

# CHOIR COURSE EXPECTATIONS / HANDBOOK

Ms Jen Andrus- Choir Director - Grades 6 through 8

PLEASE PRINT AND RETURN PAGE 8 TO MS ANDRUS

## I. COURSE SCOPE AND GOALS:

### A. Course Scope

All choir courses are designed for students who desire to develop vocal skills, performance skills, audience etiquette, teamwork and peer support. In addition, the course involves applying the basic fundamentals of musicianship.

### B. Course Goals

To understand and develop skills in choral posture, breathing, blending, tone production, fundamentals of music theory rhythm-reading and sight-singing.

To develop a work ethic and an awareness of the responsibilities that will promote the highest level of success for the individual student and the entire choir program.

To develop skills in the evaluation of music and musical performances.

To develop self-confidence demonstrated by singing alone and with others.

To develop an appreciation for varied styles of music.

## II. COURSE ACTIVITIES

### A. Homework

The student is expected to practice the exercises and pieces that are rehearsed in class everyday.

Occasionally, written assignments will be given to reinforce the understanding of information presented in class.

### B. Concerts /Testing / Semester Exams

Students are required to attend **ALL** concerts. Additional performances may be scheduled during the year with a minimum of two weeks notice.

Quizzes will be given periodically throughout the year; written quizzes are usually on Fridays.

Comprehensive written and skill examinations will be administered at the conclusion of each semester.

### C. Extra, extra!

*Extra* rehearsals may be required of students after school and/or on Saturday. Advanced notice will be given.

*Extra* credit may be built into some assignments.

*Extra* opportunity to sing: All students will be encouraged to participate in enrichment opportunities such as **Solo & Ensemble Festival** and performing in-class or concert solos. Advanced choir students will also have the opportunity to audition for the annual district **Honor Choir**.

### **III. PREREQUISITES**

- A. Beginning Choirs - none.
- B. Advanced Ladies Choir - one year choir experience at the middle school choir level or audition with director.
- C. Concert Choir- audition with director.

### **IV. EVALUATION/GRADES**

A. Grade break-down:

- 1. 25% Participation
- 2. 25% Quizzes and written assignments
- 3. 20% Semester test
- 4. 30% Concerts

B. Letter grade break-down:

- A= 90% -100% --Excellent
- B= 80% -89% --- Above average
- C= 70% - 79% -- Average
- D= 60% - 69 % --Below average
- F= Below 60% -- Failing

C. Grade reports will be issued as follows:

- 1. Grade day reports will be given four times a year, midway through each nine weeks.
- 2. Quarter grades will be given on a report card four times a year, at the end of each nine week grading period.
- 3. Semester grades will be given twice during the year, at eighteen week intervals. Semester grades will be a combination of a semester exam grade and grades for the two quarters.
- 4. Grade on Interact will be updated whenever a new score is entered (this may take the system 24 hours to update.)
- 5. Grade will be posted in the choir room by student number for students to view.

### **V. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

A. Citizenship grades: Citizenship grades will be based on a student's adherence to the classroom rules and procedures and will be issued according to the following scale:

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| O (Outstanding)  | N (Needs Improvement) |
| S (Satisfactory) | U (Unsatisfactory)    |

Keep in mind: behavior affects citizenship grade *and participations points!*

B. Appropriate behavior includes the following:

- Demonstrate respect and courtesy at all times.
- Be attentive and quiet during all functions.
- Be responsible.
- Keep rehearsal and performance areas neat.
- Never bring food, drink (except water), gum, or candy into the choir room.
- Participate!

Failure to meet the above conduct expectations will result in the following consequences:

- Warning and/or citation, conference at the end of class
- Loss of participation points, parent contact
- Detention, possible behavior contract
- Referral to Counselor
- Referral to Dean

\*Gum in class will result in automatic detention

**Severity Clause:** Fighting, insubordination, or other serious disruption that inhibits the educational process will result in an immediate referral to the dean regardless of previous action.

C. Field Trips

Students will be given a CLASSROOM STATUS form two weeks prior to an off-campus performance event. Students are responsible for getting the form completed by their teachers and returning it to the director by the assigned date for field trip eligibility. Students with an academic grade of F, or a citizenship grade of "N" or "U" in ANY class will not be permitted to participate. An alternate assignment must be completed to make-up points missed from the performance.

## VI. REQUIRED CHOIR CLASS SUPPLIES

- A. **Folder used only for choir:** The folder will contain current pieces of music being rehearsed in class, worksheet or other papers we may use in class.
- B. **Student Planner:** The planner is distributed to every student at Bob Miller at the beginning of the year. It should be available for periodic checks to see that students are keeping daily class objectives, assignments and performance dates neatly recorded.
- C. **Pencil & Notebook:** This notebook should be used for choir only.

## VII. ATTENDANCE/ TARDY POLICY

All students are expected to be in class on time. A student is considered tardy when both feet are not in the classroom when the bell begins to ring. Tardy students will be reported to the deans and will receive consequences in accordance with the school-wide tardy policy.

Choir is a participation class, and therefore credit is given to those students who are in class, participating and rehearsing. 4 points are given for participation for each class period. These points are lost through tardies, classroom distractions and/or not

participating.

## **VIII. MAKEUP WORK**

Teachers shall provide an opportunity for a student to makeup missed work due to any absence. Students shall be held accountable for the work.

After an absence, a secondary student is required to **initiate contact** with the teacher(s) to obtain appropriate makeup work within three school days immediately following the absence. Once contact has been made with the teacher(s), specific makeup work must be completed and returned to the teacher(s) within a reasonable length of time, to be determined by the teacher and communicated to the student/parent or legal guardian. The makeup work must be returned to the teacher(s) by the specified due date if it is to be acknowledged. Students shall be allowed a minimum of three (3) days to complete makeup work.

Always check with Ms. Andrus about making-up missed class.

Any quiz that is taken in class can be made-up for full credit, but must be done within one week of the quiz date.

## **IX. LATE WORK**

All daily, short, and long ranged assignments are due the following day or on the date identified by the teacher. If a student is absent on the day the assignment is due, the completed assignment is due the day the student returns to school. Late work will not receive full credit.

## **X. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

If students are found guilty of academic dishonesty (cheating), the teacher shall collect the assignment, mark a zero for the work and notify the parent of the consequence. A second offense of cheating or continued academic dishonesty may result in a notice of required parent conference at which time future consequences will be discussed.

Copying a paper from an online source is illegal and dishonest. No second chance will be given if you hand in a copied paper and you will receive an “F” on the assignment.

# CHOIR MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

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## I. ELEMENTS OF A CHORAL REHEARSAL

- A. Preparing the mind and body for the upcoming task.
- B. Work on proper choral breathing.
- C. Work on proper choral tone production.
- D. Blending voices for a proper tone and balance.
- E. Learning the fundamentals of music theory.
- F. Learning basic musicianship.
- G. Learning to work together for a common goal.

## II. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Attendance is REQUIRED.
  - 1. Because of the unique experience of live performance and the importance of each member's commitment to the choir, missing a performance may only be made up if the director is notified prior to the performance AND the situation involves a severe family emergency.
  - 2. Even with prior notice, unless the situation is a severe family emergency, it will be considered unexcused and no make-up work will be provided.
  - 3. With prior notification and appropriate reason for missing a performance, make up work will be provided. The work must be turned in on the date agreed upon by teacher, student and parent/guardian.
- B. Punctuality
  - 1. Choir members who do not arrive on time will have a reduction in points received for the performance.
  - 2. Prior arrangements with the director MAY be acceptable for late arrival.
- C. Arrive in proper uniform.
  - 1. Uniform requirements for each choir are outlined in the enclosed letter.
  - 2. Students who do not arrive in proper uniform will not be permitted to perform.
- D. Concert Dismissal
  - 1. All choir members are required to stay for the completion of a concert, not just their portion of the performance.
  - 2. Students who leave early will receive a reduction in performance points.

## III. UNIFORMS

- A. Uniforms are required so that our presentation will match our level of performance. Professional uniforms create a level of professionalism in every element of performance: pride in work already accomplished in rehearsal, confidence for dealing with the pressure of live performance, group unity, each individual contributing equally to the "whole" and creating a first impression of excellence for the audience - and there are no second chances for a making a great first impression!
- B. Uniform costs will be divided between personal expense and fundraising activities.
- C. After uniform costs have been taken care of, they are the personal property of the choir member. Should the student leave the school or transfer to another choir in

later years, uniforms may be turned in for refund or credit toward different uniform requirements. The amount of credit will be determined by the condition of the uniform being turned in.

- D. Proper cleaning and maintenance of uniforms are the students' responsibility.
- E. Choir uniforms are to be worn at choir performances ONLY.

#### IV. FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a crucial activity for the choir program at Bob Miller. It enables us to purchase materials and services necessary for a high level choral experience which is not possible through district funds alone.

