



Morton Ranch High School Orchestra Handbook

Morton Ranch High School

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Introduction

Katy I.S.D. is proud to offer a comprehensive music program that includes string instruction from grades 6-12. The Morton Ranch High School music department is well respected throughout the state, and the MRHS Orchestra is a vital segment of the music curriculum. Members of the MRHS Orchestra are expected to exhibit the highest possible standards of *Responsibility, Dependability, Musical Excellence, Dedication and Integrity.*

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Purpose and Goals

According to Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 3 of the Texas Education Code, Fine Arts Education is a **Required Curriculum**. The MRHS Orchestra is a core class with a core curriculum and the skills cultivated during class are to be demonstrated and refined during rehearsals and performances. *Leadership, self-discipline, and teamwork* are all components which characterize **musicianship**. A significant aim for the MRHS Orchestra is to not only provide development of individual musical technique and artistry, but to establish an organization that performs at the highest level.

Every student should graduate with a clear understanding of the high level of commitment and application of principles required to succeed and flourish in any field. Through standards of excellence in musical rehearsals and performances, individual students will be shaping the skills necessary to be academically prepared, an effective communicator, a leader, a responsible citizen, and a productive and continuous learner, as stated in the Katy ISD Portrait of a Graduate.

Statement of Student Assessment

In order to succeed, a student should demonstrate:

- ❖ A willingness to improve their musical skills, and develop a work ethic that will improve the orchestra
- ❖ Practice, be on time, be willing to accept constructive comments, be willing to help with daily orchestra tasks, and carry a spirit that is positive toward the image of the orchestra program

Conduct

The behavior and character of each orchestra student is a reflection of themselves, the orchestra, MRHS, and the community. The following is expected at all times:

1. Display common courtesy to administrators, directors, parents and students.
2. Exhibit mature conduct and dedication to the MRHS Orchestra.
3. Follow classroom and rehearsal rules as outlined by the orchestra director.
- 4.** Follow rules and policies of Katy I.S.D. and MRHS as outlined in the Katy I.S.D. High School Student Handbook. Failure to comply with rules may result in a Discipline Referral.

Classroom Rules:

1. Be in your assigned seat with all required materials (i.e. instrument, bow, music binder with music, pencil, etc.) two minutes after the tardy bell.
2. No gum, candy, or food in any class, rehearsal, concert or competition.
3. Be respectful of your environment, fellow classmates and director at all times.
4. Bring your own music, instrument, and other materials to class every day.
5. Take instrument home every day to practice.
6. Respond to directions the first time they are given.
7. Mark notes in your music with your pencil as directors and clinicians indicate.
8. No cell phones during rehearsals or concerts.

Programs

There are four MRHS Orchestras; **Philharmonic, Chamber, Camerata, and Sinfonia**. All ensembles require an audition and students are expected to maintain a high standard of academic achievement in order to participate in all UIL events. Sinfonia and Camerata combine to create the **Symphony Orchestra** for full orchestra pieces and for the Full Orchestra UIL competition. All orchestras are equally important performing organizations. Students are required to perform in concerts throughout the year and participate in UIL Concert & Sight Reading Contest and the UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest.

The **Philharmonic Orchestra** is comprised primarily of first year high school orchestra students who are learning to strengthen their sight reading and performance skills. The Philharmonic Orchestra will participate in school performances. Students in this group may also participate in UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest. Participation in UIL Concert and Sight Reading is dependent upon personnel, instrumentation, and directors' decision.

The **Chamber Orchestra** is comprised of students who have demonstrated advancing skills of proficiency on their instrument including in sight reading, consistent intonation and quality tone production. Members of the Chamber Orchestra will participate in school performances and UIL Concert and Sight Reading. Students in this group may also participate in UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest.

The **Camerata Orchestra** is comprised of advanced musicians with accomplished technical and artistic skill and strong academic records. Members will participate in school performances and UIL Concert and Sight Reading. Students in this group may also participate in UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest and are encouraged to audition for the Texas Music Educator's (TMEA) All-Region Orchestra Auditions. Members of the Camerata Orchestra will participate in the MRHS **Symphony Orchestra**. This group combines with members of the MRHS Wind Ensemble. They will perform for the UIL Full Orchestra Concert & Sight Reading Contest.

The **Sinfonia Orchestra** is comprised of advanced musicians with accomplished technical and artistic skill and strong academic records. Members will participate in school performances and UIL Concert and Sight Reading. Students in this group are required to participate in one UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest event and are strongly encouraged to audition for the Texas Music Educator's (TMEA) All-Region Orchestra Auditions. The Sinfonia Orchestra combines with members of the MRHS Wind Ensemble to create the MRHS **Symphony Orchestra**. The Symphony Orchestra will perform for the UIL Full Orchestra Concert & Sight Reading Contest.

Trip Orchestras- Students planning to travel and participate in the orchestra trip will come together to create the **Trip Orchestra**. All students must be eligible to travel and perform.

Auditions and Placement

Orchestra placement is by audition during the previous spring semester consisting of a scale, orchestral excerpt and/or etude and/or sight-reading exercise chosen by the conductor along with an information sheet. In addition to the audition, citizenship, effort, and conduct are large factors in the conductor's final decision in determining personnel and seating.

The director employs strategic planning to benefit not only the individual student, but the group as a whole. Audition results can be determined by the director, a panel or a combination of both. Regardless of what system or combinations of systems are used, **the orchestra directors have the final word on all seating arrangements**. This holds true for major symphony orchestras throughout the world. Various ways to seat musicians in an orchestra include:

- 1) Rotating systems in which individuals or stand partners are moved daily or periodically (Sometimes the first chair player(s) or the first stand(s) remain fixed).
- 2) Audition systems to rank and seat players from strongest to weakest
- 3) Audition systems to rank and then seat players strategically throughout sections
- 4) Reseating students at each performance or by selections within a performance
- 6) Random drawing for seating done with letters, numbers or names
- 7) Chair "challenges" done periodically

Soloists

Students interested in performing with the orchestra as a SOLOIST must:

- 1) Notify the director of their interest in performing a solo as soon as possible
- 2) Show the director the music that is being studied or consult on possible appropriate selections
- 3) Understand that there is a possibility that a solo with the orchestra depends on many variables and circumstances and might not be possible or might have to be postponed to another time.

Sometimes a soloist has to share or alternate performances with another student soloist. The director has the final word on all the decisions concerning student soloists.

Rehearsals and Sectionals

The MRHS Orchestras meet during four separate class periods each day, therefore it is essential to have rehearsals after school. These rehearsals are the only time the orchestras can rehearse as a full group in order to prepare for concerts. In addition, sections within each orchestra play different parts with varying technical and rhythmic demands. To address these needs, sections rehearse after school as well. All rehearsals are required and are a large part of the student's grade. All students must make arrangements to attend and arrive at least 10 minutes early to tune and warm up. Students not ready to play will have points deducted. If an evening rehearsal is missed, it is the student's responsibility to get the makeup assignment from the director. To make last minute adjustments and preparations for concerts, the orchestra will have scheduled dress rehearsals. While it is not necessary to wear uniforms to these rehearsals, a final run-through of the music will be a large part of this time. Again, these are required functions.

Attendance Policy and Absences

- The quality of the MRHS Orchestra reflects the composite effort and commitment from all members to practice and attend all rehearsals and performances. Students must arrive early to unpack their instrument, sign-in, place their music on the stand, tune, and warm-up. Promptness ensures that no instruction time is lost and prevents interruptions of instruction to other students.
- Students are encouraged to participate in other activities. Orchestra members are however, expected to participate in all orchestra rehearsals and performances, remembering that a grade is assigned for each event. Communications with all parents, guardians, directors, coaches, sponsors, and employers is critical.

How to submit an Excused Absence: In the event of a conflict with a rehearsal, concert, or contest, the student has the responsibility of submitting the online Google Form **“Request to be Excused Form”** from the orchestra directors before the absence occurs without a parent signature. Filling out the form does not guarantee an excused absence. This allows the student to have responsibility in taking care of their own calendar and scheduling.

Online forms not submitted prior to the rehearsal, concert, or contest will not be accepted. In the event of a missed event without prior written notice, a 50 will be recorded into the grade book. Once a **“Request to be Excused Form”** is submitted with a reasonable excuse, we will replace the grade with a 70. The student is expected to make up all of the missed rehearsal time outside of class in order to replace the grade up to a maximum score of a 90. Sitting in a practice room with your instrument while using your cell phone does not contribute to make-up time.

Recurring conflicts will be discussed on a case-by-case basis between the student and the directors.

Circumstances:

1. Advance notices are required for all prior commitments. A prior commitment is defined as an event already committed to before the orchestra schedule is announced. A notice of such a commitment should be sent to the director the next school day after a scheduled rehearsal or concert date is announced. In the case of work schedules, which may be pending, the student should communicate individually with the director about any anticipated concerns. Students are expected to request their work schedules be arranged to accommodate all rehearsals and concerts. These requests should take priority over social events. In the case of an extra rehearsal being called, each student is expected to make every attempt to attend. Conflicts with extra (unscheduled) rehearsals are usually easily resolved with good communication.
2. In the case of illness and/or a family emergency, the parents should send signed written notice or email to the orchestra director as soon as possible. If it is an emergency situation (i.e. something that happens 30 minutes before the rehearsal), it may be impossible to get in touch with anyone. In this case, please follow up with a signed written note as soon as possible after the fact. This is the only category where absences will be excused the same day, or after the event.
3. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused if the director is notified in writing by a parent.
4. All absences in the above categories, verified by a parent note, will be considered excused.

