DMS Vocal Music Handbook

Philosophy and Mission Statement

Adopted 2002

The Doniphan vocal music department will contribute to the total development of the student by providing a program that will encourage awareness of the arts according to abilities, physical growth, level of maturity, and experience. Each student participating in this department will have an opportunity to express, develop, and utilize creative concepts and an appreciation of the arts. Each student will acquire a greater understanding of the creative process, will develop musicianship to pursue a career in the arts, and/or to gain personal enjoyment.

I: General Information The Doniphan vocal music department consists of three choral groups: DHS Advanced Mixed Choir (by audition) and two DMS choirs, voicing and difficulty level to be determined on a yearly basis. Any Advanced or Intermediate Choirs, middle school or high school, will require an audition while Beginning Choirs are non-auditioned groups, open to all students with an interest in music. Not all groups are offered all years.

II: Objectives The objectives of the DMS/DHS vocal music department are:

- To develop an appreciation for and enjoyment of the arts
- To create an environment in which students can become self-aware of their musical and artistic abilities
- To develop musicianship in each student through expressive experience utilizing
    - Musical responsiveness
    - Musical understanding
    - Aesthetic potential
- To develop specific competencies in each of the following areas:
    - Vocal sound production
    - Independent music reading
    - Theory fundamentals (Musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, form, texture, and dynamics)
    - Musical and interpretive style
    - Music history
    - Discipline
- To develop responsibility as a choir, school, and community member
- To represent the school as a vocal ensemble at performance events and community functions.

III: Grading The above objectives are achieved through a variety of individual and group points-based activities and assignments. These include but are not limited to ACTIVE rehearsals skills, individual and group in-class activities, written and performance homework, as well as written and performance tests. All assignments should be completed in a timely manner. See student handbook for consequences of late work.

Each of the following elements may be assessed throughout each quarter:

- **Practical Music Skills & Concept Mastery (Approximately 20%)**

- Sight-singing and/or melodic dictation (individual)
- Rhythm reading and/or rhythmic dictation (individual)
- Vocal sound production (individual and/or group)
- Vocal Improvisation (Individual and/or group)
- Theory fundamentals
- Music History
- Supportive, homework-based music reading and theory skills

- **Group-Work Contributions (Approximately 50%)**
  - 25 possible daily points for each rehearsal, for a total of no more than 100 points weekly and 1000 points quarterly.
  - Students who miss class, for ANY reason (excused or unexcused), will be allowed to earn group-work contribution points they missed by completing the preset alternative assignments. It is the student's responsibility to collect and return these assignments within one week of missed days. Students who elect not to complete these assignments will not receive any credit for days missed.
    - Students will **earn** 10 points for daily attendance
      - Each tardy or unexcused/ excessive bathroom break will reduce potential amount earned by 2 points
    - Students will **earn** 15 points for active, positive participation
      - Each incidence of disruptive behavior, lack of participation, or attitude detrimental to group productivity will reduce potential amount earned by 2-5 points. Continued disruption and non-participation will also result in loss of above attendance points as well as disciplinary action.

- **Performances** (will only contribute to grade in quarters which public performances are schedules) **(Approximately 30%)**
  - **All students are expected to attend all concerts, festivals, contests, and scheduled small group performances. Please see attendance policy.** Each unexcused performance absence will result in a zero. Each absence will be approximately the equivalent of up to 30% reduction in **total quarterly grade,** (depending on the number of performances in that quarter.) Students with excused absences will be given the opportunity to earn up to full credit at teacher discretion.

IV: General Audition and Acceptance Information Auditions will take place in the spring of each school year for placement in the fall of the following school year. Only students who are new to the district or who were otherwise prohibited from auditioning (homebound, etc) will be allowed to audition after the spring deadline.

Students may audition for a specific voice part and request to be placed in a specific choral group. However, placement of each student will be at the discretion of the choir director. Placement will be determined by what is most beneficial to the whole choir and the individual student.

