

FHS CHOIR

HANDBOOK

2018-19

*Tradition, Excellence,
Community*



Dear Choir Students and Parents/Guardians,

My name is Jennifer Stephens, and it is my pleasure to welcome your student to the FHS choir program. My husband, Dow Stephens, also teaches at FHS in the English department. We have two beautiful daughters : Ada, who will be six in November, and baby Isla who will be 6 months in September! I moved to the Flathead Valley in 2012 after five years of teaching at Korea International School in Seoul, South Korea. Originally from Durango, CO, I have also lived and taught in Oregon and Arizona. I am a graduate of Luther College (Vocal Music Education) and Northern Arizona University (Choral Conducting).

In this handbook you will find information on the following:

- Course Objectives and Description
- Required Materials
- Classroom Policies
- Grading
- Concert Attire
- Festivals and Honor Choirs
- Voice Lessons
- Fundraising
- Concert Choir Tour
- Calendar of Events

Please feel free to email, call, or visit anytime. I am always looking for parents who would like to help with retreat, tours, chaperone duties, etc., so please let me know if you are willing to volunteer in the choir program.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stephens
Director of Choirs, Flathead High School
stephensj@sd5.k12.mt.us
Choir Office Phone: 751-3549
Main Office Phone: 751-3500

COURSE OBJECTIVES

No matter which choir you are a part of, all students in the FHS choirs are learning the following skills at a developmentally appropriate level:

- To **Sing** in a variety of choral styles
- To **Read** western music notation
- To **Hear** melodic and harmonic structures
- To **Rehearse** in a choral setting
- To **Think** critically about music
- To **Speak** intelligently about what you hear
- To **Perform** a wide variety of repertoire

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

DORIAN CHOIR (Women 9-12) - Full Year

Prerequisites: None

This choir is open to any female student interested in vocal music. No previous experience is required. Students in this performance-based class will prepare a wide variety of repertoire to be presented at concerts throughout the year. Attendance at all performances is mandatory. Music studied throughout the year will be drawn from different historical time periods and represent a variety of languages and cultures. Through their preparation of choral music for performance, students will learn the basics of vocal technique, sight-reading, theory, and choral musicianship.

VARSITY MEN'S CHOIR (Men 9-12) - Full Year

Prerequisites: None

This choir is open to any male student interested in vocal music. No previous experience is required. Students in this performance-based class will prepare a wide variety of repertoire to be presented at concerts throughout the year. Attendance at all performances is mandatory. Music studied throughout the year will be drawn from different historical time periods, represent a variety of languages and cultures, and will include both music specifically designed for the male voice as well as music for men and women together. Through their preparation of choral music for performance, students will learn the basics of vocal technique, sight-reading, theory, and choral musicianship.

VARSITY WOMEN'S CHOIR (Women 10-12) - Full Year

Prerequisites: Audition with instructor

This course is open to 10th, 11th, or 12th grade girls by audition. Students in this performance-based class will prepare a wide variety of repertoire to be presented at concerts throughout the year. Attendance at all performances is mandatory. Music studied throughout the year will be drawn from different historical time periods, represent a variety of languages and cultures, and will include both music specifically designed for the female voice as well as music for men and women together. Through their preparation of choral music for performance, students will continue their study of vocal technique, sight-reading, theory and choral musicianship. Please see the instructor for more details or to set up an audition time.

CONCERT CHOIR (10-12) - Full Year - NOT OPEN TO STUDENTS GRADUATING EARLY

Prerequisites: Audition with instructor

Concert Choir, the premier mixed choir at FHS, is open to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade men and women by audition. This choir strives for the highest levels of artistic achievement in choral music. Students in this performance-based class will prepare a wide variety of challenging repertoire, both accompanied and a cappella, to be presented at concerts throughout the year. Attendance at all performances is mandatory. Through their preparation of choral music for performance, students will continue their study of vocal technique, sight-reading, theory, and choral musicianship. This ensemble holds a fall retreat every year, participates in one or more festivals, and tours in the spring. Please see the instructor for more details or to set up an audition time.

CHORAL-AIRES (11-12) - Full Year - NOT OPEN TO STUDENTS GRADUATING EARLY

Prerequisites: Audition with instructor and concurrent enrollment in Concert Choir

This small ensemble of 16-20 voices focuses on chamber music, vocal jazz, and any other style suited for small vocal groups. Admission to this class is by audition only and is limited by the number of openings each year. **Members of this choir must also be enrolled in the Concert Choir.** This ensemble performs frequently out in the community. All performances are mandatory. Please see the instructor for more details or to set up an audition time. (Note: Full IB students may petition to take Choral-Aires without enrolling in Concert Choir; such petitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and addressed collaboratively by the music department and administration)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- pencil
- choir folder* (provided by FHS)
- concert clothing (see Concert Dress section of handbook)

***A note about your choir folder:**

Folders and sheet music are expensive. Please take good care of it. If you lose or damage your music or folder, you will be asked to pay for its replacement. **USE ONLY PENCIL** when marking in your music. Music marked in pen or highlighter is considered damaged and you will be charged accordingly.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- Respect the director, other singers and the facility
- Be prepared (pencil and folder)
- No food, drinks, or gum – water is GREAT!
- Do not touch the piano, or any other instruments in the room without permission
- Please respect the choral office area - you shouldn't be in there unless there is a clear reason

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be silent and invisible when a student enters the choir room. If I see or hear your cell phone in the choir room for any reason, I will take it to administration where your parent/guardian will have to collect it.

GRADING PROCEDURE

- A - 90-100%
- B - 80-89%
- C - 70-79%
- D - 60-69%
- F - 59% and below

I. MUSICIANSHIP DEVELOPMENT (30%)

Throughout the course of the year, there will be assessments in the following areas:

- Music Theory
- Score Analysis
- Aural skills
- Vocal skills

These may be either written, aural, or performance-based.

If you are absent the day of an assessment or in-class assignment, you must arrange to make it up within one week in order to receive full credit.

II. REHEARSAL SKILLS (40%)

In every rehearsal, students are expected to be working on the following skills:

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Posture
- 3) Engagement/Communication/Cooperation

Students will be assessed twice per quarter on the "Rehearsal Skills Rubric" for this portion of the grade. A copy of this rubric is given to every student at the beginning of the year.

ILLNESS

Choir rooms are notorious for spreading colds and other airborne illnesses. Though it is problematic for you to miss rehearsal, if you are sick with a cold or have a bad cough PLEASE STAY HOME. You will only make other people sick. If you are well enough to be at school but your throat is too sore to sing, you can still earn your Rehearsal Skills points by participating in physical activities, following in your music, marking your score, taking notes, and contributing to class discussion.

III. PERFORMANCES - (20%)

Because choir is a performance class, concerts are summative assessments and equivalent to quarterly exams in other subjects. This grade is based on timely arrival and attendance at all dress rehearsals and performances, appropriate concert dress, and stage/audience etiquette.

Tardy: Loss of 5% - Be on time!

Pre-Arranged Absence: Full credit is possible if student completes the make-up assignment

Unforeseen Absence: Full credit is possible if student completes the make-up assignment

Unexcused Absence: Student will receive a zero for the concert. This grade cannot be made up and

is grounds for dismissal from choir class.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION

As a member of the Flathead High School Choir Program, you are expected to appear at your choir's scheduled events. Performances are summative, curricular assessments, and therefore graded as part of the class. Students are expected to remain until the end of the concert to support other musicians, even if their part of the performance is complete. This year's schedule of events is included at the end of this handbook. Other required events may arise later in the year. All attempts will be made to set these dates and times well in advance to allow you to let parents, employers, etc. know your choir obligations. **A job is not considered an excused absence.** Let employers know your performing schedule well in advance. Most businesses can and will adjust your schedule so you can attend choir events.

MISSED CONCERT POLICY

Every concert is a unique team experience, and there is truthfully no way to "make it up." However, if there are conflicts with other school functions or family obligations, let me know as soon as you find out about them so we can work something out (pre-arranged absence). Most pre-arranged absences are considered excused, depending on the specific circumstances. Students who have an excused, pre-arranged absence from a concert can make up that grade by setting up a time to sing their concert music individually with Mrs. Stephens.

In the case of an unforeseen absence (serious illness, accidents, or family emergency) a phone call is expected at the earliest convenient time, followed by a note of explanation. Calls can be made to the director's cell phone or school office phone. These are considered excused and will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may involve either a make-up assignment or an exemption.

Unexcused absences from a concert will result in a zero for that performance.

FHS POLICY REGARDING CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCES

1. Activity performances take precedence over practices with no undo pressure or threat of exclusion by either coach or sponsor in the event of conflict.
2. In the event of a performance conflict with MHS/OPI activities, a district, state or national level event will take precedence over a regularly scheduled performance event.

IV. ENRICHMENT (10%)

One of the goals of the FHS music department is to encourage students to engage with music outside of the classroom. Choir students must do something each quarter that enriches their musical experience and understanding. The following is a list of possible enrichment activities, but students may propose their own ideas to the director for approval:

- Take private music lessons
- Teach music in a church or community setting
- Participate in a church or community ensemble
- Perform in a public venue (musical theater, local concert)

- Attend a musical event
- Write a one-page paper about a musician, composer, or musical group that interests you
- Other activities may be approved by Mrs. Stephens

It is the student's responsibility to submit an Enrichment Form every quarter with appropriate documentation attached to verify your activity. These forms are available in the choir room all year long and can be turned into the Enrichment Box at anytime throughout the quarter. Enrichment activities may also be used for extra-credit at the director's discretion.

*Note: Additional music classes are not considered Enrichment. However, attendance at/participation in additional concerts does fulfill the Enrichment requirement.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS - ALL CHOIRS

Choral ensemble skills, by their very nature, cannot be "made up" outside of the rehearsal setting. When a student is absent from a rehearsal, he or she is not only missing the musical growth from that day, but all the other members of the ensemble miss the contribution of that student. Class absences affect all students in an ensemble setting! The skills needed to perform with one of the FHS choirs are earned through the hard work of daily rehearsal.

There are 4 main "home" choir concerts per year, one in each quarter. If a student has **5 or more absences** (EA or UA) in the rehearsal period prior to one of these concerts, he/she is considered unprepared for performance and will not be allowed to perform on that concert (SS absences do not count towards this number). The student is still required to attend the concert and watch from the audience in order to receive partial credit for the performance (percentage at the director's discretion); however, he/she will not perform on stage. Other performances during the year may be subject to similar attendance criteria at the discretion of the director. If the student wishes to earn back the privilege of performing in that concert, the director has the option to allow the student to write make-up papers (1 page per absence) up to 10 absences (6 pages). If the student chooses this option, he/she must submit these papers the Friday before the performance and demonstrate mastery of the music in order to be allowed to perform. In case of excessive absences (EA, UA, or SS) the director may request a meeting with the student and counseling staff to determine whether or not it is appropriate for the student to remain enrolled in the class.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS - CONCERT CHOIR AND CHORAL-AIRES

Concert Choir is the premier choral ensemble at FHS, and it is a privilege to be able to take this class. Due to its large size (between 60-70 singers), the demanding performance schedule, and advanced repertoire studied in this class, attendance is of the utmost importance. Missed rehearsals simply cannot be made up and negatively impact the entire ensemble. If a student receives an Unexcused Absence (UA) in this class at any point in the year, he/she will be put on an attendance contract signed by Mrs. Stephens and the student. A second UA in Concert Choir will result in a meeting with Mrs. Stephens and possibly a guidance counselor to discuss other class options. As a sub-set of Concert Choir, members of Choral-Aires are subject to these same expectations.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Dorian Choir, Varsity Men, Varsity Women, Concert Choir

Choir robes are provided by the school for these ensembles. Underneath the robe, students are required to wear the following:

MEN

- Choir Shirt (\$15.00 - purchased through Universal Athletics - see FHS Choir website for the link)
- Black dress pants
- Black socks
- Black dress shoes

*Black jeans or sneakers are not allowed

WOMEN

- Choir Shirt (\$15.00 - purchased through Universal Athletics - please see FHS choir website for link)
- Black, knee-length skirt
- Skin-tone nylons or bare legs
- Flat, black dress shoes. Dress shoes should have enclosed toes, no heel, and be entirely black.

