

South Seneca High School Choral Handbook 2016-2017

Welcome!

We have an exciting year of choral singing ahead of us in High School Chorus, learning and singing exquisite and challenging music. Be prepared to delve into the discipline of music making and the pursuit of excellence for the next school year. In this handbook, I've included pertinent information about how chorus will function. Parents, guardians, and students, please read this handbook together.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Perry

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 musical excellence to those listening. Music is experienced with the mind, body, and heart, and learning to be a musician educates these three facets of existence, as well as helping students think in ways that help them with their other studies.

While studying voice in the High School Chorus, students will:

- 1) Perfect a healthy vocal technique through correct use 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 phrase shaping, through articulation, through dynamics, through study of language, and through the students' own enthusiasm.
- 4) Realize what it means to be increasingly independent musicians, by applying prior musical knowledge new pieces of music.
- 5) Understand music historically and stylistically.
- 6) Discover teamwork, effectively singing as an ensemble to produce a unified sound.
- 7) Use music vocabulary effectively in speech and in writing.

Ensembles:

• **High School Chorus:** This ensemble open to all students in grades 9 through 12. In this chorus, students will study "bel canto" singing. "Bel canto" means "beautiful singing" in Italian. In the study of "bel canto" singing, students will study healthy vocal technique leading to producing a natural and healthy sound and study good choral diction, with clear consonants and unified vowels. In High School Chorus, students will study high quality repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to modern day, including, but not limited to, major Classical choral works, African-American Spirituals, choral works in foreign languages, and choral works from countries outside the Western Music tradition.

• **Vocal Jazz Ensemble:** This is a select choral ensemble for students in grades 9 through 12. Students new to the ensemble audition in June before the next school year. In this ensemble, students will study other vocal techniques in a choral setting, such as the jazz, swing, popular music, and

Broadway. Students learn scat singing, performance techniques, and how to arrange their own music. Students also enhance music with choreography.

Materials:

- 1) Pencil
- 2) Chorus Folder (provided)*
- 3) Chorus Attire (see 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 for anything not returned at the end of the year.

Grading:

Students will be graded on:

Tone (*quality, consistency, projection*) (10%)

Intonation (*sense of pitch*) (10%)

Technique (*breath control, flexibility, range, registers, diction, resonance*) (10%)

Interpretation (*dynamics, style, phrasing, expression, sense of artistry*) (10%)

Reading Music (*sight reading and knowledge of music symbols*) (Quarter 3 - 15% of grade)

Accuracy (*accuracy of notes and rhythms, steadiness of rhythms*) (15% of grade)

Concert Attendance (25% of grade)

Lessons (Attendance, Sight Reading Effort and Ability, and Projection - 20% of grade)

Students are required to submit Smart Music assignments each quarter and attend lessons so grades can be given. If students do not complete these tasks, there will be little evidence of learning to grade. Students should expect incomplete marks, failing marks, or low marks if Smart Music is not completed.

Classroom Procedures and Conduct:

- 1) Upon entering the classroom, students will obtain their music folders. Students should sit quietly in assigned seats until class starts.
- 2) *Class will start promptly.* Students need to be prepared to start class on time. Students who are late need to bring a pass. Three unexcused tardies will result in a lunch detention.
- 3) There should be no talking, unless called upon. We have much to accomplish each class and have a limited amount of time together.
- 4) Chorus folders should be returned to their slots after class. Folders may only be taken out of the classroom if I am consulted and should be returned for class.
- 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) There is no time during class for restroom breaks or for drinks from the water fountain. Do these things prior to class or wait until class is finished. Students are encouraged to bring water to class.
- 8) Cellphones, iPods, etc. should neither be seen nor heard.
- 9) As this is a team, every singer is expected to treat everyone else in the classroom with **respect**.
- 10) Students chosen to be senior leaders need to accomplish their tasks with promptness, a sense of responsibility, and a positive attitude.

Lessons:

Lesson schedules will be posted each week on both sets of Chorus room doors and shared via Google Classroom. They will be available the Friday before the week they start, except in extreme cases. In lessons, students will work on vocal technique, sight reading, chorus music, and solo repertoire 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 a few smart music assignments each quarter that students need to complete on their own time and complete by the due date.

Assessments done through smart music are the best way to authentically see how students have been preparing and learning their music.

Other Classroom Technology:

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 @chorus128 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 chorus128@mail.remind.com. This is just to sign up; it is not a real email.

I also use Google Classroom to post assignments, lesson schedules, and class resources. Make sure your student is checking Google Classroom during the week.

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:

For concerts, students are obligated to wear the designated attire.

For the December and June concerts, men should wear black dress pants (no jeans) with a black belt with a plain buckle, black dress shoes (no sneakers), and black socks. Men should wear a white tux shirt with a black bow tie that they will purchase through the school. If a man continues to sing with the chorus for more than a year, he may exchange a shirt he outgrows for an another shirt if available or order a new one.

Women should wear long, floor length black skirts which are purchased *by* the school. These skirts need to be returned when students graduate or discontinue their choral study. Students will be held accountable for skirts that are not returned, and the price is \$50 for a lost or unreturned skirt. Women should wear white, long-sleeved tux shirts with black bow ties that they will purchase *through* the school. Women should wear black, close toed dress shoes and nude or tan colored pantyhose. Flip-flops should never be worn.

In the past, the cost for the shirts and bow ties for both men and women has been between \$13 and \$18.50.

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 skills and information learned during the school year is tested at concerts. Students must arrive at school at the designated call time for concerts. Call times will be announced closer to the concert date. Students are expected to adhere to good performing etiquette. Students should stay for the full concert and must give other performing groups a high level of attention and respect.

2016-2017 Concert and Event Schedule:

November 4th and 5th: Junior High Area All-State at Cortland

November 16th: Fall Vocal Showcase and Music Boosters Fundraiser, 7:00 p.m.

December 14th : High School Band and Chorus Holiday Concert, 7:00 p.m.

January 20th and 21st: All-County Chorus Festival in Trumansburg

*February 3rd and 4th: Senior High Area All-State at Ithaca High School

March 30th: 6-12 Band and Chorus POPS Concert, 7:00 p.m.

May 5th and 6th: NYSSMA Solo Festival at Boynton Middle School in Newfield*

May 9th : Silver Tea, 5:00 p.m.

*May 25th: Middle School and High School Chorus Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m.

*June 23rd: Graduation at 7:00 p.m. Rehearsal TBA

*This is a change from previous years

Please keep this calendar for future reference.

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Choral Music Expectations and Commitment Form:

Due to Mrs. Perry by September 16th, 2016

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

Student Signature: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

