



Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

The choral music department of Eanes Independent School District dedicates itself to the concept that music plays a vital role in the development of the individual. The goals of Westlake Choir are to afford each student opportunities to develop his or her highest potential intellectually, technically, aesthetically, and socially. This handbook is designed to foster the success of the WHS Choral Department, to provide information to students and their parents, and to address questions and concerns that may arise throughout the year. Additional information related to choir events, the choir calendar, and all electronic forms are available on the choir website at www.westlakechoir.com. If you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact us, either by phone or e-mail. We kindly ask that you CC Ed Snouffer, head director, on all correspondence via e-mail

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WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT

The Westlake High School Choral Department offers a variety of performing ensembles to meet the needs of all students interested in singing. Our organization is committed to developing the specific strengths of each student with regard to their musical ability. Students will have varied performance opportunities and focus on expanding their knowledge and use of basic music theory, music history, sight-reading methods, and vocal techniques. In addition to developing individual musical strengths, students will also be taught self-discipline and commitment while working together toward a common goal of excellence and fostering an appreciation of choral music.

The Westlake High School Choral Department consists of the following choirs:

1 st Period	8:50 – 9:40	Chaparral Treble
2 nd Period	9:46 – 10:39	Chaparral Tenor-Bass
3 rd Period	10:45 – 11:35	Concert Treble/ AP Music Theory
4 th Period	11:41 – 12:31	Sr Varsity Chorale/ AP Music Theory
5 th Period	12:37 – 1:02	Madrigals and Chamber Singers
6 th Period	1:33 – 2:23	Jr Varsity Chorale
7 th Period	2:29 – 3:19	Concert Tenor-Bass
8 th Period	3:25 – 4:15	Conference

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The *Executive Council* is the student leadership of the Westlake High School Choir. These students help plan and carry out activities that:

1. Act as a liaison between the students enrolled in the choir program and the directors
2. Assist directors in all ways concerning the smooth running of a well-organized choir
3. Plan social events for choir members
4. Meet and greet new choir members
5. Organize flyers, thank you notes, and posters for choir activities
6. Organize, communicate, and oversee the Big-Little program
7. Serve as positive role models for younger students and the choir program at large.

Expectations of all Executive Council Members

1. Provide strong musical and personal leadership by maintaining and demonstrating a superior level of preparation for each rehearsal and performance.
2. Set a positive example for other students by always meeting responsibilities and expectations, including attendance and punctuality at all rehearsals, sectionals, and performances.
3. Display an attitude of enthusiasm, hard work, support, and loyalty to the choir program.
4. Be open-minded and represent the thoughts and ideas of all students, not just an individual or faction of the group.
5. Maintain a spirit and tradition of unity and musical excellence.
6. Contribute to all meetings and discussions.
7. Be willing to assist with administrative tasks.
8. Work to remain in good physical, mental, and vocal health.

CHOIR ROOM RULES

1. Respect your directors, officers, and fellow students.
2. No cellphones will be allowed on the risers. Cellphones should be stored in backpacks or in a charging station during class.
3. No gum in the choir room.
4. Absolutely no food or drink in the choir room except food that is part of a choir spirit event.
5. Folder, music and pencil are required for every rehearsal. No personal items (books, homework, cell phones, iPads, etc.) should be used without permission.
6. Students should be in the choir room with necessary supplies when the bell rings.
7. Students should not write on the whiteboard in the choir room.
8. The directors' offices, work room (formerly "ensemble room"), and the music library are off-limits to all students.
9. Do not play the pianos. Pianos are available in the practice rooms after you have received permission from a director.

Cell Phones and iPads

Students using cell phones, iPads, or other technology inappropriately will result in the confiscation of the student's device. Students may retrieve the device from the assistant principals' office at the end of the school day.

Regarding Folders

Students are financially responsible for their folders and the contents provided by the school. Folders are to be returned to the folder cabinets after each rehearsal. If for some reason, you do not receive a piece of music, check the extra music files in the room to see if there are any extra copies of the piece.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms

Choir uniforms will be purchased/rented and distributed at the beginning of the year. Students will be held financially responsible for uniforms checked out to them. Our uniforms should not be laundered. Stored uniforms should be on a clothes hanger and protected with a hanging bag.

