

MMS Choir Program Handbook



The goals of the MMS Choir Program are to...

- ▶ Provide instruction in and practice of healthy singing skills.
- ▶ Perform a variety of choral music and broaden aesthetic appreciation
- ▶ Help students develop their musical potential
- ▶ Provide students with experiences that prepare students for high school choral opportunities.
- ▶ Foster a lifelong love of music.
- ▶ Foster growth in cooperative learning skills to attain a common goal
- ▶ Encourage self esteem through the pride of accomplishment



National Standards for Music Education

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the national organization for music educators and education, cites these nine areas as the current national standards of music education in America:

1. *Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music*
2. *Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music*
3. *Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments*
4. *Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines*
5. *Reading and notating music*
6. *Listening to, analyzing and describing music*
7. *Evaluating music and music performances*
8. *Understanding the relationships between music, the other arts and disciplines outside the arts*
9. *Understanding music in relation to history and culture*

In the MMS Choir Program we strive to meet and exceed the national standards for music education as we believe that music is a vital part of a well-rounded education



Expectations

1. All school rules apply at all times.
2. Students will give 100% effort and participation at all times
3. Students will show respect to the director, other students and school property
4. Students will be in their assigned seats ready to listen with all materials (folder, pencil, iPad) when class starts
5. No food, gum, or drink (other than water) is allowed in the choir room, unless given permission by Mr. Cramer
6. Talking, whispering, making faces etc. are all distractions. Everyone must be focused for the choir to reach its potential.
7. At the end of rehearsals students are dismissed by Mr. Cramer, not the bell.
 - a. All materials should be put away or taken home, there should be no trash left in the room, and chairs should be returned to their original location.



Choir Focus

The primary focus of the choir is to challenge students to become outstanding vocal musicians. Concerts are viewed as the culmination of preparation as well as the application of all concepts taught in class. The choral literature selected and studied throughout the course of the year serves as the major tool through which most of the musical concepts are taught.



Choir Concert Schedule (2022-2023)

Please enter the dates below into your personal and/or family calendar

Choir Retreat - Saturday, October 1st

12:30pm-3:00pm - Rehearsal at MMS - *(required)*

3:00pm - head to *America's Action Territory*

3:30pm-6:30pm *America's Action Territory (optional)*

7:00pm - back at MMS

Fall Concert - Wednesday, November 16th, 7:00pm *(6:15pm call time)* at MMS

Dress Rehearsal - Tuesday, November 15th, 4-6pm at MMS

Winter Concert - Wednesday, January 18th, 7:00pm *(6:15pm call time)*

Dress Rehearsal - Tuesday, January 17th, 5-7pm

NIMcon Solo & Ensemble Contest - Saturday, February 25th, 2023

NIMcon Music Festival - Friday, March 11th **OR** Saturday, March 12th

D117 Choral Festival - Friday, April 28th (time TBD)

Spring Concert - Wednesday, May 24th, 7:00pm *(6:15pm call time)*

Dress Rehearsal - Tuesday, May 23rd, 5-7pm



Rehearsal Times

6th Grade Choir - 5th period (B-days)

7th Grade Choir - 6th period (B-days)

8th Grade Choir - 7th period (B-days)

Three to four morning rehearsals in the weeks before a concert - TBA

Dress rehearsals - the day before each concert



Performances

The choirs perform at 4-5 evening concerts during the school year with the possibility of 1-2 performances that serve our community. MMS Choir has shown high levels of musical growth and execution over the past several years. This is due to the students' diligent work at individual vocal techniques and team building during rehearsals and concerts.



Attendance

Attendance in class, at morning rehearsals, and dress rehearsals is crucial to individual success and the success of the entire choir. Students will be marked excused when there has been an official notification for their absence from school. If a student must miss choir due to doctor or other appointments please communicate this to the director by written note or email so that the absence will be excused.

Concert attendance and performance is mandatory. The choir is a team and depends upon all members to produce its best performance. Absences will only be excused in the case of extreme personal illness, hospitalization, and family emergencies. All other absences must be communicated to the director **by a parent** at least **one week before the concert date**. Communicating the absence does not guarantee it will be excused.

Students should still attend rehearsals and concerts even if they are able to be at school but are not able to sing. Their vocal health is very important. Students should let the director know that they will be "mouthing the words" and not singing due to a sore throat or other respiratory problem. This will allow the student to keep up with the material, be aware of important announcements or support their team during a concert performance.



Evaluation for Choir

Category	Value	Description of Points
Participation	4 points/day	Regular attendance, signing-in, and engagement during class. Students with unexcused absences or who are disruptive, ill-prepared or tardy will not receive their daily points. Daily points may be lost without warning.
Individual Practice	20 points/log	Throughout the year students will complete logs of their practice time for an upcoming concert as well as various scales, triads, and vocal exercises. Students may be asked to record their practice session on occasion
Other Assignments	varies	Students will be assigned various other assignments throughout the year. This will include but is not limited to music theory assignments, self-evaluations, and listening assignments.
Extra Rehearsals	70-80 points	10 points for each morning rehearsal; 40 points for the dress rehearsal
Performance	100 points	Attendance and 100% effort. A concert is equivalent to a major test in other academic courses. Choral performance is based on a large group of individuals working as one cohesive ensemble



Concert Attire

See below for typical expected concert attire (unless otherwise directed).

- Black pants or skirt (modest length)
 - Please avoid leggings or jeans if possible.
- Black dress shirt blouse
 - Please avoid t-shirts
 - Black closed-toed shoes
- Black socks or flesh-colored nylons

OR

- Black dress
- Black closed-toed shoes
- Black socks or flesh-colored nylons

The requirements for concert attire are not meant to be a financial burden. Choir members are encouraged to borrow clothing rather than buy something new. If there are questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Cramer

The choir program will provide a colorful scarf or tie for each student to wear. **If items are damaged, a fee may be charged depending on the usability of the item.** At the end of the year, delinquent accounts will be turned into the school office and district policies will be followed.





Use of School Equipment

Choir members are responsible for folders, music, and books that have been taken home. Missing items that are not found by the end of the school year will be charged a replacement fee. If items are damaged, a fee may also be charged dependent on the usability of the item. At the end of the year, delinquent accounts will be turned into the school office and district policies will be followed.



Solo Singing, Small Group Singing, Instrument and Movement Parts

If interest in special parts exceeds the availability, auditions may be held. If possible, auditions will be held within the normal rehearsal time. On some occasions, singers may be asked to record their audition and submit it to Mr. Cramer. Singers will be rated on pitch, rhythm and presentation. Instrument players and movement participants will be rated on rhythm and presentation. The director will also take into account attendance and leadership within the rehearsal when giving out solo/small group parts.



Travel and Field Trips

Opportunities for travel and field trips are available depending upon availability, student interest and financial resources.



NIMcon and District 117 Choral Festival

The Northern Illinois Music Conference (NIMcon) provides opportunities for choirs and for individuals to sing prepared pieces for several adjudicators. Choirs and individuals are rated I, II or III after their performances. Adjudicators also provide comments on performances to facilitate future improvement. Students may perform solos at NIMcon's Solo & Ensemble Contest, to performed privately for a judge. Family and friends may be present. Singers will need to prepare a solo with a private voice instructor and pay for an accompanist to participate. Optional coaching sessions with Mr. Cramer will be offered the month leading up to the contest. NIMcon is hosted by a different area school each year.

The choir also participates in the District 117 Choral Festival in April. It is a great opportunity to sing with a very large choir and to reinforce the vocal techniques learned at Millburn. The day of the festival the students go on a field trip that morning or afternoon for a rehearsal at the hosting District 117 high school. The students then gather at the high school that evening for a concert performance.



Awards

At the last concert of the year 1-3 students may be selected for the Director's Award in recognition for their outstanding contributions to the Millburn Choir, including but not limited to student leadership, choir spirit and/or musical contribution.



Millburn Choir Boosters

All parents of choir members are automatically part of the Millburn Choir Boosters. There are many ways to help with enriching the choral experience at Millburn. The Executive Committee consists of a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Parents can also serve on one of several committees such as: fundraising, publicity, performance attire, choir music library, social event planning, concert decorations, volunteer coordination and musical awareness. In order to share the workload of supporting choir activities, all families are encouraged to volunteer as needed during the 2019-20 school year.



Communication

Communication about what is happening in our choir program is very important. Please do not hesitate to contact the director with any questions or concerns. Your input, thoughts, and feelings matter. You can check the choir webpage for handouts and announcements: <https://www.millburn24.net/Page/2529>. Mr. Cramer's email is jcramer@millburn24.net.

Please bring student or parent questions/concerns to the director via email. If you would like to discuss your question in a phone conversation, please indicate that. Open communication benefits all people so that our choir can achieve optimum success.



Commitment Statement

Please make sure to review the entire choir handbook. All the information in the handbook is valuable. Complete the following steps!

_____ Student and parent(s)/guardians review the entire handbook

_____ Review choir concert schedule provided in the choir handbook. The schedule is also on the choir website and on the MMS parent calendar

_____ Mark all mandatory performance dates into your family and personal calendar

_____ Sign and return this form to Mr. Cramer

I, _____ (print student's name) have read the choir handbook and understand and agree to the rules and policies that apply to my assessment and participation in the choir program at Millburn Middle School. I have reviewed the choir concert and dress rehearsal dates listed on the choir concert schedule. I understand there will be 3-4 morning rehearsals leading up to each concert. I acknowledge ***I am individually significant to the success of Millburn Choir***, and therefore promise to attend and participate in each morning rehearsal, dress rehearsal and concert to the best of my ability. I acknowledge that absences will only be excused in the case of extreme personal illness, hospitalization, and family emergencies. I understand all other absences must be communicated to the director at least ***one week before the date of the rehearsal or concert***. I also understand communicating the absence does not guarantee it will be excused. Finally, I understand that by signing this form, ***I am committing to being in choir for the whole school year.***

Signed: _____ (Student Name)

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____ Grade: _____

