

Herndon Middle School

Choir Handbook

2011-2012

Herndon Middle School
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Please KEEP THIS HANDBOOK for future reference

Name: _____ Class Period: _____

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Welcome Letter

Hello and welcome to Herndon Middle School Choir! I look forward to an exciting and challenging year of great music making!

The performing arts are a valued and integral part of the curriculum in Fairfax County Public School. Over the last year, we have certainly been forced to really consider the role that the arts have in our school system, and the response was overwhelmingly positive! You realize that the arts enable us to have experiences we can have from no other source. The arts are the way in which we mark other experiences as special. They are the methods through which we make our lives special!

This is my third year as the director of Choral Music at HMS, and I intend for our choir program to maintain the high standard that the county has for the performing arts. The great thing about choir is that **EVERYONE CAN SING!** No really...*everyone!* That being said, a great choral program must be allow both experienced and novice singers to grow musically, vocally, and artistically. HMS choir students will be given the opportunity to perform, listen, create, and critique as choral musicians. All these skills will prepare students to be lifelong lovers of music.

Students will need to work hard in order to make the most of this experience and rise to their full potential. I am here to offer extra help and encouragement along the way, but it is up to you and your student to take full advantage of every experience offered throughout the year.

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to our program, as well as establish the framework for a successful year. The following pages will make clear what is expected of our students as members of the HMS Choral Program.

Several evening and afterschool performances and activities have been scheduled for this school year. They are listed in detail on the following page. Please mark ALL of these dates and times on your calendar at home NOW so as to prevent any future scheduling problems. If there are any additions to this calendar, you will be notified immediately.

Thank you for taking the time to **read** and **understand** the material in this handbook. I am greatly looking forward to working with all of you this year!

bryan case
Director of Choirs
Herndon Middle School

HMS Choir Calendar

*The following events are for **ALL CHOIR STUDENTS** unless otherwise noted...*

Date	Time	Event	Location
September 15	7:00	Back to School Night	Herndon Middle School
September 16	HMS Choir/Volunteer Sheets DUE		
September 21	7:00	1st Choir Parent Association Meeting	HMS Choir Room
October 3	HMS Choir Activity Fee DUE		
October 4	7:00	ALL Choir Parents Meeting	HMS Choir Room
October 11-27	Music Department Fundraiser – Claire’s Gourmet!		
October 13	3:00-4:00	Choir Ice Cream Social	HMS Cafeteria
November 16	3:00-6:00	Claire’s Gourmet DELIVERY	HMS Choir Room
December 2	6:00	Barnes & Noble Fundraiser	Reston Town Center
December 12	3:00-4:00	Choir Concert REHEARSAL	HMS Auditorium
December 13	7:00	Winter Choir Concert <i>(Students arrive by 6:00)</i>	HMS Auditorium
December 14	Winter Choir Concert Snow Date		
February 10-11	All Day	District XII Honors Choir <i>(Select students TBD via audition)</i>	Washington & Lee HS
February 24	7:00	Herndon Choral Pyramid Concert	Herndon HIGH School
March 14	7:00	Choir Pre-Festival Concert <i>(Students arrive by 6:00)</i>	HMS Auditorium
March 23	Daytime	District XII Choir Festival	Madison HS
April 26-28	All Day	VCDA MS Honors Choir <i>(Select students TBD via audition; Participation Tentative)</i>	Lynchburg, VA
May 1	7:00	Pre-Trip Concert <i>(Students arrive by 6:00)</i>	HMS Auditorium
May 4	All Day	Spring Musicale Festival	Busch Gardens
June 7	7:00	End of Year Choir Concert	HMS Auditorium

Other Dates of Interest

These are not required events, but a good idea to get on to your calendar and keep them in mind.

