

**Dan F. Long Middle School
2023 – 2024 Orchestra Handbook**



Dustin Woods, Head Director
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www.danflongorchestra.com

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INTRODUCTION

The Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District takes great pride in being able to offer orchestra classes at Long Middle School as part of a well-rounded educational experience. We expect certain standards of each student enrolled in our classes:

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

It is our goal to produce outstanding orchestras and outstanding musicians. Students learn more and develop better self-discipline, responsibility, knowledge, and pride in superior orchestras than in poor ones. Producing an outstanding orchestra requires that each student accept certain responsibilities.

The following pages will outline the basic requirements for the Long Orchestra. **After reading through this handbook, please complete the Handbook Acknowledgement Form on page 13 or online at this link [CLICK HERE TO SIGN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM ONLINE](#).** This will indicate your notification and acceptance of the policies of the Dan F. Long Orchestra program.

Please check our website regularly for updates:

www.danflongorchestra.com

Please bookmark this website so that you can refer back to the handbook if you have any questions. We hope that each of you will feel pride in being part of our orchestra family! If you have any questions, please send us an email or call us at (972) 968-4134.

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Orchestra Directors

PURPOSE

The Long Orchestra is a year-long credit course that meets regularly during the school day with an emphasis on class performance, teamwork, and effort. The nature of this class requires the development of skills and concepts as well as the mastery of string playing objectives. These must also be demonstrated outside of the classroom during rehearsals and performances.

Academic performance and success go hand in hand with musical success. We take pride in knowing that orchestra students are among the highest achieving students in the school and are also among the most active in other organizations. Educational research has shown that students who are involved in extra and co-curricular activities perform at a consistently higher academic level and have higher levels of self-esteem.

EXPLANATION OF ORCHESTRAS

BEGINNER ORCHESTRA

Beginner Orchestra is made up of 1st year orchestra students - mostly 6th and 7th graders, but 8th graders are also welcome! This group will have very few before or after school rehearsals required. Beginner students will have the opportunity to attend social events throughout the year. The goals and objectives of this course will include improving musicianship, technique, motor skills, and musical vocabulary. This ensemble will go to a music festival in the spring.

CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Concert Orchestra is made up of advancing 7th and 8th graders depending on ability. This group will have very few before or after school rehearsals required. Concert Orchestra students will have the opportunity to attend social events throughout the year. The goals and objectives of this course will include building on musical foundations, improving ensemble playing, musicality, performance etiquette, and musical vocabulary. **This ensemble is not currently performing, and will likely be reinstated during the '24 - 25' school year.**

PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Philharmonic Orchestra is made up of advancing 7th and 8th graders depending on ability. This group will have before and after school commitments at certain times throughout the year. Philharmonic Orchestra students will have the opportunity to attend social events throughout the year. The goals and objectives of this course will include improving ensemble playing, advanced bow technique, musicality, performance etiquette, and musical vocabulary. **This ensemble will go to UIL Contest in the spring, and will be responsible for attending occasional sectionals or after school rehearsals.**

SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA

Symphonic Orchestra is made up of advanced 7th and 8th graders with a desire to excel on their instrument. This is an elite and highly-respected performing ensemble at Long Middle School. This group will have frequent before and after school commitments and may be asked to perform often. Individual responsibility and leadership are paramount for students at this level. Symphonic Orchestra students will have the opportunity to attend social events throughout the year. The goals and objectives of this course will include improving ensemble playing, upper position work, musicality, leadership, dedication, and persistence at anything attempted. **This ensemble will perform throughout the community, go to UIL Contest in the spring, and be responsible for attending occasional sectionals at the beginning of both the fall and spring semesters.**

GRADING SYSTEM

A student's grade in orchestra each nine weeks is comprised of:

- Formative Assessments (25%): class rehearsal grades, weekly playing grades, music theory work, in-class written work
- Summative Assessments (75%): playing tests, written tests, sectionals, dress rehearsals, concerts/concert etiquette and performances

It is important to teach musicians responsibility and preparedness. As a result, in the event of a missed sectional or dress rehearsal, students must make up the time before or after school to replace the missing grade. A parent note (via email or written note) will be required. **Concerts are impossible to truly replicate for a makeup assignment, so should only be missed in the case of illness or emergency (COVID, car accident, family death, etc.)

