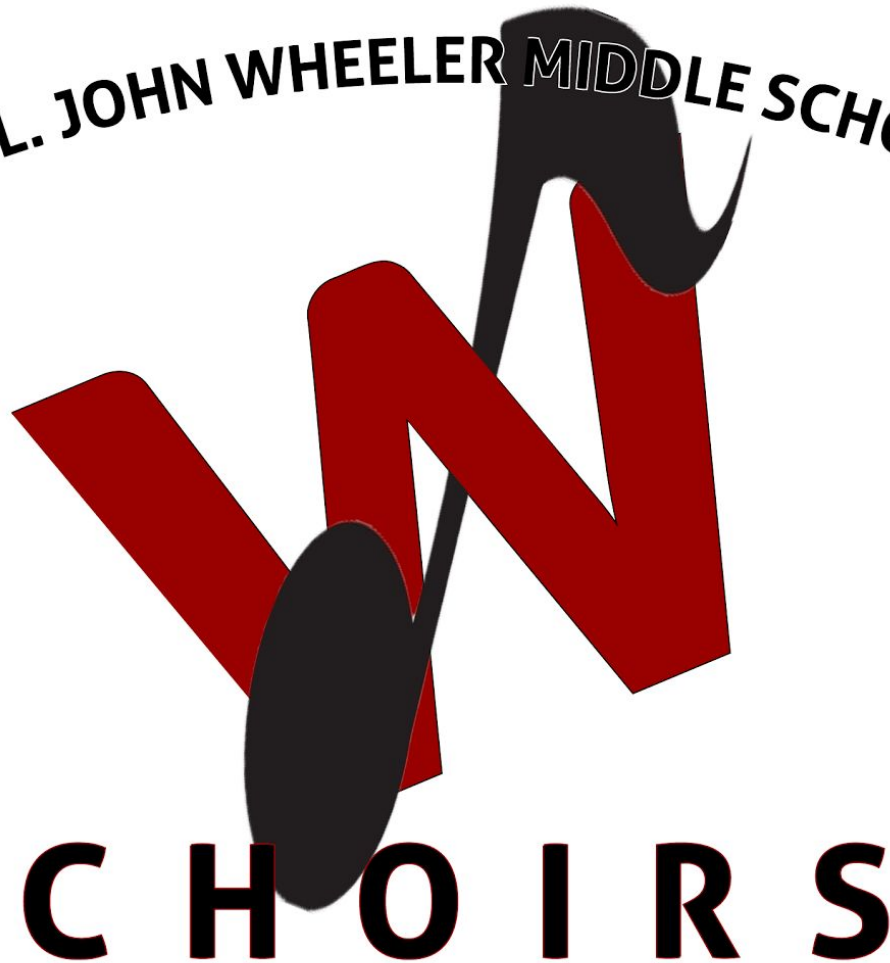


COL. JOHN WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL



**CHOIRS**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**2017 – 2018**

**Mr. Stephen Dean, *Director of Choirs***

sdean@cps.k12.in.us  
(219)-663-2173 ext. 13108 (office)  
www.wheelerbco.com

# WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM!

Dear Parents and Students,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Colonel John Wheeler Middle School choir program! This year is going to be filled with many exciting opportunities for you and your student. Your participation in this group will keep us working as a team toward *excellence*. I know we can make this another extraordinary and successful year! I would like to share my philosophy about the importance of choir in the life of your middle school student.

I believe that a quality music education is beneficial to *all* students. I believe that every child is musically expressive and deserves an outlet to explore that capability. The choral program at “The Colonel” offers a non-auditioned choir for students in all grade levels, as well as challenges for the highly-skilled or gifted choral musician.

Each of our choirs provides students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the elementary music curriculum. They provide group and solo activities and are designed to develop students' musicianship including vocal production, technical skills, and intonation. Students also participate in performance opportunities outside of the school day that support and extend the learning in the classroom.

Why is it important for students to be in choir? Choral music can:

- Provide a unique way of thinking
- Act as a link between the past and the present; various world cultures
- Lift the self-esteem of participants
- Bring joy to both the singer and the audience
- Provide a means of expressing thoughts, values and emotions through singing that may otherwise be difficult to express through speaking.

I'm so excited to get started this year. It is going to be a great year of learning and making music together. I look forward to working with each of you as we make this year at The Colonel the best one yet! Thank you for allowing me to share my love of music with your child.

Sincerely,

**Stephen Dean**

Director of Choirs

(219)-663-2173 ext. 13108

sdean@cps.k12.in.us

## WHY WE SING?

In choosing to become part of a music ensemble you have chosen to improve your life and gain useful skills for your future. You will **have fun**, work with a team, set goals in group and individual settings, learn to be accountable, listen better, gain confidence, perform in public, and become a better citizen and student.

Our ultimate goal is to affect our audiences. As performers, we have the power make people feel things they didn't feel before, to impart emotion to our listeners, and to help people cope with things in their personal life, through our music - ourselves included. That is our ultimate goal - and the true reason we sing.

Through this, we better ourselves and are provided with unique aesthetic experiences that give us a desire to continue making music and affecting audiences.

## CHOIRS AT THE COLONEL

There is a choir at each grade level open to all CJWMS students **without an audition**. Students are encouraged to enroll in choir in the sixth grade to begin gaining musical skills which will be built upon in further middle school choirs and at the high school level, but students are absolutely welcome and encouraged to join choir at any grade. There are several opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular ensembles throughout the year, via audition (including *Minor Details*, *Circle the State with Song*, and ISSMA Solo & Ensemble.)

## COURSE FEE

Each student will be charged **\$20** to cover uniform cleaning and the spring concert t-shirt. This payment is due by **Friday, September 1st**. Checks should be made out to "Crown Point Music Boosters."

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students are expected to have a **pencil, notebook, and music** for class everyday!! Students will be provided with a choir folder to hold these required materials. This folder and all materials will remain in the music cabinet at all times, unless permission is given by the director.

Eighth Grade – **RED**    Seventh Grade – **BLUE**    Sixth Grade – **BLACK**

**NOTE:** Sheet music for choir is our textbook. Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of their issued sheet music and folder. Damages to sheet music and/or folder will result in the student being charged for repairs or replacement.

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT POLICY

We are all here because we have something in common; **we enjoy singing**. How we sound as a group has a lot to do with how we work together. If you follow the classroom procedures listed below every day of the year, the result will be a choral group that truly makes beautiful music. The success of our group rests upon your individual self-discipline. *Singing in harmony can only be accomplished by working in harmony.*

## Expectations:

- Students are to be in their assigned seat everyday within 30 seconds of the beginning of class with their folders and all materials.
- **No gum, food, or drink are permitted in the choir room.** When we have gum, candy, or food in our mouths, our tonal production and diction are affected. Water is permitted in a clear, plastic bottle. There is a water fountain in the room for students to fill water bottles.
- **Cell phones** are to be out of sight and off during class. Cell phones will be confiscated and turned in to the office on the first offense. Remaining offences will result in further disciplinary action.
- Students should demonstrate good posture during rehearsal.
- **Talking during a rehearsal will not be tolerated.** Rehearse in a professional manner and we will have a professional sound.
- Sometimes in the course of rehearsal, only one section will be singing. The members of the sections not singing at the time should be **carefully following the musical part that is being rehearsed** so that total knowledge of the song is achieved.

## Consequences:

- Verbal warning
- Lunch detention
- Phone call home
- After-school detention
- Removal from choir class (3 strike policy for major infractions.)

# PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

**Ladies:** - black dress pants, black dress shirt, black tights/socks and black closed-toed shoes, official red choir scarf

**Gentlemen:** - black dress pants, black button-down dress shirt, black socks, black dress shoes, official red choir tie

Leggings, jeans, tennis shoes, boots, sandals, flip flops are not acceptable.

Wearing correct and appropriately cared-for performance attire is a factor in the "Performance Engagement/Professionalism" category. Students who do not wear appropriate performance attire will receive a lowered grade for the specific performance.

