

2023-2024

# KEALING ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK



*"With an orchestra, you are building citizens, better citizens for the community" - Gustavo Dudamel*

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**Mr. August Gmitter**

**DIRECTORS**

**KEALING MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS**

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Office Hours: by appointment

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Dear Orchestra Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year of the Kealing Middle School Orchestra program! My name is Diana Riley and I am the director of orchestras at Kealing. Mr. August Gmitter is the assistant orchestra and now head guitar director. We are so excited for another year of making music together!

Our goal as directors is to create lifelong learners who appreciate and find joy in making music after they leave the classroom and to foster friendships and feel a sense of community each time they walk into the orchestra room. The mission statement of the Kealing Orchestra is:

*Through teamwork, discipline, and individual practice, students will create a musical community in which all members are **included** and **valued**. Each student will create, collaborate, and express themselves musically in a supportive and inclusive environment. All members of the community will hold themselves and others to high standards to grow as musicians and citizens of the world.*

For some of you, welcome to the exciting world that is the mighty Kealing Orchestra while our veteran parents and students can expect another year of wonderful music, new friendships and fun events! We are so excited to start the 2023-2024 school year and are already looking forward to making new memories that will last a lifetime.

This handbook contains all important information about policies, procedures, and expectations for all classes in the orchestra program. Please take time to look through ALL the sections to be aware of necessary supplies, rules and expectations. Also, make sure you are connected with the orchestra program to continually receive further updates and information, via BLEND, [Facebook](#) (parent group), and [Instagram](#). Once you are familiar with all of the information in this packet, please sign the handbook form (link found at the end of this packet), which also includes a media release form, **by Friday, August 25**.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to another musical year!



**Diana Riley**

Director of Orchestral Activities

**August Gmitter**

Assistant Director of Orchestras

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## Kealing Middle School Orchestras

### Performance Calendar 2023 – 2024

Fall 2023				
DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION	GROUP
September 7	Back to School Night	TBA	KMS	All Families
September 27-28	All-City Orchestra	Wednesday 6:30-9 PM; Thursday 1-9 PM	Austin ISD PAC	Select 8th Grade Students
<b>October 4</b>	<b>Fall Concert</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Austin ISD PAC</b>	<b>All Orchestras</b>
October 7	All-Region Orchestra Auditions	8 AM- 12 PM	Bowie HS	Concert/Philharmonic/Symphony
October 13	Bowling Social	12 PM - 2 PM	Highland Lanes	First come first serve (due to limited numbers)
November 2	Fall String Festival	All Day	Austin ISD PAC	Beginning Orchestra
TBA	Kealing Showcase	TBA	Kealing MS	Rockestra
November 16-18	TMEA All-Region Orchestra Clinic and Concert	Thursday 7-9 PM Friday 6:30-9 PM Saturday 9-3:30 PM Concert Sat 4 PM	Austin HS (Thurs.) Austin ISD PAC (Friday/Saturday)	Select Students through audition process
TBA	District Wide Choice Fair	TBA	TBA	Rockestra and Select Students
<b>December 14</b>	<b>Orchestra Winter Concert</b>	<b>6:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Kealing Theater</b>	<b>All Orchestras</b>

