

WAPSIE VALLEY
JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

2015-2016
VOCAL MUSIC
HANDBOOK

7/8 Grade Choir – 3rd hour A days
9-12 Grade Choir – 6th hour everyday

Mrs. Palmer, Vocal Director

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Contact me by email anytime, by phone at 3:15 p.m.

The purpose of the WV Vocal Music Handbook is to introduce all choral students and parents to the set expectations and guidelines of the WV Vocal Music Department. It will serve as an overall guide for the department.

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Attendance Statement: An enjoyable, strong, pride-filled, and educational choral program cannot exist without the prompt attendance of all personnel at all events and rehearsals. This helps reinforce the idea that every individual is important to the whole. One person being gone or even late has an adverse effect on the whole group. This is a valuable life skill for all to learn to make them a success in whatever they do in life.

Attendance in class: Since class/rehearsal is where a majority of our work as a choir happens, it is paramount that students be in attendance. Students who are going to be absent from class due to a school field trip, family vacation, college visit, doctor appointment, athletic event, etc. should let Mrs. Palmer know ASAP.

Tardiness: To facilitate an efficient start to class and teach responsibility, all students are expected to be on time to class. Students will be tardy unexcused for arriving late to class unless they submit a pass to Mrs. Palmer from the high school office or the teacher who is responsible for their tardiness. The student will be the sole person responsible for bringing the pass to class and they will not be allowed to retrieve a pass after they have entered the chorus room. Excessive tardiness (more than two) will result in a deduction of daily points.

REMEMBER: TO BE EARLY IS TO BE ON TIME, TO BE ON TIME IS TO BE LATE, AND TO BE LATE IS TO BE LEFT BEHIND!!

Bathroom Privileges: Students will take a bathroom pass from the wall. The student will not ask Mrs. Palmer. If the student is using the bathroom routinely during choir, the student will need to serve make-up time before or after school. Students found to be using this privilege for other reasons than using the bathroom, will lose the privilege.

Alternative Participation: Students who are not able to participate in rehearsal will be asked to sit in front of the choir and fill out a sheet answering, "What did you hear?" The student(s) will then have a discussion following class with Mrs. Palmer.

Eligibility: The Wapsie Valley Code of Eligibility pertains to all co-curricular activities and is strictly enforced. Performances, honor choirs, trips and State Contests are under the jurisdiction of the Code and can be affected by it. Make sure you have read and understand what is expected of you both in and outside of school and make good choices.

To be eligible to participate in an evening activity, students must be present at school for a half-day. This means you must arrive no later than 11:45am. If you are sick enough to leave school, you will not be allowed to participate that evening. Any exceptions must be arranged ahead of time through the office.

Attendance:

Excused Absences: For an absence to be excused it must be approved by a director prior to the event. This should be at least a month in advance, with the exception of emergency situations. Two unexcused absences from performances may result in dismissal from the group.

The only excuse for a missed rehearsal or performance is illness, death in the family, or a pre-excused absence. Death in the family or personal illness must be confirmed by a note or phone call from your parents/guardians to be considered an excused absence. Mrs. Palmer's phone number is 563-380-3366 or you may call the school at 319-638-6711.

If you miss a concert due to an excused absence, you will be required to submit makeup work in the form of a research paper appropriate to the subject of the choral music performed at the concert. Except for emergencies, your parent will need to call Mrs. Palmer before the performance for the ability to make-up the full amount of missed points.

Unexcused Absences: If you miss a rehearsal/concert for any reason other than listed above, you will receive a ZERO for that rehearsal/concert. ***Work is NOT considered an excuse.*** Missing the rehearsals/concerts is not only detrimental for the rest of the group, but will severely affect your final grade. You may complete make up work (TBD by Mrs. Palmer) for the absence, but only for up to 25% of the concert grade.

Transportation: It is Wapsie Valley's school policy that all students MUST ride to off-campus scheduled events in a school-provided vehicle. Students, with signed permission releases, may ride home with parents or designated adults (through permission slips and a call to the school and/or director) following the event. Parents MUST check students out before leaving.

Call Time Before a Concert: A time will be given when your choir will meet to warm-up, go through any last minute details, and take attendance. It is your responsibility to make sure you are there at the time requested. Students who are tardy or absent will receive a deduction in concert points.

Concert Expectations: All students will stay for the entire concert and display appropriate concert etiquette: listening attentively, not commenting or whispering, clapping respectfully, keeping feet on the floor, staying in their chair. Onstage expectations include: not talking while walking on and off of the stage, keeping your eyes on the conductor while performing. Professionalism is a must at all times.

Performance Attire: It is important that each choir appears professional and uniform. Part of the performance grade is wearing the assigned attire.

The following is performance dress for junior high choirs:

- Men: button-down or collared dress shirt, dress slacks, dress socks, dress shoes (no tennis shoes, absolutely no jeans), ties or bowties encouraged
- Women: dresses, blouses, dress pants, skirts, dress shoes with a small heel (no platform shoes,

spike heels, sandals, flip-flops or clogs)

The following is performance dress for high school choirs:

Robe with stole.

- Men: t-shirt (black t-shirt), black dress slacks, black socks, black dress shoes (no black sneakers or navy blue pants)
- Women: t-shirt (black t-shirt), shorts, above-the-knee nude nylons/panty hose, black dress shoes with a small heel (no platform shoes, spike heels, sandals, flip-flops or clogs)

Each choir student will be fitted for a robe a few weeks before the first concert. After the student is issued the robe they are responsible for replacing any missing components or repairing damage, taking care of the robe, and hanging it up properly.

Students will not be allowed to wear necklaces, bracelets, flashy earrings, watches, or rings of any kind, as they will attract attention due to the glare from the stage lights. Small earrings that do not hang below the ear will be allowed. All hair (men's and women's) will be styled out of the face and pushed behind the shoulders. Make-up should be simple.

Uniform Maintenance: All robes will be handled as such:

- Hold the robe high enough so it does not drag on the floor.
- Hung on its hanger (square the shoulders on hanger)
- Robe zipped completely up
- Stole stored properly

Individual Responsibility: It is the student's responsibility to be a positive contributor and responsible member of the choir. Every performance should be of the highest quality. To attain this standard of excellence, every rehearsal must be productive. It is the singer's responsibility to give his/her best effort at all times by having their music, a pencil, water bottle, etc. at all rehearsals, and respecting each other, the director, staff and guests is a must. All students are expected to have a pencil everyday in class and to use it often for marking breaths, phrasing, word stress, dynamics, diction, etc.

All students should always raise their hand and be recognized by Mrs. Palmer before speaking.

Listen carefully as Mrs. Palmer will only give announcements or instructions one time.

To Be Successful in Rehearsal:

1. Be prepared by having your folder, all required music, a pencil, and water at your seat when class begins.
2. Treat all students and adults in the classroom with respect.
3. Respect the chorus room and all things in it by keeping the room clean, the chairs in their proper place, playing the piano only if permission has been given to you, and the whole facility looking pleasant.
4. Encourage other choir members to make rehearsal successful!
5. Talk only when necessary and appropriate.
6. Take pride in the diligent work it takes to be an outstanding choir!
7. Follow school policies.
8. Return your folder and all of your music to the folder cabinet at the end of class.

Electronic Devices Policy: Students may bring cell phones and other electronic devices into class, but must keep them silent and out of sight. Unless you have been granted permission by Mrs. Palmer to use a cell phone for an activity, to call a parent or to add an event to your calendar the cell must be put away at all times.

Grading: Students are graded on their participation and attitude during class, and also their attendance at performances. If a student comes into class every day, does their best and attends each performance, they are going to do wonderful in my class. If a student does not sing every note right, or has pitch problems, I do not hold that against them. I do not expect them to come into class knowing how to sing everything perfectly; that is what I am here for. Each student is an individual with their own level of skill. I do my best to meet each student at the level where they are, and help them improve and meet their

potential. My philosophy is that music should be enjoyable while motivating them to want to work hard and do well. It is also my hope that they will be able to take the skills they have learned in class and apply those skills to other areas of their life as well. Learning to work as part of the "team," having a great attitude, working hard, setting goals and accomplishing those goals are just some of the important skills that I hope your child will take away from my class.

Points are awarded based on the following:

- Performances (40%) – attendance at concerts, assessment of concert performance, arriving on time for call before the concert, concert etiquette, concert dress. (100 pts each)
- Lesson Attendance (30%) – lessons are scheduled based on your daily schedule. Lessons may be made-up if the absence was acceptable. (20 pts each)
- Daily points (20%) are awarded on the following:
 - o Participation by Presence – presence in and promptness to class
 - o Participation by Effort, Attitude, and Rehearsal Technique
 - Attitude and Effort in Participation – leadership by example, a positive spirit of cooperation, a consistent energy, willingness to contribute, participate and share.
 - Rehearsal Technique – being ready to rehearse when class starts, having your folder, handouts, and pencil at each rehearsal, marking your score in rehearsal, focusing and listening, helping your neighbor to concentrate and focus by not distracting them or talking inappropriately.
 - o Skill Development – breath, vocal, ensemble, and musical development. Posture and attention to daily vocal exercises is important.
- Other (10%)
 - o Assignments: parent/student information form, handbook contract, voice interview, reading, written work, sight singing, assessments, and more.

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87- 89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 60-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 0-59%

Due to the low quantity of points in the grade book early in a quarter, and the frequency of progress reports, a student's grade can be considerably low if a student has been absent from their lesson(s). The student and parent should be concerned, however, by the end of each quarter once more points will have accumulated. Lessons will affect your final grade.

Lessons: Students are required to take a 20-minute lesson at their scheduled time. Lessons may be grouped or individual upon teacher's approval and specific student needs. Students will have a lesson every other week. Students can expect 3-4 lessons in a given quarter. If discussed beforehand with Mrs. Palmer, lessons may also be scheduled before or immediately after school at 3:20. Each lesson is worth 20 pts and therefore is a noticeable portion of the total quarter grade.

WVHS faculty and staff work well with the music department to allow musicians individual or small group music instruction. If a student has a study hall, they will be expected to take their lesson during that time if it can be coordinated with the master lesson schedule. If a student is available during Warrior Hour, they may also take their lesson during that time.

Students who are taking a test/quiz, participating in a lab, reviewing for a test, or giving a presentation are to stay in class and reschedule their lesson for another time. Students will have until their next scheduled lesson or performance, whichever comes first, to make-up the excused lesson. Students who are absent-excused from school will also have the above time frame to complete the lesson. Lessons missed due to forgetfulness may be made-up; Mrs. Palmer's schedule will determine when a make-up lesson can be done. The lesson schedule is posted in the hallway outside of Mrs. Palmer's office.

Students will exit class at their designated time and promptly walk to the chorus room. After the lesson, students will promptly walk back to class. Students will not stop and talk with friends, or run errands during this passing time.

Lessons will focus on: vocal technique, tone, music literacy skills, singing posture, intonation, rhythm, musicianship, and singer independence.

Class Work/Extra Credit/Practicing: Periodically students will be expected to complete inclass written work, and other assignments. These assignments will at times be graded, and other times, not; but participation is always part of the chorus grade.

Students may complete extra credit work by attending a choral music concert or musical. Students must present the event’s printed program to Mrs. Palmer and write a short description about the performance. 10 pts of extra credit are available for each event. Extra credit is also available for participants in the fall musical, spring variety show, madrigal, singing the national anthem, taking private voice lessons, Iowa All State Chorus auditions, OPUS Honor Choir auditions, and honor choirs. Participation in events other than a WV Choir, WV Chamber Choir, or State Solo/Ensemble Music Festival may also grant a student extra credit.

At times, students will be asked to take their music home and practice. Students at anytime may take their music home and practice, but the music must be present at each rehearsal.

Music and Folders: All students will be expected to have a folder for their music. This folder may need to be used in performances and, therefore, must be in good shape and contain no writing on the outside. Each singer will be issued a number and music containing that number on the front cover. Show respect and care for all music issued to you. Students who lose or return damaged music will pay for replacement costs. Keep a pencil in your binder at all times, this is an absolute must. Folders may be kept in the folder cabinet in the chorus room.

Care of Equipment: It is every choir member's responsibility to show the utmost care for all equipment, instruments, music, robes, etc. in the chorus room. Do not play the piano before rehearsal and never “pound” on the piano. The chorus room and practice rooms are not to be used for personal storage or garbage. Periodically these areas are checked and personal items removed to the lost and found. Use the wastebaskets and recycling containers for items to be disposed of and your student locker for storing personal items. No food or drink (except water) is to be consumed on the chorus room carpet.

Sacred Texts: Music with sacred/religious texts will be used in class and performance. Choral music that is used for study in chorus class is chosen solely for its musical integrity, not religious message.

Lettering System: Points are carried over from one year to the next. You may rank in four different categories depending on the number of points you have earned. The categories and points needed in each are as follows:

0 – 25 Points	Participation Certificate
50 Points	Letter
75 Points	Bar
100 Points	Star

After earning a Letter, any additional 20 points will grant a student a Bar. Any additional 40 points earned will grant a student Star.

State Solo & Ensemble Music Festival:

Div. I on solo	15 _____
Div. II on solo	10 _____
Div. III on solo	5 _____
Div. I on an ensemble	10 _____
Div. II on an ensemble	5 _____
Div. III on an ensemble	3 _____

All-State Chorus Audition	5 _____
All-State Acceptance	10 _____
9th Grade Opus Audition	5 _____
9th Grade Opus Honor Choir Acceptance	10 _____

Festivals: Dorian, NEIC, UNI, etc. each 5 _____

Summer Vocal Music Camps: each 10 _____

	5	_____
Madrigal Court	10	_____
Madrigal Speaking Part	5	_____
Madrigal Special Music	3	_____
Musical: Leading Role	20	_____
Supporting Role	10	_____
Chorus, Small Role, Crew	5	_____
Variety Show: Points per group:	5	_____
Talent Showcase (vocal performance)	5	_____
Church/Community performances (things I take you to)	each 5	_____
Church Choir (sang all year)	10	_____
Solo with the HS choir	5	_____
National Anthem	3	_____
Semester Private Lessons	5	_____
Accompany a choir, ensemble or solo	5	_____
Professional Concert (200pt. maximum) (Chanhassen, UNI, Wartburg, Luther performances, etc.)	each 3	_____
Choir Room Assistant	each semester 1	_____
Total points 2014-1015		_____
<u>Last Year's Points</u>		_____
<u>Total points 2014-1015</u>		_____

Awards: One member from each choir will receive the “Most Improved” award based on his or her growth as a musician and vocalist throughout the year. The “Director’s Award” will be given to a senior and eighth grade choir member by the director. This award is given to the student who best exemplifies leadership through character, ability, example, and musicianship. The “Spirit Award” can be given to any junior high or high school student. This award exemplifies a person whose positive attitude and outlook directly affect students and the greater choral program.

WapsieTones: 7&8 Grade Students -- WapsieTones will begin towards the end of November after the musical. If you are not familiar with what WapsieTones is a group of students who want to sing in a small group. This group will sing at several school functions this year, and will also perform for a variety of community functions. Students who would like to be a part of WapsieTones do not need to audition. As long as students maintain required attendance at rehearsals and work positively within the ensemble, they are welcome to be part of the group. While most schools hold auditions for their middle school chamber choirs, it is my belief that every student at the middle school level should have an opportunity to explore their talents in order to discover their aptitude in a certain area.

Warrior Chorale: 9-12 Grade Students -- This is an advanced vocal ensemble consisting of a small group of elite and dedicated singers. The group will rehearse outside of the school day. The varsity group will also sing outside of school at community events. These singers are vocally challenged through advanced level singing and complex harmonies from choral music from the Medieval Period up to Twentieth Century atonal compositions.

Warrior Chorale Auditions: Auditions for Warrior Chorale are held during the fall semester. Auditions are based on a point system. Areas assessed are: vocal quality, sight-singing, rhythm, tonal memory, and work ethic/attitude. Any 9-12 grade student may audition for membership in the current school year’s Chamber Choir.

Star-Spangled Banner Singers: Any singer from 7-12 grade can be a part of the Star-Spangled Banner Singers.

These singers prepare versions of our national anthem to sing at sporting events. The banner can be sung as a solo, duet, trio, quartet, small group or large group with men, women, or both men and women. They receive extra lettering points in music for each prepared performance.

Fall Musical: The choir and band department combine every odd-numbered fall year to put on a major musical theatre production in November. Auditions are held in September for leading and supporting roles and chorus members. Large practices are held in the fall immediately after school or in the evenings. Due to the rehearsal structure of a musical, most cast members are not needed at every rehearsal until a few weeks before opening night. A schedule will be handed out at the beginning of the rehearsal season. Rehearsals typically begin during the first full month of school.

Variety Show: The music department holds open auditions to the entire school every year to hold a variety show in February. Auditions are held in January. Any student (musical and non-musical), or teacher, is welcome to audition.

Honor Choirs: The Luther College Dorian Vocal Festival will be held on January 9-12. The Oelwein Middle School Honor Choir will be held on April 19. Names of selected students are sent in for nomination to sing in the honor choirs.

Solo and Ensemble Music Festival (HS): The 2016 date is Saturday, April 16. High School students are strongly encouraged to participate in this skill and musicianship building event. Extra Credit is given to students who participate. In late December, all choir students will fill out a solo & ensemble interest sheet indicating their willingness to participate in various events.

CLS Arts Festival (JH): The 2016 date is Saturday, April 9 at the Community Lutheran School in Readlyn. Many of the Junior High students will participate in this arts and music showcase event. In late December, all choir students will fill out a CLS interest sheet indicating their talents in various events.

Large Group Contest (HS): The 2016 date is Friday, May 6. Large group contest is a mandatory event, and all students in High School Choir will be required to attend. Students will begin preparing contest music in January. Throughout the semester, clinicians will be brought in to work with the choir. This is an opportunity for the choir to see their strengths and improve on their weaknesses. The state ballot will be used as a guide to prepare them for state contest.

Mrs. Palmer's Office: The director's office is a personal area. No student is allowed in the office or access to anything in the office without Mrs. Palmer's permission. This includes computer, phone, CANDY, etc. Please respect this area.

Choral Website: The choir website and blog contains up-to-date information, schedules, pictures, calendars, handbooks, etc. Check it out at www.wapsievalleymusic.weebly.com

Dear Wapsie Valley High School Vocal Music Parent or Guardian,

A vibrant, educational, accomplished, and enjoyable choral program involves cooperation from student and parents. Your help in making this a successful year is very important.

The handbook is to acquaint you with the expectations and guidelines that are part of the Wapsie Valley Vocal Music Department. After you have read this handbook & read the vocal music event calendar, please complete this page and return it to Mrs. Palmer by Friday August 28, 2015.

Thank you,

Sarah J. Palmer
Director of Vocal Music
Wapsie Valley Jr./Sr. High School

I have read the handbook and vocal music event calendar, and I understand the expectations for my child to participate in the Wapsie Valley Vocal Music Program.

(Parent signature)

(Date)

Parents/Students please mark the required concerts/events on your personal calendars as each student is responsible for their participation in that event.

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Student Signature

Students, please sign below indicating, with your signature, that you have read and understand the expectations set forth in this handbook and vocal must event calendar.

(Student printed name)

(Student signature)

(Date)