

TIMBERVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Choral Department Handbook

Mr. Jason Forte-Director

Mrs. Jinney Lynch Gatlin-Associate Director

2023-2024



“Excellence is a journey; not a destination”

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Dear Students and Parents,

I am looking forward to this school year as we progress together. This year is significant not only because of our spring 2024 New York City trip, but for our opportunity to truly show our community and others the greatness inside our students at Timberview High School.

This past year was full of success and growth for the Timberview choir program; we grew 43% in membership! Two performing groups received sweepstakes in last year's UIL Concert and Sight-Reading competition and one group received a Superior rating in the sight-reading portion of the competition.

This year, I would like to not only continue in the pathway of excellence but raise the standards of both group and individual performance, encourage maintaining academic success outside of choir, and allow every opportunity to allow students to be a part of not only the school community, but the Mansfield ISD community as well.

This handbook outlines all the choir policies that you will need to be aware of. Please familiarize yourself with the choir policies. The handbook will also be posted on the choir website.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Jason Forte
Choral Director
Timberview High School

BELL SCHEDULE

A Day	B Day
7:25 am - 8:55 am Mens Choir	7:25 am - 8:55 am PLC
9:00 am - 10:50 am Varsity Mixed	9 am - 10:50 am Show Choir
10:55 am - 12:50 pm Intermediate Treble	10:55 am - 12:50 Beginning Treble
1:25 pm - 2:55 pm Conference	1:25 pm - 2:55 pm Coble MS

OVERVIEW OF ENSEMBLES

Mr. Forte and Mrs. Gatlin are a team and will collaborate equally to ensure the highest quality of performance year-long. Although there may be a “primary” director for each ensemble, we co-teach all classes. We are excited to take the Timberview choir program to the next level.

Beginning Treble

This choir consists of 9th–11th grade young ladies who are serious singers and who are training for the pursuit of a varsity level choir. Students will work on advancing vocal techniques, practice performances, and sight-reading skills. Students must maintain a good grade history, excellent work ethic, and will acquire the ability to sight-read and work through a fast-paced rehearsal. This group will also include elements of music theory. This ensemble travels and competes in several types of UIL contests. Additional rehearsals are required to best prepare for performances and contests. Mrs. Gatlin is the primary director of Beginning Treble.

Tenor-Bass Ensemble

This choir consists of 9th-12th grade young men who wish to train and develop their voices and participate in vocal performances. This ensemble will acquire beginning vocal techniques, sight-reading skills, and may participate in various performances and contests. This group will also include elements of music theory. This is a two-semester course. This choir, either in part or in whole, will be participating in several types of UIL and other competitions. Additional rehearsals are required to best prepare for performances and contests. Mr. Forte is the primary director of the Tenor-Bass Ensemble.

Intermediate Treble Choir

This is an auditioned choir that consists of 10th-12th grade young ladies who perform assorted styles of music. Audition and/or teacher recommendations are required. Students will work on advancing vocal techniques, practice performances, and sight-reading skills. Students must have previous choral training, a good grade history, excellent work ethic, and the ability to sight-read and work through a fast-paced rehearsal. This group will also include elements of music theory. This is a two-semester course. This ensemble travels and competes in several types of UIL and other contests. Grade eligibility must be maintained to keep a place in the choir. Additional rehearsals are required to best prepare for performances and contests. Mrs. Gatlin is the primary director of Intermediate Treble.

Varsity Chorale

This is an auditioned choir that consists of 10th-12th grade students who have choral experience and show an advanced level of vocal technique, sight-reading skills, and performance practices. The Varsity Chorale is the premier ensemble of the Timberview choir program and will be a traveling showcase group of Timberview High School. This group will also include elements of music theory. Students in this choir exhibit an elevated level of commitment and dedication to the choir due to the schedule demands. This is a course for students who really love singing. This is a two-semester elective. This ensemble travels and competes in several types of UIL and other contests. Many additional rehearsals are required to maintain the prominent level of excellence this choir has achieved in performances and contests. Grade eligibility must be maintained to keep a place in the choir. Mr. Forte is the primary director of Varsity Chorale.

