

2025/2026

Freeport Area School District Senior High Choir Handbook

Mr. Thomas D. Koharchik, director

“Excellence Through Unity”

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*Please note that this handbook has been approved by the High School Administration. *

Freeport Area School District Senior High Choir

Mr. Thomas D. Koharchik, director

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Senior High Phone: 724-295-5143 x1508
Middle School Phone: 724-295-9020 x2613

It's a brand new year, and I can't wait to dive back into music-making with all of you! We have some exciting opportunities ahead—performances, challenges, and memories just waiting to be made. Whether you're returning or just joining us, you're an important part of what's going to be a fantastic journey.

I hope your summer gave you time to relax, recharge, and maybe even find some new inspiration. To our returning singers, I'm counting on your leadership and passion to set the tone for another strong year. And to our new members—welcome! You're joining a community that thrives on collaboration, effort, and the joy of creating something meaningful together.

Excellence doesn't happen by accident, and I expect every member of this choir to bring their best. In return, I promise to give you mine. Let's work hard, support one another, and make this year unforgettable!

Please read the information about the performance attire carefully. A separate letter will also be distributed to make the requirements clearer. There is a need to cover costs of the performance attire upfront, but opportunities will exist for reimbursement.

The Freeport Area Music Boosters Association, or FAMBA, helps to further the cause of music education and provides for needed resources of the band and chorus. It is made up of parents of choir members and band members. I hope that you will discuss with your parents the importance of being involved in FAMBA and will take the opportunities that FAMBA presents seriously and with great appreciation. Please encourage attendance at FAMBA meetings, which are listed on the calendar of events, and turn your attention to e-mails and newsletters from FAMBA as they become available. We need the help of your parents and guardians to get the most out of our program.

The following handbook will highlight the many available opportunities for learning and growth through the choral program. 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.

Please forward any questions to me at 724-295-5143 x1508 or koharchik@freeport.k12.pa.us. I look forward to working with you and your students during the school year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Koharchik
Middle School & High School Choral Director

CHORAL OPPORTUNITIES

(This list is subject to change.)

Senior High Concert Choir

Senior High Concert Choir is an elective course in which emphasis is placed on proper vocal techniques that develop the natural voice. Additional instruction will be provided in music theory. Students continue to develop sight-singing skills. Students continue to develop and hone 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 are exposed to a wide variety of choral literature that is performed in a Holiday and a Spring Concert. Each member of the Concert Choir will be required to purchase the performance attire (black dresses and tuxedos, shoes). *At least one after-school dress rehearsal is required for each concert. After-school dress rehearsal attendance and evening concert attendance is mandatory.*

Freeport Senior High Show Choir - Forte!

Freeport's show choir, "Forte!", is selected by audition, and involves singing and dancing at a high level of energy and musicality, performing at various venues throughout the year and bringing a new element of choral performance to the Freeport community. Opportunities will exist for student choreography, leading sectional rehearsals, and incidental solos. Attendance at scheduled rehearsals is mandatory. **Rehearsals will be every Monday from 3:00-4:30.** *Additional rehearsals will be added as needed.* Members of the ensemble may be required to purchase performance attire.

Armstrong County Chorus

The Armstrong County Chorus Festival is an honors chorus that is comprised of students in grades 10-12 from the five schools in Armstrong County. Membership in Armstrong County Chorus is determined through audition. Auditions usually take place in mid-September, are strictly voluntary, and open to all choir members in grades 10-12. Participation in Armstrong County Chorus is required for participation in District Chorus.

Armstrong County Junior High Chorus

The Armstrong County Junior High Chorus Festival is comprised of students in grades 7-9 from the five schools in Armstrong County. This honors chorus is a one-day festival held at a different participating school location each year. Each participating director conducts and rehearses the ensemble. Members are selected through audition.

PMEA District 3 Junior District Chorus

The PMEA District 3 Junior District Chorus is an auditioned chorus festival that includes students from over 30 other participating schools in five counties. This festival allows students to experience the direction of talented directors and instructors, and to perform with other talented students from across the area. In this one-day festival, students in a treble choir and a bass choir put together a high-level performance in the evening.

PMEA District 3 Chorus Festival

The PMEA District 3 Chorus Festival is an honors chorus comprised of students in grades 10-12 from approximately 35 school districts. A different school hosts this event each year. A guest conductor of local or national renown is brought in to rehearse and conduct the chorus for two and a half days with two culminating performances. Membership in District Chorus is first determined by auditioning for Mr. Koharchik and those audition results are then used by a selection committee with representatives from each county involved. Only participants of County Chorus are eligible for District Chorus. Auditions usually take place in mid-September. Being selected as a member is extremely prestigious, and the audition experience is invaluable. Auditions for this event are strictly voluntary and open to all choir members in grades 10-12. Once selected for District Chorus, students use given music to audition for each successive level: Regional Chorus, All-State Chorus, and All-East Chorus.

PMEA Region II Chorus Festival

PMEA Region II Chorus is an honors chorus that is comprised of students in grades 10-12 who successfully audition at the District 3 Chorus Festival. Approximately 50 school districts make up the choir. Here, students work with a guest conductor to perform a concert of high-level music. They have the opportunity to audition for the PMEA All-State Chorus Festival, where, if selected, they may audition to advance to the NAFME All-East Chorus Festival every two years.

PMEA All-State Chorus

PMEA All-State Chorus is an honors chorus that is comprised of students in grades 10-12 who successfully audition at the Region II Chorus Festival.

Other opportunities for choir may develop throughout the year!

CALANDER OF EVENTS (Dates all Subject to Change!)**BOLD=Required Concert Activities**

September 2-3, 2025, 3:30-6:30p	SH Musical Auditions - "25 th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"
September 10, 2025, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
October 14-15, 2025, 3:30-6:30p	MS Musical Auditions - "Newsies, Jr."
October 15, 2025, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
October 25, 2025, 6:00p	"Trunk-or-Treat" & Haunted House @ H.S.
November 12, 2025, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
November 15-16, 2025	SH Fall Musical - "25 th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"
November 17-18, 2025	SH Armstrong County Chorus @ West Shamokin H.S.
December 1-2, 2025	SH Musical Auditions - "Tuck Everlasting"
December 3, 2025, 7:00p	Highlands Rotary Concert @ Highlands H.S.
December 4, 2025	SH Musical Dance Auditions / Call Backs
December 15, 2025, 3-4:30p	Senior High Choir Dress Rehearsal @ M.S.
December 16, 2025, 3-4:00p	Middle School Choir Dress Rehearsal @ M.S.
December 16, 2025, 7:00p	Senior High Choir Concert @ M.S.
December 17, 2025, 7:00p	Middle School Choir Concert @ M.S.
December 18, 2025, 7:00p	Show Choir Christmas Special "Winter Wonderland" Rehearsal *
December 19, 2025, 7:00p	Show Choir Christmas Special "Winter Wonderland" *
January 7-9, 2026	PMEA District 3 Chorus Festival @ Brockway H.S.
January 23, 2026	PMEA Jr. District Chorus Festival @ Oil City M.S.
January 29-31, 2026	Buffalo Elementary Musical "Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr."
February 12, 2026	Armstrong County Jr. High Chorus @ West Shamokin H.S.
February 18, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
February 19-21, 2026	PMEA Region II Chorus @ DuBois H.S.
February 26, 2026	National Anthem @ Pittsburgh Penguins Game
March 11-14, 2026, 7:00p & 2:00p	SH Spring Musical, "Tuck Everlasting"
March 18, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
March 28, 2026, 6:00p	Tri-M Cabaret Dinner
April 8, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
April 9-10, 2026, 7:00p & 2:00p	MS Musical, "Newsies, Jr."
April 17-18, 2026	H.S. Music Department Trip (TBA)
April 22-25, 2026	PMEA All-State Conference @ Kalahari, PA
May 11, 2026, 3-4:30p	Senior High Choir Dress Rehearsal @ M.S.
May 12, 2026, 3-4:00p	Middle School Choir Dress Rehearsal @ M.S.
May 12, 2026, 7:00p	Senior High Choir Concert @ M.S.
May 13, 2026, 7:00p	Middle School Choir Concerts @ M.S.
May 13, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
May 14, 2026, 7:00p	Tri-M Induction Ceremony
May 25, 2026, 10:00a	Freeport Memorial Day Ceremony
May 29, 2026, 7:00p	Tentative Graduation

* Tentatively schedule IF the decision is made to have a Christmas special.

** Additional events may be added as the school year progresses and all events are subject to change.

CURRICULUM

In chorus, we interact with each other through a variety of learning experiences while we work on developing many mental and physical skills as mentioned in the class descriptions. Choral singing involves "whole-brain" learning, enhancing all areas of the school curriculum. It also teaches self-discipline, an important skill in most anything you pursue in life. Music allows people to "...share and communicate thoughts and feelings that transcend the written or spoken word - expressions of the spirit that make us uniquely human and bind us together as a people and a world of cultures."¹

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the expectations set forth here, please keep in mind that all rules in the Freeport Area School District Student Handbook apply to all members of the choir at all times, whether on campus or not.

This is our Choral Philosophy for the 2025-2026 School Year:

"Excellence Through Unity!"

In chorus, every voice matters — but it is when we blend those voices with focus, respect, and a shared purpose that something truly extraordinary happens. No single singer can carry a choir; it's the strength of our togetherness that creates excellence! When we listen to one another, support each other, and strive as one, we become more than just a group — we become a team. Let's commit to lifting each other up and making every note count, together!

Choral students will be expected to:

- Come to class prepared to work and learn.
- Take responsibility for their growth as singers.
- Practice good singing habits and work well with others.
- Bring a positive attitude every day.
- Be open to trying new things.
- **Respect** others and their efforts.
- Do their part to help the group succeed.

¹ Phillips, Kenneth. Directing the Choral Music Program. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Advance notice of all performances and rehearsals will be given (as in, the calendar of events page), so make plans now.

A performance is the equivalent of a major unit exam in other subject areas. An unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal or performance will result in a grade of "0" for that activity.

Several examples of excuses which are considered **unexcused** are:

- 1) "I forgot!" ("We had a concert?!")
- 2) "I had to baby sit."
- 3) "I had a soccer (football, basketball, etc.) game."
- 4) "I didn't have a ride."
- 5) "Something came up!"

Excused absences, which require a **COMPLETED EXCUSE FORM**, include:

- 1) Family vacation/prearranged absences from school
- 2) Student illness
- 3) Deaths in the family/family emergency
- 4) Religious holidays
- 5) School-sponsored events

Students **MUST** have completed a **REHEARSAL EXCUSE FORM** (online) at least **ONE WEEK PRIOR** to an activity if an excused absence is anticipated. (Forms available on Schoology.)

If a student is absent from school the day of a rehearsal, performance, or other activity, that student will not be permitted to attend.

In the case of an emergency, please send an email to Mr. Koharchik as soon as possible.

In the case of extenuating circumstances, please contact Mr. Koharchik at 724-295-5143 x1508 or koharchik@freeport.k12.pa.us.

When conflicts occur, school activities must take precedence over non-school activities. If a student is involved in more than one school activity, the faculty members in charge will help the parents and students work out an acceptable solution. A performance or game will take precedence over a practice or rehearsal.

Students MUST split rehearsal and practice time evenly between all organizations.

Example: Choir Rehearsal from 3-5 and Track Practice from 3-5. Student would attend Choir Rehearsal from 3-4 and Track Practice from 4-5. Each organization gets one hour of your time.

*** In the case of Show Choir, if a conflict is with an event or activity that meets multiple days per week, it is recommended that the student attend the entire Show Choir rehearsal, since it only meets once per week.*

Makeup work will be given for excused rehearsal/performance absences only. If not completed, the student will receive a grade of "0" for the absence of that rehearsal or performance. The grade received for the written work will take the place of the performance/rehearsal grade for that activity. Please keep in mind that in order for an activity to be excused, a **REHEARSAL EXCUSE FORM** must be completed online at least one week prior to the activity.

Students must be present for the final (dress) rehearsal in order to perform. If a student is an "unexcused" absence from the dress rehearsal, that student will be required to complete a written activity to make up lost points from the rehearsal and the subsequent performance.

Students who do not participate in the rehearsal though present will be marked absent from the rehearsal.

Grading Policy

The grading system is based on three main categories:

- Rehearsals
- Assessments
- Performances and Dress Rehearsals

Final grades for each quarter are determined using percentages.

