

DOWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ORCHESTRA FORMS  
2019-2020

Please complete and return all the following required forms.

\_\_\_ Handbook Agreement Form

\_\_\_ MISD Medical Emergency Info

\_\_\_ MISD Drug Testing Contract (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only).

\_\_\_ Instrument Usage Form (School-owned instruments only)

Note: To be completed by all cello and bass students.

\_\_\_ Orchestra Permission Slip

\_\_\_ Spirit Gear Order Form

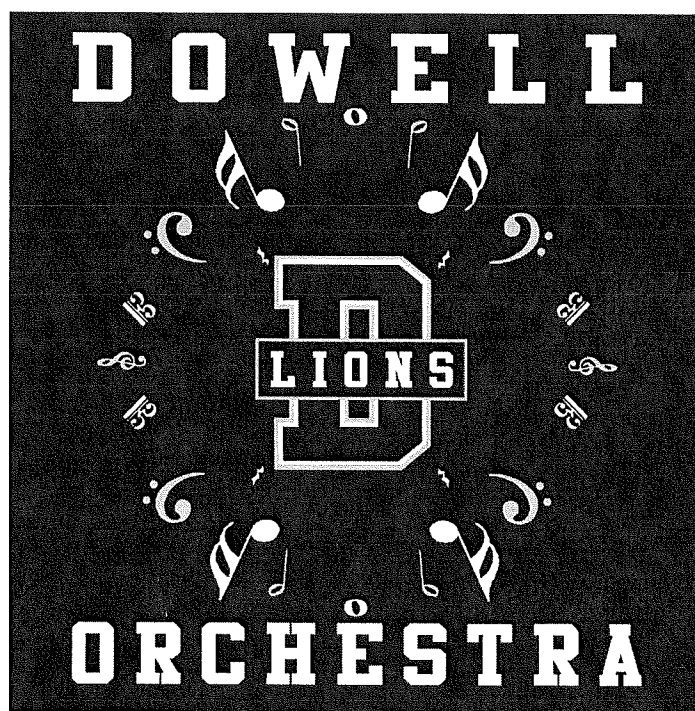
\_\_\_ Orchestra Fee Payment Sheet. **Forms and fees must be turned in together.**

Private Lesson Signup Form (optional)

Sign up for Remind 101 (Register following instructions)

Complete these forms and return them to orchestra no later than September 6<sup>th</sup>

# **Dowell Middle School Orchestra**



## **2019-2020**

Parent and Student Handbook

# DOWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

McKinney ISD · 301 Ridge Road · McKinney, TX 75070 · (469) 302-6738

Dear Dowell Orchestra Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! We are so excited that you are joining our orchestras and aiding in our continued reputation of success, diligence, and joy of music making and learning! It is an honor to teach our fine students at Dowell. I truly believe that they will become our future leaders and professionals, and will create a positive impact for the world!

The impact that you as parents make to your child and their success in orchestra, as well as your support of the orchestra program, is essential and cannot be overstated. The high quality of student success found at Dowell Middle School is attributed to our wonderful, supportive, and dedicated parents. I please ask for your support and dedication to your child's success in orchestra. This includes encouraging your child to practice daily on their instruments, enrolling your child in private lessons, and contributing your time and energy by volunteering at orchestra events. Thank you for all that you do!

To our beginning 6<sup>th</sup> grade students; welcome to Dowell Middle School and Orchestra! We are so excited that you are joining our orchestra family, and your choice in learning to play an instrument is something that may possibly aid you for the rest of your life. To our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students; welcome back! I so enjoyed getting to know all of you through learning and creating music, and I am very excited to see all the growth that will occur in your playing and music making abilities this year. To all of our students; always remember to work towards your very best, and strive for your 100%!

We also want to welcome Ms. Laurie Gabriel to our team! She is a private cello teacher for Dowell and the district, and will be helping out in class about 2 times a week. She is fantastic, and I'm very excited for the kids to learn from her and for all she will bring to Dowell!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me through phone or email. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to a great year of music making and learning!

