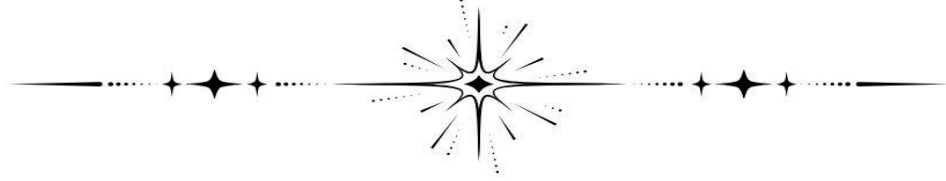




2025-2026

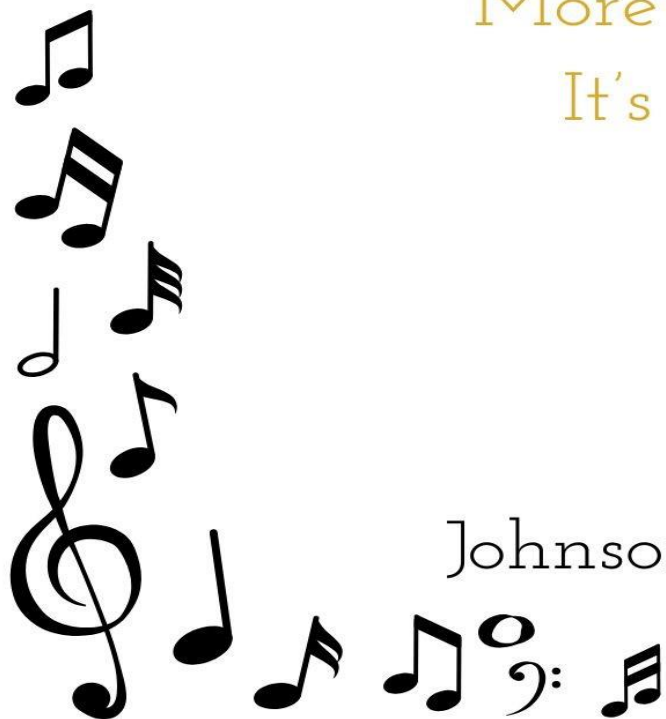


Middle Schools Orchestra

Indian Trail Middle School
Liberty Bell Middle School

Student Handbook

"More than Notes-
It's a Journey"



Johnson City Schools

JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS

Middle School Orchestra Handbook 2025-2026

INDIAN TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL

LIBERTY BELL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Christian Belt, Assistant Orchestra Director • beltc@jcschools.org

johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com

A Note from Our Directors,

Welcome, or welcome back, to the JC Schools Orchestra program!!!! I hope everyone has had a restful and rejuvenating summer!

Our ultimate goal for our orchestra program is to provide our string students with a positive music making experience that allows them to be exactly who they are and develop a life-long love of music.

Here in the JC Schools Orchestra program, you will quickly find that our orchestra is truly a family, we work together to become better people, musicians, and to make beautiful music!

Your success in orchestra depends on your understanding of how our orchestra program works. This handbook has been assembled to inform string students and parents of the orchestra's policies. Be sure to read all the information in this handbook and electronically sign the contract. By signing the contract, you are signifying that you consent to following the expectations and guidelines of the orchestra program. The consent form will be the string student's first grade.

I would like our parents to be eager and engaged in our orchestra program, because alone we achieve nothing! There are numerous volunteer opportunities with the orchestra guild for any parents interested in volunteering!

Participation in this orchestra program is a privilege for all string students who have met proper course requirements and consistently exhibit the qualities of a fine musician. You are responsible for making the following contributions to the orchestra on a daily basis: positive character, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, dependability, dedication, and musical excellence.

For additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me! We are going to have a great year in orchestra. We are going to learn a lot and make wonderful music!!!

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE AND GOAL

Orchestra is a performance class where string students learn skills to perform successfully and grow as a musician. The primary goal of this organization is to provide string students with an orchestral experience that produces creative, disciplined musicians and superior performing ensembles. The success of our orchestras depends on the collective efforts of the string students, teachers, parents, and administration. Let's work together to create an orchestral experience that is enjoyable and educational for all.

