

Philomath High School

Choral Handbook

Excellence in Music Education

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Parent Letter

Dear Choir Students and Parents,

Your grade in choir is an earned one. It WILL NOT be based only on you ability to sing. Rather, most of the grade will be based upon the contribution you make to success of the group. Also, please remember that your grade will be based on your attitude, your behavior, your attendance in class and at concerts, and how hard you are willing to work for the excellence of your choir. It will not be enough merely to SAY that you are interested in the group's success; you must demonstrate by your actions that you are dedicated to that goal.

Because the Philomath High Community is strongly committed to curtailing the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco etc., students need to be aware that they could suffer performance consequences if they are guilty of any of the following infractions:

1. Possession or use of any controlled substances, alcohol, or tobacco; assault, theft or possession of stolen property.
2. Being at parties or gatherings where alcohol or illegal substances are being used.
3. Being in cars where drinking, use of controlled substances, or illegal behaviors are taking place.

Just a suggestion-

Select and surround yourself with friends who have the same high standards as you and who will assist you in attaining your goals.

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common goal and the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational (choir) objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

I am looking forward to working with you this year and helping you achieve meaningful experiences.

Sincerely,

Dan Johnson

Classroom Rules

1. Be Ready
2. Be Responsible
3. Be Respectable
4. Be Safe

Vocal Music Course Guide

Course Activities

1. All choirs perform in concerts at least four times a year, usually after school.
2. Concert choir participates in contests, festivals and occasionally tours.
3. Chorus may on occasion perform at a contest or festival
4. Members in all choirs participate in fund raising activities.
5. All choirs may, on occasion, perform at a school assembly
6. All choirs may have an extra (possibly night) rehearsal before a major performance or adjudication

Grades/ Credits

Daily Attendance Requirements

Choir is a performance-based class where students learn to work cooperatively and respectfully. A musical experience in an ensemble is more than people singing well individually. It is also individuals learning how to cooperate, work, sing and blend with each other. This can only happen when students attend class consistently. Individual musical growth and group success are dependent upon each member's knowing what is expected of them and being able to depend on others in the choir. Unlike a math class where students can be successful independently, the success of the choir and each member is measured by how well the group has worked together and interacted with each other in preparing a particular piece of music in a unified way. New instructions and interpretations are given in each rehearsal. Without this information, students are not able to apply their individual skills to improve their section or the choir. Precision, balance, and blend are achieved through many consecutive group rehearsals. It is through ensemble listening and interpretation that phrase sensitivity; group dynamics, intonation, tempo and group trust is achieved. These areas cannot be worked on (or improved) when a student is working alone. Although students may make up points missed because of excused absences/tardies, class activities and experiences can not be duplicated in a makeup situation. Only in daily rehearsals can students hear identical instruction and experience together the same feelings and sounds.

You will be marked tardy if you enter the classroom after the first sound of the bell that is the signal for class is to begin and up to 30 minutes into the period. Students who are late miss both mental and physical warm-ups that allow the student to sing more effectively and efficiently. Vocal technique, sight-reading, and motor skills (singing) improve through consistent repetition, reinforcement, evaluation and patience over a period of time. These skills are usually worked on at the beginning of the period. Students that are late also may miss out on important information and announcements regarding concerts, daily goals, etc.

It is necessary for students to realize the significance of punctuality and good attendance as it applies to choir. Developing good attendance habits now is important in life beyond high school.

Points (10) are given only when a student is present, and participating. The maximum amount of points a student can earn if he/she is tardy will be 8. Below is an indicator of how absences can affect a student's trimester grade.

1-3=A; 4-6=B; 7-9=C; 10-12=D; 13+=F

Credit Denial

A student will be denied credit if the total number of unexcused absences reaches six (6) in a trimester. Four unexcused tardies are counted as one unexcused absence. Absences identified as "U" count towards credit denial.

OSAA Activities Policies

A student participating in a school sponsored activity shall have a 2.0 GPA, receive a passing grade in all classes, and be enrolled in 4 classes at PHS. Teacher reporting periods are at the half and end of each trimester. These rules apply to anyone participating in a school sponsored club or activity.

