

Conway Public Schools Junior High Orchestra Parent Guide

2017-2018 School Year



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**Find copies of this guidebook, other important forms,
and our calendar online!**

orchestra.conwayschools.org

2017-2018 Orchestra Calendar

September 16	South Region Orchestra Auditions Conway High School
September 22-23	South Region Orchestra Clinic (by audition) James H. Clark Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
November TBA	La Fiesta Orquesta Taco Supper Conway High School Cafeteria & Buzz Bolding Arena Times TBA, Orchestra T-Shirts and Jeans
December TBA	Holiday Concert Times/Locations TBD, Dress: seasonal casual
February 26	Orchestra Pre-Assessment Concert Times TBA, James H. Clark Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
March 8-9	Region IX Concert Assessment (“Contest”) Day/Time TBA, James H. Clark Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
March 29	Solo and Ensemble Assessment After school, Times TBA, Conway Junior High
May 7	Spring Concert and Awards Ceremony 6:30 pm, James H. Clark Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress

****ALL CONCERTS ARE REQUIRED EVENTS.
ATTENDANCE WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE STUDENT’S GRADE****

Online Registration Form

**Registering your information with the
Conway Orchestra program is as easy as 1-2-3!**

1. Visit our website at **orchestra.conwayschools.org** and click the “Online Registration Form” link
2. Fill out the parent contact information and parent guide contract
3. Click submit – you’re done!

**Sync our Google calendar to yours: add
conwayorchestras@gmail.com**

**Find copies of this parent guide, other important forms,
and our calendar online!**



Orchestra Online Resources

Conway Orchestra website:
orchestra.conwayschools.org

Sync our **Google calendar** to your own by adding
“conwayorchestras@gmail.com”

Like our page on **Facebook!**
www.facebook.com/ConwayOrchestra

Follow us on **Twitter and Instagram!**
@conwayorchestra

Paperless Policy:

As Conway Public Schools moves toward a paperless environment, most important information will be sent home via email, text, and/or social media. Please provide and keep current email addresses on file with your child’s orchestra director.



Instrument Care

- Loosen the bow hair and wipe rosin dust off the instrument after playing.
- Instruments are very sensitive to heat and cold. Avoid extremes of temperature.
- Instruments can sometimes open at the seams, especially in winter. Bring it to school to be sent off for repair. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIX IT YOURSELF!!!**
- Since they are made of wood, be careful of banging instruments into things when transporting. Also, do not put weight on the instrument!!
- Extra strings, rosin, and other supplies are available from your orchestra director at cost as a convenience. Your director will let you know how much each item is.
- An orchestra teacher can usually handle small repairs (broken strings or fallen bridges) at school for the cost of the replacement part. Bring the instrument to school and let the teachers decide what repairs must be made.
- **Please DO NOT take your instrument to a shop for a broken string!!!**



Conway Public Schools Orchestras

WELCOME TO ORCHESTRA

The Conway Public Schools Orchestras offer your student the opportunity to play an orchestral string instrument beginning in the sixth grade and continuing throughout their high school career. With over 300 students enrolled and three full-time teachers, the Conway Orchestra program is a wonderful opportunity for your child to learn a string instrument, to make music with others their age, and to develop lasting friendships. Students are expected to supply their own instruments (except bass players) and to purchase method books, orchestra t-shirts, and instrument accessories as needed. Eighth and Ninth Grade Orchestra offer a continuation of intermediate skills, including a strong emphasis on vibrato, shifting, and the finer points of large and small group performance.

SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY

Scholastic eligibility for participation in orchestra events will be consistent with the current Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) Guidelines. First semester eighth graders are automatically eligible. Second semester 8th graders and first semester 9th graders must pass (4) four courses, three of which must be from the core curriculum. In addition, students must not have any unexcused absences or disciplinary action that results in suspension. No ineligible student will be permitted to participate in adjudicated orchestra events. Ineligibility may also prevent a student from receiving an award and from traveling with the orchestra to outside performances.



Orchestra Supply List

REQUIRED ITEMS

Each student should have one of each of the following items at their seat daily. Supplies will be checked in one week and again at the beginning of each 9-week marking period. A complete set of supplies will result in a test grade of 100%.

- Eighth graders use the **Essential Technique for Strings** method book. Ninth graders use **Expressive Techniques for Orchestra**. Students are asked to purchase one at the beginning of the year, and it is theirs to keep.
- A **3-RING BINDER** will be provided for you by the orchestra. This notebook will be checked periodically for a grade. Replacement binders are \$2 each.
- A sharpened **PENCIL** with an eraser
- Workable **ROSIN** and a **SOFT CLOTH** to wipe the instrument
- **Violinists and Violists:** A **SHOULDER REST** to help support the instrument.
- **Cellists and Bassists:** an **ENDPIN STOP** to keep the instrument from sliding on the floor

OPTIONAL, BUT HELPFUL

- **MUSIC STAND** for home practice
- **METRANOME** keeps a steady beat at different tempos; its use will improve a student's rhythmic accuracy. Check out *metronomeonline.com* or many free mobile apps
- **ELECTRONIC TUNER** for an available pitch to tune to
- **RECORDING DEVICE** such as a cell phone to record and playback your performance



Orchestra Procedures

ATTENDANCE

Absences and tardies will be handled as stated in the school handbook. **Attendance at all concerts is required and will be reflected in the student's grade.**

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Students should be ready at their seat with their instrument, music, and a pencil. You may tune and warm up in your seats until it is time to tune. Do not do homework or read books during rehearsal. At the end of the period loosen bow, pack instrument, and put music and instruments in the proper storage space. Inappropriate treatment of school instruments will result in forfeiture of use. The orchestra room will be unlocked before and after school for students to drop off and pick up instruments. The storage room is not a social meeting place.

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

The orchestra room will be unlocked and supervised before and after school for students to drop off and pick up instruments. Cellos and basses should be stored on the appropriate racks. Parents who need to pick up or drop off instruments during the day should go through the front office. **Storage rooms are not for keeping personal items such as backpacks or binders.**

Violin and viola players will be assigned a locker. The school will provide a combination lock for those who would like to use one. If a student chooses to use their own, they must provide the teacher with the combination. **No keyed locks will be allowed.** A lost lock is subject to a \$10 fee. Lockers are subject to search at any time and without warning, and should be kept clean and free of trash. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines may forfeit their use of the locker.

EVALUATIONS AND SEATING

Students will be asked to play individually for assessment and chair placement throughout the school year. Evaluations may be audio or video-recorded during class time. Seating will be assigned according to the directors' decision on what will most benefit the sound and presentation of the orchestra. The decision of the directors concerning seating will be final. There will not be any consideration given for seniority. Procedures will be posted. **Concert attendance and conduct may also be considered in chair placement.**

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

- **Respect all people and things in the Orchestra room.** Any teacher in the music room is to be respected as the person in charge.
- Instruments other than yours are off-limits, including percussion instruments and pianos.
- The office is off-limits unless you need to speak to a teacher. Please knock on the door.
- Food, drink, candy, and gum are not allowed in the orchestra room or storage rooms.
- Storage shelves, cubbies, and storage rooms should be kept neat and free of trash.
- Large ensemble rooms and storage rooms are off-limits before school, during lunch, and after school unless you are getting your instrument or putting it away, or with prior permission. Do not loiter in these rooms.
- **Fingernails** should be trimmed so that the pad of the fingertip can easily make contact with the string. This is necessary to facilitate playing in tune.

All rules and regulations contained in the Conway Junior High student handbook apply to ALL orchestra students during ALL orchestra activities.



Grading Policies

This is a performance-based class, and performance and progress in class is the primary area in which students will be assessed. **Students are expected to practice at home to reinforce concepts presented in class.** Grades in orchestra are based on the following four concentration areas, as determined by your child's orchestra director:

1. PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

Personal responsibility and working with others is also very important in an orchestra, just as it is in a community or society. For this reason, it will also be counted as part of the student's grade. A musician's positive attitude and participation (professional demeanor) is very important in order to have an orchestra that will excel and grow in quality throughout the year. Students may earn extra credit by attending recitals and concerts containing orchestral string instruments, at the discretion of their teacher. Students should bring in programs signed by a parent for verification. **A STUDENT WITHOUT AN INSTRUMENT OR MUSIC IN CLASS WILL LOSE POINTS FROM THEIR GRADE FOR EACH INFRACTION.**

2. WRITTEN AND PLAYING TESTS

Playing tests and quizzes may contain excerpts from the literature, technique books, scales, or rhythm patterns. Seating may be determined at this time.

