

Boiling Springs Middle School Chorus

Welcome to the Boiling Springs Middle School Chorus Department. You have chosen to be a part of a family of students who share a passion for learning and performance. The quality of our Chorus will be the result of the hard work, passion, and dedication that students, teachers, and parents will give to the program!

This handbook is designed to help you become familiar with the Middle School Chorus Department and what it offers, as well as to give you valuable information that you will need throughout the year.

Here is what you will find information for:

- Ensembles
- Uniforms
- Fundraising
- Grades
- Social Media, Chorus Website, and Blog

At the end of the handbook, you will see an important form:

Statement of Understanding: a form signed by both the parent and student

The education of your child is a team effort among student, teacher, and parent. Each part of that team needs to feel the support of the other two in order to ensure a productive and positive learning environment. I am dedicated to making sure each child can achieve their best in one of the most enjoyable and accessible windows of the arts- MUSIC! This is going to be a year with many diverse events and memorable activities. By working together we can make it an outstanding year!

Sincerely,

Millie G. Shiflett
Chorus Director
Boiling Springs Middle School
Millie.Shiflett@spart2.org

Website: www.bsmschorus.com
Instagram: bsmschorus
Blog: www.thechorusroom.com

Ensembles

The Boiling Springs Middle School Chorus is made up of two periods of 6th grade, two periods of 7th grade, and two periods of 8th grade chorus classes. Since the three choirs are divided in separate class periods, please be aware that some before or after-school rehearsals will be required near a concert/performance date. The dates and times of said rehearsals will be given to students and parents in enough time to allow adequate planning for rides, etc. Please let Mrs. Shiflett know immediately if a conflict occurs.

Chorus students will study and perform a variety of choral repertoire that represents many genres and styles of music. Through this, students will gain knowledge of fundamental vocal technique, develop choral ensemble skills, music literacy, and ear training through the preparation and performance of a variety of appropriate repertoire.

All ensembles are **REQUIRED** to participate in the winter concert and spring concert. Please go ahead and mark these dates in your calendar:

All concerts will be held in the BSMS auditorium

There are also many fun and educational opportunities that will occur throughout the year, as well as opportunities to share what we do with the community. Participation in these events are optional, but highly encouraged!

Fees

CHORUS FEE: \$30.00

The Chorus Fee of \$30.00 is an annual fee that is due on or before **Friday, October 18th**. This fee offsets the costs of managing such a large and active choral program. Here are *some* examples of what chorus fees help to purchase:

- Student t-shirts for casual uniform
- Purchase/up-keep of our formal dress uniforms (dresses and tuxedos)
- Purchase of new music
- Fees for participation in outside events (concert festival, etc.)
- Transportation to and from certain events (e.g. all-state choir)
- Accompanist for performances, and additional musicians as needed
- Classroom supplies

This once a year fee is vital to the success of our choral program! If you choose, you may off-set your chorus fee by participating in our fall fundraiser. You will receive \$5 off of your total amount due for every item sold. (Sell 6 items, and your fee is covered!)

No student will be turned away from chorus because they cannot afford the chorus fee.

Additional Info- There may also be additional fees for any students wishing to participate in extracurricular activities in chorus. Some examples include:

All-State Auditions
Solo and Ensemble
Concert Festival
Any additional field trips

(These additional fees may also be offset by fundraising should a student choose to participate in any extracurricular activities.)

Uniforms

Uniforms are required for each chorus member and are owned by the Choral Department. Boiling Springs Choruses will maintain a professional appearance when performing in public. It is important for everyone to look unified in order to enhance the performances for the audience by eliminating distractions. Below are uniform requirements for each ensemble.

6TH GRADE STUDENTS

6th grade students will wear all black for formal performances. Black tops (guys, collared shirts), pants, skirts (at the kneecap or lower), and black closed-toe shoes and black socks. Black dresses reaching the kneecap or lower are also acceptable. If wearing a knee-length skirt for performance, please also wear black tights/stockings to help ensure uniformity.

MEN

(new uniform)- Traditional black tuxedo pants, black vest, black button down shirt with a red and black tie.

The only items that students will need to supply from home are black dress shoes, black socks AND a white undershirt for underneath your tuxedo shirt. Shoes need to be formal and socks must be black. Please make sure your uniform is clean and ironed before a performance.

WOMEN

All women will wear a formal black dress provided by the choral department.

(New uniform)-black performance fabric dress with empire waist and adjustable tie-back.

