

John Dickinson High School

Choral Music Department

Handbook (2008-2009)



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“The Arts are not simply skills; their concern is the intellectual, ethical and spiritual maturity of human life. And in time, when religious and political institutions may lose their visions of human dignity, they are the custodians of those values which most worthily define humanity, which most sensitively define Divinity, and in fact may prove to be the only workable program of conservation for the human race on this planet.

- Robert Shaw

INTRODUCTION:

The Choral Music Program is one of three components in the JDHS Performing Arts Department, along with the Instrumental and Theater programs. As with any organization, the most important element is its members. Being a member of the JDHS Choral Music Program is a choice that carries with it some responsibilities. The following information is provided to help each student and parent understand their role as a member of the JDHS Choral Music Department.

MISSION:

The mission of the JDHS Choral Music Program is to provide a safe environment where students have the opportunity to cultivate skills in choral singing and develop a love of the choral art form through instruction and performance. Members of the JDHS Choral Music Program are required to maintain a high standard of musical excellence through dedication, hard work, respect, and self-discipline.

VISION:

The vision of the JDHS Choral Music Program is to grow its membership so that more students have the opportunity to be engaged in the choral experience in a fun and supportive environment that encourages self expression, enhances cultural awareness, and promotes musicianship as an important component of secondary education, growth, and development.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objective of each ensemble will be to learn about the art of choral singing. This learning will take place primarily in the choral rehearsal through the use of exercises; vocal warm-ups; sight singing; class activities; selected music; interaction with the choir director, accompanist and classmates; as well as through required performances. Students will also become familiar with basic music theory and music notation. In addition to singing, this course will include lessons, worksheets, and evaluations of students’ vocal progress within the classroom setting.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

1. **NO GUM is allowed in the choir room at anytime!**
2. Students are expected to treat the choir director and each other with the utmost respect. Singing is a very personal and often vulnerable task. **Teasing, heckling or insulting another student will not be tolerated.**
3. **Attend class daily.** An absence from class can be made up for grading purposes; however, the missed rehearsal and instruction can not truly be recaptured. The most successful students are those who commit to daily attendance and give maximum effort.
4. **Be on time.** Tardiness causes students to miss a portion of the warm up, sight-reading, and/or rehearsal and therefore limits the student's ability to get the most out of each class. It will also affect the student's daily grade.
5. Each student should be on the risers and prepared to begin rehearsal when the bell rings. Class is dismissed by the choir director and not the bell.
6. Each student must have their music and pencil **in hand** during every rehearsal. A pencil in a book bag across the room is insufficient and considered unprepared.
7. The student remains personally responsible for the condition of the choir folder and music once distributed. Report damage or problems with music as soon as possible.
8. Students are expected to remain actively engaged in the rehearsal at all times. There is always room for improvement in your individual performance. **Hard work is expected; it is not an option!**
9. Students who are ill or otherwise unable to actively participate in singing must notify the choir director. Students who are unable to sing are expected to remain focused on the music during class.
10. Upon receiving music, each student is expected to write their name on the outside cover and number all measures, beginning with the first full measure using a pencil only. Students should make marks as instructed by the choir director. Music marking is an ongoing student requirement to individually and collectively improve the music making process.
11. Students will be responsible for the cost of replacing lost or damaged music/folder.
12. Except for bottled water, **absolutely NO FOOD OR DRINK is permitted in the choir room!!**

PIANOS:

Never place anything on the piano in the choir or practice rooms. Ask the choir director before playing any piano in the choir or practice rooms.

CHOIR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE MODEL CITIZENS IN AND OUT OF THE CHOIR ROOM!!

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

- Anatole France

HALL PASSES

Hall passes are for true emergencies only! Please take care of your personal needs between classes.

STAYING INFORMED

- **Read the board daily** for announcements, additions, and changes to the rehearsal and performance schedule.
- **Check the calendar** on the wall for added performances/rehearsals, upcoming events, concerts, extra credit opportunities, etc.
- **Pick up a copy of the newsletter** each time a new edition is out. **Share it with your parents so they can also be informed.**

“MESSAGE CENTER”

If you have a question or message for any choir member or the director, use a small piece of tape to post your written message on the outside casing of the choir office window in the choir room. Make sure that you include your name, the name of the recipient, and the date. Please check this area for a response as you enter the room.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Choir members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. The number one goal of a top notch choir must be perfect attendance. Absent students will significantly affect the quality of the rehearsal and performance for the students. It is difficult to rehearse musical elements such as balance, blend, intonation, articulation, and tone quality (to name a few) of the choir when members are absent.

Concert/Rehearsal Attendance:

Music is a “performing art.” With this in mind, the choral music program has developed its curriculum with public performances as an essential element. Therefore, as part of the requirements for successful completion of this course, enrolled students are expected to participate in a required number of performances approved by the school principal.

Concert dates will be announced at the beginning of the school year. At least two weeks advanced notice will be provided for changes to performance dates. There is a possibility that performances will be added throughout the year. Members are expected to participate in all additional performances, which will count toward the student’s overall grade.

Attendance:

Absence From A Performance/Rehearsal

- A) Unlike a test, performances can not be made up. An ensemble member may be excused from a performance only in cases of extreme emergencies or serious personal illness.

B) Requests to miss a performance should be submitted in writing five days before the performance in question unless there is an emergency. The choir director will review each request on an individual basis. **Jobs will never be accepted as an excuse.** Students will be required to write a report (length and topic to be determined by the choir director) to make up a performance grade **when excused.** **The report will be due within one week of the student's return to class.** Absences not brought to the choir director's attention for approval before the performance will be considered unexcused. An **unexcused absence** from a performance will result in a failing grade for the marking period.

C) **Unexcused absence from extra rehearsals (after school, evenings, and weekends):** There are very few extra rehearsals required in the choral music program; therefore, any student receiving an unexcused absence from a rehearsal will have his/her grade lowered one letter. *The same procedures should be followed for excused absences (see letter B above for the requirements).*

REMEMBER, ALL REQUESTS TO BE EXCUSED MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING!!!

The excuse must be written, dated, and **signed by the parent or guardian**, stating the student's name and the reason for the absence. Each note should include the phone number of the person writing the note.

GRADING GUIDELINES

Daily Attendance/Participation/Attitude (30%)

- The student will receive a grade for each after school sectional and rehearsal period;
- The student will be on task and focused during all rehearsals;
- The student will have music, pencil and supplies;
- The student will be prepared to sing his/her part successfully;
- The students will mark music and take notes as needed.

Notebook/Journal (10%)

- Each student is required to have a one inch (1") three ring binder to keep all copies of class work and assignments;
- Each student will be expected to write a one page critique of each performance.

Written/Oral Assignments/Quizzes/Tests (20%)

- The student will be expected to improve individual music skills;
- An evaluation of this improvement may include singing tests, sight reading tests, and theory tests.

Performances (40%)

- The student will receive a grade for each performance during a grading period;
- Performances will be counted as major exams;
- The number of performances will be determined by the performance calendar;
- If no public performance occurs during a grading period, the performance grade will be a classroom performance determined by the director.

Merit Points

- Students who perform at the highest level will be awarded merit points, which will be added to the student's grade, for the following individual achievement:

Earned membership in the All-State Choir
Earned membership in the All-Eastern Choir
Earned membership in the ACDA Honors Choir

Final Grade:

- A student's final grade is an average of work/requirements completed in all four marking periods.

CHOIR MAKE-UP WORK ASSIGNMENT

Dickinson Singers

To make up one missed class rehearsal, choir students may solfege one octavo and turn them in to be graded. The procedure for completing this assignment is as follows:

Materials:

- Music from my "make-up work" file located in choir room
- Sharpened pencil

Note: These pieces of music are free samples;

Do NOT complete make-up work assignments on music from your folder or any other sources.

Assignment:

1. Write your name on the cover of each song, which choir you are in, and the date of the class for which you are turning in make-up work;
 2. Using a pencil only, write out the solfege syllable (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti) next to or underneath each note of all vocal parts in the song.
- You are not responsible for the piano or any instrumental parts.
 - Do all vocal parts.
 - Note clefs and key signatures

Concert Choir and Agape

To make up one class rehearsal missed you must complete a music theory or written assignment. Make sure to include your name and the date of the class for which you are turning in make-up work.

Give completed work to Ms. Cassidy within three days of your return to school.

- If your work has been correctly and completely done, the points for that day missed will be fully restored to your grade.
- If your work is incorrect, it will be returned to you to be re-submitted upon correction.

Note: This assignment and instructions will apply to students placed into in-house suspension.

For extended illness or absence, please contact Ms. Cassidy to verify the length of your assignment.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Dickinson Singers & Concert Choir

Ladies:

- Black tea length dress (student is responsible for purchase, cost is \$75)
Ms. Cassidy will take orders for new dresses in October.
- Black pumps or a low heel dress shoe (student is responsible for purchase)
- Black sheer pantyhose (student is responsible for purchase)

Men:

- Black Tuxedo (provided by Ms. Cassidy)
- White Wing-tip Tuxedo Shirt (provided by Ms. Cassidy)
- Black dress shoes and black socks (student is responsible for purchase)

All men will wear a Tuxedo that has been purchased and is the property of JDHS Concert Choir. A \$25.00 deposit is required to cover cleaning costs. If the tux is returned to Ms. Cassidy in a dry cleaner's bag with a dated receipt attached, the deposit will be returned to the student. Students are responsible for the tuxedo while in their possession. The cost of lost or damaged tuxedos is \$150.

