

TALLAHASSEE HOMESCHOOL STRING ORCHESTRA 2023-2024

Parent and Student Handbook

Mission

The mission of THSO is to glorify God through music and to train beginning, intermediate, and advanced players in effective string playing and ensemble skills. Christian prayer is a normal part of our rehearsals and performances. Our repertoire includes classical, popular, and devotional music.

Membership

Participation in the Tallahassee Homeschool String Orchestra is open to homeschooled students and other interested students as approved by the Orchestra Administration. Our classes are structured on the academic year and students are expected to enroll from August to May and receive the most benefit that way.

Semester Fees

The Tuition and Fee schedule for the coming year is as follows:

- \$35 per family annual Registration Fee
- \$35 per family annual Building Usage Fee
- \$125 per semester tuition for Arioso student
- \$121 per semester tuition for Sinfonia Allegro student
- \$115 per semester tuition for Accelerando or Da Capo Strings student
- \$105 per semester tuition for Preludio or Poco Players student

*In an effort to help families of multiple children, families of three or more children in THSO are only required to pay the full price tuition for the first two students (**in the highest respective ensembles**), and all subsequent children enrolled in the program will be assessed a \$25 charge per semester per student.*

Example family payment for Fall Semester:

One Arioso student, Two Sinfonia Allegro students, One Da Capo Strings student, and One Poco Players student

- \$35 Annual registration fee (paid in full August 2, 2023)
- \$35 Annual Building Usage Fee (paid in full August 2, 2023)

\$70 due August 2, 2023

- \$125 One Arioso student
- \$121 One Sinfonia Allegro student
- \$75 Three additional students (@ \$25 each)

\$321 total Fall semester tuition

If paying monthly:

September payment: \$80.25

October payment: \$80.25

November payment \$80.25

December payment: \$80.25

Semester Tuition may be paid in full at the first due date (first Wednesday rehearsal in September and February) or they may be divided into four payments* (specific monthly cost depends on the number of children enrolled in THSO).

*If you choose the monthly payment option, **please date four checks** (with the first of every month: e.g., September, October, November, December) and turn in by September 6th for Fall semester. Your checks will not be deposited until the 1st rehearsal of each month.

(In the Spring, do the same for the Spring semester: **please date four checks** (with the first of every month: e.g., February, March, April, May) and turn in by February 7th for Spring 2024 semester.). Your checks will not be deposited until the 1st rehearsal of each month.

Pay in Full each Semester

Fall Semester (August – December)

Payment 1: September 6th

Spring Semester (January – May)

Payment 1: February 7th

Monthly Payments:

Fall Semester (August – December)

Payment 1: September 6th (¼ of Fall semester tuition)

Payment 2: October 4th (¼ of Fall semester tuition)

Payment 3: November 1st (¼ of Fall semester tuition)

Payment 4: December 6th (¼ of Fall semester tuition)

Spring Semester (January – May)

Payment 1: February 7th (¼ of Spring semester tuition)

Payment 2: March 6th (¼ of Spring semester tuition)

Payment 3: April 3rd (¼ of Spring semester tuition)

Payment 4: May 1st (¼ of Spring semester tuition)

Payment should be by check, cash or money order and made payable to **Tallahassee Homeschool String Orchestra or THSO**. Payments may be dropped off at rehearsal or may be mailed to:

THSO: Vicky Bufano
3122 Mahan Drive
Ste. 801-346
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Students withdrawing from THSO before the semester is over will not receive a refund for tuition paid. We make decisions about our staffing based on the number of students who are enrolled at the beginning of the academic year. Those decisions cannot be changed, and so we require a commitment for the entire year. If for some reason your plans change, you are still obligated to pay tuition for the entire season.

Place all cash payments in a labeled envelope.

All tuition and fees must be paid in full before students will be allowed to participate in classes the following semester.

Music and Equipment

Students will be given sheet music by the orchestra director to take home for practice and to bring to each rehearsal and performance. Students must keep these in binders to protect them. The music will be turned in at the request of the director.

- * Students should keep all music in a music binder or folder.
- * Students should not fold or tear the music.
- * Markings should be made with pencil only.
- * Students will be charged a copy fee for music that is lost or damaged.
\$15.00 per music book and \$8.00 per individual music part
- * Students needing a music part should see the director.

Students will be required to furnish the following:

- * Instrument
- * Music stand
- * Music books as assigned by director
 - Da Capo Strings – *Essential Elements Book 1***
 - Accelerando – *Uni-Tunes (C, G, D) (blue book)***
 - Sinfonia Allegro – *Habits of a Successful Middle Level String Musician***
 - Arioso – *Habits of a Successful String Musician***
- * Pencil
- * Notebook or binder to keep loose sheet music organized
- * Necessary instrument accessories
 - Violins and violas – shoulder rest, rosin, cleaning cloth
 - Cellos – rock stop, rosin, cleaning cloth

All cases, personal equipment (i.e., stands), and personal music should be labeled with the student's name.

