

Zion Benton  
Township High School  
District #126  
Choir Handbook 2023-2024



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## Purpose of Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to inform both students and parents of the expectations, requirements, and activities of the choral program. Along with important logistical information, this handbook contains information to help students understand what it means to be a member of the choir.

## I. ZBTHS Choir Goals

Through their participation in the ZBTHS Choirs, students will...

1. Become lifelong learners of music.
2. Develop the ability to sing with a natural, free, and vibrant tone.
3. Develop the music theory skills necessary to read music effectively.
4. Acquire knowledge of various music eras and historical styles.
5. Develop the performance skills needed to present rewarding performances.

## II. Curricular Choirs

**Beginning Treble Choir** - Open to all treble voiced students. No previous choral experience is necessary. The course content includes learning basic vocal technique and music theory concepts. Students will learn solfege, notational skills, and the basics of sight reading. The ensemble performs choral literature of all styles at seasonal concerts throughout the year.

**Concert Choir and New Tech Choir** - Open to all students. No previous choral experience is necessary. The course content includes learning basic vocal technique and music theory concepts. Students will learn solfege, notational skills, and the basics of sight reading. The ensemble performs choral literature of all styles at seasonal concerts throughout the year.

**Advanced Treble** - Open by audition to junior and senior treble voiced students. The curriculum is based on intermediate concepts of vocal fundamentals and music theory. Emphasis will be placed on sight reading. Students will perform choral literature of all styles at seasonal concerts throughout the year and in select festivals.

**Chamber Singers** - Open by audition to junior and senior students with a proficiency in vocal and sight-reading skills. The choir performs choral literature of all styles at seasonal concerts and selected festivals. Students will explore advanced concepts of music theory relating to tonality, vocal technique, and sight reading. Required to participate in activities such as ILMEA and Solo & Ensemble. Private voice lessons are highly encouraged.

### **III. Student Expectations**

1. Be respectful.
2. Be responsible.
3. Be encouraging.
4. Make music.

### **IV. Behavior Expectations**

As a choir member you are expected to consistently display behaviors designed to help you meet the above expectations during rehearsals and strive for sincere communication in performance. Some positive behaviors that will help the choir include:

1. Be respectful.
  - Treat yourself, others, and your classroom with respect.
  - Speak to others in an appropriate way.
  - Listen to instruction and allow others to listen.
2. Be responsible.
  - Take ownership!
  - Be on time.
  - Be prepared with materials (binder, music, pencil) and assignments.
  - Be ready to participate and learn!
3. Be encouraging.
  - Be positive and encouraging to our community of musicians. This is our music family!
4. Make music.
  - Participate in all activities.
  - Sing your best every time by using music knowledge and vocal technique.
  - Desire to excel vocally and musically: expect success.

**CELL PHONE POLICY-** phones and earbuds/headphones are to be turned off and put away during music making and instruction. We are not doing our best when on our phone during rehearsal. Students that are not able to self-monitor their phone usage will be asked to turn in their phone and a call/email will be made home.

Not following expectations or displaying inappropriate behaviors can result in 1). Student conference 2). Parent contact 3). Conduct Report

Remember, all school rules apply in our classroom! School rules on tardiness to class will be strictly enforced. Consult your school handbook if you have a question.

## **V. Grades**

Choir is a curricular class; thus choir students are graded on the understanding of concepts. Grades are comprised of formative and summative assessments. The grades are weighted according to the following scale:

### **Formative Assessments-20%**

- Rehearsal Score Markings
- Solfege & Rhythm Notation
- Daily Singing/Technique
- Sight Reading Assignments
- Discussions and Projects

### **Summative Assessments- 80%**

- Singing Tests
- Written Tests
- Performances (Concerts)

### **Singing Tests**

Students will be required to perform class repertoire and sight-read to demonstrate their level of growth. Tests will be recorded. These tests may be scheduled in class throughout the year.

### **Written Quizzes and Tests**

Students will be given formal written assessments at least once a quarter on material covered in class. These tests will cover topics ranging from music theory to music history and beyond.

### **Worksheets/Projects**

Students will complete written classwork and homework on material covered in class. They will also complete individual and group projects. This work will cover topics ranging from music theory, music history, composition, and beyond. These will be meant to help practice skills for summative assessments.

### **Concert Attendance**

As a performance-based class, concerts are at the core of curricular choir. They are the demonstration of both individual and group mastery of theoretical and technical concepts developed in rehearsal. Furthermore, the value of choral singing is not only for our individual satisfaction but also for the audience to experience an emotional response to a beautiful art form. In doing so, each student in choir plays a crucial role in the performance. Since concerts are a critical part of singing in a choir, you will therefore receive a grade for your performance.

An absence from either a dress rehearsal or concert will be determined by Mrs. Rickert as either excused or unexcused.

## **Examples of excused absence**

### **(requires notification in advance through email by parent/guardian):**

- Illness or Quarantine that prevents students from attending school. We will adhere to protocols and guidelines regarding COVID. Please communicate via email as soon as possible.
- Death or funeral of a relative (email by parent/guardian before concert).
- A conflict known at the beginning of the school year upon looking at the calendar and communicated to the Choir Director immediately at the beginning of the school year.

**ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENT-** Students will still demonstrate their mastery of the songs from a concert through an alternative assessment. This grade will take the place of the concert grade. Students will have one (1) week to complete the assignment. **Not completing the alternative assignment will result in a zero until the assignment is complete.**

## **Examples of unexcused absences (but not limited to):**

- No Shows- Missing a concert with **no prior notification (at least 24 hours)** from a parent or guardian.
- Personal trips
- Non-emergency doctor/dentist visits (look at the calendar and schedule these appointments around performances).
- Work. Be responsible! Let your managers know well in advance of days you will be unable to work. Plan ahead!

**An unexcused absence from a performance will seriously affect a student's overall grade.**

*Conflicts: If you have more than one school activity scheduled during a choir activity, please speak with **both** faculty members in charge. Usually performances/meets/games will receive priority over rehearsals or practices. If the problem persists, the situation will be discussed by the choir teacher and the sponsor/coach of the conflicting activity.*

## **VI. Concert Attire**

The following guidelines for concert attire is essential to creating a uniform look to the choir and create a polished, professional appearance. The final decision of concert attire will be at the director's discretion and announced to the students with ample time to obtain new concert uniforms.

### **Formal Concert Attire**

Tentatively, the following formal concert attire will be worn:

#### **Treble Choir and Concert Choir:**

**Just remember to wear ALL BLACK!**

*Black Dress or Black Skirt (Knee length or longer), Black Dress Shirt or Sweater, Black dress shoes (no open toe or sandals). Please do not wear high heels for safety reasons.*

**OR**

*Black dress pants, black dress shirt, black socks, black dress shoes, black tie.*

### **Advanced Treble and Chamber Singers:**

*Black Concert dress (issued at the beginning of the year), black dress shoes (no open toe, extreme high heels, or sandals). Dresses will be washed and returned at the end of the year. A charge of \$52 will be applied to your account if dresses are not returned.*

**OR**

*Black dress pants, black dress shirt, black socks, black dress shoes, black tie.*

**\*\*You cannot ever be OVER-DRESSED for a concert!** Stay away from athletic shoes, sandals, open-toed shoes, boots, sweatpants, sweat shirts, jeans, t-shirts, spaghetti straps, midriffs, bare shoulders, short skirts, see-through clothing, or anything that is not the color black!

**\*\*\*Note:** Dress clothes must adhere to guidelines of the Dress Code in the ZB Handbook, even if our performance is off campus. Students may not perform if concert apparel is not school appropriate.

### **Informal Concert Attire**

Occasionally, the choir will be asked to dress in their informal attire. This will include:

ZB Choir T-shirt, functional jeans, comfortable shoes.

ALL choir students need a ZB Choir shirt. They will be available for purchase at the beginning of the year.

## **VII. Attendance and Tardiness**

Be on time to class. We begin to sing at the bell. Refer to your student handbook about tardiness.

## **VIII. Facilities and Equipment**

### **Choir Room**

Our choir room is home to many. Respect this space and the equipment in it. **Only play the piano with permission. Please play piano respectfully (no banging).**

### **Music**

You are responsible for any music that is issued to you. If any of that which is assigned to you is lost or damaged, you will be assessed the amount of money for replacement. NEVER WRITE ON YOUR MUSIC WITH PEN!!!! Having your class materials is a necessary part of participating in class. **Class materials include pencil, highlighter, black binder, music, and Chromebook.**

## **Practice Rooms**

You are strongly encouraged to make use of these outstanding facilities outside of class when they become available. Practice room policies will be posted in each room and will be covered at greater length in class. You may only use the practice rooms if you have signed up in advance with permission.

## **IX. Additional Choir Information**

This section is designed to give you a better understanding of the different activities and events you will encounter over the course of the year.

### **Private Voice Lessons**

To fully develop your voice, we strongly recommend that you consider private voice lessons. Arrangements of schedule and payment are done through each instructor. Watch for forms during the first month of school to put you in touch with one of our excellent voice teachers.

### **Student Leadership - Choir Officers**

Each choir will elect 2 choir officers to assist the directors and act as communicators between the ensemble and the director. The officers meet on a regular basis scheduled starting at the beginning of the year. Officer responsibilities include (but may not be not limited to):

*Officers-* Take attendance, pass out materials as needed, assist in warm-ups, assist in planning Lock-In and End of the Year Party, communication to and from choir, attends monthly meeting, recruitment, leading by example.

*Librarian* – One or two choir librarians will be appointed by the director to help assist with the choral library, cataloging music, storage and retrieval of music, and organizing new music.

*Equipment Crew* - open to any ZBTHS Choir Student without election who wishes to assist with maintenance related tasks (setting up for concerts, tearing down after concerts, repair of equipment, etc.)

### **Tri-M**

Tri-M is a national Music Honor Society offers leadership and service experience for music students in grades 10-12. Only the top music students, both academically and by virtue of performance, are selected to apply, and are chosen to be members of the honor society. Our goal for Tri-M is for students to have a voice in our growing music program and reach out to our community to spread the importance of music. Inducted members will have to attend a monthly meeting. Tri-M students must earn 20 hours of service each year to remain a member.



## **ILMEA District and All-State Festivals**

Participation in the District and All-State Festivals is a prestigious and highly sought after achievement by high school musicians, and is open to choir members with director approval. Extra help will be provided to the students before and after school. Please set up an appointment with Mrs. Rickert.

## **Co-Curricular Ensembles**

**Jazz Voices** - Open by audition to all grade levels currently enrolled in a choral class with an accurate proficiency in jazz vocal skills. This ensemble meets up to three times a week before and after school. Students will explore vocal jazz, and popular music theory and technique. Students will also participate in extra performances in the community.

**ZB Acapella**— open to all students interested in singing a cappella styled music. Ensembles will meet once a week either before school from 7:15-7:45 or after school from 2:45-3:45 starting the second quarter. Students will perform at various choral concerts.

## **Sectionals**

There will be an occasional morning sectional from 7:15-7:45 in the morning. Groups called to the morning sectional will vary depending on the need (all choir altos, all choir sopranos, all male voices, etc.) Students are expected to attend.

## **Musical**

All students are highly encouraged to participate in the Musical Auditions. You will sing the prepared material that is provided to you. If you have specific question about the musical please feel free to ask Mrs. Rickert specific questions.

## **Solo & Ensemble Contest**

Students prepare a solo or small ensemble during class, then perform for a judge or clinician in our in-house event. More information will be forthcoming on the exact procedures.

## **Fundraising**

Throughout the year the students in the ZBTHS Choirs will have the opportunity to raise funds, a portion of which will be placed in the student's individual account. The money from student accounts can be used to defray costs of upcoming trips and materials. Look for our first fundraiser early in the fall!

## Handbook Acknowledgement Form

### ZBTHS Choirs 2023-2024

After reading the handbook, detach, complete, and return this page by **Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

*I have read the 2023-2024 ZBTHS Choir Handbook and Calendar and agree to be responsible for the information contained within it. I understand that concerts are mandatory and part of my summative grade. I understand the expectations and my responsibilities as a choir member/parent and am willing to fulfill them.*

*I also give permission to have photos and video taken of my child during concerts and events for the purpose of publicity for ZBTHS Choir which may be seen in newspapers, school websites, and social media.*

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_