

DESANA MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS

Chorus Handbook/Syllabus

2018-2019

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Note to Parents

Music performance classes differ from other academic classes in allocation of student time and requirements for student participation. Many activities that are central to the curriculum in music performance classes require not only daily class time, but also after school rehearsal, evening and/or weekend performances, trips, or special fees for uniforms. While a student may possibly pass a music performance class by participating only in daily class, he/she will certainly not realize the full benefit or enjoyment from the class without full participation in its every aspect and activity. Experience shows that students who have difficulty in music performance classes most often do so because they choose not to take part in some phases of their class activities.

This handbook has been developed in an effort to inform students and parents in as complete a manner as possible of the expectations and requirements of the Chorus Department at DeSana Middle School. I urge you to read it thoroughly and review the information with your student. You can help him/her take responsibility for participating fully in each activity the class undertakes and by following through on all assignments. Together, we can help your child have a positive, meaningful, and memorable experience in music this year.

Purpose/Course Description

DeSana Middle School choirs are designed to equip each student with musical and vocal skills that will help prepare them for a lifetime of musical involvement and enjoyment. Each chorus at DeSana Middle School has a threefold purpose:

- 1) to develop each student's vocal technique, musicianship, and music-reading skills
- 2) to practice the skills of musical performance in solo, small ensemble, and large ensemble settings in as many musical styles as possible
- 3) to develop each student as a self-responsible, contributing member of a musical ensemble

Classroom Guidelines and Expectations

Each student will:

- a) willingly participate in all class activities.
- b) be in their assigned seat with their music and pencil when class begins, ready to rehearse.
- c) be responsible for their chorus folder, music, and uniform. Damaged/lost folders, music, or uniforms will be replaced at the student's expense (see *Uniform Rental Agreement*).
- d) help maintain and enhance the learning environment in each rehearsal. Students will respect the right of every chorus member to learn and Mr. Bigliani's responsibility to teach.
- e) respect and help maintain the chorus room and music department facilities. The chorus room and stage area are essential rehearsal and performance areas. They are to be maintained in a neat and orderly fashion.

- f) Talking out of turn during rehearsal is not permitted, especially while the ensemble is singing.
- g) Gum, food, and drinks are to be placed in the trash can or appropriately put away upon entering the chorus room. *No food, drinks (except bottled water), or gum is permitted in the chorus room.*
- h) Cell phones are prohibited during rehearsal.

Chorus Uniforms & Student Fees

- 1) All girls will wear rented black chorus dresses and their own black closed-toed dress shoes for all major concerts and festivals. NO loose or dangling jewelry, or hair accessories, unless approved.
- 2) All boys will wear all black: black button-down shirt, black pants, black belt, black socks, and black close-toed dress shoes for all major concerts and festivals. Boys will not rent a uniform this year.
- 3) For the annual Super Spring Showcase, chorus members will wear their student-designed Super Spring Showcase t-shirts, blue denim jeans/shorts/skirts, and close-toed shoes.
- 4) Throughout the year, students will be participating in a couple events that will require us to travel. In order to secure transportation and participation in these events, students may be asked to pay a bus fee, or event registration fee.

Please refer to the Chorus Fee Breakdown sheet for more information. Please do not let money be a factor when deciding whether or not to participate in Chorus. Should special circumstances arise, please contact Mr. Bigliani.

Performances and Transportation

Performance is a major part of the choral learning experience and is required by the Georgia Standards for Choral Music. Required performances will be treated as unit exams. All required performances will be announced well in advance (see *Chorus Events 2018-2019*). Any unexcused absence from a required performance will result in a failing summative grade. The following are considered excused absences:

- Illness (with doctor's note)
- Death in the family
- Important religious observance
- Unforeseen emergency or extenuating circumstance. A parent or guardian must contact Mr. Bigliani before or within 24 hours after the event to let him know the reason for the absence.

Parents, please understand that the presence of every student is crucial for a stellar performance. We hope that you will plan your schedule accordingly to ensure that your student has an on-time ride to and from each chorus performance and that you will be able to attend all performances. The schedule for rehearsals and concerts are posted in the chorus room, ItsLearning, and DeSana website; therefore, lack of transportation is not excuse. Please make your arrangements early.

The following five performance expectations will be in effect at all required performances:

The student:

- 1. is in proper concert attire.
- 2. is not disruptive or inattentive and does not need to be verbally corrected more than once by the director or parent volunteer.

3. is on time to the performance warm-up or arrives with an excused tardy.
4. does not leave the event early or leaves with the expressed approval of the director.
5. contributes to the overall musical and quality of the performance and supports classmates in performance.

A (100 - 90%)	All 5 performance standards are met.
B (89 - 80%)	4 of the performance standards are met.
C (79 - 70%)	3 of the performance standards are met.
F (below 70%)	2 of the performance standards are met.

Rehearsal & Concert Make-Up Work

Since chorus is a performance-based class, all students are required to attend all rehearsals and concerts. Other school activities or not having a ride will not be excused absences from a concert. Make-up work will be assigned to students who miss a concert with an excused absence. A detailed description of this assignment can be found on ItsLearning and should be completed by the student and turned in to Mr. Bigliani no later than one week after the missed performance.

Grading

Grading procedures are consistent across all connections classes in order to be fair and effective. Below is the information regarding, standards and types of assessments an. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact any connections teacher!

Georgia State Chorus Standards

MMSIC.1- Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

MMSIC.2- Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

MMSIC.3- Reading and notating music

MMSIC.4- Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

MMSIC.5- Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines

MMSIC.6- Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

MMSIC.7- Evaluating music and music performances

MMSIC.8- Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

MMSIC.9- Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Summative Grades - 80%

1) Required performances

Includes attendance and participation at all required performances and rehearsals outside of class.

2) Vocal and written assessments

Includes singing assessments such as part checks, sight-reading tests, and any written work included tests, quizzes, listening journals, and performance evaluations.

Formative Grades - 20%

1) Individual and group vocal assessments

Students will also be assessed on their vocal ability, both individually and within the larger ensemble. This is not an assessment on vocal quality, but on their ability to successfully perform the following:

- Scales (major, minor, chromatic)
- Improvisation
- Sight reading
- Tonal memory
- Error detection

2) Rehearsal etiquette

Students will receive rehearsal participation grades based on the following criteria:

- Being prepared and on time for rehearsals
- Having all necessary materials
- Remaining attentive and well-behaved during rehearsal
- Demonstrating proper vocal technique
- Listening and following instructions from the director

Discipline Procedures

It is important for every student, parent, and guardian to understand that being involved in chorus is a privilege because the school offers the class as an elective. Failure to follow classroom procedures and instructions on a multiple offense basis may result in removal from chorus.

All policies and procedures of DeSana Middle School and Forsyth County Schools as published in the school handbook apply in chorus. These also apply to field trips, off-campus performances, and before/after school activities.

If a student fails to follow any of the chorus guidelines and expectations, the following procedures apply:

- 1) Verbal warning
- 2) Silent lunch
- 3) Detention (and phone call home)
- 4) Discipline slip
- 5) Office referral

Extra Help/Practice Time

Students are more than welcome to arrange a time with Mr. Bigliani before or after school on Tuesday or Thursday in order to practice individually, or with help from Mr. Bigliani. Practice can include preparation for honor chorus auditions, musical auditions, and in-class repertoire/work.