

**2019 - 2020
SPRING HIGH CHORAL DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK**

Your Voice Matters

Directors

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www.springchoir.com

ATTENTION PARENTS:

**Mandatory parent meeting for all students and
parents**

**at the conclusion of our Fall Preview Concert
Thursday, October 10th at 7:00 pm**

SHS Auditorium

Spring High School Choral Department

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August 14, 2019

Dear Spring High Choir Member & Parent:

Welcome to the SHS choir department!! Being a member of the Spring High Choral Department is an honor and a privilege. This year we are excited to build and maintain a culture of excellence in our department and among our students. All students in choir are auditioned and placed in the choir where they will contribute the most and enjoy the most success. A member of any performing organization has a responsibility above and beyond that of a student who is not in an extra-curricular organization.

The first opportunity you will have to support your student and the choir will be at the first concert and parent meeting on **Thursday, October 10th at 7:00 p.m. in the SHS Auditorium.** This is an excellent opportunity for you to be informed of the workings of the choral department and the areas in which you may become involved in supporting and volunteering for the choir department and booster club. Most importantly we would like to MEET you!

Choir Brags!!

We had a *tremendous* year last year and earned the following awards:

1. Five choirs competed at UIL Concert/Sight-reading contest and **all five choirs earned a superior rating.**
2. 12 students received a superior rating of division 1 at solo contest.
3. 17 students placed in the Region choir.
4. **FIVE STUDENTS** advanced to the area audition and **THREE** students sang in an All-State Choir.
5. The Chamber Choir competed at the prestigious American Classic Madrigal and Chamber Choir Competition in San Antonio and received both a superior rating and a **Performance of Distinction** Award from the judges.

Spring Choir has developed a reputation of choral excellence around the state. Being among the best and striving for outstanding musical experiences requires *tremendous teamwork and discipline*. We feel confident that this year will prove to be another great year as we work to attain our goals.

Spring High School Choir Up-To-Date Calendar

Go to springchoir.com, click "Charms Office Student Portal" in the top left, then click "Calendar" in the top left.

Private vocal instruction is available to all students for \$22 per lesson. Please complete the PRIVATE INSTRUCTION form and enclose money (cash/check) for the \$60.00 deposit. Returning voice students do not need to pay the \$60 but they do have to complete the form. Scholarship recipients must also pay the \$60 deposit if they are taking lessons for the first time. Your child's lessons can start as soon as we've received your application and deposit. We'd like to start everyone by the third week of school. If your student participated in the voice program last year at SHS, they are STILL ENROLLED in the program. You should have received notification if your student is enrolled in the program and eligible to begin voice lessons the third week of school.

The choir handbook provides you and your student with our goals and expectations for the school year. We have gone over all of this information with each student during their choir class and the information is available for you to review on our website at www.springchoir.com. If you do not have internet access, please let a director know and we will be happy to send home a hard copy of the handbook.

Please take the time to read through all of the enclosed materials in this packet and **sign and return all of the completed forms and fees** to us on or before your student's due date. This is your student's first MAJOR grade in choir: a "responsibility, meeting deadlines & following directions" grade.

****Students who have not returned all of their forms and fees, or whose parents have not communicated & discussed a fee payment plan with a director by Monday, August 26th will be removed from the program as per the school's deadline for dropping classes.****

We are looking forward to working with all of our students. As always, the lines of communication are always open. Should you have additional or specific questions, never hesitate to call or email us.

Communication and Calendar: We pride ourselves on excellent communication between both parents and students. We ask that you visit our website and CHARMS for an up-to-date calendar of our concerts and activities.

We are anticipating another fantastic year. Thank you for your continued support!!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Hicks & JB Levine
Spring HS Choral Directors

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Expectations, Attendance & Grading Policies

WE ARE A TEAM!!!

The rest of your choir is depending on you for the following:

- To come to each rehearsal with a positive attitude about working hard.
- To attend all rehearsals and performances required of your choir.
- To come to class each day on time, wanting to sing and eager to tackle the task at hand: MAKING MUSIC!!

