

# AISSD

## FINE ARTS



PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2023-2024



Dear Parents and Students,

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Aledo ISD Choral Department. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year!

As your child's Choir Director, our commitment is to create a safe, enriching, and positive learning environment. This handbook is intended to help make your years in the choir as productive as possible. It puts at your fingertips the essential information you need to understand the choral department's expectations, student responsibilities, and production program. It is important for both students and their parents to read and understand the expectations and processes described in the handbook. Please note that while the handbook does answer many essential questions, members of the choral faculty are always available to answer your questions or address any existing concerns. We believe in respect for the choir as an art form and a process of understanding. We believe in respect for the work we undertake, and the efforts and risks we all take for that work. We believe in respect for all those who contribute in any way to the creative efforts of the department.

We are committed to providing the best educational experience for every student. It's going to be a great year.

Sincerely,

Karen Paul, AHS Secondary Choral Director  
Kristen Hoffman, AMS & McAnally Secondary Choral Director

## **Departmental Overview**

Aledo Choir provides opportunities to students who have an interest in singing to perform a wide variety of choral music, study proper vocal techniques, develop strong musicianship skills, and share our musical talents with our community. Membership in the choral program requires teamwork, discipline, dedication, and professionalism in order to achieve the highest degree of musical success. As a team, each student must contribute his/her personal best in the interest of the ultimate success of our program and students. Colleagues, parents, students, and the community will join and experience a choral program that inspires and challenges students to reach their greatest potential musically and academically.

## **Focus Statement**

In the Aledo ISD Choir, the students are the focus of our endeavor and deserve an opportunity to:

- Refine physical and mental aptitudes
- Nurture self-realization, and build self-confidence
- Feel a sense of pride and dignity
- Experience teamwork and develop a sense of fair play
- Develop the ability to lead and the willingness to work together
- Foster self-discipline and perseverance
- Appreciate that rules, consistently applied, create order and discipline
- Learn to accept graciously the decisions of judges and officials
- Affirm self-worth in times of disappointment as well as adulation
- Cultivate lifetime skills
- Complement their classwork with practice and performance
- Have Fun!

Experience the joy of achieving their potential in a wholesome environment. Discover that ultimately the true meaning of winning is doing one's best. Develop strong musicianship skills, both on an individual and ensemble level. Improve music literacy. Develop student leadership and teamwork skills. Encourage creativity and self-expression. Foster a love of choral music and singing that will last a lifetime.

# Expected Departmental Learning Results

## Choir students will become

- I. **Communicators who:**
  - (a) express -ideas effectively and appropriately when speaking and writing
  - (b) receive and interpret the messages of others without distortion
  
- II. **Thinkers who:**
  - (a) utilize critical thinking skills in solving problems and applying knowledge in real- world contexts
  - (b) distinguish between facts, opinions and assumptions when forming conclusions
  - (c) use arts and ideas to represent significant concepts
  - (d) analyze current issues from a variety of perspectives
  
- III. **Developing Artists who:**
  - (a) create and produce new work reflecting originality and high standards
  - (b) demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate artistic products
  - (c) have knowledge of the historical/cultural context of the arts
  - (d) use the language of the arts for expressing aesthetic concepts
  - (e) understand the interrelationships of the arts to each other and to academic subjects
  
- IV. **Community Contributors who:**
  - (a) demonstrate and exercise productive citizenship
  - (b) make positive contributions to the community both at school and in a larger context
  - (c) demonstrate knowledge and appreciation for the global environment and its resources
  
- V. **Collaborative Workers who:**
  - (a) demonstrate effective leadership skills in various settings
  - (b) show respect for diverse opinions, feelings and beliefs
  - (c) interact effectively -in intercultural/interpersonal relationships
  
- VI. **Learners who:**
  - (a) develop and use effective learning and planning strategies such as time management, self- evaluation, and goal-setting
  - (b) use technology to access information, analyze and solve problems and communicate ideas
  - (c) communicate effectively, at a survival level,, in a second language
  - (d) demonstrate the achievement of academic and artistic standards through a variety of performance tasks

# Attendance & Grading

## Classroom Attendance

The choir is dependent on all its members. Unlike most other classes where individuals are accountable only for their own success, choir students' success is, in large part, dependent on the full participation of all its members. The following attendance policies will affect the student's grades and chances for participation.

## Attendance for Rehearsals and Performances

As a member of the Aledo Choirs, you are responsible for attending **ALL** rehearsals, sectionals, and performances of your choir. Every event has been carefully scheduled to cause the least amount of conflict with other activities. Your participation is vital to the success of our group!

Absences and tardy will be excused in the following cases:

- Medical emergency or personal injury
- Special circumstances (Contact your director for any absence or tardy ASAP)

Examples of **unexcused absences** and tardy include, but are not limited to

- Work
- Oversleeping
- Transportation not arranged (ask friends for rides, talk to your director)
- Anything deemed unexcused by the principal or choir director

## Consequences for attendance issues...

Students who are tardy to sectionals, rehearsals, and performances will receive a 75%. Students who are absent from sectionals, rehearsals, and performances will receive a 0%. Missing a rehearsal and communicating after the fact will still result in a "0."

An email or written correspondence must be given in the event of any absence, excused, or unexcused. This should be submitted as a handwritten note or email and should be given in advance (voice mails, phone calls, and texts will not suffice). If circumstances do not permit, the parent must send documentation upon the child's return to school. This documentation is in addition to what one would normally send to the attendance office.

Please provide documentation for any tardiness or absence. Without the proper documentation, determining excused or non-excused tardies or absences becomes very difficult. It is not the Aledo ISD Choir policy to know your personal business but without proper documentation, it makes it hard to be consistent as a choir without a reason for the tardy or absence.

### **An Example of Poor Documentation**

*“Please excuse Suzie from tonight’s rehearsal.”*

### **An Example of Proper Documentation**

*“Please excuse Johnny from tonight’s rehearsal. He is still recovering from the stomach virus.”*

Most, if not all, schedule conflicts can be worked out if we have that communication! We want everyone to be a part of everything they want...advanced communication is the key!

Please do not skip morning rehearsals due to illness and suddenly show up an hour later at school. We understand student attendance is a huge priority, but it sends a negative message to the other students when a person skips rehearsals because of an illness and they suddenly show up an hour later at school. We are just asking for consistency on all parties involved. If you are too sick for rehearsals, you are too sick to attend school.

Other consequences for not attending a required event or for excessive tardiness may result in, but will not be limited to

- Loss of performance status
- Choir community service
- Make-up assignments

All choir students must abide by the Aledo ISD attendance policies.

### **Before & After School Grading Policy**

Work schedules must not interfere with the rehearsal and performance schedule that you are given at the beginning of the school year. Students who enroll in other school activities such as athletics, band, or drama need to plan ahead to avoid conflicts. Ask to receive a complete semester calendar from all your activities so that you can have the maximum amount of time to work out potential schedule conflicts.

We all will work together to give every student the opportunity to be successful in all their groups. We just need the time to work it out. Let your directors know of any conflicts ASAP. Waiting until the week of the event does not give us much time to work it out.

Students are **REQUIRED** to attend **ALL** (outside of class time) sectionals, rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances scheduled by the director and the section leaders. Choir Classes are in most part based on performance, so to receive a performance grade the singer must be in attendance. As per UIL Rules, a student cannot fail choir solely on lack of participation in before or after school rehearsals.

## **Makeup work Policy**

Makeup work or assignments will be given for all approved absences. As per Aledo ISD Policy, you will have 1 day for every day missed to turn in your class assignments.

## **Conduct**

All policies and procedures of the Aledo Schools will be enforced in the choir room and at all choir events. Courtesy, respect, and compassion are the foundation of every group, and every member of our choirs is expected to demonstrate these qualities at all times both to the director and to each other. Excellent artistic performance requires absolute unity of the group; therefore, performers will be held to the highest standards of interpersonal conduct. Profanity is an unacceptable substitute for more effective communication skills. Please leave your disagreements at the door and seek to resolve all conflicts in private with maturity and respect. Criticism of another student's effort will not be tolerated.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who do so will receive a "o" for that proficiency which will result in a dramatic reduction of the term final grade, as well as a "U" for the citizenship grade. Parents will be contacted and the appropriate administrative disciplinary action will be taken.

