



CHOCTAWHATCHEE HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL POLICIES 2019-20

1. *Calendar Conflicts*

Students should be able to participate in a variety of school-sponsored activities: musical, scholastic, athletic, etc. Being aware that conflicts will occur in the scheduling of practices, games, rehearsals, matches, and performances, the following guidelines will be used:

- a. Conflicts will be avoided as much as possible, but they do happen! Take a moment and put *all* activities in your planner and let *all* coaches and directors know in advance - we are much more helpful when we are aware days/weeks/months in advance. Finding out the *day of* is stressful.
- b. A school performance or school game will take precedence over a school practice/rehearsal with no penalty or punishment involved in the missed school practice/rehearsal.
- c. If a school performance and a school game occur at the same time, the student will be given the opportunity to choose the activity in which he/she shall participate and thereafter suffer no penalties for having made that choice. The student will make the director aware of his/her choice *at least 2 weeks prior* to the event with the Request for Absence Form. Sometimes a 50-50 split can be arranged.
- d. Choctawhatchee High School activities will take precedence over *non-school* related activities.

2. *Grading*

Grades will be based on knowledge of concepts, demonstration of skills and participation in chorus activities (during school time and outside of school time).

Weekly/Daily Participation Grades - 35%

Written Practice/Online Practice, & Quizzes - 20%

You will receive weekly and daily grades based on proper involvement & participation in class, effort demonstrating skills in class, & attitude & behavior displayed to create an appropriate rehearsal culture/learning environment.

Written work is expected to be done in class - use your time wisely. We will use Google Classroom & Sight Reading Factory - you'll know deadlines in plenty of time & if you don't have access to the internet, we can schedule student computer use time. More information will be provided about online practice.

Participation:

In order to fully participate each day, you...

Need a positive attitude

Must show a willingness to work (sing, not talk)

Have your pencil, music, & folder

Complete assignments on time/stay on task

Be courteous, cooperative, & committed to the group

Skills:

Correct singing posture - standing and sitting
Good breath support and breathing technique
Free, open, and natural tone quality/vocal sound
Intonation and pitch accuracy
Good diction - clarity of consonants and purity of vowels
Phrasing of musical line
Vocal and facial expression
Stage presence
Rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic sight-reading
Memorization of vocal part(s)

Written Practice/Online Practice, & Quizzes:

These assignments will give you a chance to practice what we've been learning in class/using in our music (vocabulary, music theory, sight reading, ear training, etc).

Tests/Assessments & Rehearsal Grades - 20%

Performance Grades - 25%

There will be tests throughout the year on the various music concepts we're working on in class. Not all assessments will be in written format.

Because this is a performance-based class (and our choirs meet in separate classes), we will have after-school/evening rehearsals and performances. Each singer is expected to contribute to proper rehearsal culture & demonstrate appropriate concert etiquette.

All students are required to attend all rehearsals and all performances that pertain to the choir(s) they are in. Grades are earned for both rehearsals and performances.

An unexcused absence from a rehearsal will result in a zero for that rehearsal.

An unexcused absence from a major performance (Potluck, Winter, District, Spring) will result in **two** zeros.

Excused absences are:

Prior permission from the director - **with a completed Request for Excused Absence, Tardy, or Early Release Form (2 weeks in advance)**

Personal illness - **with a completed Unanticipated Absence Form (3 days)**

Death of an immediate family member - **with a completed Unanticipated Absence Form (3 days)**

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

Homework

Job

Didn't arrange for transportation

Forgot

Fell asleep

In order for Ms. Denham to *consider excusing* an absence it must be explained. Please complete a Request for Excused Absence, Tardy, or Early Release Form or an Unanticipated Absence Form, depending on the situation. Absences without a form are automatically considered unexcused. Please remember that this process does not replace any of the Attendance procedures for the school, nor does an excused absence for the school day automatically excuse a student from a rehearsal or a performance. If you are absent from school *only*, these Chorus forms are not necessary.

3. Uniforms

A uniform is required and will be worn at each performance. Having the correct uniform will be part of the grade for performances. Each singer should have a dress uniform and a casual uniform. Please see the 'Uniform Information' page in this packet for more details. Cost factors have been considered by the director in selection of the uniform. Madrigals have an additional uniform & should have that information page.

Uniforms are the financial responsibility of each individual choral student and are not paid for by the school. No student will be kept out of the choral program because they don't have a uniform. Please notify the director as soon as possible if there is a financial difficulty obtaining the uniform so that every effort may be made to assist the student.

4. Auditions

No student will be auditioned OUT of the choral program. A level of performance will be available for each student. Auditions will be held in April/May for Madrigals and other levels of Chorus. These auditions will be based on vocal production, musical skills, interest, and willingness to devote outside time. There is a non-auditioned Chorus as well.

5. Festivals/MPAs/Trips

The Chorus will enter the Florida Vocal Association District I Music Performance Assessments. All chorus members will attend the District Choral MPA in February and will perform for evaluation by three concert judges and one sight-reading judge. Solo & Ensemble MPA is also in February this year.

