

Mount Carmel High School Choir Program

Dear Parents and Students,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2017-2018 school year and the MCHS Choral Program. As the director, I am always excited about seeing all the new faces as well as those returning to the program. We can look forward to many new experiences singing great music together.

Whether you are a new member or a returning member, it is vital that you understand the expectations of the organization of which you are a part. Participation in an outstanding music ensemble can be one of the most fulfilling experiences of your life, and I expect the students and ensembles at Mount Carmel High School to be outstanding. There is no secret to success – it requires your time, your dedication and your discipline. With those things we can accomplish anything, and few memories of your high school career will leave you with as powerful an impression as will music.

I invite you to commit yourself now to nothing but the utmost quality. Our level of achievement is dependent upon you. Over the course of the year you will make great friends, sing wonderful music, experience leadership, teamwork, and maybe a little fun. It is also likely that you will get tired, friends will get on your nerves, I may get on your nerves, you may not always want to work, you won't like every song we sing and you will even experience stress that has nothing to do with school. Through it all it is your responsibility to see that you present yourself as an individual with strength of character, determination, high expectations and persistence.

Be aware that the State Standards in Music Education require teachers to be accountable for what is taught in the classroom. “The study of music contributes in important ways to the quality of every student’s life. Through singing, playing instruments, and composing, students can express themselves creatively, while knowledge of reading music and performance traditions enables them to learn new music independently throughout their lives. Skills in analysis and evaluation are important because they enable students to recognize and pursue excellence in their musical experiences and to understand and enrich their environment. Because music is an integral part of human history, the ability to listen with understanding is essential if students are to gain a broad cultural and historical perspective. The adult life of every student is enriched by the skills, knowledge and habits acquired in the study of music.

This handbook is designed to make your orientation to the choir program convenient. I encourage parents and students to read it together so that you have a sound understanding of our expectations, policies & procedures and your responsibilities. After reading the handbook, please print out the signature page found on the choir website (www.mtcarmelchoir.com) and return it signed as confirmation you have read this document. I cannot let any student perform without a signed signature page. If you have any questions regarding the handbook or your child’s work in my class, feel free to contact me at my office: 484-1180 ext. 3156, or you may contact me through email: mmartinez@powayusd.com.

Sincerely,

Marti Martinez
MCHS Choir Director
www.mtcarmelchoir.com

Our Classroom Rule – THE BIG ONE!

TREAT OTHERS THE WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED!

What is appropriate?

- Come to class ready to sing.
- Use rehearsal etiquette at all times. *(To be discussed over and over in class)*
- Show respect for the teacher, other students and yourself.
- Leave all gum, food, candy and drinks outside during rehearsal

WATER IS ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM DURING REHEARSALS.

LUNCH TIME: Students may eat their lunch in the choir room. However, I do not want them eating on the risers because food and drink can get into the crevices and never get cleaned up. This, in turn, will attract rodents, ants and other creepy crawly things.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Choir is a course of study in vocal production and music fundamentals. Students will have the following opportunities at their disposal.

- Develop correct vocal technique
- Acquire fundamental skills in music theory, sight-singing and ear training
- Strengthen critical listening skills as a performer and listener
- Gain a basic understanding of music history and the role it plays in music of all periods
- Recognize and demand outstanding musicianship, quality repertoire, choral blend, balance, appropriate style, flawless intonation, beautiful tone and superior performance expectations
- Experience the commitment and dedication necessary to develop an outstanding standard of performance and poise
- Strengthen leadership skills, teamwork and self-discipline
- Become an independent musician

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades for each quarter will be distributed as follows:

GRADING CATEGORIES

- | | |
|---|-----|
| ➤ Performances/Dress Rehearsals/Sectionals* | 50% |
| ➤ Daily Participation | 15% |
| ➤ Daily Citizenship | 15% |
| ➤ Singing Exams | 10% |
| ➤ Concert Attendance (as the audience) | 4% |
| ➤ Music Project | 3% |
| ➤ Paperwork, Forms & Miscellaneous | 3% |

* Sectionals are for Classical and Bel Canto only

GRADING SCALE

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
59% and below	F (This is VERY hard to achieve.)

➤ Performance Requirements

California State Standards in music education require choir students to participate in a concert outside of the school day. I understand that some of you are in this class to fulfill your Fine Arts Requirement for graduation and performing on stage might be a little overwhelming for you. Trust me when I say it is unlike any other experience in the world. In order to receive a passing grade you must participate in the concert at the end of the trimester. It is your final exam. If for some reason you cannot do the concert

1. Attend all after school rehearsals and participate in the concert according to the standards set up by Mrs. Martinez.
2. Submit a video representing your knowledge of all the material being performed at the concert. There is a form online that will explain the procedure and a grading rubric. Personally I would rather do the concert. It is a group effort and no individual is being graded. When you submit a video of you singing the material, I'm only grading you.

***This option is not available for those in Bel Canto or Classical Ensemble. These choirs are by audition-only and require a higher level of commitment. All performances are mandatory.**

You can make this choice at any time during the semester but since your entire final exam grade will be based on this paper I suggest you make the decision sooner rather than later. If you choose #1 and something happens, such as, a serious illness, death in the family, or equally pressing situation, causing you to miss the concert, option #2 will be available to you. If you aren't able to show up to a concert at the last minute, a parent must inform me prior to the event through email or voice message. Please don't ask a friend to tell me. I won't accept it. Option #2 will not be available for students who just don't show up to the concert.

Now, with all that said, choir is a performing art. You will not get the full experience if you don't allow yourself the opportunity to sing with the whole group. No one will be forced to sing a solo. Being in a performing group like choir is a team effort and if you don't perform it's like not playing in a game for a sport you've chosen to join. It would be unthinkable, right?

ALL CHOIR DATES ARE POSTED ON THE WEBSITE AND ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE CLASSROOM. **Be professional and responsible in arranging your schedule ahead of time.**

Option #1: Performance grades will be based on the following:

1. Punctuality
2. Materials (if needed)
3. Individual Preparation and following instructions
4. Conduct as a performer and listener
5. Staying for the entire concert
6. Returning clothing and materials in a timely manner

Option #2: A video submission rubric will be given to you if this is the route you choose.

NOTE: Students who are frequently absent or tardy, or are absent the week of a concert may not be allowed to perform, based upon the discretion of the teacher. (Absences include suspensions, illness, excused absences, etc.)

Note: School excused absences, such as, field trips, will not be counted against a student.

FOR THOSE HIGHLY INVOLVED STUDENTS

Choir members are often some of the most involved students in the school. If you are a student who enjoys a variety of events, continue! As long as you are responsible in your planning, high involvement will only enhance your high school experience. The following applies to you:

1. When a practice, rehearsal or meeting and an event are scheduled for the same time, the event takes precedence.
2. When two rehearsals are scheduled at the same time, inform Mrs. Martinez immediately of the conflict. Do not be a “No Show” and expect any kind of consideration. I will work something out with the other teacher/coach.

➤ ***Daily Participation & Citizenship*** points make up 30% of your academic grade and will account for your quarterly citizenship grade.

If you earn.....

300 – 270 points	O
269 – 240	G
239 – 210	N
209 – zero	U

One (1) to five (5) points will automatically be deducted from your participation grade for tardies, no music, no pencil and lack of preparation or participation. Five (5) to ten (10) points will automatically be deducted from your attitude grade for disruptive behavior, apathy or disrespect of any kind.

If you are absent from school you will not receive participation points for that day. Students who are occasionally absent will not be affected much by the loss of points. If you are absent once a week on average your grade will be greatly affected. Participation points can be made up for excused absences. The school day is a precious time that should not be missed for appointments that could be made for after the school day. No

points will be deducted for an extended illness, emergency or other equally unavoidable event. Students in ISS, suspended from school, or who have an unexcused absence will not receive points for those days in question.

With all that said, there are always exceptions to the rules and unique situations. Please come and talk to me. I promise I won't bite.....not hard. Remember, the more advanced notice you give me, the more willing I am to work with you. I also respond well to pleasant attitudes ☺

- **Concert Attendance** refers to your attendance of a concert you are NOT in. This is a separate assignment from the Music Project and the same concert MAY NOT be counted for both.

Each student is required to attend one concert featuring live music each trimester. It may not be a rock concert (although your music project may be). Students may attend school music concerts, musicals, jazz concerts, church concerts, university productions, recitals, or professional productions around town. There are plenty of free concerts in the community that will fit the bill right here on campus. If you are unable to attend an outside concert please see me for an alternative assignment.

Students will complete a short critique of the concert they attended. Directions on how to write a critique will be given in class.

- **Music Project** Students are expected to complete a music project each semester. Before you get overwhelmed, students have a great deal of freedom in completing this assignment, however all projects must be approved through the director. The music project is due no later than the last Friday of each trimester. Content may include any of the following ideas:

- Participate in the school musical
- Attend a school or professional stage musical or instrumental performance
- Compose a piece and perform it (recording is fine) for the class.
- Work as a sound-technician for a musical production
- Assist with fundraisers
- Assist with music filing
- Assist with concert set-up and take-down.
- Clean the choir room for an hour after school.
- Perform in class
- Participate in band, orchestra or musical theatre
- Take private lessons (on any instrument, but I prefer voice)
- Arrange for a guest performance
- Participate in a community or church music ensemble
- Participate at Solo & Ensemble Festival
- Participate in Honor Choir
- Conduct the choir during a performance.
- Perform for a community event or religious service (family weddings and funerals don't count)
- Write a four (4) page typed report on any topic related to music

Paperwork, Forms & Miscellaneous items refer to all theory assignments & quizzes, vocal checks and any additional assignments that arise according to the needs of the students and do not fall into the above categories.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Tardy Policy

According to Mount Carmel High School Tardy Policy, any student arriving more than 15 minutes late will need to get a readmit slip from the office. The classroom tardy policy is as follows:

1. Everybody gets one unexcused tardy for free. Yahoo!
2. Upon the second unexcused you will lose all your participation points for the day and the school will place you on Tier 2.
3. Any unexcused tardy after that will result in a detention after school. Your citizenship grade will be lowered to an "S".
4. Upon the fifth unexcused tardy a referral will be written and your citizenship grade will be lowered to a "U"

MCHS CHOIRS

BEGINNING CHOIR/CONCERT CHOIR

Description

The *Concert Choir* is traditionally a large chorus for mixed voices of all grade levels and is the foundation of the MCHS Choral Department. This choir will perform a variety of choral literature and musical styles. *Concert Choir* will perform in all department concerts and participate in at least one festival per year.

Requirements

Concert Choir is a non-auditioned group. Although previous musical experience is great, the most important factor for admittance is a willingness to learn and the desire to sing! Attendance at all concerts is required unless alternate arrangements have been made with Mrs. Martinez.

Concert Attire

Women in Concert Choir will be supplied long burgundy dresses to wear and the men will be supplied with black dress pants, white tux shirts and burgundy brocaded vests.

BEL CANTO (ADVANCED WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE)

Description

Bel Canto is an advanced women's choir specializing in literature for women's voices. Emphasis will be placed on vocal production, theory and repertoire. This group will perform in and out of state, at district festivals and in all MCHS department concerts.

Requirements

Admittance to *Bel Canto* is by audition only.

Concert Attire

Members of Bel Canto wear long black formals, which can be purchased through the Mt. Carmel Choir Boosters. If you do not want to purchase a gown, it is suggested that you wear black pants and a black top.

CLASSICAL VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Description

Classical Ensemble is a select mixed choir of 24-32 voices. Students will perform a variety of choral literature from all stylistic periods. This group will perform in and out of the state, at district festivals and possibly national festivals and in all MCHS department concerts.

Requirements

Admittance to *Classical Ensemble* is by audition only. Members are expected to have previous choral experience and/or private musical training. Students accepted for this ensemble are automatically members of the *Concert Choir* although they will not register for the class.

Concert Attire

Each member may purchase his or her formal outfit. Women wear long black formal gowns and men wear black traditional tuxedos. If you do not wish to purchase an outfit, it is suggested that you wear black pants and a black shirt.

CHOIR COUNCIL

The MCHS Choral Department will be represented by a Choir Council made up of students from all the choirs. They must be dependable individuals who are willing to dedicate extra time to our program and have the vision to take each choir to new heights. They will be responsible for student leadership, discipline, public relations, parties and assisting the director as needed.

➤ **President**

The President of the choir carries the responsibility of overseeing the entire choral program and its events. All presidents must be individuals who represent the ideal of what we are striving for. They are expected to assist in fundraising, direct concert set-up and take-down, assist in travel needs and planning, clothing selection, and all paper work as needed by the director. In addition, the president must oversee all the other officers to make sure they are completing their duties.

➤ **Vice President**

The Vice President assists the president with his/her duties. If for some reason the president cannot fulfill his duties for the entire year, the VP will assume the role of President. The VP will be charge of overseeing the website.

➤ **Secretary**

The secretary is responsible for taking minutes at council meetings, overseeing the accurate attendance at concerts, making copies, overseeing clothing assignments and assisting the director as needed. The secretary must be reliable, organized and have good ideas to share.

➤ **Treasurer***

The treasurer is responsible for assisting the Choir Booster Treasurer in his/her duties. This includes counting money, making out deposit slips, assisting in the financial reporting of fundraisers and assisting the director in creating and tracking purchase orders.

*The treasurer is also the council's Inter-Club Commissioner, which handles going to monthly meetings to keep updated with the school's ASB, and reporting back to the council with upcoming deadlines.

➤ **Librarian**

The librarian is in charge of the organization, distribution, collection and filing of all music.

➤ **Historian**

The historian works in conjunction with the Choir Booster Historian to keep a permanent scrapbook, including programs, articles, pictures, etc. from concerts, tours and events. He/She will produce a slide show of all the year's pictures to be shown at the choir banquet.

➤ **Concert Coordinator**

The Concert Coordinator works closely with the director to manage after school rehearsals, program information, house issues, booking of technical crew, and any other special needs that arise.

