

Deerlake Middle School Chorus

2024-2025 Handbook

*“Music expresses that which
cannot be said and on which
it is impossible to be silent”.*
- Victor Hugo

Mr. Steve Mills, Principal
Mrs. Lisa Dollar, Chorus Teacher

A Note from the Chorus Teacher

Dear Parents and Students,

I am so excited about the chorus classes at Deerlake Middle School! I am looking forward to a fun and rewarding year full of new and exciting activities and continuing traditions.

Please know each of my students is important to me. It is my pleasure to share the joy of music with them. My goals are to foster students' creativity and love for music; to provide my students with the vital technical skills they need, so there will be no obstacles to their progress; to teach them how to function as part of a musical ensemble, and to provide them with a wide range of musical experiences.

I hope that this handbook will be a welcome source of information for you. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to read it. Please call or e-mail me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lisa Dollar

School phone: 922-6545

E-mail: dollarl@leonschools.net

Course Descriptions

Chorus 1

Students with little or no choral experience develop beginning vocal technique and skills, critical and creative thinking skills, and an appreciation of music from around the world and through time. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

Chorus 2

Students build on previous choral experience to expand vocal, technical, musical, and ensemble skills through rehearsal, performance, and study of high-quality choral literature. Singers focus on increasing knowledge of music theory, music literacy, and aesthetic response. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

Chorus 3

Students with previous choral experience build intermediate-level knowledge of vocal technique, musical literacy, ensemble skills, and related musical knowledge through rehearsal, performance, and study of a variety of high-quality 2-, 3-, and 4-part choral literature. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

Parent Communication

Good communication between parent and teacher is a key element in the success of both your child and the chorus program. Please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Dollar if you have any questions or concerns. dollarl@leonschools.net

Class Rules

1. Arrive on time
2. Bring all your materials
3. Be respectful to yourself, your teacher, your classmates
4. Participate

Class Procedures

1. Keep the room tidy.

Students are responsible for picking up their playing area after each rehearsal. All music, instruments, books and materials must be put away at the end of each class.

*All chairs, stands, and other equipment may not leave the chorus room without permission.

*Storage areas need to be kept clean from clutter, litter and personal items.

2. NO FOOD DRINKS OR GUM (except water)

3. Students may only leave the classroom with the teacher's permission. **Use the proper procedure for leaving the room.**

4. **All electronics must be put away at all times** unless directed otherwise by the teacher. (phones, laptops, etc.)

Discipline Plan

Discipline: Students are expected to follow all school and classroom rules and procedures and always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Misbehavior will be dealt with in the following way:

1. Reminder
2. Verbal warning
3. Time out – Students will complete the Corrective Sheet
4. The Teacher-Student Conference Form will be sent home. It should be signed by a parent and returned. Parents will be contacted via e-mail or phone.
5. The student will be referred to the administration.

Severe Clause: Immediate referral to the administration will result in cases of fighting, defiance (refusing to do what you have been asked to do), or extreme disrespect to classmates or teacher.

Tardy Policy – Each grading period, parents will be contacted after the second unexcused tardy. A referral will be written for the third unexcused tardy.

Grading System

Grading Scale		Conduct Grading Scale
90-100	A	4 – no disciplinary issues
80-89	B	3 – 1 issue above a verbal warning
70-79	C	2 – 2-3 issues above a verbal warning
60-69	D	1 – 4 or more issues above a verbal warning
0-59	F	

*Grades will be posted on FOCUS and updated at least every two weeks.
Grades will be based upon the following:*

Pass-Offs/Tests/Concert Attendance 70%
Participation/Written Assignments 30%

What do I need to know about participation?

- Students are expected to have their supplies daily, and to remain on-task for the duration of the class in order to earn daily participation points. The highest level of performance can only be achieved through excellent rehearsals. Points will not be earned for inappropriate rehearsal behavior (excessive talking, not having music, etc.).
- Parents who wish to excuse their child from participation in class due to an illness or injury should notify Mrs. Dollar prior to the class they wish to have excused. An alternate method of participation will be assigned.

What do I need to know about written assignments?

Students will have some written assignments to complete such as definitions of musical terms, benchmark assignments, practice assignments, music theory and music history.

What do I need to know about progress?

The keys to progress include quality teacher instruction and correct repetition of that instruction. The most common hindrances to steady progress are lack of practice, practice with improper technique, and insufficient correct repetitions.

What do I need to know about practice?

Students should practice with a specific goal in mind. Students should use specific strategies to help them meet the goal. Goals and strategies will be covered in class.

What is a pass-off?

Students will “pass-off” selected sections of music – sing the selection for Mrs. Dollar. In this way, the teacher can be sure that each student is receiving individualized instruction. Pass-offs should be completed on time for full credit.

What do I need to know about tests and concert attendance?

Singing tests will be given to evaluate students' progress. These tests may include technique, scales, etudes and music literature. Written tests over musical terms, music theory and music history may be given. Since chorus is a performance-based class, all performances will be mandatory, and will count toward the academic grade.

- The main performances will be: Fall Concert, Winter Concert, and Spring Concert.
- There may be additional concerts during the school year. All information concerning performances will be announced as soon as it becomes final.
- Attendance at all concerts, rehearsals, and sectionals is REQUIRED. These activities are considered co-curricular because they are extensions of daily classroom activities. Grades are given for these activities.
- No makeup assignment can substitute for the experience of participating in a live concert. This is the main focus of our class. Please make every effort to attend.
- If a student is absent from a concert due to illness, death in the family, or a family emergency, the absence will be excused.
- A letter from their parent should be submitted to Mrs. Dollar on the next school day the student is in attendance.
- Parents should fill out the “Notice of Absence Form” at least one week before the concert if their child will be absent for any other reason. You will find a copy of this form on Mrs. Dollar’s website.
- If a student is absent from a concert with no excuse, they will earn a “0” for that concert grade.

- Students who have an excused absence from the concert must submit an alternate assignment to receive credit.

Examples of Unexcused Absences

I didn't know, I had too much homework, I can't get a ride, I forgot,
I had something else to do.

Concert Clean Up – Students are required to remain after the concert to help with cleaning up. Each student must sign out with the director before leaving. Participation in clean-up activities will count toward the students' grade for the concert.

Concert Etiquette

Concerts are very important to our students. They work very hard to prepare. It is important that students are allowed to perform in a true concert setting, and that parents are allowed to see and hear their child perform with minimal distractions. Therefore, we respectfully request that the audience (including students who aren't performing) observe the following:

- Please sit quietly through the entire concert, if possible.
- Please do not enter or exit the performance area while the chorus is performing.
- Please do not talk or move around the room while the chorus is performing.
- Please do not use cell phones during the concert.
- The appropriate way to show appreciation is clapping. Yelling and whistling are not considered polite.

Private Lessons

Private lessons taught by a specialist are highly encouraged. They are invaluable for working on fundamentals of posture, building technique, preparing for auditions, etc. In order for music instruction to be effective, it should occur regularly. The standard lesson time for beginners is 30 minutes. More advanced students need a minimum of 45-60 minutes per lesson. Please ask Mrs. Dollar for a list of instructors, if you are interested in private lessons.

Concert Attire

Concert Uniform (Loaned from the school) and your own black shoes

T-Shirts

If enough students are interested, we will order Chorus t-shirts. These are optional. They may be worn on the day of each concert, on Fridays, for pep rallies, auditions, and any chorus field trips.

Chorus Field Trips

The chorus may participate in various trips during the school year. Please note the following:

- All school rules apply on all chorus trips (including dress code).
- Students must attend all mandatory concerts in order to go on any chorus trip.
- Students must maintain a “B” average in chorus and at least a “3” in chorus conduct in order to perform on any chorus field trip.
- If transportation is provided for an away performance, all students are expected to travel to and from the event on the transportation provided.
- Students are encouraged to leave personal electronic devices at home. However, they may bring them at their own risk.
- Students with a referral will lose the privilege of participating in trips and activities.
- All medications must be turned in with directions to the director. Students may not carry medications.

Money Collection

- There is no fee associated with the Deerlake Chorus. Money will be collected for expenses such as application fees or transportation for a field trip. Please let Mrs. Dollar know if other arrangements need to be made due to financial hardship.
- Money which has been collected for a chorus trip is not refundable after it has been submitted to the vendor.

Fund-Raising Activities

From time to time, fund-raising events will be scheduled to cover expenses such as student awards, sheet music, piano tuning, etc. Each chorus member will be encouraged, not required, to participate. This money will be used to benefit our students. If more money is collected than is needed to cover expenses for this year, the balance may carry over to help with next year’s expenses. Thank you for your support.