



Stephen F. Austin State University Strings Project Student Handbook

Welcome!

We are so excited to have you as a student in the SFA String Project. You are starting something very special! As a String Project student, you will come to class once a week after school. In class, you will learn how to play your chosen instrument (violin, viola, cello, or upright bass) and how to be a team player in our orchestra. Ms. Alba Madrid is our Master Teacher and Program Director and a number of SFA students will be Teacher Assistants. Every person in our orchestra is important and valued and we are eager to start this journey together!

Program information and registration form available at:

[Strings Project – SFA Music Preparatory Division](#)

Beginner Ensemble

In Fall 2022 we will be starting students on violin, viola, cello and bass. Beginner students will meet in small groups, by instrument, to learn instrument technique for 60min a week. Multiple SFA students are Teacher Assistants, helping each elementary student to succeed. This class is primarily 4th and 5th grade students, but students in other grades are welcome to join if they are interested. This class will be scheduled on Thursdays from 5:30-6:15pm

Intermediate Ensemble

This ensemble is for students with roughly one year of experience. In Fall 2022 students will receive a weekly 45 min class by instrument to focus on refining the student's technique. SFA students are the primary teachers of these small groups. This class is primarily for students who have completed a year in our Beginner Ensemble, but any student with a year of playing experience may contact us to discuss joining.

This class will be scheduled on Thursdays from 4:30-5:15pm.

Advance Ensemble (Philharmonic Orchestra)

Our ensemble for students with roughly two or more years of experience. Students will be accepted into this ensemble by audition, and are highly encouraged to take a weekly private lesson with one of our instructors.

This class is primarily for students who have completed our Beginner and Intermediate Ensemble but any student with two or more years of playing experience may contact us to discuss joining.

This class will be held on Mondays from 5:00-6:00pm.

Cost

Beginner and Intermediate Ensemble participation fee: \$75 per semester (\$150 per school year)

Advance Ensemble participation fee: \$75 per semester (plus private lessons)

This works out to approximately \$5.25 per class. A great deal for music lessons!

This fee should be paid by the first rehearsal each semester. If a payment plan is needed, please be in touch with Ms. Alba Madrid before the first rehearsal. Credit card payment accepted online with registration, or you can pay cash or check.

Instrument rental is not included in the participation fee. Please see the "Instrument" section for additional information.

Expectations

Students are expected to:

1. Be kind, courteous, and helpful. You should be respectful of all teachers, fellow students, and surroundings.
2. Attend weekly classes, arriving early enough to be set up and ready to play by start of class.
3. Bring instrument, pencil, and all other supplies to each class.
4. Practice at least 15 minutes a day.
5. Share announcements and flyers with your parent/guardian. You are responsible for sharing String Project information with your family.
6. When/if you have an orchestra available at school, you must enroll in it. If you do not participate in orchestra at school, you may not continue in String Project. We are a community program and support our local school orchestra programs. We hope that String Project will help you to be successful in your school music programs and bring music to our community for your whole life.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

1. Alert Ms. Alba Madrid to absences. If it is necessary for a student to miss class, a parent or guardian should call or email Ms. Alba Madrid before class time. The only valid excuses for absences are 1) illness, 2) a death in the family, or 3) a school conflict.
Excessive absences will result in probation.
2. Pick up their child immediately after the end of class. Families in violation of this will be placed on probation.
3. Help students acquire a good quality instrument.
4. Encourage students to practice at home.
5. Attend concerts. You are also encouraged to attend class if you are able.
6. Join the String Project email list to receive important class updates.
7. Consider joining our Facebook page: @sfamusicprep

Should bad weather arrive, we will follow the Nacogdoches County School District and SFA weather announcements. If schools are closed on Thursday, no String Project. We will send an email to all families if class is cancelled and we will do our best to update our website and Facebook page promptly.

The SFA String Project is part of the American String Teachers Association National String Project Consortium and must adhere to certain guidelines for the program. One of these guidelines is that students who leave the program are not allowed to re-enter. Occasionally, a family circumstance may arise in which a student needs to leave but does not wish to do so permanently. In this case, the family should communicate with Ms. Madrid and a leave of absence can be arranged.

Multiple instances of disrespect/misbehavior, late pick-ups after class, and/or unexcused absences may lead to probation. Probation means that we are closely evaluating the student's ability to continue in String Project, with the assistance of the family. The student will remain on probation for one semester. At the end of the semester, the concerns will be reevaluated and the student will either be reinstated as a student in good standing, or dismissed from the program.

Students may be dismissed from the program at any time for any violations of policy or any other behavior deemed inappropriate by SFA String Project teachers and/or the Director. Although a rare situation, students may be dismissed from the program without first being placed on probation and without prior notice. Students dismissed from the program are not allowed to re-enter the program.

Instruments

All String Project students must have an instrument in good condition and required accessories. **Students are strongly encouraged to rent an instrument rather than purchase one.** Although it may seem like a good idea to buy something online, these purchases rarely work out well. Playing a sub-par instrument *greatly* hinders the progress of a student. Additionally, young students will go through several sizes of a single instrument and renting makes this transition the easiest. PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE AN INSTRUMENT FROM AN ONLINE AUCTION SITE, CRAIGSLIST, A DEPARTMENT STORE, ETC. WITHOUT CONSULTING US.

Poor quality instruments frustrate students and negatively impact a student's progress. If a student has been given an instrument or has purchased one, please know that it may not be of acceptable quality. It will need to be approved by a String Project teacher. If it is found to be of unacceptable quality, the student will need to take the instrument to an authorized string shop to be fixed/upgraded/improved. Some instruments, however, are simply not of acceptable quality, and no number of upgrades are possible to improve it to a minimum standard. It is very possible that the student will be required to obtain a different instrument.

These are the instrument shops we recommend you renting an instrument from:

1. **Lisle Violin Shop** (www.violins.com).
2. **Mitch Moehring Strings** (www.mitchmoehring.com)
3. **Sharmusic** (www.sharmusic.com)

In addition to having a good quality instrument & bow, the following are also required:

- a case that properly protects the instrument & bow
- a shoulder rest (violin/viola only)
- an endpin stops (cello/bass only)
- rosin
- cloth to wipe off the instrument

Please note that some places sell instrument, bow, and case separately. Make sure that you are renting all items your student will need to perform successfully.

Strings: all students are strongly encouraged to have a full set of spare strings in their case. In the event of a broken string, a String Project teacher will replace the string with one of the student's spare strings. We cannot guarantee that String Project will have the appropriate string, of appropriate size, to assist your student if they break a string.

No student will be turned away from String Project because of financial need.

SFA Music Preparatory owns a small number of instruments that are available for students with financial need. Families will be asked to pay \$40 per semester for use of these instruments. This is a maintenance fee so that we can ensure the instruments are kept in good condition. The parent/guardian and student will also be asked to sign an agreement, indicating they will take excellent care of the instrument and be responsible for any damage.

If you are interested in renting an instrument from SFA, please indicate that in the appropriate place on your registration form. Ms. Madrid will contact you to discuss the fee and instrument availability.