PROGRAM CONTENT: WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Proper technique and skills
- Reading and understanding musical notation
- Sight reading
- Music history and different styles of music
- How to be a part of an ensemble/team and how to perform on stage.

PROGRAM PREREQUISITES

6th Grade Course description:

This class is an introductory course in playing the violin, viola, cello, or bass. String students do not need any previous experience to participate. Skills will be developed in solo playing, orchestral performances, and small ensembles. Our goal is for all string students to be able to perform appropriate grade level music and be confident of their abilities. As string students learn to play an instrument, they should also develop an appreciation for the skill and artistry involved in playing a musical instrument. String students should also be able to identify famous composers in a historical context.

7th Grade Orchestra Course description:

This is a course of intermediate instruction in violin, viola, cello, and bass for string students who have successfully completed at least one year in string class. String students will learn intermediate terminology, develop technical skills, musicianship, and listening skills. String students will develop their range on their instrument through study of intermediate level scales and concert pieces. String students who demonstrate above average proficiency will be eligible for The East Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association (ETSBOA) Jr. Orchestra Clinic. Home practice is required and participation in concerts is required.

Prerequisite: String students must have successfully completed one year of string class. This is a year-long course.

8th Grade Orchestra Course description:

This is an advanced course of instruction in violin, viola, cello, and bass for string students who have successfully completed at least two years in string class. This class will prepare string students for the high school strings class. String students will continue to develop technical skills such as shifting, tuning, sight-reading, position work, advanced music theory and scales. Home practice is required and participation in concerts is required. String students who demonstrate above average proficiency will be eligible for The East Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association (ETSBOA) Jr Clinic Orchestra.

Prerequisite: String students must have successfully completed two years of string class. This is a year-long course.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Violins & Violas rent or purchase an instrument from a local music store. The string students will need to carry their instruments to and from school daily. Violins & Violas are provided with a storage locker in the orchestra room to store their instrument during the school day.

Cellos & Basses rent or purchase an instrument for home-use either from a local music store or from school based on school instrument availability. School-owned cellos and basses are rented out for home use on a first-come-first-served basis after signing the “School-Owned Instrument Use e-Contract” and paying the yearly rental of \$35.00 for cellos/basses (cellos and basses cannot be carried on the bus). Cellists and Bassists are provided an instrument to use at school.

The most cost-effective way to acquire an instrument is to RENT one from a local string instrument store; most music stores even offer a rent-to-buy option. **PLEASE do not buy an instrument from the internet. There are MANY instrument brands that are not suitable for playing in the school orchestra.** (Brand names that are not recommended: Skylark, Cremona, Palatino, Natural Acoustic, Mendini, Cecilio, and many more...) If the instrument is priced at less than \$300, it is probably not going to be a quality instrument. These instruments are very hard to play and even harder to keep in tune. If you find a “deal” on one of these sites, please email the link to us so that we can review it for you.

There are several instrument shops in town that offer lease/rent/purchase of appropriate school instruments. I will also list internet sites that I have experience with that offer good, inexpensive instruments. For beginners, I suggest the rental/leasing option until you are certain that your child has made a long-term commitment to playing and has grown into a full-sized instrument.

Local Music Stores

Baroque Violin Shop	865-322-9875	knoxvillebaroque@gmail.com
Wilhite Strings	865-670-1888	https://wilhitestrings.com/
Music Doctors	423-246-6220	
Southwest Strings		www.swstrings.com
Shar Music		www.sharmusic.com

REQUIRED MATERIALS**6th Grade**

- ✓ Instrument and bow
- ✓ Rosin
- ✓ Essential Elements Book 1
- ✓ Pencil & Highlighter
- ✓ **Violin/Viola:** Shoulder rest
- ✓ **Cello/Bass:** Rock Stop
- ✓ Black 1 inch 3 ring binder
- ✓ Sheet Protectors
- ✓ Soft Clean Cloth

7th Grade

- ✓ Instrument and bow
- ✓ Rosin
- ✓ Essential Elements Book 2
- ✓ Pencil & Highlighter
- ✓ **Violin/Viola:** Shoulder rest
- ✓ **Cello/Bass:** Rock Stop
- ✓ Black 1 inch 3 ring binder
- ✓ Sheet Protectors
- ✓ Soft Clean Cloth

8th Grade

- ✓ Instrument and bow
- ✓ Rosin
- ✓ Essential Techniques Book
- ✓ Pencil & Highlighter
- ✓ **Violin/Viola:** Shoulder rest
- ✓ **Cello/Bass:** Rock Stop
- ✓ Black 1 inch 3 ring binder
- ✓ Sheet Protectors
- ✓ Soft Clean Clo

CONCERT ATTIRE

A sharp looking performing ensemble adds to the overall aesthetic of the performance, boosts the confidence and the morale of the players, and leaves a positive impression on the audience. It is for these reasons that orchestra members wear a standard concert uniform worn at all performances. Details are below:

Ladies

- Solid White dress shirt with sleeves
- Solid Black pants/long skirt
- Or Solid Black long dress
- Black tights or socks with black shoes

Gentlemen

- White dress shirt
- Black pants
- Black socks with black shoes

NO extra colors, logos, other writing or designs visible on attire. All concert attire must adhere to the school dress code. ALL Pants/Skirts/Dresses must fall below the knee when seated.

Please Note: Orchestra members who dress inappropriately will not be allowed to perform.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Expectations for Orchestra Members Behavior

1. Always treat your fellow string students and the director with respect.
2. Enter the room quietly.
3. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking.
4. Be in class and ready to play on time. Use the bathroom before or after class.
5. Promptly and quietly be seated with your instrument and begin assignment.
6. Act responsibly--protect your precious instrument and those around you!
7. Stay in your seat.
8. No food, candy, or gum.

Consequences

String students will be held responsible if they make poor behavior choices:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Verbal warning and parent notified of child's behavior.
3. Lunch detention.
4. Referral to office. Parent notified.
5. Parent teacher conference.

String students who receive a referral in orchestra class will not be permitted to attend orchestra field trips.

Severe Clause

Fighting, swearing, violent or disrespectful behavior will result in immediate referral to the office.

String students are expected to adhere to the Johnson City Schools Student Code of Conduct and the students' policies and procedures. Violations will receive disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

GRADING (EASY “A” BUT NOT FREE)

Please make note: If an orchestra member actively participates in every class and attends all concerts, they will most likely receive an A in orchestra. However, string students must work for it.

- Homework will be checked daily during the rehearsal time.
- Tests and quizzes, either written or performed.
- String students will be asked to perform, alone and with others.

Orchestra members are graded on the following:

- Performance evaluations, daily quizzes, homework, playing tests, and projects (50% of grade)
- Daily rehearsal skills and participation (50% of grade)

PRACTICING

Practice is HOMEWORK in orchestra! String students are expected to do a minimum of 10 minutes of practice daily. Homework assignments are based on exercises and music taught in class and will be posted on the homework page of the orchestra website. String students are responsible for keeping up with their practicing and coming to class prepared and able to play music covered in previous class periods. String students' participation grade and all performance assessments will reflect the amount and quality of a string student's practice. String students who have a regular time to practice every day are more consistent players, are better prepared for tests, and perform at a higher level. Consistency is the key to success, the more you practice the faster you will improve and the better you will play.

ORCHESTRA TRIP POLICY

These are fun opportunities for orchestra members to enjoy both educational and recreational activities outside the classroom. ***These trips are considered a privilege and must be earned by the orchestra members.*** Orchestra members who wish to participate in this activity must have a good academic and citizenship record in every class. **Orchestra members must earn a 2.0 minimum GPA (C average with no F's) and satisfactory behavior EVERY GRADING PERIOD.** Orchestra members who do not meet these requirements, have shown a record of discipline problems, or have missed any required orchestra activities will not be eligible. **All decisions about the trip are at the discretion of the director.** Trips are usually scheduled in the spring and must pass school board approval.

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

String students may drop their instrument off in the storage room at 7:30 am. Instruments cannot be left alone in the hallways or outside the doors. A locker will be available inside the orchestra storage room for violins and violas only. Violin and violas will be issued a strings locker to put their instrument in during the school day and it should be kept clean and neat. They should pick it up in the afternoon, at dismissal. Please note that cellos and basses are not allowed on school buses. If your child rides the bus, you will need to use a school-owned cello or bass during class.

