

NORTHWEST KIDDER MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR HANDBOOK



2017-2018

Dear Students and Parents,

Here is our Vocal Music Handbook. It contains all the information you need to make your participation in vocal music during this coming year pleasant and rewarding. In it you will find information about our uniforms, performances, and grades. You will also find information about some of the optional opportunities that exist in vocal music at Kidder Middle School. I encourage you to read all of this material and consider participating in these extra-curricular events. Parents are asked to sign the slip at the end of the handbook and return it to the choir room.

Singers in the Northwest Vocal Music program are challenged to grow musically and vocally to their greatest potential. We do have two requirements:

1. Singers are required to show **RESPECT** for their fellow singers, the music they perform, their director, and the work that must be done to make our choirs perform at their highest possible level of achievement.
2. They are also required to show **RESPONSIBILITY** for their individual contribution by trying their best at all rehearsals and performances.

Singers who meet these requirements will be REWARDED with an experience unlike any other they can have in school – encompassing pride, joy, feelings of accomplishment, success, fun, self-satisfaction and a stirring of their soul.

Should you have questions, comments, or concerns about vocal music activities, please call James Cumings at 817-4978 or e-mail me at james.cumings@nwschools.org

Sincerely,

James Cumings
Director of Vocal Music grades 6-8

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IF YOU LOVE TO SING AND WANT TO BE A BETTER MUSICIAN, YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE!

INTRODUCTION

Every fine choir has high standards in their rehearsals, concerts and all the time that they spend together. The music standards and standards of behavior are an important part of choir at Northwest. This handbook is designed to inform parents and singers of these standards and the activities of the choirs. It is also to inform both singers and their parents of the responsibilities that are a part of being in an excellent choir at Northwest. Each choir will decide their own goals and write their own Code of Conduct.

I. REHEARSALS

Our concerts can only be as good as our rehearsals and the only key to success is plain old-fashioned hard work. Remember that it takes self-discipline to be a good musician.

YOU AND I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY STUDENT INFRINGING ON ANOTHER STUDENT'S RIGHT TO LEARN.

The usual organization of rehearsals will consist of:

1. Attendance and announcements
2. Physical and vocal warm-ups including breathing exercises
3. Sight reading and music theory
4. Work on choral music literature

SPECIAL REHEARSALS

The Director reserves the right to call sectionals or other special rehearsals. These are generally joint rehearsals that happen just before a concert during the school day. They will be announced in advance and attendance is required. If, for some reason, you are not able to attend, a note from your parents or teacher must be given to the director. The director will consider the timeliness and the reason for the absence in order to issue the appropriate grade.

II. MUSIC

Each person will be issued a folder with the current choir music in it as well as spiral notebook. It is your responsibility to have the folder, music, and notebook in rehearsal every day. Please feel free to mark your music *IN PENCIL*. The replacement cost for a piece of music is \$1.00. The replacement of an entire folder is no more than \$5.00.

III. NEW STANDARDS BASED GRADING SYSTEM (STARTED IN 2015)

NW Kidder Middle School has implemented *Standards Based Grading*. Students will be assessed on 11 standards. Here is how the scoring works.

Formative Assessment

0	No attempt made
1	0-49%
2	50%- 69%
3	70%-79%
4	80%-89%
5	90%-100%

Summative Assessment (Grade Level Standards)

Blank	Standard not assessed
0	No attempt made
Not Meeting	Below 70%
Progressing	70-79%
Meeting	80-99%
Exceeding	100%

Here are the standards for choir:

1. I can sing my part with age appropriate tone, pitch, and rhythm.
2. I can sing musically (dynamically, with articulation, syllabic/word stress, and phrasing).
3. I can sing musically using facial expression and physical engagement to express the meaning or intent of the music and text.
4. I can sight read according to grade level.
5. I can define and explain music theory (symbols, terms, and notation) according to grade level.
6. I can perform expressively at concerts in appropriate attire.
7. I can demonstrate good concert etiquette (audience, on-stage, off-stage)
8. I can evaluate strengths and weaknesses of performances (ensemble/individual).
9. I have developed good rehearsal habits.
10. I can problem solve (pitches, rhythms, and musicality) by myself or with others.
11. I can maintain my music notebook.

The following items will be taken into consideration when grading singers:

1. Daily Work: Attitude and Effort – In order to build and maintain a top quality choir, every singer must put forth their best effort at all times. This must be done during rehearsals and during performances. Our attitude can greatly affect the attitudes of those around us. If each individual makes the effort to do his or her best at all times, our success as a top level choir will be guaranteed.

a. Expectations for each rehearsal

- Bring materials: music, spiral notebook, pencil.
- Be a kind, respectful, encouraging, focused and diligent worker--be working before the tardy bell.
- Build habits of excellence: posture, breathing, tone, musicianship, note taking, team-work, etc.
- Follow directions.

2. Concerts--YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC CONCERTS IN ORDER TO FULLY MEET PERFORMANCE STANDARDS. Each performance will be used as a summative evaluation to check for performing expressively and demonstrating proper concert etiquette. Choir members will be expected to participate in all performances to be able to go on the Choir field trip to Cedar Point at the end of the year. If you cannot attend a performance because of severe illness or death in the family, please have your parents notify the director by telephone or by letter. You will then be excused so that you can do the make-up assignment. The make-up assignment is due 7 days following the performance. Students who do not have an acceptable excuse will not be allowed to make up the concert grade. The following performances are required to receive a passing grade in class – please write them on your family calendar:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Fall Concert 6 th -12 th Grade | October 17, 2017 |
| 2. | Winter Concert 6 th -8 th Grade | December 14, 2017 |
| 3. | District Choir Festival | March 21, 2018 |
| 4. | District Choir Festival | March 22, 2018 |
| 5. | Spring Concert – 6 th –8 th Grade | May 17, 2018 |

IV. UNIFORMS

The uniform of the KMS Choirs include black dress-pants for guys and black skirts for ladies (**ladies: please find black skirts that are knee length or longer**). Gentlemen should have black dress shoes and socks, and the

ladies should wear black shoes with black hosiery. **It is the responsibility of the singer to obtain these items for the choir uniform** (look for sales ☺).

6th grade choir will wear a red 3-button choir polo shirt with the NW Choir emblem on it. 7th grade ladies will wear the same shirt as 6th grade choir. 8th grade ladies wear a v-neck fitted shirt with NW Choir emblem. 7th and 8th grade gentlemen in ESCHOIR will be sporting a white dress shirt, black tie, and NW tie-tack. Students will be sized in the fall and may purchase their shirt for \$16 after their uniform arrives. The school will order each singer a choir shirt.

It is not the intention of the Northwest Choirs to prohibit anyone from being in choir because they cannot afford to buy any part of the uniform. We have set aside opportunities for students to earn money for a uniform or help those singers who might need financial support. Please see the director in private for assistance. Do not wait until the day before or the day of the concert. Please let the choir director know by the **last week of September**.

V. VOICE/PIANO LESSON SCHOLARSHIPS & FUNDRAISING.

Voice/Piano lesson scholarships are provided by our Choir Parents organization. Families that would like to **receive scholarships** for voice or piano lessons will need to meet the participation standards set by the Choir Parents organization. For example, you may be required to help at an event or participate in a fundraiser like the Apple Pie Sale.

The scholarship works in the form of a rebate. Students pay for their lessons in full to their private lesson teacher and then return their receipt to the choir parents for a \$7 rebate per lesson. That is generally about ½ the cost of a lesson. Please contact the Choir Parent Organization for further details.

Each year the KMS Choirs and the Choir Parents Association conduct various fund raising drives to raise money for uniforms, music, equipment, voice/piano lesson scholarships, and trips. 25% of a student's Fall Fundraising sale is put in their **student account** to help them pay for uniforms, trips, and voice/piano lessons. Participation in fundraising activities is optional and no one is required to participate.

VI. OTHER ACTIVITIES-- Choir members are encouraged to participate in the following other activities:

1. Honors Choir

This choir was begun in the fall of 1991 and is a 60-70 voice extra-curricular choir that meets after school one day a week from September through May. It is an opportunity for highly motivated excellent musicians to do some higher level work. Auditions are held for the group and it is open to all singers in grades 6, 7, and 8 who are in choir. They perform at all Kidder Middle School concerts and attend Choir Festival. In 2005 the choir was invited to sing at the State ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) at Calvin College in October. They were also been invited to sing at the State Music Educators Conference at the DeVos Convention Center in Grand Rapids in 2003, 2005, 2010, 2013, and 2016 (Only 1-3 choirs a year in Michigan receive such invitations.) The choir has established themselves as one of the top middle school choirs in the state of Michigan. You are invited to audition.

2. State Honors Choir (generally for Honors Choir members only)

Michigan School Vocal Music Association Junior High State Honors Choir

Auditions are held in late September (check your calendar) for State Honors Choir. You are encouraged to audition. In the past years we have had between 4 and 16 singers in state honors choir each year. We send people from our Honors Choir to audition for the State Honors Choir. This choir has three (3) rehearsals on Saturdays in the fall/winter at different locations in the state. They perform in the DeVos Convention Center in Grand Rapids on Thursday, January 25th, at the Michigan Music Conference. Information will be given to you during the first weeks of school during NW Honors Choir.

3. Private Voice and Piano Lessons

As a service to you, private voice and piano teachers are available to give lessons during school at the middle school. Students will be allowed to miss 30 minutes of choir once a week to participate in their music lesson. The private teachers set the fees for these lessons (about \$15-\$17). If you are interested in taking voice or piano lessons then please see Mr. Cumings for details. If you would like to take lessons outside of the school day then please ask for names and numbers of local teachers. You may also find this list of names on our NW School website. You must sign up on a semester basis. Please respond soon. Most all studios are filled before or within the first week of school.

4. Solo and Ensemble Festival

Choir members who are taking private voice lessons or voice class are encouraged to participate in District Solo and Ensemble Festival. This festival takes place on May 5th, 2017. You have the opportunity to perform for a judge and receive comments in a positive learning environment.

We're so glad that you have chosen to be a member of a fine performing vocal ensemble and we look forward to a great year of learning and sharing beautiful music!

Sincerely,

Mr. Cumings

Mr. Cumings' suggest the following guidelines for success:

- Vocal health is stressed in choir by good vocal production habits. Part of this is good posture, breathing, and proper tone placement, which will be stressed every day. If you have a sore throat, try singing lightly. If it hurts to sing – stop singing immediately and learn by listening and watching the music.
- A cold should not prohibit you from singing – a sore throat might. If you need to have a cough drop during rehearsal, tell the director before the rehearsal begins. If you do not feel well enough to be on the risers and participating in class, you should not be in choir that day. If you cannot sing, you will be expected to be on the risers, have your music out, and learn by listening and watching.
- The choir room and practice areas must be kept neat and clean at all times. This is each choir member's responsibility.
- You must sing with correct posture at all times. Make good posture an unconscious habit rather than something you save for performance.
- You must mark the director's comments in your music, using a pencil only. You must remember musical terms and symbols that are explained in class.
- You must look beyond the notes when reading music – be aware of tempo indications and expressive markings.

Northwest RW Kidder Middle School
Choir Calendar 2017-2018

BOLD PRINT INDICATES REQUIRED EVENTS

Aug 25-Sept 11	Fall Choir Fundraiser, Morley Candy Sale Kick-off (orders arrive the week of (OCT 16 th))
Friday, September 22	Homecoming Day Parade, 5:00pm. (Optional for all singers)
Saturday, October 21	MSVMA 6-7-8-9 State Honors Choir Auditions, (South Lyon East HS)
Tuesday, October 17	Fall Choir Concert (Grades 6-12), NWHS Cafetorium Two Concerts: 6:00pm (6th, 7th, HS choirs) & 7:30pm (ESCHOIR, 8th, Honors Choir, HS choirs)
Saturday, November 4	MSVMA 6-7-8-9 State Honors Choir Rehearsal (Birchrn HS)
Saturday, November 18	MSVMA 6-7-8-9 State Honors Choir Rehearsal (Mona Shores MS)
Saturday, November 18	Apple Pie Sale/assembly line at KMS (see Choir Parents for details)
Thursday, December 14	KMS Choirs Winter Concert, NWHS Cafetorium Two Concerts: 6:00pm (6, 7, Honors Choir) & 7:30pm (ESCHOIR, 8, HC)
Thursday, December 22	KMS Choirs/Band KMS Winter Assembly Performance (Upper grades only)
Saturday, January 6	MSVMA 6-7-8-9 State Honors Choir Rehearsal (Walled Lake Central HS)
Thursday, January 25	MSVMA 6-7-8-9 State Honors Rehearsal and Choir Concert DeVos Place Convention Center, Grand Rapids
February 9-13	Choir Valentine Flower Sale (Valentine workday 13 th , Deliveries on the 14 th)
Wed/Thurs, March 21-22	MSVMA District 8 Choir Festival (Holt HS) *note these time requests may not be honored due to schedule constraints Potentially: 6th& 7th Ladies & ESCHOIR on the 21st Potentially: 8th Ladies & Honors Choir on the 22nd
Thurs/Fri, April 26-27	MSVMA State Choir Festival @ Brighton HS (Honors Choir may attend if they receive a 'I' rating at district. Curricular classes may choose to attend.)
Saturday, TBA	Trip to see the Broadway Show ("Aladdin" or "Wicked")
Saturday, May 5	MS Solo & Ensemble, Northwest High School (for soloists & select groups less than 20)
Thursday, May 17	Spring Choir/Band Collage Concert at NWHS Cafetorium. Concert I 6:00pm—6th-Choir and Band Concert II 7:00pm---7th and ESCHOIR and Concert Band Concert III 8:15pm---8th Choir, HC, Symphonic Band
Thursday, June 7	Choir trip to Cedar Point

BOLD PRINT INDICATES REQUIRED EVENTS

Dear Mr. Cumings,

I have read the Northwest Choir Handbook with my singer and find that all the policies, rules and activities are reasonable expectations for my child.

The Choir Handbook is online at the KMS Choir Webpage.

1. Go to www.nwschools.org
2. Click on "District" and scroll down to 'Home'
4. NW Music Department (left column)
5. Click on KMS Choir Webpage (scroll down and right. It's under the calendar)
6. Click on KMS Choir Handbook



I will support my singer throughout the year in upholding these policies and participating in choir activities and the following required concerts.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Fall Concert 6 th -12 th Grade | October 17, 2017 |
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Signed _____ Date _____
(parent or legal guardian)

Please enter my e-mail address to receive a monthly choir letter, permission slips, and other information.
(If you KNOW that I've got your email address then you don't need to fill this part out)

The e-mail address I check regularly is:

Optional second e-mail address is:

STUDENT

I _____ have read the Northwest Choir
(your name)

Handbook and find that all the policies, rules and activities are reasonable and that I can uphold them for the school year. I will attend the concerts listed above and other choir activities.

Signed _____ Date _____
(choir member's signature)

Please return this slip by Friday, August 25th