

Leander Middle School

# **TIGER CHOIR**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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# **WELCOME!**

Welcome to the Leander Middle School Choir Program! It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we introduce our choir program to you in a more detailed manner. The LMS choir program has established a wonderful tradition of excellence and we are glad you have chosen to be a part of it.

Your child's participation in our choir program is beneficial in many ways. Choir students are engaged daily in a highly creative performing art that stimulates growth in areas of the human brain that no other discipline can. This growth effortlessly transfers into your student's academic life. In addition, our choir students will develop traits such as teamwork, responsibility, dedication, self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership and dependability. Membership in our choir program will give all a sense of accomplishment, pride, and respect, as the students develop musical and personal skills that will enrich their lives.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the guidelines and expectations for making this year a success for all involved, and to serve as a guide and resource for students and parents. Both students and their parents should take the time to thoroughly read this handbook.

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## **LEANDER ISD PURPOSE**

The purpose of LISD is to educate each student to be successful in an ever-changing world.

## **LEANDER ISD VISION**

The #1LISD community cultivates each student individually to produce the most sought after creators of our future world.

## **LMS CHOIR MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Leander Middle School Choir Program is to serve as an important musical link between the elementary and high school years by providing a unique education experience in which students gain musical skills and a life-long appreciation of music, as well as have the opportunity to develop individual skills that will help them to be successful throughout their lives.

## **LISD and LMS CHOIR TEN ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

The following ten major ethical values form a philosophical basis for ethical judgment and define the moral duties and virtues implicit in ethical behavior. Leander ISD is committed to these principals. The LMS Choir expects all choir members to continue to strive toward these standards of behavior.

### **Honesty**

- ◆ Always tell the truth.
- ◆ If you know of a situation or problem that the choir directors should know about, it is your duty to discuss with them the situation or problem.

### **Integrity**

- ◆ Always do what you know to be right even when no one is watching you.
- ◆ Do not compromise your values.

### **Promise-keeping**

- ◆ By signing the choir contract, you are making a promise to follow all policies and guidelines in the LMS Choir Handbook.

### **Loyalty**

- ◆ Support all members of the LMS Choir Program through thought, word and deed.

### **Concern for Others**

- ◆ Be tolerant and forgiving of each other.
- ◆ Help create and maintain a positive atmosphere and a safe environment by speaking positively to and about each other.

### **Law Abidance/Civic Duty**

Exhibit behavior that is representative of good citizenship in all classes and school-wide activities.

- ◆ Follow all school and choir rules and behavior expectations.
- ◆ Assist in concert setup and take down, as well as, any other jobs that need to be done.
- ◆ Take care of choir facilities and equipment.

**Respect for Others**

- ◆ Behave in a respectful manner to all choir students, directors, parents, chaperones and guests.
- ◆ Respect the rehearsal time by using every minute wisely.
- ◆ Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- ◆ Follow directions/instructions the first time they are given.
- ◆ Decide BEFORE you speak or act whether what you are about to say or do will be considered appropriate.

**Fairness**

- ◆ Celebrate with others when they succeed.
- ◆ Do not criticize other students who earn recognition.

**Pursuit of Excellence**

- ◆ Make an effort to improve daily.
- ◆ Do your best at all times and you will succeed.
- ◆ Help others to improve by leading by example and being supportive of others.
- ◆ Maintain the highest level of rehearsal behavior.

**Accountability**

- ◆ Take responsibility for your actions. Admit to what you do wrong and take pride in what you do right.
- ◆ Pass all of your classes every grading period to maintain eligibility.
- ◆ Be on time to and attend all rehearsals and performances.
- ◆ Wear the appropriate uniform required for all concerts.
- ◆ Follow through on your commitment to other choir students and the directors.

**COMMUNICATION**

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns throughout the school year.

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**Website Information**

The LMS Choir website can be found by going to the LMS website at <http://lms.leanderisd.org>. Click on Campus Information > Student Activities > Fine Arts > Choir, or by clicking Mrs. Clow's staff page in the teacher directory.

You can go directly using this link: <https://sites.google.com/a/leanderisd.org/lms-choir/home>.

Please visit the site regularly throughout the year to stay informed.

Please include both parents' names, phone numbers, and email addresses on the Student Data Online Form so that the choir directors are able to contact you if necessary. If this information changes during the school year, please inform the choir director as soon as possible.

## **DATA COLLECTION PRIVACY NOTICE**

The LMS Choir Directors use an online data information and communication website (e.g., CHARMS, Cut Time, etc.) to keep members informed about events, practices, and other important updates. Depending on the level of access set by the director or teacher, the website may contain contact information for students and parents, directory information for students, and confidential information such as payments made, account balances, uniforms, grades, practice logs, etc. Users and administrators of the website agree to protect the privacy of the information and agree not to use any information for non-program related purposes.

## **FUNDRAISING**

All fundraising is optional; however, students are encouraged to participate. The money raised is used for student motivation, activities, and to improve the choir department.

- We will have at least one optional fundraiser this year to help pay for the student's trip in May, uniform fees and other choir improvements.
- All money fundraised belongs to LMS Choir and cannot ever be refunded to a student. If a student fundraises money and then is unable to attend the choir trip for any reason, the money the student raised becomes the property of the LMS Choir Activity Account.
- Trip expenses will include festival registration, theme park tickets, bus expenses, and possibly some meals. These fees will possibly be lowered through fundraising, but not covered.
- Unused theme park tickets will not be given to students who were unable to attend. These tickets will be returned for cash to be deposited back into the activity account.
- Once students take their boxes of orders from the choir room they are responsible for all of the contents and must pay for the things they take with them. It is the student's responsibility to inform the choir director within 24 hours of any missing or damaged items.
- All fundraising money must be turned in on one day. No partial payments will be taken.

## **PAYMENT INFORMATION**

There will be times during the school year when payments will need to be sent to choir (fundraising, choir fees, etc.). To help with bookkeeping we ask that the following guidelines be followed each time money is sent to school for choir purposes:

- Please make online payments through the LMS Webstore (preferred method)
- Please make all checks payable to **LMS Choir**
- Please include your **driver's license number and phone number** on the check. This is a Leander ISD policy, and your check WILL be returned if the DL# is not on the check, possibly making a payment late and unacceptable.
- Please include the choir student's name on each check in the "memo" area.
- Please send all money (cash or checks) to school in an envelope marked with the choir student's name, class period, and "LMS Choir" written on the front. It's not a good idea to label any envelope sent to school as "money".

Money will be turned into the appropriate class period drawer, in the choir room at the beginning of class. Students must sign the Monies Tabulations Form for proof of money turned in.

### **Choir Fees**

There is a one-time choir fee at the beginning of the year that incorporates most of the required fees throughout the year. Specifics are included on a separate handout and the LMS Choir website. Choir fees can be paid at one time or can be split up into two installments. Optional field trips and extra activities will have additional costs.

### **Insufficient Funds**

District policy states that we are not allowed to accept checks from any individual who has had more than one check to LISD that was returned for insufficient funds. No temporary checks will be accepted. Cash and money orders can be accepted in this instance.

### **Refund Guidelines**

**Due to payment deadlines by the companies we use to go on trips, LMS Choir is unable to provide refunds for ANY reason.** Once a payment has been received and documented, refunds will not be considered. This includes but is not limited to ineligibility and last-minute cancellations. We are sorry for any inconvenience this causes. Please be sure you are eligible, available and committed to the dates in advance to prevent from losing your money.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

LMS Choir pays its fundraising company for all of the items ordered by the students. If a student does not return the money for the products they take from choir, they are stealing. Choir has paid for a product and not received reimbursement for something that the student has taken. **This is a very serious matter.** Students should keep accurate records of all the money they collect.

Any student who is delinquent in their payments toward the choir fundraising accounts may have the following consequences applied towards them:

- An office referral (which will lead to ineligibility)
- D-Hall until all money is turned in
- Students will not be allowed to go on any choir field trip until all accounts are settled.
- More serious offenders will receive consequences as determined by the LMS administrators.

### **Statement of Financial Policy**

No student will be denied participation in the LMS Choir due to financial hardship. Please speak to the choir director so that arrangements can be made for those in need of consideration.

### **Deadlines**

It is imperative that deadlines set by the director are followed. All deadlines will be strictly enforced. Students who have a particular form or money due to choir will not be allowed to turn them in past the set deadline without consequences. The consequences may include lowered grades, inability to participate in events, and loss of trip privileges.

## UNIFORMS

All LMS Choir students are required to have a formal and an informal choir uniform. Students' performance grade will be lowered for improper uniforms at performances.

### Formal Uniforms

**6th Graders:** You will need to have a formal outfit of your own. Any nice dresses, skirts, suits, slacks, long sleeved dress shirts with ties, etc. No athletic shoes or jeans will be allowed.

**7th/8th Grade Females:** You will get a formal dress issued to you by the choir. **Students will need to provide their own black flats to be worn with our choir dresses.** Hair will be worn pulled back out of their face as part of the uniform. **Jewelry must not be worn with choir uniforms.** This includes necklaces, watches, and bracelets. Earrings and rings must be small and inconspicuous and kept to a minimum.

**7th/8th Grade Males:** Students will be provided with a tuxedo, including pants, shirt, tie, and vest. These will be kept at school and changed into before performances. **Students will need to provide their own black dress shoes and black socks.** No athletic shoes will be allowed.

**Performance Attire Discrepancies:** If performance attire is an issue with a student for reasons of personal beliefs, religion, gender identity, or ability, students can speak with directors in private to devise a plan that will work for all parties.

**Return Policy:** All dresses must be returned to the LMS choir program at the end of the school year. If, at the end of the year, the dress is not returned, the full amount will be charged to the student. Uniforms will be reused for many years to come and must be kept in good shape. **Students who do not take good care of their uniforms will be charged a replacement fee.**

### Informal Uniform

**T-Shirts:** All choir members are **required** to purchase an LMS Choir t-shirt to be worn for less formal performances. Students may not be allowed to perform at these concerts without an LMS Choir t-shirt. **No other shirt will be permitted.** *These shirts will also be worn to school on choir concert days to show pride in the choir!* **Look in the packet for ordering information.**

Along with the choir t-shirt, students are required to wear blue jeans (not black, not khaki, and not shorts). These jeans should be neat and not have holes or excessive fraying.

Students with inappropriate concert attire will not be allowed to participate in the performance, their grade will be affected.

## REHEARSAL/CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

**Attitude is everything!!**

- Sing to the best of your ability at all times.
- Be in your assigned seat, quiet, with your choir folder and sharpened pencil, ready to begin rehearsal BEFORE the start of class.
- Be courteous and respectful to peers, teachers, and guests. Treat each other like you want to be treated. We depend on each other for many things. Follow directions the first time.
- Enter and leave the choir room quietly. Remain seated until the choir director (not the clock) dismisses class. Please help to keep the choir room clean and orderly each day.
- Eating, drinking, and GUM CHEWING are NOT ALLOWED in the choir room.
- Talking is not allowed in class. During rehearsal, if your section is not singing you're expected to be following along and silently studying your part.
- Take care of all equipment (music, books, folders, chairs, furniture, etc.). All pianos, the phone, stereo, all sound equipment, and the teacher's office, and other rooms are off limits without permission from the choir director.
- Use the restroom, drinking fountain, and grooming articles BEFORE or AFTER class only.
- Hair spray, cologne, and makeup are not to be used in the choir room.
- Have proper concert behavior during all performances. You should not talk at any time during a choir concert or cause any kind of distraction for performing groups or audience members.

### **Behavior Consequences**

May include any combination of the following:

- Warning/conference with the student
- Lowered grade
- Teacher assigned consequence. Can include:
  - Conference with student and/or parent
  - Detention marks
  - Alternate assignment (unfinished work = detention)
  - Trip participation privileges revoked
  - Office Referral Note: Severe offenses will automatically result in an office referral.
  - Removal from choir as your elective. Please be aware that recurrent violations of the student behavior expectations will result in a student being dropped from choir as their elective.

Excessive tardies can affect a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular choir activities and can lower a student's rehearsal grade in choir. Students may also receive lunch detention for tardies.

## ***DUE PROCESS***

All Leander ISD students are entitled to due process in accordance with LISD guidelines. Our goal as a staff is to ensure that all students are treated fairly. Please contact one of the directors if you have any concerns. We will work with you to resolve problems. We are here to provide a quality music education for all our students.



## GRADING

Each six weeks, grades are averaged according to the percentages listed below:

60% Rehearsal Grade, 40% Performance Grade

If a concert does not occur during a grading period, then the Rehearsal grade will be raised to 100%. **Participation in all concerts is required.**

### ▮ 60% Rehearsal Grade

Rehearsal grades are determined by a number of criteria listed below:

- Having all materials (pencil, highlighter, folder) the entire class
- Participation in warm-ups, sight-reading and all singing activities
- Self Evaluations and Teacher Evaluations
- Written Work: theory worksheets, starter worksheets, tests/quizzes, etc.
- Singing Tests
- Putting all materials in proper location at the end of class

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled to prepare for concert performances. **Every group choir extra rehearsal is mandatory and counted as a part of the rehearsal grade.** An unexcused absence can negatively impact the overall grade.

### ▮ 40% Performance Grade

Performance in choir is a TEKS requirement. These performances will include all times when students are required to perform (pep rallies, assemblies and out of school activities etc.). Also included in this grade is a concert grade. (If a concert does not occur during a grading period then the Rehearsal grade will be raised to 100%.

### Concerts

There will be several required performances for the LMS choirs during the school year. Evening choir performances are **mandatory** because they are part of the choir curriculum. A choir calendar with the concert dates is included in this packet. **Parents: please put all concert dates on your family calendar. Your child's presence at our performances is very important! Missing more than one required concert causes students to be ineligible for choir trips.** Please contact the director immediately if there is a schedule conflict due to a previously scheduled event. All schedule conflicts will be handled on an individual basis. Absences need to be communicated to the director one month in advance at minimum to be considered for a make up assignment.

Students do not have to be eligible to participate in the required evening concerts. If a daytime performance or rehearsal causes the student to miss another class, the student is responsible to promptly make up all missed work.

### Evening Concert Grade

Students will receive one grade of 100 for each evening LMS Choir Concert they participate in.

Because Concert Etiquette is one of our TEKS, concert grades will be lowered for inappropriate concert behavior such as talking, causing any kind of distraction during a performance, tardiness, improper uniform, etc.

If a student has a severe illness (fever, vomiting, etc., at the time of the concert, a parent should call the choir office at **512-570-3228**, and leave a message prior to the time the concert would begin. If the choir director excuses the student from the concert the student will receive no grade. In other words, there will be no benefit and no penalty.

Students who miss the concert without prior communication and do not call the choir office or do not bring a written excuse the day they return to school after the concert, will receive a grade of "0" which may result in a failing grade for the six weeks. Concerts will only be excused by the choir director in instances of extreme illness or family emergency. **Forgetting about the concert, not having a ride, etc. will not be considered excused concert absences and will result in a grade of "0". Alternate assignments will not be given to any student who misses a performance for an unexcused reason. Concert grades cannot be made up.**

## ***CONCERT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS***

Choir students will exhibit proper concert behavior during all performances, in either their own choir or as an audience member. Students will be graded on their behavior. Concert etiquette is an integral part of choral music education. Appropriate conduct in formal and informal concert settings is included in the TEKS for choral music.

- Talking is not allowed on stage or in the audience. It is disrespectful to the performers on stage and audience members who wish to hear the performance and does not show support for the LMS Choir program.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices should be put away and turned off during the concert.
- Do not leave your seat FOR ANY REASON (other than extreme emergency). You will be given ample opportunity to use the restroom and drinking fountain before concerts begin; therefore, these are not considered extreme emergencies. If you must leave, do so as quietly and as inconspicuously as possible (Make sure doors do not slam shut). Leave and enter between songs only.
- No food or drink is allowed in the performance area including the stage, backstage, and seating area. This includes water bottles.
- Support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. are not acceptable. The audience should never cause attention to be shifted from the performers on stage.
- Set a good example for the audience and other students. Other people may not know how to act at a choir concert and will be watching you for clues.
- Move between the stage and seating areas in quiet, single file lines. Sit in your assigned seat/row and do not put your feet on the seats. No talking while you are entering or exiting the stage.

- Stay for the entire concert.

Confused on when it's OK to applaud? Generally, it is appropriate to applaud when the conductor lowers his or her arms after a song is completed. During pop or jazz music it's OK to applaud after a soloist, in the middle of a song. This is not the usual practice for more serious music, in which the soloists are acknowledged after the song is over.

## **PERFORMANCE LOCATIONS**

**Leander Middle School Cafeteria Stage: 410 S. West Drive, Leander, TX 78641**

**Glenn High School Auditorium: 1320 Collaborative Way, Leander, TX 78641**

**Don Tew Performing Arts Center: 3301 S Bagdad Rd, Leander, TX 78641**

## **UIL EVALUATIONS**

All eligible 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to participate in the University Interscholastic League Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluations in March and April (see Choir Calendar). **UIL takes precedence over all other school activities. Students will not be penalized by other organizations for attending the UIL Choir Evaluations or rehearsals.**

## **TRAVEL**

### **Travel Conduct**

All school and choir rules and consequences will be enforced on trips. Choir students are expected to treat their chaperones and bus drivers with respect. Students who misbehave will lose their eligibility to participate in future choir trips. Bus conduct will include that of the schools and the bus driver's additional requests.

### **Departure and Return Policy**

Students will be given arrival times to the school for trips that must be followed. In order to get to our destinations on time, we will depart at the time indicated on the trip info sheets. Students who do not arrive on time might be left and money will not be refunded.

### **Written Communication**

If there are any special instructions such as a child being picked up early, riding with a parent, or coming late, all such instances must be written down and given to the director ahead of time.

### **Travel Forms**

All travel forms and medical release forms (completed and signed) must be in the director's possession before departure, or the child will not be able to attend.

### **Money**

LMS Choir is unable to provide refunds for ANY reason. Please refer to refund guidelines for more

information.

### **Field Trips**

As a reward for hard work and excellent behavior and for the opportunity to perform, **eligible** choir students may participate in field trips at various times during the school year. Choir students' participation in extracurricular activities is at the discretion of the director. The director will determine who can participate in choir activities according to the eligibility guidelines stated in this handbook.

Only eligible LMS Choir members can participate in choir field trips. Other students, (including ineligible choir students) or other children will not be allowed to ride along or participate.

Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to join the choirs on any of their outings. District policy states that parents/guardians must have a volunteer application on file with the school district to be allowed to chaperone (see the Parent Volunteer Form included in this packet).

**Please be courteous of the directors, administrators, and other parent chaperones time and be prompt when picking up your children from choir concerts and trips. Eligibility for future trips will be taken away if students are not picked up on time!! The police will be called for any student who has not been picked up within one hour following the conclusion of the event.**

Student safety is our number one concern. Please be sure to include all pertinent phone numbers and important medical information on the **Travel Form** submitted on Rank One. These forms will be accessible with us on every outing we attend.

It is also extremely important to let the directors know in advance, in writing of any special circumstances on a particular field trip. For example: if you are dropping off or picking up the student instead of having them ride the bus. We keep very accurate records on where each student is on a trip and it is imperative that we know in writing of any changes.

Regularly during the school year additional opportunities for performance will arise. Parents and students will be given ample notice for trips that are not included on the choir calendar.

Please keep all eligibility criteria in mind during the year!

## **PRIVATE VOICE LESSONS**

Private voice instruction is available during the school day through voice teachers in the choir department. All students are encouraged to sign up for voice lessons.

- Openings are limited. Students are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis depending upon when the voice lesson enrollment form is received.
- Lessons are 20 or 30 minute sessions, once a week and can be arranged during choir class, or before/after school.
- There are additional costs associated with voice lessons, including materials (music

books) and accompanist fees for recitals and contests and contest fees.