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Graber

Dowell Middle School Orchestra Director

(469) 302-6738

[mgraber@mckinneyisd.net](mailto:mgraber@mckinneyisd.net)

# DMS ORCHESTRA CALENDAR 2019-2020

All Dates are Subject to Change

Date	Day	Time	Event	Group	Location
8/20	Tues	6:30pm	Parent Meeting - All	ALL	DMS Stage & Cafeteria
8/25	Sun	6:00-8:00pm	Fine Arts Fun Night – APEX Center	ALL	Apex Center
9/6	Fri	4:00-6:30pm	Upper Level Movie Night	P/S/H	Orchestra Room/Cafeteria
9/20	Fri	4:00-6:00pm	All Region Workshop +	S/H	Fine Arts Wing
10/8	Tue	1st P.	String Fling Rehearsal +	B	DMS Stage
10/10	Thur	7:00pm	String Fling/Fall Concert +	B/H	DMS Stage
10/16	Wed	8:15am	Practice Buddy Breakfast	ALL	Orchestra Room
10/18	Fri	4:00-6:30pm	Beginner Movie Night	B	Orchestra Room/Cafeteria
10/19	Sat	ALL DAY Times TBA	All Region Auditions	P/S/H	Allen HS
11/1	Fri	4:00-10:00pm	DSO Trip – Meal Provided	P/S/H	Meyerson Symphony Center
11/7	Thur	6-8pm	Roller Skating!	All	Thunderbird Rink (Plano)
11/21	Thur	12-2:00	Dallas Strings Beginner Trip +	B	Dallas Strings
12/2-3	Mon Tues	All periods	Winter Concert In Class Rehearsals +	ALL	DMS Stage
12/4	Wed	7:00pm	Winter Concert + *	ALL	McKinney Boyd HS
12/13-14	Fri Sat	6-9pm, all day	All Region Clinic & Concert	P/S/H	Allen HS
12/13 and 16	Fri, Mon	ALL DAY	Fine Arts Elementary Feeder Tour +	H	Feeder Elementary Schools
12/18-19	Wed Thur	All Day	MISD MS Orchestras: Electrify Your Strings with Mark Wood +	P/S/H	MHS Sperry Auditorium
1/29	Wed	4-7:30pm	UIL Clinic +	S/H	DMS Stage/Fine Arts Wing
2/1	Sat	ALL DAY	Beginner Solo/Upper Level Ensemble +	B/P/S/H	Faubion MS
2/11	Tues	6:30pm	Pre-UIL C & SR +	S/H	DMS Stage
3/2-3	Mon Tue	3rd & 6th periods	UIL Rehearsals on stage +	S/H	DMS Stage/Fine Arts Wing
3/4-5	Wed Thur	TBA	UIL +	S/H	Lowery Freshman Center
4/4	Sat	ALL DAY Times TBA	Upper Level Solo/Beginner Ensemble +	ALL	Faubion MS
4/7-8	Tue Wed	ALL DAY	<b>STAAR TESTING</b>	7th/8th	DMS
4/9	Thur	6-8pm	Whirly Ball!	ALL	Whirly Ball (Plano)
4/17	Fri	3:45(set up) 5:30-7:00(event)	5th Grade Instrument Selection	Volunteers	DMS Stage/Cafe, Orchestra Room
5/8	Fri	ALL DAY	Pinstack Competition +	P	Pinstack in Allen
5/11-14	Mon-Thur	ALL DAY	<b>STAAR TESTING</b>	All	DMS
5/15	Fri	ALL DAY	Six Flags Reward Trip	ALL	Six Flags in Arlington
5/19	Tues	7 <sup>th</sup> P.	Combined Beginner Rehearsal +	B	Stage/Orchestra Room
5/20	Wed	7pm	Spring Concert +	ALL	McKinney Boyd HS
5/21	Thurs	8am-3pm	Peak Music Festival Competition	H	Denton (Murchison Center)
5/22	Fri	All Day	NRH20 Music Festival +	B	North Richland Hills

\*Legend: B=Beginner P=Philharmonic S=Sinfonietta H=Honors

+ Mandatory Attendance Required

\* Winter Concert date may change to Tues, 12/17 at 7:00pm – McKinney North HS

## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and events of the Dowell Middle School Orchestra. Attached to this handbook are forms that need to be completed by the parent/guardian and the student. These forms include:

- Handbook and Calendar Agreement
- MISD Medical Emergency Info
- MISD Drug Testing Contract (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only).
- Instrument Usage Form (School-owned instruments only)
- Orchestra Permission Slip
- Spirit Gear Order Sheet
- Orchestra Fee Payment Sheet

Complete these forms and return them to orchestra no later than September 6th. Also attached is a calendar of orchestra events. Please put these events in your calendars as soon as possible.

