



# Spring 2019 Choir Handbook for Students & Parents

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## 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

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**NEW WEBSITE: [www.nhchoiranddrama.net](http://www.nhchoiranddrama.net)**

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## Class Structure

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1. Get your folder, throw away any gum/candy, and find your seat. *Friends don't let friends chew gum in choir.*
2. Participate in warm-up activities with your full attention, and stay in your assigned place so that you are not marked absent and have to explain to your parent why PowerSchool said you weren't in class.
3. 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.
4. Keep homework put away unless you are told that there is free time or that you may work quietly.
5. 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

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

**50% Daily Active Participation**

**25% Vocal Hearings and Sight-reading Assignments**

**25% Concerts & Combined Rehearsals**

***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 an A in choir is YOU.

## After-School Rehearsals

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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 of 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.*** Talk with your bosses, coaches, sponsors, and parents to make sure you can attend. Mr. Cloonan is flexible and understanding when it comes to sharing and helping to set priorities *as long as it is brought to his attention ahead of time.* Obviously, you will be excused if there is a cross country away meet and you have an early dismissal to go there. But if you choose to go to a practice that you have every day instead of coming to our once per month rehearsal, that will be considered the same as a class cut (though you won't be written up, just receive a "0" for attendance/participation).

Often students will split their time as well, coming to the first half of our practice and going to the sport/club practice/meeting for the next 45 minutes or so. The important thing is that you COMMUNICATE and PLAN AHEAD.

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

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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.

North Hills School District follows a strict attendance policy for concerts. We only require a few evenings throughout the year. **Take the time to write them on your calendars when you go home tonight.** These dates are also published on the district's calendar, and are available online at [nhsd.net](http://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 almost 150 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 ext. 2731, email: [cloonans@nhsd.net](mailto:cloonans@nhsd.net)). Failure to submit an excuse will result in your grade being lowered by at least one full letter grade (do the math – you lose 25%, that means the highest grade you can get is a 75%, which is a "C"). 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

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The North Hills Choral Department follows a strict dress code policy for public performances. We strive to look as polished and presentable as possible, reflecting the hard work put in before each performance. 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.

Only Symphonic Choir will be assigned a choir robe with a number, as we don't have enough robes to accommodate both Symphonic and Women's Choirs. 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 button-down blouse, longer (to the knee, no mini) black skirt with black stockings OR black dress slacks (not leggings), and black low or flat heels (no sandals or high heels).**

**Boys: white button-down collared shirt with tie, black pants, black socks and black dress shoes.**

## Concert Dates

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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.

- Cabaret Night (open to all choir members interested): Friday, March 1, 2019, 7PM, Cafeteria A Side
- Arts Alive (North Hills Singers): Friday, May 3, 2019, 5:00-9:00PM, High School
- Spring Concert & Senior Recognition (required for all): Friday, May 17, 2019, 7PM, HS Auditorium

## Communication

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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 EIGHT different ways for you to find out what is happening in our choral program:

1. You will receive a printed monthly calendar
2. That 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 if not daily, at least every other day
5. A PDF of the calendar is posted on the choir website at [www.northhillschoralmusic.org](http://www.northhillschoralmusic.org).
6. Every time a major announcement is made, it is posted on the website, which is connected to our Twitter and Facebook accounts, so it goes to all 3 places at once.
7. Social media alerts in the form of any combination of Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook are sent out regularly
8. When big combined rehearsals or special events take place Remind app texts are sent out 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:

- NH Choirs on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/northhillschoirs](http://www.facebook.com/northhillschoirs)
- NH Choirs on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/NorthHillsChoir](http://www.twitter.com/NorthHillsChoir) or @NorthHillsChoir
- NH Choirs on Instagram: @northhillschoirs
- Email or Call/Voice Mail Mr. Cloonan: [cloonans@nhsd.net](mailto:cloonans@nhsd.net) or 412-318-1000, x2731.
- North Hills Choral & Drama website: [www.nhchoiranddrama.net](http://www.nhchoiranddrama.net)
- NH Choirs YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/northhillschoirs](http://www.youtube.com/northhillschoirs)

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

Women’s Choir: @nhwomens, Symphonic Choir: @nhhssymph,  
North Hills Singers: @nhsingers, NYC Tour Choir: @nhtour2019

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.

## Calendar-at-a-Glance

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### January 2019

22	Tue	5:00-8:00PM	Chick-Fil-A Choir Night (eat and make money for the choir!)
29	Tue	2:15PM	Cabaret Night Auditions
31	Thu	7:00PM	Winter Musical: “Mary Poppins, Jr.” at the Middle School

### February 2019

1-2	Fri-Sat	7:00PM	Winter Musical: “Mary Poppins, Jr.” at the Middle School
1	Fri	\$\$\$	\$150 NYC Tour Payment due
4	Mon	7:00PM	NH Singers @ Hockey Senior Night, RMU Island Sports Complex
6-8	Wed-Fri	all day	PMEA District Chorus at Mt. Lebanon High School
25-28	Mon-Thu	2:15PM	Cabaret Night rehearsals (Thursday run-through)

### March 2019

1	Fri	7:00PM	<b>CABARET NIGHT in Cafeteria A Side</b>
8	Fri	\$\$\$	<i>Final NYC Payment due (amount will be announced)</i>
21-23	Thu-Sat	7:30PM	Spring Musical: “Tuck Everlasting”
28-30	Thu-Fri	7:30PM	Spring Musical: “Tuck Everlasting”

### April 2019

2	Tue	7:00PM	<i>NYC Parent Meeting (for those traveling with choir), HS Auditorium</i>
3	Wed	2:15PM	<i>Tour Choir Rehearsal</i>
9	Tue	2:15PM	<i>Tour Choir Rehearsal</i>
10	Wed	2:15PM	<i>Tour Choir Rehearsal</i>
13-15	Sat-Mon	all day	<i>Music Department Performance Tour to NYC and Messiah College</i>
24	Wed	7:00PM	<i>(Tentative) “Arrows of Caring” Charity Concert, HS Auditorium</i>

### May 2019

3	Fri	5:00-9:00PM	Arts Alive (music department performances, including NH Singers)
7	Tue	2:15-3:15	<b>Full Symphonic Choir Rehearsal, Room B119</b>
8	Wed	2:15-3:15	<b>Full Women’s Choir Rehearsal, Room B119</b>
8	Wed	evening	Choir Banquet (location & time TBD)
15	Wed	during school	Set up risers in auditorium
15	Wed	2:15-3:00	<b>Logistics Rehearsal for all Choir Members</b>
16	Thu	2:15-4:30	<b>Combined Choirs on Stage for Concert Run-Through</b>
17	Fri	6:30PM	<b>All Choir Members Report in Concert Attire for</b>
		7:00PM	<b>SPRING CONCERT &amp; SENIOR RECOGNITION</b>
22	Wed	2:15-4:30	Auditions for New North Hills Singers
28-29	Tue-Wed	2:15-3:15	New NH Singers Rehearsal for Graduation
31	Fri	5:30PM	New NH Singers report to Martorelli for 7:00 Graduation