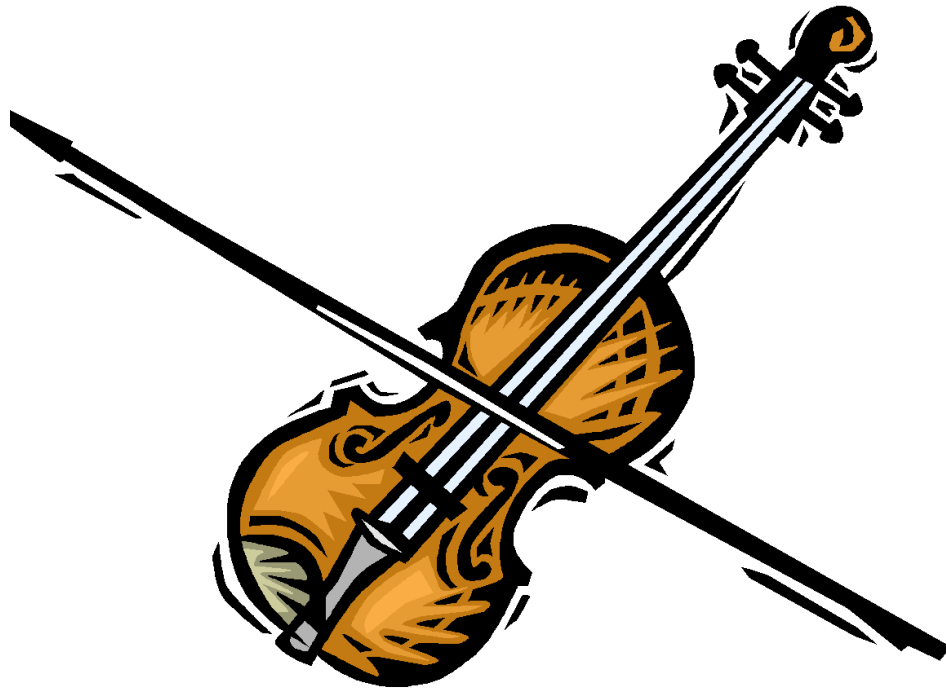


Ashworth & Bebenssee STRINGS HANDBOOK



2016-2017

Kim Forguson, Orchestra Teacher
Ousley Junior High, Ashworth Elementary, and Bebenssee Elementary

August 22, 2016

Dear String Orchestra Parents,

Welcome back! My name is Ms. Forguson and I am excited to have your student in orchestra this year! Our classes will be filled with learning and fun, with a focus on developing student responsibility, pride, teamwork, and good citizenship through quality music making. My goal is to provide a positive, successful musical experience for every student.

I have given your student the Strings Class policies to look over with you. These are general guidelines and procedures I will use in class. **Please sign the following forms and return them to school by Friday, August 26, 2016.**

1. **Parent/Student Agreement form**
2. **Permission to Travel Form (6th grade only)**
3. **Volunteer form (optional)**

In an effort to keep your child's instrument safe, please label the handle of their instrument with their name and phone number (luggage tags work well). **All students must have an instrument and supplies by the end of the second week of school (Friday, September 2, 2016) in order to participate in Strings Class.** Students who do not have their supplies by this time will switch to the General Music/Art rotation.

It is very important to me to get to know all my students' parents and keep the lines of communication open. Periodically, I will send messages through Charms. Please provide me with your most current addresses/numbers on the Parent/Student Agreement form and also keep contact information up-to-date with your school's office. You may also wish to visit our websites: www.ashworthstrings.weebly.com or www.bebenseestrings.weebly.com

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Due to my travel schedule, the best way to reach me is through email.

Sincerely,

Ms. Kim Forguson
Elementary Strings Teacher & Assistant Orchestra Director
Ashworth Elementary, Bebessee Elementary, Ousley Junior High
kforguso@aisd.net
682-867-5700

ASHWORTH & BEBENSEE STRINGS HANDBOOK

*Please read carefully and keep for future reference.
Sign and return the last page on or before Friday, August 26, 2016.*

Partnership

Learning to play a stringed instrument should include a partnership between teacher, student, and parent. The teacher will effectively present skills needed in a safe, positive learning environment; the student will actively participate in class and follow all classroom rules; and parents should provide necessary equipment, encourage the student to practice, praise efforts, and attend concerts.

One-Year Commitment

Strings class is a one-year commitment. After the second week of school, the student will not be able to change to another elective until the next school year. The director retains the right to move the student if discipline concerns affect the learning environment.

Materials

Students will need instruments and supplies for every class (see supply list). Parents should be aware of their student's class days and assist them in remembering to bring their instrument. Failure to bring the instrument to class will result in a loss of participation points for the day.

Please send a note with the student if the instrument is being repaired so the child's grade is not affected. All repairs should be completed in a timely manner by a qualified violin repair technician (Affordable Beginner Strings, Brook Mays Music Co., etc.). *If a student has a broken string, the director can replace it with one the student has purchased from the music store. There is no need to leave it at the shop.*

Instruments need to be taken home routinely for home practice. **ALL INSTRUMENTS MUST GO HOME OVER HOLIDAYS AND WEEKENDS.** Students will be assigned a place to store instruments in the orchestra room.

String Supply List

Remember to label all supplies with your name before bringing them to school. **Students will need instruments by the end of the second week of school.**

Music Store Items

Instrument (except bass players/some cello players) with fine tuners on all four strings (attached to tailpiece, not the end of the string)

Rosin

Soft cleaning cloth or old rag (can be purchased or brought from home)

Essential Elements for Strings, Book 1, by Michael Allen (5th graders)

Essential Elements for Strings, Book 2, by Michael Allen (6th graders)

Rock stop or Xeros end pin anchor (**cello/bass only**)

Shoulder rest (**violin/viola only**)

Label for instrument case and name on all supplies

Other Store Items

1 small (1") 3-ring binder, must lie flat when opened

1-2 pencils for every class (only pencils)

A box of tissues for the classroom would be greatly appreciated!

Grading

Students will receive both an academic grade and citizenship grade for Strings Class. Grades are based on the following:

In-class work (supplies, written work, participation, playing tests, performances)	75%
Weekly Practice Cards (due every first class meeting of the week)	25%

Six Weeks

E = Excellent	90 and above
S = Satisfactory	80-89
N = Needs Improvement	70-79
U = Unacceptable	69 and below

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be given to students who attend events such as symphony, band, ballet, or choir performances (including professional and school performances but excluding half-time football games). Students wanting to receive extra credit must turn in the program from the event with their name on it or bring a note from their parents.

Practice

Practice time is the most important activity in learning to play your instrument. Students learn at different rates and may need more time to master skills. When learning a skill, all students need daily practice. **The goal of practicing is to master the musical skill, not just to play for fifteen minutes and write it down.** A practice card will be used to record the time spent practicing. Parents will need to sign and return this to school each week on the first class day of that week.

There is a deduction of 5 pt. for every day practice cards are submitted late. **Practice cards will not be accepted after 1 week.**

The following scales will be used for grading practice cards:

5th Grade Weekly Practice Requirements

90+ minutes = 100
80-89 minutes = 90
70-79 minutes = 80
60-69 minutes = 70
50-59 minutes = 60
49 min. & under = 50

6th Grade Weekly Practice Requirements

100 + minutes = 100
90-99 minutes = 90
80-89 minutes = 80
70-79 minutes = 70
60-69 minutes = 60
59 min. & under = 50

Private Lessons

Although private lessons are not required, they are recommended. A private teacher specializes in the instrument your child plays. They can work one-on-one with your child to correct individual weaknesses and further develop strengths. Private lessons also reinforce the skills taught in class. It is amazing how rapidly students master skills when studying privately. A list of private instructors is available for those who are interested. Students can include their practice time for private lessons on weekly practice cards for Strings Class.

Long Nails

Just as a basketball player cannot wear high heels on the court, string players cannot play with long nails. Students must keep their nails trimmed to the appropriate length for Strings Class. Long nails, acrylic nails, and the like will affect the student's daily participation grade.

Discipline and Procedures

Good discipline is essential in order for the program and the students to be successful. Certain rules are necessary for the safety of everyone and the instruments. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Each student starts with an E in citizenship.

Classroom Rules

1. Bring instrument, music, and pencil to class **everyday**.
2. Follow directions the first time given.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Talk and play only with permission.
5. Use respectful words and actions.

Consequences

Failure to observe classroom rules will result in the lowering of a student's citizenship grade.

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Verbal warning | E | |
| 2. | 1 sign | E | |
| 3. | 2 signs | S | Parent contact |
| 4. | 3+ signs | N | Parent contact |
| 5. | 6+ signs | U | Parent conference |

Any severe misbehavior will be immediately sent to the principal's office. Citizenship grade will be lowered to U.

*Signs are cumulative over the 6 weeks

Learning Incentives

1. Musical accomplishments
2. Positive notes and/or phone calls to parents
3. Special activities, including individual and class rewards
4. Field trips

STRINGS CLASS EXPECTATIONS & PROCEDURES

Morning

- If eating breakfast at school, place case in designated area. Lay it properly on floor (do NOT prop against a wall or other object!).
- Drop off instrument in the Orchestra Room before heading to the gym or homeroom.

During Rehearsal

Come to class prepared with your instrument, music, and a pencil!

- Enter the classroom quietly.
- Follow rules to enter the Instrument Room. Wait your turn to go inside, then grab your things and go!
- Find your assigned seat, uncase, and get set up. Turn in practice cards (or other work).
- Check the board for instructions. Immediately begin individual warm-up or assignment.
- Focus your attention on Ms. Forguson when it is time to start class.
- Stay on task and give your best effort.
- During rehearsal, immediately stop playing when Ms. Forguson stops the orchestra.
- Talk and play only when given permission.
- Wait to be dismissed. Quickly and quietly pack up instrument and line up.

Afternoon

- Regularly take your instrument home for practice.
- Follow same procedures above when retrieving your things from the Instrument Room-- remember to let bus riders go first!

Strings Class Expectations & Procedures

Expectation	Arrival	During Rehearsal	Dismissal
Be Ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly set up your instrument and music • Check the board for instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for directions • Have a pencil ready • Use hand signals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promptly pack up • Quietly wait in seat until dismissed
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the room quietly • Show courtesy in the Instrument Room • Respect personal space and property of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk or play only with permission • Use kind words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show courtesy in the Instrument Room • Line up quietly
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to class prepared • Stay in your assigned seat • Immediately begin bell work or warm up • Turn in practice cards and/or other work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay on task • Give your best effort • Keep aisles clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return any materials • Keep classroom clean • Take instrument home regularly for practice

School and Extra Performances

Just like a sport, an orchestra is a team, relying on all of its team members to practice, learn their parts, and participate to do well at a game. The performance represents the culmination of our hard work. When someone is absent, it throws off the balance the orchestra has worked very hard to achieve. **Every student is expected to participate at all rehearsals and performances.**

If there is an emergency or conflict and your child cannot attend a scheduled concert or rehearsal, the director must be contacted immediately. A calendar of events will be sent home as soon as those dates are confirmed. **Please know that if your child has an unexcused absence from a concert (unless for family emergency) they will not be permitted to attend the NRH2O Music Festival in May (6th grade only).** In addition, because of House Bill #72 (*No-Pass-No-Play*), **students without passing grades will not be able to attend off-campus and UIL events.**

Concert Dress

Concert dress will consist of either the student's Ashworth or Bebenssee Strings t-shirt with jeans or more formal dress (*please no t-shirts, no skirts that fall above the knee, no jeans, and no tennis shoes*). A notice outlining concert attire will be sent home in advance of performances.

Costs

***Required. Please wait to send money until requested:**

- Orchestra T shirts for concerts (\$10)*
- NRH2O Music Festival in May (approx. \$30)*
Fee non-refundable if student cannot attend because of HB72 regulations, including any failing grade during 5th six weeks or unexcused absence from a concert.
- Optional Solo and Ensemble (\$6)

Please return the following forms on or before Friday, August 26, 2016:

FORM CHECK LIST

____ Volunteer Form

____ Parent/Student Agreement Form

____ Permission to Travel Form (**6th grade only**)

PARENT/STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM

We have read the guidelines for the Ashworth/Bebensee Strings Program and agree to abide by all the stated policies. We understand that we are making a **1-year commitment** to Strings Class.

Please sign and date below:

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Please PRINT the following information clearly so all characters can be easily read. Please provide me with at least one working e-mail address. E-mail is my primary form of communication and will be kept confidential.

Student's name _____

Student's home phone number _____

Mom's name (first and last) _____

Mom's daytime phone/cell _____

Mom's email address _____

Dad's name (first and last) _____

Dad's daytime phone/cell _____

Dad's e-mail address _____

Volunteer Form

An important part of any successful orchestra program is the volunteers. If you would like to volunteer to help out throughout the year, please fill out the following form and check the areas in which you would like to assist. You must also be an approved volunteer for AISD by going to <http://www.aisd.net/departments/Volunteer.aspx>. **Please be aware that district processing of your online AISD volunteer application may take a few weeks.**

Please return this Volunteer form, the Handbook Agreement form, and Permission to Travel form by Friday, August 26, 2016.

Student's name _____

Parent's name _____

Concert set-up (before): _____ Winter concert _____ Spring concert

Concert break-down (after): _____ Winter concert _____ Spring concert

Other:

_____ Videotaping concerts

_____ Food for parties

_____ Pass out programs

_____ Piano accompaniment for concerts

Chaperoning field trips: _____ NRH2O Music Festival, May 16, 2017 (6th grade trip)

ARLINGTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Permission to Travel

TO: Parents/Legal Guardian of:

(Student)

I give my permission for the above student of the Arlington Independent School District to attend the following district approved trip(s) this school year:

Description of Trip	Date	Means of Transportation
NRH2O Music Festival	May 16, 2017	AISD Bus

The supervising sponsor for the trip(s) listed above is: Ms. Kim Forguson

The local board policies governing student conduct and discipline are applicable to students on all district approved trips and the behavior of all participating students is expected to conform to the standards set forth in such policies. All violations of such code of conduct by any student shall be reported to the principal.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Persons to contact in case of Emergency:

1. _____
Name Telephone Number

2. _____
Name Telephone Number