

The Academy of Richmond County Choral Handbook



Ms. Blocker

Phone: (706)426-1614

Email: bridgas@BOE.Richmond.k12.ga.us

Instructional Goals:

Mission Statement: The Academy of Richmond County Choral Program will evoke emotion in every performance, by allowing music to flow through us, and by being engaged in everything that we do. We will not only represent our school, our school district, our city, and our state: we will represent ourselves well through the universal language of music.

All teachings strategies are based upon the Georgia Standards of Excellence for Music and the appropriate level of choir.

At the end of this course, students will:

- Sing alone, and with others, a varied selection of repertoire
- At times, performing on instruments, alone and with others
- Improvise melodies
- Read and notate music
- Evaluate and perform music
- Understand the relationships between music and other disciplines outside of the arts
- Understand music in relation to history and culture

Meet our Ensembles

"Music does bring people together.

It allows us to experience the same emotions.

People everywhere are the same in heart and spirit.

No matter what language we speak, what color we are,

the form of our politics, or the expression of our love and our faith,

music proves: We are the same."

~ John Denver ~

Beginning Choir – This class is for those students who display an interest in choir, but have not had any previous musical experience or choral experience. Introduction to Choir meets every day for fifty minutes. Any student is eligible to be in this choir. Though this choir is in the beginning stages, attendance is mandatory at every concert.

Intermediate Choir - This class is for anyone that has choral experience or prior musical experience. Intermediate Choir meets every day for fifty minutes. This choir has mandatory performances that will be graded, (See grading policy).

Advanced Choir – The Chorale is the mixed choir that we have at The Academy of Richmond County. It is an advanced choir that meets every day for fifty minutes. It is open to both young men and women. In order to be a part of this choir, students must be able to sight-read, blend well with other singers, and have a thirst for complex and intricate choral literature. Performing in this choir is mandatory. All performances will be an essential part of your grade, (See grading policy). There will be several performance opportunities. Traveling is also a possibility.

Materials and Equipment Policies

Supply List: Students of all choir classes will be expected to supply their own pencils for **daily** use in rehearsal. Students are also responsible for garnishing the wardrobe that is to go underneath our choir robes (see Concert Attire).

Folders: Every person in choir will be issued a choral folder. Folders should be taken care of properly. **If the folder is lost, stolen, or damaged, while in the students' care, it must be paid for in full. If reimbursement is not paid in full by the last week of school, the student's report card will be held.**

Music: The Academy of Richmond County Choral Department takes great pride in purchasing quality music. In a choral setting, sheet music is the equivalent of a textbook. One piece we sing may be your favorite piece, but you cannot treasure the music as a keepsake. Someone else will need it in the future. This being said, all music must be turned in at the end of the year. Every student will be assigned a number that corresponds to the music assigned. If your music is lost, damaged, or stolen, you will be responsible for reimbursing the money that was used to buy it. Just as with the choral folders, if your assigned music is not returned by the last week of school, your report card will be held until the money is reimbursed. Also, any marks that are made in the music are to be in PENCIL ONLY!!!!

Miscellaneous Equipment (Piano, Stands, Chairs, Supplementary Books, etc):

It is very important that each student realizes that anything that is in the classroom when they walk in is property of ARC or Mrs. Bridgeforth. They are here to facilitate the learning process of music. They are for everyone's benefit. If any of these items are lost, stolen, or damaged, the student in question will be asked to reimburse the necessary funds to fix or replace the item. No item is to walk out of the choir room, without consent from the director. All items must be checked out and checked back in with the student's name, item name/description, and the date (instruments are not to leave the room).

Concert attire: will be black bottoms (slacks or an appropriate length skirt with a black blouse, or a solid black, appropriate length dress) attire for women and black dress slacks with black socks and shoes for men. **All members of the ensemble will be asked to wear closed-toed, black dress shoes.** Shoes are to be closed-toed, enclosed shoes, a heel-strap is fine. Peep-toed shoes will also be allowed. FLIP FLOPS, SNEAKERS/TENNIS SHOES, SNOW BOOTS, CROCS, AND ANY OPEN SANDAL ARE UNACCEPTABLE! If women are to wear hosiery, they must be a nude tone or a black/charcoal black. Also, ladies, if you are to wear heels, please make sure that they are a reasonable height, due to safety precautions. All skirts/dresses must be no higher than the length of a regular-sized post-it note.

Jewelry is to be tasteful in performances – no large hoop earrings, gauges, no colorful and overly decorated necklaces, small chains with a small pendant or pearl necklaces will be accepted, no huge bracelets and rings, etc. No scarves or glasses that are not prescribed for sight and/or reading. Please do not wear heavy fragrances for performances, but an anti-perspirant is a must. Please have all hair pulled away from your face during performances. No extreme hairstyles or piercings please, (huge Mohawks, unnatural hair color, long bangs that cover your eyes). The audience not only wants to hear your lovely voices, but to see your faces as well. *Anyone inappropriately dressed upon arrival to a concert* (not dressed in the aforementioned concert attire, including, but not limited to clothing that is too revealing, too tight, inappropriate shoes – flip flops, open sandals, sneakers, snow boots, non-black shoes, etc, extreme hairstyles and piercings), *will not be allowed to perform, until the issue is fixed. If the dress code violation is not fixed, or is found during the performance time, this will be treated as a missed performance and an alternate assignment will be given to make up for your grade.* If you have a

question about the attire that you have selected to perform in, bring it in two weeks before the concert. I am providing this information now, so that we can work as a team in making the performers of ARC Choral Department look like professional performing ensembles.

Choral Uniform Rentals:

In addition to the aforementioned Concert Attire, choir members in Advanced Chorus, as well as a select few singers from other choirs, will be rented a robe to wear. Advanced Choir members, as well as a few others will be rented Formal Choral attire (gowns and tuxedos). It is the responsibility of each student's family to return the gown and/or tuxedo dry-cleaned and steamed. Each returned uniform should be returned within the bag that the Dry-Cleaner provides, with an attached receipt that contains the student's name. The tuxedos should be returned intact, including all of the necessary pieces of the tuxedo: Pants, Shirt, Vest, Jacket, Neck Tie. Should the uniform be lost or damaged, the student's family is responsible for paying for the uniform. The cost of the gown is \$54.00. The cost of the tuxedo in full is \$145. Replacement of a choir robe is \$120. If a uniform is returned without being dry-cleaned, there will be a charge of \$20 to cover the dry-cleaning cost.

The Laws of the Land

I like to treat my choir members not only as students, but as musicians. In order to be a superb musician, there has to be a high level of mutual respect between student and director, as well as a high level of professionalism among peers. The following are a few basic rules of choral behavior:

1. Respect (Teacher/Director, Classmates/Choir members, Property/Equipment, the music, as well as yourself.
2. Follow the school's Code of Conduct.
3. Be a team player.
4. Be responsible, punctual, and prepared.
5. Always display proper performance/audience etiquette.
6. No food or beverages, with the exception of water in a clear container with a lid.
7. All electronic devices are to be left in a book bag or purse with all ringers and alerts off! No device should be on a student's person in rehearsal. Each time this rule is broken, there will be a grade deduction. There will be no warnings. Cell phones should never be out unless the teacher (myself or a substitute) expressly gives consent for a specific lesson-centered task.

I will follow the Code of Conduct should any rule be broken. I will hold parent conferences for repeat offenders. Grade infractions are also likely, due to the participatory nature of these ensembles. Cell phone usage in class is a definite grade-based infraction.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!

Each student is responsible for knowing their music. Practicing in choir is the equivalent of doing homework in any other class. Everyone in every choir is being trained to be independent musicians. Talent only gets one so far! Once everyone has an EDMODO account set up, I will be putting many resources online to assist in practicing. Each student should be practicing at least 30 minutes a day. If you need help with anything we are learning in class, you can come in after school, by appointment to get help. Talk to me about setting up a time to work with you.

Choral Trips and Competitions

Any student that has multiple discipline infractions or any serious discipline infraction will not be allowed to attend any choral trip, whether it is a day trip, or an away trip. Such infractions could be those obtained in my classroom, or elsewhere in the school. I expect my students to show a level of professionalism and responsibility when we are away that is far greater than the

behavior that they are expected to display at school. When we are outside of the school campus, we are representing not only ourselves, as people and as a choir, but our school and our community, and its reputation as a whole, as well. All school rules will still apply, in addition to any further instructions more specific to such trips.

I also hold the academics to a very high standard. Before I send home permission slips, I will send an email requesting the teachers of my students to inform me of any student that is making below a C average in any class. Any student that falls into this category has from the time that the permission slips go out, until one week before the trip (if time permits) to pull up any failing grade. Once cleared by the academic teacher, then these students will be invited to come with their group. I will do anything I can to help. Anytime a student misses a test or an important in-class assignment, due to a choral function, they are encouraged to talk to their academic teacher and myself about using their choral time to complete such tasks.

Concert Etiquette

You Are Part of the Concert:

The audience members, as well as the musicians, are participants in every concert. When you participate in listening to the music, you will be taking an important part by sharing this experience with others in the audience and with the musicians on stage. Formal concerts are much different from rock concerts or sporting events, and require you to know some specific concert manners. In order to make a concert enjoyable for everyone, here are some tips to remember:

- **ABSOLUTELY NO CELL PHONE USAGE!!!!!! (talking during a performance, texting, ringers, alerts, etc.)**
- Enter the auditorium quietly. Once you have been seated, be alert to activity on the stage as the musicians take their place for the concert. At an orchestra concert, the concertmaster begins by tuning the orchestra. The audience must be quiet while the orchestra tunes.
- When the conductor enters, it is customary to applaud politely. Whistling, yelling, or screaming is not appropriate at any time before, during, or after a concert.
- Never stand or move around while music is being performed. It distracts listeners around you, as well as the performers. If you must leave for any reason, wait until a piece is finished, and the audience is applauding. Also, return to your seat only between numbers.
- It is impolite to talk, or even whisper, while the music is being performed. Listeners and performers are also distracted by sounds from programs, candy wrappers, jewelry and other objects. Remain still, and be thoughtful of others by talking or making sounds only between numbers.
- If you are photographing or videotaping any performance, please refrain from flash photography, shutter sounds, etc. You may want to test/pre-set your equipment beforehand.
- It is impolite to wear hats or caps during a concert.
- It is impolite to eat or drink refreshments during a concert.
- Always say "excuse me," if you must pass in front of someone while going to or from your seat.
- If you must cough or sneeze while the music is being performed, always try to muffle the sound with a tissue or handkerchief. Wait until the piece is finished if possible.
- Watch the conductor when the music stops to decide whether or not to applaud. Some musical works have several parts or movements and the audience is expected to applaud only after all movements have been performed.
- When leaving an auditorium, always return your seat to the upright position to make it easy for others to pass through the rows. Also, check for any trash that you may have left.

If you always remember these simple rules, and use your own good manners, you can feel confident attending a concert anywhere.

GRADING PROCEDURES

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and Participation are a big factor in each student's grade. Achieving an excellent choral ensemble is a team effort. If a student is absent or not participating, it affects the entire ensemble and the flow of rehearsal. Points will be deducted each day for any student who is not participating to their full potential or not on task. If a student is absent from rehearsal, they must come to me for their make-up work. **Concerts and Performances:** **It is highly important to note that unless a student is ill or having a serious family emergency, there will be no excuses for missing a concert or performance. Each Performance weighs heavily on your grade!! This is the equivalent of a test in any other subject classroom. It includes being on time, being dressed appropriately, being fully engaged in performance, and having a team effort attitude by being cohesive with your section and the ensemble as a whole. I fully understand that important events, weddings, funerals, graduations, occur, but these events take planning. As soon as you know, let me know. I am willing to work with you, but I cannot help you unless it is brought to my attention in a timely fashion. For weddings and graduations, I need a two weeks, written and signed notice by a parent. Any missed performance warrants a written excuse and a make-up assignment of my choice, if the absence is deemed as excused (mentioned above).**

Grading for Choir:

- Daily Musicianship Grade (10 points/school day), if any day of school is missed, other than for a school sponsored activity, it will be your responsibility to get your make up work from me personally.
 - When assessing your daily grade, I am looking for the following: punctuality to rehearsal/class, being prepared by having your folder, your music, as well as a pencil, putting your folder away in its appropriate place after every rehearsal/class, correct posture – sitting or standing, full and complete participation and engagement in all activities during rehearsal/class that is carried out with a team attitude.
- Some assignments may be posted on Edmodo and will be graded and put into Infinite Campus
 - **DAILY points** are deducted by 1-9 points:
 1. Leaving the room for any reason during rehearsal, without prior consent from the director
 2. Talking when you should be singing or listening
 3. Being out of your seat during attendance
 4. Eating or drinking anything besides water during rehearsal
 5. Leaving your folder out
 6. Chewing gum in the choir room
 7. Being tardy
 8. A lack of effort/not participating or not actively participating (ex. Mouthing the words does not count as singing.
 9. Showing disrespect to the Director, choir members, or property of others
 10. Not following directions
 11. Texting, or operating any device unnecessary for rehearsal
 - DAILY points are deducted (**10 points**) by:
 1. An unexcused absence
- **Performances, Concerts, Assemblies, etc**
 - Given accordingly:
10 points: Being on time

15 points: Wearing the correct attire
15 points: Performance on the risers
10 points: Audience etiquette

- **All PERFORMANCE points** are deducted **by**: An unexcused and/or an unexplained absence. (Student will receive a zero).

PERFORMANCE points are deducted if:

1. You bring a signed note from your parent/guardian within two school days for a missed performance to receive less of a deduction depending upon the nature of the absence.
2. You do not meet the above criteria

- **Written work, singing tests, etc + Acknowledgment letter** (5 points, no partial credit)
- **Performance Review**

- **Grading Scale**

- Concerts, rehearsals = 55%
- Class Participation, written work, attendance = 45%

Fundraising

If you or someone you know, would like to make donations to the choral department, contact your choral director. If you are a parent that would like to assist in fundraising, let me know. Also, if you would like to offer your services to the choral department as a volunteer: Chaperoning, assisting in organizing events, etc. please indicate your availability on the bottom of this page.

Contact:

Phone: (706)426-1614 (Call or Text)

Email: blockas@BOE.Richmond.k12.ga.us

(Please return the last page with a parent's signature. Keep the rest for your records.)

Acknowledgement:

I have read the handbook in its entirety and I acknowledge all of its conditions. I acknowledge that I am to refer to this handbook as a reference to any questions that I may have. I realize that if I do not sign and return this Acknowledgement of the Choral Handbook, my child will receive a zero for this grade. Due by Friday, August 17th, 2018.

Student's Name _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

VOLUNTEER SERVICES:

I, _____, would like to volunteer my services by way of:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| _____ Chaperoning trips | _____ Fundraising for the department |
| _____ Assisting in the organizing of events. | _____ Other |

Days of availability:

____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday ____

During these times:

My **best** form of contact is: _____

Stay Informed!!!!

I would like to be kept informed about choral events by way of (check and/or circle when necessary)

____ Email (please provide): _____

____ Phone (please specify by circling: cell, home, work, etc): _____