

GARNER MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL
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CHORAL HANDBOOK

2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

Dear Choir Students and Families,

Welcome back for the 2023-2024 school year! I want to thank you for choosing to be part of the Garner Magnet High School Chorus Department. I am looking forward to working with everyone to make beautiful music and achieve a standard of excellence.

Attached is the official GMHS Choir Handbook with all the information you will need to be successful! In this handbook, you will find the calendar of choir events for this year, along with grading policies, materials, goals for choir classes, rules and expectations, and much more! To save resources, the handbook is online and will not be distributed to students in hard copy form unless requested by the student. However, each student will receive a hard copy list of concert dates to “put on the fridge.” These are also available in the choir room, BAND app, and on the choir website!

My goal is to provide each student with the opportunity to be successful in and out of the classroom. I want my students to take advantage of all the opportunities available to apply what they learn. Our Choir Department will partake in numerous performances, travel opportunities, outreach events, and so much more! Throughout the course of the year, students will be required to attend rehearsals and performances outside of class time.

I will always be available to you when you have questions or need additional help. Please feel free to email, call, or visit any time. Open and frequent communication between students, parents and teacher will benefit our choir program exponentially! The contents in this handbook will be discussed with all students, and posted on the class website: **http://www.gmhschorus.weebly.com**. If there are any items that you would like further clarification on, please feel free to contact me at badkins3@wcpss.net

After reading this handbook, please fill out and sign the “GMHS Choir Contract” which will be given out in conjunction with this handbook. **This is your first grade in choir**, and is due by Friday, September 8th. I look forward to meeting you! Let’s have a great year!

Musically,

Ms. Adkins

Ensembles Offered

In the Fine Arts Department, we offer 3 choral ensembles at Garner Magnet High School: Beginning Mixed Ensemble, Intermediate Treble Ensemble, and Die Meistersingers (Mixed/Treble Chorus that rehearses separately for 10th-12th graders by audition).

Beginning Mixed Ensemble (SAB): The beginning mixed ensemble is open to all soprano/alto voices who have not been involved in the chorus program before and **all male singers**. This group is composed of a variety of students representing all four grades. This non-auditioned class focuses on basic musicianship and protocol for choral rehearsals and performances. It includes an introduction to music sight-reading and proper singing technique using choral literature for treble voices. Music selected will range from the 16th century through current day, including a cappella music, historical literature, as well as music from various cultures, genres, and languages. Students are expected to perform in 4 regularly scheduled chorus concerts (fall, winter, spring, and pops—see calendar on choral website). Students in this ensemble may be able to audition for Die Meistersingers for the following year.

Intermediate Treble Ensemble (SSA): This ensemble will include soprano/alto voices in grades 10-12. Students in this group must already have a fundamental understanding of sight-reading and singing techniques. Music selected is composed specifically for 2-3 part treble voices and involves a wide range of styles, cultures, and languages. Students will perform in all regular chorus concerts and possibly at community events. All students who have completed the beginning treble ensemble course are welcome to continue onto this class without audition. Students are expected to perform in 4 regularly scheduled chorus concerts (fall, winter, spring, and pops—see calendar on choral website). Students in this group may perform mixed music with the other ensembles. Of course, students from this course may audition for Die Meistersingers for the following year as well.

Die Meistersingers (SSA): This class will require the greatest commitment and involvement of any choral class. Students must be proficient sight-readers and must have a working knowledge of singing technique. This ensemble will sing throughout the year at regular chorus concerts but also in various community events in our area. All students in this course are receiving honors credit for participation. **Please understand that students in this course**

have more outside responsibilities. Examine the calendar of expected and graded performances outside of school. If this is too much of a commitment, please register your child for another course, as students are counting on every member being at every performance expected of them.

Communication

REMIND MESSAGES, BAND APP Messages, AND EMAILS ARE MY MAIN SOURCE OF COMMUNICATION. Students are expected to join and engage in all methods of communication. Access codes will be given during the first week of school.

Musical Literature

The literature learned and performed in class will be of high quality and represent a wide variety of musical samples. We will learn music that the North Carolina Music Educators Association suggests through a published music list for our state as well. Music is used specifically for the purpose of its educational and artistic value. An example of the state list is viewable at: <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/services-state-festival.jsp?state=NC&stategroup=&stategroupname=#state-info>.

