



# Welcome to the Winton Woods Middle School Choir!



Hello singers and parents. My name is Ms. (Jennifer) Melms and I'm looking forward to a great year as the new choir director at Winton Woods Middle School. *Parents*, I want to thank you for your support, and particularly for encouraging your child in his/her study of music. The strength of support for music from the Winton Woods community is legendary! And I'm proud to be able to continue my career here. *Students*, I want to thank you for your desire to pursue vocal music. I hope you find it as fulfilling as I have.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform choir parents and students of the procedures and policies of the WWMS choir program, as well as many wonderful musical tips to help improve student singing. I appreciate you taking time to read this information. Students- please keep this handbook in your personal choir folder for future reference. Parents- please keep page 8 (the Choir Performance Page) to put these important dates on your calendar. Please fill out the Pictures Permission Slip on page 9 and the Signature Form on page 9. These forms need to be returned by **Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>**.

To help us have the most successful year possible, I would like to share several goals for the choir program this year:

### Goals for Choral Ensemble:

Accurate rhythms/pitches  
Articulate diction  
Uniform vowels  
Good intonation  
Working together as an ensemble  
Communicating the music as a whole  
Reaching for new challenges & opportunities

### Goals for you:

High concentration  
Awareness and insight  
Self-confidence  
Musical growth and development  
Lasting relationships  
Musical interpretation/communication  
Higher skill of thought



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## **Choir Opportunities 2007-2008**

### *Non-auditioned*

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mixed Choir  
 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Women's Choir  
 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Men's Choir  
 After school Men's Choir (7<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
 Spring Musical Choir

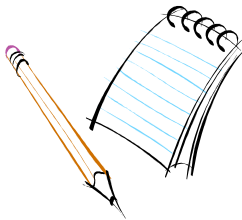


### *Auditioned*

Choristers- Small Ensemble Choir  
 District 14 Honors Choir  
 Spring Musical- Main Parts  
 Solos for choir concerts- when available

### *Other Opportunities*

Solo & Ensemble Contest-  
 vocal solos or vocal ensembles on prepared pieces to be judged.



### **Items Needed for Chorus:**

- 1 folder (2 pocket)
  - Spiral notebook (for notes in class)
  - 2 Pencils
  - Bottled water
- (optional-however, there will be no drink breaks given during class)



### **Contact Information**

Office Hours

Daily 8:15-9:00 AM

**Phone:** 619-2440

**Email:** [melms.jennifer@ex.wintonwoods.org](mailto:melms.jennifer@ex.wintonwoods.org)

[mamelms@yahoo.com](mailto:mamelms@yahoo.com)

**Website:** [www.geocities.com/mamelms/music.html](http://www.geocities.com/mamelms/music.html)

Also includes updated information about choir activities, events, class forms, test/quiz info, photos, recent news, and more.

Check often as it is continually updated.

### **Other ways to contact me:**

Notes to school/ notes in child's planner,

## **Behavior Expectations**

### **Rules**

1. Follow all directions.
2. No food, drinks (except water), gum, or candy.
3. Have all materials for class every day.
4. Maintain the integrity of all items in the choir room and stage.
5. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
6. Do not swear, tease, yell, scream, argue, put down, or harass.

### **Positives**

Choir Notes- to earn incentives based on behavior in choir.  
A list is displayed in the choir room of items and privileges.

### **Levels of consequences**

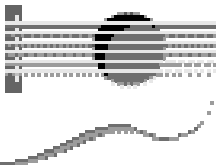
1. Warning
2. Above plus last out
3. Above plus isolation.
4. Above plus parent contact
5. Above plus after school detention
6. Above plus Friday night detention.
7. Office Referral

Rule of 3: 3 times in behavior log in 3 weeks, you will start at next level for 3 weeks.

