## Highland Park High School Choral Department Handbook



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Dear Choral Students and Families:

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! I am so glad to have all of you as part of the Choir family at Highland Park High School, and hope that you are as excited as I am to make some wonderful music this year. Of course, this school year is starting a little bit differently than any other in the past, but regardless, I am looking forward to getting to know you and working with you through the course of this year.

In this handbook, you will find important information that pertains to all of the choirs. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Performance and Event Dates
- Classroom Procedures, Grading, and Attendance
- Performance Attire
- Honors Credit ILMEA auditions and festivals
- Private Voice Lessons

We will read through much of the most important information in class, but please be sure to read through all of the information - particularly event dates and recordings with your parents/guardians at home, so that those get onto your family calendars. There is a signature page at the back of the handbook which you and your parents/ guardians must sign, then return to me by Friday, August 26, 2022 to ensure that you have read through the handbook, and are aware of all the information it contains.

Again, I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and the rest of the HPHS choir students this year, and anticipate a wonderful year together.

Sincerely Yours,


Mr. Alumbreros
Choral Director

## Choral Program Philosophy

The Highland Park High School Choral Program offers a unique educational experience whose aim is to teach students students not only learn about musical skills (such as music literacy, music history and how it relates to the times in which we live, expression, and vocal technique), but also about non-musical skills (such as discipline, time management, self-confidence, and camaraderie). Music is an essential part of the human experience, and is something that can be enjoyed by anyone for a lifetime.

Students will learn about music from a variety of countries, cultures, and time periods, and about how it can connect to other areas of their lives. Though performances are the most obvious means of sharing what is done in rehearsal, the rehearsal process is where the majority of the musical and non-musical skills are learned. Investing fully and trusting in the rehearsal process will help to ensure that all students are able to receive the best music education possible.

## Program Expectations

I expect that you will...

- Be on time for all HPHS choir events, including rehearsals, performances, and meetings.
- Be responsible members of the HPHS Choral Department by bringing your music, a pencil, and a good attitude to every rehearsal, as well as developing good rehearsal habits.
- Respect the choir room and all materials, instruments, and equipment inside it.
- Do not destroy or deface music, folders, or other materials given to you.
- Do not touch the piano or other instruments unless given permission by the director.
- Show respect for the director, accompanist, and any other teachers or visitors in the room.
- Show respect for your classmates at all times.
- Complete all assignments on time and to the best of your ability.
- Abstain from chewing gum, eating, or drinking during rehearsal or a performance, unless permission is given by the director.
- Refrain from behaviors and activities that could compromise your vocal health, as well as your overall health.
- Take pride in who you are, and what you are able to contribute to your ensemble(s).
- Remember that your actions reflect on the HPHS Choral Program, Highland Park High School, District 113 , and our community.


## Grading Policy

The HPHS Choral Department grading policy holds students accountable for all that is learned in class. Although choir is a performance-based class, a richer music education can be gained from learning about all facets of music and choral singing. Your grade will be determined using the following categories:

## Rehearsal Skills - 25\%

Development of students' musical abilities requires them to fully engage in specific practices and form productive habits during rehearsals. These practices and habits are as follows:

- Engage in all class activities at all times, physically and mentally, whether in person or virtually.
- Explore music fully through the rehearsal process.
- Be on time for all rehearsals
- Have your folder, music and a pencil at all rehearsals
- Complete a focused and energized warm-up
- Concentrate and connect throughout the rehearsal
- Embrace authentic collaboration.
- Honor the ideas and efforts of others
- Listen actively to the director, other students and sections
- Respect the role of the director
- Understand how to accept healthy criticism and use it as part of the learning process
- Evolve as an individual, artist, and student
- Demonstrate vocal growth by applying proper vocal technique across all genres of music
- Demonstrate improved musicianship through focused attention to musical elements (pitch, rhythm, intonation, diction and expressive qualities)
- Use musical vocabulary effectively to express ideas
- Understand, interpret and apply techniques to create interesting, dynamic performances
- Use expressive qualities (phrasing, dynamics, rubato, etc.) to enhance your performance
- Master musical elements (pitch, rhythm, intonation, diction and expressive qualities) to present the most artistic performances


