

FORBES MIDDLE SCHOOL



CHOIR HANDBOOK 2019-2020

Mission Statement

The mission of the Forbes MS choral music program is to provide students the opportunity for musical growth and vocal development as an individual and as a member of an ensemble. Students study and perform music of all styles, various historical periods and cultures. Students learn the value of teamwork, cooperative learning, critical listening and self-evaluation. The FMS Choir program is open to any student without regard to handicap, race, religion, sex, ethnic heritage or national origin.

Dear Forbes Middle School Choir Member and Parent,

Welcome to the Forbes Middle School Choir Program! I am so glad you chose to be a part of this team, and I am eager to begin making superb music with you for the 2019-2020 school year.

The FMS Choir Handbook can be found on our choir website (paper copies provided upon request). Please refer to the handbook throughout the year as it contains information pertaining to the policies and regulations this organization adheres to. The choir program procedures and guidelines have been implemented to ensure that every student has a positive, rewarding, and fulfilling musical experience. All choir members and parents are required to read the entire manual carefully at the beginning of each school year to avoid conflicts with the policies and rules stated herein.

Additionally your child has been given a Choir Packet that contains the following:

- **Choir Handbook Contract (Blue)**
- **Student Travel and Medical Information (White)**
- **Student Information (Pink)**
- **Uniform Contract (Green)**
- **Choir T-Shirt Order Form (Gold)**
- **Fundraising Permission Form (Purple)**
- Choir Calendar 2019-2020 (Yellow)

Documents listed in **BOLD FONT** must be signed and returned by **Friday, August 30, 2019**. Additionally, you have received our Choir Calendar with important dates and mandatory events throughout the school year. Please transfer these dates to your family calendar to avoid later conflicts. You will receive prior notice of any additional dates/events/rehearsals not yet indicated on the calendar.

Scan the QR Code provided to direct you to the Forbes Choir Website:



Again, I look forward to a great year of music making and maintaining our tradition of choral excellence!

Sincerely,

Deanna Errisuriz, Director
Forbes Middle School Choir
(512) 943-5150 ext. 7725
errisurizd@georgetownisd.org

Communication

Communication between parents, students, and choir directors is important to the success of the program and to help each student reach their potential. We strongly encourage parents to be actively involved in the FMS Choir Program and to reach out with any questions or concerns.

- **Choir Website:** <https://sites.google.com/georgetownisd.org/falcon-choir/home/>
- **Email:** It is important that ALL parents provide email addresses to be used specifically and only for FMS Choir. Directors will use email to communicate announcements, reminders, and important information.
- **Remind App:** Remind is a safe way for teachers to communicate to parents and students via text message. **To sign up for Important FMS Choir alerts, text your student class code to 810-10.**

Period	Class Code
1 st - Beginner Choir	@forbesbc1
2 nd - JV Treble	@jvtreb2
3 rd - Varsity Treble	@vartreb3
5 th - Beginner Choir	@forbesbc5
6 th - Varsity Tenor-Bass	@vartb6
7 th - JV Tenor-Bass	@jvtb7

Choir Objectives

In accordance with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) grades 6-8, the student will:

- Study Vocal Techniques
 - Produce good vocal tone
 - Demonstrate proper diction
 - Improve breath support
- Study Choral Techniques
 - Achieve choral balance/blend
 - Achieve good intonation/tone quality
 - Achieve rhythmic accuracy
 - Achieve expressive, artistic interpretation
- Study Music Theory - *Utilize an ongoing method of sight-reading to increase music literacy/proficiency*
 - Knowledge of pitch and rhythmic notation
 - Knowledge of key and time signatures
 - Knowledge of musical symbols and terminology
- Study Music History and Literature
 - Experience and discuss as variety of choral styles, eras, and composers through music studied and performed
 - Listen critically to live and recorded performances
- Performance opportunities as a soloist and an ensemble.

Code of Conduct

The Forbes Middle School Falcon Choirs will conduct themselves with **PRIDE**:

Preparation - *Be ready with a purpose in mind*

Respect - *Value yourself, others, and property*

Integrity - *Do the right thing, even when no one is watching*

Dedication - *Finish what you start regardless of circumstances, feelings, or distractions*

Effort - *Try your best even when it is difficult*

Rewards for abiding by the Falcon Choir Code of Conduct:

- A sense of accomplishment and pride in yourself and the ensemble
- Family, friends, teachers, and community will know of your achievements
- Participation in extra-curricular choral activities
- Incentives such as games, field trips, awards, prizes, etc.

Supplies

The following materials will be provided by the FMS Choir Department:

- ½ Inch Black Binder
- Music

Students are responsible for purchasing the following supplies and for bringing materials to class every day*:

- Spiral notebook
- Pencil Pouch
- Pencils
- Highlighters

Students are expected to maintain the above supplies in a neat, and orderly manner and will be asked to replace any unkempt materials at the student's expense. Supply checks will be conducted throughout the school year to ensure student preparedness and will be counted towards the rehearsal grade.

**Any concerns with obtaining the above supplies should be addressed to a choir director immediately.*

Uniforms

All Varsity and Junior Varsity choir students are required to have a formal and an informal choir uniform. Beginning choir students will only need an informal choir uniform to perform with for the entire school year. Students with inappropriate concert attire will not be allowed to participate in the performance, and thus their grade will be affected.

Formal Uniforms

- **Varsity Treble/JV Treble Choirs**– Black floor-length dress provided; the cost of a replacement dress is \$80. Each singer provides her own closed-toe, low-to-no heel, black dress shoe. The appropriate brassiere is to be worn (no sports bras), hair is tied back and away from face, and no jewelry is worn unless instructed by the director.
- **Varsity Tenor-Bass/JV Tenor-Bass Choirs**– Tuxedo shirt (\$20), silver tie (\$15), and black tuxedo pants (\$30) provided; the cost of a replacement uniform in its entirety is \$65. Each singer provides his own white undershirt, black dress shoes, and black dress socks.

No alterations should be made to the uniform without permission from the choir director. Do not use glue, tape, or permanent stitching. Hems must be stitched by hand only.

All formal uniforms must be returned to the choir department by **Monday, April 6, 2020** for dry-cleaning. Students that do not turn in their uniform by the aforementioned deadline will be financially responsible for having their uniform dry-cleaned and returned before the end of the school year.

Informal Uniform

All students are required to purchase a FMS Choir t-shirt for **\$13**. Students are required to wear blue jean pants that should be neat, not have holes or excessive fraying, and comply with the school dress code. Closed-toed tennis shoes must be worn (no sandals, flip-flops, slides, Toms, etc.). All upperclassmen will wear their informal uniform for the Fall Choir Concert and less formal performances.

Choir Officers

Officer positions designated by Director according to necessity for the school year

President/Co-Presidents

- Coordinates all student officers of the choir
- Promotes choir activities
- Sets good example for all choir members by exemplary behavior
- Works with directors to coordinate activities
- Master of Ceremonies for Fall, Winter, and Spring Concerts

Section Leaders

- Assists with daily attendance and attendance for concerts/events
- Responsible for classroom reports upon the director's absence/assists substitute
- Promotes high morale and discipline in the choir

Activities Chair

- Promotes and encourages attendance at all choir activities
- Responsible for creating/distributing/posting flyers for choir concerts
- Takes pictures at choir activities
- Works with director and other officers to promote and coordinate activities

Librarians

- Assists director with all choir library duties
- Stamps and numbers new choir music in preparation for filing
- Assists directors with music check-out/in and record keeping
- Helps maintain a neat and organized choir library

Uniform Managers

- Assists directors in maintaining neat and orderly uniform closets
- Assists directors with issuing uniforms for new students
- Assists directors with collecting uniforms for end-of-year cleaning
- Assists with uniform inspection before performances

**Any student interested in an officer position must be able to stay after school at least once a month for meetings and other activities. Students that hold an officer position must promote the values of the Falcon Choir Code of Conduct as well as abide by all behavioral expectations. Failure to do so will result in removal of officer position.*

Consequences

Failure to comply with the above expectations will result in the following consequences:

- Student/Class warning
- Refocus form documentation
- Parent phone call
- Rehearsal grade deduction
- Parent, teacher, and student conference
- Office referral*

**Severe offenses will automatically result in an office referral; extreme circumstances will be dealt with campus office procedure; continuous failure to obey class rules may result in the students' removal from choir.*

Rehearsal Expectations

- Be prepared to work hard and work together while maintaining a courteous, positive, and supportive attitude. Singing in choir requires teamwork and cooperation to be successful.
- Enter the rehearsal space quietly. Be in your assigned seat, quiet, with your binder and supplies, ready to begin rehearsal *before the tardy bell rings*.
- Talking is not allowed during rehearsal. If your section is singing you are to sing with correct posture (sitting or standing); if your section is not singing, you are expected to be following along and silently studying your part.
- Raise your hand to be addressed. Be courteous to others and listen while they are speaking.
- Be kind and respectful to peers, teachers, and guests.
- Eating and gum chewing are not allowed in the choir room. Excessive reminders of gum will result in a gum chewing essay.
- You are encouraged to bring water.
- Remain in your assigned seat throughout class. All personal needs should be taken care of *before the tardy bell rings*. This includes restroom, Kleenex, materials, grooming, and water. Remain in your seat until the choir director (not the bell) dismisses class.

Grading Policy

Each nine weeks' grades are averaged according to the percentages listed below:

- 70% Rehearsal Grade/Skill Assessment/Written Assessment
- 30% Performance Grade

If there are no performances in a grading period, grades will be averaged as such:

- 70% Rehearsal Grade
- 30% Skill/Written Assessment

Rehearsal Grade

Rehearsal grades are determined by the following:

- Being prepared and having all supplies
- Following all rehearsal expectations
- Being focused, actively participating in daily activities including warm-ups, sight-reading, all singing activities, and score preparation.

Extra Rehearsals

There may be times when choirs are required to attend after school rehearsals in preparation for a performance. These rehearsals will be scheduled no later than two weeks in advance. **All extra rehearsals are mandatory because they are co-curricular activities and are considered extensions of the classroom.** An unexcused absence can negatively impact the overall choir grade. Points will be deducted for tardiness.

Skill and Written Assessment Grade

Skill and written assessment grades include:

- Any written work
- Sight-reading tests
- Sight-singing tests to demonstrate understanding of repertoire and proper vocal technique.
- Student self-assessment of performance
- Teacher observation and assessment of rehearsal skills
- Any additional assessments given

Performance Grade

In order to maintain a high quality choir program, attendance from all members is essential. **All performances of the FMS Choirs are mandatory because they are co-curricular activities and are considered extensions of the classroom.** The highest grade a student can receive is 100% for each concert in which they participate.

- 50% of the concert grade will be an assessment of the student's contribution to the performance goals:
 - Appropriate attire is worn
 - Arriving to performance call time *on time*
 - Exhibiting appropriate concert etiquette
- 50% of the concert grade will be the performance itself

Concert grades will be lowered for inappropriate concert behavior such as talking, creating distractions during a performance, tardiness, improper uniform, etc.

Students who miss a concert must have their parents call the choir office, e-mail the director, or bring a written excuse to the director the day the student returns to school after the concert. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "0" for the performance section of the concert grade. Concerts will only be excused in instances of severe illness (fever, vomiting, etc.) or family emergency. If the absence is excused, the student will be graded only on the student's contribution to the performance goal and the absence will not affect the overall grade. Forgetting about the concert, not having a ride, not having a uniform, etc. will not be considered excused concert absences and will result in a grade of "0" for the performance portion of the grade. Students in I.S.S. at the time of an evening concert are not allowed to perform in or attend the concert as per school policy. Alternate assignments will not be given to any student who misses a performance. Concert grades cannot be made up. **Please refer to the Choir Calendar for concert dates/locations.**

Concert Behavior Expectations

Choir students will exhibit appropriate concert behavior during all performances, in either their own choir or as an audience member. Concert etiquette is an integral part of choral music education. Appropriate conduct in formal and informal concert settings is included in the T.E.K.S. set by the Texas Education Agency. These rules are to be followed in every concert setting:

- Talking is not permitted on stage or in the audience. It is disrespectful to the performers on stage and audience members.
- Do not distract the performing choir in any way.
- Do not leave your seat for any reason during a performance. You will be given time to use the restroom and get a drink of water before the concert. If you must leave, do so as quietly and inconspicuously as possible. Leave between songs only.
- No food or drink is allowed on stage, backstage, or in the seating area. This includes water bottles and gum.
- Cell phones are not permitted on stage or in the audience at any time.
- Move between the seating area and stage in quiet, single-file lines. Sit in your assigned seat/row. Do not talk as you enter or exit.
- Once the song is finished and the director's hands have lowered to their sides, support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. is not acceptable.
- Set a good example for the audience and other students. Other people may not know how to behave in a concert setting.
- We hope all parents and guests will stay for the concert when bringing a student to a concert. **If a student needs to be picked up, please do so in a timely manner.**
- Stay for the entire concert.

