

Pioneer Trail Middle School
Choir Handbook
2017-2018

Mr. Eric Newlin
Director of Choirs

enewlinpt@olatheschools.org • 913.780.7270 • ptchoirs.org

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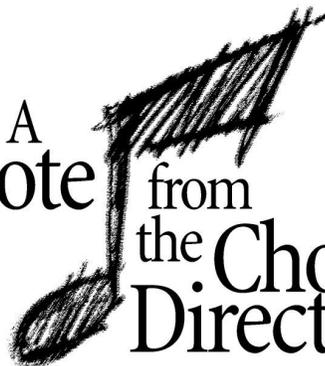
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A Note from the Choir Director

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Welcome to a new year of choir at Pioneer Trail! I'm so glad you're here to sing with us. Your friends are glad you're here too. We each bring our life experiences and special gifts to this room, and that's why we need you in choir. You matter, because without your voice we would truly miss out on something great.

The wonderful thing about choir is that when all our hearts and voices join together to sing, we learn so much— about our voices, about each other, even about how to feel deeply and think reflectively. I can't wait for you to learn more about yourself as a singer and how you can create great sound with your voice. I can't wait for you to encounter great lyrics and poetry. I can't wait for you to hear your voice join in with a roomful of dedicated singers – what a great way to connect with others! And I can't wait for the wonderful music making that will happen when you give your best, take responsibility, and commit to work hard in choir.

Curriculum [\(Back to Top\)](#)

The Pioneer Trail choir program focuses on nurturing young choral musicians, preparing them for a lifetime of music making as skilled, caring individuals. Singers at Pioneer Trail prepare a wide variety of excellent choral literature for concerts, learn fundamental music reading skills, engage in daily structured sight reading, increase their understanding of their unique voice, and learn fundamentals of good singing technique. Pioneer Trail singers also have opportunities to audition for advanced ensembles, audition for district and state honor choirs, perform in adjudicated festivals, participate in small chamber ensembles, and other musically enriching opportunities.

Honorable Behavior [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Don't be mistaken! Great choral singing is not an accident. It results from pursuing excellence *every day*. It requires consistent effort and energy. It involves taking risks, being vulnerable, and giving everything you've got. The following behaviors are expected from everyone, every day:

- Be in your assigned seat, with the necessary materials, when the bell rings.
- Leave personal and non-choir items in the back of the room (homework, books, purses, makeup, cards, games, toys, etc.)
- Empty mouths! No food, gum, candy, or drinks (except plain water) in class. See me if you have a cough drop before class.
- Respect everyone. No exceptions. If you make choir a wonderful place to be for your fellow singers, the odds are good that they will return the favor.
- Compliance is expected. We can't achieve excellence unless we all follow directions and respond appropriately to the teacher.

- Participate in class every day. Your *focused* energy and commitment is the most valuable gift you can give to the rest of us.
 - Treat your materials with respect. Your music, sight-reading materials, handouts, etc. are given to your on a loan basis. Return them in better condition than you received them, if possible. If you damage something that doesn't belong to you, you will be asked to replace it at current cost.
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Dishonorable Behavior ([Back to Top](#))

Since excellent singing and performance are the goals, less-than-excellent behavior will not be tolerated. Class disruption doesn't demonstrate honorable behavior, commitment to the ensemble (the choir), or commitment your own potential. Class disruption is selfish. It makes the rehearsal classroom feel less safe. It disrespects others' hard work. And it undermines the great things we are trying to accomplish as a class. Mr. Newlin will work with the student to get to the "root of the problem." In addition, Mr. Newlin may assign various consequences based on the type of inappropriate behavior. Policies in the student handbook will be followed regarding detention attendance. If a disruption is exceptionally disrespectful or is of a repeated nature, office referral could result.

Students who repeatedly demonstrate an inability to act according to the behavioral expectations outlined in this document, their Choir Contract, and verbal instructions from Mr. Newlin will not be permitted to attend choral festivals and field trips, during which they would represent both Pioneer Trail Middle School and the PT Choral Program. In addition, students who fail to exhibit honorable behavior and violate their Choir Contract may be asked to conference with parents, administration, and/or school counselors to find an alternative class in which they can better succeed.

I believe that undisciplined behavior is the result of a lack of opportunity to make good, thoughtful behavior choices. Poor behavior often indicates a lack of awareness of character growth in certain areas. It will be my joy to teach students that great behavior and performance result when issues of character are addressed. I want students to behave well not just because it is requested and expected, but because they are growing as thoughtful, caring, and compassionate human beings. I want to help develop young musicians whose integrity is without question, both in the classroom and in society outside the school walls.

Responsibilities ([Back to Top](#))

Class Attendance

Excellent performance will only be achieved if everyone—simultaneously—is ready to rehearse at the beginning of the hour. Tardy students interrupt the learning environment and show a lack of commitment to the ensemble. Use the restroom and drinking fountain before class. If a teacher keeps you late, bring a pass signed by the teacher, and above all, enter quietly! If you don't monitor your time wisely, expect consequences. Repeated tardies will result in consequences according to the student handbook.

Extra Rehearsals

Occasionally, morning rehearsals will be required of the students in order to have a successful performance. Students are required to attend these rehearsals. Parents will be given at least one week notice of extra rehearsals.

Panther Time rehearsals may also be necessary from time to time. Students are required to attend these rehearsals unless they have extenuating academic conflicts requiring help during Panther Time.

Concert Attendance

Included in this handbook and at ptchoirs.org/calendar is a calendar with the performance events for the year. Required events are indicated with an asterisk (*). Each event specifies which students are involved. Concerts and special events are similar to unit or chapter tests in other classes. Your personal attendance is mandatory.

Excused absences (*extreme personal illness - not just a headache, valid family emergency, or a death in the family*) will need to be made up. When possible, excused absences should be cleared with the director at least two days before the concert. Only **excused** absences may be made up; it is the student's responsibility to ask Mr. Newlin for make-up work. Building policy will be followed for make-up work timelines.

Unexcused absences (*skipping the concert, attending a conflicting non-school event, failure to secure a ride, not having the uniform ready to go, not telling your parents, other family plans, etc.*) will result in 0 credit and may have a significant effect on the student's grade. In addition, the student might not be considered for advanced choirs, honor choirs, barbershop groups, or allowed to attend festivals and field trips.

Concert Attire (Uniforms) ([Back to Top](#))

Each choir will have a uniform. The purpose of the uniform is to present a consistent look that will enhance the performance, rather than detract from it. Remember that proper concert attire is part of the student's concert grade. Go to ptchoirs.org/uniforms to see detailed examples of what is expected for concert attire.

- **6th Grade Choirs** do not have a *rented* school uniform. Instead, 6th grade girls will wear blue jeans (no holes) with solid black flats or character shoes and their choir t-shirt. Go to ptchoirs.org/uniforms for detailed information on what this should look like.
 - **7th and 8th grade choirs** will rent their uniforms for \$20. This fee covers dry cleaning, repair, and purchasing replacement pieces as needed.
 - **Shoes:** *Girls* must wear solid-black flats, boots, or character shoes. *Boys* must wear solid-black dress shoes with BLACK socks.
 - **Hair:** Pull hair out of face and secure back with black barrettes, headband, hair ties, etc. Your hair accessories should be *simple, plain, and discreet*. Boys' hair should be pulled out of their eyes as well.
 - **Jewelry:** Unless otherwise directed, no jewelry is allowed other than one small stud in each ear.
 - **Perfumes**, scents, ect. are not allowed onstage during performances. These can cause severe reactions among choir members.
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Grades ([Back to Top](#))

Students will earn a class grade comprised of the following weighted categories:

20% = Performances

30% = Assessments/Projects

Sight-reading assessments

Singing assessments

Individual and Group Projects

50% = School-day Assignments

Score markings

Vocabulary

Theory

Dictation

In-class exercises, responses, activities, exit slips, etc.

Rehearsal and Ensemble skills

Other assignments and projects as determined by the teacher

Students and parents are encouraged to regularly check the student's grade and talk to Mr. Newlin if they have any questions or concerns.

Technology and Materials ([Back to Top](#))

Choir students will use their district-issued iPads for a variety of learning activities, so students must bring their iPad to class every day with enough battery charge for the hour.

Students will also need to have a number of apps on their iPad. The list can be found at ptchoirs.org/technology.

