

R.J. Fisher Middle School



**Choral Music Department
Handbook**

2025 - 2026

Class Objectives

- Develop healthy and effective singing technique
- Develop music literacy skills to promote independent musicianship
- Rehearse and perform quality choral literature from a variety of cultural and historical contexts
- Gain respect for and an understanding of many styles of choral and vocal music
- Gain respect for fellow musicians and yourself
- Understand the mechanics of the human voice
- Learn the role choral music plays in society and in our lives
- Make meaningful connections between music and other areas of life

Materials

Each student is expected to come to class prepared with the following items each day:

1. Pencil and eraser
2. Composition book
3. Bottle of water (recommended)

All other items and personal belongings should be placed under the assigned seat. Folder slots will be assigned within the first two weeks of school so that students may keep their folders in the classroom at all times.

Formal Concert Attire

TROJAN CHOIR/CAMBIATA CHOIR (PERIODS 2/3)

- Option 1:**
- ◆ Black dress with velvet bodice (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black closed toe dress shoes, flat or 1 – 1 ½” heel (you provide)

- Option 2:**
- ◆ White tuxedo shirt, suspenders, bow tie (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black dress slacks (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black closed toe dress shoes (you provide)

BEL CANTO/ENCORE (PERIOD 4/FLEX)

- Option 1:**
- ◆ Black dress with rhinestone brooch (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black closed toe dress shoes, flat or 1 – 1 ½” heel (you provide)

- Option 2:**
- ◆ White tuxedo shirt with cummerbund, suspenders, and bow tie (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black dress slacks (borrowed or purchased)
 - ◆ Black closed toe dress shoes and socks (you provide)

Formal Attire Rental Information

Members of all choirs are expected to wear the dresses or tuxes as listed above for formal concerts (see performance calendar page). Arriving to performances in proper attire will count for a portion of students' concert grades. **Please take note of what you need to provide on your own!**

All music families will be hearing more from Music Boosters about Formal Concert Attire soon! Music Boosters will be assisting with sizing, assigning, and ordering as needed. Sizing for Formal Attire will happen **in September**. More information will come from the Music Boosters soon.

Students will be able to use school-owned attire or have the option to purchase their own (through the music boosters - similar to the process for buying PE clothing). If using school-owned attire, families are requested (if possible) to return clothing at the end of the year cleaned, or provide a donation to cover the cost of cleaning. Cleaning instructions will be provided with the attire.

Any alterations made to school-owned attire must be TEMPORARY, meaning they can be undone at the end of the year. For example, you can hem a choir dress with a light stitch that can be taken out, or take it in by pinning it in the back, but you may not cut or heavily stitch it. Attire should fit comfortably and not be skin tight. You have to breathe easily to sing well!

We request (if possible) that all students wear solid black shoes (dress shoes preferred) and solid black socks (if wearing shoes that require socks.)

Music T-shirts

Students will be given a choir t-shirt to wear for casual performances, including assemblies, and some off-campus trips. The t-shirts are black with a yellow logo on the front. For casual performances t-shirts should always be worn with **LONG, DARK-COLORED PANTS** (no skirts or shorts) and closed-toe shoes.

Grading Policy

This year, we will be continuing to roll out our standards-based grading practices. Grades will consist of two categories: product and process.

Product grades will reflect how well students have achieved specific learning goals, or standards and will be 50% of the overall grade.

Process grades will reflect student behaviors or skills that facilitate or broaden learning in music. Such as formative assessments, homework, and class participation and will be 50% of the final grade.

For choir classes, the grades will be assigned on the following:

1) Participation (only process grade)

Using a participation rubric, students will be graded on participation and rehearsal etiquette. The rubric will be filled out by the students themselves (self-evaluation), fellow choir members (peer evaluation), and/or the teacher on a rotating basis. If there is a dispute with a rubric score, the student and teacher will conference and come to an agreement on the final score.

2) Assessments and Musicianship (both product and process grade)

Students will have regular singing tests/assessments on scales and other musical passages. Scoring rubrics will be used that clearly show the process and product elements of the test. Singing tests can be done through online recordings through Google Classroom, private YouTube channel or live in class. Singing tests may be used to determine what musical part a student plays. Singing tests may be retaken as many times as desired for the best possible score, as long as it is in the current grading period.

Students will have various assignments focused on building musicianship. Topics will include vocal healthcare, music theory, music vocabulary, performance reviews, home practice, etc.

3) Performances/Performance Recording (both product and process grade)

All classes will have several performances throughout the year. These performances are mandatory and part of our music curriculum. Please take time to check your calendar, plan ahead and make arrangements so that students are able to participate at all concerts and events.

****Complete the Performance Conflict Form** if you are going to be absent from a performance. (Found in Google Classroom and on Mr. Miller's Website)

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are an important element to a student's musical growth. As a student advances, the music will become increasingly challenging to the student. The choir director does not have the luxury of giving individual attention to every student. When studying with a professional voice instructor, the student is able to progress at a much more rapid pace. Such things as tone, intonation, and technique can be developed with the utmost care and direction of a professional voice teacher.

Remember, the director is available to help you with the assigned music either before or after school. However, private lessons will not only improve your singing and musicianship, but you will also enjoy singing more because you are getting better! I strongly encourage all students to consider taking private lessons, if you do not already do so. A list of private music teachers will be posted on the choirs website and posted in the back of the classroom.

Los Gatos Music Boosters

All students in the Fisher Music Program will be supported in multiple ways by Los Gatos Music Boosters. All music parents are part of this important organization.

All music families will be receiving important information from Los Gatos Music Boosters, in the coming weeks.

Information and Communication

EMAIL

I am available by email between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Emails will generally be answered faster than voice mail. I will do my best to reply to emails within 24 hours. In-person meetings may be made by appointment. You can expect important announcements, updates, reminders, and concert details to be sent by email.

