

Westland Middle School



***Choral
Music Program***

Handbook for Students and Parents



***Jacqueline Serratore,
Director of Choral Music***

(301)320-6525 ext. 140

Jacqueline_Serratore@mcpsmd.org

Welcome to the Westland Middle School Choral Music Program!

This handbook has been prepared to provide you and your parents with information about your choral program. It includes the grading policy, musical objectives, rehearsal concert procedures, supply lists and the comprehensive calendar of music events at Westland and in MCPS for this year.



Choral Music Objectives

The student should be able to:

1. Follow classroom rehearsal procedures and respect the property of others.
2. Meet individual responsibilities for care and preventive maintenance of a musical instrument.
3. Follow concert procedures and meet performance obligations on the school music calendar.
4. Demonstrate mastery of musical skills and concepts outlined in the National Standards for Music Education.
5. Read and perform appropriate MENC (Music Educator's National Conference) grade level music.
6. Sight-read appropriate MENC grade level music.

(From MCPS Program of Studies, Instrumental Music, Grades 6-8, p.2)

PLEASE NOTE:

The exceptional musical ability of some of our students does not give any student the right to misbehave and does not guarantee their right to perform at our concerts. Our choirs are a joint effort and a sum of all of our talents; each student must lend his/her talents equally and appropriately.

Classroom Rehearsal Procedures

The student will:

1. Arrive to class on time, listen, and be respectful of others.
2. Be prepared for class with a folder, music, pencil, and necessary supplies
3. Raise his/her hand to be recognized to ask a question and not talk when others are talking or playing.
4. **Do not chew gum**, candy, food or drinks in the music room during class or performances.
5. Be supportive of classmates, never criticizing another individual's performance.

It is certainly expected that all students are quiet and respectful so that rehearsals can proceed concretely. Any student who grossly misbehaves or is disrespectful to me or any other student in the classroom will be asked to leave immediately and may not return to class that day. Administrative actions will follow.

KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPLICATION

It is expected and necessary that all students learn their music and are able to perform it without music at all concerts and adjudications. Our groups are extremely talented and competent, and the level of music is not easy for any group. However, it is fun and we all enjoy what we sing and what we accomplish together! As all of us know well, a group is only as strong as its weakest link; it is imperative that all students know their music well so that we can blend and balance the voices, and so that all students "carry their own weight" in each ensemble.

I will hold a Vocal part test after each piece is taught, in which each student will have to sing their part in an octet. This insures that each member knows his/her part and is a responsible member of our ensemble. There will also be regular Assessment checks of all of our students throughout the course of rehearsals. This will address musical concepts such as posture, breath support, diction, pitch style and finally memorization. This will ensure that the students are aware of what they know or need to learn on a regular basis, and should help them in the learning process.

I will hold several after-school sessions to teach any student to read music who is unable to do so. Reading music is the singularly best help a student can give him/herself in learning the music. I strongly encourage any student who cannot read music to attend as many of these sessions as possible. They will be held after school in the early fall, with specific dates to be announced.

In addition, I am asking the Concert Choir students to complete two Choral Analysis papers - one each for the fall and adjudication repertoire in which they must assess and comment on the songs that we all sing. This gives them an opportunity to fully understand the music that we all perform. They will have a minimum of three weeks to complete this. Failure to do this assignment will result in a drop of a letter grade that quarter. Throughout the course of the year, the students will also complete ongoing process and product journals, as explained below.

GRADING

Westland Middle School

Grading Policy for the Performing Arts

(Includes Art, Computer Technology, Instrumental Music, Vocal Music Technology Education, and TV Production)

Overview: The goal of grading and reporting is to provide you with feedback that reflects your achievement towards the mastery of the MCPS Performing Arts curriculum performance indicators.

Grading Policy:

There will be a variety of types of assignments and assessments:

⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨
Practice	Formative Assessments	Summative Assessments			
For practice. Examples: homework, class work, partnered or individual work, oral or written work	To assess progress. Examples: class work, rehearsal procedures, homework for mastery, practice cards, quiz, written or oral presentations	To assess mastery. Examples: unit test, project, oral presentation, culminating activity or culminating performance			
Reported as a learning skill and as part of the report card grade	On grade sheets reported as points/percentages. On report cards reported as an A, B, C, D, or E.	On grade sheets reported as points/percentages. On report cards reported as an A, B, C, D, or E.			
Graded as 10% of marking period grade	Together with summative assessments 90% of grade	Together with formative assessments 90% of grade			
Given as helpful feedback. Examples: checking for accuracy, re-explanation, modeling, demonstration, comments, providing exemplars, teacher/student conference, ratings on rubrics	Given as interim assessment of students' mastery & to provide helpful feedback. Examples: checking for accuracy, re-explanation, modeling, demonstration, comments, providing exemplars, teacher/student conference, ratings on rubrics	Assessed as a mastery activity			

Overall:

Grades will reflect individual achievement of the MCPS performance indicators for each marking period

Learning skills:

Will be divided into two categories

1. **Participation** –engaging in learning of the performance skills, asking questions, using feedback
2. **Assignment completion** – completing homework and class work.

Both categories will use the following codes:

- C – Consistently**
- O – Often**
- S – Sometimes**
- R – Rarely**
- NI – Not enough information**

Homework Policy / Re-assessment Policy: The homework policy and the re-assessment policy will be provided to each student by the teacher. Homework assignments will be posted in the classroom and posted on the Homework Board regularly. The teacher will announce which assessments will be eligible for re-assessment and the procedures to be followed by students prior to scheduled re-assessments.

Late and missing work:

- Each assignment will have a **due date**. This is the date by which you are expected to submit the assignment. The grade will drop one letter grade if it is not turned in by the due date.
- The **deadline** is the last day an assignment will be accepted for a grade. In some cases, the due date and the deadline may be the same. Work not turned in by the deadline will be considered missing. Missing work will be recorded in the grade book as 0%.

Re-assessment of student work:

- Some formative assessments **may** be re-assessed to provide an additional opportunity for students to show mastery. The following requirements must be met prior to scheduled reassessment:
 - complete the original task or assessment
 - complete required assignments
 - complete re-teaching / re-learning activities as determined by the teacher
- The original student work must accompany the revised work in order to be graded.
- End of unit assessments **may not be retaken.**

Extra credit: MCPS grading policy does not allow extra credit; however, students may have opportunities to earn additional points by successfully completing extension questions or activities on some assessments.

Group work: Your grades will reflect your individual achievement, even when you are working in groups.

While I certainly think that all students should earn an A each quarter, the following is a rubric for each grade area:

A - Those who are focused, attentive, and not talking during rehearsals. They show commitment to and respect for the group by learning their parts and allowing others to do the same. They are consistently high on their assessment charts.

B - Those who, although they realize the necessity of attention and focus, talk through parts of rehearsals and, therefore, do not learn their parts. At times, they inhibit the learning process of the group. They are mostly on task on their assessment charts.

C - Those who talk repeatedly through rehearsals, do not stand on risers or be seated in voice parts as required, force breaks in rehearsals by not being attentive and ready to sing, and do not know their voice parts, since they do not listen to instructions. The inconsistency on their assessment charts is due to their lack of attention in class.

D - Those who, in addition to not being attentive and respectful, show a poor attitude toward the group and any directions given, as though they were above those instructions. This should not be the case for any of our Choral members!

Late/truancy policy is as follows:

Students are expected in each class on time. It is extremely disruptive to the class in session when students enter late. We need our entire rehearsal times to accomplish our goals and to learn our music. **Our tardy policy will reflect the new school-wide tardy policy as follows:**

- Tardy slips will be issued when the student comes to class.
- All tardy students will be given administrative detention on the next Tuesday or Thursday after the infraction from 2:45 – 4:00 PM.

Truancy will not be tolerated for any reason. If a student cuts class, he/she will receive a "Zero" for that day, and administration action will follow.

It is certainly expected that all students are quiet and respectful so that rehearsals can proceed concretely. Any student who grossly misbehaves or is disrespectful to me or any other student in the classroom will be asked to leave immediately and may not return to class that day.

Administrative actions will follow.

GRADES WILL BE COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. Bi-weekly reflective and evaluation journals – process
2. Knowledge and application journals – product
3. Choral Analysis of Music– Both product and process
4. Attendance at concerts and rehearsals
5. Assessments on vocal part tests after each piece is taught

REHEARSALS and CONCERTS

This part of the grade is fairly simple. Concerts and adjudications are MANDATORY! The student is to be on time and dressed in concert dress attire. This is the culmination of all our hard work together, and it is crucial that all students are contributing members of our performing ensemble, as well. And--that's the fun "Pay-off" of all of their hard labors.

