

# Handbook Varsity / Junior Varsity 2011-2012



Lucas Darger Director of Orchestras nathanael.darger@hcisd.org 956-427-3000 x4514 Dear Parents,

Welcome to the award-winning Coakley Middle School Orchestra program! Orchestra students develop responsibility, self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership, and dependability. Being in orchestra will give students a sense of accomplishment, pride and also an opportunity to develop musical skills that will enrich their lives. Your child's success will be directly related to the amount of practice and effort on their part. This is where parental support and encouragement are so important. I am very interested in the success of your child, so please do not hesitate to stop in or give me a call. Please sign, fill out, and have your child return the Handbook Acknowledgement Form, Permission Slip and Medical Form.

Sincerely,

Lucas Darger Director of Orchestras Coakley Middle School

#### **About Coakley Orchestras**

There are three orchestras at Coakley, as well as four beginning orchestra classes. Seventh and eighth grade students will be evaluated and placed in the appropriate group based on auditions and their performance during the previous year. Any student new to our school will audition to be placed in an orchestra. Beginning orchestra is offered to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with no previous experience, and beginners are placed in the appropriate class according to what instrument they requested in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. We also offer a String Ensemble class for 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

#### **Rehearsal Procedure**

Be in the Orchestra Room when the bell rings, and in your seat ready to work 1 minute after the bell rings. When the director steps onto the podium, students should sit up on the front part of their chairs with their instrument in ready position, stop all talking, and wait for instruction. When the director raises his/her arms to conduct, students should immediately move to playing position. No gum, candy, food or beverage will be allowed during rehearsals.

## **Cougar Varsity Orchestra Calendar**

### 2011-2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>
8/24	5-7	CMS Instrument Drive	CMS Band Hall
8/31	6-8pm	HCISD District-wide Instrument Drive	Gutierrez MS
9/17	1-4	All-Region Help Session	UTB
9/19-10/3		Fall Fundraiser	
10/22	7am	All-Region Orchestra Auditions	Vela MS
11/8	4-6pm	All-Region Orchestra String Sectionals	Donna HS
11/11	4-9pm	All-Region Rehearsal	Donna HS
11/12	10-4:30	All-Region Clinic and Rehearsals	Donna HS
11/13	5:30pm	All-Region Concert	Donna HS
12/7	3:45-5:30	Dress Rehearsal	Coakley
12/13	6pm	Winter Orchestra Concert	MMA
12/15	All Day	Winter Concert Tour (tentative)	
2/8-2/12		TMEA Conference (No after-school sectionals)	
2/17		Elementary Recruiting (tentative)	Harlingen
2/27	3:45-5:30	Dress Rehearsal	Coakley
2/28	4-8pm	District UIL Concert & Sight Reading Contest	HHSS
3/6	6pm	Coakley UIL Concert (JV & Varsity only)	Coakley
3/7	3:45-5:30	JV UIL Rehearsal	Coakley
3/8	4:00-5:00	UIL Dress Rehearsal	Coakley
3/8	5:00-6:00	Varsity UIL Dress Rehearsal	Coakley
3/9	TBD	UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest	Weslaco
5/1	5:30-7:30	District Solo & Ensemble	Coakley
5/11	All Day	Schlitterbahn Competition and Trip	SPI
5/16	3:45-5:30	Dress Rehearsal	Coakley
5/17	6pm	Spring Orchestra Concert	MMA

**Bold** indicates the event is required.

Highlighting indicates the event is a concert open to the public/parents

<sup>\*</sup>All Dates and Times subject to change.

This handbook is for parents and students. Please read the handbook carefully and then sign and return the forms portion to the orchestra director. Retain the information portion of the handbook for future reference.