## Performance - 30\%

Performances (as well as dress rehearsals for those performances) are the way that we share the work that we have done with an audience. All major concerts (Showcase, All-City, Winter Concert, and Spring Concert) are required for all choir members. For Honors participants, your recital is part of this category. Your Performance grade is based on the following:

- Were you in the choir room or on stage at the call time?
- Did you demonstrate proper etiquette as an audience member?
- Did you demonstrate proper etiquette on stage?
- Did you show engagement and knowledge of your music during your performance?
- Did you accurately, and expressively perform your solo pieces? (Honors participants only)


## Written Work - 20\%

While practice and performance of music is the main goal of this class, occasional written assignments will help to solidify understanding of musical concepts that you will be learning in your music. Written assignments can include things such as:

- Concert reviews
- Listening Reflections
- Music Theory Worksheets
- Lyric memorization quizzes
- Repertoire exploration worksheets
- Recital Program Notes (Honors participants only)


## Musicianship Evaluations-25\%

Evaluation of your progress is key in helping you build your musical and vocal skill. At least once a quarter, you will perform for me alone, or in small groups. These performances will sometimes be live, and sometimes they will involve you recording yourself using an electronic device such as your phone or your Chromebook. Evaluations can consist of the following:

- Vocal Warm Ups/Vocalises
- Repertoire testing
- Sight-Singing (on Sight Reading Factory)
- Mock ILMEA auditions (Honors participants only)


## Honors Program

Students in Treble Ensemble or Chorale may choose the honors option each semester. During the first few weeks of each semester, students may apply to participate in the Honors program. By choosing to participate, students receive an extra Honor Point on their report cards (e.g., an A is worth 5.00 instead of 4.00).

During 1st semester, the student prepares and performs a mock ILMEA audition and also potentially auditions for ILMEA, singing his/her part in two choral pieces provided by the director, sight-singing, singing scales and triads. The student also prepares 2 solo pieces for the Honors Recital.

During 2nd semester, Honors participants perform at the IHSA Solo \& Ensemble Contest, and also perform two solo pieces for the Honors Recital. Responsibility falls on students to select and prepare developmentally appropriate music with the assistance of their private voice instructors.

As noted above, the work done as part of Honors Program participation will fall under the Performance, Written Work, and Musicianship Evaluations categories. If you are looking to challenge yourself, and are confident in your ability to be able to work independently on music, consider participating in Honors!

## Attendance Policy

## Class

Authorized Absences: Situations constituting authorized absences are outlined in the student handbook, as well as on the Attendance and Deans website (https://www.dist113.org/domain/182). It is the student's responsibility to make up any assignments missed during class, whether in-person or virtually.

Unauthorized Absences: Any circumstance that does not constitute an authorized absence is an unauthorized absence. An unauthorized absence on the day of a test, quiz or other assignment will result in a grade of zero.

Tardies are accepted with a pass/email from a teacher. Students should be in their assigned seats with folders and pencils (or in the virtual meeting by the scheduled start time of the class period/ meeting). Every minute of rehearsal time is important, and every student is a necessary and important member of our ensemble, thus we need all students for the entire class period.

## Concerts

Choir is a performance-based class. Therefore, attendance and participation at major concerts is required. The concert environment can be likened to a unit exam, except that the concert environment cannot be replicated in the classroom. The presence of each member is crucial to the success of each ensemble at performances. Students should make every effort to be in class on the day of a concert. Regularly scheduled voice lessons and field trips are exceptions. Please do not schedule appointments on concert days. All concert dates are on the Choral Calendar provided on pages 14-16.

Excused absences: If a student must miss a required performance for a legitimate reason (as determined by the choir director), the director must be notified (by written note, email or phone) as far in advance of the concert as possible. Such notice is necessary for the absence to be considered excused, and therefore, capable of being made up. In cases of last minute illness or emergency, a follow-up note, e-mail, or call by the parent will be sufficient to excuse the absence.

Excused absences may be made up by making an out-of-class appointment with the director. The student will be asked to sing some or all of the concert music from memory. The grade will be based upon the student's individual performance. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment and complete the make-up prior to the end of the quarter.

Unexcused absences (examples: sports, work, vacation, no ride, tickets to concert/show/sporting event, or extra-curricular activities) cannot be made up. Please be diligent in looking at your family schedules, as well as schedules for any other activities in which you are involved to identify and resolve time conflicts as soon as possible.

## Concert Attire

## Concert Choir, Treble Ensemble, and Chorale

Concert attire is the same for all members of the above ensembles. Although robes will usually be worn over this attire, it is important to think of concerts as a time to dress formally.
Black dress slacks, no jeans
Black socks
Black dress shoes, no tennis shoes, open-toed shoes, sandals, or flip-flops
Black dress shirt or blouse

## No obtrusive jewelry or hair accessories

## No perfume or cologne

Choir Robes for the above ensembles will be assigned in the fall, according to students' height. They have been professionally cleaned, pressed, and mended. Students are expected to maintain the robes in this condition and will be held financially responsible for any damaged or lost robes or stoles.

## Swing Choir

At the beginning of the year, Swing Choir will discuss in class the outfits that will be worn for performances.

## MadCap

MadCap will discuss the outfits that will be worn for its performance at the beginning of its rehearsal cycle in September.

## Classroom Materials

All students in Concert Choir, Treble Ensemble, and Chorale are assigned a number that corresponds to the folder and music that they will use all year. Swing Choir and MadCap will provide their own black 1" 3-ring binder. The folder and its contents are essentially the textbook that we use for choir, and are the student's responsibility. Lost or destroyed music or folders will result in a fine. In general, the current price for each piece of music can range from $\$ 1.50-5.00$, and each folder costs $\$ 13.00$ to replace.

Folio cabinet slots are provided for storage of folders in the chorus room. Students are encouraged to take their folders and music home to practice. If you choose to leave your folder in the choir room, please make sure your folder is in its correct slot with the number facing out. If you take your music home at any point, please remember to bring it to school with you, as part of your Aesthetic Discipline grade is having your folder, music, and a pencil with you during your choir period.

## Repertoire Selection

It is every music educator's job to provide a comprehensive music education for all students. To this end, the HPHS choirs will be singing a variety of music, from Renaissance to Romantic to Jazz to Popular. It is likely that some of this music will be sacred in nature, due to the history and development of choral music.

The National Association for Music Education, NAfME has authored a statement entitled Sacred Music in Schools. In this document, the organization offers the following guidelines with regard to the programming of sacred music:

With this volatile topic, music educators should exercise caution and good judgment in selecting sacred music for study and programming for public performances. During the planning phase of each program, the following questions should assist the teacher in determining if the program is, indeed, religiously neutral:

1. Is the music selected on the basis of its musical an educational value rather than its religious context?
2. Does the teaching of music with sacred text focus on musical and artistic considerations?
3. Are the traditions of different people shared and respected?
4. Is the role of sacred music one of neutrality, neither promoting or inhibiting religious views?
5. Are all local and school policies regarding religious holidays and the use of sacred music observed?
6. Is the use of sacred music and religious symbols or scenery avoided? Is performance in devotional settings avoided?
7. Is there sensitivity to the various religious beliefs represented by the students and parents?

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) has also crafted a statement entitled Study of Music from a Sacred Tradition in the Public Schools, in which the following statement is made:

Problems of misunderstanding and intent seem to arise most frequently with solo songs and choral compositions which have a sacred text. While public school teaching objectives and criteria for repertoire selection should not include religious indoctrination, the selection of quality repertoire will invariably include, within its broad scope, music with a sacred text. To exclude from a public school curriculum all choral music which has a religious meaning associated with the text is to limit severely the possibilities of teaching for artistic understanding and responsiveness.

This subject is, no doubt, one that is very important to many, and as the director of the HPHS choirs, I will work diligently to be respectful and inclusive of all students. Please feel free to contact me with any comments or concerns you may have.

## Choir Executive Board

The Choir Executive Board is formed by officers from each of the choirs. They will meet as needed before and/or after school to perform some of their duties, but most responsibilities will be fulfilled during class. Their jobs include planning the banquet, robe and music distribution, daily attendance, communication, website updates, helping with fundraisers, and planning choir social events, among other things. This year's representatives are as follows:

| President | Griffin Kelly |
| :--- | :--- |
| Vice President | Alexie Stetson Zejer |
| Social Media Manager | Nate Wehner |
| Social Chair | Lexi Plonsker |

## Fundraising Opportunities

The HPHS Choral Program provides a few opportunities every school year to support both choral program needs, as well as individual accounts that can be used for things such as performance tours, the end-of-year Choir Banquet. During tour years, fundraising efforts tend to occur toward the beginning of the school year in order to help families meet deadlines with tour payments. Some of the raised funds will go into a general fund to support choral program needs, and some will be deposited into individual accounts, which can be used for things such as performance tours, voice lessons, and the end-of-year Choir Banquet. Prior to each fundraiser, it will be made clear as to whether the raised funds are for the general account or for individual student accounts.

## Choir Banquet

The annual banquet is organized and run by the Choir Executive Board. This is an event whose aim is to bring together the entire HPHS choir family to celebrate and honor all of the accomplishments of choir members. The cost is usually around $\$ 20$ per person, and parents/siblings of seniors are invited to attend. This school year, the Choir Banquet will be held on Thursday, May 25th.

## Private Voice Lessons

Private voice lessons are available to students enrolled in any of the HPHS choirs and take place during free periods, lunch, or after school. All students are encouraged to study privately in order to see the largest amount of growth possible. The teachers have been selected because they are highly qualified professionals.

Students will have an opportunity to meet all two of our voice teachers on Monday, August 23th during their class meetings. We will also hold an evening meeting on Tuesday 24th at 7pm, during which parents/guardians can meet the teachers, and ask any questions they may have about private voice lessons. An application for voice lessons, as well as for need- based scholarships through our parent group Crescendo can be found on the Choir website.

## HPHS Private Voice Staff

Mr. Ace Gangoso ace.gangoso@gmail.com
Ms. Cynthia Mace cmace@dist113.org

## OBJECTIVE

The private teaching program at HPHS is designed to enhance the student's vocal experience. Having an opportunity to work with a student individually gives the teacher a chance to develop vocal production and solve vocal problems that may not be readily apparent in a large choral rehearsal. Teachers focus on such things as vocal production, musicality, repertoire, level-appropriate music theory, and can also help with preparation for ILMEA auditions/festivals, as well as Honors recitals and IHSA Solo/Ensemble contest.

## FEES

The private voice staff at HPHS will charge $\$ 30$ per half hour lesson. Teachers may have specific guidelines for payment, which may include monthly or semester options. In general, payment is expected prior to the actual lessons. Cash or check is acceptable; checks should be made payable to the private teacher.

## CANCELLATION

The lesson time that the student and teacher schedule is contracted time, and private teachers depend upon the income from lessons for their livelihood. If a student will be absent from school on a lesson day, please call/e-mail the teacher by 6:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled lesson. If an emergency arises, call/e-mail the teacher at home between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. on the day of the lesson. If the teacher is not notified in one of these ways, the student will be charged the full lesson fee. Please understand that this policy is the only fair way to accommodate both students and teachers.

## GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING PRIVATE VOICE LESSONS

- No lessons will be given during finals weeks.
- If a scheduled lesson day is an HPHS vacation day, attempts will be made by the teacher to reschedule the lesson. If the lesson is not rescheduled, the student does not pay for the lesson.
- Lessons begin in September and end in June. Students should plan to make a year-long commitment to voice lessons.
- Students should bring a recording device (e.g., phone or digital recorder) and a notebook to each lesson. Exercises and accompaniments will be recorded to aid the student's practice sessions. Exercises and suggestions for improvement may be written in the notebook.
- Students may be asked to purchase music books.
- Daily practice is necessary for improvement.
- Occasionally, our teachers - who are all professional singers - will need to reschedule a lesson due to a performance conflict. When that happens, the teacher will contact the student to reschedule the lesson.


## Auditions

Each year, auditions are held for various reasons, including solos, membership in MadCap or Swing Choir, and the annual musical theatre production. Students are always encouraged to audition, as going through the process helps them learn about appropriate audition etiquette, as well as learning how to cope with nerves. It is important to remember that those selected have earned a spot that many other students wanted, and that for every person who got what they wanted, there are many others who did not. Learning how to navigate being on both sides of this coin is an important lesson in the fine arts. Behave respectfully and with dignity, regardless of how the audition turned out for you personally.

Please always remember that part of auditioning is learning to deal with rejection. Before auditioning, assess your ability to handle possible rejection. If you are unsure that you will be able to deal with an outcome that is not ideal, then consider carefully whether you are truly ready to go through the process. Seniority and/or previous experience may improve your chances of auditioning well, but success is never guaranteed. There are no guarantees, especially in a school full of very talented, hardworking individuals who want to see their name on a cast list, solo list, or class list. If you have not yet developed the maturity to handle these situations, relax and enjoy being a member of your large choir. Find joy in music and friendships with musicians, rather than searching for joy in the spotlight. Myriad successful artists have heard many many "no's" before hearing the "yes" that may have launched their careers.

Attempts will always be made to post audition results at a time that allows you an evening or weekend to deal with your situation before returning to school ready to move past whatever the result may have been. We ask parents to help students with the growth experience of learning to deal with rejection in a dignified way.

## Performance Tours

Traditionally, HPHS choir members have the opportunity to tour either domestically or internationally every other year. Tours are designed to provide special performance opportunities as well as workshops and masterclasses with renowned musicians. When an overseas or expensive tour is planned, every attempt will be made to allow adequate time for families to raise the funds to participate. Tours are not required, but we hope that every eligible student will choose to participate. Due to the uncertainty with COVID, the 2022-2023 school year will remain as a non-touring year for the HPHS Choir Program.

Tour destinations in the past 10 years have included:
2017-2018 Spain
2015-2016 Greece
2013-2014 Italy
2010-2011 London/Paris

## Crescendo

Crescendo is a group that supports the HPHS Choir Program and its students in many ways. The money donated to this organization goes toward assisting students with things such as private lesson scholarships, tour scholarships, as well as other choir program needs.

There are many ways in which Crescendo families can help the choir program. These include things including (but not limited to):

- Bakers (for potential bake sale fundraisers)
- Those with sewing skills (to help mend and possibly hem choir robes)
- Helping with various fundraisers (e.g., Car Wash, Bake Sales, etc.)

More information about Crescendo needs and volunteer opportunities will be coming at a later date. Any support you are able to give goes a long way in supporting your students in choir!

If you are interested in donating to Crescendo to help support the HPHS Choir Program and its students, please fill out the form below. The HPHS Choir Program, Director, and Students are grateful for your help.

Please return the completed form and check (made out to HPHS Crescendo) to Mr. Alumbreros,

## HPHS Crescendo Donation Form

Donation Level: (Check one)
$\square$ Benefactor \$200+ $\square$ - $\quad$ Friend $\$ 25 \quad \square$ Patron $\$ 50$

Name
(Please indicate how you would like your name or family name to appear in future concert programs)

E-mail address
(This will only be used for communication about volunteer opportunities during upcoming events.

## HPHS Choir Calendar

August - December 2022

| Date | Time | Event | Location | Notes |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| August 16 | After 8:00 am | MadCap audition <br> music/information available <br> https://forms.gle/7o <br> A5u2XPChSUzi5v9 | Open to all students in <br> Choir/Band/Orchestra |  |
| August 22-26 | During Class | Voice Lesson sign-up | Google Sheet | Open to all choir <br> students |
| August 23 | $3: 15$ PM | MadCap Auditions | Choir Room | Open to all students in <br> Choir/Band/Orchestra |
| August 24 | 7:00 PM | Parents meeting | Choir Room | All Choir students <br> welcome! |
| August 26 | by 3:00 pm | Form | Turn in Signature Sheet (last | Schoology |


| November 29 | 7:00 PM | All-City Choir Concert (with <br> Northwood and Edgewood) | Auditorium | Call Time - 5:30 pm <br> REQUIRED for all <br> choirs. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| December - Date <br> TBD | After school | Field Trip to Senior Homes | TBD | Swing / MadCap |
| December 8 | $3: 15 \mathrm{pm}-5: 00 \mathrm{pm}$ | Honors Voice Recital Rehearsal | Choir Room | Honors students |
| December 8 | $5: 30 \mathrm{pm}-7: 00 \mathrm{pm}$ | Honors Voice Recital | Choir Room | Honors students |
| December 9 | Time TBD | MadCap Hot Cocoa Friday | Cafeteria | MadCap |
| December 10 | $5: 00 \mathrm{pm}-8: 00 \mathrm{pm}$ | MadCap Restaurant Tour | Highland Park/ <br> Highwood <br> Restaurants | 8th graders invited |

Events in bold typeface are required for all students (unless otherwise indicated). Please be sure that these events are in your calendar, as well as your family calendar, in order to avoid any possible conflicts

## January - June 2023

| Date | Time | Event | Location | Notes |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| January 13 | by 3:00 pm | Turn in Honors Contract Google Form | Google Sheet | Honors Students |
| January 20 | Periods TBA | Charity Drive Opening | Auditorium | Chorale or Swing Choir performance |
| January 27 | by 3:00 pm | Enter the information about the pieces you will be singing for the IHSA Solo \& Ensemble | Google Sheet | Open to all choir students, required for Honors |
| January 26-28 | All Day | Illinois Music Education Conference | Peoria, IL | Students selected for All State Ensembles or FMES |
| Last week of January | TBD | Swing/Treble/Chorale Auditions | Choir Room | Open to all choir students |
| Last week of January | TBD | Swing/Concert Choir/Treble Auditions | Northwood / Edgewood | Open to all 8th grade students |
| February 16-18 | 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm | Musical | Auditorium |  |
| February 25 | All Day | International Competition of High School A Cappella (ICHSA) | Fine Arts Department | All hands on deck! |
| March 4 | All Day | IHSA Solo \& Ensemble | Fine Arts Department | Open to all choir students, required for Honors |
| March 21 | 7:00 PM | Choir Concert | Auditorium | Call time 6:15 pm REQUIRED for all choirs |
| April 11 | by 3:00 pm | Enter the information about the pieces you will be singing for the Spring Honors Voice Recital | Google Sheet | Honors Students |
| April 17-19 | TBD | Focus on the Arts | TBD |  |
| April 25 | 3:15 pm - 5:00 pm | Honors Voice Recital Rehearsal | Choir Room | Honors students |
| April 25 | 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm | Honors Voice Recital | Choir Room | Honors students |
| May 3 | 3:15 pm - 5:00 pm | Spring Concert Spotlight Feature auditions | Choir Room | Open to all choir students |
| May 15 | 7:00 PM | Spring Choir Concert | Auditorium | Call time 6:15 pm REQUIRED for all choirs |
| May 23 | 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm | Graduation | Ravinia Park | Chorale only |
| May 25 | 6:00 PM | Choir Banquet | Buffo's | All choir students, as well as senior families, are welcome to attend |

Events in bold typeface are required for all students (unless otherwise indicated). Please be sure that these events are in your calendar, as well as your family calendar, in order to avoid any possible conflicts.

## Handbook Information Acknowledgement Page

Please return this page to Mr. Alumbreros by your choir meeting time on Friday, August 26th. Students and Parents/Guardians, your signature below indicates the following:

- We have had a chance to review the information in the Choral Handbook and are aware of the required events (in bold on the calendar).
- We understand that concert dates and dress rehearsals are mandatory, and that failure to attend mandatory events can affect grades.
- We consent to have recordings or pictures of students shared on any HPHS/D113 promotional mediums including: printed publications, social media, and digital platforms.
- We understand that materials loaned to students, including choir robes, choir folders, sheet music, etc. are the responsibility of the student, and if not returned, can incur a fine equal to the cost of replacement.

Student Name

Student Signature

Guardian Name

Guardian Signature

Best phone number to reach guardian

Best e-mail address to reach guardian

Thank you for taking the time to read through the information in this handbook.
I look forward to a wonderful year in the HPHS Choir Program with you!

