

Eisenhower Middle School Orchestra 2018–2019

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Dear Parents,

I am very excited about to have the opportunity to serve as orchestra teacher at Eisenhower Middle School! We have a very strong and vibrant orchestra program and I am delighted that you and your child will be a part of it.

Much of my teaching experience has been at the middle and high school grade levels, so I am looking forward to teaching at the secondary level again. This handbook should answer questions about the orchestra program, but feel free to contact me if it does not. Please read, sign and date the last page of this handbook. It is important that we share the same information.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lawson, Director
Eisenhower Middle School

Classroom Procedure

In order for our musical experience to be a successful one, certain standards of conduct must take place. Issues or problems that may evolve during the course of the year can be quickly resolved by contacting me directly at school. I check email and telephone messages several times daily. Upon entering the classroom, all MUST:

- 1) Retrieve instrument and music from storage areas be seated in designated chair. (Pencils are required for class materials)
- 2) Remain quiet during tuning (this is an idea time to read the daily agenda posted on the board. Students should use this time to mentally practice their parts and be prepared to contribute to the daily rehearsal).
- 3) Always be responsible for music supplies and instruments in your care. Students are not allowed to touch another student's instrument at anytime! Everyone is responsible for ensuring that his or her rehearsal area is clean and free of clutter.
- 4) Return to your seat and wait until the teacher (not the bell) dismisses the class.

Classroom Rules

- 1) Be on time and in your seat at the bell
- 2) Enter the classroom quietly-no running or horseplay!
- 3) No food, drink or gum in the classroom
- 4) Do follow all verbal and written instructions
- 5) Be polite, raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking
- 6) Do not socialize or play out of turn during rehearsal time!
- 7) Keep comments constructive during class discussions.
- 8) No bullying!

Consequences

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| 1 st offense | Warning |
| 2 nd offense | Phone call to parents |
| 3 rd offense | Lunch or after school detention |
| 4 th offense | Office referral (possible removal from orchestra) |

Instruments-School & Personal

Storage space is available for all instruments, and students may choose to leave them in the room during the school day. However, the Director nor the school will not be liable for instruments left at school overnight.

While it is not necessary to invest in an expensive instrument during this phase of your child's learning, it will be important that the student owns an instrument of good quality and in accordance with MENC guidelines. Inferior instruments are often difficult to tune and play, cause student frustration, and ultimately lead to a loss of interest for learning to play. All instruments must be of a natural wood color although the woods may vary in hue from dark to light brown. Please do not obtain a non-traditional colored instrument, as these are never appropriate for string orchestra. Non-traditional includes the colors red, blue, black pink, white, grey, green and purple. Please contact me to evaluate an instrument you are unsure about or if you plan to obtain one from a source other than a reputable music dealer.

Classroom Materials

Although some music is provided during the course of the year, it will be the responsibility of the student to obtain the following materials for class. These items are available at Senseney 2300 E. Lincoln; Wichita Band 2525 E. Douglas; or Damn Music 8995 W. Central.

- 7th grade **Strictly Strings, Book 1**
- 8th grade **Strictly Strings, Book 2**
- Rosin (purchase bass rosin for string bass, please!)
- Cello Strap and Rock Stop for cellos and basses
- A set of strings. Be sure that the length of the strings matches the size of the instrument. (No Red Label strings, please!)
- A soft cloth and a pencil

Performing Arts Policies

It is our goal to strive for high standards of excellence at Eisenhower Middle School. The following expectations have been set to reflect our school policy.

Attendance Policy

The orchestra class is a co-curricular course that allow students to participate in an ensemble in and outside the school day. Because of this, a student receives academic credit for daily classroom activities as well as out of school rehearsals and performances. *Therefore, all members of the ensemble are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals, sectionals, concerts, and contests. If a student does not attend, his/her grade will receive no credit for a concert grade. Additionally, participation in an ensemble is like being a member of a team. Every member of the team is important and when one team member is not present, it affects the entire team.*

During a concert, students earn performance grades as well as their ability to show proper concert etiquette while listening to other ensembles. Because listening to other ensembles is an extremely important part of the concert event, *students must stay for the entire duration of the entire concert performance.*

Excused and Unexcused

Occasionally, conflicts with out of school events arise. As soon as a conflict arises, communication about these matters is crucial. *Please contact the director immediately so that both parties are aware of the conflicting events.* At that time, the director and family will discuss possible solutions.

In order for an absence to be considered excused, a pre-arranged form (student can obtain from teacher) is to be filled out and submitted by the parent or guardian two (2) weeks prior to the event. Once the form is submitted, the director will determine whether the absence will be excused or unexcused. I will do my best to be flexible in balancing conflicts. Absences are excused only for a death in the family, religious holidays, unavoidable school activity conflicts (*which have been previously discussed with the director, student and sponsor*) and other pre-approved situations. In the event that a student is not able to attend both events and the director has had ample notification (at least 2 weeks in advance), the student may be asked to complete an assignment to make up for the missed grade. The assignment will be fair and reasonable, and at the discretion of the director.

****Students absent from school on the day of a performance (or the day before a weekend performance) due to illness will be excused for missing a concert. However, a parent must notify the director by telephone or email. Absences that are not prearranged or for other reasons not due to illness will not be unexcused, resulting in a zero for the performance grade.**

Auditions and Chair Placements

Learning the fundamentals, teamwork, and group camaraderie are the building blocks of a successful orchestra program. Therefore, we **DO NOT** hold chair auditions and chair challenges at the middle school level. Students will be placed for seating in the orchestra at the discretion of the director, and at anytime during the course of the year.

Playing Exams

Because orchestra is performance-based class, students will prepare for playing exams throughout the year. Exams are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their progress and diligent at-home practice. On certain occasions, students may perform their exam in class or record their exam at home.

Private Lessons

Although private lessons are not required for participation in orchestra, some student may want to seek private lesson. Class sizes are often large and therefore do not lend time for a lot of individual attention. While students will receive some individual attention, a weekly meeting with a private instructor is extremely beneficial in supplementing classroom content. Studying privately often helps students reinforce concepts, move along at a quicker pace, and learn solo repertoire. If you are interested in private lessons, please contact me for a list of suggested private instructors in the area.

Sectionals

Sectionals are important rehearsals where one specific section (such as 1st violins, violas, cells....ect.) will meet in order to better learn the music. Every sectional may not appear on the calendar, but may be necessary to schedule during the year. If a sectional is scheduled, it will take place before or after school. Students will receive notice of any upcoming sectional rehearsals in advance and I will make every effort will be made to avoid other school conflicts. The attendance policy applies to all sectional rehearsals, so please review this policy carefully and notify the director of any potential conflicts.

Events

After-School Rehearsals

After school rehearsals take place from 3:05-3:45. *When scheduled, students are required to attend all rehearsals.* Students receive a grade for their attendance and performance at rehearsal, so please notify the director of any conflicts at least two weeks in advance.

Concerts

Throughout the year, each orchestra will participate in three or four evening concerts. Students are required to attend all concerts in which their ensemble is performing. Concert dates are already set and listed on the orchestra calendar. Please make sure to mark all concert performances on your calendar as soon as possible. A significant portion of a student's orchestra grade comes from concert performances. Any absences from a concert performance that is not pre-arranged or due to an illness will result in a zero. In addition, students must remain for the entire concert-this includes listening to all other ensembles that are performing that evening.

Silver Strings

This is a select group of students working at an advanced level. This group will have an opportunity to travel to play outside venues. Should an opportunity for an outside performance arise, I will try my best to give at least 2 weeks notice prior to the engagement. Due to the complex literature this group will play, membership is limited and by audition only. This group will meet weekly, and the rehearsals will take place before or after school.

Wichita Suburban League Honors Orchestra (October 27, 2018)

This group involves multiple school districts, and the students selected have an opportunity to work under a guest clinician. Select students will participate, and there is a limit on the number of students from each school. **Eisenhower Middle School** is the host school for the 2018 Pioneer League Honors Orchestra.

Wichita Suburban League Solo & Small Ensemble Festival (February 27, 2019)

This is a music festival serving the school districts of Maize, Goddard, Derby, Newton and Haysville. There are 2 parts to this festival: large group and solo and small ensemble. All students are required to participate in the large group portion, but students who take private lessons on their instrument will have an opportunity to perform a solo in front of a music judge. Trios and quartets are also encouraged.

Music in the Parks/Worlds of Fun- (May 4, 2019)

Although a competitive music festival, the purpose of attending this music festival is to have a "total educational experience". There will be an evaluation of the orchestra's performance based on their mastery of music in front of a panel of music judges, and this will take place at an area school. The orchestra will enjoy the remainder of the day at Worlds of Fun Theme Park.

Fund-raising

Fund-raising is vital to our orchestra program and we will conduct several this year. In order for our effort to be a success, 100% participation is strongly encouraged. Monies from these fund-raisers will help to defray the cost of field trips, music and supplies.

Concert Dress

Middle school orchestra students all black for concert dress.

Lettering and Awards

Students who exceed expectations beyond the orchestra curriculum will be eligible for an award letter. In order to letter, certain criterion has been set (much of it is service based) and the student will need to earn a total of 10 points. Lettering forms are available in the classroom in the student center.

Eisenhower Instrumental Music Boosters & Newsletter

This parent organization help support the ongoing needs of our band and orchestra programs. With the steady growth of the orchestra program, we need our orchestra involved! The group meets the last Tuesday every month in the **Eisenhower High School** instrumental music room. Meetings normally last from 6:30-7:30 P.M. instrumental music.

EIMB also maintains our online weekly newsletter and parents can sign up for this free of charge. To get involved with EIMB or to receive a newsletter, please visit the Eisenhower High School webpage. Locate and click on the tab that says activities and then on instrumental music.

Concert Schedule at a Glance

****School concerts start at 7:00 P.M. with a 6:30 arrival time******

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| ● October 27, 2018 | <i>Wichita Suburban League</i> Honors Orchestra -EMS |
| ● November 6, 2018 | EMS Band & Orchestra Concert Fall Concert- |
| ● February 12, 2019 | EMS Band & Orchestra Pre-Festival Concert |
| ● February 27, 2019 | <i>Wichita Suburban League Solo</i> & Ensemble Festival- Derby |
| ● May 4, 2019 | Worlds of Fun Kanas City, M.O. |

My child and I will abide by the policies stated in the orchestra handbook.

Parent signature _____

Date _____