Please communicate directly with Directors if there are any individual or unusual circumstances which may present as a conflict. Unexcused absences and tardiness affects the morale of the entire orchestra (including the conductor) as each student is IMPORTANT. The following represent examples of **un**excused absences:

1. Commitments accepted after a rehearsal or concert date is announced
2. Homework
3. Transportation. Please make efforts to ensure reliable prearranged transportation. (Last minute mechanical problems will be excused. This refers to a student who fails to arrange transportation in advance.)
4. Baby-sitting
5. Falling asleep
6. Forgetting an instrument and/or music
7. Failure to request the time off from a job
8. "Forgetting" about a rehearsal or concert

Grades

Each student is awarded points based on the scale below. At the end of each six weeks grading period, points awarded are divided into the points available to compute the average.

Table of Grade Points:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Major Grades	50%
This includes performances (double grades), extended curricular activities such as master classes and clinics, and both playing and written tests.	
Minor Grades	35%
This includes playing and written quizzes (announced and unannounced), sectionals and rehearsals, UIL and TMEA preparation grades, posture, engaged and focused participation, and concert and performance attire and punctuality.	
Other Grades	15%
This grade includes having instrument, pencil, music, and other necessary equipment at your stand when the bell rings. Additionally, worksheets and other homework assignments will fall into this category.	

Tests and Exams

Tests and exams will consist of an assigned excerpt from the orchestral repertoire of the upcoming concert or a solo assigned by the conductor. Tests will generally be given every other week. Additionally, written tests may be administered.

Six weeks' tests and exams are more important and will be broader in scope, thus weighing more in the grade averaging process. Semester exams are designed to measure the independent and cooperative musical thought processes and abilities of the student. Accordingly, in many cases, the semester and final exams may be independent projects. In other words, class time will not be used to specifically review the exam; however students should feel free to ask specific questions regarding the exam.

Extra credit is always available. Bringing a signed program to the director for the following will count: attendance to a professional-level performance such as a professional opera, orchestra, or symphonic performance will earn you three points on your six weeks average. Attendance to a college level concert or performance will earn you two extra credit points. Attendance to a high school event such as a local high school's orchestra concert or musical will earn you one point. There is a maximum of six points (extra credit) per six weeks.

Eligibility

Senate Bill 1 mandates that students who participate in extracurricular activities such as contests and field trips must receive a grade of no less than 70 in each of their classes. Grades will be checked at the end of each six weeks grading period. At that time, any student who fails a class will not participate in any field trip or contest for the next three week period. After three weeks, grades for these students will be checked again. If the student is passing ALL classes at that time, they will become eligible at 2:35 pm seven days after the grades are checked. If all grades are not passing at the three week progress report time, the student remains ineligible for the remainder of the six weeks. (KISD has approved a list of advanced placement classes that are exempt from this eligibility rule).

Unless an admission fee is charged, all concerts fall under the category of **curricular** activities (part of the course requirement) and are not subject to eligibility requirements. **The following activities are considered extra-curricular and eligibility rules apply:** the school musical, events associated with the TMEA All-State Orchestra Process (i.e. Region, Area, or State), UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest, UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest, etc.

It is very important that each student maintains passing grades in all classes in addition to orchestra. Most orchestra activities are curricular. However, any student who is not passing any class may not participate in any extracurricular activity of the orchestra during that six-week period. To maintain eligibility, students who participate in extracurricular activities must not have any report card grade recorded as "I" (Incomplete). **An "I" on a report card or progress report has the same impact on eligibility as an "F."**

If a student is having trouble passing a class, **please notify your teacher.** Extra help can be arranged, if not from a teacher, then maybe from a fellow student. Students should not be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help. It is expected that each member of the MRHS Orchestra do all work necessary to pass all classes. *A reminder- grades in all of your classes help determine your placement in orchestra.*

Orchestra Fees Checklist

*Checks payable to MRHSO. Write student's name and purpose of check in the memo section.

<u>Date Due</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>
8-26-19	Activity Fee	\$100	All Orchestra Students
8-26-19	Instrument Maintenance Fee	\$80	Students using KISD instruments
8-26-19	Garment Bag Fee	\$30	All New Students
9-28-19	All-Region	\$20	All-Region Auditions
TBA	UIL Solo Fee	\$12	Students performing a solo
TBA	Solo Accompaniment Fee	\$35-50	Students performing a solo
TBA	UIL Ensemble Fee	\$12	Students performing an ensemble

Fundraising

Fundraising opportunities are provided by us several times throughout the school year. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in each event. Fundraising money is solely for the purpose of the MRHS Orchestra as a non-profit organization. Students cannot individually profit from fundraising. All funds will contribute to the entire organization as a whole. The sole parties responsible in making decisions with these funds include the Directors and the MRHSO Parent Board.

Each school year will begin with a new balance of fees. Extra funds or credit must not contribute from one year to the next. If students have a remaining credit on their accounts, they will be absorbed into the general MRHSO account. All money attributed to the MRHSO is non-refundable.

Any student who attempts to individually profit from any MRHSO-sponsored fundraiser will be promptly reported to MRHS Administration and may forfeit their membership to the MRHSO.

Personal Instrument Equipment

The following will be expected of all orchestra members:

1. Personal instruments (violins/violas) should be placed in assigned lockers. After class, all instruments should be completely packed (end pins in and bows loosened) and stored in their assigned areas for safe keeping.
2. All instruments are to be in good playing condition. Proper maintenance is required.
3. Students are expected to have rosin, shoulder rests, roc-stops, cloths, sharpened pencils, good strings, etc. Cellos and basses should have roc-stops at all times.
4. All instruments kept in the orchestra room during the day **MUST** have the student's orchestra case tag clearly visible.
5. Students are to purchase replacement strings immediately following a string breaking. In an emergency, strings may be bought at school, but must be paid for within 24 hours after receiving them.
6. Students are responsible for **their own property**. If a student incurs any damages to another student's instrument, the student who owns the instrument is solely responsible for repair expenses. The MRHSO is **not** responsible for repairs towards student instruments or property.

Repairs

Keep your instrument in good repair. Carry extra strings in your case and rehair your bow at least once a year. Instruments should not be put in repair without first being inspected by the director. Many times minor adjustments can be made by the director which may eliminate a trip to the repair shop. The choice of repairman for school owned instruments is at the discretion of the director. Please do not attempt to repair the instrument. Neglecting a repair may lead to long term damage and depreciation in the value of the instrument.

Recommended music shops for String Repair:

Lisle Violin Shop: 281-396-4848

Sam's Strings: 713-257-0459

Katy Violin Shop: 281-755-4169

Strings and Accessories:

Shar Music Company: www.sharmusic.com 1 800 248-7427

Johnson Strings: www.johnsonstring.com 1 800 359-9351

Southwest Strings: www.swstrings.com 1 800 528-3430

Lockers

Instrument will be stored in lockers assigned to each student in the beginning of the school year.

1. Close and lock your door when your instrument is stored in your locker.
2. Only your instrument and your music stored in your locker.
3. Violins/violas take instrument and cellos/basses take music home daily and on weekends.

Students or their families will assume any risk for storing instruments overnight and therefore release the Directors and Katy ISD or any other employee from damages. The student is responsible for repairing or replacing damaged or stolen instruments that are the result of individual negligence or not securing your locker.

Students do not have permission to use anyone else's instruments or materials.

Supply List

1. Personal instrument
2. 1" black binder to hold and safe-guard music (provided at the beginning of the year)
3. Five dividers with tabs and inserted labels (provided at the beginning of the year)
4. Plastic, three hole, re-sealable pencil bag for black binder
5. Sharpened pencils with erasers (2-3 in pencil bag)
6. Violins/Violas- shoulder rest, extra strings
7. Cellos/Basses- roc stop
8. Folding Music Stand
9. Electric Tuner
10. Metronome
11. Mutes
12. Rosin

Care of Music

Students are responsible for all music they receive. All music should immediately be placed in the orchestra binder. Lost binders will cost \$5.00 to replace. All measures of all pieces received should be numbered. Music should always be marked in pencil only and never in ink.

Fees

All Fine Arts Organizations in KATY I.S.D. pay a fee for membership in their organization. **All students are required to pay an Orchestra Activity fee of \$100.00 each school year.** Checks can be made payable to: **MRHSO**. ALL STUDENTS benefit from these monies, therefore ALL STUDENTS are required to pay. These fees will be used for:

1. Clinicians to prepare for UIL and TMEA competitions
2. MRHS Orchestra polo style shirt for performances
3. MRHS Orchestra T-shirt for field trips and spirit days
4. Inventory of replacement strings, roc stops, shoulder rests and rosin for emergencies
5. Recording fees for home concerts or TMEA Honor tapings
6. Defray of student cost for end of year orchestra banquet
7. Concessions for social events and celebrations
8. End of the year orchestra awards

Refunds: Any money given to the MRHSO is non-refundable.

Additional Optional Expense (non-refundable): Purple garment bag with orchestra logo for uniform \$30.00.

KATY I.S.D. Owned Instrument Information

Personal Instruments: It is highly recommended that all instruments be covered by the parent's homeowner's or renters insurance. If scheduling of the instrument on the policy proves to be cost prohibitive, there is a specific insurance available for a very reasonable premium.