Agape

The Agape Choir will perform in robes.

AWARDS

Awards will be given each year to all deserving students. Any of the awards listed below may not be awarded, if, in the opinion of the choir director, there is no one who meets the set criteria. Additional awards may be added at the discretion of the choir director.

Lettering Awards are as follows:

<i>First Year:</i>	<i>Certificate and Pin</i>
<i>Second Year:</i>	<i>Letter</i>
<i>Third Year:</i>	<i>Certificate and Service Bar</i>
<i>Fourth Year:</i>	<i>Plaque</i>

Each student will have the opportunity to letter in choir provided they meet the requirements as set by the choir director.

National School Choral Music Award

This award is presented each year to the outstanding senior choir member who displays superior musicianship, merit, leadership, dependability, loyalty, cooperation, and other positive qualities of conduct. The recipient of this award receives a lapel pin, a certificate, and a marble desk piece with a medallion. The student's name is placed on a perpetual plaque that will be on permanent display in the choir room. The choir director selects the award recipient.

Outstanding Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior Awards

These awards are given to an outstanding student(s) in each class who demonstrate exceptional leadership, dedication, commitment, and discipline. These qualities are needed to contribute to an excellent ensemble.

Most Improved Award

One student is selected from each ensemble that has made the most musical improvement in one year. The choir director selects the award recipient.

Most Spirited Award

One student is selected from each ensemble who has consistently displayed a positive and upbeat attitude throughout the year. The choir director selects this award recipient.

PAB Scholarship

This award is open to all seniors in the Performing Arts Department who have met the lettering requirements for the current year.

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

The PAB Student Account Program is established as an aid to assist students in defraying costs incurred through participation in performing arts related activities. Students will have the opportunity to raise money for various expenses that arise throughout the year, including the spring trip.

Monies will be acquired through fundraisers administrated by the PAB. A percentage of selected fundraisers that the students participate in will be credited to individual student accounts. The PAB Board of Directors will decide (by majority vote) to what extent, if any, the profits from each fundraiser may be shared. The primary objective of the fundraisers is to supplement the performing arts program.

Students may use the money for any purpose within the Performing Arts Department (i.e. uniforms, trips, All-State fees, etc.). The following guidelines will be used in administering the program:

- The PAB Board designee will maintain each student account for the duration of time the student is in attendance at JDHS.
- A student account will include proceeds from fundraisers along with any other monies collected for activities associated with the performing arts.
- Students will be advised at the beginning of each fundraiser if they may share in the profits, and to what extent.
- Disbursements will be made only toward activities (i.e. trips, equipment, music lessons, tickets for a concert or play) related to the performing arts, and only to the extent of the balance in the student's account. Students and parents must complete a Student Account Withdrawal Form. With the exception of trips sponsored by the Performing Arts Department, expenses will be reimbursed and receipts will be required. **Students must present original receipts to be reimbursed. Money must be available in the account.**

HOW TO TURN IN MONEY

Only checks and money orders *made payable to the JDHS PAB*, will be accepted for fundraising, application fees, and any other monetary transactions. Return check fees will be the responsibility of the student.

Payment must be submitted in a closed envelope brought from home. The front of the envelope should include the following information:

Student Full Name

Date

Choir Name

Purpose of Payment

Amount of Payment

The envelope must be placed in Ms. Cassidy's hand to receive credit for your payment.

FUNDRAISING

Our successful fundraising efforts have funded choral materials, buses for field trips, and “extras” for choir students over the years. ***We urge all students to participate.*** The school district provides ample funding for many of our basic needs, but the majority of the things students treasure most about the choral music program are paid directly through our own group effort. Thank you for your support!!!!

THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

We need volunteers!! Please assist us with anything that requires repairing, picking up, etc. All help is welcomed. It takes ALL of us to get things done in the choir room so jump right in as needed!

JDHS PERFORMING ARTS BOOSTERS (PAB)

The PAB consists of parents who support the choral music program and the director. They are willing to get involved in one of a variety of ways to assist the program. Please think of how you, as an individual parent, will be involved this year! **There is a place and need for everyone to lend their talents and ideas.** Look for membership information and a volunteer form on the PAB website and at our first booster meeting.