Students will be encouraged to take their exposure to new forms of musical literature seriously. The purpose of the class is not to entertain, but rather to further the musical knowledge and performance proficiency of the students. Such a goal will be the driving force behind all programming and rehearsal decisions.

Choral Curriculum

The curriculum taught in all choral music classes is based on the NC Essential Standards for Music Education, viewable at:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/documents/cte/curriculum/healthfulliving/new-standards/arts/music/essential-standards-music-9-12>

The goals are condensed as follows:

- Understanding and demonstration of singing technique and vocal pedagogy
- Basic physiological understanding of tone production and care of the voice
- Musical literacy to include sight reading, interpretation, composition and dictation
- Musical harmonic/tonal structure, including scale construction, aural identification, and key signature knowledge
- Performance preparation skills and concert etiquette
- Evaluation, reflection, and critique of musical performance in both written and oral formats
- Understanding music as a product of history and world cultures

Grading Scale

- **50% Rehearsal/Concert Attendance:** If your student is out of school on a rehearsal or concert date due to sickness or funeral, I must be notified by a parent/guardian with an explanation. It will then be your student's responsibility to make that time up within one week of their return to school or their grade will result in a zero. Please plan doctor, dentist, and trips accordingly. The Fine Arts Department tries hard to plan around school-related athletic events and tournaments. Remember that Chorus is an academic class and Athletics are *extra-curricular*. **I must be made aware of any potential conflicts 1 MONTH prior to a rehearsal/concert/event. If I have not been given proper notice of a conflict, this may result in a zero.**
- **30% Rehearsal Preparation:** This is a performing arts course, meaning you have to be present; you can't easily make up the time missed at home. A student will also lose points if they are texting, talking, sleeping, or doing homework. **If your student is sick and cannot sing, they must follow along in the music or complete given tasks - this is not free time.** Participation is required for all students in this course. I know that singing can be very vulnerable, but *this is a completely inclusive and welcoming environment*. I have established weekly (for advanced) and bi-weekly (intermediate and beginning) rehearsal grades. If you are not actively participating and engaged in class then your grade will be affected. Be ready to work!
- **10% Quizzes:** Each semester, the students will be tested at least five times on sight reading and/or new theory material. They will also have singing quizzes where they may sing alone or with a group.
- **10% Tests:** Tests are cumulative assessments based on the unit/s taught. Students should expect 1-2 tests a semester.
- **Midterm:** For the first semester, 10% of your semester 1 grade will be determined by a singing midterm assessment.

Make-Up Work

Absences due to illness or approved school trips allow for several days to complete make-up work. It is the STUDENT'S responsibility to secure such assignments BEFORE a known field trip and immediately after other unplanned absences, such as sickness. Missed/non-complete assignments may be made up, but a percentage penalty will apply to assignments every day that the assignment is incomplete. If an assignment involves a task that could only be completed on the particular day an activity was assigned (like a class listening assignment), the student will be

omitted from that individual assignment or given a time to retake or complete an alternate assignment.

Class Materials

Always come prepared with the necessary materials and be ready to learn:

- Music (provided by Ms. Adkins)
- PENCIL, NEVER PEN!
- WATER BOTTLE
- BLACK Binder

Independent Expectations

1. Take responsibility for your own development as a musician.
2. Every time you sing, make it a quality experience.
3. Develop an attitude of wanting to improve each day.
4. Be willing to try new things. Give it a chance and **expand your mind.**
5. Display an attitude of **effort** at all times.
6. Come to class prepared to work hard. (**This is not an “easy A”**)
7. Be present for all rehearsals and concerts.
- 8. Respect the efforts of others and of our differences. A positive and encouraging attitude is mandatory! Chorus is about the ensemble and what is best for the group. Work together!**
9. Enjoy experiencing and making beautiful music.
10. Practice concert etiquette at all times, especially during daily rehearsals.

Classroom Expectations

The following expectations are applicable to both daily classroom rehearsals as well as to any field trip or music event held off campus:.

- 1. Always come prepared with the necessary materials and be ready to learn.**
- 2. Be respectful to self, others, and property.** Students are to behave in a way that does not cause disruption to teaching or to other students' learning while being considerate of others' needs, feelings and belongings.

3. **Be on time!** Plan bathroom breaks, water refills, and phone calls before the tardy bell rings. (Note tardy policy from the school.) Excessive tardiness may waive trip and/or performance privileges.
4. **No ELECTRONICS, food, gum or open drink containers are allowed in the classroom.** Cell phones are to be used when deemed appropriate, otherwise, they need to stay away. Water bottles with sealable lids are encouraged as spills often occur on the risers. NO chewing gum or eating food during class.
5. **Learn from both success and failure.** Success rarely occurs without many mistakes to precede it! Further, it is okay to be wrong, but don't be content to stay that way!

Uniforms

Uniformity in appearance is important for choral performances. All students will wear the designated uniform for each performance. **No student will perform without the proper uniform**, which can result in a zero performance grade. The great thing is that students keep their uniform and do not have to purchase another (unless they grow out of it). Students are fitted for the uniforms here at school. Tux pieces may be bought separately (if you already own one, do not purchase another one). ALL students will need to purchase closed toe black dress shoes on their own - flats are encouraged. ***Assistance can be provided for any student financially unable to purchase the proper performance outfit.**

The Choral Boosters will be organizing fundraisers throughout the year to help lessen choral expenses. It is the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian to communicate a financial need to the director or appropriate booster organization member (President or Treasurer).

Sopranos and Altos: Approximately \$80.00 uniform fee

Tenors and Basses: Approximately \$160.00 tuxedo fee

1. Required concert dress for all Tenors and Basses consists of:
 - o Black tuxedo pants and jacket
 - o Black cummerbund and bow tie
 - o White pleated tuxedo shirt with wing-tip collar
 - o Plain white t-shirt (provided by student)
 - o Black (solid) socks (provided by student)
 - o Black dress shoes (provided by student). Black sneakers do not count.

o Hair and facial hair must be groomed and combed out of the face.

2. Required concert dress for all Sopranos and Altos consists of:

o Black floor length dresses hemmed to the correct length

o Solid black closed-toe shoes. Be sure you can stand for long periods of time with them.
(Provided by student)

o Black hosiery (provided by student)

o Hair is up in a neat bun and away from the face.

o Appropriate makeup

o The only jewelry allowed are stud earrings (The earrings are provided by the student)

o It is important to keep good hygiene. Remember, while performing, you are in very close proximity to other people. However, refrain from using strong colognes or perfumes since other singers may have an allergic reaction.

Performances

Public performance is one of the most effective means of music education assessment. Because chorus is considered an academic course, grades are assigned for participation in all scheduled performances. Unexcused absences from any of these events will result in a failing performance grade. We need ALL of our students for our performances—each person makes a difference! Regularly scheduled concerts will be graded events assessed on the following criteria:

- Proper preparation: Correct outfit, on-time, present for warm-ups with group
- Singing with appropriate energy/attitude
- Focus, discipline, and teamwork ethic (i.e. before concert and between pieces)
- Off-stage etiquette and discipline

The culmination of all of our hard work is the performance. Performances are **MANDATORY**. Most of the dates for the performances are included in the handbook but it is very possible that other performances will be added. You will know as soon as possible if other performances have to be added to the calendar.

o The only way to be excused from a performance is to have a parent send me an email at least one month before the performance explaining the reason for your absence. Not having a ride

does not qualify as an excused absence. Emergencies can make an absence excused, but a parent must send me an email at most two days after the missed performance explaining why you could not attend. All unexcused absences will result in a grade of a zero.

o If you are excused from a performance, you must see me about a make-up assignment. In addition to this, punctuality, preparedness, adhering to the uniform policy, and being focused are components of the performance grade. It is up to my discretion whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

I will make the final decision as to whether or not a student may perform. Out of fairness to other students, if a student has shown a lack of discipline in class or has an inordinate amount of absences, he or she may not be allowed to participate. Anyone who misses one or more classes the week before a concert might not sing in the concert. The day of the concert, dress rehearsal, is required for all students in order to perform. This is vitally important to the quality of our choirs.

Out-of-Class Rehearsals

In order to be fully prepared and successful in a performance, you will have to attend rehearsals outside of school. These rehearsals are **MANDATORY**. You will know the dates in advance. ***The only way to be excused from a rehearsal is to have a parent send me an email at least one week in advance explaining the reason for the absence.***

o Emergencies can make an absence excused, but a parent must send me an email at most two days after the missed rehearsal explaining why you could not attend.

o All unexcused absences will result in a grade of a zero. In addition to this, punctuality, preparedness and being focused are components of the rehearsal grade. ***It is up to my discretion whether an absence is excused or unexcused.***

o As events are added to the calendar and if students qualify for events like State Solo and Ensemble and State MPA, there is a strong possibility of extra rehearsals. These extra rehearsals will be **MANDATORY**.

GMHS Choral Boosters

Each parent of a GMHS chorus student is welcome to be a member of the GMHS Choral Boosters! **The only way the Choral program can thrive is with the help from parents!**

There are some ways parents can assist.

1. Attend the chorus parent meetings
2. Become a chorus booster member and/or join the chorus booster board
3. Attend all performances
4. Chaperone field trips
5. Volunteer to help with concerts, fundraisers, measuring for uniforms, etc.
6. Help students be on time for rehearsals/performances
7. Encourage/ praise the efforts of each student
8. Actively support chorus fundraisers

Fair Share & Finances

I. The choral program at GMHS has a “Fair Share” cost to help acquire the necessary resources for choral activities throughout the year. This Fair Share is simply the monetary difference between the projected program income and the amount needed to fully support our operating budget. This need results in a financial commitment that is based on procedures that other Wake County high school chorus and band ensembles use to help fund their programs. The actual request is quite small compared to similar programs, and we are thankful to keep the price at **\$75.00**. **No student will be excluded from chorus due to financial difficulties.**

This can be met via the following means:

Acquiring business/community donors OR by fundraising. Fair Share funds will benefit all students in the program, as the Choral Boosters will use the money to help pay for sheet music, concert accompanists, piano maintenance/tuning, program printing, transportation and registration fees for choral events/adjudication activities, and other items that can be viewed on the operating budget. The operating budget of the Choral Boosters helps to subsidize program expenses while remaining committed to helping students with financial needs.

Fundraisers are available to help cover the cost of Fair Share and Uniforms! Fair Share does not include ticket sales, trips, or uniforms.

II. ALL CHECKS ARE MADE OUT TO GMHS Choral Boosters There is a lock box located in my office in the chorus classroom; any money turned in during the year must go in the lock box in a specifically labeled envelope. Items on the envelope **MUST INCLUDE:** Name, Date,

Class Period, and purpose of payment. **Checks are MUCH preferred to cash;** please plan to write checks instead of paying with cash (unless absolutely necessary). If you have any concerns, please contact Ms. Adkins or the Booster Board

A Benevolence Policy is required by the IRS when assistance is provided to organizations, governments, and individuals by a 501c3 organization. This policy clearly defines what kind of assistance may be provided, in what situations it may be provided, and how it is to be provided (found on the choral website under Forms/Documents). This policy provides the IRS documentation of benevolence disbursements and establishes benevolence funds are being distributed fairly.

Due: November 2nd

Chorus Trips

Various off-campus performances may occur throughout the year, though most especially for Die Meistersingers, as it is considered our “touring” group. Various permission forms will be required for each and every trip taken during the year; students **MUST** have these to participate. Please check the chorus website under “Trip Info” and “Forms/Documents” to access these. Do not be intimidated by a trip. You **CAN** fundraise your entire portion.

GMHS Choir Contract (to be signed and returned to Ms. Adkins)

Due: Friday, September 8th

In signing, I am stating that I have read all the pages of the 2023-2024 Choral Handbook, located on Canvas and the GMHS Choir Website, and that I agree to all terms listed. In signing below, I recognize that there are expenses associated with being in the choral program. Performance uniforms are required and the choral program has a Fair Share support program to help fund the operating budget. A financial commitment exists for choral students in the amount of **\$75.00** for Beginning, Intermediate, and Die Meistersingers. **Outfit expenses (\$80.00 for Sopranos/Altos, \$160.00 for Tenors/Basses)** can likewise be paid via cash/check or through requested benevolence. Additionally, my child is expected to participate in choral department rehearsals and concerts at GMHS during the 2023-2024 school year.

Student Name _____ (print)

Student Signature _____

Guardian's Name _____ (print)

Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Class Period _____ Graduation Year _____

Parent/Guardian Home Phone _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Cell Phone _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Cell Phone _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Email PRINT:

_____ ****required**

Parent/Guardian 2 Email:
