



C. W. DAVIS MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2019 – 2020

As the director, let me tell you how excited I am to have you join my family. The chorus at DMS has set a standard of excellence that is admired by many schools in the surrounding area, and not just Hall County. Few choral programs – especially at the middle school level – have achieved the level of performance as the chorus at DMS. I am proud to have the opportunity to continue that tradition.

Many chorus students discover that being in a choral group is like having an extended family, as there is a special bond that is created among people who make music together. I hope that you will remain in chorus your entire middle school career. Also, parents are welcome to assist in chorus activities and events. I want to encourage each parent or guardian to be involved with the program in some way.

Students who are involved in the chorus program should be aware that being a member of chorus is different from being in any other class. We Perform. That being the case, your work is evaluated on two levels - the *process* (rehearsal or class time) and the *product* (performance). As we grow together in our rehearsal *process* remember that having a safe and supportive learning environment is our goal as we prepare the *product*—a wonderful performance for an appreciative audience.

Thank you for your dedication. I consider it an honor to lead students to discover their talent and the enjoyment of singing. Most information will be on the Chorus website, so from time-to-time, please check and see if I have posted anything new. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact me via e-mail, preferably, or call. I am looking forward to a great year!

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PURPOSE

The purpose of middle school chorus is to teach students music through vocal performance by learning the basic fundamentals of singing and music literacy. Each student should gain a lifelong interest in singing and an appreciation of music as an art form. Singing in choir also helps improve mental discipline and enhance social interaction. Teamwork and pride is developed through chorus.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Each student's skill, enjoyment and understanding of vocal music will be enhanced through active involvement in a singing ensemble. Guided by the Georgia Performance Standards, each of the following elements is taught on a daily basis and skills are built through continued practice.

1. Correct Vocal Skills
 - A. Pitch
 - B. Breath Support
 - C. Posture
 - D. Diction
2. Interpretation of the printed musical score
 - A. Pitch
 - B. Rhythm
 - C. Expressive Qualities
 - D. Musical Symbols
3. Recognition and performance of various styles of music
 - A. Historical Periods
 - B. Jazz, Rock, Pop, and folk
 - C. Music from other cultures
4. Sight Singing Skills
 - A. Reading steps and skips
 - B. Reading notes and rests

PERFORMING ENSEMBLES

There are 3 performing groups at DMS. All boys will be placed into the same class at their grade level so they can be better assisted through the voice change process.

6th Grade Choir

The Treble Choir is composed of all 6th graders. They perform Unison and 2-part music.

7th Grade Choir

The 7th Grade Choir is composed of all students in the 7th grade classes. They perform 3-part music, and typically the boys have their own part to sing.

8th Grade Choir

The 8th Grade Choir is composed of 8th grade classes. They will perform 3-part music and boys will typically have their own part to sing.

CHORUS UNIFORM

In chorus, we work together as a team, and just like any other team we have to dress the same in order to be taken seriously and look professional.

- GIRLS
 - ✓ Black pants, Black blouse with $\frac{3}{4}$ or full length sleeves, or black floor-length $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve dress
 - ✓ Black panty hose or knee-highs
 - ✓ Plain, black, closed-toe shoes with no heel
 - ✓ Hair worn down
- BOYS
 - ✓ Black button up shirt
 - ✓ Black tuxedo pants
 - ✓ Black socks
 - ✓ Plain, black dress shoes
- NO NO's
 - ✓ No Jeans, Leggings, Jeggings, Skirts, or Shorts
 - ✓ No Tank tops, Sleeveless Shirts (unless worn with a dress jacket), T-shirts, or Sweaters
 - ✓ No Tennis Shoes, Sandals, Boots, or Shoes with Heels
 - ✓ No Jewelry

Any student who is not dressed correctly for a concert, will not be allowed to perform, and will receive a grade of 0 for the concert.

TRANSPORTATION

Students participating in chorus will have performances and other events that require them to have transportation arrangements outside of regular school hours. The parent or guardian is responsible for getting the student to and from these performances and events (unless otherwise stated). The director is available to assist any student who does not have a ride to find a parent willing to help out. Those arrangements should be made prior to the day of the event since concerts are posted at the beginning of the year.

The schedule for concerts and any other required or optional events are posted in the chorus room, on the chorus website, and in the Chorus Handbook; therefore lack of transportation is not excused. Please make your arrangements early.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

The expectations in my classroom can be summed up using a simple acronym:

C – choose to participate

I should not have to ask you to be doing what the rest of the class is doing.

H – have your materials every day

Come prepared to class with your pencil and a good attitude.

O – open your ears for directions and close your mouth

You can't listen for instructions or sing if you are talking.

R – respect Mr. Bassett & other students

Being rude or disrespectful will not be tolerated!

U – use good judgment

Think before you act – you'd be surprised how much trouble that will keep you out of!

S – sing correctly

Sit up straight, have long vowels, try your best, cheer for everybody, and NO GUM, CANDY, or DRINK other than WATER!!!

GRADING PROCEDURES

Formative = 60%

Participation – 30%

Students will receive a weekly participation grade of 100 at the beginning of every week. Each violation of a classroom expectation will result in 5 points being removed from the weekly grade.

Quizzes – 20%

Students will receive a quiz every week, when possible, usually on Friday, to test knowledge of Music Theory and/or Music History taught during weekly rehearsals.

Individual and Group Vocal Assessments – 10%

Students will be assessed individually on his or her vocal ability. However, a grade in chorus should not be completely based on how well a student sings. After all, middle school students have voices and bodies that are changing and there are times their voices will not work correctly. For that reason, the lowest possible grade on an IVA is a 76, if it is attempted.

Students will perform the following IVAs for the director:

- ✓ Scales
- ✓ Sight Reading
- ✓ Tonal Memory
- ✓ Part Singing

Summative = 40%

Concerts

There is no choir without performances. To miss a performance is the same as to miss a final exam in any regular class. All students are required to attend all scheduled performances and rehearsals, unless there is a substantial reason for a student's absence. Please see the attached schedule. If you have prior knowledge of an event that conflicts with a concert, please send in an excuse note. Students will be assigned make-up work. If the concert absence is an emergency, the student must bring in the form from the parent or guardian within TWO days of his/her return to class.

It cannot be stressed enough the importance of your child attending each concert. Each member is a vital part of the team and if a student is missing, the whole group suffers. Your child has chosen to be part of a performing organization. It is sad for a child to work diligently for weeks or months to learn the music and then not be able to perform it at the concert. Please refer to the attached performance schedule before planning any appointments or trips.

CONCERT MAKE-UP WORK

Since chorus is a performance-based class, all students are required to attend all rehearsals and concerts. Other school activities or not having a ride will not be excused absences from a concert. Make up work will be assigned to students who miss a concert. There are four reasons a student may be excused from a rehearsal or concert: ✓ serious illness ○ doctor's note required

- parent/guardian note does not excuse absences from a concert for illness
- ✓ absent from school or sent home sick from school
- ✓ death in the family
- ✓ unavoidable family emergency ○ parent/guardian note required
- "I didn't have a ride" does not excuse absences from a concert

Students who miss a rehearsal or concert can choose one of the following ways to make up an excused absence:

Choose one of the following topics and write a 300-word report. Papers will be graded on organization, grammar, and spelling. At least 2 resources should be used, and students should provide necessary information on the sources at the end of the paper (e.g. web address, title & author of book, etc.).

1. *Choose a classical composer and write about his or her life. Some questions to consider include: Where and when were they born? What period of music are they in? What instrument did they play? What are some of the important songs they wrote?*
2. *Choose a famous singer or band and write about their rise to fame. Some questions to consider include: Who are the members of the band? What instruments do they play? What style of music do they perform? What are some of their most famous songs?*
3. *How does music affect intelligence? Are people who regularly play music smarter? Does it make a difference or not? Choose a side and defend your answer with research on the Internet and books.*

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

It is important for every student, parent, and guardian to understand that being involved in chorus is a privilege because students choose to be in it. Failure to follow classroom procedures and instructions on a multiple offense basis may result in removal from chorus. It is the right of every musician to learn, and the right of every director to teach.

All policies and procedures of C. W. Davis Middle School and Hall County Schools as published in the student agenda apply in chorus. These also apply to field trips, off-campus performances, and before or after school activities.

If a student fails to follow any of the CHORUS expectations, the following procedures apply:

1. Verbal warning
2. Reflection Time
3. Step 1
4. Step 2 and Parent consult
5. Step 3 and independent work
6. Step 4 and Office Referral

DMS CHORUS CONCERT EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

1. Be on time! This includes having your student performer at the right place at the right time and being seated when the concert begins.
2. Eat before! Please do not bring any food or drink into the concert hall.
3. No talking! Please be respectful of the performers, the director, and those around you by not talking, whispering, or singing along during the performance.
4. No distractions! We want everyone to have a positive concert experience. Certain behaviors can be very distracting to performers, the director, and other audience members. These include (but are not limited to): making phone calls, texting, taking flash photography, and waving to your child while they are performing.
5. Stay together! Please keep all young children with you during the concert – do not allow them to roam the concert hall. Also, should they become restless or noisy, please remove them from the concert hall.

6. Silence all electronics! While many phones have very symphonic ringtones, they don't always fit with the musical score. Also make sure any recording devices are set to silent mode.
7. Stay put! Wait for a break in the concert to leave the concert hall. Unless you are carrying a crying or noisy child, in which case you should leave quickly and quietly please!
8. Applaud! It is appropriate to applaud politely when the performers and director come on stage and at the end of each selection. Please refrain from cheering or whistling.
9. Wait for the end! Do not leave as soon as your child's portion of the concert is over. All students deserve a full audience for their performances.
10. Expect the best! You might just be surprised at how good your student sounds when the others join in!

DMS CHORUS CONCERT EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Come prepared! This includes wearing your concert uniform, being the right place at the right time, and knowing your music.
2. Watch the director! Focusing on anything other than the director will cause you to miss important performance cues and will be distracting to the director and the audience.
3. No distractions! This includes (but is not limited to): gum, candy, books, papers, purses, iPods, and cell phones. Your director will let you know if any of these items are needed (but don't count on it).
4. Be supportive of other choirs! As you know, it takes a great deal of courage to perform in front of a group and as DMS Chorus members, we should all support each other.
5. Act like young ladies and gentlemen! During the concert do not talk, shout, laugh, or cause distractions. Think of the kind of audience you would want during your performance. Remember, you are setting the example for the other audience members.

6. Stay put! Do not leave the concert hall for any reason. If you absolutely must, wait for a break in the concert to leave or enter the hall.
7. Applaud! It is appropriate to applaud politely when the performers and director come on stage and at the end of each selection. Cheering or whistling is not.
8. Stay until the end! Do not leave the concert early unless the director has given you prior approval. Remember, listening to all groups is part of your responsibility as a chorus member and also part of your grade.
9. Represent! Be a good representative of the DMS Chorus Department, Mr. Bassett, DMS, and yourself. Even when you are not on stage, you are still performing, so be on your best behavior.
10. Have a good attitude! Come to the concert expecting the best and watch how well your hard work pays off!

DMS CHORUS CALENDAR

The following dates are required events for all chorus students. Each will serve as a summative grade.*

- **September 30, 2019 - Variety Talent Show (DMS Cafeteria)**
- November 9, 2019 - All-State Audition (North Gwinnett Middle School)
- November 12, 2019 - Veteran's Day Performance (All Grades)
- November 15-16, 2019 - District 14 Honor Chorus (Brenau University)
- December 7, 2019 - Festival of the Nativity performance (6th Grade)
- December 8, 2019 - Christmas on Green Street performance (7th/8th Grade)
- **December 16, 2019 - Winter Concert (Christ Place Church)**
- January 16, 2020 - 2nd All-State Audition (North Hall High School)
- February 27-29, 2020 - 6th Grade Statewide Honor Chorus (The Classic Center)
- February 28-29, 2020 - All-State Chorus (The Classic Center)
- **March (TBD) 2020 - LGPE (Brenau University)**
- **May 12, 2020 - Spring Concert (Christ Place Church)**
- May 16, 2020 - (8th Grade only) Carrowinds Trip

** Although not likely, these dates and times are subject to change. Any alterations or additions to this schedule will be sent out via e-mail at least one month in advance*

EXTRACURRICULAR EVENTS

ALL STATE CHORUS – OPEN TO 7TH AND 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

All State Chorus is an elite state-wide event for skilled singers in grades 7 through 12. Students must pass a regional audition in November consisting of a solo, scales, aural listening, and sight reading. The cost of the first audition is \$20. Those receiving high enough scores must pass a second audition of selected music in January. Students are responsible for hotel fees and food during the 3 day event in February in Athens. Participating students will miss 2 excused days of school in February.

SIXTH GRADE STATEWIDE CHORUS – OPEN TO 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

Sixth Grade Honor Chorus is an elite state-wide event for skilled singers in 6th grade. DMS representatives are auditioned and selected by the director usually in late August. There is a \$45 fee for participation in the event, in addition to hotel fees and food during the 2-day event in Athens, GA. Participating students will miss one excused day of school in February.

DISTRICT 14 HONOR CHORUS - OPEN TO ANY 7TH AND 8TH GRADE STUDENT

District 14 Honor Chorus is a local event for skilled singers in grades 7 and 8. DMS representatives audition and are selected in September. There is a \$40 (may be subject to change) fee for participation in the event, which includes transportation, music, and rehearsal tracks during the one-day event at Brenau University in Gainesville, GA. Participating students will miss one excused day of school in November.