October 20	7:30	HHS Fall Choir Concert	HHS
December 2-4/9-10	Various	HHS <i>Beauty & The Beast</i>	HHS
December 19	7:30	HHS Winter Choir Concert	HHS
February 16-18	Various	HHS Choir Cabaret	HHS
May 24	7:30?	HHS Choir Pops Concert	HHS

Rehearsal Procedures & Expectations

Class begins at the bell...

- All students arriving after the bell ARE TARDY.
 - If you have a late pass, give it directly to Mr. Case and *quietly* get ready for rehearsal.
 - If you do not have a pass, sign in on the “Tardy Board” and *quietly* get ready for rehearsal. This is an unexcused tardy.
 - Unexcused tardiness will be dealt with according the HMS policy. Refer to Herndon Middle School Students Handbook.

Before Rehearsal Begins...

- Get a drink of water before class. Bring a water bottle even!
- Get your choral folder from its designated spot on the rack.
- Sit in your assigned seat. Attendance is reported soon after the bell rings; if you have not found your seat at this time, you could be marked absent.
- Make sure that your folder has everything that is required for class. Check the board to see if there are any additional directions.
- If there are no further directions, you may talk quietly. Be ready to actively participate when warm-ups begin.

During rehearsal...

- Sit or stand with proper singing posture whenever singing...anything...always...
- Keep your folder in a safe place at all times. All of its contents are extremely valuable and vital to your grade. Between standing and sitting, make sure it does not end up under a chair leg...or a human leg!
- DO NOT TALK during rehearsal unless given direct permission to do so.
 - Questions, comments, & permissions to go leave the classroom will all be given specific hand signs to be followed in the classroom at all times. This makes your hand an extremely useful tool; utilize it. It will free up your mouth ***to keep singing and participating!***
- **Respect!** You already have my utmost respect coming into my classroom, and I will expect the same of you.

After rehearsal...

- Remain in your seat until Mr. Case has dismissed you. The bell is to let ***me*** to know that our time is up, not for an all out race to the door. Besides, you'll have other responsibilities before you get to the door. Like...
 - Make sure your chair is where you found it at the beginning of rehearsal.
 - CAREFULLY close your folder and make sure that your music is not damaged inside. NEATLY place your **folder in its designated slot.** This will help you tremendously with best prepared to begin rehearsal tomorrow.

Grading

"30 years from now, it won't matter what grades you go. What will matter is what you learned and how you used it."

I hope that I made it clear in my welcome letter that my goal for HMS chorus students is to create lifelong lovers of music. My hope is that these grading procedures reflect this goal. Unfortunately, this is a tough thing to place a letter grade on. The grade you receive in this class will reflect your progress as a musician.

The goal of our choir program is to provide all students the opportunity to succeed. The grading policy is used to evaluate a student's mastery of music, thus the grade reflects the student's progress as a musician.

The student's grade is based on 100%, divided differently depending on whether or not there is a concert performance during the grading period.

Grading periods *with* a Performance...

- 25% - Rehearsal Skills
- 20% - In Class Work
- 20% - Tests and Quizzes
- 35% - Performance assessment

Grading periods *without* a performance...

- 35% - Rehearsal Skills
- 30% - In Class Work
- 35% - Tests and Quizzes

Rehearsal Skills...

will be demonstrated by a student putting forth his/her best effort & attitude in daily rehearsals, as well as taking responsibility for rehearsal materials. This area is weighted with much importance because it reflects your citizenship and commitment to music and your ensemble.

We will spend much of the beginning of the year focusing on what is expected of you during rehearsal. As the year goes on, Mr. Case will assess your demonstration of these skills. You will also frequently be asked to submit guided, written assessments of yourself, so that **YOU** are aware of your rehearsal behavior, and we can make sure we're on the same page with your rehearsal skills.

As suggested in rehearsal expectations, the folder will be a very important part of your grade. You will be given a choir number. This is your folder number. This is also the number that will be on every piece of music that will be loaned to you. You already know that you will be keeping a list of rehearsal expectations in your folder, here are the rest of your folder requirements:

- A sharpened pencil (This lives *IN* your folder. Not to just be brought everyday)
- At least 10 pieces of blank loose leaf paper at all times
- All music that is currently ON LOAN to you. If it has your number, it's your responsibility
- Any other handouts or assignments Mr. Case tells you belong in there!
- This all must be organized and easy to find and navigate. Please see Mr. Case for help in this requirement.

In class work...

will be anything and everything that assesses the *progress* of your singing, listening, music reading or vocabulary skills day to day. This area reflects your *individual commitment* to music. Here are the different ways that musicianship may be assessed...

- ***Self Evaluation Musicianship.*** To show your ability to find the title and composer of a piece of music, and communicate what section we work on in class and how we worked on it in writing.
- ***In-class performance checks.*** This is to make sure that all students are learning the music that we will study and perform. Since middle school is stressful enough, *this will never be a surprise.* Mr. Case will always announce these checks ahead of time. These should not be viewed as a grade punishment, but an opportunity to show what you have learned.

Test and Quizzes...

will assess your *mastery* singing, listening, music reading or vocabulary skills. Here are the ways this could be measured.

- ***Sight-Singing Quizzes.*** Same rules apply as In-Class performance checks. These will always be announced ahead of time, and they show the progress you are making as a music reader.
- ***Written music theory quizzes.*** To test the definable aspects of music that will be taught in class.
- ***Written performance summaries/critiques.*** To apply those definable aspects and put the vocabulary in context. This is critical for lifelong musicianship.

Performance Assessment...

is simply based on showing up and following the handbook guidelines under "Performance Participation." Please view pages 6-7 of the handbook for any further information.

Performance Participation

This is the ultimate goal of all choirs and its members. It is the true test of our musicianship, so it reflects your commitment to ensemble, as well as your individual musicianship. For this reason...

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED at every performance.

Students are also required to...

STAY FOR THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE

Please see the Choir Calendar on page 4 now for the dates and times of all performances & mark them on your own calendar if you have not yet.

Performance Attendance Policy

Any absence, tardiness, or early dismissal from any performance **must** be submitted in advance for approval. They are otherwise **unexcused**. Here are examples of excused which are considered **unexcused**...

- "I forgot!"
- "I had to babysit!"
- "I had a soccer/football/basketball/polo/etc. game!"
- "I didn't have a ride!"
- "Something came up!"

According to Fairfax County Regulations, excused absences include:

- Student illness on day of concert
- Death in the family
- Doctor appointments
- Suspension
- Religious holidays
- Prearranged absences from school

A written excuse from the parent or guardian **must** be received by Mr. Case ***TWO WEEKS BEFORE*** the concert date for doctor appointments, religious holidays & prearranged absences.

For all other excused absences, please give Mr. Case as much notice as possible. This means **a note, voice mail, or e-mail** from the parent of guardian the day of the concert, the day after the concert, or the day the student returns to school.

Phone: 703.904.4866

Email: bgcase@fcps.edu

Concert Review

In the case of an *excused* absence, a Concert Review will be assigned to make up for the performance absence, and the grade received will take the place of the performance grade for that activity. This review will be due by the end of the present grading period. "Pop" & "Rock" concerts do not fulfill this requirement, and review of recording will not be accepted.

When working on a concert review, follow these guidelines:

- Must be TWO PAGES, TYPED, SINGLE SPACE.
- Include the following information about the concert: **Who, when, where, what** (music they played), and if you **did or did not enjoy** the concert and **why** you did or did not enjoy the concert. Did the performers adhere to the musicianship skills you have developed in our own rehearsals? How was the musical performance?
- Research *at least one* of the composers of one the concert pieces. Write four to five paragraphs about their life, their music education, and what kind of music they wrote. *Use more than one source (two different websites are fine), write the information using your own words, and list your sources on a **separate** page at the end of the paper.
- Attach the concert program and have parent/guardian sign and date it.

Performances are so important because they are the equivalent of a unit exam or test in other subject areas, but because it is an ensemble activity, it is difficult to be alternatively assessed. If it is at all avoidable, *do not put yourself in the position to have to complete a concert review.*

Festivals, Workshops, & Honors Choirs

Each year various organizations including the Virginia Music Educators' Association, the Virginia Choral Directors' Association, and the Virginia chapter of the American Choral Directors' Association sponsor a number of choral activities in which our student may take part.

All-District XII Choir

From Friday, February 11th to Saturday, February 12th, a select group of Middle and High school students will rehearse and perform at Herndon High School with a nationally recognized choral conductor. This choir is made up of students from all over the district and at the middle school level, is chosen by director recommendation. Students will need to audition for Mr. Case to be considered for this opportunity. There will be extra rehearsals to prepare for this experience and a rigorous work ethic is expected of all of those who choose to participate

District XII Choral Festival

On Friday, March 18th, our choral groups will participate in the District XII Choral Festival. This is a daytime performance that is considered a school field trip. Each choral group will perform for a panel of judges who will award them a rating based on their performance and will provide comment and feedback as well. Families and friends are encouraged to come and support our choral groups at Festival.

ALL STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PERFORMANCE.

Virginia ACDA Middle School Honor Choir

From Thursday, April 28 to Saturday, April 30, Virginia middle school choral students may participate in this choir being held in Lynchburg, VA. These students will be chosen by a submitted taped audition. This is much like District Choir, and more information will be made available closer to the date.

Herndon Middle School Spring Music Department Trip

The HMS Choirs participate in an annual spring festival trip along with the HMS Symphonic Band, Concert Band and Orchestra. This year, on Friday, May 4th, the department will travel to Williamsburg, VA for the Musicale Festival. This festival allows our student ensembles the opportunity to perform for a panel of judges who provide verbal and written comments and feedback, a rating for each ensemble and a placement among similar ensembles from other schools. After the adjudicated performance, the students will spend the rest of the day at Busch Gardens.

Who may go on this trip?

As of right now, we currently plan to take ALL of our choirs on this trip. This means that everyone in our choral program is eligible. However, in order to earn the right to participate they must demonstrate *exemplary* behavior and cooperation with ALL of their teachers throughout the school year. If a student is unable to conduct him/herself properly during school hours, I will not accept the responsibility of taking them on this trip.

The cost for the festival is *approximately* \$125 per student – please plan accordingly. More specific information will follow. For purposes of financial and logistical planning, once a student has committed to participating in this festival, there can be NO REFUNDS FOR ANY REASON (*i.e. illness, discipline issues, suspension or change of plans*). The music directors retain the right to reconsider a student's participation in this activity due to poor behavior at any time.

Students who do not perform at the District XII Choral Festival or any other concert throughout the year with an 'unexcused' absence will not be allowed to participate in this trip.

After School Rehearsals

On occasion, after-school rehearsals for a full group or section will be scheduled in order to prepare for a concert or festival. These rehearsals are necessary for several reasons:

- The musical growth of the students
- Combining groups or sections who never rehearse together during the school day
- The logistical aspects of performance such as riser positions, transitions, acoustical or electronic issues

Students are expected to attend ALL after-school rehearsals, and so will ALWAYS be provided with at least ONE week notice when these rehearsals are scheduled. An excused absence will require the student to complete an alternative assignment. An unexcused absence cannot be made up and will be reflected in your grade. Please try to avoid scheduling appointments for Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday afternoons, since these rehearsals will normally take place on one of those days after school until late busses.

Concert Dress

We are in the process of replacing all of the HMS Choir performance uniforms. The concert dress for HMS choir students will depend upon which ensemble they are in. However, here are the NOT PROVIDED requirements for ALL students:

All Boys

- black dress slacks
- black dress shoes
- black socks

ALLGirls

- Black flats
- Black stockings or hose

Black JEANS or sneakers are NOT considered appropriate for concert dress.

