

Welcome To Derby Choirs!

I am so excited to begin this adventure with the students at Derby! Here is our Vocal Music Handbook. We hope it contains all the information you need to make your participation in vocal music pleasant and rewarding. We have followed the previous format in providing you with a CALENDAR of vocal music events. In addition to this you will find an explanation of the GRADING SYSTEM, a listing of rehearsal RULES, a performance DRESS CODE, and GENERAL INFORMATION you might find helpful this year.

Please read the handbook carefully. This will prepare you for your work in choir. Share the handbook with your parents. You will need to understand the responsibilities of being a part of the Derby Choir Program. If a problem arises, consult the handbook first. If you do not find the answer there, please don't hesitate to ask.

Students in the vocal music program are challenged to grow musically and vocally to their greatest potential. They are required to respect their directors, their fellow musicians, the music they perform, and the work each of us must do to become the best choir(s) possible. They are also required to show responsibility for their individual contribution by trying their best at all rehearsals and performances.

If you do these things, your reward will be an experience unlike any other you have in school, encompassing pride, joy, feelings of accomplishment, success, fun and self satisfaction!

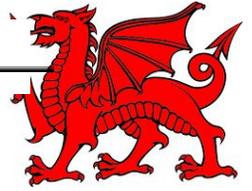
Let's all have a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Ann Marie Theis

Vocal Music Director

ATheis@birmingham.k12.mi.us



Derby Middle School Choir Handbook

Teacher Name: Ms. Theis

Email: ATheis@birmingham.k12.mi.us

Websites: mstheis.com, Google Classroom, and Band

Office Hours: by appointment.

Purpose/Course Description:

In all choirs, students will learn a variety of choral music and be given the opportunity to showcase their singing development through performance. Music history, theory, listening, and appreciation, as well as vocal pedagogy and music reading skills are taught.

Materials Needed (Supplies Suggested):

Printed music and sight-reading materials will be supplied, as well as a choir folder. Students are responsible for a pencil and **suggested concert uniform** (page 3).

Methods of Instruction:

Group rehearsal, sectional rehearsal, verbal instructions and questioning, physical movement, listening exercises and modeling.

Evaluation/Grade Calculations:

Student grades will be based on class participation and attitude (rehearsal technique), written assignments and tests, listening skills, and participation in required performances.

Types of Evaluation and Assessment:

Students will be evaluated on written work, sight-reading, singing tests, and daily class participation.

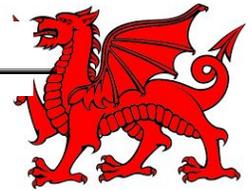
Assignment Expectations:

Assignments are expected to be the student's own work, of high quality, and turned in on time.

Grading Scale:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+

73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F



Additional Operational Information: See attached parent information sheet and concert schedule.

Topics, Concepts, or Units of Study:

At the end of the year, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and application of basic choral music.
- Produce a grade appropriate choral sound.
- Demonstrate proper concert etiquette.
- Demonstrate an intermediate knowledge of music theory.
- Demonstrate an intermediate knowledge of solfege.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the text of the music.
- Listen critically to a piece of music and generate topic of discussion on said piece of music.
- Have experience with movement as it relates to music.
- Experience several genres of music through choral music singing and other venues.

Classroom Procedures:

Student responsibilities and expectations: Students are expected to behave in a mature and respectful manner. An open and positive attitude is essential.

Consequences: Consequences for inappropriate behavior include (but are not limited to) parental contact, referral to the appropriate administrator, in-house suspension, and even out-of-school suspension for severe examples of such behavior.

Cheating: The act of obtaining answers or completing assignments in a fraudulent or deceitful manner. Staff and administrators will determine disciplinary action. Possible zero grade for assignment and possible in-school suspension.

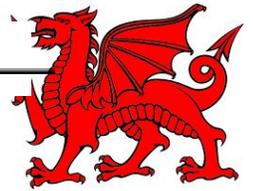
Concert and Festival Uniforms

The purpose of the concert uniform is so that we all look uniform. We are all members of one team. The concert uniform has been kept very simple and standard. THIS YEAR EVERY STUDENT WILL BE ASKED TO HAVE A CHOIR SHIRT. They will also need to wearing black pants, black socks and black shoes with this for all concerts and festivals. If students need assistance in purchasing the choir uniform, please let Ms. Theis know.

LADIES: Hair must be pulled back (we want to see your face)
 No large hoop ear-rings or excessive jewelry.
 Black pants, black socks and black shoes

MEN: Black dress pants (no jeans, please).
 Black socks and black dress shoes (no tennis shoes, please).
 Hair must be pulled back (we want to see your face)

Dressing appropriately for concert performances not only *looks* professional, but also makes a student feel they are really part of the entire group. Please make sure that your son/daughter is dressed appropriately for all concert performances.

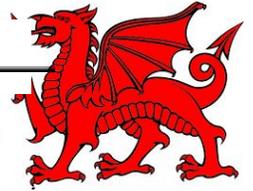


CALENDAR

One of the great things about our music program is that students have many opportunities to perform, both individually and in their groups. Some of these opportunities are optional, but some are REQUIRED. All students in a music group must participate in their required concerts. Important musical factors such as balance and blend are easily affected by the absence of even just one performer! Students accept the responsibility to be at required concerts when they join a musical group. In view of this it is proper to consider how well this responsibility has been met when determining a student's grade.

1. Look over the calendar carefully NOW. Note which performances are required and the amount of points for each that will affect your marking period grade.
2. Decide the optional opportunities (0 points) in which you wish to participate.
3. Write appropriate dates on your family's activity calendar NOW.
4. Absences from required concerts will result in a loss of the points listed with the exception of:
 - Illness. (Students claiming illness, but having attended school the day of the concert and the day following the concert will not be excused.)
 - Death in the immediate family.
 - Planned absence. This means that the director has been notified several weeks (if not months) in advance, and that every attempt has been made to rectify the conflict.
5. Absences from a required concert such as the following will not be excused:
 - A. **I had to work.** Students are given the performance schedule on the first day of school so that they can avoid conflicts with work schedules. Employers told far in advance of a specific date will most likely avoid it.
 - B. **I couldn't find a ride.** There are over 200 students in the high school choir program. One of them probably lives right near you and would gladly help you make it to and from the concert. If this isn't the case, students should speak with the director about arranging to be picked up and dropped off.
 - C. **I had family obligations.** (i.e: I had to baby-sit. I had to go to a birthday celebration, etc.) The performance schedule is given out on the first day of school so that students can arrange their calendar and avoid school/personal conflicts. Please do your best to honor the performance dates of your singer.
 - D. **I forgot.** Students are reminded daily (during class) for at least one week before an upcoming concert. Also, a performance schedule is given out at the beginning of each semester.
6. If there is a school related conflict:

Each year the music faculty and administration create a school event calendar which is virtually free of conflicts. There are times, however, when two events are scheduled at



the same time and cannot be avoided. When this happens it is the responsibility of the student to notify the teacher and the coach about the conflict in a timely fashion. Po states that the teacher, the coach, and the administration (usually the A.D.) will then decide how to best resolve the conflict. **Most of the time things can be worked out so that the student can participate in both events.** When participation in both events is NOT a possibility, the decision about which event the student will participate in becomes the responsibility of the GRPS staff.

Performance Absences:

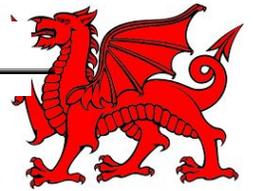
Performances occur after an extensive six to eight week period of rehearsals. It gives the students a chance to showcase the skills that they have acquired through working with the music. It is REQUIRED for every student to attend each performance.

Excused Absences: An excused absence is granted only in the case of illness or emergency, and in most cases the director must receive a phone call in advance of the performance. If the student completes the required make-up assignment given by the teacher, the marking period grade will be unaffected. Failure to complete this assignment will result in a marking period grade reduction of *ONE FULL LETTER GRADE*. **Assignments must be completed one week from the concert date.**

Unexcused Absences: Any performance absence deemed unexcused will result in a grade reduction. Students who receive an unexcused absence will have the option to complete the required make-up assignment given by the teacher. Students who do not do the assignment will have a marking period grade reduction of *TWO FULL LETTER GRADES*. Students who choose to do the assignment will have a marking period grade reduction of *ONE FULL LETTER GRADE*. In either case, the absence is still recorded as unexcused. **Assignments must be completed one week from the concert date.**

Choir Guidelines and Expectations:

1. Students need to come into class, promptly get their folders, and be in their spot on the riser when class begins. All bathroom, drinking fountain, and pencil sharpening duties need to be done **before** class.
2. NO food, drinks, gum or candy will be allowed in the choir room.
3. Students will bring only the necessary materials for choir to class: Music, Folder, any homework, and a pencil. Any unnecessary items, such as magazines, pictures, hairbrushes, make-up, toys, etc. will be confiscated and returned at the end of the year.
4. Respect each other, respect room property, respect Ms. Theis and you shall receive respect in return. Students will be charged for any music that is damaged or not returned. Music is very costly. Never treat it like a piece of paper!



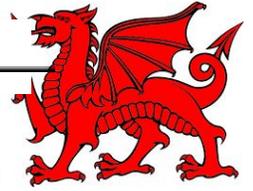
5. **NO TOUCHING THE PIANO! No excuses. Just leave it alone!**
6. Listen when rehearsing music and whenever the director is talking. You should talk only at designated times. Even if only one section is rehearsing, everyone else should still be following his or her music. Plan to talk very little and sing a great deal when you come to rehearsal!
7. **NO NO NO NO NO CELL PHONES DURING CHOIR REHEARSAL.** Students will lose all participation points for the day.

5. Responsibility

Some of the best rewards of participating in a successful program like GRPS Choirs are the skills and values which can be learned by the students. Important lessons like responsibility, dependability, honesty, accountability, and sportsmanship are just a few that are stressed. With this in mind students are encouraged to ask themselves: "Is what I'm doing (or about to do) really being responsible?" For example:

1. Locked doors mean stay out. **NOT** "It's ok for me to jimmy the lock and go in because I forgot my backpack."
2. Folders belong to the school and are the responsibility of each student. **NOT** "I lost my folder but I'll just borrow one from another student until it shows up."
3. Uniforms belong to the school and are the responsibility of each student. **NOT** "I lost my bowtie but its ok because I'll just get another one from the closet and not have to pay for it."
4. The Choir Risers are designed for rehearsing. **NOT** "It's ok if I eat my breakfast and some of it drops on the carpet. I can just smudge it in with my foot and no one will know the difference." **ALSO** "It's ok if I clean out my bag and leave my old papers and this water bottle on the floor. Ms. Theis or a custodian will clean it up."
5. Students should support one another and realize that everyone has a different interpretation and that they are usually trying their best to express it. **NOT** "Wow, he really sounded awful. He makes the choir sound terrible," **OR** "Why did Ms. Theis pick her for the solo? All my friends said I was much better."
6. Every singer makes a difference at every rehearsal. **NOT** "I watched the playoffs all last night so I'll just skip rehearsal today and get caught up on my homework."
7. Excessive communication (verbal and nonverbal) is extremely disruptive to the rehearsal process. **NOT** "It doesn't matter if I whisper to my neighbor or silently communicate with the cute alto across the room because Ms. Theis isn't working with my section right now."

CHORAL GRADING CRITERIA



Your grade in choir will reflect many aspects of your role as a member of this group. Each of the following is an element of your grade, and each is of equal importance. I do not think that strength in any one area will “carry” your entire grade.

Rehearsal Technique – Students will be awarded a rehearsal behavior/participation grade. This grade is based on respect shown to fellow students and the teacher, attendance and readiness, class participation and effort, respect shown to the classroom, property of the teacher as well as property belonging to other students. If a student is tardy, comes to class unprepared, is disrespectful to others, will not participate, etc. points will be deducted accordingly. This is worth 30% of your over all grade.

Written Assignments and Tests – Most worksheets are filled out during class, however, occasionally there *are* homework assignments. Each assignment varies in point value. All theory, singing, listening and other tests will be announced ahead of time. Assignments turned in late will lose points each day they are late. Assignments not turned in will equal a “zero”. This is worth 30% of your over all grade.

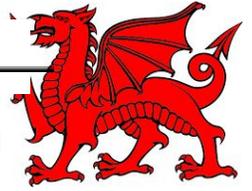
Concert Performances – Concerts are REQUIRED for every choir student. Students must arrive at the designated time, be dressed in the appropriate uniform, and stay for the entire concert. Concerts are equivalent to major exams in academic classes, though it is impossible to duplicate a concert as it is in an academic class. This is worth 40% of your over all grade.

30% Behavior/participation
40% District Concert Performances
30% Teacher Created Assesments

YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR CHOIR!!!

Everyone is important and has something to contribute!

Don't be afraid of failure. Worry instead about the changes you miss if you don't even try. **Babe Ruth** struck out 1330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs. **Michael Jordan** was cut from his high school basketball team when he was 15! **23 publishers rejected Dr. Seuss' first children's book**, the 24th publisher sold 6 million

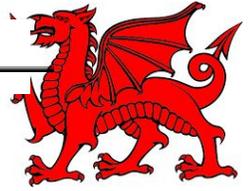


copies. **Thomas Edison** was asked how he dealt with the 12,000 failures he experienced in inventing the light bulb. He said he never failed...he just learned 12,000 ways not to invent the light bulb. **Albert Einstein** didn't talk until he was four years old. **Walt Disney** was once fired because he had "no good ideas." Rocket scientist **Wernher von Braun** failed 9th grade algebra. **Ludwig von Beethoven's** teacher once said, "As a composer, he is hopeless." Think *positively* and remember that ***you are important to our group.*** We would not be the same group without you. ***YOU ARE NEEDED!***

Please report to all concerts at least 45 minutes prior to the start time. Plan on delays!

Remember, to be on time is to be late, to be early is to be on time.

Further information can be obtained by visiting our web page at: www.mstheis.com



RETURN THIS PAGE TO MS. THEIS

This assignment is worth 20 points

I have read the 2018-2019 Derby Choir Handbook and, by signing below, I acknowledge that I will uphold the policies and procedures outlined in this document. I understand that participation in Derby Choirs is contingent upon my positive contribution to the choir team and that my behavior and attitude directly affects the outcome of our success this year.

Student Signature: _____

Date:

Choir:

I have read the 2017-2018 Riverside Choir Handbook with my child, and by signing below, I acknowledge that I will support my singer by helping them uphold the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

Parent Signature: _____

Date:



RETURN THIS PAGE TO MS. THEIS

Please take a moment to fill out the information on this sheet. Information provided is kept private and only used by the Derby music to contact families of Derby Choir Students regarding program events and choir news.

Student Name	Parent/ Guardians Names	Grade and choir	Parent email	Parent phone number	Are you willing to volunteer with RMS choirs?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your dedication, time and effort to the choir program are appreciated!

Check out the choir's website: www.mstheis.com