#### I. Qualifications

- 1. **Students must be recommended** to enroll in varsity orchestra by the Orchestra Director based on auditions, prior achievements, and a record of good discipline.
- 2. **Eligibility** is a crucial factor for participation in all UIL and TMEA events! Students should remain eligible in order to stay in good standing in the organization. If a student should struggle with eligibility requirements through more than one grading period, the student may be removed at the discretion of the director. Afterwards, if the student is able to improve their grades, they may gain permission to enroll once again.
- 3. **Attendance** at all rehearsals, performances, and sectionals is required. A student will only be excused for serious medical or family emergencies. Please check the schedule and plan with these dates in mind. Excess absences may result in dismissal at the discretion of the director.
- 4. **Discipline problems will not be tolerated**. More than one visit to OCS or one assignment to BAC may result in dismissal from the program. Being in the CMS Orchestra program is a privilege. If you have trouble following instructions, showing proper respect towards fellow students, taking care of school property, or maintaining a positive attitude, then orchestra may not be the class for you. Anyone unable to follow these guidelines may be removed at the director's discretion.

#### II. Responsibilities of the Student

- 1. **Practice Daily.** The single most important factor determining success on an instrument is consistency. Students should practice a minimum of 30 minutes each day, 6 days per week. Whenever possible, students should increase that time as much as they can. Remember that practicing for 60 minutes one day is not the same as practicing for 30 minutes on two days!
- 2. **Come Prepared.** Students should have their instrument and materials out and be in their seats ready to tune when the bell rings.
- 3. **Attend All Required Sectionals, Concerts, and Events.** Students will be notified well in advance of concert dates and other required events. Many of these are listed below.
- 4. **Attend Two Additional Concerts.** Students will be required to attend two orchestra concerts that they are not participating in, and to write a response. The concerts must be high school level or above (university, community, or professional). The first response will be due December 4<sup>th</sup>, and the second May 8<sup>th</sup>. A program must be turned in along with the response. The All-Region Concert counts as one of these concerts, even for participants.
- 5. **Maintain Your Grades.** As with other school activities, orchestra is "no pass, no play." Students who do not maintain passing grades will not be allowed on certain field trips and competitions. Please get help and notify me if you are getting behind in another class BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

#### III. Parent/Guardian Suggestions

- 1. Please be sure to pick up your student after orchestra events. Often there will be bus transportation to concerts, but not returning. This will be indicated on the information given to you in advance.
- 2. You are encouraged to inquire about your child's practice and to attend your child's performances.

- 3. Arrange a regular time and place for practice. Your child **ALWAYS** has music to practice. At least 30 minutes of daily undisturbed practice is needed for musical growth.
- 4. Give your child a safe place to keep his/her instrument. Avoid extremely hot or cold temperatures (never leave it in an unattended vehicle!). Review the "How to Care for Your Instrument" handout that will be given when your child gets his/her instrument.
- 5. Do not attempt to repair the instrument yourself. Seek help from the director or a qualified repair shop.
- 6. Take an active role in your child's music education. Many opportunities exist to assist. These include chaperoning trips, monitoring students at concerts, fundraising and publicity.
- 7. Take time to talk to the teacher. Discuss any concerns you may have with your child's music education with the director.
- 8. Time is precious. Insist that your child be on time for lessons, rehearsals, and performances.
- 9. Whenever possible, it is always beneficial and highly encouraged to enroll your student in private lessons.

#### IV. Concert Attire

Formal Concerts (Winter, Spring, and UIL): **Girls** will wear a white blouse, black dress slacks or skirt (below knees), and black dress shoes. **Boys** will wear a white dress shirt, black dress slacks, black dress shoes and black socks. Concert attire should always conform to school dress code.

Casual Concerts (Elementary Tour, Schlitterbahn): Blue Jeans (no shorts) & Orchestra T-shirt. The Orchestra T-shirts will be \$10 and are mandatory for Varsity members.