# GRADING POLICY

The majority of learning objectives are based on authentic performance, so grading is structured in a way that is different from non-performing classes:

Rehearsal Engagement/Professionalism (10 points daily)	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- active and productive rehearsal contribution such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o demonstrating proper singing posture</li><li>o demonstrating conscious effort and attempt to improve in skill areas</li><li>o cooperating with other singers</li><li>o not having food, gum, or drink</li><li>o not causing classroom disruption</li></ul></li><li>- punctuality/bringing required materials</li><li>- attendance for dress rehearsals (25 points each)</li></ul>	
Performance Engagement/Professionalism	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- attendance/punctuality for all performances</li><li>- correct concert attire</li><li>- following instructions</li><li>- performing to the best of one's ability</li><li>- respectful on stage and audience behavior</li><li>- staying for the entire concert</li></ul>	
Written Work (including SmartMusic)	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- concert music</li><li>- sight-singing exercises</li><li>- essays written in reflection of recent performances</li><li>- folder checks (progress charts, written focus activities)</li><li>- other miscellaneous written evaluations</li></ul>	

## Grading Standard (as in the Student Handbook)

A+ 96.5 - 100%	A 92.5 - 96.49%	A- 89.5 - 92.49%
B+ 86.5 - 89.49%	B 82.5 - 86.49%	B- 79.5 - 82.49%
C+ 76.5 - 79.49%	C 72.5 - 76.49%	C- 69.5 - 72.49%
D+ 66.5 - 69.49%	D 62.5 - 66.49%	D- 59.5 - 62.49%
F 59.49% >		

**Policy on Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of 10% off per school day late for up to 10 days. Assignments are late at midnight of any given due date.

**NOTE:** Choir is an elective, year-long, co-curricular, performance-based class. Participation in all performances and rehearsals unless otherwise stated is **required**. Absences must be approved by Mr. Dean. Excused absences will have their performance grade removed from their average (thus not affecting their grade). Unexcused absences will result in the student receiving no credit for the performance.

"If part of a student's grade is based on in-class participation and/or performance, a teacher may reduce that portion of the student's grade for unexcused absences (see McCarthy, Martha M. et al (1998). Public School Law: Teacher's and Student's Rights. (4th Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. p. 214)."

**Student grades of "C" or below could be grounds for removal from the choral program.**

# STUDENT CONFLICT POLICY

Although we try our best to avoid scheduling performances at the same time as other school related events, occasionally conflicts do arise which cannot be remedied. Below are events listed in order of precedence. **(This only applies to CJWMS athletic and extracurricular groups.** Non-school-related activities do not apply.)

1. National event
2. State event
3. Regional event
4. District event
5. School event
6. Practice/rehearsal

When two practices or rehearsals are scheduled simultaneously, Mr. Dean will consult with the coach about the event in which the student will participate. **It is the student's responsibility to consult the schedules for all organizations in which they participate and notify the directors/coaches/sponsors of conflicts as soon as possible.** Students are expected to make Mr. Dean aware of schedule conflicts as soon as possible, but not later than **two weeks prior to a performance date**, using the **Music Event Absence Request Form**.

# TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Students will be expected to use the school transportation for designated events. In some circumstances, students will be allowed to ride home with a parent, if they provide a letter signed by their parent explaining the situation **two days prior** to the day of the trip. Mr. Dean has final approval on any transportation changes. All school rules apply on trips. Additional requirements, including a disciplinary review, may be implemented to ensure the utmost proper behavior of students. Students are representatives of the school and the choir, and we want to be perceived as fine young men and women. Discuss concert dates ahead of time with your family to ensure you have a ride. If you can't find transportation, talk to Mr. Dean **at least a week ahead of time** and he will help you find a ride.

# FUNDRAISING

Music organizations are expensive. Each year, the Crown Point Music Department spends around \$40,000 in sheet music, accompanist fees, contest registration fees, private teachers, and other supplies. The fee assessed to choir students only accounts for uniform cleaning/rental, and the Spring Concert t-shirt. We must do some fundraising to make up the difference. The following fundraisers have been scheduled: **spirit wear, popcorn, wreaths, mattresses, and flowers.** Crown Point Schools boast one of the most comprehensive, and successful 6-12 music programs in the state, due in no small part to the dedication of our parents, students, community members to our fundraising efforts.

