WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
FINE ARTS

2020/2021 HANDBOOK
INTRODUCTION

The Westminster Fine Arts Handbook is a reference guide for students, parents and staff regarding the policies and expectations for Westminster Christian School Fine Arts. For academic Fine Arts (visual and performing arts classes) all Westminster Student/Parent Handbook policies apply. Extra-curricular Fine Arts (theater productions, jazz ensembles, ILMEA competitions, etc.) are voluntary; students are not obligated to participate and participation is not required for graduation.

Westminster Fine Arts is an important and integral part of the overall school program at Westminster. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of visual and performing arts. It should be understood by artists, musicians, cast members, parents, and staff that the academics and students’ success in the classroom takes precedence over extra-curricular Fine Arts participation (though we believe involvement in Fine Arts promotes success in academics).

Through voluntary participation in extracurricular Fine Arts, students are expected to give effort, authenticity, and dedication to the production, ensemble or club they are involved in. Students also willingly assume the responsibilities and obligations that come with being a cast, ensemble or club member, understanding that these sacrifices are for the benefit of the community, representing Christ and the school. In the Fine Arts Department, students and parents must work together to have a successful program that honors God and promotes the mission and vision of the school. We believe it is important that each group commit to these important principles in order to achieve our common goals.

VISION AND STATEMENT OF FAITH

The main purpose of Westminster Fine Arts is to bring glory to God. From the classroom to extracurricular activities, we will strive to discuss, instill and live out an understanding of what it means to worship through art, as we strive toward excellence in both visual and performing arts. Lastly, as Believers, we will strive to be different from artists who do not know Christ, in process, rehearsal, product and performance.

WESTMINSTER FINE ARTS IS LOVING

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

Within classes, ensembles and casts, we will strive to honor God by functioning as the Body of Christ, bearing fruit of the Spirit, building one another up, offering encouragement and receiving constructive criticism well. Through worship, we seek ways to love God more. Through a safe and meaningful community, we seek to love each other well. Through mentorship and intentionality, we seek to build loving, Christ-focused relationships between faculty and students.

WESTMINSTER FINE ARTS IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Through Biblical integration in the classroom and intentional discipleship in extracurricular activities, we seek to transform students. Our goal is to become more like Christ in the process of creating art or rehearsing through instruction and refinement of skill. We also seek to draw closer to the heart of God as we reflect and experience Him through worship and community. Our goal is to complete an artistic process with more knowledge of and love for Christ than when we began.
WESTMINSTER FINE ARTS IS EXCELLENT

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.” Colossians 3:23

We seek to be excellent in character, conduct, visual art, theater and music. When we create, we reflect God’s image as the Creator. We strive for excellence because God is worthy of our best, not to promote ourselves. This stems from rigorous academics, thorough instruction and high expectations.

FINE ARTS STAFF

Mrs. Lois Shaw
Director of Fine Arts
Choral Music and Theater

Mr. Daniel Quinn
K-6 General Music
Instrumental Music

Mrs. Katie Swalve
K-12 Art

IMPORTANT DATES

All School Musical Auditions - Aug. 17-19, 2020
All School Musical Rehearsals Begin - Aug. 24, 2020

All School Musical Show Dates Nov. 5-14, 2020

HS Play Auditions - Nov. 19, 2020
HS Play Rehearsals Begin - Dec. 2, 2020

MS/HS Fine Arts Night - Dec. 10, 2020

MS Musical Auditions - Jan. 19-21, 2020
MS Musical Rehearsals Begin - Feb. 1, 2021

HS Play Show Dates - March 5-6, 2021

MS Musical Show Dates - April 23-24, 2021

MS/HS Fine Arts Night - May 6, 2021

ES Fine Arts Night - May 11, 2021

FINE ARTS NIGHTS

Westminster has two Fine Arts Nights per year, per grade level (Christmas and Spring). At Fine Arts Night, all music ensembles will have the opportunity to perform formally and all visual art students will have the opportunity to present their work. This event is designed to be worshipful, formal and excellent. It is an extension of the classroom, as a learning opportunity for students to learn performance and artist etiquette. It is an opportunity to worship God and celebrate achievement, as students display and perform art for the Glory of God.
*Any details regarding attendance capacity and precautions regarding COVID-19 will be communicated closer to the event.

**Elementary Fine Arts Night**

*The December Elementary Fine Arts Night is cancelled, due to COVID-19.*

**Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:00PM**

Elementary Fine Arts Night is mandatory for all students Pre-K through Grade 4.