Spring 2024				
TBA	Elementary Tour	Times TBA	Feeder Campuses	Rockestra
TBA	Recruiting Concert	10:00 AM	KMS Theater	Symphony Orchestra
February 17	Contest Orchestra Rehearsal	8:30-12PM	F.Arts Building/Blazer Tag Adventure Center	Concert, Philharmonic, Symphony
<b>February 20</b>	<b>Pre- U.I.L. Competition Concert</b>	<b>6:00 P.M.</b>	<b>Kealing Theater</b>	<b>All Orchestras</b>
February 29- - March 1	U.I.L. Concert and Sight-Reading Competition	TBA - by assigned time.	Austin PAC	Concert, Philharmonic, Symphony
March 2*	U.I.L Celebration at Blazer Tag	11:00-1PM (tentative)	Blazer Tag Adventure Center	Concert, Philharmonic Symphony
March 4-8/18-22	2023-2024 Auditions Hornet/Concert and Phil	Regular class time	Orchestra Hall	All Orchestras
TBA	AISD Solo and Ensemble Contest	TBA Times Assigned	McCallum HS*	Students Entered through Orchestra
Date TBA (late April)	Hornet Orchestra Spring Trip	TBA	San Antonio, TX	Hornet and Concert Orchestras
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Final Concert and Awards Ceremony</b>	<b>3:00-7:00 P.M. Details TBA</b>	<b>KMS Theater</b>	<b>All Orchestras</b>
May 10-11	2 Day Bayou Festival Spring Trip	All day	Houston/Spring/G alveston TX	Philharmonic and Symphony Orchestras
TBD*	Awards Ceremony	Times TBA	TBD	All Orchestras

\* Items indicated with an asterisk are accurate but subject to change due to unknown factors at the time of calendar publication  
 \*\*Please be aware that locations, times, or even dates can, under some circumstances, be subject to change. Notice of any changes will be given as soon as possible. There can be additional performances not listed that may be scheduled as new information becomes available. Your flexibility in these situations is greatly appreciated.

# Kealing Orchestra Supply List

1. **Instrument** – (violin, viola, cello, bass) Sized correctly by a teacher or professional at a string shop **OR** [click here for a DIY sizing guide](#) to size your own child. **Please do not buy an instrument from Walmart, Craigslist, Amazon, or an online vendor.** We highly recommend renting and purchasing supplies from these local string shops:
  - a. [Westbank String Shop](#) (South Austin)
  - b. [Terra Nova Violins](#) (North Austin)
  - c. [Blackerby Violins](#) (North and South locations)
  - d. [Strait Music](#) (North and South locations)
  - e. [Austin Strings](#) (North Austin)

Note: There is also a very limited number of instruments that can be rented from Kealing based on financial need for \$50 per semester. To sign up for a Kealing rental, please fill out the form that students bring home on the 1st day of school. Due to limited inventory, it is not guaranteed that we will have the correct size instrument or even an instrument available for all students so please let us know as soon as possible.\*\*

2. **Three-ring binder (1") with 3 Binder Dividers** – (required); dividers labeled “Warmups”, “Music”, and “Handouts”. **Binders will be provided by the directors**
3. **PENCILS** - (required) and 3-ring pencil pouch (recommended)
4. **Colored pencils (Concert, Philharmonic and Symphony)** - students will need to bring 3 colored pencils (blue, green and red) for musical purposes. We will use each color for the following (dynamics, key signature/notes and time signature/rhythm).
5. **Instrument Accessories** – **REQUIRED** (can be purchased at local string shop)
  - a. Violin/Viola – [Shoulder rest](#). Adjustable shoulder rest that is the appropriate size for the instrument.
  - b. Cello/Bass – Rockstop. Either a [rubber rockstop](#) or a [strap for cellos](#).
  - c. Everyone - [Rosin](#), (or [Bass Rosin](#)) and an instrument cleaning [cloth](#)
6. **Music stand** - recommended for at-home practice. Can be a [wire stand](#) or similar. (Can also be purchased at your local string shop)

7. **Clip-On Chromatic Tuner – REQUIRED** for classroom and home use and must affix to the instrument to be used for personal tuning. You can either purchase a tuner that clips directly to the bridge or scroll (ex. [Snark SN or ST models](#), [D’addario NS micro](#), [Eclipse tuner](#), or similar), a tuner that has a detachable pick-up clip (ex. [Korg Tuner with Korg CM-200 contact microphone](#), or similar), or quality tuning applications downloaded to a smart device (we recommend the app [Tonal Energy Tuner](#)). Detachable pick-up clip tuners normally work better when it comes to tuning accuracy but are slightly pricier.
8. **Method Book** – See below for the appropriate book for each class. Can be purchased in most music stores or online. Make sure it is the correct book for the specific instrument: violin, viola, cello, bass.
  - a. Beginning Orchestra – [Essential Elements for Strings Book 1](#)
  - b. Concert Orchestra - [Essential Elements for Strings Book 2](#)
  - c. Philharmonic and Symphony Orchestra – [Essential Technique for Strings](#)

*\*\*Financial limitations should never be a reason that a student cannot participate in orchestra. If your financial situation limits you from obtaining any of the supplies or instruments, please reach out to your child's director, who will discreetly make sure that students are equipped with what they need to be successful including binders, method books, tuners, or instruments.*

## **Grading Policy**

**Participation**– To receive full credit, the student must:

- Bring ALL required materials every single class day
- Be on time to class
- Be attentive and participating appropriately (see behavior expectations)

**Performances** -

- All students are required to participate in the performances that pertain to their class as laid out in the performance calendar.
- Attendance is required. If there are conflicts, the directors need to know prior to the concert/event and the excuse needs to be approved. If there is an emergency, email or call your student’s director as soon as possible.
- Excused absences include sickness (fever, vomiting...etc), death in the family, family emergency..etc. Please check with the directors if you might have an excusable absence.
- Unexcused absences include avoidable schedule conflicts (soccer game, piano lesson, transportation issues, etc). Please check in with the directors if you have a scheduling issue.
- If there is an unexcused absence from the concert, the student will receive a 0 for that grade and it cannot be made up.

- If there is an excused absence from a concert, the student will have to complete a separate assignment to make up for the points missed.

**Performance Participation**– To receive full credit for performances, the student must:

- Bring ALL required materials to concerts/performances
  - This includes the required uniform, music and instrument
- Be on time to their respective rehearsals before their performance
- Be attentive and participating appropriately (see behavior expectations)

**After School Sectionals/Rehearsals (Symphony and Philharmonic Only)**

- Orchestra is one of several fine arts offerings for A.I.S.D. with a prescribed curriculum that includes after school rehearsals and performances, which are not extracurricular in nature, but are part of the curriculum. Students and parents must understand that meeting the requirements of the course includes mandatory attendance at ALL of our after school rehearsals and performances. Our performance schedule is published in a calendar provided at the beginning of the year.
- Students must participate in the sectional rehearsals for their class:
  - Symphony Orchestra: Mondays, 3:10-4:30
  - Philharmonic Orchestra: Tuesdays, 3:10-4:30
- Students are expected to be tuned and ready to start by 3:10. Failure to be ready by that time will result in a grade deduction.
- Students participating in UIL sports will attend most of the rehearsal with us, then go to sports practices at 3:55. Your coaches will excuse you from the first part of your sports practice.
- Students must attend **at least** 45 minutes of rehearsal in order to receive full credit if you have any conflicts and/or other scheduled events.
- **Symphony and Philharmonic students are allowed one unexcused sectional absence per semester without penalty. This absence may NOT be used in the three weeks prior to any performance or contest.**
- Sectional rehearsals will not be excused to complete assignments for other teachers. Excused absences include: certain Kealing athletic events where prior approval has been granted by the director in advance, personal illness, serious illness of a member of the immediate family, or a death in the immediate family. Excuses must be in writing, signed by a parent or guardian, and be given to the Director twenty-four hours in advance of absence where possible to be considered excused. ***It is expected that every effort will be made to schedule necessary doctor or dental appointments around scheduled rehearsals.*** Please make sure you contact your designated director if you know you will either not be attending sectionals or leaving early or if any type of emergency comes up.

Ms. Riley - Symphony Orchestra

Mr. Gmitter - Philharmonic Orchestra

- Any unexcused absences after the first absence will result in a zero for that week's sectional grade.

### **After School Rehearsals (Concert and Hornet Orchestras)**

Although Concert and Hornet orchestras will not be meeting every week for after school rehearsals, there will be certain days where we will need to schedule after school rehearsals which will mostly occur close to our concert/competition days.

- Our rehearsal times will run from 3:10-4:30, and can be expected to happen either on Wednesday or Thursday.
- Students are expected to be tuned and ready to start by 3:10. Failure to be ready by that time will result in a grade deduction.
- Since there are few and limited rehearsals for both groups, all students are **required** to attend every rehearsal sectional. We will ensure to send rehearsal dates within a reasonable time so that you may plan accordingly.
- Like Symphony and Philharmonic, sectional rehearsals will not be excused to complete assignments for other teachers. Excused absences include: certain Kealing athletic events where prior approval has been granted by the director in advance, personal illness, serious illness of a member of the immediate family, or a death in the immediate family. Excuses must be in writing, signed by a parent or guardian, and be given to the Director twenty-four hours in advance of absence where possible to be considered excused. ***It is expected that every effort will be made to schedule necessary doctor or dental appointments around scheduled rehearsals.***

### **Assessment**

- Assessment grades come from individual and section playing quizzes, tests, and any written tests/assessments.

### **Assignments**

Students will have some written work to turn in for a grade either in person or through Blend. These include:

- Concert evaluations
- Any music theory related assignments
- Practice related logs/strategies (could be individual or by sections)

### **Late Assignment Policy/Retakes**



- Students who turn in assignments/quizzes by the due date will be able to retake for full credit
- If you turn in your assignment after the due date, the highest grade you will be eligible to receive is an 80

*\*Failure to comply with every expectation listed above will affect your grade*

## **Fees and Finances**

### **Fundraisers**

Orchestra students may have an opportunity in the Fall semester to participate in a voluntary fundraiser that will go toward a small trip in the spring. Details will be communicated soon.

### **Donations**

You are welcome to donate as a kind of “no-hassle fundraiser”. The donations will go into an account that gets spent only on the orchestra students and their needs. If your place of employment matches donations, we will gladly accept those as well, and can provide anyone with a receipt of their donation for tax purposes.

### **Financial Need**

Finances should never be a reason a student cannot participate in orchestra or any of the events or trips. If you know you will require financial assistance, please contact the directors. There is always something we can do to help!

### **Trip Fees**

If your child is participating in an orchestra trip, the appropriate financial information will be given to you with trip costs and payment plans. Please keep up to date with these payments.

### **Instrument Usage Fee**

If your child is planning to use a school instrument, we ask that you pay \$50 per semester for the yearly upkeep and repair of the instruments. Along with this fee, school instrument renters will sign a rental agreement that they will turn in before an instrument is loaned to them.

### **Payment Methods**

For any fees or payments to the orchestra program, you can always pay with cash or a check made out to “**Kealing Orchestra**”. Physical payments must be in an envelope with the student’s name on the front. For most fees, you will also have an option to pay online via

[School Cash Online](#) through AISD. [Here](#) is the link of the instructions on how to register for School Cash Online.

## Uniforms

### Hornet, Concert, and Philharmonic Orchestras

The uniform to be worn at all formal concerts and contests for Hornet, Concert, and Philharmonic Orchestra members consists of the following:

- Kealing Orchestra polo shirt. (Purchase from Director)
- Black formal dress pants for all students. (No black jeans/denim/leggings)
- ALL black dress shoes, black dress socks (not low-rise black athletic socks), or closed-toe formal black flats

### Symphony Orchestra

The uniform to be worn at all formal concerts and contests for Symphony members consists of the following: (***\*Items with an asterisk are provided by Kealing. Students will be fitted for these items in class and will need to return them, dry-cleaned, at the end of the school year.***)

<p><u>Option 1</u> White tuxedo shirt with tab collar and pleated front Black tuxedo pants* Black tuxedo jacket* Black bow tie and vest* Formal ALL Black dress shoes. Formal black socks (not low-rise black athletic socks).</p>	<p><u>Option 2</u> Black formal dress* Formal ALL black closed toe dress shoes Formal black socks (not low-rise black athletic socks)</p>
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### Rockestra

Rockestra shirt (purchase from director) and black pants/shoes, or jeans, depending on the event.

