

Mission Viejo Choral Department



Student / Parent Handbook
2026-2027

August 2025

Dear Choral Student and Parent / Guardian,

As your choral director, it is with great excitement that I welcome each of you to a new school year! I look forward to working with you throughout the year. We welcome back returning singers and extend a very warm welcome to all of the new choir members. You are now part of the award-winning Mission Viejo Choral Music Department, and what lies ahead is more than just singing with some friends—your lives and the lives of those who will hear you will be changed by the music we make.

Though this year will start differently than years past, we have an exciting year planned, including festivals for all choirs, fun concerts throughout the year for the whole program. We want everyone to be as informed and aware as possible of the various components that go into maintaining such a highly successful program.

Enclosed in this packet of information are several items:

- 1) **Course Descriptions & Concert Attire**
- 2) **Classroom Rules**
- 3) **Grading Policy & Attendance Expectations**
- 4) **Performance Schedule (more information about other performances will be given at later date)**
- 5) **Student & Parent Contact information (please fill out Google Form)**
- 6) ***Volunteer List—a list of opportunities to help the program be successful (please fill out Google Form)**
- 7) ***Contribution tally – *all financial contributions to go through ASB***

*Every member of the choral department—student and parent—will be asked to contribute to the program, both financially and through donations of your time. A successful program simply ***cannot*** exist without this assistance, especially in these economic times when we receive *no money* from the district to repair equipment, purchase music, etc. All of this must be funded by those of us involved in and committed to the success of our wonderful students. Contributions can be made electronically through the ASB office and our website at www.missionviejochoir.com. Thank you, in advance, for your dedication to this program.

Please take some time to carefully read through this packet. After reading, please complete the Google Form that can be found on our website or was emailed out to you. If you experience difficulty with the Google Form, please sign and detach the portion on the last page of this packet, with any contributions needed by **Friday, August 28**, so we can go right in to making music. If there are any unanswered questions, or any other concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me: **norriss@svusd.org**. Our website is also updated regularly, so you can always check there for calendaring questions: **www.missionviejochoir.com**

We have a great year ahead of us! I'm very excited for the year, and am confident that, together, we can not only continue the traditions of excellence to which the students, school, parents, and community have grown accustomed, but build upon them. This choral program is a very special one and you should be proud, as I am, to be part of this choral family.

Sincerely,



Sarah Norris
Director of Choral Music
Mission Viejo High School

BENEFITS OF CHORAL SINGING

Singing in a choir not only teaches students basic musical skills, concepts, and vocal production technique, but also develops professionalism, self-discipline, teamwork, and an appreciation for the arts. The disciplines learned in a singing group will enable the student to participate in life long musical activities including many collegiate and adult choral organizations. Singing offers a great physical and emotional outlet for young people, cultivating the expressive part of their personality in a positive manner which will carry over into adulthood.

CONCERT CHOIR

This introductory-level choir is a **year-long course** open to all students with little or no previous choral experience. This class provides opportunities for young men and women to have the experience of singing together in simple harmony. Attention is focused on establishing basic vocal techniques, music theory, sight reading, and SAB/SATB choral literature for the beginning/intermediate mixed ensemble. Concert Choir performs at all school concerts and local festivals.

TREBLE CHOIR

This advanced performance ensemble is a **year-long course** open *by audition only* to experienced singers in grades 9-12. This is an advanced course focusing on SSAA literature from all periods of music. Students develop advanced vocal and musicianship skills, as well as sight-reading. They perform at all school concerts, local festivals, and annual tours.

CHAMBER SINGERS

Chamber Singers is a **year-long course** open to advanced singers *by audition only* in grades 9-12. Students are expected to be the top musicians at Mission, while continuing to develop advanced vocal and musicianship skills. Students study and perform advanced literature for mixed ensembles, studying music from all periods of history. They perform at all school concerts, local festivals, community events, annual tours, and school events.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

It is understood that a unity of appearance must be attained when appearing with high quality performing ensembles. These policies ensure a sense of professionalism when appearing in public and representing Mission. It shall be the responsibility of each member to appear in proper performance attire for each occasion. Members may not appear with the choir until these uniform standards are met:

- Performance attire is complete, clean, neatly pressed and in good repair
- Each choir member will be neatly groomed
- Long hair will be pulled up to maintain a professional, formal look
- Any visible jewelry, body piercings or tattoos are not appropriate performance attire

*All program-owned concert attire will be assigned to students for choir program use only and must be returned at the end of the school year. Failure to do so may result in fines or student holds with ASB preventing inclusion in school wide events & a delay in receiving completion documents.

Concert Choir – Choir Robe provided by MVHS Choral Program

Men: -Dark shirt (no collar)

-Black/dark slacks / dress pants

-Black dress shoes

-****Black Socks!!!!****

Women: -Black closed-toe dress shoes

-Dark shirt

-Shorts/skirt/leggings *must* be worn under robe, but will not be seen

Chamber Singers & Treble Choir

Men: -Black tux (no tails)

-White tux shirt

-Black dress shoes

-****Black Socks!!!!****

Women: -Dress must be ordered through Mrs. Norris.

Cost of dress is \$85 and can be paid for through the website

-Black closed-toe dress shoes

OTHER ATTIRE INFORMATION

Choir T-shirts may be ordered and will be available for all students. More information will be announced later. No student will be excluded from participating in choir if they are financially unable to pay for their choir outfit.

CHORAL DEPARTMENT CLASSROOM

In order to ensure that each student has a healthy, happy, and productive learning environment, all students are expected to do the following:

1. Be on time to *all* classes, rehearsals, performances, meetings, and events:
To be early, is to be on time;
To be on time, is to be late;
To be late, is not to be!
2. Show respect to *all* leaders, students, and / or adult by paying attention, not talking or being disruptive, and doing as asked at all times with joy and confidence
3. **Be appropriately dressed for all meetings / rehearsals – in accordance with SVUSD dress code;**
4. Be in assigned seat with *all* pertinent materials (including music and a pencil with an eraser) and ready to begin *before* the “tardy” bell sounds;
5. Participate fully at *all* times (if a student is healthy enough to be in school, they will be expected to *actively* rehearse)
6. Consume all food, drink (*other than water*), candy, gum, etc. *outside* of the classroom; it is encouraged that all students have their own water on hand throughout the day—especially during rehearsals
7. Use the restroom before or after classes and rehearsals (*not* during);
8. Do homework and other class work *outside* of classes and rehearsals;
9. Be focused on the way to all festivals, competitions, and performances;
10. Stay with their group and in their seat at all times at festivals, competitions, and performances (unless otherwise instructed by Mrs. Norris).

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE PLAN

This is the series of consequences for inappropriate, or otherwise disruptive, classroom behavior that will be followed in my classroom.

- 1st offense- warning by teacher/peers
- 2nd offense- conference with teacher
- 3rd offense- 15 min. teacher detention, lowered citizenship
- 4th offense- 30 min. teacher detention and parent contact, lowered citizenship
- 5th offense- 30 min. teacher detention, parent contact, and referral

These consequences are earned on a daily basis, with the exception of the tardy and cheating policies of MVHS. The tardy policy of MVHS will be strictly followed.

In addition to the above, the following **Severe Clause** will be enforced on the first violation to any of the following offenses:

1. Any student who willingly participates in an activity that could injure themselves or others will be immediately referred to the Assistant Principal (A.P.) and parents will be contacted.
2. Any student who violates the cheating policy (cheating or helping another student cheat on any test or homework item) or the sexual harassment policy of MVHS will be immediately referred to the A.P. and parents will be contacted.

REMOVAL FROM CLASS/PERFORMANCES

At the discretion of Mrs. Norris, students may be removed from performances or from the class should there be any severe behavior issues. This includes, but not limited to, festivals, concerts, field trips and the annual choir tour.