**All students must arrive at 6:00PM** - All band students go directly to the Band Room. All other students go directly to the Chapel.

**Middle School/High School Fine Arts Night**

**Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 7:00PM and Tuesday, May 6, 2021 at 7:00PM**

Middle School/High School Fine Arts Night is mandatory for any student involved in Band or Choir for a given semester. It is an academic, graded commitment and there are no exceptions for missing the concert (including family vacations, extra-curricular or athletic conflicts), aside from family emergencies or illness. An excused absence from Fine Arts night (family emergency, illness) can be made up through a make-up performance test.

**All students must arrive at 6:00PM** - All band students go directly to Chapel, all choir students go directly to Mrs. Shaw’s room. Students who are in both ensembles should report to the Chapel to warm up for Band first.

While other ensembles are performing, students are to sit with their ensemble and exhibit professional audience etiquette, including but not limited to not talking, no cell phones, clapping when appropriate. Ensembles are not in competition with one another, so comments should be supportive, encouraging, constructive and/or respectful.

Students must stay for the entire event.

**Concert Attire**

Concert attire will be graded. It is designed to be professional and unify the choir; it is not a time for you to individualize or stand out in regard to style.

**High School Concert Attire**

**Girls** - **ALL BLACK**

Please wear a solid black, floor length dress OR solid black, floor length skirt and solid formal top. Black dress pants or black jumpsuits are allowed if they are a formal fabric and not too tight. Sleeves are mandatory, but length does not matter. Please wear black dress shoes (no heels higher than two inches) and, if ankles are showing, black tights. Please refrain from flashy jewelry or hair pieces, watches that make noise, joggers, leggings, black jeans, sleeveless tops or informal shoes.

**Boys** - **WHITE ON TOP, BLACK ON BOTTOM**

On top, please wear a white button down. Black bow ties will be provided to students in Choir. On the bottom, please wear black slacks/dress pants, black socks and black dress shoes. Please refrain from neckties, suspenders, watches that make noise, joggers, clothing with logos or informal shoes.
Middle School Concert Attire

**Girls - WHITE ON TOP, BLACK ON BOTTOM**
On top, please wear a white formal top (do not wear ivory, cream or off-white). All tops must have a sleeve, but sleeves of any length are acceptable. On bottom, please wear a black skirt to the knee or longer with black tights OR black dress pants. Please wear black dress shoes (no heels higher than two inches). Please refrain from flashy jewelry or hair pieces, watches that make noise, joggers, leggings, black jeans, sleeveless tops or informal shoes.

**Boys - WHITE ON TOP, BLACK ON BOTTOM**
On top, please wear a white button down. On the bottom, please wear black slacks/dress pants, black socks and black dress shoes. Please refrain from neckties, suspenders, watches that make noise, joggers, clothing with logos or informal shoes.

**VISUAL ARTS**

Specific expectations for students involved in visual arts will be available as we near events this year. Please reference visual art course syllabi or contact Dr. Carol Bristol (cbristol@westminsterchristian.org) or Mrs. Katie Swalve (kswalve@westminsterchristian.org) with questions.

**THEATER PRODUCTIONS**

**CASTING**
We recognize the weight of the cast list and are committed to taking this process seriously. Casting is always full of challenging and heavy decisions, but our goal is to make spirit-led choices that promote the success of our students.

At Westminster, the root of all casting decisions is love for our students. All casting decisions will be earnestly prayed over, thoroughly discussed and unanimously approved by the directorial staff team. The directorial staff team is committed to unbiased, fair and impartial casting.

Casting is taken on a show by show basis.
Number of past roles or prior performance will not influence casting (i.e. if you have been a lead in the past, it does not mean you can not have a lead again. It also does not guarantee a lead in the future). Seniority will not influence casting (i.e. seniors are not given first choice). Homeschool partners will be given fair and equal opportunity. Student/Teacher relationships will not influence casting (i.e. if a student has a close relationship with a judge, this does not mean they are more likely to get a lead. Likewise, if a student has had a conflict with a judge, this does not mean they are less likely to get a lead).

