

Porter High School

Choir Handbook

2020-2021



Cara Cavanaugh Woodard, Head Director

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# Porter High School

## Choir Handbook

The handbook is designed to foster the success of the PHS Choral Department, inform the students and their parents, and address questions and concerns that may arise throughout the school year.

We are proud of our choir program and the respect that it has earned by the diligent efforts of students, parents, directors, and administrators. As a choir student, each of you accepts membership into an organization built upon that same pride and commitment to excellence. Please take time to read the handbook thoroughly and return the necessary pages on the due date, and please note that you are responsible for all information presented. If you should have further questions that are not answered in the handbook, please feel free to call the choir office (281) 577-5900 ext 5719. You may also access the choir website at the Porter High School webpage.

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# **PORTER HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT**

The Porter HS Choral Department offers a variety of performing organizations to meet the needs of all students interested in singing. Each choir caters to the specific strengths of each student with regard to their musical ability. All choirs offer performance opportunities and focus on expanding the student's knowledge and use of basic music theory, music history, sight-reading methods, and vocal techniques. In addition to developing individual musical strengths, each group is designed to teach self-discipline and commitment while working together toward a common goal of excellence and fostering an appreciation of choral music.

Requirements include attendance at ALL choir concerts in and out of PHS, extra rehearsals, and such functions or events which promote the choir department.

## **Spartan Chorale**

This choir is open to all voices by audition only. This is one of our top auditioned choirs. This choir will be performing on all concerts and will also be doing outside performances, such as Christmas Caroling and other events. Spartan Chorale will perform a variety of literature and will sing on all concerts. In April, Chorale will compete in the Texas UIL Concert and Sight Reading Competition. Spartan Chorale students who do not maintain their academic eligibility may be moved out of the group to another choir.

## **Spartan Women**

This choir is open to all sophomore, junior, and senior treble voices and by audition only. This is one of our top auditioned choirs. Spartan Women will perform a variety of literature and will sing on all concerts and will compete. This choir will be performing on all concerts and will also be doing outside performances, such as clinics, competitions, and other events. A strong desire to sing, a positive attitude, and consistent academic eligibility are required. Spartan Women students who do not maintain their academic eligibility may be moved out of the group to another choir.

## **Spartan Men**

This choir is open to all freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior tenor/bass voices and by audition only. This is one of our top auditioned choirs. Spartan Men will perform a variety of literature and will sing on all concerts and will compete. This choir will be performing on all concerts and will also be doing outside performances, such as clinics, competitions, and other events. A strong desire to sing, a positive attitude, and consistent academic eligibility are required. Spartan Men students who do not maintain their academic eligibility may be moved out of the group to another choir.

## **Beginning Treble Choir A DAY**

This choir is open to all treble voices in ninth through twelfth grades. The class will focus on many basics of choral singing as well as furthering the student's understanding of the musical arts through concert attendance and listening exercises. There will also be a focus on learning proper concert and rehearsal etiquette. Lyra will perform a variety of literature and will sing on all concerts.

## **Beginning Treble Choir B DAY**

This choir is open to all treble voices in ninth through twelfth grades. The class will focus on many basics of choral singing as well as furthering the student's understanding of the musical arts through concert attendance and listening

exercises. There will also be a focus on learning proper concert and rehearsal etiquette. Lyra will perform a variety of literature and will sing on all concerts.

### **Men's Choir**

This choir is open to all tenor/bass voices in the ninth through twelfth grades and an audition is required for voicing purposes only. This choir will focus on sight-reading skills and vocal techniques and will perform a variety of literature. The class will focus on many basics of choral singing as well as furthering the student's understanding of the musical arts through concert attendance and listening exercises. There will also be a focus on learning proper concert and rehearsal etiquette.

## **OFFICER DUTIES AND GUIDELINES**

Officers will be appointed in May of the preceding year. Students wanting to be considered for an office should be supportive of the ideals and programs set forth by the choral department. Students will need to refer to the descriptions in the handbook before submitting a request for officer nomination.

The following items must apply to all officers:

- Must maintain a "C" overall average and must be eligible each grading period
- Attend all choir council meetings
- Be able to work diligently, effortlessly, and pleasantly with all other members of choir
- Participate in **ALL** of the activities of the choir
- Actively seek out new members for the choir

### **PRESIDENT:**

1. Presides over officer meetings.
2. Initiates and guides officer activities.
3. Supervises and delegates activities of other officers.
4. Serves as liaison between choir and other school organizations and activities.
5. Represents his/her choir in all school functions.
6. Serves as the "right hand" to the director.
7. Is in charge of all social gatherings for the choir.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT:**

1. Assist the President in all activities and preside over his/her responsibilities in case of their absence.
2. Maintain an accurate record of uniforms issued to students.
3. Serves as the resource person for uniform questions or problems.

