



Bryan Middle School Concert Choir Choir Handbook 2018-2019

Mrs. Jessica Tatevosian,
Choral Director

Dear parents and students,

Welcome to the Bryan Concert Choir! We're **SO** excited you're here! The Bryan Choral Program has a VERY long tradition of excellence, and continues to grow and improve each year as its members do the same. This handbook will give you the information you need to have the best possible experience in choir this year.

WHY ARE WE HERE? SOME GOALS OF THE CHORAL PROGRAM

- To learn **proper vocal technique** in terms of posture, breathing, vocal production, use of head and chest voice and mix, good vocal tone, and care of the voice.
- To expand our musical background by performing a wide variety of quality choral literature in different styles. To increase our understanding of music by listening and evaluating.
- To increase our musicianship by learning music theory, musical terms, musical notation, and sight-reading ability.
- To grow in self-awareness and awareness of others as we work and play together each day!

Meet your director!

Jessica Tatevosian - 6th, 7th and 8th grade choir director - jtatevosian@elmhurst205.org.

Mrs. Tatevosian also teaches music class to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders as part of the Unified Arts team. She is thrilled to be starting her 12th year teaching at Bryan! Mrs. Tatevosian received her music education degrees from Elmhurst College (B.A.) and VanderCook College of Music (M.A.). In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her husband, singing (both at church and in a rock and roll band), and raising her backyard chickens.

I will keep you updated of choir events primarily through **parent emails**, so please ensure that I have your correct email address on file by providing it on the handbook signature form (attached).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

One of the reasons for the strength of the music program at Bryan has been the continuity of the rehearsals. Regular student attendance is essential to the success of the music program, as well as each child's experience within. As a result, regular attendance is required of all students. Please review our attendance policies with your child and continue to insist on promptness and regular attendance to help them get the most out of their choir experience!

ZERO-HOUR REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

Concert Band, Concert Orchestra, and Concert Choir are classes that meet before the regular school day (also known as "zero-hour"). Students will earn a grade for participation in these ensembles.

Attendance is expected at assigned rehearsals unless the student is absent from school.

Even if students have a sore throat and cannot sing, forgot their instrument, etc, they are still expected to attend rehearsal on their assigned days:

- 7th & 8th grade students are required to attend zero-hour choir rehearsal EVERY DAY (with the exception of Late Start Days).
- 6th grade students will attend zero-hour choir rehearsal only on ASSIGNED DAYS.

- The weekly assigned day for 6th graders is Thursday. HOWEVER, more days may be assigned as concerts approach.
- Assigned days are always posted on our website: bryan.elmhurst205.org/music

Music students who miss an assigned zero-hour morning rehearsal but are in school for the remainder of the day will be marked **tardy** to school for that day, just as non-music students would be considered tardy if they miss their first class of the day.

- A student may “use” up to three tardies per quarter with no penalty. On the third tardy, students will receive notification of tardies, and a review of the attendance policy via letter will be sent home. On the 4th tardy a detention will be issued by the office.
- If a student is dually-enrolled in more than one ensemble, tardies will be counted collectively between the two ensembles (a student is not allowed three tardies per ensemble).

But what if I “CAN’T SING” today? Am I excused from Zero-hour choir?

It is important to realize that even if a student cannot fully participate in rehearsal (due to newly adjusted braces, sore throat, etc) the student can still gain valuable information on accuracy, musical style, tempo, and interpretation by being present in the rehearsal. **Therefore, we expect students to attend rehearsals even if you cannot fully participate** (as described above). **If there is a special circumstance for which you cannot fully participate that day, please notify the director(s) BEFORE rehearsal begins that day.**

Students should not schedule help sessions for another class during before-school rehearsal time. Teachers are aware that band, orchestra and choir classes take place before school, and always offer alternate times that band, orchestra and choir students can get extra review or help when needed. **Students who choose to miss a rehearsal in order to meet with a teacher/attend a help session will be marked as “tardy” for choir.** (Keep in mind, students are allowed three tardies per quarter, and 7th and 8th graders may “use” these tardies for help sessions, etc, if they wish to do so. 6th graders should not plan to miss zero-hour rehearsals as they only take place once per week).

Note: To ensure choir members reach their full performance potential, **Choir students are not allowed to “use” their tardies the two weeks prior to a performance** (legitimate illness-from-school will still be excused, of course).

If there is an extenuating medical circumstance that would cause your child to need to miss choir but still be able to attend school that day, please do the following:

- call the attendance line to report the absence and the medical reason*
- have your child bring their doctor’s note to the office when they arrive.*

What do I do if I am absent from choir rehearsal?

All Choir students are responsible for making up any work missed in their absence (whatever the reason).

- **BEFORE CLASS:** The **FIRST** thing you should do is check in with a trustworthy peer/buddy to find out what you missed while you are away. This may be in the form of handouts, markings in your music, or even written work.
- After checking with a peer, check in with the teacher to see if we have any additional instructions for you.

DUALLY-ENROLLED STUDENTS

We are so proud of you for choosing to extend your musicianship by being involved in both band and choir or orchestra and choir! While it can definitely be a challenge to “keep up” in both ensembles, please know that your directors want you to succeed in both and we will do everything we can to help you do so. But, your success is not up to us. Here’s what YOU can do to be successful.

Responsibilities of Dually-Enrolled Students:

- **Know whether it is a full choir day or a full band/orchestra day.** This information is always on our website: bryan.elmhurst205.org.
- **Ensure that you always have your instrument here at school on days you may need it** (remember, even if it’s a choir day, you may need your instrument for technique class during the day!) If in doubt, just bring it to school!.
- **Understand it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make up what you miss while you are away.** Check in with a peer each day BEFORE REHEARSAL to see what you missed the previous day(s). Your director will likely review what was covered the day before, but if you have questions after their explanation, it is your job to ask them to make sure you get what you need!
- **Develop your own strategies for staying on top of your game in both ensembles!** Then share those strategies with your other dually-enrolled friends! YOU GOT THIS!!!!

PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE

Choral performances are an extremely important component of the choral program. Not only do they serve as the culminating event in each student’s course of study, but they offer a wonderful and rewarding opportunity for students to demonstrate their growth not just for their instructors and peers, but also for family and friends. As a result of their importance, our major performances of the year are all required. In addition to our required performances, we also offer additional performance opportunities to share music in the community. These events are very rewarding, and students are encouraged to make every effort to attend.

The Bryan choir is privileged to participate in six major performances per year (REQUIRED):

- **Fall choir assembly performance and Fall Choir Concert**
- **Elementary School Tour* (daytime field trip)**
- **Winter Choral Festival (daytime rehearsal and evening concert)**
- **Spring Choir Assembly performance and Spring Choir Concert**

**Note: Student attendance and behavior will be considered in determining field trip participation eligibility.*

Please show your support by not only attending your child’s concerts, but by inviting other family members and friends to attend with you! In the event that you are unable to attend an evening performance, you are welcome to attend the school assembly or other rehearsal. Simply contact your child’s director in advance of the date and we will happily make any accommodations to help you support your children with your presence.

You will receive a Performance and Activity Calendar for all scheduled dates for the year. Please mark your calendar IMMEDIATELY when you receive those dates!

If your family has a conflict with any of the required performances, **please let your child's director know in writing by October 1st.** We appreciate as much advance notice as possible for unforeseen circumstances such as illness and family emergencies. A teacher-assigned relevant make-up activity may be given to students to make up the missing grade, regardless of reason for absence.

What happens if I miss a performance?

Since performances are so important, they should not be missed unless a student is too ill to perform. Failure to attend a performance may be reflected in the student's quarter grade.

ADD/DROP POLICY

Should a student need to drop an ensemble, they may do so during the first week of each quarter without penalty. If they would like to add an ensemble, they may do this during the first week of the first and third quarters.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Morning bus transportation for band orchestra and choir classes is available to all students who qualify for bus transportation. B/O/C Bus schedules can be located on the Bryan Middle School Homepage. All bussing concerns should be directed to the assistant principal.

ZERO-HOUR ARRIVAL PROCEDURE:

Doors to the building will open each day at 7:15 a.m. When students arrive to school...

- 6th grade choir students will go directly to the auditorium to drop off their backpacks, etc, and retrieve their choir binder from the music room.
- 7th and 8th grade choir students will go to their lockers to retrieve their choir binder, and may enter the rehearsal room anytime after 7:15 a.m. (*On Band/Orchestra Days, dually-enrolled students will NOT go to their lockers, but instead will head directly to band/orchestra with all their belongings*).

To prevent interruptions during rehearsal, please take care of the following between 7:15 and 7:30:

- Use the restroom.
- Fill your water bottle/get a drink.
- Organize your choir binder.
- Sharpen pencils.
- Turn in any choir forms/etc.

Students are to be in their seats, with their choir binder and all related materials, ready to participate in rehearsal at 7:30 a.m. Students are considered tardy to class if they are not in their assigned seat ready to participate in rehearsal at 7:30 a.m. when the bell rings.

Though directors do take and check attendance, It is the responsibility of the student to sign in to choir each day as attendance verification.

Students that are tardy will need to sign in to the tardy binder and provide a reason.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students are expected to have their personal 3-ring hard-backed **CHOIR BINDER** labeled with their **name** with them in rehearsal every day. The binder includes:

- one set 5-tab dividers,
- one 3-ring pencil case, containing three sharpened pencils with erasers
- one large eraser
- all choir music and handouts

Once students are allowed to bring chromebooks home, they will also be required to bring their **CHROMEBOOKS** to choir every day, along with set of **inexpensive headphones** that can be stored in their chromebook case (if they don't already have a pair).

Students should also plan to bring a filled **WATER BOTTLE** to rehearsal each day. Singing makes you thirsty, so be prepared!

Choir binders will occasionally be collected and GRADED. Points will be earned for required materials being present and organized as directed, as well as written work and musical markings being completed.

It is each student's responsibility to keep up with all written work and properly file all handouts in order to receive all points for their binder grade.

CONCERT ATTIRE

All choir students will need to obtain the following items for various concert performances this year:

FORMAL ATTIRE (fall and winter concerts):

Boys: White collared long sleeve dress shirt, long black tie, black dress pants, black dress shoes (no tennis shoes), black socks.

Girls: White long-sleeved or three-quarter length shirt, black dress pants (not leggings), black dress shoes (no tennis shoes or sandals—*close-toed dress shoes only*), and black socks (if needed).

All hair accessories must match hair color, and also no jewelry or other accessories.

INFORMAL ATTIRE (assembly performances and choir tour):

Same as formal, except students will wear their blue music department t-shirts in lieu of a white top.

SPRING ATTIRE:

Same as formal, however, students may be asked to either A) purchase an inexpensive choir-themed t-shirt, or B) provide a solid-color top in lieu of their white top. Details will be provided far in advance of the spring concert, so stay tuned.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The rehearsal rooms are shared with hundreds of students. Therefore, students will be expected to respect all equipment and personal property as if it were their own. This includes stands, chairs, auditorium seats, audio/visual equipment, musical equipment, and piano or other instruments. Food and drinks, with the exception of water bottles, are not allowed in the rehearsal rooms.

CHOIR RULES

	RULE
1.	Arrive on time with ALL your materials. (in your seat by 7:30, with your choir binder* If you arrive late, you must sign in to the tardy binder and provide a reason).
2.	Follow directions the 1st time they are given. This not only demonstrates respect for your directors, but also for peers by
3.	Remain in your spot unless given permission by the director. (You may use tissue as needed without asking permission. However, to leave your spot for any other reason, you must raise your hand ask permission. If leaving the room, you must also sign out in the sign-out binder and carry the pass if you are leaving the room).
4.	Remain quiet when someone else “has the floor.”
5.	Only use PENCIL in your music in choir. No other writing utensils allowed unless given specific permission. Let’s protect our music!

**Choir binder includes: 5-tab dividers, pencil case, sharpened pencils with erasers, and all choral music and handouts.*

Of course, **all other Bryan Middle School Rules and Expectations apply as well** (ex: no cell phones allowed, no gum allowed, water is allowed but not other beverages, etc). For a full list of school rules, see your school agenda. A list of school rules is also available on our school website.

CHOIR EXPECTATIONS

In addition to following the classroom rules, we also expect that you will try to bring your best to choir every day. You can demonstrate this by following these three expectations:

1. **Actively participate at all times.**
2. **Be responsible for your own actions.**
3. **Show respect for yourself and others.**

GRADING POLICY

Choir students at the middle school level will receive a grade of “E” (exceeds expectations), “M,” (meets expectations), or “N” (does not meet expectations).

- E = 90% and above on all assignments and assessments.
- M = 60% - 89% on all assignments and assessments.
- N = 59% and below on all assignments and assessments.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Be on time, prepared, and attentive for all rehearsals.
- Always have your materials!
- Complete all written assignments: daily theory work, worksheets, etc.
- Practice at home when asked.
- Demonstrate good rehearsal conduct and remain respectful of all other students, faculty and property.
- Have all music adequately prepared for rehearsals and concerts.
- Arrive at all concerts on time, ready to perform, and in appropriate concert attire.
- Demonstrate excellent concert etiquette as performers and audience members.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something.
- Make all appropriate markings in their music as indicated by the director.
- Encourage each other and maintain a positive attitude.

Extra credit opportunities:

- Audition for ILMEA district festival or other honors choir (fall).
- Attend a high school, college, or professional choir concert or vocal music event (brief summary required).
- Listen to professional choir recordings (brief summary required).
- Complete a music composer report based on music in the current repertoire.
- Write a choir warm-up exercise (on staff paper, with notes/rhythms/lyrics).
- If you are taking voice lessons (optional), you may write a summary on what you have been learning in your private study.
- Complete your own (director-approved) project.
- Complete choir extra credit as it becomes available.

2018-19 Bryan Concert Choir Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Student First and Last Name: _____ Grade: _____

Please complete the following form along with your parent/guardian and return to your choir director by Friday, September 7th.

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In order to help my child achieve maximum success in choir this year, I have read and reviewed the Choir Handbook with my child to promote a better understanding of the Bryan Middle School Concert Choir rules and expectations.

I am also now aware of the areas in which my child may need my assistance to achieve success (helping them get to concerts, acquiring required materials/concert attire, etc).

I understand that I will receive a list of concert dates via email from the director. I assume responsibility for marking these dates in our family calendar and by prioritizing my child's attendance at all curricular choral events.

My signature below acknowledges receipt of this handbook, and the responsibilities outlined within.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s) (please print):

Preferred phone number(s): _____

Email address(es) for our database (*if you have not yet received any emails from us*):

Signature of parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Bryan Concert Choir Handbook. I have read the handbook and understand all the rules and expectations. I agree to be responsible for following all the rules and expectations outlined in the handbook and understand the consequences for failing to follow the requirements.

It is MY RESPONSIBILITY to remind my parents/guardians IN ADVANCE of anything I may need their help with in order for me to be successful in choir.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Let's have an AMAZING YEAR, Bryan Choir!!! Thank you!