## Practicing- A Musician's Daily Homework!

All Orchestra students are expected to practice their instrument at home every day. Students may be required to document their practice for a grade leading up to concerts and contest performances. The practice expectations for each group are as follows:

<b>Beginners –</b>	<b>Concert &amp; Philharmonic –</b>	<b>Symphony –</b>
First Semester 15-20 minutes per day, 5 days per week	30 minutes per day, 5 days per week	45+ minutes per day, 5 days per week
Second Semester- 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week		

**A normal practice session should include the following:**

- Tuning open strings
- Using a metronome to accurately time practiced excerpts and parts
- Warmup or method book exercises
- Scale practice
- Orchestra Music practice
- Private lesson or other music practice

# Behavior Expectations

Classroom Expectations	Rehearsal Expectations	Concert Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on time and have all your materials everyday</li> <li>● Be respectful of your director, other students, and any guests</li> <li>● Keep the room clean and organized</li> <li>● Do not play or talk while the director is speaking</li> <li>● Be respectful of orchestra property and others' personal property</li> <li>● Do your best and be productive at all times</li> <li>● Eating will not be allowed in the orchestra room, especially during class time. If you need to eat a snack, please step outside to the small hallway by the office</li> <li>● Cellphones are NOT allowed to be used during class time. If you have an emergency, let the directors know and they will notify the office.</li> <li>● Have a positive attitude and be nice – No bad vibes in the orchestra room!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have your music, pencil, and tuner</li> <li>● Be tuned and ready to go with all materials by the time we begin tuning as a class</li> <li>● Stay in silent rest position while another section is playing</li> <li>● Keep bags under your chair</li> <li>● Violins and violas - keep your instruments under or next to your chair. Cellos and basses - keep your instrument cases on the racks</li> <li>● Do not play or talk while the director is speaking</li> <li>● Listen to your director, section leaders, and other students when they are giving comments and directing the group</li> <li>● Raise your hand if you have a question</li> <li>● PRACTICE happens at home – REHEARSAL happens here</li> <li>● Keep your hands to yourself. No horse playing.</li> <li>● Do not play or touch any instrument that does not belong to you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be on time and have all your concert materials ready.</li> <li>● Be dressed in your correct uniform attire (please look at uniform section for more information)</li> <li>● Do not play or talk if you are in a room when another group is rehearsing or the directors are talking</li> <li>● Horseplaying and running in the courtyard and hallways is NOT allowed</li> <li>● Follow all of your directors/leader(s) instructions</li> <li>● Keep all used rooms and spaces clean and organized</li> <li>● Do not leave food and trash anywhere that is NOT a designated trash can</li> <li>● Cell phones and watches are NOT allowed on stage when performing</li> <li>● Keep all bags and cases in your designated area only</li> <li>● Please help tear down the stage and put the rooms back together</li> </ul>

		when we are done with our concerts
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\*These expectations will be included into your participation and concert grade and failure to comply with them will result in an automatic grade deduction. It is essential that all students follow these rules and expectations as this ensures that everyone is safe and it especially makes everything flow smoothly.

If a student does not comply with any of the above expectations, the following steps will be taken:

1. Verbal Warning (up to 3)
2. Communication with Parents
3. Referral/Meet with administrator
4. One day in ISS
5. Suspension for indefinite amount of time

If a student also fails to comply with any of the concert expectations above, they will be sent home and they will receive an automatic zero for their concert grade.

Any physical threats, aggression, or threatening language could result in an immediate referral to an AP.

**Congratulations! You made it to the end of the handbook!**  
**[Don't forget to click here to fill out the handbook form and media release form by Friday, 8/25.](#)** Thanks!