CHAIR SEATING

The orchestra director retains the right to determine member seating in the best way for the ensemble. Seating is not personal; it is based on the needs of the ensemble and to provide string students with a learning environment in which they can be successful.

FINGERNAIL LENGTH

All orchestra members must keep their left-hand fingernails cut short. To determine if a string student's fingernails are too long do the following test: With a straight finger, firmly press the fingertip down onto the top of a table so that the finger is perpendicular to the table. If the fingertip can firmly press to the table without the nail getting in the way, the nail is short enough. If the nail gets in the way, it is too long to play a string instrument correctly.

CONFLICTS WITH ORCHESTRA

Rehearsal and performance calendars are normally given out well in advance. While not always 100% preventable, every effort will be made to eliminate conflicts with other major school activities. It is the policy of the orchestra to assist orchestra members when conflicts occur within the scope of orchestra policy. Conflicts should be brought to the director's attention IN WRITING as soon as the member is aware of a discrepancy. A minimum of two weeks' notice should be given but earlier is better. Orchestra members should not expect to automatically be excused because of conflicts. Orchestra members are reminded that orchestra is a demanding activity and does require a commitment of time inside and outside of the school day. All orchestra concerts will take top priority over most school sports and other extra-curricular activities because orchestra is a co-curricular, academic class. Please do not hesitate to contact your director with questions.

AVAILABLE SUPPORT

After school individual help is available to string students. Please ask your director for help.

Orchestra-related financial assistance may be available in some circumstances. Please contact your director for information.

JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS ORCHESTRA GUILD

JCSOG is the Johnson City Schools Orchestra Guild. Every family who has a string student in orchestra is a member. This non-profit organization serves as an advocate for our orchestra program and orchestra students in our community.

JCSOG Mailing Address:

PO Box 5854

Johnson City, TN 37602

www.johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com

Facebook: @JohnsonCitySchoolsOrchestraGuild

Instagram: jcsorchestraguild

ORCHESTRA CALENDAR 2025-2026

Parent Meetings (Mandatory)

Saturday, August 9, 2025,

Indian Trail Middle School, 9:00AM-10:00AM, Indian Trail Auditorium

Liberty Bell Middle School, 10:30AM-11:30AM, Indian Trail Auditorium

Monday, January 12, 2026, 6PM, at Science Hill High School, Middle School

Mandatory for Parents of Students going on the Dollywood Trip. Deposits due and contract signing.

Middle School Concerts

LBMS

September 29, 2025,

December 13, 2025,

March 9, 2026,

May 11, 2026,

Fall Concert @ 7pm, Science Hill Auditorium

Trans-Siberian Orchestra Collaboration Concert @ 7pm, Freedom Hall

Spring Orchestra Concert @ 7pm, Science Hill Auditorium

End of the Year Concert @ 7pm, Science Hill Auditorium

ITMS

September 23, 2025,

December 13, 2025,

March 10, 2026,

May 7, 2026,

Fall Concert @ 7pm, ITMS

Trans-Siberian Orchestra Collaboration Concert @ 7pm, Freedom Hall

Spring Concert @ 7pm, ITMS

End of the Year Concert @ 7pm, ITMS

Trip Payment Schedule

Dollywood TN, May 2, 2026

Estimated Trip Cost \$125 per student. (Inquire about the cost with a Dollywood season pass.) Non-refundable deposit of \$75 is due on January 12, 2026, and balance due on or before March 31, 2026.

Trip deposits will be accepted **ONLY** at the mandatory parent meeting. Subsequent payments can be made online, or payments can be mailed to JCSOG, PO Box 5854, Johnson City, TN 37602. If mailed, payments must be postmarked by the due date. **All checks for trip related costs must be made out to JCSOG.**

*******DO NOT SEND CASH PAYMENTS WITH YOUR STUDENTS TO SCHOOL*******

Clinic/Festival Dates

Clinic	Registration Deadline	Audition Date	Clinic Dates
Jr. Orchestra Clinic (6-9 Grades)	\$10.00 Fee October 17, 2025	November 1, 2025 Kingsport, TN	November 21-22, 2025 Johnson City, TN

Please use the QR or this link to acknowledge reading and understanding the contents of this handbook.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4uHHA7lCvY7ozEztXVNCH-BTkcMLU8ghusB1Xrr5mEN7Ukw/viewform?usp=header>