Choral-Aires

Students in this ensemble purchase their outfits as needed with the director's approval.

FESTIVALS AND HONOR CHOIRS

According to MHSAA regulations, all FHS choirs participate in the annual **District Music Festival**. Every student in the choir program is required to perform with their choir for adjudication as part of the **Large Ensemble** portion of the festival. The festival dates are included on the schedule of events attached to this handbook. More specific performance times will be published as the festival gets closer.

District Music Festival also includes the **Solo and Small Ensemble** event which gives student musicians the opportunity to excel individually as soloists or as members of small group. This portion of the festival is optional. Students may select their own music (with director approval) or the director can assist with music selection. This opportunity is most appropriate for students taking private lessons. More detailed information about Solo and Ensemble will be available later in the fall.

All-State Choir auditions are recorded in May. Students selected for this ensemble present a concert during the Montana Music Educators Association State In-Service Conference in October.

VOICE LESSONS

FHS choir students are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons. Voice lessons accelerate a student's vocal progress in all areas of technique and performance skills and dramatically increase his/her confidence as a performer. The voice teachers make lessons challenging, fun, and individualized. The whole choir then benefits from the increased skill level of these students.

Two local voice teachers are currently offering weekly 25-minute singing lessons at FHS during choir classes. The lessons take place in practice rooms adjoining the choir room. Students are excused from choir class during these lessons, but all other aspects of the arrangement are their own responsibility, including payment and practicing. Students will be introduced to these teachers at school or may call/text them at the following numbers:

Cathy Helder: 471-0806

Suzanne Rohrbach: 755-3736

Marcia Siblingrud: 261-4849

FUNDRAISING

The only school-sponsored fundraiser this year for the choir program will be the annual fruit sale. The sale begins on Oct. 31; delivery date is Thursday, Dec.13. Each student's sales are tracked individually, and money earned in these sales helps pay for retreat, travel and choir t-shirts.

CONCERT CHOIR TOUR - March 20-23

The Concert Choir traditionally goes on tour every spring to perform, hear other choirs, work with conductors and clinicians, and gain a wider world view through a variety of cultural and educational experiences.

Tour is a unique and inspiring experience with lifelong value. Students can expect to come back from tour with new passion for the arts, greater confidence in their own abilities, stronger musical skills, and deeper friendships. Concert Choir council will be involved in choosing the destination for our tour, as well as planning some of the details. The cost is estimated to be about \$425. It is possible to earn all or most of this amount through the fruit sale if you participate over several years. Students may also pay directly into their account.

Each student is important in our choir, and cost should not prevent anyone from participating in tour. Please see Mrs. Stephens if you have concerns about how to pay for this experience. There are a variety of scholarship options available, and I am committed to making it financially possible for every student to tour with the choir if they desire to do so.

Finally, touring with the choir is a privilege. Students with academic or disciplinary concerns may not be allowed to tour, depending on individual circumstances. The decision about a student's ability to go on tour will be made together by Mrs. Stephens and FHS administration.