Music Theory Curriculum

Beginning orchestral students who know how to read music succeed more quickly than their peers, and intermediate and advanced orchestral students who understand and practice basic theory skills are better equipped to learn, memorize and/or understand their music. Music theory homework is highly valued in our orchestra classes, and all students are expected to participate.

Students are given weekly or bi-monthly theory assignments, expected to be completed and turned in the following week. Just as any academic, mental, or physical discipline requires regular practice, students should complete theory assignments on a regular basis rather than waiting until the end of the semester or year. Parents are encouraged to learn along with their students and to make music theory a part of their regular homeschool schedule and practice.

Theory assignments are worth 5 points each, and each week an assignment is turned in late, one point will be deducted.

Poco Players, Preludio, and Da Capo Strings students will receive theory assignments each week.

If Accelerando students have not yet completed the Da Capo Strings theory packet, they should complete that in their first year.

Sinfonia Allegro and Arioso students (as well as Accelerando students who have already completed the Da Capo Strings packet) will receive theory assignments every other week. Since we have students joining our orchestra at various ages, students will advance to new theory units based on completion rather than age:

Accelerando:

- 1) Da Capo Strings packet
- 2) All for Strings Theory Book 1
- 3) Theory Time 5th grade packet
- 4) Theory Time 6th grade packet
- 5) All for Strings Theory Book 2

Sinfonia Allegro:

- 1) All for Strings Theory Book 1
- 2) Theory Time 5th grade packet
- 3) Theory Time 6th grade packet
- 4) All for Strings Theory Book 2
- 5) Theory Time MS/HS 1A/1B
- 6) Theory Time MS/HS 2A/2B
- 7) Theory Time MS/HS 3A/3B

Arioso:

- 1) All for Strings Theory Book 2
- 2) Theory Time MS/HS 1A/1B
- 3) Theory Time MS/HS 2A/2B
- 4) Theory Time MS/HS 3A/3B
- 5) Theory Time MS/HS 4A/4B
- 6) Theory Time MS/HS 5A/5B

*Students will need to buy their own *All for Strings* theory book. Theory Time worksheets will be uploaded to the website for students to print under password protection.*

Here are some sites and resources that provide music theory help:

- [Music Theory.net](https://www.musictheory.net) is a free online resource for music theory. Click on "Lessons" and "Exercises" in the top menu to begin reviewing lessons.
- [Musicca](https://www.musicca.com) is also a free online resource for music theory. Click on "Lessons" or "Exercises" to get started!
- For Apps, some parents have recommended "Vivace: Learn to Read Music" from Dreamhound Studios. It has Trainer, Practice, and Tutorial sections and it is a free download.
- There are many other available resources online to help with Theory. If you need assistance, please reach out to your Instructor and/or the Administrative Director, Vicky Bufano, for help.

Rehearsal Location and Schedule

Rehearsal Location: Thomasville Road Baptist Church – 3131 Thomasville Rd, Tallahassee, Florida

Rehearsals Day/Time: Wednesdays

Poco Players – 10:15 am to 10:40 am, Choir Room

Preludio – 10:55 am to 11:20 am, Choir Room

Da Capo Strings – 11:35 am – 12:20 pm, Room 202

Accelerando – 11:35 am – 12:20 pm, Choir Room

Sinfonia Allegro – 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm

Choir Room Arioso – 1:25 pm – 2:25 pm, Choir Room

Site Rules:

- 1) Park in the lot on the right side of the main building.
- 2) Only members of the orchestra are allowed to be dropped off without parental supervision for the rehearsal. (Poco Players and Preludio students must be accompanied by an adult during class.) Parent(s) may stay with non-member children in the second floor waiting area but are asked to control the noise level as not to disrupt the classes. Food must be restricted to the second-floor lobby area or outside on the picnic tables (not in any classrooms). Orchestra members must be under parental supervision when they are not in class.
- 3) Adults and children associated with THSO have permission from TRBC to be in the following areas:
 - * Room 210 (homework room)
 - * Second-floor lobby area
 - * The picnic tables outside
 - * The playground – children on the playground must be supervised by a parent at all times; courteous use of the playground includes not climbing the fences and using playground equipment only as originally intended (i.e. not dismantling it or climbing on top of things not designated for climbing)
- 4) Children should be dropped off in time to have their instruments out and ready to start rehearsal on time (no later than 5 minutes before class begins).
- 5) Thomasville Road Baptist Church is allowing THSO the use of their facilities. Parents should help their children clean up before leaving and make sure they take all personal belongings with them when they leave. Items or equipment left behind at rehearsal will be collected by the instructors and will be donated if not claimed at the rehearsal immediately following.
- 6) Pick up children promptly at the end of rehearsal.

Rehearsal Rules:

- 1) Students must be punctual for all rehearsals.
- 2) Students must be seated in place at the time designated by the orchestra director.
- 3) Each orchestra member must bring his/her instrument, music stand, pencil, notebook, music, and music binder to all rehearsals.
- 4) Students must follow instructions given by the orchestra director.
- 5) No chewing gum, eating, or drinking while in rehearsal.
- 6) Students should respect the directors, their peers, the facilities, the equipment, and themselves.

Dress code

Rehearsal:

Boys: pants, jeans, or shorts worn at the waistline, shirts with no inappropriate slogans
Girls: shorts, skirts, or dresses no shorter than fingertip length, pants, jeans, modest shirts

Concert Attire for Poco Players, Preludio, Da Capo Strings, Accelerando, and Sinfonia Allegro:

Boys: black pants (no jeans), white dress shirt, black socks, black shoes, and black belt.

Girls: black skirt (below the knee when seated) or black pants (no jeans), white blouse (no low-cut necklines, no sleeveless), black shoes (no sandals or flip flops).

Concert Attire for Arioso:

Boys: black pants (no jeans), black dress shirt, black socks, black shoes, and black belt.

Girls: black skirt (below the knee when seated) or black pants (no jeans), black blouse (no low-cut necklines, no sleeveless), or black dress with above specifications, black shoes (no sandals or flip flops).

Performances:

Students are encouraged to take advantage of performance opportunities that are available throughout the year.

Participation in the Christmas and Spring concerts is mandatory, and participation in all other events is strongly encouraged. Additional information regarding these events will be emailed to parents and students.

Music Performance Assessment (MPA) is also a required performance event for Arioso students 6th grade and higher. This event usually takes place in mid- to late February.

Orchestra Personnel:

Joann Solari, Instructor

Joann Solari graduated from Florida State University where she earned her Bachelor's and Master's in Music Therapy. Her primary instrument is viola, and she also took secondary piano lessons. Joann was an Arts After School Director and Summer Camp Director for many years. Here she taught elementary-aged children everything from percussion, to dancing, piano, music history, and theory. She currently works as music therapist in nursing homes and pre-schools as well as teaching private violin, viola, and piano lessons in the Tallahassee area. Joann is looking forward to working with the children and developing in them a love for orchestra with THSO!

Communication

Communication with parents and students will be through email from tallyhomeschoolstrings@gmail.com. Please check your email on a regular basis for communication. We also maintain an on-line presence with our website homeschoolstrings.com and Facebook page Tallahassee Homeschool String Orchestra. For logistic scheduling and official business of THSO, we request that parents take leadership in communication. Students are welcome to e-mail or text questions related to the music, as well as practice charts, but we request that parents communicate directly on matters relating to registration, auditions, enrollment, attendance, and class behavior.

Practicing

Practicing is very important for musicians of all ages to improve their skills. Each student needs to make time in his or her schedule to practice. Practice charts are used to monitor the progress of the students and to help insure they are spending adequate practice time. This is especially important in the first months of learning a new instrument as the student is learning the posture, positioning and fingering of the instrument, how to read notes and music, and how to play with others in an ensemble setting.

Orchestra Class and Private Lessons

Orchestra class is different from and complementary to private lessons. Students already involved in private lessons are strongly encouraged to continue taking them in addition to participating in the orchestra program. The focus of orchestra class is ensemble playing. Students learn the basics of their instruments and how to perform as a group. The focus of private lessons is detailed instruction in technique and solo repertoire. Public and private school orchestra directors routinely encourage their students to get private lessons if they are able to do so, as it helps the overall quality of their orchestra.

Seating Policy for Arioso and Sinfonia Allegro

Students in Arioso and Sinfonia Allegro will take a main audition in August each year. Based on students' auditions, the directors will place students in orchestras and determine sectional placement and seating. Strong players are needed in all sections of the orchestra and throughout the orchestra. The director(s) will use their discretion in deciding where each student is placed to best fulfill the needs of the ensemble. At any time during the course of the semester, students may be asked to perform a brief seating audition, which may be in front of other students. Excerpts may be drawn from the current orchestra music. If a student decides not to play for the brief seating audition as requested by the director, the student forfeits the opportunity to hold a leadership position. Leadership positions in the orchestra consist of (1) both players on the first stand of each section, and (2) the outside positions of subsequent stands. Auditioning does not guarantee being placed in a leadership position. If the director(s) feels that any student in a leadership role has missed too many rehearsals to be effective in that role, the student may be moved to another seat. Students in leadership positions are especially expected to act with grace and to treat others with respect. All seating decisions of the director(s) are final.

Music/Instrument Stores

Playground Music
(Capital City Violins)
3360 Capital Cir NE
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-320-6463
www.playgroundmusiccenter.com

Ronald Sachs
836 Pleasant Hill Road
Lilburn, Georgia 30047
770-931-2440
Ronaldsachs.com

Fiddles and Sticks
669 North Avenue
Winder, GA 30680
770-867-5228
fiddlesandsticks.com

Shar
Rob Bickley, string teacher representative
1-800-248-7427
www.sharmusic.com