

Alamo Heights Junior School Choir

Handbook 2016-2017



Rachel Skarke,
Director of Choral Music

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Conference Period:
9th (3:15-4:00)*



Dear Choir Parents,

Your child has elected to participate in the Alamo Heights Junior School Choir program this year. Thank you for your encouragement in this decision. Statistics indicate that if your child participates in music, he or she is likely to earn higher grades and score better on standardized tests. Now there is powerful scientific evidence of a cause and effect link between music instruction and intelligence.

Within this packet is information that explains to you and your child his/her responsibilities and opportunities as an AHJS Choir Member. Please read over this material as some of the information may require time and effort on your part. Please mark the concert dates on your calendar so that your child will not have any conflicts with these events. Choir is a performing art. Therefore, performances and extra rehearsals do receive a grade. An email or a call from you is required in the event of an emergency, and notification to me of any possible conflicts as early as possible will help to avoid potential problems.

At various times during the year, I will need assistance with activities. If you are interested, please note your availability on the handbook form at the end of this packet. I will then contact you about specific events. Your willingness is the key to maintaining an outstanding choir program, and I appreciate your help.

My goal is to provide your child with the best choral music education possible. If you have any concerns or questions about your child or the choir program, please call or text my personal cell phone at 660-8863, contact my office at 824-3231 x3106, or by email at rskarke@ahisd.net. Finally, if you provide your email address on the form in this packet, I will send you concert announcements and other important choir information throughout the school year.

Please sign the handbook contract on the last page informing us of your commitment to your child's participation in the Alamo Heights Junior School Choir. Your child will begin the year by receiving a quiz grade of 100% for returning the signed form by **Friday, September 2nd**.

Sincerely,

Rachel Skarke
Director of Choral Music
Alamo Heights Junior School

Alamo Heights Junior School
7607 N. New Braunfels
824-3231 x3106
660-TUNE
rskarke@ahisd.net

Philosophy:

The purpose of the Alamo Heights Junior School Choir Program is to provide students who love to sing with opportunities to enhance their musical and vocal skills, to rehearse and perform a variety of musical styles, to participate in various performance venues, and to learn to use their talents in service to others in the belief that these opportunities will create life-long singers. In addition, characteristics of leadership, teamwork, and personal integrity will be encouraged to assist students in becoming successful and contributing members of their school and community.

Course Description:

Choir is open to all students at Alamo Heights Junior School. Students will focus on healthy vocal technique, fundamentals of music theory, history, sight-singing, and the rehearsal of music. Most importantly, students will develop self-discipline and learn to work cooperatively. The most successful choir students strive for "excellence" both as individuals and as an ensemble. The choirs include:

- 6th grade mixed choir
- Intermediate 7th-8th grade ladies choir
- Advanced 7th-8th grade ladies choir
- 7th-8th grade men's choir

Choir Room/Rehearsal Expectations:

- Be sitting in your assigned spot on the risers with all required materials when the bell rings
- Follow entrance and exit procedures
- Dispose of gum, candy or other "foreign bodies" that are in your mouth on your way to the risers
- Follow all directions given by the director the first time they are given
- Participate actively and positively in all class/rehearsal activities
- Utilize the 8 Keys of character and demonstrate respect for yourself, your classmates, and your director at all times

1:1 iPad access:

We are excited to have received 30 brand new iPads for our classroom this year!! This means we are going to be using these devices in place of our choir binders and all paper assignments will now be completed digitally. Please refer to the iPad expectations agreement in this packet.

Campus Cell Phone Policy:

As you may be aware, our district has enacted a "no cell phone policy" for all students at AHJS from the moment the first bell rings, until the final bell of the day. If a student is found to have a cell phone in their possession during class, the teacher will turn the phone into the office.

Discipline:

The choir program uses the campus discipline management plan. The goal of this plan is to encourage students to make appropriate choices and to realize that they are responsible for those choices and the resulting consequences, both positive and negative. Students who cause disruptions to rehearsals or performances will be subject to consequences deemed appropriate by the director and may include: redirection by the director, conference with director, choir service, phone call to parents, and office referral/detention. Students who continue to cause disruptions may also be limited in their participation in choir activities outside of school.

24-Hour Code of Leadership:

Students participating in co-curricular activities such as choir have the added responsibility to maintain an exemplary level of behavior both at school and away from school. The *Alamo Heights ISD 24-Hour Code of Leadership* states:

"The opportunity to participate in extra and co-curricular activities is a **privilege** often placing students in a position of public recognition. Students involved in these activities may also serve as role models."

Choir Activity Fee:

There is a **\$30 choir fee** that will provide for a choir T-shirt, travel, contest fees, supplies and other miscellaneous items. Social activities and field trips are separate and will be collected per event. If you cannot pay this entire fee, please contact Ms. Skarke to work out a payment plan or alternate ways for your singer/family to contribute to the group. **Please make all checks out to AHISD and include an address and phone number on the check!**

Grading Policy:

As a performance-based class, a significant percentage of points are awarded for participation in performances. Students must be responsible for informing their parents about attendance at concerts because of the big impact these events have on their grade. Read on to understand how points are earned in each category.

30% - Performances & After School Rehearsals

In order to receive full credit for concerts, each student must:

1. Attend all scheduled performances!
2. Arrive THIRTY MINUTES before scheduled performance time.
3. Wear the appropriate uniform.
4. Follow the code of conduct.
5. Use proper concert etiquette when watching others perform.

40% - Daily Participation

A student will receive an "A" for participation if they:

- Arrive on time.
- Participate and contribute positively.
- Put forth their best effort.
- Have required materials.
- Follow directions from instructor

30% - Quizzes & Classwork

This category includes sight-reading, part-singing, and all written work related to music literacy, music appreciation, music analysis, composition, and more.

Absences from concerts / performances:

Concerts are an integral part of any choir program. There is no way to make up the experience if a concert is missed. **Students are expected to attend *ALL* performances.** All concert dates are provided early in the year so that families can avoid scheduling any conflicting appointments or trips around those dates.

Excused absences: Illness; death in the family; other emergency situations; pre-arranged absences (i.e. religious reasons) where parent email/phone call is received at least two weeks prior to the concert. *In order to receive a passing grade for the concert, a student will be required to complete a makeup assignment.

Unexcused absences: Students who have an unexcused absence from a concert will be awarded no points and will not be given an opportunity to make up the work.

Eligibility:

Choir is co-curricular activity and, under Texas Law, students may participate in performances on campus regardless of grades; however, for some additional performances or competitions off campus, students must be passing all classes in order to participate.

Concert Etiquette:

During our concerts, choir students will be required to sit quietly and listen attentively as audience members when not on stage and to stay through the entire concert. Cell phone use is prohibited during a concert. Cell phones used during a concert will be confiscated and turned over to the school administration where they will be returned using the procedures outlined in the student code of conduct.

Informal Uniforms:

Students will wear their choir T-shirt and jeans for informal performances. Director will announce which events these are.

Formal Uniforms:

Some concert settings may call for formal attire. 7th/8th grade girls competing in UIL will be issued an Alamo Heights Junior School formal dress later in the semester.

Extracurricular Activities:

Participation in the activities listed here is not required, but is greatly encouraged. Additional rehearsals are required in most cases. Students must meet academic requirements and may be responsible for transportation and expenses associated with these events including entry fees, meals and transportation.

Region Choir (7th/8th graders only):

Region Choir is an audition-only choir. Students will be competing against singers from all across San Antonio and will have a blast meeting new friends from many different choir programs. Those who pass the audition will take part in an all-day clinic where they will rehearse under the direction of highly-skilled clinicians. The day will be wrapped up in the afternoon with a concert which all students and families are invited to attend. Parent chaperones will be needed both for auditions and the clinic. Audition dates and times are listed on the calendar.

Solo & Ensemble (all students invited to participate):

This event is for students interested in performing as a soloist or as part of a small ensemble. Students must choose music from an approved list with their director. A piano performance category is also available. At this point in the year ALL students will be required to prepare a solo, but it is optional to perform in the contest.

Field Trips:

Field trips are one of the most exciting parts of being in choir. Remember that field trips are a privilege. Students who do not meet choir and/or school guidelines may lose that privilege. This year we will be taking trips to Mo Ranch, sing the national anthem at a Rampage game, and spend a day at Fiesta Texas. Additional opportunities may be offered throughout the year.

Chaperones:

If you are interested in supporting our program by becoming a chaperone, please complete a criminal background check with the district. Even if you can't help us right away, it is beneficial to have the background check on file just in case you decide to join us! You can access the form online at:

http://www.ahisd.net/departments/HR/perpdf/CRIMINAL_Check.pdf

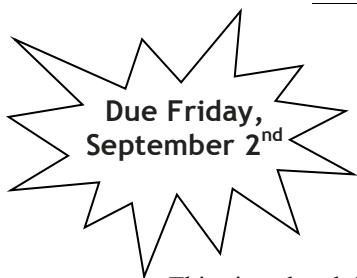
AHJS Choir Calendar 2016-2017

****Denotes MANDATORY performance for ALL choir students****

TBA	Mo Ranch Retreat Depart 9am - Return 9pm
Tuesday, October 4	***Fall Choir Concert*** Combined Concert with AHHS Choir AH High School Auditorium 7:00 PM (Students arrive at 6:30)
Friday, October 14	TMEA Region 12 MS Auditions - TTB Select 7 th /8 th grade students only Tejeda MS - 5:00pm-9:00pm
Saturday, October 15	TMEA Region 12 MS Auditions - SSA/SA Select 7 th /8 th grade students only Tejeda MS - SSA-7:30am-12:30pm/SA-1-6pm
Saturday, October 29	TMEA Region 12 MS Clinic and Concert Select 7 th /8 th grade students only San Marcos High School - 7:30am-3:30pm
TBA	Fundraiser Kick-off AHJS Choir Room during class
Tuesday, December 6	***Holiday Choir Concert*** AHJS Auditorium 7:00 PM (Students arrive at 6:30)
Wednesday, February 15	***Pre-UIL/Spring Choir Concert*** AHHS Auditorium 7:00 PM (Students arrive at 6:30)
Tues-Wed, Feb 28-March 1	UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest Select 7 th /8 th grade students Reagan HS - Time TBD
Tuesday, May 16	***Choir Pop Show*** AHJS Auditorium 7:00 PM (Students arrive at 6:30)
Saturday, May 20	Spring Trip to Fiesta Texas 8:30am-8:00pm
TBA	Solo & Ensemble Competition AHJS Fine Arts Building - 4-6pm

Please Note...

We may have more performances than what is listed. I will inform the students and parents of any additional performances that might be added.



Alamo Heights Junior School Choir
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
CONFIRMATION FORM 2016-2017

To be signed by parent and student!

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE
ALONG WITH ACTIVITY FEE PAYMENT

This signed and dated form will be kept on file in the choir office. The intent of this form is to verify that choir parents and students understand and agree with what is involved with membership in the Alamo Heights Junior School Choir Program.

- ☐ "I have read the ALAMO HEIGHTS JUNIOR SCHOOL CHOIR HANDBOOK including the grading policy with my child and we understand our responsibilities in developing a successful choir program and in earning a positive grade in this class."
- ☐ "I have taken the time to mark down the choir concert dates. I understand that if there are any conflicts I must provide Ms. Skarke with an email/phone call at least 2 weeks in advance."
- ☐ "I am attaching the \$30 activity fee by cash or check made out to AHISD (include phone number and address on check). If I have any concern about this I will contact Ms. Skarke by phone or email"

Thank you for joining the Alamo Heights Junior School Choir Program!

Student Name (Please Print)

Grade

Choir Period

T-Shirt Size (please check one)

☐ YL ☐ S ☐ M

☐ L ☐ XL

Student Cell Phone (if applicable)

Parent/Guardian A:	Parent/Guardian B: (if applicable)
Name: _____	Name: _____
Relation to student: _____	Relation to student: _____
Work Phone: _____	Work Phone: _____
Home Phone: _____	Home Phone: _____
Cell Phone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Email: _____	Email: _____

I am willing to assist with choir activities. Please contact me concerning the following:

____ Chaperoning field trips

____ Parent helper at concert

____ Formal uniform fitting

____ Cameraman/woman at concerts

____ Providing refreshments

X _____
Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

X _____
Student Signature

Date