

# SEVEN LAKES JUNIOR HIGH ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

The Katy I.S.D. is proud to offer a comprehensive music program that includes string instruction from grades 6 – 12. SLJH Orchestra is a vital segment of the music curriculum. It is expected that members of the Seven Lakes Junior High Orchestra will exhibit the highest possible standards in the following areas:

1. Responsibility
2. Dependability
3. Dedication
4. Musical Excellence

It is the goal of the directors to promote musical understanding and produce outstanding orchestras. It is also the belief of the directors that students learn more and develop better self-discipline, responsibility, and knowledge and take more pride in superior orchestras than in weak ones. To produce an outstanding orchestra requires that each student accept certain responsibilities.

This handbook will outline the basic requirements for the Seven Lakes Junior High School Orchestras.

**Please log into Charms ([www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)) and access the “First Day Forms” folder under the “Handouts and Files” button. Download, print, sign, and return the Handbook Agreement Form and the Consent to Emergency Treatment/Authorization for Travel form and return them to your director with all requested information completed and signed by Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>.** This will indicate your notification and acceptance of the policies of the SLJH Orchestra program. Please log into Charms regularly to check the status of your fees, check for calendar updates, and to keep your contact information current.

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## PURPOSE

The Seven Lakes Junior High School Orchestra is a class that meets for one forty-five minute period each school day. The nature of this class requires the development of skills, concepts, and attitudes to be learned in class. These must, however, be demonstrated outside of class via many varied forms of rehearsals and performances. Along with your musical growth, we would expect to see development in the areas of leadership, self-discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and a deeper appreciation for the beauty and joy that music offers to all who partake in it.

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## CONDUCT

The behavior of an orchestra student reflects not only on him or herself, but also on other students and his/her school and community. It is expected that each orchestra student abide by the following at all times:

1. Make a positive contribution to the SLJH Orchestras;
2. Display common courtesy and respect to directors, students, and parents while exhibiting mature conduct;
3. Follow expectations as outlined by the orchestra directors below;
4. Follow rules and policies of Katy Independent School District as outlined in the Katy I.S.D. Junior High School Student Handbook.

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## CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

1. Candy, gum, food, and/or drink are not allowed in any area within the orchestra rehearsal space. Water is permissible as long as it does not distract from the rehearsal environment;
2. Speak or play only when invited;
3. Bring your instrument, music binder, and all necessary supplies to class each day;
4. Fingernails must be kept short at all times. It is not possible to play a stringed instrument with long nails (even moderately long nails). Keeping nails short is a requirement for all SLJH Orchestra members. Acrylic nails are permissible; however, they *must* be filed to a short length. Students out of compliance with this rule will not be able to participate for the day.
5. Students will observe a Focused Entry:
  - Walking in silently
  - Preparing all materials and supplies
  - Tuning accurately with the school-owned tuners
  - Shadow practicing until the conductor addresses the ensemble

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## ATTENDANCE

An orchestra performs at its optimum with all members present; therefore, students are required to participate in all rehearsals, sectionals, and performances unless excused by the director. An orchestra calendar accompanies this handbook, and it should be studied closely so as to avoid possible conflicts. All rehearsals will be announced as far in advance as possible. Sectionals, extra rehearsals, concerts, contests, and UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluations are considered an extension of the classroom instruction and are considered **curricular** by the district.

Students who enroll in other school activities such as athletics, choir, drama, etc., need to plan ahead to avoid conflicts that cannot be resolved. The orchestra directors will work together with the other teachers,

coaches, and directors of various activities to give each student every opportunity to be a part of other groups. **NON SCHOOL-SPONSORED activities, teams, and organizations must not conflict in any way with the practice or performance schedule of the orchestra. Good communication between teacher, student, and/or parents can prevent misunderstandings.**

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## ABSENCE POLICY & SECTIONALS

Sectionals are essential to the continued success of our Orchestra. The Honors, Chamber, Lyrica, Sinfonia, and Philharmonic orchestras will have weekly sectional rehearsals during class time. It is during sectional rehearsals that we will focus on the specific concerns that are unique to your individual part (i.e. intonation, rhythmic precision, fingerings, bowings, and phrasing).

Additional after school orchestra rehearsals may be added throughout the year with appropriate advance notice. We will announce any additional after school rehearsals well in advance through e-mail.

Sectionals, orchestra rehearsals, concerts, and U.I.L. Concert and Sight-reading Evaluations are considered an extension of the classroom instruction and therefore, co-curricular. In the event that a student is **excused** from a

rehearsal, concert or contest he/she will be permitted to submit a 45 minute recording of at-home practice time (in addition to the weekly required at-home practice minutes).

