

CSHS Choir Handbook 2025-2026

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2025-2026 Choir Officers:

President – Rachel Hamlin

Vice President – Corey Jones

Secretary – Eden Taylor

Historian – Alessandra Lopez

Social Media Manager – Ally Keever

Librarian – Mikaela Perry

Uniform Managers – Emily Davison, Austin Green

Student Directors – Ady Cottrell, Hanna Malone

Parents

I would like to say welcome and tell you how excited I am about the coming year for choir at CSHS. Please keep the handbook handy for reference and keep the calendar with your other organizational material so that you can keep track of what is happening in the choir program. Be sure to sign the acknowledgement page at the end and return it as soon as possible. I will send home information throughout the year to keep you informed, but the major dates for the school year are in this handbook. We will have a parents' meeting to cover much of our information on Thursday, August 21st at 6PM. Our procedures, concert information, and much more will be shared at that time. If you can attend, please do. It will last no more than one hour. Meanwhile, you're strongly encouraged to read through the Choir Handbook to better understand what it means to be a Charger Choir student and parent.

All choir members are required to pay a \$30 participation fee, due with all forms Friday, September 12th. Payments will be made through Skyward.

Students

Clear Springs HS Choirs are designed for the singer of varying ability who desires to be exposed to a variety of music from numerous time periods, genres, and cultures. Repertoire will include music of classic choral composers as well as folk songs, spirituals, gospel, Broadway and popular music. Both accompanied and a cappella music will be explored, as well as various languages. Vocal production techniques, and music fundamentals will be stressed, as well as, comprehensive musicianship, including sight reading, listening, creating music, music theory, and relating music to other disciplines and cultures.

**Because a vast majority of choral music has historically been written for religious institutions, some of the music we study contain such texts. The repertoire will include material drawn from various traditions, which are studied and performed solely for educational value, and are in no way intended to be exclusive of any individual whose experiences or beliefs are not represented. Our shared musical experiences are intended to bring us together as we all seek to be inspired by the power of great music.*

YOU are what will make this program a winning organization! It is up to you! We will have activities so that we can all get to know each other and begin to work together as a team. Yes, choir is a team effort just like sports. We will have many performances, events, activities, and trips throughout the year. Some events are optional, but performances are mandatory to pass this class!!!!

2025-2026 Clear Springs Charger Choir Handbook

Class Facts

Choirs are directed by Ms. McDermott and/or Mr. Travis Falknor in room 1330. Ms. McDermott and Mr. Falknor can be reached by phone (281.284.1487 or 281.284.1427) or by email (mhawke-mcdermott@ccisd.net or tfalknor@ccisd.net). Parents are welcome and encouraged to communicate by phone, email, or conference; please schedule a conference ahead of time.

The class schedule is as follows:

Time	Period	Choir	Director
7:20-8:07	1	Conference	Both
8:13-9:00	2	Vox Equus	Mr. Falknor
9:06-9:58	3	Charger Chorale	Ms. McDermott/ Mr. Falknor
10:04-10:51	4	Bella Voce	Ms. McDermott
10:57-11:44	5	Rhythm & Blue	Mr. Falknor
11:44-12:50	5	Lightning Lunch	Both
12:55-1:42	6	Cantori	Ms. McDermott
1:48-2:35	7	AP Music Theory	Ms. McDermott

Course Description

All choirs at Clear Springs High School are performing ensembles; a critical portion of each student's grades is based on performing in scheduled concerts outside the regular school day. Everyone in every choir will perform, as each member is vital to the success of that ensemble. Students not wishing to participate in the scheduled performances should seek other methods of fulfilling their fine arts requirement to graduate. In addition to the required curricular performances, many other optional performance opportunities will be offered.

Class Fee

All students are required to pay an annual fee of \$30. This fee should be paid through CCISD's Skyward page. This fee helps to cover the following expenses:

- Uniform maintenance: repairs, extensive alterations, etc.
- Transportation (school bus) when needed
- Miscellaneous program costs: accompanists and clinicians, travel costs, social events, teacher training, contest entry, music, and supplies, etc.

Additional (Optional) Choir Costs

Various extracurricular activities require additional expenses. Costs are approximations and subject to change. Please notify your director if you need assistance; we may have funds available to support students in need. Additional expenses may include:

- TMEA Region Audition and Participation Fees (\$20-\$40, depending on audition results)
- CCISD Solo & Ensemble Contest (\$10-\$20)
- Choir Banquet (\$35-\$40)
- Performance attendance (Houston Grand Opera, TUTS, Broadway Across America, costs vary)
- Private Voice Lessons (weekly expense)

Private Voice Lessons

Voice lessons are offered as a supplement to regular choral instruction. These lessons are weekly, 25-minute sessions in which a professional singer works one-on-one with the student to further improve vocal technique and to prepare additional literature for activities such as region auditions, solo and ensemble, musical, and pop show. Lessons are completely optional; if you are interested, please request an enrollment form. Space is limited; students who were in our teachers' studios last year will have the first chance to schedule their lessons.

Student Expectations/Class Rules

Being a member of a choir means being part of a team. Teamwork takes cooperation, consideration and dedication. We all must work together for our team to be successful and to accomplish our goals. High expectations will be set for each of our groups, so we have something to work towards and are constantly improving. These expectations include (but are not limited to):

1. Students are expected to demonstrate good behavior at all times, not just in the choir room. Members that continuously violate school rules may jeopardize their membership in choir.
2. Choir members are to be in their assigned seats with all necessary supplies when the bell rings.
3. Follow instructions the FIRST time given.
4. Food, drink, and GUM are NOT ALLOWED in the choir room or practice rooms. Water is allowed.
5. Cell phones are not permitted.
6. Respect the property of others at all times.
7. NO SPRAYING OF PERFUME OR APPLICATION OF SMELLY LOTIONS, BODY SPRAYS, ETC.....EVER!!!!
8. Do not touch the piano or other equipment in the room without permission. Period.
9. Do not talk when the teacher is talking.
10. Be kind to you peers, your teachers, and our classroom....always.

IF I CANNOT TRUST YOU IN THE CHOIR ROOM, I WILL NOT TAKE YOU TO EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CHOIR ROOM!!!!!!

Grading Policy

As with all teachers, communication is the key. If you have an emergency, or you are ill, I will not know until you communicate that with me.

45% Major Grades – Show up and sing. ALL performances, tests, iPad tests, and contests.

15% Theory .

15% Sightreading

20% Engagement/Participation – includes daily engagement, participation, and discussion.

5% Reading/Writing

Homework and Classwork:

What I expect is that students will spend time practicing their music at home, and being prepared for theory work, sightreading, or tests. I will provide materials, websites, and apps the students can use in order to fill this request. Hard work does pay off in singing. This along with being actively engaged in class will make up most of a student's participation grade, NOT simply showing up to class.

Assessments:

Assessments will come in many forms over the course of the school year. We will have written music theory assessments, sightreading assessments, and online assessments. Students may take a performance test as many times as it takes to pass it without penalty. However, there will be a cutoff date for knowing your part before the concert.

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND AND SING IN ALL CONCERTS/PERFORMANCES

1. All school concerts are required for every student whether eligible or ineligible.
2. Students who miss a concert for any reason will receive a zero for their grade.
3. If a student misses a concert, depending of the reason, he or she will be given an alternative assignment.
4. Students must bring a written note from parents BEFORE the concert stating the reason for the absence, unless it is an emergency.
5. Lack of transportation and other non-school activities are NOT excused absences.
6. Students who miss concerts will not be allowed to participate in field trips.
7. Students should attend at least half of the day of a performance. For those performances that fall on a weekend, the student should have attended at least half of the previous school day. This includes competitions, such as UIL.
8. **In the case where a student is serving in ISD on the day of a scheduled concert, it is up to the discretion of the building principal/designee and music teacher as to whether to allow that student to participate in the concert. If the concert attendance is considered for grading and the student is not permitted to participate, the provisions must be provided for the student to have the opportunity to make up missed points.**
(District Policy)

Attendance at Performances:

An unexcused absence from a choir concert or dress rehearsal cannot be made up. Since written work is light in music classes, our concerts serve as “unit/semester finals.” In a performing arts class, it is the performance that we spend weeks/months striving towards. No other activity can match the educational value of that experience. If you make conflicting plans AFTER signing this syllabus, those are unexcused absences. I do realize that RARE

instances do occur - but in many years of teaching, I can count on one hand how many situations were truly unavoidable and/or unable to be worked out. Make-Up assignments will be accepted for those rare emergencies that require students to miss the performance. Please also consider that appropriate attire for concerts is assigned, and when not executed correctly can lead to a grade penalty.

Definition of excused absence from a concert or dress rehearsal:

1. Jury duty or court appearance.*
2. Observance of a religious holiday. *
3. Severe illness with a doctors' note. +
4. Serious illness/hospitalization of family member +
5. Bereavement +
6. Pre-approved CSHS UIL-sponsored school function. *

Examples of UNexcused absences

1. Failing to request time off of work
2. Family or friend social events (even when "Called in" by parents)
3. Any event in which the directors were not notified in the proper manner or timeline
4. A practice on a sports team or other activity (a concert performance takes precedence over a practice or rehearsal).
5. Failure to plan ahead for homework or other school commitments.
6. An event that's non-UIL or non-school related.
7. Birthday celebrations
8. Lack of transportation.

Attendance

Because we are a group performance-based subject, it is imperative that students maintain excellent attendance. If a student has too many absences, they can be removed from a performance. All cases will be judged individually based on a student's situation, but keep in mind the importance of rehearsal. Exceptions will be made for students attending other school activities.

Rehearsal is not to learn your part. Rehearsal is to learn all the parts.

Unexcused Absences will not be tolerated and points cannot be made up.

Communication

You can always find up-to-date information, recordings, forms, links, and announcements at our website, www.cshschoir.com. This website is still under construction but will be updated soon!

We use various resources to communicate with our parents, students, and community members, including text messaging via remind.com and group emails via Skyward. If you aren't receiving my emails, please confirm that your email address on Skyward is up to date.

Follow us on social media! We are at facebook.com/cshschoir and instagram.com/charger_choir. Students are encouraged to post positive messages, videos, pictures, etc. about our choir using the tag #chargerchoir

SCHOOL-RELATED CONFLICTS

Many choir students are also involved in other school-related activities, such as color guard, band, dance, or athletics. This is a good thing; choir members are expected to be involved in campus life! Conflicts will inevitably happen; students should resolve any scheduling conflicts well ahead of time.

Communicate any conflicts ahead of time to both sponsors/coaches involved. Often the sponsors can work together to help you resolve the conflict. While the Clear Springs directors, sponsors, and coaches will be fair and reasonable, they will be less flexible and willing to compromise if the student waits until the last minute to resolve conflicts. NEVER say you cannot attend a concert or rehearsal

without first speaking to BOTH the choir director AND the coach or sponsor of the conflicting activity! Students are expected to be mature and to handle all conflicts in a timely manner:

Email BOTH the choir director and coach/sponsor (same email please) of the conflict at least two weeks in advance (compare both calendars as soon as you have them and find the conflicts).

The director and coach/sponsor will work with you through that email to resolve the issue. If the adults decide that you must miss the choir activity (and you communicated the conflict in a timely manner), then your absence will be excused.

If you did not communicate the conflict to us at least two weeks in advance, the absence will be unexcused and your make up work will be graded accordingly.

According to the CCISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, “Absences or tardies to CCISD extracurricular activities due to schedule conflicts with activities sponsored by outside organizations will be unexcused.”

AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS

Mandatory after school rehearsals are rare, but when they do occur, advance notice will be given, and attendance will be required and graded. Your voice matters to our rehearsals, and there are elements of a rehearsal that cannot be “made up” if missed. Students (and parents) should recognize that it is impossible to truly make up a rehearsal or performance experience!

Conflicts with school-sponsored events and practices should be handled as outlined above, at least two weeks in advance.

Additional concerts and/or rehearsals may be scheduled by the directors. Students will be notified of any additional curricular activities (i.e. concerts and after-school rehearsals not already on the calendar) or changes to the calendar at least two weeks in advance to allow time to adjust job schedules, plan transportation, etc. Rehearsals can be made mandatory

with at least two weeks notice. Notification will be made in class, by text message (remind.com), on the website, and by email.

Students who excel academically and participate in extra-curricular choral activities may be eligible to earn the TMEA Texas Music Scholar Award. Details can be found at <https://www.tmea.org/programs/tms>. In addition, Mr. Williams (Band Director) sponsors the Tri-M Music Honor Society, open to eligible upper classmen. You may contact ljwillia@ccisd.net for more information about Tri-M.

Policy

BATHROOM POLICY: You are expected by your teachers and administrators to remain in class from bell to bell whenever possible, but restroom trips are needed at times. Students are allowed to use the restroom with permission as needed, but if the director suspects that bathroom privileges are being abused, a stricter policy may be put into place and will be communicated to students at that time. (Please inform your director of any special needs; accommodations will be made for any student with doctor-documented issues.)

SICK POLICY: There may be occasional days that a student is unable to participate vocally. All students must stand and participate in class every day, even if they cannot sing. Singing, however, is part of the class and a signed parent's note is required for each subsequent day a student is unable to sing due to illness. Persistent inability to sing may result in written assignments outside of class time to make up for missed participation.

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY: No food, drink (except bottled water), or gum is allowed in the music wing or in the Performing Arts Center without permission. Lightning Lunch is not included in this rule. An automatic teacher's detention will be assigned to anyone in violation of this rule. Students are encouraged to bring bottled water to class, and should make sure their bottles are filled up between classes.

MUSIC AND FOLDERS: Students will be assigned music and a folder slot in which to put the music. Clear Springs choir members will be issued a folder to keep the music safe and organized. Students will be charged for any lost music. Please punch the music and place it in your binder. Students **MUST** always have a sharpened pencil with them at every rehearsal.

TURNING IN MONEY: All checks (unless otherwise indicated) should be made to "CSHS Choir." Cash must be in the exact amount and turned in using the supplied envelopes, with the student's name, class period, and amount enclosed. No change will be accepted. Due dates are scheduled for a specific reason (money due to travel agent, deadline to purchase tickets, etc.);

if money is not turned in on time, there is a very good chance the activity being paid for will be canceled or you will be unable to participate.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE: Performance attire will be provided by the school. If not returned in a timely manner at the end of the year, charges may be incurred.

Students will be responsible for any damage to the uniform while it is checked out in your name. Please take care of your uniform! Uniforms should be HUNG when not being worn. Tuxedos are dry-cleaned only; dresses should be washed inside-out, delicate cycle. Absolutely no bracelets, watches, necklaces, or colored hairpieces are allowed on stage; uniformity is important. Also, please refrain from cologne or perfume on stage. Many people have allergies to them.

ELIGIBILITY:

Students must maintain academic eligibility to participate in several activities including:

- Pop Show

- The TMEA region choir audition process (and performances)

- Singing at athletic events

- Campus musical

- Any competition

- Any ticketed performance

NOTE: UIL Concert & Sightreading Evaluation has been waived from the No Pass-No Play rules. However, student participation in UIL will remain contingent on the directors' and principal's discretion based on attendance, discipline, skill assessment, and academics.

TRANSPORTATION: Students must use district-provided transportation to all choir events. Any exceptions require an Alternative Travel Form completed and returned (with parent's and principal's signature) no later than one day prior to the event.

A NOTE ABOUT RELIGIOUS MUSIC: Some of the music performed in our concerts is sacred in nature. Sacred music comprises much of the choral literature produced in western civilization. It should and does have an important place in the history of music and in music education. This music is always taught from a historical and cultural perspective in Clear Creek schools.

Calendar Dates

August 21: Parent Meeting

September 12: All forms and fees due

September 20: District Auditions @ Manvel HS

October 9: Fall Concert @ 7pm (Major Grade)

October 10-13: Holiday

October 25: Region Auditions @ Angelton HS

October 31: HOCO

November 6: Region Choir Clinic @ Moody Methodist Church

November 8: Region Choir Clinic and Concert @ Moody Methodist Church

November 17: District Guys Night Out

November 24-28: Thanksgiving Break

December 3: Winter concert 7PM (Major Grade)

December 4: Area Auditions @ Iowa Colony

December 5: R&B Performance

December 22-January 6: Winter Break

January 10: Area Auditions @ Deer Park

January 19: Holiday

February 6,7,8: Musical

February 11-14: TMEA

February 21: Region Solo and Ensemble Contest

March 3: Pre-UIL Concert (Mandatory)

March 9-13: Spring Break

March 17,18: Pre-UIL (Mandatory)

March 25-27 UIL Competition (mandatory for assigned groups)

April 3: Holiday

April 23: Possible Solo Contest

May 11-13: Pop Show Rehearsals

May 14,15: Pop Show (Mandatory)

May 16: Choir Banquet

May 20: Graduation

Not listed yet: Varsity Spring Trip