LETTERING IN CHOIR

Students earn letters by representing FHS in extra-curricular activities. A letter means this person excelled in a Flathead activity. A choir letter is earned by excelling in high school vocal music activities that students choose to participate in outside of the regular school day or class requirements. All point totals are cumulative:

Choir Letter - 45 points (First Letter)

Minor Pin - 85 points (Second Letter)

Major Pin - 120 points (Third Letter)

Gold Bar - 180 points (Fourth Letter)

The following extra-curricular events earn points as shown below:

District Festival Vocal Solo

Superior (I) Rating	15 pts
Excellent (II) Rating	10 pts
Good (III) Rating	5 pts

District Festival Vocal Ensembles

Superior (I) Rating	10 pts
Excellent (II) Rating	5 pts

State Festival Vocal Solos and Ensembles

Superior (I) Rating	10 pts
Excellent (II) Rating	7 pts
Good (III) Rating	5 pts

Piano Solos

District	(I) 5 pts	(II) 2 pts
State	(I) 3 pts	(II) 2 pts

All-State or All-Northwest Choir 25 pts

Performing in an FHS Musical Play 10 pts

Choir Officers/Section Leaders 5 pts

Singing the National Anthem at an FHS event 1 pt (5 pts maximum)

Other activities representing the choir * __ (10 pts maximum)

*Points awarded at director's discretion

FINE ARTS DISTINCTION IN CHOIR

Students who wish to earn a Fine Arts Distinction in Choir must meet the following requirements:

- 4 consecutive credits in a choir class
- 2 or more music letters
- 3.2 GPA

Students who meet these requirements wear a lavender cord at graduation in recognition of this honor.

FHS Choirs SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2018-2019

Date	Event	Choirs	Location	Time
Sept 14-16	Concert Choir Retreat	Concert Choir	Trinity Lutheran Camp	Fri. 4pm - Sun. 11:00am
Mon, Oct 15	KMS Choir Concert	All Men	KMS	7:30pm
Tues, Oct 16	Fall Choir Concert	All	FHS	7:30pm (arrive 6:15)
Oct 17-19	All-State Choir	Selected singers	Missoula	TBA
Tues, Oct 23 *Not Required, but encouraged!	FHS Choirs "Night Out" at the Band Concert	All	FHS Auditorium	7:30pm
Mon, Oct. 29 *Not Required, but encouraged!	FHS Choirs "Night Out" at the Orchestra Concert	All	FHS Auditorium	7:30pm
Wed, Oct. 31	Fruit Sales Begin	All	FHS	In Class
Nov 12-13	AA Choir Festival	Concert Choir	Kalispell, GHS	All Day
Tues, Dec 11	Holiday Choir Concerts	All	FHS	4:30pm (arrive 3:15) 7:30pm (arrive 6:15)
Thurs, Dec 13	Fruit arrives	All	FHS Choir Room	TBA
Thurs, Jan 24	National Anthem at Wrestling	All Men (VM and CC)	FHS	5:30pm
Tues, Feb. 13	Music Dept. Photo Day	All	FHS	In Class
Tues, March 5	Winter Choir Concert #1	CA and CC with MSU	FHS	7:30pm (arrive 6:15)
Tues, March 12	Winter Choir Concert #2	All	FHS	7:30pm (arrive 6:15)
March 14,15,18,19	Pre-Festival Recitals	DF solos and ensembles	FHS Choir Room	In Class
March 20-23	Concert Choir Tour	Concert Choir	TBA	TBA
April 4-6	District Music Festival	All	FHS and GHS	TBA

May 3-4	State Music Festival	Selected Singers	Missoula	TBA
Tues, May 21	Spring Choir Concert	All	FHS	7:30pm (arrive 6:15)

Student Name PRINTED CLEARLY

Choir

Folder #

FHS CHOIR AGREEMENT 2018-2019

In becoming a member of the FHS Choral Program, I agree to do my best to carry on the tradition of excellence and success, both musically and personally. I have read and fully understand the policies and expectations set forth in the choir handbook and I agree to abide by them. This handbooks is available in hard copy from Mrs. Stephens or on the FHS Choir web page, found from the FHS Home Page under "Activities/Clubs."
(<https://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/fhs/Content/1122>)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name PRINTED CLEARLY

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

FHS CHOIR EMAIL GROUP

Parents/Guardians - Please check one:

Yes, I give Mrs. Stephens permission to share my email with a parent volunteer so I can receive updates about what is happening in the choir program and opportunities to be involved.

My email is: _____

No, I do not give permission for my email to be shared with parent volunteers.

This form is DUE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14.