



MARAUDER SINGERS

August 20, 2009

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2009 - 2010 school year. I am very delighted that you have chosen to be a part of the Marauder Singers Choir! This will be a great year.

I feel it is very important that we work together for your student's success in the choir. I will do my best to give students a rich and varied experience in choral music. I will also teach students good vocal techniques and provide many opportunities for them to feel successful singing on their own. My main goal is to help your son or daughter to become a more confident singer.

This handbook is your guide to the Davis Choir Department's procedures and policies. Please take some time to look through the handbook and familiarize yourself with the guidelines for the school year. Please keep this copy for our reference.

I have also included a few items for you to sign. One is a form acknowledging that you understand and accept the guidelines, policies, and procedures of this handbook. There are also a few other forms regarding student information, shirt orders, etc. Please fill them out and return them by **Wednesday, September 2, 2009.**

If you have any questions or comments throughout the school year, please feel free to contact me by phone or email at any time.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kinnett, Choir Director
972-429-3000 ext 7162
stephanie.kinnett@wylieisd.net

"Ah, music. A magic beyond all we do here!"

- Dumbledore, in J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

MARAUDER SINGERS

HANDBOOK 2009-2010

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND GOALS FOR CHOIR

The State of Texas designates the following elements as essential to a choral curriculum:

1. Study of vocal techniques
2. Music theory and ear-training
3. Sight singing
4. Music history
5. Creative self-expression
6. Performance skills

In addition to the study and improvement of the above elements, the Davis Choir Department has the following goals:

1. Development of appreciation for all performing arts
2. Development of personal standards for teamwork and excellence in rehearsal and group performance
3. Development of problem-solving skills, abstract and mathematical thinking skills, physical coordination, creativity and imagination, and memorization skills
4. Development of responsibility, citizenship, self-discipline, sense of teamwork, and positive self-esteem

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & SUPPLIES

Every student will need a few supplies. I will purchase all of these items and give them to the students when class begins. The fee to cover the cost of supplies will be **\$30. (This includes the concert polo shirt, binder and tabs, binder pencil pouch, pencils and highlighters, CD-RW with case to use as practice cd for the entire year).**

Each student will be given a folder slot where they will store their music folder and pencil.

CONCERT CLOTHING

All choir students are required to wear the following uniform at all public concerts:

Black concert polo shirt (ordered by director at beginning of school year)
Khaki pants or full length khaki skirt (should meet Wylie ISD dress code policy)
Black closed-toe shoes, black socks, black belt

Polo Shirt Care: Concert Polo Shirt should only be worn for performances only. Because it is black, please wash in cold water and hang dry to keep the logo looking nice. Iron on low heat if necessary. Shirt should be free of visible wrinkles.

MUSIC

Music is provided by the school. Students are responsible for all music they are assigned. Music should be kept in their binder and kept in the assigned music storage slot in the choir room. Lost music will be placed in the "Lost Music" area. If a student cannot find his or her folder within 24 hours, a new folder must be brought to class immediately. One can be purchased from the choir department for \$4. It is the responsibility of the student to acquire a new folder and ask for new music. Students will be required to reimburse the Choral Department for any lost or damaged music. Students will need to take home their binders to practice but must bring them back the next day for class.

CHOICE OF MUSIC

Music is a universal language. Therefore, it is one of the most effective ways to learn about diverse cultures and historical periods. The director will make every effort to teach music that represents diverse genres and styles from various periods and cultures. Music is also chosen for its educational value, not for its secular or sacred text. Students are not permitted to make negative comments about any of the music sung in class. If there are any concerns, please feel free to contact me.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Choir students will exhibit proper concert behavior during all performances in order to reflect positively on the Davis Choir program. Students will be graded on their concert etiquette. The following rules will be followed at all performances:

1. Talking is not allowed. It is disrespectful to the performers on stage and audience members who wish to hear the performance, and does not show support for the Davis Choir program.
2. Do not leave your seat *for any reason*. Use the restroom and drinking fountain before concerts begin. If you must leave, ask your choir director or a parent chaperone first. If permitted, leave quietly *only* between songs or during applause (making sure doors do not slam shut).
3. No food or drink is allowed in the performance area, including the stage, backstage, and seating area. This includes water bottles.
4. Support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. are not acceptable. The audience should never cause attention to be shifted from the performers on stage.
5. During serious music, applaud only after the conductor has lowered her arms.
6. During pop or jazz music, you may applaud for a soloist during the song.
7. In songs that have multiple movements, applaud only after the final movement. This will be noted in the concert program.
8. Set a good example for the audience and other students.
9. Cell phones and pagers should be set to silent or turned off during choir concerts.
10. Enjoy the concert. This is the only time you will ever get to see it!
11. Stay for the entire concert.

CONCERT AND REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

Concerts and combined rehearsals are part of the music curriculum. They are considered tests and make up 40% of the grade. Every student is required to participate in all concerts and rehearsals unless he or she is excused by the director. Competitive or extracurricular events require that the student be *academically eligible* in order to participate. This means that he or she maintain above a 70 average in all classes in order to participate. However, ***every student is eligible for curricular concerts.***

Every effort has been made to avoid scheduling conflicts with other school events. However, it is the responsibility of students and parents to avoid scheduling conflicts with events outside of school. Although make-up assignments will be provided for *excused absences only*, we cannot recreate the performance setting realistically for a single student. Because of this, attendance at concerts is strongly encouraged. Make-up work will be due seven days after the teacher gives the assignment to the student.

Excused Absences -- The following qualify as excused absences from concerts, competitions, and rehearsals outside of the school day.

1. Illness.
2. Death in the family or other family emergency.
3. Religious events.
4. Conflict with another school-sponsored activity or sport. (It is the student's responsibility to inform the director of this type of conflict *ahead of time*. The director will confer with the sponsor of the conflicting activity in order to decide which activity the student will attend or to decide on a valid compromise.)

A *written* note of explanation from parents is required for all of the above items within 48 hours of the date of absence. If the director does not receive a *written* note, the absence will be considered unexcused.

The director will determine whether a previously-scheduled conflict will be excused, but she must be notified of the conflict *in writing, 2 weeks prior* to the concert. *A previously scheduled conflict will not be excused on the day of the concert or after the concert.*

Unexcused Absences — Never assume that an absence will be excused. Always communicate with the directors in advance. *Unexcused absences may not be made up with a written assignment and will result in a zero for the test grade (40% of six weeks grade).* Although it would be impossible to include a complete list, the following are some examples of unexcused absences:

1. Lack of transportation
2. Homework
3. Baby-sitting
4. Birthday celebrations
5. Oversleeping
6. Shopping
7. Soccer, baseball, basketball, or sporting events *not* sponsored by WISD
8. Dance rehearsals
9. Music lessons or recitals

GRADING POLICY

40% of Grade

Since this is a performance-based class, the best method of evaluating and summarizing the learning of basic singing technique and choral music is through group performances. The following grades will be averaged to make up 40% of the grade.

I. Concert Rehearsal

The student participates, following all rehearsal criteria listed above during the entire rehearsal.

2. Concert Performance & Concert Etiquette

The student punctually attends the warm-up, performs on stage, and displays excellent concert etiquette.

3. Individual or Small Group Singing & Sight Reading Tests

The student sings in class with good tone, technique, musicianship and pitch/rhythmic accuracy and uses Curwen/Kodaly hand signs and syllables that pulse the beat and move according to pitch when appropriate.

4. Theory Projects & Tests

The student demonstrates a consistent understanding of the basics of music theory that are taught throughout the year. Every student will have one chance to retake the theory test. The original and retake grades will be averaged to determine the final test grade. It is the student's responsibility to retest within 2 weeks of when the test is given and communicate with the director about it.

60% of Grade

The other components consist of daily singing, theory worksheets, training exercises, performance evaluations, listening assignments, syllable writing assignments, music history assignments, pencil/folder checks, group projects, portfolio assignments, and written quizzes. These will make up 60% of the grade.

I. Ensemble Singing

The student sings with good tone, technique and musicianship. There will be one grade per week for their ensemble singing. There is always a chance to improve!

- **The elements of *good tone* are:** centered, focused quality of sound, intonation, control, support, volume, intensity, blending within a section with “tall” vowels, balancing between sections, and dynamic contrasts without distortion.
- **The elements of *good technique* are:** pitch accuracy, rhythmic precision, vocal dexterity and flexibility, observance of ties, slurs and articulation markings, attack, release, fluency and diction.
- **The elements of *good musicianship* are:** style, phrasing, observance of musical markings, appropriateness of dynamic contrasts, observance of tempo, note spacing, accents, rhythmic patterns, expression, fluency, and demonstration of a musical understanding.

2. Posture and Presentation

The student applies good breath support and good posture. There will be one grade per week for their posture and participation that week. There is always a chance to improve!

- **Breath Support:** *Inhaling:* Expand the lungs down and out, pushing the diaphragm muscle down. Inhale silently without making any other noise. Expand your entire waistline, keeping the shoulders low and relaxed. *Breath Control:* Blow a steady stream of air.
- **Posture:** *Standing:* head level, shoulders low and relaxed, backbone straight, rib cage high, knees flexed, feet slightly apart, and music held high. *Sitting:* head level, shoulders low and relaxed, rib cage high, backbone straight, both feet flat on the floor, and music held high.

3. Rehearsal Materials

The student has necessary materials in good condition at rehearsals.

4. Ensemble Sight-Reading

The student sings with good tone, technique, musicianship, accurate syllable names and Curwen/Kodaly hand signs that pulse the beat and move according to pitch.

5. Score Preparation

The student precisely marks their music, completes solfege and measure numbers when instructed by the director.

6. Written Assignments

The student demonstrates their understanding of class material in written assignments done in class or at home and turned in on time.

7. Quizzes

The student demonstrates their understanding of class material in short quizzes given during class.

8. Practice Cards

Students will practice the appropriate time each week and turn in their signed practice cards weekly.

GRADING SCALE

All of the grading criteria are based on the scale below, except for written work and individual/small group singing tests.

Satisfying the above criteria 90-100% of the time, the student will earn a 90% - 100%

Satisfying the above criteria 70-90% of the time, the student will earn an 80% - 89%

Satisfying the above criteria 50-70% of the time, the student will earn a 70% - 79%

Satisfying the above criteria 0-50% of the time, the student will earn a 60% - 69%

Late work: 1 day late will be a 10 point deduction, 2 days late will be a 30 point deduction, 3 days late will become a zero.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

The following expectations have been established to create a positive and structured learning environment.

I. Be in the classroom on time.

- Many instructions and procedures are covered at the beginning of class.
- When everyone is prepared for class, we accomplish more as a choir.

2. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized before you speak or leave your seat.

- Social talking and blurting out are distractions that prevent you and others from learning.

3. Follow teacher instructions the first time they are given.

- Listen for instructions the first time; it saves time.

4. Be courteous, positive, respectful and supportive of your fellow choir members and teacher.

- Positive attitudes lead to success.
- Choir is a team sport.

5. Sing to the best of your ability.

- We don't expect you to be perfect, but we do expect you to try your hardest.

6. No gum (or any other substance) is allowed in the students' mouths.

- A foreign substance (gum, candy, pen caps, paper etc.) in the mouth while singing can create a serious health hazard.

7. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

DISCIPLINE PROCESS

First Offense

Verbal Warning

Second Offense

Sign conduct book & parent contact. We will discuss behavior modification. Application of the agreed-upon change must be observable by teacher in subsequent rehearsals.

Third Offense

Sign conduct book, parent contact, 30 minute detention after school.

Fourth Offense

Sign conduct book, parent contact, 45 minute detention after school.

Fifth Offense

Office referral.

Any severe offense will result in immediate office referral. If any after school conferences are skipped without communication to the director, two consecutive detentions must be served.

DAILY PROCEDURES

What should I do when. . .

1. I enter the classroom?

- Please go to your seat with your choir binder and pencil before the bell rings.

2. I have been absent?

- Get handouts and/or music from the class representative.

3. I cannot find my music folder?

- Check all adjacent folder slots.
- Check the Lost Music Area.
- Begin a new folder the next day. Your class representative will help you find music.

4. I know the answer?

- Raise your hand, and wait for a teacher to give you permission to speak.

5. I need to go to the bathroom?

- Please use the restroom before or after choir class.

6. My pencil breaks in the middle of a writing assignment?

- Raise your pencil and wait for a teacher to let you sharpen your pencil.

7. I still don't understand something we're talking about in class?

- Ask a friend after school to explain it to you.
- Ask Mrs. Kinnett to help you after school.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & ADDITIONAL MUSICAL GROWTH

Captain's Crew – 6th Grade Honor Choir

This year the 6th grade choir members will have an opportunity to audition for a smaller select honor choir that will rehearse twice a week and work on more challenging music. This honor choir will perform at all concerts, except the Fall Concert, and have additional public performances as they arise. Auditions will be October 20, 2009.

National OAKE Choir Auditions

This is a wonderful opportunity to audition for a national choir. If you are chosen, the choir is an extremely enriching experience. There are some financial requirements that come along with this honor, including a \$25 fee to audition and—if chosen—a registration fee, travel and lodging expenses. In early September, I will distribute information about the audition process and details about the choir. This year the OAKE Conference will be in Dallas!

Solo Contest

Students learn best about their voice when they have opportunities to sing by themselves. In December all students will begin learning several different solo songs as a class. Then in February, all students may choose one song to sing and either participate in the Solo Contest and a chance to earn a medal, or they may just sing it for Mrs. Kinnett.

Officers & Class Representatives

These students have demonstrated excellent leadership skills as well as being exceptionally responsible. The students will be chosen by either class election or appointment by the director. Students must be self-motivated and able to endure high-pressure situations.

President (1)

- Presides over meetings
- Keeps others on task
- Counts votes
- Must be able to mediate a discussion

Secretary (1)

- Takes notes at the meetings
- Updates Charms Calendar online
- Makes fliers for social events

Historian (1)

- Takes photos at social events
- Compiles photos for end of year slideshow

Class Representatives (1 per class)

- Attends meetings
- Informs their class of decisions made at meetings
- Collects money for social events during class

SAMPLE PRACTICE CARD

NAME _____

PERIOD _____

SLOT# _____

MARAUDER SINGERS PRACTICE LOG

Practice cards must be turned in every Monday with parent signature.

You should practice 5 times a week to earn your total grade. Remember great musicians practice every day!

Grade Scale	Deductions	Late Deductions	Zeros
>100 min = 100	60-69 min = 80	5 days of practice is required	Up to two zeros can be made up in evening school. Students/parents will be expected to contact Mrs. Kinnett if they wish to go to evening school. The highest grade they will be able to earn is a 70.
90-99 min = 95	50-59 min = 75	4 days of practice - 5 pts	
80-89 min = 90	40-49 min = 70	3 days of practice - 10 pts	
70-79 min = 85	30-39 min = 65	2 days of practice - 15 pts	
	<30 min = 50	1 day of practice - 20 pts	

Please calculate your grade based on information above excluding late deductions. Mrs. Kinnett will adjust grade accordingly if turned in late.

Week of	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	Total Min	Grade	Date Due	Student Signature (No Initials Please)	Parent Signature (No Initials Please) <small>Do not sign unless completed and totaled</small>	Teacher Initials
9/14										9/21			
9/21										9/28			
9/28										10/5			
10/5										10/19			
10/12										10/19			

10/19 Please turn in CDs in case with Practice Card