

Hastings High School Vocal Music Handbook 2025-2026

Mr. Christian Yost

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Welcome

Welcome to the Hastings High School choral program! We are happy to have you as a member of our performing groups. The last decade plus of students has given HHS Choirs a very good reputation in our school, community and state, and we are glad that you've chosen to help keep it. The Hastings Choral Department consists of the following choirs:

- Madrigals- 10th-12th mixed; varsity ensemble
- Concert Choir - 9th-12th mixed; non-auditioned
- Show Choir (UNCAGED)- 9th-12th men and women; auditioned varsity choir
- Show Choir (UNTMAED)- 9th-12th women; auditioned choir
- Tiger Singers - 10th-12th solo/pop music performance; instructor approval

Mr. Yost's Philosophy

Teaching is a calling I strive to undertake with love and imagination, and from my location as a relatively new teacher, I see no end to improvement, no arrival, no completion: I want to be that teacher who, even after decades in the classroom, still leaves each session asking how the next might be better, how to better engage this unique set of students, and how to change one more students life. I bring three overarching objectives to the classroom, each of them rooted in my conception of teaching as an invitation to relationship.

- 1) Every child, every student should have the opportunity to study music
- 2) Music provides a unique experience and thus, a unique contribution to intellectual development. This is what sets music education apart and makes it exceptional.
- 3) Students should be provided with real-world opportunities to allow them to feel ownership of their musical abilities, thus preparing them to become lifelong musicians.
- 4) Students learn and discover music through active music making. Activities should develop the skills of performing, listening and analyzing, and creating by way of the study of basic musical concepts, such as: pitch, rhythm, dynamics, form, and timbre.

"There is, has been, and will always be a certain group of people whom inspiration visits. It's made up of all those who've consciously chosen their calling and do their job with love and imagination.... Their work becomes one continuous adventure as long as they manage to keep discovering new challenges in it."

- Wislawa Szymborska, 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature Lecture

"Whenever and wherever humans have existed, music has existed also. Since music occurs only when people choose to create and share it, and since they have always done so and no doubt always will, music clearly must have important value for people."

- Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education, 2000

Attention All Choir Members

Welcome to the HHS Choral Department! We are looking forward to an exciting and fun filled year. The choir program intends to continue growing, meeting individual needs, and striving toward the highest ideals in choral singing, even if things tend to look a little different this year. To achieve the standards and goals set by this organization, each member will be required to be active, dependable, and consistently contributing their efforts to the choir. The facts and expectations outlined in this handbook should be discussed so that each member begins the year with the same understanding. All members are expected to be at all rehearsals and performances on time unless a director is notified at least two (2) weeks in advance of a missed performance. Do not assume that an absence is excused simply due to prior notification. Each absence will be reviewed on an individual basis and emergencies will be taken into account. Four (4) unexcused absences from a rehearsal in an ensemble could result in a conference with Mr. Yost to discuss the student's responsibilities to the choir. Any unexcused absence from a performance could result in a conference with Mr. Yost to discuss the advisability of the student in the choir program here at HHS. The responsibility for communication with Mr. Yost concerning absences, tardies, etc., lies solely with the student. Mr. Yost must be notified at least two weeks prior to the performance so that details can be arranged. Consequences for not doing so will be discussed and applied with help of the administration.

We are proud that so many of our students are involved in several other activities other than choir. Unfortunately, with the size of this organization, Mr. Yost, as the director, cannot keep up with it all! It is the student's responsibility to inform teachers and other sponsors of conflicts early! Here at HHS, we strive to make each student successful and we, as directors and sponsors, can work out these conflicts without penalizing the student. All we ask is for you and your child to do your part – be responsible! The choir department is viewed as an ambassador for Hastings High School. Therefore all choir students are expected to exhibit exemplary behavior at all times, whether in choir classes or other classes. Students who continue to violate school rules may jeopardize their membership in choir. Mr. Yost expects all students to be role models and are held to a higher standard.

For those *NEW* to choir this year, there is a thirty-five dollar (\$35) **non-refundable** fee that covers the costs associated with a choir robe, stole rental, and cleaning fee. For those *RETURNING* to choir that have their robe, there is a fifteen dollar (\$15) **non-refundable** fee that covers the costs associated with stole rental and cleaning fee. ***Please include "Choir Fee" in the memo of the check with your students name and return it to the main office.***

Please sign the attached forms if you and your child can commit to the rules and guidelines set forth by this organization. Both the signed forms and your payment need to be turned in by Tuesday, September 3, 2024. If there is a problem, please notify Mr. Yost. The goal is to eliminate as many barriers as possible for students participating in choir. If you have any questions about any information in this handbook, please email Mr. Yost at Christin.Yost@hpstigers.org.

