Welcome to a new school year and a new music program! I look forward to working with you and your child this year. We have spent the first days in class learning our responsibilities and getting to know our voices.

This handout is designed to explain procedures, activities, financial commitments and the expectations of students in choir at Sugar Land Middle. Please read the handbook carefully and fill out and sign the forms at the end of the book. If you have any questions, you can reach me by my phone or email.

**CHOIR EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**PURPOSE**
To provide students with an opportunity for cultural experience and musical growth through performance, study and analysis.

**GOALS**
- To promote, provide, and encourage interest and participation in choral music.
- To develop the individual voice and an understanding of its relation to the choral ensemble.
- To foster confidence through creative self-expression.
- To increase and develop musical skills and knowledge.
- To develop an appreciation for aesthetic beauty through the arts.
• To instill value of effort, sacrifice, cooperation, fellowship, self-discipline and dedication.
• To instill a sense of pride in the school, the choir program, and in the individual student.

CONCERT ATTIRE
Boys:
black dress pants (no jeans or shorts)
white long sleeve collared shirt
black tie
black socks and black dress shoes

Girls:
black pants or long black skirt (no shorts, capri-pants, jeans or mini-skirts)
white long sleeve collared shirt
black closed-toed dress shoes
black or off-black toned panty hose (no white/colored socks or tights)
pearl necklace (one strand medium to small size) and pearl earrings (one stud medium to small size)

**Students not dressed in proper attire will not be allowed to perform.**

Required Supplies
black folder
pencil
Sugar Land Middle School Choir t-shirt
Concert attire (listed above)

FEES
This year choir students will have a $20.00 choir fee that will cover the cost of (2) SLMS choir t-shirts. One shirt will be the choir uniform shirt and the other t-shirt will be worn during the Pop Concert in the spring.

FUNDRAISING
Money from our fundraisers will help pay for additional fees, equipment, bus costs, clinicians, accompanists etc. This year we will have one fundraiser event during the spring semester.

Additional fees
There are a few additional fees that come with being in choir. Field trips will be an additional fee as well as some of the contests/auditions. Region Auditions are $15 and if your child is selected to be part of the region choir they will pay an additional $20 contest fee. Solo and ensemble is $8 for a solo and $8 for each ensemble. If your child is doing a solo he/she will pay the accompanist $15.
CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND RULES
1. Be in assigned seat, sitting quietly, with all materials (choir folder, pencil, and any handouts) by the tardy bell.
2. Get water and go to the restroom before or after class.
3. Stay in your designated area during class.
4. No logistical type questions the first 10 minutes of the rehearsal.
5. Practice courtesy and respect in dealing with other students, directors and the music.
6. Be attentive and ready to work with musically focused participation. (If the student is too ill to participate in singing activities, he or she should study and follow with the group.)
7. No gum, candy, food or drinks allowed in class.
8. School rules and policies as outlined in the individual FBISD student code of conduct.

CONSEQUENCES
Sugar Land Middle School Discipline Plan

MUSIC/FOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES
- Take care of the music and folder.
- Only use pencil (not pen or erasable pen) when marking music.
- Folders will be put away at the end of every rehearsal. Music left out will result in a consequence.
- Return all music in good condition. There will be a charge for lost or damaged music.

ELIGIBILITY
Certain activities are classified as eligibility activities. Texas Education Agency has a specific list of activities that are eligibility activities which include competitions, activities that charge an admission fee, and pep rallies. For more information about eligibility see UIL-TEA Side by Side, which can be viewed either through the TEA website or the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Website.

*Maintaining eligibility is the student's responsibility.* Students must have a grade of 70 or above in all classes including P.E, athletics, electives as well as academic classes on their report cards to be considered eligible for field trips, competitions, performances away from school and events that charge an admission.
ABSENCE POLICY

REHEARSAL, CONCERT, AND CONTEST
Attendance is required at all concerts, which count as two test grades – one for stage performance and one for audience etiquette. Of course, there are times when absences might occur. Please read below for the policies governing absences and make-up tests. Remember, good communication between teacher, student and parents can prevent misunderstandings. Please read the following rules and contact the director if you have any questions.

