

Danny Jones Middle School Choral Department Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to the Bulldog Choral Department. This handbook is simply a written explanation of the policies, guidelines, goals and expectations of the Bulldog Choir. Please read it carefully and refer back to it throughout the year as questions arise about Choir procedures. If we all agree on the goals, expectations, purpose and procedures of the DJMS Choral Department, the year will go smoothly. Please, at any time, feel free to contact me either by phone (817) 276-6221 or by e-mail at husbma@mansfieldisd.org, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding the Choral Department.

Mark A. Husband
Director of Choirs
Danny Jones Middle School

Goal

The main goal of the Choral Department is *Singing!!* Every aspect of the choral program is designed to create energized singing, create awareness and understanding of singing styles and create good singers.

Attitude

Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference! There is nothing more important than the individual and collective attitude of all choir members. At all times, display an attitude of respect and courtesy toward others and an attitude of energy, intensity and enthusiasm for music and choral functions. Work hard, enjoy choir, and be glad you are part of such an outstanding organization. Strive to uphold a vision of excellence for yourself and the choir. Give 100% at all times! You have chosen to be in choir, so make the most and best of it!! **LEAD BY EXAMPLE!!**

Daily Information

Daily Procedures

The DJMS Choir will use the following guidelines to make the most of our rehearsal time:

1. Enter the Choir Room quietly.
2. Quickly get your folder and a *sharpened pencil*.
3. Students will not play the pianos without permission.
4. Choir members should have the following for every rehearsal:
 - *FOLDER- ½ “ Black 3-ring binder.
 - *DIVIDERS- 5 dividers to be placed in choir folder.
 - *SHARPENED PENCIL(S)- this should be sharpened before rehearsal begins.
 - *HIGHLIGHTERS- preferably green or yellow.
 - *POSITIVE ATTITUDE
5. Books and purses should be left in the assigned area. No books or purses, other than your choir folder, should be with you at your assigned seat.
6. Every student is required to sing. This is a performance-based class.
7. The bell does not dismiss the student, the teacher does!!

Music and Materials

Music will be provided free of charge to all choir students. Students are responsible for all copies of music. If a copy is lost, stolen or damaged in any way, students will be responsible for replacing each

item. We use single octavos, as well as Choir textbooks.

Music may be kept in the student's choir folder and in the assigned slot in the choir room. The student may take their folder home, so that the student can practice their choir music at home.

Original copies of music may be marked in PENCIL only and music must never be folded, crinkled or curled. Get into the habit of numbering all measures of the music in your folder. Students who lose or destroy a school-owned book or piece of music will be charged for the replacement of the book.

Missing Materials

If a student is missing important items when class starts (folder, pencil), the time that student spends in class is wasted. The Choir is unable to benefit from the student's contribution, and the student does not benefit from being in Choir that day.

Discipline Problems

Should a discipline problem arise from a student, the student will be removed from class and given an alternate assignment. This will not be time to do homework for another class. If the discipline problem continues, parents will be notified (written/phone/e-mail) and the student will follow the appropriate school-wide consequence plan.

Attendance and Punctuality

The DJMS Choir is a performing organization that meets during the school day as a regular class. Most performances and extra rehearsals are held outside the school day. 100% attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory. A performing ensemble cannot develop the necessary teamwork, even if a small number of people are missing.

Daily Rehearsals (Individual Classes)

The bulk of our work will be done during the regular Choir block. The block time is very important, so students should not ask to be excused from this block, except in emergency situations. School policy will prevail in dealing with unexcused absences and tardiness during the regular Choir block. If a student is unable to sing in class because of a medical reason, that student must bring a note signed by a parent or guardian to the director explaining the circumstances.

Public Performances and After-school Rehearsals

Public performances are a vital part of being in choir and missing a performance will be dealt with severely. Excused absences from public performances will be granted in case of genuine emergency only. Please call if an emergency arises. Jobs, family trips, etc. do not justify absences. Whether or not the student is excused, he/she will be expected to make-up the grade for the concert by singing the music from the concert at a pass-off before, after school or during class.

The date and time for each performance and outside rehearsal will be announced as far in advance as possible (generally a month ahead of time for a performance and two weeks for a rehearsal). A list of events already scheduled will be included in this packet.

Conflicts

Choir students are often involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities. If conflicts occur in the scheduling of practices, rehearsals, games, matches and performances, the following guideline will be used:

*Conflicts should be avoided as much as possible. Check the DJMS Choir Calendar periodically for scheduling information.

*A performance or game should take precedent over a practice or rehearsal with no penalty involved in the missed practice or rehearsal, provided the director and coach are notified in advance.

*All school conflicts will be handled by the choir director and the sponsor of the other conflicting school-sponsored events.

Excused Absences

The following are excused absences from Choral events:

*Personal sickness (note required)

*Death in family

*Prior written excuse presented and excused by the director and/or principal.

No absence will be excused unless notification is given before reporting time for the rehearsal or performance. Should a situation arise where a written notice is impractical (sickness or checked-out of school), it is still the student's responsibility to notify the choir director before reporting time.

Punctuality

Rehearsals will start and end on time. Be prepared to begin singing at the specified time. This means that you must be early to ensure that you have all of your materials and in your correct riser formation at the beginning of rehearsal. In the case of after-school rehearsals and performances, have someone at the site to pick you up at the end so you do not need to call for a ride and wait.

Doing Your Part

Preparation

Each student has a permanent assignment- practice your music and fundamentals every day. Always be a better singer tomorrow than you were today. Make your contribution enhance rehearsals and performances, do not be an anchor around all of our necks, holding us back until I "spoon-feed" you your part. Yes, you have other homework and a life! No Excuses! Work Hard Every Day!!

Facilities

The choir room is your "home away from home" filled with expensive equipment. Take pride in the choir room. Do more than your share to help keep it clean and looking like professionals work here. Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the choir room at any time. Each student will have assigned music, folders and folder slots. It is your responsibility to keep them clean and free of trash. Personal items must be kept in your school locker. Backpacks are NEVER allowed in ANY classroom. Anything found in the choir room besides your assigned materials will either be thrown away or placed in lost and found. Students not in choir are not allowed in the choir room. Have your friends, brothers, sisters, etc. wait for you in the hall or outside. This is for your protection and theirs.

Theft and Vandalism

Theft and vandalism will not be tolerated in the DJMS Choir. Students caught doing either of these will be sent directly to the assistant principal. Simply put, don't touch things that do not belong to you. Take pride in the appearance of all DJMS facilities and equipment.

Choir Office

The choir office is off limits to the students unless invited in by the choir director.

Concerts

Concert Uniforms

Strangely enough, music sounds better when performed by a group that looks good on stage. All students will be required to purchase the DJMS Choir Shirt. The cost of the shirt will be \$25. In addition to the

shirt, all students will need to provide Black slacks/pants and black shoes. Girls are strongly encouraged to wear a “black or white” tank or camisole underneath their shirt.

Uniforms will be worn at all concerts, contests and community events in which the Choir is involved. Sizing and orders will take place at the first part of September. More information will be sent home and placed on the website as the date approaches. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Mr. Husband in the Choir Office.

Spirit Wear

We are currently working on a Choir t-shirt design. T-shirts are not required, but strongly encouraged. The cost of the t-shirt will range from \$12 - \$15. As soon as the design and price are finalized, information will be sent home, and also placed on the Choir webpage.

Concert Etiquette

Since performance is a major objective of any choir, concert etiquette must be learned and practiced.

*Everyone should remain seated during the performance of each selection. If you must leave during a concert, you should silently exit between musical selections.

*There should be no talking during another group’s performance. Every effort must be made to avoid distractions.

*If you are entering the auditorium after the concert has already started, always wait until the end of the current musical piece before finding your seat. The people already in the audience do not want you crossing in front of them while they are enjoying the concert.

*At the end of each selection, the audience should applaud. Shouting or whistling is not acceptable. “This is not a Pep Rally or Game!!”

