

COWPENS MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORAL HANDBOOK

2009-2010



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Letter From the Director

Dear Parents and Students,

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to the CMS Choral Program. Your child has a unique opportunity to participate in the art of making music. Music is the only subject offered in public schools that involves all other areas of study. Music incorporates history, math, science, P.E. and language arts. Studies show that students involved in music perform much better on standardized tests because music requires the use of both sides of the brain simultaneously. It is my hope that exposing your child to the art of music will aid them in becoming well-rounded and productive members of society. I am a product of the District Three Choral Program and I can attest to its wonderful legacy and commitment to your child's musical education.

Performance-based classes, by nature, require strong self-discipline. Occasionally, a student may find him/herself struggling with this issue. Should this occur with your child, I will seek the support of you, team leaders, and our administration in helping to rectify the problem. Please contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of any help to you or your child. I look forward to making music with your child!

Sincerely,
Justin L. Addington
Director of Choral Activities
Cowpens Middle School

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide valuable information to parents and students about the CMS choral program, making sure that all students and parents are well informed in regards to policies, procedures, calendars. Students and parents should familiarize themselves with this handbook and its contents. Please file this book away in a safe place and refer to it throughout the year.

- All information in this book is in accordance with school and district policy.

Mission Statement: “Creating Musical Success”

Course Description

The Cowpens Middle School Chorus is offered as an elective course and is open to any sixth, seventh or eighth grader who likes to sing and is willing to commit to a group performance effort. During rehearsals, students are asked to concentrate on greater refinement of previously acquired choral skills. These skills include diction, articulation, dynamics, octavo reading and the production of a beautiful tone. Emphasis will also be placed on part-singing and sight-reading. A variety of choral literature in multiple languages and styles will be chosen at the director's discretion, commensurate with the group's ability and state standards.

Classroom Rules and Procedures

- Note that all school rules apply in my class and I will take blocks!
- The students are expected to be on time for class. Mr. Addington allows 3 mins. for class changes. If you are not in the classroom before the door is closed you will not be allowed in without a pass from another teacher.
- When you enter the room, place your book bag along the back wall.
- Students are to sit in their assigned seats.
- Please make sure you sharpen pencils etc. **before class starts.**
- The only materials you should have are the materials you will need for music class. Other materials that are viewed as distractions will be confiscated. (iPods, Cell Phones etc.)
- Students are not allowed to go to the bathroom or go get water during class. "Water and Un-water **before you come!**" Once you come in, you don't go back out!
- No Gum, Candy, Food, or Drink allowed in this classroom!
- The students are never to go into the music storage room or Mr. Addington's office. These areas are off limits for your well being and safety.
- Students are never to play the piano unless they are part of a music keyboarding class and have the permission of the teacher.
- Students are never to be on the computer unless they have special permission from the teacher. The school's technology is only to be used to further the learning process, not our social lives.
- Students are not allowed to write on the board!
- Students are not allowed to use the phone in Mr. Addington's office!
- Students are asked to refrain from talking during rehearsals. Please raise your hand to speak.
- Students are encouraged to ask questions but are discouraged from making disruptive statements.
- Students are expected to sit with correct singing posture when rehearsing (Feet flat on the floor, sitting straight on the front edge of your chair).
- Students will be asked to stand and sing from time to time without complaining. Correct standing posture for singing is feet shoulder length apart, shoulders rolled back and chin slightly tucked.
- Don't lean back in your chair!!! If you fall, blocks will be taken in addition to your injuries!
- The school provides music for the students' use. This music is not allowed to leave school property, and it is the responsibility of the students to take proper care of the music.
- Before you leave, make sure your area is clean and your chair is straight in line. You are responsible for your area. I will take blocks from those making a mess of the classroom!
- Mr. Addington's Cardinal Rule is RESPECT!!!!
 - Each other
 - The Teacher (USE YOUR MANNERS!)
 - School Property (WE WILL MAKE YOU PAY FOR IT!)
 - The Art of Music

Daily Routine

- Announcements/Roll Call
- Sight Reading Exercise/ Quiz
- Vocal and Physical Warm Ups
- Rehearsal of the Concert Music
- Clean Up and Dismissal

Grace Notes

Just like the four beats of a musical measure, each student will be allotted four passes called Grace Notes during the semester to use as they wish.

- Bathroom Pass
- Quiz or Assignment Pass
- Sick Pass
- Materials Pass
- Homework Pass, etc.

After all Grace Notes are used, failure to produce assignments or follow the rules will result in blocks taken. Grace Notes may not be used in discipline situations or for concert attendance.

What to Bring to Class

- Good Attitude!
- Pencil (NO PENS!!!)
- Assignments
- Notebook (This note book should be a 1 inch black 3 ring binder with dividers and loose-leaf paper. The dividers should be labeled: Word of the Day, Notes, Handouts, Concert Music, and Tests/Quizzes.) Random notebook checks will be given.

Consequences

All discipline situations will follow the consequences outlined in the CMS handbook. Please note that if behavior is a problem it may result in your child's removal from choral activities and ultimately the ensemble.

Expectations and Grading

Your grade in chorus is based on your willingness to work up to your potential. Each marking period, your grade will be based on the following categories:

Weekly Quizzes and Assignments=25%

- Each Friday students will have a quiz that will cover the week's material. (Theory, History, and Sight Singing, etc.)
- Sometimes "Singing Tests" will be given as part of the quiz to test the student's accuracy and memorization of the concert music.
- Throughout the year your child may also be given assignments to supplement the material covered in class.

Participation Grade=25%

Your child will start each day with a 100 in the grade book for participation. For every infraction your child will have points taken away. The following behaviors are expected at every rehearsal:

- **Being on time and participate in rehearsals**
Students must participate in all aspects of rehearsal unless they have a doctor's note that says otherwise. (Students will be asked to stand for extended periods during rehearsal.)
- **On-Task Behavior**
Using appropriate singing technique (posture, breathing, diction, phrasing, etc); singing when time to sing; being attentive to the music, being respectful to the materials distributed. Students are encouraged to bring work for other classes. This would be helpful when Mr. Addington is working with individual sections.
- **Classroom Etiquette**
Talking is disruptive to our group effort. Talking and/or other disruptive behavior in class will result in lowered percentage points.
- **Preparation**
Having a pencil and your notebook for the rehearsal

Concert Attendance=50%

Concert attendance is MANDATORY. If you miss a concert due to an unavoidable situation, you must have a note delivered to the director at least two weeks ahead of time, unless it is an emergency. In that case, a note must be submitted by the next day. Only severe illness, death of a family member, and/or extreme emergencies are valid reasons for missing a concert.

Please Note

1. Homework, sports activities, dress rehearsals for other shows, and last-moment obligations are not considered valid reasons for being absent from a concert. The concert is considered a major exam. Please plan ahead.
2. Students **will not** be granted an excused absence for illness without a **doctor's note**.
3. An unexcused absence from a performance will result in a lowered grade for that quarter. If it is unexcused, it may not be higher than a "C".
4. Since the dates for these events are given at the beginning of the year, transportation should not affect your child's ability to participate in a concert.
5. Please note that attendance at the dress rehearsal is required for concert participation.

Concert Dress

- All Students will be expected to purchase a red chorus polo shirt. The cost for the shirt is \$15. Students may also be expected to wear a white button up shirt. What we wear depends on the particular event.
- Shirts must always be tucked in with a black belt! In addition to the shirts students are expected to wear black dress slacks (no jeans) and dark dress shoes and black socks
- Large jewelry is prohibited.
- Students are asked to wear flat shoes (no opened toed, boots or tennis shoes)
- Students must keep hair out of their face during the performance.
- Absolutely no perfume or cologne allowed in concert settings!
- Students who arrive in anything other than proper concert attire will not be allowed to participate, which will result in a zero for their concert grade.

Concert Make-Up Work

Just as a student who misses school the day of a test has to make up that test, choir students who have an "excused" concert absence will need to make up for their missed concert grade. In order to make up for a missed concert, students must research one or more of the songs that were performed at our concert. You may include information about its cultural origin, its composer, lyricist/poet, your description of its musical elements, and your opinion of the song. The paper should be typed in 12 font and should be 400-words. Make sure your make-up work is turned in before (or as soon after) the concert as possible.

Honors Chorus

Open to any student in 7th & 8th grade chorus by audition only. This ensemble meets before/after school in the spring and rehearsals are mandatory. If a student misses more than 2 rehearsals they will be removed from the ensemble. Students must have an A in chorus class and no discipline referrals to be eligible for this ensemble. Eligibility will be based on your child's class performance in the Fall semester. It is a privilege to be in this ensemble, because this is the ensemble the school takes to competition.

- Audition and rehearsal dates for this ensemble will be set after Christmas Break.

Extra Credit Opportunity

Students may attend any outside fine arts event to supplement weekly quiz grades. This opportunity may NOT supplement concert grades. Acceptable events include plays, musicals, concerts, ballets, operas, art shows, and church programs. Students must produce a valid program and/or ticket to receive credit. Please note that a student's participation in such events does not constitute extra credit. Students are encouraged to watch the bulletin board for upcoming extra credit events!!

Concert Schedule

Each concert in which your child will sing during the 2009-2010 school year will be the result of many weeks of hard work and preparation. Please post our concert calendar and plan to attend these concerts with your child and your family. The memories of your supportive presence will stay with your child long after the words and the melodies have been forgotten.

Scheduled events are as follows:

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Cowpens Veterans Day Program	November 14 th	Cowpens Memorial Park	12:00 pm
"December Song" (District Choral Festival)	December 10 th	Broome High School Auditorium	7:00 pm
CMS Spring Concert	May 4 th	Broome High School Auditorium	7:00 pm

Schedule Continued

- Student arrival times for events are TBA.
- Please note that not all concerts are at the school in order to provide our students with the opportunity to perform in great acoustic spaces.
- Be aware that other concerts and field trips may be scheduled throughout the year.
- All dates and times are subject to change.

Field Trips

From time to time the chorus will have the opportunity to perform and/or view performances off campus. This is an exciting privilege and should be taken seriously. Permission forms are required to go on field trips and students with discipline problems will not be allowed to participate. Here are the CMS Chorus guidelines for field trips.

- Students are the direct responsibility of the director and chaperones.
- Chaperones are to be obeyed and respected!
- Parent chaperones be aware that you most likely will not be assigned to your child's group in order to maintain a fair atmosphere.
- Students will sit in assigned seats on the busses.
- Boys and girls are not to sit together.
- Rude and loud behavior will not be tolerated. You are ambassadors of CMS.
- Students are not allowed to ride with or leave early with parents.
- Leave all valuables at home!!
- Keep the bus clean.
- No hanging out the windows.
- Money for field trips is non-refundable. No exceptions!

Financial Obligations

Very little is required financially to participate in chorus. Please don't let your financial situation determine your child's participation in choral activities. Please speak to the director if there is an issue and we will work out a solution together. Your child will be expected to provide funds for the following:

1. Chorus Shirt
2. Notebook/Pencil
3. Field Trips

How Can Parents Help?

- Show an interest in your child's musical education.
- Keep the handbook in a safe place and refer to it often.
- Take your child to cultural events in the area.
- Participate in fundraising.
- Volunteer at the school when needed.
- Chaperone a field trip.
- Work with the director in all situations for the best interest of your child.

Concert Etiquette

In District Three we always try to instill in our students an appreciation for the arts. With this comes the knowledge of appropriate behavior in formal concert settings. Please review the following rules that were developed by the Music Educators National Conference. Encourage your child and those in your family attending concerts to always abide by these rules.

- Clapping is the appropriate way to show appreciation for the performance rather than whistling or cheering.
- Parents should keep small children seated with them. If children become restless or fussy, please move them to the outer corridor.
- Enter the auditorium quietly. Once you have been seated, be alert to activity on the stage as the musicians take their place for the concert.
- When the conductor enters, it is customary to applaud politely. Whistling, yelling, or screaming is not appropriate at any time before, during, or after a concert.
- Never stand or move around while music is being performed. It distracts listeners around you, as well as the performers. If you must leave for any reason, wait until a piece is finished, and the audience is applauding. Also, return to your seat only between numbers.
- It is impolite to talk, or even whisper, while the music is being performed. Listeners and performers are also distracted by sounds from programs, candy wrappers, jewelry and other objects. Remain still, and be thoughtful of others by talking or making sounds only between numbers.
- It is impolite to wear hats or caps during a concert.
- It is impolite to eat or drink refreshments during a concert.
- Always say "excuse me," if you must pass in front of someone while going to or from your seat.
- Watch the conductor when the music stops to decide whether or not to applaud. Some musical works have several parts or movements and the audience is expected to applaud only after all movements have been performed.
- Make certain that all pagers and cell phones are turned off prior to the start of any concert.

Sacred Music

In order to have a well rounded appreciation for music, students must delve into the history of the art. Music dates back thousands of years and begins in the early days of the church. Please understand that we cover this information, in line with state standards, so that we may see how far music has come through the years. If any of the music we sing is sacred in nature, please understand that we are only doing so for its historical significance to the development of choral literature; not because it reflects or promotes the beliefs of a particular group. Thank you for your understanding.

Movies

From time to time your student will have the opportunity to view movies that correspond and/or accentuate the choral curriculum. The movies include such classics as "The Sound of Music", "Sister Act", and "Mr. Holland's Opus". The rating on such movies will never exceed PG. If you have concerns about this, please speak with the director. Please make sure to sign the waver on the following page.

Parent/Guardian-Student Contract

This page is to be removed from the handbook, filled out, signed by both parent/guardian and the student, and returned to Mr. Addington.

Please thoroughly read and discuss this handbook in its entirety with your child before signing.

As a **PARENT/GUARDIAN**, I have read, understood, and agree to comply with all information that is stated in this handbook. I have received a copy of the performance calendar for the year and understand that my child is expected to attend all the events listed. I understand that my child will be given periodical updates in writing to bring home regarding performance details and rehearsal expectations and/or changes.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

As a **STUDENT** in the Cowpens Middle School Chorus, I have read, understood, and agree to comply with all information stated in this handbook. I acknowledge all expectations, rules, and consequences stated in this handbook and I agree to comply with them. I have received a performance calendar for the year and understand that I will be expected to attend all events listed. I am responsible for taking home periodical updates (in writing) regarding performance details and rehearsal expectations and/or changes.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I hereby give my child permission to participate in the viewing of school approved movies. I understand that these movies are to supplement my child's learning and that the rating will never exceed that of PG.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