Eligibility

UIL and Competitions

Participation in the UIL Concert and Sight Reading Evaluation is **mandatory** for our Varsity and Junior Varsity choir students. Students participating in events such as Solo and Ensemble, All-Region Choir Auditions, UIL Concert and Sight Reading Evaluation, any music festival/contest, must follow all of the eligibility requirements set by the Texas Education Agency, University Interscholastic League and Georgetown ISD eligibility rules. For the most updated eligibility requirements, please consult the UIL website <http://www.uil texas.org/music>.

Students will be allowed to participate in UIL Concert and Sight Reading Evaluation based on the following:

- Must not have been sent to ISS during the nine weeks of the event.
- Cannot receive 3 office referrals from any teacher or administrator during the semester in which the event occurs.
- Cannot receive a referral from choir director during the nine weeks of the event.
- Must be passing choir with an 80% or higher and attend all mandatory UIL rehearsals.

Travel

Throughout the school year the Falcon Choirs have the opportunity to travel. Student conduct is expected to be at the highest level on any trip. Trips include but are not limited to: UIL Concert and Sight Reading Evaluation, Region Competition, Recruitment Tour, Spring Trip. Student expectation for travel is as follows:

- Participation in choir, grades in all subject areas, and behavior will be a factor student involvement in out-of-school events. Students must adhere to Falcon Choir, Forbes Middle School, and Georgetown ISD policies and expectations.
- In the event a performance causes a student to miss another class, the student is responsible for making up all missed work.
- Students must travel to events and return from events on the bus. Any student wishing to arrive or leave with his/her parent must notify a director in writing with parent signature, prior to the event. Permission will be granted or denied based on the circumstances of the occasion.
- Students must submit a Travel and Medical Information form signed by a parent or guardian to partake in choral activities that require travel.

Fundraising

Students have the option to participate in fundraising throughout the 2019-2020 school year to benefit the Falcon Choir. All fundraising is optional, but students are encouraged to participate, as the money is used only for the direct benefit of the choir department. All money raised belongs to the FMS Choir and cannot be refunded for any reason. It is deposited into the Choir Activity Fund and cannot be moved to any other budget account.

Payment Information

There will be times during the school year when payments will need to be made for trips, uniforms, fundraising, etc. **The FMS Choir accepts cash, checks, and money orders.** To help with bookkeeping, please follow the guidelines below each time payment is sent to school for choir:

- Make all checks payable to **FMS CHOIR** and include your driver's license number near the name and address portion of the check.
- Include the choir student's name on each check in the "memo" area.
- Refrain from the use of pennies, nickels, or dimes in monetary payment. Quarters, dollar coins, and paper bills are accepted currency.
- Send all money (cash or checks) in an envelope with student name, class period, date, and FMS Choir written on the front.
- Turn in all money to a director; do not leave money on the choir director's desk.

Statement of Financial Policy

No student will be denied participation in the FMS Choir due to financial hardship. Please speak with a choir director so that arrangements can be made for those in need of consideration

Parent Chaperones/Volunteers

We are in need of **parent volunteers and chaperones** for the 2019-2020 school year*!

GISD requires a volunteer Background Check on all adults who assist students on campus or chaperone or events. If you are interested in volunteering for our events, please scan the QR code with your camera phone for more information:



**Volunteers from past years must resubmit an application.*

Internet & Electronics Responsibility

Students will be asked to utilize the Forbes Choir website as well as other online resources to enhance their choral experience. Furthermore students will sometimes be asked to utilize electronic devices and headphones during rehearsal as a means of reviewing recordings from our website. It is important that students use these resources as learning opportunities and not as a means of distraction from the assignments given. Students caught abusing this privilege will have their opportunity for Internet and electronic use revoked, devices confiscated/banned from rehearsal, and will result in immediate parent notification and referral.

Parents and students, please sign the Forbes Choir Handbook Contract for the 2019-2020 school year.