### **Severe Clause**

1. Fighting
2. Extreme defiance
3. Vandalism
4. Preventing the class from functioning

Consequences: automatic removal from classroom



## Chorus Procedures

### Before class begins

- ♪ -Enter the choir room through the blue choir room door only. No cutting through the instrument room.
- ♪ -Place belongings on the shelf or against the wall in the entry room, bringing only your take home choir folder, notebook and a pencil.
- ♪ -Get rid of your gum BEFORE entering the choir room.
- ♪ -Pick up your choir folder and a sheet from the choir box (on top of the choir folder holder)
- ♪ -Sharpen any pencils before the tardy bell rings. Keep a pencil in your folder.
- ♪ -Be in your assigned seat with all materials by the tardy bell. Rehearsal begins immediately after the tardy bell with no talking.

### Chorus Rehearsal

- ♪ -All eyes on the director and no talking during rehearsal.
- ♪ -During initial warm-ups, there is absolutely no talking. Announcements will be done at this time.
- ♪ -During singing, sit with proper singing posture.
- ♪ -Begin singing when it is your turn. If another section is rehearsing, there is no talking or off-task behavior.
- ♪ -Use a pencil only to mark any part in the music that needs attention: cues, phrasing, solfege, etc. Do not write your name on your music or on your in class choir folder in any manner, including doodling, writing your name, or writing in pen.\*
- ♪ -Stay in assigned seat the entire rehearse unless given permission. Do not ask permission during active instruction/rehearsal.

### At end of rehearsal

- ♪ All items are put away in either in class chorus folder or take home folder.
- ♪ Chorus folders are to be put in your slot (according to your number).
- ♪ If you were absent the day before, check with the director for anything that you missed in choir.
- ♪ If you were tardy, see the director at this time.
- ♪ If you received a warning, see the director at this time.
- ♪ Wait to be dismissed by the teacher by sitting in your assigned seat with your bookbag.
- ♪ Walk out of the room quietly once dismissed-the teacher dismisses, not the bell.

### Tardy Log

*If you are late to class, you must sign your name in the tardy log even if you have a pass.*

- ♪ -Fill in the name, time and reason you are late.
- ♪ If you have a pass from another teacher, place the note in the tardy log.
- ♪ -Walk silently to your assigned seat without interrupting class.
- ♪ -See the director during pre-dismissal.

### Hall Passes

You will receive 3 passes at the beginning of the quarter to leave class. Use them wisely and only for emergencies- you will not get more than 3 a quarter. Do not ask to use a pass during active instruction.

\*See page 5 for details.

### **Music & Folder Guidelines**

- ♪ Choir Folders must stay in the folder cabinet when not rehearsing. All original music must remain in these folders. Music cannot be taken home at night.
- ♪ Music will be returned after the music is performed. Every choir member is responsible for returning originals on the day announced. Original music NEVER belongs in the trash and should not be thrown away for any reason.
- ♪ Pencils are only allowed to be use on original music. Pencils are used to mark repeated mistakes, key/time changes, and any notes the director may hand. PENS, HIGHLIGHTERS, ETC. MAY NOT BE USED ON ORIGINAL MUSIC!!! If you need to highlight your singing line, you can ask Ms. Melms to make a photocopy of the music. You are still responsible for the original, however.
- ♪ Wear and tear on music and folders happens from time to time. Be sure to let Ms. Melms know if you need something repaired. Negligent or deliberate damage, or lost music or folders will be handled in this way:
  - ♪ Student will receive photocopies of all music and will need to use their personal take home folder.
  - ♪ Parents will be notified and replacement for damaged/lost items will be made.



### **GRADING**

The following items are graded throughout the school year:

- ♪ -Participation in class (10 points daily)
- ♪ -Singing/Sightreading Tests (50 points each- every other Friday)
- ♪ -Quizzes (25 points- every other Friday)
- ♪ -Notebooks (20 points- due each Friday)
- ♪ -Performances (100 points each)
- ♪ -Semester Exam- Singing/Written (10% of grade)

#### **Participation in Class-breakdown of points**

- ♪ 1 point: being on time to rehearsal.
- ♪ 1 point: proper posture
- ♪ 3 points: having a pencil, notebook, and folder
- ♪ 5 points: attentiveness, singing, taking notes, behavior, preparation

#### **Tests & Quizzes**

Tests and quizzes are given every other week. Most of the tests are on singing skills used in the music we are performing. Very few of the tests involve writing. The singing and sight reading tests will have information about what is being test prior to the test. The quizzes are usually written with information learned over the course of two weeks that is recorded in the student's notebook.

