

Crosby High School

CHORAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Home of the Cougar Choirs

Great Musicians. Better People.



Handbook

2014-2015

Our Mission:

Through diligent study, intensive rehearsal, and focused performance, singers in the Crosby High School Choral Music Department will give a voice to excellence in vocal and choral music, both as individuals and as members of an ensemble.

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Choral Music Department at Crosby High School. We have a wonderful year planned for 2014-2015. We are committed to providing the most comprehensive choral music education possible. In the CHS Choral Music Department, *we work very hard to produce the best performances and musical presentations our combined efforts can muster.* I am delighted that your child has chosen to be part of our choral program this year!

I operate with an **open-door policy** for ALL students and parents. I want to hear from you! Contact me via e-mail or call the choral office and leave a message. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

I urge parents to become involved in the choir department. There are many ways to assist us and help our students achieve their goals. We have concerts, fundraisers, field trips and much more where we could use you! Be certain to fill out the **Parent Volunteer Form** located elsewhere in this handbook.

Attend **Open House** on **Tuesday, September 9** and stop by the choir room. I'll be there to answer any questions you may have. *Please include an e-mail address that you regularly check.* I will be sending reminders and important information via e-mail. Also, starting this year, in an effort to keep everyone updated I will provide a monthly calendar. That will be sent via e-mail. It is *vital* that all parents have a working e-mail address and check it regularly.

This year, I am requiring all students to be connected with Remind 101. It's a safe and secure way to receive text messages and e-mails. We are working to improve communications between the choral department and parents/students. I will send home instructions for Remind 101 separately.

Form Day is **Friday, August 29**. This is the day on which all **forms and fees are due!**

For easy reference, the handbook has been posted on the choir website. To get there visit www.crosbyisd.org →Schools →Crosby High School→Clubs and Groups→Choir. Or you can type "Crosby Cougar Choirs" in your favorite search engine; CHS Choir is the first item in the search results.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me! I am looking forward to a FANTASTIC year!!

Musically,

Justin J. West, M.A.
Director of Choral Programs

Objectives

The primary objective of the choral music department is to provide each student with a comprehensive music education. Students will be guided through rigorous instruction in a variety of learning modalities.

In addition to music fundamentals, students learn skills in teamwork, peer collaboration, work ethic, responsibility, critical thinking, and creative expression.

Students enrolled in the CHS choral music program can expect to gain:

- A working knowledge of *music terminology*
- Ability to *sight-sing* appropriate repertoire
- Basic *singing techniques*
- Well-rounded music education *performing music of all styles*
- A *lifelong love* and appreciation for *vocal music*

The Crosby High School Choir Civil Code

1. **Leave** outside conflicts at the door.
2. Bring a **good attitude** and **hard work ethic** to class every day.
3. **Respect** everyone; we are all equals. Gossip and disrespectful comments have no place here.
4. Choir should be just as **important** as your other classes. Remember...you chose to be here.
5. All ill students will **stand with their peers**, music in hand, on the risers. If you are too ill to stand, you should be at home!
6. **Respectable dress and appearance** are expected at all times...on-campus or off...during and outside of class. **You represent the choir 24/7/365.**
7. **Good life choices** are expected at all times...on-campus or off...during and outside of class, in person or via social media. **You represent the choir 24/7/365.**

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Ensembles

At CHS, the choral department has an ensemble for all students interested in singing. Currently, we have two curricular choirs. Both choir courses are taught within the guidelines of the music curriculum as prescribed by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or *TEKS*.

ManChoir: Chamber Men's Ensemble (4th period) is the men's choir for the CHS choral department. All male students are placed in this choir. Outside rehearsals may be required and students are expected to participate in UIL Concert & Sight Reading contest in the spring semester. In addition, students who have varsity-level standing may have leadership responsibilities. Students must maintain academic eligibility. Students will perform a wide variety of music from Renaissance literature to contemporary pop tunes with choreography.

Varsity Women's Choir (5th period) is the varsity women's choir and a premier ensemble at Crosby High School. Students are selected by audition only. Outside rehearsals are required and students will perform at UIL Concert & Sight Reading contest in the spring and audition for TMEA/UIL events (e.g. solo & ensemble, all-region, etc.). As a group of the most advanced female singers at CHS, VME will serve as the primary public relations choir for the high school. Students must maintain academic eligibility. Students will perform a wide variety of music from Renaissance literature to contemporary pop tunes with choreography.

Women's Choir (6th period) is the non-varsity treble choir at Crosby. No audition is required. The only requirement for this ensemble is the willingness to work as part of a team and improve singing and musicianship skills. This group is open to all students, regardless of prior choral experience. Outside rehearsals may be required and students are expected to participate in UIL Concert & Sight Reading contest in the spring semester.

Encore! (after school) is the extra-curricular choir at CHS. This small group performs mostly pop and jazz tunes, unaccompanied. *Encore!* will serve as a public relations group representing CHS Choirs at community events and will be an integral part of the recruitment process. The ensemble's primary rehearsal is after school. Student must maintain academic eligibility to maintain membership.

Rehearsal Expectations

1. Students should expect to stand for at least 75% of in-class rehearsal time. If a student has a medical issue that prevents him/her from standing, please make sure it is documented in the school nurse's office and the student sees Mr. West for accommodations.
2. Every student will receive **3 restroom passes per grading period**. After those passes are exhausted, students will not be able to leave the room. There will be no exceptions to this policy.
3. **Food, drink, and chewing gum are strictly prohibited** in the choir room. Students are expected to rid themselves of banned foods/beverages before being seated and before the tardy bell rings. Bottled water is the only sanctioned beverage.
4. Be **on time** to all rehearsals (during or after school). Students are expected to be in the door en route to their seats when the bell rings ready to begin warm-ups or introductory activities.
5. Upon entering the room, **put all personal belongings (backpacks, purses, etc. in the designated area)**. Music folders, water, and pencil are the only items allowed on the risers.
6. The district has adopted a BYOD (bring your own device) policy. However, **cell phones should not be seen or heard during choir rehearsals**. Any student who violates this policy will have his/her phone confiscated.
7. When the Director is speaking, **students are listening**.
8. Complete **participation is mandatory**. Warm-ups are essential to vocal health and progress, and are not "time wasters". Student attentiveness during class is very important. Students' grades will be a direct reflection of their rehearsal preparedness and participation.
9. A **good attitude** and **open mind** goes a LONG way!
10. **THE GOLDEN RULE: Show respect at all times. Adhere to social contract established by YOU at the start of the year.**

Supplies

Students are expected to bring all supplies to every rehearsal.

The “textbook” for choir is the sheet music. Students will be provided a folder slot to leave their music. If a student would like to take music home to practice (which is always encouraged!), he/she is responsible for bringing it to school each day. Students who fail to bring their folder/sheet music to school will see a deduction in their weekly participation grade.

Students will be provided with a folder, highlighter, and sheet music. While there are extra pencils available for student use, students should bring a writing utensil to school every day. Ink pens should NOT be used.

**Students should take good care of all items supplied to them by the department.
Music folders and sheet music are VERY expensive.

Students will be randomly checked weekly for supplies and given a grade that reflects their preparedness.

Grading Guidelines

Choral Music at CHS is a performance-based course. Accordingly, the system of evaluation is primarily subjective. However, it is necessary to transfer the realization of artistic goals into a numerical value in order to assign a “grade”. The following grading guidelines have been established by the choral department.

Major grades – 60%

- ✓ Satisfactory attendance and participation in REQUIRED major choral performances and rehearsals
- ✓ First major grade: **CHOIR FORMS due Friday, August 29, 2014**

Participation/Daily Work– 40%

Students receive credit for active participation in daily or after-school choral rehearsals. Assessment will include singing tests (group and individual), written tests (music terms, symbols, etc.), and sectionals (attendance at after school rehearsals).

Points may be deducted for (this list is not exhaustive; please also see reh. expectations):

- ✓ Tardiness (not in seat ready to rehearse when the tardy bell rings)
- ✓ Ill-preparedness (doesn't have pencil, folder, sheet music or other supplies)
- ✓ Chewing gum or eating during rehearsal
- ✓ Any behavior deemed unacceptable and not contributory to the overall goals of the choral department

Student's weekly participation grade will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- A** Student actively and consistently participates in daily classroom activities with a positive attitude
- B** Student's active, positive participation in daily classroom activities is inconsistent
- C** Student does not actively or positively participate in daily classroom activities
- F** Student refuses to participate in daily classroom activities

Make-up Work & Attendance

There is **no substitute for live performance**. All absences are UNEXCUSED until the Director excuses them (see guidelines below). It is the **student's responsibility** to communicate with the Director regarding ANY schedule conflicts.

Choir is a **collaborative** effort. Every student is an integral component of this choral organization and **every** absence has a profound effect on the outcome of the performing group's goals. Work or transportation issues are NOT viable reasons for missing a performance.

In the rarest of circumstances (serious illness, bereavement, etc.), students may be able to receive credit for a performance. The student absence must be **well-documented** (doctor's note, parent's note, etc.) and **verified**. Documentation must be received in the choral office within **two days** of the performance.

If the absence is EXCUSED, the student will be given an assignment to make-up the major grade within 3 days of the missed performance. **The maximum grade a student can receive for the make-up assignment is 70%.** If the student fails document the absence and/or complete the make-up assignment in the assigned time frame, the absence will remain UNEXCUSED and the grade for that performance will remain a 0.

As issues or conflicts arise throughout the year, please contact Mr. West immediately. The sooner the initial contact the better the chance the arrangement made will benefit the organization AND the student.

Academic eligibility rules for student participation in extra-curricular activities are strictly observed according to guidelines set forth by UIL, TMEA, and the state of Texas. The easiest way to always be in compliance with these sometimes complex requirements is to **always maintain a grade of 70 or better in ALL classes**. Tutoring is available in EVERY class. As the old adage goes: *where there is a will there is a way!* I have never seen a student turn in all assignments, get help when needed, and still fail. It's up to the STUDENT to make it happen!

Please note: starting this year, there will be an eligibility floor for advanced classes. Per CISD policy, students will lose eligibility if they do not earn a **60 or higher in Pre-AP, AP, and dual-credit courses.

The Choir Room

We are fortunate to have spacious and accommodating facilities for our use. It is our responsibility to keep them clean and organized. **Purposeful student misuse of choir facilities will not be tolerated.**

Please read the guidelines below very carefully:

1. **Students are not to be in the choir room when Mr. West is not present. For safety reasons, the choir room cannot and will not be used as a ‘hang out’ zone. This regulation will be strictly enforced. Any person, choir student or otherwise, who violates this policy may face punitive measures. Students who are not in choir are not to be in the choir room during passing periods, lunches, etc.**
2. Choral Office—*students are welcome to visit when Mr. West is present.* Ask permission to use the choir office phone. The office computer is not for student use. No exceptions.
3. Practice Rooms—the **practice rooms are for practice ONLY.** Students found not using the practice rooms for approved purposes will be asked to leave and may have their access privileges revoked.
4. Kitchen—authorized persons only.
5. Choral Library—authorized persons only
6. Storage Rooms—practice rooms are clearly marked; all other rooms are not available to students without prior permission.
7. Piano Lab—only piano students may utilize the lab. If a choir student needs a keyboard, please use a practice room.

NO CHEWING GUM, FOOD OR DRINKS IN THE CHOIR ROOM.

WATER (SECURELY CAPPED) IS THE ONLY PERMISSIBLE BEVERAGE

Uniforms

Informal:

Men & Women—Crosby Choir T-Shirt, jeans, closed-toe shoes.

Informal attire will be worn at all auditions, choir trips, field trips, etc. Specific events include: Renaissance Festival, All-Region auditions, and Spring Show. Attire will be announced in advance.

Formal:

Men—the department will provide a black tuxedo jacket, black tuxedo pants, white tuxedo shirt, and black bowtie. **Students are expected to provide black dress shoes and black dress socks.**

Women—the department will provide a black choir dress. Temporary adjustments may be made to the dress. **NO permanent adjustments will be allowed.** Students who violate this rule may be held responsible for replacement costs for the dress (\$75). **Students must provide black dress shoes (with 1-2" heel).**

Formal attire will be worn at three of the four major choir concerts and contest: Fall Concert, Winter Concert, Pre-UIL Concert, and UIL Concert/Sight Reading Contest.

Please obtain these items ASAP!

Uniform fittings will take place during class on September 10 and September 11.

**A portion of the *Fair Share Choir Fee* is used to defray dry cleaning costs and purchase a Choir t-shirt. The department-supplied portion of the choir uniform will be cleaned at the start of each year. Any alteration or cleaning beyond that is the responsibility of the student.

Money Matters

“Fair Share” Choir Contribution: \$35

All choir students are required to pay the choir fee for 2014-2015. Fees are due by **Friday, August 29**. Students may turn in forms and fees together on that day. The fee covers the use and maintenance of choir uniforms, 1 choir t-shirt, pencils, highlighters, and other supplies for the year. This does NOT cover all choir expenses (trips, etc.). Fundraising activities will be used to supplement those extra expenditures. All students are expected to participate in fundraising activities as it benefits the whole department.

In addition to the choir fee, other expenses include (this list is not exhaustive):

TMEA District/Region Audition Sheet Music: \$10

TMEA District/Region Audition Fee: The department pays this fee. However, if a student is ineligible to audition for any reason, he/she may be assessed a fee equal to the expense incurred by the department.

Solo & Ensemble Entrance Fee and Accompanist: \$25

Renaissance Festival: \$8

****Please do not let financial hardship prevent you from fully participating in choral department activities.** Payment schedules and installment plans are available for those who need them. Fill out and turn in the appropriate paperwork (part of the Choir Fee and Expenses Agreement). Please be advised that the *Fair Share* Choir Fee and forms are **due by Friday August 29!**

Spring Trip

Crosby High School Choir will compete in the *Buccaneer Classic* on April 30-May 2, 2015! The final itinerary is still being finalized. We will travel by bus to Corpus Christi.

The estimated total cost of the trip will be \$300 per student and chaperone **before** fundraising. To secure a spot for the trip, students must **pay the \$75 security deposit by October 16. As a result of the Choral Department pre-paying trip expenses, deposits and payments cannot be refunded for ANY reason.**

We will host several fundraisers throughout the year to finance the trip. Until necessary funds have been raised, however, students should follow the installment plan below. Every student is expected to participate in the fundraisers as it benefits the whole choir.

A separate Letter of Intent and Chaperone Form will be sent at a later date. As indicated below, the Trip Deposit (\$75) is due by the Fall Concert, October 16. Please make checks payable to "Crosby High School" and write "Choir" in the memo line.

Payment Plan

October 16: \$75 *Non-refundable* Trip Deposit

November 4: \$50 trip payment

December 8: \$50 trip payment

January 13: \$50 trip payment

February 10: \$50 trip payment (may be waived through fundraising)

March 3: \$25 trip payment (may be waived through fundraising)

TOTAL: \$300

*****Please be advised that in order to travel, students must be academically eligible AND participate in UIL Concert & Sight-Reading contest if his/her choir class participates. If a student does not fulfill those requirements, he/she will not be able to travel to Corpus Christi and will not be issued a refund.**

Awards

The **Texas Music Scholar Award** designates students in high school music programs who exemplify attributes of meritorious performance in the areas of scholarship, musicianship, and citizenship.

Criteria for nomination:

- Is a viable member of the school's parent musical organization for the entire school year.
- Maintains in all coursework an overall "A" average as defined by the local school district for the entire school year.
- Maintains academic eligibility for the entire school year.
- Participates in all scheduled events of the parent organization.
- Attends, as an audience member, two director-approved concert events of high school, collegiate or professional level during a school year.
- Has auditioned, been selected, and participated as required in a TMEA or ATSSB organization (band, orchestra, or choir).
- Performs a UIL Prescribed Music List Class 1 solo for a competition or public performance.
- Consistently exhibits behavior which brings honor to the parent organization, school and community.

These criteria may be met through participation singularly or in any combination of band, orchestra, or vocal organizations. The distinction may be achieved each school year. The school year is defined as the beginning of the year through the next-to-the-last official grade reporting period of the local school district for the purposes of calculating grade averages and determining eligibility.

Texas Music Scholars receive a certificate, patch and letter from the Texas Music Educators Association signed by the Executive Director. You will receive a press release for your use. **Please note that this is an award, not a scholarship or other offer of money.

Letter Jacket Policy

Choir students may earn a letter jacket after two satisfactory years of participation in the organization as long as students have enrolled in a third year. The jacket will be awarded in the fall of the third year of participation. A student may letter BEFORE the prescribed two years if he/she:

1) earns a first division on a class one solo at TSSEC or 2) earns a place in a TMEA All-State Choir.

FORMS

The following pages contain choir forms. Optional forms are indicated as such. Unless otherwise indicated, forms and fees are **DUE Friday, August 29, 2014. Students' first major grade in choir will be given upon receipt of required forms, signed and filled in completely.**

REQUIRED FORMS

Fees and Expenses Agreement PG. 16

Parent Contact & Volunteer Form PG. 17

Travel and Medical Information Sheet PG. 18

Student Photography/Video Release Form PG. 19

Handbook Acknowledgement Form PG. 20

FORM 1: Fees & Expenses Agreement

The *Fair Share* Choir Fee (\$35) helps defray costs of sustaining a high school choral program including uniform maintenance, etc. **All choir students are required to pay this fee.**

Please submit this form with payment (\$35) by Friday, August 29. Payment plans are available for those who need them. Please see Mr. West for details.

STUDENT NAME:

CHOIR (please circle one):

ManChoir: Chamber Men's Ensemble (4th)

Varsity Women's Choir (5th)

Women's Choir (6th)

PARENT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

FORM 2: Parent Contact & Volunteer Form

No viable fine arts organization thrives without the support of its parents. Furthermore, our students need our encouragement and assistance!

There are many ways to get involved. Please fill this form out and send it back to school with your child if you can help us out in any way! Thank you for your time. I'll be contacting interested parents very soon with more details!

Parent Name:

Child's Name:

Parent Phone:

Parent E-mail:

Please **circle** events with which you would be willing to help chaperone, organize, etc.. This list is not exhaustive. There will be additional opportunities other than those listed. We can always use more parental support!

District Choir Auditions (for female voices)—Monday, September 29

District Choir Auditions (for male voices)—Monday, October 6

Region Choir Auditions—Monday, November 3

Concert Ushers: Fall (Oct. 16), Winter (Dec. 8), Pre-UIL (March 26), Spring (May 21)

Renaissance Festival *School Days*—Wednesday, November 5

Solo & Ensemble—Saturday, February 7

UIL Concert & Sight-Reading—April 9-10

Spring Trip Chaperone—April 30-May 2

MOST DESIRED OPTION: Please call me. I can help wherever I'm needed!

Crosby Independent School District
Crosby High School
14703 FM 2100
Crosby, TX 77532

FORM 3: TRAVEL RELEASE AND MEDICAL INFORMATION SHEET

_____ has my permission to go on all approved Choir trips for the 2014-2015 school year. We have read the guidelines and rules as stated, and we agree to abide by them. We understand that the sponsor and chaperone(s) have the right to search handbags or any personal belongings for illegal items in order to protect the entire group. We understand that the Crosby Independent School District, the sponsor, driver, and chaperone(s) cannot be held liable for accidents.

Signed: _____
Parent or Guardian

Signed: _____
Student

Home Phone ____ - _____

Other Phone ____ - _____

My child will need the following medication on the trip:
(List all medication in space below.)

Family Physician's name and Phone _____

Known Allergies of Student _____

Hospitalization Policy _____ Policy No. _____

Other Insurance _____ Policy No. _____

In the event that emergency treatment or surgery is needed, a minor cannot be operated on without the consent of a parent or guardian. Parents should consider and act at their discretion on the following:

I give my permission for _____ to receive emergency treatment or surgery by a qualified physician if the need should arise.

I also give my permission for _____ to receive emergency treatment or surgery in any duty licensed hospital by any qualified physician on the hospital staff if the need should arise.

Signed: _____ Parent or
Guardian

Other pertinent medical information:

**FORM 4: Crosby ISD/Crosby High School Choir
Student Photography/Video Release Form 2014-2015**

Please circle the appropriate statement below:

YES, I give my permission for Crosby Independent School District or Crosby High School Choir to photograph/video and/or use a photograph of my child in publications, news releases, on the District web page, and/or for training purposes.

NO, I do not give my permission for Crosby Independent School District or Crosby High School Choir to photograph/video and/or use a photograph of my child in publications, news releases, on the District web page, and/or for training purposes.

Student's Full Name (Please Print) _____

Period (circle one): 4 5 6

Grade _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Signature _____ Date _____

FORM 5: Handbook Acknowledgement Form

***Please return by Friday, August 29

The success of this fine arts organization is solely dependent upon strict adherence to the guidelines, expectations, and obligations set forth in this, the 2014-2015 Choral Music Department Handbook. Any deviation from the policies described herein is at the sole discretion of the director. All schedule changes will be announced in class and with ample notice. Communication is of vital importance. When schedule conflicts arise, they are to be resolved IN ADVANCE and IN WRITING to pursue a course of action most advantageous to the organization.

I have read and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the 2014-2015 Choral Music Department Handbook. I understand that to be a viable member of this fine arts organization, I must meet minimum expectations and follow the student code of conduct as specified in the Crosby High School student handbook and by the Crosby Independent School District. I also understand that any deviation from guidelines stipulated in this handbook may be reflected in the final grade in the course and/or appropriate disciplinary action as prescribed by administration and district officials.

STUDENT NAME:

STUDENT SIGNATURE:

PARENT NAME:

PARENT E-MAIL & PHONE #:

PARENT SIGNATURE:

DATE: