



# Helena Middle School Choir

## 2023 - 2024

Welcome to a new school year of fun and excitement in the choir program! The goal of a great choral program is to teach students to sing with correct technique, allowing individual voices to shine while creating a beautifully blended sound, and to read music notation for your voices. We will also explore a variety of other musical experiences like drumming, movement, music history, etc. This handbook has been assembled to explain to students and parents the details of our program and expectations. Please review it, discuss the information it contains, and ask questions if any arise.

### CONCERT DATES

#### ***Fall Performance - Thursday, November 9 @ HMS Auditorium***

- ★ 6th Grade and 8th Grade @ 6 pm (arrive 20 minutes early)
- ★ 7th Grade @ 7:30 pm (arrive 20 minutes early)
- ★

#### ***8th Grade Caroling Concert - Monday, December 18 @ Capitol Rotunda***

- ★ Caroling with HMS, HHS, CRA, and CHS (time TBD)

#### ***6th and 7th Grade Caroling Concert - Thursday, December 21 @ HMS Auditorium***

- ★ 6th Grade @ 9 am (excused from class)
- ★ 7th Grade @ 11 am (excused from class)
- ★ Caroling with HHS (date and time TBD)

#### ***Winter Performance - Tuesday February 20 @ HMS Auditorium***

- ★ 6th Grade @ 9 am (excused from class)
- ★ 7th Grade @ 11 am (excused from class)

#### ***8th Grade and High School Choir Combined Festival Concert - Monday, March 12***

- ★ **HMS Auditorium @ 6:30 pm** (arrive 20 minutes early)

#### ***Spring Performance - Wednesday, May 29 @ HMS Auditorium***

- ★ 6th Grade, morning TBD
- ★ 7th Grade, afternoon TBD
- ★ 8th Grade, afternoon TBD

## Classroom Expectations

- **Students will treat all members of their class with respect.** Music will make each of you feel vulnerable sometimes, so show each other support and offer words of encouragement whenever possible. Refrain from derogatory language and actions at all times.
- **Students will arrive to class on time.** It is expected that students will arrive, pick up their music, be in their seats, and start the bell ringer before the tardy bell begins.
- Students will enter the room calmly and quietly. We will be able to sing better and focus better if you enter with decorum.
- **Bring a pencil and your chromebook each day,** and care for your music as if it were your own.
- **Students will participate in classroom activities.** You are in an ensemble with each other, and the ensemble cannot succeed unless everyone works cooperatively, seeks to improve skills daily, asks questions, and follows instructions.
- **Students will participate in concert activities.** Sharing music is an important part of learning to sing in a choir, so each student is expected to prepare for and participate in all concerts throughout the year.
- **Students can bring bottled water to class/concerts.** For student safety, gum is prohibited in choir.
- **Music requires complete, undivided attention during class.** This means cell phones will be kept out of sight and out of hands, or better yet, not brought to class. Cell phones will be confiscated if out during rehearsal.

All of these may be summed up with a few simple rehearsal rules:

*Be respectful, listen to your director, take pride in your work, and do your best!*

## Consequences

When expectations are met:

1. You will earn participation points in class
2. You will meet or exceed skills tests
3. You will receive the respect of your fellow musicians, Mrs. Nelson, and your audience
4. You will create beautiful music

When expectations are not met:

1. You will lost participation points in class
2. You will not be able to pass skills tests
3. Parents or guardians will be called
4. Detention will be assigned with Mrs. Nelson
5. A referral will be made to the assistant principal

## Disciplinary Action

The HMS Choir Program will operate with a tradition of excellence and pride. There are very few rules as we try to operate on the idea that everyone will do their best at all times. When working with a large number of students, it is necessary to have certain responsibilities and rules. Each member is expected to uphold and follow these responsibilities and rules. It is the director's responsibility to ensure fairness in the classroom and to act if the criteria for proper class behavior are not followed.

## Grading Policy

**Classroom Participation/Preparation** - (40% of quarter grade) When arriving on time and participating respectfully, students earn up to 5 points per class. When students miss a class, a **Practice Reflection** may be completed as a make-up. The guidelines for these assignments are discussed during class, and students may pick up a **Practice Reflection** the day after an absence. Up to 5 points will be awarded based on completeness of makeup.

**Skills Tests** - 30% of quarter grade (3 skills tests per quarter demonstrating singing in tune, note reading, etc.)

**Concerts** - 100 points per concert

- 20 points - Arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of the concert
- 10 points - Arrive prepared without gum, and with water (if needed for your comfort and singing success)
- 10 points - Wear required concert attire
- 40 points - Participate in performances of selected pieces
- 20 points - Demonstrate appropriate concert behavior while playing and while in the audience

**Other Assignments** - Total point value will depend on varied assignments

**Final Grade: Earned Points / Total Points = Final Grade**

- 100 - 90      A
- 89.9 - 80     B
- 79.9 - 70     C
- 69.9 - 60     D
- 59.9 - below   F

## Concert Attire

Students are asked to wear semi-formal clothing. Dress pants (*very dark* denim is ok), or long skirt, shirts with sleeves, and dress shoes (or dark tennis shoes). If students wish to wear a shorter dress, students should wear tights or leggings in addition to the dress.

### **Concert Absences**

It is each student's responsibility to plan for concerts during the year, but it is also understood that conflicts sometimes arise. If you have a family conflict, you must turn in a note (signed by a parent or guardian) to Mrs. Nelson two weeks prior to the concert and consult with her about your make-up assignment in order to receive full credit. Missing a concert because of illness will be similarly excused, but the parent-signed note will be turned-in following the concert. Deviations from this policy may result in complete or partial loss of credit for the concert.