Auditions ([Back to Top](#))

Students may audition and apply for **extra choir opportunities** throughout the year. Some of these opportunities are listed below. Students and parents must commit to the extra rehearsals, performance dates, and responsibilities that come with each opportunity. Go to ptchoirs.org/auditions for audition details and applications.

- Olathe District Honor Choir
 - KMEA Honor Choir
 - KCDA Treble Honor Choir
 - Advanced Choirs (for the following year)
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Parent Support ([Back to Top](#))

I need parent involvement to help these choirs be the best they can be. You can help in the following ways:

- **Participate in the Choir Fundraiser (September)!** This fundraiser is *absolutely vital* to sustaining and supporting your child's choir program experience. In today's current funding environment, it would be impossible to sustain the level of music program without your fundraising assistance!
- **Help with Uniform Fitting Days (September 20-22 - during the school day)**

- **Sew or Hem** Uniform Skirts and Pants
 - **Help with Fundraiser Turn-in Days** (September)
 - **Attend all our concerts.** It's more fun to sing to a full audience filled with caring, loving ears!
 - **Donate simple supplies** for choir lessons (simple items like drinking straws, marshmallows, etc.)
 - **Be a Men's Festival Chaperone** (Tuesday morning, September 19)
 - **Be a Winter Concert Chaperone** (December 7) - PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING WITH THIS.
 - **Videotape** or record our concerts.
 - **Bring Donuts** for the day after the concert.
 - **Be positive about your child's singing** and music in general. Student attitudes toward singing often reflect parent attitudes. If you are positive, your child will more likely feel positively toward their singing..
 - **If you have concerns, call or e-mail me. I'm serious!** Generally speaking, most problems are just misunderstandings or miscommunications. I'm a teacher. Not Perfect! I'll make mistakes. Call me, and we'll sort things out. I may call you from time-to-time as well. We're on the same page. We both want your child to be successful!
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Deaf and Hard of Hearing ([Back to Top](#))

If you would like an interpreter for a performance, please let me know at least a week in advance so that we will be able to provide one for the date requested. I must request this person through the district.

2017-18 Pioneer Trail Choir Calendar ([Back to Top](#))

Please visit ptchoirs.org/calendar to see the list of choir events for the school year. Required performances are noted with an asterisk (*); note which **ensembles** are singing for each event.

2017-18 Media Release ([Back to Top](#))

I give permission for the **Pioneer Trail Middle School choir program** to use images, audio, and video of my student in promotional materials, PT newspaper, printed and digital media, social media, website content, streaming media, mobile applications, and other representational materials associated with Pioneer Trail Middle School Choir.

Student's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

2017-18 Choir Contract ([Back to Top](#))

As a student, I agree to uphold **all** the policies and expectations outlined in the *2017-18 PT Choir Handbook*, including the following:

Honorable Behavior:

- Attend all required concerts in the appropriate performance uniform.
- Be in your assigned seat, with the necessary materials, when the bell rings.
- Leave personal and non-choir items in the back of the room (homework, books, purses, makeup, cards games, toys, etc.)
- Empty mouths! No food, gum, candy, or drinks (except plain water) in class. See me if you have a cough drop before class.
- Respect everyone. No exceptions. If you make choir a wonderful place to be for your fellow singers, the odds are good that they will return the favor.
- Compliance is expected. We can't achieve excellence unless we all follow directions and respond appropriately to the teacher.
- Participate in class every day. Your *focused* energy and commitment is the most valuable gift you can give to the rest of us.
- Treat your materials with respect. Your music, sight-reading materials, handouts, etc. are given to your on a loan basis. Return them in better condition than you received them, if possible. If you damage something that doesn't belong to you, you will be asked to replace it at current cost.

Consequences for Dishonorable Behavior:

- Mr. Newlin may assign various consequences based on the type of inappropriate behavior. Policies in the student handbook will be followed regarding detention attendance. If a disruption is exceptionally disrespectful or is of a repeated nature, office referral could result.
- Students who repeatedly demonstrate an inability to act according to the behavioral expectations outlined in this document, their Choir Contract, and verbal instructions from Mr. Newlin will not be permitted to attend choral festivals and field trips, during which they would represent both Pioneer Trail Middle School and the PT Choral Program.

Students who fail to exhibit honorable behavior and violate their Choir Contract may be asked to conference with parents, administration, and/or school counselors to find an alternative class in which they can better succeed.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____