3. HOME PRACTICE

Eighth Graders will keep a Practice Log. The log must be completed each nine weeks according to the teacher's instructions. Suggested home practice is 120 minutes a week, which is roughly 30 minutes a day, every other day.

Ninth graders are expected to practice at home to reinforce what they learn in class. Assessment of at-home practice in the ninth grade will be determined by students' performance on quizzes and tests.

4. CONCERTS

Concerts are a ***required*** part of the Orchestra program. They are not only an opportunity for the students and teachers to evaluate musical progress, but they also serve as a common performance goal and let the students share the music with their families and friends. A concert and performance calendar is at the front of this parent guide. ***Please post these dates on your calendar.*** School activity conflicts will be handled on an individual basis and should be worked out prior to the concert. Parents should contact the orchestra director before the concert in the event of illness or emergency. **Unexcused absences will result in a zero for the concert grade.** Grades will also be adjusted for the following infractions: tardiness, uniform violations, forgotten music, forgotten instrument, and professional demeanor.

Orchestra Scholastic Eligibility

A PASSING GRADE IN ORCHESTRA IS REQUIRED FOR EACH SEMESTER OF ENROLLMENT AS A PREREQUISITE FOR MOVING TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL.

A NINTH GRADE BARRIER EXAM MAY BE ADMINISTERED IN THE SPRING. STUDENTS MUST SCORE A 70% OR HIGHER IN ORDER TO BE PERMITTED TO ENROLL IN THE HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA.



Awards and Recognition

GOLD STAR AWARD:

Eighth graders who participate in class, attend all concerts, and earn at least 6 points in two or more different categories will be awarded a Gold Star certificate and pin.

HONOR BARS AND HONOR CERTIFICATES:

Ninth graders who participate in class, attend all concerts, and earn at least 6 points in two or more different categories will be awarded an Honor Bar and Certificate.

OUTSTANDING MUSICIAN AWARD:

Students may earn an Outstanding Musician Award by maintaining a high standard of professional demeanor and going above and beyond the expectations of an orchestra student. Failure to turn in practice slips, attend required extra rehearsals or performances, or maintain a high standard of professional demeanor may affect whether or not a student receives an award.

STAR AWARD POINTS

(must earn at least **6 points** in **2 or more different categories**):

All-Region Orchestra:

Tryout for All-Region	1 point
All-Region alternate	1 point
All-Region member	2 points
All-Region principal	3 points

Solo and Ensemble Contest:

Rating of I	2 points each
Rating of II	1 point each

Participation in outside ensembles 2 points

Private lessons 1 point per nine weeks

Summer Activities (prior to current school year):

String Camp	1 point
Weekly private lessons all summer	1 point

Outside performances (max. 4) 1 point

Program or note signed by parent to document performance must be turned in



“La Fiesta Orquesta” Taco Supper

The annual “La Fiesta Orquesta” Taco Supper is our primary fundraiser for the year. All proceeds from the Taco Supper are used to provide things beyond music and instruments for the Orchestra such as camp scholarships, trips, awards, and class parties. Taco Supper is in late Fall and will feature all Conway orchestra students performing in an informal setting. We serve a meal to over 1,000 people in a single night in addition to hosting the concerts and a silent auction. The concert itself is free, and tickets for the meal may be purchased in advance or at the door. We will need lots of parental help both prior to the Taco Supper and during the supper itself (it takes over 100 parent volunteers to pull off a night like this!). Please watch for and return the Taco Supper volunteer form as soon as you receive it.



Concert Attire

Please make sure your orchestra t-shirt and black and white dress clothes and shoes still fit – many of you have grown since last year!!!

CONWAY ORCHESTRA T-SHIRTS

All students will be asked to purchase a Conway Orchestra t-shirt. Wearing these shirts serves to promote unity within the group. This is not a moneymaking item and cost will be kept to a minimum. If your student already has one, make sure it still fits and is in good condition at the beginning of the school year – some of you have grown considerably since you bought them!

EIGHTH GRADE FORMAL CONCERT ATTIRE

Formal uniform will not be needed until February's Pre-Assessment Concert

Ladies: Dressy white top and dressy black long slacks or floor length skirt. Black dress shoes (no sandals), black hose or socks. Sleeves must be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ length. No spaghetti straps or tank tops. No midriff showing in front or back (please check while seated with your arms in playing position). Casual concerts will be performed in Orchestra t-shirts and blue jeans.

Gentlemen: White long-sleeve dress shirts and black dress slacks, black socks, and solid black dress shoes. Neckties to be determined for each concert. Casual concerts will be performed in Orchestra t-shirts and blue jeans.

LONG HAIR SHOULD BE PULLED BACK AND OUT OF THE FACE SO STUDENTS CAN SEE THEIR CONDUCTOR, AND SO THEIR AUDIENCE CAN SEE THEM.

NINTH GRADE FORMAL CONCERT ATTIRE

Formal uniform will not be needed until February's Pre-Assessment Concert

Ladies: Dressy black top and dressy black long slacks or floor length skirt. Black dress shoes (no sandals), black hose or socks. Sleeves must be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ length. No spaghetti straps or tank tops. No midriff showing in front or back (please check while seated with your arms in playing position). Casual concerts will be performed in Orchestra t-shirts and blue jeans.

Gentlemen: Black dress shirts and black slacks, black socks, and solid black dress shoes. Ties to be voted on by the boys in each orchestra. Casual concerts will be performed in Orchestra t-shirts and blue jeans.

LONG HAIR SHOULD BE PULLED BACK AND OUT OF THE FACE SO STUDENTS CAN SEE THEIR CONDUCTOR, AND SO THEIR AUDIENCE CAN SEE THEM.

Extracurricular Performance Opportunities

Arkansas Symphony Youth Orchestras: The Arkansas Symphony sponsors the **Prelude, Academy, and Youth Orchestras** for those who wish to further their musical growth and audition for an advanced ensemble. Information may be obtained by calling Barbara Burroughs at the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Office, 501-666-1761.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are strongly recommended for all Conway Orchestra students because they allow students to progress at their own pace and to work on solo repertoire that will increase their individual skill level. Almost all Conway Senior High students who have been awarded music college scholarships have studied privately during their public school days. Two sources for teachers are the **UCA Community School of Music** and the **Conway High School Cadet Program**. The Cadet program matches up younger students with outstanding advanced high school students in a peer-teaching setting. Lesson costs are not high this way, and the younger students form a lasting relationship with their mentor. Many other highly-qualified teachers live in the Conway/Little Rock area as well, including many Arkansas Symphony musicians. Please request a list of private and Cadet teachers any time during the year.

OPUS

In musical terms, an opus is a work or composition. In the context of the Conway Public Schools Orchestras, **OPUS** is **Orchestra Parents United in Support**. OPUS exists to ensure our children receive the full benefit of their orchestra experience. Quite simply, this is achieved by the volunteer efforts of parents like you working in concert with the orchestra teachers and other equally dedicated parents. Providing transportation for large instruments, helping set up the reception after a concert, and assisting at Taco Supper go a long way to the continued success of the orchestra program. Orchestra is a wonderful and enriching experience for our children not only as musicians, but also as young adults, and they will carry it with them long after they graduate from High School. Through the dedication of their teachers and most importantly, YOU THE PARENTS, the Conway Orchestra Program will continue to be a positive, strong, and successful experience for our children.

Summer Strings Camps

UCA, the Arkansas Symphony, and the University of Arkansas each sponsor week-long summer string programs that are a wonderful experience for all of our students. Intensive work on Region audition music, ensembles, and sectionals with master teachers provide an enriching experience and encourage students to advance their playing. The Conway Orchestra program awards a limited number of camp scholarships to help defray some of the cost. Scholarship applications will be available in late April or early May, along with details about each camp.

Go to Concerts!

Students need to know you think that they and their membership and success in orchestra are important. One way you can show this is by attending their concerts throughout their school music careers. It is the experience of your orchestra directors that in spite of the fact that they will tell you otherwise, even the High School students need to have someone in the audience that is there just for them! Out of respect for the performers, please stay for the entire concert – no one likes playing for an empty house!

Arkansas Symphony Orchestra: Performances are in Little Rock. Student tickets are free on Sunday afternoons with a paying adult!!!

Conway Symphony Orchestra: The CSO plays several concerts a year here in Conway at the Reynolds Performance Hall on the UCA campus, including a children's concert in the spring.