Every choir member benefits as a result of fundraising, so every choir member is expected to participate.

More information to come!

#### V. FIELD TRIPS

- A. Field trips are a PRIVILEGE not a RIGHT.
- B. Field trip requirements are detailed in the Course Expectations under Behavioral Expectations, section C.
- C. The requirements are designed to encourage students in the establishment of good academic and behavioral habits throughout the year. These requirements are easily met by all students who **show effort** to do so!

#### VI. ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

**Q: Are we in competition with other schools?**

A: No. We are able to achieve excellence without negative comparisons to other school choral programs. If we achieve our goals and our fans love us - great! We should hope that other schools achieve their goals as well.

**Q: Why are students required to attend performances?**

A: The performing arts are unique. In addition to the classroom setting, a great deal of learning takes place in performances outside the classroom. Attendance and punctuality are part of learning to be a responsible member of a performing arts group. Missing a performance hurts everyone, because each member of the group brings a unique quality to the whole. WE NEED YOU!

**Q: Why do choirs sing in foreign languages?**

A: We study music from many different countries and cultures. Composers usually set music to words from their native country. These words actually add to the beauty and character of the piece. Singing in foreign languages gives us a learning tool for the focus of proper vowel sounds, it exercises the mind and helps us to develop our intellectual thinking. Through the language learning process, we grow to understand the words and the meaning of the music.

**Q: What about the singing of religious music?**

A: The U.S. Supreme Court states that public schools may present holiday assemblies as long as they do not advance or inhibit religion.

*"(Religious) music...may be included in the curriculum, as long as it is presented in a prudent and objective manner."*

Before there were radios, CD's and MTV, the primary outlet for composing choral music was the church. In order to study great masters of the past, such as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and others, we must accept this fact or be denied their greatness.

## **VII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Here's what you can do to show your support!

- A. Reinforce the importance of commitment and responsibility by keeping all performance dates a priority on your family calendar.
- B. Attend concerts! It means so much to your child for you to come and be attentive.
- C. Be proud of your child for being in choir and express it often! Compliment them for their hard work and accomplishments.
- D. Remember, we all make mistakes! Mistakes CAN BE great learning tools.
- E. Take your child to a choral concert. Our area has many quality professional, college, church, high school, middle school and elementary school choirs.
- F. Offer your time and talents to the choral program by filling out and returning the enclosed **Parental Involvement Survey!**

\*\*\*Give to Ms. Andrus\*\*\*

Bob Miller Middle School

# Choir Course Expectations / Grading Criteria / Handbook Signature and Commitment Page

Ms. Jen Andrus - Choir Director - Grades 6 through 8

Please print, sign and return this page indicating you have **read** a copy of the classroom course goals and expectations, **grading criteria sheet**, and handbook, outlining requirements for being a successful choir member and agree to the terms here in. Your signature will also serve as your commitment to partner with Ms Andrus in creating an environment of high level performance in and out of the classroom. I also understand that if I do not participate fully in making our program successful that I may need to find another elective as choir is a team effort and we cannot succeed without everyone's commitment.

Printed Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature	Date
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date

Please complete the **FIELD TRIP PERMISSION SLIP** below. The form will be kept on file and serve as permission for off-campus performances that arise during the year. Detailed information regarding field trips will be sent home at least two weeks in advance. **READ CAREFULLY PLEASE!**

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CCF-796

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

6/92

## FIELD TRIP PERMIT

Last Name of Pupil \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

I request that my child be allowed to participate in an authorized Clark County School District Field Trip. I understand that my child will be chaperoned by a responsible adult while away from the school, who will take reasonable precautions to protect my child from harm and injury.

I understand that this is a supervised activity. In order to maintain order, students will be expected to comply with rules, standards, and instructions for student behavior. I waive and release all claims against the Clark County School District employees or their agents arising out of my child's failure to remain under such supervision. If at any time my child's behavior is incompatible with the standard for student behavior, his/her further participation may not be permitted.

In the event that my child is injured, becomes ill, or involved in an accident while away, I understand that the chaperon will seek medical attention for my child, and the school will contact me as soon as possible, and that I will be financially responsible for medical treatment. I further agree to hold the Clark County School District, its employees, and agents harmless for injury or illness caused by the negligence of persons other than employees or agents of the Clark County School District when such injury or illness occurs during the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent/ Guardian- YES** Date

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Phone and Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note any medical information which would be of help: (i.e., allergies, medications to avoid, current medications, etc.)

I **do not** wish my child to take part in the school field trips.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent/ Guardian- NO** Date