Formative grades are often given for class performance. To earn a 100 for the week, students must:

1. Be on time with all required supplies
2. Be sufficiently prepared on their music and engaged in learning
3. Exhibit appropriate playing posture at all times (includes keeping nails short)
4. Give 100% effort when trying new and challenging skills
5. Exemplify the Falcon Way: **“No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety, or well-being of others.”**

PRACTICING AT HOME: Individual practice at home is *essential* to every musician's progress. Additionally, it is important to the success of our ensembles that each student puts in outside effort to learn his or her individual part. A recommended amount of time for students to practice while in middle school is at least **120 minutes per week at home**. It is best to spread out this time into equal intervals 5-6 days a week, rather than spending 1-2 days practicing an hour or more. The more students practice at home, the better they will do on playing tests and performances. In order to facilitate a consistent habit of practice, students will complete the following:

- Practice Card/Playing Tests - Students will be required to complete an in-class practice card or playing test once a week. These will consist of very short passages that students will play individually that count as a formative grade. Passages will come from class music and possible spots will be announced ahead of time. The following grades will be given for practice checks: 100 (exceptional), 90 (on track), 80 (needs a little more work), 70 (needs extra attention), 50 (needs lots of help), 0 (did not play). Playing tests will be graded more rigorously out of 100/
- Practice Reflections - In addition to practice checks, students may be required to complete a practice reflection every 3 weeks. These will usually be assigned to complete during class and will require students to self-assess their own practice habits.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE: Concert attendance counts for 2 major (summative) grades: **one for concert performance and the other for concert audience etiquette**. Our concerts in

orchestra are equivalent to a unit test in another class – it is the sum of all we have been working on in class.

Conflicts with concerts (Long MS athletic games, Long MS fine arts performances, etc.) should be worked out in advance with the orchestra directors and Long MS coaches and teachers. Students may only be excused from Long Orchestra concerts because of Long MS athletic and other fine arts events – *not activities students attend outside of school*. In the case that something overlaps, please talk with the associated teachers as soon as the conflict is found so that we can help you find a suitable solution. Please allow us ample time to help solve scheduling conflicts so that students may participate in as many activities as possible.

In the rare occasion a concert must be missed (i.e. illness, medical emergency, or death in the family), a makeup assignment will be given in its place *after* parents have contacted the directors explaining the absence. **Bear in mind that no makeup assignment will truly replicate a concert. Every effort should be made to attend concerts unless there are extenuating circumstances.**

CONDUCT

The conduct of an orchestra student reflects not only on himself/herself, but also on other orchestra students as well as the school and community. The Long Orchestra will be following the same discipline plan as the rest of Long Middle School. We hold our students to a very high standard of citizenship and behavior because we believe that our students are among the best at Dan F. Long.

The Falcon Way: “No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety, or well-being of others.”

ABSENCE/TARDY POLICY

Open and proactive communication between teachers, students, and parents can prevent misunderstandings. Please read the following rules and contact your student’s director if you have any questions. These rules pertain to all orchestra rehearsals, sectionals, performances, field trips, and any other orchestra activity that takes place outside of class time where the school’s absence policy is also in effect.

1. ALL absences (excused or unexcused) from a rehearsal or performance must be communicated to the director via email, phone call, or written note. If a student misses a rehearsal or performance for an excused reason, he or she may make up the grade for full credit. If a student misses a sectional or performance for an unexcused reason, he or she may make up the grade for partial credit. Excessive absences may result in removal from performances or removal from the organization.
2. Advanced notice is required for all prior commitments. A prior commitment is defined as a date already committed to another event when the schedule is announced. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Outside of school activities (i.e. baseball practice, medical appointment, personal travel, etc.) are *NOT* considered excused absences unless they were scheduled before the Long MS calendar was distributed in August.

3. In the case of illness and/or family emergency, parents should call or email the director as soon as they are aware that a situation exists. If it is an emergency situation, i.e. something that happens 30 minutes before the concert begins, it may be impossible to get in touch. Thus, please follow up with a written note, email, or phone call as soon as possible afterwards. This is the **ONLY** category in which absences will be excused the same day or after the event.

