

# McMillan JH Choir Handbook

2023 - 2024

Ms. Daryl Jackson, Head Director

Ms. Cassidy Kramer, Associate Director

daryl.jackson@wylieisd.net | cassidy.kramer@wylieisd.net | (972) 429-3241

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*"Music is not a luxury, it's a necessity; not simply because it is therapeutic, nor because it is the universal language, but because it is the persistent focus of our intelligence, aspiration, and goodwill." - Robert Shaw, choral conductor*

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## From the Directors

We choose to teach Choir because we believe that music education has the power to change lives. In McMillan Choir, students receive a sequential, developmental curriculum that allows each student the opportunity to build musical skills and understanding through a wide variety of quality musical experiences. The study of music as a discipline can and should provide an avenue for unique creative and artistic self-expression. Junior High is an influential and often challenging time for students, and we believe that being a part of a supportive Choir family where they feel worthy and valued makes all the difference in a child's life. Watching a child find their voice and learn how to make music independently is a gift, and our hope is to make a difference in the lives of young musicians the same way they make a difference in ours.

## Daily Schedule

1st period	Concert Treble Choir <i>Beginning 7th &amp; 8th Grade Girls</i>	8:15 - 9:01
2nd period	Cambiata Tenor-Bass Choir <i>Intermediate/Advanced 7th &amp; 8th Grade Boys</i>	9:04 - 9:50
3rd period	Concert Tenor-Bass Choir <i>Beginning 7th &amp; 8th Grade Boys</i>	9:53 - 10:39
4th period	A Cappella Treble Choir <i>Advanced 7th &amp; 8th Grade Girls</i>	10:42 - 11:28
5th period	7th Grade Lunch Mon/Tue/Wed: Advisory Th/Fr: Melodix	11:28 - 12:16 12:19 - 1:04
6th/7th period	Conference/Assist at Davis	1:07 - 2:42
8th period	Bella Voce Treble Choir <i>Intermediate 7th &amp; 8th Grade Girls</i>	2:45 - 3:30

## Remind 101

Remind 101 is a service that allows teachers to send announcements and communicate quickly with students via text message. While most communication will be emailed, it is important for students and parents to enroll in Remind so they do not miss any important reminders or information. Please enroll in Remind by texting your class code to 81010:

Concert Treble Choir (1st period): @congirls1  
Cambiata Tenor-Bass Choir (2nd period): @cambi2  
Concert Tenor-Bass Choir (3rd period): @conguys3  
A Cappella Treble Choir (4th period): @acap4  
Bella Voce Treble Choir (8th period): @bellavo8

## Concerts and Rehearsals

Concerts are a curricular extension and evaluation of many weeks of preparation and classwork. Therefore, concert and rehearsal attendance is MANDATORY. Choir members are expected to be present and participate for the entire time of each required concert. Family vacations, sports games, non-emergency doctor's appointments, and church activities are all examples of unexcused absences. Absences and tardies will be excused in cases of medical emergency or death in the family. Prior notification of any conflict with a concert or rehearsal is required. Students are held responsible for keeping up with the dates and times of scheduled activities. An unexcused absence from a concert will lower the student's grade dramatically. See "Grading" for more details on how concerts affect each student's grade.

## Concert Attire

As our singers excel in their musical performances, it is important that the attire reflects the level of professionalism and artistry that they are striving for. Choir concerts, competitions, and other performances are formal events that require students to look and act the part. For the Fall Concert and Pop Show, students will wear their choir shirts and jeans with closed-toe shoes. For the Winter Concert, Pre-UIL, and UIL, students must wear one of the following formal attire options:

- Black formal dress provided by McMillan Choir. Students must provide their own solid black flats. These dresses must not be altered without director approval but may be washed and dried at home.
- Black dress shirt, black tie, and black dress slacks provided by McMillan Choir. Students must provide their own black belt, black dress socks, and black dress shoes. Athletic shoes/sneakers are not acceptable. Please do not wash or dry the shirt or dress slacks without a director's approval.

Students not appropriately dressed for a performance will have their grades deducted and may not be able to perform with the group. If you need assistance obtaining these items, please contact the director no later than two weeks prior to the performance.

