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# CHARLOTTE HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR HANDBOOK

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2023-2024

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**ALL REQUIRED FORMS IN HANDBOOK AND CHOIR FEE ARE DUE BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th, 2023**

## Introduction

Welcome to Choir! Charlotte High School is proud to offer a choral program that emphasizes musical growth and excellence. We believe that discipline and hard work in an environment full of energy and fun are the basis for what we will be able to achieve. Thank you for committing yourself to a year of choral learning.

This handbook is designed to foster the success of the Charlotte High School Choral Department, inform the students and their parents, and address questions and concerns that may arise throughout the school year. Answers to some of the most commonly asked questions concerning the procedures in our department can be found within this book.

This choral program has established a strong tradition of professionalism both on our campus, and within our community, and we strive to provide students with multiple educational opportunities. We welcome you as a part of our choir family and look forward to your involvement with the choir. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns that may arise throughout the year.

Sarah Mayper (she/her), Director

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## Membership

Membership in the Charlotte High School Choral Department is open to all students currently enrolled at Charlotte High School, regardless of prior music experience. As a member of an ensemble, students are expected to put the group before themselves and maintain the Code of Conduct discussed later in this handbook.

Participation in a music ensemble should be considered a privilege, not a right. In order to maintain the integrity of the department and provide a positive learning environment for all students, a certain level of etiquette must be upheld. **Consistent in-class discipline problems, multiple placements of in-school suspension, discipline referrals for fighting, substance abuse, and/or bringing weapons on campus will result in a loss of privileges in the choral program, including, but not limited to, movement into a different ensemble, loss of traveling privileges, suspension from performances, or removal from the choral program at the director's discretion.**

## Participation & Attendance

As a member of this program, you will be expected to perform in class, concerts, extra rehearsals (if necessary), and programs as scheduled by the director. While rehearsals beyond school hours will not occur often, they will be necessary as we near major concerts and events. Students will be given ample notice of when these will occur, and will be expected to be at all extra rehearsals. Extenuating circumstances will be discussed on an individual basis. **All rehearsals, and concerts are a required part of the final grade for the course.**

## Finances

Choir Fees consist of two main sections: Fair Share, and Uniform Fees. Fair Share will work towards covering the expenses to participate in MPA competition, sheet music purchase, transportation to events, and social choir events.

**The total cost for the 2023-2024 Fair Share and Uniform Fee will total \$50.** This is regardless of which ensemble a student may be enrolled in, and is on an individual basis. If more than one student in a family is enrolled in the choral program, they must both pay that \$50. All of the Fair Share payment goes towards the students. Payment plans are an option if necessary, and may be discussed privately between the family and the director.

## Parent Volunteers

A formal parent volunteer organization will be a chance for the parents of students to become involved in the choral program. This organization will assist with the planning of fundraisers, transportation of students to events, ushers for concerts, and other volunteer opportunities for the Choir Program. All parents are encouraged to assist, even if their involvement is limited; all help is greatly appreciated. Please note that if a parent assists with a choir fundraiser, they will NOT receive any of the proceeds. All monetary collections will go toward the Choral Program.

## Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Certain standards are necessary to be upheld for the integrity and reputation of any organization. Every choir member will be expected to display manners, follow school rules, meet deadlines, and always represent CHS and the choir with pride and dignity. Choir members are expected to have and maintain a character above reproach. Not following school rules both in and out of the choir room may result in loss of membership and all of the privileges of the group. Students are expected to display:

- **Responsibility** through punctuality, following through with all commitments, bringing supplies to every rehearsal, communicating with staff, delivering accurate information with parents, and making a marked effort to improve musical skills and learn repertoire.
- **Professionalism** by displaying self-discipline, working well with others, having an attitude of respect of the director and other school staff, presenting a positive image for the organization, and displaying the qualities of a professional musician.
- **Dignity** by adhering to the campus dress code, using appropriate language and etiquette, and displaying self-motivation in rehearsal.
- Integrity through honesty with the director, oneself, and other students, regular attendance at school and out of school rehearsals and events.
- **Compassion** through sensitivity and acceptance of diversity, displaying kindness and encouragement to peers, and showing sympathy for others.

### Rehearsal Etiquette.

This is one of the most important factors of success of any choir. How we rehearse and how we perform. Every day, there will be a set procedure to begin and end rehearsal, which we will go over throughout the first weeks of school.

#### Beginning of Class:

- 1) Leave outside drama at the door.
- 2) Backpacks will remain with students under their chair, not beside it.
- 3) Pick up music folder and pencil, and be in their seat when the bell rings. Warm-ups and announcements will begin promptly after the bell rings.
- 4) Refrain from use of electronics.

#### End of Class:

- 1) Return music to assigned slot/cubby
- 2) Students will be either be given a cleaning wipe, or paper towel (the instructor will spray cleaning solution if that is the case) to wipe down their chair after use.

**\*\*Students are not permitted to be on their phones during class in accordance to HB 379.**

### Classroom Discipline

- 1) Verbal Warning
- 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Verbal Warning
- 3) Referral

Any physical violence, major infraction of CHS Policy, or student refusal to cooperate in discipline procedures will result in an immediate referral.

### The Music Classroom

Use of the Music facility, including the CPAC is a unique experience that can only continue successfully if all who use it are respectful to the space. That includes:

- Not bending, tearing, folding, crumpling, or damaging sheet music in any way.
- Not eating in the classroom without permission from the director.
- Writing on the boards only with permission from the director.
- Playing piano only with permission from the director.
- Walking on and off the risers in a safe manner.

### Supplies

Each student is responsible for providing a pencil for score marking and assignments, loose leaf paper or a spiral bound notebook, and a personal water bottle. **If provided sheet music is lost or damaged/destroyed, students are financially responsible for their replacement.**

### Uniform

The choral uniform will be one of the two following items of clothing for formal performance:

- Choir Dress: This is a formal, floor length, black gown provided by the choral department.
- Choir Tuxedo: This includes pants, a tuxedo jacket, black bowtie, and white button-down shirt provided by the choral department.

For informal performances and events/festivals, students will wear their choir shirt (or shirt of the same color), and non-ripped blue jeans.

**SHOES:** All students will wear plain black shoes. This includes flats, Toms (or any other equivalent), and slip-ons with black bottoms. Shoes must be close-toed for safety reasons backstage and onstage. **NO SANDALS ARE PERMITTED.**

The choir t-shirt will be designed at a later date, and is included in the fair share fees.

### Student Leadership

The Student Executive Board is made up of 8 main positions, which are as follows:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Historian
- Public Relations
- Uniform Personnel

These officers work closely with the director to plan events during the school year, run after-school rehearsals, relay important information to all choir members, assist in uniform assignment, plan/brainstorm fundraising opportunities, etc.

Additional officer positions include student leaders from each class period. They will assist in class accountability at afterschool rehearsals and performances, uniform inspection with the Uniform Personnel, and occasionally leading warmups.

### Student Travel

The choral department would typically travel for competition, or festivals. Details concerning upcoming trips will be discussed early in each school year. While travel is an optional part of the program, it is strongly encouraged for students to participate. Specific regulations concerning travel will be discussed in detail preceding all trips.

### Refund Policy

Most fees charged to the student involve advance payment for a service or item (trip fees, competition fees, etc.). Because of this, the following policy must be enforced: **there cannot be a refund in any case where the student has paid for an activity or supply but is no longer able to participate.** This policy applies to all reasons of withdrawal, and includes, but is not limited to situations of ineligibility, illness, unexpected family travel, or withdrawal from the CHS choir.

### Turning in Money

In order to assure the security and proper accounting of funds, money will always be handled in a secure fashion, by the director and student treasurer. Please use the following guidelines to assure you receive proper credit for money turned in.

- 1) All payments must be placed in a sealed envelope with the Choir Expenses Contract, and placed in the secure black box in the Choir Room.
- 2) Checks should always have the student's name, and an indication of what the money is for on the Memo Line.

### Choir Placement Policy and Descriptions

All students are placed in the appropriate choral ensemble based on their level of musicianship, technical ability, and voice part. There is a place for every student, regardless of prior musical experiences.

All first-year treble voice students (generally female) will be placed in the *Beginning Treble Choir*. Here, we focus on the fundamentals of choral singing, sight-singing, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), languages, etc. If the student is coming from an established choral program, they may be considered for the Intermediate ensemble.

The higher level non-auditioned ensemble, *Intermediate Treble Choir*, is available to all treble voices who do not wish to audition for Charisma or Advanced Treble Choir after their first year of involvement in the choral program. This group focuses on continued practice of choral singing, sight-singing, IPA, more complex technical musical skill, etc.

Note: Students may remain in this ensemble if they do not want to audition into the next level choir.

The final treble choir, *Advanced Treble Choir*, is a completely auditioned group of treble voices and meets after school hours. While this group may not typically travel as much as Charisma, they are expected to maintain a high level of musical achievement and technical skill. It is faster paced than the other treble groups, and will study more difficult music. Here, we will sight-read on a regular basis, with

students working more independently within their voice sections to learn their music to maintain a high level of musicianship.

Our student named Ensemble, *Fratellanza*, is made up of only lower voices (Tenors and Basses), and encompasses all levels of skill. If you are a Tenor or Bass, you will be placed in this class automatically. Here, we focus on the unique experience of being in a Tenor-Bass choir, the fundamentals of singing together, IPA, languages, etc.

Students may audition for *Charisma*, which is the advanced, mixed voice ensemble. Historically, this group would perform within the community; this has been much more limited due to COVID-19. In this ensemble, we focus on maintaining high levels of musicianship, sight-reading on a regular basis with students working independently within their voice parts to learn their music.

If a first-year student has significant prior musical training, they may audition for an upper level ensemble. Otherwise, students must have been enrolled in the choral program at least one year prior to auditioning.

The combined choir of *Fratellanza*, The Advanced Treble Choir, and *Charisma*, is called *Choral Union*. This group will sing pieces that are mixed voiced, to allow students the opportunity to sing mid-level mixed music with classmates they don't normally get to see. This ensemble does require occasional rehearsal outside of school hours.

The entire choral program as a whole makes up our mass ensemble, the *Varsity Choir*. This group only comes together when performing large pieces at a formal concert, due to the fact that it is made up of multiple class periods and does require additional after-school rehearsals.

NOTE: The age and grade of the students will not correlate to the group they are placed in. That is solely based on how many years they have been involved, and/or their audition results.

### Grading and Assessment

- 1) Daily Preparedness 40%
  - a. Students will be assessed on their overall ensemble participation, punctuality to rehearsal, preparedness in class, and application of musical topics to repertoire selected.
- 2) Quizzes (Singing and Written)- 20%
  - a. These assessments will be both formally and informally given, keeping students engaged in lessons and solidifying music theory concepts in addition to vocal development. These quizzes can include but are not limited to sight reading, aural dictation, and vocabulary checks.
- 3) Performance (Formal Assessment)- 40%
  - a. Students will receive a grade for required performances of the department based on their attendance, punctuality, uniform, and concert etiquette at the performance.
  - b. This is a performance-based class. If a student does not perform, their grade will show it. Extenuating circumstances are considered when grading is considered.

### Excused Absence Make-up Assignments

As per the Charlotte High School make-up work policy, students will be permitted **two** days to complete any outstanding assignments. Missed rehearsals will be made up with an individual rehearsal in with the



director before or after school. The rehearsal will be 30 minutes, and will cover all material addressed in the original rehearsal.

**Missed performances** will be made up with a written paper about a specific composer related to the repertoire sung in class, or the culture the piece of music came from. It will be 2 full pages, single spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman font. Extenuating circumstances resulting in an absence from either graded event will be discussed privately with the director, so an appropriate solution can be reached.

## Charlotte High School Choir Expenses Contract

This form is to help keep track of all monetary transactions within the choir program. By filling out this form, you are helping limit the possibility of something being misfiled, lost, or unaccounted for. Please include this form in the envelope along with the what is being paid. If more than one fee is being paid simultaneously, please list all fees this payment fulfills.

CHOIR STUDENT:

AMOUNT:

PURPOSE OF PAYMENT:

# Student/Parent Contract and Acknowledgement Form

The success of the choir department is dependent upon each individual choir student adhering to the policies and procedures set forth in the handbook. Singers are expected to fulfill all expressed commitments and responsibilities. If a student fails to meet the designated performance and participation requirements, he/she/they will be given grade reductions. Any deviations from this policy will be at the sole discretion of the choral director. Reasonable consideration will be given relating to legitimate conflicts including but not limited to familial tragedy, religious requirements, medical emergencies, school activities, and academic requirements in other areas. Students and parents must communicate in writing and in advance (if possible) in order to provide time for proper resolution of any schedule conflicts.

I have read the 2023-2024 CHS Choir Handbook, understand the expectations and responsibilities of the course, and agree to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook. I also understand the consequences for failing to meet these requirements that have been outlined herein.

Student Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Charisma Student Contract

Charisma is normally more involved in the community than the other ensembles within our program. It can be a major time commitment, particularly in the holiday season. Students will be given ample notice prior to each performance. If the group is requested short notice, a discussion between the director and students will occur to determine whether or not the performance request will be accepted. Should a student have to miss the performance, they must notify the director as soon as they are able. **Failure to do so in a reasonable time frame may result in the student's removal from the ensemble.** This contract must be signed as an acknowledgement of the responsibility that has been accepted by each student enrolled in this ensemble to be punctual and performance ready at each singing opportunity this school year. Parents/Guardians must also sign this form to ensure that they are fully informed of their student's commitment.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby understand the commitment I have made to this ensemble for the 2023-2024 school year. I will be at each required performance on time, and ready to perform. If a conflict arises, I will notify the director as soon as I am able, so that other arrangements may be made to make up for the missed grade.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## Advanced Treble Choir Contract

The members of this ensemble will be expected attend events outside of the school day, with prior notice given to the students involved in advance as soon as possible.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that this ensemble meets once a week, therefore, missing one rehearsal greatly impacts the ensemble. Therefore, I affirm that I will be present for every rehearsal that I can, to uphold the expected ensemble etiquette, and musical excellence. I understand that being in this ensemble is a privilege, and failure to abide by this contract may result in removal from this ensemble.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Student name)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Student signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Parent/Guardian signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)