Choir Classroom Rules:

1. Remove headphones, including AirPods, before entering the choir room (yes, even if nothing is playing!)
2. Greet your choir director(s) at the door with a positive attitude! :)
3. Be in your assigned seat with your folder and a pencil when the bell rings.
4. The only food or drink allowed on the risers is a water bottle with a spill-proof lid.

If a student fails to follow one or more classroom rules, the director is assuming they have temporarily forgotten what the rules are and will remind them.

Reminders may result in temporary removal from the choir room, parent conferences, disciplinary referrals, and/or probationary status that can result in permanent removal from the choir program at the discretion of the director.

General Choir Room Expectations for All Students:

1. Please come and visit us in the choir offices, but always knock or wait to be acknowledged before you enter. **No student should ever be in any choir office without a director present.** The Choir Conference Period is from 1:45-2:30 pm on days when we are not visiting our feeder middle school choirs. This is when we will be available to receive money, check messages, and return phone calls and e-mails. If you call later in the day, chances are we might not be able to return the call until the next day.
2. Before school, you must be in either the choir room, fine arts hallway, or in the cafeteria. Remember, food and drinks are not allowed in the choir room. Furthermore, your friends who are not in choir or band are not allowed in the fine arts wing.
3. The choir room is **ALWAYS** off-limits to students except during their choir, their applied music class or their private voice lesson. Students must **ALWAYS** get permission from a choir director to come to the choir room at another time. **YOU MAY NEVER BE IN THE CHOIR ROOM DURING LUNCH. You may only be in the choir hallway during lunch with director permission.**

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4. ALL choir students are provided with a calendar at the beginning of each semester with concerts, events and dates that you will be required to attend. Please resolve conflicts as soon as they arise. Feel free to come to a director for help with this. Many times, we, as teachers, can approach or help with another teacher or coach if we are informed in plenty of time. Waiting until the day of the conflict or later is too late.
5. The best time to communicate with your director regarding conflicts, setting up times for extra help, finding out about make-up work, etc., is before or after school, or during the choir planning period. Immediately before a rehearsal is not a good time as we are focused on the rehearsal about to happen. If there is an **emergency**, you may speak with a director who is not warming up the choir.
6. You are to go to the restroom, get water, and take care of personal matters between classes. There is a water fountain in the music library. You may use it before and after rehearsals. Bottled water is also for sale before and after class for \$1. Please do not ask to go to the restroom or get a drink of water during class.
7. You are only allowed to have bottled water at your seat. You may not have sodas or drinks from fast food restaurants inside the choir room during class or at before/after school rehearsals. (This includes morning classes and Starbucks drinks.) There should never be any food or drink on any piano in the music facility ever.
8. Food, drinks, and/or gum are not allowed in rehearsals, inside the choir room, choral library, practice rooms, or in the ensemble rooms. *Meals/snacks before/after rehearsals need be consumed in the hallway outside the choir room as in previous years.*
9. **Do not brush hair, spray perfume or hairspray, apply scented lotions/hand sanitizer, apply nail polish, or put on make-up in the choir room.** Take care of this in the restroom!
10. All backpacks and books are to go on the green shelves in the choir room, not on the floor next to the risers. These items are not to be at your seats. The only item at your seat on a daily basis is your choir folder which **MUST** contain a sharpened pencil **AT ALL TIMES**. There are sharpened pencils in various places around the room. You pay a supply fee and are expected to make sure you have a pencil **prior to rehearsal beginning**. There are pencil sharpeners in the choral library available for use prior to the beginning of class.
11. The choir room is not a storage area for your personal belongings. Any items left in the choir room are left at your own risk and we are not responsible if something goes missing. Personal items may not be stored anywhere in the music wing without permission from the directors.

