



J. N Fries Middle School Choir Handbook Letter 2019-2020

Tuesday January 28th, 2020

Dear JNFMS Chorus Parent/Guardian,

It is with much excitement that I welcome you to the JN Fries Middle School Choral Department. This year is going to be filled with many exciting opportunities for you and your children. I would like to share a few thoughts about the importance of choir in the life of your middle school child.

I believe that every child can learn, and I extend that belief that every child is musically expressive and deserves the opportunity to explore that capability. Our choral program here at JNFMS offers a semester long choral experience for the 6th grade music learner and beginner, as well as offers challenges for the 7th and 8th grade highly skilled or gifted choral musician.

Throughout the year, we will learn about the individual singer by developing vocal skills, increasing knowledge of his/her own voice, and developing music literacy. In addition, we will learn about the choral ensemble and how we can work together to continue an organization that we can be proud to be a part.

Why is it important for students to be in choir? Choral music can:

Provide a unique way of thinking

Act as a link between the past and present

Lift the self-esteem of participants

Bring joy to both the singer and the audience

Provide a means of expressing thoughts, values and emotions through singing that otherwise maybe difficult to express through words.

It is going to be a great semester of learning and singing together. I look forward to working with each of you and thank you for allowing me to share my love of music with your child. Please visit the choir webpage listed below, read the handbook, and fill out the online form by February 7th. If you would like a printed copy, they are available in the choir room. Please also see the back of this page to sign up for text messages or emails.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Mary Gardner, director
mary.gardner@cabarrus.k12.nc.us
jnfchoir.weebly.com



Class description

Chorus classes are open to all students at JN Fries Middle School in 6th grade. In order to be in 7th and 8th grade chorus, students must have been in chorus the previous year(s). Students will focus on healthy vocal technique, fundamentals of music theory, history, sight-singing, and the rehearsal of music. Most importantly, students will develop self-discipline and learn to work cooperatively.

Classes offered

6 th Grade Chorus	1 semester (August – January/ January – June)
7 th and 8 th Grade Chorus	year round

Chorus Uniforms

All chorus students are required to wear their chorus uniform to performances. This is a formal event, and students are expected to dress as such. All chorus students will receive a chorus shirt this year. Shirt order forms will be provided within the first few weeks of school. If you will need assistance paying for your shirt, please indicate so on the online handbook form. All requests for financial assistance will be verified.

Chorus students will need to provide the rest of their attire, other than the shirt. Attire guidelines are as follows:

- Chorus shirt
- Black dress pants (or knee length or longer skirt)
- Black, dark, or skin tone socks
- Black, grey, or silver dress shoes

The following are NOT dress code for the concert: flip flops, large jewelry, bright colored shoes/socks, athletic pants/shorts (including joggers and yoga pants), and blue jeans.

Chorus Supplies & Materials

Students are required to bring to chorus:

1. Loose-leaf paper or a notebook (we will NOT use a whole notebook)
2. A folder with prongs, or (preferably) a ½" black binder. A black binder is suggested so that it may be used for performances as needed.
3. A pencil to keep inside their binder.
4. A highlighter.
5. Headphones or ear buds.
6. Their laptop.
7. Optional supplies: markers and divider tabs.

Students will be held responsible for materials assigned to them, including sheet music. Sheet music is the most expensive part of the chorus curriculum. Students who damage or destroy an original copy of music **will be charged \$5** to replace it. Everyone is expected to handle classroom materials and equipment with care. Students who fail to do so may lose the privilege of using these items.

Food Policy

Food, drinks, gum and candy are not allowed in the chorus room at any time. This is for your safety, and to preserve our equipment. Failure to follow this rule may result in disciplinary action. Students are encouraged to have water in a clear bottle in the room.

GRADING POLICY

Rehearsal - daily and after school	40%
Performance(s)	30%
Class work/Tests & Quizzes	30%

Daily Rehearsal

Active rehearsal of music includes listening, learning, practicing, and eventually mastering proper group vocal techniques through the music. Students should recognize the importance of every element of the rehearsal. Complete attention should be given to the director and her instructions. Students who do not follow the rehearsal rubric will lose points on their daily grade. Students who are sick and cannot sing must participate in rehearsal in every way except phonation (i.e. lip synching).

The rehearsal rubric is as follows. The student ...

1. Arrives on time to class.
2. Sits in assigned seat quickly upon arrival.
3. Remains in assigned seat throughout the period.
4. Has required materials quickly when needed (music, pencil, folder, highlighter, and computer)
5. Maintains eye contact with director during rehearsal and instruction.
6. Remains silent, raises hand, waits to be called on and participates when appropriate.
7. Sings with tall vowels.
8. Sings at appropriate volume.
9. Sings with proper energy and enthusiasm.
10. Maintains good singer's posture when appropriate.

