

Dear incoming Westside Orchestra Students and Parents,

On behalf of the Westside HS Orchestra, I'd like to welcome all incoming Westside Orchestra students/parents. Hopefully, I can answer your questions that you might have about Westside, fees, important dates, etc. Please do not hesitate to email me at [wesley.smith@houstonisd.org](mailto:wesley.smith@houstonisd.org), I would love the opportunity to speak with you and address any concerns or questions you may have.

**I highly recommend reading this letter carefully - all the information is important!**

**You are about to become a member of one of the best organizations at Westside High School! Popular reasons why students/parents love being in the Westside Wolf Orchestra:**

- **The orchestra is fantastic!** We have a place for every student in our program – no matter the quality of the musician! We all work together as a team to bring each other up, and play great music!
- **So many different opportunities for a musician!** Along with Orchestra class, you can join AP Music Theory, Individual Contests, Solo & Ensemble, All State-Region Orchestra, and more!
- **Students learn lifelong skills!** We teach our students to be patient, disciplined, responsible, punctual, and respectful while teaching them to be great leaders and musicians.
- **Great for college applications!** Colleges love students that are committed to a seven-year (middle school through high school) orchestra program. Most students take over important leadership roles in the Westside Orchestra when they are upperclassmen which is incredible for their resume and future scholarship opportunities!
- **Students find a place to belong!** All our orchestra students are a part of something that is important! Many freshmen drown their first year in high school. Orchestra gives the students friendship and community from day one!

### **FAQ/Info:**

#### **Audition/Class Placement:**

#### **How do I sign up for the orchestra?**

1. Sign up for ORCHESTRA on your course selection sheet. (Ask your Westside Dean for help) \*\*\*If you accidentally (or rethinking it!) didn't choose orchestra, it's not too late. E-mail Mr. Smith!
2. If you are NOT from Westbriar, if you haven't already, please fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/5dHUc4M9ouarrUCW6> We will add you to our e-mailing list. We want to make sure you are getting information!
3. **We do have auditions!** All students can join the orchestra! We just want to make sure we put you in the correct class based on your ability. Therefore, we ask all students to submit a video of the below music. Students will email a video of the music/video to Mr. Smith. Please have videos sent by **May 25th**. If you miss the deadline, no worries! Audition video should be a one-take video of your playing the scale, as well as audition music.
  - a. All students will be required to play one scale:
    - i. Violins 3 octave G Major
    - ii. Viola 3 octave C Major
    - iii. Cello 3 octave C Major
    - iv. Bass 2 octave E Major

We are using the Houston Youth Symphony's audition music. Music is located here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=13mLc1HD80acvtfhIQMaLpe0jGcjV7zvi>

We will be using the Sinfonia level audition music. If you can play the Philharmonia or Symphony music, that will also be accepted.

4. Students & Parents - Check out the Orchestra Website! This is where we will post information in the upcoming months. [www.westsidehsorchestra.weebly.com](http://www.westsidehsorchestra.weebly.com)

#### **Does the Westside Orchestra take big trips?**

Yes! Our hard-working students deserve an incredible trip! We usually plan on taking a trip every year. The size of the trip depends on fundraising, as well as student contribution for trip costs.

#### **How much are orchestra fees, and what are they for?**

All students pay for a one-time annual orchestra fee. This fee includes most essential things throughout the school year, including t-shirts, entry fees, music, etc. We don't "nickel & dime" you at Westside; we issue one fee that pays for almost everything. Fees usually range from \$50-\$100.

#### **Rehearsals during the school year**

Once school begins, we will have weekly rehearsals. It's important for every student to attend every rehearsal.

I hope I have answered most of your questions. I also hope that you are excited about being a Westside Orchestra Member, because we are excited about having you join our team! Again, please do not hesitate to email me with any questions that you might have.

Thank you,

Wesley Smith

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Orchestra Director  
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