



Pearson Orchestra

Handbook

2026 - 2027

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Pearson MS Orchestra is:

- To train students in music to a point where they may participate in the performance of these great works; and to enable them to continue making music, whether as an avocation or a profession, after graduation from school.
- To assist students in growing into responsible and successful members of society; able to contribute both individually, and as a member of a group while possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability, and loyalty.

The rules and procedures outlined in this handbook have been developed to accomplish these goals in the most efficient and productive manner, and to provide an accurate method of assessing each student's progress. The goal of this organization is for each student to progress both as a citizen and a musician through making music with a group of their peers. The success of the **Pearson MS Orchestra program** has traditionally been based on the concept of each student performing his or her assigned tasks to the best of his or her ability. Each student is capable of making a contribution to the group and to grow in knowledge and appreciation.

Orchestra Class Rules

Students are expected to follow these rules for the sake of the group's success. If a student does not follow the rules, a warning will be given. Consistent rule-breaking will result in parent communication and a possible loss of privileges at concerts/events.

- **Nails MUST BE SHORT.** Acrylics/Press-ons/Long nails are *NOT* allowed in orchestra due to the physical requirements of the instrument. Long nails negatively affect the intonation and posture of the student, creating frustration and unnecessary obstacles.
*If a student arrives to class with long nails, there will be a nail clipper provided to cut their nails before they can participate. No exceptions.
- **No food** may be eaten in the Orchestra Room. This includes: snacks, lunch, and candy. Students may bring a water bottle with a lid.
- **Only touch the instrument you are assigned to.** We do not want you to be responsible for somebody else's broken or damaged instrument.
- Arrive in class on-time **with all materials.**
- The Orchestra room is available for Before School practice starting at 7:55 - 8:20 am. After-School practice is from 3:50 pm- 4:20 pm.
***During this time, if you are not practicing your instrument, or doing an assigned task, you will be asked to leave the Orchestra Room.**
*The exception to these times will be communicated if we have rehearsals or sectionals.

ATTENDANCE

Orchestra activities are planned so that the least amount of activities will conflict. All students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as they wish, but at the same time, orchestra members are required to participate in all orchestra events, rehearsals and performances - remembering that a **grade is given for each event.**

IMPORTANT: In the event of a conflict, the student has the responsibility of submitting a signed note, email, or phone call from a **parent or guardian** stating the reason for the conflict. Notes that have not been submitted prior to two weeks before the orchestra event may not be considered. This note does not automatically excuse an absence. Each case is considered individually and privately according to its circumstances.

Unexcused absences will be given a "0" in the gradebook. Last minute excuses cause problems in scheduling and may not be excused. The only exceptions would be a student illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. Not having a ride to an orchestra function does not qualify a student for an excused absence. If this occurs, please try to get a ride from another student. As a last resort, contact your director. Please make efforts to make sure that you have reliable pre arranged transportation to all activities. The attendance guidelines do not apply to social events.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is required at all scheduled rehearsals, sectionals, and performances.

Examples of excused absences:

- **Death in the family**
- **Medical emergency or illness**
- **Religious holiday**

All requests for excused absence from rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances are to be **REPORTED IN WRITING, EMAIL, OR PHONE CALL BY A PARENT or GUARDIAN**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Emergency circumstances may justify an excused absence for reasons other than those listed above. In the case of illness or family emergency, an explanatory telephone call or email prior to the rehearsal or performance is appropriate.

STUDENT TRAVEL

Student travel with an FISD Orchestra is a privilege; you are representing not only the Orchestra program but Frisco ISD and Pearson MS when you travel as a group. Please follow the guidelines for travel below. Choosing not to comply with the following will result in a discipline referral at the student's campus and possible removal from the Orchestra program.

- Your behavior in class determines your ability to participate in an Orchestra trip. Chronic behavior problems in class will result in the student losing the chance to travel with the Orchestra.
- Students who choose to participate in illegal activity (drugs, alcohol, shoplifting, vandalism) will be dismissed from the trip and must be picked up by a parent. These illegal activities could lead to possible arrest by the local police.
- Be respectful of all parents & teachers on the trip. When visiting a public venue, show kindness and respect to all employees and customers of the business.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT ASSESSMENT

In order to succeed in the orchestra, a student should demonstrate two things:

1. *A willingness to improve their musical skills*
2. *A work ethic that will improve the orchestra team*

It would not be fair to assess a student's progress based solely upon playing abilities. Instead, several things can come into account, including:

- an *improvement* in overall performance skills
- being *on time* to class and rehearsals
- *success* in all academic courses – understanding that failing courses affects participation in orchestra
- *attitude* toward other students as well as the directors
- willing to *accept constructive comments*
- willingness to *help* with daily functions of the orchestra

TESTS AND EXAMS

Playing tests and exams consist of material assigned by your director - usually an assigned excerpt from the repertoire of the upcoming concert or other performing material. Playing tests will include both MakeMusic recordings, Video recordings, and in-person performances. We will also have note-reading quizzes throughout the year.

Practice and Accountability

Parents, you can help your son/daughter develop accountability by making sure that they practice consistently!!! During middle school, students start to take ownership of their schedule. They might forget to practice, so they will need your help to remind them. Please encourage them to work on their musical skills because their musical development will enhance all other areas of their education.

We do our best to provide instruction and guidance during class, but consistent practice is a crucial part of developing as a musician. Universities and employers look for qualities that are developed through mastering an instrument. These include: Perseverance, Patience, Problem-Solving skills, Social skills, Collaboration, Loyalty, and Responsibility. Even if the student does not plan to become a professional musician, the habits formed by learning an instrument will follow them in any career path they choose. Please help your student develop these qualities by being a supporter of their musical formation.

ORCHESTRA FEES

This year's orchestra fees are \$80. The fees go towards orchestra t-shirts, snacks for concerts, clinicians and guest conductors, food for All-Region, social events, and orchestra supplies.

Pay Orchestra fee to POPA here:

my.cheddarup.com/c/required-pearson-ms-orchestra-pmso-year-at-a-glance-2026

Thank you for taking the time to read the handbook. We look forward to having an amazing year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Lara - LaraC@friscoisd.org

Mr. Adams - AdamsRo@friscoisd.org