## **PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY**

Orchestra at Dowell Middle School is the first step in what we hope to be a seven year course of study in music for you child. Participation in orchestra leads to growth and development of kinesthetic, aural, and cognitive function for a student along with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the beauty and joy that excellence in music offers. Additionally, we expect to see student development in the areas of leadership, responsibility, teamwork, and self-discipline. It is the goal of the director to develop and foster a culture of musical understanding and excellence through teaching dedication, responsibility, knowledge, and commitment through orchestra. Ultimately, students are able to collaborate together to create a culture of excellence and success that contribute to the school and community they represent, both inside and outside of music.

## **CONDUCT**

Dowell Middle School Orchestra students exhibit exemplary behavior that reflects on himself or herself towards the school and community as a whole. The Dowell Middle School orchestra student:

- Is a team player and contributor to the orchestra family, and positively contributes in their actions, attitudes, and work.
- Is courteous and respectful to directors, other students, parents, the property of others, and themselves.
- Follows all rules and policies of the McKinney ISD and Dowell Middle School Code of Conduct.
- Strives to put forth their best effort to reach their full potential always!

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

These expectations encourage an environment of excellence, success, and enjoyment for Dowell orchestra students. Dowell Middle School Orchestra is a family that is built on mutual respect for people, instruments, and the music itself. Each student is responsible for his or her own behavior and property. The expectations for all students are:

- Have all orchestra materials with you every day (Pencil, Binder, and Instrument). Students who continually forget materials will receive a warning, a phone call home, and removed daily points for repeated infractions.
- Cellos/Bass players and all students using school-owned instruments are responsible for the care of that instrument when in their possession. Please see your Instrument Usage contract for detailed information.
- No gum, food, or drinks with the exception of water are allowed in the orchestra room.
- No cellphones/electronics during class unless instructed by director to do otherwise.
- Fingernails must stay short! Long nails not only discourage correct finger placement and accurate playing, but they can cause injury to your fingernails. Students are not to have long nails or artificial manicures.
- Works with diligence, fosters respect towards the learning of others, and is opening to learning and putting forth their 100% effort every class.

## **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

The following procedures ensure that classes run efficiently and encourage the highest level of learning and enjoyment for every student.

- Students enter the room quietly, drop off their bags where assigned, obtain their instruments/supplies, and go directly to their seats for tuning at the beginning of class.
- Students place cellphone/electronics in bag unless instructed by director otherwise.
- Students play with correct posture at all times.
- Students stay quiet and listen while other sections are being rehearsed.
- Students follow all instructions from the director.
- Students treat everyone and everything with respect, including themselves. No playing other instruments that are not yours or not assigned to you. Do not damage or mistreat the property of others. Treat yourself and your property with this same respect.

Consequences for infractions of these expectations and procedures may include:

- Daily points taken off for habitually forgetting materials.
- A phone call home.
- A discipline referral issued.
- A conference with parents.
- A conference with a principal and parents.

Please note that all student behavior is to be in accordance with the McKinney ISD and the Dowell Middle School Student Code of Conduct.

# GRADING POLICY

In accordance to McKinney ISD grading guidelines, orchestra grades fall into two categories:

## Summative Grades (70% of average)

- Playing Test - including live, video recorded, and pass-offs.
- Concert Performances and Rehearsals – Attendance at all is mandatory!
- In-Class Solo Performances
- Written Tests

## Formative Grades (30% of average)

- Class Participation: Students receive daily credit for class participation. Points are removed if the student does not fully participation due to lack of materials (binder, music, instrument, or pencil) or for behavior infractions.
- Practice Record: Students turn in a weekly practice record given to them at the beginning of each semester. **Daily practice is essential for student success.** Detailed instructions are printed on each practice record. Beginners will start their practice records after their first concert in October.
- Additional Formative Grades: Other grades will be given for in-class work or Music Theory quizzes.

# ATTENDANCE

Dowell Middle School Orchestra students exhibit teamwork and responsibility by participating in rehearsals and concerts outside of class. Individual teamwork and responsibility are important for the success of the entire orchestra. When one member of the orchestra is absent from a concert or rehearsal, it affects the entire orchestra just like a sports player missing a game or practice. Students are required to participate in all scheduled rehearsals and concerts/performances unless excused by the director. Study the attached calendar to avoid and plan for potential conflicts (athletics, academics, other fine arts, etc.). These conflicts can usually resolved between coaches, directors, parents, and students with advanced notice.

