



West Fork High School
2015-2016

Choir
Handbook

Shelby Wilson,
director

**“Music is the
universal language of
mankind.”**



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High School Choral Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to the West Fork High School Vocal Program! It is a pleasure to be joining you again at WFHS to have you in choir this year! By choosing to participate in a choral ensemble at our high school, you are making a commitment to an ensemble that pursues the goal of musical knowledge and excellence.

I have no doubt this will be a fantastic year, full of many exciting opportunities and experiences. We'll be singing some really great pieces this year, and we're going to have a lot of fun in the process! Many lifelong friendships are made through the process of learning and performing, and there will certainly be plenty of these opportunities for all students!

This will be a great year full of hard work and great musical experiences. Come prepared to learn great music and work together, and we will definitely have a successful year!

Sincerely,

Shelby Wilson

This choir handbook has been written for choir students and parents, with the intent of giving a clearer picture of the expectations and responsibilities of the student musician. It includes the general policies of the high school choirs. Each parent and student is requested to be familiar with these policies.

Parents: Please remember that your participation, guidance, and encouragement are vital to your student's success. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions, concerns, or comments.

CHOIR COMMUNICATIONS

Phone: 641.892.4461, ext. 1190

Email: shelby.wilson@westforkschool.org

Website: <http://westforkchoir.weebly.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/westforkchoir>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/westforkchoir>

Staff Page: <https://sites.google.com/a/westforkschool.org/west-fork-vocal-music/>

CHOIR WEBSITE

In addition to the Google Sites page that may be accessed from the main school website, the choral program will also have a website available. The Google Sites page will contain all the basic information, including contact information and a link to the choir website. More resources can be found on the choir website (<http://westforkchoir.weebly.com>), including a calendar of events, performance photographs, examples of choral works, links to websites mentioned in class, course descriptions, suggested external music events, a copy of the choir handbook, and more. The choral program also has Facebook and Twitter accounts available for students and parents to receive updates.

NATIONAL MUSIC STANDARDS

The following is a list of music standards, or program goals, for each student involved in the high school music program.

- ♪ Sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- ♪ Performs on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- ♪ Improvises melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
- ♪ Composes and arranges music within specified guidelines.
- ♪ Reads and notates music.
- ♪ Listens to, analyzes, and describes music.
- ♪ Evaluates music and music performances.
- ♪ Understands the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
- ♪ Understands the relationship between music and history and culture.

CHOIR MEMBERSHIP

To be a member in good standing, the choir student must currently be enrolled in the class and be under no restrictions, either through disciplinary or academic difficulties. Those students who have failing grades will have restricted involvement within the choir. Specifically, a student who is under academic or disciplinary restriction cannot attend vocal festivals, honor choirs, participate in Solo & Ensemble contests, or audition for All-State or Opus. Concerts are required as part of the grading process; therefore, the student will not be required to miss a performance for either academic or disciplinary restriction. A list of mandatory performance dates are listed in this handbook and are also posted on the vocal music website.

COURSE OFFERINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Concert Choir: The Concert Choir is open to grades 9-12. Concert Choir is a fast-paced, no-nonsense choir that focuses on building a strong, unified sound through proper singing technique, vowel unification, diction, and basic music theory. Singers will take part in interpretation activities, acting games, and other fun activities that promote an atmosphere that is positive and productive. Women in the ensemble will also be required to participate in the treble clef chorus. There will be opportunities for the men of Concert Choir to perform as an ensemble as well. Concert Choir will perform a wide variety of repertoire, both accompanied and a cappella, with a focus on spirituals, classical pieces, and contemporary works sung in the classical style. The Concert Choir performs in five concerts a year as well as participation in Large Group Contest. Other performance opportunities may be added by the director and may be considered mandatory.

Chamber Singers: Chamber Singers is an ensemble consisting of 12-18 singers open by audition only. Chamber Singers will perform advanced literature consisting of no less than five parts, mostly in the a cappella style. The ensemble will focus on advanced singing techniques to achieve a mature sound through vowel unification, diction, intonation, and musical expression. The Chamber Singers perform in four concerts a year as well as participation in Solo & Ensemble Contest. Other performance opportunities may be added by the director and may be considered mandatory.

Show Choir: The Show Choir is an extracurricular ensemble open by audition only. This ensemble combines singing with dancing during performances. In addition to any rehearsal time spent during class, there will be rehearsals outside of the regular school day. These will be considered mandatory. A schedule will be presented to students well in advance so any conflicts can be resolved. Show choir will perform a variety of popular music, including contemporary a cappella versions of popular pieces, and will provide students with many small-ensemble and solo opportunities. The Show Choir performs in a number of concerts, including a feature concert at the end of the year.

Forkapellas: The Forkapellas are West Fork's barbershop ensemble. This ensemble will consist of 4-5 men and is open by audition only. The Forkapellas will perform pieces sung in the barbershop style. Performance opportunities will be added throughout the year.

Voice Lessons: High school choir students are provided with the opportunity to have voice lessons during the school day. Voice lessons are designed to improve personal and group success in the ensembles. Lessons will be taught on a one-on-one or small group basis and will include vocal techniques; help with choir music; and preparations for college auditions, contests, or competitions if the student chooses. With the exception of the first week of school, each student will be required to attend a minimum of one lesson per week. More lessons will be available to students preparing music for an audition or event. It is the responsibility of the student to stay aware of their lesson time and not to forget or skip.

Honor Choirs: There will be several opportunities for students to attend honor choirs throughout the year. Student nominees will be selected at the director's discretion. If chosen to participate in an honor ensemble, it is the student's responsibility to ensure he/she attends any additional lessons provided to him/her and is prepared for the festival.

Solo and Ensemble Contest: Solo and Ensemble contest takes place every year in March. It is a chance for students to sing solos or in small groups, get comments from other directors, and receive a rating. Students have the option to help choose their music with the director and will prepare during lesson times and additional times as needed. Any student who signs up for participation and doesn't participate/performs at a subpar level due to lack of effort or poor time management will be required to reimburse the school the cost of the entry fee. Solo and Ensemble Contest is a required event for Chamber Singers members.

Musical: Students will be given the opportunity to participate in an extra-curricular musical to be announced at the start of the year. Rehearsals will take place outside of the regular school day, and roles are not limited to choir members. Cast members will be selected by a panel of judges in early September. Rehearsals will be considered mandatory, and extracurricular eligibility rules will apply.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

In order to have successful rehearsals, there must be a positive and professional atmosphere in which to rehearse. Therefore, the following expectations have been established:

- ♪ Be in your seat and ready to sing when rehearsal begins.
- ♪ Students are required to take care of their own music and return it to the appropriate slot in the cabinet at the end of each rehearsal.
- ♪ Don't fold or bend sheet music.
- ♪ Be an active participant! Try your hardest not to make the same mistake twice, and do your best.
- ♪ Follow instructions the first time they are given.
- ♪ Do not talk when we are working.
- ♪ Use correct posture and utilize new knowledge and techniques you are given.
- ♪ No homework from other classes during rehearsal.
- ♪ Do not use your cell phone during rehearsal. This includes calling, texting, surfing the internet, "using the calculator," and any other possible reason you might want to invent.
- ♪ Respect your director, yourself, other singers, equipment, and facilities. A general rule of thumb: If it isn't yours, don't touch it.
- ♪ Give new music a chance!
- ♪ Every singer should have a sharpened pencil in his/her folder at all times. Music should not be marked with pen. Additional pencils are available if you need one.
- ♪ If you have to go to the restroom, please take care of this during your pass time, making sure you are to class on time. If you ask to leave during class, it should be an emergency.
- ♪ If you are really sick and cannot sing, you must fill out the "Sickie Form" to receive credit for the day.
- ♪ All students need to stay in the room until dismissed.
- ♪ Food, gum, and candy are not permitted during rehearsal or in the choir room for any reason. Students may have something to drink; however, if there is a spill resulting in carpet stains, the student may be responsible for the cost associated with removing the stain.
- ♪ If you have something really important to tell the director, *tell her*, and then *remind her*. Post-It Notes were invented for this very reason. ☺

If, for any reason, these expectations are not met, issues will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and consequences will be left to the director's discretion, in accordance with school policies and agreements formulated by the director and students at the beginning of the year.

CHOIR COUNCIL

The choir will designate a student-representative council to govern it. The choir council will consist of a president, vice president, secretary, librarian, social media administrator, website manager, and 4 section leaders (one for each section). The role for each position will vary and will be covered further in class prior to elections. Elections for council offices, with the exception of section leaders, will occur at the beginning of the school year. Elections for section leaders will occur at the beginning of each semester.

PERFORMANCES

All performance call times (the time the student needs to be at the school or location) will be given at least one week prior to the performance. All students must attend all performances unless they were **excused** from school the day of the event. An unexcused absence includes: having to work, forgetting, skipping, etc. Students must give an excuse, verified by their parents, to the director no later than 2 weeks prior to the performance they will be missing. If a student misses a performance due to an emergency, once verified by a parent, the absence will be considered excused. Excused absences can be made up with a project/paper (as determined by the director) and a review of the concert. An unexcused absence will result in an automatic "F" for the quarter that contains the performance. Required absences from any performances, with the exception of concerts, due to academic or disciplinary restriction will be dealt with on a case by case basis at the discretion of the director. Additional alternative assignments may be given.

GRADING POLICY





Grades will be figured using the following grading scale:

100	A+	89-88	B+	79-78	C+	69-68	D+
99-93	A	87-83	B	77-73	C	67-63	D
92-90	A-	82-80	B-	70-72	C-	62-60	D-
						59-0	F

The grade is divided into four parts:

- 40% Daily Participation: Attendance, participation, in-class assignments, music memorization, effort and behavior in rehearsals, etc.
- 35% Performances: All performances must be attended. Simply showing up to a performance does not guarantee that a student will receive all possible points; full participation, appropriate concert attire, and behavior will be considered in the performance grade. Any unexcused absence from a scheduled performance will result in an automatic "F" for that quarter.
- 25% Lessons: With the exception of the very first week, students are required to attend one lesson per week; however, they are not limited to one lesson per week if their schedule permits. Students auditioning for an honor choir or participating in Solo & Ensemble Contest will receive additional instruction time. Students will be assigned a lesson time, and are expected to attend their lessons. If a student must miss a lesson, they may attend a lesson with another student of the same voice part, and additional makeup lesson times will be announced during classes.

Credit for lessons will be given as follows:

-  During the original lesson week: Full Credit
-  If made up in the week after lesson is missed: Full Credit
-  If made up in the week following (3rd week): 50% Credit
-  Any time after: No Credit

There will be a chart posted in the choir room so students may check the status of their lessons at any time. Please be aware that missing lessons on a regular basis means a

student is not fully prepared for class, and his/her participation portion of the grade may be negatively affected as well.

Effort and Behavior: Students who do not follow the classroom expectations or do not show the appropriate relationship between preparedness and improvement will have their grade lowered appropriately in the Daily Participation and/or Lessons portion(s) of their grade.

CHOIR LETTERING

Each student will begin the year with 0 points. Students may earn a letter by participating in any combination of the following activities and reaching a total of 18 points. A student must pass each quarter with a C- or above to earn a letter. Please present any suggestions for list additions to the director.

1	Participation in Concert Choir – 1 semester.
1.5	Participation in Show Choir – 1 semester.
1.5	Participation in Chamber Singers – 1 semester.
2	Audition for All-State Choir.
3	All-State Qualifier.
1	Participation in any one-day honor choir/festival.
2	Participation in any two-day honor choir/festival.
1	College audition.
2	Participation in a summer music camp (vocal).
1.5	Participation in an event at Solo & Ensemble Contest.
2	Participation in a church choir (full year) or community theater (one complete musical).
1	Private lessons from a professional besides the director. (10 lessons/semester)
1	Switching voice parts at director’s request.
1	Participating in a musical concert/performance outside of school. (Limit 3)
1	Choir Council member.
1	Performing a solo in a choir concert.
1	Providing service by working the Music Booster concession stand, designing posters/program covers, helping with elementary concerts, etc.
.5	Singing national anthem at a school or community event.
1-3	Playing piano for choir rehearsals and/or concerts (ensembles grades K-12 are eligible).
3-4	Singing role in school musical.
2	Chorus role in school musical.
4	Writing a choral composition the choir performs at a concert.
1	Attending a musical performance outside of school, such as free concerts at nearby colleges, live concerts (must be approved by director), and shows at the Civic Center. Students must fill out a performance review sheet and bring a program from the event for this to count.
2	Participation in the high school choir program for a consecutive four (4) years (only seniors are eligible).

Others may be added at the director’s discretion.

PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE/CHOIR ROBES AND STOLES

Pride is visible. Whenever in the “public eye”, students are expected to be in nice, clean clothes. A council member will fit students in a robe and stole. Robes and stoles are kept at the school and are handed out before each concert. Concert Choir wears robes and stoles for each concert, unless otherwise specified in advance by the director. Show Choir uniform expectations will be discussed prior to each performance. Students performing in robes are still expected to dress in appropriate concert attire; sweatpants, short skirts or shorts, spaghetti straps, low-cut shirts, jeans, t-shirts, etc. are **not appropriate** attire, even if they are concealed under a robe during the performance. Men performing in robes are expected to wear black pants and black dress shoes, while women are expected to wear black dress shoes and skirts or capris that do not show when the robe is on. Flip flops are *beach attire* and are **NOT** considered dress shoes, so they should not be worn.

Those singers not performing in robes must wear black and white school- and concert-appropriate attire that is clean and ironed. Shades that fit within the black and white monochromatic scheme, such as gray and silver, are also acceptable colors for performances not requiring robes. Students disregarding the dress code will not be permitted to participate in performances, and will have their grade negatively adjusted accordingly.

If for any reason, a student is unable (financially or otherwise) to obtain the required clothing items or shoes for their performances, they are expected to discuss this with the director at least two weeks prior to an upcoming performance, and the director will help to locate the proper items for the student. This will be done in a completely confidential manner.

In any case, the singer is expected to dress in a manner that demonstrates respect for others, but more importantly, a respect for self. The manner in which you perceive and treat yourself serves as the precedent for how others view and treat you!

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT POLICY

All regulations in the student handbook regarding school equipment will be followed in the choral program. Damage to or misplacement of choir property, such as robes, stoles, music, folders, pianos, chairs, recording equipment, and other items will be dealt with in accordance to the school handbook. Students may be required to reimburse the music program for any damages incurred.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT TRIP

The Show Choir and Jazz Band will be traveling to Minneapolis during the spring of 2016. The following expectations have been set for the trip:

- ♪ All students must be paid in full (by one means or another) in order to attend the trip.
- ♪ Students are prohibited from bringing or using tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal substance on the trip.
- ♪ Because this is a school-sponsored activity, students must follow all school rules as stated in the student handbook.
- ♪ Students must obey the chaperones’ directions at all times. Chaperones may edit or add rules as they feel necessary to accommodate the situation at hand.
- ♪ If there is a major problem, parents will be notified and responsible for transporting their child home. Major discipline problems will be dealt with following the trip by school officials.

- ♪ Students must stay at the location designated on the itinerary.
- ♪ If a student will need to take any medication (prescription or over-the-counter), the student must check the medicine(s) with the chaperones. The parents must include all medication information on the emergency contact information form.
- ♪ Students are expected to respect the rules and policies of all the places we are visiting. Students are expected to respect the other visitors not in our group.
- ♪ Students will not be allowed to rent movies or video games on the TVs in the hotel rooms. Students may not make phone calls outside the hotel from the telephones in the rooms.
- ♪ The student will pay for any damages or extra charges they cause. Neither the music department nor the school will be held financially responsible for any damage or stolen goods. Students will be responsible for their property while on the trip. The school and music department will not be responsible for lost or damaged items.
- ♪ All students will be required to provide a reference card with emergency contact information, medical treatment consent forms, health insurance information, and liability release prior to the trip. These documents must be turned in to Mr. Grunklee or Ms. Wilson before departure.

The trip will be financed by each student individually; however, fundraising opportunities will be available for each student to fund the cost of their trip. More information will be provided to parents and students within the first semester.

✂-----
 Students will receive participation points for filling out and returning this form by 08/31/15.

_____	_____
Student Name	Grade

_____	_____
Parent Name(s)	Phone Number

Parent Email

- I give permission for my student to be in media located on the choral website.
- I have read and agree to the terms of the handbook.

_____	_____
Parent Signature	Date

_____	_____
Student Signature	Date

Important Choir Dates

2015-2016

Items marked in **bold** are required events.

Saturday, September 12, Pre All-State District Rehearsal, Belmond, TBA

Sunday-Monday, October 4-5, UNI Vocal Arts Festival, Cedar Falls, TBA

Tuesday, October 13, Simpson Honor Choir, Indianola, TBA

Saturday, October 17, Real Men Sing! Festival, Waverly, TBA

Saturday, October 24, All-State Auditions, Hampton, TBA

Thursday, October 29, High School Fall Vocal Variety Show, 7:00 PM

Friday, November 6, High School Musical, 7:00 PM

Saturday, November 7, High School Musical, 7:00 PM

Friday, November 13, NCICDA 7-12 Honor Choir, Mason City, TBA

Friday, November 13, Simpson College Voice Clinic, Indianola, TBA

Thursday-Saturday, November 19-21, All State Music Festival, Ames, TBA

Thursday, December 17, High School Winter Concert, 7:00 PM

Saturday, January 9, Dorian Vocal Festival (Chamber Choir), Decorah, TBA

Sunday-Monday, January 10-11, Dorian Vocal Festival, Decorah, TBA

Saturday, January 30, Meistersinger Honor Choir, Waverly, TBA

Sunday, February 14, Music Boosters Community Variety Show, Rockwell, 2:00 PM

Tuesday, February 16, Youth in Harmony Barbershop Festival, Humboldt, TBA

Thursday, February 25, High School Pops Concert, 7:00 PM

Saturday, April 16, State Solo and Ensemble Contest, TBA

Monday, April 25, High School Spring Concert, 7:00 PM

Friday, May 6, State Large Group Contest, TBA

Thursday, May 12, High School Show Choir Concert, 7:00 PM

Monday, May 16, Fine Arts Night, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, May 18, Senior Awards Night, 6:30 PM

Sunday, May 22, Graduation, 2:00 PM

Monday, May 30, Memorial Day Services, TBA

