

2016-2017 ROBERT E. LEE HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR HANDBOOK

The Choral Program at LEE Freshman and Senior High Schools offers a unique educational experience in which you may gain not only musical skills and a lifelong appreciation of music, but discipline, self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment by working with others toward THE COMMON GOAL OF EXCELLENCE. As a member of the Lee High School Choir you are expected to be a credit to your choir, your school, and your community. Because we are committed to EXCELLENCE we must have a common high standard. The purpose of this handbook is to define that standard. Chorale, Ladies' Ensembles, Men's Ensemble, and Freshman Choirs are competitive ensembles requiring travel and participation in UIL /TMEA competitions.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Be on time to all rehearsals and public performances prepared to give your best.
2. Be a responsible member - bring your music to rehearsal with pencil, keep your music in order, know your music.
3. Maintain respect for the Choir Room, the instruments and the equipment. This includes your music and folder. Keep the room clean and orderly. The piano, recording equipment, and sound system are not toys.
Do not use any of the equipment unless you have received permission from the directors.
4. Take pride in your personal appearance.
5. Remember, your actions and attitude reflect on you, your choir, and your school.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

The success of a choir depends on how it rehearses. How it rehearses depends on the conduct and cooperation of the student. Rehearsals are the place to correct mistakes. The fewer the mistakes and the less individual distractions, the greater your contribution is to the choir. Be patient, attentive, careful, and cooperative in observing these rehearsal expectations. When the directors have to discipline and control rather than direct, the rehearsal and eventually the choirs are headed for failure. Good behavior, attitude and self-discipline are essential to producing a GREAT CHOIR. If you are successful, the Choir is successful.

1. Be ON TIME to all rehearsals (school or extra) and performances. Cellphone in cubby, pencils sharpened, music in hand, in your place on the risers BY THE TIME THE BELL RINGS OR THE REHEARSAL IS TO BEGIN. ****LHS and LFHS tardy policy is enforced.
2. Always have your MUSIC, CHOIR FOLDER, and PENCIL
3. All students MUST be in MISD Dress Code attire for EVERY rehearsal (unless approved by director).
4. Please take care of restroom breaks, before the rehearsal begins (notify teacher of health concerns).
5. Please, no gum!
6. Be conscious of GOOD POSTURE at all times.
7. Keep your EYES on the conductor during rehearsal.
8. LISTEN to the conductor at all times. Talking while the conductor is rehearsing or giving instructions is **NEVER** appropriate.
9. **The use of cell phones is not allowed at rehearsals or concerts. (School policy enforced.)**
10. Take a MATURE ATTITUDE toward correction. Don't be a "know it all".
11. Rehearsals are not over until the director dismisses the choir. Don't begin to put your music away until instructed to do so.
12. Stay involved in the rehearsal from start to finish. Rehearsals are not for personal grooming, catching up on the latest gossip, or doing homework.
13. Keep the room orderly and clean. Do not bring food, candy or drinks in the Choir Room unless given permission by the director. If you are not taking your music home, make sure you return it to the correct folder shelf. The Choir Room is not to be used as your personal locker.
14. Approach rehearsals as well as performances with OPTIMISM, ENTHUSIASM, DETERMINATION, AND YOUR WHOLE-HEARTED ATTENTION.
15. The success of the Choir is your individual responsibility.
16. Before asking a question-- ALWAYS refer to your handbook.