1. Absences from outside of class rehearsals and concerts will be excused only at the directors’ discretion, unless the student is absent from school. If a student is absent from school, they will automatically receive an excused absence from a rehearsal or concert. Absences will be qualified as follows:

   A. An excused absence is one that the program instructor has prior knowledge of and/or is based on an acceptable reason. Acceptable reasons for an absence would include a medical emergency or illness, a death in the family, a religious holiday, or a family emergency.

   B. An unexcused absence is one that the program instructor has no prior knowledge of and/or is based on a reason that is unacceptable to the instructor.

2. Written notice from the parent is required for all absences from outside of class rehearsals and concerts. Email is preferred. Verbal or student written notices are not acceptable.

3. Advance notice is required for all prior commitments. A notice of such a commitment should be sent to the director as soon as this schedule/handbook is received. These absences will be excused on a case by case decision and at the directors’ discretion.

4. In the case of illness and/or family emergency, the parents should send a written notice to the director as soon as they are aware that a situation exists. Illness or family emergency that results in an absence the day of the concert or the day after the concert is automatically excused. Illness that does not result in an absence from school will be excused only at the director’s discretion. If there is an emergency situation, e.g. something that happens 30 minutes before a concert is to begin, it may be impossible to get in touch with anyone. Thus, please follow up with a written note as soon as possible after the fact. This is the ONLY category where absences may be excused afterwards.
5. Students who have an excused absence from the director for a performance will be given a take-home make-up assignment with a possible grade of 100. Students who have an unexcused absence from a performance will be given the opportunity to do a take-home make-up assignment and, as per FBISD gradebook rules, their make-up grade will be averaged with their concert grade.

6. Students who are in ISS or OSS on the day of a competition, field trip or competition will not be allowed to participate. Students will be given a make-up assignment instead.

**GRADING POLICY**

Daily Grades 50%
Test Grades 50%

Students earn grades in choir much like they do in other classes. Observation Daily Grades are taken EVERY DAY through the use of the seating chart/grade sheet. Overall observation Grades are taken once a week. **Remember, concerts count as two test grades – one for stage performance and one for audience etiquette.** In addition, test grades will be assigned to all outside of class rehearsals and occasional written tests. Students earn observation daily grades and occasional weekly observation test grades based on the following observable skills:

**Vocal Skills Grades**
1. Proper vowels.
2. Proper jaw placement.
3. Proper mouth/lips placement.
4. Proper breathing techniques.
5. Correct posture.

**Sight-reading Grades**
1. Correct hand signs.
2. Correct pitches.
3. Accurate reading

**Rehearsal Skills Grades**
1. Music correctly marked.
2. Concentrated focus on the music at all times.
3. Correctly singing the music/holding parts.
4. Focus/respond to the conductor.
ACTIVITIES

CONCERTS
Choir concerts are the way the students show what they have learned in class, and are the culminating event of a unit of study. Please see the attached tentative calendar for the scheduled concerts and rehearsals for this year.

ALL REGION COMPETITION
Region auditions are open to all 7th/8th grade choir students. Students may learn the audition music or a piece in class as a group (and perform it at the fall concert.) The directors will then audition and choose the students who will compete on the region level. Students will be competing against other students from throughout Region 13, which includes all Fort Bend ISD schools down to Victoria. The top students will be chosen for the All-Region Choir. These select students will then perform a concert in November. Auditions are at Dulles HS in October. Those students who earn a place in Region Choir will have a clinic and concert in November at Calvary BC. Parent volunteers will be needed to travel and help with the students on audition day.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE COMPETITION
This exciting activity is an optional activity open to any choir student. Solo and Ensemble is an individual competition where students learn solos or small group songs (the director will supply the music) on their own or with their private voice teacher and then perform before a judge. Students may earn a rating and also earn a medallion. Outstanding soloists and outstanding ensembles may also earn a trophy.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS
Parental involvement in the choir program is welcomed and highly encouraged. Throughout the year parent volunteers will be needed for: uniform measuring and coordination, fundraising check-in and check-out, music library organizing, data base updating, as well as chaperoning concerts, contests, and trips. Parents must complete a background check through FBISD before chaperoning. http://www.fortbendisd.com/Page/830