

**COBLE MIDDLE
SCHOOL
CHOIR DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK**



**Jennifer M. Portele
Director of Choirs
2010-2011**

Dear Coble Choir Parents,

Welcome to another exciting school year! I am very excited to have the opportunity to work with you and your student. With a new year comes new opportunities, and by choosing to be a part of the choral department, your student has taken the first step towards an exciting opportunity to become a better musician, as well as a better student.

Research has shown that the value of music participation can be crucial to a student's overall intellectual development. The study of music strengthens critical thinking skills and is considered an academic discipline by researchers. Musical expression utilizes the creative part of the brain and nurtures a positive self-image. Coble Middle School is pleased to offer a quality choral music program that will provide you and your student with experience in all areas of music education.

As a member of the Coble Choir, your student will learn that in order for them to be successful they must work for it. Any group of students can stand on a stage and sing a song, but Coble Choir members will learn how to be expressive and bring the audience into the performance. Your child will also learn the value of teamwork and how the entire group is affected by each individual member. In addition, your child will learn perhaps the most important lesson: When to have fun! As a member of a choir, there are times when we will be able to relax and have some fun, but the responsible student will know when it is time to work.

There are certain responsibilities that accompany an opportunity like this. This handbook contains much of the information you and your student will need during the year in order to be aware of the policies, activities, and events involved with choir. Please read it carefully and keep it where it can be found for further use. There will be periodic newsletters sent home with you giving important dates and information about upcoming events.

As choir is a class as well as an activity, so there are several required events that occur outside of the school day. In order for your child to fully benefit from the choral experience, we must all work together to ensure that he or she participates in all activities. It is very important that we communicate well with each other. When you are given dates for choir activities, please put them on your calendar to keep confusion at a minimum. The 2010 – 2011 Choir Calendar will be finalized very soon, and will be sent home with each student.

Please review this information with your student. The last pages of this booklet have areas for information parent signature. These pages should be returned by Friday, August 3rd, 2010. Your signatures assure me that you are aware of the policies and procedures for the upcoming school year. With your support and participation, we can offer your student a quality musical experience. Let's have a great year!

Musically Yours,

*Jennifer M. Portele
Coble Middle School
Director of Choirs*

HANDBOOK HIGHLIGHTS

- I. Coble Choirs**
- II. Essential Elements and Goals**
- III. Supplies**
- IV. Grading**
- V. Classroom and Rehearsal Conduct**
- VI. Concerts are Mandatory**
- VII. U.I.L Concert and Sight reading Concert**
- VIII. Extra Opportunities**
- IX. Behavior at Events**
- X. Eligibility**
- XI. Uniforms and Fees**
- XII. Fundraising**
- XIII. V.I.P.'s**
- XIV. Contacting the Director**



I. Coble Choirs and Course Description:

Beginner Treble Choir – This class is for 7th and 8th grade girls in their first year of choir at CMS. This course will include vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and music performance. There are two sections of this course – 6th and 7th periods on B days.

Beginner Tenor/Bass Choir - This class is for 7th and 8th grade boys in their first year of choir at CMS. This course will include vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and music performance. This class meets 1st period on A days.

Intermediate Treble Choir – is an auditioned girls choir consisting of developing singers, including both 7th and 8th graders. This course continues to develop vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and music performance. This class meets 3rd period on A days.

Advanced Treble Choir – This is an auditioned girls choir for more advanced singers and music readers. This course offers accelerated study of vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and music performance. This class meets 4th period on A days and 8th period on B days.

Advanced Tenor/Bass Choir - is an auditioned boys choir for more advanced singers and music readers. This course offers accelerated study of vocal technique, music theory, sight reading, and music performance. This class meets 5th period on B days.

Show Choir - (Extra-Curricular) Show Choir is a new choir for the 2010-2011 school year. Show Choir focuses on choreographed performance of pop, jazz, and musical theatre. Auditions will be held early in the fall and are open to any student enrolled in one of the other Coble Choirs.

*All choirs will perform at Coble MS Choir Concerts as well as UIL Concert & Sight Reading Competition.

