McEachern High School
Chorus Handbook

Director: Mr. K. Kirkland
July 31, 2017

Chorus Office (770)-222-3710 ext. 283

Email: Kendrick.kirkland@cobbk12.org
Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome 9th graders, new students, and all returning students!! The MHS Chorus has a fun and exciting year planned. Please read this handbook carefully, filling out the student/parent contract on the back. Forms must be turned in to Mr. Kirkland by Friday, August 11th. Our first BIG event of the year is our first Chorus Kick-Off meeting on Thursday, August 24th, at 6:00pm in the PAC Chorus room. This is a required attendance event for all new students and a parent. We will be discussing the calendar, special events, opportunities, and concerts.

If you are interested in taking a leadership position, please see Mr. Kirkland. Parents, I really need your help to allow things to run smoothly. Your help is greatly appreciated. If you work for a company or corporation that would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please let me know. Thank you for encouraging your child to continue. Having completed four years of high school chorus will make a difference in their college application.

Please refer often to the chorus blog at McEachernhigh.org as well as our under construction website www.mceachernhighchorus.org I look forward to seeing you at the chorus kick-off meeting, events and concerts!

Our motto: Never Good, Always GREAT!!!
Description of Choruses:

The McEachern High School “Chorale” is a performance group comprised of 10th through 12th grade students. The students are selected through auditions and/or with the approval of the Chorus Director, with the understanding that there will be out-of-school performances and rehearsals required of all members during the school year. The course will cover the mechanics of choral singing: note reading, rhythm, pitch discrimination, expression, and music literacy at a higher level.

The McEachern High School “Bel Canto” is a performance group comprised of 9th through 12th grade women only. The students are selected through auditions and/or with the approval of the Chorus Director, with the understanding that there will be out-of-school performances and rehearsals required of all members during the school year. The course will cover the mechanics of choral singing: note reading, rhythm, pitch discrimination, expression, and music literacy at a higher level.

The McEachern High School “Concert Choir” is a performance group comprised of 9th through 11th grade men and women. The students are selected through auditions and/or with the approval of the Chorus Director, with the understanding that there will be out-of-school performances and rehearsals required of all members during the school year. The course will cover mechanics of choral singing: note reading, rhythm, pitch discrimination, expression, and music literacy at an intermediate level.

McEachern Chorus Booster Club

A Volunteer Organization composed of parents of chorus students and the chorus director. McEachern Chorus Booster Club’s objectives are:

• To create & maintain an enthusiastic interest in the McEachern Chorus Program
• To organize, sponsor & fund projects in the chorus program
• To purchase, receive, develop, and maintain equipment and supplies for the enrichment of the chorus program
• To provide financial and organizational support to the McEachern High School Chorus Director in the pursuit of excellence in music education.
Course Outline

Purpose

Our Chorus’s purpose is to:

- Serve the school and community through quality concert performances
- Furnish members with an invaluable experience in music as an art form
- Develop individual responsibility and self-discipline
- Further school spirit
- Encourage and develop leadership and teamwork

Goals and Objectives in line with MENC/GPS Standards

1. Singing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire list
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Compromising and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Earning a McEachern Chorus Letter

Students may earn a McEachern Chorus letter if they meet the following requirements:

1. Exemplify superior class conduct
2. Perform well on class performance tests – 90% or above
3. Participate in extra-curricular ensembles
4. Exemplify leadership qualities in class and at concerts
5. Demonstrate outstanding effort
Grading and Discipline

Grading System
Grading will be based on the director’s evaluation of each student’s work done in class and during after school rehearsals and performances, with emphasis on daily participation/rehearsal competency, preparation for performances, general improvement in actively singing, written tests, and singing tests. All grading areas/tests will be based upon the 100-point scale. The following is a basic guideline for weight given to specific areas and subject to change at semester change:

Class Assessments (35%)
A partial list (but not limited to) of rehearsal competency:
1. Attendance, on time to class and in seat 2 minutes after bell
2. Helping with set-up if needed
3. Remaining in seat while instruction is going on.
4. Attentive participation without talking disturbances
5. Attentive participation without making singing disturbances working with another section
6. Participation and following directions with a good attitude and effort
7. Having daily materials: black notebook, music, theory worksheets, pencil, and highlighter
8. After school rehearsals when scheduled
9. Classroom Performance and written tests.

Performances (45%)
Two concerts per semester. Students must be on time, in the correct complete uniform, sing and perform their parts correctly, exhibit correct concert etiquette and stay for the entire concert, to receive full credit. All concerts are GRADED EVENTS. Fall, Holiday, Spring, Large Group Performance Evaluation (formerly known as “Festival”), feeder program concerts and trip performances, etc. are all considered co-curricular and graded. See further performance information, including attendance policies, later in the handbook.
IMPORTANT: Chorus is a Co-Curricular subject. Although students are in the chorus/academic class during the school day, they will also have a limited number of rehearsals and concerts after the school day. In order for your student to receive the best possible musical experience, attendance for these rehearsals and concerts are mandatory. These are graded events, as per Cobb County regulations.

Comprehensive Exam (20%)
Includes: Written, listening and playing components. The Written/Listening portion is half the grade and the singing components constitute the other half.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Each student is expected to do the following:
1. Be at the right place at the right time with the correct music and the right attitude.
2. Pay attention in class and be considerate of the rights of others to learn.
3. Have a positive attitude and patience when success is not immediate.
4. Approach singing any genre in a serious manner.
5. Remember that everything you do affects everyone else in the class.
6. Practice, practice, practice!
7. HYGEINE, HYGEINE, HYGEINE!!!
8. Abide by guidelines as set forth in the MHS Student Handbook and this MHS Chorus Program Handbook.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Parents should make every effort to do the following:
1. Provide encouragement for student effort -- let him/her give a concert for you.
2. Provide a quiet, private place for the student to practice.
3. Communicate with the director in a timely manner - both positive situations and developing problems of the student.
4. Help the student in his/her efforts to fulfill the responsibilities listed in the sections of this handbook.
5. Encourage the student to take private lessons to work on vocal technique. Private lessons will give your student the individual attention necessary to take auditions for extra-curricular choruses.

Required Materials
1. Black Folder
2. All music in your assigned MHS Chorus Folder.
3. 4 dividers
4. A pencil and highlighter
5. Assigned Sight-reading book (provided by Choral Director).
Care of Music
The student is responsible for his or her music and folder that is provided by the school. Folders and music that is lost or damaged must be replaced by the student or the following fees must be paid: $15.00 for the folder, $5.00 per original piece of music and $1.00 per photocopied piece of music, scale sheet, etc. Costs for lost or damaged method books and other materials will be the retail price of each item. As with other classes, unpaid fines for lost/damaged materials will result in the student not being allowed to take their final exam and/or put a hold on their transcripts/diploma.

Practice and Private Lessons
Because this is an ensemble class, the lack of participation by one student affects all other students in the class. To be a learning, contributing member of the McEachern High School Chorus, you will need practice. Failure to do so can also result in a lower grade. Practice may be defined as “achieving the greatest amount of technical and musical improvement in the least amount of time.” Difficult measures, lines or passages must be carefully analyzed. Sing each passage slowly at first, drilling it until it is learned. Singing entire pieces through without practicing them carefully is a waste of time. You will sing as well as you practice and, the better you practice, the better you and our chorus will be.

Taking regular private lessons from a reputable teacher is recommended for any serious orchestra student at McEachern High School. If any student or parent needs names and contact information for voice teachers, please see Mr. Kirkland. Just as other teachers require students to do their homework, regular practice is expected from every chorus student at least 30 minutes of each day.

Conduct
It is expected that chorus students are exceptional and take responsibility seriously. Since the conduct of a chorus student reflects not only on himself/herself, but also on all chorus students, the school, and the community, each student is required to follow all expectations listed below:

1. Common courtesy and respect for others. “Others” includes students within the chorus and anyone who comes in contact with chorus members during chorus activities and performances.
2. Mature conduct in all situations, good etiquette is a part of the concert grade.
3. Unpack immediately once you arrive in class and be seated to warm up by 2 minutes after the bell. Our time is valuable!
5. Handle your own materials and not someone else’s without his or her permission.
6. Follow all specific performance, festival, and trip policies.
7. No talking, food, drink, gum, or candy is permitted in class or at performances.
8. ABSOLUTELY ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CELL-PHONES!!!!

Performances
Performances permit the students to share what they have learned with the public. Concerts have two major purposes. One purpose is for the student to experience the interpreting of music for and with an audience. Students will display technical growth and the expression of the musical language. The other purpose is for the student to experience music with an educated ear. Listening is as important as the singing of music. Most of us are listeners and a goal of music education is to develop better listening skills in our students. A student who hears with a trained ear listens with more depth.
*****Absence Policy*****

A chorus rehearses and performs at its optimum with all members present. Every member is important for the success of the chorus. *ALL after school rehearsals (which are very few!) and concerts are required components of the course and attendance is MANDATORY (see Mr. Kirkland regarding any and all possible conflicts).* Absenteeism and tardiness not only hurts you, but impairs the effectiveness of the entire ensemble. **Musicians are always on time, and being on time is arriving early!** Ample time is required to tune and warm up before the rehearsal/concert begins. Students with approved excused exceptions will be assigned a paper or project equivalent to the missed rehearsal or concert. Good communication between the director, student, parents, and/or coaches/sponsors can prevent misunderstandings. Please read the following expectations carefully and contact Mr. Kirkland with any questions:

1. **WRITTEN NOTICES FROM PARENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL ABSENCES. VERBAL OR WRITTEN EXCUSES FROM STUDENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

2. **ADVANCE notice is required for all absences.** Students are given a calendar of rehearsals and concert times at least two/three weeks prior to the event. Once a rehearsal/concert is scheduled and a conflict arises, please notify the director immediately. **STUDENTS ARE GIVEN AMPLE NOTIFICATION IN ORDER TO MAKE PROPER ARRANGEMENTS.** Students are required to request that their work schedules be arranged to accommodate all after school rehearsals and concerts. Your employer will help you to work around required school events. Rehearsals/concerts take priority over work and social events. **REMEMBER THAT REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS ARE REQUIRED PARTS OF THIS CLASS AND THAT UNEXCUSED ABSENCES RESULT IN A LOSS FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND/OR REHEARSAL COMPETENCY PART OF A STUDENT’S GRADE.** With most performances, students must attend the required rehearsal(s) in order to be permitted to perform.

3. In the case of illness and/or family emergency, the parents should send a written notice to the orchestra director as soon as they are aware that such a situation exists. If it is an emergency situation (i.e. something that happens 30 minutes before the rehearsal is to begin) it may be impossible to get in touch with the director. Therefore, please follow this up with a written note as soon as possible after the fact. **THIS IS THE ONLY CATEGORY WHERE ABSENCES WILL EXCUSED THE SAME DAY, OR AFTER, THE EVENT.**

4. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused, given advanced notice. Please notify Mr. Kirkland with a written note as soon as you are aware that a conflict exists. There will be an assigned project to make up the grade. The director will assign the parameters and topics.
5. To receive a grade for an EXCUSED absence from a rehearsal or performance, it is the student’s responsibility to see the director for an assignment. This assignment will be a four-page research paper. NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER SEVEN DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE MISSED REHEARSAL OR CONCERT. THE STUDENT WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE GRADE IF IT IS LATE. **NOTE** PLEASE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE DIRECTOR IF THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY BE A PROBLEM. Unexcused absences affect the morale of the entire orchestra. Although it would be impossible to include a complete list, the following items are examples of unexcused absences:

1. Homework
2. Transportation: This refers to the student who fails to arrange transportation in advance.
3. Babysitting
4. Watching TV
5. Falling asleep
6. Forgetting instrument and/or music
7. Failure to request time off from job
8. Reporting to the wrong location or school
9. Extra-curricular/After-school activities: Refers to the student who fails to arrange schedule with extra-curricular sponsor. MR. KIRKLAND CAN HELP YOU!!!

Additional Information

CHORUS ENRICHMENT FEE

The Chorus enrichment fee is $80 for the entire school year and covers expenses for learning events offered beyond regular class instruction. Examples include minicamps, community building events, outside clinicians, music, deposits for trips, end of the year banquet and concert attire that students are provided. Participants have the option to pay or fundraise the fee. Checks can be made payable to: McEachern Chorus Booster. All enrichment participant fees should be paid by the first concert, October 18.

AUDITION PROCESS:

Your audition to enter an upper choir will be held at the end of the year (dates and times TBD). Everyone must audition, even if you are not looking to move choirs. This will serve as your final exam along with written theory exam. There will be four parts; Solo, sight-singing, scales and music theory.

Solo: You will each learn an All-State approved solo of my choosing. We will learn them as a class so everyone will learn the correct pronunciations and musical phrasing.
Sight-singing: Just like in class, you will be given a line to sight-sing. I will ask you for the key signature and I will give you the tonic chord and your starting pitch/solfege.

Scales: You will sing a major, minor, and chromatic scale starting in your comfortable voice range.

REMINDER: Every day in class is an audition. If you audition at the end of the year for an advanced choir (Bel Canto or Chorale) and you ace your audition but you come to class on a regular basis unprepared, with a poor attitude, or I have to ask you repeatedly to stop talking or put away your cell phone, you will forfeit the opportunity to be moved up. There are absolutely no exceptions.

Performance Uniforms

The goal of the performance uniform is to enable a group to look as good as it sounds. The McEachern High School Chorus is an impressive group of talented student musicians and we should look the part!

The Formal Uniform

Gentlemen: Basic black tuxedo with black satin stripe down the pant legs, purchased through the dealer assigned or approved by the directors. White tuxedo shirt, black dress shoes, black socks, and black cummerbund and tie.

Ladies: Black Short-sleeved dress purchased through the dealer assigned by the director. Black closed-toe dress shoes! If the ladies wear any accessories, such as a hair clip, it must not be a distraction for audience members in any way. The directors must approve the accessories before a student is allowed to perform. In general, no jewelry is permitted and hair must be pulled back out of the face.

The Informal Uniform/Spirit Wear

Each student must have a MHS Chorus Polo Shirt for various performances, including 8th Grade recruiting concerts and in-school performances. Mr. Kirkland will provide the details on how to order a shirt. The rest of the uniform will vary, depending on the circumstances of the performance: you will need:

1. Black dress slacks, black socks/hose, black dress shoes

Extra-Curricular Performance Opportunities

Students are encouraged to participate in outside ensembles for extra musical fun and challenge! GHP is the Governor’s Honors Program and is sponsored by the State of Georgia through the Governor’s office. This is a four-week summer program for all subjects for students who have just completed their sophomore or junior year in high school. Participation in the chorus program portion is by a comprehensive audition process, which begins with an interview/audition in Cobb County in October. The final audition/interview is in early February. An applicant must have a 3.0 average (possible change for this year) or better in all school subjects, have an A average
in chorus, be proficient on their music, be knowledgeable of musical theory and history, and recommended by their high school director. Only 18 - 20 students are selected throughout Georgia for this wonderful honor. GHP is held at Valdosta State University.

**Festivals**
Each year the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA), Georgia State University (GSU) and the University of Georgia (UGA) Berry College sponsor several music events. Some of the events are intended for students in our local GMEA district. Other events involve students on a statewide level. The McEachern High School Chorus Program currently takes advantage of the following events: Large Group Performance Evaluation (formerly known as “Festival”), Solo and Ensemble, and All State Chorus. Additional opportunities include the University of Georgia Choral Festival and Georgia State University Invitational Festival. The MHS Chorus Program might want to take advantage of the above or additional opportunities during this school year. If something is decided upon, then students and parents will be made aware of the event information in a timely manner.

**Chorus Trips and Fund-raising**
Once a year, MHS chorus students will have an opportunity to go on a chorus trip. Information regarding the trip this year will be available at the chorus fall meeting. **Various fund-raising opportunities will be available to help reduce out-of-pocket expenses for all students going on student trips.**

**COMMUNICATION RESOURCES**
The primary forms of communication I use are texting and email

**REMNIND ME INFORMATION –**

**Chorus Booster Parents** Text “@MHSCBP” to 81010

Parents AND Students, sign up to receive Remind 101 texts from the class that your child is in:

**Concert Choir (Mixed Choir) (1st block):** Text "@MHSCCC" to 81010

**McEachern Chorale (Mastery Mixed) (3rd block):** Text "@MHSCMMX" to 81010

**Bel Canto (Advanced Women’s Chorus) (4th block):** Text "@MHSCBC4" to 81010
McEachern High School Chorus

Schedule of Activities (2017-2018)

Students Name: ___________________________________________ will be committed to the BOLD dates below or will be responsible for make-up assignment per Chorus Handbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>EVENT SITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/24/17</td>
<td>**6:00pm</td>
<td>Chorus Kick-Off Meeting</td>
<td>PAC – Chorus Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/7/17</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Tri-M Induction</td>
<td>McEachern Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/16/17</td>
<td>**After-School</td>
<td>Fall Concert Dress Rehearsal</td>
<td>McEachern Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17/17</td>
<td>**7:00pm</td>
<td>(Call Time – 6:00pm) Fall Chorus Concert</td>
<td>McEachern Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/6-20/17</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Chorus Fundraiser (2 Weeks Only)</td>
<td>PAC- Chorus Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28/17</td>
<td>10am-5pm</td>
<td>Men’s Power Sing w. Morehouse Men’s Choir</td>
<td>Ray Charles PC</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/11/17</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>All-State Chorus Auditions</td>
<td>Woodland High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/7/17</td>
<td>**7:00pm</td>
<td>(Call Time 6:00pm) Fine Arts Winter Concert</td>
<td>PAC Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/12/17</td>
<td>**7:00pm</td>
<td>(Call Time-6:00pm) Winter Concert</td>
<td>McEachern Memorial UMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/4-6/18</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>High School Honor Chorus</td>
<td>Lassister High School</td>
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<td>1/19/18</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>2nd Round All-State Auditions</td>
<td>Kell High School</td>
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<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>**Pre-LGPE Concert w. Cooper and Tapp MS</td>
<td>PAC Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1-2/18</td>
<td>**TBD</td>
<td>**Large Group Performance Evaluation</td>
<td>Lassister High School</td>
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<td>April TBD</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Chorus Trip TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/8/18</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Spring Show</td>
<td>PAC Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/10/18</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Chorus End of Year Banquet and Awards</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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We will have chorus outings and will be announced well in advance for you to adjust your schedule if need be!

** Mandatory event for Chorus members as part of course requirement

We understand and accept the policies and responsibilities for Chorus students as stated in the 2017-2018 McEachern High School Chorus Program Handbook.

Student’s Signature ___________________________________________ Date __________

Parent/Guardian Signature ___________________________________________ Date __________

Parent/Guardian Printed Name ___________________________________________