

Wilkinson Middle School Wildcat Choirs

Kristin Poligala, Director of Choral Activities

2100 Crest Park

Mesquite, Texas 75149

September 8, 2014

Welcome to the 2014-2015 Wilkinson Middle School Choirs! I am very excited about the upcoming year and the opportunities it holds for all of us.

The Wildcat Choirs of Wilkinson Middle School are designed to give you a well-rounded choral music experience. Our focus this year is to perfect our routines and procedures. We will be working on becoming responsible and structured students in and out of the choral classroom.

I can’t wait to see how your student’s positive behavior affects other students in our school!

Teamwork is an important building block to the WMS Choirs. As you can expect 100% out of me each day, I will also expect 100% out of each of you. Together with our voices, we can work together not only as a choir, but as a team and family.

As a member of the WMS Choirs, you will be a key part in helping this choral program succeed. You will be singing in many concerts, competitions, and other performances. You will also have opportunities to gain individual recognition through events such as the All-Region Choir, Choralfest, and Solo & Ensemble. Along with participation in musical activities, students in the Wildcat Choirs will enjoy a broad range of social events.

This handbook contains valuable information about grading policies, uniforms, calendar events, and more. Please read this information ***closely and carefully*** and sign and return **all signed forms** by September 19, 2014.

Thank you for your interest in the WMS Choirs. I am excited to work with you and am looking forward to many great musical experiences over the next year! I am confident this year will only continue the great traditions already established in the WMS Choral Department.

Musically Yours,

Kristin Poligala

Director of Choral Activities

Wilkinson Middle School

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| **Contact Information****Kristin Poligala**Director of Choral ActivitiesWilkinson Middle School972-882-5950 ext. 5970 or ext. 4776kpoligala@mesquiteisd.org**Office Hours: Monday-Friday by appointment only****Conference Period: 3rd period (10:08-10:58)****WEBSITE COMING!****Philosophy of Choral Music**It is the philosophy of the Wilkinson Middle School Choral Department to provide students with a well-rounded choral music experience. Through participation in choral music, students learn musical skills such as literacy, history and culture, vocabulary, improvisation, technology, and many more. These skills not only develop the student’s musical competency, but help to shape the student non-musically as well.The study of choral music also helps the student to develop many non-musical skills that they can reflect on and use in different situations throughout their lives. These include, but are not limited to social skills, patience, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, risk-taking, leadership, pride, and self-respect. Through a variety of choral music experiences, students will receive quality learning experiences where student ownership of learning is stressed daily.Through selection, rehearsal, and performance of diverse repertoire, the choral music experience at Wilkinson Middle School promotes diversity both inside and outside of the schools. This provides students with an unbiased look into different languages, religions, and cultures, while honoring each student’s personal beliefs and opinions.We are all consumers of music-the evidence is seen daily. It is the philosophy of the Wilkinson Middle School Choral Department to provide students with an outlet of expression through the singing and performance of choral music. The musical skills learned in the classroom are importation; however, when those musical skills are combined with non-musical skills, the learning experience becomes holistic and helps to create a better, more knowledgeable child and society.**Wilkinson Middle School Choirs****Concert Choir (6th Grade):** This non-auditioned choir is offered to all 6th grade students who are interested in vocal music. Students enrolled in the course will develop singing, listening, sight-reading, and music theory skills. Membership requires attendance at extra-curricular activities, including concerts, rehearsals, and/or sectionals. **Treble Choir (7th-8th Grade):** This non-auditioned choir is offered to 7th and 8th grade women who are interested in vocal music. All women must enroll in this choir before advancing to Select Treble the following year. Students enrolled in the course will develop singing, listening, sight-reading, and music theory skills. Membership requires attendance at extra-curricular activities, including concerts, rehearsals, and/or sectionals. **Men’s Choir (7th-8th Grade):** This non-auditioned choir is offered to 7th and 8th grade men who are interested in vocal music. Students enrolled in the course will develop singing, listening, sight-reading, and music theory skills. Membership requires attendance at extra-curricular activities, including concerts, rehearsals, and/or sectionals. **Select Treble Choir (7th-8th Grade):** The Select Treble Choir is designed for 7th and 8th grade women with successful previous choral experience. Students enrolled in this course will continue the development of musical knowledge and musicianship skills. In addition to formal concerts, the Select Treble Girls will represent Mesquite ISD at district and local choral festivals. Membership requires attendance at extra-curricular activities, including concerts, rehearsals, and/or sectionals. **Choir Supplies**In order for successful rehearsals to take place, all students must be prepared for class each and every day. Failure to bring required materials will result in a grade reduction. ♪ Choral music♪ Choral binder♪ Sharpened pencil♪ Colored pencils♪ Pencil pouch♪ Any other materials providedOther materials (worksheets, homework assignments, etc) will also need to be brought to class on their due dates or when instructed by the director.**Fees and Expenses**Most costs of participating in choir are covered by the WMS Choral Department’s budget. **For new choir students (6th, 7th or 8th Grade), a fee of $20 is due by *October 1, 2014* to purchase a choir polo shirt.** Any additional costs or fees will be discussed with the students as the need arises. Financial difficulties will NEVER prohibit your student from participating in choral events.**Classroom Rules**1. Be standing/sitting on risers with folder, pencil, music and planner when the bells rings.
2. Speak only with permission
3. Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
4. No food or drinks (including gum) are allowed in the choir room.
5. Respect your director, your fellow students, and the property of the WMS choir room.