** Advanced Choir students are strongly encouraged to audition for All-Region and participate in Solo and Ensemble Competition.

***Advanced Choirs and Show Choir may have the opportunity to perform at special performances or events away from Coble M S.

II. Essential Elements and Goals

1. Study of vocal techniques
2. Music Theory
3. Ear Training
4. Sight-singing or Sight-reading
5. Creative self-expression
6. Performance skills
7. Concert etiquette
8. Development of appreciation of all performing arts
9. Development of responsibility, citizenship, self-discipline, and positive self-esteem
10. Development of personal standards for teamwork in rehearsal and group performances
11. Music History and study of composers

III. Supplies

Supplies Needed: These supplies will be kept in the choir room at all times, so please do not plan on using those from your CMS binder)

1. A single subject spiral notebook
2. One package of 5 dividers
3. At least 2 pencils
4. 2 highlighters (yellow, orange or pink)
5. Pencil zipper bag
6. 1 box of Kleenex

A MATERIALS GRADE WILL BE TAKEN ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 2 FOR A-DAY, OR FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 3RD FOR B DAY.

Students will need to keep notebook paper in their choir binder at all times. Students must also bring a pencil to every class. The best use of our rehearsal time will be to remember what we achieved in the previous rehearsals. In order to do this, students will be required to make notes in their music, with pencils only. A supply check grade will be taken periodically, so students need to always be prepared.

Students will be provided with a ½ inch, 3 ring, black binder. This folder is where students will keep their choir music and rehearsal information. Choir music will be provided by the choral department as part of their activity fee. Students will be responsible for maintaining this folder, and should replace it if it becomes damaged.

IV. GRADING

Six-week grades are computed in the following manner:

- 40% Concert Attendance and Concert Participation
- 30% Daily Performance and Skill Demonstration
- 30% Written Assignments, Sightreading Tests, Folder, Music, & Pencil Checks,

Concerts:

All concerts are required activities! A concert is the equivalent of a major exam or major project. (Please see detailed information in Section V. Titled Concerts are Mandatory.)

Daily Performance and Skill Demonstration:

Emphasis is placed on learning to sing with correct vocal technique, to read music, to perform music appropriately and to understand musical concepts. Students will be graded on their demonstration of these skills in each rehearsal. Students will be deducted points as follows:

Three Points	Five Points	Ten Points (in addition to disciplinary action)
Out of Seat	Gum, food, candy	Use of profane language
Talking during instruction	Unprepared (no pencil, etc)	Refusing a directive
Blurting out	Hurtful comments/insults	Vulgar gestures
Making noises	Not participating	Argumentativeness
Personal grooming	Unexcused tardy	Fighting

Written Assignments, Singing/Sightreading Test, and Folder, Music & Pencil Checks:

All written assignments are due during the class period that they are assigned. Students choosing not to turn in a written assignment will receive a grade of zero for that particular assignment. Students will have periodic singing and sightreading tests to check for understanding of musical concepts. There will also be a grade taken for a folder check, music check and pencil check on a periodic basis. The only type of written homework, which may occur, will be extra credit projects/assignments, which are optional to all students. Students may receive extra credit by attending other schools' choir concerts, and writing a review, written reports on musical topics, written reports on televised music specials, etc.

V. Classroom and Rehearsal Conduct

One of the most important skills a student learns in choir is a high level of self-discipline. In addition, social and communication skills, teamwork, cooperation, self-expression, goal setting, self-confidence, concentration, coordination and poise are greatly enhanced through involvement in a music ensemble. These life skills serve to strengthen a student's ability to become a more responsible adult. Due to the activities and nature of a choral rehearsal, each student's behavior directly affects his or her own learning as well as the learning of the rest of the choir. For this reason, it is essential that students discipline themselves to follow these basic expectations and rules:

Expectations:

Students are expected to...

- 1) Follow all rules, procedures and directions.
- 2) Treat all others the way you wish to be treated.
- 3) Respect others belongings and personal space.
- 4) Attend ALL concerts and performances.
- 5) Strive to pass all of your classes every 6 weeks.

Rules:

- 1) Follow directions the 1st time given.
- 2) Talk and sing only at appropriate times.
- 3) Be respectful at all times to everyone, including other students, teachers and all adults.
- 4) No gum, candy, food or drink is permitted in the choir room.
- 5) Do not cause distractions that would prevent other students from learning or the teacher from teaching. (Could include making noises, personal grooming, moving out of seat, etc.)
- 6) Come to class on time, with a positive attitude, prepared, with all supplies, and ready to give 100% to each rehearsal and performance.

Students will be positively reinforced by their director. The choir will be able to earn various rewards for good behavior and accomplishments. Positive rewards may include recognition or special privileges.

Any student not following the rules will face the following consequences in order:

Consequences:

- 1) Verbal warning
- 2) 2nd verbal warning
- 3) Separated from group
 - Alternative written assignment
 - Parent may be contacted
- 4) Choir Detention issued
 - Parent is contacted
- 5) Referral to assistant principal
 - Parent is contacted

Repeated and/or serious offences may result in loss of privilege of being in an advanced choir, placed on choir probation, or removal from program.

If a student is placed on choir probation, they must continue to attend all required functions, including rehearsals and concerts because attendance is a part of their grade. However, the student will not be able to perform with the Coble Choir, and may not attend any social activities.

I insist that all members of this organization behave appropriately, not only in rehearsal, but in all classes at BJH. Choir members represent BJH not only at concerts and contests, but also in all classes they attend. I will regularly communicate with other Coble teachers, coaches, administrators and staff to insure that Coble Choir members are representing our organization in the best way possible.

VI. CONCERTS ARE MANDATORY

Choir is a performing class and concerts are a part of our curriculum. The only way to evaluate what we are teaching is to periodically assess your knowledge in the form of a concert. Each concert results in you earning three grades: Concert attendance, audience etiquette, and uniform/stage presence. An unexcused absence will result in three zeros for the six weeks. You must make arrangements to attend each concert. **All students are required to attend unless excused by the director.** It is your responsibility to avoid scheduling conflicts with the planned calendar. If there is ever a change in the calendar you will be notified in writing as soon as the date is changed.

Excused absences may include:

1. Serious illness
2. Extreme family emergency or death of a family member
3. Conflicts with another school activity or school sport.

Students are given ample notice of scheduled events so that conflicts are minimal, and every effort is made to avoid conflicts with other CMS activities. In the case that there is a schedule conflict with another school activity, it will be resolved by CMS faculty. Do not assume that if you have a school game the same night as a concert that you will be excused from the concert. The Athletic Director works well with us to insure that each child is attending the proper event. It is the student's responsibility to inform the director and coach/teacher of the conflict.

The choir director is the only person who can excuse an absence. Excused absence will be provided with a make-up assignment, at the discretion of the director. Students are responsible for keeping up with dates and times for performances, although frequent reminders will be given during class. The fall calendar can be found in this handbook, and the spring calendar will be available in January 2011.

***** In order for an absence to be excused, the parent must notify the director in writing or by e-mail. Absences are handled on a case-by-case basis.** If the absence is approved and excused, the student will be able to make up the grades by completing the following. 1) The student will write a 2-page paper that should discuss proper concert etiquette (to make up concert etiquette grade.) 2) The student may choose to either perform their concert music for the director, or may write a second paper on the music theme of their choice. If the student chooses to write a 2nd assignment, the topic must be approved by the director. That grade will be counted twice. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to make up their concert grades.

Unexcused absences include:

***** Never assume an absence will be excused. Always communicate with your director.**

1. Homework
2. Lack of transportation
3. Baby-sitting
4. Birthday or parties
5. Athletic events or other events not sponsored by MISD

***** Unexcused absences will always result in zeros.**

VII. UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest

Each year we enter a contest to assess the work we are accomplishing as a choir. This is our equivalent to the TAKS test and is our most important activity of the year. Therefore, it is very important that each student is working hard throughout the year so that our choir may receive the best ratings possible. This contest is mandatory for all eligible students. (See IX. Eligibility) More information will be sent home about U.I.L as the contest approaches.

