

2019-20 Georgetown ISD Choir Handbook

Choral Staff - Georgetown ISD

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GISD Choir Department Mission

The choral music department of Georgetown Independent School District believes in the philosophy that music plays a vital role in the whole educational development of the individual. The goals of the GISD choral department are to afford each student, according to his or her abilities and interests, educational experiences and opportunities to develop his or her highest potential in the performing arts.

The goal of the GISD Choral Department is to create students who...

- are musically literate,
- have a love and appreciation for choral music,
- are prepared upon graduation to gain entrance into a college, church, or community choral program.

Concepts and Competencies

Several different areas are addressed in the classroom during the school year. While all classes utilize the state adopted TEKS, the following concepts and competencies are addressed as core ideals in our classrooms:

- Vocal Techniques
- Choral Techniques
- Music Theory
- Hand-signs and Solfege
- Music History and Literature
- Listening Skills
- Performance Skills
- Mental and Physical Development
- Citizenship
- Self-Expression

Choir Activity Fee

Choir activity fees cover uniform rental/cleaning, supplies and help defray the cost of accompanist needs for competitions and concerts.

Grading Policy

Students earn a grade based on mastery of State required TEKS, demonstrating diligent effort, quality mastery of work, and daily rehearsal participation through regular attendance and punctuality.

Full credit for attendance at rehearsals and performances is based on call times. Unexcused Late arrival will result in a lowered grade.

Penalties will be assigned as follows:

- An unexcused absence from a public performance or required rehearsal will constitute a 0 test grade for the grading period from which the infraction occurs.

Classroom Behavioral Expectations

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| 1. Conduct yourself properly at all times. | 7. Do not talk during rehearsals. Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged before speaking. Maintain the highest level of rehearsal behavior. |
| 2. Sing to the best of your ability at all times. | 8. Take care of all choir equipment and materials. |
| 3. Follow directors' and all adult instructions the first time they are given (provided they are legal, ethical, and moral). | 9. Use the restroom, drinking fountain and grooming articles before or after class only. You may bring water bottles to use during class time. |
| 4. Be on time to all choir activities. | 10. Do not leave the room without permission. |
| 5. Bring all required materials to choir activities. | |
| 6. Gum, food and drink are NEVER allowed in any choir area (including practice rooms, ensemble rooms, storage rooms, offices). Water that is in bottles will be permitted. | |

Consequences

1. Warning/conference with the student.
2. Teacher assigned consequences may include:
 - conference with student and/or phone conference parent
 - re-assigned seating
 - lowered choir participation grades
 - participation in any choir trip revoked
 - other choir privileges revoked
3. Office referral
4. Removal from choir as your elective

Hazing, Bullying and Intimidation in GISD Fine Arts Programs

It is the philosophy of the Georgetown ISD Fine Arts Department that every student enrolled in a Fine Arts course is entitled to a positive experience that encourages a life-long love for and involvement in the arts. Based upon this belief, it is critical that each student, parent and faculty member have a positive experience while participating in GISD Fine Arts activities. Students have the right to a safe and positive learning environment. This learning environment should be free of disruptions to the learning process. Hazing, bullying, intimidations, and physical or emotional threats must be considered as serious impediments to the learning process and cannot be tolerated. These incidents could occur in any combination between students, parents and/or staff members. Any event such as these must be reported to school district personnel immediately so that corrective actions can be made before events could escalate. All students must be made aware of how to recognize these dangerous behaviors and must be informed of procedures to safely report these types of activities with no fear of retribution or negative consequence. Likewise, parents have the responsibility to report inappropriate activities to school district personnel with no fear of reprisal by district personnel toward any student in the program.

The recommended course of action when inappropriate action is witnessed or experienced is as follows:

- a. Witness, victim or any other person who is aware of a potential problem should report the inappropriate behavior to the activity sponsor as quickly as possible – normally within 24 hours.
- b. The activity director will immediately report this information to campus level administration. The director and campus administration will begin investigating the report with the intention of quickly putting an end to the inappropriate behavior(s). The Director of Fine Arts will be informed of the report(s).
- c. When appropriate, the campus administrator will instigate disciplinary action if such action is warranted.
- d. Campus administration will report to the Director of Fine Arts: 1) the alleged incident; 2) investigation outcome(s) and 3) actions taken, if any, to correct the behavior(s)

Concert Etiquette

Choir students will exhibit proper concert etiquette during all performances to show knowledge of concert practices, and to show respect for all performers. Students will be graded on their concert etiquette. The following rules should be followed by not only students, but by all people attending formal concert performances!