#### V. Supplies

#### Required at class daily:

- 1. Instrument
- 2. Everest or Kun Shoulder pad for violin and viola; Rock Stop for cello and bass
- 3. 1" 3-ring binder (with music)
- 4. Tuner
- 5. Pencil (NOT a pen)
- 6. Rosin
- 7. Cleaning Cloth
- 8. Essential Elements for Strings 2000 Bk. 2

#### For Home practice:

9. Music stand

#### VI. Music Folder

Students must purchase a 1" three-ring binder for music and handouts. The binder should be divided into three sections: Handouts and Announcements; Concert Music; and Musical Handouts. This handbook should be kept in the binder, and all music issued to the student should be kept in their orchestra binder and maintained in good condition. Music should not be loose and/or folded, and should never be marked on with pen except for the Student's name. Students will be issued ONE COPY of music, and should immediately put their name at the top. If you lose or destroy your music you will need to submit a request for a replacement using the Copy Request Form. You are responsible to have your music at class or you will lose a portion of your participation grade for that day.

Music/folder checks will be held regularly during the year to see if students have the correct music in their folder, and to see if students are marking (only in pencil!) the music according to the instructions given in class.

#### VII. Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker and a lock combination for that locker during the first week of school. Students may not trade lockers, switch locks, or borrow supplies from another locker without asking. Students MUST keep their lockers locked at ALL TIMES (even during class). If a student loses a lock they must pay a \$5 fee to replace the lock. A stolen lock is the result of not following the rules and will be categorized as being "lost". There will be a zero-tolerance policy for horseplay around the lockers. Students found playing in or on the instrument lockers will be given an office referral.

#### VIII. Grooming

Students must keep their fingernails trimmed short in order to play in the orchestra. Long nails will damage strings, affect posture and intonation, and possibly cause injury. If a student decides to get fake nails for a special occasion, they must be removed by the following Monday. Fingernail clippers will be provided to a student immediately if seen with long fingernails. A parent note will be needed if fake nails must stay on after Monday.

#### IX. After-School Sectionals and Rehearsals

Each section will normally have one **mandatory** after-school sectional per week from 4:00 to 4:45 or from 4:45 to 5:30pm. Additionally, there are occasional after-school rehearsals before concerts or competitions that are listed on the calendar. It is important to have everybody there for these to be successful, so attendance is graded. Students who miss more than two sectionals per semester may be moved to JV where there are less after-school commitments.

Every effort will be made to work with student's extracurricular activity schedules when scheduling section days. However, we will have to go with the option that works for the majority of students, and we may not be able to accommodate everybody. Orchestra students who are also athletes, cheerleaders or dancers should speak with their coaches as well as the Orchestra Director early to make arrangements to attend sectionals.

#### X. Concert Attendance

Orchestra is a team in which each member is integral. All students are REQUIRED to attend ALL performances. Concerts are extensions of the classroom and are the highlight of the learning process. An unexcused absence from a performance will result in a failing grade and possible dismissal from the program. Excusal from concerts will only be granted in the event of extreme illness, major family emergency, recognized religious holidays, or other extenuating circumstances with the director's permission. A note from the parent and/or physician is required to be given an excused absence, and students having excused absences will be given the opportunity to complete a suitable assignment to recover lost points. Unexcused absences may not be made up.

#### XI. All-Region Orchestra

The Region 28 All-Region Orchestra is an audition-only group made up of the best middle school students from schools across the valley. Students are selected by a panel of judges in a blind audition (the judges are behind a screen and cannot see the student). It is a great honor to make this elite orchestra, and students who are accepted into the All-Region orchestra are honored with a plaque with their name and instrument inscribed, and will serve as the orchestra leaders throughout the year. **Everyone is encouraged to audition!** Students who are selected must attend all the rehearsals and the final performance. Audition, rehearsal, and performance dates are listed on the calendar.

#### XII. Orchestra Officers

Orchestra officers are an elected leadership council. The purpose of this council is to provide assistance to the director and leadership in the orchestra program. The council will meet as necessary to discuss special needs in the orchestra and provide ideas for social events. Nominations for next year's orchestra officers will be held May. Elections are done by secret ballot and only members of the orchestra can participate. Students may run for only one office. Positions include:

President (1) Vice President (1) Librarian (1 from each orchestra)

#### XIII. Fundraising

The Orchestra will hold two fundraisers during the school year to give students the opportunity to cover their expenses: one in the fall, and one in the spring. Funds go into the orchestra's activities account to pay for trips and other activities, such as the year-end banquet. All students are expected to fundraise, and profits they earn will be applied towards their year-end trip fees. Students who do not raise enough to cover their portion of the activities will need to pay their own way in order to participate.

