

Southwestern High School Choir Student Handbook 2019-2020

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Teacher

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Fall 2019

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Students and Families:

I would like to welcome you to another great year in choir at Southwestern High School! This will be my ninth year of directing the High School Wildcat Choir. It is my privilege to work with these fine young individuals and I look forward to continuing their education and watching them grow into wonderful men and women. We have many opportunities for students to work together or individually and I encourage each of you to try something new this year.

In this Handbook, you will find the materials you need to participate with SWSH Choir, including outlines of important dates, wardrobe requirements, as well as our Code of Conduct, grading policies, and other important items used to run the choir. Please look over the entire Handbook and discuss these policies between students and families so that everyone feels clear regarding expectations. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Also, please take note of all the important dates on the SWSH Choir Calendar. Adequate advance notice will be given of any additions or other changes to the choir schedule.

We would like to invite all parents to attend our Music Parent's Meetings held in the Middle School Band Room on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm. Please try to attend as we need your input on many items. Keep in mind that Music Parents sponsors many opportunities for students to put money into their music accounts for trips, camps or activities that the music department may decide to participate in.

Again, a big welcome to all new and returning students and families! I am looking forward to a great year together!

Sincerely,

Theresa Brown
Vocal Music Teacher, Southwestern Wisconsin High School

SWSH Choir Calendar 2019-2020

Dates may be subject to change. Adequate advance notice will be given regarding any additions or other changes. Please check the school website for performance dates.

Southwestern Homecoming SSB	Fri, Sept 13th, 7:00 pm
Kieler Fireman's Picnic/Parade SSB	Sun, Oct 6th, 12:00
Cross Country Meet (Cole Acres)SSB	Thurs, Oct 17th, 4:00
Volleyball Game SSB	Thurs, Oct 17th 7:00ish
*Dorian Choir Nomination Deadline	Mon, Oct 26th
Veteran's Day	Mon, Nov 11th
Fighting Saints SSB	Fri, Nov, 8
Girl's BBall SSB	Thurs., Nov 21st 7:00ish
Wrestling Meet SSB	Fri, Dec. 6th, 7:00
*Middle School Christmas Concert	Sun, Dec 8th @ 12:00
High School Christmas Concert	Sun, Dec 8 th @ 2:00
Gymnastics SSB	Mon, Jan 20th @ 6:00ish
*Dorian Festival	Sun, Jan 12 & Mon, Jan 13 - Luther College
*MS/HS Honors Practice (Mineral Point) 9-12	Thurs, Jan 23rd, 9 am
*Honors Choir (Mineral Point) All Day @4:30	Sat, Jan 25th; Concert
Music Menus	Sun, Feb. 23rd @ 5:00
High School Pops Concert	Sun, Feb 23rd @ 7:30
*Middle School Pops Concert	Mon, Feb 24 th @ 7:30
*MS Solo and Ensemble (Iowa Grant)	Sat, Mar 14th (may change)
*Jazz/Show Choir Festival @ Fennimore	Tues, Mar 17th
*High School Musical	Fri-Sun, Mar 20,21,22
High School Solo and Ensemble (MP)	Sat, Apr 4th
*Music Field Trip	Sun-Fri, April 5-10
*Middle School Spring Concert	Mon, Apr 27th @ 7:30
*State Solo and Ensemble (Platteville)	Sat, Apr 25th
Large Group Festival (CC)	Thurs, April 30th 8-3
High School Spring Concert	Wed, May 13th @ 7:30
Graduation	Sun, May 24 th

*optional or not required

Southwestern High School Choir Statement of Priorities

Priority

The personal growth and maturity of each student as a human being.

Priority

The growth and maturity of each student as a musician and singer.

Priority

Providing the best possible musical experience and education for each student.

Southwestern High School Choir Statement of Values

These six values must all be present in order to have students and ensembles that perform at an exceptional level. Absence of any of these elements is debilitating to each student and to the ensemble as a whole.

- **Persistence: keeping on when you'd rather not, because you understand there is a payoff down the road.**
- **Commitment: choosing to fully and enthusiastically participate all the time.**
- **Accountability: understanding you choose the consequence when you choose the action.**
- **Intellect: looking at music with intelligent, problem-solving attention, apart from emotional content.**
- **Vulnerability: willing to make yourself emotionally and personally vulnerable so that you can connect with the deeper, human meaning in music.**
- **Talent: using your natural abilities to their fullest potential.**

Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct exists to help each and every student be successful in growing and maturing as a human being, as a musician and singer and to give each student the chance to have the best musical experience and education possible.

All persons in the class will address each other with professionalism and respect. When addressing a teacher or other adult in this class, students should use Mr., Ms., or Mrs., as in “Mrs. Brown” or “Mrs. Feldman”, unless the adult specifically gives alternative instructions. Teachers and other adults should address students (and each other) with all due respect and consideration, without condescension.

The words “*please,*” *thank you*”, and *you’re welcome*” should be used at every opportunity. No matter how directly, forcefully, or critically you must speak, respect and politeness are the rules for communication and will take you far throughout the rest of your lives.

Full and enthusiastic participation is expected from everyone for the entire rehearsal, including Board Work and warm-ups.

We will all behave in a Constructive manner, rather than a Destructive one. All actions that build up other members of the choir and help us reach our goals together will be strongly encouraged. Any behavior that “tears down” choir members, distracts from the musical or educational task at hand or does not demonstrate an appropriate, very high level of focus, will be discouraged.

Our classroom and all items within it will be treated with the utmost care and respect. Students should not move, change, or in any other way disturb any classroom items unless specifically directed to do so. The piano may be played with permission from the adult in charge.

Wardrobe Requirements

The goal of the uniform wardrobe code is to let the ensemble be seen (and heard) as a single unit, rather than a group of individuals. Any wardrobe item that will cause the audience to remember a single student above the entire ensemble may not be worn in concert.

All members of the choir are assigned a specific number of a robe. You are responsible for making sure that your robe is put away correctly after each concert and is handed in at the end of the year. You will lose points if your robe isn't taken care of properly. If lost or damaged, you will be responsible for replacing it.

Because many of the Choir students are also Band students, it's important that we look as uniform as possible. Therefore, all students will wear black pants or skirts (must meet the appropriate length, as per the Student Handbook), black tops, black shoes and black socks or hosiery (hose or tights – no leggings or jeggings, please). Students should always be dressed appropriately under the robes. You are representing our school and our organization before and after the performances.

Please wear shoes that are professional as well as comfortable as you will be standing, and in some cases, walking, while performing.

Please keep jewelry to a minimum and refrain from wearing cologne or perfume.

Music Council

Music council is a group of experienced students who will help make decisions regarding fundraising, performances, trips, and social events for the band and choir. The following positions and their descriptions make up the music council.

- President-
 - The job of the president is to make the agenda for each music council meeting. They will also be responsible for running the meetings. A very important part of the president's job is to attend music parents meetings and make presentations to the music parents.

- Vice President-
 - The primary job of the vice president is to share in the president's activities. They will need to preside over meetings when the president is not able to attend. This means they may also need to attend music parents meetings when the president can not. It is also the vice president's job to make sure that music council meetings stay on track.

- Secretary-
 - It is the primary role of the secretary to take notes during the meetings and distribute them to the other music council members within two day after the meeting. The secretary will also be in charge of taking attendance at the beginning of class.

- Band/Choir Librarians-
 - There will be two librarian positions, one for each room. Librarians are in charge of everything music: distributing, copying, filing and collecting music.

- Social Chair-
 - It is the job of the social chair to planning and executing bonding activities/social events. You will be given a committee to help you with this process.

Music council meeting times will be decided after elections take place.

Policies for Grading and Participation

Students will be graded on the following class elements

1. Participation in required performances.
2. Daily attendance, promptness and participation
3. Completion of Board Work and other in-class assignments.
4. Exams: written or audio recorded
5. Other assignments and points-on completion events (such as promptly returning forms, etc.)
6. The following are elements of the rehearsal, please use these as your guide for daily rehearsals: Rehearsal Rubric
 - a. **Responsibility** - music in order, having a pencil, being on time, practicing sections of your music that need work.
 - b. **Responsiveness** - watch and listen to the conductor so you can respond to different conducting gestures. *This is how choirs make music.*
 - c. **Active Participation** - you're always working on your music during rehearsal. If the director is addressing the needs of another section, you are listening and taking notes in your score or possibly looking over a section that you need to master. If discussion is taking place during rehearsal, you listen to all questions and responses since most, if not all, will apply to you.
 - d. **Goal Setting** - We always have a daily goal for each piece we rehearse. What goals do you need to set to make the group goal happen? Do you need to work on a specific interval, modify your tone, improve your posture, breathe more deeply? The Choir cannot move forward without everyone setting individual goals. What do you need to do to make the music happen?

System for Grading

The actual point system used to grade students assumes that:

1. All students have varying degrees of natural talent, and it is unfair in a public school setting to weight grades too heavily in this area,
2. Daily grades, therefore are weighted heavily in the areas of participation, work ethic, personal responsibility, and behaving in a manner that is constructive to the success of everyone in class.

Grades as points

- Grades will come from concert participation, daily participation, completed assignments, in-class assignments and other Board work, exams, and points-on-completing activities.

- Grades will be on a 100 point scale
- All students will start with a 100 points clean slate. Points may be lost for any day-to-day behaviors that are destructive rather than constructive.

Point system

Each event has a number of points that goes into the grade book. The table below is the number of points that each event is worth. It is important that students attend all required performances and to participate appropriately in class to earn the maximum number of points. It is very easy to get a perfect score in Choir.

Events	Points
Concerts	50
Class	4 - sometimes increases to 10 points
Weekly lessons	10 - sometimes increases
National Anthem	15 per game
Written work	7-10

Concert Participation

- Concert participation is worth 50 points per concert. There are extra performances that are worth 15 points, such as singing the National Anthem at sporting events, special performances, etc. Any student missing a performance for any reason will lose 25 points on their semester grades. There are some cases in which points will be increased.
- Lateness to a concert call-time or inappropriate wardrobe or behavior is worth 5 or more points per infraction.
 - All Concerts will be graded on the same elements as are evaluated after the concert.
 - Wardrobe
 - Promptness
 - Conduct
 - Preparedness
- Concert participation is considered a required class element, the same way written exams are required in other classes. Therefore, a concert that is excused, including illness, can be “made up” with a written assignment.
 - Work is never an excuse for missing a concert. School is a priority and since this is a graded class, any student missing a concert for work will be unexcused.

- If an absence is excused a make up assignment will be assigned after a note from a parent is turned in. Below is the grading rubric for such assignment:

Make up Assignment Rubric

CATEGORY	10	8	6	5
Focus	Essay has a focus throughout	Essay mostly has focus throughout	Essay sometimes loses focus	Essay does not have a focus
Organization	Essay has a clear introduction, body, conclusion, and Bibliography	Essay has introduction, body and conclusion, Bibliography, though not always clear.	Essay is missing introduction, body or conclusion.	Essay is missing two of the following: an introduction, body or conclusion. Bibliography.
Length	Essay has 1500 words or more	Essay has 1200-1340 words	Essay has 893-1042 words	Essay has less than 892 words.
Effectiveness	Essay has effective information about topic.	Essay has mostly effective information about topic.	Essay does not have effective information about topic.	Essay does not have information about topic.
Completes Assignment Requirements	Essay is double spaced, uses appropriate font, includes pictures and is turned in on time.	Essay is double spaced and includes appropriate font and is turned in on time.	Essay is double spaced, and has appropriate font but is late or has no pictures.	Essay is missing a page, missing pictures, is late, or not using appropriate spacing or font.

Assignments that are plagiarized (copied from an article, etc- not your own work) will not be graded. And will, therefore, be given an “F”

Board Work

- Sometimes, students will have a journal assignment they are to complete as they enter the room. Students will have a Journal so they can record all assignments.
- Journals and board work count as 10 points each.

Singing Tests

- Students will be given on Singing Test per quarter. These tests will be conducted in a private lesson. Students will be evaluated only on learned, classroom elements of singing. STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED SINGERS TO PASS SINGING TESTS, THEY ONLY NEED TO HAVE WORKED ON ELEMENTS TAUGHT IN CLASS.
- Singing Tests will be pass/fail only. Each quarter, students will have one chance to re-take the Singing Test if they failed previously that same quarter.
- Singing Tests are worth 15 points on semester grades. Students receive zero points for failed tests (if the re-take is also failed). These points may be made up (see below).
- Singing Tests are designed to evaluate how a student is keeping up in class: they are not designed to test which students are the most naturally talented or gifted. Students of basic or average ability will be able to pass Singing Tests easily if they have worked hard in class and sing with confidence.

Penalties for Unexcused Absences, Tardies, and Non-Participation

- Each unexcused absence to class will cost the student (4 points).
- Each unexcused absence to class within five school days before a concert will cost the student 10 points.
- Students who do not fully participate in class, or prevent others from doing so will lose points as if they had skipped class (4 points)
- If you're late for class, you must have a pass. If you don't, it is marked tardy.

Grading Scale

Points	Grade
100	A
89	B
79	C
69	D

Make up Points Missed

- Students who have missed points on their grades due to absences, tardies, missed concerts or failed Singing Tests may request the opportunity to make up those points by doing community service for the choir. The student may earn up to 5 points for each hour of service.
- Students may NOT make up points for missed Board Work, since Board Work can be turned in late at any time without penalty.
- Students may not earn points beyond a total of 100.
- Service hours may be only completed outside of the school day (Before or after school) and with advance approval by Mrs. Brown. Service hours completed without Mrs. Brown's prior approval will not be counted. No service hours may be completed during the school day.
- Hours may only be completed at times when they are convenient with Mrs. Brown's schedule. It is the student's responsibility to prioritize and accommodate available times.

Lettering in Choir

SWHS Choir students may apply for a school letter each year they participate in choir. Eligibility is determined by a point system that is outlined on the following form. Points are cumulative from year to year.

- Students are responsible for filling out a blue letter sheet, after each event and turning it into the envelope on the door of Mrs. Brown's office. Please be sure the form is signed by the supervisor of the event. The Letter Form in this packet should also be filled out each year and submitted it to Mrs. Brown to be initialed. Only students whose forms are approved by Mrs. Brown by the announced deadline and receive her initial will be considered.
- After students have received a first letter, they are eligible to receive bars.
- Private vocal teachers must be approved by Director
- Summer Camp counts for 75 points, please indicate on form
- Singing of National Anthem at Sporting events or other activities counts as 25 points.
- Points for Service can be earned for the following:
 - Office work: filing organizing, computer, etc. 5-20 points
 - Event/Concert set up 5-20 points
 - Cleaning/organizing 5-20 points

- Other (see Mrs. Brown for approval) - points depend on what job is and how long it takes to get it done.
- Any other ensembles you are performing in or auditioning for counts for 50 points.

SWHS Choir Lettering Form

Student Name _____

A student may earn a letter for the first 500 points
A Bar is earned for each subsequent 500 points

ACTIVITY	POINTS	9	10	11	12	Total
Volunteer Performance	25					
Attending Choir Camp	75					
Member of Show Choir	50					
Section Leader/Captain	10-75					
District Festival Soloist	50					
State Festival Soloists	75					
District Festival Ensemble Member	50					
State Festival Ensemble Member	75					
Honors Choir Participant	50					
Dorian/Adrian Participant	50					
Choir Officers	20-50					
Private Lessons (not from Mrs. Brown)	10 per lesson					
Special Service to Choir	5/50 per quarter					
Performance Attendance (not SW)	10					

Totals					
Initials/date					

Director's initials and date required every year.

Voice Teachers

- Southwestern is fortunate enough to have vocal teachers in the surrounding area. Students are encouraged to study with a private voice teacher. THIS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT.
- Please note that studying privately may mean working with a highly-capable adult musician who happens to be a relative or family friend. You do not need to find a paid voice teacher to excel.
- Also please note that this is not an exhaustive list of area teachers. And I have not personally observed each teacher in action – you will need to research and decide for yourself.

Contests and Special Choirs

If there is time and any interest, I am willing to work with those who would like to participate in Barbershop or Show Choir. Please talk with me during your lesson or outside of class if this is something that you are interested in.

PASS YOUR CLASSES! Students who pass their classes benefit from the many rewarding opportunities choir presents. Those who fail their classes let down the group and lose out on these experiences. **It is the student's responsibility to maintain eligibility. Check your grades online, communicate regularly with your teachers, hand in your assignments, and study for your tests!** Grades play a crucial role in your ability to participate in extra activities. As the director, I have absolutely no discretion when a student is declared academically ineligible. Guidelines restrict students from participating in the following events: Dorian Choir, Honors Choir, Musical, extra school day events not previously approved by the administration (ie: Halloween at the Nursing Home).

We want you to be academically responsible!

Meeting this deadline will be one of your first grades in Choir!

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

(Please read carefully and sign where appropriate)

We have read the hard copy or gone online at www.swsd.k12.wi.us and read the grading guidelines, rules, policies, and expectations as stated in the Southwestern High School Choir Handbook. As a student, I understand what will be expected of me as a member of SWHS Choir and agree to maintain its tradition of high musical and behavioral standards. As a parent, I understand what is expected of my child and will help him/her meet these expectations. We have discussed these policies together and will see to it that I/the student will fulfill all of his/her obligations to the Southwestern High School Choir.

Please sign and return to your director by Thursday, October 3rd.

Signature of Student: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Thank you!