RJF WEBSITE & GOOGLE CLASSROOM & PARENT SQUARE

Parents should refer to my emails for the most up-to-date information, as well as my page on the Fisher website and Parent Square for calendars, links, and announcements. Students should refer to Google Classroom for student-related information and announcements.

Los Gatos Music Boosters & Cut Time

All students and families in music courses become a part of the Los Gatos Music Boosters. This organization along with One Community help support our music programs across all school sites. Information pertaining to music classes in general will be sent from the Cut Time music system.

Member Conduct

Members of the Fisher Choral Music Program continuously represent themselves, their ensemble, their school, and their community at various musical events throughout the year, both on and off campus. It is expected that students maintain professional etiquette at these events and retain an awareness of the image they convey with their actions. Behavior that will not be tolerated includes, but is not limited to: distraction from and/or interference with performances, defiance, indecent actions, inappropriate

language, and failure to follow instructions. Inappropriate behavior at events or performances will result in disciplinary action, and in extreme cases, may include removal from the ensemble.

The choral art relies on the participation and cooperation of all members in the ensemble. We always work as a team and can only perform to our fullest potential when each student is contributing their best work. Any member that prevents others from giving their best, or exhibits negative or disruptive behavior that is detrimental to the group in rehearsal or performance will receive appropriate consequences for their behavior, and in extreme cases, may include removal from the ensemble.

Classroom Expectations

Expectations:

1. Show support for your choir, director, classroom, and self.
2. Work as a team.
3. Strive for excellence.

Unsupportive behavior will result in the following consequences:

1. Verbal warning (points lost)
2. Written reflection
3. Parent contact
4. Office referral

Daily Procedures and Norms

- Students that are not seated in their assigned seat when the tardy bell rings will be marked tardy/absent.
- No gum or food allowed in the classroom. Water bottles, however, are recommended.
- The only items allowed at seats are pencils, music folders, and water bottles.
- Cell phones or other electronics are prohibited in class. Chromebooks may be used only when specified.
- The white board is not to be written on by students, except with permission.
- Personal items left in the classroom will be put in lost and found or recycled at the end of the week.
- Sheet music is the property of the school. Students will be held financially responsible for replacing any music that is lost, torn, defaced, or otherwise mangled to the point it can no longer be used.
- Students that have been absent are responsible for checking in with a classmate to get caught up.

Performances

All concerts on the **Mandatory Concert Calendar** are a big part of our music curriculum. Absences will be excused under extenuating circumstances.

Excused Absences:

- Conflicting event is unavoidable and was scheduled before the concert calendar was released (weddings, graduations, etc.)
- Illness or family emergency
- Notification required at least 14 days in advance, with filled out [Performance Conflict Form](#), signed by parent/guardian.
- Make-up performance required for full product grade credit. Process grade excused.

Unexcused Absences:

- Notification of absence received less than 14 days in advance
- Conflicting event is planned after the concert calendar was released (sports games or practices, play rehearsal, extracurricular performances, last-minute vacations, etc.)
- Make-up performance required for product grade credit, with filled out [Performance Conflict Form](#), signed by parent. Process grade will be zero.

All excused and unexcused absences require a [Performance Conflict Form](#) filled out and signed by a parent.

Make-Up Performances

All make-up performances will be scheduled with Mr. Miller within two weeks, prior or after, the missed performance, or sooner if the end of the grading period requires. Students will perform their part on any of the pieces performed at the missed event and will be graded using the [performance grading rubric](#).

Choir Event Calendar

Please note the dates and times on the calendar below. Performances are mandatory for the participants of the groups listed. Additional details and information will be given closer to the time of performances. **Students should plan on arriving 30 minutes early to each performance.** Please refer to grading procedures above.

DATE	EVENT	PARTICIPANTS	DRESS CODE
September 3	Disney Trip Parent Meeting* Via Google Meet	Parents of Cambiata and Bel Canto Choir 6pm	
September 17,18,19	Uniform Fittings RJF MPR By Appointment via Parent Square	All choir students	
October 15	Fall Concert RJF Quad 3:30;4:30pm;5:30pm	Trojan Choir- 3:30 Cambiata 4:30 Bel Canto - 5:30	Music T-shirt
November 5	Veteran's Day Celebration RJF Gym	Encore Choir	Concert Formal

December 5	Tree Lighting Los Gatos, TBA	Encore - 4:15 call-	Concert Formal
December 7	Los Gatos Rotary Cinnabar Hills Club	Encore - 11am-12pm	Concert Formal
December 16	Winter Concert #1 & #2 RJF Gym	Trojan Choir-6:00 Cambiata- 7:30	Concert Formal
December 17	RJF Staff Luncheon MPR	Encore	Music T-shirt
December 17	Winter Concert #3 & #4 RJF Gym	Bel Canto- 6:00 Encore- 7:30	Concert Formal
January 21	LG Music Festival Los Gatos High School 7pm	8th Grade Choir Students	LGHS Music T-Shirt
February 10	Elementary Tour	Cambiata and Encore	Music T-shirt
March 12	Spring Concert McAfee Performing Arts Center 7pm	All Choirs	Concert Formal
March 19-21	Disney Festival and Tour*	Cambiata and Bel Canto	Concert Formal Music T-shirt
May 7	Picnic and Pops Concert RJF Gym, TBD	All Choirs	Music T-shirt

*Pending Board Approval

Any changes made to this Calendar will be sent out via email.

Other Non-Mandatory Events/Dates To Know

➤ 2025-26 LG Music Boosters Meetings

- Please come if you want to get involved with supporting the Fisher music program!

- Check the [LG Music](#) for up-to-date meeting dates, times, and locations