#### **XIV.** Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are needed often throughout the year for chaperones on field trips and concerts, planning events, preparing materials, etc. Please check the list at the end of this handbook for the things that you are interested in helping out on. I generally contact parents by email to ask for volunteers, and take them on a first come, first served basis. Parents must have a current background check completed by the district for the current school year in order to volunteer, so please fill out the attached background check if you intend to volunteer.

#### **XV.** Private Lessons

Private lessons are an essential part of the success of any student. Private lessons are the most effective way to learn advanced techniques, and they are highly recommended. You may obtain a list of qualified instructors in the area by contacting the Orchestra Director.

#### XVI. Grading

10% Preparation (Home Practice)

10% After-School Sectionals

20% Performance Quizzes (Chair Tests) and Written Quizzes

35% Daily Classroom Participation

25% Concert Performances.

#### XVII. Demerits

The Cougar Varsity Orchestra represents not only our orchestra program, but the school, the district, and our community. Students who do not uphold orchestra standards or who violate orchestra rules will receive a demerit. Students with three demerits may lose the privilege of participating in this group, and will either be transferred to a different orchestra or removed from the program at the discretion of the director.

Possible reasons for demerits include, but are not limited to:

- 1. 2 or more unexcused absences from sectionals
- 2. Missing a concert or mandatory event
- 3. Concert dress code violation
- 4. Major incidents requiring referral to OCS or BAC.

#### **XVIII. Instrument Care**

Students will be given a handout regarding instrument care. Keep in mind:

- 1. Instruments are fragile. Handle with care!
- 2. Never drag an instrument on the floor (in or out of its case)
- 3. Loosen the bow before putting your instrument away.
- 4. Wipe any dust or prints of the instrument daily before putting it away.
- 5. The instrument should be kept in the case when not in use.
- 6. Protect your instrument from extreme temperatures. Never leave it in the car!

#### XIX. Resources

Following are some helpful resources for string players:

#### Instrument rental & purchase, accessories, supplies:

Shar -- www.sharmusic.com

Southwest Strings – www.swstrings.com

Charles Liu Violins – www.finestringinstruments.com

Antonio Strad Violins – 687-9788 (McAllen)

Melhart Music Center – 682-6147

#### Other resources:

Free online metronome – www.metronomeonline.com
Free online tuner -- www.get-tuned.com/online\_tuners.php
Other resources -- www.violinstudent.com

# The following Section should be filled out and returned to the Orchestra Director by August 25th, 2011

## Orchestra Handbook Signature Form

I HAVE READ THE HANDBOOK, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS, AND I WILL ABIDE BY IT TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY:

Signed:		
	Coakley Orchestra Member	Date
Print Name: _		
Signed:		
·	Parent / Guardian	Date
Print Name:		

### **Contact / Emergency Information Form**

Note: It is critical that I have current contact information so that I can relay information effectively, communicate with parents as necessary, and especially to be able to contact a student in the event of absence or emergency during or prior to a field trip or rehearsal. Please inform me if this information changes so that I may keep my records up to date. This information will not be sold or used for solicitation in any way.

Student Name:								
Zip								
Preferred ema	ail :							
Mom's Cell Ph	none							
Mom's Work	Phone							
olicy? Yes N	lo							
Phone	Number							
health issues or allergies yo	our student has:							
parents are unreachable):								
Relation:	Phone							
te item or items below. It end out an email to those heck on the next page. he an orchestra activity, ents and/or pass out progre								
	ZipPreferred emageMom's Cell Phage							

#### RELEASE FORM FOR THE ELECTRONIC AND MEDIA DISPLAY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Student's Name				
Grade	Id #			
give my permission	1 2	ifiable information ab	out my child or a photographict, or the media.	h of my child to be
☐ I <b>DO NOT</b> give	e my permission to dis	splay personal, identi	fiable information of my chi	ld.
Signature of studer Date	nt's parent or guardiar	n		