

2019-2020

Simmons Middle School

Choral Department

Dan Cater, Director
Daniel deShazo, Assistant Director
1575 Patton Chapel Road
Hoover, AL 35226
(205) 439-2127
Email: dcater@hoover.k12.al.us;
ddeshazo@hoover.k12.al.us
Web: simmonschoir.blogspot.com

“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and
philosophy.”
- Ludwig Van Beethoven

Welcome to the Simmons Middle School Choral Department! Thank you in advance for the commitment of your time and energy to help your children have an excellent year. The goal of our choral program is to develop independent choral musicianship and cultural awareness in its students, to connect the school with the wider artistic world through choral excellence, to celebrate cultural diversity and connection in our nation and around the globe, as well as instill a love for singing. As you participate in choir, you will become aware of the amount of time, dedication, and effort that goes into being a part of an extraordinary choir. It is my hope that this choir becomes: a family where all are equally valued, a safe place to try new things, a place where students not only learn more about music, but also learn more about themselves.

Due to our school board, administration, elementary music teachers, parents and our students, Simmons has developed a reputation of choral excellence around the state. Our enrollment this year is approximately 162 students in 4 choir classes, and our standards are VERY high in all of these classes. Our choir department prides itself and is known throughout the state for the following:

1. Students who receive a MUSIC EDUCATION
2. Choirs that sing with a healthy, beautiful and appropriate TONE/SOUND
3. Choirs that perform interesting, challenging, meaningful and entertaining music.
4. Choirs that can SIGHT-READ at a high level of excellence.

Being among the best and striving for outstanding musical experiences requires tremendous teamwork and discipline.

This packet of information will provide you and your student with our goals and expectations for the school year. I feel it is important that all parents and their students entering the choir department know what is expected of them. The expectations that we have, as teachers and musicians, are very high. Your student will benefit from these high expectations through discipline, hard work, optimum performance opportunities and musical growth. Please take the time to read through all of the enclosed materials in this packet and fill out the google form (IN STEP TWO ON THE CHOIR WEBSITE) on or before Wednesday, September 11.

Occasionally our students are photographed or seen in video, both in school and local community performances. Please read and sign the video performance release in this packet.

Feel free to email me at any time. My email address is dcater@hoover.k12.al.us. Also, feel free to call me in the choir room at 439-2127.

Dan Cater

Expectations, Attendance and Grading Policies

WE ARE A TEAM!

The rest of your choir is depending on you for the following:

- To come to each rehearsal with a positive attitude about working hard.
- To attend all rehearsals and performances required of your choir.
- To come to class each day on time, wanting to sing and eager to tackle the task at hand.
- To support every member of the choir program in the choir room, in your academic classes and in the hallways.

This makes the choir different from any other class you take at Simmons. Our individual success in choir is dependent on our group efforts and our individual efforts control our group success!!

1. General Expectations

- a. Upon entering the choir classroom, a student should retrieve the contents of their assigned shelf and go to their assigned seat.
- b. Students must be in their assigned seats in the choir room with their music folder and a sharpened pencil when Mr. Cater or Mr. DeShazo begins warm-ups, or the student will be marked tardy.
- c. Students are not allowed to play the piano without permission from the teacher.
- d. Gum is not permitted ever, at any time.
- e. Students are allowed to write directions (notes) on his/her music with PENCIL only. The student must purchase music damaged with pen or highlighter marks so the school can get the music replaced.
- f. When a visitor enters the room, pride in the choir program will be demonstrated by the courteous behavior of each student.
- g. Honesty, integrity, and self-discipline are a must at all times.

2. Performances

- a. As part of our Alabama Course of Study, mandated by the state board of education, choir students must be provided with performance opportunities. This means that **performances are a required part of the curriculum for a choir class**; therefore, performances are graded and considered to be co-curricular, not extra-curricular. Please mark all choir performance dates on your calendar now in order to avoid conflicts.