STUDENT HEALTH ISSUES

If you have any health problem that could affect your performance in the Choral Music Department, you should inform Mrs. Norris immediately. This information is kept in confidence with the school health office. If you have a sore throat and should not sing, tell Mrs. Norris BEFORE class begins. If you are sick and present in class, you are expected to actively participate in the rehearsal by being actively engaged in the music by singing mentally with the choir and taking notes critiquing the choir that will be turned into Mrs. Norris

VOICE LESSONS

All students in choir are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons. There is only so much that can be done in the choral rehearsal to enhance one's instrument. Good private voice instructors can prove an invaluable tool to achieve greater self-confidence and enhanced vocal ability. Please talk to Mrs. Norris for a voice teacher recommendation.

GRADING POLICY

Students will be graded on a point system. Below is the breakdown of how the grades are calculated:

45% = Performance: any and all choral performances go into the make-up of this grade

35% = Participation: being in class on time & engaged in lesson/rehearsal

20% = Theory: Classwork, *Sight Reading Factory*, Tests, and Final

PERFORMANCES EQUAL 45% OF OVERALL GRADE. Each concert is worth 100 points.

Note: This is a Performance Class. As such, **50 Performance Points** will be lost for each performance that is missed, *if excused**; students **will lose all 100** points for each performance that is missed that is *unexcused*.

*An absence from a performance will be considered “excused” only if the criteria defined below are met and the student turns in an “Absence Excuse Form” signed by a parent or guardian. The form is to be submitted as soon as the calendar conflict is identified, but **will not be accepted any less than one week before the date of the event**.

NOTE: There is a make-up assignment that must be completed to recover lost points from *any* missed concert—excused or not. **For an unexcused absence, only 75% lost Performance points may be recovered with any make-up assignment.** Excused absences can gain fully recovered (100%) with make-up work.

Participation Points: points will be determined based on attendance and the Director’s observations of each student’s work and attentiveness during classes, rehearsals, and performances (with input from section leaders where appropriate). Each day is worth ten (10) points. *Students will lose 2 points for tardiness and all 10 points for unexcused absences or absences due to “Opportunity Days” (i.e. In-house Suspension).* Points may also be lost for other reasons: 5 points lost for chewing gum or eating during rehearsal, 10 points lost for using cell phone or other device unless instructed to do so by Mrs. Norris. Electronic device will then be confiscated for the period, in accordance with school policy. Participation points can be recovered through extra credit work at teacher’s discretion.

ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is important to a fine ensemble. A student must be **IN CLASS** in order to contribute to the ensemble. Students with excessive absences lower the overall group potential. Absences and tardiness have a strong impact on our performance ability because it is impossible for us to be at our best as a choral ensemble when people are absent or late—hence the penalties explained above. So please be punctual and prepared to sing. Students are expected to be in their assigned seats when the bell rings, with music folder, notebook, pencil and any other required materials in hand.

I expect that all choir members will be at each rehearsal and concert. Missing these events will lower each student’s grade (*as explained above*). The concerts are not only our way to show our families and friends, as well as the community, what choir is all about at Mission, but they are also our main source of assessment. *Yes; each performance carries the weight of a Unit Final, and should be regarded as such.* The after-school rehearsals (which are few) are required for all choir members. I realize that emergencies occur, and have developed the following procedures for concert or rehearsal absences:

1. You all have a choir calendar with concerts and rehearsals identified. Updated calendars will be readily available. I expect that you will put these on your personal calendars and will make every effort to see that your student is present.
 2. The following are acceptable reasons for **EXCUSED ABSENCES** from choir rehearsals and concerts:
 - a. Sudden severe illness (not a cold!)
 - b. Death in family
 - c. Court appearances
 - d. Religious holidays
- NOTE:** Students who miss rehearsals or concerts for these reasons will need to complete the make-up assignment to recover lost points. See Mrs. Norris or visit the website for the “Performance Make-Up” located under the “Calendar” tab; section listed as “Additional Resources.”
3. The following are some examples of **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**:
 - a. Transportation problems
 - b. Religious youth group, service or event
 - c. Family plans, vacations, parties, reunions
 - d. Minor illness
 - e. Athletic or cheer games or practices (in regards to performances)
 - f. Other group's rehearsals or concerts
 - g. Voice or dance lesson
 - h. Suspension from school or other discipline

