**Connell Middle School**

♫ Choir ♫

San Antonio Independent School District

Ms. Kimberly Martinez, Director

Mr. Rivers, Principal

413.400.2434

Kmartinez8@saisd.net

Room 708

Conference Period: 1st period, 8:30am-9:27am

400 Hot Wells Blvd.

San Antonio, TX 78223

413.400.2434

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Dear Connell M.S. Choir Students and Parents,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year at Connell Middle School! This handbook is designed to give you an overview of the choral program, to outline policies and procedures, and to serve as a reference throughout the school year.

Parents, your assistance and involvement in choir are crucial to our success. **We will need your help** in supporting our goals, in raising additional funds for choir projects, in chaperoning our field trips and concerts, and, of course, in attending our concerts and letting yourself be entertained by your talented children!

I am requesting that parents and students read the **entire** handbook carefully, as students and parents will be held responsible for its contents. Included in this handbook are a **Volunteer Sign-Up Form,** a **Permission to Record Form,** the **Yearly Permission Slip**, and a **Signature Page**. In order to participate in any choral activity, these forms must be signed and returned by September 4th, **for a grade.** *All extra copies of this handbook will cost $5.*

Choir is one of the most fulfilling activities that Connell M.S. has to offer, and I am so glad that you have opened your mind and heart to this opportunity. Share with me the goal of creating an organization, which educates, nurtures, and encourages its students to learn and grow into their full potential!

Sincerely,

Ms. Kimberly Martinez

Choir Director

It is the policy of San Antonio ISD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Es norma del distrito de San Antonio no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, edad, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades vocacionales, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Deprechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Emmiendas en la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda.

**Connell M.S. Choir Calendar 2015-2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Event | Site | Time | Info. |
| Sept. 1 | Choir Parent Meeting | Cafeteria | 5:30-6:00 PM | ALL |
| Sept. 2 | Extra Rehearsals Begin | Choir Room | 7:45-8:30 AM | M-Th |
| Sept. 4 | Handbook Forms Due | Choir Room | 4:15 PM | ALL |
| TBA | Talent Show | Auditorium | TBA | TBA |
| Oct. 8 | 9 WEEKS CURRICULUM CONCERT-Fall | Highlands HS | TBA | ALL |
| Oct. 16 | TTB Region Auditions | Wood MS | 5:00-9:00 PM | + |
| Oct. 17 | SSA Region Auditions  SA Region Auditions | Wood MS | 7:30 AM-12:30 PM  1:00-6:00 PM | + |
| Oct. 31 | Region Clinic and Concert | Judson HS | 7:30 AM-3:30 PM | If you pass audition. |
| Dec. 4 | 6th grade Honor Choir Concert | Irving MS | 1:00-4:00 PM Rehearsal  6:00 PM Concert | Select 6th graders. |
| Dec. 10 | 9 WEEKS CURRICULUM CONCERT-Winter | Auditorium | 5:30 PM Call Time  6:00 PM Concert | ALL |
| Jan. 23 | Solo and Ensemble Competition | Tafolla MS | TBA | = |
| Feb. 25-26 | Pre-UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest | Cooper Learning Center | TBA | + |
| TBA | 9 WEEKS CURRICULUM CONCERT-Spring | TBA | TBA | ALL |
| March 23-24 | UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest | Lanier HS | TBA | + |
| TBA | 9 WEEKS CURRICULUM CONCERT-Welcome to the 60’s | TBA | TBA | ALL |

Extra weekly rehearsals will take place throughout the school year. Students will be given at least a week’s notice so they have time to arrange for a ride. Attendance at these rehearsals is MANDATORY, and contributes to the participation grade for the week. Students will be given a pass to allow them into the building on these days.

ALL - Mandatory for all choir members.

+ Mandatory for all Advanced Choir members.

= All eligible choir members are encouraged to attend.

*\*\*There are some events not listed, as there are some dates and times that have not yet been confirmed. As soon as these dates and times are confirmed, students will be given written notice. All events and updates will also be posted to the choir website at www.connellchoir.weebly.com\*\**

**Connell Middle School Choirs**

**Beginning Choir**

This gender-based class is designed to introduce beginning 6th grade singers to the fundamentals of choral music. Topics include vocal anatomy, proper breathing technique, introduction to sight-reading and musical notation, performance practices, music history, and basic music theory. The students in this class **may** participate in 6th grade Honor Choir.

**Intermediate Choir**

This gender-based class is designed for 7th and 8th grade students who may or may not have prior music or choral experience. A continuation of beginning choir, it reviews the fundamentals and progresses to more complicated choral songs and sight-reading. Includes continuation of music history and music theory. The students in this class **may** compete in UIL Concert and Sight-Reading, Region, and Solo & Ensemble.

**Advanced Girls' Choir**

This class is for 7th and 8th grade girls with at least one year of choir, and is audition-based. This group learns more complicated concert and sight-reading music. The students in this class **will** compete in UIL Concert and Sight-Reading, Region, and Solo & Ensemble, as well as have more and varied performance opportunities.

*Students in the Advanced Choir are expected to be present and punctual at every class, outside rehearsal and performance. Students are also expected to maintain passing grades and show excellent citizenship in the choir environment and beyond. Students may be dismissed from these choirs for more than 3* ***unexcused*** *absences in a 9-week period, consistent misbehavior, failure to participate, and/or failure to adhere to the rules and regulations presented in this handbook.*

**UNIFORMS**

Choir uniforms must be worn for every concert/event **unless otherwise instructed**. Students may be asked to bring their uniform to school prior to a concert. This is to assure that each student's uniform follows the criteria mentioned below. A student will only be allowed to perform with their choir if they are in full uniform. ***NO EXCEPTIONS!*** Please contact me if you need assistance providing the uniform.

* Black Dress Shirt or Polo (NO t-shirts, sleeveless shirts, tank tops.)
* Black Undershirt if applicable (NO cleavage or midriffs showing.)
* Black Pants or *Ankle Length* Skirt (NO skirts shorter than the ankles, jeans, shorts, cargo pants.)
* Black Shoes with no more than a 1-inch heel. (NO open-toed shoes, tennis shoes/sneakers, sandals, non-black shoes, boots, flashy shoes, high heels, flip flops.)
* Black Belt if applicable (NO sagging.)
* Black Socks if applicable
* Ladies: Hair must be pulled away from the face in a neat fashion using black hair ties/clips or bobby pins. (NO hair ribbons, hair bands, large clips, colored hair ties, colored clips.)
* NO jewelry, except for small studs on the lower ear, and only if you want.
* Some choir members may have allergies, so please refrain from wearing perfume at concerts.

IMPORTANT: If you are not in full uniform, you will lose 20 points on your concert (TEST) grade. Depending on the situation, you may be asked to not perform, but will still have to sit in the audience for the entire concert.

*When going to region or district events, students may be given articles of clothing to wear for the duration of the event. Students are NOT allowed to take the clothing home. They will be given the clothing at the event and must return it at the end of the event, signing off both times. If the clothing becomes damaged, the student will be required to buy replacements.*

**Choir Council**

The Choir Council is elected by the department membership and will serve as a governing body for the organization. Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

* To act as responsible members of the organization.
* To remain in good academic standing.
* To use good leadership skills and work well with others.
* To report once a week to discuss duties, progress, and concerns. (Meeting dates and times will be arranged.)

**President:** He or she will be the main spokesperson for all choirs and help with publicity. He or she will assist the choir director and the other officers when the need arises.

**Vice President:** He or she will assist the Choir President in any publicity and organizational matters and also assist the Choir Historian in the collecting and recording of various items as needed.

**Librarian:** The Librarian will be responsible for organizing and tracking music folders and the choir library, as well as for updating the calendar in the choir room.

**Historian:** The Historian will be responsible for gathering photos and recording historical information for the choir. He or she should have a camera/video recorder and also be familiar with PowerPoint or other presentation software. The Historian will be responsible for putting together a scrapbook for the year as well as a slideshow for the End of Year Show.

**Section Leader:** A section leader will be appointed by the choir director. There will be only one per voice part, per choir. This is someone who is a strong leader and a strong sight-reader. This person will assist by leading his/her section when the group breaks into sectionals.

**Choir Expectations**

**C**ome prepared.

**H**andle all class materials with care.

**On** time means in your seat.

**I**nvolve yourself 100%.

**R**espect everyone, including yourself.

**Goals for Choir**

1) To provide a safe learning environment for musical expression.

2) To gain a well-rounded understanding and knowledge of music.

3) To grow as a musician and as an individual.

4) To hear, perform, create, and learn about many genres and styles of music.

5) To reach out, perform, and be involved in our community.

**Connell MS Classroom Rules**

1. Be on time, prepared to learn.

2. Follow directions, the first time they are given.

3. Be respectful to others, property, and learning.

4. Look, Listen, Learn.

**Connell MS Consequences**

First Offense: Verbal or Documented Warning

Second Offense: Behavior is documented within 24 hours on Review 360, and a classroom consequence is assigned.

Third Offense: Parent is contacted within 24 hours, and the outcome is documented in Review 360.

Fourth Offense: Detention is assigned.

Fifth Offense: Parent Conference is set up.

Sixth Offense: Referral to the office.

Severe Disruptions: Student is sent immediately to the office.

In Class Consequence: May include a seat change or removal from the general area to a desk to write a reflection paper or other assignment.

Detention Procedures: A student will report to detention at 7:45 am on the day detention is assigned. Students must perform community service and/or service learning for the choir if they receive a detention from the choir director. Extracurricular and after school activities do not excuse students from serving detention. *Take-home detentions may occasionally be used.*

**Travel**

The choir will have opportunities throughout the year to perform at off-campus locations, such as for our first nine-weeks concert, UIL, and Region. *When on the bus or off-campus, students are expected to abide by all of the policies and procedures in this handbook, as if they were on campus.* If a student continually misbehaves, he/she will need to be brought back to school for the remainder of the day. Consequences will depend on the situation, but can include detention, office referral, or dismissal from choir.

**Daily Procedures**

ENTERING: Students will enter the classroom quickly, quietly, and safely. They will then place any belongings in the designated area, grab his/her choir materials from the cabinet, go immediately to his/her assigned seat, and begin working on the Do Now assignment.

Homework will be placed in your class period’s folder in the red holder.

BEHAVIOR: \*Absolutely NO running or horseplay inside or outside the choir room.

\*Do NOT talk or interrupt rehearsals (waving, walking in front of class, etc.)

\*Gum is NEVER allowed in the choir room.

\*Water is the ONLY drink that will be allowed in the choir room.

HEALTH: Talk to me at the very beginning of class if you are sick. If you do not communicate with me, I will not know and will assume you are simply not participating.

PENCILS: If you need a pencil, raise your hand and I will loan you one in exchange for an item of yours. *DO NOT SHARPEN PENCILS IN CLASS.* If your pencil breaks, raise your hand and wait for me. Music should only be written on in pencil!

ATTENDANCE: I will take attendance as soon as the tardy bell rings. *If you are not in your assigned seat with your materials when the tardy bell rings, you will be counted tardy!*

VOCAL WARM-UPS: Warm-ups for the day will include a mixture of exercises dealing with stretching, breathing, diction (consonants), vowels, resonance (placement), intonation (matching pitch), tuning, dynamics, articulation, and blending.

SIGHT-READING: We will sight-read after warm-ups, every day! You will be expected to use Karate Chop hand signs, sing with LRT vowels, and actively engage your brain and voice.

RESTROOM/HALL PASSES/NURSE: Students will raise their hands to ask for permission after sight-reading and before the last fifteen minutes of class. Only one student will be allowed to leave the room at a time. You will sign in and out on the log. You may only go to the restroom once a week, so choose wisely. You must be present to learn in choir!!

DISMISSAL: I will dismiss students by row, towards the end of class. Students will \*clean up their area, \*place their materials where they belong, \*gather their belongings, and \*line up quietly at the door. Students may leave the classroom ONLY when I verbally dismiss them.

PHONES: The use of cell phones and all other electronics (iPod, iPad, MP3 Player, Handheld game systems, ear buds, etc.) on school property is prohibited during instructional time. Occasionally, students will use their phones in class for certain assignments, *but only when instructed to do so*.

**Materials**

Beginning & Intermediate

- Folder (I will provide the first one. It should remain in the classroom, unless I allow you to take it home overnight for study or homework purposes. **If it is damaged in any way, you must buy a replacement**.)

- Pencil with Eraser

Advanced

- 1” black binder - 4 highlighters (yellow, blue, orange, pink) - Clear plastic pouch

- 2 sharpened pencils - Red pen OR pencil - Black pen

- Copies of music, work sheets, and textbooks will be provided. (NO writing on textbooks, original music, or folders unless I instruct you to do so. These are classroom sets and property of the school. Any drawing, tearing, writing on, or losing of materials could result in a **fine or office referral.**)

- Donations are always welcome. If you are able to provide materials for the classroom such as **highlighters, notebook paper, printing paper, Kleenex, or hand sanitizer**, it would be greatly appreciated!!

**Grading**

Assessment Performance 40%

9 Weeks Curriculum Concert

Post-Concert Reflection

Tests on Music Theory, Music History, Repertoire, Sight-Reading

Various Individual and Group Singing Tests

Projects

Class Work/Homework 60%

Weekly Sight-Reading

SAISD Weekly Rubric Grades

Score Study (Analysis, Solfege)

Written Assignments

Performance and Written Quizzes (Music Theory, Rhythm, Solfege, Sight-Reading, Vocabulary, Singing, Repertoire)

Participation

Curriculum Concerts: If you arrive after attendance has been taken, you will be counted tardy. If you are counted tardy, the highest grade you can make for the concert or dress rehearsal is an 85. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior can also lower your grade by 5 points for each infraction. The make-up assignment will either be a packet of worksheets, an essay, or an individual performance, which will be due by Friday of that week. Unexcused absences will only earn up to a 70 on make-up assignments.

**The only reasons for Excused Absences are: Extreme Illness (Proof is Doctor’s Note) or Death in the Family (Proof is Obituary or Note from Funeral Home) *Not having a ride is not an excuse!!! Get in contact with me, and we can figure something out.***

Participation: Your grade in choir is mainly participation. Things that can contribute to your participation grade include singing, sitting and standing at the correct times, hand signs, and written assignments.

Absence: If you are absent, you will be given a day for each day you were gone to complete the assignments you missed. Missed work can be gotten from me either before or after school. Homework assigned when you were present will still be due when you return.

Late Work: Homework is due the next day, unless specified otherwise. 10 points will be deducted for each day an assignment is late, and will stop being deducted when the grade becomes a 50. No more late work will be accepted after the end of the 9 weeks period.

Extra Credit: 2 points can be added on to your final grade for each piece of extra credit, up to a maximum of 6 points per grading period. It can be earned by going to an approved choral concert and writing a 2-page paper on it, researching an approved composer and writing a 2-page paper on him/her, or any other musical project that I approve.

Extra Rehearsals: Extra rehearsals will be called before or after school in order to prepare for an upcoming concert or event. These rehearsals are necessary when several groups are scheduled to perform together.

**The E-20 grading policy allows for grades to be taken for activities outside of the school day.**

**Contests**

Region Choir

The Texas Music Educators Association sponsors an activity to honor outstanding middle school choir students from Bexar and surrounding counties. All 7th and 8th grade students are eligible if they meet academic requirements. The members of the Region Choir are selected based on an audition of prepared music. Those students selected for the Region Choir will be involved in a clinic and concert under the direction of well-known choral masters. To be in this choir is a great honor and a reward for the hard work and preparation by the students involved. This event will require several rehearsals outside of class. Music and a learning CD will be provided.

UIL Concert & Sight Reading

The University Interscholastic League sponsors this group contest annually. Choirs consisting of 7th and 8th grade students may compete at UIL. Groups in this contest prepare three musical selections from a prescribed music list in their choir class. In addition to the three selected pieces, choirs are required to sight read a piece of music that they have never seen before. For each of these activities, the group receives a rating. The UIL contest is the most challenging event of the school year. If a choir is selected to attend this contest, each member of the choir will be required to participate, based on passing grades and behavior in all classes. Failure to participate or make up this grade will result in a lower grade for that grading period.

Solo & Ensemble

SAISD sponsors a middle school Solo & Ensemble contest. This contest is open to all choir members who meet academic eligibility and excellent behavior standards. It is our hope that many students will participate in this contest. It offers an excellent experience in musical development. Participation in this event requires several rehearsals outside of class.

**Fundraisers**

Choir students need to fundraise in order to help cover the cost of activities during the school year. Maintaining the choir program is expensive (Region fees, UIL fees, sheet music, extra trip costs, buses, etc.) and students are encouraged to actively participate in any fundraising we do.

**No Pass, No Play**

Students must be eligible under no-pass, no-play, which is a state law. Extracurricular activities include public performances, contests, demonstrations, displays, and club activities. An activity would be considered extracurricular if the activity is competitive, the general public is invited, or an admission price is charged.

I will be checking grades on a weekly basis. Students that are not passing will not be allowed to participate in certain activities. I can be available for tutoring at a time we arrange.

**Website**

For more and updated information, visit:

www.connellchoir.weebly.com

PERMISSION TO RECORD

**(DUE 9/4/2015)**

During the course of the year, students are periodically recorded in video and/or audio for later critique and assignments. Recording is part of the learning experience, and this process is often crucial for the progress of the group. Also, occasionally, as part of our performing service to the community, we are asked to be a part of photographs or video taken by audience members and/or sponsor organizations. These photos are sometimes used in promoting a particular place or sponsor. The yearbook staff, our historians, and/or school administrators may also sometimes take pictures of the choir during class and performances. These pictures may be published.

We’d like all of our choir members to be a part of these pictures and recordings. No child likes to feel left out. Please sign the below permission slip for general permission for your child to be recorded on audio, video, CD, DVD, or camera.

Recordings of the choirs will be heard and/or seen by the choirs for concert reflection purposes and assignments, as well as used in recruiting new students. Pictures taken may be used in recruiting new students and/or posted in the choir classroom.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

(Print Parent/Guardian Name) (Print Student Name)

give permission for my child to be recorded on audio, video, CD, DVD, or camera during the course of normal choir activities. I understand that these recordings are made solely for the benefit and education of my child, along with the other current and future choir students, and will not be used in any non-educational format.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION FORM

**(DUE 9/4/2015)**

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Student’s Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Choir Period:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (1):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) - Text\_\_\_\_ Call\_\_\_\_\_ Both\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (2):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) - Text\_\_\_\_ Call\_\_\_\_\_ Both\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Which parent/guardian should be contacted first concerning discipline or emergencies?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Parent/Guardian Volunteer(s):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I am NOT available to assist with choir activities.

\_\_\_ I am available to assist with choir activities. Please contact me with additional information concerning the following:

\_\_\_ Sit with my child’s choir at a concert. \_\_\_ Chaperone a party.

\_\_\_ Publicity (pictures, phone calls, flyers, etc.) \_\_\_ Classroom assistance.

\_\_\_ Provide refreshments or snacks. \_\_\_ Assist with fundraisers.

\_\_\_ Chaperone a field trip during the school day. \_\_\_ Decorate for concerts.

\_\_\_ Chaperone a field trip in the evening. \_\_\_ Videotape/record choir concerts.

\_\_\_ Drive students to and from off-campus events. (If so, how many?) \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Concert Day duties (passing out programs, pulling curtain, etc.)

\_\_\_ Other (Please list):

*Your help is GREATLY appreciated!!!*

PROOF OF KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION OF CHOIR HANDBOOK & CHOIR COMMITMENT FORM

**(DUE 9/4/2015)**

By signing this form, my child and I, truthfully:

- have read through this handbook in its entirety;

- understand everything stated in this handbook;

- will keep this handbook to reference throughout the year;

- agree to contact the director through email, phone, or in person if we have any questions or concerns;

- understand all of the obligations associated with choir;

- agree to uphold the responsibilities that come with being a Connell M.S. choir member, to include exceptional attendance and conduct;

- are willing to participate in and support the choir program in any way!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name Student Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name Parent/Guardian Signature Date