➤ **Members at Large**

Members at Large are responsible for organizing and promoting MC's Got Talent. They are also responsible for assisting other officers in their duties.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Choir Officers must:

- Have a 2.0 GPA
- Be in choir for at least a year
- Agree to be at every dress rehearsal and choir concert
- Agree to weekly meetings
- Have a willingness to participate in every choir activity (Which is and not limited to restaurant nights, choir bonding, fundraising, etc...)
- Have leadership qualities

Students interested in becoming a Choir Officer will go through an interview with the Choir Council and Director. They will also be required to complete an application regarding the compatibility with their roles.

AUDITIONS

Auditions will be held in the spring of each year for the entire choral department. Interested students must sign up for an audition time for after school. Signs will be posted at least one week before auditions stating requirements, times and directions. Auditions for current choral students take place during class time as a benefit for your dedication. All auditions are done in private.

Choral Department Auditions will consist of the following:

- Range Check
- Pitch Retention
- Prepared Solo
- Sight-Reading (melodic and rhythmic)
- Pitch-retention
- Rhythm retention

FOLDERS & MUSIC

Each student will be assigned a choir folder. The student is responsible for the care of the folder and all of the music contained therein. All music must be returned to the choral department. Students will be charged \$2.00 for each piece of missing or damaged music unless the price of the music exceeds \$2.00, in which case the student will be charged the price of the music. Folders must also be returned at the end of the school year. Students will be assessed \$10.00 for hard-covered folders and \$2.00 for paper folders.

CONCERT DRESS

CONCERT CHOIR will be supplied the following to wear: Women: long burgundy dress, Men: black dress pants, tux shirt and burgundy vest. It is suggested that men wear black socks and black dress shoes and women wear close-toed black dress shoes no higher than two inches.

BEL CANTO may purchase their performance gowns. The cost will be approximately \$100. It is suggested that you wear nude nylons and close-toed black dress shoes. For safety on the risers shoes may be no higher than two inches.

CLASSICAL VOCAL ENSEMBLE members may purchase their performance outfits. Women's gowns-approximately \$100/ Men's tuxedos-approximately \$120. It is suggested that men wear black dress socks and shoes and women wear black dress shoes. For safety on the risers, shoes may be no higher than two inches.

HONOR CHOIR & FESTIVALS

Students are highly encouraged to work toward auditioning and participating in the Southern California Vocal Association Honor Choir. It is a lot of work, a lot of fun and extremely rewarding!

- Help sessions during tutorials will be offered for students wishing to audition for honor choir. Auditions require prepared music, part-singing, pitch retention and sight-reading.
- For more information and audition sites, go to www.scvachoral.org.

These festivals can be some of the greatest musical experiences you will have!! Please consider participating.

FUNDRAISING

An outstanding music program cannot exist without proper music, equipment and experiences – the cost of which is not covered by district funding. Fundraising can provide an opportunity for the choir department to participate in all activities and travel, but it requires the time and effort of all of us. If any of you have ideas and connections that can assist us in our efforts please feel free to contact me at any time.

BOOSTERS

The Mt. Carmel Choir Boosters is a group of parents dedicated to promoting choral music at Mt. Carmel High School. If you are interested in helping out or attending any of the meetings please contact our president, Suzanne O'Kane at suzokane@aol.com. We are a 501c3 non-profit organization so all your donations are tax-deductible.

TOURS & TRAVEL

One of the greatest rewards for being a member of a musical ensemble is the opportunity to perform anywhere and everywhere. It is the goal of the MCHS Choral Department to allow all choirs to perform outside of the school at least once every school year. Top groups will have the opportunity to travel out of state and or country. ***Only those students who are in good standing with the choir department and school will be allowed to travel.*** Guidelines and details for trips will be given to students and parents as such needs arise. Students may not be allowed to travel based upon the discretion of the teacher and administration if:

- Student has multiple suspensions
- Grades in any class are below a 2.0
- Other teachers have expressed academic or citizenship concerns

LETTERS & SERVICE BARS

Students who show outstanding commitment to the choir program by going above and beyond the basic requirements may qualify for a letter and service bar. It is a privilege for which every student should strive.

The following minimum requirements must be met in order to letter in vocal music:

1. Six consecutive trimesters in an audition only ensemble (Bel Canto & Classical Ensemble) or nine (9) trimesters of any ensemble.
2. Perfect attendance at all concerts
3. Minimum grade of 85% in all music classes.
4. Citizenship grades in music classes cannot go below a "G".
5. No serious violations of school policy in class or at choral department events.
6. No trancies.

Service bars will be given for semesters of service past the "letter" requirements.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Music is an art that requires extreme dedication, perseverance and training. Individual voice lessons and piano lessons are vital for any serious singer. If you would like to take lessons, please obtain a list of instructors from me at any time throughout the year. The cost of lessons will vary from teacher to teacher and is completely at your discretion.