****Students absent from rehearsal / concert for any of the above reasons or any other unexcused absence will need to submit a 5-page paper if a performance is missed or a 4-page paper if a rehearsal is missed, as assigned by Mrs. Norris.**

Mission Viejo High School Choral Music Program 2026-2027 Calendar

****This is only a general calendar of the dates we know are on the Master Calendar. Calendar subject to change. Please refer to handouts and emails for updates; students are responsible for changes when given advance notice.**

August: 21 – Home Football Game – Chamber Singers - Choir T-shirt September: <i>(3 – Back to School Night)</i> 11 – 1st Responders & MAF Football Game - All Choirs & La Paz Choir sing @ Halftime - Pizza Party before the Game!! 25 – Treble Choir Retreat, 4-10pm <i>(26 – Quartet Festival @ CSUF: select singers)</i> October: <i>TBD – Choir Halloween Party - ALL</i> 2 – HomeComing Game: Chamber Singers - In Full Concert Attire 15 – Fall Spotlight Concert – ALL CHOIRS 21 – SOCC Festival @ SJHHS – Chamber Singers; day time 24 – Choir Halloween Party – 5:30-9pm 30 – Home Football Game – Chamber Singers - Choir T-shirts November: 18 – Showcase – Chamber Singers & volunteers - program/sport t-shirt / jerseys December: 5 – Choir Holiday Party – 5:30-9pm 11 – Holiday Concert – All Choirs	January: 22 – 8th Grade Day – Chamber & Volunteers February: 1-14 – Singing Valentines Sales & Deliveries: Chamber 8 – Area Concert – Main Gym – Chamber March: (1 or 2 other festivals to be added) <i>TBD – Choir Tour</i> 11 – SVUSD Festival (MVHS PAT) – day time, Choir TBD 12 – Festival Concert – ALL, evening 18 / 19 – CSUF Festival - Chamber April: <i>TBD – Pops & Spring Concert Auditions</i> May: 2026-2027 Choir Auditions 14 – Spring Concert ALL Choirs 27 – Pops! June: 2 – Choir Banquet (MPR) - ALL
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For up-to-date schedule changes, check our website!

www.missionviejochoir.com

MVHS Choral Program

Contact Information & Student Contributions

Please provide contact information and volunteer choices by completing this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/a7Hhr4jBRp1iTvxl8> (linked here & w/ QR code)



Student Contributions

Your contribution is requested at the beginning of each school year and enables the choral program to grow and thrive. In order to meet this year's budget and best serve our students, each family's participation is needed and very much appreciated. Contributions can be made through the Student Store or online through the school's Webstore.

Parent Volunteers

Our choir calendar includes student concerts, special events and fundraising activities. The help of every family is needed in order to provide the best year possible for your son/daughter. Each parent is asked to volunteer a minimum of once during the school year.

CHOIR CONTRIBUTIONS: *This portion is **for your records only**, as everything is paid through ASB. No need to turn this part in.*

Chamber Singers.....	\$80	\$_____
Treble Choir	\$70	\$_____
Concert Choir.....	\$40	\$_____
T-shirt (required if you do not already have one).....	\$25	\$_____
Choir Dress (Chamber & Treble members only).....	\$85	\$_____
Tuxedo (Chamber & Treble members only).....	\$115	\$_____
Additional Contribution (tax deductible).....	Any amount appreciated	\$_____

PAY CONTRIBUTIONS DIRECTLY THROUGH ASB

NOTE: Payments can be made with cash or credit card in the Student Store, OR **online** through the ASB Choir portal. For a link to the ASB portal, please visit the MVHS Choir website at www.missionviejochoirs.com

----- **Sign, Detach, and TURN IN to Mrs. Norris by Friday, Aug 28** -----

Parent Approval

I have personally read and completed the Google Form in its entirety. I understand that my child is enrolled in choir at MVHS and that my support is needed.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Student Name: _____