**HMS Choral Handbook**

**2017-18**

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**7th and 8th Grade**

**Concert Chorus**

**Welcome**

Welcome to the HMS Concert Chorus. Concert Chorus consists of 7/8 grade students who will meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and perform 3 and 4 part music.

This handbook is your guide to our expectations for every chorus member, and it includes a list of scheduled and optional events for the year. I encourage you also to view our website at [www.hmsmusic.weebly.com](http://www.hmsmusic.weebly.com) for additional field trip forms and upcoming information as it becomes available. I will also try to push letters and packets to my website for the convenience of students.

I will try to keep in contact with parents through email distribution/school messenger so everyone can be aware of event information, field trip permission slips, concert reminders, and other important information.

This will be a great year full of hard work and great musical experiences.  Come prepared to learn engaging, rewarding, and challenging music.

**Objectives**

**Choral Students Will:**

* Develop musical competencies: sight-singing, score reading, blend, balance and intonation.
* Explore music from a historical perspective through the study of choral repertoire from various periods, genres, and languages.
* Develop each singer's vocal abilities through proper posture, breath support, tone, projection and more.
* Successfully perform repertoire for the school and community

**Rules**

* Sing and actively participate in every rehearsal and sectional.
* Respect all music.
* Respect all musicians:
  + Be courteous to others.
  + Keep your hands, and feet and other body parts to yourself.
  + Do not chew gum or eat any food during chorus.
  + No talking with neighbors, texting/chatting, taking pictures, or recording unless specified by me.
* Respect the director by actively listening when he speaks.
* Leave all possessions in cafeteria on full chorus days with the exception of your music and a pencil.

**Consequences**

Failure to follow the rules may result in your removal from rehearsal. If you are asked to leave rehearsal, you are expected to fill out a processing sheet which must be completed on that day and signed by both the director and your parent. If you are removed more than twice in a trimester or four times in a school year, you will be removed from chorus for the remainder of the year. If you are caught chewing gum or doing homework in class, in addition to losing points you will also serve a lunch detention that or the next school day.

Course Grading

* Rehearsal Etiquette (Weekly Rehearsal Grade)  **50%**
* Sectional Grade **20%**
* Blog Posts **10%**
* Voice Tests **20%**

**Chorus Rehearsal Grading**

Class participation is the most important aspect of this ensemble and of this course.  Students are expected to sing as this is a singing class. Chorus rehearsals are worth 10 points. Every student will begin with the maximum amount of points and can lose points for the following reasons:

* Forgot Folder/Music (2 points)
* Talked out/off task in rehearsal (Up to 6 points)
* Forgot Pencil (2 points)

Dress rehearsals for concerts are worth 30 points and concerts are worth 50 points in this category.

Exit Cards

Students will fill out exit cards each rehearsal. Honesty is rewarded, lying will have consequences. For example, if you choose to talk in rehearsal and admit it on your card explaining why, you can avoid the grade deduction or limit the hit your grade takes. I track who talks each rehearsal and officers also help enforce these expectations. Not submitting an exit card or filling it out carelessly will result in lost points

**Sectional Grade**

Sectionals occur once each week either during the WIN block or Study Skills block.  Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared to work hard during these rehearsals. Sectional rehearsals are worth 5 points. Every student will begin with the maximum amount of points and can lose points for the following reasons:

* Forgot Folder/Music (1 point)
* Talked out/off task in rehearsal (Up to 3 points)
* Punctuality (1 point)

**Weekly Blog Responses**

Students are expected to respond to assignments on the blog section of my school website for every Tuesday, with the first assignment being due on September 4th. Assignments are graded before rehearsal on Tuesday. Prompts will ask questions specific to the music, will offer students a chance to respond to what we can work on (as a chorus) for the next rehearsal, and to listen to and evaluate rehearsal recordings throughout the year. When practice files are available, students are expected to also track their practice and report it in the weekly blog assignment.

Practicing at Home

Practice files will be available on my website at [www.hmsmusic.weebly.com](http://www.hmsmusic.weebly.com) under the “Practice Files” tab. All recordings for our Winter Concert will be available by September 28th. Please use these to practice between rehearsals to make our chorus even better.

Music Folders

During the second full chorus rehearsal, students will be provided with music folders. This will serve to hold the student’s music for the year and needs to be brought to every full chorus rehearsal and sectional rehearsal. Students can write lightly in their music in pencil during rehearsals, and it is encouraged students bring two pencils to rehearsal.

**Voice Tests**

Voice tests will be issued at least once per concert season, and will focus on a small section of one of the songs we are performing. This will be further explained later in the year. Students can test with one or two other people, depending on the size of the sectional, and may retest as many times as desired after all initial testing has completed. Voice tests may be given at alternate times throughout the WIN block on weeks of a test for the sake of time.

**Chorus Rehearsal Procedure**

1. Students drop off belongings (not chorus folder and pencil) in cafeteria.
   1. *Tables will be labeled regarding where to place your things. Remember there is camera surveillance of the area. Items left on the floor will be placed in “Lost and Found.”*
2. When you enter, you will find your graded card from the previous rehearsal. In addition, the rehearsal order will be on the board.
   1. *Please review your grade from me on the card. I always explain if points are lost and why.*
   2. *You will use the same card on Tuesday and Wednesday, and students will grab a new index card on Tuesday of the new week.*
   3. *This is also a good time to get your music in order. Use the board to help you.*
3. Rehearsals will begin promptly at 1:55PM.
   1. *The class technically begins at 1:52, but I am allowing 3 minutes for packing up and 2 minutes for walking down.*
   2. *Professional musicians are always early. You are doing a disservice to your peers if you take your time or fool around on your way downstairs*.
4. Warm-Up
   1. *It is expected that you focus during warm-up as it is the most crucial part of rehearsal since it sets the tone (literally).*
   2. *If you walk in late during warm-up, please quietly find your seat.*
5. Sight Reading
   1. *Every rehearsal, we will read a short segment of music which will get progressively harder over the year. This process will be explained further in rehearsal.*
6. Concert Repertoire
   1. *After sight reading and warm-up we will work on concert rep.*
   2. *The board will let you know what pages to turn to. It is expected that you have your music at each rehearsal. If you do not, please share with the person next to you and don’t try to hide it or refuse to use music or I will give you a bonus quiz to check your memory.*
7. Announcements and Exit Card
   1. *Rehearsal will end with students filling out the index card that was on your chair. Please do not leave your old graded index cards behind or I will deduct points called the “I don’t care enough about my graded card to keep it” deduction of 2 points.*
   2. *The officers or I will also review upcoming dates including potential auditions.*
8. Exit rehearsal as a professional
   1. *Even though rehearsal is over, you are leaving as a chorus student. Running through the halls, cutting in front of people, etc. will result in a consequence such as an escort being assigned or leaving rehearsal last.*

**Concert Attendance Policy and Dress**

All concerts at HMS are **mandatory**. The HMS attendance policy is enforced and students should arrive early so that the concert may start on time.  This means that parents must communicate with coaches and other necessary people in advance. Students who are ill, but are in school, are not excused from the concert.  **Only** the director may authorize an absence from a rehearsal or performance and must be notified in advance. Please understand that these rules are in place so that our ensembles can have a successful performance.

**\*A missed concert will result in a 4 page research paper on a topic of the director’s choice. Failure to do this paper will result in removal from Select Chorus, and a potential failing grade.**

**Concert Dress Code**

For Boys:   
Black pants (no jeans or sweatpants)   
Black socks and black shoes  
White shirt (Not a t-shirt, no logos or patterns); these must be tucked in at concerts.

For Girls:

Black pants or a *long* black skirt (at least knee length)   
Black socks or hose with black shoes  
White shirt or blouse (not a t-shirt, no logos or patterns)

\*Failure to follow the dress code will result in not being able to perform in the concert. If you are unable to find clothing, please notify the director prior to the concert and some arrangements can be made.

**Solo Auditions**

Solo auditions are handled on a case by case basis. Most solo auditions will require you to sign up on the board outside of the Chorus room. That way, in case you are absent due to sickness, you will be able to make it up at a later date.

Solo auditions are usually a tiered process. What that means is that the primary audition might occur in a sectional, and then final call backs will be held during a full chorus rehearsal. All solo auditions will be recorded. If you refuse to sing for the callback you will not be eligible to receive the solo.

Full solo songs, which are typically given out for the winter concert, require you to stay after school to audition. This can be done in a group or alone, but must be done after school on the date given.

Solos are determined by a rubric which you can go over with me. I encourage everyone to try out for solos as not only is it a good experience, but it gives you a point bonus on your final grade.

**Officers**

Every year, chorus officers are elected by the chorus members and the director. In order to become an officer, you must express your interest and turn in a minimum of five sentence paragraph explaining why you are a good candidate, then be elected.

Responsibilities

*8th Grade Representatives* – Anyone is welcome to run for representative. Representatives are responsible for assisting the director with seating charts, suggestions for rehearsals and selecting the “student of the month.” They act as liaisons between the students in 8th grade and the director. The **chorus president** will be the representative that I deem to be the most qualified through an interview, and shows positive traits of being a leader and will speak at all major events including concerts and Success Assembly performances.

*7th Grade Representatives* - Anyone is welcome to run for representative. Representatives are responsible for assisting the director with seating charts, suggestions for rehearsals and selecting the “student of the month.” They act as liaisons between students in the 7th grade and the director.

*Librarian(s)* – The choral librarian(s) will be responsible for taking care of all music. This includes distributing music in folders, labeling new music, collecting music and putting music away. The choral librarian(s) are also encouraged to manage the choral library and update it regularly. This year the library is updated and ready to stay organized. Librarians are not elected through votes, but selected by me based on who is interested.

The Road to Becoming an Officer

* Friday, September 15th – Paragraphs due to the director by end of day.
* During sectionals on the following week, students will vote for the students running. (If no one runs for an office, the director will assign someone to office).
* On Wednesday, September 30th, the officers will be announced in chorus.
* Meetings will take place every Wednesday during lunch.

**Section Leaders**

Every year section leaders are selected by officers and/or the director. Section leaders are given additional duties in chorus including tracking mistakes by peers on a section leader card and identifying spots to work on to the director during rehearsals. Additionally, students who are chosen and accept being section leaders are expected to attend an additional section leader rehearsal at another point during the school day that has not yet been determined.

**Select Chorus**

Select Chorus is HMS’s elite choral ensemble which meets 3 times a week before school at 6:45 AM. Enrollment/participation is by audition and students who are chosen receive extra credit points every quarter towards their final Chorus grade. The membership of the group will include primarily 7th and 8th students. 6th grade students will also be considered. Everyone is encouraged to audition. Auditions will be held on September 14th and 15th, and the first rehearsal will be on September 26th. Rehearsals are scheduled every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Packets are available on the website and Mr. Phillips can provide them as well. Extra credit is provided for students who audition.

**Lady Falcons/Falcon Treble Singers/Gentlemen Falcons**

Every year, there is either a Treble or Men’s chorus in Grades 7 and 8. Rehearsals typically begin one week after the school musical or play in April, and the group is expected to perform at the Spring Concert, Great East Festivals, as well as for other community functions.

**Great East Festival**

The Great East Festival is a regional music festival where band/chorus (7/8) students from all around New England perform concert repertoire for a panel of judges. Performance quality is officially scored and a group clinic is given by one of the judges. After the clinic, we will all go to Six Flags New England and enjoy! This is an excellent way for our students to use and learn new music and ensemble techniques through the clinic process and to get professional feedback from a source other than their teachers. The Great East normally costs between $70 and $75 to go and prices can be offset through fundraising.

**Cabaret Night**

Cabaret Night is a bi-annual event that is done on a year that the musical does not fall on. Students can select any popular song that they want, and perform in small groups, solos, or instrumental groups. It is a way for students to perform some of the songs they really want to sing. Students are encouraged to find other students to accompany them on the piano, guitar or drums as well. This is only available to members of select chorus or students in 7th and 8th grade who are part of either band or chorus.

**Eastern Region Festival**

Every year, chorus students in grades 6-8 have the opportunity to audition for the Eastern Region Middle School Chorus. The students who perform the best at auditions are selected to be in the top choirs.

**Auditions**

**Where:** East Lyme Middle School

**When:** Saturday, November 11th, 2017

**Cost:** $10 (Includes bus fair)

**Audition Music:** Provided by Mr. Phillips (Also On website)

**Registration Deadline:** TBD (Mid October)

**Festival:**

**Where:** RHAM High School

**When:** Friday-Saturday, March 9th and 10th, 2018 (Snow Date 16th and 17th)

**Cost:** $15 for Registration + $5 per ticket. (Registration may be waived)

***Music Department Important Dates:***

September 14th and 15th ...……………………..Select Chorus Auditions

October 27th ……………………………………….. Staff Variety Show

November 11th…………………Eastern Region Auditions (East Lyme)

December 3rd...…………. Millworks Performance (Select Chorus) 1pm

December 6th...……….......Winter Concert Solo Auditions (7/8th Grade)

December 7th....………......Winter Concert Solo Auditions (5/6th Grade)

December 12th ………………….…...Winter Concert (Gr. 5-6) 6:30pm

**December 13th……………..….…Winter Concert (Gr. 7-8) 6:30 pm**

December 16th..…….......…Caroling at Nursing Homes (Select Chorus)

December 18th and 19th …………………….. Spring Musical Auditions

December 20th.…….…………..…...Winter Concert Snow Date 6:30pm

December 21st ……..…. Spring Musical Audition Callbacks (if needed)

March 2nd and 3rd...….…………………………………. Spring Musical

March 9th and 10th …………………………………….. ERMS Festival

March 16th and 17th ………………………..ERMS Festival Snow Date

March 22nd……...... Fly-Up at E.O. (7 – 8 Only and SC) During School

May 17th ……………….………Spring Instrumental Concert (6:30pm)

**May 24th ……..……..…..…………..Spring Vocal Concert (6:30pm)**

May 29th ……...……. Memorial Day Parade (8am) Band/Select Chorus

**June 1st...……………………………………….….Great East Festival**

June 6th …………………….………….. Hall Idol Auditions (Tentative)

June (2nd to last day) ……………………………………Hall Idol (1pm)

*Some dates may be subject to change.*

***Bolded*** *dates are mandatory attendance for chorus only students.*

**Letter of Commitment**

Please check off the statements and sign below for credit. Also include your email address at the bottom so that I can email you important information when necessary. If you have any concerns or questions, please write them in the space below and I will email you back in a timely fashion.

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

* I have read the choral handbook
* I understand the rules of the classroom
* I understand that by signing and submitting this, I am committing myself to remain a member of chorus for the full 2017-18 school year.
* I am aware of all concert dates and have put them in my calendar.
* I am aware of the concert dress code.

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Student Signature Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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Parent/Guardian Email Address (Please write neatly)

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Alternate Email Address (if needed) (Please write neatly)