Classroom Routines and Expectations

Self-discipline is an important element of choir rehearsal and performance. Students must realize that they are a member of a group or team with an excellent reputation. Their behavior during school classes and at public performances reflects on both Hastings High School and the Choir as a whole. Please remember the following basic rules:

- 1) **Care and effort go a long way in choir!**
- 2) Criticizing another student's voice or effort is not allowed and will not be tolerated.
- 3) Be on time in your seat, with your folder, **pencil and highlighter**, ready to begin when the bell rings.
- 4) When we are ready to rehearse—you are quiet and ready. We begin class when the bell rings and end when the next bell rings.
- 5) NO food, gum, or drinks inside of the choir room. Students may bring containers of water into the choir room.
- 6) NO students in Mr. Yost's office unless they have permission to enter.
- 7) Students are not allowed to keep personal items in the choir room throughout the day. Please use your locker! *Special permission may be given by Mr. Yost.
- 8) No cell phones unless used with permission from Mr. Yost.
- 9) All HPS activity attendance rules and consequences apply to choir performances and dress rehearsals. Students are expected to inform coaches and myself of any potential conflicts at least one week in advance.
- 10) You will be issued your own choir folder/binder and music, and these should not be lost or damaged. The student will pay \$4 per piece of music that is lost or left out, and \$2 for a new folder or \$4 for a new binder.
- 11) Our grand pianos may not be played by any student- Mr. Yost will make exceptions for select students who are proficient on the piano and those few still need to ask each time they play.
- 12) Proper concert etiquette and attire will be observed at all performances.
(Severe illness, wedding or death in the family are acceptable excuses.)

Consequences

Any student who does not follow the rules listed will receive the following consequences:

BIST Room Referral

Director / Student conference

Parent phone call/email

Office referral

Removal from class

Grading

Grades are based on the standards laid out at the district, state, and national levels. Scoring will be done on a 0-4 basis. (0=No data, 1=Below Standard, 2=On-Track to meet the standard by the end of the year, 3=Approaching mastery of the standard, and 4=Mastery of the standard) Standards will be assessed multiple times, and the lowest formative score will be dropped. The final score will be multiplied by 10 and then added to 60 [**$(Score \times 10) + 60 = Grade$**]. This grading system allows tracked growth, and academic accountability between all students.

Grades will include but are not limited to the following per semester:

- **Formative (30%)**

Week 2 - Sight Singing
Week 4 - Sight Singing
Week 6 - Sight Singing
Week 10 - Sight Singing
Week 12 - Sight Singing
Week 14 - Sight Singing

-**Summative (70%)**

Concert 1 - 250 pts
Concert 2 - 250 pts
Sight Reading - 250 pts
Final - 250 pts

CREATE		<i>C. I can compose, arrange, improvise, read, and perform music with an analytical understanding of the language of music.</i>
Imagine/Plan		<i>C.1 Students will independently generate multiple compositional ideas for a specific purpose or mood, utilizing how personal experiences influence musical choices.</i>
Present		<i>C.2 Students will present an improvisation, arrangement, or other original elements that convey varying moods and emotions through craftsmanship.</i>
Connect		<i>C.3 Students will create musical elements that connect to historical and cultural contexts, the arts, other disciplines, and life experiences.</i>

PERFORM		<i>P. I can contribute to music making, both independently and/or with others, through a variety of music genres and styles using professionalism, technical accuracy, and expression.</i>
Rehearse		<i>P.1 Students will develop and refine solo/ensemble performance skills (e.g., posture, technique, reading music) using self-evaluation and feedback from others, while demonstrating appropriate rehearsal expectations.</i>
Present		<i>P.2 Students will perform (formally or informally) music of greater complexity using accurate intonation, expression, movement, and stylistically correct interpretation of phrasing, dynamics, and articulation, while demonstrating appropriate performance expectations.</i>
Connect		<i>P.3 Students will use historical and cultural contexts, the arts, other disciplines, and life experience to influence their performance.</i>

RESPOND		<i>R. I can analyze and evaluate how music stimulates a personal response to myself and others.</i>
Select		<i>R.1 Students will select appropriate music in contrasting styles to listen to or perform with the audience in mind.</i>
Analyze/Interpret		<i>R.2 Students will analyze and evaluate how the performer/creator uses composition and performance characteristics (e.g., form, style) to convey expressive intent.</i>
Evaluate		<i>R.3 Students will independently choose appropriate criteria (e.g., texture, phrasing) to critique expressiveness and effectiveness of a performance/composition.</i>
Connect		<i>R.4 Students will connect music to historical and cultural contexts, the arts, other disciplines, and life experience through responding.</i>

Everyone will participate in singing tests each semester. Sometimes this is done individually and sometimes in groups. **YOU WILL NEVER BE GRADED ON VOCAL QUALITY.** You will be graded on your *progress* throughout the semester. These are meant to encourage you as an independent singer, not solo you out

Other important info:

Making up a performance: Students will have the opportunity to make up any missed performance. Students are responsible to schedule a time with both Mr. Yost and Mindee Rowan to perform the required materials, as a solo, as presented at the concert. Students will be graded on music accuracy (90%), Stage Presence (10%).

Class Supplies

Students should have a **Pencil, Highlighter, and Red Pen** at all times in their choir folder/binder

Choral Music and Folder - Students will be provided with choral music and a music folder belonging to Hastings High School. They are responsible for them, just as they are responsible for textbooks in other classes. Lost or damaged music or folders must be paid for by the student. Students are encouraged to take music home for practicing purposes.

Uniforms

Each student, once the \$35/\$15 fee has been paid, will be issued a t-shirt, choir robe and a choir stole depending on their ensemble. **THESE ROBES ARE THE STUDENT'S PERSONAL ROBES.** Students should keep these robes hung up at HOME, and bring them to school the day before the concert. Students without a robe or stole are not allowed on stage to perform. Choir stoles are property of the school and will be kept at the school and cleaned and disinfected after each performance. **For performances, each student needs to wear black dress pants or a black dress, black dress shoes, and black socks under their choir robes. Though not seen by the audience, all wardrobe needs to meet school dress code.**

HHS considers our concerts formal affairs and expect that all students present themselves in a professional manner. Please make sure that your uniform is maintained throughout the year – cleaned, pressed, and hemmed.

Concert Etiquette

Audience members are encouraged to follow the following well-established standards for formal concert behavior:

- 1) Please eliminate disruptions by turning off cell phones and no flash photography.
- 2) Refrain from talking during the performance.
- 3) Remain seated for the entire concert if at all possible. If it is absolutely necessary to do so, move only between selections and exit at the nearest door.
- 4) Wait to re-enter the auditorium until the performing group is finished or between songs.
- 5) Students are not permitted to leave until the end of the concert and are expected to observe all performing groups. This is part of the educational process.
- 6) No food or drink is allowed in the theater.

Private Voice Lessons

Private voice lessons are a great way for students to learn more about the voice and get one-on-one instruction. These lessons typically cost between \$80-\$100/month for 1 30-minute lesson per week. There are many fantastic teachers in town, and I would love to help find one if that is something you are interested in.

2025-2026 Vocal Music Performance Calendar

September, 2025

M 8: NMEA All-State Audition Registrations Due (B/O/C)

F 12: HS CHOIR, National Anthem, HC Field (UNCAGED Only)

TH 25: NMEA Vocal Audition Window Opens

SA 27: HS BAND/ORCH/VOCAL, NMEA Auditions Due.

October, 2025

TH 2: HS CHOIR, Grades 9-12 Fall Concert, 7:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

November, 2025

M 10: HS CHOIR, EMC Choir Day , All Day, Norris High School (Madrigals Only)

M 17 Musical Auditions 4:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

T 18 Musical Auditions 6:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

W 19 Musical Callback Auditions 4:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

TH-SA 20-22: HS BAND / CHOIR / ORCH - NMEA ALL-STATE ENSEMBLES

December, 2025

TU 2: HS CHOIR, Concert, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

SU 7: Show Choir Preview Concert, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

February, 2026

TH: 26: HS CHOIR, Winter Concert, 7:00 pm, HHS Auditorium

April, 2026

SA 25: HS BAND / ORCH / VOCAL, District Music Contest, Kearney (Groups TBD)

May, 2026

TU 5: HS CHOIR, Mass Rehearsal, 4-6 pm, First Pres.

SU 10: HS CHOIR, Mass Concert, 7-9 pm, First Pres.

SU 17: HHS Graduation ORCHESTRA / VOCAL (Madrigals only)

Hastings High School Choir

Student/Parent Agreement Form

Please complete and return this form by Friday, August. 29th

Student Name (print) _____ Choir Period _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Cell phone # _____

Home Phone # _____

Parent Email Address _____

Student's Height ***in Inches*** _____

Please Check One:

[] \$35 New Student

or

[] \$35 Returning Students Needing a New Robe

or

[] \$15 Returning Student

There are many opportunities for parents to help the HHS Choir throughout the year. I am interested in assisting with choir activities. Please contact me concerning opportunities to volunteer.

____ Yes ____ No

By signing this agreement form,

- I agree to pay the \$35/\$15 choir fee for the year OR will be in contact with Mr. Yost to waive the fee.

- I have reviewed the expectations and responsibilities of a Hastings High Choir member, including the attached calendar.

- I agree and am willing to participate as a HHS Choir Member or Parent and will support the program in every way.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

****Please return this page SIGNED to Mr. Yost by September 1st!***