# Tutorials

Tutorials will be held on an as needed basis. Tutorials may be scheduled before school, after school, and during FLEX.

Students on the Leadership Team will also be available for tutorials at any point by phone call, after school one-on-one, or any other form of communication when allowed. Please let us know your needs...we want to help! Director tutorial sign up times will be posted as soon as the final schedule is released.

## Classroom Rules

1. **BE ON TIME.** Be in the choir room when the bell rings.
2. **BE PREPARED.** Be seated with your water bottle, choir folder, and pencil in hand. Pick up new materials as appropriate before being seated. No food, gum, or any other chewables in the choir room. Use the restroom before class.
3. **BE RESPECTFUL.** Do not talk without permission...especially when another section is working. Personal situations needing private attention by the director should be handled at the end of class.
4. **BE FOCUSED.** Every singer should demonstrate correct singing and rehearsal techniques such as proper mouth shape, good posture, correct breathing, and music ready. No backpacks, reading material, purses, or grooming items will be allowed in the rehearsal area. Such items may be placed around the back of the room before class begins. Use of cell phones during class is specifically prohibited. See policy below.
5. **BE RESPONSIBLE.** Please treat all instruments, music, and our classrooms with care and respect. Do not play the piano without permission or adjust the sound equipment.
6. **BE ORGANIZED.** Be sure to turn in all paperwork as appropriate, keep your uniform maintained, write down and be on time for all appointments such as auditions, lessons, or rehearsals, and plan ahead to manage your schedule and any conflicts that may arise.
7. **BE EXCITED.** A positive attitude and enthusiastic participation will multiply our time, increase our potential for improvement, and allow us to accomplish much in each rehearsal. Be a leader in this area!



## **Cell Phone and Online Policies**

Rehearsals are not a place for phones. The use of phones during class will result in 1 warning, next time will result in taking the phone up and returning at the end of class. 3 or more times will result in the phone being turned into administration as per the Student's Campus Student Handbook. Warnings may come from student leaders as well as the instructors.

**ONLINE PRESENCE:** As a representative of the Aledo ISD Choir you will be expected to uphold the highest standards for behavior and character in class, at school, in the community, and online. Remember what you do and say online now will be there forever. There are no take-backs in social media! We all use these tools, let's just make sure that everything people see about you is something you can be proud of...even years down the road. Appropriate consequences will be given when needed.

### **Consequences for behavior problems...**

1. Proficiency Deductions: Infractions of classroom rules will affect a student's Classroom Participation grade for the 9-weeks. A first offense will cause a reduction by 2 pts, second offense: 5 pts. Further infractions will continue to erode an individual's grade. Rehearsal/Performance Proficiencies may be reduced for tardiness or not being dressed in full uniform.
2. Director/Student Conference: When the grade has been reduced significantly due to proficiency deductions, the student will make an appointment with the director for a conference. Choir community service may be assigned at that time depending on the behavior problems.
3. Choir community service: Continued infractions may result in the assignment of choir community service. A student may (at the director's discretion) be assigned an organizational, cleaning, or music library task to be performed either before or after school. A one-hour service will return 5 points to the participation grade.
4. Parent phone call.
5. Removal from performance opportunities. Written work will be substituted.

# GENERAL AUDIENCE CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Our students are being taught much more than music. As a part of their performance experience, we also teach them the proper behavior expected at a formal event, such as this classical concert. To create the best possible atmosphere for this concert, please observe the following:

- Please double-check to be sure your phone, electronics, or other noise-making device are all set to silent!
- Refrain from talking or looking at your phone during a performance.
- If it becomes necessary to leave the performance hall, please do so between selections and as quietly as possible.
- We gratefully receive applause at the appropriate times, but shouting, whistling, or calling out student's names is not appropriate in this venue.

Your attention to these matters demonstrates your respect for these hard-working students and will be appreciated by your fellow audience members as well. Thank you for helping us educate our students and for serving as role models to them. Enjoy the Concert!

## **Additional students expectations as audience members:**

- You may not allow guests to sit with you in the Choir seating area.
- Do not leave the auditorium or your assigned holding area at any time.
- DO NOT TALK.
- Applaud, but do not shout, whistle, or call student names.

We will have assigned members of the choir helping the officers with teardown and clean up after each concert. If it is your time to help, please plan to stay after the event for AT LEAST 20 minutes to assist in cleaning the performance area! You must check out at the end of the concert!

As a member of Aledo ISD choirs, you should be the best example of appropriate concert etiquette.

## **Uniform guidelines**

Our uniforms should be worn with pride and confidence. Our uniformity of appearance demonstrates our respect for our choir, our school, and our audience.

- The complete uniform will be worn for each performance. Be sure it is clean, pressed, and hemmed. Mid-year dry-cleaning may be necessary and should be done at the student's expense.
- Hair will be neatly groomed. No extreme hairstyles which will distract from the performance will be allowed. Hair should be worn away from the face.
- No perfume, cologne, or strongly scented lotions should be used. (Deodorant is mandatory!) The uniform is to be worn ONLY for official choir functions.

## **Women's Formal Dress Uniform**

- Low-heeled (1-2") dressy black closed-toe shoes or black closed-toe flats
- A hairstyle that clearly shows your entire face and conservative makeup should be worn every time you are in uniform.
- Hair accessories should be neutral or black and should be unobtrusive.
- ONLY solid black undergarments should be worn! No part of your undergarments should show or stick out and be seen at any time.

## **Men's Formal Uniform**

### **TBD**

- Black dress shoes and black dress socks are mandatory and must be provided by the student. Loafer type, lace-ups, or tap shoes are acceptable. NO athletic or tennis-shoe type, even if they are black.

## **6th Grade Uniform**

- Choir t-shirt provided from the choir fee.
- Blue jeans without rips or embellishments.
- Closed-toe shoes (no flip flops, croc, etc.)

## **Lost Uniform Replacement Cost**

Uniform replacement fees for any lost or damaged uniform are as follows:

- Dress \$ 85.00

## **Supplies**

**The cost of these supplies will be covered in your choir fees. The following items will be needed for each class day rehearsal:**

- Black Rehearsal Folder, with 5 tabbed-dividers: A 3-ring 1” Standard Binder.
- A sharpened pencil, and a soft eraser. Mechanical pencils and “click-erasers” were invented just for musicians! Take advantage of these simple tools. You may place a hole-punched transparent zipper pouch in the back of your rehearsal folder for these items.

**The following items will be needed for each class day rehearsal and since there is a lot of personal preference choices...you will need to provide what you want to use:**

- Electronics: earbuds, phone or mp3 player to use in class for listening assignments and individual practice when directed to use them.
- Water-bottle. (optional) Any water bottle with a re-closable lid is acceptable. Hydration is key to vocal health but doesn't begin in the choir room. Drink your water! Water is the only beverage allowed in the choir room.

## **Classroom Choir Supplies**

Each student will be asked to bring the following items at the beginning of the year.

- 1 box of tissues for use in the choir room
- One case of bottled water to be used for choir even

## **Vocal Music Enrichment Program (Private Voice Lessons)**

It is the goal of the Aledo ISD Music Department to provide the very best learning experiences for each student. One of these learning experiences is the opportunity for a student to study privately with a professional voice instructor. This enrichment opportunity is available to all choir students in grades 6-12 and is optional. Private lessons enable your child to become a better musician through one-on-one instruction. Lessons are paced to fill each student's learning needs. The teachers who will be offering these services have been thoroughly interviewed and auditioned to ensure that your student receives the best possible instruction. It is our goal to provide students with the best teachers available.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Prepare fully for each lesson.
- Always bring all lesson music and materials to the lesson.
- Always notify the teacher in advance if you must be absent from a lesson.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Assist your child in having the necessary music, material, and accessories.
- Maintain communication with the child's teacher, following all payment agreements, and working with them regarding any scheduled or unscheduled absences.
- Complement your child for good work, faithfulness in practice, and any other worthy accomplishments.
- Attend your child's performances.
- Contact the director if you have any questions, need assistance, or are concerned about your child's progress.

## **Lesson Location, Scheduling, and Cost**

- Lessons will be scheduled before school, after school, or during the choir class period depending on the availability of the teacher. No lessons will be scheduled during academic classes.
- If a student must be absent from the lesson for any reason, notification must be given 24 hours prior in order for a make-up lesson to be scheduled. If a lesson is missed without prior notification, the student will be financially accountable for that lesson.
- The student should advise the private instructor of concerts, holidays, or other events which might result in the interruption of the regularly scheduled lesson in advance.
- The cost for each lesson is decided by the individual instructor and can range from \$20.00-\$30.00 per half hour, depending on the teacher's qualifications and experience. Monthly tuition is payable directly to the instructor on the first lesson day of each month.

Interested students will be given contact information for available instructors.

# **Trips**

A student represents his/her school, community, home, and him/herself when on a Choir trip. Conduct always must be such that at no time could it be considered a poor reflection upon the school, community, home, or the student him/herself. The individual's manner of dress and his/her personal grooming also must be always meticulous. As a member of a group – sometimes in uniform – the student's every action is observed with interest by the public. The following rules will be in effect while on any choir trip:

On trips, you **MUST** go and return on the bus. The only exception is that a parent may request that their child be able to ride home from an event or trip with them. This is granted if the parent has the proper documentation on file, forms are available from the director. At no time may a student ride home without one of his/her parents accompanying them unless prior notification is given, and a permission document is placed on file.

- Be quiet during roll call and when instructions are given.
- Do not stand or leave your seat when the bus is in motion.
- No public display of affection. (PDA)
- While on the bus, there will be no loud talking, vulgar or abusive language or obscene gestures, standing in the aisles, or sitting on the backs of seats. All body parts will always remain inside the bus.
- Loud, boisterous talking, screaming, etc. will not be tolerated.
- All electronics must have headsets. **ALEDO ISD, DIRECTORS, AND SPONSORS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS!!**
- No food or drinks on the bus unless permission is given by directors. At no time will glass bottles be allowed on the bus.
- Students are expected to keep the bus clean.
- Upon arrival at a certain point, students must remain seated until dismissed by the sponsor, officer, or director in charge.
- File off the bus in an orderly manner. Do not crowd or push.
- Do not exit, enter, or open the back door of the bus unless there is an emergency.
- Always show proper respect and cooperation to all adults.
- Swimsuits should be one-piece only. A dark colored swim-shirt may be worn over a two-piece if the student does not own a one-piece.
- **ALWAYS USE GOOD JUDGMENT & COMMON SENSE.**
- **WHEN IN DOUBT – DON'T DO IT!!**

## **Fundraising**

Singers of the Aledo ISD Choirs will be participating in fundraising activities throughout the year. Fundraisers are used for a variety of purposes, including covering individual student travel costs or other fees, to support program costs not covered by regular budget allocations, hire buses for special events, and provide scholarship assistance for students whose circumstances would not otherwise allow them to participate in the choral program.

Fundraisers may be sponsored by the Aledo ISD choir department or by the Booster Club. Details will be provided for each event.

Although no student is required to participate in a choir fundraiser, the income from fundraisers is crucial to the program. If you do not participate in the fundraisers your student will not earn money for their account and will have to make up the difference with payments.

## **TERMINATING COURSE CONTRACT**

Students are expected to honor contracts as signed. The contracts between students and departments are taken very seriously. Should a student void any contractual agreement, they may jeopardize future relationships within the department. Students who do not fulfill contracts may be excluded for future productions and are expected to select a new course of study. If student voids contract in the middle of a semester and cannot drop the class, students will be given individual course studies until the end of the semester.

If the possibility exists for students to be removed from the class or transferred to a non-audition choir class, removal will take place immediately. Once a student ends the relationship, the decision is final and terminal.

We hope all our parents will work with students in teaching the value of honoring commitments and the importance of fulfilling contracts. Teaching children to honor their word is perhaps the best skill set we can provide future generations.





## 2022-2023 Aledo Choir Handbook and Parent Information Contract

Please sign below if you have reviewed the choir handbook and fully understand the content and expectations of this course.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Signature

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Date

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Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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e-mail address

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Parent/Guardian Home Phone

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Parent/Guardian Cell Phone

Are you interested in being a chaperone or volunteer for future choir events?

YES

NO

If yes, please make sure you complete the required background check linked below!  
<https://www.aledoisd.org/Page/7033>