

McLaughlin

Middle School

2014 – 2015

Choir Handbook



Table of Contents

Letter to Parents and Students	2
Philosophy	3
Requirements for Chorus Membership.....	3
Concert Etiquette.....	3
Classroom Guidelines	4
Grading Policy	4
Rehearsal/Performance/Behavior Requirements.....	4
Choral Program Structure.....	5
Choir Awards/Honors.....	6
Uniform.....	6
McLaughlin Calendar	7
County and State Event Calendar.....	8
Parent/Guardian Signature.....	9

Dear Parents and Students,

It gives me great pleasure to be a part of the Choral Program at McLaughlin Middle School and Fine Arts Academy. I thoroughly enjoyed the previous school year, and I am looking forward with great anticipation to the continued success of the Choral Program in the upcoming year.

The Staff at McLaughlin have great plans this year. Throughout the year we will grow musically, spiritually and emotionally. We will become better singers, better musicians, and most importantly, better people. There will be both good days and not so good days. But whatever happens, we will become good friends and our experiences will become memories we will never forget. I hope you are as excited as we are!

Please read over this handbook carefully. The policies, procedures, and dates are being presented at the beginning of the year so that everyone understands what is expected of them this year. It is going to be a wonderful year! Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook!

Sincerely,

Seth Pendergast

If you ever need to contact me, please feel free to call or email me.

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Philosophy

At McLaughlin Middle School we believe that music is an essential part of our student's education for its disciplined nature, creative opportunities, unique cooperative elements, and its ability to satisfy the inner being of a person. When students are enrolled in choir they are not only given the opportunity to improve musical skills but also develop character traits that will aid in molding them into a productive and confident adult. We believe in placing attitude, character, and hard work at the forefront of our curricular goals. The medium of music has a powerful ability to shape and mold individuals for the better.

Requirements for Chorus Membership

Musical Ability: You do not need to be a good singer to be in chorus; however, you must strive to reach a level comparable to that maintained by the chorus. You should strive to sing your part to the best of your ability.

Willingness to Work: Each person must make a personal commitment to make the necessary effort to make the choral program the best that it can be. It is not meant to be an easy class! A positive attitude, active daily participation, and leadership are all expected in this class.

Choice: When you and your parent(s)/guardian sign the Chorus contract you have chosen to become a member of chorus. No one is forcing you to join against your will. Remember this always! Because you make the choice to be a member you have no excuse for not giving your best at all times!

Attitude: A positive attitude is critical to success! Behavior is a direct indication of attitude. A positive attitude will be obvious when you are being respectful to the teacher and your classmates. It will be obvious when you are working hard and helping your peers. Please come to class everyday with a positive attitude!

Concert Etiquette

The Choral Department at McLaughlin Middle School places a strong emphasis on concert etiquette at each performance. In an effort to promote respect in each of our performances, it is important for students and parents to understand acceptable behavior on and off the stage.

Concert Etiquette Guidelines

- Be quiet during performances.
- Wait until the end of a performance to clap or cheer.
- Do not leave a concert before it is completed.
- Stay attentive! (Please don't slouch in your chair, sleep, make loud noises, use your cell phone, or participate in other behaviors that are distracting.)
- Respond appropriately after a performance! (Do not cheer or clap excessively or obnoxiously.)

Classroom Guidelines and Procedures

Classroom Guidelines- These are the guidelines that will be followed within the classroom and on class trips.

- **Be Responsible.**
- **Be Safe.**
- **Be Prepared.**
- **Be Respectful.**

Consequences

- Verbal Warning- Students will be informed that they are breaking a rule.
- After Class Conference- If poor behavior persists, students will meet with the instructor after class to work out a solution.
- Further Appropriate Consequences- If students cannot correct behavior themselves then further consequences will be implemented. This could include but is not limited to: develop a behavior plan, write a report, after/before school detention, contact parents, parent/teacher conference, exclusion for rehearsal or activities, etc. All students who reach this stage will also be put on the McLaughlin Middle School behavior-tracking sheet.
- Office Referral- If students are unable to correct poor behavior they will receive an office referral.
- **Rewards**- McLaughlin's Positive Behavior Support System will be used as in class awards (McBucks).

Grading Policy

Although activities will vary with each nine-week grading period, percentage of grade will be within the following boundaries:

- 10% - Daily Work (includes attitude, class work, bell work, participation, etc.)
- 15% - Concert/Rehearsal Attendance
- 15% - Formal Performance and Written Assessments (individual performance, evaluations, written tests, etc.)
- 30% - Informal Assessment Rubrics (classroom procedure, singing, posture, diaphragmatic breathing, performance)
- 30% - Music Reading (flashcards, musical excerpts and exercises, formal sight-reading assessment)

Performance and Rehearsal – Grade and Behavior Requirements

An ensemble can only function as a whole, and each student's individual voice plays a huge part in the sound produced by the group. We function as a team, and each member is invaluable to the team as a whole. Therefore, membership in the chorus program automatically includes attendance at all rehearsals and performances. **The only acceptable excuses are:**

- Personal illness (excuse must be provided)
- Family Emergency (excuse must be provided)
- Out-of-town trips with parents/guardians (excuse must be provided two weeks in advance)
- Religious commitment, ritual, or conviction (excuse must be provide two weeks in advance)
- If parents feel that this policy is too stringent or their family has special circumstances that will make complying with these requirements difficult, please contact the teacher before signing the agreement below.

Make-Up Work: If a student's absence from a performance is excused then they will be given a report to write to make up the work. The report will be a substantial assignment requiring students to construct an essay based on the life of a composer.

Trips, Special Performances, Concerts: The following guidelines outline behaviors that are not acceptable prior to trips, special performances, and concerts. If these trips, special performances, or concerts are missed students will be required to make up the grade by writing an essay based on the life of a composer.

- **Grades**
 - Special performances and trips will have a grade requirement attached to them. If a student would like to participate in a trip their grade must demonstrate that they have practiced to become capable, literate musicians with a positive attitude.
- **ISS/OSS**
 - If students receive a total of five days of ISS or OSS throughout the year, they will forfeit participation in subsequent trips and special performances.
- **Unexcused Absences**
 - If students have more than one unexcused absence in the week leading up to a performance they will be required to make up the performance.
 - In this case, unexcused absences include ISS or OSS.
 - If a student receives ISS and OSS the week of the concert, they may be required to sit out of the performance/trip and complete a make up assignment.
- **After School Rehearsals**
 - Students must attend at least one of the after school rehearsals scheduled before a performance or bring a signed excuse for missing the rehearsal to participate in the performance.

Choral Program Structure

The choral program at McLaughlin Middle School currently consists of three separate choir classes. These classes rehearse separately during the school day. In any given performance the classes may perform separately, in selective groups, or altogether.

- **Women's Ensemble** - This group is for girls in all grades that have demonstrated excellence musically, academically, and in their attitude. The focus of this group will be high-level repertoire, theory, sight-reading, and choral fundamentals. Students must audition with Mr. Pendergast before being admitted to this group. Grades, attitude, work ethic, and teacher recommendations will play a large part in deciding a student's placement in this ensemble. Students in this ensemble are highly encouraged to audition for All-State, All-County, and participate in Solo and Ensemble.
- **Men's Choir**- This group is designed specifically for middle school boys. Students will focus on an introduction to theory, sight-reading, and choral fundamentals (pitch, blend, tone, expression, etc). This group will also focus on helping boys sing through this transitional period in their voice. It is our belief that boys are very capable singers at any age and can produce excellent vocal results with good training.
- **Treble Chorus**- This choir is for students in all grades. Students will focus on an introduction to theory, sight-reading, and choral fundamentals (pitch, blend, tone, expression, etc). There is no audition for this group. This group will perform on trips and in special events just like the other groups.

Awards/Honors

Awards will be given at the end of each year to deserving students.

- All State Participant
- All County Participant
- Solo and Ensemble Participant
- Leadership Award – This award is given to a 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.
- Most-Improved Chorus Student – This award is given to a 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.

Uniform

At the beginning of the school year students will be measured and fitted for uniforms. When the uniforms arrive they will be distributed to students. Each student will be responsible for all the items included in their uniform. The student responsible for the uniform must replace any lost or stolen items. Shoes will not be provided. Please see the guidelines for shoes below.

- **Black Shoes**
 - o Men and Ladies- Shoes must be black. Dress shoes are preferred.
- **Appearance:** Everyone must be neat, clean, and well kept. Hairstyles should not be extravagant and distract the audience from the performing group. Girls hair should be pulled back away from the face.
- **Uniform Cleaning Fee (Women's Ensemble/Men's Ensemble):** *Each student is required to pay \$15 for a uniform cleaning fee.* The uniforms for choir, band, orchestra, and guitar are provided each year. We only ask that parents help with the cost of cleaning the garments. This fee is the same in each music ensemble. If students are unable to pay the fee please provide a note expressing that you are unable to pay the fee and why. If this is the case the student will be expected to participate in a fundraiser provided by the music department to help raise the fee.
- **Treble Chorus Uniform Requirements:** Students in the Treble Chorus are required to wear black dress pants, a white blouse, and black shoes for concerts.

McLaughlin Choir Schedule

Date	Performance/ Rehearsal	Description	Ensemble	Location
October 10 th	Rock – A –Thon!	This is our first fundraiser of the year! More information is coming!	All Students	McLaughlin Middle School
October 16 th	Harrison SOTA Art School Concert 7:30 PM	Students will gain perform for and with other art schools at Harrison School of the Arts in Lakeland (evening performance).	Women's Ensemble and Men's Ensemble	Harrison SOTA Lakeland, FL
November 4 th	Dress Rehearsal	This rehearsal may be reserved for only certain choirs.	TBA	N/A
November 18 th	Final Dress Rehearsal	Students should make special effort to attend this rehearsal.	All Choirs	Choir Room immediately after school.
November 20 th	Fall Choir Concert 7 PM	Students should be ready to rehearse in the choir room by 5:45 PM.	All Choir Students	TBA
November 24 th – 28 th	Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break	All Students/ Teachers	N/A
December TBA	Christmas Caroling	Students will tour nursing homes and local retirement communities to sing Christmas carols.	Women's Ensemble	TBA
January 27 th	Broadway Show <i>Newsies</i>	This year will attend a Broadway show in Orlando titled <i>Newsies</i> . It is a great opportunity for students to see a professional show! Students are not required to attend. It is an optional event.	Optional Event	Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts Orlando, FL
March 26 th	Middle School Music Performance Assessment	This is an excellent opportunity for our students to test their abilities. Each school sends at least one choir to be evaluated on two pieces they perform as well as their ability to sight-read music they have never seen. The County requires this event.	All Choir Students	Auburndale High School
April 23 rd	Music Department Recital	This is an opportunity for students to perform solos and in small groups as opposed to the larger choir setting.	Select Soloists and Ensembles	McLaughlin MS Black Box Theatre
May 5 th	Dress Rehearsal	This rehearsal may be reserved for only certain choirs.	TBA	Choir Room immediately after school.
May 12 th	Dress Rehearsal	This rehearsal may be reserved for only certain choirs.	TBA	Choir Room immediately after school.
May 19 th	Final Dress Rehearsal	Students should make special effort to attend this rehearsal.	All Choirs	TBA
May 28 th	Spring Concert 7 PM	Students should be ready to rehearse in the choir room by 5:45 PM.	All Choirs	TBA
May 19 th – June 5 th	Final Chorus Trip	Disney Field Trip	All Choirs	TBA

** We will have requests from the communities for special performances that will fall outside of this schedule. We do our best to support the community and share our talented students with the community. We will do our best to accept the right performances for our students and work with their school/personal schedule to make these events possible.*

All-County/All-State/Solo and Ensemble

Date	County/State Event	Description	Time	Location
Every Tuesday and Thursday beginning August 21 st through September 23 rd	All-State Tutoring Sessions	Meeting the requirements for an All-State choir is very difficult. Students must work on their own to make it into the choir. I will offer two tutoring sessions a week leading up to the audition.	4:00 – 4:45	Choir Room (McLaughlin)
August 29 th	All State Registration	Money and Forms for All State are Due. No exceptions!	All Day	Choir Room (McLaughlin)
September 4 th	All-County Auditions	Students will record an audition that will be sent to the County level where judges will evaluate all the recordings and place students in the All-County Choirs.	Immediately after school. Students must sign up for a time slot on the Choir Room door.	Choir Room (McLaughlin)
September 25 th	All-State Written/Sight-Singing Test	Students must take a theory test and a sight-singing test. If they pass these tests, they are allowed to continue to the vocal audition.	3:30	Ridge Community High School
October 23 rd	All-State Vocal Audition	Students must learn the music and perform a portion of it. The performance will be recorded and evaluated by judges at the state level.	4:00	McLaughlin Middle School
November 6 th	All – County Rehearsal	First evening rehearsal for the All-County Students.	5:30 – 8:30	Davenport School of the Arts
November 13 th	All – County Rehearsal	Second evening rehearsal for the All-County Students.	5:30 – 8:30	Florida Southern College Lakeland, FL
November 14 th	All – County all day rehearsal and evening performance	Students rehearse all day at Florida Southern College. They will eat dinner and then return to Florida Southern for the performance in the evening.	<i>Rehearsal:</i> 8 AM – 4 PM <i>Concert:</i> 7:30 PM	Florida Southern College Lakeland, FL
January 15 th – 17 th	All-State Rehearsals and Performance	If students earn a spot in the All-State Chorus then they will be attending this event.	TBA	Tampa Convention Center Tampa, FL
January 31 st – February 1 st	Solo and Ensemble	This is an opportunity for students to perform solo's and perform in small vocal ensembles for judges. <u>Men's Ensemble will be performing at this event.</u>	TBA	Rochelle School of the Arts Lakeland, FL

Parent/Guardian Signature

Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the policies and expectations stated in the McLaughlin Middle School Choir Handbook. I agree to abide by the rules, guidelines, and expectations listed in the Choir Handbook. Furthermore, I understand that failure to abide by these expectations could result in my removal from the choir.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

I have reviewed the policies and expectations explained in the book with my child and will help him/her to abide by these policies.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Important Contact Information

PRINT Parent's preferred phone number _____ (circle one) home/work/cell

PRINT a second phone number _____ (circle one) home/work/cell

Print	Parent's	Preferred	Email	Address

My child may have a treat used in classroom activities: Yes ____ No ____

If yes, please identify any food allergies: _____

Please add any details you would like for me to know about your student below: