



**2022-2023**  
**Clayton Polytechnic Middle School**  
**Choir Handbook**



**Clayton Middle School**

**3000 Spears Road Houston, TX 77067**

**Choir Room: (281) 891-7950**

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# Welcome

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Welcome to the 2022-2023 Claughton Middle School Cougar Choirs! We are eagerly looking forward to the possibilities of this coming year and are excited that you have been chosen to be part of the Claughton Middle School Choral Program.

The Cougar Choirs of Claughton Middle School are designed to give you a well-rounded choral music experience. We will focus on helping each scholar grow as individuals, develop their choral skills, and continue in our tradition of excellence.

Your choir directors are Ms. Hubbard and Mrs. Reese. Ms. Hubbard received both her Bachelor's and Master's in Music Education from Stephen F. Austin State University. Mrs. Reese received her Bachelors in Music Education from Texas A&M University-Commerce.

As a member of the CMS choirs, you will be a key part of helping this choral program succeed. You will be singing in many concerts, competitions, and other performances. You will have opportunities to gain individual recognition through events such as the All-Region Choir, Solo and Ensemble, and Pop Show. Along with participating in musical activities, students in the Cougar Choirs will enjoy a broad range of social events, including parties and trips.

This handbook contains valuable information about grading policies, uniforms, fundraising, private lessons, calendar events and more. Please read this information closely and carefully. Sign and return the appropriate pages by **Friday, September 2nd**.

Thank you for joining the CMS CHOIR FAMILY! We are excited to work with you and are looking forward to having many great musical experiences this year! We are confident that this year will continue and build upon the traditions of excellence already established in the CMS Choral Department.

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## Course Objectives

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### Philosophy of Choral Music

It is the philosophy of the Claughton Middle School Choral Department to provide students with a well-rounded choral music experience. Through participation in choral music, students obtain and refine skills in music literacy, singing, performing, they learn about music history and culture, broaden their vocabulary, practice improvisation, and develop interpersonal skills. These skills not only develop the student's musical competency, but help to shape the student in other areas of their academic and personal growth. In choir, students work toward a common goal of learning how to collaborate, lead, and provide creative solutions to obstacles that may present themselves. Often times students have

opportunities to showcase their talents independent of other singers, and must refine skills of presentation, and preparation to be successful.

### **State and National Music Education Standards**

While at Claughton Middle School, choir members learn a wide range of quality choral repertoire ranging from classical and jazz, to spirituals and multicultural music, spanning from the Medieval to Contemporary periods.

CMS choral rehearsals are centered on the six standards listed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

1. Perception – the student describes and analyzes musical sound and demonstrates musical artistry.
2. Creative expression/performance – the student sings, individually and in groups, performing a varied repertoire of music.
3. Creative expression/performance – the student reads and writes music notation.
4. Creative expression/performance – the student creates and arranges music within specified guidelines.
5. Historical/cultural heritage – the student relates music to history, to society, and culture.
6. Response/evaluation – the student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance

In addition to learning strong choral repertoire, CMS choral rehearsals also address the nine national standards of music education, as determined by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC):

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and notating music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

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# **Expectations**

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- A. Upon entering the choir classroom, the students will immediately get their assigned choir folder, check the board for instructions, and place all belongings (including purses and cell phones) in a cubby and sit *immediately* in their assigned seat.
- B. Students must be in their assigned area on the risers ready to start class.
- C. The piano is **NOT** to be played without permission from the directors.
- D. Gum, food and drink, *with the exception of bottled water*, are **NOT** allowed in the classroom except on special occasions designated by the directors. Unauthorized food, drink, and gum maybe thrown away in the trash at the director's discretion.

- E. **Only** pencils are to be used to mark in the music or to do any written choir assignments.
- F. The directors and only the directors will dismiss the class. Leaving class early without permission from the directors **WILL** result in an office referral.
- G. Respect will be shown at **ALL** times for each other, the directors and anyone who is in the classroom. **Talking without permission during rehearsal time could result in affecting the daily participation grade.**
- H. Students will behave respectfully at **ALL** concerts. Participation at concerts is **required**, unless otherwise noted. *Please read the calendar of events, carefully.*

## Student and Director Expectations

When coming to choir, we expect the following out of each student:

1. A **positive attitude** toward the director(s) and other students.
2. **Concentration and Focus**—Both of these are essential for successful choir rehearsals. This means not talking when the director(s) is/are talking and following along in your music when other sections are working.
3. **Music**—All students should have their folders (containing all music), in hand.
4. **Good Posture** – it’s the only way to go!
5. **Pencil**—This allows for you to write down markings, notes, and places to work on outside of class. Markings may only be written in pencil.

In turn, you can expect the following out of your choir directors:

1. A **positive attitude** toward each student and the rehearsal at hand.
2. **Preparedness**—We will come to choir each day with our music well-prepared and will have a plan for success for each rehearsal.
3. **Energy**—You can expect us to give it our all every day.
4. **A continuing desire to teach!**

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# Grading Guidelines

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Grades in choir are earned by assessing each student’s knowledge (classroom assignments, quizzes, and exams), skills (sight-reading and mastering repertoire), and participation/performance in daily rehearsals and required performances.

Grades will be assessed on a **percentage system** as follows:

Rehearsals (in class & outside of school): 25%

Classroom assignments and sight-reading quizzes: 25%

Performances/Music Theory Exams: 50%

**Rehearsals:**

In a given week, a choir will rehearse **3 times, for a total of 100 points per week (~30 points per day)**. Points may be subtracted for an infraction of a choir rule (see “Discipline Policy” section). A rehearsal grade encompasses all daily participation in choir class. The rehearsal grade will be worth a total of 25% of a student’s choir grade.

**Classroom Assignments & Quizzes:**

Students will be routinely quizzed on sight-reading skills and for knowledge of the performance repertoire rehearsed in class. Quizzes are to check for comprehension and to encourage closer study of music and sight-reading materials. Students may also be given brief written assignments or quizzes to enhance and drill further study of performance repertoire. Classroom assignments and quizzes will be worth a total of 25% of a student’s choir grade.

**Performance Attendance:**

As this is a performance-based class, *attendance at all performances is mandatory*. Why is attendance mandatory at performances?

Performing for an audience is the primary focus of this class. Concerts provide an experience that cannot be reproduced in the classroom.

Performances are the means by which the skills learned in class are evaluated.

Choral singing is a group effort. The performance is weakened by every missing voice. We rehearse together and we perform together.

A student will earn full credit (100) by simply appearing, performing, correct concert etiquette and correct uniform. If a student is late for the warm-up time, they will receive 90 points. If a student appears on time to a concert without proper attire or materials (i.e. music binder), they will receive 80 points. A student will receive zero points for not appearing. As performance attendance encompasses 50% of a student’s choir grade, a student will be in danger of failing choir for the term if s/he fails to appear at a performance and does not complete the make up assignment.

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# Attendance

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**All performances** will be required and count as **TWO TEST** grades in the grade book. They are a part of the curriculum for all our courses. These dates are scheduled at the beginning of the school year in order to allow your family enough time to make plans for your student to attend. Concert attendance is **MANDATORY!**

Scheduled concerts will always be preceded by an afterschool rehearsal on the day of the performances. Students will remain at school until the start of the performance.

**FAILURE TO ATTEND A PERFORMANCE WILL RESULT IN A ZERO UNTIL MADE UP.**

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## Facility Usage

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### **Choir Room**

We are fortunate to have wonderful facilities for choirs at CMS. Maintaining the choir room should be a top priority for our students.

### **Piano/Stereo**

Students may use the piano and stereo with a director's permission before or after school. Preference is given to those practicing for All-Region auditions or Solo & Ensemble. Please do not set any of your belongings (especially water) on top of the piano or stereo system.

### **Music**

Throughout the year, you will be given music that has been purchased by the CMS choral department. Just like your textbooks, you must return all of the music to us in good condition at the end of the semester. When marking in music, always use pencil. This ensures that the music will be able to be used for future choirs.

### **Practice Rooms**

Priority for practice room use should be given to those taking voice lessons, practicing All-Region or Solo and Ensemble music, or taking sight-reading tests.

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## Uniforms

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**FORMAL UNIFORM:** 7th and 8th grade choir students will have the use of a choir uniform. To prevent loss or damage, uniforms will remain in the classroom until needed.

7th & 8th Grade **BOYS** – will provide their own ALL BLACK shoes and black socks

7th & 8th Grade **GIRLS** – will provide their own ALL BLACK closed toed shoes. No heels or sandals are to be worn.

**CASUAL UNIFORM:** consists of the current year's choir t-shirt, khakis or blue jeans when deemed appropriate (no holes), and tennis shoes, or closed toed shoes. Every student will be provided with a choir t-shirt to be worn as a casual uniform for the year. Every student must pay for the choir shirt whether it is purchased separately or with the choir fee.

**6th Grade Choir** students will only be required to wear the casual uniform throughout the year.

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## Discipline

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Our choral ensembles are music teams. The actions of any individual can help or hinder the entire ensemble in both rehearsal and performance. Self-discipline is not optional; it is required. Repeat offenders may be removed from the class at the director's discretion and asked to complete written assignments to earn their grade. Students begin each week with a clean slate (100 points).

-10 points: no music/binder

-10 points: no pencil

-10 points: chewing gum

-10 points: tardy

-5 points: out of seat without permission

-5 points: each reprimand for behavior (talking or other disruptions) or redirect to participate.

-Total points (~33 points) for the day will be deducted for failure/refusal to participate in lesson

## Consequences

*Results, not excuses.*

As members of the CMS Choirs, you "set the bar" for how the choral department is perceived. Good behavior and model citizenship should be synonymous with the CMS Choirs. We hope that these behaviors will be commonplace this year; however, when a student breaks a classroom or school rule, the following procedure will be implemented:

1st offense: Warning

2nd offense: Loss of Participation Points and Documented in eSchool (the cloud)

3rd offense: Parent Phone call/email

Students must also follow all school rules. Any violation of school rules will be dealt with not only by the director(s), but also by the appropriate school officials.

When attending off-campus events, such as trips or contests, all school rules still apply.

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# Choir Fees

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The fees associated with this class are to be used to help supplement supplies that the students will use throughout the year, and help pay for bussing to many events. It also covers the cost of choir t-shirts, the spring field trip, and meals during the trip. **The full fee will be due on Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

If you would like to split the fee, half will be due September 22<sup>nd</sup> and the other half will be due Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. **PLEASE** contact the directors if you need to discuss any issues with payment.

If the student has no desire to attend the Spring Field Trip, they still must pay for the Choir T-Shirt at the cost of **\$12**

<b>8<sup>th</sup> grade TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50*</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> grade TOTAL</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> grade TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30</b>

**NO CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED. ACCORDING TO DISTRICT POLICY, CLAUGHTON MIDDLE SCHOOL IS A CASH or MONEY ORDER ONLY SCHOOL!**

**Receipts will be given to the student when payment is received.**

## **FALL FUNDRAISER**

### **Deanan Gourmet Popcorn**

This year the choir will have a popcorn fundraiser starting on **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Each student who wants to participate will receive 5 bags of popcorn priced at \$2 a bag. They will be given an envelope for their money and must turn in the \$10 when all popcorn is sold. If students do not sell all five bags, they may return the bags that they did not sell. If the student does not turn in any money, they will be responsible for the payment of \$10.

**If students have not returned the product or their fundraiser money, they will not be allowed to participate in any end of the year activities.**

## **SPRING FUNDRAISER**

### **Ozark Candy Company Lollipops**

These will be sold throughout the school day for \$1 each.



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# Concert Etiquette

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The following guidelines should be followed to ensure a pleasant concert experience for the performers and audience:

- Dress appropriately for the performance. Concerts are formal unless noted
- Turn off all cellular phones during the performance.
- Food or drink is not allowed in the performance hall.
- Refrain from talking while the director(s) is/are talking or the choir is performing. Concerts are recorded and recording equipment can pick up the slightest whisper.
- Only enter or leave the seating area during applause.
- Do not take flash photographs while the group is singing.

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## Additional Information

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### Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are always needed in the CMS Choral Department, especially in the areas listed below! If you are interested in volunteering your time, please fill out the information on the acknowledgement form! Thank you in advance!

- ❖ Uniforms (Measurement & Alterations)
- ❖ Finances/Fundraising
- ❖ Social Events/Chaperoning
- ❖ Administrative

### Activities

Special performances/activities are offered throughout the year. Varsity groups are required to participate in UIL Region Choir, and Concert and Sight-reading competition, (this may also include JV groups, as well). Additionally, the director will consider student behavior in all classes, and on the bus, as well as whether choir fees have been paid. Students will not be eligible to participate in any end of the year activities if choir fees and fundraiser money have not been turned in. Listed below are a few possible activities that may be scheduled at the director's discretion:

- Elementary School Tours (6<sup>th</sup> grade only, Recruiting performances)

- Concerts (FALL, HOLIDAY, SPRING)
- Region Choir (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only)
- UIL Concert and Sight-Reading (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only)
- SISD Solo & Ensemble (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only)
- Spring Trip/Reward Outing
- Festival Performances
- Social Gathering