

Kirby Orchestra

Student & Parent Handbook

2022-2023



KMS
O r c h e s t r a

Welcome Introduction

Welcome to the Kirby Middle School Orchestra! My name is Giselle Izaguirre, and I am the Head Orchestra Director here at Kirby. I am truly looking forward to teaching our students this brand new school year and setting the first step to a successful journey into music. I strongly believe that participation in the Fine Arts, like orchestra, can be a rewarding experience in a growing child's life. My goals are to provide a positive musical experience for every Kirby Orchestra student and make our program shine! The orchestras will have live performances, like concerts, throughout the year and participate in out-of-campus curricular activities. Middle school orchestra is a performance-oriented program that provides our young musicians with opportunities to build self-confidence, problem-solving skills, self-responsibility, group collaboration, and self-discipline in addition to just playing fun music! This experience will stay with students and parents for a lifetime. I am looking forward to a wonderful year!

Please read the policies and sign the **Handbook Agreement Form** found on the last page. **Signed form must be returned ASAP and due by Thursday, August 25th, 2022.**

For any questions or concerns, please contact me via email at Gizaguirre@judsonisd.org

Respectfully,

Ms. Izaguirre

Performance-Our Traditional Commitment to Excellence

Being a part of the Kirby Orchestra means making a strong commitment to a team. Unlike other subjects, orchestra is a performance-oriented subject. All of the orchestras play throughout the school year. In addition, some students may perform as individuals and in small groups for different events. On some occasions, the students will perform or compete on Saturdays for judges only in district competitions/events. School Concerts will always happen Tuesday-Thursday in the evenings after 6PM. There are after-school rehearsals students will have to attend in order to rehearse and set ourselves up for success. Please know that I have to comply with any policies that have come from above me.

All performances are required. It is the equivalent of one test grade. Tests are 40% of your grade. Please be looking for communications about your options when it comes to concerts via email and the REMIND APP.

Sign up for the orchestra's REMIND!

Download the **Remind app** for direct messaging and follow these simple steps:

All Kirby Orchestra Students

Text this number: 81010

Send this message: @kirbyor
Follow instructions given to complete sign up.

Emergency situations are a viable excuse for missing a performance and will require a parent phone call/email to discuss the matter. If a student has overlapping events leading to conflict (ex. football game the day of an orchestra concert) please notify the orchestra director **ASAP** so the faculty can resolve the conflict. Orchestra can be compared to sports in that the absence of one player can affect the other players' confidence and the success of the overall performance. **Orchestra is an individual and team effort.** The students are expected to participate in class every day and practice outside of class, at home. Practice Logs will be passed out to students and graded to help students prepare on their own for concerts and events.

Because Kirby Orchestra Students will follow these expectations:

- ***Maintaining passing grades** (70 or higher).
- ***Maintaining short fingernails**
- *Maintaining care of orchestra formal uniform and informal (Orchestra T-shirt). Loss/issues with uniforms should be communicated to the director immediately.
- *Securing transportation to and from school or performance locations if need be. In most cases, JISD will provide school buses to and from Kirby.
- *Security of music, instrument, instrument accessories (rosin, shoulder rest) at home and in school assigned instrument area.
- *Required documentation of parental consent for travel (for UIL competitions, field trip, Festivals).
- **Be good citizens in the school and in the community. Take the helpful skills you learn & apply in orchestra to the rest of the areas in your life!*

Grading System--How Grades are Determined

40%: Concerts, other major performances, and major playing tests
60% Daily Participation, playing quizzes, and more.

Extra credit assignments will be given at the director's decision. Grades will be visible online to view and students/parents may ask the director directly for grades or any clarification.

Discipline

Effective and restorative discipline is essential in order for the entire class to be successful. Given rules must be followed to ensure the safety of the students and their instruments. Classroom rules & Procedures will be given on the first days of school.

- ❖ NO GUM, FOOD, OR DRINK IN CLASSROOM
- ❖ LEAVE BACKPACKS ON THE SHELF BY ROOM ENTRANCE
- ❖ NO SHARING INSTRUMENTS
- ❖ KEEP HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF
- ❖ THINK POSITIVE AND PROBLEM-SOLVING MODE
- ❖ NEVER LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT UNATTENDED IN UNSAFE AREA (ON THE FLOOR)

- ❖ RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU NEED TO SPEAK
- ❖ STAY SEATED UNLESS TOLD OTHERWISE
- ❖ BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY & PROFESSIONALLY. ORCHESTRA AND YOUR OWN PLAYING SKILLS ARE NOW A PRIORITY.
- ❖ DO NOT USE THE RESTROOM DURING CLASS, USE DURING PASSING PERIODS.
- ❖ HAVE MATERIALS READY WHEN CLASS STARTS: YOUR OWN PENCIL, MUSIC, INSTRUMENT IS SETUP CORRECTLY, TUNED (ASK FOR HELP!).
- ❖ COME IN READY TO FOCUS ON MAKING SOME MUSIC MAGIC!

Two Uniforms-Formal & Informal

The director will specify which uniform is appropriate for each performance or event ahead of time so students & parents may prepare. Students are responsible for maintaining the quality of their uniforms and having them clean and ready for each event. Students who fail to comply with equal uniform standards may not be allowed to perform or may be re-seated.

Formal - 1. Black dress and tux provided by district & kept at school. Solid black closed-toed shoes.
2. Solid black concert clothing for Honors, Black and White concert clothing for Beginners. Solid black closed-toed shoes. Items are provided by student/guardian. Contact director for concerns.

Informal - Kirby Orchestra T-Shirt and Jeans/pant/knee length skirt. T-Shirt Payment is necessary to receive a T-Shirt! These funds go directly into the Orchestra's Activity Account which pays for field trips, replacement strings, supplies for orchestra events, custom items (like T-shirts!), and more.

Video Recording/Photographs

The Kirby Orchestra is part of the local community. In an effort to get the word out about your wonderful students, there will be occasions where videos and photographs of the Orchestra will be shared on websites, TV, and newsletters. **Follow our Kirby Orchestra Page on Facebook (@KirbyOrchestra)!** Please note on the Handbook Acknowledgement form if you would or would *not* like your student's image to be reproduced.

Required Materials

Students will receive a supply list. All students are required to have the following materials and bring to class everyday:

- Your own instrument (school or personal owned)
- Instrument case tag always on and labeled with students name
- Orchestra binder provided by director
- Writing Paper
- Workbook/Method Book provided by director or student if necessary.
- Orchestra Pencil (#2) - keep inside of case or binder
- Instrument materials: rosin, bow, rockstop, shoulder rest, chin rest, instrument blanket (opt.)

All-region Orchestra. What's That?

The All-Region orchestra members are selected as the best performers in the Northeast San Antonio region through a system of try-outs (or auditions) in October and November. Judges will hear and critique the audition and rank each student's performance relative to other students trying out. Then the All-Region orchestra is selected from the rankings. After that, on a weekend in November or December, the All-Region orchestra meets to rehearse and perform as a group under the direction of a special guest conductor. This event presents an opportunity for motivated students to participate with the top students in the region and with an outstanding conductor. Every orchestra student is eligible to try out for All-Region! The entrance fee will be collected from all auditioning students when entering the contest. Fee cannot be returned if you do not attend the audition on that day or miss it. Interested students may obtain music for All-Region tryouts from their teacher. The director will rehearse these candidates on a voluntary basis before school at times to be announced. **Students who take private lessons should involve their private-lesson instructors in preparation for the try outs.**

UIL Concert and Sight-reading Contest

Concert/Advanced (classified as Non-Varsity in UIL) Kirby Orchestra competes in a UIL Evaluation in March. UIL evaluation is a two-part competition featuring (1) a concert performance based off of selections from the UIL music list, and (2) a sight-reading performance, in which students play music they have not prepared and have never played. Officials judge the orchestras separately in each part of the contest and rate the groups on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the rating of excellence. Orchestras earning 1 ratings in both parts of the contest are awarded "sweepstakes" designations, indicating exceptional performance in both contest parts. During the weeks leading up to the evaluation date, Kirby orchestras prepare for the event, maintaining a vigorous rehearsal schedule in class. Extra rehearsals may be required for students. These required rehearsals are announced in advance and held before or after school. Prior to UIL Evaluation, Kirby Advanced Orchestra participate in special concerts. Attendance is mandatory. The purpose of this event is to provide students with constructive criticism of the concert. You can think about it as our "STAAR" test.

