

Conway Public Schools Middle School 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 Middle School Orchestra Calendar

September 16	South Region Orchestra Auditions (7 th graders only) Conway High School
September 22-23	South Region Orchestra Clinic (by audition) James H. Clark Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
November TBA	<i>La Fiesta Orquesta Taco Supper</i> Conway High School Cafeteria & Buzz Bolding Arena Times TBA, Orchestra T-Shirts and Jeans
December TBA	In-School Holiday Assembly Dates/Times during school TBA, Dress: seasonal casual
March TBA	Recruiting Concert Dates/Times during school TBA, Orchestra T-Shirts and Jeans
March 29	Solo & Ensemble Assessment (7 th graders only) After school, Times TBA, Conway Junior High
May 4	RDMS Beginners Spring Concert & Awards Ceremony 6:30 pm, CJHS Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
May 8	CSMS Beginners Spring Concert & Awards Ceremony 6:30 pm, CJHS Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
May 10	SMS & CMS Beginners Spring Concert & Awards Ceremony 6:30 pm, CJHS Auditorium, Formal Concert Dress
May 14	City-wide 7th Grade Spring Concert & 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.

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.

Beginning Orchestra (sixth grade): A class for any student wishing to begin instruction on violin, viola, cello or bass. The emphasis is on fundamental posture and playing positions, music reading, and tone production.

Intermediate Orchestra (seventh grade): A continuation of fundamentals with the addition of more advanced bowing, keys, and rhythms. More emphasis is placed on part playing within chamber groups and large ensembles.



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%.

- The **Essential Elements for Strings** method book is our primary textbook. Students are asked to purchase one at the beginning of the year, and it is theirs to keep.
- **A Folder or 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.
- **Cellos and Basses:** an **ENDPIN STOP** to keep the instrument from sliding on the floor

OPTIONAL, BUT HELPFUL

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

For information on where to purchase these items, contact an orchestra teacher.



Orchestra Procedures

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 begin. Do not do homework or read books during rehearsal. At the end of the period loosen bow, pack instrument properly, and put music and instruments in the proper storage space. Inappropriate treatment of school instruments may result in forfeiture of use.

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

The orchestra rooms will be unlocked and supervised before and after school for students to drop off and pick up instruments. Instruments will be kept on assigned shelves or racks in the rehearsal hall or storage room. Students may want to keep their instrument cases locked, as the storage areas are in classrooms. Parents who need to pick up or drop off instruments during the day should go through the front office.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Respect all people and things in the Orchestra room. Rules will be as consistent with the band and choir as possible.

- All instruments other than your own are off-limits. This includes all 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.
- All instruments and folders are to be stored in the proper storage place. These areas should be kept neat and free of trash.
- Large ensemble rooms and storage rooms are off-limits before, during, and after school unless you are getting your instrument or putting it away. 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.



Instrument Care

- Loosen the bow hair and wipe off any rosin dust 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!!!



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 very important in an orchestra, just as it is in a community or society. 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 the teacher. Students should bring in programs signed by a parent for verification. **A STUDENT WITHOUT AN INSTRUMENT 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

Middle School Orchestra students may be asked to keep a Practice Log. The log must be initialed by a parent and handed in each nine weeks according to the teacher's instructions.

- 6th Graders: total of at least **640 minutes** (80 minutes a week for eight weeks)
- 7th Graders: total of at least **960 minutes** (120 minutes a week for eight weeks)

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. **Concert absences will affect a student's grade.** Parents should contact the orchestra director before the concert in event that a student will miss a concert due to illness or catastrophic family event. School activity conflicts will be handled on an individual basis. Chair seating may be adjusted to accommodate balance. A concert and performance calendar is at the front of this parent guide. ***Please post these dates on your calendar.*** Grades will be adjusted for the following infractions: uniform violation or forgotten music, minus 15 points; forgotten instrument, minus 25 points; non-attendance, concert grade of 0.

Orchestra Scholastic Eligibility

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



Awards and Recognition

OUTSTANDING MUSICIAN AWARDS

Students may earn Outstanding Musician Awards 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 rehearsals or performances, or maintain a high standard of professional demeanor may affect whether a student receives an award.

STAR AWARDS

Bronze Star Award (Beginning Orchestra): All students who participate in class and attend all concerts will receive a Bronze Star certificate and pin.

Silver Star Award (Intermediate Orchestra): Intermediate students who participate in class, attend all concerts, and **earn at least 3 points** will be awarded a Silver Star certificate and pin (see below).

STAR AWARD POINTS

(SEVENTH GRADERS must earn at least **3 points**)

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

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.



Concert Attire

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. If your student already has one, make sure it still fits and is in good condition at the beginning of the school year.

FORMAL CONCERT ATTIRE

Girls: “Sunday” Dress: long dresses, skirts, or long dress slacks with blouses for girls. No sleeveless, backless, or spaghetti straps. Skirts and dresses should go past the knee when seated. Dressy shoes (no flip-flops or sneakers). Casual concerts will be performed in Orchestra t-shirts and blue jeans.

Boys: “Sunday” Dress: long slacks or khakis, (no jeans or shorts) tucked-in dress or polo-style shirts. Dressy shoes (no sneakers or flip-flops). 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.



“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 the late Fall and will feature all Conway orchestra students 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.

Extracurricular Performance Opportunities

Arkansas Symphony Youth Orchestras: The Arkansas Symphony sponsors the **Preparatory Orchestra** for recommended students who are proficient in first position, and the **Prelude Orchestra** for those who wish to audition for a more advanced ensemble. Information may be obtained by calling Barbara Burroughs at the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Office, 501-666-1761, or visit www.arkansassymphony.org.

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.

Summer Strings Camps

UCA and the Arkansas Symphony 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!

Students like to do what they see other people doing (consider athletic events). For this reason **extra credit** is offered to any student attending a concert or recital outside of school that includes the orchestral string instruments. Students attending concerts should bring in a program signed by their parent or guardian for extra credit.

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.