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Welcome!

This handbook has been prepared for the Browning High School Choir students and their families to provide information concerning the choral music program in the high school. All choir members and their parents/guardians should be familiar with the information contained in this booklet to make participation in choir a successful experience for all.

The BHS music program has been a part of the community for a long time and we are glad that you've decided to join us. Our vocal ensembles strive for excellence, not only in musicianship but also in citizenship within our community. Students, parents, faculty and community members all work together to achieve the common goal of music education through individual studies as well as performance opportunities. At BHS we recognize the importance of music within the school curriculum and are committed to offering the best possible experience we can.

Goals

As a member of the BHS Choir, we encourage growth in:

- Citizenship – Leadership, respect, responsibility, diligence, cooperation, social skills, etc.
- Musicianship and Theory – Pitch, rhythm, style, tempo, blend, balance, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, note values and rests, keys and scales, terminology and definitions, ear training, vocal health, etc.

To reach our goals, it is important to work within a structured framework. Everyone has responsibilities and expectations to work towards. **COMMUNICATION IS KEY.**

Directors will:

- Set high, but achievable, goals
- Provide the best possible musical experience
- Create a challenging, but nurturing environment
- Demand academic excellence
- Communicate schedules and expectations clearly

Students will:

- Always be prepared
- Communicate conflicts as soon as possible
- Show responsibility – with homework assignments and sectional attendance
- Strive to pass all other classes

Parents will:

- Keep an open mind and line of communication
- Encourage, not discourage
- Provide transportation when needed
- Become a part of the choir family

Note: Please put your name on this Choir Handbook and keep it with your syllabus. It is the only copy you will get. Please do not lose it, and use it as a reference throughout the class. If you can provide this Choir Handbook and your original syllabus at your Final, I will add 5 points to the total grade of your final.

CHOIR CALENDAR

Concert dates and times are final. The choir is often asked to perform at sporting or school events. We will give as much notice as possible, but often we do not find out about such events until the last minute. Therefore, we ask that you be flexible and ready at a moment's notice!

- Fall Semester – National Anthem at various sporting events (TBD)
- October 16-18 – All-State band and choir festival, Great Falls
- November – BHS Musical – A Series of Unfortunate Sneezes: The Truth Behind the Big Bad Wolf
- November – District Honors Choir
- December (TBA) – Christmas caroling! Parents, teachers, and community members are invited to join us.
- December 18th – Winter Band, Guitar and Choir concert, 5:30 BHS Cafetorium
- March 25th – Spring Band and Choir concert, 5:30 BHS Cafetorium
- April 11th -12th – District 7 Music Festival, Havre
- May 20th – All Choirs concert, 5:30 BHS Cafetorium
- May/June – Graduation

CHORAL ENSEMBLES

Mixed Choir

Choir is open to any student who wishes to sing. There are no auditions and everyone is welcome. We currently have two sections of choir that meet as a class during the school day. If there is enough interest, we may open an after-school choir for students who are not able to fit choir into their schedule during the day or students who are interested in choir, but are not sure they want to sign up yet. Students wishing to have a leadership role in the choir may choose to be a section leader or run for Choir Council. For more information on becoming a section leader, see page 13. For more information on Choir Council, see page 12. At the moment, this is the only performance group available. We would like to build up enough student involvement to also have a male group and a female group. These groups would focus on, but are not limited to, a capella music. If you would be interested in either, please see Miss Montmagny.

After School Choir

Students have the option to attend after school choir if they cannot fit choir into their daily school schedule. Students who participate in choir during the school day are encouraged to attend after school choir to help out and get a better feel for the group sound. After school choir meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30.

Student Run Ensembles

Students may choose to run their own ensembles with permission and a faculty advisor. Student run ensembles must audition at least four weeks before a concert to be put on the program. Ensembles may also participate in the District Concert held in April.

PERFORMANCES

Performance Etiquette

Musical performances are not the same as other school and community events, though they take place in the same setting. Musicians have worked hard to prepare their music for public performance. They deserve the respect of the audience so that they can perform well. Some rules of etiquette for concerts so that we can all enjoy the performances are:

- Be seated quietly during the performance. Do not walk around during a performance. If you must walk, do so between songs or during an intermission.
- Be quiet. Do not talk or make distracting noises during the performance.
- Turn off cell phones or other electronic devices before the program begins. It is very rude to be texting or browsing during a performance.

Home Sports Games

There is a chance the choir will be singing the National Anthem at home games, when needed. You will only be required to stay for the performance pre-game, but you are encouraged to stay and cheer your classmates on. Keep in mind that you are representing the BHS choir and your school as a whole, so your behavior should be no different than at school or a regular performance.

Dress code:

- School spirit! Black bottoms or jeans and black, red and/or white tops.
- Must adhere to the school dress code (see the student handbook for more info)
- Close-toed shoes. No flip-flops or sandals.

High School Concerts

All BHS performances take place in the cafetorium at 5:30. Transportation is on your own. Students should have their robes on and be ready to warm up on the risers promptly at 5:00. **All students must have black dress shoes.** Sneakers and flip-flops are not acceptable.

Dress Code:

- Casual dress clothes. Yes, you are wearing robes, but you should still look nice when you take them off.
- Nice black shoes.
- No jeans, no sneakers, no hats
- Must adhere to the school dress code (see the student handbook for more info)

Honors and All-State Choirs

All choir students are eligible and encouraged to audition to participate in the District Honors Choir and the All-State Choir.

The District Honors Choir usually occurs the Monday and Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Students receive two days of school-related leave to rehearse with approximately 100 other students from area schools. After two days of rehearsal, the choir performs a public concert on Tuesday evening. Auditions are to be tape-recorded and sent in for adjudication in September or October.

The All-State Choir is a similar experience, but the singers are chosen from throughout the entire state of Montana. For that reason, competition is greater than for the District Honors Choir. Rehearsals take place during the two days of Teachers' Convention in October, and the performance occurs on Friday evening of Teachers' Convention. Auditions must be sent in May or June for participation the following October.

Taking part in these choirs will be a great experience and a lifetime memory.

District Festival Guidelines

In order to participate in the District Festival, students must perform in the spring concert. If a student does not meet the attendance requirements for a concert (see page ___), he/she may not participate in the District Festival. This opportunity is a privilege and should be taken seriously.

Solos and Group Numbers:

To ensure adequate preparation for the music festival, the following timeline is to be observed:

1. Students who wish to perform a solo or ensemble piece should begin to prepare at the beginning of the school year. Students must indicate their intent to participate by the end of January.
2. By the end of February students must have their music selected and be working on it.
3. By the end of March the music must be learned so that it is performable at that time. Music must be memorized.
4. Students must perform their solos or ensembles at a pre-festival concert. Only then will the student(s) be permitted to register to perform at the festival. Any student who registers for a festival event and subsequently cancels his/her participation must reimburse the school for the cost of registration (\$20).

ASSESSMENT

Sectionals

Students are required to attend a total of eight sectionals each semester. A sectional is a chance for all the singers in a voice part (soprano, alto, or baritone) to get together and go through trouble spots in the music outside of class. This is equivalent to homework and should be taken seriously, as attendance to sectionals will affect grades. Section leaders run these during, before, or after school when the section can meet together. Sectionals will be 15 minutes long at the beginning of the year, but may be extended as students familiarize themselves with the idea. During this time section leaders work out rhythms, notes, phrasing, dynamics, and other technical problems so that the majority of choir rehearsals can be spent shaping and making music.

Written Quizzes

Pop quizzes will be handed out occasionally in the last five minutes of class. These quizzes will have terms and phrases common to music that all musicians should know. All students should get 100% on these quizzes, so if anyone gets less than that, they have the option of taking it again until they get 100%. We want students to excel.

Alternate Assignments

Should a student miss an assignment, alternate assignments may be completed to make up for a zero, but at the teacher's discretion. Alternate assignments can be requested two weeks before the semester ends, and up to three days before the semester ends. Again, we want students to excel and strive for academic excellence.

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly. As choir relies on trust within the group, it is crucial that members are present and participating as often as possible. Absences WILL count against your grade unless you have a medical absence, special circumstance, or school related absence.

You will have an opportunity to earn up to 20 points a day.

5 points – coming to class and staying the entire time

5 points – required materials (i.e. pencil, notebook, textbook, music, etc.)

5 points – participation in class

5 points – respect to students and teacher

At the end of each quarter, if you still have your emergency hall pass, I will award an extra 10 points.

Points will be taken away for (but are not limited to) the following reasons:

Absence – Unless you have a school related absence or a medical absence, if you are not in class, you get a zero for the day.

Forgetting Required Materials – It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. If you do not bring your materials, you need to share with another classmate. You will not be allowed to go to your locker unless you use your quarterly emergency hall pass.

Poor or No Participation – The best way to learn is to be involved in discussions and class work. If you do not consistently participate in class, it will greatly affect your grade.

Disrespect – I will give one verbal warning before I write a referral. Talking back, not following directions, distracting other students from their work, leaving without asking and other forms of disrespect will result in loss of points.

Use of Emergency Hall Pass – You have time before school, time during lunch, and four minutes in between each class to do what you need to. All students are required to have a notebook in which you keep your notes for every class. You should not need to go to your locker before every class. You will lose 10 points when you use your emergency hall pass.

Chewing Gum – I do not allow gum in my classroom. If you do not throw it away before the bell rings, points will be taken away.

Food or Drink – I only allow water in a closed container. If you bring food or drink to class, points will be taken away.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Class Rules

- Be Respectful, Responsible and Reliable
- Bring required materials daily – music, pencil (no pens), water, etc.
- Be on time
- No food, drink (except for covered water), or gum
- Use appropriate behavior – no profanity, no horseplay, etc.

Consequences for breaking rules:

1. Verbal Warning
2. TAB In
3. TAB Out
4. Referral
5. See Ms. Guardipee

Positives for following rules: Students help to decide these.

1. Quarterly achievement awards
- 2.
- 3.

Severe Clause:

Students will be immediately sent to Ms. Guardipee or ISS.

Rehearsal Schedule

There are two sections of Choir. It is very difficult to perform as an ensemble when our rehearsals are split. If administration and scheduling allows, there will be combined rehearsals the week prior to concerts; you will be excused from your regular class during that period. Students will be informed which choir periods they should attend in addition to their regular class. Combined rehearsals give students the opportunity to hear the full choir before they perform together at concerts.

Student run ensembles choose their own times to rehearse. If rehearsals take place outside of school facilities, an adult must be present.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at each rehearsal, athletic event, and major performance. All conflicts for rehearsals must be given in writing, with parent/guardian signature, with at least a one-week notice and valid reason. All conflicts with major performances will require written and signed documentation as well as a meeting with the director.

If attendance begins to be a problem, students will be given one warning and two weeks to improve their performance. If attendance does not improve, students stand to lose their place in the choir and will meet with the director to discuss further action.

If a student has more than 10 absences (excused or unexcused) in a quarter, he/she will **not be allowed to perform in a concert**. The student will have to complete and alternate assignment (see page 8). It is of the utmost importance to know the music and be a contributing member of our ensemble. Frequent absences interfere with building a choir.

Acceptable Reasons for Missing a Performance:

- School related absence
- Sports game
- Family emergency
- Doctor's appointment that cannot be rescheduled

For acceptable, excused absences, you must provide a written, signed explanation for your absence and complete an alternate assignment in order to remove the zero from your grade.

Unacceptable Reasons for Missing a Performance:

- Sports practice – you have the initial calendar on page 4 and I will update it on the board in my classroom. You should make arrangements with your coach to be at performances.
- Shopping, sleeping, “I didn’t want to go”, etc.
- No ride – you can stay after school until the performance. If you need a ride home, talk to other choir members and carpool.

Code of Behavior for Athletic and Public Events

The BHS Choir represents the school at all public events. Be Respectful, Responsible and Reliable. Poor behavior will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Care for Printed Music

Much of our music is well loved and fragile. Sheet music should be kept in the black folder issued out at the beginning of the year. All markings on music should be made

lightly in pencil and erased before returned at the end of the semester. Any damaged music (originals only, not copies) will have a fee of \$1 to replace it.

Concert Dress

Concert dress is modest, following the school dress code (even when wearing robes) and is specific to each performance. See pages 5 and 6 for more details. The Browning School District has made a major commitment to purchasing beautiful red choir robes. The robes are expensive, pricing over \$100 each. Wearing these robes should symbolize the pride of being a member of the Browning High School Choir.

A numbered robe will be assigned for your use. You are responsible for that robe and for any damage that occurs to it. You alone are to wear that robe. You are to wear no other robe and no other person is to wear your robe. Please care for your robe properly. Hang it neatly after each use.

Beaded Stoles

Our dream at the present time is to make beaded stoles of Native American design that will set our choir apart-as special; we are a group that is proud of the heritage and culture of the community. Each student will be given the opportunity to learn the art of beadwork from a member of the Browning community and put those skills to use. We will have a designated class period set aside each month to work on our stoles, as well as optional evening workshops. Our goal is to have every choir member wearing a beaded stole when we go to the District Music Festival in April 2013!

Stole-making materials will be furnished for each student. Because of the loss of many unbeaded stoles in past years, the policy will be that a student must pay a \$10 deposit to work on the stole outside of the school. If you return your stole at the end of the year, you will receive your deposit back in full. In past years, students have been able to keep their stoles for that amount. This year, we ask that if you would like to keep a stole, you make an additional stole for the choir to keep in their collection.

Working Students

Students who work after school must submit a work schedule at the beginning of the year or within one week of obtaining a job. If the student's work schedule interferes with the choir requirements to an extreme, the student, his/her parents, and the director will have a meeting to see if it is realistic to continue with choir. We want you to be a part of choir, so we will work with you to make things work.

Substitute Teachers

In the case of a substitute teacher the section leaders and choir council members will be in charge of running class while the sub oversees.

CHOIR COUNCIL

The Choir Council is a brand new idea for the BHS Choir.

The Choir Council was created to give students a voice in the music program and as a way of learning responsibility. The Council is comprised of a president, vice president, secretary/librarian and treasurer, all of whom are elected by the students. Other members include the section leaders who are either auditioned or appointed by the director. The four grade levels are accounted for on the Council, with the exception being the first quarter of the year when the first year class members campaign for the first year representative. All other positions are chosen in the spring of the previous year so that new members have a chance to work with graduating members before they leave.

Meetings

Once Choir Council members have been chosen, all members will get together with the choir director to discuss meeting times. Choir Council will meet once a month. These meetings are designed for Council members to voice opinions, anonymously, of other choir members and to work out any issues with sectionals or anything else. Meetings shouldn't run more than a half hour, unless we are planning a fundraiser or event, and will be used as a check-in to see how things are running.

Positions and Duties

- President – Runs choir rehearsals when director is absent, takes attendance, keeps track of seating arrangement, heads rehearsal setup of chairs, go-to person for questions and comments, sits in on Choir Parents meetings as student representative, option of conducting a piece at the Spring Concert
- Vice President – Takes over president's roles when director is absent, in charge of handing out and collecting music and organizing folders, sits in on Choir Parents meetings when president is unable to
- Secretary/Librarian – Takes notes at meetings if necessary, keeps music library in order, prepares music to be handed out, puts away music that has been collected
- Treasurer – Works closely with Choir Parents in fundraising, keeps track of damage fees (robes and music)
- Section Leaders – Run sectionals
- First Year Rep – Shadows all positions

Section Leaders

Students wishing to improve and exercise both their leadership skills and knowledge of musicianship should consider being a section leader. These students run sectionals each week and give choir members a chance to meet members from the other classes and work on learning notes and rhythms. For more info on sectionals, see page 7. Section leaders are responsible for finding a time when all the members of their section, including those in other classes, can meet for 15 minutes and run through some music.

CHOIR PARENTS

Parents and guardians of students are encouraged to help out with fundraising and to get to know one another. If any parents are interested in organizing a parent group for the BHS Choir, please contact Miss Montmagny at ElizabethM@bps.k12.mt.us.

PRIVATE LESSONS

As a classically trained soprano, Miss Montmagny would be more than willing to assist any student looking for voice lessons. Lessons are \$10 for a half hour and can be arranged to meet the needs and goals of the student. The same rules and regulations for behavior apply for lessons. Students must come prepared to lessons, or risk the chance of losing the option. Lessons must be paid for two weeks in advance. If a lesson is cancelled, a 24-hour notice is necessary; otherwise the teacher keeps the money. Students who wish to take lessons but cannot afford the teacher's fee may apply for a need-based scholarship.