

Choir Handbook

2021-2022



Website: othschoir.com

Ms. Heidi Buch, *director*

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This handbook has been prepared to provide both choir students and their parents/guardians with a quick reference for the rules and regulations governing the choral program. In addition to the information provided in this handbook, all students are expected to abide by the regulations set forth in the OTHS Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

Welcome (back) to the OTHS Choir family and what will be an eventful school year! Please carefully read through the information in this syllabus/handbook with a parent/guardian. Once you have read it through, please fill out the attached **Choir Commitment Form**. This form will **acknowledge that you have read and understand this syllabus/handbook**. Note that a parent signature is also required.

*** In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, there are many unknowns. Please interpret this handbook as a living, breathing document that is subject to change over the year as the status of our world and resources also change. Your patience and flexibility is greatly appreciated. ***

Expectations

What my students can expect from me:

- I will treat you with respect and care as an individual
- I will work with students to provide a classroom environment that is conducive to learning
- I will strive to help you grow as both an individual singer as well as an ensemble singer.

What I expect from my students:

- Students will respect themselves and others
- Students will refrain from actions or words that may put themselves or others in danger.
- Students will think before they speak and act.
- Students will come to class and performances on time, prepared, and with a willing attitude.

What are my goals:

- To foster a safe and welcoming learning environment
- To foster comprehensive musicianship
 - To teach healthy vocal technique, the fundamentals of music, and general music appreciation
- To foster a community of learners who are motivated to sing and learn

A NOTE ABOUT NON-DISCRIMINATION:

Every student in this department, regardless of background or identity categories, is valued and appreciated. As a member of this community, you have the right to determine your own identity. You have the right to be called by whatever name you wish, and for that name to be pronounced correctly. You have the right to be referred to by whatever pronoun you wish. You have the right to adjust those things at any point in your education. Additionally, all students, regardless of race, sexual orientation, economic status, or religion, have the right to be treated fairly and with respect. If there are aspects of the instruction that result in barriers to your inclusion or a sense of alienation, please contact me privately without fear of reprisal.

CHAMBER CHOIR

Honors Chamber Ensemble (1st semester) Chamber Ensemble (2nd semester)

Full Year: ½ Credit Per Semester (Honors Credit 1st Semester Only)

Open to Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors - Prerequisite: Audition

Honors Chamber Ensemble is the premier choral group at OTHS and is a one semester course focusing on the highest levels of vocal musicianship. Students will be introduced to advanced music theory, focusing on the highest levels of vocal musicianship. Students will be introduced to advanced music theory, a large variety of vocal styles including a cappella, jazz, and several different foreign languages. Voicing Ranges from SATB to 16 parts. The Madrigals and Jazz Choir are encompassed within this group. Chamber Ensemble has the largest time commitment of all the choirs, and students are required to attend all performances, rehearsals, and outreaches.

CONCERT CHOIR

Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester

Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors -Prerequisite: Audition

A full-year course focusing on perfecting fundamentals, intermediate theory, and good musicianship through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles. There will be a moderate amount of singing in foreign languages and sight singing. If the level of music is too difficult for any person, private lessons may be required to remain in this class. Attendance at performances is **mandatory** and considered as part of the basic course requirements.

TREBLE CHORUS

Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester

Open to students 10-12th grade with treble voices

A full-year course focusing on vocal fundamentals, basic theory, and good musicianship through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles. In addition to performance expectations, students will also study introductory music theory, sight-singing techniques, and music history. Attendance at performances is **mandatory** and considered as part of the basic course requirements.

FRESHMEN CHOIR

Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester

Open to all freshmen

This is a full-year academic course focusing on good musicianship through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles. Begins with SAB voicing. In addition to performance expectations, students will also study introductory music theory, sight-singing techniques, and music history. Attendance at performances is **mandatory** and considered as part of the basic course requirements.

DAILY SUPPLIES

- Black 3-ring binder for materials (1 in. recommended)
- Sharpened or Mechanical Pencils (with led)
- Any music and/or worksheets from class
- Device (per school handbook)
- Face Mask (goes over nose and mouth, fits snugly)
 - Students will be given specific singing masks which are recommended for daily use but not required. These singing masks will be required for dress rehearsals, concerts, and other rehearsals as the director sees fit.

