

2025/2026

Freeport Area School District Middle School Choir Handbook

Mr. Thomas D. Koharchik, director

“Excellence Through Unity”

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

Freeport Area School District Middle School Choir

Mr. Thomas D. Koharchik, director

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High School Phone: 724-295-5143 x1508
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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!

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.)

6th Grade Chorus

In the 6th Grade Chorus, students develop fundamental skills in proper singing technique including but not limited to posture, breath management, vocal production, diction, and tonal matching. They will be introduced to music-reading skills using solfeggio and will study music from a variety of musical genres. The students will present a Holiday and a Spring Concert. The concerts are mandatory and are a significant part of the grade.

7/8th Grade Mixed Choir

In 7/8th Grade Mixed Choir, students gain an understanding of singing technique including but not limited to posture, breath management, vocal production, diction, and care of the changing voice. They also gain an understanding of ensemble skills, music-reading skills using solfege, and music literature from a variety of musical traditions. The students then use these skills to prepare a wide variety of music for a Holiday and a Spring Concert. *At least one after-school dress rehearsal is required for each concert. After-school dress rehearsal attendance and evening concert attendance is mandatory.*

Armstrong County Junior High Chorus

Armstrong County Junior High Chorus is an honors chorus that 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. Freeport will be hosting the festival this 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, entering its third season, 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 (girls) and a bass choir (boys) put together a high-level performance in the evening.

Other opportunities for choir may develop throughout the year!

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

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"
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 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.
March 11-14, 2026, 7:00p & 2:00p	SH Spring Musical, "Tuck Everlasting"
March 18, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
April 8, 2026, 7:00p	FAMBA Meeting @ S.H.
April 9-10, 2026, 7:00p & 2:00p	MS Musical, "Newsies, Jr."
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 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.

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 (aka "Accountability")

- The total available score for each ensemble is 250 points per marking period. All students start out with the maximum score possible per ensemble (250), and the score is decreased by each infraction.
- The instructor will randomly check each students' preparedness throughout the quarter. Points are deducted when students are not prepared for class and/or have behavior issues during class. Students: remember that you are **accountable** for yourself, no one else.
- In addition, students will be formally assessed for attendance and participation at all in-school rehearsals, mandatory dress rehearsals, and performances/concerts.
- Please see the excuse policy on pages 6 and 7 for important information.
- Attendance at all in-class rehearsals as well as after-school rehearsals is expected.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Detailed information about concert attire will be provided about a month before the concert date. For planning purposes, this is a *general* idea of what to expect:

December -

6th Grade Chorus:

Girls - Black skirts or dress slacks or similar school appropriate bottom

White blouse or shirt or similar. **NO PRINTING ON SHIRT!**

Boys - Black dress pants, black socks, black shoes

White dress shirt and long tie. Any tie you'd like... but no printing on shirt!

7/8th Grade Chorus:

Since the theme will be "A Dickens of a Christmas," students should wear something nice that reflects the Victorian era. Think "Christmas Carol" or similar.

May -

For the spring concert, **ALL** students are asked to wear something "nice" that can be of their choosing. It does **NOT** need to be black and white! Look good! Please keep in mind all school dress code policies.

Student and Parent Syllabus Agreement
Freeport Middle 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/3J13XAWvnFaLLRgH9>

By signing on the online form, you and your parent state that you have read the syllabus for the Freeport Middle 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.*