A student participating in a school sponsored activity receiving an "I" (incomplete) for the regular teacher reporting term will have two weeks to make up the "incomplete" and obtain a passing grade. If, after the two weeks, the "I" (incomplete) is not a passing grade, the student/athlete will be either on academic probation or declared ineligible for the remaining grading period.

Students dropping a class after the initial six (6) weeks of the class will be held accountable for their grade at the drop date (see the student handbook, page 10). Special circumstances will be handled by the building Principal.

Violations of OSAA Activities Policy

Students are suspended from interscholastic competition or representing Philomath High School until the suspension is lifted.

Process

1. Academic Probation for the remainder of the Trimester
If the required 2.0 GPA is not achieved, the student will be ineligible until the end of the current grading period.
2. Students are responsible for the preceding teacher-reporting period with the exception of incoming freshman and new students to the district.
3. Participation suspension periods are imposed on an annual basis beginning in the fall.

Participation Requirements

These points reflect the student's attitude and actions during class and performances. Points are assigned to each activity of the ensemble including daily rehearsals. A performance will be assigned more points than a daily rehearsal, but the cumulative points from daily rehearsals will be the largest because it is in the rehearsal where most musical growth occurs.

Daily participation points are awarded in the following manner:

- Always (10)
- Most of the time (9 - 7)
- Some of the time (6- 4)
- Occasionally (3-2)
- Seldom (1-0)

Class Participation (10 points a day)

Posture --- The student demonstrates he/she understands correct singing posture at all times in rehearsals as well as performances. This includes sitting as well as standing

Effort--- The student puts forth the amount of effort necessary daily to improve his/her singing technique. On task behavior occurs during sectionals, group rehearsals and warm-ups. The singer is focused and is not studying for other classes or writing or reading notes from other students.

Cooperation--- The student is attentive and works cooperatively with other students in their section and in the choir. The student works responsively with the director and exhibits a positive attitude. Respect for fellow students, music, etc., is demonstrated.

Responsibility--- A student has knowledge of and demonstrates responsibility regarding taking care of music and choir robes. The student is ready to sing, with music in hand, when the director gives downbeat or starts the warm-up. Responsibility is exhibited because beverages, other than water, food, gum, candy, etc., are not in the rehearsal room.

Caps/Hats are not worn during rehearsal/ performance

Illness--- Students who have a strained voice, laryngitis, head cold, etc., may earn their daily participation points with director's permission, by writing a review of the rehearsal, describing what was worked on or another project assigned by the director. Students need to consult with the director **before** the beginning of the rehearsal in order to earn points. Prolonged inactivity will require a doctor's excuse.

Performance Participation (100-150 pts)

Participation in concerts/festivals is comparable to a major test or term paper in other classes. The only excuse for a missed performance includes illness, death in the family, and an unavoidable absence due to a Philomath High related activity (excused by the parent, communicated to the teacher and the school office at least 10 school days before the event). Although absences may be excused, the student is required to do make-up in order to earn concert/festival points. Students earn the following points only when in attendance for the entire performance/rehearsal retreat.

Concerts	100	Festival/Competition	150
Retreat	100	Extra Rehearsals	50

TESTS (Most singing tests are 30 points)

The criterion includes but is not limited to: Quality of Sound, Technique, and Musicality. Points will be awarded as follows:

A student demonstrates the following criteria:

- Always: (30 - 27)
- Most of the Time: (26 -21)
- Some of the Time: (20 - 12)
- Occasionally: (11 - 6)
- Seldom: (5 - 0)

It is the **student's responsibility** to check with the teacher to determine what homework and/or tests need to be made-up. Tests should be made up within three days after the student returns or the student should arrange with the teacher for an extension.

Make-up Assignments/work

Class Absence/tardy Make-up

In class, where daily participation is a main objective and determinant of a grade, it is almost impossible to do make-up that would cover the learning experiences of the day. Although daily experiences cannot be duplicated, a student may earn points missed, due to excused absences or tardies, by doing assignments or projects assigned by the school director. These makeup assignments may be done either before school, after school or during lunch. Students who have an extended illness, etc., need to check with the teacher to work out a make-up work. Make-up work will only be given for **excused** absences/tardies.