EXTRA REHEARSALS & CONCERTS

1. Choir is a performance-based class. Concerts AND rehearsals are required. Every effort is made to schedule concerts and rehearsals around other SCHOOL-related activities. Unfortunately, we cannot schedule around community activities, private lessons or tutorings. Students are expected to keep a calendar, check their email regularly, and inform the Director **IN ADVANCE** of any conflicts.
2. Extra rehearsals are called for all choirs INCLUDING FRESHMEN before major performances. It is the directors' wish to keep these rehearsals to a minimum. Refer to your calendar for these rehearsals & be alert to rehearsals announced in class and email. **KEEPING A CALENDAR AND CHECKING YOUR EMAIL IS A MUST!**
3. Each choir member is required to attend his or her respective section rehearsal which may meet one to two times a week at the lunch hour, before school, or another agreed upon time. This schedule varies depending on the particular contest or concert.
4. The LHS CHORALE will meet every MONDAY evening for rehearsals (reserve this day). During Contest season the Chorale meets on MONDAY and THURSDAY evenings for Mixed Choir in addition to special clinics.
5. ALL CHOIRS (Freshman Choirs, and Senior High Choirs) meet every MONDAY evening during Contest season. (Contest season begins in February- see calendar and reserve these evenings).
6. All rehearsals and concerts are REQUIRED unless excused IN ADVANCE by the director.
7. Definition of an "EXCUSED ABSENCE" -- Absence resulting from illness, serious illness in the family, or bereavement. A phone call from the PARENT must be submitted to the Director **WELL IN ADVANCE** for review and consultation with the student. In the case of sudden illness, a **parental** phone call should accompany the student's return. ***It is the parent's/student's responsibility to clear the absence.***
8. Consequences for an "UNEXCUSED ABSENCE"
 - a. 1st Absence- One or more of the following consequences can occur:
 - Loss of performance privileges
 - Loss of tour or trip privileges
 - Parent conference
 - Suspension of rehearsal privileges with alternative class work requirements
 - Loss of letter
 - Chorale/Origin: Reassignment to another ensemble
 - b. 2nd Absence
 - Consequences of 1st Absence may be used
 - Conference with parent and student to decide continuation or dismissal from the Choir.
- * Any of the above consequences may also be used in a disciplinary capacity.
9. EACH STUDENT'S contribution is crucial to rehearsals and concerts. One student's absence can upset the balance of a rehearsal or the success of a concert. Never lose sight of the importance of your individual contribution to the Choir.

If there is a conflict with a rehearsal or concert, let the Director know WELL IN ADVANCE. School conflicts can almost always be worked out. The key phrase is IN ADVANCE! I.e. Weeks or months in advance – NOT DAYS! COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY!

DEFINITIONS OF "GOOD STANDING" & "ELIGIBILITY"

1. "In Good Standing" means that a student has no unexcused absences and has **POSITIVELY** contributed to the choir in attitude and work ethic.
2. **Academic eligibility** is defined by UIL and MISD. A student must be passing or regain eligibility in all classes to participate in TMEA auditions, 9th Grade Region, UIL contests, Madrigal, Broadway Revue and trips that would take a student out of classes. The Fall concert, Choral Classics, and rehearsals (extra or in class) DO NOT fall under the eligibility guidelines. Eligibility is solely based on the MISD computer generated "failure lists" and "progress reports". ***A student cannot fail or regain eligibility between the dates that the lists are published.***

GRADING POLICY

Choir is a **performance-based class**. Students earn grades by performing in rehearsals as well as concerts. Concerts and rehearsals cannot be “made up”. (See “Extra Rehearsals & Concerts”, pg.2) Students will earn grades in the following areas.

1. Performances in class by solo and small ensembles
2. Sight-reading/Music Theory/ Ear-Training- solo & small ensembles (Performance)
3. Attendance to Concerts & Rehearsals
4. Focus & Consistency (observable performer characteristics: Facial expression, posture, attentiveness)
5. Contribution (audible singing- equal partnership)

****** Please note: Students are video-taped and audio-taped in class and in performance for teaching, evaluating, and publicity purposes.**

EVENTS & PERFORMANCES

ORIENTATION- ALL MEMBERS & PARENTS (September)

1. **To insure a student's successful participation in the LHS Choral Program, an orientation is required for all students and their parent(s).** The Orientation provides students and parents the year's calendar, expectations of the Choral program, and an opportunity for questions and answers.
2. Student Travel Forms, Uniform Training Rules, Choir Contract, and Assessment Agreement Forms are signed by parents and students at this time.
3. In order to participate in the choral program, the student AND parent must attend an orientation. All forms are due **by September 2** in order to participate in the choral program.

FALL CONCERT “Vive Musica!” (September)

1. All choir students (Freshmen & Senior High) participate in the Fall Concert.
2. There is no admission charged.
3. Formal concert attire is worn.

ALL STATE AUDITIONS-Senior HS (Sept., Nov., Jan.)

1. Members of Chorale and selected Ladies' Ensemble members are expected to prepare and audition for the first level of auditions – REGION. All entrance fees are covered by MISD.
2. Students are given rehearsal CD's and music to practice for the auditions.
3. If a student advances to the next level, he/she is required to attend rehearsals and learn the music for the next level of competition.
4. If a student makes the Region Choir, he/she is required to attend the Clinic/Concert. (See Lettering Policy)
5. Refer to your calendar for auditions and performance dates.
6. DO NOT SCHEDULE ACT/SAT on Region Clinic & Concert.

FRESHMAN ALL-REGION CHOIR (October)

1. All “academically eligible” freshmen are required to prepare & audition for the 9th Grade Region Choir.
2. Entrance fees and music are covered by MISD.
3. If a student makes the Region Choir he/she is required to attend the Clinic/Concert.

HOLIDAY REVUE (December)

1. ALL CHOIRS participate.
2. Eligibility rules apply. (See **DEFINITIONS OF “GOOD STANDING” & “ELIGIBILITY”**)
3. Attire is different from choir to choir.
4. Admission is charged to defray the costs: sets, costuming, staging, instrumentalists, & dessert. Holiday Revue is not a fund-raiser; it does not make a profit.
5. A rehearsal schedule for the week of the show (specific to each choir) will be posted as soon as possible.
6. All seating is reserved. Check the calendar for Ticket Night.

RENAISSANCE MADRIGAL DINNER (January-February)

1. All "**academically eligible**" students will participate and perform in the annual Madrigal Dinner. Costumes/uniforms are provided and cleaned for all choirs. The Chorale costumes are costly and students are expected to return the costume in the same condition it was issued. Students are financially liable for any damages.
2. Members of the Ladies' Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, and Freshman Choirs are expected to purchase a black long-sleeved turtleneck to be worn with their formal tux pants and vests. ("**Formal Wear**".)
3. Admission is charged to cover the cost of the meal, the rental of the hall, sets and props, and costumes. Madrigal is not a fund-raiser, it's an opportunity; it does not make a profit.
4. All seating is reserved. Check the calendar for Madrigal Faire (Reservation Night) in January.

UIL CONTESTS (Feb. & April)

1. All "**academically eligible**" students participate in UIL Concert & Sight-Reading and UIL Solo and Ensemble Contests.
2. Freshmen, Ladies' Ensembles & Chorale will participate in an ensemble for Solo & Ensemble Contest at the Director's discretion.
3. For Solo & Ensemble Contest Men's Choir will participate in either a solo or ensemble (director's discretion).
4. Sunday dress is worn for Solo & Ensemble (See FORMAL WEAR: Additional Concert Attire)
5. Concert attire is worn for Concert & Sight-reading.
6. A **special contest rehearsal schedule** will be posted for UIL Concert & Sight-reading Contest. During this rehearsal period, the Men's and Women's Choirs (Chorale, Ladies Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, & Freshman Choirs) will rehearse on Monday evenings. Chorale will rehearse on Thursday evenings. There are often one or two UIL Clinics with a guest conductor and a UIL Concert before the Contest. Students are required to participate in all.

SENIOR HIGH CHOIRS SPRING TRIP (March)

1. SENIOR HIGH Choirs will attend an out-of-town retreat at MO Ranch in the Spring semester for the purpose of preparing & performing contest music.
2. The cost of the retreat (lodging, meals, and transportation) is covered in the assessment.
3. Students must be "**in good standing**" and "**eligible**" to participate.

CHORAL CLASSICS (March)

1. ALL CHOIRS (SR HS & FHS) participate in this concert.
2. No admission is charged.
3. Formal concert attire is worn.

FRESHMAN CHOIR TRIP- (April)

1. The FRESHMAN Choirs will attend an out-of-town competition
2. Students must be "**eligible**" and "**in good standing**" to participate in the trip.
3. The cost of the trip is a *portion* of the assessment.

REBEL SING – (May)

- 1). ALL CHOIRS (JH, FHS, and SR HS) participate in the inaugural concert
2. No admission is charged.
- 3). Attire is different from choir to choir
- 4). A dress rehearsal will be scheduled for this event (TBA)

MUSIC AND FOLDERS

1. All concert music is furnished at no expense to the student. (Some music for individual competition must be purchased by the student, i.e. Pre-Area/Area and UIL Solo)
2. Music is expensive and students are expected to take care of it. **Music is to be kept in the choir folder at all times. Folders go home for practice or to their slot at the conclusion of every rehearsal/class**
3. If music is lost or damaged, the student will pay for the replacement of the music.
4. Music left out of the folder or slot and not in its place in the choir room is considered "lost".

CONCERT ATTIRE

All formal wear is the property of the Lee Choir Boosters & Lee Freshman/Senior High School. Part of the assessment covers the maintenance of the formal wear with the exception of the tux shirt and any unusually difficult alterations. Since the formal wear is the property of the Lee Choir Boosters & the School, it will be used for LHS/LFHS Choral performances only. If formal wear is lost or damaged, the student will pay for the replacements.

Formal wear must be fitted as soon as possible. Please listen for announcements and refer to the calendar as to your fitting date and time. *You MUST BE PRESENT for your fitting WITH YOUR DRESS SHOES (see below).*

A. LADIES

1. Formal wear includes a maroon formal dress, tux pants (LE), vest (LE), & t- shirt(s).
2. *CHARACTER SHOES* (your responsibility)
 - a. Uniform black character shoes will be worn by all the ladies.
 - b. A group order will be made. Payment must be made ***IN ADVANCE*** of the group order. (Cash or money order --more information will follow).
3. Accessories
 - a. Small earrings only. No multi-piercings, facial, or tongue piercings.
 - b. Limit other jewelry to a watch and favorite ring- no necklaces, no bracelets or excessive rings.
 - c. ***No Fingernail polish is to be worn other than natural or clear.***
 - d. Keep hair simple not extravagant- no hair ribbons, bows, or gaudy accessories.
4. The formals come to you freshly dry-cleaned. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WASH OR IRON THE FORMALS, TUX PANTS, BOW TIE OR VEST.**
5. Freshman Treble, & Ladies' Ensembles will need a black, long-sleeved turtleneck for the Madrigal Dinner.
6. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.) Hair will be pulled back out of the face, no bangs, no unnatural colors.
7. Chorale Ladies: Broadway Revue pants & top

B. MEN

1. Formal attire includes black tuxedo- tux pants, tux shirt, LFHS bow tie & cummerbund, vest & tie (senior high) and choir t-shirt(s).
2. The tuxedo shirt must be purchased by the student and is his personal property. A group order for the shirts will be taken to insure the lowest possible price and a uniform shirt.
3. Shoes are your responsibility.
 - a. Black DRESS shoes and black socks- no tennis shoes or boots.
 - b. Remember you must be able to dance and stand in these shoes. This means leather soles not rubber.
4. Accessories
 - a. NO earrings. No facial or tongue piercings.
 - b. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.) Hair will be pulled back out of the face, no bangs, no unnatural colors.
5. The tuxes come to you freshly dry-cleaned. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WASH OR IRON THE TUXEDOS, VEST, OR BOW TIES AND CUMMERBUND.**
6. Men's Choir and Freshman Men will need a black long-sleeved turtleneck for the Madrigal Dinner.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment covers the following costs: use, maintenance, and cleaning of concert formal wear, Broadway Revue costuming, Madrigal costumes, Spring Trip, travel, audition cd's, receptions, and additional music, office supplies, and accompanist & clinician fees not provided by the school budget. Any fundraising monies which exceed the stated assessment by \$100 or more will be applied to the following year's assessment.

WHAT IS AN ASSESSMENT? In August, plans are made, a budget set for the year, and a student assessment is determined. The Finance Committee compiles a budget which includes expenses for performances, trips, costuming, formal wear, storage fees, scholarships, administrative costs, etc. The budget is approved by the Board of Directors and brought before the club membership for a vote. Traditionally, a large portion of the expenses involve a major trip in the spring. The student assessment is set to cover both a portion of the operating budget as well as the cost of the trip.

Fundraising opportunities are planned to allow any student to raise a portion or the entire assessment amount. A schedule is set, and whether a student is earning their assessment or making payments, it is extremely important that all students remain current. Expenses are incurred year-round, so there must be a cash flow for obligations to be met. Equally important is preventing students from the financial bind that could occur when the final amount becomes due. Account statements will be available periodically. Any amount due can be mailed directly to the Booster Club P.O. Box 8473, Midland, TX 79708-8473. We ask each parent to visit with their student and agree together how they will meet this financial goal. You should maintain your own records of your student's fundraising and payments to confirm the accuracy of the club's records. A schedule for the assessment due is provided at choir orientation.

Because the Booster Club is a NON-PROFIT organization, the assessment is NON-REFUNDABLE.

What's covered by the assessment?

FRESHMAN

Spring Trip & Trip shirt
Maintenance & replacement of formal wear
Receptions, staging & props

SENIOR HIGH

Mo Ranch Trip
Maintenance & replacement of formal wear
Madrigal costumes, receptions, staging & props

What's not covered by the assessment?

FRESHMAN

Character Shoes-Ladies
Black Dress Shoes- Men
Black long-sleeved turtleneck
Tux Shirt
Choir T-Shirt

SENIOR HIGH

Character Shoes-Ladies
Black Dress Shoes- Men
Black long-sleeved t-neck (Ladies' Men's/En's's)
Tux Shirt
Choir T-Shirt
Chorale Ladies (pants & top for Broadway)

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising projects afford the student the opportunity to earn assessment monies. All profits of fundraising monies are credited to the individual students' assessment. Profits of fundraisers average 40% of selling price. All students are expected to participate and make an effort in fundraising.

***No student will be denied participation because of lack of funds, but ALL students are expected to make an effort to the very best of their abilities. Students who make no effort or attempt to fundraise will not travel on special trips.*

A. Booster Club Memberships (August-Sept.)

1. **ALL CHOIRS** participate
2. Parents are strongly encouraged to join.
3. All memberships receive advance publicity of all events and listing in concert program.
4. Students receive 100% of monies.

B. See Fundraising Handout at Orientation(s) for specific projects.

LETTERING POLICY-Senior High Only

In order to "letter" in Choir a student must:

- Must be a member in "good standing"*
- Compete in Region Choir auditions (for a major award- jacket or blanket)
- Perform in the Region Concert & Clinic (if selected for Region Choir)
- Participate in UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest
- Compete in UIL Concert & SR Contest
- Participate in all concerts, productions, and rehearsals
- Choir Community Service (5 hours)
- No unexcused absences***

SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

Membership in the choir is not only an honor but carries with it a responsibility to the entire Choir.

As a member of the choir the student makes a commitment to participate in all activities throughout the year. As the choirs are auditioned and carefully balanced according to voice parts, a student who does not complete the year affects the entire choir.

Therefore, if a student chooses not to fulfill his or her obligation and commitment, the following procedure will be observed in this order before any changes in schedule:

1. Required Student/parent conference with Mr. Davis OR Mrs. Cheatham (LFHS)
2. Required Student/director/counselor conference
3. Music and formal wear turned in
4. Assessment and fundraising obligations cleared
5. Drop slip signed by Mr. Davis OR Mrs. Cheatham (LFHS)
6. Schedule change initiated

Dear Parents,

The Robert E. Lee Senior and Freshman High School Choral Program offers a unique experience whereby a student may gain not only musical skills and a lifelong appreciation of music, but discipline, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment by working with others toward the common goal of EXCELLENCE.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of the expectations, requirements, and activities of the choral program. The Choral Program is a performance-based program. In order to be a member of the Lee High School Choral Program, students are expected to participate in all concerts and rehearsals.

I hope you will become involved by attending rehearsals and concerts. Come see the preparation as well as the results of these rehearsals.

Please feel free to contact us any time you have a question or problem concerning your student or the program.

For current information, rehearsal schedules, and updates: www.lhschoirs.org

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