

ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS PROGRAM SYLLABUS 2014 – 2015

Instructor: Mrs. Jessica Irish
 Contact: 703-642-4244 or JElrish@fcps.edu
 Website: www.annandalechoirs.org
 Blackboard: My Blackboard site refers students and parents to the AHS Chorus website, where course info is posted and updated regularly.
 Courses: Concert Choir (Men's and Women's), Men's Chorale, Select Women's Ensemble, Annandale Singers

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE CHORAL DIRECTOR TO PARENTS

Welcome to the Annandale Chorus Program, both new and returning students and parents! It's going to be a wonderful year of music-making and learning. I am about to begin my 15th year of teaching chorus in Fairfax County Public Schools, and I can't wait to share my experience and expertise with my students. I especially look forward to meeting and getting to know parents so that together we can be partners in your students' learning. Parents, here are some things you can do to support your students' learning in my class:

- **Visit our website regularly** (bookmark it!) to view the event calendar, which will be updated regularly. www.annandalechoirs.org This is "command central" and will tell you when any required rehearsals and performances occur as well as a host of other chorus events. (All chorus students are accountable for being present at course required curricular rehearsals and concerts, which are an integral part of their grade in the class.) The website has all of the information about the chorus program as well, so if you have a question it's a great place to visit to find out information.
- **Come to our performances!** The students work hard to learn how to perform inspiring music, and we need a supportive audience to complete the learning experience. That's where you come in. Communicate with your student so that you know when the concerts are, and then come enjoy their singing! Bring the whole family. Concerts are free and open to the public.
- **Come to our chorus parent ("booster") meetings.** We only have a few meetings a year, but this is a chance to find out opportunities for you to support the chorus program through the donation of your volunteerism. We have a wonderful, award-winning chorus program which counts on the support of the parents and community. You are needed and valued!
- **Don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Irish, chorus teacher, at any time.**

PARENTS AND STUDENTS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR BEING AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING POLICIES EXPLAINED IN THIS SYLLABUS.

LET'S GET STARTED...

GRADING POLICIES

The quarterly grade for each student is weighted as follows:

Daily rehearsal technique:	40%
Concert performances:	30%
Evaluations, assignments, class activities:	20%
Homework:	10%

Chorus is a Performance-Based, Participatory Class

Chorus students learn rehearsal and performance techniques, and are graded through their physical demonstration of them, and their application of them to increasingly advanced music. Therefore, students are graded on these techniques daily. The student does not perform the techniques in isolation. Rather, they are a member of an interdependent “singing team,” and their contributions are valued and important, affecting the total performance of a group. Because chorus is very much a “learning by doing” class, involving active participation and team-work, some in-class evaluations and activities cannot be duplicated when the student is absent. Please review the policies below on how being absent affects the student’s ability to earn in-class points, as well as to make up missed points when logistically possible.

Missing Class

When a student misses chorus class, either by being tardy or absent, whether excused or unexcused, the student will miss the opportunity to earn some or all of the DRT (Daily Rehearsal Technique) points for that day. Because these are earned based on participation, there is no opportunity to make up these lost points.

When a student misses chorus class, either by being tardy or absent, whether excused or unexcused, the student may miss the opportunity to earn some or all of the points earned through in-class assignments and class activities. When logistically possible, the student will be able to make up these points. It is the student’s responsibility to talk with the teacher about making up the lost points.

Missing a Test

When a student misses a test due to an absence, excused or unexcused, the student must make up the test within the same number of days as he or she was absent. Example: If a student was absent from school for 2 days, the student has 2 days to make up the test. It is the student’s responsibility to talk with the teacher upon returning from the absence to make arrangements to take the test within the given time frame.

Missing a Curricular Rehearsal or Performance

Students are required to participate in some rehearsals and performances that take place outside of the regular school day, either after school or in the evenings. The dates for these rehearsals and performances are published on our website: www.annandalechoirs.org at the beginning of each school year to allow students and parents plenty of time to make arrangements for the student to be present. There are very few circumstances in which a student would be excused from either a required rehearsal or performance. Family plans, lack of transportation, and work commitments are all examples of things that do not justify an excused absence from a concert. Missing a concert due to an illness and an excused absence from school would be considered an excused concert absence. A concert performance takes priority over a sports practice; however, if the concert conflicts with a game, it is the students’ responsibility to bring this to the attention of the chorus teacher and their coach ahead of time so that a reasonable accommodation can be made if possible. If the conflict cannot be resolved, the graded chorus concert takes priority over the game. A last-minute request to miss a concert for a

game may not be approved. Students who miss a rehearsal or performance, either excused or unexcused, are subject to the following make-up policy:

Making Up a Missed Rehearsal (excused or unexcused)

Students who miss a rehearsal will have an alternate assignment to complete. It is the student's responsibility to talk with the teacher to make arrangements to complete the alternate assignment. The student must communicate with the teacher within 2 days of the absence in order to make arrangements to make up the points. If the absence was unexcused, the maximum grade the student can earn for the rehearsal is 80%.

Making up a Missed Concert (excused or unexcused)

Students who miss a concert will have the opportunity to make up the missed points by performing their concert music from memory for the chorus teacher. The student will be graded on their mastery of the concepts and techniques taught in class on the specified repertoire. The student must communicate with the teacher within 2 days of the absence (or returning to school if their absence encompasses multiple days) in order to schedule a time to make up the concert grade. It is the student's responsibility to talk with the teacher to make arrangements to make up the points. If the absence is unexcused, the maximum grade the student can earn for the concert is 80%. For an excused absence, the student must make up the concert grade within the same number of days as he or she was absent.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to follow all school and FCPS rules, and regularly demonstrate the following *Principals of Successful Participation*:

- Preparation for class
- Respect of one's self, peers and the teacher
- Ability to work as a positive member of the singing team

The following classroom behavior standards must be upheld at all times:

- Demonstrate being ready to learn by being in your assigned seat with music binder and pencil, and quiet when the bell rings to signal the start of class.
- Follow all teacher instructions the first time.
- Gum, candy and food are not permitted. No drinks, except for water.
- No name-calling, put-downs or bullying.
- Participate fully and responsibly in all instructional activities.
- Avoid inappropriate talking and other distracting behaviors.
- Personal electronic devices are not permitted unless specified by the teacher. Keep them off and out of sight.

Consequences of Negative Participation

Discipline matters will be handled in a progressive manner in accordance with FCPS policies, depending on the severity of the infraction, or the inability of the student to correct the poor behavior over time. Consequences include reassigning a student's seat, phone call/communication to parent or guardian, detention, conference with parent or guardian, behavior plan, referral to administrator, etc.

MATERIALS

Students are given a black 3-ring binder in which to keep music being studied, class hand-outs, and other items related to chorus class. This serves as the student's "textbook" for the class and should be brought to every single class. The binder is never to be stored in the chorus room. All sheet music is on loan until collected. Students are responsible for taking care of their binder and sheet music. Binders are not to be decorated or covered with other materials. A lost binder will be replaced for a charge of \$5. Lost sheet music is replaced at the cost of \$3 per item, or the actual cost of the item if it exceeds \$3. Students must bring a pencil with them to every class.

UNIFORMS

Students receive freshly cleaned uniforms which are loaned to them for the duration of the school year. They are responsible for caring for them and returning them by the specified deadline at the end of the school year. Students will incur a fee (student debt goes on file with school finance office until paid) for lost uniforms as follows:

- Garment bag - \$10
- Chorus gown - \$100
- Tuxedo Jacket - \$50
- Tuxedo pants - \$40
- Tuxedo shirt - \$25
- Bowtie - \$10
- Cummerbund - \$15
- Red Vest - \$35

Students keep their uniforms at home in their assigned garment bag, and arrive to concerts dressed in their uniforms.

Concert Shoes for Ladies

Ladies provide their own shoes for concerts. They must meet the following guidelines: solid black dress shoe that is leather or leather-like material, flat or small heel only, with a closed toe. Shoes should be conservative-looking, not "flashy." Absolutely no sneakers, canvas shoes, or sandals. If a student needs financial assistance with obtaining shoes, she should talk with the chorus teacher privately.

Concert Shoes for Guys

Gentlemen provide their own shoes for concerts. They must meet the following guidelines: solid black men's dress shoes, either "oxford style" (lace up) or slip-on. Absolutely no sneakers. Shoes should be leather or of a leather-like material. If a student needs financial assistance with obtaining shoes, he should talk with the chorus teacher privately.

Caring for Your Uniform

If your uniform becomes wrinkled, you should iron it on a low heat. Take pride in your appearance, and don't show up to a concert with a wrinkled uniform. Uniforms will often retain body odors, so it is a good idea to consider cleaning them after each performance. Ladies' gowns are machine washable on a cold, gentle cycle. Gowns with a red sash should be turned inside-out prior to washing. Gowns should be hung to dry, NEVER put in a dryer. Men's tux jackets are dry-clean only—please DO NOT put these in the washing machine. Men's tux pants are washable on a cold, gentle cycle and should be hung to dry, NEVER put in a dryer. Tux shirts are washable.

General Guidelines for Concert Appearance

- Hair should be styled neatly and pulled away from the face. No wet hair.
- Students should be clean and odor-free upon arrival to concerts. No cologne or perfume. DO wear deodorant.
- Students should be fully dressed (shirts tucked in, bowties on, etc.) when they arrive for a concert.
- Remove any facial piercings.
- Ladies are not permitted to wear a necklace of any kind. Earrings must be smaller than your ear lobe. No bracelets.
- Gentlemen who wear earrings should remove them, or make sure that earrings are very small.
- Gentlemen must wear BLACK socks.
- Ladies must wear skin-colored stockings or tights. No bare legs.
- Ladies should make certain that no portion of an undergarment is accidentally visible (shoulder straps should be tucked away or pinned so that they do not show).
- Uniforms should be clean and wrinkle-free.

COURSE MATERIALS FEE

In accordance FCPS regulations, all chorus classes at Annandale High School require a course materials fee in the amount of \$50. The fee covers the care and maintenance of choral uniforms, pays for professional pianists to accompany our performances, and other items considered to be “consumable” within a given school year. The course materials fee is due at the beginning of the school year. Assistance for students who receive free or reduced lunch is available. Please contact Mrs. Irish privately if you need financial consideration.