

Voices of the Valley Chorus

Chorus Handbook

2019-2020

Chorus Mission

The *Voices of the Valley Chorus* will provide musical instruction and performance opportunities for 4th – 8th grade students. This season, we will focus on learning how to sing harmony.

Rehearsal Schedule

Rehearsals will be each **Monday afternoon from 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. in the elementary music room** with the exception of school holidays and weather days. Our first rehearsal will take place on Monday, **September 16, 2019**. Rehearsals are for chorus members only. Siblings cannot be supervised and are not allowed to attend. Our season runs from September - December, 2019.

Attendance

Attendance is taken at each rehearsal. Because chorus is a performing group, students are expected to attend all rehearsals. Of course, things such as illness, doctor appointments, and other family conflicts may prevent a student from attending a rehearsal. If this is the case, please send a note or email me in advance. Missing practice without a note results in an unexcused absence. Two or more *unexcused* absences within a season may result in non-participation during a performance or removal from the group. Please speak with me if you have any questions.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Rehearsal begins promptly at 3:00 p.m., and ends at 4:15 p.m. Members will need to be in the elementary music classroom and ready to start on time. Students will be dismissed from the elementary music classroom and escorted to the parent pick-up area, or extended day.

Performances

Parents will be informed of performance dates as soon as they are confirmed. VRA Chorus is a performance based group, please make every effort to have your child available to participate, and of course, plan on attending to support your child!

Uniform

- White button down shirt/blouse
- Solid Black Pants
- Black socks or hose
- Black closed-toe shoes (no high heels)

Chorus members are required to wear the complete uniform at every performance. Students who are out of uniform may have to sit in the audience. Please take care to make sure all uniform pieces are ready before the day of the performance. In addition to learning music, a main goal of participating in chorus is to learn responsibility! Stage makeup is NOT necessary.

Costs

The 2019-2020 fee for chorus is \$45. The fee is non-refundable. This covers the cost of sheet music, props, royalty fees, accompaniment (live and/or recorded), and any other costs related to performances. It does not cover the cost of the student-provided pieces of the uniform (button down white shirt/blouse, black closed-toe shoes, pants, and socks).

The fee is due before or on **Friday, September 13, 2019**. Choose one payment method:

- Check (payable to VRA) or cash (exact change). Place in a sealed envelope labeled with your child's full name and "Chorus". Your child may deliver it to the music room or have it placed in my mailbox at the front desk. Please have two phone numbers on the check.

Auditions

Chorus participation is open to all 4th – 8th grade students. Auditions will sometimes be held for sections of a performance requiring solos, small ensembles, or speaking parts. If a student signs up for an audition, but fails to show up during their audition time, they will be ineligible to receive a part. Many factors are taken into consideration before assigning parts. Some of these factors are character, commitment, talent, appropriateness of part, availability for extra practice (if needed), and performance quality. Students who are chosen for parts (along with the support of the parent) will need to make a commitment to learn the part and attend any additional practices that are necessary.

Behavior Expectations

Chorus is like a team sport – it takes everyone giving their best effort, together, to make an outstanding chorus with a dynamic performance. Therefore, there is no tolerance for pettiness, picking on one another, being mean, criticizing, bullying or gossiping. The best way to build a team is to encourage one another. It is like looking at a beautiful painting. How can you just pick out one brush stroke and say that it was the one that made all the difference? The beauty of chorus is the synergy of all the parts working together to make beautiful music.

Performance etiquette is an important skill that will be rehearsed. Knowing how to carry ourselves on stage will allow our performance, as well as our behavior, to be what shines through to our audience.

Discipline Policy

Chorus is an extra commitment and I am confident that those who participate will be able to do so in a constructive, positive way. However, students may lose performance privileges or be asked to leave the group if the following problems arise:

- Two or more unexcused absences from rehearsal
- Any unexcused absence from a performance
- Any school discipline referrals
- A pattern of disrespectful behavior, including toward other members
- A pattern of a poor work ethic in rehearsal

Chorus students are also expected to maintain their academic performance. Poor academic performance must be improved for a student to continue to participate in chorus.

Materials for Home Practice

Chorus members will be required to memorize performance material. Members will have plenty of time to learn performance pieces during rehearsals. However, there will be times when additional practice is necessary. Members will need to take responsibility for their repertoire and practice outside of school when needed. Rehearsal recordings and lyrics will be provided during chorus rehearsal.

Performance of Religious or Culturally Diverse Songs

Music reflects many different cultures, ethnicities, religions, experiences, and people. These aspects are often the motivating factor behind a composer's music. This has been true for hundreds of years and remains true for composers today. This ensemble may at times present music that is representative of a particular viewpoint or belief. When this is done, it is not to honor any single group. Rather, it is to reflect the broad variety of music and cultural expression.

It is not the intent of this ensemble to put any student in a compromising position. Therefore, if there is a song in our program that conflicts with your world view, your child will not be required to sing that song. Your child will be provided with a copy of all song lyrics. Please review these lyrics carefully. If you have any concerns about the literature being performed, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the chorus director as to the preference for your child's participation. While a song will not be withdrawn from the music program due to the lyrical content, it is perfectly acceptable for a student to opt out of performing that song. This is done very discreetly through the transition time between songs.

This practice is in accordance with St. Johns County School District policy.

Volunteers Needed

This club would not be possible without the help of parent volunteers. Volunteers must be approved through the SJCSO “Keep N Track” system. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Rehearsal Volunteer (no musical skills necessary)
- Piano accompanying
- Other musical assistance for parents with musical knowledge who do not play piano
- Snack donation
- Photographer/Videographer at performances
- Stage Decorating
- Stage/Concert Cleanup
- Costuming
- Day of concert help (backstage)
- Coordinating concert refreshments

Contact Information

I can be reached at **Jennette.Knoblauch@stjohns.k12.fl.us**. Email is the best way to contact me. Please understand that my attention is with the students during the school day, so I will usually respond outside of school hours.

And, please install the “Remind” app on your phone so I can text out reminders.