

COUGAR CHOIR

This handbook is to serve as a guide for both students and their parents. Behavior and expectation guidelines are set forth in this document. Every student joining this organization assumes the responsibilities of upholding and improving upon the high standards and goals of the Cougar Choir.

All students and parents are expected to read the handbook carefully to avoid conflicts with the policies stated herein. **As soon as the handbook is read, the handbook signature page should be signed and returned to Mrs. Hinojosa.**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Choral music program at Coakley Middle School provides students the opportunity for individual growth and vocal development as a member of a choir. Students study and perform music of all styles and historical periods as well as from various musical cultures. Students learn the value of teamwork, cooperative learning, critical thinking, and self-evaluation. The Cougar Choir program is open to any student without regard to handicap, race, religion, sex, or ethnic origin.

STUDENTS

Welcome to the Cougar Choir Program. Students who get involved and fully participate in the choral program will enjoy the experience. The Cougar Choir is an organization whose members possess high qualities of good citizenship and strive to maintain a high degree of musical excellence.

Hard work is required of every choir member. Every single choir member is important to the success of the choral program. Hard working students are always rewarded. Work hard, do your best, and I hope you have a wonderful year making music!

PARENTS

Without your support, encouragement, and approval, the quality of our choral program would suffer. If you have any questions regarding your child and their progress in the Cougar Choir, please contact me at vanessa.hinojosa@hcisd.org. I will respond as soon as possible.

Discipline is necessary in all that we do. Students must meet the expectations of this organization. Any misconduct, while in the public eye casts a negative light on our school, our community, and HCISD. All Cougar Choir members must follow the student code of conduct for our campus, anything less is unacceptable, under any circumstances.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Vanessa E. Hinojosa
Choir Director
Coakley Middle School
(956) 427 - 3000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The choir classes are open to students who desire to learn to sing. The courses are divided by ability from beginning to intermediate, and advanced levels. In all classes students will receive guidance in techniques for producing proper vocal tone, pitch, rhythm, posture, dynamics, and performing at varying levels.

Choir is designed to help build self-esteem, cooperation, and life skills through the discipline of learning to sing and read music.

CHOIRS OFFERED

The Coakley Choir program consists of these performing choirs:

1. Beginner Choir – This choir is made up of 6th grade students.
2. Tenor-Bass Choir – This is a competition choir. This choir is made up of 7th & 8th grade tenors and basses.
3. Treble Choirs – Our Varsity and JV Treble Choirs are competition choirs. These choirs are made up of 7th & 8th grade treble voices, grouped by ability and attitude.

ELIGIBILITY

There is no academic eligibility requirement for concerts. Concerts are considered co-curricular, which means they are an extension of classroom learning. Participation is mandatory. Eligibility requirements will be in effect for all extra-curricular activities: Solo & Ensemble Contest, Region auditions, and any other competitions that occur. To be eligible, students must be passing all classes with a grade of 70 or above. Waivers may be granted for students who take Pre-AP courses in accordance with district policy.

Supplies List:

Students should bring the following items for use in the choral classroom:

- A pencil
- A ½ inch binder with front and back view pockets (7th & 8th Grade only)
- A reusable water bottle

Other Items:

Performance attire:

- Black Slacks
- Black Dress Shoes
- Black Socks

All students in the Cougar Choir will need these items for performances.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Although we do not intend on having any discipline problems, minor behavior issues will be documented and parents will be notified according to campus policy.

FUNDRAISING

The Cougar Choir has fundraisers to help with the extras such as trips and rewards. Profits from these fundraisers will be used to benefit the students. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one of the fundraisers. Fundraising makes trips and rewards possible. If there are any costs not met with fundraising efforts, students will be asked to pay the difference.

PERMISSION SLIPS

Information about off-campus activities will be sent home. A permission slip will be included. Parent signatures, and emergency information are required. We ask that both parents and students read the information carefully. No student may leave the campus without a signed permission slip. **All permission slips must be turned in by the given deadline for the event. No exceptions will be made.**

EXPECTATIONS

A CHOIR MEMBER IS EXPECTED TO:

- Be in your assigned place before the tardy bell rings.
- Raise your hand to speak.
- Follow instructions the first time they are given.
- Stay on task -
 - homework, makeup, brushes, etc. do not belong on the risers.
- Show respect to others and their property, this includes choir property.
 - Teasing, foul language, stealing, lying, and hitting/kicking are not tolerated in the choir hall.
- No foreign objects in your mouth – this includes gum.
 - You will only be asked once to get rid of gum, disciplinary action will follow.
Having foreign objects in your mouth while singing is a safety hazard.
- No electronic devices allowed.
- Have a positive attitude.

GRADING POLICY

Students will earn their grades in the following manner:

Daily Class Participation (75%)

- Following all expectations stated above.
- Full participation in all class activities.
- Complete all assigned tasks.
- Consistently demonstrate excellent quality of work.
- Maintain focus on the task at hand.
- Listen attentively throughout rehearsal.
- Do not distract others at any time during rehearsal.

Assessments will be made based on skill demonstration. The student is responsible for all material covered in the choral classroom. Students are expected to be fully prepared for each day's rehearsal.

Quizzes/Sight Reading Evaluations (25%)

- Sight Reading will be evaluated individually and as a group.
- Students will also be evaluated on class music.
- Written quizzes will be given periodically.
- Students will be quizzed on music theory, symbols or terms, and other information which will enhance their musical experience.

Advanced notice will be given to students prior to any quiz.

Concert Attendance

- Arrive on time for the concert.
- Be dressed appropriately for a performance.
- Exhibit proper concert and performance etiquette.
- Follow all directions the first time they are given.

Choir is a performance group. Participation at all performances is required. While I have made every effort to avoid scheduling concerts on days that conflict with other school events, occasional overlaps may still occur. I sincerely appreciate your understanding and support, and I kindly ask that you make every effort to ensure your child is present for all scheduled performances.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our program.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHOIR TRIPS

The Cougar Choir will take several trips during the school year, including our end of the year trip. In order to be eligible for these trips students must meet the following criteria:

- You will be asked to raise funds or to pay your own way for the non competitive trips.
 - You must NOT owe the choir any money.
 - Meeting academic eligibility is required for competitions & preferred by administration for all other trips.
 - Students having many behavior issues or referrals will not be allowed to attend off campus events. You are the face of Coakley Middle School & HCISD, your behavior must be exemplary.
 - You must have all the necessary forms signed, completed, and turned in by the date specified.
 - Performance at all concerts this year, without exception. (End of Year Trip)
- Students are expected to exhibit excellent behavior on all trips. Any inappropriate behavior while on a trip will not be taken lightly, and will result in disciplinary action.

CHOIR UNIFORMS

All students will be required to have the following for our fall concert & 6th Grade Festival:

Black Slacks

Black Dress Shoes

Black Socks (if wearing socks)

7th & 8th grade: Uniforms will be issued for use at Christmas Concert, Pre-UIL Evaluation, & UIL Evaluation; these must be returned.

6th grade: Will wear black slacks, dress shoes, and Choir shirts for performances.

All students must wear their hair in a way that does not cover their face. Bows or other hair ornaments must be black for performances. A Choir shirt must be purchased for use throughout the year. Students will wear a Choir shirt and a pair of full-length jeans (no rips or holes) for various events. Group uniforms give the choir a professional look.

COMPETITIONS, CONCERTS AND EVENTS

Concerts: All choirs will perform in concerts. Should a concert be held off campus, parents will be notified in advance about transportation arrangements for students. Plans should be made in advance so that all students are present for concerts. Absences from concerts will require an additional assignment to be completed by the student to make up that grade. Every voice is important. Please contact Mrs. Hinojosa if your child is unable to attend a concert.

From the Coakley Handbook:

A student who is absent from school for any reason will not be allowed to participate in school related activities on that day or evening or on Saturday if they are absent on Friday.

Solo & Ensemble Contest: 6th, 7th, & 8th graders are eligible to individually participate in the Solo & Ensemble contest in the fall. Preparation of a solo and/or ensemble requires extra rehearsal at a time other than during choir class. The music must be memorized and will be performed for a judge who will rate the performance. Students should dress nicely but comfortably, and the school dress code will be enforced. Entry fees and meals are provided by the school district. Eligibility is required.

Pre-UIL Concert & Sight Reading Evaluation: This evaluation, put on by HCISD, provides a rehearsal for UIL Evaluation. This takes place locally and participation of all students is mandatory. All 7th & 8th grade students participate in this evaluation. Lunch will be provided for students.

UIL Concert & Sight Reading Evaluation: The competition choirs will perform in the UIL Evaluation in March. The music prepared for the concert portion must meet certain criteria. The sight-reading portion requires special skills and techniques. Entry fees, meal money and transportation are provided. Participation is mandatory.

6th Grade Festival: All 6th grade choirs in the HCISD participate in this concert. Participation is mandatory.

All Region Choir Auditions, Clinic & Concert: We are a part of Region 28, which includes all school districts from Donna to Brownsville. This experience is very helpful and necessary in preparing the choir student for the All State audition process in high school choir. Music for this audition will be issued to each 7th & 8th grade choir student, along with a recording of their voice part. Preparation for this audition requires extra time outside the choir class. On the day of the audition, they will sing portions of the music by themselves and will be scored by five judges. The top 30 or so students that audition on each part will make the All-Region Choirs. There will be a 7th Grade Treble Choir, 8th grade Treble Choir, and a Tenor-Bass Choir. These choirs will meet three weeks after the audition for a clinic with a guest conductor and a concert for the parents. Entry fees, music, meal money and transportation are provided by the school district. Eligibility is required.

Parent Help

If you are able to help chaperone during the course of the school year, please go to www.hcisd.org, click on menu, look under “About Us” to find “Employment/Career”, click on “Volunteer - Apply Here”. Fill out the necessary information and we will let you know when you have been cleared to volunteer. It is district policy that this process be completed before each event at which you volunteer, even if you are currently employed with HCISD. These applications take approximately 3 to 4 weeks to be processed. We appreciate your time and willingness to help our program.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions at any time. We look forward to a wonderful year for the Coakley Middle School Cougar Choir.

Thank you!

Mrs. Vanessa E. Hinojosa

Director

Dr. Joshua Medrano

Accompanist/Assistant

Coakley Choral Staff

Mrs. Elizabeth MintoBauer

Principal

Mr. Daniel Sanchez

Assistant Principal

Mrs. Ashley David

Assistant Principal

Coakley Administration