1. Talking during a performance is not allowed. Talking is disrespectful to other performers and to audience members who wish to hear the performance. Talk in between pieces of music, and stop talking when you see that music is about to start.
2. Do not leave your seat for any reason other than extreme emergency. You have ample time to use the restroom and drinking fountain before concerts begin; therefore, these are not considered extreme emergencies. If you must leave, do so quietly and inconspicuously between pieces or during applause. Make sure the auditorium doors do not slam shut.
3. No food or drink in the auditorium, including the stage and the backstage area. Water must be in a closed container.
4. Support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling and calling names are considered inappropriate during formal concerts. Audience members should never cause attention to be taken off the performers on stage.
5. During serious music, applaud when the conductor lowers his or her arms.
6. During pop or jazz music you may applaud for a soloist during the piece.
7. In pieces that have more than one movement, applaud after the final movement. This will be noted in the concert program. The conductor will lower his or her arms when the final movement is over.
8. Set a good example for the audience. Other people may not know how to act at an choir concert and will be watching orchestra students for clues.
9. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off during concerts.
10. Move to the stage carefully and quietly, especially upon reaching the stairs.
11. Enjoy the concert. This is the only time anyone will ever get to see it!

Concert Uniforms

Students are expected to follow the listed uniform guidelines below, without exception. Students may not be allowed to perform and/or their grade may be affected if the following guidelines are not met.

Informal Uniforms

Informal choir uniforms should be worn at informal choir events at the Director's request.

Formal Uniforms

GISD provides the formal uniforms as a portion of the Activity Fee. Concert dresses are used for the ladies, tuxes for the men at the HS, and light formalwear for the men at the middle schools. Students are responsible for providing shoes.

Guidelines are as follows -

Ladies must purchase BLACK, closed toe shoes. Flip-flops are not acceptable. Large, tall heels are not acceptable.

Men must provide their own black socks and black dress shoes. Black athletic shoes are not acceptable.

Failure to adhere to any listed uniform guideline may prevent the student from performing with the ensemble. Students with an extenuating circumstance should see a choir director PRIOR to the day of the concert.

Formal Uniform Guideline

1. Formal choir uniforms will be issued during the Fall of the school year.
 - Choir students are financially responsible for all parts of their formal choir uniforms that they use, including dresses, jackets, pants, ties, cummerbunds, and garment bags. Repair and/or replacement costs are the responsibility of the student.
2. Formal choir uniforms and other parts are numbered and will be tracked through the choir department.
3. Uniforms should be treated with pride.
4. Proper shoes and socks must be worn with the uniform at all times.
5. Hair must be pulled back as part of the uniform.
6. Jewelry must not be worn with choir uniforms. This includes necklaces, watches, and bracelets. Earrings and rings must be small and inconspicuous and kept to a minimum. Men will not wear earrings during performances. We will follow the GISD policy for piercings

Alterations and Care of Formal Uniforms

1. Never cut any material from a choir uniform in an effort to make it fit. Directors will issue proper hemming instructions when issuance of the uniform occurs.
2. Students will return the uniform by a date determined by the director. Failure to meet this expectation may result in disciplinary referral. Report cards and schedules or diplomas may be held until the uniform is returned. All hems and alterations must be removed before a choir uniform can be checked in.

Eligibility

Students do not have to be eligible to participate in the required co-curricular concerts. Students in I.S.S., GAP or BIC at the time of an evening concert are not allowed to perform in or attend the concert. If a daytime performance or rehearsal causes the student to miss another class, the student is responsible to promptly make up all missed work.

Co-Curricular Choir Activities

Curricular Choir Activities are those choir activities that occur as an extension of the choir class, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Curricular Choir Activities include graded choir concerts, rehearsals and sectionals.
- Curricular Choir Activities may occur during school, before or after school, or on the weekend.
- Eligibility is not a factor when determining participation in curricular choir activities.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-Curricular Activities are those choir activities, particularly contests, which occur beyond the regular, required choir activities, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Students are eligible during the next grading period if they pass all of their classes on their report card with a grade of 70 or above.
- Students who receive grades of "Incomplete" on their report card in any subject are considered ineligible. Students have 7 days after the end of the 9 weeks period to complete the missing work and have their grade changed to passing to regain eligibility.
- Students who receive grades of Incomplete on their report card but make up the work AFTER 7 days after the end of the 6 weeks period will not regain eligibility.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report card in any subject are ineligible, even if the student completes work to get the grade changed after the 9 weeks is over, unless the failing grade was given in error by the teacher.
- According to UIL, there is no special compensation given to Special Education students if the modifications set out in the A.R.D. have been met by the teacher.
- Students who are ineligible due to grades may regain eligibility at the end of the 4th week of a 9 weeks period by receiving passing grades for all of their classes on their progress report (given at the end of the 3rd week of the 9 weeks period). If eligibility is not regained at that time, the student will have another opportunity at the end of the 7th week by the same process as stated earlier. Students who fail to follow through with their responsibility regarding grades may be removed from choir or placed in a lower choir.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report cards or UIL grade checks may or may not be allowed to participate in choir activities. Participation will be determined by the choir director, in accordance with choir policy, school district policy and UIL rules.

Conflicts with Choir Activities

When a student is involved in more than one activity that requires after school time, conflicts may occur. The student must notify all affected parties (choir directors, parents, coaches, employers, sponsors) when there is a conflict so that there is time to determine how to handle the conflict (compromise, miss one or the other activity, work out a ride, etc.). Here is a list of activities a choir student may be involved in and their "priority".

This list should help students to know when they have a commitment how to handle it.

- A UIL event takes precedence over any non-UIL event.
- A district level event takes precedence over any non-district, lower level event.
- A performance/district level event takes precedence over a practice.
- A practice for a UIL or district level event takes precedence over a practice for a non-competitive performance/game.
- When there are two activities of equal importance (practices, performances/games, competitions) the student will need to work out a compromise with all parties involved.
- A practice for a one time performance takes precedence over a routine, regularly scheduled practice.
- A school event takes precedence over a non-school event, even if that non-school event is a competition.
- A Varsity level event takes precedence over a Non-Varsity level event.

Students MUST check event calendars for ALL of their scheduled activities for conflicts as soon as dates are available. Sometimes, a student will need to make a choice regarding activities that are of equal importance without fear of reprisals or forfeiture of status/position. Family events must be scheduled around REQUIRED choir activities.

Choir Students with Jobs

- Having to work is NOT considered an excused absence from any required, graded choir activity. Missing a required, graded choir activity for work is considered an unexcused absence, and will follow the GISD policy for make-up work.
- Students should notify employers well in advance (at least one month or as required by your employer) of all required choir activities.
- Students may request an extra copy of the choir calendar or may request a letter from the choir directors to give to their employer regarding required choir activities that may interfere with work. This letter is available in the choir room. The letter must be completed by the student, with a teacher signature, at least two weeks prior to the events listed on the letter.

Choir Contests

UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest (MS/HS)

This is an optional contest for students who choose to attend at both high school and middle school.

- Students are judged based on their individual or small group performance.
- Directors choose songs from the UIL Prescribed Music List.
- The director will have sole discretion in choosing the appropriate difficulty level for each student.
- Participation in this event will require extra time outside of the school day.
- Students must demonstrate proficiency on the solo before being allowed to participate at contest.
- If a student drops out of the contest process at any time for any reason, their money for fees and accompanist will not be refunded.
- Students are required to pay entry fee and accompanist fee by the director designated deadline to be able to participate.

UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest (MS/HS)

This is a required contest for all ACADEMICALLY ELIGIBLE students in selected ensembles at the middle and high school.

Students are judged based on the overall performance of the choir in which they participate.

- This UIL contest takes precedence over other school activities and any absence from school is considered excused. Students are responsible for any missed work.

- Rehearsals for this contest will take place during class; however, sectional and other rehearsals before or after school will be required.
 - Any student who misses required UIL rehearsals will not be allowed to participate in the contest, at the director's discretion.
 - Students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency on the music before being allowed to participate.

TMEA All-State Choir Auditions (HS) - TMEA All-Region Choir (MS)

Auditions are **OPTIONAL** for all students.

To become a member of the All-State Choir, a student must be selected through a series of auditions:

1. District Auditions (September)
2. Region Auditions (October)
3. Pre-Area Auditions (November)
4. Area Auditions (January)

Cost

Students are required to pay the TMEA Region 26 Vocal Audition fee.

Sectionals

Sectionals will be held to rehearse All-State audition music. Sectionals are **REQUIRED** in order to participate in this process. Students will be required to sign a contract prior to participating in the audition process. Any student who does not meet the requirements set out in the contract will not be allowed to audition. Students are expected to follow through with a commitment to this audition.

- Dates and times for section rehearsals will be announced by directors.
- Sectionals begin the 1st week of school and continue until throughout the entire year until there are no more students left in the process or the process has ended.
- Individual rehearsals will be provided at no cost to students with a director. Sign up sheets will be posted.

Trips

Local Trips

The GISD Choir takes many small choir trips throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend these trips as chaperones. Trips may include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Austin Lyric Opera performances ▪ Local choir concerts ▪ Retreats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UIL ▪ Auditions |
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Festival Trip

GISD high school choirs do take overnight trips at the Director's discretion.

Trip location will be determined by the Choir Directors and announced at the beginning of the school year. Students in all choirs are highly encouraged to attend.

- Students and parents must sign a Travel Contract when signing up to attend a Festival trip or any trip that costs money.
- Trip refunds are controlled by the tour company. The refund policy will be set out in the trip information letter and the Travel Contract given to each student when signing up for the festival trip. Students will forfeit all or part of the money they paid to attend the trip if they cancel **FOR ANY REASON** after the refund deadlines.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Georgetown ISD. Students must follow all GISD Choir and School rules as well as legal, ethical, and moral requests from directors or chaperones while on the trip.
- Receipts will be issued for all trip payments made that reflect the balance due.
- Trip payments must be made in a timely manner so that services providers can be paid on time.
- Parents are invited to attend this trip. Cost for parents is the same as for students, minus festival entry fees

Payment Information

The following procedure should be used whenever any type of payment is made to the GISD Choir:

1. If the payment is cash, you must have exact change.
2. If payment is being made to the choir Booster Club, please make check payable to the GPAA- (School Name) Choir.
3. If payment is being made to the choir activity account, please make check payable to School Name Choir.
4. **Please include the choir student's name in the "memo" area of all checks turned in.**
5. All payments, especially cash, should be paid before school starts in the morning.
6. All payments should be turned in to the director in charge of the activity.
7. Payments must be made on time or students may be denied the opportunity to participate in the activity.
8. Please send all money, and accompanying forms, in an envelope marked with the student's name, class period, GISD Choir, and what the money is for.

Private Voice Lessons

Optional private voice lessons are available for all GISD choir students. GISD Choirs have a qualified staff of contracted Voice teachers. Contact a choir director for more information.

GISD Choir Parent Organization

A parent of any GISD choir student is a member of the Choir Parent Organization. Frequency of parent meetings will be discussed at the first scheduled parent meeting of the year.

GISD Choir Handbook Contract

PARENT/STUDENT AGREEMENT: GEORGETOWN ISD CHORAL DEPARTMENT

Please read and sign below as indicated:

I have read and understand all the policies and guidelines stated in the Georgetown ISD Choral Department Handbook. I realize that it takes full cooperation, a willingness to make sacrifices and dedication from each student for the program to continue to improve. I further realize that failure to follow the stated policies or directions from the Choir Directors will result in appropriate action which could lead to a change in performance status or dismissal from the choir.

Signature of student

Date

I have read and understand the policies and guidelines stated in the Georgetown ISD Choral Department Handbook.

Signature of parent

Date

Parent Email address

A Signed Contract is due by the end of the second week of school. Please return to your student's Director.