

Rosemount High School Curricular Choir Handbook

(rev. 8/17)

Program Overview and Instructors' Statement of Expectations

Students take choir for a lot of different reasons, but those students all have one thing in common: they like the challenge and reward that comes from singing and making music. Becoming a musician takes a lot of work, but in the end it is worth every bit of effort. The choir classes at Rosemount High School are designed to give you all the necessary tools and opportunities to improve your skills, knowledge and confidence as a singer.

The RHS Choir Program has a place for everyone, regardless of grade level, previous music experience or “natural talent.” The only requirement is that you show a sincere commitment to singing, a readiness to learn and an attitude of tolerance, respect and cooperation.

We know that the harder you work at becoming a better musician, the more rewarding it gets and the more you achieve. Our foremost expectation is that you take charge of your own progress, that you always put forth your best effort and attitude, and that you become an expert at knowing how to learn. With these three skills in hand, you will achieve great things.

Learning Outcomes

In the RHS Choral Program, the teaching and learning process is directed toward producing three primary outcomes. Like the three legs of a stool, your success as a choral musician rests equally on all three outcomes:

1. You will learn the language of music.
2. You will learn to use your voice as an instrument.
3. You will learn the skills needed to participate in an ensemble, or group.

Acquiring the musical skills you can use throughout your life takes daily individual effort. In your choir class, you will learn the elements of musical language and will practice using that language independently through sight-singing with excellent phrasing, pitch and rhythm. You will learn to sing with good breath support and create full, free and open vocal tone. You will practice the craft of ensemble singing through daily exercises and preparation for performance.

RHS choirs learn all styles of choral literature from Renaissance to the Contemporary periods. The choirs perform publicly at concerts, festivals, contests and other school events. We also emphasize solo and small-ensemble singing, as we strongly encourage all our students to hone their skills as individual singers and engage in opportunities to perform as soloists, in duets, etc.

Attendance Policy

We care that the Rosemount High School choirs all sing at their highest level, and that each choir gains valuable experience in learning to work as a group. Acquiring the ability to sing expressive, exciting, rewarding music demands the daily, combined group effort of the entire choir. Therefore, musicianship, good citizenship and positive group interaction are expected of every group member. **Your attendance and full, on-time participation in class is essential for your success and for that of the entire class.**

If you are TARDY to class, or have been ABSENT the previous day, you must check in with the attendance officer and show him/her your slip. Do not give tardy/absence slips to your instructor.

If you are ABSENT from class for any school-verified reason, you must make up the sight-singing assignment for that day within two weeks of the absence. Speak with your teacher to arrange a make-up assignment. Making up absences in a timely and professional manner is your responsibility.

Sight-singing is part of your daily grade, and failure to make up for absences will affect your grade each trimester. Be aware that daily sight-singing assignments cannot be made up during the last week (final exams) of each trimester.

Class Readiness

Each class begins with essential voice-building exercises and other important activities. **Therefore, you must be in your seat with your choir folder, your district-issued iPad, and a pencil, ready to work when the tardy bell rings.** Being late or forgetting your folder, iPad, or pencil limits your ability to participate fully in class, and will result in a loss of daily points. (See Grading Policy below.)

Many choir students are very outgoing, fun, friendly, and conversational, and most have personal friends in choir. Friendships and fun times are two of the greatest strengths and rewards of being in choir! However, everyone must observe reasonable limits or else the group begins to break down. No student has the right to interrupt class or disrupt any member of the class with talking or off-task behavior. It is an infringement on other students' learning, on the instructor's teaching and on the overall enjoyment of everyone in the room. Disruptions will not be tolerated.

Readiness to learn starts with the right attitude but it doesn't happen automatically. Everyone must make right choices.

Behavior Expectations and Discipline

Quality education can only take place in if there is effective discipline and an orderly, respectful classroom atmosphere. In order to guarantee each student the excellent learning climate they deserve, students, their parents/guardians and teachers must work together to promote students' self-discipline, sense of personal responsibility, and an appreciation of the rights of others. The classroom teacher is the administrator of classroom discipline, and addressing minor disciplinary offenses is their responsibility and obligation. When serious or persistent problems arise, discipline will become the joint responsibility of an administrator, the choir instructor, and the parent/guardian.

We welcome and invite parents/guardians to communicate their concerns directly with the choral director via phone, e-mail, or in person.

Consistent with RHS school policy, cell phones, headphones/earbuds, and non-district-issued devices are not to be used during any choir class except with express permission from the instructor!

All members of the Rosemount High School Choral Program are expected to follow and abide by the Rosemount High School Performing Arts Eligibility Rules for participation, specifically referring to the illegal use and possession of tobacco products, liquor, and other mood-altering chemicals.

Required Materials

You will be assigned a specifically numbered music folder for the entire school year that must be kept in its proper slot in the folder cabinet for your choir. You are responsible for this assigned music folder and for all the music that will be provided to you, free of charge, throughout the year. At the end of the year you will return the choir folder and all music and materials in excellent condition. Fines will be assessed for damaged or missing music or folders.

For every class, you are expected to have a pencil in your hand for taking notes and marking your music. We encourage you to keep the pencil directly in your folder; however, if it falls out, you are still responsible for having a pencil with you in class. Be prepared at all times.

Respect for Materials, Room and Equipment

Besides being responsible for maintaining your “own” choir materials (folder, music, iPad, and concert apparel) at all times, you also share the responsibility for the choir room and all choir equipment, including white boards, pianos, chairs, walls and floors. The choir room is a very busy place from before school until late afternoon or evening, as well as every period of the day. The choir room must be left in TIP-TOP condition after every class. Therefore, the following Room Respect Rules will be strictly enforced:

1. **NO GUM, CANDY, FOOD, OR BEVERAGES ARE PERMITTED IN THE CHOIR ROOM!** This is for two IMPORTANT reasons: Keeping *trash* under control, and *ensuring free, safe singing technique*. Food, candy and gum interfere with good singing, and over the course of a day wrappers and empty beverage containers left behind create major messes.
2. Drinking **plain water**, however, is encouraged, as long as bottles are picked up and recycled properly.
3. Check around your seat at the end of each class and pick up all papers, trash, and belongings.
4. Put your choir folder away in its proper location at the end of each class.
5. Bulletin boards, white boards and items posted on walls are for **official use only**, so *always* ask permission if you would like to use them or post something.
6. Treat chairs and pianos with extra special care; they are more vulnerable than they appear. Do not tip chairs backward or play the pianos aggressively. When crossing to and from the back rows, always walk on the floor and not on the chairs.

Required Concert Attire and Fees

Each choir has its own specific apparel requirements. These are explained in the syllabus for each individual choir. Likewise, choirs have different fees based on their apparel needs and the activities that each choir will be involved in during the year. These fees are explained in the individual class syllabi, which can be found on Schoology.

Grading Policy

Each choir student has the opportunity to earn an "A" grade. This grade will be based mainly on your participation and performance, not your talent or personality. The following is a breakdown of the grading structure:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59% or below

Your choir grade will consist of points earned from each of the four weighted categories listed below:

1. Classroom/daily work (40%)
2. Concert participation (30%)
3. Choir lessons (20%)
4. Performance assessments, aural exams, and written exams (10%)

Descriptions:

Classroom/daily work (40%): This portion of your grade is directly tied to how YOU participate in the choral classroom. These points are based strictly on the quantity **and quality** of your participation – your presence, cooperative attitude, and sincere effort to learn and grow – and not based on your ability level. We believe strongly in a positive classroom setting and count on each member of the group to help make that happen every day. All expectations regarding conduct, behavior, readiness, and treatment of equipment and materials (as stated previously) are taken into consideration. You are evaluated and earn points on a daily basis throughout each trimester. Completion of daily sight-singing assignments and any written work are included in this portion of your grade.

Concert/festival/performance participation (30%): Each individual choir has required performances throughout the entire year. When we perform, everyone is expected to be there at the stated time. For those students who have a medical emergency or family bereavement during a concert or performance, a make-up assignment will be assigned. Absences for work, babysitting, family vacations, college visits, etc., will not be tolerated. **Inform your choir director within the first week of school if you have any concert conflicts.** Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero for the concert. Please refer to the RHS Choir Activities Schedule to mark performance dates.

Choir lessons (20%): Each student is required to attend choir lessons with their classroom instructor. This includes students who are studying voice with a private teacher. Students **MUST** notify their academic instructor the day before the lesson, get a pass from their choir director, and report to the voice lesson on time! Please note that there will be no choir lessons given during finals week.

Performance assessments, aural exams, and written exams (10%): Performance-based assessments will be administered periodically throughout each trimester in class or during lessons. When these exams are conducted during class, students will demonstrate progress by singing individually or in small groups using their current choral repertoire and/or sight-singing materials. The purpose of these exams is to evaluate the improvement of each individual's vocal technique, sight-singing, and mastery of choral music. Aural and written exams and quizzes may also be given to assess students' mastery of the material covered in class.

Extra credit in your curricular choir class may be given for attendance at area concerts, which include other high schools, middle schools, college, or elementary choir concerts, band concerts, musicals, operas or symphony concerts. To receive credit, you must turn in the concert program with comments and a brief evaluation written on the program itself. Please be sure to sign your program and turn it in promptly! See your classroom teacher **before** the concert if you have questions about whether a particular concert qualifies for extra credit or if you are unsure about the assignment. *Note: Some concerts may also fit the criteria for lettering points. (See “Lettering Policy.”) You may not receive lettering points for attending a concert if you also received extra credit for it in your curricular choir.*

Communication: RHS Choir web page and e-mail list

News and announcements about RHS choir events such as concerts, festivals, and fundraisers will be posted and updated as needed on the choir web page at <http://www.rosemountchoralarts.org/>.

Fundraising

The RHS Choral Program engages in numerous fundraising opportunities every year. Each fall, students are asked to sell coupon books for the choir program. The profits from this sale are vital to the daily operations of our curricular choir program.

Other fundraising opportunities will be made available to individual choirs as needed. An individual fundraising account is established for each student. Funds from these accounts can **only** be used for RHS choir trips, events, fees and clothing items. Upon graduating or leaving the program, any remaining monetary balance in a student’s account is transferred to the RHS Choral Activities Account. To access your individual account, visit <https://www.charmsoffice.com/>. Information on how to access this account can be found on the choir website at <http://www.rosemountchoralarts.org/>.

Lettering

Many RHS choir students go above and beyond the academic and performance requirements of their curricular choir. Letters and awards are given each spring to students who earn sufficient points for their extra involvement, have NO unexcused absences from ANY choral performances, and demonstrate cooperation, leadership, responsibility, and a caring attitude throughout the year. For more information about lettering, students may talk with their instructor or refer to the sample lettering sheet attached to this handbook.