VIII. Extra Opportunities

There are two opportunities for you to be recognized on an individual basis. The first is placement in the **All-Region choir**. All students interested learn three challenging pieces of music and perform portions of these pieces for a panel of judges. The highest ranked singers earn a spot in the choir. Students will start learning this music ASAP. The audition takes place on Saturday, October 23, at Ousley Junior High School, in Arlington. Selected members participate in a Clinic, on Tuesday, November 9th and a Concert on November 13th.

The second is the **Solo and Ensemble competition**. At this contest, students perform a prepared solo and or ensemble for a judge and receive a rating. The piece must come from a prescribed music list and are more legitimate in nature. Ensembles are chosen by the director. This event takes place in the 2nd semester, and students will begin preparing for this event in December. There is a small fee involved for entry fee and accompanist fee.

All students participating in these extra competition opportunities must meet eligibility requirements. (See IX. Eligibility) More information will be sent home regarding these opportunities as they approach. .

The **CMS Outstanding Musician**, is a new program for the 2010-2011 school year, and was designed to encourage students to stretch themselves as a musician by participating in extra choral activities. This program will recognize students for accomplishing extra achievements in choir on a points basis. Students will be responsible for reporting their points in a log, which will be kept by the director. Students achieving the honor of “Notable Musician” and “Outstanding Musician” will be recognized at the awards concert in May.

IX. Behavior At Events

The Coble Choir is a representative of Coble Middle School, Mansfield ISD, and our community. Therefore, it is important that all choir members are on their best behavior at all times. All Mansfield ISD rules and regulations must and will be followed so our school will always be respected favorably. Each event requires complete obedience. Failure by any student may result in the following:

1. Teacher/student conference
2. Teacher/student/parent conference
3. Referral to Vice-Principal and or placed on choir probation
4. Removal from the Coble Choir or denied entrance into the Coble Choir the following year.

X. ELIGIBILITY

In order to participate in an extra-curricular activity, students must be eligible for the six weeks in which the activity occurs. To be **eligible**, a student must score a 70 or above for **all courses** on his report card or progress report. If a student receives a 69 or below in any one (1) class, he becomes **ineligible**. Students regain their eligibility at the next 3 week grading cycle **if all classes have grades of 70 or above**. The best way to avoid confusion on this matter is for the student to pass all of his or her classes. Many choir activities and performances require that a student be eligible. This is in compliance with the Texas law “No Pass – No Play” that other organizations are required to follow.

XI. Uniforms and Fees

Choir, like many other organizations, does have a fee. The fee for choir is \$30, which pays for the entire school year. This fee is due by Friday, September 17th at the latest (If possible, please pay ASAP) In comparison to other school groups, this fee is very minimal, and there is no instrument cost – your voice is free! This \$30 fee includes uniform rental, a choir T-shirt, which is our alternate uniform, and . The Choir T-shirts will be worn for our more casual performances, spirit days, and recruiting. These T-shirts should be worn with a nice, solid, ankle length pair of blue jeans (no rips, patches, frays, glitter, paint, embroidery, etc.) **tucked in with a belt**, and appropriate shoes – no athletic shoes or flip flops.

All choir members will also have a formal uniform, which will be required for most performances. Students are responsible for making sure that their uniform looks professional for all performances, which means uniforms should be clean and wrinkle free. When students look great, they have pride in themselves and that pride will positively affect their performance.

The formal uniform is as follows:

All Girls– Black with blue choir dress (furnished by the choral department.) Girls should wear black hose, and black, closed toe flats or low-heeled dress shoes. Dresses should be hemmed to barely touch the top of the foot, while wearing dress shoes.

All Boys– White, long sleeved, button down tux shirt, with black cummerbund and bow tie, (furnished by the choral department.) Shirt should be tucked into a pair of NICE, black dress slacks, with a black belt, black socks and black dress shoes or boots-no athletic shoes!

The issued uniforms must be professionally dry cleaned before turning them in at the end of the year. This will be a part of their final grade. Failure to turn in a uniform will result in a fine, and may hold up receiving a report card and registering for school the following year.

Appearance is very important! We are judged on appearance at contest as well as our behavior and our singing. Therefore, there will be no exceptions to our uniform requirements. **If you are unable to purchase uniform materials, please notify me as soon as possible so that I can make other arrangements for your student. Any student not in the correct uniform will not be allowed to perform with the choir, and their grade will be affected.**

XII. Fundraising

Fund raising is very important to the choir. We will have one major fundraiser each semester. The amount of fun we have and the extra things that we do is all determined by how much we are able to fund raise. Funds are used to pay for and to offset the costs of uniforms, supplies, music competitions, and social activities. Therefore, we would like for every student to participate in the fundraisers. It is of course not mandatory, but you will find that all students are somehow affected by the fundraiser account. ***In addition, donations are also accepted and appreciated!***

XIII. V.I.P.'s

V.I.P.s are Very Interested Parents. At different times throughout the school year, it is helpful for me to have assistance with the business side of the choir department. Assistance is especially needed in helping to monitor students at concerts! In addition, there are many jobs behind the scenes that could never be taken care of by the director and students alone. Parents will be needed to assist with fundraisers, public relations, chaperones and programs and or decorations for concerts, solo contest, and many other things. I would like to try and arrange some non-singing outings for the department. Please let me know if you are available to help. Parental support and involvement are both welcomed and appreciated. For this organization to be successful, directors, students, and parents must work together as a team. If you are interested in helping, please fill out the parent volunteer forms at the end of this handbook. **All parent volunteers must be approved by Mansfield ISD prior to helping with any event.**

Your willingness to participate in this way is V.M.A. (Very Much Appreciated!)

There will be VIP meetings several times throughout the school year. This will allow us to touch base and answer any questions parents may have. The meetings will be in the Coble Choir Room at 7:00 PM. And will be kept as brief as possible.

**2010 – 2011 Coble Middle School
Choir Calendar**

September

Thursday 9/2 – Choir “V.I.P.” Parent Meeting 7-8 pm @ Coble Choir Room
all parents are invited, *more V.I.P meetings TBA*

- **Friday 9/3– all forms due!!!**
- **Friday 17th last day to pay \$30 choir fee**
- Friday 17th Choir Social Event – details to come
- Express Fundraiser Kick-Off in class

October

- Thursday 10/21 **Fall Concert @ 7 p.m. Coble MS Cafetorium**
- Saturday 10/23 All-Region Auditions @ Ousley JH, Arlington times

November

- Saturday 11/6 – Cluster Concert for Advanced Choirs @ Timberview
- Tuesday 11/9 – All-Region Clinic 6-9 pm
- Saturday 11/13 – All-Region Concert 5 pm

December

- Friday 12/10 - Holiday Party and Caroling @ Coble 6pm – 10 pm
- **Wednesday 12/8, Winter Concert 7 p.m. Coble MS Cafetorium**
- Holiday Performance Tour, day and time TBA – during school day
- Friday, 12/17 – Holiday in the Park – Six Flags

January

- Tuesday, 1/25 - Talent Show Auditions
- **Cluster Concert– possible cluster alternative – if not in Nov. for advanced choirs**

February

- Tuesday, 2/1 -Talent Show Rehearsal
- Friday, 2/4 – Talent Show

March

Monday & Tuesday 3/7 & 3/8 Pre-U.I.L. Concert
14th –18th Spring Break

- **Wednesday, March 30 – Thursday, March 31 – U.I.L. Competition @ Lamar HS in Arlington, times TBA**

May

- **Tuesday, 5/10 - Spring Concert and End of Year Awards 8 p.m.@ Willie Pigg Auditorium**
- **Hurricane Harbor TBA**
- **Awards ceremony TBA**

XIV. Contacting the Director

I am always open for any meeting with a parent, student, or any interested party about the CMS choir program. I appreciate any input or suggestions that will help this program run smoothly. If you need to reach me, the best way is by e-mailing me at jenniferportele@misdmail.org. You may also call Coble Middle School's main line 817-299-6400 or the direct choir line 817-299-6421, and I will return your call as soon as possible. You may also write a note and send it with your child. I also welcome you to come and observe your student's rehearsal. I can recommend good days to come and observe. My schedule is as follows:

A Days:

- 1st period – Beginner Boys
- 2nd period – Conference
- 3rd period – Intermediate Girls
- 4th period – Advanced Girls

B Days:

- 5th period – Advanced Boys
- 6th period – Beginner Girls
- 7th period – Beginner Girls
- 9th period – Advanced Girls

There are several pages and a check list added to the back of this handbook. Please sign all of them and have your child return them for their first grade of the year. All must be returned except for the Parent Volunteer form, which is up to your discretion to sign and return. If you do not fill out the MISD volunteer form you will not be placed on the list of approved volunteers, and you will not be able to help our program as a V.I.P. This is for all our students' protection and is extremely important.

Thank you for taking the time to read this material and discuss it with your child. I look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Portele
Coble Middle School
Director of Choirs
jenniferportele@misdmail.org
817-299-6421

Choir Check List

Use this checklist to help you make sure that you have turned in everything you need. Forms are due by Thurs. August 31st

1. ____ Acknowledgement of Rules
2. ____ V.I.P. Parent Form (optional – but appreciated!)
3. ____ Permission to Fundraise
4. ____ Medical Authorization **MUST BE NOTORIZED** by an official notary of Texas and stamped.
5. ____ \$30 Activity Fee (includes T-shirt, and uniform rental)

Acknowledgment of Rules

RETURN WITH SIGNATURES BY Thursday, September 2, 2010

I have read the policies of the COBLE Middle School Choir Department Handbook. I am aware that all concerts are required events. I understand that it is my responsibility to have my child at all required events. By signing this form I am making a year long commitment to the Coble Middle School Choral Department.

Student's Name: _____ Grade and Team Name _____

Address: _____

Home Telephone: () _____

Mother's Cell or Business Phone (_____) _____

Mother's E-mail _____

Father's Cell or Business Phone (_____) _____

Father's E-mail _____

Student's Signature _____ *Date* _____

Parent's Signature _____ *Date* _____

Student's T shirt size: (please circle – parent orders welcome for \$15)
Youth XL = adult XS Adult S M L XL XXL

Quantity of T-shirts _____

Permission to Fundraise

I also know fund-raising is very important for the choir to be able to succeed at the many events it performs throughout the year. I understand the fund-raising goes directly into an account that is used for only choir events, music, supplies, entry fees, uniforms, transportation, or any needs of the choir throughout the year.

Please read and check only one statement below:

_____ My child has my permission to fund-raise for the choir for the 2010 – 2011 school year. I understand my child will be responsible for all money until turned into the director.

_____ My child will not be allowed to fund-raise for the choir this school year.

_____ My child will not be allowed to fund-raise for the choir, but I will donate \$_____ to help reach the choir's goals.

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Date

CHOIR PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM

“V.I.P”

Very Interested Parent

The Coble Middle School Choir is always in need of parents that can help with events that take place during the year. Some of the things we will need help with are listed below. Check any that you would be willing to help with. No matter how big or how small, your help is greatly appreciated!

- * _____ Coordinating Chaperones
- * _____ Chaperoning at concerts – MANY NEEDED
- * _____ Chaperoning on bus trips during the day – SEVERAL NEEDED
- * _____ Chaperoning activities or trips in the evening
- * _____ Chaperoning at choir parties
- * _____ Video Recording of Concerts
- * _____ Sewing hems and mending uniforms
- * _____ Working with fund-raising materials when they arrive
- * _____ Piano accompanist
- * _____ Website Help
- * _____ Calling Parents
- * _____ Anything during evening hours
- * _____ Anything during school hours
- * _____ Decorating for concerts/events
- * _____ You need me... Call, I'll help when I can!
- * _____ Other ways I can help are _____

All volunteers must be registered with MISD. It can take up to a month to be added to the list after a criminal history has been run. **If you are not on the approved list you will not be allowed to help.** This form must be filled out yearly. If you think you may be able to help at all during the year, please fill out this form and the MISD volunteer form. Return both forms to Ms. Portele.

Parent's Name

Student's Name and Grade

_____)_____
Home Phone #

(_____)_____
Work Phone #