PROCEDURES

- Students are expected to give their best effort in class and rehearsals every day.
- Students should proceed straight to their assigned seat before the start of class and put their backpacks to the sides of the room.
- At Smiley, students will be cognisant of their chair position on the risers at all times. With no exceptions, chairs will have all 4 legs on the platform. Students may not jump, run, move excessively, or be rowdy as this is a safety issue and a disruption to the class.
- When seated, students should check the daily agenda and begin any opening bell work
- Students should remain at their seat for the class period and observe social distancing practices as efficiently as possible.
- Cell phone usage is NOT permitted - exceptions at discretion of the instructor
- Students should refrain from chewing gum and eating/drinking in class - water is permissible
- At the end of our time in the room, students will be sure to sanitize their hands prior to leaving

CLASS ABSENTEE POLICY

- If you miss class, regardless of the reason, it is YOUR responsibility to email Ms. Buch and catch up on what you missed within 3 school days. This makeup work is up to the discretion of the director and may include individual practicing with tracks, reflections, or doing a makeup assignment.
 - Excessive absences are detrimental to student learning and will result in a conference with the student and/or parent(s).
 - Failure to communicate absences and complete makeup assignments will result in a reduction of participation points

PERFORMANCES

- Concerts and performances usually happen **outside of the school day** and act as major summative assessments. They allow for students to demonstrate collaborative ownership of their craft. In other words, regardless of your student's choir, **students are required to attend and participate in concerts for a grade.**
- If you are involved in a sport or other *school-related* activity and have a conflict with a required event, you must notify your director in writing (email) **AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE** of the conflict so the director and the sponsor can work out a solution.
 - Failure to communicate such absences with at least 1 week's notice in writing will result in an unexcused absence. Makeup points may not be awarded.
- Excused absences include the following: death in the family or illness /excused absence from school, or other conflicting school activity.
- If a student misses a concert with an **excused** absence (as prescribed above or by the director), that grade will be required to be made up with a project agreed upon between the director and the student. Full credit will be awarded.
- Absences due to illnesses will need to be documented with a parent or doctor's note or phone call before any credit can be recovered.
- Unexcused absences will be discussed with the director and points may or may not be recoverable. Job conflicts are considered unexcused. Plan ahead.

ATTIRE

For regular concerts, students should wear **concert black**. This means business casual, all black. All clothing should not only be school appropriate but also interview appropriate. The goal is to look professional. No white socks, revealing clothing, heels you can't walk in, etc. Talk to Ms. Buch ASAP if you need help with providing concert black attire. All clothing should also align with the district's dress code.

Official Concert Attire may be assigned during the school year as well. Information on this will be forthcoming.

Grading Policy

Per district requirements, coursework constitutes 80% of your overall semester grade, and the remaining 20% is a comprehensive final exam. All assignments and assessments align with one or more of the following choir focus topics and skills.

Choir Focus Topics & Skills

Vocal Pedagogy (*posture, breathing, phonation, tone production, resonance, articulation*)

Rhythm (*Various note values, time signatures, aural dictation*)

Melody (*Singing vocal parts, key signature, solfege identification/labeling, harmony, chords, scales*)

Elements & Vocabulary (*Expressive markings, interpretive ideas, text painting, diction, vowels, style*)

Critique & Reflection (*Constructive evaluation of other singers as well as self-reflection*)

Professionalism (*concert etiquette- on and off the stage, timeliness*)

Context (*making connections to real life, applying performance practice, analyzing historical relevance*)

Knowledge & mastery of these focus topics and skills will be assessed according to the following breakdown:

Coursework:

Performances & Major Projects: 30%

Tests & Quizzes: 20%

Attendance/Participation: 30%

Classwork: 20%

Grading Scale:

A+ 100-98	A 97.99-93	A- 92.99-90
B+ 89.99-88	B 87.99-83	B- 82.99-80
C+ 79.99-78	C 77.99-73	C- 72.99-70
D+ 69.99-68	D 67.99-63	D- 62.99-60
	F 59.99-0	

Additional Opportunities for Student Growth

PRIVATE LESSONS

Lessons are strongly encouraged for all students as it is one of the most effective ways to build musicianship skills. Many private lesson instructors are available locally and a list of local teachers can be found on the choir website. These invaluable lessons reinforce musical skills taught in class and aid in the development of good singing habits. They correspond with all choral activities (Solo Contest, ILMEA, sight-singing, college audition preparation, etc.) and supplement our musical curriculum. These "one on one" lessons may vary in price depending on teacher and frequency of lessons. Private lessons are required for members of Honors Chamber Ensemble.

ILMEA (Illinois Music Education Association) FESTIVALS

All students are *highly* encouraged to audition for the [ILMEA](#) Festivals. *Members of Chamber Choir are required to audition.* The auditions for the festivals take place in October and will consist of singing prepared pieces, sight-reading and demonstrating tonal skills. *Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the auditions and festival will be held online in a modified format.* Upon a successful audition, singers will participate in the District Festival held on a Saturday in November. High school students may audition for either traditional or jazz (or both). High school sophomores, juniors or seniors are eligible for the ILMEA All-State and All-State Honors Choirs and Jazz Ensembles based on their initial audition score in October. The All State festival is held for three days in Peoria during January. Being selected for any of these choirs is an incredible honor and an unbelievable musical experience showcasing the top high school musicians in Illinois!

Students may also participate in the All-State Music Festival by entering the state [composition contest](#) in a variety of categories. Students may also apply for the [Future Music Educators Seminar \(FMES\)](#), which will allow the student to attend the state conference if they are interested in becoming a future teacher of music. This helps students decide if music education is truly the career path for them. Contact the director with interest in either of these programs!

IHSA SOLO & ENSEMBLE CONTEST

ALL high school students are strongly encouraged to participate in the IHSA solo & ensemble contest. *Members of Chamber Choir are required to participate.* Held each year during 2nd semester, this event provides the opportunity to prepare solo and/or small ensemble literature to perform for a professional adjudicator. Students will receive a performance rating and brief feedback. The comments received are constructive in nature and are used to help students improve as musicians!

MUSIC TRIPS/FESTIVALS/EDUCATIONAL TOURS

A highlight of a music student's high school experience is the opportunity to travel. The purpose of music trips and festivals is to provide additional educational opportunities that are not available at the school. Students represent the school and community by participating in once-in-a-lifetime performance opportunities at exciting destinations. Students may earn their trip costs through participation in various fundraising projects offered during the year(s) leading up to the trip.

**Due to restrictions, in-person field trips are currently prohibited by our district. Virtual replacements or opportunities will be communicated, where possible! We hope to schedule a trip as soon as Covid-19 restrictions ease and travel is safer.*

TRI-M MUSIC HONORS SOCIETY

Led by Dr. Gustafson-Hinds, Tri-M opens up a world of opportunities for students who have already shown themselves to be academically capable and musically gifted. Through performance and community service, they'll develop confidence, creativity, critical thinking, compassion, and a host of other leadership skills sure to serve them well in school and beyond.

O'Fallon Choral Risers Association

The O'Fallon Choral Risers Association, henceforth known as OCRA, is a parent boosters organization which supports the choir functions financially, socially, and physically. All parents of choir members are automatically in this organization and are encouraged to actively participate in any way they can. OCRA is always looking for volunteers to help with events, fundraisers, and publicity. Parent support is essential to the success of any choral program, and there are opportunities for even those who have limited time available. **Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Milburn Choir Room.** Want to know more? Email ocra203@gmail.com or visit the OCRA facebook page.

2021 - 2022 Choir Calendar & Important Dates

*All dates, times, and locations are subject to change. Visit www.othschoir.com for updates.

Date	Event	Time	Location	Additional Info
8/28	Fundraiser - Car Wash	10am-2pm	Valvoline in O'Fallon	Volunteers needed!
8/31	Choir Retreat	3:30 - 5:30	Smiley 510	Required for all choirs
8/31	Choir/OCRA Meet & Greet	5:30 - 7	O'Fallon Park, Pavilion 4	Parents are welcome!
9/21	Music For All - Feeder Concert With 7th Grade	Afternoon/Evening	Milburn	Required for Chamber, Concert, & Treble
9/22	Music For All - Feeder Concert With 8th Grade	Afternoon/Evening	Milburn	Required for Chamber & Freshmen Choir
9/30	OCRA Fundraiser	TBD	TBD	
10/4	Fall Concert Dress Rehearsal	3:30-5:30	Milburn Auditorium	Required for all choirs
10/5	Fall Concert	6:30pm, call 6	Milburn Auditorium	Required for all choirs
10/11	ILMEA Auditions (virtual due date)	-	Virtual	<u>Required for Chamber</u>
10/22	OCRA Fundraiser	TBD	TBD	
11/6	ILMEA District Jazz Festival	All day	Belleville East	

11/20	ILMEA District Festival	All day	Belleville West	
11/23& 11/28	Madrigal Set-Up	6-?	Milburn	Need parent help!
11/27- 12/2	Madrigal Tech Week	3:30-10 (will vary)	Milburn	Required for mads participants
12/2 - 12/5	Madrigal Dinners	Varies	Milburn	Required for mads participants
12/9	Winter Choir Concert	6-8pm	St. Clare Church	Required for all but chamber
1/12 - 1/13	Musical Auditions	3:30 - 6:30	Milburn	
1/15	OCRA Fundraiser	TBD	TBD	
1/26-2 9	ILMEA All State		Peoria	By audition
3/5	IHSA Solo & Ensemble Contest	All day	TBD	Required by Chamber, recommended for all
3/10	Fine Arts Festival		Fulton JHS	Required for all
3/31 - 4/2	Spring Musical	varies	Milburn Auditorium	
4/8- 4/9	IHSA Large Group Festival			
4/30	OCRA Fundraiser			
5/2	Finale Concert Dress Rehearsal	6-8	Milburn Auditorium	Required for all
5/3	Finale Concert	6-8	Milburn Auditorium	Required for all
5/5	Choir Banquet	5:30 - 8	Milburn Cafeteria	

Choir Handbook | Family Sign Off

Please fill out and return the Choir Commitment Form after reviewing the handbook in its entirety. **Please do not sign without viewing the handbook to fully understand the policies, procedures, and expectations of the OTHS choir program.** Taking the time to look through the policies and bringing up any points of clarification may help eliminate any potential conflicts and issues down the road! Let's have a great year.

O'Fallon Township High School Choral Program
COMMITMENT FORM

Due by Wednesday, August 25th.

This completed form is required for all choir students and WILL count for a grade. Please write legibly.

Student Name (print) _____

Year in School (circle 1) Fr Soph Jr Sr **Choir Class** (circle 1) Freshman Treble Concert Chamber

1. **Parent/Guardian Name(s)** (print) _____

Parent Email Address _____

Phone # : _____

2. **Parent/Guardian 2 Name(s)** (print) _____

Parent Email Address _____

Phone #: _____

For parents: I am willing to help the OTHS Choir Program in the following ways:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serving on the OCRA board | <input type="checkbox"/> Voice - I teach voice lessons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Fundraiser events | <input type="checkbox"/> Videography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering my time at fundraising events | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up/tear down events & concerts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering supplies and/or donating to fundraising events | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperoning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing/Alterations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piano - I can make practice tracks or help with rehearsals | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design (logos, flyers, t-shirt designs) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

By signing below, I certify that I have read and agree to the policies outlined in the 2021-2022 choir handbook. In becoming a member of the OTHS Choral program, I agree to do my personal best to carry on the tradition of excellence and success both musically and personally. I realize that conscientious attendance and preparation for rehearsals and performances are essential for the performances for the choir program to operate successfully. I have reviewed the important dates and understand I am expected to attend all required events. I recognize that failure to do so will negatively affect my grade and the success of my ensemble(s). Finally, I agree to volunteer in any way I can and give my best effort every day.

Student Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date:** _____