

String Instrument Use Handbook

Tempe Elementary School District #3



Dear Instrumental Student and Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Congratulations on your acceptance into your school's music program! The endeavour that you are embarking on is both rewarding and challenging, and supports lifetime learning and appreciation of the musical performing arts. Tempe Elementary School District has a long tradition of supporting music. This includes providing high quality instruments that are maintained and supported to yield the longest possible use in the classroom and at home. In addition, the district equips each program with an acceptable amount of accessories to ensure a successful experience for every music student. These include but are not limited to method books, strings, rosin, shoulder rests, etc.

Your student has been selected to use a district owned instrument. The information contained in this handbook provides important details to ensure the longevity, safe, and appropriate use of the instrument. In order for you to use a district owned instrument, as well as take an instrument home, it is necessary for you to read the handbook, then sign and date the Instrument Use Agreement (IUA). Please keep one copy for your records and return the signed IUA promptly. Contact your director/instructor with questions.

Orchestra Director/Instructors

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Taking Care of the Instrument

Students are responsible for the general care of the instrument issued by the district. By following the guidelines below you will be able to appropriately maintain and guarantee the longevity of the instrument.

General Instrument Care Guidelines

- Use care in handling the instrument, parts, and accessories (treat it like a baby).
- Always keep the instrument in its case when not in use.
- Be sure there is nothing on the instrument before closing the lid (e.g. pencil, sheet music, accessories).
- Do not remove, damage or alter any labels or barcodes attached to the instrument.
- Do not deface, scratch, mark, or intentionally damage the instrument.
- Before cleaning your instrument consult your director/instructor. Instruments should only be polished with approved cleaners when necessary. Never use water or alcohol to clean off the instrument.
- Do not attempt to tune instruments at home. Tuning should only be done under the care of the director/instructor.
- Do not attempt to tighten the strings when they unravel.
- Instruments should only be used by the student, not other family members or friends.
- Students should never leave the instrument unattended--anywhere (bus stop, patio, park).
- Instruments should never be left in a car.
- Keep instruments away from the following:
 - Extreme temperatures (sun, heating/air conditioning vents, car trunks)
 - Pets
 - Small children

Bow Care

- Bows are fragile. Never push the bow tip into the floor, poke at sheet music, or use for sword fighting. Treat them with care.
- Never touch the bow hair with any body part. The skin's oils will ruin the bow hair.
- The bow hairs should be tightened prior to each practice and loosened before placing back in the case.
- Rosin should be added sparingly before each practice session. Students have been taught how to smoothly slide rosin on the hair of the bows.
- Use a cotton washcloth or clean sock at the end of every practice session to clean the rosin off the strings and under the fingerboard. Do not let rosin residue build up on the instrument or it will ruin the varnish.

Cello and Bass

- Be careful not to pull the endpin all the way out, push it all the way in and never drag a cello/bass across the floor on its endpin.
- Set the endpin height so that you can reach the bridge with your bowing arm and use a rock stop when practicing on a hardwood or tile flooring.
- Always place cellos/basses on their side when not in use.
- Never lean them up on a chair, against a wall, etc.
- **NEVER** walk over any instrument.
- When taking cello/bass bows out of the case, bows always come out first and go in last.
- Always put the endpin in when in it's case.

Instrument Case

- The instrument and bow should always be transported in the provided case.
- Although the case is reinforced to help protect the instrument against minor bumps, it is not guaranteed to prevent damage. It remains the student's responsibility to care for and protect the instrument.
- **Nothing** should ever be placed on top of the instrument or case; this will maintain the longevity of the instrument and case.
 - Do not rest your feet on it.
 - Do not sit on it.
 - Do not place your backpack on top of it.
 - Do not place any other object on top of it.
- Do not write or put personal stickers on the case.
- Sheet music and method books should **only** go in a case if it has a designated area for sheet music separate from the instrument.
- Always take the shoulder pad/sponge off the instrument before placing inside the case.
- Do not place the sponge near the bridge or at the top of the case.

