

Starr's Mill High School Choral Department
Student Handbook and Syllabus
2017-2018
Dr. John L. Odom
Director of Choral Activities

After the notes, the music begins!

♪ Philosophy ♪

The Starr's Mill High School Choral Department is designed to fulfill the musical needs of students who enjoy singing. Each choir is devoted to the diligent study, rehearsal and performance of great choral music. Students are exposed to a variety of choral literature, representing different styles and cultures. We offer opportunities for individual and group performances and activities. Through a strong work ethic, commitment, and a passion for music, all students will succeed.

Research studies have proven that the study of music enhances performance in academics. Participating in a choir teaches students basic musical skills and vocal production in addition to developing professionalism, self-discipline, team-work and a greater appreciation for all the Arts. The study of music incorporates concepts from other disciplines: **Science** – it is exact, specific and demands exact acoustics and production; **Math** – it is based on divisions of time into precise units; **History** – music reflects the environment and culture relative to the time period in which it was written; **Language** – music terms are in Italian, German, and French; students will sing text in Italian, Latin, German, French and English;

Art – it demands creativity and develops what other disciplines cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling, and emotion; **Physical Education** – singing requires control of muscles, coordination, and responses to aural stimuli. Core subjects take on a deeper meaning and understanding with the study of music.

♪ Goals ♪

The educational goal of the SMHS Choral Department is to give students the best musical education while developing self-esteem, self-discipline and team work. We offer our students the opportunity to develop talent and express that talent and creativity through choral ensemble and solo performance. Students must have a desire to sing and develop their own personal art of singing.

The goal in each rehearsal is to achieve a high degree of learning and performance excellence. Attaining this goal is an individual mission requiring a strong work ethic and a commitment to the advancement of the choral art. Creating and expressing music has a significant impact on the human spirit and develops a well-rounded person. The future adult life of every student is enriched by the skills, knowledge and habits developed by the study of music. Each choral ensemble, through rehearsal and performance will develop an understanding and appreciation of music, as well as learn skills necessary to successfully contribute to the group. Each student should take ownership of these goals and conduct themselves each day in a manner that will further their successful attainment.

♪ Choral Performing Ensembles ♪

Bel Canto (Beginning and Intermediate Women)

Bel Canto is a non-auditioned performing ensemble. It is open to any female singer in grades 9-12. The goals of *Bel Canto* are to introduce the singer to good choral literature, develop good vocal production, develop the ability to sight-read, perform with strength as an independent singer and prepare the singer to advance into one of the audition ensembles.

Camerata (Beginning and Intermediate Men)

Camerata is a non-auditioned performing ensemble. It is open to any male singer in grades 9-12. The goals of *Camerata* are to introduce the singer to good choral literature, develop good vocal production, develop the ability to sight-read, perform with strength as an independent singer and prepare the singer to advance into one of the audition ensembles.

Bella Voce (Advanced Women)

Bella Voce is an auditioned performing ensemble for women in grades 10-12. The singer must demonstrate a sense of good vocal production, a well-developed ability to sight-read, and an ability to perform as an independent singer.

Chanticleer (Advanced Mixed)

Chanticleer is an auditioned SATB performing ensemble. The singer must demonstrate good vocal production, a well-developed ability to sight-read, and must perform with strength as an independent singer. Advanced choral literature up to college level is performed by this ensemble. Factors such as contribution to previous ensembles, general attitude, and active participation are taken into consideration for the auditioning student.

An Octave Above (Vocal Jazz Women)

An Octave Above is an auditioned ensemble. This ensemble meets Zero period. The singer must be a member of one of the four concert ensembles listed above to be considered for An Octave Above. The singer must demonstrate a sense of good vocal production, and an ability to perform as an independent singer. This ensemble performs music in the a cappella vocal jazz genre, as well as some contemporary pop music.

Men of the Mill (A cappella Men)

Men of the Mill is an auditioned ensemble. This ensemble meets Zero period. The singer must be a member of one of the four concert ensembles listed above to be considered for Men of the Mill. The singer must demonstrate a sense of good vocal production, and an ability to perform as an independent singer. This ensemble performs a cappella music of various genres for men's voices.

♪ Choral Music Objectives ♪

The choral music program is designed to produce individuals who:

- are able to perform music alone and with others;
- are able to use the vocabulary and notation of music;
- are to respond to music aesthetically, intellectually, and emotionally;
- are acquainted with a variety of music of different styles and genres, and from various cultures;
- understand the uses and influences of music in the lives of human beings;
- are able to make aesthetic judgments based on critical listening and analysis;
- have developed a commitment to music.

♪ Classroom Policies and Procedures ♪

Policies

- When the tardy bell rings, each student will...
 1. Be at their assigned seat with folder and pencil
 2. Begin daily warm up.
- Sit with singer's posture while singing.
- **No other book/work/electronic device is to be brought to your seat. Choral Folder Only!**
- Use cubbies for storage of other materials
- **All cell phones are to be placed in a cubbie with your other belongings or placed in the phone holder. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Any student who has a phone or electronic device on their person will have that phone confiscated and turned into the office
- **All other electronic devices such as Ipads, etc. should not be brought to class.** Keep them secured on your locker. If they are brought to class they are to be left in a cubbie. However, we are not responsible for the safety of that device.
- Be on time for class rehearsals and performances
- During rehearsals, singers will refrain from talking; Rehearsal begins when tardy bell rings; Singers will sing their designated pitch in relation to the pitch of the tardy bell
- Mark the conductor's instructions in your score (pencil will be kept in folder).
- Never interrupt rehearsal with talking or other distractions unless there is an emergency.
- Absolutely no gum, food or drink in the choral room (you may have bottled water only).
- Raise your hand for permission to speak.
- There will be no student writing on white boards or bulletin boards without the director's permission.
- Your director must be notified **before rehearsal** if vocal rest is required. You will be required to follow each activity/song throughout rehearsal and fill out a rehearsal assessment form. Failure to complete assessment form will result in no daily credit for that class period.
- Staying on task is not optional. If your director is working with a section or small group, your attention is on your music at what ever place in the music the other group is working.
- Help keep the choral room clean at all times. Trash goes in the trash can!
- Have a positive attitude and sing!

Procedures

- Treat your director and each other with respect at all times.
- Each student will have a sharpened pencil each day for rehearsal. Failure to have your pencil will result in 2 points deducted from your daily grade. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- At the end of rehearsal, students are expected to put their folders in their assigned folder slot and to gather all of their belongings.

♪ **Sequence of Consequences** ♪ (all result in deduction in daily grade)

- Student conference with teacher to try and correct failure to meet class expectations
- Contact parent and 20 minute teacher detention
- 30 minute teacher detention
- Discipline referral to assistant principal

♪ **Grading Policy** ♪

You earn your grade through participation in choral activities and adherence to the above daily expectations. The grading system is as follows:

Each grading period, the student's grades will be calculated from three weighted categories:

Nine Weeks grade

- Vocal Assessments - 50%
- Performance Attendance & Evaluation – 30%
- Quizzes/Activities - 20%

Vocal Assessments

This will come in the form of a daily grade that will be recorded weekly. The student will be assessed on areas including, but not limited to singing posture, breathing techniques, attentiveness, following directions, and contributions to daily rehearsal.

Performances

The performance grade will be determined by attendance, punctuality, appropriate attire, and demonstration of vocal skills. A performance grade will be assigned for each performance.

Quizzes/Activities

The quizzes/Activities grade will consist of sight-singing quizzes, written quizzes/activities, ear-training quizzes, and other graded assignments.

Make-up Work: The nature of a performance-based class is that a student must be present to benefit from the course.

A student who is absent from rehearsal cannot truly “make up” the missed rehearsal. For this reason, to make up a rehearsal will mean the student should spend extra time working on their part. This includes getting a section leader's music to copy any markings made during the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the student to speak with their section leader or the director to determine the music rehearsed during their absence and spending an equitable amount of time missed working with the website practice files. Once returning to the classroom, the student should work diligently to “catch up” to the level of the entire ensemble.

A student who is absent from a concert cannot effectively duplicate the environment of the concert and all of the many components and nuances of a live performance. For details regarding an absence from a concert see “Concert Policies and Procedures.

A student whose absence is excused will be allowed to make up any written assignments or vocal assessments. All make-up work must be completed within five school days after the student returns. **FIELD TRIP ABSENCES ONLY GET ONE DAY TO MAKE-UP THE WORK.** All make-up work will be scheduled at the director’s convenience with the student having at least 24-hours notice. It is the student's responsibility to access what was missed and to set up a time with the director to make up the work. After five school days, if the student has not set a time with the director a grade of zero will be entered.

A student with an unexcused absent will not be allowed to make up any missed assignments or assessments.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation by a student of another's ideas or writing as his own. Basically, two types of plagiarism are common. The first, which is more serious, involves a deliberate attempt on the part of a student to pass off as his own the writing or ideas of another person (student, parent, published or unpublished author, et al). This type generally consists of the straight copying or slight paraphrasing of a source that the student attempts to conceal. The second results from the student's lack of attention to proper procedures for source acknowledgments and use, involving one or more technical errors. The student in this case fails to acknowledge indebtedness to outside material. Both types of plagiarism are serious violations of the principles of academic integrity. They will not be tolerated. Penalties, especially for those involved in deliberate plagiarism, may be quite severe.

♪ Attendance Policy ♪

By nature, the choral program is a "performing art". This describes the most basic, evaluative outlet for choirs – Performance! It is necessary for all members to be present for rehearsals and performances. Every member is crucial to the maximum achievement of the ensemble.

Three categories of attendance issues will be taken into account for grading purposes:

- Tardies
- Excused Absences
- Unexcused Absences

Tardies

Students are expected to be punctual to the class time rehearsal and performances. A student tardy to class or a performance will have 2 points deducted from the daily or performance grade.

Excused Absences

Excused absences from daily class are those deemed excused by the school. If a student is excused by the school from their absence in class, no grade will be given for the day(s) and the weekly grade will reflect only those days present. NO ABSENCE FROM A CONCERT WILL BE EXCUSED (see below)

Unexcused Absences

In the case where the school rules an absence as unexcused, a zero will be recorded for the student for that day. A student who misses a performance has no means by which to "make up" the performance. For this reason, they will receive a zero for the performance. Only in the case of a family emergency or illness (requiring a doctor's excuse) will an alternative assignment be given and the zero removed.

♪ Reminder ♪

You must cross-reference your athletic calendars with the chorus calendar in the beginning of the year and each month after to catch conflicts well in advance so that you may inform your coach of a mandatory choral event that is on the calendar.

♪ Concert Policies and Procedures ♪

Concerts and public appearances are the measure of the performing arts. The manner in which an ensemble presents itself prior to, during, and after the actual performance contributes to the way audience members, judges, and parents reflect on the overall ensemble and program. Again...there are no excused absences from performances other than illnesses with a doctor's excuse or family emergencies. You have been given the calendar for the year and are expected to adhere to that calendar. Sporting events, other extra-curricular activities, banquets, etc. are not considered excused absences. The following policies will be observed during concerts:

Policies

- Students are required to have the appropriate concert attire.
- No measures by which a student can be singled out are to be exhibited (i.e. jewelry, excessive hair styling, waving to family members, etc.).
- No cologne or perfume is to be worn. Please do use deodorant.
- Music is to be memorized unless the director designates the use of folders.
- Students are expected to arrive at the concert 30 minutes prior to the concert start time, unless otherwise instructed.
- Students are not permitted to leave the concert early. If extenuating circumstances are present, the director must give prior approval.

Procedures

- Upon arrival at the concert, each student must check in with the designated person in charge of attendance.
- After checking in for attendance purposes, students should use the restroom and be in their designated seats no later than 15 minutes prior to the concert start time.
- Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate concert etiquette.
- Students must have transportation home at the end of the concert.

Consequences

- Consequences for breaking policies and procedures as outlined on these pages will result in a member's grade being adjusted.
- If a student cannot function as a contributing member of the ensemble, they will not be allowed to return to the ensemble the following enrollment period.

♪ Room Maintenance ♪

- Do not enter the Chorus Room with gum, food or drink. (You may have a water bottle.)
- Do not touch sound equipment or the keyboard without permission.
- Keep your folder slot clean.
- Keep book cubbies free from trash.
- Never leave trash on the floor.
- Do not enter offices, storage rooms, AP Theory room or library without permission.

♪ Folders and Materials ♪

Students will be issued all music materials. Each student will provide their own **1 or 1 1/2 inch (no larger), BLACK three-ring binder** for their music. You may mark your music lightly in pencil, but you must not make any other marks on them. You will be assessed a music fine at the end of the year for any marks/writing in the books or on your single copies of music that has not been directed by your conductor. Please keep your folder neat and your folder slot clean.

♪ Uniforms ♪

- Women's Shoes: Wear closed-toed, black shoes with back. Your shoes should have **no more than a 2 inch heel** (flats are recommended) and you must wear black stockings with your chorus uniform. Men: black dress shoes.
- Hem your dress neatly one inch (with performance shoes on) from the floor.
- Do not wear jewelry with your chorus uniform. This includes any “fad” jewelry, e.g., friendship bracelets or silly bands! Keep your hair out of your eyes. The only jewelry allowed is the class set of pearls worn by the Chanticleer women.
- Be sure your uniform is neat and pressed.
- Men, you must button your coat while you are on stage.
- Men will wear wing collared shirts and bow-ties.

