

CdS CHOIR HANDBOOK 2025-26

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to an exciting and *thriving* choral music program! Corona del Sol Choir has a long standing of excellence both on and off of the stage. We welcome you to the program!

This Handbook will give you all the information you need for the 2025-26 school year. Below are two important points to note:

1. *All volunteers - parent or otherwise - must be cleared through the district. Visit www.tempeunion.org/Volunteer to begin the process. Once complete, email me and I will inform the CdS Activities office to look for your information to complete the process. Likewise, if you are a returning volunteer, email me and I will forward your information to Activities to re-up your volunteer status. And if you'd like to receive communication from other Choir Parents about how you can help the program, please email [cgschoirhelp@gmail.com](mailto:cdschoirhelp@gmail.com) to let them know you are interested.*
2. **Most important!** *This is a **performance-based** class and all students are required to perform. There are four required, on-campus performances; **Sept. 18, Dec. 12, Feb. 26, May 15 & 16.***

Students, please complete the online form [found here](#) (same as the QR code from class). This is important so I can make an updated student and parent email list, and get to know you a little more.

And finally, please print and sign the last two pages of this document - “**The Really Important Form**”, as well as TUHSD’s Medical Release form - and return them to me by Friday August 1st. Hard copies are available in the choir room.

If you have any questions, let me know right away by sending a DM via PatentSquare. I look forward to meeting all of you soon!

Andrew De Valk

Choir Director

adevalk@tempeunion.org

www.cdschoir.com

Office Phone: 480-624-7962

ABOUT THE CHOIRS

Choir 1 “Bella Voce” (girls), or “Novum” (boys & girls)

No audition is required for these classes. ***School concerts and other performances are mandatory and are a major part of the grade.*** This course concentrates on healthy fundamental vocal development, essential music performance skills, and historical/theoretical application of choral music. The course *emphasizes* sight-singing, music literacy, and appropriate performance practice.

Choir 2 “Encore”

This course requires an audition. This is our intermediate treble choir. School concerts and other performances are mandatory and a major part of the grade. This class will attend the Chandler-Gilbert Community College Fall Choral Festival in October as well as the Choir Trip in the spring. This course concentrates on healthy vocal development, advanced music performance skills, and historical/theoretical application of choral music with a strong emphasis on sight-singing.

Choir 3 “A Cappella”

This course requires an audition. This is the advanced SATB choir (Soprano-Alto-Tenor-Bass). School concerts, festivals, and other performances are mandatory and a major part of the grade in this class. This course concentrates on healthy vocal development, advanced music performance skills, and historical/theoretical application of choral music with a very strong emphasis on sight-singing. Many of the students in this class take private voice and/or piano lessons.

Choir 4 “Jaztecs”

This course requires an audition. This is a small ensemble of 16-20 students who are already members of ***A Cappella*** (Choir 3). It is the most advanced of our choirs. Students will earn an Honors credit for completing this course. Therefore, it is a more rigorous course. The advanced literature is at least four-part to eight-part harmony. This course concentrates on fundamental concepts with some emphasis on early fifteenth and sixteenth century polyphonic music from the Medieval and Renaissance periods, as well as Vocal Jazz or Pop. Many performances are scheduled throughout the school year, including our annual Middle School Recruiting Tour .

Solstice

This is our only club choir. Any Corona del Sol student may audition for this club. It is completely student organized and directed. Mr. DeValk is merely the Club Sponsor. Solstice performs on all of our regular concerts throughout the year. They will sometimes perform for school assemblies and other off-campus performances.

COMMUNICATION

The Choir’s website is www.cdschoir.com. Important information will be posted there throughout the year. If you don’t find the answer to your question on the website, please email the choir parent volunteers at cdschoirinfo@gmail.com and/or Mr. DeValk at adevalk@tempeunion.org as well.

ParentSquare and StudentSquare

Mr. DeValk will communicate with parents and students almost EXCLUSIVELY via ParentSquare & StudentSquare by way of Posts and Direct Messages. This platform allows staff to communicate with

parents and students without exchanging personal cell phone numbers. Downloading the app to parents and students phones makes for a more seamless experience.

Office Phone

Mr. DeValk's office phone is 480-624-7962. This is connected to ParentSquare. Calls to this number will be recorded.

GRADING POLICY

40% On-Campus Performances

20% Rehearsal/Behavior

20% Sight-Reading Factory Assignments/Quizzes (written and sung)

20% Homework/Paperwork (inc. but not limited to signed documents, receipts, etc.)

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION/BEHAVIOR (aka "Rehearsal Technique")

This grade reflects your work on a daily basis in the classroom. The teacher will regularly evaluate the student's attitude and effort on a daily basis. In addition, the following behaviors will reduce a grade:

- Talking during rehearsal (disrupting the educational process)
- Missing materials (folder, music, pencil, etc.)
- Application of make-up in class
- Gum/food/non-water drinks in class
- Cell phone out in class or other technology
- Tardy w/o pass (see CdS Tardy Policy in Student Handbook)
- Inappropriate language or activity

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

All communication will be logged in Synergy, and parents will be notified via ParentSquare

1st offense	verbal warning to student
2nd offense	parent/guardian notified
3rd offense	phone call to parent/guardian
4th offense	referral to administration for discipline

PAPERWORK

Any document requiring a signature will be given a deadline. If the document is handed in late, there will be a point deduction. The later the document is, the more points that will be deducted.

Receipts from the Bookstore will also be given a deadline. If the receipt is handed in late, there will be a point deduction. The later the receipt is, the more points that will be deducted.

TUHSD CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell Phone / Electronic Device Guidelines (smart watches, earbuds, etc)

In order for students to focus on learning, Tempe Union High School District tries to minimize distractions and interruptions to all instructional time. Based on the importance of this instructional time, phones and electronic signaling devices will not be allowed to be visible or used. All students are

required to adhere to the following guidelines regarding cell phones and other electronic signaling devices.

Cell phones and electronic signaling devices **may NOT be used:**

- during instructional classroom time, including assemblies or other activities, which take place during the regularly scheduled classroom periods
- to take pictures at any time that violate personal privacy
- for cheating
- on field trips or excursions, which are conducted during the normal school day and during regular classroom instructional hours

Cell phones and electronic signaling devices **may be used:**

- on or off campus before or after school.
- during lunch
- following a school state of emergency, the school principal or designee may allow contact with parents for a designated time period.
- if a teacher approves the use for educational activities conducted in his/her own classroom.
- if a teacher/coach approves the use during extended trips and sporting events.

Consequences

Students who violate the above guidelines shall be deemed to have created a disruption in the educational environment and shall be subject to disciplinary action. The severity of the disruption and whether other policies were also violated will determine the appropriate discipline. If a phone or electronic signaling device is involved in a criminal violation, the phone or electronic signaling device may be held or turned over to District administration or police for evidence.

- **First offense:** warning and teacher will document warning
- **Second offense:** detention and reflective practice
- **Third Offense:** referral and parent conference
- **Fourth Offense:** referral and electronic device will be confiscated; parent/guardian can pick up the phone from the front office

ON-CAMPUS PERFORMANCES

All on-campus concerts are curricular and MANDATORY. Concerts are the ultimate evaluation of many weeks of preparation and class work. Choir concerts are designated as an extension of the classroom. All choir members are expected to be present for the **entire length** of each required concert. An unexcused absence from a concert will have a negative impact on the student's grade.

Concerts are a mandatory element of the curriculum. ***If you are in choir only for a fine arts credit, please re-think your choice.*** Everyone in every choir will perform. STUDENT's grades will reflect their participation both during rehearsals and at performances. Every member of a performing ensemble is vital to the ensemble. Never think otherwise!

Concert Grading

- 25% On time for Call Times
- 25% Staying for ENTIRE concert
- 25% Behavior ON/OFF the stage (see Concert Behavior Expectations)
- 25% Uniform (hair, shoes, jewelry, etc)

****Student Concert Behavior Expectations****

- Be on time to call times (typically 6pm, 1 hr before concert time)
- Arrive fully dressed including hair, shoes, socks, make up (if applicable)
- No talking during the concert (on and off stage)
- Clap when appropriate
- No cat-calling or shouting of any kind
- Respect all adults, especially choir parent volunteers!
- No cell phone use during the concert (volunteers will collect before the concert)
- Students are not permitted to use the auditorium lobby restrooms during concerts. Students are to go backstage (outside & around the auditorium bldg) and use the Little Theatre restrooms backstage.

Concert Absences

Types of Excused Absences for concerts include but are not limited to:

- **Personal Illness** – In the event of illness, please email Mr. DeValk. Personal information need not be shared. Simply inform Mr. DeValk that you're ill. An email from a parent/guardian will be required in order to excuse you from the concert.
- **Family Emergency** – In the event of a family emergency, if possible, have a parent/guardian notify a director **as soon as possible**.
- **Long-Planned Family Event** – If your family has scheduled a trip prior to receiving the dates of the concerts, and those plans cannot change, please notify Mr. DeValk **as soon as possible**. Do not wait until the week before a concert.

Types of Unexcused Absences include but are not limited to:

- **Work** – Employment schedule conflicts are **never** considered an excused absence from a rehearsal or performance. You will be provided with advance notice for all rehearsals and concerts in order to give you time to coordinate your work schedule.
- **Sports** - Students need to communicate with both Mr. DeValk and their coach about a conflict. Concerts, again, are **curricular (graded)**. Sports are **extra-curricular (not graded)**. Most times, we can resolve a conflict by both Mr. DeValk and the coach with flexibility from both Mr. DeValk and a coach.
- **No ride** – Concerts are planned months in advance. Those dates can be found in the calendar portion of this document and [here](#). The excuse "I couldn't find a ride" is not an excuse at all. This will result in your grade being lowered.
- **"I don't feel like it"** – is not a reason for an excused absence. This is a performance based class.

Alternative assignments are for EXCUSED ABSENCES only

If an excused absence from a concert is granted, the student must complete a make-up assignment to earn the points of the concert. The make-up assignment may be as follows:

1. Attend another choral performance by a high school, college, or professional choir and complete a one-page evaluation (evaluation requirements below).

Evaluation Requirements

Performance Evaluations should Include the following Information: (at least 250 words)

- Brief summary of the performance (concert theme, décor, any overall thoughts). What you liked and disliked.
- Evaluate things such as the uniforms/costumes, lighting, choreography, etc.
- Evaluate the choir's tone quality, blend, style, dynamics etc.
- Programming, length of the concerts, types of songs, professionalism on and off stage.
- Copy of the program or ticket stub attached including directors signature.

2. Complete a 500 word essay on a musical topic assigned by the director. Due dates are typically the date of the concert.

Essay Topics may include but are not limited to:

- The music that the choir has worked on for that quarter.
- A musical topic in which you take interest; ie: a singer, genre, ensemble, composer, etc.

UNIFORMS

Every student will be issued a school uniform for performances. Students will be fitted for a uniform in class by a parent booster volunteer who will help find the uniform that best fits your student. The Choir Program pays for the uniforms. They belong to the Corona del Sol High School Choir Program. However, once a student takes possession of the uniform, a hold for the value of the garment will be placed on the student's account in the bookstore.

- Concert Dresses \$100
- Black dress shirt \$20
- Black dress slacks \$20
- Black suit cost \$60
- Neck tie \$15
- Solstice dress \$80

Students will have to provide the following to complete their choir uniform:

Boys: Black dress socks, black dress shoes, white button down dress shirt (A Cappella), black button down dress shirt (Novum, Jaztecs). If a student doesn't own black pants or black suit coat (A Cappella only), one will be provided. Black dress shirts can also be provided by the choir for Novum and Jaztecs.

Girls: Black FLAT *closed toe* shoe, and nude knee-high stockings. Even though the dress is full-length, the audience's eyes are at the level of the performer's feet. We want all performers on stage to look as uniform as possible. So this means that these knee-high stockings are required.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We LOVE our parent volunteers! From helping with concerts, and feeding students at choir activities, to chaperoning tours, our program cannot survive without them!

Tempe Union mandates that all parent volunteers must complete their registration process. If you have registered with the district in the past, simply [email Mr. DeValk](#) your information will be forwarded to the CdS Activities Office for renewal.

If you've never volunteered for Tempe Union, and have not yet registered, please [CLICK HERE](#) to begin the application process. Please also email [Mr. DeValk](#) to let him know you are applying.

***Mr. DeValk and TUHSD expect our students to treat our volunteers with respect. Our Choir Parent Volunteers give so much of their time, effort, and sometimes, their own money, to help the students, the director and the program. When our volunteers are shown disrespect, they don't feel valued or welcomed and that can make them feel like they don't want to volunteer any longer - understandably so! Please help in welcoming, thanking, and treating our parent volunteers with the utmost respect and care!*

CONCERT TICKETING

Tempe Union is now a GoFan district for all ticketed events. This means that Choir Concert tickets will only be available via GoFan and NOT the bookstore. There are 3 tiers of tickets; Premium \$16, Main Floor \$11, Lecture Hall \$6. Concert goers will be able to select their seat/seats for each concert. There is no General Admission. Everyone will purchase their seats.

Tickets will go on sale soon! More information is forthcoming!

BOOSTER DUES

Each year, the CdS Choir Boosters collect dues. This year, the dues are \$100 and are due by Friday August 1st. This is NOT a fundraiser for the Boosters! Rather, this money is essentially returned to the students in form of \$25 Dbacks tickets when we sing the Nat'l Anthem (8/20), choir t-shirts \$25, meals for events (dress rehearsals, choir retreat), snacks & water for concerts, Pops Concert costumes, and other expenses that are directly related to students.

***The CdS Choir Boosters - a not-for-profit organization - are always looking for individual or corporate sponsors. Should we get enough sponsorship, we may not need to assess booster dues. If you or your business are interested in a sponsorship, please reach out to cdschoirhelp@gmail.com. Should you need extra time to pay Booster Dues, please let Mr. DeValk know right away.*

ADVANCED MUSIC STUDY AND PERFORMANCE CREDIT (Optional)

Students in Choir 2, 3, and 4 can earn honor's credit by participating fully in their choir, and by fulfilling the requirements listed below. Papers and projects are due by the final school day of each respective quarter. ***Late papers or projects will not be accepted.***

QUARTER 1

Select one song that your choir is singing for the concert and write a 2-page, double spaced paper using a 12-point font (at least 500 words). Research topics can include but aren't limited to the following:

- Facts about the composer
- First performance of the piece
- Country of origin
- Recordings of the song
- Is the song from a larger work?

QUARTER 2

Attend a high school, college, or professional choir performance and write a review. Write about what you saw, heard, liked, or disliked. Did you hear a song that stood out? Was there an amazing soloist? What were they wearing? Did they look professional? Was there a theme to the concert? Dates for such concerts can be found in Canvas.

OR

Audition for the Arizona All State Jazz and/or Show Choir. To audition for these all state choirs, students must learn a prescribed solo as well as a major scale and chromatic scale. For the Show Choir, students must audition with a prescribed dance routine as well. Audition registration is August 22 and the live audition date is September 21 at West View High School.

QUARTER 3

Audition for regionals. The registration deadline is November 22, 2024. The auditions take place on January 24 or 25, 2025 at Pinnacle High School. The required fee to audition is \$30.

To audition for the regional choir, students must prepare and memorize a song found [here on the Arizona Choral Educators website](#). There is also a sight-singing component to the audition. Hiring a private voice teacher is encouraged, but not required. Students do ***not*** need to make the Regional Choir in order to receive honor's credit.

QUARTER 4

Complete a project of your choice. Projects must be approved by Mr. DeValk no later than March 10. Below is a brief list of possible projects. Be creative! Think about something that you love about music and dive into it! Projects could include something from the following list. Feel free to adapt a project to make it your own.

- Compose and perform an original work song for voice or instrument. If you use someone else's lyrics, be sure to cite the author's name. Submit a video of you performing the song as well as sheet music with the words and the notation for at least the melody line.
- Write a 4-page research paper on a topic that you choose. A rubric will be provided if you choose this option.
- Create tutorial videos for first year choir kids. For example, "how to find your starting pitch in sight-singing" or "here's what it means to have good posture in choir", or something else that you choose.

[CLICK HERE to sign up for Advanced Music Study and Performance.](#)

****Deadline to sign up is Friday August 1st at 11:59pm.****

2025 - 2026 CHOIR CALENDAR

[Click here to add the Choir Google Calendar to your own](#)

***All dates and times are subject to change. Written notice will be given to students and*

OTHER OPTIONAL FEES

Students will be presented with other performance opportunities. The Arizona Music Educators Association - AMEA - sponsors the following activities with the cost for each activity listed accordingly. More information on these opportunities can be found later in this document.

- All State Jazz Choir
 - Audition \$25
 - Festival Participation \$60
- All State Show Choir
 - Audition \$25
 - Festival Participation
- West Region Honor Choir
 - Audition \$30
 - Participation \$30
- AZ All State Honor Choir
 - Audition \$30
 - Participation \$50

Choir Merch

Our student led Choir Council will be presenting some Choir Merch to purchase later in the year. Often times they design sweatshirts, hats, stickers, and other merch for students and families to purchase. This is completely optional.

FUNDRAISING

Tax Credit

Please participate in the Tax Credit Program! This is our best fundraiser. Under Arizona law, any Arizona tax payer (parent, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, great-grandparents, adult friends of the family, etc.) can donate up to \$200 (\$400/married couple) to the Choir Program and claim that contribution as a tax credit on their state tax return. *This is not a deduction.* This is a dollar-for-dollar Tax Credit.

If you choose to participate in the tax credit program, you can donate in person at the bookstore, or donate online [here](#). If writing a check, make the check to “Corona del Sol Choir” and write your student’s name and your phone number as well as “Choir Tax Credit” in the memo of the check.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ON MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Once money is raised, contributed, or donated for the choir program, the person who raised, donated, or contributed the money no longer owns it. There are ***no*** refunds. Thus, even if a student cannot participate in an event for which money has been raised, donated, or contributed – such as a choir trip – there are no refunds. The money will be used for the choir program, but there are ***no*** refunds.

ARIZONA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION SPONSORED EVENTS (AMEA)

Optional Activities for Individual Students

The Arizona Music Educators Association (AMEA) sponsors events throughout the year in order to provide more opportunities for individual success. The following activities, listed below with dates and details, are ***strongly encouraged*** but not required unless your student has chosen to earn honors credit for choir. If you have any questions about these events, do not hesitate to contact Mr. DeValk at adevalk@tempeunion.org.

All State Jazz Choir

There are two Jazz Choirs - All State Jazz Choir and the All State Clinic Choir. The 1st 5 singers of each section (SATB) will be placed into the Jazz Choir and work with a clinician from out of state. The next 5 students from each section will be placed in the Clinic Choir and will have an in-state clinician. Students interested in auditioning for this choir should have a solid grasp on jazz concepts such as swing, appropriate tone, excellent intonation, and a desire to push themselves musically.. Auditions are virtual (submitted digitally). The registration deadline is August 22. Digital submissions are due Sept 7th. Details will be posted on the website and shared with parents and students.

All State Show Choir

This choir is for those who love to sing and dance. The audition consists of a singing portion and a dance portion. There are two All State Show Choirs. The SATB (mixed boys/girls) will be made up of the top 15 singers of each section. And the SSA (girls) will be made up of the next 15 singers from the sopranos and altos. Registration deadline is August 21 and there is a live/in-person audition on September 20.

West Regional Honor Choir

This is a choir of the most talented high school choral musicians in the West Region (one of eight in Arizona). One hundred members are selected after a live audition (25 per voice part). Audition registration is November 22. The auditions take place January 24/25. And if chosen, the choir rehearses on February 14 and 15 at Central High School with a concert on the evening of the 22nd. Concert time TBD.

All State Honor Choir

If a student has successfully performed with the Regional Choir, they are then qualified to audition for the All State Honor Choir. This choir is composed of 200 members from all around Arizona. A nationally recognized conductor will be flown in to direct this choir with challenging music. The audition process and performance will be exactly as the All Regional Honor Choir. The auditions take place on March 7 and 8 at Gilbert High School. If selected, the choir will rehearse at Northern Arizona University April 10-12 with a concert at NAU the evening of April 12.

THE REALLY IMPORTANT FORM

2025-26 Choir Agreement Form

The student – and one of the student’s parents or legal guardians – ***must*** sign and return to the Choir Director for the student to fully participate in the choir:

We (the undersigned) have fully read and understand the **2025-2026 Corona del Sol Choir Handbook**. We understand that it includes important information on such things as:

(please initial)

_____ grading policies;

_____ ***dates for required performances Sept. 18, Dec. 12, Feb. 26, May 15 & 16;***

_____ *make up assignment procedures for missing required performances;*

_____ Booster Dues of \$100 (Due August 14)

_____ concert tickets are now only available via GoFan;

_____ fundraising and Tax Credit donations;

By signing this document, the student, and parent or guardian, agree that they know their responsibilities as they pertain to the choir program – and that they also know the program’s many opportunities. By signing this document, the student, and parent or guardian, also agree to follow the rules of Corona del Sol High School High School, the Choral Music Department, and its Director.

Name of Student (printed)

Student Signature

Name of Parent or Guardian (printed)

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Name of Choir

Date

**Please print, sign, date and return this form
no later than *FRIDAY August 1, 2025.***