An orchestra performs at its highest level when all members are present. Therefore, students are required to participate in ALL sectionals, rehearsals, and performances unless excused by the director. We understand that transportation situations, athletic conflicts, and other issues arise throughout the course of a year. If there is a problem getting your child to before or after school rehearsals, sectionals, or concerts, please let us know. We will help find rides to school, work with coaches to resolve any athletic conflicts, and figure out a solution to the problem. As long as we are made aware of any situation in advance, we will work with it!

Similarly, it is important that students make every effort to be on time to every rehearsal. During regular class time, students must be in the room by the time the bell rings or they will be marked tardy. Punctuality for sectionals, rehearsals, and performances is required and excessive tardiness may result in removal from the concert or contest. The best thing to do if you know you may be late or have trouble is to communicate with your director in advance.

UNIFORMS

Beginner Orchestra

Students in Beginner Orchestra will wear the Long Orchestra T-shirt, blue jeans, and plain closed-toe shoes as their uniform. (This combination is also the **informal uniform** for the advanced classes during certain performances.) **Flip-flops, sandals, shorts, skirts, and jeans with rips or holes are NOT ALLOWED for concerts.** Long Orchestra T-shirts are included in the orchestra fees and are also available for sale throughout the year should you need to purchase a replacement.

Symphonic, Philharmonic, and Concert Orchestra

Boys:

1. Black dress shirt (school-issued)
2. Black dress pants (school-issued)
3. Gold bowtie (school issued)
4. Black dress shoes* (student will provide) - NO tennis shoes or sandals
5. Long, black socks* (student will provide) - must not show any ankle skin while sitting down

Girls:

1. Black concert dress (school-issued)
2. Plain, all-black, closed-toe dress shoes* (student will provide) - NO wedge, platform, or stiletto shoes, NO tennis shoes, NO sparkles or jewels. For your concert dress shoes, flats are highly recommended.

***Parents need to provide the parts of the uniform that are not school-issued. The remainder of the uniform will be passed out before the first concert. We recommend Walmart, Target, Kohl's, Ross, TJ Maxx, and DSW Shoes for purchasing dress shoes.**

We have worked very hard as an orchestra and a booster club to purchase these uniforms. You are not allowed to make any permanent alterations to them. If you do so, you will be charged the full replacement cost of \$70. If a dress is too long, you may pin the hem, use *removable* hemming tape, or sew a new hem with BLACK thread (leaving 2-4 inches available for the dress to be let back down).

INSTRUMENTS

All instruments are to be in good playing condition at all times. Proper care and maintenance are required! Students are expected to have rosin, shoulder rests, rock stops, a method book, working strings, and a cleaning cloth. The vast majority of student instruments are rented from our school or from Music & Arts. **Please DO NOT buy an instrument online without consulting the directors first.** We are happy to assist in the buying process when students are ready, but we encourage you to wait until your student is in 7th or 8th grade and to buy an instrument from a reputable music store. To ensure that your student will be purchasing an instrument of good quality, please consult with us before beginning your search.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

ALL violin and viola students are required to have:

1. Instrument and bow
2. Method book or school-issued binder
3. Kun, or Kun-like shoulder rest
4. Cleaning cloth (can be purchased or made from an old t-shirt)
5. Rosin (each musician needs his or her OWN ROSIN)
6. Pencil

ALL cello and bass students are required to have:

1. Instrument and bow
2. Method book or school-issued binder
3. Rock stop or Cello strap
4. Cleaning cloth (can be purchased or made from an old t-shirt)
5. Rosin (each musician needs his or her OWN ROSIN)
6. Pencil

There are many places to purchase supplies that you will need throughout the year. There is a list of music shops and online stores that we recommend on our website, but here is a short list:

Music & Arts: www.musicarts.com

Dallas Strings: www.dallasstrings.com

NEW STRINGS/SUPPLIES

If you rent your instrument from Music & Arts, routine maintenance is included in your rental fee. If a string breaks, just bring the instrument to us, and we will replace the strings with ones that Music and Arts provides to us for that purpose. If you use a school instrument, we will replace broken strings and use the annual Instrument Maintenance Fee to cover the cost of the strings. If you own your instrument, you will have to pay for replacement strings. In this case, we can replace the string for you, and you would need to make payment for the replacement in a timely manner.

If you need supplies at any point (shoulder rests, method books, etc.), we can easily order them for you. After ordering, we will bill you via an email to your parent/guardian. You are responsible for making payment in a timely fashion (through our website or in exact cash).