3. **Grading**

Students earn grades in several ways:

- a. Preparation and Written Work (10%)
 - i. Music folder (in good shape and with music)
 - ii. Pencil
 - iii. Paper
 - iv. Vocabulary
 - v. Music Reading
 - vi. Solfege
 - vii. Key Signatures
- b. Participation (60%)
 - i. Using hand-signs during sight-reading
 - ii. Sitting/Standing with correct choir posture
 - iii. Listening
 - iv. Individual/Group singing assessments
 - v. Positive contributions in all aspects of the class
- c. Performances (30%)
 - i. Every concert is the culmination of weeks of hard work, much like a research paper or major project in an academic class; therefore, not attending a performance is like not turning in a major project in another class. A grade of 0 will be earned for not attending a performance without a note being turned in **BEFORE** the performance.
 - ii. Make-up assignments (students will record themselves singing the concert songs and turn in the recording) will be assigned for excused absences only.
 - iii. It is the student's responsibility to complete the make-up assignment on time without reminders.
 - iv. Decisions about excused absences are at the discretion of the director.

4. **Class Choirs**

- a. 6th Grade Choir: A non-auditioned group of roughly 42 6th grade boys and girls that meets 7th period. They will perform mainly Unison, SA, and Two part music.
- b. 7th Grade Mixed Choir: A non-auditioned group of 35 7th grade boys and girls that meets 1st period. They will perform mainly SAB and SATB music.
- c. 8th Grade Choir: A non-auditioned group of 35 8th grade boys and girls that meets 4th period. They will perform Three-part and SATB music.
- d. Synergy: An auditioned group of 50 7th and 8th grade boys and girls. They will meet 8th period and perform SAB and SATB music.
- e. All of these choirs will perform at the Winter Concert, State Choir Assessment, and Spring Concert. Other performances may be added during the year and students and parents will be given advance notice.

5. **Extra-Curricular Choirs and Festivals**

- a. Girls Chorale: An auditioned group of 7th and 8th grade girls who will rehearse on Thursday mornings from 7:00-8:00. They will perform advanced SA and SSA voiced music.
- b. Synergy: An auditioned group of 50, 7th and 8th grade boys and girls. They will perform a choreographed show as well as SATB voiced concert music.
- c. Alabama All-State Choir: An honor choir consisting of students auditioned from around the state. Auditions are November 1 or 2 in Tuscaloosa, AL and the festival is March 5-6, 2020 at the BJCC.
- d. ACDA Young Voices Festival: An honor choir held at the University of Alabama. Students audition on February 14, 2020 and the festival is April 24-25, 2020.

6. **Uniforms**

- a. Informal Uniform
 - i. Consists of the Choir T-Shirt and jeans. Every choral student must purchase the Choir T-Shirt and this year parents may purchase one if they desire. The t-shirt cost is \$10.00. This shirt is unique for each school year.
 - ii. This uniform is worn for in-school performances and on various different days to show pride in the choir.
- b. Formal Uniform
 - i. 6th Grade Choir boys wear a formal uniform consisting of a white wing-tip tuxedo shirt, with black bow-tie and cummerbund. The tuxedo shirt, bow-tie and cummerbund will be fitted at school and ordered through the choir department. 6th grade boys are responsible for their own long black pants, black socks and entirely black shoes to complete the uniform. **The complete 6th Grade Boy's uniform costs \$35.00 (plus the t-shirt).**
 - ii. 7th and 8th Grade Choir boys wear the same uniform as the 6th Grade boys but add tuxedo pants which are also fitted and ordered through the choir department. **The complete 7th and 8th Grade Boys uniform costs \$60.00 (plus the t-shirt).**
 - iii. ALL GIRLS this year will wear a black, floor-length, sleeveless dress made by Rivar's. These dresses will be **RENTED from the choral department for \$40.00.** Girls are expected to provide their own solid black shoes.
 - iv. This uniform is worn for the Winter and Spring Concerts and the State Choral Assessment and possible other formal performances.

7. **Fundraising**

- a. There are several opportunities to raise money to offset extra expenses.
- b. Students in the Simmons Middle School Choir Program are encouraged, but not required to participate in the fundraising programs.
- c. Monies raised will pay for portions of the activities, programs, competitions trips, and materials needed to operate and maintain a flourishing choir program.
- d. The monies earned through fundraising belong to the Choir Program, but a percentage of the total sold by the choir will be divided evenly and deducted from everyone's choral fees

(uniforms, some trips including All-State, Young Voices and all Synergy events). Should your student leave the choir department, the monies earned through fundraising opportunities will remain with the Choir Program. Money earned through fundraising is not refundable for any reason.

e. All fundraising monies not applied to students will be utilized for the purchase of music, equipment, furniture, and other choir related items that Mr. Cater (with the approval of the principal and bookkeeper) feels directly or indirectly increases the success of the choir program.

f. If a student damages or loses fundraising merchandise, he/she is required to pay for its replacement.

Choir Dates & Events for 2019-2020

August	13	Synergy Start of the Year parent meeting 5:30 p.m. in choir room
	16	Synergy Music Retreat at Simmons 3:30-10:00 p.m.
	19	Fall Fundraiser Begins New to Choir student and parent meeting at 5:30 in the choir room
	23-25	Synergy Choreography Retreat, SMS Dance Room
	28	First Synergy Morning Rehearsal, 7am; Dance Room
September	2	Fall Fundraiser Ends
	13	Synergy Mini-Retreat (3:30-8:30 p.m. in Dance or Choir Room)
October	24-26	Performances of Musical
November	2	Synergy Serves Day 8:00-12:00; Location TBD
	1-2	All State Auditions, Tuscaloosa, AL
December	8	Synergy mini-retreat, (3:30-8:30 p.m. in Dance or Choir Room)
	4	Winter Concert REHEARSAL @ Riverchase UMC (8-noon)
	5	Winter Concert @ Riverchase UMC (6:30 p.m.)
	6	Girls Chorale Caroling Field Trip (8:30-1:00 p.m.)
	10	Winter Fine Arts Assembly, Lower Gym
January	13	Synergy mini-retreat, (3:30-8:30 p.m. in Dance or Choir room)
	3-5	Synergy Choreography Workshop, Dance Room and Upper Gym
	11	Synergy Contempo Choral Festival, Vestavia Hills High School
	24	Synergy Capital City Classic, Montgomery AL
	31	Hoover City Schools Show Choir Showcase, Spain Park HS
February	8	Synergy Oak Mountain Invitational, Oak Mountain High School
	11	Synergy Shines, 6:00-7:30 pm, SMS Cafeteria
	14	ACDA Young Voices Festival Auditions, Simmons Middle School
	28	Auburn Show Choir Showdown, Auburn, AL
March	5-6	All State Festival, BJCC
	20	Simmons Got Talent, (6:00 p.m. in Lower Gym)
	31	Fifth Grade Orientation (Synergy Show) Synergy and Paradigm Performance for Simmons
April	??	State Choral Performance Assessment (University of Alabama)
	2	Synergy Nursing Home Performance, Mount Royal Towers
	4	Choir for a Cause, Oak Mountain High School
	7	Synergy Spring Trip parent meeting, (5:30 p.m. in Choir Room) Young Voices Festival Parent Meeting, (6:00 p.m. in Choir Room)
	16	Synergy Nursing Home Performance, Regency
May	24-25	ACDA Young Voices Festival, University of Alabama
	4	Spring Concert REHEARSAL (8-noon at Shades Crest Baptist)
	5	Spring Concert (6:00 p.m. at Shades Crest Baptist)
	8-9	Synergy Spring Trip, Atlanta, GA
	14	Spring Fine Arts Showcase in Lower Gym
	11-15	Synergy and Girls Chorale Auditions

How to pay online for choir fees and activities:

Go To: www.myschoolfees.com

Sign in or create an account.

Select Alabama

Select Hoover

Select Simmons Middle School

Select Public Payments (Continue to Other
Payments Page)

Select Choir

Choose the fee you need to pay

Proceed to check out

YOUR DONE!!

Parents: I highly encourage you to pay online whenever payments are due. My degree is in music education, not accounting. Paying online helps you AND me.

Thanks – Mr. Cater

*******THANKS FOR READING ALL OF THIS. NOW MAKE SURE YOU FILL OUT THE
GOOGLE FORM IN STEP 2 ON THE “CHOIR HANDBOOK” PAGE OF THE CHOIR
WEBSITE*******