Concerts and rehearsals are an extension of the orchestra classroom instruction and grades are taken for participation. Extra rehearsals or sectionals (an individual section meeting to practice) on an as-needed basis will be given advanced notice from the director.

For an excused absence:

1. Written notices from a parent/guardian are required for all event absences prior to the event.
2. Advance notices are required for all prior commitments. A prior commitment is defined as an event you have already committed to before the orchestra calendar or event is announced.
3. In case of family emergency and/or illness, a parent/guardian should send a written note or email to the director as soon as they are aware of the situation.
4. Failure to meet attendance requirements for rehearsals and performances can result in a student losing the privilege to participate on extra-curricular events, and may adversely affect a student's grade.

Please communicate directly with the director if there is a scheduling conflict. Unexcused absences and tardiness affect the morale and quality of the entire ensemble and are not allowed. Unexcused absences from rehearsals/performances result in a grade of a 0.

In the event of making up an excused absence, the student may make up any rehearsal or concert by making a video recording of all music covered in the event and submitting it to the director. A note from a parent/guardian is needed when making up this work, and the video must be made at school during lunch or tutoring hours (not during class). Students may also do an approved alternative assignment to make up any concert or rehearsal. **Please note that both parent/guardian and student signatures are needed for your acknowledgement and attendance of all calendar events.**

## ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

A student shall be suspended from participation in *extra-curricular* events sponsored/sanctioned by the school district during the nine weeks period following a grade report in which the student received a grade lower than a 70 in any class on their report card. While ineligibility or "No Pass/No Play" has been exempted for UIL Contest and Sight Reading, it still applies to every other event and participation is at the behest of the director. Events affected by the "No Pass/No Play" state law include solo and ensemble contests, TMEA region orchestra (both auditions and clinic/concert), UIL sanctioned events, and any off-campus trip where admission is charged. Ineligible students will be required to participate in school concerts as they are co-curricular and an extension of the classroom.

An ineligible student may regain eligibility seven days after the grading period ends or after the three week evaluation period if they are passing all classes with a 70 or higher.

Note that Orchestra Fees, which cover the cost of these extra-curricular events, cannot be refunded if a student becomes ineligible and is unable to attend an event.

## EQUIPMENT

The following is to be expected of all Dowell Middle School Orchestra students regarding equipment:

1. Instruments are to be placed in your orchestra locker with the door closed and locked when applicable. After class, all instruments should be cleaned, packed up (with bows loosed and endpins in), and stored in their assigned area.
2. All instruments are to be kept in good playing condition. Proper maintenance is essential for an instrument to produce a quality sound. If a home instrument is out of tune, bring it to school to have a director tune it.
3. All instrument cases should have name tags.
4. Treat your instrument with utmost respect! Treat it as you would a loved one or pet!

## REPAIRS

Stringed instruments are fragile, please take care of your instrument and keep it in good condition. Students who own their instruments should carry extra strings in their cases and have your bow re-haired when necessary (usually about once a year). Many times minor adjustments can be made by the director, eliminating the need of a shop repair. Please do not attempt to fix any instrument repairs yourself as this can often make the issue more severe and more costly to repair in the long run. If an instrument is in a shop being repaired, please have a student bring a parent/guardian note to the director and accommodations in class will be made.

**Note:** The Director and Dowell Middle School are not responsible for any damage that may occur to an instrument at school.



## CONCERT ETIQUETTE

One of the TEKS required by the Texas Education Agency for orchestra is student demonstration of proper concert etiquette. Proper concert etiquette is expected all times during concerts, and not following the listed guidelines may result in points take off a concert grade, or in extreme cases, disciplinary action.

1. Turn off cell phones and leave other electronics/noise making devices at home. The performers on stage have worked hard to prepare their music and should be acknowledged for their hard work with respect from the audience without distractions.
2. The way to show appreciation at a school concert is appropriate clapping. Yelling or whistling is not appropriate.
3. As an audience member, students are expected to sit quietly and listen attentively as other groups perform. Respect the performers on stage by giving your undivided attention.
4. Students are expected to stay and listen to all of the orchestras performing on the same concert when applicable.

