

Clear Creek High School Choir Handbook



...in a world of political, economic, and personal disintegration music is not a luxury but a necessity - not simply because it is "therapeutic," but because it is the persistent focus of man's intelligence, aspirations, and good-will.

-Robert Shaw

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Clear Creek High School Choral Department Ensembles

Concordia – Roman Goddess of Harmony

- Tenor-Bass Chorus
- Open to All Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Tenors and Basses
- Non-Auditioned
- Required to Compete at UiL Concert & Sight Reading
- Concordia Members are Encouraged to Participate in All Solo Competitions

Cantus – Latin for “To Sing”

- Treble Chorus
- Open to All Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Treble Singers
- Non-Auditioned
- Required to Compete at UiL Concert & Sight Reading
- Cantus Members are Encouraged to Participate in All Solo Competitions

Kapelle – German for “Ensemble.”

- Varsity Treble Choir
- Open to All Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Treble Singers
- Audition is Required
- Required to Compete at UiL Concert & Sight Reading
- Eligibility Requirement

Symphonic Chorale

Course Objectives and Goals

Through the courses offered in this department, students will:

- Develop a Healthy Vocal Tone in Both Soloistic and Choral Literature
- Develop Mastery of Sightreading Skills and Musical Vocabulary
- Develop Rehearsal Techniques in Choral and Soloistic Environments
- Gain a Greater Understanding of the Historical Significance of Choral Music in the Global Canon
- Develop Interpersonal Skills with a Focus on Post-Secondary Citizenship
- Learn Proper Concert Etiquette Through Participation In and Attendance of Live Performances

- Varsity Mixed Choir
- Open to All Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Students
- Audition is Required
- Required to Attend Madrigal Festival (Whether Performing or Not) and Compete at UiL Concert & Sight Reading
- Eligibility Requirement

Chamber Singers

- Open to All Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors
- Chamber Singers Students Must Also be Enrolled in Symphonic Choir
- Audition is Required
- Required to Compete in first round of TMEA process, Madrigal Festival in February, as well as UiL Concert and Sightreading
- Community Ambassadors with Numerous Performances Throughout the Year, especially in December
- Eligibility Requirement

Student Expectations

Participation in the Clear Creek High School Choral Program is a ***privilege and not a right***. Students are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior, dependability, and dedication both in the classroom and in the community. With this philosophy in mind, the following guidelines of behavior are EXPECTED:

- Show Up and Be On Time
- Be Healthy, Be Attentive, Be Aware
- Do YOUR BEST
- Work to Improve
- Contribute as a Positive Team Player
- Be an Example of CCHS and the Community EVERYWHERE You Go
- PASS ALL of Your classes EVERY NINE WEEKS
- Make PERFORMANCES and EXTRA REHEARSALS a PRIORITY
- Communicate Effectively with All Parties (Parents, Teachers, and Directors)

Materials

- Folder with Music and Pencil
 - Students will provide their own black 1-inch 3-ring choir binder and pencils and must put their names on the inside of their binder in permanent ink.
 - Students are financially responsible for their binder and all contents provided by the school. Loss or damage to music can result in a replacement fine that can be anywhere from \$1.00 on up (usually not more than \$30) per piece, depending on what music it is.
 - DO NOT mark in your music with pen - even erasable pen.
- Water Bottle (Optional)
- One-to-One Laptop (to Remain in Backpack Unless Instructed Otherwise)

Attendance Guidelines

Do not wait until the last minute to work out conflicts-- be proactive and communicative. Your daily contribution to the choir program is graded, but more importantly, it is essential for the advancement of our program.

Punctuality

Punctuality is of vital importance to the choir program, so please be on time. Members are required to arrive 5 minutes prior to designated rehearsal time. Later arrivals are expected to go directly to their seat with no distraction to the ensemble. Tardies will be recorded, and consequences will follow the guidelines below.

After-School Rehearsals

Scheduled after school rehearsal dates and times will be provided with sufficient notice. Attendance is mandatory and will be counted as a major grade. To receive credit for an excused missed rehearsal, students must meet with their section leader or a member of their section and receive all notes given. The student may be required to show their score to the directors to demonstrate completion of this task. Failure to complete this task may result in removal from upcoming performances, auditioned ensembles, and may affect grades. Any absence must follow the attendance policy below. Unexcused absences from rehearsals will result in a zero grade, but is at the discretion of the directors.

Concert Attendance (Subject to the Absence Policy Below)

Concerts are curricular activities and as such will be treated as major grades. Therefore, attendance and participation in all concerts is mandatory. Concerts are the culmination of much preparation and class work. It is impossible to make up a choral rehearsal or concert experience. In addition, choir members are expected to be present for the entire duration of each performance.

Student Attendance Expectations and Consequences

- All dates listed above are mandatory and all students are expected to attend.
- School conflicts must be communicated to the directors via the absence request form at least 3 calendar days in advance. Students will be permitted a total of 3 school function-related absences per ensemble for rehearsals per concert series. No absences will be permitted for performances and competitions.
- Non-school-related absences will be excused at the discretion of the directors and must be communicated to the directors via the absence request form. If a form is not submitted, the absence will automatically be unexcused. In the event of an emergency, this form may be accepted up to 3 days late but must be accompanied by communication from a parent concerning the reason for the absence.
- 5 cumulative rehearsal absences in a concert series for any reason may result in the student being required to sing off the music in a timeline decided upon by the directors. Inadequate knowledge of the music may result in removal from the upcoming performances/competitions on the current literature and the student will be required to complete an alternate assignment decided upon by the director.
- After 10 cumulative absences of any kind during a concert series and a failure to sing off the music by a date decided upon by the directors, the student will not be permitted to perform with the ensemble at the upcoming performance and the student will complete an alternate assignment instead.
- Failure to attend any performance, competition, or rehearsal may result in removal of Solo opportunities in Spring Show and may affect choir placement for the following year.

Absence Policy

Excused Absences

- All absences must be approved by the directors prior to an event using the absence request form found on the choir website, BAND, and Canvas at least 3 days in advance.
- Work cannot interfere with rehearsals; work is not an excused absence nor an excuse to leave early or arrive late.
- Routine doctor/dentist appointments must not interfere with rehearsals, these appointments are not excused unless scheduled and cleared with the directors at least one week in advance.
- Make up tests or tutorials should be taken during school scheduled tutorial times.
- Vacations/trips cannot be scheduled during rehearsals or performances; these will be counted as unexcused absences.
- The Directors reserve the right to request a doctor or parent note in the event of an absence.
- Excused absences include but are not limited to personal illness and injuries, funeral or death in the family, pre-approved school field trips, and other absences at the discretion of the directors.

School Conflict

- In the case of school conflicts, the student is responsible for notifying the directors and acquiring approval PRIOR to the event. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence and a grade no higher than a 70%.
- In the event of an absence, students will be given the opportunity to make up the missing grade using an assignment decided upon by the directors. However, unexcused absence assignment grades will begin at a 70%.
- All rehearsals are mandatory; however, should you need to miss, absences will ONLY BE EXCUSED if the absence request form is completed (link on the choir website, BAND, and Canvas) at least 3 days in advance.

***Excused absences are left to the discretion of the directors.*

***Work related conflicts are unexcused*

CCHS Choir Cell Phone Policy

CCHS Choir will abide by the electronic device policy outlined in the Clear Creek High School Handbook. Cellphones caught out in class will be placed in "Phone Jail" for the duration of class. Failure to comply with the "Phone Jail" policy will result in the device being immediately turned in to campus administration. After three infractions, the parents will receive an email detailing the student's options. These will be at the teacher's discretion and could range from turning the device in at the start of class to an office referral.

In the case of director-approved iPads, the student may not use the iPad for anything other than the task at hand during rehearsals. Directors reserve the right to confiscate any device at anytime if the director suspects the student of misuse. The above policy will apply to all electronic devices in class including Apple Watches.

Concert Make-up Assignment

The following essay must be completed and submitted via email to Mr. Taylor (mjtaylor@ccisd.net) by 4PM on the 7th day following the missed event regardless of the day of the week on which the due date falls. Failure to complete the assignment will result in a zero test grade and CANNOT BE MADE UP. Students will only be allowed ONE MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENT PER SCHOOL YEAR. All other concert absences will result in zeros.

ESSAY REQUIREMENTS

- 1,000 words, single spaced, using Arial font size 11, in prose format (NO BULLETS)
- Essay will include research into 3 pieces of the student's choosing from the missed event and must answer the 3 questions below.
 - Where did the text come from?
 - What was happening in the world at the time of the composition of the piece? (Bonus points for how what was happening might have affected the composition of the piece)
 - What are 3 interesting facts about the life of the composer?
- The student must also supply a bibliography (list of sources) of no fewer than three sources used in the research portion of the paper.
- WIKIPEDIA IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SOURCE
- Grading of these essays will be at the sole discretion of the teacher; however, the weighting of the rubric will be as follows
 - Content: 60%
 - Formatting/length/following of instructions: 40%
- Plagiarism or use of AI technology will result in an automatic zero and will be reported as an honor code violation.

TMEA All-State After School Rehearsals

All students are highly encouraged to audition for the Texas All-State process. To make the process more accessible.

- Rehearsals will be Monday through Thursday from 3:15-4:30pm in the choir room
- The choir room will be open before and after school at the directors' discretion for anyone wanting to use a practice room to rehearse. Please be respectful of rehearsals happening when it is not your ensemble working.
- It is encouraged that students attend as many rehearsals as possible.

Grading

Choir is a performance-based course with a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum. Our performances/recordings are a culmination of careful study of vocal technique, music theory, knowledge of the musical score at hand, and

attention to intonation. Proper rehearsal skills are essential to the performance process and will be graded as such. Classroom behavior infractions that affect student performance will result in deductions from grades.

Daily: 50%

- Daily grades are the grades based on daily work such as participation grades (individual and ensemble singing), quizzes, writing assignments
- Tardiness, lack in focus or preparedness, failure to bring materials may result in a lowered grade

Major Grades (Rehearsals/Performances): 45%

- Performance grades are any grades that relate directly to a performance such as attendance at concerts, dress rehearsals, or any required before-school or after-school rehearsals and participation in mandatory before- and after-school rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and concerts is required.
- Tardiness, lack in focus or preparedness, failure to bring materials or uniform items may result in a lowered grade.
- All students will have one opportunity to retest on a major grade if mastery is not demonstrated. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate this process with the teacher within 10 days of grade notification. The maximum grade that can be earned on the reassessment is 70%. This requirement does not apply to semester exams or “benchmark tests”.

Writing: 5%

- It is a district requirement that all students will complete a writing assignment each grading period regardless of the class’s discipline.

No Pass... No Play

Grades play a crucial role in the student’s ability to participate in extracurricular activities. Directors have absolutely no discretion when a student is declared academically ineligible.

U.I.L. guidelines restrict ineligible students from participating in the following events: TMEA Auditions, UIL Solo/Ensemble Contest, Madrigal Festival, the Spring Trip, and all events that charge admission. DIRECTORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DENY THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN NON-UIL EVENTS BASED ON A STUDENT’S ACADEMIC STANDING AT ANY TIME. Future choir placement will be reflected in your ability to pass your classes!

Communication

BAND

“BAND” is a platform in which Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Smith will send reminders and updates and is available for both students and parents. **THIS IS REQUIRED FOR ALL STUDENTS AND PARENTS.** Band will be our primary communication program as well as our calendar. The “BAND” App is available on the Apple Store (iPhone users) or Play Store (Android users). BAND can also be accessed through a web browser at band.us.

To be added to BAND, please use the join links are also available on the choir website and Canvas pages.

Director Contact Information

Matthew J Taylor
Head Choir Director
mjtaylor@ccisd.net

281-284-1878
Rachel Smith
Associate Choir Director

Uniforms

This document serves as a uniform contract for the issued uniform pieces provided by the school. Students will be responsible for their uniform until it is turned in at the end of the year. Damage or loss of uniforms will result in replacement fines that could easily exceed \$100, and these fees must be cleared before the end of the year so no consequences are implemented.

Formal Uniforms - Tuxedos

The school district provides a tuxedo jacket and slacks. Students will be responsible for the following items:

- White, Pleated Tuxedo Shirt with Stand-Up, Wing-Tipped Collar (Purchased through CCHS Choir Boosters)
- Black Bow Tie (comes with shirt)
- Black Dress Shoes (No Patent Leather, Canvas, or Suede)
- Black Socks

Formal Uniforms – Formal Dresses

The school district provides a formal dress. Students will be responsible for the following items:

- Black Closed-Toe Pumps, 1" - 2" Heel (Black Character Shoes are Recommended)
 - NO BLACK BOOTS OR "CHUNKY" SHOES - Plain, Closed-Toe Heels Suitable to Wear with a Formal Gown are REQUIRED

Alterations

- Hemline Should Be 1" Off the Floor.
- Hems MUST be Temporary
- DO NOT CUT THE DRESS OR TUXEDO
- DO NOT USE STAPLES, SAFETY PINS, OR TAPE
- Each Student is Responsible for Alterations
- Major Alterations Must be Approved in Advance by the Choral Directors

Hair and Jewelry

- Hair will be worn back and out of the face.
- Jewelry should not be distracting and must be approved by the director.
- Post earrings or studs only may be worn in concert.

Remember, the concert attire is enforced because the choir performance is about us, not you. Any attire that brings attention to a single person takes away from the group.

Improper concert attire (inappropriate shoes, wearing bows in hair, hair covering face, excessive jewelry, missing items, etc.) may result in a lowered test grade for that concert!!!

Uniform Return Policy

- Uniforms will be kept in the choir room unless needed for a performance off campus.
- Uniforms needing alterations may be taken home, but then must be returned to the choir room.
- Following the final formal concert, all uniforms must be returned to the choir room to be cleaned. Dry cleaning fee is included in this year's choir dues.

CCHS Choir Letter Jackets

In addition to program requirements for choir, the following CCISD requirements for an award must be met:

- Complete Participation for a Minimum of One Year in Choir
- Not Leave Choir for Disciplinary Reasons
- Not be Suspended or Placed in an Alternative Education Program
- Not End the One-Year Period with a Probationary Status
- Receive the Recommendation of the Organization's Sponsor

All awards to students must meet the criteria set forth by the District and the University Interscholastic League. A student may receive only one major award for combined activities during his/her four years in high school and no more than one award per year for participation in the same organization.

- Jackets may not be awarded until the student completes participation for a minimum of one year in a program.
- Leaving the organization for disciplinary reasons will disqualify the student from the award.
- Ending the one-year period with a probationary status will disqualify the student from the award.
- The awarding student must receive the recommendation of the respective organization sponsor.
- A student may not receive the recommendation of the choir director, which is required to be awarded the letter, if any of the following have occurred:
 - o Excessive Behavior Problems
 - o Excessive Academic Eligibility Problems
 - o Excessive Attendance Problems, Including Any Required After-School Events

Choir Awards will be presented to choir students based on a point system of participation and service.

- TMEA Honor Choir – 2 Points
- TMEA District Choir – 5 Points
- TMEA Region Choir – 10 Points
- UIL Solo (Div. I) Class II – 2 Points
- UIL Solo (Div. I) Class I – 3 Points
- One Year's Participation – 10 Points
- UIL Ensemble (Div. I) Class I – 2 Points

20 points = Awards Jacket

Letter jackets will be awarded at the conclusion of the one-year period.

Choir Fees

CCHS Choir Fee: \$70.00

- This will cover Choir Shirt, Scores, Tracks, Program Pianist Fee, and Uniform Cleaning Fee.
- Students who wish to participate in the TMEA process will incur a separate fee listed below.

Chamber Choir Fee: \$175 (Chamber Choir Only)

- This will cover registration fees, scores, clinicians, hotel, and charter bus.

Possible Additional Fees

- TMEA Contest : \$25
- TMEA Region Clinic and Concert: \$20
- Voice Lessons Facilities Fee \$25
- Tux Shirt and Bow Tie \$40

Other expenses might include other choir T-Shirts, letter jacket patches, Secret Santa Gifts, choir trip expenses, and professional performances, all of which would be optional.

REFUND POLICY

There will be no refunds from the choral department in any case where a student has paid for an activity or supply but is no longer able to participate. This policy includes but is not limited to the situations of ineligibility, illness, unexpected family travel, or withdrawal from the CCHS Choir. Any trip refunds would go through the company's optional insurance policy; however, the directors are not responsible for facilitating refunds with these insurance policies.

Code of Conduct

The CCISD's Extracurricular Code of Conduct can be found at the following link. All choir students must adhere to the CCISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct.

http://www.ccisd.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_645402/File/Departments/Policy%20and%20Legal%20Affairs/fm-extracurricular-code-of-conduct.pdf

Additionally, students must adhere to our Clear Creek High School Choir Code of Conduct. Students who are not in compliance with our Code of Conduct may receive the consequences below.

Choir Student Code of Conduct

- Students will treat all other people respectfully. Any form of bullying, name calling, threats, hate-speech, volatile and directed language, sexual harassment, or unwanted intimate advances will not be tolerated, including interactions in online, text-based, social media, or other formats.
- Students will respect other students' physical space and not touch another student without his/her permission. Any amount of physical violence against another student will not be tolerated.
- Students will not commit any acts that would be considered illegal or against CCISD guidelines. Any amount of theft, use of illegal drugs or paraphernalia, physical altercations, or any other inappropriate or illegal activity will not be tolerated.

Consequences of breaking the Choir Student Code of Conduct:

If a violation of the Code of Conduct is confirmed to be against another person, the teachers will hold a conference with the student against which the offense has occurred, and the severity of the infraction will be determined by the teachers using a student-centered approach and philosophy.

- For minor infractions, the teacher will have a conference with the student who has broken the Code of Conduct. If appropriate and mutually desired, the student against whom the infraction occurred could also be in the conference in order to facilitate healing, self-advocacy, and good communication practices.
- For more significant infractions that still fall under "minor" infractions, any of the following could happen (listed in no order, and this is not an exhaustive list): student conferences, student-parent conferences, parent notification, administrative notification, administrative disciplinary actions, campus formal write-up (disciplinary referral), or a consequence to be determined.
- For major infractions (even first-time), any of the following could happen (listed in no order): loss of involvement of specific choir event (not getting to participate in an event, for example), demotion of choir class (moving down a level), being removed from Chamber Singers, removal from choir officer executive council or representatives, or future non-advancement to a higher choir.
- For the most egregious infractions (even first-time), removal from the choir program could be applied (it could be immediate, or it could be delayed until the next grading period depending on the nature of the infraction). Examples of infractions that would warrant immediate removal from the program include (but are not limited to) stealing money from a choir colleague's purse during class, showing up to a choir event drunk or high, or physically fighting with another choir student during a choir event.

Note that consequences that result from major and egregious infractions would be discussed with and supported by CCHS administration before they were implemented.

By signing the page that acknowledges you have read and understand the CCHS Choir Handbook, you are agreeing to this CCHS Choir Student Code of Conduct and CCISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct.