

Choir Handbook 2017-2018

Official Communication Channels

Handle or Link	Platform	Purpose
Website	http://westwoodchoirs.com	Official source of communication, all other methods link to this site The most up-to-date calendar.
Remind	Text @wwoodchoir to 81010 http://remind.com	Up to the minute reminders sent via text message
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/westwoodchoirs/	Facebook group, open to all, website posts to this outlet, also used for posts during off-site performances and activities
Twitter	https://twitter.com/westwoodchoirs/	Twitter handle, open to all, website posts to this outlet, also used for posts during off-site performances and activities
Instagram	https://instagram.com/westwoodchoirs	Instagram handle, open to all, used for posts during off-site performances and activities
Tumblr.	https://westwoodchoirs.tumblr.com/	Twitter handle, open to all, website posts to this outlet, also used for posts during off-site performances and activities

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Westwood HS Visioning Document

Core Purpose

- To transform lives for the benefit of society.

Core Values

- Respect all in a welcoming and accepting environment.
- Uphold a learning culture built on perseverance and continuous growth.
- Value both inquiry and experience.
- Encourage innovative, creative thinking.
- Foster excellence and balance.
- Embrace professional autonomy and collaboration.
- Practice, promote, and support honesty.

Choir Mission Statement

To educate students with diverse and quality music to become literate and expressive musicians.

Choir Academic Goals

All of the goals listed below are directly related to the TEKS which are central to the Round Rock ISD Curriculum.

- Individual and Group Music Reading Skills
 - Learning to sight-read music scores using the “movable do” system
 - Learning musical terminology through repertoire
 - Assessments of knowledge musical proficiencies
 - Individual and group vocal assessment of vocal pedagogy, reading music, developing musicianship skills and singing varied repertoire
- Improvement of Vocal Skills through Opportunities for Individual Achievement
 - TMEA Texas All-State Choir Process (District, Region, Pre-Area, and Area Auditions)
 - UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest
 - Texas State Solo & Ensemble Contest
 - Private Voice Lessons
- Vocal training and musicianship through opportunities for group performances
 - Region 26 UIL Solo & Ensemble – be a part of an ENSEMBLE
 - Region 26 UIL Concert & Sight-reading
 - Concerts and Performances throughout the year
 - Concert Etiquette taught through participation in concerts during the year
 - Trips which include a Choral Festival/Contest

Rehearsal Room/Behavior Expectations

- **Maintain the highest level of rehearsal behavior.**
 - Sing to the best of your ability at all times. The Westwood Choir Hall is a place where the directors train and educate each student to the best of their abilities so that each student can reach their full potential as a musician.
 - Conduct yourself properly at all times - Westwood Choir members take pride in everything they do.
 - Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged before speaking. The Westwood Choir Hall will be a safe place where all students can learn and be musically expressive, an individual comment might disrupt the learning environment.
 - Follow instructions at all times.
 - Do not leave the room without permission. No one should leave the room without signing out.
- **Be prepared for all choir activities.**
 - Bring all required materials to choir activities. Westwood musicians arrive to rehearsal on time, prepared with materials & ready to learn.
 - Use the restroom before class.
- **Take care of the rehearsal spaces.** Westwood Choir members value and respect their peers, teachers, school property, and the property of others.
 - Backpacks go under the office window on the left side of the main entrance
 - You may bring water bottles to use during class time.
 - Ask permission before playing on the piano or getting on the class computer
 - Eating is not allowed in the practice rooms
 - Keep all food or drink away from any electronic or musical equipment
- **Our time together matters.**
 - Tardies will be accounted for by the teacher, consequences are enforced by the administration
 - Be in your assigned place with your materials (folder with music, pencil, etc.) to be marked present and on-time.

Consequences

- Teacher/Student
 - In class redirection
 - Re-assigned seating
 - Lowered choir participation grades
 - Private conference with the student
- Teacher/Parent
 - conference with student and/or parent
 - participation in any choir trip revoked
 - other choir privileges revoked
- Teacher/ Administration
 - Office referral
 - Removal from choir as your elective

Concert Etiquette

We work on music for a performance for up to 3 months at a time, only to have essentially 1 opportunity to share the work. Following are some guidelines to ensure a positive experience for all – performers and attendees.

Set a good example for the audience and other students. Other people may not know how to act at a choir concert and will be watching you for clues. Choir students will exhibit proper concert behavior during all performances in order to reflect positively on the choral program. Students will be graded on their concert etiquette.

Major Expectations:

- Enjoy the concert. This is the only time you will ever get to see it – so stay for the entire concert. To make the concert enjoyable for all:
- Cell phones and pagers should be set to silent or turned off during choir concerts.
- Talking during a performance is not allowed. It is disrespectful to the musicians who have prepared for this event!
- No food or drink is allowed in the performance area, including the stage, backstage, and seating area. This includes water bottles.


Applause:

- Support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause.
- Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. are not acceptable. The audience should never cause attention to be shifted from the performers on stage.
- When do I clap???
 - General Rule: applaud only after the conductor has lowered his or her arms.
 - During pop or jazz music you may applaud for a soloist during the song.
 - In songs that have multiple movements, applaud only after the final movement. This will be noted in the concert program. The conductor will lower his or her arms when the final movement is over.

Movement:

- Do not leave your seat FOR ANY REASON other than extreme emergency. If you must leave, do so as quietly and as inconspicuously as possible ONLY between songs or during applause (making sure doors do not slam shut).
- Move between the stage and seating areas in quiet, single file lines. Sit in your assigned seat/row.

Grading Policy

Topic	Board Policy	Westwood Choir Policy
Redo/Retake	Each student will be provided a reasonable and fair opportunity to retake or redo an examination/class assignment for which the student received a failing grade.	<i>Students may retake an assessment for a maximum score of 70 up to one week after the test,</i>
Grade Percentages	<p>No single assignment/assessment grade will count more than 30 percent.</p> <p>No two assignments/assessment grades will count more than 50 percent of the total average regardless of the grade category.</p> <p>Major projects may comprise more than one assignment.</p> 	<p><u>Daily Participation (50%)</u> <i>The criteria for daily grades is based on participation in all singing opportunities offered in the choral rehearsal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>maintaining rehearsal materials (binder, pencil, music, etc.)</i> • <i>class vocal assessments</i> • <i>demonstrating proper choral rehearsal etiquette including, but not limited to:</i> • <i>refraining from personal conversation</i> • <i>refraining from eating/drinking in rehearsal, not chewing gum etc.</i> • <i>Outside of the school day rehearsals - See the policy on absences later in this document</i> <p><u>Performance Assessment (40%)</u> <i>All outside performances are graded and required. Dates and times will be published on the official choir website. The six major concerts plus choir camp each year are major grades:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Choir Camp</i> • <i>Fall Concert</i> • <i>WLC Vertical Concert</i> • <i>Winter Concert</i> • <i>Cabaret</i> • <i>Spring Concert</i> • <i>Graduation Ceremony</i> <p><u>Written Assessment (10%)</u> <i>Students will have written assignments that will count as 10% of their average.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dictation</i> • <i>Music theory</i> • <i>Musical analysis</i> • <i>Projects</i>
Late-work Policy	Shall be consistent by grade or course in each school, and when possible or appropriate, district wide.	<i>Students may turn in late work with a 10 point penalty per late class day,</i>
Homework Requirements	Shall be consistent by grade or course in each school, and when	<i>Students may be assigned ungraded, out of class work to prepare for auditions or competitions, completion will be evident through assessments and success at events.</i>