***Every before or after school rehearsal and performance is graded. Please note that rehearsals and performances are also graded on promptness; a deduction of points will take place if a student is late.***

1. Written notices from parents are required for all absences. Verbal or written excuses from students are not accepted.
2. Advance notices are required for all prior commitments. A prior commitment is defined as an event already committed to before the orchestra time 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 an unscheduled or extra rehearsal being called, each student is expected to make every attempt to attend. Conflicts with extra rehearsals are easily resolved with good communication. ***Doctor, orthodontist, dental, eye, etc. appointments must be made with consideration to sectionals. These appointments are considered routine and will not result in an excused absence unless your child is unexpectedly ill.***
3. In the case of illness and/or family emergency, the parents should send a written notice or email to the orchestra director as soon as they are aware that such a situation exists.

If it is an emergency situation it may be impossible to get in touch with anyone. In this case, please follow up with a written note within four days after the fact. This is the only category where absences will be excused the same day, or after the event.

4. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused if the director is notified in writing by a parent before the scheduled date.
5. All absences in the above categories, verified by parent note, will be considered excused.
6. Non school-sponsored activities will not be excused for any reason.

Please communicate directly with your child's primary orchestra teacher if there are individual or unusual circumstances that may be a problem. ***Although it would be impossible to include a complete list, the following items are examples of unexcused absences:***

1. Commitments accepted after a rehearsal or concert date is announced;
2. Homework. Please plan ahead. Good time-management is essential to success!
3. Transportation problems (last minute mechanical problems will be excused);
4. Forgetting instrument and/or music;
5. Forgetting about a rehearsal or concert.

In order to encourage regular attendance at scheduled events, the following policies will take place.

1. Any absence from rehearsal without a note from the parent/guardian will be considered unexcused unless prior arrangements have been made with the director.
2. Any unexcused absence will result in an immediate loss of chair rank within the section.

3. Two unexcused absences for a series of rehearsals will result in the loss of performance privileges for the next performance event.
4. Attendance at all scheduled performances for the year is mandatory.
5. Failure to meet the attendance requirements for orchestra can result in a student losing the privilege of traveling with the orchestra on any extra-curricular trips,
6. Unexcused tardiness will result in the lowered grade for that rehearsal.

## GRADES

- **50% Written and Playing Tests/ Performances**
  - Some form of written or playing test will be given most weeks
  - All performances
- **35% Class Participation & Preparedness**
  - Being an active member of class performance and discussion.
  - Students begin with 100 participation points each week; however, **points will be deducted for:** supplies not brought to class, lack of effort, disruptive class behavior/talking, chewing gum/eating/electronic devices out without permission
- **15% Practice Records**

Students are expected to practice every day. **The amount of time your child spends practicing each day is entered on the weekly practice record that is distributed each 6 weeks and kept in their Orchestra Binder.** Practice Records will be graded every Monday. Failure to have a parent signature or a completed practice record on these days will result in a grade of zero. Late practice records can be turned in on Tuesday and Wednesday for a lower grade.

Every instrument (violins and violas) must go home every day. **This is a requirement.** Do not leave your instrument at school overnight.

### Honors/Chamber/Lyrica/Sinfonia/Philharmonic

Minutes Practiced	Grade
180	100
150	90
120	80
90	70
60	60
0 or not turned in	0

### First Year Orchestra

Minutes Practiced	Grade
120	100
100	90
80	80
60	70
40	60
0 or not turned in	0

Practice minutes may not include private lesson time, rehearsals, sectionals, or any musical concert you attend. ***If KISD changes any aspect of the grading policy, you will be informed immediately for the 2017-2018 school year.***

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## ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

A student shall be suspended from participation in all extra-curricular activities sponsored/sanctioned by the school district during the six-weeks period following a grade reporting period in which the student received a grade lower than 70 in any class on their report card. This ineligibility begins seven days after the end of the six weeks period. Events affected by this state law would include orchestra contests, solo and ensemble contests, region orchestra, and any event where admission is charged. **Ineligible students are required to participate in concerts where no admission is charged.**

An ineligible student may regain eligibility seven days after the grading period ends or after the three week evaluation period if all classes are passing with a grade of 70 or higher.

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## EQUIPMENT

1. Personal instruments (violins/violas) & binders should be placed in your storage area. 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. **Leaving your instrument at the repair shop is not a valid reason for lack of an instrument.** Most shops will provide a “loaner” violin while yours is being repaired;
3. Students are expected to bring their orchestra binder to every orchestra class and co-curricular event. Violin and viola players must bring their shoulder rest, rosin, and soft cloth every day to class. Cello and bass players must bring a soft cloth every day to class; they must have a roc stop, rosin, and bass stool (basses only) for at-home practice.
4. All instruments kept in the orchestra room during the day **MUST** have the student’s name clearly printed on the outside of the case;
5. Students are to purchase replacement strings immediately following a string breaking. **Lisle Violins, Sam’s Strings, Katy Violin, and Fishburn Violin Shop can arrange to bring supplies (like strings) you purchase to school for no extra charge.** I would highly encourage this practice as it saves all of us a lot of time.

## REPAIRS

String instruments are fragile. Keep your instrument in good repair. Carry extra strings in your case. Have your bow re-haired at least once a year. Many times minor adjustments can be made by the director which may eliminate a trip to the repair shop, so should you have any questions please consult your child’s primary orchestra teacher.

**Please do not attempt to repair the instrument yourself.** Realize that neglecting a repair may lead to long term damage and depreciation in the value of your instrument.

## SEVEN LAKES ORCHESTRA SUPPLY LIST

- INSTRUMENT
  - Correctly sized
  - Good condition
  - Composite or wood bow recommended
  - Good quality strings (Consult your child's primary orchestra teacher or the rental shop)
- MUSIC BOOKS

First Year Orchestra	Suzuki Book I (for correct instrument) Essential Elements 2000, Book 1 (for correct instrument) Essential Elements 2000, Book 2 (for correct instrument) Essential Technique, Book 3 (for correct instrument)
Philharmonic	Solo and Etudes, Volume 1 (Anderson/Frost) String Basics, Volume 1 Habits of a Successful Musician
Sinfonia	Solo and Etudes, Volume 1 (Anderson/Frost) Sound Innovations Sound Development, Intermediate Habits of a Successful Musician
Lyrica	High Tech for Strings Habits of a Successful Musician
Chamber	Sound Innovations Sound Development, Advanced Habits of a Successful Musician
Honors	Habits of a Successful Musician

\* Philharmonic/Sinfonia/Lyrica/Chamber/Honors: These books will be provided with the school activity fee.

You do not need to purchase them separately.

- BINDER
  - 1" Black View Binder
  - 2 Pencils
  - Highlighter
  - Pencil Pouch
  - Dividers

\*\* These items are provided with the activity fee.

- SHOULDER REST (violin and viola only)  
 Necessary for proper posture  
 Kun collapsible shoulder rests and Everest brands generally work best
- ROC STOP (cellists and bassists)

End pin strap is recommended but donut is acceptable

- TUNER and METRONOME

All students must have a tuner and metronome for at-home practice

Korg TM-50 (with tuning clip recommended)

- SOFT CLOTH

Cleaning cloth or piece of an old t-shirt

- WIRE STAND

Collapsible wire music stand used for practicing at home

- CONCERT DRESS

Formal Concert Performances (see orchestra uniform) (order form first day of school)

Informal Concert Performances: 17-18 Orchestra Spirit Shirt (order form first day of school)

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## ORCHESTRA UNIFORM

### **Formal Concert Dress\***

- **Ladies:** Floor-length black trumpet skirt or black tuxedo pants, white tuxedo shirt, black socks/tights, and black closed-toe dress shoes.
- **Gentlemen:** Black tuxedo pants, white tuxedo shirt, black socks, and black dress shoes.

\*Bowties and cummerbunds will be provided for Philharmonic, Sinfonia, Lyrica, Chamber, and Honors students by the school.

### **FYO Formal Concert Dress**

- **Ladies:** Long black skirt or black dress pants (no jeans), long-sleeve white blouse, black socks/tights, black closed-toe dress shoes.
- **Gentlemen:** Black dress pants (no jeans); white long sleeved button down dress shirt, black socks, black dress shoes.

\*\*FYO students may purchase tuxedo pants, tuxedo shirts, or trumpet skirts if they wish.

### **Informal Concert Dress**

Current Seven Lakes JH Orchestra T-shirt with nice blue jeans and tennis shoes.

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## STUDENT FEES AND FUNDRAISING

### Fees

Class fee options are listed on the Activity Fee Sheet. **Each child's fee is due in full by September 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Checks should be made out to **SLJH Orchestra**.

**SCHOOL -OWNED INSTRUMENTS:** All students using Katy ISD owned cellos and basses at school must pay a \$100.00 maintenance fee (see "Instrument Information"). This fee is IN ADDITION to the activity fee and is required by the

district. Students who chose not to pay this fee may bring their home instrument to/from school daily. This fee is due September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Checks should be made out to **Katy ISD Fine Arts**. *Please write separate checks for activity fees and maintenance fees, as they are to be made out to two different entities.*

### Fundraising

The Seven Lakes JH Orchestra will not participate in any “door to door” fundraisers this year. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the SLJH Orchestra program, we welcome any and all contributions! Please see the orchestra sponsorship information in Charms.

### Spring Trip

The Spring Trip to Fiesta Texas in San Antonio will be on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018. This trip is open to any student in our performing orchestras (Philharmonic, Sinfonia, Lyrica, Chamber, Honors). The cost and trip information will be announced later this semester. There are a limited number of spaces available on the trip this year, and they will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. Please turn in your fee promptly if you wish to attend the Spring Trip.

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### INSTRUMENT INFORMATION

**PERSONAL INSTRUMENTS:** It is highly recommended that all instruments be covered by the parent's homeowner's or renter's insurance. If coverage 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 ISD owned cellos and basses must pay a \$100.00 maintenance fee.* Full payment is due on Friday, September 2, 2016. Make your checks payable to **Katy ISD Fine Arts Department**. This fee is minimal but necessary for the upkeep of the instruments. (Please do not send payment without the official form filled out.)

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### INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

**ALL-REGION JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS** are made up of the finest junior high school students in the Houston area. Students audition each fall for a chance to perform with one of the two all-region orchestras. Those who are selected will rehearse and perform on a specified weekend of November and be featured in a special concert. This is an honor and an exciting experience for those participating. Even the students not selected will experience musical growth in preparing for, and participating in, a competitive audition.

**KATY ISD SOLO AND ENSEMBLE CONTEST** is held annually each February during our solo/ensemble unit in orchestra. The contest provides an opportunity for each student to perform a solo and/or ensemble and receive a rating and evaluation of their performance. Advanced orchestra students (non-FYO) will be strongly encouraged to participate in a solo/ensemble for the event. Those students that earn a "Superior" performance rating will receive medals.

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### PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are offered by the Katy ISD Fine Arts Program to instrumental music students that are interested. Most of the lessons run through a high school nearby. These teacher's dedication and service to our orchestra

program is exemplary and worthy of your consideration. I highly recommend private lessons for all students. The Katy ISD private lesson rate starts at \$18.50 per half hour to be paid directly to their teacher.

There are also instructors in the area that I would recommend that do not teach in the KISD Fine Arts Program. These fine teachers may request you travel to their home if they do not travel to your home. In any case where the lesson does not take place on a KISD campus, payments are scheduled between the student and the instructor.

Although your child receives valuable instruction in our classes, private lessons provide:

- 1) Students with an opportunity to deal with the unique challenges of the particular instrument one-on-one with an expert teacher. This will allow him/her to progress at his/her own level at all times rather than at the rate of the class.
- 2) Review and reinforcement of class assignments when necessary.
- 3) Earlier exposure to techniques such as vibrato, advanced bowing, shifting, and intonation.
- 4) Expanded opportunities for advanced solo and ensemble instruction.
- 5) Greater confidence in their individual performing because of the individual attention private lessons provides.
- 6) Enhanced opportunity for success at individual competitions such as All-Region Orchestra, and Solo & Ensemble contest.
- 7) Heightened standard for group endeavors such as concerts and contests.

Private lessons are not required but are one of the best investments in a student's success! During the first few weeks of school your directors will provide a list of teachers within the Katy area that teach privately at Katy Schools and/or out of their homes.

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**ORCHESTRA WEB SITES**

<b>Website:</b>	<b>How to get there:</b>	<b>When you're looking for:</b>
SLJH Orchestra <b>Charms</b>	<a href="http://www.charmsoffice.com">www.charmsoffice.com</a> – “Enter” – “Login” – School Code is 7LakesJHOorch  Password is your child’s Katy ISD Student ID Number with Capitalized first letter. (Case Sensitive) You will be prompted to change the password.	ANYTHING & EVERYTHING related to orchestra (forms due, payment status, orchestra calendar, electronic documents, etc.)  <b>UPDATED REGULARLY</b>
SLJH Orchestra <b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sljhorchestras.org">www.sljhorchestras.org</a>	Pictures, videos, information about recent and upcoming orchestra events, rental and supply information.

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ORCHESTRA CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: 281-234-2242

<b>Who to Contact</b>		
Jennifer Gingell	Lee Anderson	Zachary Miller
<a href="mailto:JenniferFGingell@katyisd.org">JenniferFGingell@katyisd.org</a>	<a href="mailto:LeeAnderson@katyisd.org">LeeAnderson@katyisd.org</a>	<a href="mailto:ZacharyWMiller@katyisd.org">ZacharyWMiller@katyisd.org</a>
Honors, Philharmonic FYO Violin, Bass	Chamber, Sinfonia FYO Viola	Lyrca FYO Cello

