

ENCORE

Dawson Choir Handbook

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Welcome to Choir

We are thrilled and excited about your choosing to be a part our family this year whether it be for the first time or the fourth time and everything in between. We are confident that together through hard work, the making of great music, lots of laughter, and an emphasis on recognizing the importance of your role on this team, we will be able to grow as people and as musicians. We look forward to a successful and eventful year.

Encore Ensembles

Junior Varsity Treble and Tenor-Bass Choir

These ensembles are open to any Dawson High School student in any grade level. All ensemble members will receive valuable training and practice in sight-reading, building vocal tone, and mastering proper vocal technique. This ensemble will perform at every concert and will be a part of all social events. Eligible members of this choir are required to compete in UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest in April. In the future, these ensembles will remain open to any DHS high school student. Students who have not had prior experience in choir may be required to be a member of these ensembles for at least one year before auditioning for any of the varsity ensembles.

Advanced Junior Varsity Treble

Students receive placement into this ensemble by audition or recommendation only. All members will strengthen existing sight-reading skills and polish proper vocal technique, which will enable students to meet the demands of accelerated ensembles in high school. This ensemble will perform at every concert and will be a part of all social events. Eligible members of this choir are required to compete in UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest in April. In the future, these ensembles will continue to serve students who have had prior experience in choir, and placement will be determined by audition.

Varsity Mixed and Varsity Treble

These ensembles are for students who have superior musicianship and place a high dedication to choral singing in their lives. Students receive placement into this ensemble by audition only. All members will strengthen existing sight-reading skills and polish proper vocal technique, which will enable students to meet the demands of this accelerated vocal ensemble. In addition to fulfilling all community performance requests (examples include: football games, commitments, Holiday tours), these ensembles will perform at every concert and will be a part of all social events. Both will compete at UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest in April. Members of this choir are expected to maintain good grades and serve as representatives of our school and its choir program. In the future, this ensemble will continue to serve students who have had prior experience and excellent musicianship, and placement will be determined by audition only.

NOTE: As the DHS Choral program continues to develop, ensembles may change and/or additional ensembles may be added at director's discretion.

If at any point in the year, you fail to abide by the rules and policies set forth by this handbook, by Dawson High School, or by the law, you will be subject to discipline at the directors' discretion which may include a lowered grade, placement into a different ensemble, or removal from the program.

Overview of Fees

This is a summary of the fees further explained in the following pages.

- Required for every student in Encore:
 - **Choir Fee-\$40-Due October 16, 2026-Payable to DHS Choir**
 - We strongly encourage you to pay through your student's Skyward account
- Required for every student assigned a tuxedo by the school
 - **White Tuxedo Shirt-Cost-\$20-Due October 16, 2026, Payable to DHS Choir Booster**
 - We strongly encourage you to pay through our booster club.
- *Credit will be accepted on the night of our Encore Parent Meeting which can be found on our calendar. All checks must be made out to DHS Choir Booster or DHS Choir and include your driver's license and your student's name in the memo.*

Choir Fee - \$40, Due October 16, 2026 (payable to Dawson High School Choir)

- This assessment will defray the costs of choir socials, UIL Concert & SR clinicians, UIL Solo and Ensemble accompanists, uniform maintenance and repair, bus transportation, and other supplies needed throughout the year.
- We will accept cash or check (made out to DHS Choir). Please include the check holder's driver's license number and student name on the check. Note that we are not able to accept temporary checks. **This fee is different from the UIL participation assessed by DHS.** *If there is a financial hardship, students should write a note and turn it in to the directors on or before October 17, 2025, by 2:40 pm. We are very willing to make special arrangements, but **timely communication is the responsibility of the student.***
- PER DAWSON HS POLICY, THIS FEE MUST BE PAID BY OCTOBER 16th TO AVOID THE NOT CLEAR LIST.
- **This fee is for ALL students in choir. Materials for students are purchased at the beginning of the year after the first 2 weeks. Therefore, if a student remains in any of the choir classes after the 3rd week of school, they will be assessed the \$40 fee.**

Choir T-Shirt Cost

- All students will be provided with a t-shirt by the Booster Club since this will be utilized at various performances.
- **For students that lose their choir shirt, a replacement fee of \$10 is due.**
- Checks must be made out to **Dawson Encore Choir Booster**, include your driver's license, and your student's name in the memo.

We highly recommend that you pay through our website.

