



We are very proud of the wonderful Orchestra program here at Ted Polk Middle School. As a 6th grader, your child can take Orchestra as one of their fun and exciting electives. In Orchestra, we offer the following instruments:

- The **violin** is the “small” of the orchestra family. Because its strings are the shortest, it produces the highest sound. Violins can play sitting down or standing up because it’s played on the violinist’s left shoulder – even if you’re right-handed!
- The **viola** is the “medium” of the orchestra, and a very important member of the orchestra. Because it is bigger than the violin, with longer strings, it makes a rich, warm sound that is lower in pitch. It’s a little heavier than the violin, but it is still played on the violist’s left arm.
- The **cello** is the “large” of the orchestra and plays even lower than the viola. To support its longer strings, it’s more than twice as big as the viola - so cellists sit down, resting the instrument upright against their bodies. The cello section of the orchestra makes a big, powerful sound.
- The **bass** is the “super size” of the orchestra and acts as the foundation. These deep instruments add the lower notes to the orchestra sound. The instrument is often taller than the person that plays it! Because the orchestra depends on the bass section, the most skilled musicians should be bass players!

Musical Excellence

We currently have over 260 students enrolled in Orchestra (making us one of the largest programs in the state) and have ranked **among the best middle school orchestras in Texas!** There is a long standing tradition of musical excellence that students pass down from one class to the next. Your child will inherit those traditions and rise to the occasion. It is amazing to see how good they become on their instruments in such a short amount of time!

“A Family Atmosphere”

The students form a very close “family” atmosphere in Orchestra and form bonds that carry through to high school and beyond! We do lots of things outside the school day to foster that togetherness; i.e. **trips to Six Flags, a Dallas Symphony Orchestra performance, Rock Climbing, a Lock In, Roller Skating, and lots more fun stuff!** We perform in many different places – including the Meyerson Symphony Center, Sandy Lake, nursing homes, concerts, and more! Our Chamber Orchestra will even be traveling to Austin to perform at the Capitol Building in March! We work really hard, but have *SO* much fun.

Who can join the Polk Orchestra?

Any 5th grader can sign up! NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY!! Those that do attend the Orchestra Instrument Night have a much better chance of getting to learn the instrument that they *want* to play, rather than being assigned an instrument! (See back for more info.)

How do I sign up for orchestra?

- ✓ It’s easy! Just check **ORCHESTRA** on your 6th grade course selection sheet and you will be automatically enrolled. You can be in Orchestra and still be in any other elective (choir, art, theater, karate, PE) but you cannot be in band AND orchestra. One instrument is enough! 😊

Does everyone who signs up for Orchestra get in?

Yes!!!! Everyone who wants to be in orchestra can participate!!

How will Orchestra help me in middle school?

Being a member of our orchestra means that our students have a place to belong...an automatic circle of friends to support them daily. Being a member of a group that excels gives our students’ confidence and dedication that carries over into other aspects of life. Orchestra members are incredibly active in Polk life - athletes, artists, cheerleaders, student council members, honor society members, spelling and geography bee winners, singers, actors...all in orchestra too! Polk Orchestra students rank among the best in the school! We are proud to say that Polk Orchestra students do not drop out of high school, stay out of trouble, and most go on to be millionaires (mostly kidding about that last one).

How do we get instruments?

When you and your child attend the Instrument Night on March 31st, we will help you decide which instrument would be the best fit for your child to play in orchestra. They will be sized and can begin the paperwork to rent an instrument from Music and Arts at that time, if you wish. We do have a few instruments that are school owned, but those are available on a case by case basis, and are first come first served. Come to Instrument Night for more detailed information!

Be an Orchestra Hero!

Be sure you take a LOOK at our awesome website!
See the pictures, check out the different instruments, and much much more!!!!!!
<http://cfbstaff.cfbisd.edu/polkorchestra>

Questions? gauthierm@cfbisd.edu or 972.968.4636

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