

HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Student Name: _____



Atascocita High School Orchestra

INTRODUCTION

Please read and retain this handbook as a future reference and fill out the Handbook Receipt Form and signature by **Friday, August 28, 2026**.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Atascocita Orchestra Program's primary goal is for students to attain the highest level of musicianship, understanding, and appreciation of music; through instrumental performance, music appreciation, music theory and self-expression. In addition, through the process by which we learn together and by establishing a great sense of community, students can develop essential traits that will contribute to their success in their adult lives.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

To provide:

- A safe learning environment where mistakes can be made confidently
- Learn to play in a disciplined ensemble
- Opportunities to develop musical and technical skills on string instruments
- Opportunities for leadership development
- Performance opportunities through the following settings:
 - Large Groups
 - Small Ensembles
 - Solo Literature
 - Community
 - Adjudicated Events
 - Honor Organizations – National, State, Regional

REHEARSAL GUIDELINES

Excellence is intentional; *An orchestra only performs as well as it rehearses.*

Every rehearsal is a prophecy of the performance.

1. Have all items needed for rehearsal at your chair/music stand at the beginning of rehearsal (all music, instrument, bow, rock stop, shoulder rest, sharpened pencil). Even if you are sharing music with a stand partner, have yours so that you are able to make notes as needed.
2. Instrument cases will remain in the designated areas.
3. Attention should remain focused on the music and the directors at all times. Talking, except for relevant questions (raised hands), or distracting behavior will not be permitted.
4. Fingernails must be trimmed and kept relatively short to permit correct playing position.
5. Students may not be excused to complete work for another class during orchestra rehearsal.
6. Demonstration of practicing outside of rehearsal times will be monitored. Students are expected to have all marked passages prepared to their fullest ability. Practicing is a serious requirement of any competitive organization and demonstrates a significant level of respect when it comes to valuing the time and talents of your colleagues and directors.
7. **No Cell Phones or Electronic Devices.** - AHS Orchestra will follow state law and campus guidelines at all times.

Texas House Bill 1481 prohibits the use of personal communication devices by students on school property during the school day. This means that students in public and charter schools

will not be allowed to use cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, or similar devices while on school grounds during school hours.

GRADING POLICY

ERG - Everyday Rehearsal Grade

- This grade is based on your performance daily in class. Students that follow directions, play when instructed, and try their best every day will have nothing to worry about.

3 Summative-Major Grades for each 9 weeks

- These grades will be for big events like concerts and playing exams.

For all rehearsals, performances and assessments: The only items permitted to receive an excuse with less than two week's notice are major illnesses in which a medical doctor advises the student to stay home or a relative's passing. Doctor's appointments, work schedules, and forgetfulness are not excused.

Unexcused absences will result in a zero and cannot be remediated. Excused absences will result in an "X", meaning the students will not be penalized nor rewarded for the assignment.

Final Exams (100 points)

The Fall and Spring Semester Exams will be Music Theory and/or performance-based.

REASSESSMENT POLICIES

Students must follow the AHS Reassessment Parameters for any summative grades they would like to reassess. Please review these parameters carefully.

CONDUCT

Orchestra members should maintain a conduct grade of an "S" or "E" in orchestra.

"E" = Excellent

"PN" = Poor/Needs Improvement

"S" = Satisfactory

"U" = Unsatisfactory

If a student is continuously not prepared for rehearsals, ineligible due to failing any of their class, or is NOT an active member, the directors will consider this when making orchestra placements. Directors will reevaluate orchestra placements at the end of every semester. Keep in mind that students are always auditioning for placement.

GENERAL ORCHESTRA ROOM GUIDELINES

1. The orchestra room is built for its members; we ask that you take care of the facility.
2. Orchestra members are the only students allowed in the orchestra room.
3. Food, drinks (except water), and gum will not be allowed in the orchestra room.
4. Unpack and leave cases outside of the setup. Bring pencil, rosin, and music into setup.
5. Book bags should be placed at the designated area prior to the start of rehearsal.
6. Beginning at 6:45 a.m. every morning, the orchestra room and practice rooms are to be used for practicing students only. (first come, first serve basis)
7. Vandalism with respect to school or individual student's property will not be tolerated; report any such act, no matter how small. Students will be required to provide funds for repairs.
8. Play on your instrument only. **You do not touch instruments you do not play.**
9. Do not use your instrument locker for storage of personal items. Students may utilize their personal lock to secure their instrument during the school day and after hours. Campus administration and directors are not liable for any instrument that is left unsecured.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Orchestra members are expected to attend **ALL** scheduled before and after-school sectionals, special rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and concerts. Please re-read the parameters indicated for each item as listed under “Grading Policy.” Check the provided orchestra calendar and make arrangements as needed. Attendance at rehearsals is vital in that each student contributes to the success of their ensemble. In orchestra we will learn to prioritize our commitments in a way that will be required in professional life. This is a process we plan to work with our students in mastering through their years with AHSO. **Communication** is a priority, as you will not receive excused absences from rehearsals without clear, written communication with **both** directors.

