

Utley Wolf Pack Choir

2018-2019 Handbook



Student Name:

Student Choir:

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Objectives and Expectations	3
Contact Information	3
Attendance	4
Extracurricular Conflicts.....	4
Trips	4
Eligibility	5
Grading	6
Concert Etiquette	6
Discipline	6
Procedures and Conduct	7
Fees and Paperwork	7
Supplies.....	7
Parent Volunteer Information	7
Concert Dress.....	8
General Choir Information.....	8

Forms and Fees Packet

- Cover Page/Instructions
- Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Hoodie Order Form
- Choir Fee and Apparel Form
- Parent Volunteer Form
- Background Check Form (if not completing online form)

Choir Handbook

Utley Middle School
Home of the Wolf Pack!

Objectives and Expectations

The objective of the UMS Choir Program is to train superb singers, develop skillful sight-readers, and encourage masterful musicians. Students will use warm-ups to develop a strong voice using proper technique. Students will learn how to read music using solfege and “audiation”, advanced skills essential to learning music at the high school level and beyond. Students will use choral literature, appropriate to their skill level, to develop these techniques as well as learn how to take a collection of notes and rhythms and turn it into music.

Beyond the choir basics, students will also be trained in areas relating to music though not directly musical. This includes audience etiquette, appreciation of the arts, character, work ethic, punctuality and a positive attitude. All these objectives and expectations are a part of “Choral Experience” and extend beyond the choir classroom into a myriad of other activities, both academic and social.

Contact Information

Donny Behne, Choir Director
donald.behne@rockwallisd.org

The primary method of communication will be via email. I endeavor to send out regular reminders and updates via email. This email is your window into the everyday operations of the UMS Choir. Please make every effort to ensure your email address is both up to date and entered correctly with the district. If you aren’t receiving emails, contact me ASAP. Some of the more important events will have a handout that goes home parallel to email contact.

<http://www.facebook.com/WolfPackChoir> – the Utley Choir Facebook page will be a great source for reminders and recaps of events. “Like” it for updates.

Remind – each class has a Remind group. All students and parents should sign up for their appropriate class. Text your class code, on the right, to 81010. If you’ve used Remind before, you’re all set. If you haven’t, it will ask you for a little information and to confirm joining the group.

Vox Viridis	@umsvox
Bel Canto	@umsbel
Treble Singers 7	@umstreb7
Treble Singers 8	@umstreb8
Voice of the Pack	@umsvoice
Concert Men	@umstb

Attendance

Mandatory Events – these events may be before and after school rehearsals, concerts, and some contest performances. These activities are often major grades. It is expected that students will plan their schedule around attendance at these events. **These events appear in bold in the calendar.** Eligibility is not a factor when participating in these events – all students will attend regardless of eligibility.

Optional Events – these are social activities and trips related to festivals. Eligibility is not required for social events however students must be eligible to attend trips associated with festivals and contests. *These events appear in italics in the calendar.*

Other Events – Some events are not mandatory, but attendance/participation is expected. This includes UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest and our annual fundraiser. Sometimes these events will require qualifying to participate, such as UIL Contest. More information about this will appear closer to the event. These events appear without formatting on the calendar.

Extra-Curricular Activities

It is possible for students to participate in many other activities in addition to choir. Band, orchestra, theatre, drill team, cheerleading, on campus athletics, select athletics teams off campus, school social clubs – all these activities can be enjoyed by choir students while still singing. The most important thing is to review the schedules for all activities in advance.

If you see a conflict between another activity and choir, please notify me IMMEDIATELY!

If it's an on-campus activity, I will meet with the sponsor and work out an arrangement that will not penalize the student in any way. As a general rule of thumb, I allow choir students to miss “rehearsals” for “performances”. For example, if there's a choir rehearsal after school that conflicts with a basketball game, I excuse students involved in the game from the rehearsal (assuming an arrangement can't be made allowing them to attend both). It is my goal to work cooperatively with campus sponsors for the benefit of the student.

If the conflicting event involves an organization not associated with the campus or school district, it would be a very rare occasion that the student is released from the choir activity. All choir events are considered co-curricular and have a graded component, thereby giving them priority over an ungraded activity. Please keep this in mind when scheduling these events.

Trips

On occasion, the choir will need to take trips off campus for various activities. All events will be approved by the administration and students will be required to complete and return a field trip permission form and medical release form prior to the trip. No form – no trip! No exceptions! Two possible trips are UIL contest in March and a festival in May.

Eligibility

No Pass, No Play

- Students must be eligible under no-pass, no-play. Extracurricular activities include public performances, contests, demonstrations, displays and club activities. An activity would be considered extracurricular if:
- the activity is competitive;
- the activity is held in conjunction with another activity that is considered extracurricular;
- the general public is invited;
- an admission price is charged.

Exception: If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course in which he or she must demonstrate mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in a public performance, then he or she may participate so long as the activity is not competitive, it is not held in conjunction with another activity that is competitive, and an admission price is not charged.

For example, a theatre student may participate in a non-competitive, free presentation of a one-act play in which the public is invited to attend.

Basics of No Pass, No Play

- **Must be passing all courses** (except identified advanced classes).
- Students lose eligibility for a three-week period, which is defined as 15 class days. Exception: one but only one of the three school weeks may consist of only three or four class days, provided the school has been dismissed for a scheduled holiday period. Two class days does not constitute a school week. Exception: Thanksgiving if schools are on holiday Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- School week begins at 12:01 a.m. on the first instructional day of the calendar week and ends at the close of instruction on the last instructional day of the calendar week (excluding holidays).
- Ineligible students must wait seven (7) calendar days after a three-week evaluation period and the grading period to regain eligibility.
- Students may regain eligibility an unlimited number of times throughout the school year. Passing means a minimum grade of 70 on all courses (except identified advanced classes).

In short, students must pass all their classes in order to participate in any choir competition including Solo & Ensemble, All-Region Auditions, UIL Concert and Sight-reading and Spring Festival. If a student fails one or more classes they have three weeks to become eligible again by passing all classes – not just the ones they failed.

None of this applies to concerts. These events are graded and therefore mandatory, regardless of eligibility.

A copy of the eligibility calendar will be made available as soon as possible.

Grading

- *Formative Grades*
 - Music Theory Lessons – students will periodically be given a music theory worksheet to complete. This sheet is due within a few days, at the beginning of class. We will review the content and it will be handed in for a grade.
 - Weekly Skills Assessment – this category is about students demonstrating the basic skills necessary for being a successful member of the Utley MS Choirs. Correct posture, participation in class (singing), having supplies, etc.
- *Assessment Grades*
 - Performances – concerts are a major part of what we do as performers. As members of the Utley Choir, students are expected to plan around and attend these performances. Grading is based on proper dress and audience etiquette.
 - Sightreading Tests – students will be periodically evaluated on their development as sightreaders and musicians. These tests will be recorded performances.
 - Clinic Rehearsals – additional after school rehearsals will be required in order to prepare and sound our best. Due to the significant improvement achieved through these rehearsals, attendance is mandatory and the grade reflects this importance.

Concert Etiquette

This is an essential aspect of being a member of any performing group. This aspect of choir is a life skill that students practice in their other classes and will make use of their entire life in the work environment.

- There is no “communicating” during the concert. This includes all forms of communication – talking, whispering, gesturing, texting, etc. Anything that distracts other audience members around you is considered inappropriate.
- Cell phones and similar devices should be silenced at minimum and turned off at best. Students found on their cell phone during the performance will have it taken up.
- Students are expected to sit with their performing group for the duration of the concert, both before and after they sing.
- Applaud politely between songs – cat calls, hollering, and screaming are for other forms of concerts and sporting events

Discipline

Choir is an elective – no one is forced to join. All students are expected to arrive to class ready to perform at their best, behaviorally and musically. Students unable to do so will be subject to the disciplinary steps of the campus. This can include detention, parent/teacher conference, or in school suspension. Let’s work together to make our choir experience great for everyone.

Procedures and Conduct

Code of Conduct

- No food, drink, or gum is permitted in the choir room at any time.
- No running, yelling, or horseplay.
- No talking during instruction time – this includes when another section is singing.
- Keep the choir room clean – respect the space you work in.
- No cell phones are not permitted on the risers without permission.
- **Respect everyone, no exceptions!**

Procedures are steps all students must follow upon entering the class room.

Procedures

1. Gather anything you may need for class from your backpack before entering the room.
2. Backpacks and other supplies will remain in the hallway during class.
3. Mobile devices either stay in the backpack or are placed at the charging station.
4. Collect your folder from the cabinet and make sure your pencil is sharpened.
5. Sit in your assigned seat.
6. Follow instructions on the board as you wait for class to begin.

Forms and Fees

The choir form packet is included with this handbook. It features the Handbook Acknowledgment Form, Medical Release Form, Charms Sign Up Instructions, Parent Volunteer Form, Background Check Form (**for parent volunteers only**), and Choir Fee and Apparel Order Form. Please follow the instructions on the cover page when completing the forms and submitting fees.

Choir fees are \$30. These fees cover the cost of the choir t-shirt, choir folder, pencils, and help defer the cost of our accompanist. Our choir shirt is how people recognize you as a member of the Utley Wolf Pack Choir! Students are encouraged to wear it on concert days and we will use it for multiple performances and outings.

All paperwork and fees are due Friday, August 24.

Supplies

There are specific supplies required of all students in every choir. Choir folders have been provided. Students are to keep it in good condition. A sticker with student name, ID, and folder number will be provided. Any music distributed should be kept in pristine condition. Students are expected to refrain from tearing, ripping, folding, eating, or otherwise damaging their music. Replacement music or folder can be replaced for a small fee. Students should also have a sharpened pencil at all times.

Parent Volunteers

If you're interested in volunteering this year, please complete the volunteer form in the Form & Fees Packet and return it with all paperwork. There are loads of areas to volunteer, particularly chaperoning concerts, social events, trips as well as helping to plan events with other volunteers.

Formal Performance Uniform

The choir uniform is below. Items marked with a * are provided by the school. Students should acquire the additional items by December 1. These uniforms will be worn at the Christmas, Pre-UIL, and UIL performances.

Vox Viridis, Bel Canto, Treble Singers 7 & 8

- Black dress*
- Black dress shoes (must strap to heel)

Voice of the Pack, Concert Men

- White dress shirt
- Black Vest*
- Black bow tie*
- Black dress pants
- Black belt
- Black dress shoes
- Black socks

Casual Performance Uniform

The casual performance uniform is choir t-shirt, jeans, and tennis/casual shoes. Casual performance uniforms will be used in the Fall Concert and Spring Pop Show. All students are expected to arrive at the concert location completely dressed to perform.

All aspects of the uniform should be clean and, where necessary, pressed. Appropriately styled hair is also expected. Any jewelry should be modest and appropriate for a concert setting. Shorts are not permitted.

General Choir Information

- *Vox Viridis* – this is the advanced auditioned group for girls at Utley MS. These students will perform at UIL Concert & Sight-reading as well as all other concerts. This group focuses on continuing to develop the voice as well as advanced sight-reading skills.
- *Bel Canto* – this is the intermediate auditioned group for girls at Utley MS. These students will perform at UIL Concert & Sight-reading. This group focuses on developing musicianship and strong sight-reading skills as well as building good vocal technique.
- *Treble Women 7 & 8* – this is the non-auditioned group for girls at Utley MS. These students will perform at all concerts and will endeavor to perform at UIL Concert & Sight-reading. This group focuses on developing good tone and sight-reading skills, preparing for advanced groups.
- *Voice of the Pack* – this is the auditioned group for boys at Utley MS. These students will perform at UIL Concert & Sight-reading as well as all other concerts. This group focuses on continuing to develop the voice as well as advanced sight-reading skills.
- *Concert Men* - The group performs at all concerts and will strive to prepare for UIL Concert & Sight-reading. This choir focuses on developing musicianship and strong sight-reading skills as well as building good vocal technique.