

**TOMBALL MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR
HANDBOOK
2021-2022**



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WELCOME TO CHOIR!!!

CHORAL PROGRAM GOALS

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 as an ensemble and as an individual. Each and every singer is an important and valuable part of our team. A member of any performing organization has a responsibility above and beyond that of a student who is not involved in an extra-curricular program. Students in the choir program become well-rounded productive members of society by developing core skills such as personal responsibility, teamwork, leadership, work ethic, and appreciation of art. Students support each other in becoming better individual musicians and performers, exhibiting the highest quality at every performance, and developing a familial atmosphere in all choir activities. Together we will endeavor to seek excellence and establish ourselves as a premier choral program.

DO I (AND MY PARENTS) REALLY NEED TO READ THE CHOIR HANDBOOK?

ABSOLUTELY! The information in this document guides our program and protects you and the TMHS Choir. It is in your best interest to be familiar with the policies and procedures outlined as they detail how the choir program operates. It is important that all parents and their students entering the choir department know what is expected of them, as the expectations we have for teachers and musicians are very high. Your student will benefit from these high expectations through discipline, hard work, optimum performance opportunities, and musical growth. In addition, throughout the year, if you have any questions regarding grading, performances, attendance policies, and trips, you can always refer back to this document. By signing the Handbook Acknowledgement Page, both you and your parents agree to adhere to all aspects included in the handbook. Like any binding document, it is important to read and understand before you sign.

Each choir student will review the handbook in our classroom. It is available for your information and referral on the www.tmhschoir.com website. **Please take the time to read all information and sign the last three forms, as well as submit class fee payments on or before August 31. Extra forms will be available at school as needed. This is a major grade in choir: Responsibility/Meeting Deadlines/Following Directions Grade.** **If you have a financial hardship regarding fees, please contact the choir office to discuss your specific needs. Please note: financial hardship is not an excuse for late forms.*

CHARMS ACCOUNT

CHARMS is a program designed specifically for music organizations. A very important part of CHARMS is that it serves as a tool to communicate lots of information to both students and parents, which is essential to the success of our program. Please visit our CHARMS website regularly for updated information and dates.

To Access:

- **Go to www.charmsoffice.com**
- **Click on the parent/student/members access icon.**
- **Type in the school code: TomballMemorialChoir.**
- **The password is your student's id number.**

If you cannot access your file, please contact me right away. If we don't have your student information, you might miss out on important events and details. For questions about Charms, please email Mr. Ragsdale at jedragsdale@tomballisd.net.

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 Wildcat Chorale, Wildcat Chamber Choir or the Advanced Women's Choir (Bel Canto) by way of audition, or will be placed in The Belles for Treble voices or The Dudes for Tenor/Bass voices.

EXPECTATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

- A. Positive individual attitude and team spirit
- B. Attendance at all required rehearsals and performances
- C. Eligibility in all classes
- D. Application 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 and/or person otherwise in lawful control of the student must present written consent to school sponsored random drug testing and have a signed trip permission form on file.

CHOIR ROOM EXPECTATIONS:

- A. Be on time! (Tardies are discussed in grading policies.)
- B. You are expected to do your best. Anything less is unacceptable.
- C. Bring a positive attitude to class every day. Personal difficulties should remain on the other side of the door. You are expected to want to make music, to sing enthusiastically, and be eager to conquer the task placed before you.
- D. Proper posture is always required in singing.
- E. All TISD School District policies will be enforced.
- F. Read the Choir Room board for announcements at the beginning of class. Choir members are responsible for the information posted.
- G. When a director is speaking, you are expected to listen.
- H. Respect yourself and respect others.
- I. Please stay out of 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. Warm-ups are essential for music-making and are not "time-wasters".
- K. The bell does not dismiss you.
- L. All choir students are provided a calendar of all choir activities. An updated calendar will be kept visible in the classroom and on the Charms website for your referral. **Resolve conflicts before they arise.** Feel free to ask your director for help in resolving a conflict. Many times we, as teachers, can approach / help with another teacher / coach if we are informed in plenty of time.
- M. The best time to communicate with your director **regarding conflicts**, setting up times for extra help, finding out about make-up work, etc. is **before or after school, or right at the end of a rehearsal.** Immediately before a rehearsal or during a rehearsal is NOT the time to ask these questions.
- N. Personal matters such as going to the restroom, getting water, etc. are to be taken care of between classes. You may bring bottled water to class.
- O. Only have bottled water at your seat. You may not have cokes or other drinks in class or at after school rehearsals. There should NEVER be a coke/water bottle on any piano in the music facility.
- P. Food, drinks, or GUM are not allowed in rehearsals, in practice rooms, or in the ensemble rooms.

- Q. Do not spray perfume or apply scented lotions in the choir room. Students have allergies. Use the restroom for personal grooming.
- R. You must not have backpacks or books at your seat. The only item at your seat on a daily basis is your choir folder which **MUST** contain a sharpened pencil. **DO NOT** take them to other classes.
- S. Your folder is your textbook in choir. Replacement costs for music and sight-reading materials will be posted for your information. The replacement cost for your folder is \$5.00. You are responsible for the cost of printed music assigned to you. If you lose or destroy your folder you will need to replace it and its content immediately so that you have materials to use in class each day. Failure to replace your folder in a timely manner will result in a daily participation grade reduction until the folder is purchased.
- T. **Cell phones:** as per district policy, cell phones should not be visible or audible in any choral rehearsal during or after school. Students caught using their phone will have it taken up. The phone may be reclaimed from the front office by a parent for a \$15.00 fee. We view texting like talking – it is RUDE to do so while instructions are being given and certainly during singing.
- U. You are the biggest advocate for our choir by your maturity and attitude toward this program. Remember that any student of an extracurricular organization is expected to represent themselves and their school in a positive manner at all times. You, as students and we, as teachers, have a responsibility to fulfill these expectations if we are to be successful.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICIES:

- A. Tardies: If you are not in the room, or are standing around talking and 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. If you have a long way to travel to this class, plan ahead. You can keep your choir folder with you so you are ready when you enter the room.
- B. **ALL PERFORMANCES AND EXTRA REHEARSALS ARE A MANDATORY ELEMENT OF THE CURRICULUM!** Every member of a performing ensemble is vital to the ensemble as a whole; never think otherwise. Failure to attend a performance is equivalent to receiving a “zero” on a research paper. Just as you spend weeks researching and preparing a paper, you spend weeks rehearsing and preparing for a performance. You receive no credit on your paper if you do not turn it in; you receive no credit for a performance if you do not perform. **If you miss a dress rehearsal, you receive a grade reduction you will not perform in the concert.**
- C. Below are the only excused absences from an after school rehearsal or performance:
 - 1. **Personal illness or accident**
 - 2. **Funeral or death in the family or other serious family emergency**
 - 3. **Special school activities with prior permission from the director**

It is important that you communicate any of the above immediately to your director. This may be done through phone or email. If the director cannot be notified in advance of an absence, a note from the parent must accompany the student to the next class meeting following the absence.

- D. **A member’s work schedule is NOT an excused absence for any rehearsal or performance. Advance notice is given for all rehearsals and concerts in order to give you time to communicate with your work.**
- E. If your choir is going on a trip, you are expected to attend as we are singing as a team.
- F. **Daily Grades = 30%**
Daily grades include: participation in class, required materials, attendance, written work and quizzes.

G. Major Grades = 70%

Major grades include:

1. 20% Test grade average (singing or written tests).
2. 50% Performance grade (dress rehearsals, required performances).
 - a. If your performance absence is excused by your director you will be required to complete an alternate assignment which will replace the concert grade. There will be no exceptions to this policy.
 - b. Included in the performance grade is proper uniform attire for concerts. Have everything you need. **PLAN AHEAD!**

H. Extra Credit

These activities include individual competitions, voluntary in-class activities announced as extra credit, and outside concert attendance approved by the director.

- I. 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.

UNIFORMS

A. Formal uniforms:

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 stockings and close-toe, closed heel shoes.**
2. Gentlemen: A formal tuxedo and tuxedo shirt are 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, and black dress socks.**

B. Formal Uniform Guidelines:

1. Female students will have appropriate (low heel) closed toe black dress shoes and black opaque stockings. **Flip-flops and sandals are not appropriate or allowed on stage.** All ladies must have their hair out of their face and pulled back in a ponytail, braid, French twist during performances. For the formal concerts, hair dyed other than a natural hair color will not be allowed (blue, pink, purple, etc.). Jewelry is limited to small tasteful earrings and necklaces chosen by the choir and a watch. **No other jewelry is allowed.**

2. Gentlemen will wear appropriate black dress shoes and black dress socks. For all performances each male must have his hair out of his face with both eyes visible and be neatly groomed. For the formal concerts, hair dyed other than a natural hair color will not be allowed (blue, pink, purple, etc.).

C. Casual Uniform:

1. Students will sometimes be asked to wear choir T-shirt, jeans, tennis shoes or other closed toe shoes. T-Shirts will be \$10.00 this year and are included in the Choir Fair Share fee.

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 by the following methods. Point total must include a minimum of 2 service points.

1. **TMEA:** *note: These points are totals at each level and not cumulative.*

- Audition at the District level 1 Point
- Audition at the Region level 3 Points
- Perform with a Region Mixed Choir 2 Points
- Audition at the Pre Area level 8 Points
- Audition at the Area level 12 Points
- Perform with the All State Choir 15 Points

2. **UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest**

- Perform a solo 1 Point
- Earn a 1st division rating on a Class I solo 2 Points
- Earn a 1st division rating on an ensemble or Class II or III solo 1 Point
- Earn a 1st division rating on an ensemble at UIL Concert & Sightreading contest 1 Point

3. Perform with their particular ensemble at required school concerts outside of the school day: 1 point per concert.
4. 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.
5. 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 choir grade lower than a B or a conduct grade lower than satisfactory.
6. 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 director through an application and interview process.** The director 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. 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 25 minute weekly lesson totaling \$96 for a typical month and is due at the beginning of each month. **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.
5. You may use Booster Club points if you have them available!

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. 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.

SPRING CHOIR TRIP

The Spring Trip is an honor, a privilege and a great opportunity to see or experience something you haven't before! However, students must be academically eligible during the entire year, as well as maintain an excellent behavioral record for the entire school year. A student whose actions require In-School-Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension at any point during the school year forfeit their opportunity to participate on the Spring Choir Trip and lose any money paid toward the trip, unless they are able to sell it to an interested TMHS Choir Student or parent of a TMHS Choir Student. Any other behavior deemed inappropriate or detrimental to others by the director or administrators prior to the trip may result in the student forfeiting their opportunity to participate on the Spring Choir Trip, as well. The students must complete a trip contract acknowledging the understanding of rules while on the trip. Also outlined in the trip contract will be information on what type of activities result in being sent home at the parent or guardian's expense. We must trust the students will exhibit behavior that represents THMS, TISD and the TMHS Choir Department in the best possible way, maintaining the safest environment for all, at all times during the trip.

SUSPENSION AND LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any member who makes an F in any course in a nine-week grading period will be placed on suspension from performance for the following nine weeks, as mandated by HB 72 of the State of Texas.
- B. When a student successfully completes a nine week grading period with all passing grades he/she may return to extra-curricular performances with the group.
- C. Choir members will be dismissed from the group 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 policy
 - 3. The second time in AEP
 - 4. Any act resulting in at-home suspension
 - 5. Any infraction that the director and principal deem detrimental to the organization.

TMHS FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT VAPING POLICY

1st Offense:

-If a student is caught vaping (or with vaping paraphernalia) at school, they will receive the “standard” school consequences. 3 days of ISS and loss of exam exemptions for that school year. (This will be the policy for all students at TMHS.)

-If a student is caught vaping (or with vaping paraphernalia) on a TMHS Fine Arts Program trip off campus (spring trip, football games, contests, Thespian Convention, VASE, etc.), they will receive the following consequences (These will be the same consequences for a student sent home from a trip for any reason. i.e. alcohol, PDA, curfew violations, etc.):

- 1 - Immediately sent home at the parents’ expense
- 2 - Suspended from ALL Fine Arts extracurricular participation for the remainder of that semester
- 3 – Not allowed to travel on the next spring trip or Thespian Convention trip
- 4 – During the semester following their infraction, the student may only participate in extracurricular events if the parent provides transportation and attends all events (in their entirety) with the student. If the parent cannot provide transportation to all events, the Director of the organization has the discretion to prohibit partial participation.
- 5 - Students may still participate in all curricular and classroom activities.

2nd Offense

-Any Fine Arts student caught vaping (or with vaping paraphernalia) at school or on an off campus trip will immediately be removed from all Fine Arts extracurricular programs.

If you have questions or concerns about the policies set forth in this handbook, please feel free to contact me: jedragsdale@tomballisd.net

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 nd	Andy Easton TMHS Fine Arts Chair
3 rd	Your child's Assistant Principal (Kyle Dunn, Mary Endress, Meredith Henry, Jill Hayes)
4 th	Dr. Mike Metz TMHS Principal
5 th	JD Janda TISD Director of Fine Arts
6 th	Dr. Amy Schindewolf TISD Assistant Superintendent
7 th	Dr. Martha Salazar-Zamora Superintendent

TOMBALL MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

2021-22 CONTRACT

Return all digital forms (handbook contract, medical form, and transportation form by August 31 for a major grade.

THE CHOIR FAIR SHARE FEE FOR THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR \$52.50 This amount will help to cover choir T-Shirt and materials. This can be paid through School Cash Online or KEV, and will be available to us August 1, 2021.