

# **BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL**

## **CHORAL DEPARTMENT**



**2023-2024**

**STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

# **BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT**

## **2023-24**

Welcome to a wonderful new school year and to the Big Sky Choral Program. Please look through this handbook to understand choral department expectations and policies and procedures. Parents and students, please sign, date, and return the form in the back of the handbook or return electronically by Sept 8th.

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Director: Nancy Labbe

Office Phone: (406)728-2400 x 8036

Email: [nklabbe@mcpsmt.org](mailto:nklabbe@mcpsmt.org)

The quickest way to communicate with me is via email - easy for me to check throughout the day. At the end of each day, I'll also check my school voice mail. Please do not hesitate to communicate any concerns or questions you may have. I'm glad to hear from parents and guardians.

## **BSHS CHOIR CLASS OFFERINGS**

The curricular offerings for the BSHS Choral Department are as follows:

**Chorale (beginning treble choir):** by consent of instructor – for treble voices primarily in grades 9 and 10 but open to any grade level.

**Tenor/Bass Choir:** by consent of instructor – for tenor & bass voices primarily in grades 9 and 10 but open to any grade level.

**Advanced Treble Choir:** by audition only – for treble voices primarily in grades 10 -12.

**Aesirian Choir:** by audition only – mixed chorus of students primarily in grades 11 -12.

## **Extra-Curricular Ensembles:**

**Sky Blues:** by audition only – extra-curricular, elite mixed ensemble of 16 - 24 students primarily in grades 11 and 12. Students must be a member of Aesirian choir in order to audition.

**Bel Canto:** by audition only. This extra-curricular, elite treble ensemble will be comprised of 8-16 voices. Students must be a member of the Treble Choir or Aesirian Choir in order to audition.

# **BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR**

## **Choir Class Rule:**

There is only one rule.

**Be respectful of everyone and everything, always.**

Respectful students keep their cell phones put away during class.

Respectful students are prepared and ready to sing every day.

Respectful students speak kindly, and at the appropriate time.

Respectful students care for their music, equipment and rehearsal space.  
Please do not bring food or drink (except water) into the choir room, or  
chew gum.

Respectful students are appreciative of the positive contributions of those  
around them.

Respectful students are open-minded and hard-working.

Respectful students always look for ways to learn.

Respectful students pay attention to and work on vocal health.

Respectful students value arts education.

Respectful students seek to be better, never embittered.

Respectful students are positive leaders.

Respectful students try to do their best every day.

## **Student Evaluation and Grading**

### **Grading Policy**

Choir is unique to the curriculum as it is a performance-based organization. Students involved in choir must understand from the onset that each performance and rehearsal activity must be considered a necessary part of the class curriculum and will be treated as such. **It is the philosophy of the department that each student is responsible not only to him or herself, but is responsible to the organization as a whole and to the other students for participation in performances.**

Grades in choir are earned through four categories.

**I. Daily Participation (40%):** 4 points/day. Daily attendance in choir is extremely important. When a class is missed, it's impossible to recreate the rehearsal experience on one's own. "In class" work will consist of warm-up exercises, rehearsal of concert/festival material, note taking, sight reading, and various other musical exercises. Students have the opportunity to earn up to 10 points per class meeting. Students must come prepared ON TIME with a pencil and music folder daily. Additionally, points are earned by singing out strong, being ready to learn and work, being positive, open-minded, and working well with other choir members, and by showing a constant desire to create and experience great music.

**Tardies:** Do not be tardy. Our class time is already too short. Unexcused tardies will result in the loss of daily points. Those with consistent tardies will be referred to the office and risk removal from the class.

**Excused Absences:** The first excused absence within a semester will not affect your grade. For each additional excused absence, you will receive a zero for your daily participation grade. Make up work may be assigned for any rehearsal missed due to excused absences. **It is the student's responsibility to ask for a makeup assignment immediately upon return.**

**Unexcused Absences:** Students will receive a zero for unexcused absences with no opportunity for makeup; grounds for removal from class.

**School-Sponsored Absences:** These will not affect your grade. Please check in to gather material you may have missed.

**II. Performances (45%):** Performance attendance is considered to equal a major exam in the music area. Each student satisfactorily participating in a performance and arriving on time in the proper attire will be awarded the percentage grade of 100% for that event. Students will be notified of all performance dates at least one month before that performance or sooner, if possible. Each infraction (i.e., improper attire, tardiness, improper performance behavior, etc.) lowers the grade.