Maintenance and Potential Repairs

Maintenance

- Along with providing instruments, method books, and accessories, Tempe Elementary School District provides standard repairs that coincide with using an instrument at no cost to the user.
- Throughout the year an instrument might come out of alignment or adjustment.
- As soon as you feel that the instrument is no longer playing as easily as it was at the beginning of the year, please bring the instrument to your director/instructor.
- Parents should **never** attempt to repair an instrument themselves.

Repairs

- Instruments that are broken or fail to work properly should be immediately turned into director/instructor.
- If an instrument is being repaired for an extended period, in rare cases, a loaner instrument may be issued to the student. If a student receives a loaner instrument, a new IUA form must be signed before use.
- If it is determined that an instrument has been broken or damaged due to neglect, as determined by the music director/instructor or contracted district repair personnel, it may result in the loss of using a district provided instrument.
- Any repair deemed necessary to restore the instrument to acceptable playing condition from said negligent action, may be billed to the family.
- **District owned instruments should never be taken to a instrument repair shop.**

School Expectations

- The student is required to bring the instrument to all music classes.
- The student's continued use of the instrument is dependent on progress assessed by the director/instructor during periodic evaluations throughout the school year.
- Participation in day and evening concerts are a requirement for the continued use of the instrument.
- Demonstrating safe and reliable instrument care is a requirement for the continued use of the instrument.
- Your director/instructor will provide additional school expectations.

Home Expectations

Taking the Instrument Home

- Instruments may be taken home once the following conditions are met:
 - Parents/guardians and students have signed and returned the IUA.
 - Demonstration of correct handling of the instrument by the student.

Practicing Expectations

- The purpose of taking home an instrument is to practice the concepts learned in class.
- The student should practice every evening after attending music class so that he/she maintains learned concepts, tone quality, and musical technique.
- Find a safe and distraction free area to practice.
- Use a firm, stiff backed chair and sit tall. Posture is paramount! Violin/viola players are encouraged to stand!
- Please encourage your student to play for you! Students, play for your family!
- In the beginning of the year this will be a relatively short amount of time (10-15 minutes at a time). As the year progresses, you will be able to practice longer in one setting. Your director/instructor will share practicing expectations.

Returning the Instrument

- All district owned instruments must be returned at the request of school personnel. Students will return instruments:
 - When transferring to a new school.
 - After the final concert of the school year (typically before the last week of school).
 - During school inventory checks.
 - At the request of the director/instructor or school administrator for any other reason.
- If the instrument is not returned at scheduled check-in times, parents/guardians will be contacted to return the instrument. Continued use of a school instrument will depend on prompt adherence to this policy.
- Any lost or stolen instruments or accessories will result in the parent/guardian being charged the replacement cost listed on the IUA.

Summer Instrument Use

- Tempe Elementary provides the possibility for continued use of a school instrument over the summer.
- To use an instrument over the summer the following will need to take place.
 - The instruments will need to be returned after the final concert for inventory.
 - The student will need to be enrolled in one of the following:
 - Tempe Elementary Summer Enrichment Music Program
 - City of Tempe Summer Music Program
 - Private Lessons
 - Summer Music Camp
 - The student will need to be returning to the same school in the fall.
 - A new IUA will need to be completed.

Lost, Stolen or Severely Damaged Instruments

- In the event that an instrument is lost or stolen, notify the director/instructor immediately.
- Often times the sooner we can respond to a possible lost or stolen instrument the higher chance we have at getting the instrument returned.
- If an instrument is lost or stolen, a police report will should be filed as soon as possible. Ask the police for a copy of the report and give it to the director/instructor.
- If the district instrument is lost, stolen or damaged beyond repair through negligence, the parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost to replace the instrument.
- In the event that the district instrument needs to be replaced, it will be replaced with a new instrument that meets the quality expectations of Tempe Elementary School District.
- The replacement cost for your instrument and accessories are listed on the IUA.