In addition to my choral classroom rules, we will follow the campus behavior plan.  **Facilities & Materials****Choir Room**We are fortunate to have wonderful facilities for choirs at WMS. Maintaining the choir room should be a top priority for our students. No food or drink is allowed in the choir room.**Piano/Stereo****Students may use the piano and stereo only with the director’s permission before or after school.**  Preference is given to those practicing for All-Region, ChoralFest, or Solo & Ensemble. Please do not set any of your belongings on top of the piano or stereo system.**Music**Throughout the year, you will be given choral music. Just like your textbooks, you must return all of the music to us in good condition at the end of the semester. If you lose your music, or it is in poor condition upon return, you must pay the replacement cost. When marking in music, always use pencil. This ensures the music will be able to be used for future choirs.**Practice Rooms**Priority for practice room use should be given to those practicing for All-Region, ChoralFest, or Solo & Ensemble. Students may use these rooms only with the director’s permission.**My Office**My office is my home away from home. I spend almost as many hours of my day here as I do in my home. I want to get to know each and every one of you, but please knock before entering. If I am not busy, I will let you in. If I do not answer, I am either busy in a conference, or on the phone. Please try again later. I do want to talk to you. ☺**Grading Policies****Daily Grade/Rehearsal Accountability - 50%**The student’s daily grade consists of work done during the choral rehearsal. Each day is worth 20 points, making each week worth 100 points, and each six-week grading period worth 600 points. Deductions will occur for the following offenses: Talking (-5 points) Tardy (-10 points)No pencil (-10 points) Food/drink/gum (-10 points)No music (-10 points) Office referral (-20 points)The director(s) reserve the right to perform supply checks at any time for a daily grade.**Concert Attendance - 30%**Performance outside of the school day is a necessary component of performing in choirs. Attendance is required for all concerts, sectionals, and outside rehearsals, as they are a form of assessment in choir. Performance dates are listed on the calendar of events, and other extra-curricular activity dates will be given to students with adequate notice. Absence from a concert will significantly reduce the student’s grade. An excused absence will be awarded only on a case-by-case basis. Parents must contact me prior to the concert if there are any circumstances that keep the student from performing. Students are expected to be on time to all concerts, sectionals, and outside rehearsals. **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 (-20 points) Talking/Gum on Stage (-30 points)Attire Problems (-50 points, will not perform) Misbehavior Backstage/During Concert (-50 points)If a student is ineligible for a concert, or has been granted an excused absence, they will be given an alternative assignment to replace the zero in the grade book.**Assignments - 20%**Assignments such as sight-reading tests, singing repertoire, theory assignments, memory checks, music analyses, and web-based assignments will be given at the discretion of the director. Doing so allows assessment of the student at an individual level, rather than as a group. |

***Note: The grade is not determined by inherent music ability, but rather by the effort put forth in class to become a better musician.***

**Attendance Policies**

**Rehearsals**

Unlike other academic classes, it is impossible to make up activities that occur during a choral rehearsal, thus attendance is imperative at all rehearsals, concerts, and extra-curricular activities. Excessive unexcused absences will have a negative effect on the student’s grade.

**Concerts**

Attendance at any choral concert is required. Missing a concert will lower the student’s grade drastically. Absences will only be excused in special situations, such as a medical/family emergency, religious holiday, or death in the family. Written documentation should be provided to the director as soon as a problem arises and must occur ***prior*** to the event to be given a concert makeup opportunity. Note: Non-school-sponsored events do not constitute an excused absence for any required choral event and will not be allowed a makeup.

**Extra-Curricular Activities**

Students will be given sufficient notice of any activities outside of the school day, including rehearsals, sectionals, and concerts. These activities are essential to the development of the choral program. As with concerts, an unexcused absence at an extra-curricular activity will lower the student’s grade. The director will make every effort to limit the time spent outside of the school day. Any conflicts, including appointments, athletics, other student organizations, etc. should be brought to the director(s) as soon as possible.

**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 extra-curricular 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 the following:

♪ Any WMS choral concert where admission is charged

♪ All-Region Choir Auditions & Concerts

♪ Solo & Ensemble Contest

♪ UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest

♪ Choir Field Trips

♪ Any event where we leave campus by means of school transportation

In order to receive a grade for these situations when ineligible, appropriate written assignments will be given. A student who is ineligible after the six-week grading period cannot become eligible until the three-week mark of the following grading period, granted that he/she is passing the class failed on the report card. Students cannot lose eligibility at the three-week mark if they passed their classes on the previous six weeks report card.

**Uniforms**

At the beginning of the year, measurements will be taken to help fit you with a uniform. The uniforms will be issued to you at the beginning of the school year. You are responsible for them over the course of the year. **Formal dresses and tuxedos will be stored in the choir room.**

**Formal Uniforms – Concert Choir (6th Grade Men and Women)**

These will be worn in formal concerts, including festivals and WMS fall, winter, and spring choir concerts.

WMS Choir Polo (must be tucked in to pants)

Khaki Pants (must cover the entire leg) \*

Tennis Shoes \*

**Formal Uniforms – Treble, Select Treble, Men’s Choir (7th & 8th Grade Men and Women)**

These will be worn in formal concerts, including UIL, festivals, and WMS fall, winter, and spring choir concerts.

**Women:** Choir dress

Black dress shoes (closed toe, up to 2” heels acceptable) \*

Black hose or knee highs\*

**Men:** White tuxedo shirt

Plain white t-shirt to be worn underneath \*

Black pants

Bow tie

Black socks \*

Black shoes \*

**Casual Uniforms – All Grades (Men and Women)**

These will be worn in casual situations where we want to be uniform, but not formal.

WMS Choir Polo (must be tucked in)

Khaki Pants (must cover the entire leg) \*

Tennis shoes \*

\* To be provided by student

**Jewelry:** Large jewelry is not acceptable. Women may only wear studs in their ears. No dangling earrings, necklaces, hair bows (other than solid black), watches, or bracelets are allowed. Men, no earrings are allowed.

**Hair:** Hair must be away from the eyes. Women, hair must stay behind the dress. If it cannot stay there, you must tie it back. Men, be sure that your bangs stay out of the eyes.

**Hygiene:** Middle school marks a time in your life where your body goes through many changes. It is important that each student keep good hygiene rules in mind when preparing for concerts. This includes **using deodorant**. **Do not** use perfume or cologne to cover your body odors. Some perfumes and colognes can cause allergic reactions and can affect the health of other students.

**Choir Officers**

For this school year, choir officers will be selected by the director based on teacher recommendations, leadership qualities, participation in choir, and service to the choir program. Choir officers are expected to aid the director in maintaining high standards of behavior and choral singing and should be respected by the membership for their efforts. These individuals must maintain good academic records, be great leaders, have good behavior, and have a positive attitude.

Each choir will have a designated secretary to help with classroom tasks. Secretaries will be chosen by the director and will serve for the entire school year. The other choir officers will be selected from all classes combined and will serve for the entire school year.

Students interested in running for office need to pick up an officer packet from the director the first week of school. Selections will be made by October 1st.

**Awards & Honors**

**Director’s Award**

The Director’s Award is based on leadership skills and musical ability. The directors will choose one boy and one girl from each grade for this award.

**Singer of the Year**

Students will select one singer from each choir to be named as “Singer of the Year.” This award will be presented at the spring concert.

**Solo & Ensemble**

All students have the opportunity to take a memorized solo and/or ensemble to the Mesquite ISD Solo & Ensemble contest for adjudication by a judge. This is held on November 15th.

**All-Region Choir**

Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to audition for placement in the TMEA Region III All-Region Choir that performs in March. To audition, students must first attend rehearsals and audition with the directors and then must travel to the audition site on the designated audition day. Students will sing a blind audition (in front of a curtain) that is scored by five judges. All-Region Choir is a prestigious, yet competitive choir that is well worth the work.

**ChoralFest**

Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to sing at ChoralFest in Mesquite on October 24th. Auditions for this choir will take place on October 9th. Audition materials will be given to student in mid-September.

**Concert Etiquette**

The following guidelines should be followed to ensure a pleasant concert experience for the performers and audience:

♪ Dress appropriately for the performance. Concerts are formal unless noted otherwise.

♪ Turn off all cellular phones during the performance.

♪ Food or drink is not allowed in the performance hall.

♪ Refrain from talking while the director is talking or the choir is performing. Concerts are recorded and recording equipment can pick up the slightest whisper.

♪ Only enter or leave the seating area during applause.

♪ Do not take flash photographs while the group is singing.

**Disclaimer**

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| All information in this handbook was accurate at the time of printing of this document. All dates and times should be considered tentative until the director gives the final word. Please check the WMS Choirs website for the latest information pertaining to the WMS Choral Department. |

**Acknowledgement Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read the expectations, grading policy, rules, and attendance policies for WMS Choirs. I understand that my participation in choir requires me to be a model for others not only at WMS but in the community as well. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines will reduce my grade and could lead to removal from the choral department.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

I have read the expectations, grading policy, rules, and attendance policies for WMS Choirs. I understand that my child’s participation in choir requires them to be a model for others not only at WMS but in the community as well. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines will reduce their grade and could lead to removal from the choral department. I also understand that successful organizations that work require teamwork between the parents, students, and teachers.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Please sign this form and return it no later than **September 19, 2014**.

**Choir T-Shirt Order Form**

**Choir Polo Order Form**

All choir members are required to purchase a choir polo for use during informal concerts, activities, and trips. The choir polo is provided to your student for a cost of $20 per student. Please circle your size below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent Volunteers**

Please place a checkmark beside any duty you would be willing to help with during the school year.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Uniforms (Measurement & Alterations) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chaperones

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Social Events \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Anything ☺