*When a piece is over, always wait until the conductor lowers his/her arms before applauding. Sometimes a piece may have several movements with silence in between. In such cases, it is proper to applaud at the end of the entire piece, NOT the end of each movement. The conductor will not usually lower his/her arms until the end of the entire piece, so this is usually a good indicator of when to applaud.

Trips

You are to be on your best behavior on trips, showing respect to each other, the director, sponsors, drivers, and to people from other communities or schools. This applies especially if they are not behaving courteously toward you! Behave with dignity and class at all times. If a school absence is required as part of the trip, then it is the student’s responsibility to obtain assignments from your teachers in advance of the activity and turn in the work on time. Choir students will not receive extra time to turn in homework because of school related absences.

On bus rides, remain in your assigned or selected seat. Once we leave the parking lot, you may talk quietly to those seated in your immediate area. Follow instructions from directors, chaperones or drivers immediately without question or comment. Remember- You are, at all times, a representative of your school and community. Act in a manner that will represent them well.

Grading Policy

The Danny Jones Middle School Choir program takes great pride in continuing a tradition of excellence. The grading policy reflects this commitment and also provides all students the chance to excel according to their own personal learning style. The grade will consist of daily skills assessment and effort, oral and written work, test grades, rehearsal and concert attendance. The grade is computed in the following manner:

40%- daily skills assessment and effort, written class/homework

20%- sight-reading tests and rehearsal attendance
40%- written tests and concert attendance

Discipline Plan

Participation in the DJMS Choral Program is a privilege, not a right. Good self-discipline should be maintained at all times. Distractions from rehearsal such as talking, horseplay, passing notes or doing homework for another class will not be tolerated. The following actions will be taken in the event that a student cannot maintain self-discipline:

- *1st offense- Warning
- *2nd offense- Teacher assigned Detention (Parent notification)
- *3rd offense- Lunch detention (Parent notification)
- *4th offense- Office Referral

Severe discipline problems will be automatically referred to the appropriate principal. It is the student's responsibility to talk to the choir director after class if disciplinary measures have been assigned.

Communication

Communication is vital in any organization. Therefore, the director will make every effort to communicate choir activities to the students and parents as far in advance as possible. Posters and signs with details will be posted in the choir and choir web page for each event.

Parents- please notify the director of conflicts well in advance of the event. I can be reached by phone, fax, e-mail and many other means. Please, I cannot fix a problem that I do not know about.

Important Numbers:

School Main Number- (817) 276-6200
Choir Office – (817) 276-6221
School Fax Number – (817) 453-7380
E-mail- husbma@mansfieldisd.org
Choir Webpage- www.mansfieldisd.org/schools/djones/extracurricular/choir/index.html

Handbook Signature Page

Parental support and student awareness are vital to the success of the choral program. Listed below are four essential points that the parents and students must understand when joining the choral program.

- **Commitment to the program-** Once a student agrees to join the choir; they are committed for a one-year period of time. Ideally, the student would commit to remaining in choir throughout their high school years. Music education through the choir classes are designed to be a six-year process.
- **Schedule-** At times, the choir schedule can be difficult to remember. The parent, as well as the student, should remain aware of the schedule. Please post the choir calendar with your family’s calendar. Please note required dates!!
- **Concert Attendance-** All activities that are scheduled outside of the regular class day are extremely important to the student’s experience in choir. Parental support of these activities will give the students pride in what they are doing in choir. Having the students at the performance on time, in concert attire, and along with listening to the entire performance and picking up the student at the end are all essential ways to support to the choir program.
- **Positive Attitude-** It is imperative that all students enter into every activity or piece of music with a positive attitude. This will ensure that every student receives the “most” out all activities.

I have read the DJMS Choir Handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to have all supplies needed and be at every activity in which I am involved.

Student Name

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Throughout the year, there will be occasions where extra parental help will be needed. If you are interested in volunteering, please check the blank or blanks next to the activities you would be willing to assist. Thank you in advance for your assistance!!

_____ Choir Volunteer Coordinator

_____ Chaperone trips during school day

_____ Helping with students at concerts

_____ Chaperoning evening social events