



Choir Handbook

2011-12

Olivet Middle School

**" Music is
fundamental~
one of the great
sources of life,
health, strength, and
happiness."**

~anonymous

September 6, 2011

Dear Students and Parents,

Congratulations!!! You have begun an adventure----singing in an Olivet Middle School Choir! I look forward to the challenge of working with you, your friends and classmates and the special opportunities it represents.

This handbook is created with both the student and his/her parent or guardian in mind. Being a member of our choir program involves some personal responsibility and ownership. Please consider carefully if you are willing to make the commitment to help our choir class be the best it can be! Performance attendance is mandatory and part of a student's grade. If attending out-of-school performances is not feasible, this may not be the class for you. However, I believe that being part of a music group can offer you opportunities that no other class or club can and I intend to do my best to create those opportunities for you!

I hope this edition of the Olivet Middle School CHOIR HANDBOOK contains all the information you, and your parent, need to make your participation in the coming year the BEST it can be! Here you will find an overview of our choral program, a calendar of events, a performance schedule, dress guidelines, and explanation of our grading policy and a partial list of student expectations. Please take the time to read this over carefully and sign the student/parent awareness contract at the end of the handbook!

During each rehearsal, we will be studying choral literature, performance skills, music symbols, choral score reading, vocal production and creative thinking skills all through cooperative learning.

If you have any questions or comments about vocal music activities, always feel free to ask. If there are problems, let us remember we both have the same goal in mind. Parents may contact me at 749-9953 during school hours. In addition, we are working to make more information available on the school website. Look for the **choir** link under the **Arts, Athletics, Activities and Achievements** sidebar heading at **www.olivetschools.org**.

This year should be a year of new and exciting experiences for our three middle school choirs. From our fall clinics, to choir festival to our own school concerts, we have much to look forward to. Let's all work together -students, parents and director- to make it a GREAT year!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Faulkner,
Vocal Music Director

OLIVET MIDDLE SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC PROGRAM

WHAT KEEPS US BUSY

- Singing in the Fall Music Spectacular
- Attending middle school clinics
- Participating in MSVMA Choral Festivals
- Singing for guest conductors/clinicians
- Presenting a Winter Concert
- Participating in Solo & Ensemble Festivals
- Presenting a Spring Concert
- Presenting holiday assemblies
- Presenting Outreach Performances

WHAT DO WE DO BESIDE "JUST SING"

- Study proper breathing techniques
- Work on correct pronunciation of vowels
- Practice proper articulation of words
- Do regular warm-ups to extend range and projection
- Learn to listen critically to ourselves and others
- Explore music literature and music history
- Learn to perform music in foreign languages including Latin and Italian
- Learn the proper music vocabulary
- Practice music reading
- Learn the foundations of music theory
- Perform music from other countries and cultures
- Learn the importance of music in other cultures
- Learn basic composition by creating our own lyrics and melodies
- Learn to be a team player

WHAT MAKES US HAPPY?

- Singing!
- Having people care enough about our program to come and hear us!
- Having a willing supply of chauffeurs, chaperones, helping hands and encouragers!
- Experiencing success as developing musicians!

The real secret of success is enthusiasm!

-Walter Chrysler

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

One of the good things about our music program is that we are increasingly offering students more opportunities to perform, individually and in groups. A few opportunities are optional, but most are required. Important musical factors such as balance and blend are easily affected by the absence of even just one performer! Furthermore, when a singer knowingly "blows off" a performance, it sends a loud and clear message to his/her fellow musicians regarding his commitment to the choir's (or "team's") success. In view of this, it is pertinent to consider how well this responsibility has been met when determining a student's grade. Nonetheless, especially in a small school, I understand conflicts do occur because many of our students are involved in several activities. If you must miss a concert but do not want to lose credit, you may make arrangements with me to make up the grade. You will have 1 week to turn in the make-up work from the concert date and it will be in the form of a 3 –page essay and presentation. However, it must be remembered that choir performances are a curricular event and performances are a required outcome of the curriculum. This fact must be considered when determining pre-excused circumstances.

You are needed and expected to be present for all chorus performances. This is the responsibility of both the students and the parents. The primary performances are listed in this handbook; you will be notified of any additional performances at least one month in advance. If you miss a performance without previously informing the director, your grade will be reduced. ***If you must miss a required event, make every effort to notify the director at least 1 week in advance by completing a pre-excused absence form.*** In case of last-minute illness or unforeseeable emergencies, a follow-up phone call or note from your parent or guardian the following day will be sufficient. Please remember, if you need a ride, ask a classmate or Mrs.Faulkner---this is not an excused absence but most often we can find a way to help. Lastly, athletic events or practices not affiliated with Olivet Community Schools are not considered a school event or excused. However, the following categories do allow for an excused absence:

- Illness
- Planned absence with pre-excused form
- Unforeseeable emergency
- suspension
- religious observance

You will be assigned homework occasionally. These are short written exercise in rhythmic notation, score reading, sight-singing and daily drills. Although these assignments are not time-consuming, they are vital in building skills that will lead to refined musicianship.

Grading Policy

-Performance attendance.....	40%
-Tests/Quizzes(written/performance).....	20%
-Homework.....	20%
-Participation/attitude/preparation.....	20%

There is no failure except in no longer trying.
-Elbert Hubbard

SOME REHEARSAL GUIDELINES TO LIVE BY!!!

1. Enter and leave the classroom quietly. Be in your assigned place with your assigned folder when the bell rings.
2. Do not bring gum, candy, snacks or drinks into the rehearsal area or classroom unless with special permission(i.e. class reward). Bottled water is the exception but it must be plain water not flavored as the sweeteners are sticky when spilled.
3. Rehearsal time is our choir's (or team's) time...do not do homework from another class during this time.
4. If your throat hurts but you do not stay home, notify the director before rehearsal that you are ill. Do not expect to be exempted from rehearsing just because your throat hurts----if you are well enough to be in school you can participate by listening and learning.
5. Listen when rehearsing music and whenever the director, our accompanist or guest adult is talking. You may chat at designated and unstructured times.
6. Mark the director's comments in your music, using pencil only!
7. Raise your hand when you have a question or would like to contribute to the class. Remember, if you have not raised your hand to signal you would like to talk, then chances are, you should not be talking.
8. Cooperate with your teacher and the other students in the class. It is only when we choose to work as a team that we will be successful!
9. Your school-issued hall pass is required to leave the classroom.
10. Try everything the director asks you to do to the best of your ability. I promise not to request anything that is unsafe physically or emotionally. In turn, please remember you are an integral part of the Olivet Choral Program and any choir is as strong and musical as each member!!!

TRUTHS AND CONSEQUENCES

Discipline Policy

Although all the listed rules (or "truths") are important, the most serious disturbances are listed below. It is these infractions which immediately lead to the stated consequences.

1. Talking during structured rehearsal time
2. Not participating or doing work other from other classes
3. Being unprepared for class---bring your folder w/music, sightreading book and pencil daily!
4. Offensive language, double meanings, back talk
5. Display of inappropriate attitude or gesture

- 1st offense: warning
2nd offense: Conference with teacher
3rd offense: Detention
4th offense: Call to parents
5th offense: Referral to principal/conference with student and teacher

Special Dates To Remember!

Fall Music Spectacular.....Monday, October 24th, 6:30 p.m.

Holiday Music Celebration.....Thursday, December 15th @ 7 p.m.:

Festival Concert.....Monday, March 12th, 7 p.m.

MSVMA Choral Festival.....Friday, March 23rd and Saturday, March 24th

MSVMA Solo & Ensemble(optional).....Saturday, April 28th

Spring Concert.....Monday, June 4th, 7 p.m.

These are the performance dates already on our calendar. We will perform many other times including school assemblies, trips to the elementary school, outreach concerts and invitationals. However, these are our present required performances dates. Parents please help your child by MARKING YOUR CALENDARS. So often, they forget to remind you until it is too late. Planning early will help them stay organized and be more successful in this class. If you know you will not be able to attend, please fill out a pre-excused absence form at least one week in advance so that your child will not lose credit for the performance. Those forms are available in the choir room. Also, this year we will list our concert dates and information on the school website. In the past, reminders were sent home, but that seemed to be somewhat inefficient for many families. Informational notes will still be sent for special events that are added to our performance schedule but basic concert information will be available on our website only and in school newsletters such as the Middle Eagle. Look for the **choir** link under the **Arts, Athletics, Activities & Achievements** sidebar heading at www.olivetschools.org If you are unable to find the necessary information there, feel free to contact me or the school office.

CONCERTS...WHAT TO WEAR???

6TH GRADE...Students are asked to wear nice dress clothes. For girls, this means dresses or skirts. For our boys, dress pants, shirts with a collar and dark shoes.

7TH AND 8TH GRADE...Students are asked to wear a long or short -sleeved white shirt or blouse. Black skirts, black dress pants and dark shoes. Boys are encouraged to wear ties.

***Parents, if this is a problem for your child, please let me know. Together, we will work something out. It is much more important that a student performs than what he wears. However, it is most appropriate when we all look uniform. So let us work together, if needed and feel free to call me if there are any concerns.