TARDY POLICY

If a student is late to class three times, they will receive a warning. Any further tardies will be met with disciplinary action at the discretion of the directors. We hold a high standard of professionalism and discipline within our program and tardies and absences will contribute to orchestra placements decisions.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Selection to serve the A.H.S. Orchestra in an officer capacity is selected by application in late April. Any student who has performed with the orchestra for at least one year is eligible to apply. All orchestra officers are expected to have a positive attitude, consistently demonstrate respect to all involved with the orchestra program, and to devote time outside of the rehearsal schedule to further promote the orchestra.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTORS

The music department feels very strongly about the importance of private study as an integral part of developing the student’s progress on their instrument. The one-on-one relationship available in a private lesson allows for more individual attention than is permitted in a large group rehearsal. Students can concentrate on their playing goals, improve on areas in which they are weak, and progress at their own rate. This individualized instruction can provide a better chance to master your own instrument, as well as maintain and boost the quality of the orchestra program. Please consult with your director to receive a recommendation, or visit our website.

REGION ORCHESTRA

Students enrolled in Chamber and Symphonic are required to audition for region orchestras. Any conflict with this requirement should be brought to the director’s attention at the beginning of the year. Students wishing to be placed in Chamber or Symphonic the following school year are strongly encouraged to audition for a region orchestra. All students in the AHS Orchestra program are encouraged to participate in region orchestra

LETTER JACKETS

Upon completion of their sophomore year, all orchestra students are eligible to apply for a letter jacket. Students must keep track of their involvement and achievements in orchestra to receive this honor. Letter jacket point tabulation sheets are provided via the AHS Orchestra website.

U.I.L. SOLO AND ENSEMBLE CONTEST

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the U.I.L. Solo & Ensemble Contest. Entry fees for this contest are provided by the school district. Directors work to assign accompanists to students for this event. Students are responsible for paying their accompanist for the service provided. There will be a form for solo and ensemble sign up to take place.

Students earning a superior rating on a memorized, Class 1 Solo or a Class 1 Ensemble (not memorized) are eligible to participate in the Texas State Solo & Ensemble Contest in Austin, Texas. This event will take place on Memorial Day weekend. Accompanist fees must be provided by the student's family and are payable directly to the accompanist. Arrangements for travel to this competition will be made and announced to students in the spring semester.

ORCHESTRA CONCERT ATTIRE

Each Orchestra student will be sized for an assigned tuxedo or dress to be worn for all formal performances. Students are responsible for getting their uniform properly altered; **DO NOT CUT ANY FABRIC FROM THE DISTRICT-OWNED UNIFORM**. This uniform is to be appropriately maintained by each orchestra family – always stored in a hanging position, dry cleaned only, never stained or damaged, and never permanently removing material from the garment.

Ladies:

Assigned concert dress+

Closed-toed, solid, black dress shoes (no athletic type shoes or boots)

Gentlemen:

Assigned tuxedo jacket and pants+

*White Wing Tip collar, long-sleeved, button down shirt for ALL

Bow tie for

Black vest+

Long, black dress socks

Solid, black dress shoes (no athletic type shoes or boots)

+Provided by AHS Orchestra

*May be purchased at stores like Al's Formalwear, JC Penny or Men's Wearhouse

ORCHESTRA EXPENSES AND PURCHASES

Required purchases for 2026-2027 school year:

ALL: rosin, AHS Orchestra fee, required uniform items, black binder

VIOLIN/VIOLA: Extra set of strings

CELLI: plus rock-stop

BASSI: plus rock-stop and stool

The \$120.00 AHS Orchestra fee should be made payable to "AHS Orchestra Boosters" and covers the following items:

- Events, Activities, and Materials.....\$95.00
 - social events, workshops, guest clinicians, general equipment, supplies
- AHS Orchestra Shirt.....\$15.00
- Uniform Maintenance.....\$10.00

Resources: Terra Nova 832-469-9095; Lisle Violin Shop 800-545-4753; Fishburn Violin Shop 281-290-4580; www.sharmusic.com; Amazon

AWARDS

The Atascocita High School Orchestra presents several awards at the conclusion of the school year to recognize outstanding student achievement. All award recipients are decided by the directors, based on a given student's consistency in performance, academic eligibility, attendance, performance in U.I.L. and T.M.E.A. Region 33 events, and a consistently positive attitude and work ethic. The awards presented are: Outstanding Progress, Outstanding Leadership, and Outstanding Performance per each performing orchestra; Rookie of the Year and the National School Orchestra Award are awarded to outstanding members from the overall program.

The Atascocita High School Orchestra Booster Club presents a number of scholarships to outstanding, graduating seniors of the A.H.S. Orchestra. Scholarship applications may be printed from the A.H.S. Orchestra website.

STUDENT PREPARATION FOR REHEARSAL

Daily practice is essential. Success of the group and of each student depends on individual hard work. This is the only guarantee of progress and success.

Contact:

Head Orchestra Director

William Bewley

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(281)-641-7578

Eva Leigh

Eva.Leigh@humbleisd.net

AHSO Handbook Receipt

Return to directors by **Friday, August 28, 2026**

By signing this receipt you agree to follow all rules and procedures outlined in the 2026-2027 orchestra handbook.

Student Name

Student Signature

Parent Name

Parent Signature
