

# Vocal Music Handbook

## 2023-2024



## *Reynolds Middle School*

*Choir Room: A102*

*Director: Mrs. Kristen Yost*

[kyost@htsdnj.org](mailto:kyost@htsdnj.org)

**Website:** <https://www.htsdnj.org/Domain/1938>

**X:** @ReynoldsChoir

**Google Classroom:**

**6th:** l4ghxui

**7th:** hnvshfh

**8th:** wgd4xyi

Dear Student and Family,

I am so excited that you have signed up to be a part of the vocal music program. I know that we are going to have a wonderful year together. If this is your first year in the choral program there may be questions that this handbook will be able to answer. Please feel free to ask questions throughout the school year to ensure your success in this program.

Being part of a choir means being a part of a musical community. We all must work together to move forward toward our common goals. The atmosphere of our choral rehearsal must be encouraging at all times. We must leave our problems behind us when we walk through the music room door. Every day we meet, each student in the chorus is responsible for sharing his or her unique gifts and putting forth his or her best effort as we strive together toward excellence!

**In the music room (and the auditorium), you may bring a bottle of water to drink during rehearsals. Only water will be permitted. Cell phones are NOT to be used in Vocal Class. There are occasions that school issued laptops may be used. Mrs. Yost will let you know in advance when those times are appropriate. Also, as per our school handbook, there will be no gum (or food of any kind)!** I am looking forward to a wonderful, musical year!

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Kristen Yost*

Choral Music Teacher

Emily C. Reynolds Middle School

# PERFORMANCE DATES

## **WINTER REHEARSAL: December 19, 2023**

Rehearsal is held at STEINERT. Students will be met in the auditorium by Mrs. Yost and other staff members after school and walked to SHS. This is the only chance that students can sing in the venue prior to the concert. *Concert attire is not required for rehearsal.* Students should be picked up at the Back Entrance (door closest to RMS) of STEINERT at 5:30pm. Please be prompt.

## **WINTER CONCERT: December 21, 2023**

Concert begins at 6:30pm, though students should report to STEINERT AUDITORIUM at 6:00pm. Please be in your Concert Attire. Your seat will be labeled with your name. Concerts are over at approximately 8:00pm.

## **SPRING REHEARSAL: May 7, 2024**

Rehearsal is held at STEINERT. Students will be met in the auditorium by Mrs. Yost and other staff members after school and walked to SHS. This is the only chance that students can sing in the venue prior to the concert. *Concert Attire is not required for rehearsal.* Students should be picked up at the Back Entrance (door closest to RMS) of STEINERT at 5:30pm. Please be prompt.

## **SPRING CONCERT: May 9, 2024**

Concert begins at 6:30pm, though students should report to STEINERT AUDITORIUM at 6:00pm. Concert Attire is required. Your seat will be labeled with your name. Concerts are over at approximately 8:00pm.

**\* Concerts & Rehearsals are mandatory and will be a summative grade for the 2nd and 4th marking period. Unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.**

## **LUNCHTIME REHEARSAL:**

For 6th & 7th Graders, there are approximately 5 lunchtime rehearsals prior to each concert. ***This is one of the few times that the entire group can get together.*** Students must attend 4 out of the 5 rehearsals. Dates will be posted on the White Board in A102 and in Google Classroom.

## **TRENTON THUNDER: TBA May or June**

This is NOT a mandatory performance. This is set up and run through our RMS PTA. There will be more information on this performance opportunity as soon as possible.

## **Music in the Parks: TBA ~ May/June 2024**

This year, **All Choirs** will be competing in the Music Festivals. Our Choirs will be performing at RMS for judges from Music Festivals. They will be evaluated and rated at this time. **At a later date (usually in June) our entire Music Department** will be going to Hershey Park. More information will be available throughout the year in class and in Google Classroom. Remember this is a privilege. I will be checking grades and behavior. WE WILL NEED PARENT INVOLVEMENT TO MAKE THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY A REALITY!

