

## **I. THE CENTREVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL PROGRAM**

There are six choirs in the CVHS Choral Program:

**Men's Ensemble** – Entry-level all-male choir –no audition required

**Women's Ensemble** – Entry-level all-female choir – no audition required

**Concert Choir** – Intermediate level mixed (male/female) choir – audition required

**Bella Voce** – Intermediate/Advanced level all-female choir – audition required

**Symphonic Choir** – Advanced level mixed choir – audition required

**Madrigal Ensemble** – Small, select advanced level mixed choir (extra-curricular) -  
audition required

All choirs are designed to teach the following aspects of music: vocal technique, musicianship (reading music), general music history, basic compositional components of the choral genre, the components of ensemble singing, and the principles of rehearsal and performance in a choral setting. These various components are evaluated through the grading process (except in the case of Madrigal Ensemble), which is discussed in the next section. Placement in a choir is based primarily on level of musicianship skills. For further information on course content, see the syllabus for each class.

**II. GRADING** – Grades are based on a point system. The total number of graded assignments determines the amount of points that can be earned in a year. (Class participation is also graded – see below).

**A. CLASS PARTICIPATION – 10 points per class.**

This consists of active involvement during class, following established classroom procedures (see page 4). Regular attendance, punctuality, having all required materials, and on-task behavior all constitute appropriate class participation, and will all be factored into this grade. Also, it is the student's responsibility to arrange to make up any work missed due to excused absences.

**B. ORAL AND WRITTEN TESTS – Total points determined by number of items on each exam.**

Assessment is both oral and written.

**C. CONCERT/REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

**Dress Rehearsals – 200 points (equal to two test grades)**

**Concerts – 300 points (equal to three test grades)**

Students will be expected to participate in all required rehearsals and concerts. The *Calendar of Events* is attached with all performance dates listed. (Punctuality, wearing of appropriate concert uniform and on-task, disciplined, appropriate concert behavior are also factored into the points earned.)

*See next page for details of the Concert/Rehearsal Attendance Policy.*

## CONCERT/REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont.)

### 1. Definitions of Absence Types (for rehearsals and performances)

#### **EXCUSED Absences:**

- \* Personal severe illness
- \* Catastrophic events
- \* Death in the family
- \* Religious Holidays/  
Observances
- \* Commitments made  
before signing choral policy

#### **Examples of UNEXCUSED Absences:**

- \* Social engagements
- \* Community Sports
- \* Work
- \* Transportation problems
- \* Homework
- \* Babysitting
- \* Oversleeping
- \* Commitments made  
after signing choral  
policy
- \* Forgetfulness
- \* Outside performances
- \* Auditions/Try-outs

### 2. Rehearsal/Concert Absence Procedures

#### a. **Excused Absence Procedure:**

- Contact (call or e-mail) Mrs. Babcock about the absence in advance of the absence. (Also, in the case of a last minute emergency, call or e-mail immediately if at all possible)
- Bring a signed, typed note from parent /guardian upon return to class (no e-mails)
- Complete make-up work (see Mrs. Babcock for make-up procedure)

#### b. **Unexcused Absences From Final Dress Rehearsals:**

- Student will not be allowed to perform in the concert and will lose both rehearsal and concert points. There will be no opportunity to complete make-up work in this case.

#### c. **Unexcused Absences From Concerts:**

- Student will lose concert points – in this case there is also no opportunity for make-up work.

- III. CHOIR UNIFORMS** - Each student will be fitted for his/her uniform within the first few weeks of the new school year. The Choral Department will provide the uniforms, the maintenance/rental of which will be included in the choir fee. If there are any financial issues that prevent prompt payment, parents/guardians should immediately contact the director. Any communication of this nature will be kept completely confidential. Uniform information is on page 7 of this handbook
- IV. CHOIR FEES** – Each student will be responsible for paying a choir fee that will help cover departmental costs such as: uniform rental/maintenance, accompanist(s), equipment, and music. (See page 7)
- V. PLACEMENT PROCEDURES FOR CHORAL ENSEMBLES** – Auditions for all choral ensembles will take place in the second half of the spring semester. Some of the auditions will involve after-school time. Audition information will be announced in class well in advance of the audition dates.
- VI. MUSIC AND FOLDERS**  
The “textbooks” for each choir are the choral scores (sheet music) that are distributed to the students, along with folders in which to store these scores. Students are to treat these materials responsibly and with care. Students will pay a replacement fee if these materials are damaged or lost.
- VII. BLACKBOARD AND WEBSITE**  
Most information pertinent to the choir department, including assignments and important dates, will be posted frequently on Blackboard and the Choir Website. Parents must be sure that they know how to use Blackboard and the Website so that they can access this information. The CVHS choir website address is [cvhschorus.org](http://cvhschorus.org).
- VIII. CONTACTING CHORAL DEPARTMENT**

Choral Department Phone Number – Mrs. Babcock: (703) 802-5473  
Mrs. Babcock’s e-mail address: [llbabcock1@fcps.edu](mailto:llbabcock1@fcps.edu)

## VIII. CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

1. Be seated in assigned seats with class materials (pencil, folder, music, etc.) when the bell rings. Students NOT SEATED IN ASSIGNED SEATS when the bell rings will be marked tardy.
2. Dispose of gum, food or drink *before* coming into the classroom (or concert venue).
3. Bring music and a pencil to **every** class/rehearsal.
4. Sit or stand (as indicated by the director) using correct posture when singing.
5. Be attentive and **on-task** during rehearsal, eliminating any inappropriate talking and disruptive behavior.
6. Raise your hand to be recognized before speaking out in class/rehearsal.
7. Respectfully comply with all verbal instructions given by the director during class, rehearsals, and performances.
8. Bring completed assignments to class *on the date they are due*. This includes homework, permission slips, forms, or any other assignments made by the director.
9. NO cell phones or other digital devices which can distract the student or other students are allowed during class time, unless expressly permitted by the director for rehearsal purposes. These devices must be turned completely off and stored either in backpacks or lockers. If any such devices are out during rehearsal time without permission, they will be collected by the director and delivered to the sub-school, for pick-up by the student at the end of the school day.
10. Always treat the director and fellow choir members with respect and kindness, remembering that choral singing is a team effort and therefore requires positive, constructive, and supportive team members.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2014-2015

**It is imperative that parents and students understand that the events listed below in bold are mandatory and graded, and subject to the CONCERT/REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE POLICY stipulated on page 2.**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
SEPT. 15	CHORAL PARENT BOOSTERS 1 <sup>ST</sup> GENERAL MEETING – “MEET & GREET”	Choir room	7 pm
<b>SEPT. 17</b>	<b>COLLECT CHOIR FEE (B-day choirs)</b>	Choir room	In class
<b>SEPT. 18</b>	<b>COLLECT CHOIR FEE (A-day choirs)</b>	Choir room	In class
SEPT. 19	<b>SYMPHONIC CHOIR RETREAT</b>	<b>Choir room</b>	<b>3-9 pm</b>
<b>SEPT. 27</b>	<b>MUSIC DEPT. TAG DAY FUNDRAISER (All Choirs)</b>	<b>Centreville Area</b>	<b>8:30am</b>
<i>OCT. 9/10- NOV. 12/13</i>	<i>POINSETTIA FUNDRAISER for Spring Trip starts ORDERS DUE</i>		
OCT. 11	STATE HONORS CHOIR AUDITIONS (Seniors only)	Longwood College	TBA
<b>OCT. 27</b>	<b>ADL CONCERT (Symphonic only)</b>	<b>Kennedy Center</b>	<b>2 pm- 11pm</b>
<b>OCT. 30</b>	<b>A CAPPELLA NIGHT (All Choirs)</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>
NOV. 15	ALL-DISTRICT CHORUS AUDITIONS	Centreville H.S.	TBA
NOV. 20-22	VMEA STATE HONORS CHOIR (Seniors only)	Norfolk, VA. (Details TBA)	TBA
<b>DEC. 13</b>	<b>MADRIGALS CAROLING DAY</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>11 am – 5 pm</b>
<b>DEC. 17</b>	<b>WINTER CONCERT DRESS REHEARSAL</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>2:30- 5:3pm</b>
<b>DEC. 18</b>	<b>WINTER CHORAL CONCERT (All Choirs)</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>
<b>DEC. 19</b>	<b>HOLIDAY ASSEMBLY (Symphonic Choir only)</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> 2 blocks</b>

<b>DEC. 19</b>	<b>HOLIDAY ASSEMBLY (Symphonic Choir only)</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> 2 blocks</b>
<b>JAN. 12</b>	<b>PYRAMID CONCERT (All Choirs)</b>	<b>CVHS Gymnasium</b>	<b>2:30 - 9:30pm</b>
<i>JAN. 13/14- JAN. 20/21</i>	<i>KRISPY KREME DONUT SALE FOR SPRING TRIP starts ORDERS DUE</i>		
JAN. 26	CHORAL PARENT BOOSTERS 2 <sup>ND</sup> GENERAL MEETING	Choir Room	7 pm
JAN. 27	CHORAL CABARET AUDITIONS	Choir Room	2:30 pm
FEB. 28	CHORAL CABARET REHEARSAL	Cafeteria	10am-12pm
FEB. 28	CHORAL CABARET	Cafeteria	7:00 pm
FEB. 19-21	ALL-DISTRICT CHORUS	West Springfield H.S.	TBA
FEB. 19	ALL-STATE AUDITIONS (Juniors and Seniors only)	West Springfield H.S.	TBA
<b>MAR. 11</b>	<b>SPRING CONCERT REHEARSAL</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>2:30- 4:30pm</b>
<b>MAR. 12</b>	<b>SPRING CONCERT (All Choirs)</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>
<b>MAR. 19-21</b>	<b>DISTRICT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (DPAC) (All Choirs)</b>	<b>Woodson H.S.</b>	<b>TBA</b>
MAR. 23	CHOIR TRIP MEETING (All trip participants and their parents)	CVHS Theater	7:30 pm
APR. 16-19	CHOIR TRIP (All Choirs)	New York City, NY.	TBA
APR. 23-25	ALL STATE CHORUS (Juniors & Seniors only)	Virginia Beach, VA.	TBA
<b>APR. 27-30</b>	<b>CHOREOGRAPHY BLITZ</b>	<b>CVHS Choir Room</b>	<b>TBA</b>
-7-			
<b>JUNE 2-3</b>	<b>BROADWAY POPS REHEARSALS</b>	<b>CVHS Theater</b>	<b>2:30-</b>

	(All Choirs)		5:30 pm
JUNE 4-5	BROADWAY POPS (All Choirs)	CVHS Theater	7:30 pm
JUNE 9-10	SYMPHONIC CHOIR, BELLA VOCE & MADRIGAL ENSEMBLE AUDITIONS	Choir Room	2:30pm
JUNE 11	CHOIR DEPARTMENT BANQUET	CVHS Cafeteria	6 pm
JUNE 19	GRADUATION (All Choral Dept. undergrads.)	PATRIOT CENTER GMU	6:30am- noon

*Other performance or rehearsal information may be added at a later date, and with a minimum of two weeks' notice.*

**To contact the Choral Department, please call the Choral Department phone number: (703) 802-5473 or e-mail Mrs. Babcock at: llbabcock1@fcps.edu.**

## **NEW YORK TRIP**

Each year the Choir Department goes on a spring trip. This year the trip is to New York City. THIS TRIP IS **NOT** MANDATORY!! If students elect to participate in this trip, two fundraisers are sponsored by the Choir Department so that they may work to raise money for their trip if they so choose. Payment for the trip may be divided into three installments. The ESTIMATED COST of the trip is \$700.00. The payment dates/amounts will be announced once the trip cost has been finalized, and will be sent home via e-mail and hard-copy trip packets.





## STUDENT/PARENT AGREEMENT

I have read and understand the Centreville High School Choral Department Handbook for the 2014-2015 school year. My signature below indicates that I shall at all times comply with the policies and procedures specified in the Centreville High School Choral Department Handbook. I understand that if these procedures are not followed, I will be subject to any appropriate consequences (i.e. lowered grades, referral to administration, loss of privileges, etc.).

I have also read through the Choral Calendar, marked the dates that apply to me and put them on my family calendar in order to avoid after-school rehearsal and concert conflicts.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

I have read and understand the Centreville High School Choral Department Handbook, and will support my child's compliance with the policies and procedures specified therein.

I have also read through the Choral Calendar, marked the dates that apply to my child and put them on my family calendar in order to avoid after-school rehearsal and concert conflicts.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

# CONCERT CHOIR

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for the purpose of teaching the choral art at an intermediate level of study. This choir is a mixed ensemble of male and female singers, grades 10 – 12. Members of this choir are at an intermediate level of music literacy and choral experience. Students must pass an audition to qualify for membership in this ensemble.

In this choir, the students will learn:

- simple anatomy as it relates to the singing mechanism
- use of healthy and efficient vocal technique
- the elements of good choral singing
- different genres of choral literature
- how to expressively and effectively communicate a lyric
- how to read musical notation and terms
- how to sing in three and four parts

Upon completion of this course, the students will have a broad fundamental understanding of how to sing freely and expressively, as well as how to read the music they are singing and how to maintain their vocal line while other parts are being sung simultaneously. They will also have a general understanding as to how to execute vocal exercises and how to care for the vocal instrument.

# **BELLA VOCE**

## **I. GOAL**

The students will learn simple anatomy as it relates to the singing mechanism.

### **A. OBJECTIVE**

1. The students will define the following terms and will indicate on their own bodies where each of these areas of the anatomy is: lungs, rib cage, diaphragm, epigastrium, abdominal muscles, larynx, vocal chords, soft and hard palates.

## **II. GOAL**

The students will learn correct breathing techniques.

### **A. OBJECTIVES**

1. The students will demonstrate, while singing, use of correct breathing habits through expansion of the diaphragmatic area and abdominal muscles, and visible relaxation of the upper chest, shoulders and throat muscles.

2. The students will explain, in discussion, what correct breathing for singing is and why it is essential to good singing.

3. The students will demonstrate understanding of good versus bad habits by critiquing classmates in various singing situations on the effectiveness of their breathing.

4. The students will demonstrate the use of the following elements of correct posture while singing: shoulders back and down, expanded rib cage and chest, weight balanced evenly on both feet, flexible knees, and a relaxed and energized stance.

## **III. GOAL**

The students will demonstrate understanding of free and healthy tone production.

### **A. OBJECTIVES**

1. The students will sing with round, open mouths and relaxed throats, necks, lips, tongues and jaws.

2. Given listening samples of different people singing, the students will identify, in discussion, which are examples of healthy singing technique as opposed to those of unhealthy technique, and will justify their perceptions.

## Bella Voce (cont.)

3. The students will apply the principles of correct breathing technique each time they sing.
4. The students will be able to explain where the “tonal sensations” should be occurring for low, middle and high tones in order to create free, resonant sound.
5. The students will be able to perform a series of vocalizes with vocal freedom, elasticity and breath control.

### IV. GOAL

The students will demonstrate clean, clear articulation and enunciation in their singing.

#### A. OBJECTIVES

1. The students will produce sung vowel sounds that are open, round, free of tension and pure in quality.
2. When singing vowels, the students will maintain a relaxed tongue, jaw and lips.
3. When singing vowels on one pitch, the students will maintain the same throat space for all the following vowel sounds: ah, ay, ee, oh, and oo.
4. When singing consonants, the students will utilize effortless, distinct articulation with a minimum of vowel disturbance, and will maintain a relaxed, loose jaw.

### V. GOAL

The students will communicate a song with honesty and expressiveness.

#### A. OBJECTIVES

1. Prior to singing each song assigned in class, the students will present certain lyrics as a dramatic reading with believability, sensitivity and attention to diction.
2. Prior to singing any song that has a non-English text, the students will recite the translation, which they have learned for the piece.
3. The students will perform each song they are assigned with energy and visible facial expression.
4. In rehearsals the students will participate in discussion as to the meaning and intent of the lyrics, in order to enhance their understanding for performance purposes.

VI. GOAL

The students will learn how to read musical notation.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. The students will identify in writing, and demonstrate through sight-reading exercises and rehearsal, recognition of various time and key signatures, as well as note names on the staff, the bass and treble clefs, intervals, dynamic markings, a specified list of musical terms, and various note values.
2. The students will count aloud and clap various rhythmic patterns in duple and triple meters.
3. The students will sight-read diatonic melodies, using the solfeggio reading system and the Kerwin hand sign system.
4. The students will demonstrate, through singing and writing, major, minor and chromatic scales and major and minor triads.
5. The students will identify by ear a series of specified intervals, both major and minor.

VII. GOAL

The students will learn to sing effectively and efficiently in a choral ensemble setting.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. The students will demonstrate understanding of the concepts of blend and balance in their use of unified vowel shapes, precise onset of tone at beginnings phases, precise cutoffs at ends of phrases, and control of volume and tone quality.
2. The students will test regularly in quartets, in order to demonstrate their individual knowledge of their respective vocal parts in the music.
3. The students will critique small groups from the class as well as recordings of their rehearsals/performances, in terms of their use of blend, balance, correct phrasing, effective diction, and communication of text.
4. The students will avoid flat singing by maintaining physical and vocal energy (especially on descending melodic lines and intervals), breath control, good posture and forward focus of tone.

5. The students will avoid sharpening by remaining relaxed (especially in the lips, jaw and throat), maintaining breath control, and exercising care in the singing of accidentals and upward intervallic skips.
6. The students will demonstrate understanding of dynamics by using those indicated in the music.
7. The students will conduct guided analyses of their scores in class in order to determine where the following should occur: beginning/ending of phrases, rise and fall of phrases, which vocal line (if any) is prominent, the compositional structure of the voices, and where staggered breathing should occur.
8. The students will conduct basic patterns in meters of 2, 3, 4 and 6.
9. The students will respond to the following gestural language of the conductor/teacher: metrical patterns, dynamic and tempo changes, and phrase shaping.

#### VIII. GOAL

The students will learn discipline and responsible rehearsal behavior.

##### A. OBJECTIVES

1. In rehearsal, the students will demonstrate on-task, focused behavior, which includes correct posture when singing, score study/listening to other parts when not singing, marking of the score with pencil when necessary or when required by teacher, no inappropriate talking, and immediate response to directions from teacher.
2. The students will demonstrate responsible behavior by arriving in class and to other rehearsals on time, minimizing absences, disposing of gum and food before entering the classroom, keeping their music in good condition, and memorizing their music as per the deadline set by the teacher.
3. The students will have all materials (music, folder, pencil, etc.) required by the teacher at every rehearsal.

# BELLA VOCE

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for the purpose of teaching the choral art at an intermediate to advanced level of study. This is an ensemble of female singers only, grades 10 – 12. The students in this choir will have had prior choral experience and training. Students must pass an audition to qualify for membership in this ensemble.

In this choir, the students will learn:

- how to sing in four and five parts
- how to read musical notation and terms
- how to expressively and effectively communicate a lyric
- the elements of good choral singing
- different genres of choral literature for treble voices
- use of healthy and efficient vocal technique

Upon completion of this course, the students will: be able to sing confidently and competently as members of a vocal ensemble, be able to sing in various languages, have expanded their musicianship skills, have an understanding of healthy vocal production, and have experienced singing a wide range of choral compositions at an advanced level of difficulty.