

TA Howard Middle School  
Choral Department

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# **Welcome!**

Welcome to another exciting new year! We have a lot of great things coming our way and I am so excited to work with all of you.

## **Dear Parents and Students,**

Your students are about to embark on an amazing experience that will hopefully be something that they continue throughout the rest of their lives. Here at Howard, we expect the best of our students, which means being present and on time to every rehearsal and performance. Choir is similar to sports in the aspect that we are a team and if one member is missing, the whole team suffers because of it. We want our students to learn and grow here and we hope that you will be just as supportive of that goal as we are.

We understand that there is a lot of information being thrown at you regarding the concerts, rehearsals and all of our other events throughout the semester. As a way to make both your life and mine easier, I ask you and your child(ren) to thoroughly read this handbook. Within it contains the dates of all of our important events including concerts, rehearsals, trips etc. It also goes into immense detail about our program and the standards we set for the students. The very last page is a contract that must be signed and turned in by both you, the parent, and your child, stating that you have read through the handbook and understand its content. Additionally, you, the parent, are asked to aid in the responsibilities of your child if you can.

Thank you so much,

**Ms. Gabriella Fresquez**

**Director of Choirs**

**TA Howard Middle School**

## Choir in the midst of Covid-19

**As you all can imagine, this year is going to look very different than in years past. The district and CDC have made a set of guidelines for everyone on campus to follow.**

- Be sure to always wear a mask when you walk into the classroom that completely covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- Every student is to maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet from each other to avoid spreading.
- At the end of every class period, we will disinfect all surfaces to be sure that there is no contamination between classes.

As of now, we do not plan on having any in-person concerts or social events for this coming semester. Things may change in the Spring semester but we have no way of knowing. I will do my best to keep both the students and parents updated as I receive information.

We are currently working to see if we can provide face shields to sing with rather than masks but we are still looking into details for that.

**We know that all of these precautions are not ideal when singing but it is for the safety of both you and everyone around you. This is not forever. We will continue to find new and creative ways of making music together.**

## Classroom Rules and Procedures

**The following rules have been established to ensure a positive and successful learning environment for all choir students:**

1. All school and district fine arts behavior policies will be followed.
2. Before class begins, all backpacks, cellphones and homework from other classes must be placed put away in the designated spot. **Cellphones are to be put in backpacks and NOT kept in a pocket.**
3. Be in your spot with your *folder, pencil and music* every day within the first minute after the bell rings.
4. Talk only with permission.
5. Respect yourself and others.
6. Food, drinks, gum and candy are not allowed in the choir room. Water is the only exception.
7. The choir director, NOT the bell, dismisses the class.
8. Please stay away from off-limits areas without permission from the director: choir office, pianos, storage closet, uniform cabinets and desk computer.
9. Proper singing position is required at all times, sitting or standing.
10. When the director, substitute teacher or any other adults are speaking, give them your full attention.
11. 100% participation is expected all the time. Students should be rehearsing and singing for the entire class period.
12. Make sure to throw away any trash, bottles and loose leaf paper that is left in the room.
13. Students are responsible for paying for lost copies of original music.
14. Everyone will receive a choir binder and pencil at the beginning of the year. It is the student's responsibility to replace the binder if misplaced or lost.

## **Choir Conduct Infractions Form**

Students will have to fill out a Choir Conduct Infractions form for any behavior violation listed in the Howard Choir Handbook or the MISD code of conduct. This form will contain the student's name, date of infraction and description of infraction. At the bottom of the form is a space for a Parent or Guardian to sign, showing that they have been made aware of their student's misbehavior. **The purpose of this form is to document accurately any instances where a student needs improvement with regards to conduct and behavior in association with the TA Howard choral program.**

Infractions can occur: during rehearsals, throughout the school day as well as before and after school, at concerts, performances off and on campus, choir services events, choir social events, and any event that can be associated with the Choral program which includes events not officially sponsored by the choir program, but include a significant amount of choir students gathered together or any instance that the directors or an administrator deems qualifying.

Infractions will be assigned points varying on the degree of each infraction. Points will be totaled and will result in a series of escalating consequences. Points will also be factored into the overall Audition score at the end of each school year. CCI Points will be reset at the beginning of each new semester.

Infraction points will be assigned at the director's discretion. Some common infractions are listed below:

**1 point:** Not having a music at a rehearsal; being tardy to a class, rehearsal or concert; using profanity; talking during rehearsal or performance; use of cell phone when not permitted.

