

Rosemount High School Choirs

Tuition-Based Private Voice Lessons

Rosemount High School choir students have the unique opportunity to study with highly respected voice teachers from the Twin Cities area. These independently contracted instructors use the facilities at Rosemount High School during the day and after school to provide tuition-based vocal instruction to individual students.

Why should I take private lessons?

Students in curricular choirs are required to participate in individual vocal instruction in some capacity as part of their class grade. Each student receives two or three 15-minute lessons each trimester with his or her choir instructor free of charge. The choir instructor is able to get to know the student's voice, but the total amount and extent of instruction is very limited by the brevity and infrequency of lessons.

By contrast, students who study with the independently contracted voice teachers have one 25-minute lesson every week – approximately 30 lessons per year, at an average of three to four lessons per month – which is up to eight times the amount of instruction they receive in three trimesters of curricular lessons. This allows for very careful investigation of each student's voice and time to explore vocal growth. The regular schedule of lessons develops a beneficial regimen of practice, skills acquisition, and study of vocal literature.

Private voice study doesn't just lend itself to improved singing. It also helps students learn better study and memorization skills, improve the quality of their speaking voice, hone their performance skills, learn more effective facial and body expression, increase their creative and artistic awareness, and gain more overall confidence and poise in front of others.

Taking lessons through the private voice program at RHS has at least two other significant advantages: the tuition rates are very competitive with private lesson rates elsewhere around the Twin Cities, and taking your voice lessons once a week during your choir class is much more convenient than having to work out scheduling and transportation to take lessons elsewhere.

How do I begin?

1. Turn in a signed copy of the attached ***Student Information/Individual Tuition-Based Lessons Contract*** to your choir instructor.
2. You will be assigned to a voice studio based on your preference of voice teacher (if noted on your form) and teacher availability.*

3. You will be informed of your teacher assignment and weekly lesson time; your private voice teacher will also contact you to confirm the date and time of your first lesson and to discuss tuition payments.
4. Bring your tuition payment to your first lesson.

*Mr. Albaugh is the private voice lesson liaison. He will make every attempt to match you with the private teacher of your choice. If you do not express a teacher preference on your lesson contract, Mr. Albaugh will consult with the other choir instructors and the private voice teachers to determine your ideal studio placement.

NOTE: Only two private lessons can be taught during each choir period. Lesson spots are first-come, first-served. If there is high demand for private lessons during a particular choir period, some students may need to have their voice lessons after school.

What are the voice studio policies?

1. To reap the full benefits of private voice, **every private voice student is expected to practice on a regular basis**, as determined by his or her teacher. A piano or electric keyboard is very helpful for this. If you do not have access to a piano or are not proficient in piano, your voice teacher will make a recording of exercises and literature which you can use for practicing. You are responsible for **providing an electronic device (smart phone, tablet) or portable media storage device** for recordings. This will be discussed in your first lesson.
2. Your voice teacher will choose appropriate literature for you to study based on your vocal development. In accordance with copyright laws, you are expected to **purchase the necessary print materials such as songbooks and sheet music and bring your assigned music to every lesson**. Your voice teacher will provide you with price information and can recommend music stores.
3. Your voice grows and develops just like any other part of the body, therefore it must be **kept healthy and treated with care**. Your voice teacher will talk to you about **vocal hygiene** and the best ways to take care of your voice. You must refrain from yelling and/or abusing your voice. You must also abstain completely from smoking, consuming alcohol, and taking any mood-altering substances, as per Minnesota State High School League guidelines.
4. You will have opportunities to perform in recitals, master classes, and Solo/Ensemble Contest during the school year. To participate, you will be expected to **pay all necessary entry fees and/or accompanist fees**. Your voice teacher will provide you with more details about such events and associated costs.
5. When you study voice, you are learning an instrument and a discipline. You are training both your body and your mind and developing your musical ear. These are processes that take place gradually, over time. Establishing a strong foundation and solidifying one's skills

as a singer and performer requires at least one year of lessons. Therefore, **the standard for study in this private lesson program is a one-year commitment.** If an exceptional situation arises and you believe you may need to suspend or terminate your voice study, you should initiate a conversation between you, your parent/guardian, your voice teacher, and your choir instructor to discuss your concerns and seek a solution.

If the decision is made to terminate private voice lessons at any point before completing a year of study, you must inform your teacher two weeks prior to termination. If you terminate study without giving advance notice, you will be financially responsible for payment of lessons through the two-week notice period.

How much do lessons cost?

Lessons with the independently contracted voice teachers are tuition-based. The cost of private instruction is **\$27 per lesson** and tuition is **paid directly to your voice teacher.** Payment of \$108 per month (4 lessons) or \$324 per trimester (12 lessons) in the form of a check (or cash) is **due at the time of your first lesson of each calendar month or trimester.** **Please make checks payable to your voice instructor, not to RHS.**

If payment has not been received before the first lesson of the month, the student must forfeit the lesson. (In other words, you must give up the lesson but are still accountable for the tuition for that lesson.) The independently contracted teachers have been instructed not to teach lessons if the lesson tuition has not been paid. If a student fails to bring tuition the second week, an invoice will be sent home for the missing tuition payment(s) plus a \$30 late fee. The collection of all tuition, accompanist fees and late fees (when applicable) will be supported and enforced by the RHS Fees and Fines List.

What if I must miss a lesson?

Communication and prior notification of absences are critically important for the steady operation of the voice lesson program. Here's why:

Your tuition payment reserves a **time slot** for your weekly lesson. Advance notice of student absences allows a voice teacher to rearrange the schedule and exchange students' time slots in order to ensure that each student receives their weekly lesson. When a student misses a lesson without giving the teacher advanced notice, such rearranging is usually impossible.

Therefore, **if you know you must miss a lesson due to illness or emergency, you must contact your teacher as early as possible and always before the time of the scheduled lesson.** 24-hour notice is preferred, but even 12-hour notice – if you believe you will miss school the next day due to illness, or you will attend school but are too ill to sing – can be enough time for your teacher to contact other students and swap lesson times.

If giving even a 12-hour notice is impossible, as long as you contact your teacher before the time your lesson is scheduled, the missed lesson may be rescheduled with no penalty or forfeit required. Rescheduling the missed lesson is your responsibility. You, the student, must take the initiative to reschedule the lesson with your teacher, and it must be made up within a month of the missed lesson. If you do not make up the lesson within a month of the missed lesson, you must forfeit the tuition for that lesson.

No private voice lessons take place on concert or choir festival days. The voice instructors have all of the event dates for the school year and will reschedule any weekly lessons that coincide with concert or festival days. They will notify you well in advance of such schedule changes.

If you know you will miss a weekly lesson due to a planned event of any kind, you should notify your teacher immediately upon discovering the conflict. It is a good idea to maintain an academic planner in which you record all of your lesson dates as well as any upcoming field trips, family events, medical/dental appointments or other events that will require you to miss school. That way you can easily identify any potential conflicts well in advance.

The Bottom Line: If you miss a lesson for any reason and do not give prior notification, you must forfeit the tuition for that lesson and will not be given the opportunity to reschedule.

*Another option, if you know you must miss an upcoming lesson, is to trade lesson slots with another student for that week ***IF*** they are able and willing to do so. (Don't make assumptions; anyone has the right to refuse to trade times with you if it would cause them to be underprepared for their lesson or otherwise inconvenienced.) Trading lessons and notifying the teacher is your responsibility.

What if my teacher misses a lesson?

The independently contracted teachers will, from time to time, need to reschedule lessons because of prior obligations or events in the school calendar that preclude in-class instruction. Students will be informed of prescheduled absences and lessons will be rescheduled in advance.

In the event that a voice teacher will be absent due to unanticipated reasons such as illness or personal emergency, the teacher will make every effort to notify their students directly. If the school day has already begun, the teacher will contact the choir office to have students notified of the schedule change. The teacher will contact their students within 24 hours to reschedule the missed lessons.