

Dear Orchestra Parents and Students:

August 13, 2006

Congratulations on enrolling your child in the Orchestra Class! Orchestra is one of the most rewarding and exciting educational opportunities offered by our school. Your investment will pay tremendous dividends in your child's life for many years to come. Music provides students with a wealth of benefits. In addition to obtaining the musical skill necessary to become a performer, a child learns skills that can be used in every facet of life. Team work, dedication, self-discipline and responsibility prepare a child for a successful future in any profession he/she may choose.

Instruments and Accessories

Prior to the beginning of class, each student should have rented or purchased their instrument. The instruments should come with rosin for the bow. Violinists and violists must purchase a shoulder rest from a music store such as Brook Mays, Williamson Music, or Fiddles and Bows or on the internet from www.sharmusic.com. The Kun shoulder rest is preferred though other brands may also work. The shoulder rest should match the size of the violin/viola (i.e. 3/4 or 4/4 instrument). Cellists will need to purchase a rock stop (a rubber disc that the endpin goes into for non carpeted areas). All students should have a music stand. A wire folding music stand is fine and portable.

Instrument care will be reviewed the first day of class. Our string instruments are made of wood and are breakable. Instruments and bows should ALWAYS be in their cases when they are not being played. If your vendor has instrument insurance for \$5 per month, I highly recommend it!

Instrument Storage and Drop Off

On Monday/Wednesday/Friday, please drop off your instruments to the Band Room. Before class, please bring your instrument to the Cafetorium Stage. 5th grade class will begin promptly at 1:15. 6th-8th grade class will begin promptly at 2:00. If your homeroom teacher permits, you may store your instrument in the classroom.

Orchestra Fees

The yearly orchestra fee of \$400 should be paid to the school office. Checks should be made out to ASCS.

Weekly Scheduling

Orchestra Class will be held on Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 1:15-2:00 for 5th graders and from 2:00-2:45 for 6th-8th graders. On Tuesday/Thursdays, 5th graders will go to Ms. McNeil for Art. 6th-8th graders will either go to Art or Digital Photography. If you are a 6th-8th grader, please ask Mrs. Bristow which class you will be going to.

Books

We are using Essential Elements 2000. It is in your folder. Please bring it to every class and take it home to practice. The book comes with a CD and DVD which should be used with your practice. You may leave the CD and DVD at home.

Practice Log

Your practice log is in your folder. In the Fall, I expect 15 minutes of practice 6 days per week. I will check your log on Fridays. The log should note the date and time of your practice and should be signed by the student. We are on the honor system. Your log will count toward your semester grade. A weekly practice must be a minimum of 90 minutes but I would recommend a little per day (15 min) rather than 1 hour twice a week. It is surprising how good you will get at your instruments if you practice a little bit every day!

Attendance and Grades

As with any other class at All Saints, regular attendance is important and will be taken. This is a graded class. The grade will be comprised of participation, practicing (see practice log), playing tests, a few written quizzes announced in advance, and an end of the semester test. Review information for the quizzes and test will be provided in advance. As long as you are actively participating and paying attention and have a willingness to learn, you have no need to worry. Music is a great joy and I want to make it fun and interesting for you.

Performances

We will have one Christmas performance and end of the year performance. These concerts will be held in conjunction with the band. Students will wear a white top and black pants/skirt. In the Spring semester, I hope that we will be able to play at some Sunday masses, nursing homes, and with the All Saints String Ensemble (our church orchestra). I will work with Mrs. Owan to get student volunteer hours for these extra performances.

Private Lessons

Private Lessons are encouraged but not mandatory given our small class size. I will provide names of local teachers if you are interested.

About Me and Contact Info

My love for the violin started as a child. Through my high school years at Ursuline, I played violin in the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra. After graduation from Ursuline, I attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston from 1985-87 and then went to finish my Music Performance degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey in 1990. I have taught privately since 1990 as well as in the Flower Mound and Carrollton School systems. I am currently the conductor of the All Saints String Ensemble at church. I also maintain an active private violin/viola studio at my home in North Dallas, and am the first violinist of the Peters Colony String Quartet and the Bastien Piano Trio. The easiest way to contact me is through email at sdruffner@allsaintsk8.org. My home contact information is also in the student directory and my home number may be used as well until 8:30 pm.

Again, I congratulate you on enrolling your child in the orchestra. As the year progresses, I hope you will feel free to contact me whenever necessary.

Shana Druffner
ASCS Orchestra Director