



**NEW PRAIRIE HIGH  
SCHOOL  
CHORAL MUSIC  
DEPARTMENT**

Students and Parents/Guradians,

Welcome to the New Prairie Vocal Music Program! By being part of this department you have now become part of a much larger family of students, parents, alumni, and friends who have an appreciation for the value music has in all our lives. Thank you in advance for being a part of the music we are making this year. Before we get any farther in the school year, I wanted to touch base with all of you and inform choir members and their families of their responsibilities for the 2016-2017 school year.

This handbook contains very important information to your success as a choir student. Please review the below information with your parent(s)/guardian(s) and then sign and return the last page back to the Choir Department.

Jimmy Bennett  
New Prairie Choir Director  
[jamesbennett@npusc.k12.in.us](mailto:jamesbennett@npusc.k12.in.us)

## **COURSE OFFERINGS**

Beginning Women: In this course, major emphasis is on vocal development, music comprehension, and the study of a variety of choral repertoire. Students perform at concerts and local events. Students are encouraged to participate in Solo and Ensemble and the school musical.

Saphire: This course places a continued emphasis on vocal development, music comprehension and the continued study of a variety of vocal music. However, because this is a more advanced course a higher level of understanding of the above concepts must be demonstrated in order to be selected for this choir. Students perform at concerts and local events. Students are encouraged to participate in Solo and Ensemble, the school musical, and all other extracurricular ensembles. This class is open to women grades 9-12 by audition.

Sing Sensation: The course places a major emphasis on vocal development, music comprehension, and the continued study of a wide variety of musical styles. Students also learn intricate choreography for the show choir competition. Students perform at concerts, local events on and off campus, and compete at show choir invitationals and ISSMA events. This is an auditioned ensemble open to women grades 10-12 who have demonstrated an advanced understanding of the above concepts. Students are encouraged to participate in Solo and Ensemble and the school musical.

Innovation: The course places a major emphasis on vocal development, music comprehension and the continued study of a wide variety of musical styles. Students also learn intricate choreography for the show choir competition. Students perform at concerts, local events on and off campus, and compete at show choir invitationals and ISSMA show choir events. This is an auditioned ensemble open to students grades 10-12 who have demonstrated an advanced understanding of the above concepts. Students are encouraged to participate in Solo and Ensemble and the school musical.

## CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the policies established by the New Prairie School District, the following rules will be implemented in the choral ensembles

### Rehearsal Expectations

In order for you to get the most out of this class – your participation is required on a daily basis. If there is a valid reason you are unable to participate please bring a note from a parent, doctor or administrator prior to that day’s rehearsal. In addition you are expected to:

- Be respectful of and show respect to every person in the room and their belongings.
- Be in the classroom, in your seat, with all materials needed for the day by the time the bell rings.
- No food, drink, or gum is allowed during rehearsal (water is allowed).

### Classroom Rules

1. **Take responsibility for your actions and use self-discipline.**
  - a. Follow all school rules.
  - b. Exhibit above average conduct as a representative of the NPHS Choral Department.
  - c. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
2. **Be on time with all required materials to every choral activity.**
  - a. You will receive a tardy if you are not in your assigned seat with all required materials, ready for warm-ups when class begins. If you are tardy, you will lose half of your daily points.
  - b. Required rehearsal materials include: choir folder, music theory notebook, all choir music, and a pencil.
  - c. Put all required materials away in the designated storage areas in the choir room.
  - d. If you do not have all materials for choir you will lose half of your daily points.
3. **Be respectful of others and maintain the highest level of rehearsal conduct.**
  - a. Do not work on assignments from another class or write personal notes during music class.
  - b. When another section is rehearsing, study your part silently.
  - c. Mark your music when you are asked **using ONLY PENCIL!**
  - d. Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged before speaking.
  - e. Listen to others when they are speaking.
  - f. Do not disturb choir rehearsals in progress before, during, or after school.
4. **Listen and follow instructions the first time they are given.**
5. **Be respectful of choir equipment and materials.**
  - a. Equipment and materials include: music, books, folders, chairs, furniture, pianos, electronic equipment, other students’ property, etc. Fines for replacement materials will be enforced.

- b. All pianos, phones, electronics, sound equipment, offices, practice & ensemble rooms are off limits without permission from the choir director.
- c. You may use the choir phone with permission from the choir director.
- d. Any original copies of music, sight-reading books, warm-up books, costumes, or any other materials checked out to or being used by students are the responsibility of the student. Fees will be assessed for materials that are damaged or lost.
- e. Keep the choir room clean and orderly. This is not a college dorm room.

### **Performances**

Concert attendance is mandatory. Singing is a performance art. Performances are the culmination of many hours of rehearsals and preparation. The absence of even one member adversely affects the morale and their performance integrity of the whole group. Please let me impress upon you the importance of everyone being present at all scheduled performances. Since it is impossible to replicate the experience of a live performance, make up work will be given for excused absences but will require the time involvement and effort that was put forth by those students who attended the concert. Each student will be given a schedule with required performance dates and should notify the director of any conflicts as soon as possible. Details on whether an absence is excused or not are discussed later in this handbook.

### **REQUIRED PERFORMANCE DATES**

Fall Sampler- October 12

Choir Christmas Concert- December 9 and 10

Show Choir Preview Show- February 15

Spring Show- May 12 and 13

\*Members of show choir will receive additional performance dates later in the semester.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Daily Participation	50%
Quizzes	20%
Tests	20%
Performances*	10%

\*All performances are required for every student in choir. Without an excused absence (pre-approved by the director) an absence from a performance will result in an automatic failure of the course. Grades for performances will only be given to students who attend the performance.

## **PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE/GENERAL INFORMATION**

Unless wearing a costume from the school (show choir), or instructed otherwise by the director, concert attire includes:

Men-

- Black pants, white collared shirt, black shoes, black socks, black belt
- No visible jewelry
- Must be clean shaven
- Hair must be pulled back (or combed) away from your face

Women-

- Black pants, white colored shirt, black shoes
- No visible jewelry
- Hair must be pulled back away from your face

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Schoology**

Essential and specific information for both students and parents is located on schoology. This includes rehearsal, classroom, and event information vital to student and parent involvement. Students will also be able to access assignments, quizzes/tests, and other valuable resources for classroom activities. This site is regularly updated to accommodate for new events and information.

## **MUSIC BOOSTERS AND VOLUNTEERING**

New Prairie Music Boosters, is our chief support system. Parents aid our choirs in everything from fundraising, lending a hand in set construction, sewing costumes, and many other ways.

Our department truly would not have any success without their support! If you are a parent or guardian, please help us with whatever time, talent, or treasure you may be able to contribute. Our students need your help in everything they do!

## **CLASS SUPPLIES**

Classroom materials include: a choir folder, music, music theory notebook and pencil. Students need to bring in a plain black folder to store their music. You may take folders home but remember to bring these materials every day to rehearsal. If a student drops the class for any reason, they are expected to return the SAME music they were given, in the same condition, or they must pay for the lost or damaged items. These items will only be accepted from the student to whom they were issued. Lost, misplaced, or damaged items WILL be replaced at the student's expense. Original copies of music cost anywhere from \$1.50 to \$3.50 per copy.

Equipment in the choral department can be very expensive and costly. Students should ask permission to use any equipment within the department (including pianos).

## **OFFICERS AND SECTION LEADERS**

Our choirs cannot function without student leadership. Choir Officers, Dance Captains, Section Leaders, and other student leaders are chosen by either the directors or by the students themselves. The director determines the need for choral officers and meet with those individuals on a regular basis. The director plans meeting times and frequency.

Anyone with a leadership position in any choir is expected to show maturity, teamwork, responsibility, and a positive attitude for everyone in the New Prairie Choral Department. Specific duties and information is made available to all officers and section leaders.

## REHEARSAL AND CONCERT ABSENCES

Extra rehearsals and concerts are an extension of classroom work, and students will be graded accordingly. If a student chooses not to participate in a required choir activity, even if that activity occurs before or after school or on the weekend, they will receive a grade of "0" and may fail choir for that nine-week period. Unexcused absences will affect the student's grade, awards given at the end of the year, and will also negatively affect a student's future placement and participation in choir ensembles.

If a student is absent for the following reasons the absence may be considered excused ONLY if the student notifies the Choir Director in writing **at least 3 weeks** prior to (or immediately following in the case of an emergency) the required Choir activity. Criteria the Choir Director use in determining an excused absence:

- Is the absence a result of severe student illness (fever, vomiting)?
- Is the absence a result of an unforeseen immediate family emergency (death in the family, sudden hospitalization, accidents)? Family refers to IMMEDIATE family and is defined as: parents, stepparents, siblings, stepsiblings, and grandparents.
- Other school activity – must be cleared with the Choir Director in advance.
- Other circumstances as determined by the Choir Director.

Notification of conflicts (other than emergencies) with choir activities must be taken care of a minimum of 3 weeks in advance by submitting a written explanation of the reason for the absence signed by a parent. It is the STUDENT'S responsibility, not the parent's, to follow Choir procedure.

Unexcused absences are determined by the Choir Director and include:

- Lack of a ride (ask a Choir friend or ask your Director IN ADVANCE if you need help)
- Non-school related activities (sports, dance or music lessons, rehearsals, recitals, parties, dinners, birthdays, and other events not cleared in advance)
- Job (clear your work schedule in advance – check the Choir calendar carefully and often)
- Trips
- Family planned activity
- Other circumstances as determined by the Choir Director

**PLEASE do not assume that the director knows why the student was not present, or that it is automatically excused because notification was given. All excused absence requests must be in writing and signed by a parent.**

## **STUDENTS WITH JOBS**

It is our desire that New Prairie Choral Students are dependable, respectful, professional employees who communicate clearly and frequently with both the employer and the choir director.

If a student has a job and is in choir, please keep in mind:

- Having to work is NOT considered an excused absence from any required, graded choir activity. Missing a required, graded choir activity for work will result in a grade of "0".
- Students MUST notify employers well in advance (as required by your employer) of all required choir activities.
- Students are encouraged to print a copy of the choir calendar to give to their employer regarding required Choir activities that may interfere with work.

## **ADULT STUDENTS (STUDENTS WHO ARE 18)**

Students who have reached the age of 18 *are still required to* have a parent or guardian sign their paperwork for both school and Choral Department purposes.

# Choir Fees

Fees:

- Sapphire- \$100
- Sing Sensation-\$450
- Innovation- \$450
- Combined- \$650

Choir fees are a necessary part of sustaining a high level choral program. The fees help to pay for: music, contest admission, choreographer rehearsals, music arrangements, set design, costumes, alterations, and much more. The fees can be paid throughout the year, and there are fundraisers throughout the year to help earn money for each student. It is possible for a student to take care of his/her entire choir fee through fundraisers as long as he/she is willing to put in the effort.

Fundraisers for choir fees:

- Cheese and sausage
- Candle sale
- SCRIP
- Patron Drive

# New Prairie Choir Handbook

This Handbook has been prepared to ensure that you understand the rules, procedures, and expectations of the Choral Department. Please read through the material carefully with your parent/guardian and make sure that you both understand it thoroughly. Once you have completely reviewed the contents of this handbook please print your name below and sign at the bottom of the page. This form must be returned to Mr. Bennett by Friday 8/19/2016 via Schoology.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read the New Prairie Choir handbook and understand the rules of the classroom and the expectations of me as a choir member. By signing below I understand, acknowledge, accept, and agree to all of the information within the handbook. I also understand that this is not intended to cover every possible situation that could arise, but rather a guide to policies, procedures, and expectations.

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Student Signature

Date

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Parent Signature

Date