- **Absences** may be excused by the instructor in the event of serious illness or family emergency. School activities conflicting may also be excused if arranged IN ADVANCE. **Excused absences must be verified IN ADVANCE.** Excused absences must be made up using materials assigned by the instructor within two weeks of the missed performance. The student is responsible for getting the assignment from the instructor. A percentage grade will be awarded based upon the results of that material. Material not completed within the time frame, and unexcused absences will result in the percentage grade of “o” for that event (letter grade of F).

Please keep in mind that if you have a job, you must let your employer know of the concert dates NOW in order to ensure there is no conflict. “I have to work.” is not an excused absence from a performance.

**III. Written and/or Vocal Assessment (15%):** Points will vary from ensemble to ensemble. Written worksheets, quizzes, tests and/or vocal tests will be given throughout each semester.

## Voice Lessons

**There is no better or faster way to improve as a singer!** BSHS choir members are highly encouraged to take private voice lessons. There are a number of fine teachers in our area. Voice lessons usually take place weekly for a half-hour.

Caitlin Cisler (920)205-8439  
Angela Dailey (406)239-4769  
Melody Anderson (406)544-0210

Elin Peterson (406)214-9525  
David Cody (UM) (406)243-6880  
Anne Basinski (UM) (406)243-6880

## Performance Attire

The following items are needed for any formal performance or concert:

- Tenor/Bass Choir:**        Black dress pants  
                                      Black dress shoes and black socks  
                                      Black dress shirt (provided for you)  
                                      Neck tie (provided for you)
- Chorale:**                    Black dress provided for you  
                                      Close-toed, black dress shoes (no flip-flops, sandals, boots)  
                                      Alternate: tenor/bass attire
- Treble Choir:**            Black dress– provided for you  
                                      Close-toed, flat black dress shoes
- Aesirian:**                 Choir robe – provided for you  
                                      Black dress pants, black close-toed dress shoes & black socks
- Sky Blues & Bel Canto:**   \* Provided for your use. Need close-toed black shoes

Students are NOT REQUIRED to purchase any attire. If certain items are not attainable for a student, the director must be informed well before the performance. Also, if there is any question about the appropriateness of attire, the student should consult the director.

All attire should be pressed, clean and professional looking!

Please do not wear perfume or cologne to concerts. Some people are allergic or very sensitive to these. When in a confined space, it's important to be considerate of others. No perfumes but deodorant is a MUST!

\* There will be a **\$20 uniform fee for SKY BLUES members**. We need to pay for dry cleaning and uniform updates.

## **BIG SKY CHORAL MUSIC LETTER AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

Because of the great amount of time and effort exerted by many Big Sky Choir students in their musical activities, a letter award is given to afford these students due recognition and incentive. **In order to letter in choir, a student must achieve perfect concert attendance AND must obtain a minimum of 250 points during the academic year** through any of the following areas:

### **Festivals:**

1. District or State Ensemble – 50 points per performance plus 75 points for a Superior rating.
2. District or State Solo – 100 points per performance plus 100 points for a Superior rating on a piano or vocal solo.

### **Honors:**

1. All-State Choir Member – 175 points.
2. All-Northwest Choir Member – 200 points
3. Audition recording for either event – 10 points
4. Member in good standing of Sky Blues Vocal Ensemble – 200 points; (deduct 10 points for each unexcused absence from rehearsals & performances. More than 3 unexcused absences may result in removal from the group and complete loss of Lettering Points.)
5. Member in good standing of Bel Canto vocal ensemble – 100 points; (see info. above)
6. Member of the All-Star Honor Choir – 3-day commitment – 150 points

### **Other:**

1. Summer Music Camp – 5 points per day
2. Designated Music-Related Activity – 5 points
3. Private Lessons – 5 points per lesson (50 points maximum)
4. Duties performed for the benefit of the group (director's discretion) – 10 points
5. Member of the cast, crew, or pit orchestra for all-school musical – 50 points
6. Member of more than one academic choir – 100 points
7. Member of band or orchestra AND choir – 75 points

Points are accumulated throughout each school year but not carried over from year to year.



**Big Sky High School Choral Department**  
**2023-24**

We acknowledge that we read and understood the BSHS Choral Dept. Handbook and will make every effort to comply with its contents.

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(student signature)

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(parent signature)