## Singing Tips

It is possible to have a good singing sound! Keep these things in mind when in doubt:

- Fill up with enough air through the diaphragm.
- Support your sound as you sing.
- Keep your chest high and shoulders back to allow the lungs to expand.
- Keep the throat open to allow the air and sound to come out (especially on high notes!) Relax the jaw, especially during songs with lots of diction.
- Keep the teeth apart- your mouth is a chamber (much like a music hall!).
- Make sure there is no tension in the body.
- Keep your eyes bright and sparkling- this will help communicate the music as well!
- Use your air wisely.

## The Nitty Gritty on Singing

### **Pitch**

Be sure you know where DO is in the music. If you need help finding your pitch think of Do, Mi, So (the triad pitches). You may want to mark problem areas in your music where you lost your pitch, writing in solfege syllables, and how it's in relationship with the triad.

- Listen as you sing- see how your pitch relates to the pitches around you, making up different chords- you may be surprised what you hear. Mark spots where you or your section tends to go flat or sharp.

### **Intonation**

- Keep concentration high.
- Learn pitches, rhythms, pronunciations, etc. quickly (intonation problems at the beginning may stem from insecurity)
- Breathe from the diaphragm and support the air as you sing (with energy!).
- Listen as you are on a descending line in music- it is common to go too low. Always think each step sharper!
- When on the same pitch, think each pitch sharper. Believe it or not, these tend to go flat!
- Keep vowels consistent with your neighbor to keep the best resonance.

### **Rhythm**

- When having problems with particular rhythms, write out the rhythm counts (1&2&3&4&). Check the meter as well.
- Always count! This is a common problem in choirs, and can be overcome easily.
- Shape long notes and fermatas to give it life and energy.

### **Diction**

- Final consonants are very important in music. Know exactly where they need to go. Write the final consonant under a rest to show where it needs to be put, or at the end of the phrase. Also write in problematic ending consonants in the music. They need to be over-exaggerated (sent to the back of the room).
- Internal consonants and songs with lots of text are a mouth workout! Overwork diction, making sure the person in the back of the room catches what you said!
- Keep uniform vowels with your neighbor in the manner the director provides.

## Concert Requirements

Attendance at all concerts is MANDATORY. Concerts are treated like exams. They demonstrate everything that we have learned in class. Not only is your grade for attending concerts based on attendance, but also on promptness, behavior/attitude, and appropriate attire.

Known absences from concerts should be addressed no later than a week before a concert **in writing** with a parent/guardian signature. These are excused absences: wedding, religious event, “once in a lifetime” situation. Only emergencies (family emergency, illness, death in the family) will be excused a week or less as long as there is written documentation from a parent/guardian about the situation within a week after the concert. Otherwise it will be considered unexcused.

If your absence is excused, you will be expected to see the director to make up the work. You will have one week to complete your make up assignment.

The following are considered Inexcusable Absences:

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| ○ Lack of transportation                        | ○ Baby-sitting   |
| ○ Forgot  | ○ Homework       |
| ○ Overslept                                     | ○ Shopping       |
| ○ Other events (sports, dance, recitals, etc.). | ○ Birthday party |

A list of performance dates is provided for your convenience at the beginning of the year. All conflicts should be worked out in advance. If some conflicts are difficult to resolve, please contact Ms. Melms ASAP! Students may lose up to 25% of their grade due to missing a performance. Please, please plan ahead!

🌟🌟 Helpful Suggestion: Please post the “*WWMS Concert Dates*” on family calendars, parents’ planners, student planners, refrigerator, etc.

### **Transportation to and from choir events**

Please make sure that you have made arrangements for your child to be transported to and from choir events. If your child rides with someone other than a parent or legal guardian, we will need a written note by the day of the event. This is to protect your child and insure that he/she is in a safe environment. Please pick your children up on time after choir events. If a child is left waiting for a parent, we as the directors are obligated to wait with him/her, but we are NOT allowed to take him/her home.

