

South Seneca 7th and 8th Grade Choral Handbook 2015-2016

Welcome!

We have an exciting year of choral singing ahead of us in 7th and 8th Grade Chorus, learning and singing beautiful and challenging music. Being in Chorus is a year long commitment. Be prepared to delve into the discipline of music making and the pursuit of excellence. In this handbook, I have included pertinent information about how chorus will function. Parents, guardians, and students, please read this handbook together.

Sincerely,
Miss Quinn

Philosophy and Goals:

Music Education aims to provide students with the tools they need to become skilled musicians. Skilled musicians bring meaning to music, interpret the work of great composers, and bring joy through their excellence to those listening. Skills learned through music education also help students in their other studies.

While studying voice in the Middle School choruses, students will:

- 1) Perfect a healthy vocal technique through correct usage of the vocalic muscles, correct breathing, correct posture, and correct placement of the vocal tone.
- 2) Sing using appropriate diction, with clear consonants and well-shaped vowels.
- 3) Make music expressive through beautiful phrase shaping, through articulation, through dynamics, and through the students' own enthusiasm.
- 4) Realize what it means to be increasingly independent musicians, by applying prior musical knowledge to new pieces of music.
- 5) Understand music historically and stylistically.
- 6) Discover teamwork, effectively singing as one ensemble to produce a unified sound.
- 7) Use music vocabulary effectively in speech and writing.

7th and 8th Grade Chorus is open to all seventh and eighth grade students. Students will study a healthy and natural singing technique. Students will study good choral diction, including clear consonants and well-shaped vowels. Students will sing a variety of repertoire in three parts and four parts. Students will also study intervals and study sight reading in their lessons.

7th and 8th Grade Chorus Materials:

- 1) Pencil
- 2) Chorus Folder (provided)*
- 3) Concert Attire (please see the "Concert Attire" section of the handbook).
- 4) Smart Music Account (set up through school)

*Students are responsible for keeping track of their Chorus folder and the music inside. Students will be held accountable for damaged and lost items. Students will be billed if items are not returned at the end of the year.

Grading:

Students will be graded on:

Tone (*quality, consistency, projection*)

Intonation (*sense of pitch*)

Technique (*breath control, range, registers, diction, resonance*)

Accuracy (*accuracy of notes and rhythms, steadiness of rhythms*)

Interpretation (*dynamics, phrasing, sense of artistry*)

Reading Music (*sight reading and knowledge of music symbols*)

Teamwork

Concert Attendance

Lesson Attendance

Classroom Procedures and Conduct:

- 1) Upon entering the classroom, students will obtain their music folders. Students should sit quietly in their assigned seats until class starts.
- 2) Class will start promptly. Students need to be prepared to start class at this time. Three unexcused tardies will result in a lunch detention.
- 3) There should be no talking, unless called upon. It is imperative that students do not talk; we have much to accomplish each class and have a limited amount of time together. In order for individual sections to learn their parts quickly, there needs to be no talking, so each student can hear the part being taught, and I can hear each singer to assess progress.
- 4) Chorus folders should be returned to their slots after class. Folders may **not** be taken out of the classroom, except in the case of taking a folder to a practice room.
- 5) There should be no chewing gum or eating food in the choral classroom, as it presents a safety hazard to singing individuals.
- 6) All students should have a pencil in their folders at all times. Marking instructions into the music score will minimize lost rehearsal time. Only mark music in pencil.
- 7) Try to take care of restroom needs and drinks of water prior to class. Please bring a water bottle to class.
- 8) Cellphones, iPods, etc. should neither be seen nor heard. If seen in class, they will be turned in to the teacher and returned at the end of class. Multiple offenders may have to pick up their electronics from the AC room.
- 9) As this is a team, every singer is expected to treat everyone else in the classroom with **respect**.

Group Voice Lessons:

Lesson schedules will be posted each week on both sets of Chorus room doors and shared via Google Drive. They will be available the Friday before the week they start, except in extreme cases. In lessons, students will work on vocal technique, intervals in music, sight reading, and chorus music in small groups. Lesson attendance is mandatory. It is important that students come to their scheduled lesson time. If a test or an absence prevents a student from going to his or her lesson, he or she may either make up a lesson with another group or use an "excuse."* If a student is not coming to his or her scheduled lesson time, it is expected that the student is either coming out of a study hall or has communicated with their classroom teacher that it is a make-up lesson. Students who consistently make

up lessons instead of coming to their scheduled lessons will find it difficult to accomplish the goals of their specific groups; therefore it is important to attend the scheduled time.

*Students will be granted one excused absence from lessons each quarter. A reason for using an excused absence should be similar to, "I had a test," or "I was home sick from school." Students must communicate to me that they would like to use their excuse.

Smart Music Assessments:

Smart music is becoming an increasingly important tool in our music classrooms so we can have evidence of student learning. There will be two or three smart music assignments each quarter that students need to complete *on their own time*.

Two practice rooms are available to use during the school day or after school that are equipped with computers loaded with smart music software. Students may use the practice rooms as long as a music teacher is available, and students need to check in with a music teacher to be in a practice room. Microphones can be picked up from the music teachers, but they must be returned. There are also two additional practice rooms in the Chorus room that may be used during my prep or lunch time. Students will set up smart music accounts through the school at the beginning of the school year.

Assessments done through Smart Music are the best way to authentically see how students have been preparing and learning their music. If students are not completing their Smart Music assessments, there is little to grade each quarter.

Practice Room Etiquette:

Two practice rooms are available to use during the school day or after school that are equipped with computers loaded with smart music software. Students may use the practice rooms as long as a music teacher is available, and students need to sign in with a music teacher to be in a practice room. Microphones can be picked up from the music teachers, but they must be returned. Any damaged materials will be billed. There are also two additional practice rooms in the Chorus room that may be used during my prep time or study hall time. Students will set up smart music accounts through the school at the beginning of the school year.

There is no food allowed in the practice rooms. Internet use on the school computer, especially social media use, is strictly prohibited. Practice rooms are for music making purposes only; they are not a social hangout. Anyone found eating food in the practice room or using the computer for purposes other than music will not be able to use the practice rooms for a week, unless arranged by the teacher, for the purpose of completing smart music.

Concert Attire:

Students are obligated to wear the designated attire to concerts.

For the December and June concerts, Music Boosters will provide shirts to all students, skirts for the girls and ties for the boys. Students will need to arrive before designated warm-up times to change into concert attire.

Boys need to provide their own black dress pants and black socks. Both boys and girls need to wear a white t-shirt or tank top to school the evening of the concert to change into their provided shirt. All students need to provide their own black dress shoes. Flip flops are not dress shoes. Be prepared to arrive early at concerts to have time to change. Students also need to return all Music Boosters attire at the end of the night, so students must change before they go home.

Performances:

Our concert performances throughout the year are mandatory. Students are expected to be present at the Chorus concerts as a culminating experience of the pieces they have been studying, equivalent to a test in another type of class. All the learning that takes place in the year is tested at the concerts. Students must arrive at school at the designated call time for concerts. Call times will be announced closer to the concert date. Students must exhibit the highest level of performing etiquette. Students should stay for the full concert and must give other performing groups a high level of attention and respect.

During performances, we wish to minimize the amount of foot traffic and movement in the auditorium, as it is distracting and disrespectful to those performing and to the audience alike. Students will be escorted to the back of the auditorium, after their part of the program, with a chaperone to sit for the remainder of the performance. Students are expected to stay for the whole concert. If you have to leave for unforeseen circumstances, you must meet your student out in the atrium at the end of the hallway that has the old nurse's office / Music Booster closet (the side closest to the ramp to the auditorium) and be seen by a chaperone to pick him or her up.

Staying in Touch:

I use Remind App to stay in touch with students and parents about schedules, assignments, and performances. If you would like to get reminders via text messaging, please text @ms128 to 81010. This is just to sign up; it is not a real phone number. To subscribe via email, please send an email (it can be blank) to ms128@mail.remind.com. This is just to sign up; it is not a real email.

2015-2016 Concert Schedule:

November 6th and 7th: Jr. High Area All-State at Cortland

December 17th: Middle School Band and Chorus Holiday Concert, 7:00 p.m.

January 5th: All-County Chorus Reading Rehearsal at Newfield

January 15th and 16th: All-County Chorus Festival at Newfield

March 22nd: Middle School / High School Band and Chorus POPS Concert, 7:00 p.m.

May 6th and 7th: NYSSMA Solo Festival at Boynton Middle School in Ithaca

June 2nd: Middle School Band and Chorus Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m.

**Chorus Commitment and Consent Form:
Due to Miss Quinn by September 11th, 2015**

I have read this booklet and accept the terms and responsibility of the Chorus.

Student Signature: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____