



# Chorus HANDBOOK

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## Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize choir members and their guardians with the rules and guidelines of the singing panthers. It is intended to help the choir be more effective, and help each member receive the best choir experience. Furthermore, the things contained herein will ensure a productive relationship between the choir members, the choir director, and their guardians.

## Course Description and Objectives

This performance-based class focuses on learning to use the vocal instrument to create a healthy and pleasing sound. In addition to learning proper vocal production and technique, students learn music reading skills, sight-singing skills, and performance skills. Students sing literature with and without accompaniment in up to three parts. Chorus offers opportunities for students to develop team building and leadership skills. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

## Required materials

The following are things that are necessary for each choir member to have in order to participate in choir:

1. Black 3-ring binder with pockets.
2. Paper and pencil.
3. Formal Uniform – All Black
4. Casual Uniform (Mandatory) -Chorus Shirt and denim

**Price:** \$15

Wishlist Items:

- Kleenex
- Hand Sanitizer
- Clorox Wipes

## Goal

The goal of the choral music program at Pine Hill Middle School is to have all members of the choir benefit from the enriching experience of performing choral literature. To achieve this goal, we will often study music from other cultures, which may include different languages and performance practices. In addition, we want each student to acquire the fundamental skills that lead to effective musicianship. At the completion of the school year each student should have a strong foundation in the basic elements of music theory, understand the process of vocal production, and show a great degree of proficiency when performing standard choral literature. Overall, we want to ensure that each student works to achieve an appreciation and respect for every genre of music.

**\*Note: Nowhere in this statement is our mission to sing popular music or music we that we like. We strive to be true to the art form. As choir members, our foremost responsibility is to educate and enlighten our audience. We will attempt to be successful in fulfilling this goal whether in rehearsal, adjudication or exhibition.**



## Grading Policy

Minor Grades = 60% (Daily Performance, Quizzes, Classwork)

Major Grades = 40% (Unit tests, Project-based Assignments, and Performances)

## Academic Grading Scale

A (90-100)    B (80-89)    C (75-79)    D (70-74)    F (below 70)

## Academic Dishonesty

The Student Code of Conduct, Rule 1(A)(t), states that no student shall cheat, alter records, plagiarize, receive unauthorized assistance, or assist another in any type of academic dishonesty. When the assignment calls for students to produce original work, students will not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate the assignment for them. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, the task may be entered as incomplete, and the student is required to redo the assignment or retake the assessment.

## Daily Performance Assessment

**Everyone must perform on a daily basis!** In short, the performance rehearsal process ensures that we are making Adequate Daily Progress. With choir singing, it is imperative that everyone gives 100%. Haphazard or lackluster participation leads to poor performance. Ideally, **Maximum Effort = Maximum Performance.**

Everyday there are certain things I consider when assigning participation grades. First and foremost, each student must consciously follow the **Rules of Singing** (see paragraph marked **Rules of Singing**). A violation of one will get you a warning. Subsequent violations will earn you a zero as a participation grade for that day. Secondly, each student must be actively engaged in the rehearsal process. In essence, your attention is focused, your mouth is open, and you are making a serious attempt to produce the technical, **bel canto** or beautiful singing, sound that the choir is trying to achieve. Either you get a zero or a hundred. All participation grades are added together and account for fifteen percent of your total grade.

## Rules of Singing (Rehearsal Procedure)

1. No Cell Phones or Electronic Devices in Rehearsal
2. No eating or chewing food, paper, or objects of any kind
3. No talking while we're singing
4. Sit in the classroom configuration semi-Circle
5. When sitting, do not pull down the tabletops



6. Sit up straight with both feet flat on the floor
7. Stand up straight (feet shoulder width apart) with music held high
8. When not holding music keep your hands by your side
9. Always look at the director

These rules are to be strictly followed. A violation will cause us to lose productivity during the rehearsal. Two violations, or a failure to correct one, will result in a low mark (i.e. a Zero (0)) as a participation grade.

## Performances

The show is the reason we exist. The performance is the culmination and exhibition of our hard work and dedication during class rehearsals. **It is absolutely mandatory that all choir members are present at each and every performance.** A failure to meet a performance date may lead to a very poor grade.

## Dates to Remember:

- Tentative Halloween Skate Party Fundraiser - TBD
- Holiday Concert – TBD
- All State Auditions (optional) – November 8<sup>th</sup>
- Black History Program - TBD
- Tentative Field Trip – February 18<sup>th</sup>
- Tentative Field Trip – March 20<sup>th</sup>
- LGPE – March 23-24
- All County Chorus – April 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Spring Concert - TBD

## Concert Etiquette

An essential element of performance is concert etiquette. There may be times when all members of the choral program are not on stage and actively participating in a performance. It then becomes our responsibility to model good concert etiquette. Oftentimes, it becomes necessary for us to teach our audience how to receive us in concert form. The audience should be quiet as they sit and listen. At the end of each selection the audience claps to show their appreciation. There should be no loud outbursts or anything that would draw attention away from the choir performance. Furthermore, you should never enter or exit while a song is being performed.

## Excused Absences

Missing a performance is a very serious matter. It is unfair to you, the student, and it is unfair to choir members that have rehearsed with you, supported you while you sang solo, or has to sing your part at the last minute because you did not show up. Therefore, missing a performance should be avoided at all costs. Any choir member that misses a performance, **for any reason,** is required to complete a make-up assignment within one



week of the missed performance, or their grade for that performance will be a zero. This assessment is in accordance with Richmond County Board of Education Rule 10(a). Students that participate in sports, or other school sponsored organizations or events, are to notify the conductor of any conflicts well in advance so that the details of the conflict can be resolved in the best way possible. All students that plan to miss a performance should let me know in advance, and obtain their make-up assignment early.

## Uniforms

The choir has 2 uniforms which are used for performances. Casual Uniform and Formal Uniform. Casual uniform is chorus tshirt and denim (no holes). Formal Uniform is all black.

The following rules govern casual uniform wear:

1. Earrings (girls) must be studs or pearls.
2. Flat shoes are required (sneakers are acceptable).
3. Hair should be neatly groomed.
4. Belts should be worn with pants.
5. Good Hygiene must be observed

The following rules govern formal uniform wear:

6. Girls must wear black flat shoes (no sneakers).
7. Skirts/Dresses must be BELOW the knee.
8. Earrings (girls) must be studs or pearls.
9. Guys must wear black dress shoes (no sneakers).
10. Hair should be neatly groomed.
11. Belts should be worn with pants.
12. Good Hygiene must be observed

**\*\*Anyone who is not wearing the uniform properly is in violation and may be excluded from performances at the director's discretion.**

**\*\*Caution: When in uniform, perfumes, cologne, scented lotions and many hair sprays are not be used. Many people have allergies and the excessive use of these products may severely affect their health. Therefore, it is advised you do not come to class or to concerts spraying these products.**

## LGPE (Large Group Performance Evaluation)

Each year, Richmond County schools are required to attend LGPE. This is a performance that will be held off campus and reviewed live by a panel of judges. The judges will give comments (and possibly scores) to the performing groups. LGPE takes place in the spring semester and transportation will be provided. We will be working on material to prepare us for this event throughout the year.



**\*All students should be aware that Richmond county rules and guidelines still apply to all participants. Furthermore, students should be aware that this is a performing trip and any student that plans on missing this performance is still required to complete a make-up assignment (see guidelines above).**

## Cell phones

The use of cell phones, electronic communication devices and/or accessories is prohibited for all students at all times during the instructional day, which is defined as the time the student arrives on campus until the end of the school day and/or the time the student leaves campus.

- **First Offense:** The first offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the student or parent at the end of the same school day.
- **Second Offense:** The second offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time.
- **Third Offense:** The third offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time.
- **Fourth Offense:** The fourth offense and thereafter will result in the electronic device being confiscated for ten (10) school days, and the parent must schedule a conference with an administrator to retrieve the electronic device.
- **Further incidents may result in the student losing the privilege of bringing electronic devices on campus, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.**

## Parent/Student Support

Every parent is encouraged to be an active part of our organization. When parental involvement and support are high we have more performing opportunities and greater success. One of the ways we want to encourage support is to invite each parent to join our support team. Please feel free to offer suggestions and ideas on how to build and support our choir program. With your help, we can ensure that our kids receive the best choral experience known to our area. Without your support our achievement is limited.



Therefore, please plan to be active. I encourage all parents interested in assisting with the choral program complete volunteer training through our amazing counselors.

Now that your child is a member of the choir you should consider yourself a member also. So don't just plan to have them at the performances, but plan to stay and make it a success. Your support and assistance is greatly needed and appreciated.

## Conclusion

I sincerely hope that the things contained herein will be met enthusiastically. Chorus is one of the most rewarding classes because there is no other subject in which you are appreciated and applauded for your efforts. So let me officially welcome you to choir. I know we will have a memorable and enjoyable year. We will be successful by building a tradition and standard of excellence. We will continue to challenge ourselves and our peers, to grow musically. With goals such as these, success is on the horizon!

Please sign the bottom portion acknowledging receipt of this handbook, detach and return it to me. **Please log on to our *Facebook* page Pine Hill Middle School Chorus to keep up with class activities and chorus events and join our *Remind* page @ PHMSchoir to continuously receive updates and reminders about our programs and events.** Any questions or concerns can be addressed to me. Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to an exciting year of making music.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Claitt, Choir Director



## PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

I have read, understand and agree to follow the rules and guidelines set forth by the Pine Hill Middle School Chorus Handbook.

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

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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## T-Shirt Order Form

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

Size: Sm \_\_\_\_\_ Md \_\_\_\_\_ Lg \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_ 2XL \_\_\_\_\_  
3XL \_\_\_\_\_

No. Shirts \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ Total

\*\*\*\*\* Return With Money by September 5<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*\*\*