Each member is responsible for purchasing their own black panty hose and black, closed toe/closed heel dress shoes. They may either be ballet flats, or may have a small heel (not to exceed 1½"). Ladies with long hair will need to fasten hair back with an invisible or black hair tie. No jewelry, including watches, wristbands, or earrings may be worn, unless it may not be taken off for

religious reasons and there is a note from home. Only small metal stud earrings for ladies may be worn if absolutely necessary. Only basic stage makeup (no glitter) and no cologne or perfume should be worn.

*This uniform will remain at school students can check it out prior to their first concert performance. Students are then responsible for keeping up with their uniform until the final concert in the spring. Students and parents are responsible for upkeep of the formal uniform during this time. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

DRY CLEAN ONLY: Men's black pants, tuxedo jackets, vests, cummerbund, and bowtie

WASHABLE: men's dress shirts, women's new uniform (but dry on a lower temperature setting to prevent shrinkage)

Please make sure your uniform is cleaned and ironed before a performance!

CHORUS SHIRTS- All Chorus members will receive a chorus shirt to wear for various events and performances. This shirt will be worn with nice, solid color blue jeans (no holes!) for any performance where a "casual uniform" is requested.

Fundraising

Chorus families, friends, and area businesses augment the school budget through fundraising and community support. Enhanced instruction and active choral participation afforded by this program are accomplished through a budget with expenses including, but not limited to: payments to accompanists and choreographers, clinicians, music, travel related costs of competitions, director participation in professional conferences, concert recording, registration for festivals/competitions, classroom equipment, technology, and numerous concerts. In an active middle school chorus program, a typical year's expenses can exceed \$20,000.

FALL FUNDRAISER: Wednesday, September 25th - October 9th

SPRING FUNDRAISER: TBA

How do I earn my grade in Chorus?

Homework/Classwork/Participation Grades- 40%

The following examples are some of the main ways students receive daily grades. There may be other assignments not listed.

Device Check: Chromebook checks may be given at random to ensure that students stay focused, on task, and have required files, apps, and programs. Students found off-task on their chrome book in class will lose their device for the remainder of the period, and lose 10 points from their participation grade every time they are caught off-task.

Bell-work and Sight-singing: Students will have a brief assignment to complete upon entering the room daily to review skills taught previously. Participation in any bell-work and additional sight singing exercises are required, and student contribution is expected every day. This is how we practice and re-enforce learning to read music!

Rehearsal Participation & Contribution: grades are earned by meeting the Classroom Responsibilities and Expectations. Students can earn 100 points weekly for putting forth their best effort and for contributing to the productivity of the rehearsal. By working together as an ensemble and maintaining an energized focus, we can achieve a high standard of musicianship that will define Boiling Springs Middle School Choirs. Points can be deducted for each occurrence of the following: tardiness, talking when inappropriate, chewing gum, not singing, not participating, lack of focus, disrespectful attitude, poor posture, missing music, causing distractions, and other things at the discretion of the director. All instances will be documented in PowerSchool under the student's weekly grade. Students will receive a weekly Rehearsal Participation/Contribution Grade. These grades will be averaged for 2 test grades at the end of each 9 weeks. *Improper use of devices will result in ten points removed from the student's weekly grade.*

Test/Project Grades- 60%

The following presents several examples students may earn test grades. There may be other assignments not listed.

Performance Check: There will be times when I may hold students accountable for learning their music by having performance checks. We will utilize our iPad's this year for performance checks by making recordings of sections in our music. I will let them know what I am listening for in advance, in order for them to properly prepare. It is important that every student take responsibility in learning their music, because a choir is only as strong as its weakest member.

Sight-reading/Theory assessments: Students will be assessed on their knowledge of sight singing and general music theory skills throughout the year. Sight-reading will be taught during the first 10-15 minutes of class daily, and is VITAL for musical growth. The purpose of these activities is to reinforce concepts that have been identified through the choral music.

Participation/Rehearsal Contribution (9weeks average): Students will receive 2 tests grades based on the averages of their weekly participation grades throughout the 9 weeks.

Required Rehearsal attendance: Chorus is a co-curricular performance-based class. Therefore, chorus students are required to attend rehearsals and performances beyond regular school hours. Every effort will be made to advise you of any changes to the announced rehearsal schedule well in advance so that you may plan your time productively. These extra rehearsals will be kept to a minimum to be respectful of your time.

Reasons why attendance at rehearsals is important:

- The student gains new information.
- A rehearsal is part of an ongoing development of one's physical and mental conditioning.
- The student sometimes has the opportunity to work with an expert guest conductor.
- Every singer must be present to work on blend, balance, intonation, and precision.
- The group will not have to waste rehearsal time teaching the material from the previous rehearsal.
- The morale of the group is uplifted.
- The student missing a rehearsal can fall out of touch with the group's goals.

ABSENCE FROM REHEARSAL

Chorus students will not be excused from rehearsals except in cases of emergency or illness. Work, appointments, detention, meetings, homework, vacations, etc. will not be valid excuses for missing a rehearsal. A written note from the parent/ guardian is due upon the student's return from any excused absence due to an emergency. A doctor's note is due upon the student's return from any excused absence due to illness. If you anticipate an unavoidable absence from rehearsal, please submit a written request to the director for approval prior to the absence. Those on athletic teams/clubs should communicate their practice/game/meeting schedule with Mrs. Shiflett before the season begins to find a workable compromise. I am thrilled to have students involved in many activities at BSMS and believe strongly that you should have the opportunity to participate in all you can! Communication is the key!

Performance Attendance and Contribution: grades are earned by being present, on time, in proper uniform, and participating positively and fully. Points can be deducted for each occurrence of the following: tardiness, not in full chorus uniform, inappropriate behavior, or lack of musical focus. Mark your calendars now for the concerts, which are the required performances in chorus. If getting a ride to these performances might be a problem, arrange a ride you can count on, or let Mrs. Shiflett know at least a week in advance so that she can help you find a ride.

Reasons why attendance at performances is important:

- The student will see the ultimate result of their months of hard work.

- The student will create a memorable experience that can last a lifetime.
- Each student is vital to the performance. There are NO substitutes.
- Although the process of how we get to performance is most important, the performance is a significant assessment for both the student and director.
- Missing a performance negatively affects not only the individual, but the entire group.
- Performing is incredibly fun!!

ABSENCE FROM A PERFORMANCE

Performances are a large part of the student's chorus grade. Any absence which is not brought to the Director's attention for approval prior to the performance will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences from performances result in a zero for that grade. Students who have an excused absence from a performance may make up for that part of their grade by completing a project agreed upon by the director. If you anticipate an unavoidable absence from a performance this year, please submit a written request to the director for approval right away. Any excuse given within two weeks of a performance (with the exception of emergencies) will be considered unexcused. In the case of an emergency, parents should contact the chorus office via email at: Millie.Shiflett@spart2.org.

Exam Grades-30% of the semester grade

Exam grades for each semester are comprised of separate test grades. These test grades will be averaged together in order to achieve the final exam grade. Here is how it breaks down:

Concert dress rehearsal attendance: 25% (You will receive ONE test grade for this)
 Concert performance attendance: 50% (You will receive TWO test grades for this)
 Post-concert reflection: 25% (You will receive ONE test grade for this)

Social Media, Chorus Website, and Blog

I want our chorus program to be very transparent between teacher, parents, and students. All of these outlets are available for you and your family to keep up with what's going on in Chorus. Please be aware that I will sometimes video classes for academic purposes, and may post some of this video on these outlets. I will also take pictures of students in class, and during activities throughout the year. Know that I only want to display our students in the best light, and will never post anything with the intention of doing otherwise! Please e-mail me at any time if you have concerns about your student being in a video or picture.

Social Media- Boiling Springs Middle School Chorus has an Instagram account: @bsmschorus.

Feel free to follow along, and keep up with what's happening every day in our class!

Chorus Website- The chorus website is www.bsmschorus.com. Here you will be able to find an online version of the handbook and calendar for your convenience.

Blog- Mrs. Shiflett is the author of *The Chorus Room*, found at the following address: www.thechorusroom.com . On the blog, Mrs. Shiflett writes about classroom strategies, music, and other helpful information designed for choral music educators. Last school year, she created this blog as a part of her master's thesis titled *The Chorus Room: Blogging about the middle school choral classroom*. This is updated at least once a week with what is happening in real-time in class. Students and parents, I would love to have you read along as well if you would like to do so!

Statement of Understanding

We have read the Chorus Handbook, and understand the expectations involved in the Boiling Springs Middle School Chorus Department; including Uniforms, Conduct, Rehearsal and Concert Attendance, Grading Policies, Concert Etiquette, Communications, and Financial Obligations. I also understand that I may contact Mrs. Shiflett with concerns regarding taking videos and photos in class at millie.shiflett@spart2.org.

Name of Student (please print)

Signature of Student

Name of Parent/ Guardian (please print)

Signature of Parent/ Guardian

Date

Please return this Statement of Understanding to Mrs. Shiflett on or before

Friday, August 30th, 2019

CHORUS FEE of \$30 is not due until October 16th. (But you can certainly pay before this date!)

Students can put their fundraiser earnings towards this

Please indicate below how you plan on paying for the chorus fee, just so I know!

- I will be paying for the Chorus fee by cash or check
- I plan on participating in the fall fundraiser to offset my Chorus fee, and paying the difference with cash or check