Anticipated Additional Choir Costs

The following are anticipated choir costs for the remainder of the school year for those participating in any of these events. These costs are subject to change and serve for budgeting & planning purposes only. Scholarships are always available for students who need assistance.

TMEA Region Auditions = \$20-30

Covers audition fee & transportation

Students will also need additional funds for food on audition days

Solo & Ensemble Contest = \$20-50

Covers audition fee & accompanist fee (*additional fees may be added for students without voice teachers for coaching sessions prior to Solo & Ensemble*)

Choir Banquet Ticket = ~\$45 (subject to change)

Covers catered dinner & after-party

Refund Policy

Most fees charged to the student involve advance payment for a service or item. In such cases (i.e. accompanist fees, trip fees, game tickets, etc.), the choir has a deadline for receiving reimbursement from the supplier. Because of this, the following policy will be strictly followed: ***There will be no refunds in any case where a student has paid for an activity or supply but is no longer able to participate.*** This policy applies no matter what the reason is for withdrawal and specifically includes, but is not limited to situations of ineligibility, illness, unexpected family travel, or withdrawal from the DHS Choir.

UNIFORMS

Students will receive the same uniform yearly. Exchanges may be made if clothing is outgrown. All uniforms will be checked out and returned to the director(s). **If any item is lost, stolen, or neglected, you will be responsible for purchasing replacements or paying for the cost of repair.**

- Formal Concert Attire
 - All students assigned a formal gown **will need to provide their own solid black dress shoes with a closed toe and a short heel or flat.**
 - All students assigned a tuxedo provided a tuxedo by the school will need to:
 - **Provide your own solid black dress socks and black dress shoes.**
 - **Purchase a white tuxedo shirt. Price per shirt is approximately (\$20 determined by the vendor).** Measurements for each individual needing to purchase a shirt will be taken. Checks must be made out to **Dawson Encore Choir Booster**, include your driver's license, and your student's name in the memo.
 - Formal Uniform Care
 - **Do NOT hand wash any item belonging to the school.** They must be dry-cleaned.
 - If your garment requires alterations, **we will designate a day to take measurements during the school day and send them in bulk.** **Please check the choir calendar for these dates.** If this day is missed, you will be responsible for any alterations which must be made by a seamstress designated by the directors.
 - **Any PERMANENT alterations made to your uniform such as cutting any part of the uniform or any alteration unable to be undone will result in the uniform needing to be replaced. You will be held financially responsible for any replacement costs.**
 - Alterations on the choir dresses and pants must only be at the hem or neckline and will be taken care of **ONLY** by Encore Choir Booster & Parents.
 - Dry Cleaning
 - **All uniforms will be turned in after the final concert of the year to be dry-cleaned. If you miss the deadline, you will be responsible for taking the uniform in for dry-cleaning yourself. This includes financial responsibility.** You must turn in your uniform with dry-cleaning receipt detailing the specific item that was cleaned and the date completed before the uniform will be accepted. Failure to comply may result in a dry-cleaning fee.

- Replacement Costs-Lost or damaged. Damages resulting in replacement will be determined at directors' discretion.
 - Dress- \$110
 - Tux Jacket- \$80
 - Tux Pants- \$30
 - Bow Tie- \$5
 - Tuxedo Garment Bag- \$20
 - Gowns Garment Bag- \$23
 - Hanger- \$5
- Informal Concert Attire
 - All students will wear their **choir shirt** with **appropriate school blue jeans** as their informal concert attire.

Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum of Dawson HS Choirs is a blend of many disciplines and follows the standards of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students can expect lessons on music theory, different musical forms, and singing in foreign languages. Performance is one of the best ways to demonstrate this learning. Therefore, participation in all required performances is *expected* and *required* of **ALL CHOIR STUDENTS**. Our calendar can be found on our choir website through the Dawson HS website under the Clubs/Activities tab and on sportsYou for ENCORE CHOIR. *All dates are subject to change.*

When conflicts arise between two organizations, students need to communicate with both directors/coaches to work out the conflict well in advance. If the student is unable to work out a solution, the parents and directors will then get involved and work out a solution. Learning to work conflicts out through proper means of communication is an essential life skill, and it is one that the DHS Choir wishes to encourage its students to develop.

Students will be notified of performance and rehearsal times and are expected to attend in order to be eligible to perform. It is the director's responsibility to provide these dates in advance, and it is the students and parents' responsibility to check their personal calendar for conflicts and communicate appropriately and in a timely manner. Failure to fulfill these requirements set in place by the directors may result in actions up to and including a lowered grade or placement into a different ensemble or removal from the program. Students will be held accountable for performance and rehearsal obligations. **If a student is unable to attend rehearsals and has consulted with the director, the student may be placed on an alternative assignment and not perform with the ensemble. Not communicating with directors in advance, an unexcused absence (i.e. work or non-school related activity), and not appearing may result in losing eligibility for a make-up assignment for the missed performance.** *All of us are a crucial part of the team and we need everyone to be successful!*

Extra-Curricular Activities

This includes the TMEA All-State Process competition and Musical among other events throughout the year. When students commit, they understand that they will **follow through with their commitment**. Failure to follow through **will result in possible fees**, as well as possible reconsideration for choir placement. Information on each activity will be given to the students at specific times throughout the year. In addition, there will be the need to have after-school rehearsals as we approach concerts and contests. These rehearsals are an extension of the class and will, therefore, hold grade accountability.

All State Process and Solo contest costs: Students are invited to participate in these competitions but being timely about entries is a must to avoid penalty fees.

If you miss the deadline for entering a contest, our region has a policy in place that states that the student's entry fee is doubled plus the cost of the campus fee. Our campus fee is currently \$100 per event. So, for example, if you want to be entered for district auditions ***and it is past the deadline***, your cost would be: \$20 (original fee) + \$20 (late fee) + \$100 (late campus fee) = \$140 (*to be paid by the student*).

Please work towards staying on top of deadlines to avoid not being able to participate or paying way too much.

Personal Electronic Devices

House Bill 1481 prohibits students to use any personal electronic devices during the school day.

This includes cell phones, air pods, headphones, smart watches, smart glasses, paging devices, flip phones, tablets and personal laptops.

Discipline

- 1st Offense: Device is confiscated, sent to AP office, parent/guardian must pick up, no discipline.
- 2nd Offense: Device is confiscated, sent to AP office, parent/guardian must pick up, 2 hrs. D-Hall.
- 3rd Offense: Device is confiscated, sent to AP office, parent/guardian must pick up, 1 day ISS.
- 4th Offense: Device is confiscated, sent to AP office, parent/guardian must pick up, 2 days ISS.
- 5th Offense: Device is confiscated, sent to AP office, parent/guardian must pick up, DAEP.

Student Refusal

- 1st Offense: Phone violation consequence + 1 day of ISS
- 2nd Offense: Phone violation consequence + 2 days of ISS
- 3rd Offense: Phone violation consequence + OSS/DAEP

Grading

There are several elements in determining a student's grade in the choir program.

- **Daily Grades = 40%**
 - Daily class participation
 - Punctuality (being in your assigned seat when tardy bell rings)
 - Having proper rehearsal materials: folder, music, pencil, and highlighters
 - Any assigned Written Work
 - Attendance for rehearsals outside of class period
- **Test Grades = 60%**
 - Attendance for mandatory dress rehearsals
 - Concert attendance
 - Sight-reading exams
 - Pencil checks
 - ****PLEASE NOTE:** Tests taken online are set to make questions only available **once**. In other words, once a student clicks the button to submit their answer to a particular question, the student will not be able to return to this question to make any changes
 - ****PLEASE NOTE:** If a student is unable to attend practices face to face with the ensemble, the student ***may not*** be permitted to perform with the ensemble at the time of the performance. However, this will not affect their grade if the reason for not attending rehearsals is an excused absence.
- **Alternative Assignments**

Although there is no substitute for live performance for assessment (as prescribed by the TEKS), alternative assignments provide students with the opportunity to earn a grade. *When a student has decreased commitment in rehearsal or is absent from a concert, an alternative assignment may be issued.* The amount of work given in an alternative assignment will be equivalent to the amount of work demonstrated by students who do participate.

Total possible maximum amount of credit given for Alternative Assignments = 90%. (This year, if you are approved for an alternative assignment, there may be opportunity for 100% credit.

- Absence Policy

Two forms of excused absences from rehearsals and concerts will be accepted:

- **Personal Illness**
- **Family emergency**- notify your director IMMEDIATELY
 - In both cases, a signed parent note stating reason will need to be turned in upon return. ***Work related responsibilities as well as activities that are not school related cannot be accepted at any time, no exceptions.*** If you do not notify the director within **1 week** of receiving your rehearsal schedule of the excuse, it will be considered unexcused. Poor attendance and excessive absenteeism will result in removal from the Encore Choir Department. With excused absences, a student will be allowed an alternative assignment for 90% of concert grade. *Unexcused absences will result in a grade of "0".*

Letter Jackets

- Information on letter jacket awards can be found online on the teacher websites for Mrs. Silva or Ms. Reed through the Dawson HS choir webpage. If a student qualifies, the student will notify Mrs. Silva to ensure placement on the fitting calendar.
- *The student and their family are responsible for the cost of the jacket.*
- Students must qualify through criteria established by the sponsor(s) of the organization for Balfour to be able to process their order. When the student qualifies, the organization sponsor will submit their name to administration for permission to purchase a letter jacket.

Voting for Officers

- Students interested in running for officer will be given a packet explaining all the requirements
- Students who apply must maintain academic standing and abide by all rules and policies set forth in this handbook and Dawson High School.
- Students who vote for officers must be in full participation of their choir class for the year

Money Matters

- Turning in money-All checks and cash will be turned in inside an envelope. Envelope are provided by Encore Choir for all students.

- Please have the following information written neatly and clearly on the front of each envelope:

- First and Last Name
- Date
- **What the money is for**
- **Amount of money in the envelope**

This is critical for us to track money deposits. Money needs to be exact change

or checks (made out to **DHS Choir or DHS Encore Booster with Texas driver's license number**).

- We highly recommend that you utilize our methods of online payment instead of sending physical forms of payments.
- Please place your envelope into the money box located in the choir room to the right of the lockers.

Internet & Social Media Code of Conduct

Please remember that you are an ambassador of Dawson High School and the Encore Organization. As such, you are always in the public eye. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, WhatsApp, personal blogs, and other similar websites open windows into your life. What you say (or post) online could come back to haunt you. In most cases, words and pictures reach way beyond the peers for whom they were intended. Ultimately, students are naively putting their reputation and futures at risk. The following guidelines must be followed if postings are made:

1. Do not post information, pictures or video on-line that would embarrass you or violate the code of conduct (or rules) of the Encore organization (and that identifies you as a member of the Encore organization). Examples include but are not limited to:
 - A. Foul language or inappropriate innuendo(s).
 - B. Inappropriate behavior (alcohol related, public intoxication, drugs, underage drinking, personal pictures wearing suggestive clothing, nudity, inappropriate gestures, fighting, etc.)
 - C. An act that would constitute an offense under appropriate federal, state, or local criminal statute.
2. Do not allow friends to post inappropriate information or pictures of you on their websites. It is your responsibility and right to prevent the postings and or have them removed. All it takes is one person to take a screen capture and it is there forever.
3. You may not post information on your website that ties you to the Encore organization if you have anything that is listed in the above (#1, #2) on your website.
4. Violation to the Encore organization's Internet & Social Media Code of Conduct will be grounds for removal from office (if you hold an office) and/ or membership revoked (depending on the severity of the violation). The decision will be at the discretion of the director with the knowledge of Dawson Administration.

Please be aware that all websites and postings may be monitored by the Encore Director(s) with the knowledge of the Dawson Administration.

Any inappropriate images, video, posts or other media will be presented to your parents/guardians.

Violation of the said rules may result in but not be limited to probation, a change of choir class, or automatic dismissal from the Encore organization. The Encore Director with the knowledge of Dawson Administration has full discretion of determining which members may participate in Encore activities and performances and has full discretion over probation and dismissals.

Spring Trips

All students who have been in full participation during the school year (required performances and in class) are eligible to travel with the DHS Choir on trips. Every other year, the Choir may travel out-of-state. The cost of the trip is the sole responsibility of the student. However, the Choir may provide fundraising opportunities throughout the year.

- **Students must be an active participant in all required choir activities up to the point of the trip (concert performances, class participation, etc. as listed in the calendar) as well as be academically eligible.**
- **Students who have been assigned to ISS, ALA, or who have been involved with any issues involving the police may lose eligibility to attend the trip at the discretion of their director**

Transportation

By law and district policy, students who participate in school sponsored trips shall be required to ride in transportation provided by the district. This may include buses, vans, and sometimes passenger cars. With prior written school district release (alternate student travel form which requires a principal's signature and approval), parents may drive students to and from extracurricular events. These forms require multiple signatures. **So, if you know you will be utilizing alternate transportation, please pick up and fill out a form several business days before the event.**

Voice Lessons

Please refer to one of the directors or Canvas to find this information. We are excited and thankful for Elisa Thompson, John Gallagher, Katie McCravy, and James Silva as our voice teachers this year!

Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement.

Success is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.