The scale is as follows:

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

<p style="text-align: center;">Rehearsals</p> <p>(Students are assessed using a 20-point scale once per 6-day rotation per quarter. Points are awarded for each item on the right as noted.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Time and Ready - Student is in assigned seat and ready to rehearse when the bell rings. Students with the proper late admittance forms will be excused for tardiness. Unexcused tardiness will result in the loss of a point. (4 pts) • Posture - Student observes proper singing posture throughout rehearsal, both sitting and standing. (4 pts) • Attentive - Student maintains attention and participation throughout rehearsal. (4 pts) • Observable Musicianship - Student uses proper vowel shape, breathing techniques, holds music up, memorizes as required, takes notes in music as needed, and so on. (4 pts) • Ensemble Commitment - Student maintains positive attitude throughout rehearsal and engages in behavior that contributes to overall ensemble success. (4 pts)
<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments</p> <p>(Opportunities will arise for assessments such as the examples to the right to be given. Part tests will occur throughout the year. Students will be given all of the points unless they fail to sing individually for the director.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Tests - Individual singers, or singers in small groups, will use a section of music being rehearsed and perform it for the director. Sections being assessed include development of the voice, singing technique, and part singing. • Music Theory – Lessons in music theory will be given with quizzes or tests administered throughout the year. • Other Assignments – Various assignments will be given to further student knowledge. Examples include lyric assessments, song structure analysis, program notes, concert program development, and more. Each assignment will be given its own unique grading criteria.

<p style="text-align: center;">Performance</p> <p>(Students will be issued points as noted to the right. December and May concerts are each worth 100 points. Failure to attend a concert will obviously result in 0 points; therefore, it is essential that all students attend every concert. Exceptions do exist for excused absences and for emergency situations. See page 7 for more information on attendance policies.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance - Performance is the ultimate goal of any chorus. Therefore, attendance IS REQUIRED at every performance. A performance is the equivalent of a major unit exam in other subject areas, but because it is a group activity, it cannot be made up. A student's absence from a performance without a prior note from his/her parent will be considered unexcused, and subject to a failing grade of zero for that activity. Students must complete an “Absence Excuse Form” online and submit as soon as a schedule conflict arises. Emergency situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis but notification must be made to the director by the day of the concert, or the next school day. Failure to notify the director of an absence before the end of the next school day will result in an unexcused and non-negotiable grade. (See page 7 for more information.) (70 pts) • Attire - Students must follow the concert dress code (see page 20). Failure to observe proper uniform policies will result in dismissal from the concert and the student will not be permitted to perform. In the event a student is not permitted to perform due to an attire problem, half of the attendance points for the performance will be forfeited. (10 pts) • Professionalism - Although not a professional choir, students are expected to carry themselves with the utmost discipline, dignity, and respect. Unprofessional behavior, both on and off stage, reflects poorly on not only the students involved, but also the school district and the choral department. (10 pts) • Choral Department Support - Students are expected to remain in the concert area until ALL groups have performed. Supporting fellow choristers is important, as is the educational benefits of attending a concert. (10 pts)
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CONCERT ATTIRE

Every member of the Concert Choir is expected to purchase the same performance attire that will be worn at all performances this year and in the years to come.

All members of the choir who need new dresses or tuxedos are expected to be measured for their outfits on DURING CLASS in the first few weeks of school.

Choir members will be expected to purchase the appropriate dress or tuxedo. Details for reimbursement will be provided in a separate letter. Dresses will be \$72.00; Tuxedos will be \$115.00. All cost includes taxes and shipping. Men will have the option to purchase their own tuxedo from a store or site of their choosing. Often, tuxedos can be purchased more inexpensively from a rental store as they sell used tuxedos.

Since the performance items are ordered from catalogs, alterations *are likely*. Any alteration cost is the responsibility of students and parents. Keep in mind, reimbursement is possible through fundraising. Information about reimbursement is provided on the clothing information sheet.

Please see the clothing letter attached for additional information.

Additional uniform purchases may be required for Show Choir.

Please do not order any items or send any money in at this time!

In addition to the formal attire, students may be required to wear choir robes for certain performances and events. Underneath the robes, students must wear appropriate dress clothes and dress shoes. No jeans, white socks or tennis shoes are permitted to be visible while wearing robes. Other performance clothing may be required as well based on the needs of each concert.

ROBE RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the choir robes is for the entire group to look uniform. Like textbooks in other classes, ALL STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ROBE ASSIGNED TO THEM DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR. All students are responsible for the replacement of the robe due to carelessness or negligence.

Robes will be kept in the storage cabinets in the music hallway. Students attending County, District, Regional, or State Festivals may take their robes home following the festival but ARE REQUIRED to return them to the music wing the first school day following the event.

CASUAL PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

All members of the choir who will be performing in any additional performances (Music department trips, Pittsburgh Penguins "National Anthem", Memorial Day, etc.) may be required to purchase or obtain additional clothing. Information about such clothing will be distributed well in advance of any performance.