Please contact me if you have any difficulties acquiring clothing to meet our dress code.

Activity Fee

All HMS Choral members are required to pay a \$25 activity fee for the school year. This fee is needed to cover the cost of your HMS Choir T-Shirt (*which is mandatory for the spring trip*) as well as the tux shirt/studs/bowtie/cummerbund usage fee.

This is due on **Friday, October 3rd**.

If a student loses a uniform item there will be a replacement fee, which needs to be paid in order to receive the replacement item. No uniform items will be sold on the day of a concert, so plan ahead...if you're not dressed properly at the concert, you won't perform or receive credit.

Student Info/Handbook Agreement/Volunteer Form

This form is the next page of this handbook.

Tear it off, complete it, and return it by ***Friday, September 16th***.

Herndon Middle School Choir

Student Information & Choir Handbook Agreement Form

THANK YOU for taking the time to read the CHOIR HANDBOOK with your child. In order to keep a large and growing program organized and consistent, we need to make sure we are all in agreement, so your efforts and cooperation are greatly appreciated!

Please read and sign the following statement and return this form (FRONT AND BACK!) by Friday, September 16th.

Also, be reminded that the \$25 Activity fee is due by Friday, October 3rd. Cash or checks may be made payable to "HMS CPA" will be accepted.

- We have read the HMS CHOIR HANDBOOK carefully.
- We recognize the importance of concert and rehearsal attendance and agree to the policy
- We understand the REHEARSAL PROCEDURES and agree to follow them
- We agree to the CONCERT DRESS policy and will follow it carefully

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Student Information

Name: _____ Class Period: _____ Grade: _____
(Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Names: _____
(Please Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____
(Very important, please be clear) _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Other: _____

If we need to call, which number do you prefer we use? Home Work Cell Other

Volunteer Oppurtunites

We NEED your help for this year to be successful this year! Understand that I'm not asking every parent to volunteer for every concert, trip, and party (though I won't stop you!), but please consider helping in some capacity this year to help make it a great one! Please plan on attending our meeting for ALL parents on **October 4** and for parents interested in the Choir Parents Association on **September 21**.

Please fill out and return this sheet, even if you are not able to join us this year. THANK YOU!

Student Name: _____ Period: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (s): _____

Parent Guardian Email (s): _____

Preferred Phone: _____ This is your: Home Work Cell
(circle one)

Please check ANY areas in which you would be able to volunteer:

Chaperoning...

_____ HMS Winter Choir Concert
REHEARSAL, 12/12, AFTER SCHOOL

_____ HMS Winter Choir Concert
12/13, 6:00-8:30 PM @ HMS

_____ Herndon Choral Pyramid Concert
2/24, 6:00-8:30 @ HHS

_____ HMS Pre-Festival Concert
3/14, 6:00-8:00 @ HMS

_____ District XII Choral Festival
3/23, ALL DAY FIELD TRIP
Drivers may be needed!

_____ HMS Pre-Trip Concert
5/1, 6:00-8:00 @ HMS

_____ HMS Choir Trip to Williamsburg, VA
5/4, ALL DAY FIELD TRIP.
EARLY AM to LATE EVENING

_____ End of Year Choir Concert
6/7, 6:00-8:00 @ HMS

_____ Not sure of availability, but I know
I will be willing to chaperone if available!

Hospitality...

_____ Ice Cream Social, 10/13, After School
Set-up, serving, clean-up, etc...

_____ Winter Concert Reception, 12/14, before and after
concert. *Set-up, refreshments, clean-up...*

_____ End-of-Year Choir Concert Reception, 6/7, before
and after concert. *Set-up, refreshments, clean-up...*

Choir Parents Association

We are in dire need of a few parents to step in to some very important positions in our Choir Parent Association. Please consider joining us for our first meeting on September 21st!

_____ I am interested in serving on this committee and plan on attending monthly meeting to assist in planning choir events

_____ I was involved in HMS CPA last year and plan to continue my involvement!