

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated 4/15/2020

How do I obtain a registration form? Registration is available online through Itasca Community Education. www.getlearning.org under the category “music” or follow the link from our website: www.itascaorchestra.org. Paper registration forms are also available. Email tammy@itascaorchestra.org if you have questions or wish to receive registration form.

Where and when are lessons?

During the School Year, Youth Lessons will take place in your student’s school, during your student’s school day or afterschool in the IOSP lesson room or Grand Rapids Middle School.

In 2019/2020 we will offer lessons in Deer River Schools, Greenway Schools and Grand Rapids Schools including St Joes. Homeschooled students are welcome!

When will I learn my student’s exact lesson time?

During the School Year, Lessons will be scheduled after the registration deadline has closed. In the few days prior to the first day of lessons, the IOSP will send you an email indicating the time of your student’s lesson, the day in which your student will have orchestra, and the name of your student’s teacher.

During the School Year, may I choose when my lesson is? Student lesson times are based on a number of factors: 1) the student’s availability according to the schedule set by the student’s classroom teacher; 2) the availability of places in your student’s school to have a lesson; and 3) instructor availability. With students at 5 elementary schools, the middle school and the high school, scheduling is complicated. We really appreciate your patience with the process! Lesson times are scheduled first come, first served.

How much do lessons cost?

Through May 29th, the registration fee is only \$10! After May 29th, the registration fee will be \$50.

Lessons for the first child paid in full are \$560 for the year. This includes lessons, orchestra rehearsals, and concerts. Our program is subsidized by individual donors, the Blandin Foundation, and Minnesota legacy funding.

Additional students in a family may register at a reduced rate of \$490/child. We allow monthly payments at a slightly higher cost. The first student will pay eight payments of \$72 and additional children in the same family will pay eight payments of \$63.

What other expenses are there? In the first year, all students will purchase a lesson book, Essential Elements for \$12. There is an option to purchase the book during online registration. More advanced students may need books for solos or technical work. We have purchased books that we will provide to your student and bill you for your convenience. If you prefer to purchase your own books and supplies, please let us know.

If your student is renting an instrument, the instrument will be provided with good strings, but if a string breaks during the year the student's teacher will replace the string and give the student an invoice for the string.

All students are encouraged to purchase a collapsible music stand to encourage practicing with proper posture. You can find collapsible stands on-line beginning at \$11 and up.

A shoulder rest is necessary for proper playing posture. You can purchase a shoulder rest for as little as \$15. A shoulder rest made of metal and rubber is highly recommended, but for beginners a sponge or piece of foam can also work. If your student does not have a shoulder rest, we will provide them with a foam shoulder rest and invoice you for its cost (\$5).

Instrument humidifiers (Damp-it) are provided in rental instruments. If the humidifier is lost or broken we will charge for a replacement.

Students playing a cello or bass will need a rock stop. Those are also available for purchase at checkout.

Where are orchestra rehearsals? Orchestra rehearsals take place at the Robert J. Elkington Middle School bandroom. Orchestra rehearsals are included in the lesson price, but participation in orchestra is optional. Your student will be placed in one of four orchestras according to their skill level.

When does my student have orchestra rehearsal? Please see the calendar on our website: www.itascaorchestra.org.

Chamber Orchestra (advanced group) Mondays at the Reif Center 3:30-4:30

Prelude Orchestra (beginner group) – Tuesdays at RJEMS 3:30-4:30

Overture Orchestra (2nd group) Wednesdays at RJEMS 2:45-3:45

Intermezzo Orchestra (3rd group) Thursdays at RJEMS 3:30-4:30

Who do I contact if my student is going to miss a lesson or rehearsal? Please contact your instructor via email if our student will miss a rehearsal or a lesson. Notifying your instructor ahead of time is a huge help and greatly appreciated!

Do you offer make up lessons if my student misses a lessons? Make up lessons will only be given if a teacher misses a lesson.

Do you have instruments available to rent?

During the School Year, Yes, the IOSP has instruments available to rent at affordable prices. Our IOSP instructors will determine what size your student needs at either our open house, or at your student's first lesson. Rental instruments do not include shoulder rests for violin and viola players. A shoulder rest is necessary for proper playing posture.

I am renting and instrument, do I need to go to the IOSP office to pick it up before the first lesson? Instruments will be distributed at our open house. If you miss the open house, your instructor will bring your students instrument to their first lesson.

What should I keep in mind if I decide to buy an instrument? When it comes to buying a string instrument, the saying about "you get what you pay for" is true. The IOSP highly recommends investing in a quality hard shell case, especially for cellos and basses.

My instrument is broke what do I do? If you have a rental instrument, let an IOSP instructor or call/email the IOSP office to let us know so we can set your student up with a different rental instrument. Return the damaged instrument to the IOSP office. We will have the instrument repaired. You will be charged for the repair. To avoid this, please stress the importance of good instrument care including using the humidifier in dry weather and keeping the instrument in its case when it is not being used. (See instrument rental information)

If you own your own instrument, the IOSP office can give you the name of the individuals to whom the IOSP sends instruments for repair.

My instrument is out of tune! What do I do? (To be answered by our Instructors)

What happens if I leave my instrument in the car in extreme cold and heat? Your instrument will crack. A quick run into the grocery store can become very expensive.

My student forgot their instrument at home! Is there any point in going to the lesson or rehearsal? YES! At a rehearsal, your student can learn by listening and following along in their own music (or stand partner's music). In a lesson, our instructors will have no problem teaching your student something valuable in the lesson time even without the instrument.

What can I do to help my student?

1) ***Encourage Practice.*** Even if you are not musically inclined you can help your student by encouraging regular practice—this could mean setting up a consistent practice time.

2) ***Listen to great performances.*** Part of learning to play an instrument well, means you need to *listen* to great performances. There is no shortage of great music available on youtube.com: Joshua Bell, Yo-Yo Ma, Artaria String Quartet, Tim Kliphuis, The OK Factor, April Verch, Jelloslave, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO). The Grand Rapids Public Library also has a great selection of CDs to check out. Listen with your student!

3) ***Attend live performances.*** The Itasca Symphony Orchestra, made up of local musicians, performs 3 times each year. Tickets for String Program students are free! Each year the Reif brings in fabulous chamber groups, and often includes a workshop for our Strings Program Students in their performance fees with no extra costs to our students. When these opportunities are available, take advantage of them!

4) ***Home Music Stand for Practice.*** Make sure your student has a collapsible music stand. Why? Putting your music at the proper height encourages proper posture and playing technique, which is vital to learning how to play well. Stands are available on amazon for as little as \$11.99. Practicing in front of a mirror is also a helpful technique because then your student can check his/her own posture and look into the mirror to check their hand placement rather than down at his/her hands. Being able to look up and play is an important skill to develop for playing in an ensemble.

5) ***Encourage your student to be prepared for lessons and rehearsal.*** 1) All students should bring their music in a Folder, 2) their instrument and bow, 3) a pencil, 4) a rock-stop for cello players, and 5) a should-rest for violin and viola players.