***School Owned Instruments:** All students using KATY I.S.D. owned harps, cellos, and basses must pay a \$80.00 Maintenance Fee. Make checks payable to MRHSO. This fee is minimal, but necessary for the upkeep of the instruments. (If you were to rent/purchase a second instrument for home use, it would cost a minimum of a \$50 deposit in addition to a \$35/month payment.) This fee covers the cost of an annual bridge replacement (\$86 for a cello or \$175 for a bass), and a bow re-hair (\$35 for a cello or \$40 for a bass). Instruments are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. Students will not be issued an instrument for school use until all outstanding repair bills from the previous year are paid. This maintenance fee is not an insurance fee and therefore the student and/or parent are responsible for any damage to an instrument due to student neglect or recklessness. *Contact the Directors to discuss payment plan options.

Individual and Group Competitions

All-Region High School Orchestras are made up of the finest high school students in the Houston area. Students audition each fall. There are two orchestras that one may be chosen to perform in. Those who are selected rehearse and perform in a special concert in November. It is a very high honor and exciting experience for those participating. Guest conductors are brought in to choose repertoire and work with students. Even students not selected will experience musical growth in preparing and participation in a competitive audition. **The All-Region Audition** is included in the Charms Calendar.

Sinfonia Orchestra students are strongly recommended to audition for All-Region Orchestra while members of the Camerata Orchestra are highly encouraged to do so. Learning this literature improves technique tremendously and in turn elevates the level of the orchestra.

Texas All-State Orchestras: If a student auditions for All-Region, they are eligible to audition for Area and possibly continue to record for an All-State audition, which includes their etude and orchestral excerpts from the All-State repertoire. If a student qualifies for All-State they will participate in one of the three All-State Orchestra ensembles. There are two full orchestras and one string ensemble. Students are notified after Thanksgiving if they have made All-State. Hotel accommodations and meal money is provided by the district for all students who perform at the Texas Music Educators Association Convention in San Antonio in February. This is considered an extraordinary musical experience. **Area and All-State Auditions are included in the Charms Calendar.**

The UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest is held annually providing an opportunity for each student to perform a solo and/or ensemble and receive a rating and evaluation of their performance. Every student is strongly encouraged to learn a solo and/or ensemble. Those students earning “Superior” or “Excellent” performance ratings for a solo will receive medals. Those students who earn a “Superior Rating” on a grade I ensemble or on a memorized grade I solo will be eligible to advance to the state level of this competition which will be held in Katy ISD. **The Region 23 UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest is included in the Charms Calendar.**

MRHS Orchestra Uniform Guideline and Uniform Policy

Like all of our other high quality performance groups at MRHS, the Orchestra requires a uniform outfit to be worn at each performance (concert or contest) unless otherwise specified. It is expected that every student will fully comply with the uniform described below.

Non-compliance will result in a lowered concert grade. Every student will be inspected prior to each performance by the director, officers and parents to make sure the dress code is followed. It’s about how we see ourselves, how others see us and looking as good as we sound.

MRHSO Informal Uniform: Orchestra t-shirts or polo, blue jeans, athletic shoes.

Replacement Costs: In the event that a given item listed is lost or damaged, the student/parent must reimburse the MRHSO at the listed price:

Boys: Tux Jacket- \$90, Tux Slacks- \$45, Bow Tie and Cummerbund- \$15 **Girls:** Dress- \$75

Girl's Formal Uniform

- Black uniform dress (provided) and black bra
- Black nylon hosiery
- Black shoes with toe and back no more than 2' heel – Classic style pumps. Shoes may not have tassels, buckles, straps, or any other decorations on them. Please no chains or necklaces. You may wear small earrings (studs).

Girl's Formal Uniform Care Guidelines

Please follow these guidelines to increase the longevity of these uniforms.

- The uniform dresses will be measured and hemmed. If any alterations are required later, **do not cut the dress in any way**. Instead, have temporary alterations made. You will be charged the cost of a new dress if the alterations alter the original size of the dress in any way.
- Dresses must be **hand washed, drip dried**. DO NOT machine wash or dry clean the dresses. Machine washing causes the material to get damaged.
- You are required to turn in the uniform at the end of the year hand washed and completely dried in the bag with your name attached. You are responsible for the replacement or repair of the garment. If you are unable to repair the garment, local cleaners often can perform repairs for you.
- You are responsible for returning the dress to its original condition at the end of the school year unless your daughter is remaining in orchestra and will wear the same dress the following year. In this case, they should inform the Directors that they want to reserve their dress for next year and make sure to label it with their name.