USE OF SCHOOL INSTRUMENTS

If you would like to rent a school instrument, you may do so for a small annual Instrument Maintenance Fee (see fees page below). All school instruments will be checked out by the directors, and contracts must be signed by parents before students will be allowed to take instruments home. Please understand that we have a limited inventory of school-issued instruments.

ANY DAMAGE BEYOND NORMAL WEAR AND TEAR INCURRED TO AN INSTRUMENT WHILE IN THE POSSESSION OF THE STUDENT OR FAMILY IS THE SOLE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THAT PARTY (i.e. your little sister breaks your cello, you leave your violin in a hot car, the instrument is left on the bus). You can purchase instrument insurance for as little as \$30 a year. We recommend that you purchase insurance to protect your finances should something break or go missing.

BINDERS

All orchestra members will receive a binder for sheet music and handouts. The binder will be used to hold all informational handouts, warm-ups, music, etc. for orchestra. It is the student's responsibility to bring his or her binder, pencil, handouts/music to class every single day. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of class rehearsal grade.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons consist of one-on-one instruction with a professional musician. Private lessons are extremely beneficial and can help students achieve higher goals in orchestra. Unlike traditional class tutorials, they can help a child advance faster than the class curriculum and achieve at a higher level.

Private lessons are offered in-person during the school day, and occasionally remotely, if needed. The cost of private lessons is regulated by the district at \$22 for a half-hour lesson. Most students take one half-hour lesson once a week. All private teachers have been screened by the district personnel office and have had their backgrounds thoroughly checked for your child's safety.

We also offer scholarships! Both CFBISD and the Long Orchestra Booster Club set aside money each year for financial assistance. We do not want finances to be a hindrance from taking private lessons! Please fill out the scholarship application on the Private Lesson Sign-Up sheet to be considered.

You can sign your child up for private lessons on our website. **Private lesson teachers are paid directly by parents**, and consistent communication between parent and private lesson teacher will be vital.

ALL-REGION ORCHESTRA

All-Region Orchestra is a highly competitive orchestra made up of outstanding musicians from Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD and Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD. Students are selected by an audition process. To be eligible for the All-Region Orchestra, a student must have passed all classes with a grade of at least 70 during the 3-week period before the audition date.

The process to get into All-Region Orchestra is extremely competitive, and only the most hardworking players achieve this honor. Traditionally, musicians from the Long Orchestra have done well, but only through lots of practice and effort. During the fall, we will host sectionals to help students learn the music. We encourage students to take private lessons, come to every All-Region sectional, and put in a substantial amount of individual practice time.

CONTESTS AND COMPETITIONS

Contests and competitions are a big part of what we do in orchestra. Our students set high goals for their playing and work incredibly hard to attain these goals. We also believe that they learn very important lessons through the journey of competing. UIL Contest is a very big event in our school year. It is the orchestra equivalent of academic classes' STAAR tests. There will be many intense rehearsals and sectionals in the spring semester leading up to the contest. UIL is not a competition against other orchestras. Rather, it is a competition against a standard of excellence and perfection. An orchestra's performance is judged by a panel of three judges on a scale of 1 (Superior) to 5 (Poor). Beginning orchestra does not attend UIL. They will instead compete in a separate contest later in the spring. Symphonic, Philharmonic, and Concert Orchestras do attend UIL and will also attend an additional music festival in the spring.

ELIGIBILITY

Long Orchestra students are expected to maintain academic eligibility at all times. A single failing grade in any class on a report card may deny you performance and extracurricular privileges, such as contests and field trips. Additionally, ineligible students may not be allowed to participate in Solo and Ensemble or All-Region Concert – even if they have made the orchestra. Please note that you do not need to be academically eligible for school concerts. Becoming academically ineligible for a contest can undermine all of our hard work as an orchestra. An orchestra is a team, and students' grades have a direct influence on every other student in the orchestra. In order for a team to succeed, it is the responsibility of each and every student to pass his/her own classes.

Here are a couple of ways to stay eligible:

1. Complete all of your homework and class work and turn it in on time! The majority of ineligible students fail simply because they do not complete their work. A single zero on any assignment can cause your overall grade in a class to plummet.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for help! Check with your teachers to find out when tutorials are available. Every teacher at Long is here to help anyone willing to put in the effort. Just ask!