## **ReMaxx Caroling: TBA ~ traditionally the 2nd weekend of November**

The **8<sup>th</sup> Grade** has been part of this community event prior to COVID for 5 years in a row. This is NOT a mandatory performance. If outside trips are allowed by the district, there will be more information on this performance opportunity as soon as possible. We meet on a Saturday or Sunday morning in November at the ReMaxx office on Rt. 33 and provide Carols to those waiting to see Santa!

## **Music in Our Schools: Last Week of March 26th OR 27th**

**This is a MANDATORY event for the 8th Grade Chorus.** This performance will count as a Summative Grade. We will join Grice, Crockett, West, Steinert & Nottingham for an evening of vocal music in Steinert's Auditorium. More information will be given out in class and on Google Classroom to the 8th graders.

## **Fine Arts Night at Reynolds: May 2, 2024.**

Members from all the choirs may perform at this event to showcase their individual talents. There will be more information about this fun night that celebrates all of the Fine and Performing Arts. This is NOT a mandatory event.

*\*There may be other opportunities for our students to perform throughout the school year. Information will be made available to you as soon as possible. These performances WILL NOT BE MANDATORY.*

# CONCERT/REHEARSAL ABSENCE

An ***excused absence*** is defined as a medical issue or medical/family emergency, with **teacher notification** (a parent or guardian must email me directly) happening within 48 hours of the performance. An Alternate writing assignment will be given to those students with excused absences. Dates are provided well in advance for planning purposes. A trip/vacation IS NOT an excused absence. Leaving early from a performance will result in a deduction of points from the final concert grade.

## CONCERT ATTIRE

Our school concerts are a time for students and parents to gather in a ***semi-formal*** setting to exhibit music that the students have been studying throughout the school year. The music program requires students to dress appropriately in concert attire. Each choir student is **required** to wear certain attire. **NO** leggings, **NO** jeans, **NO** shorts, **NO** sneakers and **NO** short skirts will be allowed on stage. See below for specifics. Failure to dress appropriately may result in a lowering of your concert grade. If procuring the proper attire is a financial difficulty please contact Mrs. Yost privately.

**Boys:** White shirt sleeve dress shirt with a long necktie, black dress pants, black socks and black dress shoes. 8th Grade Boys will be given bow ties.

**Girls:** White blouse, black knee-length (or longer) skirt or dress pants and black dress shoes.

At the Trenton Thunder Game, community performances, & Music in the Parks, the students will have alternate attire. More information will be given to you as the dates of these performances approach.

***Please note that points will be deducted from the Concert Grade if proper attire is not worn!***

# TICKETS

There is traditionally a nominal donation for tickets to the concerts. Information will be provided prior to concerts. ***Every dollar goes directly to the Reynolds Music Department and is used to benefit the students (i.e. Defer cost of bus for trip, T-Shirts, etc.).***

# HTV/RECORDINGS

Our concerts are recorded by HTV. You can obtain a DVD from them by doing the following: Send a blank DVD (DVD-R works best) to Steinert's Main Office; Attention: HTV. Include your name, contact information, and the event, i.e. Reynolds Winter Vocal Concert 2018. They will burn a DVD for you!

# CONCERT BEHAVIOR

Exceptional behavior is a must for any performer. The following fundamentals of **good audience and participant** behavior are a guideline for ***any venue*** and are expected by all chorus members.

- Arrive on time and report to your assigned room.
- There is no talking during the performance.
- Hats may not be worn.
- Your attention should be focused on the director at all times.
- Muffle coughs and sneezes.
- Stay in your seat or spot during the performance – ***DO NOT WANDER.***
- Use the restroom 15 minutes *before* the performance.
- Do not take pictures with your phone or camera at any time.
- Do not post items to social media.
- Give any electronic devices to a parent or guardian for the duration of the concert.
- If you need to leave the concert hall because of an emergency, please go quickly and quietly.

\*Please remember that we are Guests at Steinert and proper behavior and respect are a must!

# GRADING POLICY

All grades are based on the Hamilton Township Grading Policy.

There will be:

1. Summative Grades (50%) *Concerts (100pts.) Rehearsals (50pts)*
2. Formative Grades (40%) *Pitch, Musicality, etc. Assessments (10 pts)*
3. Individual Grades (10%) *Weekly Participation Assessments (10pts)*

Concerts and Mandatory Rehearsals will be counted as a Summative Assessments. In-Class checks for pitch, intonation, dynamics, etc. will be counted as Formative Assessments. Every Week, each student receives an Individual Participation Assessment. Rubrics are provided in this handbook.

## IN CLASS

While students are in class, exceptional behavior is the norm. No food or drink of any kind, except water, is permitted. **There is to be no gum chewing during class.** The use of Cellphones in the Music Room is not permitted. Good singing, encouragement, teamwork and fostering a creative and caring environment that nurtures our talents are expected at all times. Rubrics that will be used during class and for graded performances are included in this packet for your review.

**\*\*\*PLEASE BRING A PENCIL TO EVERY CLASS\*\*\***

## Sight Singing Rubric

Rubric Components	Point Scale				Student's Score
	4	3	2	1	
<b>RHYTHM</b>	The steady beat is evident and the rhythms are accurate.	The steady beat is evident and rhythms are mostly accurate. There are few duration errors.	The steady beat is somewhat evident and some rhythms are accurate. There are occasional duration problems.	The steady beat is not evident and the rhythms are seldom accurate.	
<b>INTONATION</b>	Notes are in tune.	There is an occasional out of tune notes.	There are a few out of tune notes.	Out of tune notes are consistent throughout.	
<b>ACCURACY</b>	Letter names (or solfeg syllable) of notes are consistently correct	There is an occasional letter name or solfeg syllable that is incorrect	There are a few letter names of solfeg syllables that are incorrect.	Letter names or solfeg syllables are consistently incorrect.	
<b>POSTURE</b>	Student is sitting/standing properly.	Student is usually sitting/standing properly.	Student is sometimes sitting/standing properly.	Student does not sit/stand properly.	



# Singing Skills Rubric

	4	3	2	1
<b>Posture</b>	Feet shoulder width apart, knees not locked, hips and shoulders aligned, head straight, chin parallel with floor, shoulders back and relaxed, assertive and confident	Feet shoulder width apart, knees not locked, hips and shoulders aligned, head straight, chin parallel with floor, shoulders back and relaxed	One or two elements out of position (Feet, knees, hips, shoulders, head, chin)	More than one or two elements out of position (Feet, knees, hips, shoulders, head, chin)
<b>Breathing</b>	Low, full breath, abdominal and intercostal expansion, no shoulder movement	Low, full breath, abdominal expansion, little shoulder movement	Low breath, little expansion, some shoulder movement, audible "breath" sound	Shallow breath, no expansion, obvious and large shoulder movement, loud "breath" sound
<b>Phonation/Diction</b>	Open, round, supported sound with presence and maturity. Lyrics are clear and consistently understandable throughout.	Open, round, supported sound. Lyrics are clear and understandable most of the time.	Tone lacks openness, shape, or support. Lyrics are muffled and understandable sometimes.	Tone lacks definition or clarity. VERY Breathless. Lyrics are muffled and not understandable.
<b>Pitch</b>	Notes are in tune throughout.	There are occasional notes out of tune.	There are several notes out of tune.	Notes are out of tune throughout.
<b>Expression</b>	Connected to text and engaged in music throughout. Phrasing is appropriate.	Connected to text and engaged in music most of the time. Phrasing is appropriate in general, can be a bit choppy.	Very little connection to the text. Singer shows little understanding of lyrics. Phrasing is choppy.	No connection to the text. Singer shows no understanding of lyrics. Phrasing is nonexistent.

# Music Performance Rubric

	<i>Beginning Performer</i>		<i>Intermediate Performer</i>			<i>Advanced Performer</i>		
<b>Level</b>	<b>Generally 6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>		<b>Generally 7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>			<b>Generally 8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>		
<b>Pitch</b>	I am still working on high and low notes	I performed <u>some</u> pitches correctly	I performed <u>many</u> pitches correctly	I performed <u>most</u> pitches correctly	I performed <u>nearly all</u> pitches correctly	I performed <u>all</u> pitches correctly	I performed all pitches correctly and most were in tune	I performed all pitches correctly and all were in tune
<b>Rhythm</b>	I am still working on long and short notes and keeping a steady beat	I performed <u>some</u> rhythms correctly and kept a steady beat some of the time	I performed <u>many</u> rhythms correctly and kept a steady beat <i>much</i> of the time	I performed <u>most</u> rhythms correctly and kept a steady beat <i>most</i> of the time	I performed <u>nearly all</u> rhythms correctly and kept a steady beat <i>nearly all</i> of the time	I performed <u>all</u> rhythms correctly and kept a steady beat <i>all</i> of the time	I performed <i>all</i> rhythms correctly with a steady beat and the meter was clear <i>most</i> of the time	I performed <i>all</i> rhythms correctly with a steady beat and the meter was clear <i>most</i> of the time
<b>Tone</b>	I am working towards a natural sound	I made a natural sound <u>some</u> of the time	I made a natural sound <u>many</u> of the time	I made a natural sound <u>most</u> of the time	I made a natural sound <u>nearly all</u> of the time	I made a natural sound <u>all</u> of the time	I used good technique to make a natural and engaging sound	I used good technique to make a natural, engaging, and beautiful sound
<b>Technique</b>	I am still working on using my body for music making	I showed good technique with <u>some</u> parts of my body	I showed good technique with <u>many</u> parts of my body	I showed good technique with <u>most</u> parts of my body	I showed good technique with <u>nearly all</u> parts of my body	I showed good technique with <u>all</u> parts of my body		
<b>Expression</b>	I am still working on fast/slow, loud/soft, and separated/connected	I performed <u>some</u> of the written directions for tempo, dynamics and articulation	I performed <u>many</u> of the written directions for tempo, dynamics and articulation	I performed <u>most</u> of the written directions for tempo, dynamics and articulation	I performed <u>nearly all</u> of the written directions for tempo, dynamics and articulation	I performed <u>all</u> of the written directions for tempo, dynamics and articulation	I used expression to share the song's meaning beyond what was written	I used expressive elements to artfully share the song's meaning
<b>SCORE</b> (Dependent on Grade Level)	<b>1 - 2</b>	<b>2 - 3</b>	<b>2 - 3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>	<b>4</b>

# **VOCAL MUSIC CONTRACT 2023-2024**

1. I will do my best in class to reach my fullest potential in class.
2. I will attend the **rehearsals** at Steinert on December 19, 2023 & May 7, 2024.
3. I will attend the **concerts** at Steinert on December 21, 2023 and May 9, 2024.
4. I will attend the **mandatory performances** dressed in the appropriate concert attire exhibiting exceptional behavior. Points will be deducted if not followed.
5. I will turn in all permission slips/reminders ON TIME. Points will be deducted for every day that is missed.

I have read the above and agree to adhere to all of the expectations. I will be at mandatory concerts & rehearsals with exceptional behavior. I understand that concerts & rehearsals are graded and that if I do not attend a concert or rehearsal my grade for the concert or rehearsal that I missed will be a failing one.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name (*Printed*)    Student Signature    Date

\*\*\*\*\*

I understand that for my child to be successful in the choir program the above expectations must be met. I understand that an unexcused absence from a concert or rehearsal will result in a failing grade for that particular event.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (*Printed*)      Parent/Guardian Signature    Date

**Parents:** Important information and Announcements will be posted in your child's Google Classroom and emailed to you periodically.

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE OF THE HANDBOOK TO MRS. YOST BY SEPTEMBER 29th**