If the uniforms and garment bags provided by McMillan Choir are not returned at the end of the year (or if you un-enroll at McMillian JH), you will be assessed a fine and will not advance to the next grade until the fine is paid. The costs are \$55 for a dress, \$30 for dress pants, \$30 for dress shirts, and \$15 for garment bags. We ask that all students and families are diligent about keeping up with their uniforms as they are property of the school.

## Grading

### Daily Grade/Rehearsal Accountability/Assignments 40%

The student's daily grade consists of work done during daily rehearsals. Students will be graded on their singing posture, vowel shapes, class participation, and preparedness. Additional assignments such as sight-reading quizzes, ear training quizzes, bell ringers, worksheets, memory checks, score studies, and web-based assignments may be given at the director's discretion.

### Concert Attendance 60%

Concert grades are double-weighted. One grade is given for performance and the other is given for concert etiquette. Concert grades are figured with the following guidelines:

Concert Performance	Concert Etiquette
Tardy (-2 points per minute late)	Talking/Gum/Phones on stage (-20 points)
Incorrect concert attire (-30 points)	Misbehavior backstage/During concert (-30 points)

If a student is ineligible for a concert or has been granted an excused absence, they will be given an alternate assignment to replace the "0" in the grade book. Students with an unexcused absence will be given the opportunity to make up the grade for a maximum of 80.

## Eligibility

According to University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules and House Bill 72 (No Pass/No Play), a student must stay academically eligible in order to participate in an extracurricular activity. Students are required to participate in all class rehearsals and performances where admission is not charged, regardless of eligibility. Students who are ineligible will not be allowed to participate in Solo & Ensemble Festival (November) or All-Region Choir auditions/concert (April). A student who is ineligible after the nine-week grading period cannot become eligible until the following three-week grade check.

## Choir Fee

Most costs of participating in Choir are covered by the McMillan Choral Department's budget; however, participation in Choir does require some financial commitment. To help offset these

costs, a \$60 choir fee is due by Friday, September 1st. This fee includes a t-shirt, supplies (including a binder, dividers, pencil pouch, and pencils), sheet music, as well as participation in trips and other social events. It also includes a \$30 Uniform Fee, which includes each student's rental of a formal dress or dress slacks/dress shirt, alterations, and dry cleaning. Payments can be made in person with cash or check (made out to McMillan JH) or online through RevTrak (see QR code below). Other costs associated with McMillan Choir are optional and are dependent on the student's participation in optional events:

- Solo & Ensemble Festival: \$10
- All-Region Choir Auditions: \$20 (includes required music packet)
- Pinstack Trip (October): \$30
- Hawaiian Falls Trip (May): \$25



Note: Finances should never affect a student's participation, progress or potential in Choir. In the event that finances become a concern, please contact Ms. Jackson or Ms. Kramer - arrangements can always be made in these situations.

## Choir Socials & Trips

Throughout the year, McMillan Choir students will have the opportunity to attend various social events and trips. These events give us the chance to make connections and build community within our program, so they are highly recommended but never required. Socials that take place on campus will be free for all choir students and are included in the Choir Fee. Any trip that takes place off-campus will have an additional cost that will be communicated beforehand. Students must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the end-time of the event or they will not be allowed to attend socials for the remainder of the school year.

## Private Voice Lessons

Private voice lessons are offered as a supplement to classroom instruction. These lessons are designed to provide individualized instruction for the developing voice. Participation in these supplemental lessons requires an additional cost and are therefore optional but highly recommended. Students enrolled in voice lessons experience a higher level of achievement, gain confidence, and learn skills for success in practicing and performing. Voice lessons further students' understanding of vocal pedagogy, technique, music theory, sight-singing, diction, and musical artistry. Private voice teachers are also able to assist students in preparing for extracurricular opportunities including musical auditions, Melodix auditions, Solo & Ensemble Festival, All-Region auditions, and high school choir auditions.

Here's how it works:

- All students will have access to these lessons until our voice teacher's studio slots are full. When students enroll in voice lessons, they commit to the private voice teacher for the same date and time every week.

- Lessons are for 22 minutes once a week and will be taught here at McMillan JH in a practice room. They will be scheduled during the student's choir period, and each lesson is \$22.
- Students will pay private voice teachers directly and must communicate with them when they will be absent so a make-up lesson can be scheduled.

At McMillan, Mrs. Candace Tillman is our resident voice teacher. To sign up or to get more information, please contact her at [ctvoicestudio@gmail.com](mailto:ctvoicestudio@gmail.com).