Students who have two or more unexcused absences from sectionals are also ineligible for contest. These students may not be allowed to compete at UIL or music festivals; they will instead have to complete a lengthy research-based written assignment.

Eligibility also affects social events as well as our annual end-of-year Six Flags trip. Any 7th or 8th grader who was ineligible for UIL Contest will NOT be allowed to go with the orchestra to Six Flags. We view this trip as a reward for the many hours of orchestra rehearsals and individual practice. Those who did not take care of business in the classroom and at home therefore do not deserve this reward.

ORCHESTRA FEES

Typically, our Orchestra Fee is an upfront payment to cover what students will eventually need to pay for throughout the year. Rather than collecting money at several points during the year, the Orchestra Fee allows for a convenient one-time payment that clearly outlines the items and costs. **For the 2023-2024 school year, the Orchestra Fee is \$45.**

(If you would prefer, you may also spread out payments according to the schedules detailed below.)

We accept payment in two ways:

- **Online (PREFERRED METHOD)** - pay through our website at www.danflongorchestra.com/store **(MAKE SURE YOU SELECT THE APPROPRIATE ONLINE FEE FOR YOUR STUDENT [Beginning or Symphonic and Philharmonic], AS ONLINE REFUNDS MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE)**
- **Cash** - you may also send exact cash with your student to school or mail the exact amount to:
Dan F. Long Orchestra / 2525 Frankford Rd. / Dallas, TX 75287

Note: We DO NOT accept checks.

Symphonic, Philharmonic, & Concert Orchestra	Beginner Orchestra
\$15 Orchestra T-Shirt	\$15 Orchestra T-Shirt
\$10 Uniform Rental	\$10 Uniform Rental
\$10 Orchestra Contests and Buses	\$10 Orchestra Contests and Buses
\$10 Food/Drink for Events	\$10 Food/Drink for Events
\$45 Spent Throughout the Year	\$45 Spent Throughout the Year
<i><u>OPTIONAL PAYMENT PLAN:</u></i>	<i><u>OPTIONAL PAYMENT PLAN:</u></i>
<i>\$10 __ Due before Sept. 1, 2023</i>	<i>\$10 __ Due before Sept. 1, 2023</i>
<i>\$10 __ Due before Oct. 3, 2023</i>	<i>\$10 __ Due before Oct. 3, 2023</i>
<i>\$10 __ Due before Nov. 1, 2023</i>	<i>\$10 __ Due before Nov. 1, 2023</i>
<i>\$15 __ Due before Dec. 1, 2023</i>	<i>\$15 __ Due before Dec. 1, 2023</i>

INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE FEE

This fee applies only to students renting a school instrument and is **\$50 for the 2023-2024 school year.** This fee covers string and repair costs, a shoulder rest or cello/bass strap, rosin, and a cleaning cloth. (Any repairs due to negligence costing more than \$50 will be assessed by the

directors and may need to be paid by parents above and beyond the \$50 maintenance fee.) *Note - students on free & reduced lunch will NOT be responsible for this fee.*

Any Student Renting a School Instrument - \$50

Due Date: Monday, 10/2/23

We never want finances to prevent a student from participating in orchestra. We are more than happy to offer financial assistance on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Mr. Woods at woodsd@cfbisd.edu, or call us at 972-968-4134 with any questions or concerns.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email

Mr. Woods: woodsd@cfbisd.edu

Ms. Chua: chuak@cfbisd.edu

Phone

Orchestra Office: (972) 968-4134

Website

www.danflongorchestra.com

Handbook Acknowledgement Form 2023-2024

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM ONLINE](#)

By signing this form, I agree to the following:

- I understand how to access the orchestra handbook on the website.
- I understand that consistent (daily or almost daily), focused practice is required of my child.
- I understand that concerts and sectionals may be required of my child.
- I understand the orchestra fee system and will do my best to make my payments on time.
- I understand the expectations required due to my child's involvement in a group of this caliber and pledge to support them.
- I understand that due to possible changes to the school year from COVID-19, this handbook cannot possibly cover all scenarios.
- I understand that as a result of possible changes in orchestra, I will need to check my email and the orchestra website regularly for important updates.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Date Signed _____

Mr. Woods, woods@cfbisd.edu

Ms. Chua, chuak@cfbisd.edu

Orchestra Office: 972-968-4134