

“ORCHESTRA 101”
For Shawnee Mission East Orchestra Students & Parents
2017-18

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. Keda in hopes 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 Class Fee

Each Orchestra student must pay an annual fee of \$50 to cover clinician fees, uniforms, and an Orchestra t-shirt for each student. Fees must be collected before a uniform 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 Mr. Keda to request an Orchestra fee waiver. Your request will be kept confidential.

SME Orchestra Boosters

We encourage all parents to participate in the Orchestra Boosters. The goal of the Orchestra Boosters is to support the activities of our students with volunteer time and funding. We meet several times a year to exchange information, coordinate fundraisers, plan trips and events, and receive updates from Mr. Keda about the Orchestra program. We need as many parents as possible 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 via email, so it's vital that we have your current email address(es). Rest assured that your email address(es) will only be used for Orchestra business. **The Booster email is smeorchboosters@gmail.com.**

We have sponsorship opportunities for the Orchestra Boosters as well. Sponsors receive recognition at all Orchestra concerts, and your extra dollars help provide 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 (i.e., Lancer Day Parade float, back-to-school get-together, etc.)
- Support for all Orchestra trips

Digitally Recorded Playing Tests for Class Grades

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

A word to the wise: Get the recording system you plan to use 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. Women are provided with a black dress; they provide their own closed-toed black dress shoes and black hose. Men wear tuxedos—the jacket, pants, tux shirt, cummerbund and bowtie are provided. Men provide their own black dress shoes and black socks.

There are some absolute “no-no’s”: flip-flops, sneakers, bright jewelry, brown shoes, high heels, etc. All students should have hair pulled back from 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 have received the SME Orchestra Uniform Contract. Please read the contract in its entirety, as you are held accountable for the condition of your student’s uniform when it is returned. Two copies of the contract must be signed by the student and parent and returned when uniforms are distributed. Uniforms will then be in your care until the end of the performance year. Uniforms will be collected at the end of each school year for cleaning. You may request your same uniform the following year, as we realize that you may have paid to have your student’s uniform altered to fit. If a uniform no longer fits, it may be exchanged for another size.

Uniform problems or size changes may be made when necessary throughout the year. Do not exchange uniforms without first notifying Mr. Keda or the Booster Uniform contact person. The returned uniform must be checked in before a new uniform may be assigned. **You will be held responsible for the specific uniform assigned to you on your uniform contract. Contact Michele Anderson (816-305-5700, danderson@kc.rr.com) for any changes.**

As uniforms are a very large investment for the Orchestra, we ask that you respect this policy.

Performance Dress Code

SME Orchestra performance 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 SME Orchestra's Performance Dress Code will reflect your pride in and respect for the music to fellow Orchestra members and your audiences. Students will be monitored for adherence to the dress code. Lack of adherence may be reflected in class grade.

Men – Tuxedos, shirts, cummerbunds, and bowties are provided. Only SME-issued tuxedos may be worn. **Men will provide black socks and black shoes** to wear with 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 gowns may be worn. **Women will provide black hose and black closed-toed shoes with heels no higher than 2 inches.** 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, and the winning design is selected by student vote (subject to approval by Mr. Keda). Every Orchestra student receives an Orchestra t-shirt. The shirt will be worn throughout the year at various Orchestra and fund-raising events.

Lettering in Orchestra

Any Orchestra student may earn a Shawnee Mission East letter. A point system is devised by Mr. Keda and used to determine if and when a student receives a letter. The letter award has no bearing on the student's grade.

SME Orchestra Trips

Every two years (odd years) the SME Orchestra travels to another part of the country (sometimes outside the country, as in spring of 2017!) to experience a professional symphony performance, coaching by a professional symphony conductor, or to compete in a nationwide competition. With this every-other-year rotation, a four-year Orchestra student will have the opportunity to participate in two (2) Orchestra trips while at Shawnee Mission East.

Students have numerous opportunities throughout each year to earn money to apply toward his/her next Orchestra trip. In past years we have had students earn almost enough money to pay for their entire trip, so it pays for your students to get involved in fundraising early and often!

Many of the Orchestra activities are focused on raising money for the next Orchestra trip—the September 9 Orchestra car wash, November/December poinsettia sales, grocery sacking at Price Chopper over the holidays, etc. We keep close track of the students that participate, how much money is raised for each event, and how that money is divided proportionately among the students that took part. It's a great way for the kids to get to know their fellow Orchestra members and a great way for kids to ease the financial burden on parents when the Orchestra travels.

Orchestra Banquet

The annual Orchestra Banquet is held in May, and all Orchestra students, parents, and family members are invited to attend. The event takes place in the East cafeteria and is catered by a local restaurant. Senior Orchestra students are honored at the Banquet; an annual award is presented to an outstanding junior; and we recap the accomplishments and activities of the year.

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 with the exception of 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; these posters encourage people from the community to attend the event. This is the Boosters' 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 to 30 minutes before the performance; turn off cell phones and pagers; maintain silence when music is played; refrain from entering and leaving the auditorium during a performance; and applaud enthusiastically only after all movements of a musical piece have been 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. The activities are grouped below 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

Each **spring** the Orchestra director holds auditions for all students who plan to continue with Orchestra in the coming year. Students are then placed in the appropriate Orchestra group the following year. Every student auditions every year, regardless of his/her placement during the current year.

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 Shawnee Mission schools 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.

KMEA District Auditions (Kansas Music Educators Association)

The KMEA sponsors six (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**. If auditions are outside of the Kansas City metro area, a bus is provided for the 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, and they perform with that group in **December** in Olathe.

KMEA State Auditions (Kansas Music Educators Association)

Students who qualify for the District Orchestra are eligible to audition for the KMEA State Orchestra. Those auditions are held in **January** in Salina, Kansas. 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 spend three (3) days rehearsing at the State Conference and then play a performance at State.

KSHSAA State Large Ensemble Festival (Kansas State High School Activities Association)

The KSHSAA sponsors this event on a regional and state level. 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.