	possible or appropriate, district wide.	
Academic Integrity	Determination based on judgment of teacher or other supervising professional.	<i>First confirmed offense, students receive a discipline referral, the second offense results in an automatic grade of zero.</i>
Make-up Policy	Parent-Student Handbook: Students who miss a class due to illness or any other approved absence generally have one class day for each day missed to make up work. Previously assigned work for which they have had adequate notice and time to complete, even with the absence, should be handed in on time unless the delay is approved by the teacher. Any test missed due to absence will be made up immediately upon return or at the earliest possible day at the teacher's discretion.	<i>Students must make up assessments on the next class day following the absence. Missed performances require an alternate, written assignment.</i> <i>Should a student miss a performance, alternative assignments can be found on our website. Directors must be notified of concert absences within 3 days prior to a performance (except in emergency situations) for a student to receive full credit for an alternative assignment.</i>
Other Subject Specific Policies	Shall be consistent by grade or course in each school, and when possible or appropriate, district wide.	

Eligibility

Students do not have to be eligible to participate in the required evening concerts. Students in I.S.S. at the time of an evening concert are not allowed to perform in or attend the concert. If a daytime performance or rehearsal causes the student to miss another class, the student is responsible to promptly make up all missed work.

Curricular Choir Activities

Curricular Choir Activities are those choir activities that occur as an extension of the choir class, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Curricular Choir Activities include graded choir concerts, rehearsals and sectionals.
- Curricular Choir Activities may occur during school, before or after school, or on the weekend.
- Eligibility is not a factor when determining participation in curricular choir activities.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-Curricular Activities are those choir activities, particularly contests, which occur beyond the regular, required choir activities, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Students are eligible during the next grading period if they pass all of their classes on their report card with a grade of 70 or above.
- Students who receive grades of “Incomplete” on their report card in any subject are considered ineligible. They have 7 days after the end of the 9 weeks period to complete the missing work and have their grade changed to passing to regain eligibility.
- Students who receive grades of Incomplete on their report card but make up the work AFTER 7 days after the end of the 6 weeks period will regain eligibility.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report card in any subject are ineligible, even if the student completes work to get the grade changed after the 9 weeks is over, unless the failing grade was given in error by the teacher.
- According to UIL, there is no special compensation given to Special Education students if the modifications set out in the A.R.D. have been met by the teacher.
- Students who are ineligible due to grades may regain eligibility at the end of the 4th week of a 9 weeks period by receiving passing grades for all of their classes on their progress report (given at the end of the 3rd week of the 9 weeks period). If eligibility is not regained at that time, the student will have another opportunity at the end of the 7th week by the same process as stated earlier. Students who fail to follow through with their responsibility regarding grades may be removed from choir or placed in a lower choir.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report cards or UIL grade checks may or may not be allowed to participate in choir activities.

Conflicts with Choir Activities

When a student is involved in more than one activity that requires after school time, conflicts may occur. The student must notify all affected parties (choir directors, parents, coaches, employers, sponsors) when there is a conflict so that there is time to determine how to handle the conflict (compromise, miss one or the other activity, work out a ride, etc.). Here is a list of activities a choir student may be involved in and their “priority”.

This list should help students to know when they have a commitment how to handle it.

- A UIL event takes precedence over any non-UIL event.
- A district level event takes precedence over any non-district, lower level event.
- A performance/district level event takes precedence over a practice.
- A practice for a UIL or district level event takes precedence over a practice for a non-competitive performance/game.
- When there are two activities of equal importance (practices, performances/games, competitions) the student will need to work out a compromise with all parties involved.
- A practice for a one-time performance takes precedence over a routine, regularly scheduled practice.
- A school event takes precedence over a non-school event, even if that non-school event is a competition.
- A Varsity level event takes precedence over a Non-Varsity level event.

Students MUST check event calendars for ALL of their scheduled activities for conflicts as soon as dates are available. Sometimes, a student will need to make a choice regarding activities that are of equal importance without fear of reprisals or forfeiture of status/position. Make every effort to ensure that family events must be scheduled around REQUIRED choir activities.

Choir Students with Jobs

- Having to work is NOT considered an excused absence from any required, graded choir activity. Missing a required, graded choir activity for work is considered an unexcused absence, and will follow the district policy for make-up work.
- Students should notify employers well in advance (at least one month or as required by your employer) of all required choir activities.
- Students may request an extra copy of the choir calendar or may request a letter from the choir directors to give to their employer regarding required choir activities that may interfere with work. This letter is available in the choir room. The letter must be completed by the student, with a teacher signature, at least two weeks prior to the events listed on the letter.

Students MUST complete the conflict form, available on the choir website, no later than three days prior to the event.

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Contest Information

Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA)

TMEA is the professional organization for all Texas music educators. TMEA sponsors the Texas All-State Choir. In Texas, the All-State Choir audition process begins with approximately 20,000 students and is narrowed down to 500. It is an outstanding accomplishment to earn a spot in the Texas All-State choir. In order to become a member of the All-State Choir, students participate in multiple rounds of auditions throughout the fall.

- *Round 1: District*
- *Round 2: Region*
- *Region Clinic and Concert*
- *Round 3: Pre-Area*
- *Round 4: Area*
- *TMEA All-State Choir Clinic/Concert*

Who should enter:

- Students of the Chamber or Varsity Women choirs are expected to audition for the first round.
- Students of any other choir are encouraged to audition

Costs:

- The entry fees and music for All-District Choir Auditions are paid for by individual students.
- Chamber Choir and Varsity Women have the entry fee factored into their choir fees
- Students of any other choir must pay the \$20 entry fee in addition to their choir fees
- Students provide their own copies of the All-State Literature – you will keep this at the end of the process
- Students who advance to the Area round will have their expenses paid for the overnight trip to the audition
- If a student earns a spot in the Texas All-State Choir, student expenses are paid by the school district for the TMEA Convention to rehearse and perform with the choir at the convention.

Expectations

- Follow through with the entire audition process. Only 3 conditions remove you from the process:
 - The audition process itself,
 - An appeal filed by a TMEA member, or
 - A director.
- Practice their music nightly with recordings and music
- Maintain eligibility in order to participate in auditions, clinics, and concerts
- Attend any sectionals, clinics, concerts and auditions that are held for that audition level - students will be removed from the process if they fail to attend any required activities associated with the audition process, or fail to adequately prepare their music as determined by the Choir Directors.

University Interscholastic League (UIL)

Concert and Sight-Reading

This contest is in April and involves each choir being judged on their stage performance and their sight-reading skills as a group. All eligible students will participate with their choir.

Region 26 Solo and Ensemble Contest

Solo and ensemble contest is open to any student in the choir program, although private voice lessons are highly encouraged for students who wish to participate past the region round. Students who wish to enter an ensemble should work with the directors prior to the entry deadline. The entry fee for Solo and Ensemble is \$10 per event. Students must pay an accompanist in order to participate in the solo competition (pricing TBD).

Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest (TSSEC)

Any student that earns a 1st Division on a Class I Solo or Ensemble at the Region level is eligible to participate in this event at UT during the Memorial Day Weekend. Entries for this event are \$20 per event, and students must pay for their accompanist for any solo event.



Uniforms

Students are expected to follow the listed uniform guidelines below, without exception. Students may not be allowed to perform and/or their grade may be affected if the following guidelines are not met.

Informal Uniforms

The informal choir uniform consists of a choir shirt, and denim color jeans (skirts are permissible for ladies). Informal choir uniforms must be worn on all concert days, to all informal concerts, singing the Star Spangled Banner, on choir trips, etc. No other shirt will be permitted. Choir shirts are required for all choir students.

Formal Uniforms

Shoes

- Ladies must purchase BLACK, low heeled, closed toe shoes.
- Flip-flops are not acceptable.
- Large, tall heels are not acceptable.
- Men must provide their own black socks and black dress shoes.
- Black athletic shoes are not acceptable.