♪ Sample Chorus Events 2017-2018 (not limited to...see choral calendar) ♪

- Fall, Christmas, and Spring Concerts (All Choirs)
- Various Performances by selected choirs
- Chanticleer Retreat and Music of the Season performance
- All-State Sight Reading Chorus
- All-State Chorus
- Large Group Performance Evaluation
- District Honor Chorus
- Governor's Honor's Program
- Spring Sampler at the Fred (An Octave Above and Men of the Mill)
- Spring Choral Awards Banquet
- Baccalaureate (Seniors only)

♪ Officers ♪

Each class will elect the following officers to serve the class.

- *President* – He/She is a model chorus member and serves as a leader in the class. The President will be the liaison between the performance ensemble and the director.
- *Secretary* – The secretary assists the Choral Boosters Publicity Committee, takes attendance at concerts, is in charge of program distribution at concerts, and helps with administrative tasks as they relate to his/her choir.
- *Librarian* – The librarians keep the choral library clean and orderly. He/She is responsible for music filing, making folder assignments, inspecting music when it is turned in, and passing out new music.

The Director will select the following leaders:

- *Student Conductors* -- The student conductor is an example for other students. He/She conducts rehearsal in the absence of the director. He/She teaches sectionals and will conduct a piece on the spring concert.
- *Section Leaders* – Section leaders will be designated by the director to assist in rehearsals. Responsibilities include:
 - Leading their respective sections in break-away (sectional) rehearsals
 - Provide information to the director on behalf of their section
 - Responsible for the accuracy of his/her section
 - Mark their music meticulously and learn their parts thoroughly enough to teach them to others
 - inform a singer of material missed if they are absent and provide their music for that student to transfer markings from rehearsals missed
- *Student Accompanist* – The student accompanist assists the director and section leaders and is trained to use the keyboard.

♪ Choral Varsity Letter Requirements ♪

Students enrolled in at least one SMHS Choir may earn a choral letter/gold bar at the end of the year. Students must fulfill the following in order to earn a letter:

- Complete one year as a member of a Starr's Mill High School choral ensemble
- Maintain a grade of 90% or better in their choral ensemble
- No Unexcused absences from concerts, performances and rehearsals of your ensemble
- Exhibit exemplary behavior at all times. Discipline problems, insubordination, chronic tardiness, or multiple unexcused absences from rehearsals will result in the loss of the opportunity to letter
- Earn a total of 105 merit points to earn a varsity letter and each subsequent bar (see chart below)
- maintain a record of points earned using the provided chart (see after Merit Points)

Merit Points

- Concerts
 - Fall Concert 20 points
 - Christmas Concert 20 points
 - Spring Concert 20 points
 - LGPE 25 points
 - Other Concerts 10 points
(participation in another SMHS choral performance or attendance at a director approved concert)
- Events
 - All State Chorus: Audition 1 10 points
 - All State Chorus: Audition 2 (successful completion)..... 10 points
 - All State Sight-Reading Chorus Audition 10 points
 - Other Events (i.e. All State Chorus, GHP, District Honor Chorus, Spivey Hall Honor Choir etc. 15 points
 - After School Rehearsals 5 points
- Other
 - Choral Department Service 5 points per hour

♪ Video Taping ♪

Throughout the year, choir performances are videotaped. On some occasions, classroom rehearsals may be videotaped for evaluation purposes. Typically, the Candlelight Processional and Spring Concert will be professionally videotaped, edited, menus and graphics added and made available for sale.

♪ Awards ♪

The Director will select one student from each chorus class to receive the award for “Most Outstanding Choral Student” and will recognize these students at the Spring Choral Banquet. One student will receive the “Director’s Award” which recognizes a student who stands apart from his/her peers as an exceptional musician and goes beyond the day *to* day participation in choir to contribute to the overall choral department. All award winners will receive a plaque. There are also scholarships awarded to selected seniors who will be continuing their participation in choral music in college. Within the last nine years, the SMHS choral Department has awarded students over \$43,000 collectively in college scholarships.

Finis pendit originae

IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves, not only in choral activities, but also throughout every facet of their lives. The “right attitude” must be present along with sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the basic foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable and is the factor that makes the difference between a successful, outstanding group and one that can only achieve mediocrity. You are a part of a team. Make the most of every rehearsal, every event, and every concert.

Starr's Mill High School
Choral Department
Choral Handbook Compliance Form

Please read, sign, and return to Dr. Odom No Later Than August 18

“I have received, read, and understand the 2017-2018 Choral Handbook and agree to follow the guidelines established in it.”

Student Name (please print) _____

Student Signature _____

Date Signed _____

“I have received, read, and understand the 2017-2018 Choral Handbook and will refer to it in regards to all related topics as well as encourage my child to observe the guidelines established in it.”

Parent/Guardian's Name (please print) _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date Signed _____