Casting is influenced by four main categories*: skill, stage presence, character likeness and personhood. **Skill** - Accuracy, notes, rhythms, vocal tone, musicality, intonation, range, projection, movement, flexibility, versatility and diction are considered. **Stage Presence** - Facial expression, size of movements, camaraderie and intentionality are considered. **Character Likeness** - We do need to consider your ability to resemble a character. (For example, a munchkin could not be played by someone over six feet tall). However, we are open to artistic interpretation and promote flexibility. We will only consider this if it will be a distraction or put a student in a position to be embarrassed. Discrimination or bias of any kind regarding a student’s race or weight is completely unacceptable and will not influence decisions regarding character likeness. **Personhood** - Students with lead roles serve as leaders to a large group of students. Thus, preparedness, respect, integrity and godly character are important and influence the decision making process.
*Please know that if you do not receive a lead role, it does not mean you do not have godly character, incredible skill or excellent stage presence. There are never enough roles to highlight all the incredible talent in our school.

When the cast list is posted, we ask that you prayerfully consider how to respond in a godly way. There will be celebration, disappointment, joy and anxiety throughout our cast as roles are processed. If you are celebrating, please do so respectfully, being aware of those who may be sad. If you are nervous about your role, please walk forward knowing that God will equip you and the Directorial staff team believes in you! If you are disappointed, please do so without bitterness, defensiveness or accusations, being supportive of your peers and believing that your role is valuable! It is important that we “rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn” Romans 12:15.

REHEARSALS

All School Musical Rehearsal Breakdown (Beginning August 24, 2020)

Below is the “rough draft” breakdown of rehearsals for each week (subject to change). There may be exceptions and rehearsals may run later as we near tech week. The goal is for elementary students to have a consistent schedule (Mondays and Thursdays) and for MS and HS students to have a semi-regular routine, as they work around athletic and work schedules.

*Elementary students will be supervised in the chapel from 3:00-3:15.

Mondays:
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 leads and supporting characters (sometimes elementary) blocking/choreography
5:00-5:30 leads vocals

Tuesdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 MS/HS choreography
5:00-5:30 leads vocals

Wednesdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 leads and supporting characters blocking
5:00-5:30 leads vocals

Thursdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-4:30 elementary vocals and choreography
3:30-4:30 leads review blocking
4:30-5:00 leads vocals

Fridays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 MS/HS choreography
5:00-5:30 leads vocals
High School Play Rehearsal Breakdown (Beginning December 2, 2020)
Below is the “rough draft” breakdown of rehearsals for each week (subject to change). There may be exceptions and rehearsals may run later as we near tech week. The goal is for the rehearsal schedule to accommodate cast members involved in athletics.

Mondays:
NO REHEARSAL

Tuesdays
3:15 - devotional
3:30 - 5:30 full cast - blocking

Wednesdays
3:15 - devotional
3:30 - 5:30 specific characters blocking

Thursdays
NO REHEARSAL

Fridays
3:15 - devotional
3:30 - 4:30 specific characters blocking

Middle School Musical Rehearsal Breakdown (Beginning February 1, 2021)
Below is the “rough draft” breakdown of rehearsals for each week (subject to change). There may be exceptions and rehearsals may run later as we near tech week. The goal is for elementary students to have a consistent schedule (Mondays and Thursdays) and for MS and HS students to have a semi-regular routine, as they work around athletic and work schedules.
*Elementary students will be supervised in the chapel from 3:00-3:15.

Feb. 1 through March 6 (during HS Play):
Mondays:
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 leads and supporting characters (sometimes elementary) blocking/choreography
5:00-5:30 leads vocals

Tuesdays
NO REHEARSAL

Wednesdays
3:00-4:30 one-on-one vocal coaching sessions with leads

Thursdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:30 vocals and choreography

Fridays
NO REHEARSAL

March 8 through April 16 (after HS Play):
Mondays:
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:30 full cast vocals and choreography
Tuesdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:30 specific number choreography

Wednesdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:00 leads and supporting characters blocking
5:00-5:30 leads vocals

Thursdays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:30 full cast vocals and choreography

Fridays
3:15 - devotional and warm up
3:30-5:30 leads and supporting characters (sometimes elementary) blocking/choreography

TECH WEEK AND PERFORMANCES

All School Musical Tech Week:
Tech week rehearsals are FULL CAST from 3:00PM-9:00PM (elementary dismissed at 8:00 for All School and Middle School Musicals), dinner provided.
On Friday (and Thursday for All School Musical), rehearsal begins at 3:00PM, anticipated show end time is 10:00PM. On Saturday, rehearsal begins at 11:00AM, anticipated show end time is 10:00PM, followed by strike and a casual “cast party” (IHOP for All School Musical and HS Play, Portillos for MS Musical).