## CONCERT DRESS AND UNIFORM

A cohesive look is important to the overall presentation at concerts and events. It is important to create a sense of teamwork through the sound a group produces and through their appearance. All uniform requirements must adhere to the McKinney ISD and Dowell Middle School Dress Code. Students choosing not to follow instructions will be sent home to change.

**Causal Uniforms:** (Required of all Dowell Middle School Orchestra students)

- 2018/2019 Dowell Middle School Orchestra T-shirt (included in Orchestra Fee)
- Long jeans (school dress code approved)
- Close-toed shoes (no flip flops or sandals)

**Formal Uniform:** (Required of all Dowell Middle School Orchestra students)

- Beginners: White dressy top (button down dress shirt for boys), black dress slacks (no skirts or dresses), black socks and black dress shoes.
- Philharmonic, Sinfonietta, Honors: Black dressy top (button down black shirt for boys), black dress slacks (no skirts or dresses), black socks and black shoes.

Girls: Shoulders must be covered. **No skirts or dresses for girls.**

Honors Gentlemen: A black suit coat for the UIL performance.

**All: No Jeans, T-Shirts, or tennis shoes.** These are formal events and your uniform must reflect the event. Please have your uniform ready for the first concert.

# SUPPLIES

## Music Orchestra Supplies

\*Beginners, these items are included in your supply bundle purchase when you reserve an instrument.

- Good quality instrument with wood or carbon fiber bow.\* (Please do not purchase an instrument online)
- Rosin\*
- Soft cloth for daily cleaning\*
- Kun or Everest Shoulder Rest\* (for violins and violas)
- Rock Stop\* (for cellos and basses)
- Method book\* (see below)
- Music stand for home practice\* (Bass players must have an adjustable-height stool for home practice and occasional use at concerts. This is a separate purchase available at most dept. stores.)
- Electric tuner/metronome combo with pickup (Beginners purchase these when they learn to tune in January)

### Parents/Guardians-PLEASE NOTE:

If you want to purchase an instrument, it is strongly recommended that you wait until your child grows into a full-sized instrument. Do not purchase instruments on websites such as E-Bay, Craigslist, Amazon or pawn shops, garage sales, etc. The best option is trying an instrument at a local, trusted string shop or dealership and then showing the instrument to the director, private teacher, or both. If you have any questions about local dealers, quality of instruments, or the right fit of instrument for your child, please ask us. We want your child to have a quality instrument and we want you to have a quality investment!

## Academic Orchestra Supplies

Please bring these items to the first day of class.

- **NEW** 1.5 inch black binder with clear- view cover.
- 5 full sheet divider tabs
- Zipper pencil pouch to be kept in binder
- 2 pencils with erasers (No PENS!)
- 2 yellow highlighters
- 1 box of Tissue

## Method Books

Pick up your class book at Dallas Strings.

Make sure it is for your instrument.

- **Beginners**  
Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Book 1
- **Philharmonic**  
Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Book 2
- **Sinfonietta**  
Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Book 2  
Expressive Techniques for Orchestra
- **Honors**  
Essential Techniques 2000 for Strings Book 3  
Expressive Techniques for Orchestra

## TMEA REGION 25: ALL-REGION ORCHESTRA

This festival orchestra is comprised of the finest middle school orchestra students within the Allen, Lovejoy, McKinney, Rockwall, Sherman, and Wylie School Districts. Students audition each October for a chance to perform with one of two region orchestras. Those selected will rehearse and perform on one weekend in December and are featured in one special concert during that weekend. Being selected into the region orchestra is considered to be one of the highest honors an orchestra student can attain. All students in the Honor's Orchestra are expected to try out. Students in the other upper level classes are not expected to audition but are strongly encouraged to do so. There is an All-Region Workshop for the benefit of the students, please plan to attend if you are trying out. Information and audition music will be presented at the beginning of school.

## McKINNEY ISD SOLO AND ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

This McKinney ISD sanctioned festival is held twice each spring semester during the solo/ensemble unit in orchestra. There is a contest for 6<sup>th</sup> grade beginner solos/upper level ensembles, and a contest for upper level solos/beginner ensembles. The contest provides students an opportunity to perform a solo and/or ensemble and receive a rating/evaluation of their performance. Students who receive Superior and Excellent ratings will receive medals. Students taking private lessons will have their solos assigned by their private teacher and students who do not take private lessons will receive a solo/ensemble packet from the director. Please note that participation is required, and a participation grade is taken. See the calendar for dates, and more information will be given closer to the dates.

