



# Choir Handbook

2022 - 2023

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This handbook has been prepared to provide both choir students and their parents/guardians with a 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 digital [Choir Commitment Form](#). **This form will acknowledge that you have read and understand this syllabus/handbook.** Note that a parent signature is also required. Completion of this form is for a grade.

### **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 & 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 (1<sup>st</sup> semester) Chamber Ensemble (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)*

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

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

Chamber Ensemble is the premier choral group at OTHS and is a two semester course focusing on the highest levels of vocal musicianship. Students will continue developing proper vocal technique in a large variety of vocal styles and genres, from Renaissance music to Jazz and Contemporary styles, and sing repertoire in a variety of languages and meters. Advanced theory and sightreading are also included in the daily course load. Voicings range from SATB to SSAATTBB. Madrigals and the Jazz Choirs Bluenote and Encore are encompassed within this group. Additionally, all students enrolled in Honors Chamber

Ensemble must audition for ILMEA, participate in up to 10 madrigal outreach performances during the school year, sing at solo & ensemble contest, and attend a variety of required events outside of the regular school day. All members are required to study voice privately. Students must also be enrolled in the Spring Chamber Ensemble the following semester to be eligible for Honors Chamber Ensemble.

### CONCERT CHOIR

*Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester*

#### *Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors -Prerequisite: Audition*

This is a full-year course focusing on vocal technique, intermediate theory, and good musicianship through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles. This course includes a moderate amount of singing in foreign languages and intermediate sight-reading. Begins with SATB voicing. Rehearsal and performance times scheduled outside of the regular school day are *mandatory* for all enrolled students.

### TREBLE CHOIR

*Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester*

#### *Open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors with treble (higher) voices*

This is a full-year course focusing on vocal fundamentals, basic theory, and good musicianship through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles and introductory sight-reading. Voicings range from SA to SSAA. Rehearsal and performance times scheduled outside of the regular school day are *mandatory* for all enrolled students.

### FRESHMEN CHOIR

*Full Year: 1/2 credit per semester*

#### *Open to all freshmen*

This is a full-year academic course focusing on building musicianship and vocal technique through the performance of a wide variety of musical styles. Voicings range from SAB to SSATB. In addition to performance expectations, this course includes introductory sight-reading, ear training, and music theory. Rehearsal and performance times scheduled outside of the regular school day are *mandatory* for all enrolled students.

### DAILY SUPPLIES

- Black 3-ring binder for materials (1 in. recommended)
- Sharpened or Mechanical Pencils (with led)
- Highlighter
- Any music and/or worksheets from class
- Device (students will be notified prior to class if device will be needed)

### PROCEDURES

- Students are expected to give their best effort in class and rehearsals every day.
- When entering the classroom, students should put their backpacks to the sides of the room, retrieve their binder and pencil, and proceed to their assigned seat.
- If there are any new pieces of music or worksheets on the cart (Smiley) or music stand (Milburn), students should take one.
- When seated, students should check the daily agenda and begin any opening bell work. If there's new music, students should start numbering the measures and analyzing the piece.
- 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 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.
- **Please Note:** Singing **will be required** outside of the normal class time or at home to adequately prepare for concerts & assessments. Theory worksheets or other classwork may also be assigned as homework at the director's discretion.

### 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

## **MUSIC SELECTIONS**

Teachers choose music for many reasons. Listed below are just a few of the considerations taken into account when choosing literature for performance and study:

- Age-appropriate literature
- Cultural diversity
- Musical periods and styles
- Exposure to new languages
- Progressing through difficulty levels
- Developing vocal technique and skill:
  - Expanding vocal range
  - Developing vocal endurance
  - Enhancing breath control and phrasing
  - Developing good tone production and resonance
  - Encouraging part independence
  - Developing ear training and theory skills

## Concerts & Performances

### **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.
- Keep this phrase in mind: **"Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable."**

## **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.**

For certain activities such as Madrigals and ILMEA, concert attire may be assigned. Students are responsible for the care and safe return of all school owned attire. Failure to abide by these guidelines will result in a fine on the student's account.

## **Grading Policy**

Per district requirements, coursework constitutes 90% of your overall semester grade, and the remaining 10% 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:** 10%  
**Attendance/Participation:** 30%  
**Classwork:** 20%  
**Cumulative Final Exam:** 10%

#### **Grading Scale:**

A 100-93	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	

## **Please Note Regarding Recording**

*Choir students will be recorded or will submit recordings of themselves throughout the semester for critique, evaluation, and assessment - these individual recordings will be kept confidential and are for education purposes only. Additionally, groups may be recorded for publicity for the choir program and family outreach on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Please consult the district policy on recording preferences for your student.*

### Social Media

Please visit the choir website often at [www.OTHSchoir.com](http://www.OTHSchoir.com). We also have a presence on Facebook and Instagram. Parents and students are encouraged to use their own social media platforms to share our fundraising and event posts with the broader O'Fallon community.

**Facebook:** @OTHS Vocal Director; @OTHS Choir Boosters; @OTHS Madrigals; @OTHS Choir

**Instagram:** @Oths\_choirs

### 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 Honors Chamber Choir are required to audition.* The audition for the festivals take place in October and will consist of singing prepared pieces, sight-reading and demonstrating tonal skills. *Auditions will be held in a pre-recorded online format.* Upon a successful audition, singers will participate in the District Festival held on a Saturday in November. High school students may audition for the traditional chorus, vocal 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 showcases 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 early March, 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.

*\*There are no choir trips currently planned for the 2022-2023 school year.*

### **Choir Boosters**

Parent support is essential to the success of any choral program. The OTHS Choir Boosters, formerly known as OCRA, is a parent organization which supports the OTHS choir program's functions financially, socially, and physically. All parents/guardians of choir members are automatically members. The Choir Boosters are always looking for volunteers to help with events, fundraisers, and publicity, and there are opportunities for even those who have limited time available. Parents/Guardians are highly encouraged to participate to any extent possible, **Regular meetings are held primarily on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Milburn Choir Room.** Parents are invited and encouraged to attend regularly to keep up to date with choir initiatives. Want to know more? Email [ocra203@gmail.com](mailto:ocra203@gmail.com) or visit the Choir Boosters facebook page.

### **2021 - 2022 Choir Calendar & Important Dates**

To view the choir calendar digitally, visit [www.othschoir.com](http://www.othschoir.com)

OR click this link:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f4TVrfjiG\\_RlvA4\\_dkMCoRWgelh9fQau658PFSJIQAY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f4TVrfjiG_RlvA4_dkMCoRWgelh9fQau658PFSJIQAY/edit?usp=sharing)



## Commitment Form

To access the digital commitment form, use your phone camera to scan the QR code, type in the URL below OR visit [www.othschoir.com/](http://www.othschoir.com/)Please fill out and return the digital 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.



<https://forms.gle/9B31pW4AmcjV3M49A>

Or visit [www.othschoir.com/parent-information/](http://www.othschoir.com/parent-information/)

Let's have a great year!

# OTH Schoir.