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12. Cell Phones: as per district policy which forbids cell phone usage, cell phones should not be visible or audible in any choral rehearsal during or after school. If a phone is visible or audible in a rehearsal, per SHS policy, it will be collected by the director and turned into the appropriate assistant principal's office. District policy requires those phones be sent to the main office and a processing fee be paid to retrieve it. **Additionally, if it comes to a director's attention that a choir student has texted during a rehearsal and/or performance, either as a performer or a member of the audience, the student will have a consequence and repeated issues will result in demotion, probation, or removal from the program.** We view texting like talking – it is rude to do so while someone is talking and it is impossible to do so while one is singing if one intends to sing well.
13. Represent Spring High in a positive, mature manner and you will further develop pride in your choral department. You are your biggest advocate for choral music by your attitude about music, your directors, and your performances. **Your attitudes are a direct reflection of your choir directors and our program.** We expect students in the choir department to be drug free and good examples outside of the school. Both you, as students, and we, as teachers, have a responsibility to fulfill if we are to be successful.
14. Any choir member representing themselves or the SHS choir program, its directors, and/or fellow students, in an unfavorable, questionable or illegal manner through electronic media (i.e. Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, websites, blogs, text messages, social media apps, or similar websites/files accessible through a server or internet) or using electronic communication devices in such a way as to bring discredit, dishonor or disgrace on their organization and/or its leaders or members, or any other school organization, including themselves (i.e. camera phones or digital photos) will be subject to the disciplinary actions determined by appropriate school officials and/or organization/directors, including probation, suspension, and/or dismissal from the organization.

Rehearsal Etiquette

The single most important factor in the overall success of any choir is the work it accomplishes during its rehearsals. A positive attitude towards the director and fellow choir members is vital. Good concentration on the present has to take precedence over past classes/experiences as well as future classes/experiences. A pencil in hand is required. Please mark your music diligently. This allows you to be a responsible choir member by keeping up with the progress of the music.

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Attendance and Grading Policies for All Students:

Unlike individual activities such as an academic class, it is impossible to makeup activities that occur in a choir rehearsal. Absences will have a negative impact on the student's grade.

1. Tardies: You are to be **in the room, diligently moving to your seat** with your folder and pencil when the tardy bell rings.
2. Tardiness to an extra rehearsal or performance will result in a grade cut. **For each minute late past the designated time 10 points will be deducted from the event grade.** For example if concert call is in your seat at 6:50 PM and you arrive in your seat at 6:53 PM you will receive a 70 for your concert grade. Concert grades are major grades.
3. Poor daily attendance affects the participation and performance grade in choir. Excessive absences from daily rehearsals **will** result in probation, demotion or removal from the program. Therefore, it is imperative that students stay healthy and come to school every day. Serious illness, bereavement absences, etc. will be considered at the discretion of the director.
4. Students will be given adequate notice of all additional rehearsals and activities outside of the regular class period. These rehearsals and activities are course requirements and are vital to the success of the choral program. Every effort will be made to minimize the amount of out-of-class time required. Therefore, absences from these activities will be treated in the same manner as an absence from class, and will affect the student's grade.

In the event of a conflict with another scheduled school activity, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the sponsors of the activities, not the responsibility of the choir directors.

5. **Concerts are the ultimate evaluation of many weeks of preparation and class work.** Choir members are expected to be present for the entire time of each required concert. An unexcused absence from a concert will lower the student's grade dramatically. Absences and tardies will be excused for cases of medical emergency or death in the family. Prior notification of any conflict with a required concert or rehearsal is required. Students are held responsible for keeping up with the dates and times of scheduled activities.

If a student misses class, an additional rehearsal/activity or concert due to an extenuating circumstance, every effort will be made to accommodate the student with a similar make up activity.

6. More than one unexcused absence from a performance may result in probation or dismissal from the choral department.

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7. There are only two excused absences from an after school rehearsal or performance: Personal illness or family emergency.
 - a. Personal illness - If personal illness prevents you from attending an extra rehearsal or performance, call the choir room at 281-891-7061. If a director is not available, please leave a message and then e-mail AND message us through text or Remind. **Failure to communicate will result in a 0 for that grade.**
Upon returning to school, present a note, signed by a parent, stating the reason for your absence. Parents may also contact a director regarding the absence via phone or email.
 - b. Family emergency - if possible, please notify a director as soon as possible. As with personal illness, a written note is required upon return to the school.
8. If your performance absence is excused by your director **you will be required to complete an alternate assignment which will replace the concert grade.** There will be no exceptions to this policy. Deadlines will be set accordingly and must be adhered to by the student or a grade of a zero will be earned and the student may be removed from the choir program.
9. **WORK AND/OR TRANSPORTATION ISSUES ARE NEVER AN EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR A REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE.** Advance notice is given for all rehearsals and concerts in order to give you time to communicate with your place of employment and/or arrange transportation. Students who do not attend required activities will not meet the state required TEKS of the course and will not receive a passing grade for the course.
10. Participation grades: As choir is a performance-based class, great importance is placed on the efforts and team work necessary to produce a quality choral experience. The grade is based on the student's individual performance on a daily basis. Students are expected to have materials, be positive contributors, be actively engaged in each aspect of the rehearsal, be at school and be in class on time on a daily basis. Remember: TODAY'S PREPARATION DETERMINES TOMORROW'S ACHIEVEMENT!!
11. Failure to participate: If a student chooses not to fully participate in class, they will be given an alternate assignment to complete. If the student is removed from the class multiple times for failure to fully participate, that student may be placed on probation or removed from choir altogether. (Like athletics, choir is a team activity. A football player would not sit on the football field and be allowed to continue participating in the practice or game.)
12. Choir students are also graded on singing tests, quizzes, theory and general musical knowledge.

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Eligibility and EC Rules for All Students:

1. Choir concerts are designed as an extension of the classroom and are therefore considered CO-CURRICULAR. However, grades still play a *crucial* role in the student's ability to participate in "extracurricular" activities. Extra-Curricular includes: TMEA All-State auditions, Broadway Night, UIL Solo and Ensemble contest, and all trips. As long as you are sure that you are passing all of your classes, you will not have to worry about it. We have found it to be true that students who have NO ZEROS (i.e., TURN-IN every assignment and have GOOD attendance) pass their classes.
2. EC (Extension Center) - A student who is sent to EC more than one time and / or is suspended may be placed on probation or removed from the choral department.

Letter Jacket Rules for All Students:

1. Letter jackets are EARNED by students who meet the criteria set forth by SISD:
 - a. Students must complete two full years of high school choir.
 - b. Students must have participated in UIL concert / sight-reading contest both of those two years or director-approved equivalent competition.
 - c. Students must be academically eligible and in good standing with the choir program at the time that they request the letter jacket. If you're not in choir at the time of the request, you cannot order a choir letter jacket.
 - d. Students must order their jackets on designated days announced by the school.

Choir Expectations

All students in all choirs have been auditioned and placed because of the GOOD qualities they possess. EVERY singer is an IMPORTANT part of the "team". Some have different strengths than others, but EVERY PERSON is VALUABLE. Our standards are VERY high in all of the choir classes.

To remain in a performing choir students MUST:

1. Have excellent attendance.
2. PASS ALL of their classes EVERY SIX WEEKS.
3. Be at every performance.
4. Receive NO DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES from the school (including going to EC or being suspended for any reason).
5. Be at EVERY extra rehearsal. There will be VERY FEW of these, but YOU MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE. (A Cappella Women will likely have a few more extra rehearsals, clinics, and/or performance opportunities. These are mandatory, not optional. If you are not willing to be flexible in your life schedule, please see a director now for a schedule change.)

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How eligibility can affect your choir placement:

If you fail a class for a 6 weeks grading period, you MUST be passing ALL of your class at the next 3 week progress report. IF YOU ARE NOT PASSING ALL OF YOUR CLASSES, you will be put on PROBATION. If you are not passing EVERY CLASS THE NEXT 6 WEEKS, you may be reassigned to a different choir or removed from choir altogether.

****CHORALE****

Extra Rehearsals (Monday PM and Various Other Rehearsals as Needed)

Chorale, as the varsity mixed choir, has **mandatory Monday night rehearsals** and some **extra rehearsals/clinics/workshops/performances**. You are expected to be present, be ACTIVELY ENGAGED, and have a POSITIVE attitude at every rehearsal. Failure to do so is the same as being absent and your grade will be lowered.

Please review the Choir calendar on Charms and plan accordingly. If you have a job or are involved in another extra-curricular activity, keep Monday nights FREE. **These rehearsals are worth a significant number of points and transportation/work is not an excused absence.** Failure to meet attendance expectations at these rehearsals will result in being placed on probation or dismissed from this choir. However, most of you know WE WILL WORK with you in situations, when it is warranted.

We believe in you!

You will be provided a detailed rehearsal calendar. Please make this available to your PARENTS and keep it in a visually accessible location for YOURSELF. Your section leaders and I will remind you, but **the responsibility for attendance lies with you, the singer.**

Let's continue the reputation of excellence in the Spring Chorale!

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UNIFORM INFORMATION

Students in the Spring High choirs will be provided a clean formal uniform for formal performances with the choir department.

WOMEN: Formal Dress

MEN: Tuxedo - pants, coat, and shirt

Chorale Women: Pearl necklace and earrings

Chorale Men: Vest

Male students should also have appropriate BLACK dress shoes and BLACK dress socks to wear with their tuxedo (NO tennis shoes of any kind). For ALL performances each male student must have his hair out of his face with both eyes visible.

Female Students should have appropriate, comfortable **closed toe black shoes** for performing. Flip-Flops, tennis shoes and sandals are not appropriate or allowed on stage. All ladies must have their hair completely out of their face during all performances. Jewelry is limited to small earrings (studs or tiny hoops). Necklaces and excessively big or colorful jewelry are not appropriate or allowed. Clothes or undergarments visible while wearing the choir dress are not permitted.

Part of the choir department fees pay for uniform hemming and dry-cleaning. **Please note that all choir fees are non-refundable in the event that a student is no longer in choir at Spring HS.**

CHOIR SHIRT INFORMATION

New this year: Choir fees include one Spring Choir Pride shirt for every choir student. This is a no opt-out fee because it may be worn throughout the year to show department unity/spirit, on trips, and for informal performances.

FUNDRAISING INFORMATION

Fundraising is an "All for one, one for All" endeavor. All profits from student fundraising will be applied to the entire choir program. You cannot fundraise to add money to your personal choir account.

Due dates for fundraiser monies and forms are set on the fundraising calendar and students are reminded daily through announcement and reminders in the classroom. Students on the delinquent list will not be allowed to begin another fundraiser until they have cleared. We accept cash and money orders only for fundraising materials. We will not accept credit cards or personal checks.

All fees owed will carry over each year and will have to be paid before a student graduates.

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PAYMENT DEADLINES

Payment deadlines for fees, fundraisers and trips are made clear to students and parents throughout the year. For trips, these dates also coincide with the due dates for trip payments to the travel agency. If students fail to pay by each payment deadline, there is an EXCELLENT CHANCE THAT THE TRIP COULD BE CANCELLED.

Parents are welcome to turn in cash deposits for their students before school, from 6:40 am to 7:10 am, after school from 2:30 pm to 3:00 pm, and on MOST Monday evenings. However, it is imperative that deposit envelopes are filled out correctly. Both the fundraising calendar and the due date schedule will be posted on the website and given to all students.

***Account summaries will be available in your student's Charms account.
(See Charms info page in forms packet.)***

NO MONEY FOR FEES, FUNDRAISING, TRIPS, OR ANYTHING ELSE IS TO BE LEFT ANYWHERE BUT IN THE SAFES!!!!

PROCEDURE FOR TURNING IN PAYMENTS

IF PAYING BY CASH OR MONEY ORDER: Fill out an envelope next to the safe in the choral library COMPLETELY: Name, Period, Amount & Purpose (i.e. fruitsnacks, choir fees, trip, etc.) Once your envelope is filled out accurately, you will put that in the safe. Remember: **NO CHECKS OR LOOSE CHANGE MAY BE DEPOSITED!**

IF PAYING ONLINE: See online payment instructions on Charms info sheet in the forms packet.

RECEIPTS:

Your envelope is kept on file in the choir room for two years. Should you require a receipt of your deposit, they are available online on Charms. If a parent has questions about this, they can email a director.

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