

NBMS Choir Handbook



2023-2024

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Welcome

Welcome to the award-winning choral program at New Braunfels Middle School! By joining this organization, you are committing to a dynamic and growing organization where you will gain many important skills and also a loving family. This will be an exciting year full of opportunities and possibilities for all of us! My goal is to provide technical music skills, competition opportunities, and quality performances while also instilling a love of music in all students. The purpose of this handbook is to help you understand the activities, policies, and procedures to ensure a successful year in choir. It is extremely important that all information in this handbook be read very carefully.

About the Program

There are four ensembles in the NBMS Unicorn Choir split over six periods. There are two sections of 6th Grade Treble Choir, the 6th Grade Tenor Choir, the 7th/8th Tenor-Bass Choir, and two sections of the 7th/8th Treble Choir.

Throughout the year, students will be exposed to a variety of musical genres and styles including, but not limited to, classical, spiritual, multicultural, folk, show tunes, and popular music. All choirs will learn appropriate vocal tone and technique as well as sight reading and theory skills. The choir will perform several times throughout the year to demonstrate these skills at opportunities including concerts, competitions, festivals, tours, and recruitment trips.

Materials

This year we will use a combination of iPads and choir folders. A folder will be assigned to each student at the beginning of the year. Choir folders should never leave the choir room for any reason, unless it has been discussed with the director first. In our choir folders, we will do music theory and ear training exercises, as well as performance evaluations, and a number of other written assignments. We will use student iPads for accessing choir resources, turning in certain assignments, and communication. It is incredibly important that students arrive to class with a charged iPad every day. Failure to do so can negatively affect a student's ability to perform in choir, and therefore affect their grade. Music and assignments will be distributed through Canvas or on paper. We will spend time in the first weeks of class getting acquainted with our technology. A stylus pen and set of headphones with an attached microphone are highly encouraged for choir.

Electronic Devices

Campus policy states that students are not to use their cell phones during instructional time, and I will uphold that expectation in the choir room. iPads are only to be used as instructed. Misuse will be subject to loss of privileges.

Classroom Expectations

<u>SAFE</u>	<u>RESPECTFUL</u>	<u>RESPONSIBLE</u>
Move around the room safely	Listen to all instructions.	Come to class prepared.
Keep your body and belongings to yourself.	Accept each other's differences.	Use electronics only as directed.
Spit and gum and put away food.	Be okay with mistakes.	Try your best and don't give up!

Grading Policy

Students will earn their grade from the following categories:

Daily Grades (50%):

- Preparation and Participation:
 - Having materials ready at the bell
 - Proper use of rehearsal time
 - Full cooperation and attention throughout rehearsal
- Demonstration of classroom skills
 - Demonstrate theory and sight reading objectives
 - Show ability to perform music covered in class
- Quizzes:
 - In-class singing/sight reading quizzes
 - In-class theory quizzes

Test Grades (50%):

- Performances and concerts (see performance policy for further details)
- Music Theory/Sight Reading Tests
- Other projects aligned with Music TEKS

Choir T-Shirt

At the beginning of the year, each student will be supplied their 2023-2024 choir t-shirt at no cost. If a student must replace their choir shirt at any point in the year, they will be financially responsible for replacing the t-shirt at the cost of \$10.

Performance Uniform

All students will receive their choir t-shirt which will be utilized for performances and spirit days. Students are expected to follow listed uniform guidelines.

The concert uniform **for all choirs** will be:

- 2023-2024 choir t-shirt, tucked in
- Blue jeans, no holes or embellishments, with pockets.
- Black close-toed shoes (Sneakers that are at least 90% black are acceptable)
- If a student chooses to wear a hygienic mask, it should be solid black.

For the Pre-UIL Concert and UIL Competition, 7th & 8th grade will wear one of the formal options below.

7th/8th Grade Formal Option 1:

- White tuxedo shirt (checked out from school)
- Black tuxedo pants (checked out from school)
- Black tuxedo vest (checked out from school)
- Blue necktie (checked out from school)
- Black dress shoes with tall black socks (must be provided by the student)
- White undershirt (must be provided by the student)
- If a student chooses to wear a mask, it should be solid black.

7th/8th Grade Formal Option 2:

- Black choir dress (checked out from school)
- Pearl necklace (checked out from school on performance days)
- Black close-toed shoes (flats or heels no higher than 1in, must be provided by student)
- Black pantyhose, knee-highs, or black dress socks (encouraged, but not mandatory)
- Do not ever wear jeans or leggings underneath your choir dress. You will overheat which can cause fainting on stage.
- If a student chooses to wear a mask, it should be solid black.

Note about Formal Uniforms: Dresses and dress pants should be hemmed appropriately. The pants or dress should touch the top of the student's shoe. Do NOT cut off excess material. A deep hem will be fine. Sew ONLY. Do not use hem tape, glue, staples, or any other method to hem your uniform. Uniforms may be washed in cold water on a delicate cycle only. Uniforms must hang dry. Uniforms that are returned unclean will result in a \$15 cleaning charge to the student. Uniforms that are damaged in any form will result in a \$70 replacement charge to the student.

Note about hygiene: Hair should be pulled out of the face for all performances. Makeup is not required for performances, but should be subtle and tasteful if worn. Students should apply deodorant before performances. Please do not wear perfumes, cologne, or sprays for performances.

Performance Policy

Choir is a performance-oriented course. Daily activities in the classroom are specifically designed to be showcased in the form of a concert or contest. The Texas Education Agency lists the public performance of music as one of the TEKS for approved music courses. ***Choir students receive a grade for each performance they are required to participate in.*** It is assumed that each student will be present for all special rehearsals and all performances. Choir is a cooperative activity that fosters personal and group responsibility. Guardians are asked to help their student develop this sense of responsibility by making sure they attend every required rehearsal and concert on this year's choir calendar. Dates are given well in advance to give families time to make calendar preparations.

Serious illness and family emergencies will result in an excused absence only if the student provides written documentation within two (2) school days of the required event. **Please note that a lack of transportation does not constitute an excused absence.** If there is an issue with transportation, please let Ms. Evans know, and arrangements can be made for you.

Students who have an excused absence must make up the grade by completing an assignment given by the director. If the student fails to make up the assignment by the given due date, the student will receive a grade of ZERO (0) for that concert grade.

An unexcused absence from a performance or mandatory rehearsal will result in a ZERO (0) for that concert grade and there will be **no opportunity for makeup**. Students who have other school obligations (i.e. band, athletics, theatre, etc.) that conflict with a mandatory choir activity must let the director know at least a week in advance of the event. In most cases, something can be worked out so that the student can attend both events. ***Students are not excused from mandatory activities because of a non-school related event.***

Students must be present for the entire concert in order to receive credit for participating. The TEA lists demonstration of proper audience etiquette as one of the Music TEKS, and this includes staying for the duration of a performance. Additionally, it is important to the student that their guardian is present at our concerts. Family attendance at choir functions is a practical way to show your student that you are supportive of their extracurricular activities!

No Pass, No Play

Students who wish to participate in certain extracurricular choir activities must be passing all classes with a grade of 70 or higher, according to the Texas Education Code.

These extracurricular activities include Region Honor Choir auditions and field trips that take place during school hours that are not required for a grade.

It is important to note that the “No Pass, No Play” rule *does not affect* a student's ability to participate in all required concerts or events, including those which take place in the evening. NBISD considers these events to be co-curricular. The director will monitor grades through progress reports, Ascender, and report cards, but maintaining passing grades is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Ascender is a wonderful tool provided by NBISD which provides a convenient way for guardians to stay updated on their student's grades via the Internet. Students' grades, attendance, and other valuable information can be viewed on this website. We strongly suggest that guardians log on to Ascender frequently to monitor their student's grades. We also suggest that guardians consider allowing their student to view his/her grades on Ascender's Student Portal. This will encourage the student to become more responsible for their own grades and averages.

Rehearsal Policy

Students who enter contests or wish to become a member of a select choir ensemble will occasionally be required to attend rehearsals outside of regular class time. These rehearsals can be held before and after school. These rehearsals will become more frequent as the performance and/or contest date approaches. On occasion, full dress rehearsals and extra rehearsals will be called in order to prepare for an upcoming event or performance. These rehearsals are necessary when several groups are scheduled to perform together. Such rehearsals will be considered mandatory, and a grade will be assigned. Ample notice will be given for all of these events.

Timely Pickup After Events

Students will be informed in advance when after school rehearsals, functions, performances, and social events will end. New Braunfels ISD requires club sponsors to remain with all of their students until they are picked up. Guardians are expected to pick up their students within ten (10) minutes of a function ending. Of course, I understand extenuating circumstances, and ask that you communicate with me and your student in these events. There are also several choir families that are happy to assist you and your student with transportation when needed. It is the responsibility of the student and their guardian to make arrangements for their student's transportation if the guardian cannot pick their student up on time.

Choir Excursions & Field Trips

The choir director may choose to take one or more groups on an excursion or competition/ performance out of town. Students qualify to attend if they meet the following criteria:

1. They are in good academic & financial standing with the NBMS Choir Department.
2. They have been present at all required concerts and functions, or have excused absences from required concerts.
3. They demonstrate mastery of the music which the choir will perform at the event.
4. They have maintained passing grades in all of their classes for a designated period of time. (This can vary depending on the activity; see No Pass, No Play.)
5. They have not been assigned in school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), and any other serious disciplinary action from a school administrator.
6. They have fulfilled all financial obligations required for the excursion.

The choral director and school administration will decide if an exception to these requirements is warranted, should such a situation arise. It is important to understand that **refunds for any paid trips are not possible, even if a student loses eligibility due to failing grades**. Our organization must send a payment to our tour company and/or transportation company when our trip is booked. As a result, we are required to pay specific fees for each student who commits to attend this event. These payments are non-refundable to our organization and therefore are non-refundable to the student who previously committed to participate. The refund policy of the tour groups and/or transportation company will be included in the initial correspondence for the activity, if applicable.

NBISD Random Drug Testing Program

NBISD has a vital interest in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all students. The use of illegal drugs poses serious health and safety risks to the user and those associated with the user. The District intends drug testing to serve as a deterrent to the use of illegal drugs and to provide students with a viable reason to resist peer pressure to use illegal drugs.

All students in grades **7 through 12** who participate in school-sponsored competitive extracurricular activities shall be required to undergo random drug testing.

If your student is in 7th or 8th grade choir, please click the link below to fill out the RDT Form.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfC1yA_iOly-3X6FynjZ-IO9NcyIAUj1Cyyqyx4pRiGD2EQsg/viewform

Communication

It is my goal to maintain open communication with all students, guardians, faculty, and administration. I will provide several formats for all communication, so there should never be a reason that someone was uninformed. ParentSquare and Email will serve as my primary forms of communication.

ParentSquare is NBISD's preferred method of communication. Please download the app to your devices and register using the email you provided the school.

Please add eevans@nbisd.org to your email address book so communication doesn't go to your spam folder. Email is the best way to get a hold of me during school hours.

My office hours are 8:20-9:10am, and I can be reached by phone at 830-627-6326 during that time. If I am unable to answer your call, please leave a voice message and I'll call you back as soon as possible.

Contests and Competitions

REGION CHOIR (Any eligible 7th/8th graders)

The Texas Music Educators Association sponsors an activity to honor outstanding middle school students from Comal County and surrounding counties. Seventh and eighth students are eligible to audition for this choir. The members of the Region Choir are selected based on an audition of prepared music. Those students selected for the Region Choir will be involved in a clinic and concert under the leadership of well-known conductors. The Region Choir is an extremely high honor and it is hoped that many of our choir students will set this as one of their goals for the coming year. Varsity Choir members are strongly encouraged to participate, however, all 7th and 8th graders are encouraged. Before and after school help is available to all who want to audition.

UIL CONCERT/SIGHTREADING (All 7th/8th Grade Choir Members)

The University Interscholastic League sponsors this group contest annually. Choirs consisting of seventh and eighth grade students are eligible to compete in UIL. Groups entering this contest prepare three selections from a prescribed UIL music list. In addition to prepared selections, choirs are also required to sight-read a piece of music. For each of these activities, the group receives a rating. All 7th & 8th grade choir members will compete at UIL. It is a required event.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE (Any eligible choir student)

This is a district sponsored event that gives all students the opportunity to gain experience in solo or small ensemble singing. Students will select a solo from a predetermined list to learn and prepare to sing for a judge. The judge will give the student a rating based on preparation and skill. All choir members are strongly encouraged to participate in Solo & Ensemble.

Calendar

All dates/times are subject to changes or cancellation with adequate notice. Events may also be added during the school year with adequate notice.

Events in BOLD are required for the listed members.

WEEKDAY	WHEN	WHAT	WHO	WHERE
Fall 2023 Semester				
Tuesday	Oct. 10 - 6:30pm	Fall Concert	All Choirs	NBMS Cafeteria
TBD	Nov. TBD - During School	Veterans Day Ceremony	Selected 7th/8th Graders	NBMS
Tuesday	Nov. 14 - During School	Solo Competition	Any Choir Student	NBMS
Thursday	Nov. 16 - 2:00pm Concert - 6:00pm	NBISD Tenor/Bass Festival	5th & 6th Period Choir Members	NGC/Long Creek
Thursday	Dec. 7 - Time TBD	Wassailfest*	Any Choir Member	Downtown NB
Monday	Dec. 11 - 6:30pm	Winter Concert	All Choirs	NBMS Cafeteria
Spring 2024 Semester				
Saturday	Feb. 3rd - Time TBD	Junior Choir Clinic	Interested Students	NGC/Long Creek
Tuesday	Feb. 20 - Times Vary	PreUIL Concert	7th/8th Grade	NBMS Cafeteria
Wed. - Thurs. - Fri.	Feb. 28/29, Mar. 1 - Times Vary	UIL Concert & Sight Reading	7th/8th Grade	Nimitz MS - NEISD
Tuesday	Mar. 5 - 6:30pm	6th Showcase - With ORMS	6th Grade	ORMS Cafeteria
Friday	Apr. 5 - After School	TTB Region Auditions	Any TB Choir Member	Tex Hill MS - NEISD
Saturday	Apr. 6 - All Day	SA/SSA Region Auditions	Any 7th/8th Choir Member	Tex Hill MS - NEISD
Saturday	Apr. 20 - All Day	Region Clinic & Concert	Selected 7th/8th Graders	San Marcos HS - SMCISD
Friday	May 10 - 10am	NBHS Pop Show Field Trip	Eligible Students	NBHS PAC
Monday	May 13 - 6:30pm	Pop Concert & Awards Reception	All Choirs	NBMS Cafeteria
TBD	May TBD	6th Grade Field Trip	6th Grade	TBD
TBD	May TBD	7th/8th Grade Field Trip	7th/8th Grade	TBD