**5 or more points:** Defiant Behavior that results in the class instruction stopping such as refusing to hand over a cell phone or talking back to the instructor including directors, voice teachers, and substitute teachers; being argumentative; being a disruption in rehearsal or at a performance

**10 points+:** Truancy or skipping class including violating restroom policy to leave campus; Hazing or Bullying; and use of illegal substances and any other general Infractions - Director Discretion.

### **Consequences:**

**\*\*If a student receives 5 or more CCI points in one class period, they will also be handled according to the Howard PBIS signing system that has been put in place.**

Once a student reaches 5 CCI points throughout the year, a parent email and CCI form will be sent indicating that their student has accumulated those points as well as description of all the infractions to date.

If a student were to accumulate 10 CCI points within a year, that student will be placed on Choral probation. Once on choral probation, the student will be given alternate assignments for a week. The student will not be able to participate in any choir rehearsals, concerts, social or service events for an entire week. Parents will be called in for a parent/teacher conference.

If a student were to accumulate 15 CCI points within a year, that student will be dismissed from any auditioned choir ensemble and may be denied future participation in the choral program. Students may not receive any program refunds and will be held to any financial obligations to the choir program.

**\*\* Any exceptions or extraneous circumstances will be studied on a case by case basis and will be dealt with at the directors' discretion.**

## **PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES**

### **Students:**

1. Failure to participate in a concert is a serious infraction. Concerts are assessments of the work done in class. Please see the Attendance Policy section for specific details concerning concert attendance and makeup opportunities.
2. Excused absences include but are not limited to: illness, death in the family, another school-related conflict.
3. If the absence from a concert is excused, there will be an alternate assignment available (Refer to the Grading policies).
4. Concerts are scheduled far enough in advance, so make arrangements as soon as you know the dates.
5. Reasons for missing a performance must be given directly to the Director no less than 24 hours **before the concert**. They must be written out formally and signed by your parents. If you are ill, please contact the Director as soon as possible.
6. There will be no laughing, talking, or whispering on the risers during a performance. If any does occur, the Director will stop the performance and ask the person causing the infraction to leave.
7. Uniforms are to be worn at all the concerts unless the Director instructs otherwise.
8. UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest is also a requirement of the course, if you are eligible.
9. Students who are not performance ready for a concert may be restricted from singing on stage. Students who are removed from a concert will have to do an alternate assignment.
10. It is the students' responsibility to check in with the director for attendance. Students must be in their seats 15 minutes before the concert starts unless otherwise stated by the directors.
11. Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off in the auditorium.
12. Students will remain respectful, attentive, and supportive of the other performing groups while seated in the auditorium.
13. Students should not leave a concert until they have helped put away the risers, piano, and shells. Students are also expected to help keep the choir room and any other classroom used clean and tidy for instruction the next day.
14. The State of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for secondary choral music outlines that concert attendance, evaluation and etiquette are an important part of the learning process for our students. **Therefore, students are required to stay for the entire concert.** Written evaluations of concerts will take place in class following each concert. Students who leave a concert early will be counted absent and will receive a zero.

### **Audience:**

1. Please turn off all electronic devices.
2. Please do not use flash photography.
3. Please stay seated for the duration of the concert. If you have to leave, please exit during applause and close the doors quietly.
4. No unnecessary yelling or calling out other students' names.
5. Please take any noisy children into the lobby.
6. Please do not save more than 2 seats per person.
7. Applaud once conductors hands are by their side.

## **Grading Policy**

### **Daily Work 60%**

- Class rehearsal and participation
- Before/After school rehearsals
- Written Assignments, Folder/Supplies Check, Sight-Reading Quizzes, Written Quizzes

### **Major Grades 40%**

- Concerts
  - Concerts are the assessment of our work in class and therefore, the most important test grades that we give. ATTENDANCE AT ALL CONCERTS IS MANDATORY.
- Sight-Reading Tests
- Projects

## **Attendance Policy**

**Excused Absences** must be pre-approved by the director unless it is an emergency. Excused absences include (but are not limited to) religious reasons, death in families, other conflicting school events and medical reasons. Students with excused absences will be given a zero for their concert grade until the make-up assignment is turned in. All excused absences need a doctor's note or a printed letter signed by the student's guardian. Director reserves the right to decide on the validity of the excuse.

**Unexcused Absences** will result in a zero for a grade. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to: vacations, forgetfulness, lack of a ride, babysitting younger siblings, practices or rehearsal with non-school groups or teams and apathy. Unexcused absences can result in the removal of a student from an ensemble.

### **In class Attendance**

1. Students are expected to be on time to class every day.
2. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class each period.
3. Anyone late to class by 5 minutes or more may marked Absent.
4. Students not in their seat after the bell has rung will be counted Tardy.
5. Students that are out of their spot for more than 5 minutes total in a given class may be issued CCI points.

### **Before/After School Rehearsal Attendance:**

Sometimes in order for our choirs to be successful and prepared for performances, extra rehearsals are needed outside of class time. The director is very respectful of our students' time and do not schedule any extra rehearsals, unless necessary. Those will be decided by the director and the rehearsal schedule will be published in advance. If a rehearsal is called, attendance is mandatory and the attendance policy in this document will be followed.

### **Make-up Assignments for Excused Absences**

1. For excused absences, the alternate assignment must be completed no later than exactly two (2) weeks after the concert. (i.e. If the concert is on a Tuesday, the assignment is due on Tuesday two weeks later)

2. IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION FOR AN EXCUSED ABSENCE AND PICK UP A RECORDING OF THE CONCERT AND SCHEDULE A SINGING MAKEUP WITH THE DIRECTOR.
3. The make-up assignment is a two-part assignment, consisting of a performance component and a written portion .
  - a. For the performance component, the director will schedule a time for all makeup singing assignments to be performed together. The student must attend that makeup grading session before, or after school to sing for the director the music that was performed in the concert. If a student has a scheduling conflict that cannot be avoided, s/he must contact the director before the scheduled makeup session to set up an alternate makeup session. During this session, the student will perform from memory any music that was sung from memory by the choir in the rehearsal or concert with the music. The student will be graded on all aspects of musicianship including but not limited to tone quality, rhythmic accuracy, pitch accuracy, vowel production, breath support, and interpretation. At the discretion of the director, the student will sing solo A Capella, with piano accompaniment, or with a recording of the concert.
  - b. For the written portion of the assignment, the student must write about concert etiquette as well as an analysis of the one piece that had been performed by his/her class. This should explore the composer’s history as well as a brief explanation of the text. The paper must also speak in detailed manner the about the performance expectations of that piece, using musical terms and ideas explored in class, including but not limited to aspects of tone quality, blend intonation, ensemble, interpretation, musical expression, breath support and phrasing and other musical and artistic ideas. **The paper should be 2-3 pages long, 12-point font.** All makeup work should be completed by the due date specified unless the alternate due date has been worked out ahead of time with the director. If the student does not promptly set up a make-up schedule upon his/her arrival back to school, the grade may remain a zero.
4. This make-up assignment is intended to reflect the importance of the concert preparation and performances as well as give the director a chance to assess the 6-9 weeks’ worth of classroom preparation that occurs before a concert. This is in accordance with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills criteria, set by the State of Texas. The concert is a major grade, so the make-up work reflects that.

### **Restroom Policy**

1. Students are expected to take care of bathroom needs during passing periods before the bell rings.
2. After the bell has rung, students will not be allowed to use the restroom unless it is an emergency.
3. If it is an emergency, you must get a pass and place your cellphone in the drawer provided until you return.
4. Once you return, you must sign and date the Emergency Restroom Binder located at the front of the classroom.
5. Multiple occurrences will result in a parent meeting. If a student has a medical need for frequent bathroom trips, a doctor’s note/clinic pass will be required.

## **UNIFORMS and Member Dues**

*There is a Choir Fee that will be due TBA. This fee will cover your Uniform Rental, Choir T-Shirt, Music, and Supplies for the entire year. If this is a hardship, please communicate with me and we can work out some sort of payment arrangement.*

### **Beginner Girls' Treble Choir \$15**

Students are responsible for providing their own black dress pants (NO JEANS, JEGGINGS, YOGA PANTS, etc.) or a long dress skirt, black dress top (NO T-SHIRTS), black closed-toe dress shoes (NO TENNIS SHOES). All uniform items must follow school dress code.

### **Boys' Choir/ Advanced Boys' Tenor-Bass Choir \$30.00**

Students will be responsible for their own black dress pants (NOT JEANS), black dress socks, black dress shoes (NO tennis shoes), and black belt. Boys will be fitted for their tux shirts, and will be responsible for maintaining them throughout the year. These will need to be returned dry-cleaned at the end of the year.

### **Concert and Advanced Treble Choir \$30.00**

Concert dress (provided). The girls will need to provide their own solid black closed-toe dress shoes. You may need to adjust the hem lengths...DO THAT EARLY!!! (Do not cut the dress)..These will need to be returned dry-cleaned at the end of the year. No necklaces or bracelets should be worn with concert attire.

STUDENTS WHOSE UNIFORMS ARE NOT TURNED IN ON TIME WILL BE FINED ACCORDINGLY.

## **MONEY TURN IN PROCEDURE**

- Checks should be made out to T.A. Howard Choir and should include the student's name.
- Cash is also acceptable.
- Beginning of the year fees (Choir Fee, T-Shirt, etc.) may be paid in one check.
- Students will sign a tab sheet when money is collected.
- Director will collect Forms and Fees DURING CLASS (not during passing periods)

## **Uniform Rules**

1. In order to participate in a concert, you must have your complete and presentable uniform in place. **NO PIECES MISSING!** You will be checked by chaperones before each performance. If your uniform is incomplete, you will not be able to perform and therefore receive a zero for that performance.
2. Both men and women must have their hair completely out of their face.
3. Women may wear small earrings and/or rings. Other than that, no jewelry will be allowed.

# Contract Forms & Fees Checklist and Payment

Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT Shirt Size**  
Youth Large      S      M      L      XL      XXL  
(circle one)

## Additional Shirts (optional): \$10.00 each

Sizes:      YL    S    M    L    XL    XXL  
Quantity    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_

(3XL and 4XL are and additional \$1.50)

Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

## Required Fees

CHECK ONE

Choir Fee (Concert, Advanced Girls, and Boys)      \$25.00

OR

Choir Fee (Beginner Girls only)      \$15.00

**Total amount due** (fee plus additional shirts)      \_\_\_\_\_

**(Cash, Money Order or Check payable to  
TAH Choir...)**

To Be filled out by Director:  
Dues complete: Y/N  
Date:

# Signed Choir Contract

## FOR STUDENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print student's name), \_\_\_\_\_ (class period), have received the T.A. Howard Choral Program Handbook, Contract and Calendar. I have read all policies and information. I understand the responsibilities therein, and commit to following all guidelines of the program.

## FOR GUARDIAN

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print guardian's name), have received the Choir Handbook, Contract and Calendar. I have read all policies regarding my students and attendance. I understand therein, the responsibilities and commit to following the guidelines of the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **Information and Medical Release Form**

Notify the choir office as soon as possible if any changes need to be made to this information

Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother/Guardian Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Father/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Father/Guardian Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Father/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Insurance \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

List any allergies the student has (including drug allergies)

\_\_\_\_\_

List any medications that are being taken

\_\_\_\_\_

List any conditions that may restrict physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I do hereby grant Howard Choir Director, or their designees, the authority to seek medical attention for the above named student in the event of an emergency or in any situation that requires medical attention.

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

**PHOTO RELEASE**  
**HOWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT**

I hereby authorize the Howard Middle School Choral Department permission to use my likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including but not limited to: printed publications, newsletters, programs, digital publications, organization and school websites. I understand and agree that any photograph using my likeness will become property of Howard Middle School Choral Department. I acknowledge that I will receive no financial compensation for the use of photographs in my likeness.

I authorize Howard Middle School Choral Department to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute this photo for purposes of publicizing Howard Middle School Choral Department programs or for any other related, lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photograph.

I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge Howard Middle School Choral Department from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other person acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have reason of this authorization.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Guardian signature required if under 18 years of age*

**OR**

I **DO NOT** authorize the Howard Middle School Choral Department permission to use my likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications at this time.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Guardian signature required if under 18 years of age*

## Parent/Guardian Volunteering

And YES! We do need your help! Without your participation, some of our events could never happen. We will welcome any willingness to volunteer, no matter how small.

District policy requires that all volunteers working with our students have a criminal background check. Some of you have likely submitted your application at registration. If you have not, we encourage you to submit an application online at [www.mansfieldisd.org](http://www.mansfieldisd.org) if you thing you would like to help in some way.

Approval can take anywhere from 2 to 4 weeks to complete. Don't delay!!!

### PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT(S) BELOW THAT BEST APPLY:

\_\_\_ I am available during the school day to volunteer.

\_\_\_ I am available on nights and weekends to volunteer.

\_\_\_ I can help any time!!!

\_\_\_ My schedule is varied, but please contact me and I'll help if possible.

\_\_\_ I am unable to volunteer this year.

*Please be on the lookout for emails requesting help and reply as soon as possible with your availability!*

Volunteer Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ "I have already submitted an MISD volunteer form for the 2020-2021 school year."