Order information for any additional performance attire will be sent at a later date.

Concert Choir Performance Attire Cost Information

Women:

- The cost of the dress is \$72.00. This includes shipping and tax.
- Payment of Check must be made between September 2, 2025 and September 25, 2025.
 - Please make checks payable to "FSAF."
- After delivery of the dresses, a receipt may be given to the Freeport Area Music Boosters Association for reimbursement out of the student's activity account.
 - Students may fundraise throughout this school year in order to be reimbursed.
 - Please only request reimbursement once ALL \$72.00 is in the student's account.
 - Students with less than \$72.00 in the account at the time of reimbursement request will be reimbursed up to the amount in the account.
 - All reimbursement requests must be made by Thursday, May 7, 2026.
- Alterations *will most likely* be necessary after delivery. Alterations must be arranged on your own.
- You WILL need to press the dress after delivery and before the first use!
- This dress will be worn at EVERY choral performance throughout the year. Though it will be your property, it is strongly encouraged NOT to be worn for other events in order to maintain a clean, crisp, and unified appearance in performance.
- Opportunity will exist in the future to sell the dress to a new member in the event you outgrow the dress. Each year will include a "new orders" process if you need a new dress.
- Girls are also required to purchase a pearl necklace. Necklaces are \$10.00 and can be purchased directly from Mr. Koharchik.
- Black character shoes are REQUIRED and can be ordered for \$50.00. If you currently own character shoes, you MUST bring them in for Mr. Koharchik to approve. If you plan on ordering them on your own to try and save a buck, you must have them *delivered* by September 25th.
- The dresses are from Southeastern Apparel; the Corelli Dress (Style #D761).
- Please direct any questions to Mr. Koharchik with the e-mail address below.
- koharchik@freeport.k12.pa.us

Men:

- Men are required to wear a complete black tuxedo with black bow tie and a black cummerbund. White shirts with lay down collars (not butterflyed) and non-pleated tuxedo pants are also required.
- Men may purchase their own tuxedos. For cost savings, it is recommended to purchase a used rental tuxedo.
- Tuxedos may be ordered through the school. The cost of the full tuxedo would be \$115.00. This includes shipping and tax.
- Payment of Check must be made between September 2, 2025 and September 25, 2025.
 - Please make checks payable to "FSAF."
- After delivery of the tuxedos, a receipt may be given to the Freeport Area Music Boosters Association for reimbursement out of the student's activity account.
 - Students may fundraise throughout this school year in order to be reimbursed.
 - Please only request reimbursement once ALL required money is in the account.
 - Students with less than what they paid for the tuxedos in the account at the time of reimbursement request will be reimbursed up to the amount in the account.
 - All reimbursement requests must be made by Thursday, May 7, 2026.
- Alterations *may be* necessary after delivery. Alterations must be arranged on your own.
- You WILL need to take care of the tuxedos after delivery and after every use!
- The tuxedos will be worn at EVERY choral performance throughout the year. Though it will be your property, it is strongly encouraged NOT to be worn for other events in order to maintain a clean, crisp, and unified appearance in performance.
- If tuxedos are purchased through the school, opportunities will exist in the future to sell the tuxedo to a new member in the event you outgrow it. Each year will include a "new orders" process if you need a new tuxedo.
- Black dress shoes with laces are REQUIRED and can be ordered for \$50.00. You may order your own shoes, but please ensure that they have laces and they should preferably be shiny. If you have questions about your own shoes, you may bring them in for Mr. Koharchik to approve.
- The shoes are from Southeastern Apparel (Style #SM001).
- Please direct any questions to Mr. Koharchik with the e-mail address below.
- koharchik@freeport.k12.pa.us

Student and Parent Syllabus Agreement

Freeport High School 2025-2026 Chorus

Mr. Thomas D. Koharchik, Director

* Please complete this form ONLINE by Thursday, August 28, 2025.

* To access the online form, please use this QR code:



or visit: <https://forms.gle/HtkB9eVWFTqJEiVT6>

By signing on the online form, you and your parent state that you have read the syllabus for the Freeport High School Chorus with Mr. Koharchik and agree to the expectations, requirements, and obligations of this class. Please note that you will be held accountable for all of the information provided to you here.

** The online form is to be completed by Thursday, August 28, 2025.*