



# TAYS JUNIOR HIGH ORCHESTRA

KATY ISD • 26721 Hawks Prairie Blvd • Katy TX 77494 •

Dear Tays Orchestra Parents,

We are pleased that your child has chosen to be a part of the Tays Junior High School Orchestra for the 2024-2025 school year. Your child will have the opportunity to continue the successful Tays JH tradition and be a part of a wonderful orchestra program.

As a new orchestra member you must attend the instrument interview meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Tays JH Orchestra Room. Please go to [www.taysorchestras.com](http://www.taysorchestras.com), go to Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders and click on Sign Up Here for a Time. That link will take you to a sign up genius. Please sign up for the date and time best for you and your child to select their instrument. This is your child's opportunity to select the instrument that they like best. We will be there to introduce and guide them to the instrument best suited for him/her as we consider a number of factors; the two most important factors being hand size/dexterity and instrument preference.

After we chose an instrument we will discuss procedures for renting an instrument for the school year. We will provide information from reputable vendors so that you might make an informed decision regarding instrument rental. We will also be glad to answer any questions you might have about the various vendors, the rental process, etc. **Renting an instrument during the first year of study is strongly recommended for many reasons but most importantly because it is simply too difficult to sell back a beginner level quality instrument once your child grows into the next size instrument. Purchasing an instrument online from a different vendor is not recommended.**

Please bring your child with you so that the correct size instrument may be obtained. Once the instrument and size are determined you may pick up brochures that will help you decide which vendor you would like to make an instrument reservation with. Listed below is a list of additional supplies your child should have for the 2024-2025 school year.

## 1. INSTRUMENT

- Correctly sized
- Good Condition
- Composite bow recommended
- Rosin
- Good quality strings on instrument

## 2. MUSIC BOOKS can be ordered online or purchased through the instrumental rental vendor.

- Suzuki Book I (for your correct instrument) **Basses do not need this book.**
- Essential Elements 2000 book one (for your correct instrument)
- 1" Black Binder (with pockets)-will be provided to your child
- Pencils
- A three ring binder pencil bag
- Korg TM-50 (or TM-40) tuner and clip. Other models must be approved by Tays Orchestra Directors.

## 3. SHOULDER REST FOR VIOLINS and VIOLAS

- Required for good positions and performance
- Kun and FOM brands work well.

**4. A SOFT CLOTH**

Cleaning cloth (non terry cloth)

**5. WIRE STAND**

Collapsible wire music stand used for practicing at home

**6. ROCK STOP** (cellist and bassists)

Xeros strap or “Slip Stop” model.

**7. CONCERT DRESS: This is not required until our first concert in October.**

Ladies: Long black skirt or black pants,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length or longer

Black blouse, black hose, black shoes.

Gentlemen: Black pants, black dress shirt,

black socks, black shoes.

**8. TAYS ORCHESTRA T-SHIRT: We will order the shirts in September.**

**Students who have previous playing experience need to contact the orchestra director at the earliest possible convenience and arrange to play an audition on April 16th for possible placement into a more advanced orchestra.** Please refer to the [taysorchestras.com](http://taysorchestras.com) website for audition details.

Parents are urged to consult Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Capshaw or Mrs. Williams at any time a question or problem arises. The earlier a real working relationship is reached between child, parent and teacher, the greater your child’s success will be. We are looking forward to continuing the wonderful Tays JH tradition for 2024-2025.

Sincerely,

Bryanna Porter

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## *Frequently asked questions Of new orchestra parents:*

- **Should we buy or rent an instrument?**
  - We always recommend RENTING a beginner instrument for a number of reasons. First of all, you should make sure that your child is going to continue with orchestra year after year before committing to a costly instrument. Secondly, it is very difficult to sell a beginner, factory-made instrument when your child is ready for a step-up model. Finally, through renting an instrument, you can accrue credit with your vendor that can be used later to purchase a better instrument.
  
- **When do students move up in size?**
  - Students move up in size as they grow. Always speak with your director and/or private teacher about moving up in size before you contact the vendor.
  
- **Does orchestra meet every day and does my child get a grade?**
  - Yes. Orchestra is a class that meets daily. Orchestra has homework (students are required to turn in weekly practice records), tests (both written and playing), and participation grades.
  
- **Does my child have to have previous music training?**
  - No, but a strong reading ability as well as a demonstrated desire to work independently is most important. They have learned everything they need to know in their elementary music classes.
  
- **Does it matter if my child is left-handed?**
  - No, it does not matter. All students, regardless of which hand they use to write with, will learn the instrument in the same way.
  
- **Do we really need a shoulder rest?**
  - Teachers cannot stress the importance of a shoulder rest enough. Playing without a shoulder rest is painful and promotes major position problems. A shoulder rest is absolutely necessary and is NOT to be considered an “extra”.

- **What is a rock stop and why do we need one?**
  - A rock stop is a tool in which the endpin of a cello or bass can rest. It is used to keep the instrument upright and to prevent slipping and sliding. Playing without one on a slick flooring (such as on a stage or gym floor) is almost impossible.
  
- **How do we know what instrument a child should learn to play?**
  - At the instrument interview, we ask that you and your child try out ALL FOUR string instruments (violin, viola, cello and bass). We do look at the size of the child and the shape of his or her hands to help determine which instrument he or she will be most successful playing. Of course, the final decision is up to you and your child.
  
- **Is my child expected to carry the cello or bass back and forth to practice?**
  - The instrument that you rent from the music company stays at home and each student is assigned a school instrument to use during class time. Periodically, the home instrument will need to be brought in to us for tuning. There is a \$75 school maintenance fee charged for use of the school instruments to cover minor repairs and string replacement. This fee can be paid throughout the year in small payments if needed.