*Anyone running for the office of **CHOIR PRESIDENT or VICE PRESIDENT** should expect to be responsible for the entire department directly under the director in terms of leadership and responsibility. They should be prepared to set up for all choir functions including concerts, trips, etc. and be the last to leave with the director.*

### **SECRETARY:**

1. Assists the directors with clerical duties in both the classroom as well as before and after school, if needed.
2. Assists the directors with roll checking during class and other choir functions.

3. Organize and maintain a working choir folder system.
4. Organize and maintain all choir book-keeping items.

**LIBRARIAN: *Chosen by Mrs. Woodard***

1. Assist the directors with all library functions.
2. Check in and file all new music.
3. Keep records of all music that is checked out and or returned.
4. Librarians are responsible for the condition of the library at all times.

**HISTORIANS:**

1. Responsible for taking pictures at all choir activities throughout the year including concerts, parties, fundraising activities, meetings and trips.
2. Prepare a musical slide presentation for the choir banquet in which all choirs are equally represented.

**ENSEMBLE REPRESENTATIVES:**

1. Represent the needs and concerns of your respective ensemble.
2. Assist the President when needed.

**SECTION LEADER: *Chosen by Mrs. Woodard***

1. Maintains a current telephone and address list of all people in his/her section both at home and cell.
2. Acts as the telephone coordinator in case of a need to reach a section of the choir at home.
3. Responsible for keeping up with and reporting to the director and choir secretary all absences in class as well as absences from extra rehearsals, concerts, etc.
4. Organizes and maintains a positive rehearsal in the director's absences.

**The following items must apply to all officers:**

- Must maintain be eligible each grading period
- Attend all choir council meetings, or have any absences be excused through **prior** approval
- Be able to work diligently, effortlessly, and pleasantly with all other members of choir
- Participate in all of the activities of the choir
- Actively seek out new members to the choir

*Please understand that being an office is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, the director reserves the right to remove anyone from office at any point who does not exemplify the above or exhibits inappropriate behavior or conduct not befitting an office.*

# STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

## Folders

Students are financially responsible for their folders and the contents provided by the school. Folders are to be returned to the folder cabinets after each rehearsal. Students should return to the choir room after school to take their folder home for study and practice. Any folder left out will be collected and will have to follow certain consequences. If, for some reason you do not receive a piece of music, share with your neighbor for the day, then let your director know that you need a copy of the music and they will get a copy to you for the next rehearsal.

## Uniforms

Choir uniforms are to be maintained in the best manner possible. Proper laundering is expected. Stored uniforms should be on a clothes hanger and protected with a hanging bag (men).

## Communication

Students are given ample notice of scheduled rehearsals, performances, and activities so that conflicts are minimal. As students continue their quest to be responsible adults and perfect the art of balancing and organizing activities and calendars, it is their responsibility to inform parents, employers, coaches, sponsors, and other teachers of choir activities. ***Prior to the event, conflicts with choir commitments must be discussed with the director and written communication from the parents and the student must be submitted. Failure to communicate with the directors within 24 hours of the event will result in a lowered test grade.***

## Participation

As a member of the organization, you are expected to perform in class, concerts, and programs. It is your responsibility to attend tutoring and **maintain** your grades in order to participate. You will be expected to display manners, follow school rules, meet deadlines, and always represent PHS and the choir with pride and dignity. If failing grades affect a student's involvement in choir events, future participation in choir activities may be jeopardized.

## Attendance

It takes the presence of the whole ensemble to build and ensemble sound. The absence of one person does affect the way the choir rehearses and the way they perform. It is expected that each choir member will maintain a good record of attendance for the class and for any extra rehearsals. Poor attendance that affects the students ability to contribute to the group or that causes undue burden on the directors or other choir members is grounds for removal from the course.

# ELIGIBILITY

Choir students are responsible for maintaining high academic standards. Eligibility rules for participation are as follows:

1. All students are eligible the first six weeks of school unless they do not have enough earned credits for their respective grade level.
2. At the end of the first six weeks, if the student is failing (below 70) or has an incomplete in one or more subjects he/she will not be permitted to participate in extra-curricular activities for the next three weeks, following a one week grace period, or until the incomplete is cleared up, i.e. trips off campus, TMEA, UIL sponsored events, and other specified activities. **Incompletes make you ineligible.**
3. At the end of the first nine week grading period grades will be checked again. Students who lost eligibility at the six weeks mark can regain eligibility if they are passing all classes and have no incompletes. If any student is failing a class at the end of the first nine weeks or has an incomplete they will be deemed ineligible for the next three weeks, following a one week grace period, or until the incomplete is cleared up.
4. An ineligible student may re-gain eligibility at either one of the progress reports following the end of the first nine weeks. If the student is passing ALL subjects, he/she will be eligible to participate in choir activities following a one week grace period. If he/she is failing any course, the student will continue to be ineligible for the remainder of the grading period.
5. Students can lose eligibility after the first six weeks, and then at the end of any of the subsequent nine week grading periods. The three week and six week progress reports during each grading period are times when students may regain eligibility. Students do not lose eligibility at progress reports except for the first six weeks progress report.
6. **All Choir officers and** students placed in Spartan Chorale must maintain their eligibility status throughout the year. Any student who becomes ineligible will be on probation. If a probationary student is ineligible a second time during the year, then it will be necessary for the directors to replace him/her as an officer and place him/her in a different choral organization, thus allowing the student more time to focus on their academic needs.

*All incompletes must be cleared for a student to be eligible. It is not enough to do the assignment, you must make your director aware that your incomplete has been taken care of. They will then go through the proper procedures to make you eligible again.*

**Exceptions:** The following choir activities are considered co-curricular. Attendance is expected by ALL students, eligible and ineligible. Concerts on campus that do not require an admission fee are considered co-curricular.

1. Fall Concert (Oct. 30)
2. Winter Concert (Dec. 7)
3. Spring Concert (Apr. 3)
4. Pop Show Performance (May 17)
4. After school sectionals and rehearsals

Any student receiving an incomplete ( I ) on his/her report card is considered “ineligible” until the incomplete is cleared.

Students are encouraged to notify their director as soon as possible if they suspect that a grade is less than acceptable. It is sometimes possible to offer suggestions and/or locate appropriate tutors from within the choir program. Remember, we are here to help, but we can't help once the grades are posted.

# PHS CHOIR GRADING POLICY

## Weekly Grades

Every student will receive nine weekly grades per nine weeks. This grade will be an assessment of a behavior or concept that has been addressed that week. This assessment may take the form of a written or oral test. Not all assessments will be graded, but at least one will result in a grade each week.

## Quiz Grades

Quizzes (oral and written) will be given on a periodic basis. Quizzes will count the same as weekly grades.

## Extra Rehearsals

An unexcused absence from a required rehearsal will result in a ZERO. A tardy for a required extra rehearsal will result in a 75. Each rehearsal counts 100 points.

## Performances

Performances are our “tests.” Performances count as test grades. Absence from any performance will result in ZERO points. A tardy for a performance or misbehavior during a concert or rehearsal will result in a lowered grade.

## Final Grade

The average of the weekly participation grades, plus any test grades for concerts, etc. will be the basis for the six weeks grade.

## Make-up Assignments

If, for any reason, a student is prevented from attending any rehearsals or concerts for any reason - excused or unexcused, school-related or not - I require a **phone call and a letter** (e-mail is fine) from a parent or guardian as soon as possible explaining the reason why the student cannot or did not attend the rehearsal or concert. **Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not**, (s)he will be expected to complete a makeup assignment as follows:

For a missed **rehearsal**, the student will be given a makeup assignment upon arrival back in class that will detail what was covered in the rehearsal. The directors will schedule a time for all makeup singing assignments to be performed together. The student must attend that makeup grading session before or after school to sing what was covered in the rehearsal for the directors. If the student has a scheduling conflict that cannot be avoided, (s)he must contact the directors before the scheduled makeup session to set up an alternate makeup session. The student will be graded on all aspects of musicianship including but not limited to tone quality, rhythmic accuracy, pitch accuracy, vowel production, tone production, and breath support. More specifically, any musical or vocal details taught in the missed rehearsal must be demonstrated by the student to receive complete credit. The directors will follow NCISD grading procedures in regards to timeline for makeup assignments.

For a missed **performance**, the student will be required to make up the grade in two parts: performance and written analysis of a recording of the concert.

1) For the performance component, the directors will schedule a time for all makeup singing assignments to be performed together. The student must attend that makeup grading session before or after school to sing what was covered in the rehearsal for the directors. If the student has a scheduling conflict that cannot be avoided, (s)he must contact the directors before the scheduled makeup session to set up an alternate makeup session. During this session, the student will perform from memory any music that was performed from memory by the choir in the concert, and the student may use their music for any pieces that were



performed in the concert with music. The student will sing as a soloist or with a small group of other students making the grade up. The student will be graded on all aspects of musicianship including but not limited to tone quality, rhythmic accuracy, pitch accuracy, vowel production, tone production, and breath support. At the discretion of the directors, the student will sing solo a capella, with piano accompaniment, or with a recording of the concert.

2) For the written portion of the assignment, the student will be given a recording and program of the concert. The student must write an academic review of the entire concert (not just his/her choir's performance), speaking in a detailed manner of the performances of all choirs, using musical terms and ideas explored in class, including, but not limited to aspects of tone quality, blend, intonation, ensemble, interpretation, musical expression, breath support and phrasing, and other musical and artistic ideas. The paper should be 3-5 pages long, 12-point font, one-and-a-half spaced paragraphs (not double-spaced), one-inch margins on top and bottom, and 1.25-inch margins on the sides. Pictures or clip art may be included but does not count toward the 3-5 page amount. All makeup work should be completed by the due date given unless an alternate due date has been worked out ahead of time with the directors. If the student does not promptly set up a make-up schedule upon his/her arrival back to school, the grade may remain a zero.

Please note that these make-up assignments are given for excused and unexcused absences. They are not meant to be punitive. They are intended to reflect the importance of the concert preparation and performances as well as give the director a chance to assess the 6-8 weeks' worth of classroom preparation that occurs before a concert. The concert is a major grade, so the makeup work reflects that.

### **Letter Jackets**

Students must fill out the letter point sheet to see if they are eligible to receive a letter jacket. Please note that eligibility and discipline are factors in receiving a letter jacket.

# UNIFORMS

*Please note that improper or incomplete uniforms may result in students receiving lowered grades for performances.*

- Men's Formal Uniforms

The school district provides a black tuxedo jacket, slacks, tux shirt, and a bow tie. The men will be responsible for the following items:

- Black dress shoes (no patent leather, canvas, or suede)
- Black socks

- Women's Formal Uniforms

The school district provides a formal dress and pearls. The women will be responsible for:

- Black closed toe pumps, 1" - 2" heel. Black character shoes are recommended.

**NO BLACK BOOTS OR "CHUNKY" SHOES** - *plain, closed-toed heels suitable to wear with a formal gown are*  
**REQUIRED**

- o All students will sign a uniform contract when issued uniform pieces provided by the school. Students will be responsible for their uniform until it is turned in at the end of the year. Damage or loss of uniforms will result in replacement fines that could easily exceed \$100, and these fees must be cleared before finals can be taken or a student can graduate.
- o The hemline of the choir formal should be exactly 1" off the floor. Care must be taken in hemming the dress or pants. **Note that all hems MUST be temporary!! DO NOT CUT THE DRESS OR TUXEDO PANTS!!! DO NOT USE STAPLES, SAFETY PINS, OR TAPE!!!** It is the responsibility of each young man or woman and his/her parents to see that the necessary alterations are made on his pants or her dress in order that it fits properly. If major alterations are necessary, they must be approved in advance by the choral director (281) 577-5900.

- Hair and Jewelry

For men and women, long hair should be worn back and away from the face. Shoulder length hair or shorter may be worn down, but must be away from the face. Ladies: NO BOWS! Hair clips and accessories should be nondescript and blend with hair color. No visible jewelry, such as watches, necklaces, and excessive rings. Post earrings for girls only.

**\*\*\*Improper concert attire (inappropriate shoes, wearing bows in hair, hair covering face, jewelry, missing items, etc.) will result in a lowered test grade for that concert!!!\*\*\***

- **Informal Uniforms**

For many events, we will wear something a little less formal that still looks unified and professional. Informal uniforms for specific events will be discussed in class, but for things like National Anthems at local professional sporting events, we will wear our choir shirts (tucked in, if needed) with formal black pants (no black jeans) and nice black shoes and socks (no tennis shoes or chunky shoes). Please be aware that if we are singing on a playing field that is grass, women in heels may not be a good idea since the heels will stick in the ground.

Other times, we will wear a nice black outfit with red accents of your own choosing. Examples of this may include for women a black pants outfit with red jewelry/belt or hair accessories or a black dress (not the choir formal dress) with red jewelry. For men, it might be a pair of black slacks with a red shirt and black jacket, or black slacks with a black shirt with a red tie.

For things like in-school pep rallies, our uniform will be your choir shirt with blue jeans.

Specific dress for specific occasions will be reviewed in class prior to the event, but you should have ready at any time a pair of black pants and nice black shoes (flats for ladies).

# CONTESTS

## Region Choir Auditions

The top 22 from both women's zones and the top 20 from both Baritone zones of the District Audition compete for seats in the Region Treble, Men's, and Mixed choirs. Girls who rank #19-44 will be placed in the "Region Treble Choir." Tenors who rank #17-34 and Bass/ Baritones who rank #17-40 will be placed in the "Region Men's Choir." Students who rank #1-16 will be placed in the "Region Mixed Choir." They will advance to the Pre-Area Audition.

## Pre-Area Choir Auditions

Any student who made the Region Mixed Choir will compete for the top five positions. Those five singers will advance to the "Area/All-State Auditions." There is no ensemble performance at the Area level.

## Area/All-State Auditions

The top five students of Regions 10, 17, & 19 will compete for positions in the All-State Choirs. Students who rank #1-4 will be placed into the "All-State Mixed Choir." Students who rank #5-10 will be placed in the "All-State Treble Choir" (Girls) or the "All-State Men's Choir" (Boys). Those students will attend the Texas All-State Choir Clinic and Concert at the Texas Music Educator's Association Convention held in San Antonio in February.

## UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest

Students are encouraged to prepare a solo selected from the UIL Prescribed Music List (PML), check out an accompaniment tape, rehearse with the director and accompanist, and perform the solo for contest. Students are responsible for paying a non-refundable accompanist fee. Ensembles will be selected and prepared by the directors according to voice blend, choral balance, and relative abilities.

## UIL Concert & Sightreading

Choirs will prepare three selections from the UIL PML and also prepare for the sight-reading procedures as described in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules Handbook. Students will be evaluated on both their concert performance and their sight-reading ability. **Students must be enrolled in five classes in order to participate in UIL activities. Spartan Chorale is required to participate.**

## Festivals

Competitions of this nature will vary from year to year according to activities of the choir, commitment, expense, fund-raising, eligibility, and involvement of the students in other school related or work related activities.

# CHOIR EXPENSES

The following is an anticipated list of choir expenditures that will occur throughout the year. They are listed to help you plan your budget. Please note that in some cases, fees are approximate. Required expenditures are so indicated.

1. PHS Choir fee (includes choir t-shirt, clinics, uniform cleaning fee, and Pop Show supplies)  
Required\*
  - a. Treble Choir A & B and Men's Choir: \$30.00
  - b. Spartan Chorale and Spartan Women: \$50.00 (contest fees)
2. Astros, Dynamo, etc Game Bus/Ticket Fee: \$20.00 appx. (participation optional)
3. Renaissance Festival: \$25.00 appx. (Spartan Chorale & Spartan Women only)
3. Solo Festival fee: \$30.00 appx. (participation optional)
4. Musical production fee: up to \$100.00 (participation optional)
6. Choir banquet: \$20.00 appx. (participation optional)
7. Pool Party: \$5.00 appx. (participation optional)

## *REFUND POLICY:*

Most fees charged to the student involve advance payment for a service or item. In such cases (i.e. accompanist fees, trip fees, game tickets, etc.), the choir has a deadline for receiving reimbursement from the supplier. Because of this, the following policy will be strictly followed: **There will be no refunds in any case where a student has paid for an activity or supply but is no longer able to participate. This policy applies no matter what the reason is for withdrawal and specifically includes but is not limited to the situations of ineligibility, illness, unexpected family travel, or withdrawal from the PHS Choir.**

# POP SHOW

This is a fun and exciting time in May and you have a chance to be a part of it! The “Pop Show” is a large production taking place in our auditorium with costumes, lighting, and an elaborate set. The music for this show consists of music from about every genre, ranging from popular hits of today to the popular oldies of yesterday. In order to have a successful program, we need your participation and support.

The students will be required to pay a small production fee (\$25) and will be needed to attend some after-school rehearsals beginning in March. Along with the production fee, the students will need to provide some of their own costume pieces to go along with the costumes that the school will provide. In order to participate in “Pop Show,” the students will need to keep their grades up and maintain their discipline.

The Pop Show is not a requirement of all students, except for the Spartan Chorale students, but I promise that you will want to be involved. If you choose to not participate in the Pop Show, you will be required to complete other work during the in-school rehearsals for your grade.

I hope that all of you will want to participate. This is an all-choir production full of large group numbers, solos, and small ensembles. I want to give us the chance to show-case all of our wonderful students’ talents. I feel that this will be a great experience for all.

# Porter High School Spartan Singers 2020-2021 Calendar

Due to COVID-19, all concerts, competitions, and field trips have been postponed.