

# Bunker Hill Middle School

## Choral Handbook 2017-2018

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome Back! This packet contains everything you need to know about being a member of the BHMS Choral program. This handbook is considered not only your source of information, but also a contract. Once signed, you are responsible for following the policies contained within. You will probably need to refer to this handbook many times during the year, so please keep it in a safe and secure place. I recommend removing the page containing our rehearsal/concert dates and posting it on your refrigerator!

Please take the time to read through this material very carefully. I have done my best to outline in detail everything that is expected of you and your child to ensure his/her success. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me any time at [ndickinson@wtps.org](mailto:ndickinson@wtps.org). After reviewing and discussing the contents with your child, please fill out and return the **2017-2018 Information Sheet/Commitment Form** by Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>:

I'm very excited for another wonderful year of music making!



Sincerely,

Ms. Nancy Dickinson  
Director of Choral Activities

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## Grading Procedure

**Please note:** Please use **Power School** to keep track of your child's grade in this course. Also, my webpage (accessible through [WTPS.org](http://WTPS.org)) will provide additional updated information on concerts, trips, rehearsals, and assignments, as well as letters I send home.

### Class Participation/Attitude

Chorus class is a group-oriented program that is only successful when all members are prepared with a *positive* attitude and required materials EVERY DAY. Each student is expected to arrive to class on time and fully prepared. Required materials include: assigned music folio, notebook, take-home folder, assignment book, and a pencil. Each student will be assigned a cubby for their music folio and Essential Musicianship book. Students are also expected to participate fully and positively in all class activities, including: discussions, rehearsals, and class assignments. GUM and other food/drink (except a bottle of water) are not permitted in the chorus room at any time! Any student who fails to come to class prepared or participate in class will lose Class Participation points for that day. Disruptive or disrespectful behaviors have no place in our classroom! Continued lack of ability to adhere to these guidelines will result in disciplinary action as per school policy.

### Written Tests, Assignments, and Projects

- A. Graded Class Work/Homework/Notebook
- B. Written Tests/Projects
- C. Vocal Assessments



There will be a small number of written assignments throughout the year. Students are responsible for any and all information presented during class. Notebooks will be collected, and students are expected to keep all handouts in their folders. Tests and quizzes will also be used to ensure concepts have been mastered. A mid-year or end-of-year project may be assigned after the concert season is over.

### After-School Rehearsals

We will have a small number of **mandatory, graded** after-school rehearsals before the concerts for the following reasons:

- Students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade rehearse separately during the day, but perform together. These rehearsals provide the only forum to rehearse as a full ensemble.
- They provide the only opportunity to practice with our accompanist.
- 25% of each class is 'in exploratory arts' at concert time, and do not attend daily chorus class. These rehearsals are the only opportunity for the entire ensemble to rehearse together!
- They allow students to know where/how to stand on risers, practice walking on and off the stage, and discuss performance logistics. These cannot be done during class time.

**Performances**

- A. Winter and Spring Concerts
- B. High Notes Festival at Dorney Park / NJMEA Middle School Choral Festival
- C. Other performances as scheduled

**Performing** is what being a musician is all about! Concerts and Trips are the culmination of all our hard work and will be graded based on a rubric evaluating all aspects of musicianship and professionalism. See the attendance policy below in reference to after school rehearsals and concerts. More information regarding what to wear for concerts can be found on page 5.

**After School Rehearsal/Concert Attendance Policy**

Students must attend all after school rehearsals and performances. Unexcused absences may result in being removed from trips and other activities. Students may be excused from rehearsals for the following reasons: absence from school that day, court appearance, death in the family, or approved religious holidays. All other scheduling conflicts must be documented with a note from home and cleared with the director *prior* to the day of rehearsal. Any last minute emergencies will be handled on an individual basis. All other reasons are considered unexcused and will result in a '0' for that rehearsal.

Doctor's appointments, babysitting family members, "I don't have a ride home," and other such reasons are NOT excused. You have been given a calendar outlining your responsibilities for the entire school year, and the expectation is on the student and family to make all arrangements necessary to be present at every rehearsal and concert. Plan ahead! Don't wait until the night before or the day of to tell your parents you have rehearsal! Students who miss any rehearsals unexcused may not be allowed to perform at the concert, and must complete a make-up project at the discretion of the director. Students who miss rehearsals and/or performances unexcused may also be excluded from any trips or special activities, at the discretion of the director.

**Vocal Assessments**

At least once per year, students will take vocal benchmark assessments. These will assess the students' abilities to perform and understand various musical skills that are being mastered in class. The most common components of a vocal assessment are:

- Rhythmic Memory (I clap, you clap)
- Tonal Memory (I play, you sing)
- Major Scales (accompanied and a cappella)
- Solo repertoire (mostly patriotic songs)
- Vocal Range (highest and lowest note)

The purpose of the vocal assessment is to gauge vocal progress throughout the school year. Assessment results are used to assign vocal parts (soprano, alto, and baritone), and to ensure a blended and balanced ensemble sound.

**Special Honors Ensembles**

6<sup>th</sup> graders may be selected to participate in the South Jersey Elementary Choral Festival in March of each year. 4 students (2 sopranos, 2 altos) will be chosen at the discretion of the Director to represent BHMS. More information will be distributed in December.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may audition for All South Jersey Chorus. This is considered a high honor for any music student, and anyone who is interested in auditioning and representing BHMS and Washington Twp. Schools will need to prepare with the Director in the weeks prior to the audition. More information will be handed out as audition time approaches.

### Exploratory Cycles - Keyboarding, Art, and Technology

Music students will go to one Exploratory cycle class each year for one marking period. 6<sup>th</sup> graders will take Keyboarding, 7<sup>th</sup> graders will take Art, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will take Design & Technology. All students remain full members of the Chorus program even while going out to cycle; therefore, they will receive both a Chorus grade and an Exploratory grade while they are out. Students will be expected to uphold their responsibilities as a choral member at all times, including: staying on top of their exploratory work in order to come to Chorus as often as possible, scheduled after school rehearsals, and concerts/trips. Any supplemental measures taken to ensure music is learned are encouraged. These include, but are not limited to: individualized help during any free time available, acquiring a recording of the music (see Director), and individual/group practice outside of school.

### Returning Assigned Music/Books

Each student will be assigned a music folio, Essential Musicianship Book 1, and various pieces of music throughout the year. Students are expected to keep their music in excellent shape and return all materials in the condition it was given to them. Music may only be marked in pencil, and all marks must be erased before turning in the music. Students may take their music home with them to practice with the understanding that they must treat their music like their academic textbooks. Lost or damaged music and/or EM book will result in a book fine as per school policy.

### Performance Attire

Proper appearance and demeanor is an important aspect of performance etiquette. Although middle school students are not expected to wear the traditional uniforms of most choirs (tuxes or robes), BHMS students will dress according to certain simple guidelines that foster professionalism. Concerts are not a time to make a fashion statement! Looking professional and *uniform* is the key!

#### Concerts

Boys - black dress pants, white dress shirt and tie, black dress shoes with black socks.

Girls - black or white dress/ black skirt (or dress pants), with white dress shirt/blouse, black shoes. Skirts must be at least knee-length, and shirts must have sleeves.

*\*No reflective jewelry!!*

#### Other performances and field trips

Boys/ Girls -black pants or nice jeans (no rips,) sandals or NICE sneakers, BHMS Chorus T-shirt

### Daily Classroom Procedures

Each day in chorus class, students will be expected to follow the following procedures:

1. Have your required materials out and ready for rehearsal. (includes pencil!)
2. Place all non-chorus materials (books, purses) on the shelves upon entering the room
3. Get music folder out of cubby. Look at the log on the board to see if you need your EM Book.
4. Once warm-ups have begun, please stop all conversations and put your full focus into the rehearsal.
5. Keep your pencil out during rehearsal. If you or your section receive a musical suggestion, write it down in your music!

6. When other sections are being addressed, use that time to review what we are working on and listen to the suggestions being given to the other section. Those suggestions might help you, too!
7. At the end of the class, take all of your belongings with you when you leave your chair. Make sure your chair is straightened and nothing is left on the floor.
8. Place your music folder/EM Book neatly into your cubby, being careful not to bend it.
9. Wait quietly until the bell rings. Please remember that your teacher dismisses you; not the bell!

Things to remember about rehearsals:

- Always raise your hand if you have a question. Do not call out!
- Use correct singing technique at all times!
- Gum is NEVER allowed in the chorus room. No exceptions.
- Bathroom Usage: Use the first 5 or last 5 minutes of class to ask to use the lavatory. Emergencies only once music rehearsal has begun. You must complete the sign-out sheet by the door.
- Water fountain: Emergencies only once rehearsal has begun. You are permitted to have a water bottle in class to avoid needing to use the water fountain.
- Pencil Sharpener: You may get up at any time to sharpen your pencil.
- Tissues: You may get up at any time if you need a tissue.



Trip Eligibility

Every year, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Chorus travels to Rowan University for the annual *NJMEA Middle School Choral Festival*, and the 7<sup>th</sup>+8<sup>th</sup> grade Chorus travels to Dorney Park for the *High Notes Festival*. More information regarding costs, chaperones, and itineraries will be distributed later in the year.



The BHMS choral program strives for high musical and personal excellence. These trips are opportunities in which we represent our school, as well as our community; therefore, behavior above and beyond the norm is required. As a means of ensuring the best effort on the part of each member of the BHMS Chorus, students must meet certain expectations in order to go on the trip. These expectations encourage students to remain fully cooperative, well behaved, and consistently motivated to do their very best throughout the school year. Students who do not meet these expectations may be excluded from their class's trip, at the discretion of the

Director. In addition, students who disqualify themselves after the final count has been turned in will not be reimbursed.

**Trip Eligibility Expectations:**

- Respect for fellow Students and Director at all times
- Positive attitude and behavior in class at all times
- No more than 1 missed after-school rehearsal unexcused
- No missed performances unexcused
- Learning and practicing music while in Exploratory class (Keyboarding, Art, Technology)
- Maintain at least an overall average of 77% (C) in chorus at the end of each of the first three marking periods and on progress report day of the fourth marking period.



**Concert Etiquette**

Concert etiquette refers to the proper way to attend a performance. This applies to all students, performers, and non-performers (parents, family, etc.). These guidelines have existed for centuries and are considered 'standard practice.' They enable everyone involved (performers and audience members) to enjoy the concert experience in a formal atmosphere free of distraction and disrespect. *The following are accepted guidelines for attending a concert:*

1. **Be seated prior to the start of the program.** If entering or leaving the concert hall after the program has begun, do so only during applause or when the performers are changing position.
2. **Remain quiet during the musical performance.** Talking, whispering, and other noises made with your voice, program, candy wrappers, etc. can be extremely distracting to both the performers and fellow audience members. When bringing small children to a concert, they should be under the constant supervision of those responsible for their presence. In addition, cell phones should be turned **OFF** prior to entering the concert hall (leaving them on 'silent' or 'vibrate' could still interfere with the sound system).
3. **Remain seated until intermission or the end of the program.** Drinks of water and restroom breaks, during a performance, should be done only in case of emergency.
4. **Applaud only at the end of each program selection.** There should be no applause during a piece of music, unless directed by the conductor (ex. after a solo section in a Jazz piece). You will know when it is time to applaud by watching the conductor, who will lower his/her hands

and turn to face the audience. Although these concerts are designed to be entertaining, they are not a venue for loud yelling, calling out to the performers, or other inappropriate displays of enthusiasm. As excited as you may be, please refrain from yelling or making other noises, which might detract from the formal atmosphere of the event.

5. **Stay and enjoy the entire program.** Performers devote countless of hours of hard work preparing for their concerts. They deserve your full attention throughout the entire program, even if the performer you have been watching has completed their portion of the evening. In other words, please stay and enjoy the entire concert!

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Ms. Nancy Dickinson  
School Phone: 856-881-7007; ext. 5136  
School Email: [ndickinson@wtps.org](mailto:ndickinson@wtps.org)

Instagram: bhmschorus

Remind Signup: Text your class code to the number 81010

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus: 78518

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus: 18bb9

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus: c4cfa0

Webpage:

[www.wtps.org](http://www.wtps.org)

~Bunker Hill Middle School

~Teacher Pages

~Dickinson, Nancy



**BHMS Choral Activities**  
**Rehearsal and Performance Schedule 2017-2018**

*(subject to change with adequate notice)*

*Performances in bold*

Concerts and performances are the culminating activities of our program. These activities as well as the after school rehearsals are **mandatory** for every student enrolled in Chorus. All after school rehearsals are from 3-4pm. See pages 3+4 for more information.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus:

*Wednesday, October 4, 2017 - After School Meeting: SJ Chorus (optional)*

*Monday, November 20, 2017 - After School Rehearsal (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Wednesday, December 20, 2017 - After School Rehearsal (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Thursday, December 21, 2017 - **Winter Concert** (BHMS Cafeteria 7:00pm) (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Date TBD, Spring, 2018 - **Choral Festival at Rowan University** (trip during school hours)*

*Tuesday, May 29, 2018 - After School Rehearsal (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Wednesday, May 30, 2018- **Spring Concert** (BHMS Cafeteria 7:00pm) (mandatory/for a grade)*

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus:

*Wednesday, September 13, 2017 - After School Meeting: SJ Chorus (optional)*

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017 - After School Rehearsal (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Thursday, December 14, 2017 - **Winter Concert** (IBPAC 7:00pm) (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Monday, May 14, 2018 - After School Rehearsal (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Tuesday, May 15, 2018 - **Spring Concert** (IBPAC 7:00pm) (mandatory/for a grade)*

*Friday, May 18, 2018 - **High Notes Festival at Dorney Park** \*(must meet qualifications)*

*\*Monday, June 18, 2018 - **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation** (8<sup>th</sup> graders only) \*(date TBD by snow days)*

# 2017-2018 BHMS Chorus Information Sheet/Commitment Form

*(Please print all information neatly)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Team \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ HR# \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Student E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mom Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Dad Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Parent E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

..... : Parents, how would you prefer to be contacted?    Phone    E-mail    Letter    : .....			
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**I have read and discussed the 2017-2018 Choral Handbook with my child. We understand the policies and expectations, and have noted all mandatory rehearsal dates and concerts on our family calendar.**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_