Requirements for placement into an advanced High School choral group are as follows:

- 1 semester of an introductory choir/ equivalent class or higher. This can be at MS or HS level. Students with private music instruction also qualify, providing they can pass a general music exam. Only HS seniors and new students with choral experience from previous schools will be exempt from this requirement, providing that the student meets all other requirements.

- A passing grade on a basic music skills test. Test accommodations will be made for qualifying students.
- A vocal audition consisting of, but not be limited to, a student or teacher selected song, vocal range check, pitch-matching, and tonal recall abilities. Students who are unable to adequately demonstrate these skills will not be accepted into an advanced group.
- Students must be in good standing within the school, including but not limited to discipline, academics, and competitive teams. Advanced choir is a competitive group, and students must meet all MSHSAA standards.
- Upon completion of audition and acceptance into any vocal music group, students and guardians will receive a digital copy of choir rules and regulations. Both parties must review these regulations and students must agree, in writing, to abide by rules set forth by DMS/DHS Vocal Music Department. Guardians must sign as witnesses.

V: Attendance Policy

- **Class Attendance:** Each school's general attendance policy applies. Students are encouraged to follow this, keeping in mind that each member is necessary to make the whole successful. Each absence does make a difference in the effectiveness of rehearsal. Alternative homework assignments will be available to offset missing points from absenteeism. **However, it will be the student's responsibility to ask for and return alternative assignments in a timely manner.** All alternative assignments must be returned to the teacher within one week of absence. The only exceptions to this will be for students with extended absences due to homebound status, illness, or family emergencies.
- **Extra Rehearsals:** Extra full group and sectional rehearsals may be scheduled as needed. Notice will be given at the earliest possible date so that arrangements can be made. Attendance may be mandatory or non-mandatory as determined by the director.
- **Performance Attendance:** School concerts, performances, performances for visiting clinicians, pre-scheduled small ensembles, contests and other scheduled choir performances will be mandatory. These performances serve as a testing element of the musical organization and individual student. The absence of even one member affects the whole. A single missed performance will affect grade average. Repeated absenteeism will result in non-participation in group field trips and may result in inability to fully participate in future group endeavors.
- **Performance Absences:** Absences from performances or scheduled rehearsals may be excused under certain circumstances.
    - A parent phone call, email, or other communication of explanation will be necessary for an excused absence, and only certain situations will be granted an excuse. Communication of an expected absence must be made in advance of performance. Students who know they are going to miss a performance and do not communicate this to the director will not be given an excused absence. Students who do not communicate performance and rehearsal dates to parents/guardians in a timely manner will not be granted an excused absence.
    - Examples include but are not limited to: Personal illness, death or emergent circumstance in immediate family, conflict with another school organization with an equal or higher priority. Priorities are as follows: (1st) contest or performance

(2nd) regularly scheduled rehearsal (3rd) extra rehearsal (4th) activity of non-performing nature.
        - Any other conflict will be determined on an individual basis by the director and it will be their sole decision as to whether or not the absence is excused. Such decisions do not set a precedent and are not binding for future decisions. The director reserves the right to refer to the student's individual attendance history when making such a decision.
        - Excused absences will require completion of a make-up assignment, to be determined by the director. Excused absences will be able to earn **up to full credit.**
        - Unexcused absences are given zero credit towards the performance grade. However, the director may choose to offer a make-up assignment for partial credit in certain circumstances.
    - **Volunteer Performances:** Clubs, Civic Organizations, and School Functions may request a small performing ensemble which does not require all choir members. Performance for such events is considered voluntary. Extra or missing points may be awarded to volunteers if needed. **If a student volunteers for an event, they will be expected to perform. Absence from a volunteer performance will count toward absenteeism policy.**

VI: Performance Apparel Performance apparel will vary by type of performance (dress-up, casual, robes, special costume). All attire is to strictly follow school dress code. Students will receive advance notice of performance dress "type." Each type will be regulated by the following set of guidelines:

- Dress-Up:
    - Ladies: Dress or nice skirt/slacks with blouse. Tights are only acceptable when worn under a dress or tunic top that is at least fingertip length all the way around. **Flats only.** Heels change the heights of students and can interfere with sightlines. They are also dangerous on the risers!
    - Gentlemen: Dress pants or khakis (no cargo pants) and nice shirts such as a button-up or polo with no obvious logos or writing. Dress shoes are preferred, but boots or plain, solid color tennis shoes will be acceptable as long as they are neat and clean.
- Casual:

    All students should wear plain, nice jeans and current year choir t-shirt. Jeans with any tears, holes, or patches are not allowed. Shoes should be neat and clean, and not be distracting in color. No heels or flip flops.

- Robes:

    Students will be assigned a choir robe, to be kept at school. Students will be expected to keep track of their robe and stole before, during, and after performances. It must be neatly returned to its designated spot immediately following performances. Students who do not return robes and stoles may be subject to a replacement fee.

- Special Costume:

    From time to time, performances may require special dress or costume specific to the nature of the performance. Individual choirs may also elect to coordinate outfits to enhance

the performance. Every effort will be made to ensure students and parents receive specific instructions or suggestions in a timely manner. If a student is lacking a requested item, please inform the teacher as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made accordingly.

- General information:

  All students should avoid wearing perfumes, hair, or cosmetic products with strong scents during performances. Students should not dress in a manner that will draw undue attention to the individual. Always err on the side of comfort and modesty, so that the student may move freely or sit comfortably.

VII: Responsible Use of School Property

- Student Materials: Students will be assigned robes, folders, music, and sight-singing workbooks throughout the school year. The director will keep a log of what has been issued to each student. Students are responsible for keeping track of assigned materials. Appropriate selections will be checked in at the end of each quarter and semester. Students will be responsible for the replacement of any school property that is lost or is damaged beyond reasonable, normal use.
- Classroom Materials: Students will have access to and use of many expensive classroom materials, including but not limited to the digital piano, xylophones, drums, keyboards, and a variety of small classroom instruments. Students are expected to treat each instrument with caution and respect. Students will be responsible for replacement/damage repair costs resulting from mistreatment of any classroom material.

VIII: Acceptable and Expected Behavior.

- Rehearsal: The student is expected to maintain positive personal behavior at all times. Recurring disruptive behavior or negative behavior during class may result in dismissal from the group and will affect grade. Those behaviors considered disruptive or negative include, but are not limited to:
  - Excessive Talking
  - Making noises or moving about the room when director is giving instructions
  - Intentionally singing improperly or singing wrong notes, especially with the intention of disrupting class
  - Open disrespect or disregard of instructions
  - Disrespectful behavior towards the instructor or other students
  - Continued misuse of classroom items
  - Bullying of any kind
  - Continued non-participation
- General Classroom Rules
  - No drinks, other than water, are allowed in the classroom. Water containers must be kept in bags or by the entry.
  - Never place any drink on or near classroom instruments/equipment.
  - No gum
  - No food

- Do not use classroom instruments/equipment without asking for and receiving permission. Violating this rule will result in automatic lunch detention (MS) / discipline referral (HS).
- No cell phones. Phones will be confiscated and office referrals/ remediation will be assigned as dictated by the appropriate student handbook.
- No charging of cell phones or batteries during class.
- Students who are not in the classroom by the time the bell rings will be counted tardy. Students must immediately and quietly make their way to assigned seat/ riser positions so that attendance can be taken. DMS/ DHS students should refer to the student handbook for tardy consequences.
- Students should complete any posted daily classroom work or specific instructions upon finding their seat.
- Students will be allowed to use the restroom in the first three minutes of class, provided that they have checked in with the director so that attendance may be completed.
- No backpack, coats, bags, etc. on risers during class.

- **Trips, Performances, And Out-of-School Activities**
  - All rehearsal and school handbook rules apply. Rules related to dress code, prohibited substances, and appropriate conduct will be strictly enforced.
  - Cell phones must be turned off and put away during all performances.
  - Student safety is always top priority, followed closely by the example we set as a school and community. Students are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner that brings pride upon themselves, the choir, the school, and the City of Doniphan.
  - Director and approved chaperones have the authority to enforce additional rules and guidelines as needed to ensure the safety and positive atmosphere of the group.
  - Behaving in any way which opposes these ideals or compromising the safety of the group will result in non-participation of future activities and/or expulsion from the group.

Doniphan Middle School Choir Club ACTIVITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Choir Club is an extracurricular activity offered to choir members only. Choir students are automatically members of the choir club. Choir Club is a great way for students in choir to spend time together outside of class, to participate in community activities, and to attend AWESOME musical performances.

Meeting Times: Choir club runs concurrently with choir and does not hold monthly meetings. Meetings will be held at quarterly choir parties (see calendar for details).

Additional meetings and work days may be required as needed for trips, events, and fundraisers.

Meeting Place: Choir Room, unless otherwise instructed

Dues: No dues, students will instead be expected to provide snacks at parties

Attendance & Participation Requirements: All DMS Choir Club members must be enrolled in a choir class at DMS and are required to:

1: Regularly attend class to remain an active member. Excessive absences (10 or more per semester) may result in removal.

2: Participate in AT LEAST one fundraiser per year

3: **BEING PHASED OUT 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR** Work TWO DMS ballgame concession duties. (Concession stand duty schedules will be created and released as soon as game schedules are finalized with DMS teams and clubs are assigned nights to work.)

4: Provide pre-package snacks for AT LEAST one after school party.

TRIPS: Past club trips have included musicals such as *Wizard of Oz, Wicked,* trips to state parks, petting zoos, skating rinks, laser tag and more. Trips are determined on a yearly basis according to what is available at the time.

PARTIES: Choir club students have after-school parties for holidays such as Christmas and Valentine's Day. This is a great time for students to relax, have fun, and enjoy each other!

FUNDRAISERS: All Choir Club students are expected to participate in fundraisers. Funds help pay for club trips and are also necessary to buy supplies, music, and pay fees. Students who sell the minimum number of items for each fundraiser and maintain their positive standing in the choir club will get to attend events for free. Students who do not sell the minimum will be required to pay the difference. Parents who do not want their student to sell fundraiser items must pay for student participation in each choir club event (I.E. ticket costs, etc). These students will still be expected to participate in the work part of the fundraisers. This may include sorting and bagging items, hanging up flyers, working fundraiser booths, asking for donations, etc.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS: Students may be removed from choir club or may be unable to participate in choir club "fun activities" for a variety of reasons.

1: Insufficient attendance.

2: Repeated disruptive or disrespectful behavior. This includes having a negative attitude or arguing with other members.

3: Violation of school policies and handbooks, especially those pertaining to substances, bullying, weapons, and repeated days in ISS. This includes any school violations, not just those occurring during choir club activities.

4: **Excessive missing assignments or notification from other teachers of your failure to complete work in a timely manner will negatively affect your ability to attend trips and special activities!**

Welcome to DMS Choir!



Dear choir parents and students,

I am delighted that you have chosen to be a part of the choir family this year! The 2026-27 DMS CHOIR already looks very promising!

I have included all the “need to know information” in this packet. Please take the time to read through it carefully before committing to choir this year. We have fun, but we also work hard and there are a few after school commitments.

SCAN QR CODE for CHOIR CALENDAR

Please pay close attention to the schedule provided and mark down any dates you need to remember. If dates/times change throughout the year, SportsYou messages will be sent to all members. Updated and more detailed schedules will also be sent home in paper form periodically throughout the year.

SCAN QR CODE to JOIN CHOIR MESSAGING

Participants/Parents of students in Doniphan Athletics and Activities (which includes choir) **ARE REQUIRED to use the new DHS Athletics App for communication.** This **is not optional.** If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact the Athletic Director, Adam Epps.

MS Choir

FAILURE TO JOIN THE MESSAGING SYSTEM WILL NOT BE AN EXCUSE FOR STUDENT INABILITY TO FULFILL CHOIR REQUIREMENTS.

SCAN the QR CODE to access the full CHOIR HANDBOOK

The handbook includes rules, expectations, grading policies, performance expectations, choir club details and much more. Please read through this document with your student. By joining choir, students and parents are agreeing to the content within.

If you are unable to access the digital copy, please submit a request in writing to have a paper copy sent home. If you have any questions, please email me at rswafford@doniphanr1.k12.mo.us, contact me via Sports You, or send a note with your student.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rebecca Swafford

All students and parents must fill out the permission forms that are attached.

6th grade students do not need to complete MSHSAA form. 7th & 8th Grade athletes, if you have completed the MSHSAA form for a coach, you do not have to fill it out again.

Please return by Friday, September 4th.

Emergency Contact Form

Student Information

Student Name_____ Birthdate_____Grade_____

Allergies / Medical Concerns/ Need to Know Custodial Information

_____

_____

_____

Student Medical Insurance Provider_____ ID #_____

Insurance Group# (if applicable)_____

Parent Information

Parent / Guardian #1 _____

(Please list relationship to student if other than parent_____)

Primary Phone _____ Alternate Phone_____

Parent / Guardian #2 _____

(Please list relationship to student if other than parent_____)

Primary Phone _____ Alternate Phone_____

Emer. Contact /Relationship_____Phone_____

Email: _____

Student shirt sizes (circle one): YS YM YL YXL S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Choir Trip Permissions

I (parent/guardian name)_____ give permission for my choir student_____ to attend **all local, school-day choir performances, and activities throughout the 2026-27 school year.** These are trips that do not require parent drop-off or pick-up and occur during regular school hours. (Examples: Nursing home visits, caroling, Singing Valentines, etc. **This also serves as permission for all non-local performances and evaluative festivals. Notices, but not permission slips, will be sent via paper calendar and will be updated via DHS ATHLETICS APP throughout the year. Parent response will be expected through the DHS ATHLETICS APP.**

I agree to provide adequate, timely transportation for my child to and from all choir activities and performances.

I give permission for my student to ride on school provided transportation (bus or van) to and from local and non-local activities. (All before/after school trips will require additional permissions.)

All school handbook and choir handbook rules (including attendance policy) extend to field trips. Students are always expected to behave in a manner that positively reflects upon this group, the school, and the community. Consequences of violating school/choir policy may include exclusion from future trips and/or expulsion from the group.

Finally, in the event of a medical emergency (including but not limited to accident, severe allergic reaction, trauma, blood loss, loss of consciousness) I understand that every attempt will be made to reach me/emergency contact. **However, in an emergent situation, I understand that school chaperones/ personnel will not wait for verbal permission to seek medical help. I give permission for Doniphan R-1 to seek medical treatment for my child.**

Student and Parent Choir Contract

I/my student have received copies (digital or print) of:

- Vocal Music Handbook
- Choir Club Expectations (included in handbook)
- Choir Field Trips Permissions
- Choir Contact Agreement
- Choir Calendar (updates will be sent out via ATHLETICS APP as they occur)

and agree to the expectations, rules, and regulations within. I/my student have completed all forms and have provided appropriate contact information. I have read and understand the performance expectations for my child as a choir student.

I/my student have also

- Joined the DMS CHOIR TEAM on the ATHLETICS APP
- Filled out the: MSHSAA Pre-Participation Form (only fill out once for ALL activities. Athletes, if you have turned this in to a coach, you DO NOT have to do it again.) 7th & 8th Grade ONLY
- Included the shirt fee: $25
- Consented to random drug testing (This is required of all students involved in sports and activities at DMS/DHS. This is not a choir document, but is required for participation in choir. This is located in the beginning of the year enrollment packet provided by the school.)

All forms and payments are due by _____. Please send cash or check in a sealed envelope labeled with your student's name and "choir." Checks can be made to Doniphan Middle School, memo “choir.”

Student Name (printed)_____Parent Name (printed)_____

Student Signature_____Date_____

Parent Signature_____ Date_____

Parents/guardians who have difficulty paying for student shirts/fees are encouraged to contact me directly about alternative arrangements. Please CALL, SEND A NOTE, EMAIL, or send a message via the DHS ATHLETICS APP. DO NOT SEND A VERBAL MESSAGE WITH YOUR STUDENT.
Thank you!