Class Work

Class work includes quizzes, tests, and assignments in the areas of sight-reading, part-singing, music literacy, music appreciation, music analysis, composition, and more. Most of this work will be assigned on their computers through canvas or google, but paper copies will be available for any student. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absences, or classwork that is not finished at school, within 2 weeks. Late work will not be accepted after 2 weeks and will remain a zero.

Behavior Expectations

Students are expected to exhibit self-discipline and a sense of pride as a member of the chorus department. Each member represents the choral program, as well as JN Fries Middle School and should behave accordingly-- in school and out. Students are expected to be respectful to students, teachers, parents, and/or any adult who may be placed in charge. Students are also expected to be positive and supportive of their classmates. Students who exhibit excessive/severe misbehavior during class, at a performance, or while at an off-campus chorus-sponsored activity may be disciplined in one or more of the following ways:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Removal from activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline referral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Removal from room | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> Suspension from chorus events (All County, Williamsburg/Spring Trip, etc.) |

Performances and outside of class rehearsals

Chorus is a performing arts program; therefore, students are expected to attend ***ALL*** performances and before/after school rehearsals. *Attending these events is part of every student's grade.* The performance and rehearsal dates will be sent home by phone call, email, and/or letter and will also be posted on the webpage with as much advance notice as possible.

- A performance is any activity where the chorus performs in public: concerts, MPA, etc.
- Before or after school rehearsals are *RARE* for most classes. *They become necessary, however, when several classes need to rehearse together.* Rehearsing the entire choir together is often necessary for a successful performance.

An unexcused absence from concerts or rehearsals will be grounds for suspension from the chorus. Repeated unexcused absences result in disciplinary consequences including but not limited to being excluded from trips, extracurricular activities, etc.

Concert Attendance

To receive full credit for concerts, each student must:

1. Attend all scheduled performances
2. Perform to the best of their ability
3. Arrive on time and stay for the full performance- even if you perform first
4. Wear the uniform as instructed- this is a formal event
5. Use proper concert etiquette when watching others perform.

Request for Excuse from Concert

Concerts are a required part of any chorus program – think of them as our EOC/EOG. There is no way to make up the experience if a concert is missed. Concert dates are provided early in the year so that families can avoid scheduling any conflicting appointments or trips around those dates. I usually do not add a performance with less than two weeks' notice. Requests for excuse from the concert can be provided to the director in the form of a signed parent or doctor note/email. This note must be in the

director's hands at least two weeks in advance. It is the student's responsibility to check with the director to see if the request has been approved.

Excused absences: Illness; death in the family; other emergency situations; pre-arranged absences (i.e. religious reasons) where parent note is received at least two weeks prior to the concert.

If a student misses a performance/rehearsal unexpectedly due to illness, emergency, etc, a signed parent note, email or phone call explaining the situation should be sent to the director **within 2 school days after the performance**. If there is no parent contact, I will assume the absence is unexcused.

*In order to receive a passing grade for the concert, **students will be required to complete a makeup assignment** in the form of singing their music solo or a research paper, to be determined by the director. Students who do not complete the makeup assignment will receive an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences: Students who have an unexcused absence from a concert will be awarded no points and will not be given an opportunity to make up the work.

**Unexcused absence from concert
or rehearsals = ZERO POINTS**

Communication

Communication between the director and the students/families is crucial. I welcome parents' and students' questions about chorus activities. Please utilize the chorus web site, add yourself to the chorus class on Remind, and ask your child for letters and updates.

The best way to contact me is by email. I can usually respond to an email the very same day. Even if you would like for me to call you, the best way to ensure that I get the message is to send me an email. My contact information is listed on the first page of this handbook.

Ways Parents Can Help

The chorus program needs the support/participation of the parents. Help from the parents will make chorus events easier for the adults and more fun for the students.

Below are some ways parents can help.

1. Attend all performances
2. Chaperone Trips
3. Volunteer to help with fundraisers, measuring for uniforms, etc.
4. Bring students on time for rehearsals/performances
5. Encourage/praise the efforts of each student
6. Support chorus fundraisers

Chorus Trips

The following guidelines will ensure order and safety during bus trips during the year.

1. While traveling, chaperones will monitor student activities. If a chaperone asks a student to stop or to do something, those instructions are to be followed without question. All chaperones are to be treated with respect.
2. No portable games or video players are permitted on bus trips. However, MP3 players, iPods, etc. are acceptable with earphones. These items must be put away and/or left on the bus or with a chaperone when arriving at our destination.
3. Any student discipline issues that occur on a trip will be treated as if it were a regular school day with regards to discipline referrals and consequences.

Fundraising

The chorus participates in fundraisers each year, including a variety of events such as donation drives and catalogue sales. The money we raise is used to pay for music, bus transportation, uniforms, accompanists, awards, fees for state choral functions and much more... The director requests that each student does their part.