

SANGAMON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

CHOIR HANDBOOK

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

MR. JOHN GORECKI, DIRECTOR

I am very excited to begin another excellent year of music-making together! This handbook will outline my expectations for our choir classes. Please review the handbook carefully before signing and returning the last page.

In order to get a good grade in Concert Choir, you must be present at all performances.

Choir Performances

Wednesday, October 11

Fall Concert at Niantic

7:00 PM

Wednesday, May 1

Spring Concert at Niantic

7:00 PM

Wednesday, December 6

Winter Concert at Niantic

7:00 PM

Saturday, May 18 (Tentative)

High School Graduation at Niantic

7:00 PM

Friday, March 1

Prism Concert at Niantic

7:00 PM

Purpose

The purposes of the music programs at Sangamon Valley High School are:

- To provide students with the opportunity to improve their performance abilities by learning about technique, intonation, expression, interpretation, and music literacy.
- To expose students to an essential component of their own culture as well as provide insight into the feelings and beliefs of other cultures.
- To provide students with a unique outlet for their own creative thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.
- To encourage students to actively listen by crucially analyzing music.

Participation in Choir

Any student who would like to sing as part of a group and learn more about music is welcome in choir at SVHS. **Concert Choir** meets during the school day 2nd hour, and students can join by choosing this class during course selection. Students will receive a grade (based on participation, assessments, and performances.) Each quarter, Concert Choir will perform a concert that is the culmination of the unit of study. Attendance at these concerts is mandatory and graded.

Students in Concert Choir may only join at the beginning of the school year during course selection. Choir may not be dropped or transferred in between quarters or semesters.

Contingent on student interest, we will also offer **Sangamon Valley Voices** this fall, an extracurricular ensemble that meets before school. Students must audition for this group and agree to all the rules and conditions that apply for any other choir member as outlined in this handbook.

Expectations

- ✓ **Respect your director:**
 - Pay close attention to instructions when they are given.
 - Put your phone out of sight and leave it there - don't let it become a distraction.
- ✓ **Respect your peers:**
 - Encourage and uplift your fellow musicians - we are all learning together!
 - Don't distract someone by talking - then we all have to wait for you.
- ✓ **Respect your art:**
 - Practice your music at home so you can contribute positively to our choir.
 - If you have trouble with a musical passage, ask a peer or your director.
- ✓ **Respect your facilities:**
 - Take good care of resources provided by the school (music, technology, etc.).
 - Clean up after yourself in the music room. NO GUM.

Grades

40% PARTICIPATION: This includes attendance, participation and effort at rehearsals, adherence to classroom procedures, coming prepared for class, and behaving appropriately. It will also include any practice assignments done at home.

40% PERFORMANCES: This includes any concerts at which the choir sings. Unexcused absences from a performance will result in a zero (see "Concerts" section on the next page).

20% QUIZZES: Quizzes will be held at least once each semester to ensure students know their part.

Concerts

Students are expected to arrive in concert dress 30 minutes prior to a performance. This will allow time to warm up before the concert. Students arriving later than this time will be considered tardy and will lose points for the concert. When not performing, students are expected to be polite, attentive audience members for other ensembles. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in partial or full loss of performance grade and/or disciplinary action.

Dress for concerts will be **BLACK DRESS CLOTHES**. This consists of a black dress shirt and dress pants (with appropriate belt and shoes) or a black dress. Students are encouraged to **plan ahead** to make sure you have the correct clothes – don't wait until the day before the concert to ask your parents to go shopping!

Because the culmination of studying and rehearsing any piece of music is a performance, attendance at performances will count for 40% of your grade. If you must miss a performance for a legitimate reason (death in the family, illness) performance credit may be made up by an alternative assignment. Exceptions are made through the director only and must be in as much advance of the performance as possible. **Absences will not be excused for reasons such as work, oversleeping, or vacation.** Since an unexcused absence implies no effort was made to participate, it cannot be made up. Students who choose to leave a performance early will also receive a zero.

Music & Materials

Each student will be assigned a music slot which will function as their mailbox and music storage. The student is responsible for checking their slot before each rehearsal. Students will also be assigned a folder containing music. The folder is the student's text for choir, and the student is responsible for any lost or damaged folders or music. If any item is lost or damaged, it will be the responsibility of the student to pay for its replacement at current market value.

Practice Tips

Singing in an ensemble is not something everyone can do - it takes a special person with the willingness to work to master it. It's important to spend time honing your craft to make you the best musician you can be.

- **Find a place to practice at home.** It should be a quiet place without any distractions and chair that allows for good posture (standing works great for posture too!).
- **Warm up carefully.** Sing through some of the warm-ups that we do in choir every day.
- **Use your ear.** Listen carefully to the practice recording to make sure you are matching pitch exactly, and moving through the rhythms at the right time.

- **Write on your music.** If you miss something or need a prompt, write it in! The more you write on your music, the more you will remember.
- **Ask for help.** Use a buddy as a resource, and don't forget that Mr. Gorecki's whole job is to help you. Find a time to work with him - he'll be happy you put forth the effort to work on it rather than giving up!

Communication

Throughout the year, it is important that an **open line of communication** exists between the director, students, and parents. If at any time you have questions, concerns, or would just like to discuss something, please call or email:

Email: jgorecki@sangamonvalley.org

Agreement to Choir Policies

By joining choir this school year, you agree to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook. This includes being **present and on time for performances**, **owning and maintaining the required concert dress**, and **following the expectations for classroom and performance settings**. Failure to adhere to these regulations will result in the lowering of your grade and/or removal from the choir program.