Communication

Students are given ample notice of scheduled rehearsals, performances, and activities so that conflicts are minimal. As students continue their quest to be responsible adults and perfect the art of balancing and managing activities, it is their responsibility to inform parents, employers, coaches, sponsors, and other teachers of their choir commitments prior to the event. **Conflicts with choir commitments must be discussed with the directors and written communication from the parents and the student are required.**

Participation

As a member of the organization, students are expected to perform in class, concerts, and programs. It is the student's responsibility to maintain grades/eligibility in order to participate. Students will be expected to follow school rules, meet deadlines, and always represent WHS and the choir with pride and dignity. If failing grades affect a student's involvement in choir events, future participation in choir activities may be jeopardized.

Required Documents and Fees

At the beginning of the year, students and their parents should create an account in our online store and pay the designated required fees. Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors should also pay their musical fees in the online store.

Note: This required fee is separate from the \$200 activity fee which is collected by Eanes ISD.

Parents and students can access our online store from the choir website, or directly at www.westlakehighschoolchoir.com. To reduce our overhead costs, we strongly encourage debit card payments for fees whenever possible.

ATTENDANCE

Students should make every effort to be in class each day as participation is vital to our success. Students who expect to be excused with excessive absences are strongly encouraged to consider their commitment to the program. The directors reserve the right to test students on various parts of their music to ensure that absenteeism is not affecting the student's ability to keep up with the progress of the group. This can be done via recordings or listening to the student one on one.

Undocumented Absences from Class

Students who are absent from class without documentation will be subject to disciplinary penalties per Eanes ISD District Policy. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that undocumented absences are resolved with the attendance office as quickly as possible.

Unexcused Absences from Concerts & Dress Rehearsals

The head director must be notified by a parent or guardian of scheduling conflicts with concert or dress rehearsal dates within the first two weeks of the academic year. Absences reported outside of this time are subject to the approval of the head director and may be subject to a grade penalty at his discretion. Students who are absent from concerts or dress rehearsals without approval of the head director will receive a grade penalty. (see "Grading" on p. 6).

Consequences for an unexcused absence

One or more of the following consequences may occur for chronic absenteeism, at the discretion of the director:

- Loss of performance privileges
- Loss of tour or trip privileges
- Parent conference
- Suspension of rehearsal privileges
- Alternative class work requirements
- Loss of letter
- Reassignment to another ensemble

GRADING

The following procedures will be used to determine course grades:

Skill Development (50%)

Weekly Grades

Each week, students will be assigned a grade that reflects their individual contribution and progress towards the selected learning objectives during the week's rehearsals.

At the discretion of a director, as it becomes necessary to provide students with more immediate or frequent graded feedback, weekly grades may be entered individually as daily grades and will be weighted accordingly.

Skill Mastery Grades

Over the course of the marking period, a director may select a group of students to assess on a single day for their progress towards that day's selected objectives. This assessment may be done without prior knowledge of the student, and can be counted equally as if it were one weekly grade.

Music theory, aural skills grades, and other written work may also be entered in this category.

Major Grades (40%)

Concert Attendance

Performance is the culmination of our daily class work and is an essential component of the Fine Arts TEKS. Because the concert experience is impossible to replicate, there is no make-up option for students who are absent for a concert.

Concert Attendance (continued)

To ensure the most rewarding concert experiences for all our students, the head director must be notified by a parent or guardian of scheduling conflicts with concert or dress rehearsal dates within the first two weeks of the academic year. Absences reported outside of this time are subject to the approval of the head director and may be subject to a grade penalty at the director's sole discretion.

Students who are absent from concerts/dress rehearsals without adequate notice will receive a failing grade for the concert or dress rehearsal in which they were absent. There will be no circumstances in which a student may make-up a concert grade.

LETTERING REQUIREMENTS

A student in the Westlake High School Choir may letter if he or she fulfills all of the following requirements:

1. Attend all performances and rehearsals designated by the directors.
2. Remain a member in good standing for the entire school year, exhibiting a good attitude at all times.
3. Maintain grade eligibility (six weeks grade average of 70 or higher in all subjects) for the entire school year.
4. Attain an overall average of 90 or above in choir.
5. Be a member of the choir program for at least two years.
6. Earn the required letter jacket points.

UNIFORMS

Tenor-Bass Uniforms

The school district issues a black tuxedo jacket and slacks to rent. The students will be responsible for the following items:

- A white, pleated tuxedo shirt with stand-up, wing-tip collar
- A black bow tie and cummerbund
- Black dress shoes (no patent leather, canvas, or suede) and black socks

Treble Uniforms

The school district issues a formal uniform for each student to purchase. The students will be responsible for:

- Black closed-toed pumps, 1"-2" heel. Black character shoes are recommended. No black boots, sneakers, or chunky shoes are permitted. Plain, closed-toed heels suitable to wear with a formal gown are required.

Informal Uniforms

Students will also be using an informal uniform throughout your years in choir. Students are responsible to purchase:

- Blue Choir Polo Shirt
- Jeans (full length, no holes, regular shade of blue)
- Dark Shoes

Alterations

The hemline of the choir formal should be exactly 1" off of the floor. Care must be taken in hemming the dress. No staples, safety pins or tape allowed. It is the responsibility of each student to see that the necessary alterations are made on their dress in order for it to fit properly.

Hair and Jewelry

Long hair should be worn back and away from the face. Shoulder length hair or shorter may be worn down, but must be away from the face. Hair clips and accessories should be nondescript and blend with hair color. No visible jewelry, such as watches, necklaces, large earrings, and excessive rings.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Audience members are encouraged to follow some well-established standards for formal concert behavior.

- Refrain from talking during the performance.
- Remain seated for the entire concert if at all possible. If it is absolutely necessary to do so, move only between selections and exit at the nearest door.
- Wait to re-enter the auditorium until the performing group is finished.
- Applause is the only appropriate form of expressing appreciation. A good rule of thumb is to wait until the conductor lowers his or her hands to indicate the completion of the selection or work.
- Please eliminate disruptions by turning off pagers, cell phones, and removing small children who are crying or speaking loudly.
- Students are not permitted to leave until the end of the concert and are expected to observe all performing groups. This is part of the educational process.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Scholarships are available to students needing financial help with various choir expenses throughout the year. Parents or students with their parents' permission are encouraged to discuss specific financial needs with the directors or a member of the choir parent board. All scholarship requests will remain completely confidential. Please note that in addition to choir scholarships, there are choir-sponsored individual fund-raising opportunities. Students are encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities before or in addition to requesting scholarship help.

REFUND POLICY

Most fees charged to the student involve advance payment for a service or item. In such cases (i.e. accompanist fees, trip fees, etc.), the choir has a deadline for receiving reimbursement from the supplier. Because of this, the following policy will be strictly followed: There will be no refunds in any case where a student has paid for an activity or supply but is no longer able to participate, unless explicitly stated otherwise. This policy applies no matter what the reason is for withdrawal and specifically includes but is not limited to the situations of ineligibility, illness, unexpected family travel, or withdrawal from the WHS Choir.

AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS

Choir participation includes more than daily class attendance, and students are rewarded on a point-system basis for a wide range of music-related activities. Students will sing in the Fall and Winter Concerts, Chaparral Cabaret/Musical, and the annual Spring Revue. They may also elect to audition for Solo and Ensemble Competition, the TMEA All-Region and All-State Choirs, and the annual Westlake Musical. Students may choose to sing in a choir outside of school, to attend a summer choir camp, and to attend musically enlightening performances as part of their musical education. Students may also study voice privately (the choir may assist in finding a suitable teacher and lessons are available at the high school). Students may serve the choir as choir officer or section leaders and may additionally assist the directors as needed in other capacities. Finally, students may participate in choir fundraising events. Letters and letter-jackets are awarded on the basis of points earned for these activities. The Westlake High School Choir Parents organization offers annual college scholarships to students who have distinguished themselves through their participation and accomplishments in choir activities. Applications will be made available to interested graduating seniors prior to the spring choir banquet. Children of sitting Westlake Choir Parents Board Members are ineligible to apply for these scholarships.

ELIGIBILITY

Choir students are responsible for maintaining high academic standards. Eligibility rules for participation are as follows:

1. All students are eligible the first six weeks of school.
2. At the end of the first six weeks, if the student is failing (below 70) or has an incomplete in one or more subjects he/she will not be permitted to participate in extra-curricular activities i.e. trips off campus, TMEA, UIL sponsored events, and other specified activities for the next three weeks or until the incomplete is cleared through the registrar's office.
3. An ineligible student may regain eligibility after the following progress report. If the student is passing all subjects, he/she will be eligible to participate in choir activities following a one week grace period. If he/she is failing any course, the student will continue to be ineligible for the remainder of the grading period.

A student receiving an incomplete (I) on his/her report card is considered "ineligible" until the incomplete is cleared. All incompletes must be cleared through the data processing office for a student to be eligible. The teacher(s) that initially reported the failing grade must report the grade change to the data processing office for a student to regain eligibility.

Exceptions: The following choir activities are considered co-curricular, and make up the performance component of the Fine Arts TEKS. Attendance is expected by all students, eligible and ineligible. Concerts on campus that do not require an admission fee are considered co-curricular.

1. Fall Concert
2. Winter Concert
3. Spring Revue
4. Chaparral Cabaret

Students are encouraged to notify their director as soon as possible if they suspect that a grade is less than acceptable. It is sometimes possible to offer suggestions and/or locate appropriate tutors from within the choir program. Remember, we are here to help, but we cannot help once the grades are posted.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Eanes I.S.D. Board of Trustees has enacted an Extracurricular Code of Conduct that applies to all students participating in these activities. This policy regards the use of any illegal substance and actions of a serious criminal nature.

In addition to disciplinary procedures outlined in the handbook, choir students can expect any or all of the following consequences for violating the Student Code of Conduct or Extracurricular Code of Conduct:

- Required conference with student, parent(s), director(s), and/or assistant principals
- Student may not be allowed to participate in TMEA All State Auditions or Solo and Ensemble Concert.
- Student may not be allowed to travel on future overnight trip(s) for the period of one year.
- Student will be removed from and/or will not be considered for a choir officer position for a period of one year.

SQUADS & BIG/LITTLE PROGRAM

This Westlake Choir tradition promotes connection between our students on a vertical 9th-12th grade level. Each student will be assigned to a squad with themes chosen by the senior class.

Within each squad, each 11th and 12th grader (big) will be assigned a 9th or 10th grader (little). There are several activities that each student will participate in throughout the year as a part of this program.

AUDITIONED ENSEMBLES

MADRIGALS AND CHAMBER SINGERS

Madrigals and Chamber Singers are the auditioned ensembles in the Westlake Choir Program. These ensembles meet during the first half of fifth period on Monday-Thursdays. Additional rehearsals will be scheduled during peak performance times by the directors. Students selected for these ensembles are expected to commit themselves fully to participating in these elite groups and are required to have greater scheduling flexibility than other students in the program.

Attendance Policies

Participating in these ensembles is a privilege. Because of the smaller number of students selected for these ensembles and the advanced nature of the repertoire, attendance at rehearsals and performances is paramount. Conflicts with rehearsals and performances are expected to be communicated with the director in the first two weeks of the academic year. Once notified of additional rehearsals and performances scheduled after the beginning of the year, students will have 24 hours to notify a director of any prior conflicts with a new rehearsal or performance. Conflicts that are communicated to directors outside of these parameters are subject to the director approval in their sole discretion.

Consequences for Absenteeism

Students who are absent from rehearsals and performances without director approval may be removed from Madrigals or Chamber Singers if deemed appropriate by the director. Students who are chronically absent with or without cause will be asked to evaluate their commitment to the ensemble, and may be removed at the discretion of the director.

Eligibility

All Madrigals and Chamber Singers performances are extracurricular activities. Students must maintain eligibility in order to participate. Ineligible students may be removed from an ensemble if it will impact their ability to fully participate. The decision to dismiss a student from a select ensemble is at the sole discretion of the director.