

Pelham High School

Choral Department

2023-2024

Student/Parent Handbook



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Google Classroom Join Code: 5re5554

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Introduction

Welcome to the Pelham High School Choral Department. My name is Madison McCugh, and I am excited to carry on the rich choral traditions at Pelham High School. This year will be a fantastic musical experience for our students.

The choral tradition at Pelham High School is one of excellence. We will aim to grow beyond the expectations we have of ourselves and learn from those among us. Every member of the choir will work to improve their vocal instrument as well as develop their music theory skills. There is always room for improvement. To achieve these goals of achieving excellence and overall improvement, everyone must be ready to work hard and dedicate their time to this organization.

Please be sure to read this handbook thoroughly. No one wants to be caught unaware of events or expectations. This is a handbook, therefore, keep it handy. It will be referenced many times, and there are some important documents for future use.



Preface

The information in this handbook is designed to inform the parents, students, and interested parties of the policies and activities as they relate to the Pelham High School Choral Department.

Pelham City Schools rules and regulations are always enforced. PHS has priority over choral policy should such conflict arise.

The Choral Director has the authority to amend or suspend any choral policy at any time, if necessary, in the best interest of the choral program.

I. Philosophy

The Pelham High School Choral Department is guided by the idea that to provide a complete and balanced curriculum, a basic study of music is essential for all students. The PHS Choral Department provides choral music classes at all levels of vocal development and maturity. Education is the key to this development and maturity. Through this education, the students can express themselves through the art of music. This education in music can help build a student's self-confidence and character, as well as guide some to a future in the arts.

II. Course Goals and Objectives

- a. Demonstrate the ability to produce an acceptable vocal tone.
- b. Provide, promote, and encourage interest and participation in choral ensemble.
- c. Apply proper vocal techniques to various styles of choral literature.
- d. Participation in all performances of one's respective performance group.
- e. Demonstrate ensemble performance techniques such as blend, balance, intonation, and response to conducting.
- f. Consistently strive to best serve the interests of the student, school, and community.
- g. Prepare and encourage the students for the experiences available in higher education, and to encourage future musical leaders.
- h. Instill the value of effort, sacrifice, cooperation, conformity, fellowship, self-discipline, and dedication.
- i. Develop an appreciation for musical artistry and aesthetic beauty, as well as increase the awareness of the arts within the community.
- j. Always strive for excellence in academic performance as well as musical performances.

III. Organization

a. Chorus Council (Students)

- i. The governing body of the choral department is the Chorus Council. The council will consist of the choral director and the following elected officers: President(s), Vice-President(s), Secretaries, Treasurer, Administrative Assistant, Student Conductor, Historian, Head Librarian, Fundraising Chairman, Uniform Manager, Chaplain, Social Media Coordinator, & Stage/Equipment Manager. In addition, there will be section leaders.
 1. Of these positions, there will be an Executive Committee (EC) that will consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Administrative Assistant, and Ex-Officio.
 2. Additional Committees will be appointed during the year to complete Council tasks.

- ii. This council will meet every other week unless an emergency meeting is called.
 - 1. The EC and other committees will meet every week.
- iii. The Chorus Council shall be empowered to make decisions concerning all matters of the Choral Department, if they agree with the PHS policy, Administration, and Director. On occasion, certain matters will be brought before the entire Department for consideration, in which case a rule by majority would be in effect.
- iv. It will be the responsibility of the Chorus Council members to see that all procedures and guidelines are always executed properly. In turn, all choral students will be expected to support the actions of the Choral Council.

b. Pelham Choir Booster Club (Parents)

- i. The Pelham Choir Booster Club (pending parent participation/interest) will both exist and have the goal of becoming a 403b Nonprofit Organization during the 2023-2024 school year. Invitations to the membership in this organization are warmly extended to any parent of a child participating in the PHS Choral Department. The organization's name will remain the same due for tax reporting purposes.
- ii. The Booster Club operates independently from the school while maintaining an extremely close relationship. The club has its own bank account and officers. How it spends and raises its money will remain independent from Pelham High School.
- iii. The Club will have an organizational meeting soon after the start of the school year to set goals for the academic year. The club will then meet periodically throughout the school year in the evening to discuss its work. Emails and text messages are the preferred method of communication with this group.

IV. Chorus Procedures and Rules for the Choir Room

All students are expected to follow the rules and regulations of the student handbook from the [Pelham High School Student Code of Conduct](#). The dress code is expected to strictly be followed and will be enforced in the choral classroom.

- a. To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late. Be on time. Call times (for performances) and bell times are when rehearsals or classes BEGIN so students should already be in place.
- b. Materials needed for class daily: Pencil, Choir Folder, Composition Notebook.
 - i. **REQUIRED MATERIALS: You will need to purchase a 1 inch 3-ring binder, a composition notebook, and pencils.**
 - ii. Optional materials: Music staff paper, pencil pouch
 - iii. To not make marks in music (pencil, always) is to waste rehearsal time. When music is in order, the level of accuracy is heightened. PENS MAY NOT BE USED IN MUSIC OR ON MUSIC ASSIGNMENTS.
- c. Cell Phones - PHS school-wide cell phone policy requires all cell phones to be SILENT and OUT OF SIGHT. In the choir room, students will leave their cell phones in numbered slots and may not have them on their person. Students may not set their cell phone to "record" while in the slots. Students will retrieve their cell phones after class is dismissed by the director.
- d. There is no food, drink, or gum allowed in the classroom with the exception of a personal water bottle containing only water.
- e. Arriving to class: Enter through the backstage of the theater off of B-Hall. Pick up your materials from the numbered shelf at the bottom of the stairs. Travel up the stairs and find

your assigned seat. Students should be in their assigned seats with all materials prepared to begin class before the 8:00am bell rings to be marked present.

- f. Deposit all personal belongings under your chair as you sit. This includes phones, bags, purses, binders, books, etc.
- g. Students are expected to maintain good posture and a positive, industrious attitude during rehearsals. This is defined as sitting tall on the front third of your chair or standing with healthy posture conducive to intentional breathing.
- h. Mature and dignified behavior is always expected of everyone. This includes talking during class. Politeness and attentiveness are expected from students towards the person in charge (or speaking) —whether it is the director, substitute, assigned student, or visiting guest. Rudeness by any individual is considered in poor taste and will not be tolerated.
- i. Class will end upon dismissal by the Director and not when the bell rings. Students are to leave the choral room in an orderly manner with all chairs arranged and personal belongings picked up. Students may retrieve their cell phones at this time and travel down the stairs to place their materials on the storage rack. Music is not allowed to leave the Theater. Students may wish to take their composition notebook home for study purposes.
- j. Leaving the choir room for personal reasons (restroom, drinks, etc....) will rarely be acceptable. Remember the educational time missed from a choral classroom realistically cannot be made up. Restroom breaks are to happen in the first or last 10 minutes of class (PHS-wide rule). Emergencies are the only provision to this rule.
- k. The director's desk and piano is OFF LIMITS! Students are only to utilize either of those locations at the director's prior permission. The Administrative Assistant & Student Conductor are the only students with automatic authorization.

Strict adherence to these rules and procedures should allow every gathering of choral students to result in an efficient, motivating musical experience. All infractions will be recorded, and appropriate action will be taken. Repeated infractions of A-K will result in lowering of the student's Rehearsal and/or Conduct Grade depending on the nature of the infraction. Any student with multiple infractions may be suspended from choral activities.

V. **Handling of Music**

- a. On occasion, Pelham High School Choral Folders will be issued to students for the storage of music on the designated shelves and are NOT to be taken to lockers, other classes, or home. Music can be taken home only at the permission of the director.
- b. Music should remain in the assigned folder as the individual assigned to that folder will be held responsible for it. Students should never use music from another person's folder or leave it on the floor or in a chair.
- c. **MUSIC IS NOT TO BE ABUSED IN ANY WAY!!! Think of sheet music like an issued textbook.** This includes tears, markings in ink, graffiti, lost pages, or other damage which make the music unable to be reused.
- d. Markings requested by the director or needed by the student should be done lightly in pencil.
- e. Students are responsible for every piece of music issued to them in their folder. In the event music (or folder) is determined missing or abused by the librarians when collected at the end of the term, the chorus student who signed for it will be fined its current replacement cost.

VI. **The Choral Facility**

- a. All students will be expected to maintain the choral facilities in a neat and orderly fashion. These are defined as all areas designated for music activities including, but not

- limited to, the chorus room, band room, drama room, auditorium, offices, ensemble rooms, storage areas, and choral library.
- b. Other than the choral room area, certain areas of the facility will be designated to certain individuals. More specifically:
 - i. Only the Head Librarian or Assistant Librarian are to be in the Choral Library.
 - ii. Only the officers listed at the beginning of this book are to be at the officers' desk.
 - c. The piano is to be used by the accompanists and Director during rehearsals. It is NEVER to be played by other individuals, between classes, during lunch, or otherwise without permission from the Director.

VII. Uniforms

- a. Performance Uniforms: All members of the choirs are expected to dress uniformly. The following is information concerning the uniform used by the program.
 - i. All choir members will be expected to acquire their own uniform. When you purchase the outfit, it becomes your property to keep and use for the remainder of your time in the choir. You may donate or sell it to a new member once you leave the organization or outgrow the uniform.
 - ii. Footwear - Black, closed toe dress shoes, purchased on your own. Heels are not recommended. No tennis shoes.
 - iii. Jewelry must be minimal and not distracting. No large or dangle earrings are allowed. Any accessories will be agreed upon by the Uniform Manager and a small committee made up of members of the choir. Click the links below to purchase your uniform. Please reference the sizing charts and measurements.
*Note - be sure to order in plenty of time before the first concert as dresses may need to be shipped and hemmed.
 1. [The Dress \(click here\)](#)
 2. [The Tuxedo \(click here\)](#)
 - iv. If you need financial assistance with purchasing a uniform, please contact me by email at least 4 weeks prior to the first performance date (2023- first performance is October 12)
- b. PHS Choir Shirts
 - i. Each student will receive a Pelham High School Choir T-shirt at the start of the year. These could be worn on spirit days, when we travel before getting into formal wear, or while on trips.

VIII. Participation

- a. Each singer gives to the choir not only the strength of his/her own voice, but also gives confidence to others, which increases their strength. Because of this, the choir is greater than the sum of the individual voices. This means that there must be participation. A choral organization cannot exist without participation from the members. Everyone in the choir must sing, but participation goes beyond singing.
- b. Rehearsals- The choirs rehearse during the regular school day. **Extra rehearsals will be announced with at least two weeks' notice, so that all conflicts** (transportation, work schedules, family plans, etc....) can be resolved so that the student may attend the required rehearsals.
- c. Conflicts which arise because of your involvement in another PHS-related group activity should be discovered as early as possible and brought to the attention of the Director immediately. Every effort will be made to avoid scheduling concerts in conflict with other activities. Student athletes and cheerleaders must check and give a copy of their game schedule to the Director immediately, so that conflicts may be worked out. Once the

director is made aware of a PHS-related conflict by the student or parent, the director takes the responsibility of speaking with PHS faculty and coaches to reach a resolution.

There are typically 3 possible resolutions:

- i. The student may be able to participate in both activities by making special transportation arrangements.
 - ii. The student may be instructed by the Director or Coach as to which activity he/she is to undertake.
 - iii. The student may be given the option of choosing in which activity he/she will participate.
- d. On a day school is in session, to participate in performances of any nature (on school grounds or away), it is necessary that a student be in attendance for a minimum of a half day.
- e. **Fees** – At the start of the school year, dues totaling the amount of \$25 per student will be due by the end of the 3rd week of school - payable on MySchoolBucks. These dues cover the cost of the official PHS Choral Department T-Shirt, Memberships to AVA, ACDA & Sight-Reading Factory.
- f. **Fundraising** – The program will regularly present opportunities for traveling to workshops, performances, and other events. To relax the financial strain of traveling and fees for students, we will have various fundraisers throughout the school year. Students may have to sell products or participate in activities to raise funds. EACH STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE TO AID IN THE FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES. Effort is rewarded.
- g. **PERFORMANCES ARE MANDATORY FOR ALL!!!** Illness or an extreme family emergency is the only excuse for absence. However, the parent must notify the director prior to the event for the absence to be excused. Students who are excused from a performance must ask the director to complete a written make-up assignment to receive credit for the event.
- h. **PLAN ACCORDINGLY** – Performance dates will be given well in advance. Arrangements for transportation are expected. If a performance comes up with short notice (which may occur) and is not during the day at school, leniency will be promoted for the time and performance.

IX. Grading

- a. The PHS Choral Department Grading Policy aligns with the PHS Grading Procedures and are as follows (all assignment grades are given out of 100 points):
- i. Academic Prep (10% of total grade, 2-10 tasks/9 weeks)
 1. Responsibility/Conduct: By following classroom rules, attending performances, and turning in appropriate materials on time, the student will demonstrate his/her achievement of the overall ensemble.
 - ii. Minor Grades (40% of total grade, 4-15 tasks/9 weeks)
 1. General Classroom Assignments: These include but are not limited to:
 - a. Folder Checks
 - b. Written assignments
 - c. Quizzes
 2. Rehearsal Grade (weekly): Each student's participation and contribution to the class will receive appropriate credit for that week. To receive full credit, a student will be diligently working to master the above-listed performance expectations. This will include but is not limited to proper posture, use of sheet music, tone production, breath control, and response to director cues/instructions.
 - iii. Major Grades (50% of total grade, 2-5 tasks/9 weeks)

1. Testing: There will be tests given periodically as part of the music theory curriculum, It Works In Theory by Margaret Heron. These will require study and preparation on the part of the student.
 2. Performances: Performances are necessary for students to attend. Non-attendance for any reason besides sickness or family emergency with prior permission by the director will result in a zero. In the event of an excused absence from a performance, the student must complete a written assignment to receive credit (see below).
- b. **To receive an “A” grade for a performance, the following criteria must be met:**
- i. The student will be on time to give a performance. For example, if there is a 7:30pm performance, and the student’s call time is 6:30pm, the student will be present, dressed, and ready for roll call at 6:30pm.
 - ii. The student will be responsible for his/her uniform, keeping it in good condition, and keeping track of its location. The student will come to a performance appropriately groomed and dressed in his/her well-maintained uniform. (1-5 pts deducted for failure of this line item) Students will not be allowed to perform if not dressed appropriately in his/her uniform.
 - iii. For performances requiring field trip forms and or money, the field trip form will be turned in no later than FIVE days after it was issued. Students not turning in such items at least three days prior to the trip may forfeit their attendance on that field trip. (1-2 points for failure of this line item)
 - iv. The student will exhibit mastery of his/her music and will perform at his/her utmost individual capability. The student will conduct himself/herself in a mature and responsible manner at the performance site. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO HELP SET-UP AND PUT AWAY ALL THE EQUIPMENT AND PROPS.** (1-3 points deducted for failure of this line item)
 - v. For school concerts involving several departments, students are expected to attentively watch and respectfully attend the entire concert (1-3 points deducted for failure of this line item.)
 1. If a student is absent (excused) from a performance (see handbook section Participation), he/she must do a written assignment to receive credit for that performance grade. The written assignment will be given by the teacher upon request of the student. Unexcused absences cannot be made up.

X. Chorus Honors at Graduation

- a. Upon graduation from Pelham High School, an Honor Cord (Pink) can be acquired by graduating Seniors based on the completion of the following requirements:
 - i. Students must complete 3 years in the PHS Choral Department.
 1. Of those 3 years, participation during the Senior year is required.
 - ii. Students must perform at least 25 times in the Choral Department.
 - iii. Students must audition for Alabama All-State at least twice.
 - iv. Students must maintain a “B” average or higher in the Choral Department
 - v. All debt to the Choral Department must be paid off to reach a balance of \$0 to receive the Honors Cord.
- b. Upon satisfaction from all requirements, an Honors Cord will be granted during the month of May of a Senior’s Year.

School Activity General Conduct Rules

Choir is a school-sponsored activity; therefore, the PHS's Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Code will be in effect for all activities. Any infraction of these rules will result in school disciplinary action which can include suspension and/or expulsion. The following items are of merit:

1. Absolutely no possession of objects such as weapons, explosive devices, fireworks, or other potentially dangerous substances that could be used to harm another person.
2. No fighting
3. Absolutely no possession of mood-modifying drugs or substances, including, but not limited to, alcohol.
4. No use of profanity or obscene and abusive language or gestures in the presence of students or staff members. Chaperones are there for your protection and to help you. They are to be treated with respect. Any abusive actions or words directed at them will be dealt with through school administration upon returning from the field trip.
5. No theft or defacement of property.

These items are explained fully in the PHS Code of Conduct. Adherence to all PHS policies is expected as well as those listed above.

Parents and Students, after reviewing the calendar on the next page, please [click here](#) to complete a required survey together with your student.

The form can also be found on the PHS Choir Google Classroom, for which the join code is on the cover page of this handbook.

Event Calendar:

August 9:	Classes resume
August 17:	Choir Parents & Booster Club Meeting
September 8:	AVA Fall Workshop (PD) (U of Montevallo)
September 15**:	All-State Audition Registration Deadline (5 needed)
September 29***:	Samford University Honor Choir (4 students, director nomination)
October 3**:	AVA Outstanding Choral Student & Music Educator Reg. Deadline
October 12:	<u>Pelham Fall Choral Showcase - 6:30pm - PHS Auditorium</u>
October TBA:	U of Montevallo All-State Choral Prep Workshop, U of Montevallo
November 1-2**:	All-State Auditions (5 Needed), Christ Episcopal Church, Tuscaloosa
November 28**:	OCS/ME Interviews, (Virtual)
November 28:	Christmas at the Alys, UAB Alys Stephens Center (Attendance for Extra Credit)
December 7:	<u>PHS Choirs Winter Concert - 6:30pm - PHS Auditorium</u>
January 10-11:	All-State Show Choir Auditions (online via Zoom)
January 18-20:	AMEA Conference, Von Braun Center, Huntsville (PD)
January 18**:	All-State Festival Registration Deadline
February 5***:	<u>UAB Honor Choir, UAB Alys Stephens Center</u>
February 21-24:	ACDA Southern Conference, Louisville, KY (PD)
Feb 29-Mar 2**:	All-State Choral Festival, BJCC**
March 13-15**:	<u>District III SCPA & S/E, Hope Church, Gardendale</u>
March 18*:	U of Montevallo 3 rd Annual Choral Fest, U of Montevallo
April 4-5***:	<u>State Choral Performance Assessment (required field trip), U of Alabama</u>
April 24-26:	All-State Show Choir Festival
April 25:	<u>PHS Choirs Spring Concert</u>
April 27***:	<u>Atlanta, Georgia Six Flags & Performance Assessment Trip</u>

*= Pending Date (Subject to change)

**=Alabama Vocal Association Event (Students may be asked to participate)

***=Field Trip

Event= Required Performance

Highlighted = Date that was changed since calendar originally sent home

As stated previously, all attempts will be made to avoid any previously scheduled events by other PHS organizations. In the event of conflicts with PHS-related events, please contact me by email ASAP.