# MUSIC BOOSTER ORGANIZATION

This support organization exists to promote further interest in the music programs of the Crown Point Community School Corporation; aid in funding for equipment and expenses not met by the Board of Education; and to assist the directors in the maintenance of the music program of the Crown Point Schools. All parents of middle school music students are members of the organization and are urged to become involved in the Booster activities by attending monthly meetings, volunteering for committees and chaperoning duties, and cooperating with fundraising activities. We urge you to become a Music Booster Patron! Music Booster meetings are at 7:00 p.m. in the Crown Point High School Music Suite. Meeting dates are usually the second Tuesday of each month.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Show an interest in the music study of your student.  
Notify Mr. Dean if your student is to be absent at required events ASAP.  
Teach your student to be punctual for rehearsals and events.  
See that your student keeps up with assignments, and classroom studies.  
Discuss with Mr. Dean anything that will help him understand your student.  
Attend concerts and other events involving your student. Show your support!!!

## COMMUNICATION

We have several ways to stay informed with what is going on with the CJWMS Choral Department.

A monthly newsletter is emailed to all students and parents.

You may also sign-up for Remind 101 text messages. As we approach concerts, turn-in dates, this is a way for me to communicate. Information on this will be sent home at the start of the year.

Visit and keep up to date with the Col. Wheeler Music Department website. On this website you can see concert schedules, handbooks, forms, pictures, videos, practice tracks to music and pdf's of sections of music. <http://www.wheelerbco.com>

You may call or email Mr. Dean any time at (219)-663-2173 ext. 13108 or [sdean@cps.k12.in.us](mailto:sdean@cps.k12.in.us).

# CONCERT ETIQUETTE – (for students and parents!)

Concert Etiquette is something very important for both our students and audience to learn. For students, proper etiquette is a part of the Indiana Department of Education standards for middle school choir. It is integral that we create the best possible environment for our students to perform. It is our hope to educate students for future symphony and musical concerts.

- **Arrive early and stay until the end.** It is discourteous to arrive late, or to leave before the concert is over. If you must enter or leave during the program, do so discretely and in between performances, during the applause
- **Minimize movement:** The performers and the other audience members can become very distracted by movement in the audience. Please remember, it is not appropriate to stand up, get out of your chair, and/or enter or exit the seating area when the groups are performing. Instead, please wait until the song is over and you can move during the applause.
- **Silence cell phones and electronic devices.**
- **Be quiet and attentive:** The performers and the other audience members can become very distracted by noise in the audience. Please remember that we are here to listen to the beautiful sounds created by the students. Talking, rustling papers, and various other noises will interfere with the music.
- **No Flash Photography:** While many of you will want to capture concerts “on film,” please remember that flash photography can be very distracting to the performers. After each group performs, we will have them stay on the stage for a minute so that you can get some good photos and use your flash if necessary. If you must take pictures during the performance, please do not use the flash and make sure that your camera does not make any sounds that might interfere with the performance.
- **Applaud enthusiastically!** Applause is what affirms to the performers that the audience is enjoying and appreciative of their efforts.
  - The conductor, choir, and any guest soloists are applauded when they walk onto the stage.
  - Shouting comments at performers, whistling, or other loud noises are great for athletic events and but not really appropriate at formal concerts.



# HANDBOOK CONTRACT

**This handbook was written for all Colonel John Wheeler Middle School choir members and their families. After reading the handbook, please fill out this page and return it to Mr. Dean by September 1, 2017. This will count as a grade.**

Your signatures below acknowledges:

- You have read the CJWMS Choir Handbook
- You understand the requirements for you/your student's expected participation in the CJWMS Choral Program for the 2017-2018 school year.
- You are aware of scheduled performance dates for the year and acknowledge that performance attendance is REQUIRED.

Thank you for your continued efforts to make Colonel John Wheeler Middle School one of THE BEST middle school choir programs in the Region! Congratulations on your choice and commitment to our fine performing groups.

**Parent Name (PRINT)**

**Parent/Guardian Signature**

**Date**

**Student Name (PRINT)**

**Student Signature**

**Date**

## UNIVERSAL PERMISSION SLIP

Rather than filling out separate travel permit for each event, I am asking that parents fill out the form below that covers any event that is listed on the performance calendar included in the Choir Handbook. Additional events would require a separate travel permit. Thank you for your cooperation.

\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to make field trip(s)

Name of student

- That are scheduled for the 2017-2018 school year.
- Listed in the Choir Handbook of Colonel John Wheeler Middle School. I will not hold the school as an institution or school officials as individuals responsible in case of an accident.

**Date**

**Parent/Guardian Signature**