All School Musical Show Dates
Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 7:00PM
Friday, November 6, 2020 at 7:00PM
Saturday, November 7, 2020 at 2:00PM and 7:00PM
Thursday, November 12, 2020 7:00PM
Friday, November 13, 2020 7:00PM
Saturday, November 14, 2020 2:00PM and 7:00PM

High School Play Show Dates
Friday, March 5, 2021 7:00PM
Saturday, March 6, 2020 2:00PM and 7:00PM

Middle School Musical Show Dates
Friday, April 23, 2021 7:00PM
Saturday, April 24, 2021 2:00PM and 7:00PM

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS
You are expected to arrive at rehearsal prepared, including being off-book by October 5, 2020, ready to work. You are expected to interact with fellow cast members, parent volunteers and staff with a respectful and Christ-like attitude.

Per the Westminster Student/Parent Handbook, you must be at school by 10:45am (aside from excused absences, such as a college visit) in order to attend rehearsal. During tech week, if you arrive at school later than 10:45am, it will count as two unexcused absences, since being cut from a performance could be unfair to fellow cast members, theater donors, etc. Depending on the student’s attitude behind tardiness, further consequences may apply as the Director sees fit.
Cell Phones are allowed at rehearsal and in the green room only during downtime or intermission and must be on silent at all times pertaining to rehearsal or performance. You may not have your cell phone on stage or back stage. When taking pre-show photos, please be cautious and respectful of those who may be changing and avoid taking any photos in the dressing room. Mrs. Shaw highly recommends putting your phone on airplane mode from “curtain to curtain” to avoid any text or social media post throwing your focus.

At rehearsal, dress code policies apply with the exception of clothes better suited for movement at choreography rehearsals (i.e. athletic pants or joggers; yoga pants must be worn with a shirt or dress at least mid-thigh in length). Modesty is still a priority.

If you are going to miss rehearsal for a predictable reason (such as a family vacation) you must let the Director know in advance. In the event that you leave school during the day due to illness, you do not need to inform the Director, as the information will be in RenWeb. Missing rehearsal without warning or for an unexcused reason may result in being cut from a specific scene or number.

If expectations are repeatedly ignored or if disruptive behavior persists in a way that compromises the rehearsal process, Westminster reserves the right to ask students to resign from participation in the show.

**PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

At least one parent or guardian from each family is required to attend the Parent Meeting and be on at least one parent committee.

- **All School Musical Parent Meeting** - Wednesday, August 26, 2020 at 5:00PM
- **All School Musical Pre-Tech Week Meeting** - Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 5:30PM
- **High School Play Parent Meeting** - Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 5:30PM
- **Middle School Musical Parent Meeting** - Monday Feb. 1 at 5:00PM

Westminster will provide costumes, but you are responsible for providing appropriate backstage undergarments (something students can wear and remain covered in the event of a quick change, such as a leotard or bike shorts and a tank top) and basic makeup for your student. You also may be asked to purchase shoes or specific small costume pieces, but you may request declining this responsibility if it is not financially feasible for your family.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

What should I wear to auditions?

*Wear something within the school dress code that you feel comfortable in and can move/dance in.*

Are auditions open or closed?

*For the musicals, dance auditions are open (other students will be in the room). Solo and lead auditions are closed (just you and the judges will be in the room). For the High School Play, all auditions are closed.*

Where will auditions take place?

*All School and Middle School Musical auditions will take place in the chapel. High School Play auditions will take place in Mrs. Shaw’s classroom.*

What will auditions be like?

*Don’t worry, the “judges” are not “judging you.” We want you to succeed and are rooting for you!*

*All School and Middle School Musicals - For the dance audition, we will spend time learning a short dance combination all together, then you will be given a few minutes to practice on your own. You will then perform the dance combination in small groups for the judges. You will be evaluated on accuracy,*
expression and attitude. For the solo and lead auditions, you will enter the chapel when your name is called, hand in your audition packet and stand on the stage (judges will be seated in the audience, and the chapel door windows will be covered). You will then state your name, grade and desired role. When you’re ready, you will sing the song you’ve prepared (with a live piano accompanist for All School Musical auditions and rehearsal track for Middle School Musical auditions). Lastly, you will read the lines you’ve prepared with one of our judges. You may be asked to read/sing for a different part or read/sing something again differently (this does not mean you messed up, it is testing your versatility).

High School Play - You will enter Mrs. Shaw’s classroom when your name is called, hand in your audition packet and state your name, grade and desired role and read the lines you’ve prepared with one of our judges. You may be asked to read for a different part or read something again differently (this does not mean you messed up, it is testing your versatility).

What do I need to prepare for my audition?
You will need to fill out the audition form and bring it with you.

All School and Middle School Musical - If you want to be in the ensemble, you do not need to prepare any songs or sides (just come with a positive attitude). If you want a specific lead role, please prepare the song and sides that correspond with the role you want. You may be asked to read or sing for another role, so it would be wise to look over all the songs and sides.

High School Play - Please prepare the sides that correspond with the role you want. You may be asked to read for another role, so it would be wise to look over all the sides.

Does my audition need to be memorized?
It does not need to be memorized, but if you are wanting a lead role, memorization will help us see your level of commitment/preparedness.

What will my time commitment be?
All School Musical - In general, elementary students and those in the ensemble will have rehearsals for 1-2 hours, 2-3 times a week. Leads will have rehearsals for 1-2 hours, 4-5 times a week. This may increase as we near tech week.

High School Play - In general, students will have rehearsals for 2-3 hours, 2-3 times a week.

Middle School Musical - While the HS Play is still going on (through March 5), elementary students and those in the ensemble will have rehearsals for 2-3 hours, 1 time a week. Leads will have rehearsals for 1-2 hours, 2-3 times a week.
For March and April, elementary students and those in the ensemble will have rehearsals for 2-3 hours, 2-3 times a week. Leads and supporting roles will have rehearsals for 2-3 hours, 4-5 times a week. There are no rehearsals during Spring Break. Rehearsal length and frequency may increase as we near tech week.

Is participation on a parent committee required?
Yes. At least one parent from each family must be on a parent committee.

Can I miss tech week rehearsals?
No. There are no exceptions to this, aside from a medical or family emergency.

Can I play a sport and be in the play?
Yes. The Athletic Department and Fine Arts Department will work together to make sure the schedules are manageable for students to play a sport and be in the play.

Where will information be throughout the process?
You will receive emails with schedules and any other necessary information from Mrs. Shaw (Lshaw@westminsterchristian.org) at least once a week. If you are not receiving emails, please contact Mrs. Shaw at the previously stated email address.

**All School Musical Specific Questions:**

**Does my student have to come to auditions if he/she wants to be in the chorus/ensemble only?**
Yes, if your student wants to be in the chorus/ensemble, he/she is required to be at the dance audition on Tuesday until 4:30.

**Do grades 3-8 have to audition?**
Elementary students are required to attend the audition on Tuesday from 3:15-5:00PM. Any elementary schooler who wants to audition for a solo part must sign up for an audition time on Wednesday between 3:15-4:15PM.

**Can my middle schooler have a lead role?**
Middle schoolers are not given lead roles (aside from supporting roles designated for 3-8 to audition for) unless we are not able to fill the cast with high schoolers. If this situation arises, you will be notified.

**Middle School Musical Specific Questions:**

**Does my student have to come to auditions if he/she want to be in the chorus only?**
Yes, if your student wants to be in the ensemble, he/she is required to be at the dance audition on Tuesday.

**Do grades 3-4 have to audition?**
Elementary students are required to attend the audition on Tuesday from 3:15-5:00PM. Any elementary schooler who wants to audition for a solo part must sign up for an audition time on Wednesday between 3:15-4:15PM.

**Can my elementary schooler have a lead role?**
Elementary schoolers are not given lead roles unless we are not able to fill the cast with grades 5-8. If this situation arises, you will be notified.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

All conflicts at Westminster Christian School, including those related to or within the Fine Arts, should be handled in a Biblical manner. In particular, Westminster encourages application of Matthew 18 when handling a problem or settling a dispute. This principle encourages the offended party to go directly to the one with whom he/she has a problem. (i.e. students should talk to a fellow cast member or teacher at an appropriate time prior to parental involvement and prior to going directly to the Fine Arts Director). Following the biblical model, most conflicts can be resolved through loving, open and honest communication, being slow to speak and slow to become angry. If the situation is not resolved, the offended person is encouraged to seek a solution by speaking to the next person in authority. In simple terms, a student should approach whom they're in conflict with first. If unresolved, the student and parents may approach the teacher or director. If still unresolved, the matter may be brought to the Director of Fine Arts. If after presenting the problem to the Director of Fine Arts the parent or student feels that the proper process was not followed, they can take the matter to the School Board. The School Board will ensure that the matter has been discussed first through the appropriate channels and God-honoring steps have been taken to promote harmony and resolution in the Body of Christ.