



2019-20 Choir Handbook for Students & Parents

Periods:

Symphonic Choir – periods 4 & 8
Women’s Choir – periods 5 & 9

Room: Choir Room B119

Instructor:

Mr. Cloonan

cloonans@nhsd.net

voice mail: 412-318-1400 x2731

www.nhchoiranddrama.net

Class Structure

Here’s what to expect when you enter the classroom:

1. You will take a music folder from the shelves **and replace it with your electronic device**, then quickly find your assigned seat, throwing away any gum or candy you may have before class begins. ***Chorus is a “no gum zone!”***
2. *As soon as the late bell rings*, you should end conversations, stand up, face the front of the room, and begin silent stretching. Our warm-up routine is stretching, breathing, and singing exercises.
3. During warm-ups, talking is not permitted, as you must focus on relaxing muscles, breathing and singing, and following the directions of the teacher. If you are carrying on a conversation with your neighbor, you will distract others and might miss instructions. ***Attendance is taken*** during warm-ups. If you are in an incorrect seat or are wandering around the room, you may be marked absent, which your parents will see as a notification and may negatively affect your attendance record.
4. The hall pass may be used **after warm-ups are completed**, one at a time. Please do not abuse the hall pass or the privilege will be taken away from you. Keep in mind that classroom doors are locked at all times and constantly coming in and out of the room will cause a disruption to our class.
5. Keep homework put away unless you are told that there is free time or that you may work quietly. Since we do not have desks or books, our choir music is like our textbook, and should always be out so that when parts of the music are discussed, you can follow along, make markings, etc.
6. When class is over, make sure that your music is put neatly back in the pocket of your folder and that you return your folder to the correct shelf. Please do not leave music on a chair or the floor.

Grading

Report cards are distributed at the end of each semester, and grades will be kept current through PowerSchool. Grades are a reflection of your participation, attention, and motivation. Here is how the percentages are calculated:

- 50%** ***Daily Participation:*** arriving to class on time, having music folder, participating in all activities, marking vocal scores properly, focusing attention on listening activities, displaying a positive attitude, staying on task, demonstrating good singing posture, exhibiting proper vocal technique
- 25%** ***Vocal Hearings and Assignments:*** hearings are times when you will be singing in small groups to demonstrate progress on pitches, parts, and memorization of concert selections, to allow Mr. Cloonan to check for changes in range, a chance to discuss any problems you may have with sections of a song. Any assignments given will be completed during class (theory/sight-singing worksheets, written observation of concert video). You will not receive homework outside of class, except to make sure songs are memorized for the concert.
- 25%** ***Concerts & Combined Rehearsals:*** attending scheduled pre-concert rehearsals, participating in the 3 required evening concerts, following the dress code for concerts

As you can see, the largest part of your grade is your daily participation. As long as you follow directions, stay on task, and sing when asked, those should be easy points. ***It takes work to fail choir!*** You have to make a conscious effort to not participate, to not follow directions, to show disrespect for others, and to not attend rehearsals and concerts. The only thing preventing you from having a 100% in choir is YOU. Strive for excellence...be the best you can be. We’ll be a better choir because of it!

After-School Rehearsals

After-school rehearsals are also a part of your class grade. Since each choir is divided into 2 class periods, we need to hear what the full group sounds like as we prepare for concerts. These rehearsals are **very** important, because it is here where we can properly check for balance between sections, practice coming on and off the risers, figure out standing arrangements, and work with our piano accompanist and other instrumentalists.

Attendance is required, and it is your responsibility to make arrangements to be there. There are 4 after school rehearsals in the first semester and 3 in the spring semester. That's 7 days out of 180 – hardly a major requirement or too much to ask for a full year of participation. Talk with your bosses, coaches, sponsors, and parents to make sure you can attend. To use a sports analogy: missing these rehearsals is like not showing up to the practice right before a big event... you would be confused if the coach changed something and you weren't there. The choir "team" counts on every voice to be there.

See the calendar-at-a-glance at the end of this handbook for specific after-school practices for each ensemble. There will be times when it is just Symphonic Choir, just Women's Choir, and everyone combined. **READ THE SCHEDULE CAREFULLY**, as attendance will be taken at each rehearsal.

Concerts

Public performances are a part of the district music curriculum, and are **required**. Concerts serve as our formal assessment of the weeks of work and preparation. There are 3 evening concerts in 2019-20: the fall collage concert in October, the holiday concert in December, and the spring concert in May.

North Hills School District follows a strict attendance policy for concerts. **Take the time to write them on your calendars when you go home tonight.** These dates are published in the district's calendar, are available online at nhsd.net as well as the choral/drama website. "I didn't know about it" is not considered a valid excuse for missing a concert; neither is "I couldn't get a ride." There are over 120 members of the choral program between all 4 class periods. *Someone* who is also a part of the choir lives near you. If it becomes apparent that transportation is going to be an issue, talk to someone to arrange a ride. As the saying goes: "lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part."

If there is a legitimate conflict with a concert date (and very little is considered legitimate), it should be brought to Mr. Cloonan's attention as soon as possible **IN WRITING** (either a note brought in or an e-mail sent by a parent), **and submitted BEFORE the day of the concert.** Remember that concerts make up 25% of your grade. If you become ill on the day of the concert, it is your parent/guardian's responsibility to notify Mr. Cloonan (voice mail or email). Failure to submit an excuse will result in your grade being lowered by at least one full letter grade. We all must work together and help to make the best concerts possible – even one person missing from the choir hurts everyone, so don't think that your voice doesn't matter!

Concert Dress Code

The North Hills Choral Department follows a strict dress code policy for public performances. We strive to look as polished and presentable as possible, as well as teaching "industry standards" of performance for those who plan to continue singing outside of school. A student found to be in violation of the dress code may be sent home to change clothes or given something to wear (that may or may not fit well!) before the concert. If the student refuses, they will not be permitted to participate in the concert and their grade will be lowered accordingly.

Symphonic Choir will be assigned a choir robe with a number. These robes will be kept in the robe room and the Uniform Coordinator will be responsible for keeping track of numbers. Robes will be worn for at least the first half of each concert. Standard black and white dress concert attire should be worn under the robe for uniformity as well as quick changes for the second half of the concert.

- Girls:** white dress blouse (button down or crew/scoop neck – no white t-shirts), longer (just above or to the knee, no mini) black skirt with black stockings **OR** black dress slacks/pants (not leggings – actual pants), and black low or flat heels (no sandals, boots, or high heels).
- Boys:** white button-down collared shirt with tie (regular or bow-tie, any color, no crazy cartoons or prints!), black pants (not jeans), black socks (dress or athletic, not the lower ankle socks) and black dress shoes (no tennis shoes unless they are entirely black).

Members of the North Hills Singers have black and red uniforms that are worn at every performance.

**If purchasing any of these items is a financial hardship for your family, please let Mr. Cloonan know. No one will be penalized for not physically being able to get the items – we can help.*

Concert Dates

While it is important that we share in the music making process together, and that is what brings many of us to join choir in the first place, that is only part of what we do. All of the hard work put in during class and rehearsals is so that we can share what we do with others. For that reason, public performances are written into the curriculum of each music ensemble class and are considered formal assessments as part of the course grade. The following **required concerts** will take place during the 2019-20 school year:

- Fall Collage Concert: Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 7:00PM, Middle School Auditorium
- Winter Holiday Concert: Tuesday, December 17, 2019, 7:00PM, High School Auditorium
- Spring Concert & Senior Recognition: Friday, May 15, 2020, 7:00PM, High School Auditorium

The following annual events are open to any high school choir member who wishes to participate:

- Madrigal Dinner – Saturday, December 7, 2019, 6:30PM, Hiland Presbyterian Church Hall
- Cabaret Night – Friday, February 21, 2020, High School Cafeteria

Additionally, the North Hills Singers will be featured at:

- Arts Alive – Friday, May 8, 2020, 5:00-9:00, High School

After-School/Extra-Curricular Ensembles

North Hills Singers: auditioned ensemble (spring of previous year) from the Symphonic Choir. Rehearses Monday and Tuesday after school as well as a few Saturdays. Extensive performances during holiday season.

Arrow: student-run men's ensemble open to any of the Symphonic Choir tenors & basses. No auditions, just commitment to attend scheduled rehearsals. Performs on high school concerts and in community when pieces are ready.

Madrigal Choir: open to all choir members in grades 9-12. Rehearsals are for 2 weeks every day after Thanksgiving in preparation for the annual Choral Parents Association Madrigal Dinner fundraiser. Opportunities are also available for speaking/acting roles in the Madrigal Dinner skit in addition to the singing that the choir does.

Festivals

PMEA Honors Choir: Open to any interested singer in grades 9-12, this festival takes place on October 19-20, 2019 at Waynesburg High School. There are separate Men's and Women's choirs that rehearse with their own guest conductors and then the 2 groups combine for the concert on Saturday afternoon. Participation is by application and teacher recommendation. If interested, submit your application to Mr. Cloonan by Friday, August 30th.

PMEA District Chorus: PMEA District 1 Chorus will take place at South Fayette High School on Thursday-Saturday, January 16-18, 2020. Auditions will be held on Monday, November 25, 2019 at North Allegheny Intermediate High School. District Chorus is open to students in grades 10-12. At District Chorus, participants audition for Region Chorus.

Opportunities for Freshmen: The following choral festivals are available for our **ninth-grade** singers. Each of the festivals is based on teacher recommendation. If you are given a letter, please seriously consider participating. For Mucho Macho & Sweet Harmony, we can have anywhere between 6 and 10 students represented depending on how many other schools are participating

Sweet Harmony: For girls in grades 6-9. Held at Avonworth on Monday, October 14, 2019. Students selected to participate are excused from school this day and must arrange to be picked up at school around 5:00PM.

Mucho Macho Music: For boys in grades 6-9. A day to come together with 100 other boys to build confidence during the voice change and learn from a guest conductor and also from college guys. Friday, November 8, 2019 at South Fayette High School.

Music Department Tour 2020

Our high school music department performance tour will take place April 16-19, 2020. We will participate in the Music in the Parks festival, performing for judges and competitive ratings at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia. The tour involves all 10 performing ensembles from the bands, choirs, and orchestras, and includes a day at Busch Gardens and a visit to Colonial Williamsburg. More specifics about costs, fundraisers, and payment dates will be coming in the next month or so. Our hope is that as many of our choir members as possible can join us for this memorable experience!

Choral Parents Association

Parents of all singers in grades 9-12 are invited to join to support the trips and special events hosted by the choral program. We generally meet twice in person each year, with additional electronic communication sent out as we get closer to the two big fundraising events: Madrigal Dinner and Cabaret Night. If your parents are interested in being a part of this group, have them send an e-mail to nhchoralparents@gmail.com so that they may be added to the e-mail list for notification of meetings. The more parents involved in the group, the better our organization will be and the easier the work will be for the big projects!

Communication

With so much going on between all of the ensembles, festivals, performances, and rehearsals, communication will be key to our success. Open and honest communication between student, director, and parent will help to assure that everyone knows what is going on, what is expected, and that we avoid frustration, anxiety, and hurt feelings.

What to expect from Mr. Cloonan: I will do my best to always let you know as far in advance as I can dates, times, and locations of rehearsals and performances. Especially with the NH Singers, things come up quickly and require flexibility on everyone's part.

I say this at the beginning of every semester in every class every year: ***I will never accept "I didn't know" as an excuse for missing something.*** And here's why...there are SEVEN different ways for you to find out what is happening in our choral program:

1. You will receive a printed monthly calendar
2. That printed calendar will be posted on the bulletin board in the Choir Room
3. A weekly schedule of rehearsals is written on the board in the front of the room
4. Announcements will be made in class regularly
5. A PDF of the calendar and all major announcements and handouts are posted on the choir & drama website at www.nhchoiranddrama.net, which also includes a Google Calendar of all choir events that you can sync to your phone or iPad.
6. Social media alerts in any combination of Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook are sent out regularly
7. Remind app texts are sent out for major announcements/rehearsals/deadlines as well

If you don't know what is going on, you can't say it's my fault for not letting you know!

What Mr. Cloonan expects from you: First and most importantly, BE HONEST. Sometimes you forget to say something to your parent, or a boss, or a coach. That is human. I'm a pretty understanding person, unless you purposely cover up the mistake by lying about it. As soon as you realize or know about a conflict for a legitimate reason, let me know! We can work together to find a solution.

Secondly, TALK TO YOUR PARENTS. I can't tell you the number of times I've talked with a parent who said "they never gave me that paper," or "I just found out yesterday about this." Avoid the unnecessary fight at home or with me by being proactive and organized.

And lastly, BE RESPONSIBLE. Take some ownership of and pride in your commitments and responsibilities. The group suffers when you fail to communicate. Look at your schedules, plan your appointments and other activities around when you know you need to be with the choir. As mentioned in an earlier section, every voice counts!



COMMUNICATION METHODS

There are several ways to find out about what is happening with the North Hills Choirs:

- Social Media: Facebook – North Hills Choirs; Twitter - @NorthHillsChoir; Instagram - @northhillschoirs
- Email or Voice Mail Mr. Cloonan: cloonans@nhsd.net or 412-318-1400, x2731.
- North Hills Choir & Drama website: www.nhchoiranddrama.net (which includes the Instagram feed)
- NH Choirs YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/northhillschoirs



Remind App Directions: Search by *class code name*—

Women's Choir: [@nhwomens](https://www.remind.com/@nhwomens), Symphonic Choir: [@nhhssymph](https://www.remind.com/@nhhssymph), NH Singers: [@nhsingers](https://www.remind.com/@nhsingers)

To receive messages via text, text *@class code name* to 81010. You can opt out of messages at any time by replying, 'unsubscribe *@class code name*'. Trouble using 81010? Try texting *@class code name* to (302) 321-6356 instead. Or to receive messages via email, send an email to *class code name*@mail.remind.com. To unsubscribe, reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

August 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
18	19	20 First Day	21	22 2:15 Drama Club Meeting	23	24
25	26 2:15 Singers	27	28 Open House	29	30 PMEA Honors Choir Applications Due	31

September 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 NO SCHOOL	3 Singers after Drama Club Meeting	4	5	6	7
8	9 2:15 Singers	10 2:15 Singers	11	12	13	14 Band Festival
15	16 2:15 Singers	17 2:15 Singers	18	19 Singers: Board Mtg.	20	21
22	23 2:15 Singers	24 2:15 Singers	25	26	27	28 Homecoming

October 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sept 29	Sept 30 2:15 Singers	1 2:15-3:00 Singers	2	3 2:15 Sweet Harmony	4 2:15 PMEA HC Prep	5
6	7 2:15 Singers	8 2:15 Singers	9 2:15 Sweet Harmony	10 2:15 Sweet Harmony	11 Set up for Alumni Choir Event	12 ALUMNI CHOIR
13	14 NO SCHOOL Sweet Harmony	15	16	17 2:15 PMEA HC Prep	18 PMEA Honors Choir	19 at Waynesburg HS
20	21 2:15-3:15 All Choirs Rehearsal in HS Choir Room	22 2:15-4:00 Choir/Band/Strings Rehearsal @ MS	23 6:30 Report to MS 7:00 COLLAGE CONCERT @ MS	24	25	26
27	28 2:15-4:00 Singers	29	30 2:15 Mucho Macho	31 2:15 Mucho Macho	Nov. 1 2:15 Madrigal Dinner Meeting	2

November 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	4 NO SCHOOL	5 NO SCHOOL	6 <i>MB Stadium Review</i>	7 Play Preview Night	8 Fall Play <i>Mucho Macho?</i>	9 Fall Play
10 Fall Play Matinee	11 15 min Madrigal Mtg Set Strike	12 2:15 Singers	13 2:15 Musical Audition Rehearsal	14 2:15 Musical Audition Workshop	15	16
17	18 2:15 Spring Musical Auditions	19 2:15 Spring Musical Auditions	20 2:15 Callback Rehearsal/Workshop	21 2:15 Callbacks	22	23 9:00-11:30 Singers 12:00-2:00 Madrigal
24	25 2:15 Singers PMEA District Chorus Auditions	26 2:15 Singers <i>Jazz Night</i>	27 NO SCHOOL	28 NO SCHOOL <i>Thanksgiving</i>	29 NO SCHOOL	30

December 2019

Note that December is one of our busiest months. Look at the dates and times carefully, especially for North Hills Singers.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 NO SCHOOL 9:00-12:00 Singers (if needed)	3 2:15-4:15 Madrigal	4 2:15-4:15 Madrigal	5 1:00 Singers (NHUPC) 2:15-4:30 Madrigal <i>Orchestra Concert</i>	6 1:00 Singers (Northmont) 3:00-5:00 Madrigal Mandatory Run-thru	7 MADRIGAL DINNER
8	9 2:15 Singers <i>Children's Choir</i>	10 1:00 Singers at Shannopin CC <i>Guitar Concert</i>	11 2:15 Symphonic Choir Rehearsal <i>HS Band Concert</i>	12 2:15 Women's Choir Rehearsal <i>EL Band Concert</i>	13 2:15 Musical Cast Meeting & Set up Risers on Stage	14 1:00 Singers at Faith Lutheran (Laurel Gardens)
15 9:00 Singers @ Edgewood & Children's Hospital	16 2:15-4:30 ALL ON STAGE (@ HS) <i>MS Band Concert</i>	17 6:00 Report for YB Photos & Warm-up 7:00 CONCERT	18 <i>MS Choir Concert</i>	19 Singers Tour Day <i>EL Orchestra</i>	20	21
22	23 NO SCHOOL	24 NO SCHOOL	25 NO SCHOOL	26 NO SCHOOL	27 NO SCHOOL	28

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dec 29	30 NO SCHOOL	31 NO SCHOOL	1 NO SCHOOL	2	3	4
5	6 2:15 Singers	7	8	9 <i>End of 1st Semester</i>	10 NO SCHOOL <i>Teacher Clerical Day</i>	11
12	13 2:15 Singers	14	15 PMEA District	16 Chorus Festival at	17 South Fayette HS	18
19	20 NO SCHOOL	21	22	23 <i>Curriculum Night</i>	24	25
26	27	28	29 Winter Musical Preview Day	30 7:00 Winter Musical	31 7:00 Winter Musical	Feb 1 7:00 Winter Musical

February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3 2:15 Singers	4	5	6	7 2:15 Cabaret Night Auditions	8
9	10 2:15 Singers	11	12	13	14 2:15 Choir Room open for Cabaret	15
16	17 NO SCHOOL	18 2:15 Choir Room open for Cabaret	19 2:15 Choir Room open for Cabaret	20 2:15 Cabaret Night Run-Through	21 CABARET NIGHT HS Cafeteria	22
23	24 2:15 Singers	25	26 PMEA Region I	27 State Chorus at	28 Hickory HS	29 <i>Jazz Band Mardi Gras</i>

March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 NO SCHOOL	14 Musical Tech
15 Musical Tech	16 Musical Dress Reh.	17 Musical Dress Reh.	18 Musical Dress Reh.	19 Musical Preview	20 Musical	21 Musical
22 Musical Matinee	23	24	25	26 Musical	27 Musical	28 Musical
29	30 Set Strike <i>Band-O-Rama</i>	31 2:15 Singers				

April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 2:15 Singers	2 2:15 Tour Choirs	3	4
5	6 2:15 Singers	7 2:15 Singers 7:00 Tour Meeting	8 SPRING BREAK	9 SPRING BREAK	10 SPRING BREAK	11
12	13 SPRING BREAK	14 SPRING BREAK	15 2:15 Tour Choirs	16 Music Dept. Tour (leave after school)	17 Music in the Parks Performances	18 Day at Busch Gardens
19 Tour Williamsburg and Drive Home	20 2:15 Showcase Auditions	21 2:15 Singers	22 PMEA All-State	23 Convention in the	24 Poconos	25
26	27 2:15 Singers	28 NO SCHOOL	29	30		

May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Drama Showcase	2 9:00 Singers (only if needed)
3	4 2:15 Singers	5 2:15 Singers	6 2:15 Symphonic	7 2:15 Women	8 Arts Alive Singers perform	9
10	11 2:15 Singers 6:30 Senior Banquet	12 2:15 Singers <i>Guitar Concert</i>	13 2:15 Logistics – Everyone on Stage <i>MS Choir Concert</i>	14 2:15-4:30 All Choirs on Stage <i>HS Awards Night</i>	15 SPRING CONCERT	16 Promenade & Senior Prom
17	18 Last Singers/party <i>Orchestra Concert</i>	19 <i>MB Get Acquainted</i>	20 2:15-4:30 New Singers Auditions	21 <i>HS Band Concert</i>	22 <i>Senior Clap-off</i>	23 <i>Gene Kelly Awards</i>
24	25 NO SCHOOL Memorial Day	26 2:15 New Singers	27 2:15 New Singers	28 Last Student Day	29 Graduation	30
31	June 1	2	3	4 Theatre Workshop	5 Theatre Workshop	6

2019-2020 NH CHOIR CONTACT FORM AND TEACHER-STUDENT-PARENT AGREEMENT

Please go to

www.nhchoiranddrama.net

Click on CHOIRS, then HIGH SCHOOL and choose your choir:
SYMPHONIC CHOIR or WOMEN'S CHOIR

The first item on the page is the form.

Complete all fields, and please enter email address correctly,
as this will be imported directly for e-mail communication.

Or scan this QR code to take you directly to the form:

