

**TOMBALL MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR  
HANDBOOK  
2023-2024**



**Contact Information:**

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**Choir Room Number:**

281-357-3230 x1106

WELCOME CHOIR STUDENTS!!!



It is the goal of this program to develop in our singers a life-long skill of musical appreciation through individual musicianship, understanding musical styles, study of music theory, and performing both, an ensemble and as an individual. Each and every singer is an important part of our team. A member of any performing organization has a responsibility above and beyond that of a student who is not in an extra-curricular organization. Together we will endeavor to seek excellence and establish ourselves as a premier choral program. This handbook is intended to provide you with information, policies, goals, and expectations of you as a member of the Wildcat Choral program.

**It is imperative that both you and your parent/guardian take the time to read through all of the information, after which, you must complete all google forms and pay required choir fee totaling \$52.50 on or before August 31, 2023.** FOLLOWING THESE INSTRUCTIONS IS THE STUDENTS' FIRST MAJOR GRADE IN CHOIR. (If you have a financial hardship regarding fees, please email the choir directors to discuss your specific needs. However, financial hardship is not a reason for late forms.)

The handbook is available for your information and referral on our Choir Website. Again, please take the time to read it. It is important that all parents and their students entering the choir department know what is expected of them. The expectations that we have, as teachers and musicians, are very high. Your student will benefit from these high expectations through discipline, hard work, optimum performance opportunities and musical growth. **Lastly, a quiz will be given the first week of school over handbook items.**

### **Choir Website**

Nearly all information regarding the TMHS Choir Program will be found on the website [www.tmhschoir.com](http://www.tmhschoir.com). Information includes but is not limited to:

- director and booster club contact information
- newsletter
- calendar
- all forms
- flag information
- all fees schedule

### **Choir Newsletter**

The TMHS Choir Newsletter is sent out weekly on Friday evening and can be found on the choir website. The newsletter is a reliable source of information regarding approaching choir events, rehearsals, deadlines, etc. Please share any choir student accolades from outside activities with directors to be featured in the newsletter. Previous newsletters can be found on the choir website, as well.

### **Charms account:**

Your Charms account allows us to communicate with all students, and all parent(s)/guardian(s) rapidly. Good communication between both students and parents is essential to the success of our program.

To Access Charms:

- Go to [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)
- Click on the parent/student/members access icon
- Type in the school code: **TomballMemorialChoir** (Case sensitive)
- If new to the TMHS Choir Program, the password is your student id number

If you cannot access your Charms account, please email directors. If your Charms account is not current, it is possible you will miss information regarding important events and details.

#### **MEMBERSHIP:**

- A. Membership in the Tomball Memorial High School Choir program is open to all students who possess or have an interest in learning necessary skills to contribute to the musical performance of our choir.
- B. Students can be selected for The Vocal Ensemble, or audition for placement to the following choirs:
  - a. The Belles - Treble Choir
  - b. The Dudes - Tenor/Bass Choir
  - c. Bel Canto - Advanced Treble Chamber Choir
  - d. Chorale - Varsity Mixed Choir
  - e. The Major Chords - Mixed Chamber Choir (in addition to Chorale)

#### **EXPECTATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:**

- A. Exhibit a positive individual attitude and team spirit
- B. Attendance at all daily rehearsals, extra rehearsals, and **ALL** performances
- C. Maintain academic eligibility in all classes
- D. Application of, or growth in the areas of basic theory and sight-reading skills
- E. Before a student may be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities, the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) must complete all required TISD and TMHS Choir forms.

#### **CHOIR ROOM EXPECTATIONS:**

- A. All TISD School District policies will be enforced.
- B. Be on time! (Tardies are discussed in grading policies.)
- C. Do your best. Anything less is unacceptable.
- D. Maintain a positive attitude regardless of the situation. Each member of the ensemble is equally important, special, and works better in a positive vibe.
- E. Proper posture while singing, signing, and audiating
- F. Read the Choir Room board for announcements when posted and always refer to the weekly newsletter for reminders. Choir members are responsible for all choir information.
- G. When a director is speaking, do not talk, even if about the subject.
- H. Respect others and yourself.
- I. Respect off-limit areas unless given permission by the director. These areas include pianos, the choir office, the music library, storage closets, and practice rooms.
- J. Always be attentive. Complete participation is mandatory.
- K. The bell does not dismiss you.

- L. **Resolve conflicts before they arise.** Calendar of events can be found on the choir website [www.tmhschoir.com](http://www.tmhschoir.com) and on the newsletter. Please speak to your director **regarding conflicts**, extra help, make-up work, etc. **before or after school, or during wildcat den.** During a rehearsal is NOT the time to ask these questions.
- M. Personal matters such as going to the restroom, getting water, etc. are to be taken care of between classes. We will follow TMHS guidelines regarding leaving class.
- N. Only have bottled water at your seat.
- O. Food, drinks, or GUM are not allowed on pianos, in practice rooms, or in ensemble rooms.
- P. Do not spray perfume or apply scented lotions in the choir room. Students have allergies. Use the restroom for personal grooming.
- Q. You must have your choir binder and a pencil on a daily basis. Not having materials will lead to a grade reduction. Your binder is your textbook in choir. Please do not write on or put stickers on the outside of the binder. Replacement cost is \$5.00.
- R. **Cell phones:** as per district policy, cell phones should not be visible or audible in any choral rehearsal during or after school unless instructed. Students caught using their phone outside of instruction will have it taken up. The phone may be reclaimed from the front office by a parent for a \$15.00 fee.
- S. You are the biggest advocate for our choir by your attitude toward this program. Remember that any student of an extracurricular organization is expected to represent themselves, their school, their program, and families in a positive manner at all times. These are necessities for any organization to be successful.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICIES:**

- A. Tardies: If you are not in the room, or are in the room not making an effort to be in your seat, you will be counted tardy. You are to have your folder and pencil when the tardy bell rings. Additionally, on any field trip or extra rehearsal, students must serve 10 minutes for each minute late to given meeting time to the choir program before/after school, or during Wildcat Den.
- B. ALL rehearsals are REQUIRED for ALL students in the prescribed organization. Each student is important to the success of these many activities. We expect 100% attendance. Family commitments (weddings, graduations, etc.) must be cleared with a director **at least one month ahead of time**. Student job commitments and professional appointments (doctor, orthodontist, etc.) are **NOT** reasons for excused absences from Choir rehearsals or performances.
- C. If a family emergency occurs, please contact your child's primary director ASAP to relay that information.
- D. Parents, if your child is sick please notify the primary director of that affected ensemble prior to the start of the rehearsal.
- E. In order for an absence to be excused, it must be communicated to the primary director of that affected ensemble **at least one month prior to the absence**. The director will then make the decision as to whether the absence is excused or unexcused. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with all affected directors, coaches, and sponsors when conflicts arise with other TMHS activities. These conflicts should be resolved **at least one month prior to the absence.**
- F. All rehearsals are part of our curriculum and, as such, are graded. Continued absences may result in removal from the student's current choir period, and placement into a non-performing course, or loss of performing privileges.

- G. All performances are required of all students in the prescribed ensemble(s). In order for an absence from a performance to be excused, it must be communicated to the primary director of that affected ensemble **at least two months** prior to the absence. The director will then make the decision as to whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Any unexcused absence from a performance could result in the student failing Choir for the current grading period and may result in removal from the student's current choir period, and placement into a non-performing course.
- H. Students and/or parents must inform the directors within the expected time frame of any absences from events. Students with an absence will complete an alternate assignment with a specific due date. Alternate assignments will follow our grading policy.
- I. If your choir is going on a trip, you are expected to go on the trips as we are singing as a team.
- J. **If you miss a dress rehearsal or the final rehearsal before a concert, you receive a grade reduction and you may not perform in the concert.**

**K. Daily Grades = 30%**

Daily grades include: participation in class, required materials, attendance, written work, document completion, and quizzes.

All daily class assignments are due as assigned. Students will have as many days to make up assignments as they are absent from school with an excused or unexcused absence. For example, absent one day will result in one additional day to turn in assignment. Absent two days will result in two days to turn in assignment. Additional days absent will result in same number of days to complete daily assignment. Daily assignments turned in late will result in a 15-point deduction per day until it reaches 0 points.

**L. Major Grades = 70%**

Major grades include:

1. 20% Test grade average (singing, written tests, music literacy tests, and document completion).
2. 50% Performance grade (dress rehearsals, required performances). With the advent of AI, the TMHS Choir grading guidelines will be as follows:
  - a. If your performance absence is **excused** by your director you will be required to complete an alternate assignment (a performance in class of all featured concert repertoire with other voice parts, within the requirements of the performance) which will replace the entire concert grade. Alternate assignment must be completed within the time frame set by the directors. No sooner than 3 school days unless requested by the student to complete the assignment earlier, no later than 5 school days. An assignment turned in later than 5 school days will result in a zero. There will be no exceptions to this policy.
  - b. If your performance absence is **unexcused** by your director you will be required to complete an alternate assignment (a solo performance in class of all featured concert repertoire, within the requirements of the performance, including attire) which will replace the performance portion of the concert grade. Alternate assignment must be completed within the time frame set by the directors. No sooner than 3 school days unless requested by the student to complete the assignment earlier, no later than 5 school days. An assignment turned in later than 5 school days will result in a zero. There will be no exceptions to this policy. An unexcused absence from a performance major

grade may also result in placement into a non-performing Choir at earliest opportunity, possibly end of the semester or for the following school year. Students with an unexcused absence from a major performance grade will also have to make up the time commitment expected of a concert. This can be done either before or after school and would consist of serving a total of 2 hours within 5 school days.

- c. Performances are worth 4 major grades:
  - proper attire (have everything you need)
  - punctuality (being fully dressed and in your seat at the call time)
  - the choir's performance on stage
  - audience etiquette.
- d. Concert and rehearsal punctuality is incredibly important to ensuring our performances start on time. There will be a 10-point deduction to punctuality grade for every 5 minutes late to required meeting time.
- e. Students will have up to 2 opportunities to improve one major grade per marking period, not including an unexcused absence from a performance.
- f. Excused absences include family emergencies, or clinic/doctor approved note stating a student's inability to attend. Jobs commitments, a parent email, birthdays, etc. are **not** excused absences.

#### **M. Late Work Policy**

- a. Major assignments will be accepted and graded. (See Student Handbook) Students with excused absences are subject to the late work policy.
  - 1 day late = 15 pt. deduction
  - 2 days late = 30 pt. deduction
  - 3 days late = Department discretion

#### **N. Homework**

- a. The TMHS Choir Program assigns minimal homework, but homework is necessary on occasion in order to maximize rehearsal time in preparation for competition or performance. Homework is not assigned as punishment and homework assignments are counted as daily grades. These assignments will consist of marking music: numbering measures, writing in solfege for assigned voice part, marking dynamics including phrasing, text stress, foreign language translation, poetic articulation, rhythmic counting, theory worksheets, and important documents needing attention from parents. From the assignment due date, students will have as many days to turn in assignments as they are absent. Any homework assignments turned in late will result in a 15-point deduction per day until it reaches 0 points.

#### **O. Opportunities to master curriculum**

- a. Students will be allowed two opportunities to improve one non-performance major grade per marking period. They may do so through performance or a written, non-plagiarized report. From the assignment due date, students will have as many days to turn in assignments as they are absent. Any late work will result in a 15-point deduction per day for up to two days. Opportunities to master curriculum turned in later than two days will not be accepted.

## P. Extra Credit

There are times when extra credit will be offered, but not often. Should the opportunity arise, the criteria will be given to students. Extra credit will only be incorporated with quizzes and other daily grades, not as replacement grades. For example, 15 points will be added to your lowest quiz grade, which is a daily grade. Number of points will be determined with each opportunity and will be the same for all students in the choir class period.

- Q. All Choir classes have some written work outside of class. In addition to concert and rehearsal grades choir students will have homework assignments which are counted as daily grades. These assignments will consist of marking music, theory, and responsibility grades. For example, an important paper that needs to be signed and returned to the choir office by a certain date is a responsibility grade.

## ELIGIBILITY

- A. Choir concerts are designed as an extension of the classroom and are therefore considered CO-CURRICULAR. However, grades play a crucial role in the student's ability to participate in "extra-curricular" activities every three weeks. Tomball Memorial High School Choir will adhere to all UIL academic "no pass – no play" rules. Your calendar of activities will specify those activities that are governed by UIL regulations. For the Spring Trip, Pop Show, UIL Solo and Ensemble, and for Major Chords performances in the community, students must be eligible.
- B. UIL Concert and Sightreading contest is required of all students. Eligibility does not play a role in the Choir UIL Concert and Sightreading contest in April.

## UNIFORMS

- A. Formal uniform guidelines:
1. Ladies: A concert dress will be provided by Tomball Memorial High School and is on loan for the school year. The uniform rental, alteration and end-of-the-year cleaning fees are included in your Choir Fair Share fee. Students are responsible for the upkeep of their garment while in their possession. **Students are responsible for their own appropriate black closed-toe shoes. Flip-flops, sandals, or just black socks are not appropriate or allowed on stage. A lost choir dress replacement is \$100. Lost pearls (chorale) are \$10.** Jewelry is limited to small tasteful earrings, necklaces chosen by the choir, and a watch. **No other jewelry is allowed.**
  2. Gentlemen: A formal tuxedo is on loan for the school year. The uniform rental, alteration and end-of-the-year cleaning fees are included in your Choir Fair Share fee. Students are responsible for the upkeep of their garment while in their possession. **Gentlemen will be responsible for their own black shoes, black dress socks, and winged-tip tuxedo shirts. A lost tuxedo is \$150. Lost bow tie, cummerbund, or pocket square are \$10/each.**
  3. All students must have their hair out of their face with both eyes visible and pulled back in a ponytail, braid, or French twist during performances. For the formal concerts, hair dyed other than a natural hair color will not be allowed (blue, pink, purple, etc.).

## B. Casual Uniform:

1. Students will sometimes be asked to wear choir T-shirt or polo, jeans **with no holes**, tennis shoes or other closed toe shoes. T-Shirt replacements will be \$10.00 this year. Choir polo replacements will be \$20.
2. Choir t-shirts, polos, and water thermos are included in students' fair share choir fee.

## COMPETITION FEES

There are many opportunities where the Choir Booster Club or Choir Program will cover the cost of students' competition entry fees. If the student chooses to enter a competition and does not participate, the student must reimburse said fees.

## FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is important to our group in order to supplement activities and items other than those provided by Tomball ISD. Details of fundraising will be presented separately. Participation in fundraising is not a requirement for membership in choir, but will be strongly encouraged.

## CHOIR TRIPS AND SPECIAL ENGAGEMENTS

Special engagements, whether near or far, are always exciting. However, some have a significant cost. All of these trips will be at the expense of the student with the support of fundraiser dollars from our choir supporters and other choir fundraisers. Our biggest fundraisers are through the Choir Booster Club, in which families must be members of the Booster Club to participate. The Choir Pop Show and another fundraiser will be channeled through the Choir Activity School account.

Choir Spring trips, whether in-state or out, require trust and dependability of our students. Trips are opportunities to showcase our students, our school, and district in the best possible manner. Students with disciplinary infractions that result in suspension at home, in-school-suspension, or expulsion will not be allowed to travel on overnight trips. Students must also be eligible, and have an attendance record that does not require making up hours, unless due to health reasons diagnosed by a physician and cleared by campus administration. Any student who has been charged and convicted of a crime off campus will also not be allowed to travel. If a student loses their opportunity to travel, it is possible to sell the trip, but it is not guaranteed. Trips may be reduced in price or donated at the discretion of the parent/guardian. If the trip is donated, the parent/guardian will receive a receipt for a donation for tax purposes.

## LETTER JACKETS

- A. Major Award: one major award (Letter Jacket) is provided by the School District for each student that meets the lettering requirements for a given organization. Additional letters may be earned in other organizations upon completion of their lettering requirements.
- B. To receive an award, students must be members in good standing and participate in required performances.
- C. Students must demonstrate a positive attitude and maintain a satisfactory citizenship/conduct and academic average.

To receive a major award, students must earn 24 points. Please refer to the points chart [here](#) for a full breakdown. Point total must include a minimum of 2 service points. other important factors:



1. Service Points are earned by volunteering to help set-up or take-down major choir functions, spending time after school organizing library, uniform room or other projects as deemed appropriate by the director.
2. Seniors may receive a major award if they have been in choir for 4 years, must have participated in all required performances and have a point total of 18 at the end of their Junior year. They may not have a choir grade lower than a B or a conduct grade lower than satisfactory.
3. Students may receive one school-purchased award during their high school career. If a student becomes eligible for an additional award, an epaulet will be made available for the student to indicate that he/she has achieved this recognition more than once.

### **OFFICERS and Section Leaders**

- A. Prospective officers will complete an Officer Application after reading and understanding officer responsibilities. Officers will need to maintain academic eligibility, adhere to choir policies, and demonstrate responsibility, honesty, dedication, reliability and a willingness to assist in ALL choir activities. **Officers will be appointed by the directors through an application and interview process. The directors reserves the right to remove an officer from their position who is unable to fulfill these obligations at any time during the school year.**
- B. Students selected for an officer position, or selected as a member of The Major Chords are **strongly encouraged** to attend the Choir Spring trip. These students demonstrate strong leadership, as well as make up the core of the performing and/or competing ensemble. There are many opportunities for fundraising, and it is possible to raise funds for the entire costs of the trips.
- C. Prospective Section Leaders will be called upon to exercise various duties during a rehearsal. Section leaders will be responsible for the following:
  1. Knowing the music and leading the section in learning and/or correcting trouble spots.
  2. Monitors learning and problems within the section and relaying information to the director.
  3. Leads section in sight reading procedures when necessary.

### **PRIVATE VOICE LESSON PROGRAM**

1. Private voice lessons are available to any choir member.
2. The cost for lessons is \$24.00 per 24 minute weekly lesson totaling \$96 for a typical month and is due at the beginning of each month. Choir service points may be requested on the choir website [here](#) and used towards voice lesson payments. **All payments are to be made directly to the voice teacher.**
3. Private lessons provide students with one-on-one instructions supporting all aspects of voice building and all the TMHS choral experience has to offer. Students benefit greatly from this individualized instruction. Only highly trained, degreed individuals are hired as voice teachers.
4. Lessons are scheduled during the choir period or after school.

## SUSPENSION AND LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Choir members may be dismissed from the group or placed in a non-performing ensemble for the remainder of the year for the following violations of the student handbook:
1. Violation of the alcohol and drug policy
  2. Violation of the tobacco and vaping policy
  3. The second time in ISS
  4. Any DAEP placement
  4. Any act resulting in at-home suspension
  5. Any infraction that the directors and TMHS/TISD administration deem detrimental to the organization.
- B. Lengthy periods of absences, unless due to health reasons diagnosed by a physician and cleared by campus administration, could result in suspension, loss of membership, or removal from an ensemble.

If you have questions or concerns about the policies set forth in this handbook, please feel free to contact [jedragdale@tomballisd.net](mailto:jedragdale@tomballisd.net) and [jordynwhite@tomballisd.net](mailto:jordynwhite@tomballisd.net)

Parents,

I wanted to make you aware of a new law relating to e-cigarettes. HB 114 was passed by the Texas legislature last spring and requires schools to place in the District Alternative Education Program (DAEP) any student who is in possession of, uses, sells, gives, or delivers an e-cigarette on school grounds or at any school related event. Tomball ISD will make changes to the Student Code of Conduct to comply with and will strictly enforce this new law, which is intended to stop the rapidly increasing numbers of students affected by the vaping epidemic.

What this means for your student:

- If your student has an e-cigarette (even if nothing is in it) on school grounds or at a school-related event, he or she will be recommended for a DAEP placement of at least 10 school days. Please note: your student is responsible for any item in his or her possession- even if it does not belong to your student.
  - While at DAEP, your student will not be allowed to attend any school activities and may be removed from certain student organizations or clubs in accordance with the rules and regulations of each organization.
  - Your student will not be eligible for exam exemptions.
  - The district does not provide transportation to DAEP.
- As stated above, if any student is placed in DAEP, it may result in placement in a non-performing ensemble and dismissal from the TMHS Choir program at earliest convenience

What you can do:

- Talk to your student to ensure he or she is aware of the new law.
- Ensure your student knows what is in his or her backpack, car, or other belongings.
- Remind your student to not allow friends to leave restricted items such as e-cigarettes in his or her car and to not carry such items for other students.
- Talk to your student about the health effects of vaping. [Resources](#) are available on the Tomball ISD website.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter, and we appreciate your cooperation as we strive to provide a safe and healthy campus for our students and staff.

# The Wildcat Choir Staff

Jed Ragsdale	Director of Choirs	<a href="mailto:jedragdale@tomballisd.net">jedragdale@tomballisd.net</a>	281-357-3230 X1106
Jordyn White	Associate Director of Choirs	<a href="mailto:jordynwhite@tomballisd.net">jordynwhite@tomballisd.net</a>	281-357-3230 X1106

## Organizational Chart

We know from time to time parents and students may have questions or concerns regarding the Choral Program. To assist you in resolving these issues, please follow the organizational chart below.

Start here and work down	Jed Ragsdale Director of Choral Activities
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Andy Easton TMHS Fine Arts Chair
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Your child's Assistant Principal (Michael Crocker, David Sherman, Grant Granquist, Meredith Henry, Jade Lopez)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Bailey TMHS Principal
5 <sup>th</sup>	Paulette Tomlinson TISD Director of Fine Arts
6 <sup>th</sup>	Dr. Amy Schindewolf TISD Chief of Staff
7 <sup>th</sup>	Dr. Martha Salazar-Zamora Superintendent

**Return the handbook acknowledgement, the field trip/medical form, travel/transportation form, and fees by August 31 for a major grade. Please make sure you complete all ONLINE forms and fees**

**THE CHOIR FAIR SHARE FEE FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR IS \$52.50. Payments will be paid through schoolcashonline.** This amount will help to cover such items as uniform rental, altering, launder/dry-cleaning, postage for mail-outs, Copies, Folders, Choir T-Shirt, Choir Polo, Choir water thermos, and other necessary items.

**Optional monies due:**

Any initial trip payments, competition fees, accompaniment fees, High School Night at the Opera, or other choir events and activities

