

Olympia High School Chorus Handbook 2020-2021

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"We Strive to Touch Lives"

[Click here to watch a video from your chorus teacher, Ms. Le](#)

[Click here to watch a video from our new Intern, Ms. Willitt](#)

Hello, and welcome to the Olympia High School Choral Program!

Students, I know this year looks so different. There are many changes and unanswered questions at this time, and that can feel scary. Please know that no matter what, I am SO excited to see you, to build a chorus community with you, and to make music with you!

Parents, please read through this handbook with your student. There are many COVID-19 related updates! I encourage you to communicate any questions or concerns you may have throughout the year. I will post new information on Canvas, send frequent updates on Remind, and send regular emails from janet.le@ocps.net. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

I'm excited to see everyone on LaunchEd@Home August 10th! Let's make it a year we will never forget. :)

Sincerely,

Ms. Le

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Forward

This handbook is designed to aid students and their parents in understanding the policies, organizational structure, and general functioning of the Olympia High School Choral Program. Please read this handbook completely and save it in a convenient place for future reference. This handbook and any of its updates will be available in Canvas and on titanchorus.weebly.com. **To the best of their ability, Ms. Le and Ms. Willitt have marked adjustments related to the COVID-19 pandemic in red.**

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Communication

Remind Text Messaging: Please Sign Up!

This lets Ms. Le remind you about upcoming assignments, events, tests, etc. via text. To sign up, text the following to the number 81010:

Women's Chorus (1st Period): @wchorus21

Men's Chorus (2nd Period): @mchorus21

Vocal Ensemble (3rd Period): @vocale21

Titan Singers (5th Period): @tsingers21

Bella Voce (6th Period): @bella2021

Mastersingers (7th Period): @masters21

Visit our website!

titanchorus.weebly.com

Follow us on Instagram!

@titanchorus_ocps

Chorus Program Overview

Women's Chorus (1st Period)

This year-long, formative class, designed for soprano/alto (high voice) singers with little or no participation in a high school chorus, promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of music through the study of choral repertoire from a variety of times and places. This class concentrates on providing students opportunities to strengthen skills in critical listening, vocal techniques, and ensemble rehearsal using high-quality choral literature. Rehearsals focus on the development of critical listening skills; foundational instrumental technique, music literacy, and ensemble skills; and aesthetic musical awareness.

Men's Chorus (2nd Period)

This year-long, formative class, designed for tenor/bass (low voice) students with little or no participation in a high school chorus, promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of music through the study of choral repertoire from a variety of times and places. This class concentrates on providing students opportunities to strengthen skills in critical listening, vocal techniques, and ensemble rehearsal sing high-quality choral literature. Rehearsals focus on the development of critical listening skills; foundational instrumental technique, music literacy, and ensemble skills; and aesthetic musical awareness.

Vocal Ensemble (3rd Period)

This year-long, intermediate level class is designed for students who wish to explore a variety of choral literature, including musical theatre, vocal jazz, and show choir repertoire. Students with previous vocal ensemble experience continue to build musicianship and performance skills through the study and rehearsal of high-quality ensemble literature in a variety of styles. Student musicians learn to self-assess and collaborate as they study relevant musical styles and time periods.

Titan Singers (5th Period)

This year-long, intermediate-level class is designed for students with previous participation in chorus and moderate skills in critical listening, vocal techniques, music literacy, and choral performance. Rehearsals focus on enhancing these skills and

students' aesthetic engagement with music through a variety of high-quality three- and four-part choral literature, providing students with the means to learn how to reflect and use a combination of analytical, assessment, and problem-solving skills consistently to improve their own and others' performance.

Bella Voce (Advanced Treble Chorus, 6th Period)

This year-long, advanced class is designed for soprano/alto (high voice) students with previous participation in a high school chorus who have demonstrated a capacity for developing advanced listening/aural skills and advanced knowledge of vocal techniques, musical literacy, and choral performance. Bella Voce focuses on the development and application of these skills and provides opportunities for aesthetic engagement and making individual musical choices, where appropriate, while preparing a variety of high-quality choral literature. Musical independence and student leadership are promoted through significant opportunities for peer mentoring, solo work, and participation as a performer, conductor, or coach in a small or large ensemble. **Students are to attend and participate in small-group, face-to-face, after school rehearsals to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. These rehearsals will follow the face-to-face procedures listed under “Procedures, Rules, Expectations”. LaunchEd students will be able to view said rehearsals online. Meeting day/time TBD.**

Mastersingers (Advanced Mixed Chorus, 7th Period)

This year-long, advanced class is designed for students with previous participation in a high school chorus who have demonstrated a capacity for developing advanced listening/aural skills and advanced knowledge of vocal techniques, musical literacy, and choral performance. Mastersingers focuses on the development and application of these skills and provides opportunities for aesthetic engagement and making individual musical choices, where appropriate, while preparing a variety of high-quality choral literature. Musical independence and student leadership are promoted through significant opportunities for peer mentoring, solo work, and participation as a performer, conductor, or coach in a small or large ensemble. **Students are to attend and participate in small-group, face-to-face, after school rehearsals to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. These rehearsals will follow the face-to-face procedures listed under “Procedures, Rules, Expectations”. LaunchEd students will be able to view said rehearsals online. Meeting day/time TBD.**

Supplies/Materials: “What do I need for chorus?”

1. For face-to-face students:

- a. **1/2 inch black binder with pockets (face-to face students only).** It is very important that each student has a chorus binder that is not shared with another class. Choir folders need to be as lightweight as possible! 1 inch binders will also be accepted. **We have plenty of used binders in our classroom for face-to-face students, so unless your student wants a shiny new binder, they can pick one up the first day they are on campus!**
- b. **Pencils.** I suggest buying plenty of pencils. If they are not mechanical, pre-sharpen before class. At least two workable pencils must be with each student at all times.
- c. **Face mask (Face-to-face students only).** Due to CDC health regulations and in efforts to prioritize the safety & well-being of others, masks will be mandatory in order to be permitted access to the choral room.

2. For LaunchEd@Home students:

- a. **Charged school Laptop**
- b. **Headphones (highly suggested, but not required)-** this will help you feel like you are in the choir room, surrounded by other singers.
- c. **CANVAS app downloaded to your phone-** I strongly recommend using your phone/tablet to look at music and to record yourself for video note-checks.

Grading procedures: “How will I be graded in chorus?”

Types of Assignments

- a. **Classroom Rehearsals (In-class and/or online, after school for Mastersingers and Bella Voce) – up to 50 Points** 10 points a day based on student’s energy and concentration during rehearsal, respect towards classmates and teacher, posture, arriving to class on time, and participating in class discussions.
- b. **Classwork/Homework – points vary per assignment** Students will be graded on completeness and accuracy of assignment. Some assignments will be online; other assignments will be completed by hand. Late assignments will receive points off earned grade for every day they are late.
- c. **Quizzes/Tests – points vary per quiz, 100 point tests** Students will be assessed on knowledge of classroom music, music theory, and vocabulary skills. Singing tests are included in this category.
- d. **Concert Critiques – 100 points each** Student completes written concert critique on time with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- e. **Due to the pandemic, we will very likely not have in-person concerts this semester. Ms. Le will communicate when it is safe to have these concerts again. Concerts are usually 200 points per performance, and 100 points per dress rehearsals.**

Due dates/Grading Policy

Due dates are set for a physical schedule, meaning things are “due” at a very specific time indicated on CANVAS. There will be a 48 hour grace period where students may submit work, but students must notify Ms. Le. Generally speaking, if work is submitted the same day it is due, I do not reduce points. If it is submitted the following day, it is docked 10%. Once an assignment has closed, there will be an opportunity to make it up later in the quarter for half credit.

Financial Obligations: “How Much is Fair Share?”

1. **\$20 or \$45 Fair Share (Due Friday, September 11)-** We know this is a financially difficult time for many, so please email Ms. Le at janet.le@ocps.net if you need a payment extension.
 - a. **What is Fair Share?** Each of us must contribute our “fair share” if the choir is to purchase necessary equipment. The Fair Share will cover the choral program’s planned operating expenses for the entire year. Please note that Fair Share is usually \$50/\$75, but due to COVID-19, this year is different. Budgeted items include purchasing rights to rehearse and perform music, t-shirts, practice tracks, sight-reading factory accounts, and sanitizing equipment.
 - b. **How much is Fair Share?** Fair Share for the 2020-2021 school year is \$20 for students in Women’s Chorus, Men’s Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, and Titan Singers. Fair Share for the 2020-2021 school year is \$45 for students in Mastersingers and Bella Voce.
 - c. **My student is in more than one choir. Do I need to pay twice?** No. Students are only required to pay one Fair Share. For example, if they are in Titan Singers and Men’s Chorus, their Fair Share is \$20. If they are in Bella Voce and Vocal Ensemble, their Fair Share is \$45.
 - d. **How do I pay?**
 - A. ONLINE (preferred): LINK COMING SOON!
 - B. CHECKS: make payable to “Olympia High School.” Write the student’s name and “Chorus Fair Share” in the memo section of check.
 - C. CASH: Due to COVID-19, we ask that you refrain from sending cash payments. If you do need to pay with cash, please place cash in an envelope. Email Ms. Le at janet.le@ocps.net with any questions.

- e. Students who do not pay required fair share will usually have their name placed on the school's financial obligation list, so please communicate if you are unable to pay this year due to financial hardship. **We know this is a financially difficult time for many, so please email Ms. Le at janet.le@ocps.net if you have questions/concerns.**

- f. Fair Share payments are non-refundable. The annual budget is based on the needs of the choral program divided equally among the program enrollment. Failure to participate in the choral program will not relieve the student of his/her responsibility. Failure to maintain academic or discipline eligibility will not relieve the student of his/her responsibility.

Procedures, Rules, and Expectations

Expectations: General

1. Singers are expected to treat themselves, their peers, and their teacher with respect. Singing is a very personal and vulnerable activity.
2. It is impossible to eat, drink, or chew gum while singing properly. Students are allowed to bring a clear water bottle to rehearsal.
3. Bring all materials to class. Have your folder with music and a pencil in hand during every rehearsal. Expect periodic pencil and folder checks.
4. The singer remains personally responsible for the condition of sight-reading materials, theory sheets, and music once they are distributed.
5. Singers are responsible for the care of the choir room. When rehearsal is complete, put all supplies away, throw away trash, and take all personal items with you as you leave.
6. Singers are expected to remain actively engaged in the rehearsal at all times. There is always room for improvement!
7. Follow directions and classroom procedures the FIRST time they are given. Positive and cooperative attitudes result in a fun and productive atmosphere.

General Procedures: LaunchEd@Home

IMPORTANT: As we find out what works and what does not work in LaunchEd@home, these procedures will evolve.

- Music will be uploaded to CANVAS, and students are expected to learn music from home. (At a later date, students will have the option to pick up a hard copy of the music from school).
- Rehearsals will be held daily, and all students are expected to log in to either Big Blue Button or Microsoft Teams (depending on which link Ms. Le send out on CANVAS/Remind) and fully participate in class time rehearsal
- Daily Attendance - Daily attendance will be taken via web conference at the beginning of class. Students are expected to sign in on time as if they are attending class
- Web Conferencing - Students need to attend class digitally during their normal class period. It is expected that students have their video camera activated at all times during web conferencing and that they be dressed appropriately for school as if they were attending face-to-face.
- Recording by students is in violation of FERPA laws and is not permitted. However, any notes, presentations, or other materials you might need for the course will be available to you online.
- Daily Procedure- At the beginning of our scheduled class period, sign in to our Chorus course on Canvas and start by accessing the conference for the day (on BBB or Microsoft Teams... the link will be provided on CANVAS). Make sure that your video is enabled and your display name is your first and last name. If you have another name that you go by, let Ms. Le and Ms. Willit know so they can adjust their roster.
- During class discussions or singing, be prepared to be called on as if you were sitting in class. Make sure your video is enabled, and I will unmute your microphones whenever you are asked to speak. If you need to ask a question during class, you can use the “raise your hand” option, or simply type your question into the chat box.
- In the event of a microphone issue, you can also use the chat function to participate. Even when you are working independently on a class assignment, you must keep the conference active during the entire period.

- Content - All chat conversations, video conversations, shared screens, presentations, etc, should be focused and school appropriate. Students at home are held to the same standards of civility and engagement as students on campus. Remember that everything you do on a school computer or using your school accounts (like Google, even in Google Hangouts) is subject to observation and monitoring by the school and district. These are not private accounts or private equipment and they should be used solely for educational purposes.
- Note checks will be through video online (students will record at home & submit on CANVAS).

General Procedures: Face-To-Face

- Music will be provided in class and will be stored in the student's individual binder.
- Music will be learned through audiation/humming/some singing in the classroom (no longer than 30 minutes).
- Note checks will be through video online (recorded at home & submitted on CANVAS).

Safety Procedures: Face-To-Face

- PPE: All singers must wear a mask while inside the classroom. Face shields are encouraged in addition to masks, if possible.
 - Students without proper PPE will not be permitted to sing inside the classroom.
- Ms. Le will mark the floors in advance so there is ample distance (at least 6 feet) between each singer. Singers have responsibility to maintain this distance from others during class/rehearsal.
- Ms. Le will position singers in a straight line to reduce aerosol cross-contamination.
- If a guest conductor is present to help Ms. Le, we will use multiple rehearsal locations to increase social distancing.
- Students will sing for no longer than 30 minutes before taking a supervised air-ventilation break.
- We will wipe down surfaces after rehearsals.
- Weather permitting, we will go outside for a portion of rehearsal for air-ventilation (this may or may not work with LaunchEd home viewers).

- **If we are permitted to have after-school rehearsals for Mastersingers/Bella Voce, temperature checks will be taken upon entry (any student higher than 100.4° F will not be permitted into the building).**

Expectations: Cell Phone Policy (face-to-face)

1. Cell phones must be silent and invisible unless used for academic purposes.
2. If a student uses a phone out of policy, Ms. Le will ask the student to place his cell phone in his/her backpack. If necessary, Ms. Le will confiscate cell phones used out of policy until the end of the class period.

Procedures: Restroom

Due to the pandemic, Ms. Le is working on an alternate procedure that requires less surface contact.

1. Restroom privileges are not available the first and last ten minutes of class.
2. To ask permission to use the restroom, students must raise their hands with crossed fingers. This way, Ms. Le knows you need to go to the restroom without you having to verbally ask and interrupt rehearsal time.
3. Students must sign out before leaving the classroom and sign in upon returning.
4. Students must take designated classroom pass to the restroom.
5. **Parents, please provide a letter detailing medical bathroom excuses at the beginning of the school year.**

Expectations: Discipline

In the event that a student chooses to behave inappropriately, the following steps take place:

1. Student Conference
2. Loss of participation grade
3. Parent/Guardian Contact
4. Referral to Administrator

Other discipline issues: We represent Olympia and the Chorus Department everyone we go. It is important that we take this representation seriously. Should she deem it necessary, Ms. Le has the right to take away performance privileges if a student is sent to the discipline office for a chorus or non-chorus related issue. Ms. Le also has the right to take away performance privileges from any chorus student who fails to follow moral expectations outside Olympia High School.

Procedures: non-pandemic/ “normal” rehearsal

I am including these procedures as a point of reference should we be able to return to “normal” this year. Until then, please read the procedures ABOVE, and email Ms. Le with questions. Rehearsal time is short and every moment must be used for actual rehearsal purposes. If you delay the rehearsal for even one minute, you have wasted a great deal of time because every other member of the ensemble has been forced to waste one minute. The following guidelines are used in all fine performance organizations and are the foundation of our rehearsal procedure:

Non-pandemic Procedures: General

1. Each singer should be in place (on the risers, in the chairs, or around the room depending on rehearsal schedule) ready to warm up by the time the bell rings. Being late can cause you to miss a portion of warm-ups, limiting your ability to get the most out of rehearsal.
2. Read the board at the beginning of class for materials and assignments.
3. Leave backpacks and other irrelevant items against the side walls.
4. Turn in any necessary homework and have all materials with you at the beginning of class.
5. Dismissal: follow all directions and wait to be dismissed by the teacher. Collect all your belongings and return any borrowed items at the end of class.

Non-pandemic Procedures: Beginning of class

1. Enter quietly.
2. Look at the lights above the smartboard. Red= no laptop, Blue= laptop out but closed, Green =laptops out and open
3. Retrieve your binder as fast as possible from the shelf. You should have a pencil and all music in your binder.
4. Place your personal belongings (backpack) in a designated place against the wall.
5. Place your cell phone safely in your backpack.
6. Retrieve your laptop from your backpack (if needed).
7. Zip up your backpack completely.
8. Bring your laptop and chorus binder and pencil to your seat (or your place on the risers).
9. At the conclusion of rehearsal, return any loose music inside the three rings in your binder.
10. Return your chorus binder to its designated location on the shelf.
11. Gather your personal belongings.
12. Return to your seat until the bell rings.

Non-pandemic Rehearsals in the Choir Room

Required items: music in order, no less than 2 working pencils.

Recommended: water bottle

- Before rehearsal begins, you may warm up individually until the director steps onto the podium or sits at the piano, two to three minutes after the bell rings. At that moment, all singing and talking will STOP. Your full attention must be given to that person and nothing should be allowed or able to distract you.
- Correct posture is essential to proper breathing and concentration. Sit on the edge of your seat with shoulders relaxed and head held high. You will stand A LOT during class.
- If you need to ask a question during rehearsal, raise your hand and wait to be recognized. Otherwise there will be NO TALKING DURING REHEARSAL, EVEN IF IT DEALS WITH THE MUSIC.
- Cell phones will not be out or used in the Choir room or during any rehearsal. Violation of this policy will result in 1) parent contact, 2) referral.

- Do not leave your seat/ spot in the risers unless given permission to do so.

Uniforms

Due to the pandemic, we may not be able to have in-person concerts until the spring semester. Once it is safe to have in-person concerts, Ms. Le will communicate with parents, and we decide on whether or not we will wear uniforms. If we do, students will wear the following:

a. Option 1 : Tux/Suite

- a. PURCHASE ON YOUR OWN: Black dress shirt (Long sleeve, button-down, collared), black slacks, black dress shoes.
- b. PROVIDED: Black Tuxedo Jacket, Silver Tie for Mastersingers

a. Option 2: Dress

a. If you are in Women's Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, and Titan Singers:

- 1. PURCHASE ON YOUR OWN: Black, close-toed dress shoes
- 2. PROVIDED: Southeastern Apparel Corelli Dress Style

1. If you are in Mastersingers and Bella Voce

- 1. PURCHASE ON YOUR OWN: Black, close-toed dress shoes
- 2. PROVIDED: Stage Accents Avelle Women's Dress

Performances

Due to the pandemic, we may not be able to have in-person concerts until the spring semester. Once it is safe to have in-person concerts, Ms. Le will communicate with parents, and the following expectations shall be put into place:

- ~~1. All performances are graded events! Students are expected to perform.~~
- ~~2. Any known absences must be submitted to the director in writing no later than two weeks BEFORE the performance.~~
- ~~3. Work is not considered an excused absence! Ask off now!~~
- ~~4. Transportation issues are not considered an excused absence! Figure out rides now!~~
- ~~5. School activities are sometimes, but rarely, excused. Ask NOW if you have a school event (this includes sports, rehearsals, field trips, etc.) the same time as the concert.~~
- ~~6. Emergencies must be communicated to the director the day of the performance or before 12 noon the day after via email or phone.~~

Thank you for carefully reading through this handbook! A handbook acknowledgement form will be available on canvas shortly after the beginning of the school year.