

Orchestra 101:

*A Guide for
Shawnee Mission East Orchestra
Students and Parents*

Orchestra 101

This guide is intended to give you as much information as possible about the many activities that are a part of the Orchestra program at Shawnee Mission East. This is prepared by the Orchestra Boosters and Mr. Lane in the hope that you will keep it as a reference throughout the school year. If you are a new parent or a returning parent needing a refresher on the many activities and acronyms, this guide is for you!

SME Orchestra Website: www.smeorchestraboosters.com

This website is a one-stop location for all orchestra information, the calendar of events, recordings of concerts, Booster meeting dates and more. You will want to bookmark this site and check it regularly throughout the year for updated information.

SME Orchestra Fee:

Every student must pay a one-time fee of \$50 for events required by Mr. Lane. This fee covers the Solo Fest, uniform cleaning and repair, other classroom activities, meals/snacks for field trips and an Orchestra t-shirt (more on this below). Fees must be collected before uniforms can be distributed to your student.

Please note that students who participate in the reduced or free lunch program will be eligible for a fee waiver. Please contact the Booster president if you would like to request an Orchestra fee waiver. Your request will be kept confidential.

SME Orchestra Boosters:

Sponsorship of the Orchestra Boosters is encouraged for all parents of Orchestra students. The goal is to support the activities of our students with volunteer time and funding. We meet several times a year to exchange information, plan trips and events, and receive updates from Mr. Lane about the orchestra program. We need as many parents as possible to volunteer to help with activities, most of which are not very time-consuming, but very necessary for the success of the orchestra program and our students. ***Please get involved early as we cannot be successful without you!*** The Boosters will communicate with parents primarily by e-mail to save postage and to avoid the mysterious disappearance of handouts between the classroom and home! Please rest assured that your e-mail address will only be used for orchestra business. **The Booster email is smeorchboosters@gmail.com.**

Your Orchestra Booster sponsorship provides the following for all students:

Support for field trips and competitions

Clinicians who are instrument specialists and guest conductors to work with students

Equipment purchased for use by all students in the Orchestra classroom

Support of general team building and spirit within the Orchestra overall - e.g. Lancer Day

Parade float, membership picnic, etc.

Support for all Orchestra trips

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SME Orchestras:

Symphony Orchestra: This is the most advanced orchestra and students are selected by Mr. Lane based on auditions held the previous spring. It includes only strings for the first semester. Winds, brass and percussion students from the band program are added during the second quarter and continue for the remainder of the school year.

Philharmonic Orchestra: This orchestra includes only strings for the entire year. Placement is determined by Mr. Lane based on spring auditions.

Concert Orchestra: (primarily Freshmen) This orchestra is strings only for the entire year and may play with the Philharmonic orchestra during concerts later in the year.

Digitally-Recorded Playing Tests for Class Grades:

Mr. Lane requires that all students digitally record pieces of music for playing tests for class grades. This can be done in a variety of ways from your home computer or other digital recording device. Instructions for digital recording options will be available from Mr. Lane on the orchestra website. In addition to recording at home, there is equipment available to all students in the Orchestra room. Mr. Lane will assist the students with access to and use of the school equipment.

A word to the wise: It is a good idea to get this system set up far in advance of a playing test deadline.

Uniforms:

Each student is provided with a uniform for concerts. Uniforms remain the property of the Orchestra and are loaned to the students. Girls are provided with a black dress—they provide their own closed-toed black dress shoes and black hose. Boys wear tuxedos—the jacket, pants, tux shirt, cummerbund and bow tie are provided. Boys should provide their own black dress shoes and black socks. Please adhere to this concert dress code as Mr. Lane is a stickler for this!

There are some absolute “no-no’s: no flip-flops, sneakers, bright jewelry, brown shoes, high heels, etc. All students should have their hair pulled back out of the face. We are very proud of the musicians our students have become and expect them to project a professional image when representing Shawnee Mission East.

You will receive the SME Orchestra Uniform Contract via email at the beginning of the school year. Please read this policy in its entirety as you will be held accountable for the condition of your student's uniform when it is returned. Both copies of the contract must be signed by student and parent and returned when uniforms are distributed. Uniforms then will be in your care until the end of the performance calendar. Uniforms will be collected at the end of each school year for cleaning. You may request to have your exact uniform returned the

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following year, as we realize that you have paid to have your student's uniform altered to fit. If a uniform no longer fits, it can be exchanged for another size.

Uniform problems or size changes can be made when necessary throughout the year. Do not exchange uniforms without first notifying Mr. Lane or the Booster Uniform contact person. The returned uniform must be checked in and a new uniform assigned. **You will be held responsible for the specific uniform assigned to you on your uniform contract. Contact Dana Snyder (913-649-0135, allendana1@sbcglobal.net), Kelley Gasperi (913-642-7474, sgasperi@att.net) or Diane Levin (913-649-8458, lev1in@yahoo.com) for any changes.**

Since uniforms are a very large investment for the Orchestra, please RESPECT this policy!

Dress Code – SME Orchestra Concert attire should always portray the quality musicians that students have worked hard to become. This image is best reflected in consistent, dignified, and professional attire. Adherence to the standard of SME Dress Code will reflect your pride and respect for the music, to fellow orchestra members, and to your audiences. Students will be monitored for adherence to the dress code and chronic lack of adherence may be reflected in class grade.

Men - Tuxedos, shirts, cummerbunds and ties are provided. Only SME issued tuxedos may be worn. **Men will provide black socks and black shoes** to wear with their tuxedos. Shirts should be clean and ironed for each performance. Pants should be hemmed so that the length is approximately ½” off the floor. Men should be neatly groomed for every performance.

Women – Black uniform gowns are provided. Only SME issued gown may be worn. **Women will provide black hose or knee high hose and black closed toed shoes with heels no higher than 2”**. Gowns should be hemmed to allow for 1” clearance off the floor to ensure safe movement up and down stairs, and around the stage. Dresses should be clean and well maintained for each performance. Dresses are machine washable so can be laundered at home ... on gentle cycle with gentle soap containing no bleaching agents. Women should be neatly groomed for every performance.

Orchestra T-Shirts:

Each year students submit design ideas for Orchestra T-Shirts in September and the winning design is selected by student vote (subject to the approval of Mr. Lane and the Orchestra Booster Board, of course!). These shirts will be worn throughout the year at various events, including the all Orchestra trip when held in the Spring every other year. Of note, in past years non-Orchestra students have coveted the orchestra shirts!

Lettering in Music:

Any student of the orchestra may earn a Shawnee Mission East Letter. A point system devised by Mr. Lane is used to determine whether a student receives a letter. The award has no bearing on grades. Specifics regarding the point system may be found on the Booster website.

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Concerts at Shawnee Mission East

Our orchestras perform a number of concerts at SME each year, usually in October, December, March, April and May. Refer to the calendar on the website or in your packet for dates and times. Admission is free to all concerts except the Collage Concert, which is our annual fundraiser.

Collage Concert: Students are asked to sell tickets for this fundraiser which is usually held in March. Complimentary tickets are distributed to elementary and middle school strings students. We create advertising posters with artwork provided by our students to encourage people from the community to attend. This is the Booster's primary fundraiser each year and is very important to the success of our organization. Please support us in any way you can when asked!

Concert Etiquette: Please refer to our website for complete information regarding concert etiquette. Most importantly, arrive 20-30 minutes before the performance, turn off cell phones and pagers, maintain silence while music is played, refrain from entering and leaving the auditorium during a performance, and applaud enthusiastically only after all movements of each work are completed!

Concert Receptions: After most concerts, we have a brief reception in the foyer. Families are asked to provide drinks and cookies. Parent volunteers coordinate these receptions.

Auditions and Festivals

Students are required to participate in a number of activities during the year in addition to school concerts. They are grouped here by sponsoring organization. The dates, locations and times for each event can be found on the annual calendar on the website and in this mailing.

SME Orchestra Placement Auditions:

In the spring, Mr. Lane holds auditions for all students who plan to continue with orchestra in the coming year. Independent judges rate each student and Mr. Lane uses that rating to determine whether a student is placed in the Symphony or Philharmonic Orchestra. Every student auditions every year, regardless of their placement in the current year.

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KMEA District and State Auditions (Kansas Music Educators Association):

District Auditions: The KMEA sponsors 6 District Orchestras across the state of Kansas. SME is in the Northeast District. SME students in grades 10-12 attend the District auditions in early November. Symphony Orchestra students (grades 10-12 only) are required to participate in District auditions and Philharmonic students are encouraged to do so.

If the audition is out of the Kansas City metro area a bus is provided for all students, leaving from SME early on a Saturday morning and returning by mid-afternoon. If the auditions are scheduled within our city, parents will be required to provide transportation to and from the location. The audition music is provided on the KMEA website: www.ksmea.org. The top-performing students are named to the KMEA District Orchestra. They perform with that group in December in Olathe.

State Auditions: Students who qualify for the District Orchestra are eligible to audition for the KMEA State Orchestra. Those auditions are held in January in Salina, KS. A bus is provided, leaving from SME very early on a Saturday morning and returning late in the evening. Those named to the State Orchestra perform with that group at the KMEA Conference in Wichita in February. They will spend 3 days rehearsing and then play a performance at State.

SME Solo Festival: All students are required to participate in the Solo Festival organized by Mr. Lane at SME. It is held on a Saturday in late April or early May. Students sign up for a specific time to perform and are rated by an outside clinician who is trained in the student's instrument. Parent volunteers are needed to assist with this event.

Shawnee Mission District Large Ensemble Festival: This festival is organized by the Shawnee Mission School District and is usually held in April. The top orchestras from each of the SM high schools (Symphony from East) perform for a visiting clinician and the public at one of our high schools. The clinician then works with each orchestra during one class period following the festival and provides critiques of their performance.

KSHSAA State Large Ensemble Festival: All orchestra students participate in this event which is held during the school day. The orchestras play for a panel of judges and are given a rating based on their performance. Parent volunteers are needed to chaperone for the day.

KSHSAA Solo and Small Ensemble Festival (Kansas State High School Activities Association): The KSHSAA sponsors this judged event on a Regional and State level. Students are asked to play a piece and are rated by a panel of judges. Students who are interested in this festival should contact Mr. Lane for information.