

CHOIR HANDBOOK

Dear Limestone Choir Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to a brand new year in the Limestone Choir Program! Whether you're returning for another year or joining us for the first time—I'm thrilled you're here. This program isn't just about singing—it's about showing up, stepping up, and growing together.

To the students: Your voice matters. Whether you're confident on stage or still figuring it out, you're an essential part of what makes this group work. This is a place where effort matters more than perfection—and I'm here to help you grow in skill, confidence, and expression.

To the parents and guardians: Thank you for trusting us with your student's time and talent. This program goes beyond notes and rhythms—it builds discipline, collaboration, and pride. I'm committed to giving your students my best and guiding them toward theirs.

This year, we'll tackle a wide range of music, push ourselves to new levels, and create performances we can all be proud of. Communication will come through documents, emails, and our shared Google Calendar. If you ever have questions, I'm just a message away.

Here's to a meaningful year filled with hard work, strong community, and great music.

Sincerely,

Mr. Rockford

Choir Mission Statement –

The LCHS Choir Department is dedicated to fostering musical literacy, delivering outstanding performances, and promoting diversity and inclusion. Through music, we will unite voices, celebrate differences, and achieve excellence on stage and in our community.

DESCRIPTION OF CHOIRS

Concert Choir

Concert Choir is a non-auditioned, mixed ensemble made up primarily of upperclassmen, with an average size of **35 students**. Open to all skill levels, this group performs **5 times per year**, mostly on campus. Repertoire spans genres and eras—from classical masterworks to contemporary pop and musical theatre. Concert Choir serves as the core ensemble in our program, providing students with foundational choral experience, ensemble skills, and the opportunity to grow as musicians in a collaborative setting.

Freshman Choir

Freshman Choir is a non-auditioned ensemble of **freshmen singers** (typically around **20 students**) singing soprano and alto parts. With **4-6 performances annually**, Freshman Choir introduces students to vocal technique, sight-reading, and ensemble singing in a nurturing environment. The repertoire includes traditional treble literature, folk music, and pop and contemporary works. The group fosters confidence, community, and a solid musical foundation for future participation in upper-level choirs.

Chorale

Chorale is a **once-a-week, auditioned SATB ensemble** composed exclusively of students from the Chamber and Madrigal groups. This ensemble focuses on preparing advanced repertoire for the **main school choir concerts**, offering an opportunity to dive deeper into more complex literature. In addition to ensemble work, Chorale members are expected to be highly engaged in **individual musicianship**—including preparation for **ILMEA District and All-State auditions, Solo & Ensemble contests**, and other enrichment opportunities throughout the year. Chorale provides a space for motivated singers to refine their skills, build confidence, and grow as artists within a focused and committed community.

Chamber Singers / White Tones

Chamber Singers is an **auditioned intermediate-advanced, SAB ensemble** of typically **20 singers** in grades 10–12. They perform **various times per year**, including concerts, contests, festivals, and community performances. Their fall semester focuses on concert repertoire in collaboration with the Madrigal Singers for the Madrigal Dinner. In the spring, under the name **White Tones**, they become a training-ground vocal jazz ensemble exploring swing, Latin, blues, and pop charts in a contemporary jazz style. This group emphasizes versatility, vocal independence, and musical excellence across a variety of genres.

Madrigal Singers / Blue Notes

This **auditioned ensemble** features **12-16 advanced singers**, typically sophomores through seniors, and represents Limestone's most elite vocal musicians. In the fall, the group prepares historically-informed Renaissance and early Baroque repertoire, culminating in the **Madrigal Dinner**. In the spring, the group transitions to **Blue Notes**, focusing on vocal jazz literature with close harmonies, improvisation, and microphone technique. Madrigal Singers / Jazz Society performs at **festivals and community events**, as well as all school concerts and believe in an emphasis on stylistic authenticity and performance finesse.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Procedures

1. Required materials for class include your folder, pencil, and Chromebook
2. Place your phone in the folder slot and be seated by the time the bell rings.
3. Place all belongings on the sides of the classroom.
4. No food or drinks other than water. Water must be closed-lid.
5. Do not have your smartphone at your seat.
6. Respect everyone. Treat them like you would like to be treated.
7. Respect the equipment and especially the practice rooms.
8. All school handbook related policies apply in the choir room.

Consequences

1. Verbal warning
2. Seating change
3. Call home
4. Assign classroom/school detention
5. Dismissal from class and sent to deans office
6. Parent meeting
7. Disciplinary Contract

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All choir students are expected to attend and actively participate in all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Conflicts such as vacations, work shifts, or non-school activities **will not be excused** and should be scheduled around choir commitments.

If an unavoidable absence is necessary, **a parent or guardian must notify Mr. Rockford at least two weeks in advance**. Excused absences due to school-related conflicts (such as athletics or academic events) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and a makeup assignment will be provided when appropriate. See below for make-up assignment.

With that said, school-related commitments and conflicts can—and regularly are—worked out quickly and efficiently with clear communication. The goal is always to support student success in all areas while maintaining the integrity of the ensemble.

Please note: Per a **new Limestone policy**, students must be in attendance for **at least half of the school day** to be eligible for **any after-school activity**, including choir concerts and events. Additionally, **choir participation is closely tied to events governed by Mid-Illini Conference and IHSA guidelines**. As such, students must remain academically and behaviorally eligible in accordance with those standards to participate in public performances, contests, and off-campus events.

Excused Absence Assignment

Write a 3-page paper (typed, double spaced) comparing and contrasting two recordings of a music selection featured on the most recent concert using a rubric provided by Mr. Rockford. Then, using a chromebook/personal device, individually record your voice part of for the entire music selection, integrating the positives you listed in your paper. You may use YouTube. Try to find high school recordings, but college/professional will work as well.

Unexcused Absence Information

Any unexcused absence from a major concert or contest will automatically lower a student's semester grade by TWO letter grades. Any unexcused absence from a major rehearsal will automatically lower a student's final semester grade by a letter grade. Any two unexcused absences from a required activity will result in the student's dismissal from choir with a failing grade.

CONCERT ATTIRE

All students will wear our brand new **Limestone Choir robes** for formal performances. These robes are designed to provide a clean, unified look on stage.

Required Under-Robe Attire:

- **Black dress shoes**
- **Black socks, solid black tights, or leggings**

Additional Guidelines:

- Jewelry must be minimal—**stud earrings only**
- **All LCHS dress code policies apply**
- Students not in compliance may be **sent home or prohibited from performing**

That's it—simple and consistent. Students may choose their other clothing underneath the robe, but it must be **comfortable, school-appropriate**, and **invisible** during performance. Thank you for helping us maintain a polished and professional presence at every performance.

GRADING SYSTEM

Daily Rehearsals

- Up to 45 points per grading period
- Rehearsal procedures followed; unexcused absences result in lowered grade

Music Theory Handouts and Weekly Assessments

- Up to 20 points per grading period
- Assessments may be aural, recorded on a personal device and uploaded to Mr. Rockford or written, expressing understanding of a concept taught in class.

Concerts

- Up to 30 points per grading period
- Punctuality and concert attire; concert etiquette; performance of prepared selections

Final Exam

- 20% of semester grade; may be aural, skill based, or writing based

COMMUNICATION

Classroom Announcements

- Mr. Rockford makes announcements at the beginning of class, presents important dates on the classroom television and the right-hand bulletin board
- Any handouts will be distributed during class

Choir Website

- www.limestonechoirs.com
- Main source for choir information, including:
 - **Schedule:** Displayed on the homepage and downloadable under **INFO**
 - **Announcements:** Classroom handouts and announcements located at **INFO**
 - **Contact Information:** Displayed prominently on the homepage
 - **Ticket Sales:** At limestonetickets.com but also **TICKETS**
 - **Concert Programs:** At limestoneprogram.com but also **PROGRAMS**
 - **ALSO: Choir Merch,** Various information for Madrigal Dinner, Set Up for Concerts, Choir Awards Donation and Fundraising, Costumes, Alumni, and History

Students: Remind, Email, and Google Classroom

- Mr. Rockford will send important reminders about events, changes, and other crucial information directly to Remind. Please make sure student has turned notifications set to on
- Text the number "810-10" the message "@limechoir" or use the app.

Parents: Remind and Email

- Mr. Rockford will send important reminders about events, changes, and other crucial information directly to our Remind profile and more lengthy information on things going on throughout the year through email.
- Text the number "810-10" the message "@limechoir" or use the app.
- Remind and Email both work for timely and direct communication
srockford@limestone310.org

Questions?

If you have any questions about the information above or anything choir-related, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Rockford. While email is preferred, the Director's school phone number can be used for urgent matters only. Please Note: Schedules are subject to change, and some information may not be available until closer to the event. **Follow Us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tiktok @limestonechoirs.**