

Surfside Middle School Chorus Department

2015-2016 Handbook

DIRECTOR

Mr. Fred Mullen mullefo@bay.k12.fl.us

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Surfside Middle School Chorus program provides a performing outlet for highly motivated and dedicated students interested in becoming more involved in the art of choral music and musical theatre. Class activities will include performing and listening to music from many different styles and time periods, music theory, sight reading skills, musical theatre, and using character voice and movement. Performances will occur periodically throughout the school year both on and off campus.

TEXTBOOK / MATERIALS

The instructional materials used in chorus classes are a choir folder and sheet music which are purchased with fundraising money earned by the students. The student is responsible for lost or damaged materials. These items should be in place by the end of the first week.

1. Pencil - only pencil should be used to write in the music.
2. Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of pure water everyday and may refill them at the water fountains.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Chorus and musical theatre thrives with the help of parents! Events run more smoothly for the adults and more fun for the students. Below are some ways parents can assist.

1. Attend the chorus parent meeting held twice a year
2. Attend performances
3. Chaperone field trips
4. Volunteer to help with concerts, fundraisers, measuring for uniforms, etc.
5. Help students be on time for rehearsals/performances
6. Encourage/praise the efforts of each student....and even the director!
7. Actively support chorus fundraisers

GRADING POLICY

- **35% - Performance Contribution**

The majority of points are earned by, but not limited to, being present, arriving on time, wearing the uniform properly, participating positively and fully, and exhibiting appropriate audience behavior. All concert dates are listed on www.surfsidechoirshark.com, at the front of the classroom calendar bulletin board, and listed in the weekly Choral Reef Newsletter. There is no excuse for not knowing a date of a concert. Bay District Schools recognizes that membership in chorus and musical theatre requires attendance outside of the regular school day. Yes, that means grades are from outside school hours. If there is a conflict with a concert date, a note from a parent or guardian is required at least two weeks in advance of the performance. See the section on Concert Absences below for more details.

- **30% - Class Work**

This includes theory sheets, listening activities, part checks, written assessments, or other work done primarily in class. This can include performance assessments during class, both formal and informal in nature.

- **35% - Weekly Rehearsal Techniques**

Rehearsal techniques grade in this class will be determined by the level and frequency at which students perform the listed rehearsal behaviors. The rubric will be distributed to students and is available at surfsidechoirshark.com. See below for the list of standard rehearsal techniques.

STANDARD REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

1. Be seated in assigned seat at the conclusion of the countdown on the main viewing screen with required materials (pencil, music folder, etc)
2. Listen and maintain appropriate eye contact with director during rehearsal
3. Listen for transfers and study your part when not actively singing at the moment.
4. Sing with lifted soft palate, at an appropriate volume, using “low” breath support, with enthusiasm
5. Sing with appropriate singer’s posture
6. Use Curwen hand signs when singing solfege
7. Write rehearsal notes in music using pencil

CONCERT AND PERFORMANCE ABSENCES

Chorus is a performance oriented course. Therefore, performances are a large part of each student's overall grade. Performances are not optional due to convenience. Student and parents are expected to prioritize concerts by transferring these dates into their calendars and avoiding all non-emergency conflicts. Parents need to consider transportation plans in case they are suddenly not able to transport their student to a performance. If absent from a performance, it is the responsibility of the STUDENT to make sure the proper procedure is followed.

- An unexcused absence from a performance will result in a zero and no opportunity to make up the points. *Not having a ride will be ruled unexcused.*
- The only excused absences from after-school rehearsals or performances are personal illness (extreme) or family emergency (extreme case). In either of these situations, a parent note needs to be submitted as soon as possible.
 - Personal Illness: If personal illness prevents the student from attending an after-school rehearsal or concert, e-mail Mr. Mullen before call-time at mullefo@bay.k12.fl.us. Students and families will need e-mail even if they miss school that day. Upon returning to school, present a note, signed by a parent, stating the reason for the absence. Failure to communicate may result in an unexcused absence, and a grade of a zero will be given with no opportunity to make it up.
 - Family emergency: if possible, please notify the director as soon as possible. For family events (graduations, weddings, funerals), we must be notified at least 2 weeks in advance.
 - Pre-Approved Family Leave is also a requirement for an excused absence; however, be careful not to plan family trips at the same time as scheduled concerts in the fall and spring.
- Tardiness: Arriving late to an after-school rehearsal or performance will negatively impact a student's grade. Every five minutes after that will result in an additional 10 point decrease. For example, if curtain call is to be in assigned seats at 6:00 PM and a student arrive in their seat at 6:15 PM, the student will receive an 80% for their concert grade. Plan to arrive and sign in with your student assistant (SA) early!
- Make-up Work: If your performance absence is excused, you need to request an alternate assignment which will replace the concert grade. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Deadlines will be set accordingly and must be followed by the student. No make-up assignment will be given for unexcused absences or failure to communicate with the director. The grade of zero will stand.

CHORUS AND MUSICAL THEATRE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

This section is meant to give you a full understanding of the financial responsibilities of the chorus and musical theatre and how it benefits our students. In short, all student are expected to fundraise (or pay up front) for their chorus uniform (one time purchase for their years) in choir) and the chorus PFC or “Personal Financial Commitment” of \$40.00. See below for details.

IMPORTANT: No student, in 26 years of the school’s existence, will be excluded from the program due to financial difficulties. To assist with these costs, we offer several fundraisers throughout the first 9 weeks to assist students who need help raising these funds. Failure to pay or raise the required fee places the student on a school-wide obligation list (handled much in the same way as a lost library book or textbook). Students who need help, are expected to be actively involved in the fundraising process. Please feel free to contact the director with any questions you may have or if you need additional time/assistance in paying these fees. We are happy to handle requests on a case by case basis.

UNIFORM

Girls returning to chorus - the uniforms are the same as the last 5 years. If you are returning and your dress is getting too small in the bust or length (at the middle of the knees), shoes are getting too snug, you may trade up to the next size shoe or dress at anytime - if we have one in stock. All dresses are cleaned and professionally handled. You may wish to buy a new set of character shoes; however, used ones are also in stock if you would like to trade yours in (for free).

**Earring replacements are \$13.00 made out to Surfside Middle School in case you lost yours.*

Girls who are NEW chorus students must fundraise or pay a one-time fee of \$88 for their uniform. This includes their dress, their shoes, and their earrings. Uniforms will be voted on in 2018-2019 to see if we want to go with a new look.

Boys who are NEW chorus students must purchased on their own, at the store of their choice, the following multi-purpose items:

1. Solid black dress pants
2. Solid black dress shoes (continued on next page)

3. Solid black dress socks
4. Solid black dress belt (in short everything from the waist down - solid black)
5. A thick/form fitted solid white undershirt (tee shirt)
6. A solid white, long sleeved shirt with a collar (durable fabric) Be sure it isn't too "transparent."

**Note: The school provides the teal ties for the guys.*

**Also note: we chose this uniform as it can double for family or other formal events. The ties will be kept at the school.*

Outgoing students are encouraged to donate used choir uniforms to help those who are in need. Please consider donating your uniform at the conclusion of your time at Surfside.

PERSONAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT (PFC) - \$40.00

The PFC is a commitment that every chorus family makes to support the chorus program. There are annual financial needs involved with school art programs not provided for by Bay District Public Schools. Enhanced instruction is accomplished through a budget with expenses including, but not limited to, accompanist and choreographer fees, clinicians, music, group travel, concert recordings, MPA registrations, classroom equipment, technology, and performance space fees. In an active middle school chorus program like ours, a typical year's expenses can exceed \$30,000.

This annual fee of \$40 may be fundraised, paid out of pocket, credit card, or a combination.

****It is our goal to keep the cost of our PFC at an absolute minimum while still making sure that we are meeting the financial need of the chorus program.**

PAY ONLINE WITH CREDIT CARD

Parents may pay many school fees online using SchoolPay. Go to our school's website for more details!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to contact the director with questions or concerns. He is happy to help whenever possible!

Mr. Fred Mullen

Phone: 850-767-1096 (chorus room office)

Email: mullefo@bay.k12.fl.us