

Mt. Lebanon School District

2019/2020

Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Choir Handbook

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Jefferson Middle School Choral Department

Mr. Jim Lash, Choral Director

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August 19, 2019

Hello and welcome to the JMS Choral Program. My name is Mr. Lash, and I will be your chorus teacher for the 2019-20 school year. I am thrilled to be teaching at JMS, and very much looking forward to all the wonderful things planned for this year. I hope that you are ready and raring to go. Many of you are veterans of the choral program at JMS, but nonetheless, please take a look at the following handbook that highlights the available opportunities for learning and growth in choir. It is also your guide to my expectations and to the events and activities taking place this year.

PARENTS: Please read the entire handbook and discuss it with your child. Concerts and special activities have already been scheduled for the school year. For your convenience they have been listed in the handbook. **Please mark these dates on your home calendar.** If any changes or updates arise, I will notify you immediately. At the end of this handbook is a permission form that will allow your child to ride the bus to and from dress rehearsals for these concerts. **Please sign and return this form to me no later than Friday, September 6,** and I will retain this form in my files for the year.

Please forward any questions to me at 412-344-2000 x65027 or jlash@mtlsd.net. E-mail will usually elicit a quicker response. I look forward to working with you and your children during the school year.

Sincerely,

Mr. Lash
Jefferson Middle School Choral Director

CHORAL OPPORTUNITIES

6th Grade Choir

6th Grade Choir is an elective that meets for three periods per week. In 6th Grade Choir, students gain an understanding of singing technique including but not limited to posture, breath management, vocal production, diction, and care of the changing voice. They also gain an understanding of ensemble skills, music-reading skills using solfege, musical elements (for example, form, tone color, melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics) and music literature from a variety of musical traditions. The students then use these skills to prepare a wide variety of 2 or 3-part music for a Winter and a Spring Concert. Participation in the two evening concerts is mandatory. Dates are listed in the calendar section of the handbook.

7th Grade Choir

7th Grade Choir is an elective that meets for three periods per week. In 7th Grade Choir, students continue to improve their understanding of singing technique, including but not limited to posture, breath management, vocal production, diction, and care of the changing voice. 7th Grade Choir students will also learn how to become more sensitive, well-rounded musicians, through the development of their vocal and ensemble proficiency, through their continued development of music reading skills using solfege, through their continual learning of musical elements, and through music literature from a variety of musical traditions. The students then use these skills to prepare a wide variety of 2 and 3-part music for a Winter and a Spring Concert. Participation in the two evening concerts is mandatory. Dates are listed in the calendar section of the handbook.

8th Grade Choir

8th Grade Choir is an elective that meets for five periods per week. In 8th Grade Choir, further emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique and developing appropriate choral musicianship, including balance and blend, the ability to use proper dynamics and phrasing, and to sing in the style of the composition. Students continue to develop more advanced sight singing skills and acquire a broader knowledge of musical elements and musical styles through a wide variety of choral literature. The students then use all of these skills to prepare a wide variety of 3 or 4-part music for two Winter Concerts, two Spring Concerts, and an adjudication festival. Participation in the four evening concerts is mandatory. Dates are listed in the calendar section of the handbook.

Jefferson Middle School Choral Department

2019-2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BOLD & SHADED=Required Concert Activities for ALL JMS Choir Members

<i>December 2019</i>	<i>during school</i>	<u><i>Allegheny County Courthouse Holiday Performance</i></u> <i>(8th GRADE CHORUS ONLY)</i>
December 17&18, 2019	<u>during school</u>	<u>Grade-Level Dress Rehearsals</u>
December 18, 2019	<u>7:00p call</u>	<u>JMS Winter Choral Concert in High School Auditorium</u>
	<u>7:30p concert</u>	
<i>March 3, 2020</i>	<i><u>rehearsal</u></i>	<i>8th Grade Choir Dress Rehearsal</i>
<i>March 3, 2020</i>	<i><u>6:00p call</u></i>	<i>Performance with MMS 8th Grade Choir at the</i>
	<i><u>7:00p concert</u></i>	<i><u>Mt. Lebanon District Chorus Tiered Concert in</u></i> <i>HS Auditorium (8th GRADE CHORUS STUDENTS ONLY)</i>
<i>March 19, 20, & 21, 2020</i>	<i>7:30p</i>	<i>JMS Musical-To Be Announced!</i>
<i>May 29, 2020</i>	<i><u>7:00a-6:00p</u></i>	<i>High Note Adjudication Festival at CMU & Kennywood</i>
May 27 & 28, 2020	<u>during school</u>	<u>Grade-Level Dress Rehearsals</u>
May 28, 2020	<u>7:00p call</u>	<u>JMS Spring Choral Concert in Mellon Middle Auditorium</u>
	<u>7:30p concert</u>	

CONCERT ATTIRE

The basic concert attire for Jefferson Middle School Choir performances is listed below. Every effort has been made to keep costs down while maintaining a polished, professional appearance.

6th & 7th Grade

GIRLS

- black dress pants (no jeans) OR black skirt (knee length or longer)

OR

- white shirt, preferably a dress shirt
dark shoes

BOYS

- black dress pants (no jeans)
- white button-down dress shirt
- tie
- *dark socks and dark shoes*

8th Grade

GIRLS

- black dress pants (no jeans) OR black skirt (knee length or longer)
- black shirt, preferably a dress shirt

OR

- black dress (knee length or longer) & *dark shoes*

BOYS

- black dress pants (no jeans), white button-down dress shirt & bow tie (provided)
- *dark socks and dark shoes*

CURRICULUM

Music Education is an aural art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through singing, listening, and/or playing and instrument. In chorus, students interact with each other through a variety of learning experiences while they work on developing many mental and physical skills as mentioned in the class descriptions previously. While singing can be a lot of fun, there are many things to learn. The curriculum for all choir classes is based on the following *National Standards for Music Education* and *State Standards for Music Education*.

National Standards

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
 - a. choral works with harmony
 - b. choral works from various styles and historical periods
 - c. performing in choral ensembles
5. Reading and notating music
 - a. sight reads music
 - b. uses notation and symbols to organize musical ideas
6. Listening, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding the relationship between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

State Standards

- 9.1 Production, Performance, and Exhibition of Music
- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
- 9.3 Critical Response
- 9.4 Aesthetic Response

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the expectations set forth here, please keep in mind that all rules in the Jefferson Middle School Student Handbook apply to all members of the choir at all times, whether on school grounds or not.

Choral students will be expected to:

- always strive to be their best!
- be POSITIVE every time they come to class, prepared to work and learn.
- develop an attitude of wanting to improve every day.
- be willing to try new things.
- work together as a team, make a positive contribution to the choir (the team), and respect the effort of others.
- remain quiet when the teacher is talking and to practice concert etiquette at all times, even during rehearsals.
- listen carefully during rehearsal to improve the quality of the choir.
- ask questions by first raising their hand.
- be present for all dress rehearsals and performances.
- NOT bring food, drink, candy, or gum to class.
- bring a late slip if they are late for class.
- respect the personal space of other students.
- pay for any lost or damaged music at replacement cost. (Remember...concert music is the equivalent to a textbook!)
- return music folders to their assigned space before exiting the classroom.
- not borrow or use music from another student's folder without permission from Mr. Lash.

Discipline Policy

STRIKE 1: Talking or minor disruptions will result in a verbal or non-verbal warning.

STRIKE 2 & 2.5: Recurrent talking and disrupting will result in receiving a classroom time-out. If the student receives an additional time-out, they will also obtain an after-school or lunchtime detention in addition to a phone call home to work with parents on resolving the behavior issue.

STRIKE 3: If none of the above are effective OR if the behavior issue is extreme, the principals will be notified to assist in resolving the behavior issue.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Advance notice of all performances and rehearsals will be given. Please refer to the aforementioned calendar of events. Any changes, additions, or deletions will be announced immediately.

A performance is the equivalent of a major unit exam in other subject areas. If a student is absent from school the day of a rehearsal, performance, or other activity, that student will not be permitted to attend. An unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal or performance will result in a grade of "0" for that activity.

Excused absences, which require a WRITTEN EXCUSE, include:

- 1) family vacation/prearranged absences from school
- 2) student illness
- 3) death in the family/family emergency
- 4) religious holidays
- 5) school-sponsored events as approved by Mr. Lash

Students **MUST** have a WRITTEN EXCUSE signed by themselves and a parent/guardian and the excuse must be turned in to Mr. Lash at least ONE WEEK PRIOR to an activity if an excused absence is anticipated.

If an emergency or an extenuating circumstance arises, if possible please call 412-344-2000 x65027 or send an e-mail to jlash@mtlsd.net. A WRITTEN EXCUSE must be received by Mr. Lash no later than 10 days following the unanticipated absence.

An unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal or performance will result in a grade of "0" for that activity.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of personal electronic devices including: cell phones, iPods, iPads, cameras, laptops, etc. are strictly prohibited in hallways or the cafeteria during the school day (8:00am-2:58pm). Additionally, students may not, under any circumstance, use electronic devices in a restrooms and/or locker rooms. Use of a cell phone for making personal phone calls or sending personal text messages is strictly prohibited throughout the building during the school day (8:00am-2:58pm). Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off and put in lockers.

Personal electronic devices may be used for learning purposes within the classroom at the discretion of each individual teacher. Electronic devices will be confiscated if a student is found using the device in the prohibited areas (listed above), or in a classroom for an activity that has not been approved by the teacher. Devices that go off in class (ring or vibrate) will also be confiscated.

While students may be permitted to use personal electronic devices in the classroom, bringing them to school is at your own risk. The district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. If a student chooses to bring a personal technology device to school to use for learning purposes, he or she is solely responsible for the security and maintenance of their device.

GRADING POLICY

Vocal Assessments	approx. 25 points
Written Work/Quizzes	approx. 25 points
Group Project	approx. 30 points
Concert Attendance	approx. 50 points
Class Preparation and Participation	approx. 100 points

90%-100%	A
80%-89%	B
70%-79%	C
60%-69%	D
0%-59%	F

Students' grades in chorus are based on the following criteria:

1) **Vocal Assessments**

Students must periodically sing for Mr. Lash to evaluate her/his progress in the development of their voice, sight-singing, and the literature being studied. This will be done near the close of each marking period and any other times as deemed necessary. Each student will sing **BY THEMSELVES** & in a small group. Both assessments will be averaged for a total score.

2) **Written Work/Quizzes**

Students will complete music theory assignments, and complete concert reviews. Periodic quizzes will be given on music theory assignments and on other information related to the literature being studied.

3) **Group Project**

Students will complete a group project tailored to each grade level. More information on these projects will be distributed later in the fall.

4) **Concert Attendance**

Refer to previous section, *Attendance Policy*.

5) **Class Preparation and Participation**

Students receive 5 points for each day they are in chorus class. These points are given based on, but not limited to, the following: class input, always having a pencil, always knowing where we are rehearsing, being ready to sing when asked, singing with appropriate posture whether sitting or standing, listening carefully when a section other than your own is rehearsing, being prepared with music, putting music away at the close of class, and following all general classroom rules.