**HMS Choral Handbook**

**2019-20**

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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 Tuesday and Wednesday, 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 and work together, and we will definitely have a successful year.

**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 others.
* 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 myself and your parent. If you are removed more than twice in a quarter 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 detention that or the next school day.

**Course Grading**

* Rehearsal Etiquette (Daily Rehearsal Grade)  **50%**
* Sectional Grade and Voice Tests **35%**
* Blog Posts/Permission Slips **15%**

Rehearsal Etiquette (Daily Rehearsal Grade)

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 7 points)
* Forgot Pencil (1 point)

Dress rehearsals for concerts are worth up to 50 points and concerts are worth at least 100 points in this category.

Music Folders

During the third 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 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. If for any reason the folder gets lost or destroyed, the student is responsible for providing a new folder. Bringing the chorus folder is part of the student’s grade.

Exit Cards

Students will fill out exit cards answering the following questions:

1. Did you arrive on time? If you are late, explain why.
2. Did you bring your music? If not, why?
3. Did you bring a pencil?
4. Did you sing out? If not, why?
5. Were you on task? If not, why were you off task?

\*There could also be an additional 6th question.  
\*Please avoid writing “No.” You *must* explain why in this case.

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. Officers will keep track of who is talking and who is not, but their input will not directly affect the grade unless I have noted it. Students do not grade other students but only provide observational data. At the end of rehearsal, students should leave their exit card on their chairs.

Sectional Grade

Sectionals occur once each week either during the WIN 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 points)

Voice Test Grade

Voice tests will be issued at least once per quarter, 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.

Blog Post Grade

Students are expected to respond to the assignments on my school website every other week, with the first assignment being due on September 17th. 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 bi-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 will be available by October 4th. Please use this to practice between rehearsals to make our chorus even better. Practicing will always be a part of the blog assignment.

**Chorus Rehearsal Procedure**

1. Students drop off belongings (not chorus folder and pencil) in cafeteria, then promptly go to rehearsal.
   1. *Please place all backpacks on tables. The floor is a safety hazard. Remember that there are cameras situated in cafeteria.*
   2. *Avoid waiting for your friends or having a social hour in the cafeteria. Head straight to rehearsal.*
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 for up to four times or at the discretion of the director.*
   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 1:52PM
   1. *The class technically starts at 1:50PM. However, I understand some of you may be delayed in coming straight 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 and write down why you are late on your exit card.*
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.*
7. Closing 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. The announcements may be done after the initiation towards the beginning instead.*
8. Exit rehearsal as a professional
   1. *When buses are called or slightly earlier, the director will dismiss by row and by section.*
   2. *Stay in an orderly line, and do not run or cut each other on the way out. 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 exceptions 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 my 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 granted the solo.

Full solo songs, which are typically given out for the winter concert, require you to stay for a day 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 after presenting your speech to the chorus.

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.

The Road to Becoming an Officer

* Friday, September 13th – Paragraphs due to the director by end of day.
* Tuesday, September 17th - Students will receive their speeches back to practice for…
* Wednesday, September 18th – Students will read their speeches aloud to the chorus and the students will submit their votes on their exit card.
* The first officer meeting will be Tuesday, September 24th during lunch. In addition, the chorus president and vice president will have an additional leadership meeting during WIN on Monday. This day will be used to plan and create an agenda for the officer meetings as well as have more leadership training for the choral director.

**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 their 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 during WIN on Friday (7th and 8th grade will be separated this year).

**Select Chorus (Tentative)**

Select Chorus is HMS’s elite choral ensemble which meets 3 times a week before school at 6:45. Enrollment/Participation is by audition and students who are chosen receive extra credit points every quarter towards their final grades. The membership of the group includes primarily 7th and 8th students. 6th grade students will also be considered. Everyone is encouraged to audition. Auditions will be held on September 12th and 13th or 19th/20th. and the first rehearsal will be on September 27th or October 1st. Rehearsals are scheduled every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Packets will be made available at a later point on the website and through Mr. Phillips. Extra credit is provided for students who audition.

**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 graded 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 $75-$85 and prices can be offset through fundraising. All students are also expected to order a music t-shirt.

**Treble Falcon Singers/Gentlemen Falcons**

Every year, there is either a treble or men’s chorus. 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. A formal contract with group expectations will be given at the first rehearsal.

**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:** William J. Johnston Middle School, Colchester, CT

**When:** Saturday, December 7th – Times are TBD but usually occur in the morning.

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

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

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

**Festival:**

**Where:** Enfield High School

**When:** Friday-Saturday, March 6th and 7th, 2020 (Snow Date 13th and 14th)

**Cost:** $15 for Registration + $10 per ticket.

***Music Department Important Dates:***

September 11th ...................................Jazz Band Auditions (6-7:30PM)

September 12th and 13th …..............….Select Chorus Auditions (TBD)

November 4th ………..…Spring Musical Informational Meeting (TBD)

November 18th and 20th ................................. Musical Auditions (TBD)

December 2nd ...................................... Winter Solo Auditions (Gr. 5-6)

December 4th ....................................... Winter Solo Auditions (Gr. 7-8)

December 6th ........................Tree Lighting (Select Chorus)7pm (TBD)

December 7th ………………………...…… Eastern Regional Auditions

December 8th .......Mill Works Performance (Select Chorus) 1pm (TBD)

December 11th ............................... Winter Concert (5/6 Grade) 6:30PM

**December 12th........................... Winter Concert (7/8 Grade) 6:30PM**

December 14th ……Caroling at Nursing Homes(Select Chorus) (TBD)

December 18th .............................Winter Concert Snow Date (6:30PM)

March 6th and 7th .........Eastern Region Festival (Enfield High School)

March 13th and 14th .......................Eastern Region Festival Snow Date

March 20th, 21st and 22nd .................................... Musical Performances

March 25th .......................... Fly-Up Day (7th/8th Grade Chorus) (TBD)

**May 20th ...........................…………..Spring Vocal Concert (6:30pm)**

May 25th ............... Memorial Day Parade (Various Music Ensembles)

**May 29th ...................………………………….….Great East Festival**

June 3rd ..……...............…….…Spring Instrumental Concert (6:30pm)

June (TBD) …………………………………………Hall Idol Auditions

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

Some dates may be subject to change.

Only events in bold are mandatory for 7/8 Chorus students

**Letter of Commitment**

Please check off the statements and sign below for credit. Also include your email address on the bottom so that I can email you important information when necessary.

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 2019-20 school year.
* I am aware of all concert dates and have put them in my calendar.
* I am aware of the concert dress code.
* I am aware that concerts are recorded and posted on the music website through YouTube.
* I am aware that the chorus will often have pictures taken at various school related events and may be posted on social media or on the school/music website.

If you have any concerns or questions, please write them in the space below and I will email you back in a timely fashion.

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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**)