

C.M. Russell High School Choir Handbook 2017-2018

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome back to another exciting school year of artistic endeavors in choral music! In this handbook you will find most of the information needed throughout our school year in regards to choir class. Unlike other curricular classes, choir has mandatory performances (and sometimes rehearsals) outside of the normal school day. We will always try to give you a significant amount of time to plan for these performances. If you have any questions, please email (you will get the quickest response via email) or call anytime.

*When you have completed reading through the handbook, sign the CMR Choir Handbook Signature Page and return it to your choir teacher by **September 6, 2017**. Required materials for the school year include: 1 pocket folder w/brads or a ½" in. three-ring binder, pencil, and \$10 wardrobe fee (if a uniform is required for the choir). If a student needs supplies, please see your choir teacher.*

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lynn Ryan
lynn_ryan@gfps.k12.mt.us
406.268.6119

Mr. Peter Wilson
peter_wilson@gfps.k12.mt.us
406.268.6120

CMR Curricular Choirs

Chanson	Freshman/Non-Auditioned Women
Freshman Men's	Freshman/Non-Auditioned Men
Chaconne	Intermediate Women's Choir (Grades 10-12)
Varisty Men's	Intermediate Men's Choir (Grades 10-12)
Charlie's Girls	Advanced Women (Grades 10-12)
Chanteur	Advanced Mixed (Grades 10-12)
Russell Ayres	Advanced Chamber Choir (<i>must be enrolled in Chanteur</i>)

**Chanson, Men's Choir, Varisty Men's Choir, Charlie's Girls, and Chanteur are directed by Mrs. Ryan*

** Chaconne, Chanteur, and Russell Ayres are directed by Mr. Wilson*

Class Procedures

1. Be on time. Tardiness is an exhibition of disrespect to all.
2. Get your folder as you enter the room. Spit out your gum. Turn *off* your cell phone and put it away.
3. Find your seat and place your belongings under your seat (including your folder). Have a pencil ready.
4. Water is the only beverage allowed in the classroom-NO FOOD/GUM
5. Do not leave the room for any reason without permission. Bathroom stops need to happen on your way to or from class.
6. Expect nothing, but the very best from yourself and your peers.
7. Work hard every day! 90% of success is based on attitude, and only 10% from skill.
8. Be positive and supporting. Refrain from gossiping about others or complaining.
9. Class is dismissed when the director dismisses the choir. Please do not start gathering your items prior to the dismissal, as it is very distracting and disrespectful.
10. Choir is very social and you will be excited to visit with each other (we love that!), however, do not talk when the director is teaching or another student has the floor. Stay focused even in moments where a director may be trying to figure out the next step.

Attendance & Grading Policy

Grading

Grading choral music is a challenging endeavor because it involves some subjective judgment on the part of the director. You are not graded on how well you sing. What *is* important is making progress with the voice you have. I will grade on vocal progress, note/rhythmic accuracy, and quality of work. Attitude and effort are vastly superior to talent, especially in the long run. There are 10 daily participation points per rehearsal and they are earned by your own contributions to the ensemble.

There will generally be a few traditional assignments, varying in musical matter: worksheets, theory assignments, singing tests, self-evaluation, listening, written responses, score checks, etc. Points will be assigned to these assignments as well. Most of the time, you will be expected to make up any missed class work. Choir scores will be checked periodically to make sure you are putting markings in your score in pencil. If the director says it, write it down in your music!

Daily Rehearsal (10 points/daily rehearsal)

Points are awarded as follows:

10 (A+)	Prompt, respectful, work hard, positive
9 (A-)	Ready, good effort, basically positive
8 (B)	Do what is required, but in a neutral manner. Not disruptive or off task.
7 (C)	Tardy (first offense) or not giving best effort/lack of attention
6 (D)	Tardy (second offense) or not on task.
<5 (F)	Tardy (third offense), distracting, off task, little effort

**Unexcused Absences: no make-up for unexcused absences from rehearsals/performances*

**Excused Absences: You are allowed three excused absences per semester. Students will need to complete 1 "YouTube & Google Internet Assignment" for each excused absence after that. The assignment is due 2 days after return to school. No exceptions. Assignments not turned in within those 2 days will result in a 0 for the daily grade correlating to the day missed.*

**School-Related Absences: Students are exempted for the daily grade. If there was an assignment missed, they will be expected to make that up. Students will have 2 days to complete any missed work for school-related absences.*

**Tardiness: You will be allowed 1 free tardy for the quarter. After that, points will be deducted: 3 for the first offense, 4 for the second, 5 for the third, and no points will be awarded for tardies after that. If you were with another teacher, just make sure you bring a pass with you.*

**Cell Phones: Points will be taken away for students not participating due to cell phone distraction. You may be asked to store your phone in a neutral location in the choir room until the end of class. If cell phone use continues to be a problem, further action will be taken. Cell phone procedure is as follows:*

- 1. Warning*
- 2. Phone will be taken for the remainder of class.*
- 3. If a phone has been taken three times, students will be written up and disciplinary action will follow. Daily points are negatively impacted by cell phone use in class.*

If you know that you are going to be absent for any reason, let us know so we can plan rehearsals accordingly. If unexcused absenteeism and/or tardiness becomes an issue, you may be transferred to a non-auditioned choir or other class for the remainder of the semester. It is imperative to the success of the choir that ALL singers are responsible and exhibit an effort to

learn. If you are having personal issues outside of school hindering your ability to get to school, please talk to us. We want nothing more than to help you and keep you singing!

Concert Performances (75-200 points/concert)

Performances are a public display of all we've been learning in class. They are our "final exams," and are mandatory. Performances constitute a large portion of your grade, and you are expected to be at all required performances. If you are very ill, or there is an emergency, please contact Mrs. Ryan or Mr. Wilson *prior to the concert*. In the case of illness or emergency, make-up work will be assigned.

Unexcused absences from a choir concert will result in a two-letter grade reduction at the semester. If you have two unexcused absences from concerts in a semester then it would be a four-letter grade reduction. If you are in an auditioned group, unexcused absences from a performance may result in reassignment to a different ensemble.

Choir students need to be properly attired and ready to perform at least thirty minutes before the start of the concert. Some groups may have earlier call times (call times are the time you are expected to arrive prior to a performance).

Concert Attire

Most concert attire will be checked out by each individual student. Different choirs have different wardrobes. Choirs using school attire will be assessed a \$10 usage fee (This applies to all choirs except Chanson and freshman men's choir). The \$10 wardrobe use fee is due by September 22, 2017 if possible. Unpaid fees will be added as a fine to a student's account at the end of the year.

Students must supply the following wardrobe for their choir performances. It is your responsibility to have you uniform looking clean and ironed for choir performances.

***Men's Choir**-Black slacks, black shoes, black socks, white long-sleeve dress shirt (button down), nice tie

Freshman students may use black bottoms or white dress shirts from the CMR choir, but, they will also be charged a \$10 cleaning fee.

***Chaconne**-Black close-toed dress shoes, nude nylons

***Charlie's Girls**-Black close-toed dress shoes, nude nylons

***Chanteur & Russell Ayres Men**-Black dress shoes, black socks

***Chanteur & Russell Ayres Women**-Black close-toed dress shoes, nude nylons
Chanteur may be purchasing a new polo, sweatshirt, choir gear, etc.

Other Information

CMR SCHOOL POLICY

When our choirs have extra-curricular performances and activities, both in and out of town, all school policies remain in effect. Students sign permission forms before every extra-curricular activity. These forms explain that the use of alcohol/tobacco/drugs/vaping is not permitted at any time (even if a student is 18+ years old). Students caught in violation of CMR school policy will be removed from their auditioned choirs and face all consequences given by the principals. In addition, students caught leaving activities without director approval will also be in violation of school policy and face all consequences.

Voice Lessons

There is no better or faster way to improve as a singer. Choir members are encouraged to take private voice lessons. There are a number of fine teachers in our area. Voice lessons are usually in half-hour or 45-min. increments. Voice teacher information will be posted in the choir room for students to review. Any questions regarding voice teachers can be emailed to Mrs. Ryan directly.

Auditioning for Honor Groups (All-State/All-Northwest)

There are multiple opportunities to audition for honor choirs throughout the year. Making AllState Choir or All-Northwest are the two greatest honors we have in choral music. When the time comes, announcements will be made in class and more information given.

Fruit Sales (November)

This is the only fundraiser for the high school music departments in Great Falls public schools. This money funds trips, community performances, wardrobe fees, etc. Our community is extremely supportive of this endeavor and the fruit basically sells itself! Students in the advanced choir are required to sell more fruit, as their groups travel the most. Most if not all of the choirs will be participating in at least one festival this year. If a student chooses not to sell fruit, they will be asked to pay their portion of the festival fee.

District Music Festival District

Music festival takes place in Great Falls during April. Thursday, all choirs perform and it is a required performance. However, on Friday, students have the opportunity to perform solos and small ensembles. Friday's solo/ensemble

performances are deemed extra-curricular, which means that students must be academically eligible to perform on Friday. More information will be available as we get closer to preparing for this event.

Lettering in Choir

Students have the opportunity to letter in music, just as they do playing varsity sports. Please review the lettering application form to see what activities earn points towards a choir letter. Points accumulate from year to year, but only one letter/bar may be earned in a school year. Applications are filled out towards the end of the school year in class.

Choir Tours/Fees

Students enrolled in a choir that tours/travels will be required to pay for their trip. Most students pay for their trip by selling their quota of fruit during the fundraiser. There will be due dates for money later in the year. Choir tours are not optional. If you are in a traveling choir, it is imperative that you participate in choir tours. Tours are vital to the musical growth of the ensemble and so much learning takes place throughout the trip. Chanteur usually records their music in a spectacular venue on tour as well. The entire choir will suffer if members of the ensemble are missing.

Dress Code

Students will abide by school dress code during rehearsals and any extracurricular choral activities (tours/festivals/workshops/etc.). Choir students are asked to err on the side of modesty when traveling and take pride in their appearance. "Keep it classy, CMR!"