Show Choir (Viva di Voce)

This is an auditioned choir that consists of 10th-12th grade students who have choral experience and show an advanced level of vocal technique, sight-reading skills, and performance practices. Students in this choir exhibit an elevated level of commitment and dedication to the choir due to the schedule demands. This ensemble will compete in several types of UIL and other contests as part of their second blocked class. Many additional rehearsals are required to maintain the prominent level of excellence this choir has achieved in performances and contests. Grade eligibility must be maintained to keep a place in the choir. Mr. Forte and Mrs. Gatlin are co-directors for this ensemble.

SUPPLIES

Students will need the following for choir class:

- 5 Tab Dividers
- 2 pencils

Choir supplies that are included:

- Black Binder
- Pencil Bag

This is included in the choir fee. It is your child's responsibility to keep the binders. Binders are for choir use only. The student will be responsible for replacing his/her lost binder at an additional cost. Folder checks will be conducted throughout the year and points will be deducted for failure to have/maintain a choir binder and supplies.

GRADING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Mansfield ISD is on a six (6) week grading schedule. There will be at least eight (8) grades taken in the six (6) weeks period, with a minimum of two (2) test grades.

Grades will be given according to the following scale

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| I. | Daily Grades | 60% |
| | 1. Class Rehearsal | |
| | 2. Singing | |
| | 3. Written assignments | |
| | 4. Classroom activities/participation | |
| | 5. After-School Rehearsals | |
| II. | Tests | 40% |
| | 1. Concerts/Performances | |
| | 2. Sight-Reading | |
| | 3. Singing Tests | |
| | 4. Written Assessments | |

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Choir is exciting and different from any other class. To be successful, we must work as a team. **EVERY VOICE MATTERS!** The following rules are for your benefit and the success of our choir. Your enjoyment of choir depends on following these rules.

- Follow directions the first time.
- Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself always. This includes the passing period before the tardy bell.
- Food, drinks, and gum are not allowed unless permission is granted from directors.
- You need permission to use the phone, touch the piano, sound equipment, or computer, enter the choir office, leave the room, or speak during class.
- Students are expected to be in assigned places with their choir folder, music, and pencil when the bell begins ringing.
- No bathroom passes will be given due to the shorter length of the class, with the exception of a nurse's pass in extreme emergency situations.
- Class begins when the tardy bell rings. Students should have their folder, pencil, and any other supplies needed for class by the beginning of class. Students who are not in their seat with their materials one minute after the tardy bell will be counted as tardy.
- Cell phones that are seen or heard will be taken up, marked, and given to the bookkeeper. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**
- The same rules and procedures apply when a substitute is present.
- All MISD and THS rules and policies are in effect when we go on trips. Students who consistently follow the rules and procedures in the choir room will be invited to go on field trips. Students who do not consistently follow the rules and procedures in choir or fail to meet performance and grade requirements will not be invited to go on field trips.

Every day that a student attends class, he/she receives has the capability to receive 100 total points. The points will be calculated to receive a weekly participation grade. Points are given based upon their participation and effort given in the activities listed under daily grades, being on time, and having their supplies. Points will be deducted as follows:

No participation or insufficient participation	At the discretion of the director not to exceed 50 points
No putting away music binder	-50 points
Gum/drinks/food in class	-10 points
No binder/music by tardy bell	-20 points
Tardy to class	-10 points
No pencil	-10 points
Poor rehearsal techniques	-10 points per infraction

*All choir students will be given a semester exam which consists of 20% of the total semester grade. Students must receive a final grade of at least a 70 to receive credit.

Test grades are earned in several ways. Singing and sight-reading tests are given throughout the year to monitor the progress of each student. Written assessments are also given. Each of the required concerts (see calendar) count as two test grades. Rehearsal grades will at times be counted as daily grades. Concert test grades are determined in the following manner:

1. Arriving on time in your assigned seat.
2. Dressing in the correct uniform, making sure that all parts of the uniform are present and extra parts are not!
3. Listening quietly to the other choirs and following concert etiquette behavior expectations.
4. Walking on and off stage correctly.
5. Performing on stage in the manner that has been instructed

LETTERMAN JACKETS

A total of 25 points are required to receive a varsity letterman jacket. The list of points that can be received is available at the beginning of the year for all students. Every student must individually be responsible for keeping up with their points throughout the year. Each sheet will be turned in at the end of the year and be handed out each subsequent year. For concert attendance outside of a THS Choir event, please bring the printed program as proof of attendance along with the students' name. The letterman points will be added towards a student's audition points for advanced choirs.

ELIGIBILITY

For choir students to fully participate in UIL sponsored choral contests and festivals, each choir member must pass ALL classes with at least a 70 average. Failure to do so will result in academic probation beginning the second week after the end of the six weeks grading period in which they failed. By the end of the third week, students who failed must be passing ALL subjects to become eligible. During a students' time of academic probation, all choir members are still obligated to attend all rehearsals. Ineligible students will be able to perform in curricular activities in which a grade is given for participation.

Events Subject to **eligibility requirements:**

1. TMEA Region/All-State Auditions
2. Trips or Concerts that are off campus and/or within the school day
3. Any concert which admission is charged
4. UIL Concert & Sightreading

Required events not subject to any eligibility rules

1. Extra rehearsals and sectionals after school hours
2. In class rehearsals and performances
3. All concerts when admission is not charged

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Rehearsals and concerts are vital to the choral program. The choir program is a performance-based class and grades are given based upon students' attendance and participation in both rehearsals and choir concerts.

Performance has privileges; lack of performance has consequences. Failure to attend concerts will result in TWO zero test grades. Conflicts with other THS events will be worked out by the other club/athletic sponsors and myself; if there is proper PRIOR WRITTEN notification. It is your child's responsibility to notify the director as soon as notice of the conflict occurs. It is the students' responsibility to notify the choir director PRIOR to an absence, except in the case of an emergency. NOTIFICATION THE SAME DAY WILL BE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED. Non-school related activities will not be excused. Other UNEXCUSED absences include, but are not limited to:

- Transportation issues
- Babysitting
- Doctor appointments
- Non-school related events
- Drive Time

Sometimes certain circumstances do occur. In those cases, excused absences will only be excused and at the director's discretion. Whatever the circumstance, the director must be notified as soon as possible.

- Death in the family
- Critical family emergency
- Bed-ridden illness (accompanied by doctor's note and/or notification by parent that the child did not attend school due to sickness or notification if child is checked out of school due to illness)
- Once in a lifetime event (i.e, birth of a sibling, or grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary) In this case, the student must provide PRIOR approval from the director in writing that includes (1) the students' name, (2) the date/time of the conflict, and (3) the specific reason for the conflict.

Unless prior approval has been given, any reason for an absence must be given within TWO school days of the return of the student after the missed rehearsal or performance. **Any written correspondence after the two days will not be excused.**

Students will be given adequate notice of all outside rehearsals and activities. All choir members are required to be in attendance and take part. If there is an unexcused absence, the absence will be reflected in the student's grade for the six weeks. **All students absent from concerts, regardless of if it is excused or unexcused MUST make up the grade either by examination or alternate assignment. You will need to see the director to make arrangements. Students with unexcused absences receive a grade of no higher than 70% of the assignments total worth.**

TARDY POLICY

Please refer to the Timberview High School handbook regarding tardiness. The same policies and consequences will follow. In addition, students will be deducted daily points for each tardy. (See point scale above).

CELL PHONE POLICY

Please review Mansfield ISD's cell phone policy. In choir, phones need to be placed in a student's binder slot or put away.

UNIFORM

All choir members must rent a uniform. Anyone who is unable to pay or needs to make special arrangements must contact the director. Students must be in complete concert attire to perform. Failure to be in full compliance will result in the lowering of the test grade and/or failure to perform in the concert/performance. All students must wear the school issued uniform. All concert attire will need to be returned at the end of the year. Failure to do so within the allotted amount of time will result in a fine. The choir fee will cover the cost of dry cleaning; however, the uniforms must be turned in by the deadline date. If turned in after the deadline, students

will need to provide their own dry cleaning and bring the receipt and the original plastic. Failure to have the receipt will still result in a fine.

Mens' uniform: Will consist of black tuxedo pants, black vest, and black tuxedo jacket. The cost of the rental of these items is included in the choir fee. This includes a polo shirt or T-shirt for informal concerts to be worn along with jeans or black pants. The boys will be responsible for their own tuxedo shirt, bow tie, black dress shoes, black dress socks, and black belt.