Each choir member's involvement affects the success and growth of the choir. A student's absence affects the entire choir's progress, not just the absent student. To help establish the importance of attendance and responsibility to others, each student will be allowed to do make-up as described above up to seven absences. After the seventh absence or third tardy this form of make-up will only count for fifty percent of the points missed. Students wishing to receive full make-up points will need to rehearse with at least three members of their section for a period of 30 minutes for each absence, and 15 minutes for each tardy. They will need to tape record their practice time. Students, who exceed five days due to prolonged illness, etc., will be give special make-up consideration and/or project.

Performance Absence Make-up

If a student has an "excused absence," (illness, death in the family, an unavoidable absence due to a Philomath High related activity- (**excused by the parent, communicated to the teacher and the school office at least 10 school days before the event**), they may receive performance points by; a) attending another school concert and writing a review of the concert; b) watching a teacher approved TV music special and writing a review of the program; c) writing a paper of at least two pages on a composer whose music we are singing or a research paper assigned by the director; d) watching the video tape of the concert and writing a review of each group's performance; e) doing a project assigned by director.

Make-up for Excused Absences @ Retreats/extra Rehearsals

The purpose of these experiences/rehearsals is to focus time on "perfecting" or improving the understanding of our music. Students, in order to receive full make up points and perform with the choir at the next performance, will need to do the following:

1. Make up all time missed by completing a project as assigned by the director.
2. Demonstrate they have learned all the material covered at the retreat/rehearsal by performing the music worked on for the director either in person or by recording.

3. **The student will need to** initiate a meeting (within 3 days after the absence) with the director and set a time/day when makeup will be completed. Makeup must be completed within five school days of the missed event.

Time spent preparing and/or demonstrating their knowledge of what occurred during the retreat/rehearsal may count for make up time.

Unexcused Absences

Students with unexcused absences either daily or at performances will not be allowed to do make-up work.

Missing Class Because of a Musical Event

Every possible attempt is made to avoid scheduling music performances/events during the school day. Unfortunately, some performances/ events are scheduled by outside organizations, such as district festivals, competitions, school performances, etc. In the event music students have to miss class due to a music event the student's responsibilities are as follows.

1. Students are expected to do makeup work as allowed (expected) by the instructor. I believe missed class for a performance is **NO** excuse for special consideration involving makeup work.
2. Assignments due the day of the performance should be turned into the teacher's box or to the teacher directly. The only exception would be with the teacher's **prior** approval.
3. Individual students should inform their teachers, in advance, if they will be missing a class due to a musical event.

Performance Opportunities

In much the same way as an athlete makes the "team," it is possible that not all members will play in the game or sing in the concert if the "coach" feels their performance would be detrimental to the groups' success. Students will have the privilege of performing with the choir at a concert or festival only if they have demonstrated they can sing their part accurately and contribute to the group's success.

Students missing an extra rehearsal or retreat without acceptable excuse approved beforehand by the teacher may not be allowed to participate in the upcoming performance.

There are many ways to insure participation in a performance. Some are: have good attendance, have good consistent concentration and focus during rehearsals and make up absences and/or tardies so that the test grades are high.

Students not able to perform will be expected to attend the entire concert (including warm-ups) and write a comprehensive review of each group's performance. They will not receive full concert participation points and their grade will not be affected.

Due to the musical demands of Concert Choir, it is critical students attend the class, extra rehearsals, and retreats. Students not able to meet these responsibilities should sign up for Chorus. If there are excessive absences in Concert Choir, (i.e. more than 4 a trimester) a student may not be allowed to sing at a performance, put on an attendance contract and/or may be moved to Chorus at the trimester.

Unexcused absences 10 rehearsal days prior to a performance may result in suspension from that performance.

