



CHORUS

2019 – 2020 HANDBOOK

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All students and parents are required to read the handbook and complete the **STUDENT/PARENT CONSENT FORM** online in order for the student to participate in chorus. The link to the consent form can be found on the [chorus website](#).

Items in red are additions and revision made on August 9, 2019.

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I. Introduction and Welcome from the Directors

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Lost Mountain Middle School Choral Department. For those of you who are new, my name is Jay Champion, Choral Director and General Music Teacher at LMMS. I am very excited about teaching such a great group of students and look forward to meeting all our new students and parents.

I'm sure you would like to know a little bit about me, so I'll fill you in. I was born and raised among very strong choral traditions in Edinburg, Texas and studied at Louisiana State University where I received a Bachelor of Music Education degree as a voice major and a Bachelor of Music degree in composition. I earned my Master of Music Education degree and an Education Specialist degree from the University of

Georgia. I taught middle school chorus and general music in East Baton Rouge Parish for one year before deciding to move to Cobb County in 1998. I served as choral director at the West Cobb School and decided to stay at the middle school level as the director at Lost Mountain Middle School in 2000. I am a former member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus, and current member of Coro Vocati, a premiere chamber group in Atlanta.

I am glad to say that while teaching in Cobb County, I have encountered an incredible amount of success and have made a very positive difference in my student's lives. Helping my students feel good about themselves by learning about and appreciating music, and singing from their hearts is my number one goal. In order for this to happen, I am demanding as a teacher and director, always have the student's best interests in mind, challenge my students regularly, always try to accommodate to the special needs of my students, and above all, love and care for my students very much. It is important for students to be willing to learn and have an open mind toward different kinds of music. They must not only give of themselves, but also encourage and support each other to do the same. They must see themselves as winners both individually and as a whole ensemble. Parents should actively encourage these successful habits and feelings by attending all concerts, becoming involved in chorus activities, and encourage students to stay enthusiastic and dedicated. This involvement shows the students our support, and that chorus is important and a source of pride. Parents are needed to help organize and execute various choral activities throughout the school year. If you are a parent that is interested in helping out in any way, please contact me by email or by phone.

The students will learn and grow as musicians and young adults. Responsibility, dedication, accountability, and teamwork will be reinforced daily through their efforts and allow them to learn how music plays an important role in the enrichment of the human spirit. I look very forward to helping this new group of students learn and grow!

Sincerely,

J. Champion

Dear Parents and Musicians,

Hello and welcome (back)! I am honored to be a part of the choral department here at Lost Mountain. A little about me... I grew up an Army brat and spent most of my childhood in Germany and Texas. In 1993, my family moved to Conyers, GA, where I attended Edwards Middle School—according to family legend, I told Mr. Mitchell (the chorus teacher) in 8th grade that I was going to come back and take his job when I graduated...I did! I received my undergraduate degree in Music Education from Shorter College and my Masters in Music Ed from UGA and will finish my specialist's degree in Instructional Technology from Kennesaw State University in December of this year! I taught for 10 years before taking some time off to spend with my two little ones, Ian (age 7) and Ivy (age 6). I love teaching middle schoolers for several reasons—the students are still deciding who they are as people, and they're generally some of the funniest people I know. I laugh every day that I teach. I also want my room to be a place where EVERY student feels welcome and can't wait to get back to!

Musically Yours,

Kacy Bishop

II. SYLLABUS

LOST MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS SYLLABUS

Beginning Chorus/Grade 6 - This performance-based class focuses on learning to use the vocal instrument to create a healthy and pleasing sound. In addition to learning proper vocal production and

technique, students learn music reading skills, sight-singing skills, and performance skills. Students sing literature with and without accompaniment in up to three parts. Chorus offers opportunities for students to develop team building and leadership skills. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

Intermediate Chorus/Grade 7 - This performance-based class focuses on continued demonstration of proper breath control and correct singing posture. Students sing with and without accompaniment, and sing literature in up to three parts. Students demonstrate proficiency in sight-reading at the expected competency level and read music with more complex melodies and rhythms. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

Advanced Chorus/Grade 8 - This performance-based class focuses on continued and consistent demonstration of proper breath control and correct singing posture. Students demonstrate open vowel sounds, properly articulated consonants, and appropriate tone quality on more advanced repertoire. Students demonstrate more advanced proficiency in sight-reading at the expected competency level and read music with more complex melodies and rhythms. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence for Music can be found online at <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Documents/K-12-Music-Georgia-Standards.pdf>. The standards for 6th grade chorus are on page 42, 7th grade is on page 45, and 8th grade is on page 48.

ASSESSMENT WEIGHTS

Participation in rehearsal techniques including warm-up exercises, music reading, rehearsals, posture, effective use of time, and class discussions. – 40%

- Grades are issued every two weeks. Students are expected to sing at acceptable level of effort and accuracy, with acceptable singing posture. Since we function as a group, they should keep up with tasks, and perform tasks to specific instructions. To save time, students are asked to quickly get seated, and be ready to work. Students should sharpen pencils and retrieve music before sitting down, and not waste time mingling.
- See the [LMMS Participation and Prepared Rubrics](#) for detailed information.

Self-Evaluation Survey – 10%

- Students will be asked to complete a self-evaluation rubric in the form of a survey. This survey is taken at least once a semester. Student responses are entered into a formula so students cannot calculate their own grade. Students are asked to identify their strengths and weaknesses and compare from one period to the next for measures of improvement. When students can improve on their individual weaknesses, we become better as a choir.

Prepared for class (Agenda notebooks, folder, pencil, paper) – 10%

- Grades are issued every two weeks. Students earn one point a day. Students are expected to have their folder with all music and handouts, workbook, sharpened No. 2 pencil (not color) with eraser, and student agenda. They must have them all!!!

Written Work – 10%

- Students will demonstrate knowledge through verbal communication, and written worksheets. They will also write solfege and/or counting in our music, and complete workbook exercises and worksheets.
- Some common written work grades include: marking solfege in their music, various music theory worksheets, Music Literature study guides, and “Solfege Keyboard” worksheets.
- **Make-Up Expectations: As per school policy, for each school day that a student is absent, he/she will have the same number of school days to make up work. The same applies to long-term assignments, tests, and quizzes.**
- **Late work policy as per school policy: 1 school day late = -10; 2 school days late = -20; 3 school days late = -30**
- **As per school policy, work will not be taken for a grade after 3 days.**

Quizzes – 10%

- Quizzes are given frequently to practice written skills. Students may use worksheets as a study guide. Quizzes will prepare you for written tests. After taking a test, quizzes are occasionally also given to keep the information fresh and keep the skills sharp.
- Quizzes are given on theory activities, marking solfege and/or counting in music, music performance literature. Quizzes are given in Musition and Auralia over previously mastered material.

Tests – 20%

- Students will take tests on the music literature that is learned in class. Some tests will cover knowledge of music theory terms and symbols and reading skills like labeling counting and solfege. These tests are written or are taken using Musition and Auralia. When using Musition and Auralia, students can take a test as many times as they want to earn the highest grade possible before the final deadline for that test.
- Some tests are singing tests, or test other musical skills. These tests are performed individually for a teacher or are recorded and submitted in Edmodo.
- **Re-Assessments: Students may have the opportunity to complete a re-assessment on tests and projects and written assignments. Requirements for re-assessment include having no missing assignments and having a score 89% or below on the original assignment. This will give students a chance to earn additional points for their final score for that grade but can only receive a grade as high as 90% on the re-assessment. All re-assessments will be completed within 5 days of the original graded assignment.**

Notification Grade – 0%

- Occasionally, we will post a “grade” that does not count toward the class grade, but rather serves as an instant notification for parents concerning a given matter. For example, if students must turn in a field trip form by September 20, we will post that as a grade with a

maximum of 1 point, but it will count 0% towards the report card grade. If a student has a “1”, it has been received; otherwise it will remain a zero.

For a more detailed explanation of our grading procedures, go to www.lmmschorus.com/grade.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

1. Be prepared and on time.
2. During rehearsal and when instructed, questions/ comments should be directed toward the teacher only. Please raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking. Socializing among other students is not permitted.
3. Show respect for peers, teachers, and property.
4. Obey school rules as stated in the Lost Mountain Middle School Student Handbook.
5. Have a positive attitude.

CONDUCT GRADES:

Conduct grades will be discussed with the student and parents if the student is at risk of receiving an “N” or “U”. This syllabus is a guide and is subject to change in order to accommodate class and individual needs. Students will be notified of change.

IV. UNIFORM AND SUPPLIES INFORMATION

Students will perform in their chorus polo shirt, khaki colored pants, dark formal shoes, and dark belt unless otherwise specified. The chorus polo shirt is a navy blue polo-style short-sleeve shirt with an LMMS Chorus symbol. If you don't have a chorus polo shirt, please fill out the Chorus Polo Shirt Order Form and return it to Mr. Champion. Pants must be plain khaki pants. No jeans, cargo pants, Capri pants, or corduroy pants are allowed. Shoes must be formal, black or brown, may NOT be athletic shoes, sandals (i.e., Birkenstock), boat shoes (i.e., Sperry), and cannot have white on them. Shoes may not be open-toed. The belt should be the same color as the shoes and may not have any shiny pieces on it (metal loops, large buckles, or rhinestones). An explanation of the difference between khakis (a.k.a “chinos”) and jeans can be found on our chorus website.

We will inspect every student's uniform in person at the beginning of each year. Students do not need to wear their uniform to school, but they do need to bring it in for inspection. The inspection deadlines change every year, so please refer to the chorus calendar for these deadlines. Students must bring their pants, shoes, and belt in a bag labeled with their name. If preferred, students may drop off the bag before school and pick it up after school. We will **NOT** accept pictures of these clothes.

If a student need to purchase a new uniform part for any reason after the initial inspection, then the new articles must be approved before wearing them to a performance. It is the student's responsibility to inform the director and ask for a new inspection.

If financial assistance is necessary in purchasing a chorus polo shirt, or any other part of the uniform, please submit a written request from the parent. This may be submitted in a discreet manner, via email, or paper letter.

Choral music is considered to be a resource for reuse much like a textbook in other classes and must be returned. Chorus students are responsible for marking and using their own copy of each piece of music that we perform. These pieces must be used again by future students, so each piece must be returned with no markings and as little wear-and-tear as possible. **Students will be issued a copy from the choral library and will be responsible for returning that copy in the condition they received it. If the student loses their copy, has damaged the copy so it is unfit for reuse, or simply wants to keep it**

as a memento, then the student may pay for a replacement copy by placing an order through the LMMS PTSA. Order forms are available in the school store or the chorus room. The cost of each piece varies, but are usually around \$3 each, a small price to pay to not have to erase it, and to be able to keep it!

Some pieces are public domain, which is to say that photocopies are allowed to be made and freely distributed. You can find many examples at cpdl.org. Some pieces are permanently out of print, but may be photocopied with permission from the publisher. Some pieces may look like photocopies, but are actually editions sold in digital form with permission to print a certain number of copies at school. In the case of an imminent performance, if purchased copies are not available, then the choral department may make temporary photocopies to use until the purchased copies arrive. In this case, these photocopies may be partial copies of the piece and must still be collected after use so they can be destroyed. Photocopies that must be returned will be marked accordingly.

V. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Boys Choir and Girls Choir will rehearse on Mondays and Tuesdays. Chamber Chorus will rehearse on Thursday. Please check the list of clubs on the school website for details about these choirs. PLEASE CHECK THE CHORUS CALENDAR FOR UPATED INFORMATION ABOUT REHEARSALS. Sixth Grade Students can participate in GMEA Sixth-Grade Statewide Honor Chorus. 7th and 8th graders have the opportunity to audition for Middle School Honor Chorus, and can audition for All-State Chorus.

VI. CONCERT ATTENDANCE AND CALENDAR



Our chorus calendar is published on Google Calendar. You can view our calendar in agenda form on the homepage of our website www.lmmschorus.com; from there, you will also have the option to see the calendar in monthly view.

Concert performances are the culmination of our work and the purpose of the ensemble. Attendance and participation in concerts is required to be in chorus. Participation by the entire ensemble is crucial to the success of the concert. The success of our concerts is crucial to the success of the class. Lack of participation in concerts is damaging to the morale of our ensembles. If concerts are a failure, students will perceive the class as a failure and not want to be in chorus. Concerts are our only chance to share our hard work and great music with our family and our fellow choirs. Watching performances by other choirs is a critical part of a students' music education and concerts are our only chance to enjoy and learn from this experience. Seventh graders must attend and participate in all concerts and LGPE in order to be eligible to attend the Lock-In at Stars-and-Strikes at the end of the year. Eighth graders must attend and participate in all concerts and LGPE in order to be eligible to attend the Disney Trip at the end of the year.

Boys/Girls/Chamber Chorus members must attend and participate in all concerts in order to be eligible to attend the Lock-In at Stars-and-Strikes at the end of the year. If a student has a conflict, they may be given permission to show up late or leave early if notification is given well in advance. In rare instances, students may be excused from the concert altogether if an explanation is submitted in writing by the parent as soon as a conflict is known. If a student is absent from school on the day of a concert, and that absence is excused, then the student is automatically excused from the concert provided the absence is not due to a scheduled appointment that still allows the student to attend the concert. If a student must miss a concert due to a family emergency, a student may be excused if an explanation is submitted in writing by the parent the next day. Students **will not** be excused due to conflicts with rehearsals, practices, or games by other organizations that meet on a regular basis.

VII. FORMS TO RETURN TO THE DIRECTOR

Please fill out and return the **Consent and Commitment Form**, and the **Chorus Polo Shirt Order Form** (if necessary). These forms must be turned in as soon as possible upon receiving this handbook. You will receive a letter before each field trip to inform you of all the details concerning the trip. You will also receive a separate permission slip to sign and return for each field trip.

Please subscribe to receive text messages from us with important announcements and possible last-minute changes. Instructions for subscribing are on the Homepage of our chorus website: www.lmmschorus.com.

VIII. DISCIPLINARY POLICY

All disciplinary matters will be addressed according to the Lost Mountain Middle School Behavior Policies and the appropriate use of the Student Eagle Card. In the event a student is asked for their Eagle Card and they do not have their Eagle Card, a silent lunch will be added to the original infraction. 7th and 8th graders and their parents are required to sign an agreement to our Behavioral Policies for participation in the Lock-In and the Disney Trip.

IX. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Choral Department is in need of much help from parents this year. Parents will receive text messages with links to sign-up to volunteer or simply contact the directors. Areas of need include:

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Major help is needed in this area! Parents are needed for various tasks such as the collection of music, the organization of our library, payment records, and planning and organization of field trips. Parents will be needed to come to the school and help with these tasks. I need a small core of parents that can come one day a week, not necessarily on the same day.

CONCERT MANAGEMENT

Physically able-bodied parents are needed to set up risers at Burnt Hickory Baptist Church. This might be done the day before a concert or the morning of a concert. At least three are needed to put everything back after the concert. This will take about 15 minutes. I need three parents from three different grade levels to monitor, record, and correct student behavior during the concert.

FUNDRAISING

At least five parents at a time (or as many as possible) are needed to help distribute items on the fundraising delivery date. Parents are needed from approximately 4 p.m. until the end of distribution at approximately 8 p.m.

We will have a poinsettia sale in December. This sale is for eighth grade Disney participants only. There is no kickoff meeting, but there will be a Saturday morning distribution event. At least four parents will be needed for the Saturday distribution event. The date will be provided if and when the fundraiser begins.

Finally, a few parents are needed to solicit donations from the community for sponsorship of our concerts and/or equipment. A local business can sponsor one song by purchasing the music of that piece for the class. This will cost between \$80 and \$100 for most songs, but may be as much as \$200 for the more popular and lengthy pieces. The business will receive recognition and thanks in our concert programs and will receive a certificate of thanks from the choral program for display.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents are needed to chaperone field trips at a one to fifteen student ratio. Various trips will be planned and organized throughout the year.

X. CONCERT ETTIQUETTE

Please follow the guidelines below for concert behavior. At all performances, when parents and students are seated in the audience, parents should watch their children to observe this behavior, and teach by example.

- Speak in a whisper while in the theater.
- It is appropriate to applaud when the first person walks on the stage, even if that person is the announcer. Your applause lets the performers know you are looking forward to the show.
- While a performance is in progress, do not utter a sound. Whispering to a neighbor is distracting not only to the people around you, but also to the performers on stage. Whistling and “Cat Calls” are never appropriate at our concerts.
- Refrain from open coughs or loud sneezes during a song. Although it is sometimes necessary, it can often be delayed until the next applause.
- Any devices that make sound should be turned off. Also be careful of any other potential noisemaking materials such as Velcro, jingling jewelry, or clothing that makes noise with movement.
- If the show is funny, feel free to laugh aloud. Pay close attention because your laughter must stop as soon as the words resume. You don’t want to miss the next funny line.
- Movement is very distracting to the audience as well as the performers. For that reason, no one should get up during a performance.
- It is appropriate to applaud at the end of every piece. Listen carefully to make sure it is really the end. It is embarrassing to start clapping before the song is over. Sometimes it seems like the end, and then the music starts again. The conductor usually puts his hands down by his sides when the piece is over.
- It is appropriate to remove crying or misbehaving children from a concert.
- While sitting in your chair, your feet must remain on the floor. Desks must remain lowered.
- If the show is very good, you may want to give a standing ovation at the end. This is appropriate as long as you stay at your seats.
- Set the example! Show others the correct way to act.
- While singing, stand still and watch your director. Nothing is more distracting to an audience than a choir member that is moving or scanning the room with their eyes instead of concentrating on what they are doing.