Each choir member will be issued a district-provided formal dress or tuxedo. Once the choir fee has been paid, the uniform should be kept at home. Black dresses are used for the ladies, tuxes for the men. Failure to adhere to any listed uniform guideline will prevent you from performing with the ensemble. Anyone with an extenuating circumstance should see a choir director PRIOR to the day of the concert. Formal choir uniforms will be issued at the beginning of the school year, on an assigned day, coordinated with student officers, directors, and booster club parents.

Formal Uniform Guideline

- Formal choir uniforms and other parts are numbered and will be tracked through the Charms.
- Uniforms should be treated with pride.
- Proper shoes and socks must be worn with the uniform at all times (above)
- Hair must be pulled back as part of the uniform
- Jewelry must not be worn with choir uniforms. This includes necklaces, watches, and bracelets. Earrings and rings must be small and inconspicuous and kept to a minimum. Men will not wear earrings during performances.

Choir students are financially responsible for all parts of their formal choir uniforms that they use, including dresses, jackets, pants, ties, cummerbunds, and garment bags. Repair and/or replacement costs are the responsibility of the student. Costs for replacement:

- Dress = \$100.00
- Tuxedo = \$100.00 (Jacket = \$70.00, Pants = \$30.00)
- Tie/Cummerbund (sets only) = \$15.00

Alterations and Care of Formal Uniforms

- Westwood Choir will provide alterations, and the garments will be cleaned at the end of the year.
- Never cut any material from a choir uniform when it is altered to fit you.

Formal Uniform Check-In

Students who do not turn in their uniform by the last day of school will be turned in to the AP office. Report cards and schedules or diplomas will be held until the uniform is returned to the choir.



Financial Information

Choir Dues

The choir fee for every choir member this year is dependent on ensemble enrollment. This fee includes the 2017-2018 choir t-shirt used for informal performances, cleaning and alterations for formal uniforms, and transportation to various events. This fee also includes class materials: folders, pencils, pencil pouch, music, notebook paper, dividers, staff paper, etc. If you qualify for financial assistance through free or reduced lunch, you can see a director for a scholarship application.

2017-2018 Dues

- All Choirs - \$50 Activity Fee
- Chamber, Varsity Women – additional \$35 (includes TMEA, UIL Solo and Ensemble audition fee)

Additional fees (based on participation)

- TMEA All-District Choir Entry - \$20 (for students not enrolled in Chamber/Varsity Women)
- UIL Solo and Ensemble - \$15 entry fee per event (for students not enrolled in Chamber/Varsity Women)
- UIL Solo and Ensemble – Accompanist fees – set according to RRISD schedule
- Private Voice Lessons - follows RRISD schedule for fees
- Trips and Festivals – separate contracts and payment schedules will be communicated

Student Activity Account

There are several fundraising activities during the year to help with trip expenses. The required expenses are minimal. When you send checks please make them out to the “WHS Choir” unless otherwise directed and put your child’s name in the memo on the bottom left of the check. Please contact a director with any questions or concerns.

Payment Information

Payments must be made on time or students may be denied the opportunity to participate in the activity.

The following procedure should be used whenever any type of payment is made:

- Payments must be turned in using an envelope, found in the choir room next to the payment drop box.
- All payments, especially cash, should be paid before school starts in the morning.
- If the payment is cash, you must have exact change.
- Make all checks payable to Westwood HS Choir.
- Include the choir student’s name in the “memo” area of all checks.
- Include a current phone number and driver’s license number on the top of the check.

Insufficient Funds

District policy states that we are not allowed to accept checks from any individual who has had at least one check that was returned for insufficient funds. Cash and money orders can be accepted in this instance.

Charms

Westwood HS Choir will keep financial information for students and the program using the online music database called “Charms”. Through Charms parents and students can track all financial transactions, letter jacket points, uniforms, music and materials checked out to the choir student.

Directors and Booster Club Officers will use Charms to communicate with students and parents. Charms gives the director the ability to access parent contact information from any computer (this is especially helpful on trips). Charms also gives the director an easy tool for sending reminder emails regarding performances and special events.