Promotion to another Choir

1. The curriculum for each choir class is carefully structured so that a student may move sequentially, with the proper skill level, from Chorus to Concert Choir.
2. In order to be promoted, a student must be able to demonstrate skill in technical areas such as: sight-reading, a well focused and supported tone throughout their singing range, accuracy of pitch, vocal flexibility, and the ability to independently sing their part, etc.

In addition to technical concerns, students need to demonstrate their understanding of commitment to others by showing they can work cooperatively with the director and other students. They must be able to demonstrate discipline through correct singing posture and good rehearsal techniques. Students must also have good daily attendance as well as attending all performances and retreats. A student's inability to fulfill their attendance responsibilities will severely hinder their opportunity to be promoted to another choir or remain in their current choir the following trimester.

Uniform/ Music Information

1. Philomath High School has purchased robes and stoles for its vocal groups. The school will assume responsibility for the cleaning of robes and stoles before they are issued, and the students will be responsible for his/her uniform during the year. Robes are **NOT** to be taken home unless otherwise directed to by Mr. Johnson.
2. Groups not wearing robes are responsible for purchasing their own uniforms. If this is a financial problem for anyone, please contact Mr. Johnson so that a solution can be worked out.
3. There are many ways of demonstrating pride and group discipline. Uniformity of dress is one of these. Therefore:
 - a. Female members of all choirs will be responsible for having black **closed-toed** shoes for all concerts and performances.

- i. Dress or skirts should be worn under robes, not exceeding the length of the robe.
 - ii. Long hair should be pulled back off shoulders,
 - iii. and **BLACK** nylons are to be worn.
 - b. Male members of Chorus and Concert Choir will be responsible for having black shoes and dark dress pants for all concerts and performances.
 - c. The bottom hemline of the robe should be 11 inches from the floor when the chorister is wearing his/her shoes.
 - d. No earrings, jewelry, and/or hair bows that are visible!!!
 - e. Anyone having difficulty meeting these standards due to financial concerns contact Dr. Johnson beforehand to work out a solution.
4. Students unwilling to conform to proper concert attire will not be allowed to perform.
5. Students defacing or losing music, music folders, or robes/stoles will be charged a replacement and/or repair fee.
6. Students need to check in robes and stoles at the end of the school year. Students who do not turn in their robe will be charged a replacement fee of **\$145.00**.

Choral Performance Evaluation Criterion

QUALITY OF SOUND

Tone Quality—The student demonstrates superlative tone quality. Tone is well-focused, full, open, resonant, and consistent, in all registers and dynamic levels.

Intonation –Melodic and harmonic intonation are superior. Students are able to show a well-developed ability to control difficult tuning situations. They have great control of pitch in all registers. Superior listening and adjusting skills. Accurate pitch is maintained when singing with another part.

Vowel Uniformity/Blend/Balance –Student can maintain superior blend and balance both within and between sections. Vowels are uniform and consistent throughout. Extremes in register and volume not detract from proper placement of vowels. Superior listening is demonstrated.

TECHNIQUE

Rhythm/Precision – The student demonstrates a superb control of pulse, tempo and rhythmic patterns. The singer is able to achieve outstanding ensemble cohesiveness. Precision and clarity are exemplary. Flaws, if any, are minor and quickly detected.

MUSICALITY

Interpretation/Style – A thorough and stylistically valid interpretation is attained. Tone quality reflects knowledge of the style of music. The singer exhibits a thorough understanding of style and interpretation and successfully communicates this knowledge throughout their performance.

Phrasing – Phrasing is natural and uniformly performed. The singer demonstrates a knowledge of the rise and fall of each phrase.

Expression – A clear, meaningful, and expressive shaping of music phrases occurs at all times. Expression is natural, sensitive, and highly effective. Communication is superior throughout.

Sensitivity – Student demonstrates superior dynamic range with excellent control and also demonstrates thorough use of all dynamic levels with excellent dynamic sensitivity. Superlative use of music technique to create a sensitive, effective, naturally communicated, artistic, and exciting musical performance.

Philomath High School Choral Contract
2010 - 2011

We have taken the time to read through the on-line choral handbook, and **FULLY** understand its contents. We understand all choral program policies and procedures and agree to adhere to these.

DATE: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

DATE: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____