Practice Tips - Never Forget that Practice Makes Perfect

In an orchestra, like any other performing art, excellence rarely comes easily without effort and time. To achieve greatness, students must not only learn music in class, but must practice it outside of class. If you practice a little bit each day, your fingers and brain will never forget! That is how you build up a new skill and get stronger at it. The World's finest performers practice regularly and with full attention and focus, let's call it "getting in the zone" and you'll know when it happens. Follow these guidelines to get yourself started for success:

Beginners: Practice at home AT LEAST 5-15 minutes a day.

Honors: Practice at home AT LEAST 15-30 minutes a day.

If you feel like you can do more and are "in the zone" then go for it! We are capable of incredible things. The sky's the limit.

Parents: We Welcome Volunteers For Events and Need Your Support at Home

The Kirby orchestra program welcomes enthusiastic involvement of parents/guardians. Kirby parents work within the orchestra program as volunteers and encourage and support the students at home. Director will announce when parent volunteers are needed ahead of time. Please indicate on the form you are turning in if you would like to volunteer. **Parents must do Volunteer Training**, available on the Judson ISD website. Click on Families, then the + sign next to Stay Involved, then volunteering. If you do not have access to the internet, please call me and I'll be more than happy to arrange something with you to get you signed up! The volunteer program has a place for parents who will make commitments for one or more of the following responsibilities:

- *Drive car pool to special events
- *Chaperone students on trips to events
- *Chaperone students at school concerts and events
- *Organizing and setting up orchestra social events
- *Assist in administering the fund-raising events
- *Chaperone students during orchestra social events
- *Help with Orchestra Pictures (email them to director)

At HOME, parents have a major role in continuous support for the orchestra student. Here's how you can be supportive:

- *Encourage your child to practice a little each day on a regular schedule. Make sure there is a distraction-free place at home for routine practice.
- *Help your student arrive on time, if not early! "To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, to be late is...to be in trouble."
- * Attend our concerts to demonstrate support of child's interest & the education in public school fine arts.
- *Provide the best instrument possible and encourage your student to care for the instrument properly. Consider providing instrument insurance through your homeowner's policy or otherwise.
- *Fill out and sign permission slips.
- *Private Lessons if possible - ask director for information.
- *Have your child teach you what they've learned! This help IMMENSELY.

INSTRUMENTS

Instruments need to be taken home over the weekend. All instruments must go home over holidays. Instruments are stored in shelves or racks located in the orchestra room. An instrument needs to be tuned many times, especially for beginners. String and bridge breakage occurs naturally and is part of playing a stringed instrument. Director is not liable for equipment damage. If a student's personal instrument is in repair, bring documentation as proof. Participation in class is always required.

School-owned instruments - a few violins, violas, cellos, and basses are available for use from Metzger at the cost of \$60.00 per year (\$30 in fall/\$30 in Spring). There is a limited number of these instruments. School instruments will not be assigned until the **Instrument Use Agreement and Instrument Condition Forms** are turned in, and fee is paid. You may rent your child's instrument from

any music store like Antnio Strad or Terra Nova. Most music stores offer instrument rental insurance. A good quality instrument is essential to success in student learning.

*payment plans may be discussed directly with the director. Call/email me!

Students will not be issued a school owned instrument until payment of JISD Instrument Usage Fee is received. In addition, if a student does not turn in payment by set date , the student will have their scheduled changed to another elective.

Pay fees online: <http://www.myschoolbucks.com>

The Handbook Agreement Forms must be completed on paper. Please see your teacher's webpage, or email them for a copy of the online version.

Let's have a terrific school year!!

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