All information entered is stored on the Charms database. Nothing is kept on your computer. The database is stored in a separate location from the website and is protected by a firewall. Only an authorized user can gain access to your student records. Only you, the choir director, and their authorized assistants have access to your student and program records. No one can see your data, and your information will never be sold or used for commercial purposes.

To access the Charms website for student/parent information updates:

- Click on the link, [[https://www.charmsoffice.com/charms/parents.asp?username= WestwoodChoirs](https://www.charmsoffice.com/charms/parents.asp?username=WestwoodChoirs)]
- Enter your child’s school ID number to access their information form.
- Click on the “Student Info” icon and update your information.

Fundraising - Choir Program

There are two entities that provide fundraising opportunities to the choir program. Westwood HS governs fundraising activities that are applied to student activity funds. Examples of the use of these fundraisers would include student choir fees, audition entry fees, and trip payments.

Fundraising – Choir Booster Club

The Westwood Choir Booster Club also has fundraising opportunities, which are aimed at support of the entire choral program. -The purpose of this organization is to supplement and enrich the choirs of Westwood High School. Information about the boosters and the benefits of membership is available on the <http://westwoodchoirs.com> website, located under the Boosters tab.

Trips

Choirs take many small choir trips throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend these trips as chaperones.

Local Trips may include:

- Local choir concerts, both professional and scholastic
- Retreats
- UIL
- Auditions

Major Trips

- The choir may take one two to five-day choir trip per year within or outside the state of Texas.
- Trip location will be determined by the staff and announced at the beginning of the school year. Students in all choirs are encouraged to attend.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the district. Students must follow all choir and school rules as well as legal, ethical, and moral requests from directors or chaperones while on the trip.
- Students and parents must sign a Travel Contract when signing up to attend a festival trip or any trip with a personal financial commitment.

Financial Responsibility

- Trip refunds are controlled by the tour company. The refund policy will be set out in the trip information letter and the Travel Contract given to each student when signing up for the festival trip. Students will forfeit all or part of the money they paid to attend the trip if they cancel FOR ANY REASON after the refund deadlines.
- Receipts will be issued for all trip payments made that reflect the balance due.
- Trip payments must be made on time so that we may pay the tour company.
- Parents are invited to attend this trip. Cost for parents is the same as for students, minus festival entry fees

Trip Pick-Up Times

Sometimes it is difficult to determine our exact arrival time when itineraries are set for choir trips. Students will be provided an opportunity to communicate the travel changes via phone. Additionally, check the choir communication methods for any updates available (Twitter, etc.). Parents, please be prompt when picking up children from choir trips.

Letter Jackets

Letter Jackets for the Music Department are fitted at certain times in the year. Students who participate fully in the choral program will qualify for a jacket prior to their senior year. A senior will qualify for a letter jacket based on three years of participation in the program and enrollment for their senior year. Students must have earned OR been awarded a jacket the PREVIOUS year and the student must enroll in choir the following year. These jackets are earned by any combination of fifteen points. The letter jacket point matrix is listed below. Students who have qualified must turn in a completed form for a clearance letter to our letter jacketed supplier.

9	10	11	12	Participation Points Earned	Pts
				Summer Choir Camp (must provide proof of attendance)	1
				HS TMEA District Choir Auditions	1
				HS TMEA District Choir Member	2
				HS TMEA Region Choir Auditions	1
				HS TMEA Region Mixed Choir	3
				HS TMEA Area Candidate	4
				HS TMEA All-State Choir	6

9	10	11	12	Participation Points Earned	Pts
				Performing a Solo at Regional Level	2
				Performing in an Ensemble at Regional Level	2
				Performing a Solo at State Level	4
				Performing in an Ensemble at State Level	4

9	10	11	12	Participation Points Earned	Pts
				Ninth grade year	2
				Tenth grade year	2
				Eleventh grade year	2
				Twelfth grade year	4
				12th grade (w/3 previous yrs. Successful completion)	9
				Varsity Choir Member	2
				Choir Officer	2
				Director Points	1