

BLACKSBURG HIGH SCHOOL



Choir Department Handbook

2023-2024

*Tim Woolwine, Director
3401 Bruin Lane
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 951-5706 ext. 2063
timothywoolwine@mcps.org
www.blacksburgchoirs.weebly.com*

PREFACE

Congratulations on choosing to be part of one of the most successful programs at Blacksburg High School! Your involvement in the choir program will not only enhance your singing and music literacy abilities, but will also provide you with memories and friendships that you will cherish and remember long after you leave BHS!

This handbook is intended to advise each student and their parents of what is expected during the school year. If anything is unclear, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Woolwine with any questions. Mr. Woolwine will be following this handbook and expects all students to do so as well. It is strongly recommended that students and parents read each section so there are no misunderstandings as the year progresses.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Choral music education at BHS has a long standing tradition of excellence. BHS choral students perform and compete at a superior level. Students are expected to give no less than 100% at every rehearsal, fundraising event, community service event, and public performance that they are involved in.

We are committed to performing choral music literature from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century to the very best of our abilities. Choirs perform music from other countries from around the world in their languages, as well as from our own American heritage. **Sacred/Religious music is performed for its historical and artistic merit and not for its theological content.** The choir curriculum at BHS is based upon the Virginia Standards of Learning for Choral Music and includes methods for developing appropriate skills in vocal production, choral blend, articulation, sight reading, theory, and music history. Students are afforded the opportunity to develop their individual vocal talents in a positive, encouraging, ensemble setting.

BHS CHORAL DEPARTMENT ENSEMBLES

Concert Choir

(No audition required) grades 9-12

Any student who has an interest in singing, performing, and learning more about choral music and vocal technique may join this ensemble for credit. Students who choose to take this class are expected to demonstrate a genuine desire to participate in rehearsals, performances, and fundraising activities.

ManBand

(No audition required) grades 9-12

Concert Choir and Madrigal Singers' tenors and basses will combine to perform a variety of men's choir repertoire from various musical time periods. Some after-school rehearsals may be required.

Musical Theatre

(No audition required) grades 9-12

This performance-based class is an exploration of American Musical Theatre. Students will study the work of the actor/singer/dancer and use their gained knowledge to develop and grow as performers. Students will prepare and present as soloists as well as members of small groups and larger ensembles. There will also be a focus on the audition process as well as musical theatre history and repertoire.

Chorale

(Audition required) grades 9-12

Students are selected for this ensemble based on a successful audition in the spring. Students will perform a variety of treble choir repertoire from various musical time periods. An intermediate to advanced level of music reading ability and musicianship is required.

Madrigal Singers

(Audition required) grades 10-12

Students are selected for this ensemble based on a successful audition in the spring. Students will perform mixed choral repertoire from the Medieval and Renaissance Era in the fall, as well as songs from other eras and musical genres in the spring. Selected students are expected to demonstrate an advanced level of music reading and musicianship. Students must be available to participate in numerous community performances outside of the regular school day.

GENERAL RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Students will respect teachers and fellow students at all times, and will abide by the BHS Student Handbook and Montgomery County School's Student Code of Conduct.
2. Students will attend ALL required rehearsals, performances, and other events deemed necessary by the director.
3. Be on time! Rehearsals begin when the tardy bell rings. Students not in their assigned seat with their materials will be marked tardy.
4. Students are not allowed in the choir office or the music library without permission from Mr. Woolwine
5. Be prepared and have all of your music and a pencil at every rehearsal and performance.
6. Talking and chatter during a rehearsal will not be tolerated. Rehearse in a professional manner, and we will have a professional sound.
7. Students will not leave the choir room during class for any reason unless approved by Mr. Woolwine via E-Hall Pass. Please keep restroom visits to a minimum by going before class begins.
- 8. Cell phones are not allowed and must remain out of sight during class. Chromebooks may be used at appropriate times, and should not be out during full ensemble rehearsal unless specified.**
9. Food and sugary drinks are not allowed in the choir room unless specified. However, water with a lid is encouraged.
10. Clean up after yourself. Leave the choir room neat and as you found it before you came.
11. All students are responsible for their assigned music and choir uniform. Damages will be collected if materials are lost or mishandled.
12. We ALWAYS work as a group and not as individuals...DRAMA FREE ZONE!!!

***Serious consequences may occur if these rules and expectations are not followed, including removal from the program if a serious infraction occurs. These rules are necessary so everyone can have a fun and enjoyable experience.**

***The director reserves the right to deny any student the opportunity to perform, attend trips, or participate in any other event if their behavior is not acceptable.**

GRADES

MCPS Grading Scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

A choir student's nine-week grade will be assessed on the following:

- Performances/Dress Rehearsals/Written or Singing Evaluations – 50%
- Daily Class Participation – 25%
- Quizzes and Class Work – 25%

Final Project/Assessment: Spring Concert Performance

During the last weeks of this course, there will be a final project to evaluate student learning, skill attainment, and achievement with a meaningful, authentic assessment that reflects relevant real-world situations/experiences. An evaluation of this project will provide an assessment of the students' cumulative learning in the course, and will be connected to some meaningful essential question that has value outside of the class.

PERFORMANCE POLICY

Performances are a vital part of the Blacksburg High School Choral Curriculum. They provide students with a deeper appreciation of the music they are working on as well as a greater feeling of unity within the group. **ALL students are REQUIRED to be at concerts and performances.** The only acceptable excuse is illness, death of a family member, or some other serious family emergency. All of these instances must be documented by a parent and submitted to Mr. Woolwine.

- **Work is not a valid excuse for missing a performance.** Students will be given performance dates several weeks, if not months, in advance. It is their responsibility to notify their employers of these dates.

If a student qualifies for an excused absence from a performance or dress rehearsal, the student will record themselves singing their individual vocal parts with accompaniment practice tracks and submit the recording to Mr. Woolwine within 5 days of the excused absence.

ALL UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN A ZERO PERFORMANCE GRADE!

TRIPS

Students involved in the BHS Choral Program will have the opportunity to travel at different times during the school year. Whether it is an overnight trip, or just a quick drive to perform somewhere in the county, all students will abide by the rules and expectations stated in this handbook. Students will remember that they are representing this program, their school, and their community.

Should a choir event fall during the school day, students are responsible for making up any work missed during their absence in other classes. It is the student's responsibility to notify and get that work from their teachers.

- **Students that receive 2 or more ISS assignments in a semester, or an OSS assignment will not be allowed to travel with the group on overnight trips.**
- **Students that have excessive absences from rehearsals will not be allowed to travel with the group.**
- **Students that have a letter grade of a D or F in another class must get that teacher's approval before they may travel with the group on any trip.**

COUNTY, DISTRICT, STATE, and NATIONAL CHOIR EVENTS

During the school year, students have the opportunity to participate in choral events at both the district and state level and are encouraged to do so. These events provide a chance to sing with other students from around the state and are considered high honors. Even just getting up the courage to audition is a great experience. The more students representing BHS at these events the better!

- **VT Honor Choir:** (available to all students upon director's recommendation)
- **All-District Choir:** (available to students in grades 9-12 upon a successful audition)
- **All-Virginia Choir:** (available to students in grades 11-12 upon a successful audition)
- **VMEA Honor Choir:** (available to students in grade 12 upon successful audition)
- **ACDA Jr. High Honor Choir:** (available to students in grade 9 upon successful audition)
- **ACDA Sr. High Honor Choir:** (available to students in grades 10-12 upon successful audition)

Students will have ample opportunity to prepare for these optional events with Mr. Woolwine if they are interested in participating. You can visit the VCDA website, www.vcda.net or the VCDA District 6 website, www.districtvi.weebly.com for more information.

Students who audition and are selected to participate in any of the above events are responsible for the cost. This generally includes but is not limited to: Registration fees, lodging, meals, and music. **The director must be notified as soon as possible if financial assistance is needed.**

UNIFORMS and FOLDERS

Choir uniforms and folders are provided for every student involved in the choir program. Uniforms should not be taken home unless specified by Mr. Woolwine. If a uniform or folder is lost or damaged the student is responsible for replacing it. Students will provide their own black shoes/socks/tights.

Replacement cost for lost or damaged items:

- Choir Folder cost \$20
- Choir Dress cost \$70
- Choir Tux cost \$100

There will be a \$38 uniform cleaning/t-shirt fee required for all students.

Madrigal Singers may rent or purchase their own Renaissance costumes for the fall semester.

The following should also be observed as a matter of group uniformity and professionalism:

- Long hair must be pulled back and out of the eyes during performances.
- Perfume, hairspray, nail polish, and excessive jewelry should not be worn.

CHOIR DEPARTMENT WEBSITE, GOOGLE CLASSROOM, and REMIND

Students and parents should become familiar with the BHS Choral Department's website. The address is www.blacksburgchoirs.weebly.com. The website is updated regularly and is an important resource for upcoming events and choir department news. There are also important links and sound files for students to practice with. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for the choral department newsletter which is emailed out each time important information is added. Assignments, rehearsal tracks, and important information will also be posted on each ensemble's Google Classroom. Students should check their Google Classroom daily. Students and parents are also encouraged to sign up for Remind. Remind is a safe, text messaging service that Mr. Woolwine uses often, to communicate and remind students and parents of upcoming events. Please make use of this valuable resource. Students can find Remind codes on the BHS Choir website.

Madrigal Singers Classroom Code: **qa33twh**

Chorale Classroom Code: **jqypoap**

Concert Choir Classroom Code: **zgv7drh**

Musical Theatre Classroom Code: **zhsgxm2**

You can also find the BHS Choir Department on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube!

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a necessary part of any organization. There will be one department-wide Donation-Drive fundraiser during the Fall semester. Participation is optional. 100% of funds that are raised support the BHS Choir program to help pay for accompanist fees, district/state event registration, uniform replacement and upkeep, as well as other materials not purchased with county funding.

AWARDS

Individual choral awards are given out at the Spring Concert. Students may earn awards for participation in district and state choir events, leadership, merit, and service to the BHS Choir Program.

I would also like to continue the tradition of awarding choir letters, bars, and pins. These will be awarded for going above and beyond the “everyday classroom experience.” Students will earn points for each choir related activity that they participate in. These awards encourage students to become well-rounded musicians through the observance and critique of others’ performances as well as participation in their own. Students enrolled in the BHS Choir Program must earn a minimum of 100 points to obtain their letter and each 100 points earned after the initial will receive a gold bar.

The following values will be assigned to each event:

Participation in BHS winter and spring concerts	6 points
Participation in other community concerts	4 points
Attending community concerts of any kind	3 points
Auditioning for county, district, state, or honor choir	6 points
Being selected for county or district choir	15 points
Being selected for a national or state or honor choir	25 points
Auditioning for school solos or musicals	2 points
Participation in a school musical	8 points
Attending an elementary, middle, or high school concert	5 points
Performing in a private voice or instrumental recital	3 points
Participation in a choir dept. fundraiser	5 points
Participation in a community musical (ex. SME)	10 points
Participating in a spring choir trip (overnight)	10 points
Section Leader/Student Accompanist	10 points

*If you attend an event you must provide some sort of verification that you were there. (concert program, ticket stub, etc.)

*Each student is responsible for keeping a running record of his/her choral points throughout the school year. Point sheets will be available in the choir room or on Google Classroom. It is not the director’s responsibility to keep track of your points. All point sheets must be submitted by the deadline and approved by the director to receive credit. Points may be applied to the next year but it is the student's responsibility to keep up with all documentation.

TRI-M NATIONAL MUSIC HONOR SOCIETY

The minimum national criteria for Tri-M candidate consideration include: participation in a music class or ensemble, an A grade average in music, a B grade average or better overall, and continued character strength that includes demonstration of service, leadership, and cooperation. Students are inducted in the fall of each year and participate in club-day meetings. Honor cords are earned and worn at commencement.

BHS Choral Dept. Calendar of Events 23-24

September 1-30	ACDA Honor Choir Audition Window
October 2-15	Fall Donation Drive
October 2-5	VMEA Honors Choir Auditions (Seniors)
October 3	Fall Concert & Dress Rehearsal (All Choirs)
October 20	National Anthem at Homecoming FB Game (All Choirs)
November ?	All-District Choir Auditions
November 16-18	VMEA Conference/Honor Choir Event
December 2	Blacksburg Farmer's Market Performance (Madrigals)
December 12	Winter Concert & Dress Rehearsal (All Choirs)
December 14	Rotary Club Holiday Luncheon (Madrigals)
December (TBA)	Inn at VT Caroling (Select Madrigals)
January 9 & 11	Spring Musical Auditions
February 9-10	All-District Choir Event/All-VA Choir Auditions
February 21-24	ACDA Southern Division Honor Choir (Louisville, KY)
February 26	RU Pre-Assessment Clinic (All Choirs)
March 13	Pre-Assessment Concert Clinic (All Choirs)
March 15-16	District Performance Assessment (All Choirs)
April 8-11	BHS Fine Arts trip to NYC (tentative)
April 18-20	All-VA Choir Event
May 3-5	Spring Musical
May 6	Spring Concert & Dress Rehearsal
May 18	Graduation Performance (Madrigals and Seniors)

REQUIRED EVENTS ARE WRITTEN IN BOLD

At this time, ALL dates are tentative and subject to change. If other events are added, students will receive at least 2 weeks notice. A complete list of events can also be found on the choir department website –

www.blacksburgchoirs.weebly.com