Boy's Formal Uniform

- Tuxedo jacket and pants (provided).
- Individually purchased 1/4" Pleat Wing-Tipped White Tuxedo Shirt- if you already have a tuxedo shirt that meets that description, you do not need to purchase one. If you do not have a tuxedo shirt that fits that meets that description, one may be purchased at Al's Formal Wear. Remember- you must be able to comfortably button your tuxedo shirt collar and wear a bow tie. If your collar is too tight- you must get a new shirt that fits.
- Bow ties and cummerbunds will be provided- there is a replacement fee if lost
- Black socks and black dress shoes, no tennis shoes or casual shoes of any kind

Boy's Formal Uniform Care Guidelines

Please follow these guidelines to increase the longevity of these uniforms.

- Tuxedo pants must be temporarily hemmed. No un-hemmed edges are allowed.
- Do not cut the pants when hemming or altering. Do not use hem tape to hem slacks.
- Do not remove any labels.
- Tuxedo shirts should be dry-cleaned after concerts to keep them looking nice. Tuxedo jackets and pants must also be dry cleaned at least once during the year unless heavily soiled.
- You are required to dry clean the tuxedo at the end of the year for summer storage. Please staple receipts and leave them on the bag.
- You are responsible for the replacement or repair of the tuxedo pieces. You are responsible for all missing buttons on coats and pants.

Independent Practice

Individual home practice is an integral part of any musician's learning process. It is very important to the state of the orchestra that effort is being made by each student to be responsible for learning individual parts outside of the classroom. Ideally, class meetings and rehearsals are not to be used as a practice session, but as time for working out ensemble concerns.

The MRHS Orchestra is a great orchestra because of the quality teaching you have received in the early years of your musical education. It becomes a superior orchestra when all members put hard work into it. Just as any other class, if there is a problem in the music that you cannot handle, please talk to your conductor. Students must take their instrument home every day to practice a minimum of 45 minutes each day.

Any time there are rehearsals in the orchestra room, students are more than welcome to take a practice room and utilize that time and space for their individual practice time. Cell phones, homework, food, and drink are not appropriate inside the practice rooms. Please be courteous to those seeking to use rehearsal space for instrumental practice.

Private Lessons

In a program this large, it is impossible for Directors to meet the individual needs of each student. With private lessons, participating students can have extra help on a one-to-one basis. We are very pleased to offer a high caliber private lesson program for students. Private teachers are highly skilled performers and respected teachers in the Houston area. Their dedication and service to our orchestra program is exemplary and worthy of your consideration. Each lesson from the Katy Private Lesson Program costs approximately \$18.50-\$24.50 for 30 minutes of instruction. Since longer lessons tend to be more beneficial for students of this level, students may elect to enroll in a "double lesson" at a higher fee. Katy Private Lessons Teachers teach on many campuses throughout the district. All monies are handled by the private teacher directly.

Students desiring private lessons instruction must complete a student application, available from the director, and return it to the director. It is important that the student/parent obtain all contact information from the instructor (phone, email, etc.) in the event a lesson must be missed. Unexcused absences from lessons will be charged the full lesson price.

In addition, private lessons are available through qualified personnel in the Greater Houston area, and from area music studios. Consider enhancing your child's musical progress by seeking out a qualified private teacher.

Some Outstanding Benefits of Private Instruction:

1. Make improvements in technique and musical artistry on perspective instrument
2. Opportunity to deal with unique challenges of particular instruments with an expert on that instrument at student pacing
3. Review and reinforcement of class assignments when necessary
4. Earlier exposure to techniques such as vibrato, shifting, and advanced bowings
5. Expanded opportunities for advanced solo and ensemble instruction
6. Greater confidence in individual performing
7. Enhanced opportunity for success at individual competitions such as All-Region and Solo and Ensemble contests
8. Heightened standard for group endeavors such as concerts and contests.

Charms

CHARMS Office Assistant is our data management system and vital tool for holding all information for the MRHS Orchestras. This is a system that has been adopted by our district and almost all Fine Arts programs manage our programs. All of our forms and important information will be accessible from our Charms website. The following information will help you access your child's information, as well as change/update personal data and look up/download important information.

Important materials such as forms and fees will be sent electronically to the email address on file.

It is extremely important that all contact information is current. Check all student and parent information: grade, sex, date of birth, e-mail addresses, home address, and all phone numbers.

Home Email- The orchestra uses email for communication to parents. This email address should be the email that you prefer the orchestra to use. (It should be a parent email, not the student email.) Do not duplicate email addresses or you will receive multiple emails at the same address.

Classes- Only #1 should be completed with either your child's current orchestra assignment.

You **DO NOT** need to add driver's license or date of birth for parents.

LOGGING INTO CHARMS

To get to the CHARMS website simply follow these instructions:

- Go to <http://www.charmsoffice.com> (you may want to bookmark this page)
- Click “ENTER,” located at the header near the top right hand corner of the page.
- In the “Parent/Student login box, type the following: MRHSorch
- Click “Enter Student/Parent Area.”
- In the Student Area Password box, type your student’s KISD ID number with a capital letter.
- Click “Enter.”
- View your student’s Menu Page - Click “School Calendar” to view the Orchestra Calendar - Click “Handouts” to view and print important documents such as the Orchestra Handbook and Orchestra Calendar - Click “Finances” to see financial statements - Click “Forms Collected” to see which forms your student has or has not turned in - Click “Personal Info” to access Contact Information

Please note: We do not use the “Absences & Tardies” button. Other items are being updated.
Please change your child’s password and write it down.

LETTER AWARDS

The district policy states that in order for a student to earn a letter jacket, the student must earn a minimum of 15 points in one activity (orchestra). A student may earn only one jacket in high school, but may earn additional letters in additional areas of activity in subsequent years. This award will be a patch designed to denote the year and activity of the award. Jacket orders are taken twice a year. The form and requirements sheet may be found at our website, mrhso.org.

Student Officer Qualifications and Responsibilities

Those students willing to offer extra help and demonstrate leadership to the MRHSO are encouraged to run for an office. Officers are important to the orchestra. The leaders help organize logistical concerns for music performances and social events. This is a service position. You do not receive letter jacket points from the district for being an officer.

Officer Qualifications:

1. Any student with one year of experience in the MRHS Orchestra may run for office. Freshman may run for Freshman Representative only.
2. Officers must maintain academic eligibility and be in good academic standing throughout the year or they will forfeit their office.
3. Officers must maintain regular attendance and promptness for rehearsals, performances, and officer meetings.

4. Officers may not receive an N or lower in conduct.

Consequences: A student officer who fails to maintain these standards will forfeit their office. A suitable replacement will be appointed by the director.

If there are no candidates for a position the director will select a student for that position. The Directors serve as the Chief Executive Directors (CEOs) of the Orchestra Officers and has veto power over any suggestion or rule of policy brought forward that is not in keeping with the vision of the MRHS Orchestra Program, school, or KISD policy.

Officer Job Descriptions

President: (1) *Must be a Senior:* The President is the student executive officer of the student board. He/She will assist the director with planning social functions for students, coordinating receptions with parents, and communication needs of the officers and orchestra members to the Director and Board. The President presides over student officer meetings, provides an agenda and communicates all discussions to the Director immediately following meetings.

Vice President: (1) *Must be a Junior or Senior:* He/She assists the President/Student Assistant in his/her duties and will preside over the student board meeting if the President is absent. The Vice President is also in charge of social functions and may appoint a committee of volunteers from the orchestra membership to assist with this task.

Librarian: (2) *May be a Sophomore, Junior or Senior:* This person will be responsible for the music library. The Librarian will assist the Director in filing, cataloguing, stamping, copying, passing out, and organizing music.

Secretary: (1) *May be a Sophomore, Junior or Senior:* The Secretary is responsible for taking the minutes of all officer meetings and displaying them on the orchestra bulletin board following an officer meeting. He/She should also keep a notebook with the minutes in case reference to past meetings is needed. Minutes should include attendance of officers present, items discussed, items voted on and results of the vote. He/She will help collate and distribute forms (i.e. permission slips) and graded paperwork.

Photographer/Historian: (2) *May be a Sophomore, Junior, or Senior:* The Historians will be responsible for keeping records (i.e. photos, videos, and brief written summaries) of each event throughout the year and coordinating with the yearbook and newspaper staff. These individuals will help publicity announcements and make spirit posters for events throughout the year (contests and celebrations). At the end of the year banquet, they will display the photos taken during the year in a photo album and help create our video slideshow. The Historian(s) may appoint a committee of volunteers from the orchestra membership to assist with these tasks.

Publicity Managers: (2) *May be a Sophomore, Junior, or Senior:* The Publicity Managers will assist the Director in advertising for concerts by making posters as well as with social media and community engagement. They will oversee donation letter distribution to businesses and help to seek and secure donations throughout the community. They will also assist in organizing EnCore the gig group.

Stage Manager: (2-6) *May be a Sophomore, Junior, or Senior:* This is a Director appointed position. The Stage Manager(s) will be responsible for concert set up, loading and unloading for trips, stage management and clean up. They will assemble a crew to assist them.

Ensemble Representatives: (4) *1 per grade ensemble:* The Representatives will assist the officers in the planning and organization of the Orchestra and provide input from their represented ensemble. They will assist the Directors with attendance, wardrobe, turning on A 440 tuning note, and communicate student needs of specific Ensemble to Officers.

MRHSO Orchestra Booster Club and Parent Volunteers

The MRHSO Booster Board is a parent board which holds monthly meetings beginning in the fall semester regarding orchestra events such as chaperoning activities, uniforms, fund raising etc. Parents are always encouraged to volunteer and to become members of the MRHSO Booster Board.

With the dedication of the MRHSO Booster Board and assistance of parent volunteers, the orchestra is looking forward to a year of successful fundraising and hosting opportunities. This year MRHS will be hosting the UIL High School String Non Varsity Orchestra Concert and Sight Reading Contest. This is a wonderful honor for our school. Student and parent volunteers will be greatly needed to assist in directing students, parents, directors, and conductors from all over the region to appropriate rooms and to provide hospitality. Please mark your calendars if you are able to assist in April.

Orchestra Trips

Almost every year, during the spring, the MRHS Orchestra sponsors a trip to an out-of-town destination. All trips are approved by the administration of KISD and MRHS. All precautions are taken to ensure the safety of all participants. There may be other trips taken during the course of the year. This year, the Orchestra will be sponsoring a trip in April. The destination will be determined. All students participating in the spring trip will perform as a member of a combined orchestra trip ensemble. Students and chaperones must sign a contract regarding their commitment to payment plans and preparation. Students will be representing themselves, MRHS, and the state of Texas. Important information regarding the trip will be sent

out very soon. Fundraising opportunities will be provided for students to help pay for their trip. All students must be academically eligible in order to attend the trip.

MRHSO:

Got a question?

Who do I ask?

KATZ	Alumni	Organization for Spring Concert
	Booster Organization	Coordinates events
	Communication	Charms emails, bi-weekly newsletter
	Eligibility	Checking academic eligibility for No Pass/No Play
	Finance	Approvals, school/district budget, purchases
	Grades	Fall: Sinfonia, Chamber Spring: Sinfonia, Camerata
	Instruments	Cello/bass lockers, repairs, inventory
	Music	Cello/Bass fingerings and sectionals, EnCore gig music, senior piece, etc.
	Orchestra Charms Calendar	Schedules, rehearsals, changes/updates
	Paperwork	Trips, officer forms, auditions, fundraising
	Private Lessons	Scheduling, teacher contacts, problems
	Reminds	Oversees officers
	Scheduling	Clinicians
	Social Events	Planning, scheduling
	Social Media	Twitter, Facebook
	Solo & Ensemble	Entries, scheduling
	Student Officers	Meetings, interviews, assignments
	Trips	Spring trip, region, all-state and UIL events
	UIL/TMEA	Entries, scheduling, information, paperwork
	Website	Updates, advertising, spirit nights, handbook

MRHSO:

Got a question?

Who do I ask?

CHO	Banquet and Seniors	Spring Concert ceremony, wills, toasts, banquet
	Booster Organization	Volunteer needs
	Car Wash	Set up, organization, planning, inclement weather plan
	Charms	Email, forms, organization, finance
	Concert Programs	Designing, editing, printing
	Finance	Collection, accounting, holds, payments/fees
	Forms	Emergency/Extracurricular, Handbook, Maintenance, Privacy Codes, etc. PAC, Facility Requests, Fundraising Requests
	Fundraising	Product distribution, money collection, record-keeping
	Grades	Fall: Philharmonic, Camerata Spring: Philharmonic, Chamber
	Instruments	Violin/viola lockers
	Itineraries	Trips, events, contests
	Music	Violin/viola fingerings and sectionals
	Recording Equipment	Set-up and inventory
	Rosters	Organization, MRHS/Miller Attendance staff
	Seating Chart	Stage setup, classroom setup, UIL
	Solo and Ensemble	Collection, organization, accompanists, piano rehearsals
	Student Officers	Delegating tasks, stage crew and volunteers
	Uniforms	Sign-out, sign-in
	Website	Updates, organization, handbook

MORTON RANCH HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Handbook Signature Page

Return by **Monday, August 26th, 2019**

Student Name (print): _____ Grade: _____

Orchestra: _____ Period: _____

Thank you for being part of this fine organization and for taking it yet another step forward this year in maintaining The Tradition of Excellence at MORTON RANCH HIGH SCHOOL.

➤ **Orchestra Handbook Statement**

I verify that I have read the Morton Ranch High School Orchestra Handbook and understand and support the policies, obligations, and expectations of the Orchestra as well as will comply with the rules and regulations stated within.

➤ **Orchestra Calendar**

I have reviewed the orchestra calendar and understand that while it rarely happens - all dates and times are subject to change. I trust that notice of such changes will be given well in advance.

➤ **CHARMS Office Assistant (www.CharmsOffice.com)**

I have recently updated both student and parent information on my student's page and I expect that this information will be kept private and will be used discreetly only for operational needs of the orchestra, including the orchestra directory.

➤ **Private Lesson Program (encouraged)**

I have read and understand the information regarding the Private Lesson Program. If interested, I will complete the Private Lesson Application.

Student Name Printed: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Name Printed: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____