Some of our singers will be able to audition for/participate in the Okaloosa All-County Honor Choir and some of those students will be able to audition for All-State. Those who make All-State are chosen based on scores from the 3-step audition process.

The Candlelight Trip is in December. This trip will include singing 1 or 2 shows at Epcot in Disney's Candlelight Processional, a visit to 2 Disney parks, possibly a side trip to Give Kids the World, a hotel stay, and charter bus transportation. This trip involves a group audition, memorization of 14 songs, a \$200-225 trip fee, & food money.

The Spring Trip is a tradition at Choctawhatchee High School. Some years we participate in State MPA, an FVA festival, & some years we participate in a commercial festival. Choruses receiving Superior ratings at District MPA qualify to participate in State MPA. This MPA event will be held in mid-April.

Several fundraising activities are provided for students to earn all or part of the trip expenses. The more money we have in our account, the lower the cost per student will be. Students are encouraged to start earning money for individual accounts early!

Students who earn OSS during the school year will not go on any out-of-county trip. Students in legal trouble will not go on any out-of-county trips. Students who earn STP will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Behavior at school matters!

Money paid for MPA/trip fees are *non-refundable*.

Behavior while out of the building must be impeccable. Any student who chooses to behave otherwise runs the risk of being issued a written referral at school or being removed from Chorus. If rules are not followed during off-campus trips, parents will be called and possibly told to pick up their child in person immediately, at their expense. If the student chooses to do something illegal, law enforcement will be called, and the parents will then be responsible for picking up their child in person *immediately*, at *their* expense.

6. Academic Eligibility

There is no minimum grade point average required to participate in any chorus class or to perform in local concerts, performances, or MPAs. Currently, there are guidelines in

place requiring the student to have a 2.0 GPA from the previous 9-week grading period and not be failing more than one class to be eligible to participate in All-State.

7. Awards

Chorus awards are presented at the Spring Concert to outstanding Choral students. Selection for these awards is based on scholastic chorus average, musical skills and knowledge, leadership, natural ability, and participation in Solo/Ensemble MPA, All-County Honor Choir, and the Florida All-State Choruses. Traditionally, the Seniors receive their Senior Ribbons during the awards portion of the evening.

8. Fundraising

Our program relies on fundraising and donations to buy music, pay MPA fees, pay for transportation, pay accompanists, etc. We receive no funds from the school budget, & receive a small amount from the county - and that money has strict rules about what it can be spent on. While participation in fundraising activities is optional and not mandatory, it is necessary for our group. If a student willingly participates in a fundraiser, he/she is responsible for payment in full of the merchandise or for returning unsold merchandise. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from chorus or chorus activities. If the student is raising money specifically for his or her account, 'overage' will not be given back to the student as this money is not extra money.

9. Classroom Procedures

- a. Get your pencil & assigned folder when you arrive
- b. Put your phone away - in your folder slot, in your bag, or on the charging table
- c. Go to your seat/place & check the board for instructions
- d. Once the rehearsal/class has started, please don't talk amongst yourselves - we have lots to accomplish!
- e. At the end of rehearsal/class, straighten your area
- f. Put your folder away in the **correct** number before you leave

10. Classroom Rules/Expectations

- a. Be on time for class/rehearsal - if you are late, do not be a distraction!
- b. Participate appropriately & create the rehearsal culture expected
- c. Follow directions the first time they are given
- d. Exercise self-control at all times
- e. No food or gum - you can't sing with it in your mouth - bottled water only!
- f. Be courteous and respectful of other people (teachers, students, visitors, etc.) and their belongings
- g. Stay in the room unless you have permission to be elsewhere
- h. Always display an attitude of cooperation and be committed to doing your individual best while working within the group
- h. When we are out as a group, remember that you represent Choctaw!

11. Chaperone Information

We will need parent volunteers and chaperones for a variety of events. Anyone wishing to volunteer (help with a fundraiser, help in the classroom, etc.) or chaperone an event will need to go to okaloosaschools.com and fill out the Volunteer Info. That information should be re-submitted each school year. Signup.com will be used to book volunteers and chaperones.

12. Choral Parent Meetings

We will have 2-3 Choral Parent Meetings during school year – dates & times will be announced well in advance. These meetings provide our parents with an opportunity to stay up-to-date on Chorus information, events, fundraisers, chaperone needs, etc.

13. Calendar of Events

There is a calendar in this Handbook, on Google Classroom, on our FB group, and on the Chorus Webpage. Events may be added &/or changed from time to time. Those changes will be posted on Google Classroom, on our Chorus Webpage, on our FB group, in the Chorus Room, and sent out via Remind &/or email depending on what is most appropriate. There are some situations changing on our campus (and every campus) this year & we can't predict all of the possible unintended ramifications. Some of these results might not be the most convenient, and we need to be flexible.

14. Contact Information

There is a page in this Handbook dedicated to ways to find and receive Chorus information. You are *strongly encouraged* to return the Info Form with as much accurate information as you have, sign up for the appropriate Remind groups, join the FB group, and bookmark the webpage. Be part of *all* forms of communication that you can be part of – stay informed and in the communication loop. ☺