Concerts are expected! In addition, each student will be expected to attend the few after school rehearsals that we DO have, so that he/she may help the group to achieve maximum effectiveness. I will always schedule these on days when there are activity buses

CLASSROOM REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

Each student is expected to:

- * Arrive to class before the late bell rings, and have his/her music out.
- * Be standing on the risers after the late bell rings, as instructed daily, ready for choral warm-ups.
- * Be prepared for class with a pencil, music, and a folder in which to keep his/her music neatly. This is crucial for the learning process.
- * Understand that gum, candy, and food are not permitted in the choral music room at any time. A check-minus will be issued if a student has gum.
- * Respect all music, keep it neatly, and return it when the concerts are over. A face-value fee will be charged for any music lost or ruined at the end of each concert cycle. These are treated as financial obligations, and report cards will be held.
- * Remain attentive, and not talk through instructions. When I am not working with a section, each student is expected to remain quiet so that others can learn their music. He/she may bring a book or homework assignment on which to work quietly during sectional rehearsals.
- * Listen carefully to his/her own voice and its balance within the group.

CONCERT PROCEDURES

* Concert attendance is mandatory. Family vacations, sports events, lack of transportation, etc. are not considered legitimate reasons for missing events. **Arrangements can be made if a ride is not available.** Please check your calendar carefully for all concert dates and times.

* Appropriate concert dress is required. A student who does not wear the proper concert dress will not be permitted to participate.

CONCERT CHOIR MEN:

White long-sleeved collared shirt, black dress slacks, (no jeans!), dark socks, dark dress shoes (no sneakers).

CONCERT CHOIR WOMEN:

White long-sleeved collared blouse, **black ankle-length skirt**, black stockings, and black dress shoes (again, no sneakers).

CHORUS MEMBERS:

White long-sleeved turtle-necked shirts, black pants for men and **ankle-length skirts** for women, black socks or tights, and black shoes.

ALL GROUPS:

All choir members will be given ties and cummerbunds or suspenders before each concert. They are responsible for returning them to me or a designated parent after each concert event. Each concert choir student will be measured for a waist measurement in class so that I may order the proper sized cummerbund in time for our Winter Concert.

* Arrival call times will be approximately 30-45 minutes prior to the concert. Students should arrive dressed, only needing cummerbunds and ties so that we may warm-up properly.

* During all concerts, students are expected to be respectful of all performing groups, act in a quiet and professional manner, and remain until the end of the concert in support of all our choral groups.

Students are reminded that concerts are fun! He/she should look forward to the culmination of all of our work together, and should encourage their friends and family to come. Parents are certainly encouraged to come! Our groups are outstanding! Please come see your kids!

Please read both parts of this final page, detach, and have your child return it to me no later than October 1st. Thanks so much for you help and co-operation!

MUSIC BOOSTERS CLUB

I would like to become a part of this group, and I would be willing to help in the following ways:
(please check)

Bake Sales before concerts (8) _____

Car Washes (5)_____

Fruit Sales or pick-up (12) _____

Festival trips chaperone (6)_____

Phone calls as needed _____

Concert Chaperone as needed _____

Pizza Sales _____

Please note: The number in parentheses behind each item is the approximate number that we feel we need to help at each event. If each of us can give just a portion of this time, then each of these fundraisers will run smoothly. The added benefit is getting to know other parents and working together with your child for the benefit of our program.

Parent's name: _____

Phone number: (W)_____ (H)_____

Student's name: _____ Grade _____

I have read this handbook and understand my commitment to this group. I will abide by the rules so that we may all maximize the fun and ability of this group.

Student Signature- _____

Parent Signature- _____

Home Phone Number - _____

This is due to Ms. Serratore by October 1st.

Choral Contract

Purpose-

- 1) To identify rules.
- 2) To make certain that people learn their music.
- 3) To ensure respect for all students and directors.

Guidelines-

- 1) Please leave your gum at home.
- 2) Be on time.
- 3) Come prepared to class with all your supplies (includes music folder and a pencil).
- 4) Please stay quiet and pay attention in rehearsal.
- 5) Do not write notes to other students during class.
- 6) Only use your own water bottle to prevent illness.
- 7) Keep away from the heaters.
- 8) During the first minute get music.
- 9) Please leave your food out of class.
- 10) The right to play all instruments, including the piano, must be earned.
- 11) Keep your own music in order and do not share with others.
- 12) Ask questions if you do not understand.
- 13) Work hard, play hard.
- 14) Always try your hardest and do your best
- 15) Keep the room clean and pick up all trash, especially your own.
- 16) If you lose your sheet music, you must pay for it.
- 17) Please respect all people in the class.
- 18) Concerts are mandatory and part of your grade – a two letter grade drop is the penalty.

Penalties for rules not followed will be as follows

- 1) Teacher will speak to student and issue a warning.
- 2) Have the student sit down on the risers, away from the class.
- 3) Have student leave the class and proceed to the main office.
- 4) Call Parents.
- 5) Drop one letter grade.