## ORCHESTRA AND MAINTENANCE FEES

**Every student in Dowell Middle School Orchestra is assigned an Orchestra Fee of \$75.** This fee covers the cost for trips, transportation, food, clinicians, and other expenditures relating to orchestra activities; see itemized list below. **Please note that this fee does not cover the Six Flags Reward Trip or DSO Field Trip.** 100% of this fee goes back to the students in the orchestra program at Dowell Middle School, and ensures that each student is given the highest quality experience in orchestra. This also gives the students the benefit of not having to fundraise for events, allowing us to focus more on music and learning. For those who are issued school instruments at Dowell Middle School (Cellos and Bases in particular), a \$20 Maintenance Fee is assigned to cover repairs and wear throughout the course of the year. Please take care of these instruments. Students that are assigned instruments are held responsible for any damages outside of normal wear and tear.

Beginner Orchestra Fees Cover	Upper Level Orchestra Fees Cover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie Night</li> <li>• Dallas Strings Field Trip</li> <li>• Roller Skating Fall Admission</li> <li>• NRH20 Registration, Transportation, and Food</li> <li>• Orchestra T Shirt</li> <li>• Solo and Ensemble</li> <li>• Practice Buddy Breakfast</li> <li>• Clinicians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie Night</li> <li>• UIL Clinics and Food</li> <li>• Roller Skating Fall Admission</li> <li>• Elementary School Tour Transportation and Food</li> <li>• Orchestra T Shirt</li> <li>• Pinstack Competition</li> <li>• All Region Clinicians</li> <li>• Practice Buddy Breakfast</li> <li>• Solo and Ensemble</li> <li>• Peak Music Festival</li> </ul>

## **TRIPS**

All Orchestra/Maintenance Fees are to be paid and all forms must be turned in prior to students participating on orchestra trips. Students need to be academically eligible for trips and contests. Children may be released to parents/guardians during the trip only if the director has a written parent/guardian note in advance, phone calls releasing children are not acceptable. Students represent Dowell Middle School and McKinney ISD on these trips, and are expected to be on their best behavior at all times. Students are to respect all parent chaperones, following directions from them as if they were a director or teacher, and are to be respectful to themselves and other students.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

Private lessons are offered to Dowell orchestra students through McKinney ISD and outside-of-school instruction. Lesson are highly recommend, but are not required. Private lesson teachers are screened, contracted by the director, have completed the district's criminal history background check, and are experts on their instruments. The McKinney ISD private lesson rate is \$20 per 24 minute lesson (half of one orchestra class period) once a week during that child's orchestra class. This fee is paid directly to the teacher on a time schedule set up by private teacher. If our in-school lesson slots become filled, we have a list of recommended private teachers that teach out of their homes or at music shops.

Although your child receives valuable instruction in orchestra class, private lessons provide:

- Students with an opportunity to address the unique challenges of their particular instrument with an expert, degreed teacher in a one-on-one setting.
- Review and reinforcement of class assignments when necessary
- Earlier exposure to more advanced techniques
- Expanded opportunities for advanced solo instruction
- Greater confidence in their individual performing because of the individual attention they receive in lessons. This in tum enhances opportunities for success at individual competitions.

Please note that private lessons in no way guarantee placement in an advanced orchestra class. However, it is no coincidence that most students in Honors Orchestra take private lessons. Private lessons will have more value if students are prepared for each lessons. If you are interested in private lessons, please fill out the private lessons form and return it to the director. Private lesson requests will be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND MCKINNEY ISD APPROVAL**

Parent volunteers are vital for the success of the students and orchestra program at Dowell. Parent volunteers assisting as chaperones on field trips, volunteering help during concerts or contests, and providing other services or duties supply an added level of safety and assistance during our events. Please note that attendance on field trips for parent volunteers is contingent on the approval from McKinney ISD, and that those volunteers not approved will not be allowed on any field trip.

If you would like to volunteer, you will need to complete a Volunteer Application, which includes a Background Check, through McKinney ISD. Go to [mckinneyisd.net](http://mckinneyisd.net) and click on the "Parents" tab at the top of the page, then click the "Volunteer" tab on the left side of the page. Scroll down and click the "Volunteer Application" link. You will need to create a McKinney ISD log-in prior to filling out the application. Please note that volunteers will need to complete a new application every school year. Thank you for your support!