**Friendly Reminder:** Students are expected to stay for the entire duration of all concerts. (*Exception:* Family emergency, student illness. Student must bring a parent/guardian note to the director before the event and must check out in person.

### Attire for Concerts

Students are to wear their WWMS polo shirt (order form attached) with khaki pants. White sneakers that are clean are also part of the attire for concerts. Please wear deodorant.

**Absolutely Not Allowed:** Perfumes, colognes, powders, or aftershaves (may cause allergic reaction, coughing, difficulty breathing, especially in close proximity on stage); large flashy jewelry, big hair décor, ripped or dirty clothing, open-toe shoes.



## Winton Woods Middle School Choir Performance Dates

October 9	WWMS Fall Choir Concert
October 30	WWMS 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Concert w/ High School
December 18	WWMS Holiday Choir & Orchestra Concert
March 12-13	WWMS Spring Musical
April 26	Kings Island Choral Competition
May 16	WWMS Choral Concert



Dear Parents/ Guardians,

Students have the opportunity during the school year to have their picture taken in choir. These pictures are only used for the following purposes: to show the school what we are doing in music (on bulletin boards in the school) or to tell the community what we are doing in music (in the PTA newsletter, on the WWCS website, or on our music website at

[www.geocities.com/msmelms/music.html](http://www.geocities.com/msmelms/music.html). I would like

to ask your permission to post these pictures. I will honor your request to not have your child's picture posted. Please fill out this form and return it to Ms. Melms by Friday, August 31, 2007. I will keep these on file to ensure your family's request. Thank you for your time.



Sincerely,

Ms. Melms

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 YES! You can post my child's picture as stated above.

NO! Please do not post my child's picture in the following:

Do not post on bulletin boards in school.

Do not post in PTA newsletter.

Do not post on the website (Internet).

Do not post on all of the above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Child's Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/ Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Today's Date

\*\*Please return to Ms. Melms, Music Teacher, by Friday, August 31, 2007. Thank you!

## Chorus Polo Shirt Order Form



We will order polo shirts again as part of our performing uniform. These shirts are royal blue polo shirts with an embroidered “Winton Woods Chorus” logo. Students are required to have these by our first concert in October. Volunteer chorus parents can order one, too! The parent volunteer polos are in a gray polo with black lettering. Each polo shirt is only \$9.00! Please pay by cash or check made out to Winton Woods Middle School. Please place your order by **Friday, September 21, 2007.**

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Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

### SIZE

(Circle One)

Youth S    Youth M    Youth L    S    M    L    XL    XXL

### Type of Shirt

(Please Check)

Number of Shirts

Student Chorus Polo \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Chorus Polo \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Shirts \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost (Number of Shirts x \$9.00) \_\_\_\_\_

*If ordering parent shirts and you would like to be notified, please put your phone number or email address below:*

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## Winton Woods Middle School Chorus Volunteer Form

In order for the success of the chorus department, volunteers are necessary. We need volunteers to help during various venues throughout the school year. Many volunteers are needed. If you have some time to help, please sign up!

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Volunteer Name

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Email

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Phone Number

Check all that you are able to volunteer:

Chorus Concert Chaperones (during the program)

- October 9 Concert
- December 18 Concert
- May 16 Concert

Chorus Concert Program Ushers (before the program)

- October 9 Concert
- December 18 Concert
- May 16 Concert

Musical Volunteers (March 12-13)

- Costume Designers/Makers (months before show)
- Set Designers/ Makers (months before show)
- Prop Designers/Makers (months before show)
- Ticket Sellers (at the door)
- Program Ushers (before the show)
- Helpers (during the show helping with props, costuming, cues, etc.)
- Chaperones (during the show backstage)
  - Kings Island Choir Competition
  - Chaperones (must be adults and pay own way)
- I would like to be involved in the Music Boosters.

Winton Woods Middle School Chorus  
Handbook Signature Form

\_\_\_\_\_ *I have read the music information provided in the packet.*

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Student's Name

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Student's Signature

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Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) Name(s)

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Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s)

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Email and/or Phone Number

**Please return to Ms. Melms by Friday, August 31, 2007. Thank you!**