Womens' uniform: Will consist of a school issued concert dress. The cost of the rental is included in the choir fee. This includes a choir T-shirt for informal concerts to be worn along with jeans. They may wear the t-shirts at any time. The girls will need to supply their own *solid* black closed toe dress shoes with black panty hose. No necklaces or bracelets should be worn with concert attire. They will be allowed to wear earrings that are studs or hoops no larger than a quarter.

Uniforms WILL always be kept clean and neat. All students will need to return their choir uniform at the end of the year. Failure to return the uniform either in total or in part will result in a fine that covers the cost of replacement (see Finance).

Viva di Voce (Show Choir) uniform: Students will have to purchase their show choir uniform. Additional items will have to be purchased and it differs according to the type of show that we put on every year. Be prepared to pay for both dance shoes and undergarments. Prices will vary.

FUNDRAISING

We will be participating in various fundraisers throughout the year. It is important that we have as much participation as possible to meet the needs of the choir. Money earned will go either towards your trip account or into the choir fund. This will aid in allowing us to keep costs low for various activities that we would like to participate in throughout the year, AND help with providing scholarships for those students in need who wish to participate in private voice lessons that the district offers. Participation in fundraising is not mandatory, however, fundraising participation is ESSENTIAL for an equitable experience for our diverse population.

TMEA ALL-STATE

All students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to participate in the All-State process. These solo auditions are highly competitive and require intense practice. All Varsity Chorale members are expected. Private voice lessons are strongly recommended to be successful in this competition. Students must be eligible to participate and pay the initial \$15 fee. Please see the calendar for date(s). Required for all students who wish to audition in a varsity level choir.

9TH-10TH GRADE REGION 5 CHOIR

All 9th-10th students are eligible to audition for this All-region choir. Students selected for this choir will perform in the November region concert. This experience prepares them for the rigors of the all-state audition process in later grades. This competition will be held in October. Required for all 9th-10th students who do not audition in the all-state process.

VOICE LESSONS

Through the Mansfield Music Enrichment Program (MMEP), we offer high quality vocal instructors to teach private voice lessons on our campus both during class, and/or after school. The function of the private lessons is important to the developing singer and the overall choral program in ensuing success in both local performances and competitions. Lessons run \$60-80 a month, or \$20 per lesson per week. More information will be given at the beginning of the school year.

STUDENT TRAVEL

The choral department will be going on a choir trip. Although choir trips are optional, students are strongly encouraged to participate as we will be performing on all trips and need the entire group to be successful.

Specific regulations concerning student travel will be discussed in detail preceding all trips. More specific guidelines will be given at the beginning of the school year and during subsequent trip meetings.

FINANCES

The following are anticipated expenditures that will occur throughout the year. They are listed to help you plan your budget. Ample fundraising opportunities can and will be provided to assist families in meeting these expenses. Please note that some of the fees are approximate. Required fees are indicated.

1. Choir Fee	\$60	Required
2. Show Choir Fee	\$120	Show Choir ONLY (Less because of NYC trip)
3. All-State/Region Choir	\$15	Optional for Non-Varsity (Required Varsity)
4. Choir T-Shirt	\$20	Required
5. Group Dynamix Lock-in	\$50	Required for Officers
6. Choir Banquet	\$25	Optional
7. Voice Lessons	\$20/month	Optional/Chorale strongly encouraged
8. Replace Womens' Dress	\$75	If not returned
9. Tuxedo Shirts	\$20	Optional to buy through THS but required to have
10. Replace Men's Tux	\$275	If not returned
11. Bow Tie Replacement	\$10	If not returned
12. Dry Cleaning Fee	\$20	If returned after deadline
13. Various Social Outings	Varies	Optional

Make checks payable to: Timberview High School

REFUNDS

Most fees are charged to the student prior to an event or service. The choral department has a deadline for receiving reimbursement from the supplier at times; however, deadlines must be strictly enforced. There will be no refunds due to a student becoming ineligible. In MOST cases, refunds will not be given; however, the director will consider refunds on a case-by-case basis.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

It is important that we have parental involvement in the choir program. Parental involvement adds tremendously to the success of the choral program, so please fill out the volunteer form if you wish to be contacted regarding volunteering to be a choir parent.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. Thanks in advance.

Jason Forte

Timberview High School

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