



# Handbook

2023-2024



## Wakeland High School Choirs

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*“Welcome to the award-winning Wakeland High School Choral Department!”*

Being a member of the WHS Choral Department is an honor and a privilege. You have chosen to be a part of an organization that can offer you many opportunities for growth and provide musical experiences that you will remember for a lifetime.

The handbook introduces the many facets of the WHS Choral Department, and the policies answer as many questions as possible. We know that parent support and involvement in the choir program is one of the greatest assets we have. It is important that all parents and students entering the choir department know what is needed of them. Students benefit from high expectations through discipline, hard work, optimum performance opportunities and musical growth.

The Wakeland Choirs have a reputation for choral excellence. Being among the best and striving for outstanding musical experiences requires tremendous teamwork and discipline. We feel confident that this year will prove to be a great year as we work to attain our goals.

We look forward to working with you. The lines of communication are always open. Should you have any questions, please never hesitate to contact us.

I am committed to learning alongside you how to best serve our wonderful Wakeland Choirs during these times of varied learning!

Sincerely,

Paul W. Bright, *Director*

## I. Choir Fee

Please consider that when compared with other groups such as cheerleading, drill team, band, etc., choir is quite a bargain.

Choir Fee: \$150.00 (Please make checks payable to Wakeland Choir. There is not an online payment system.)

Examples of fee support:

- Choir t-shirt
- Booster Club membership
- Equipment repair
- Uniforms
- Concert and UIL accompanists
- Concert sound technician
- All-Region and UIL solo vocal coaching
- Food for rehearsals, UIL contest, etc.
- Social Activities
- Banquet decorations and associated costs
- Banquet DJ and lighting
- Concert receptions and stage decorations

## II. Uniforms

- When we have a performance, students are expected to be in full uniform from the time you arrive to the time you leave the performance site (shirts tucked in, ties on, etc.) We want to take pride in our organization and our appearance.
- Students are responsible for paying for any damage and will be responsible for replacing any lost parts of the uniform.
- Uniforms will be freshly cleaned for each performance. This is a matter of courtesy as much as it is a health issue.
- Students may be unable perform with the choir if they are not in the required uniform at the choir event.

Treble Choirs:

- A uniform will be issued to each member.
- No rings, necklaces large earrings or bracelets may be worn with the uniform. Earrings must be the size of a quarter or smaller.
- Appropriate close-toed, black shoes are to be worn with the uniform. (no tennis shoes, casual sandals, heavy, awkward or overly casual styles)
- Uniforms may require hem alteration.
- Distracting/excessive hairstyles may not be worn. (no bows, large clips, etc.)

Tenor-Bass Choir:

- Each Tenor-Bass choir member will be issued a school-owned uniform. Alterations may be needed for pant hem length, etc.
- Each Tenor-Bass choir member will need purchase a wing-tipped tux shirt, black cummerbund and black bow tie from the
- *Black* socks and *black* dress shoes will be worn with the choir uniform. (no tennis shoes, casual sandals, heavy, awkward or overly casual styles)

### **III. Choir Concerts and Extra Rehearsals**

- **Concerts and extra rehearsals are a mandatory part of the curriculum.** You will receive a list of all major concerts and contests. On occasion, other performances may be added (special invitation, etc.). It is impossible to re-create a missed concert or rehearsal. Failure to attend a performance is like not turning in a major semester project. Just as you spend weeks researching and preparing a major research paper, you spend weeks rehearsing and preparing for a performance. You receive no credit for your paper if you do not turn it in. Likewise, you will receive no credit for a concert if you do not perform.
- **Students are expected to be on time to rehearsals and pre-concert warmups.**
- **Students are expected to stay for the entire rehearsal and concert** (please do not ask to “slip out” before it is over).
- **Students will receive grades for each rehearsal and concert:**
  1. On time
  2. Performance (all choral elements and vocal technique concepts)
  3. Audience etiquette
- **Examples of unacceptable reasons for missing rehearsals and choir concerts:**
  1. Non-school related events
  2. Work (plan accordingly)
  3. Lack of Transportation
  4. Birthdays
  5. Babysitting
  6. Forgetting Events
  7. Club ball, cheerleading, dance, etc.
  8. Anything not on the list of acceptable reasons
- **To be considered for an excused absence:**
  1. Parents, please e-mail [brightp@friscoisd.org](mailto:brightp@friscoisd.org) in advance of your child’s absence.
  2. A parent e-mail will suffice.
  3. Student notification alone is not enough for consideration.
  4. Director approval of the reason.

- **What may happen if you have an unexcused absence from a rehearsal or concert:**
  1. Earn a failing grade
  2. Reassignment to another choir
  3. Removal from the WHS choir program
  4. Membership Probation
  
- **If you have a school related conflict with a rehearsal or concert:**
  1. At the beginning of the year, you must fill out a form of date conflicts with any other school group (band, athletics, DECA, etc.) Outside, non-school events are unexcused.
  2. If necessary, a conference will be scheduled with other coaches/sponsors, administrator, and parents to resolve the conflict.
  3. In consultation with the director and coaches, you will be expected to split the time.
  4. Let the coaches and the directors know well in advance.
  5. You will be expected to demonstrate that you have not fallen behind in preparation.
  6. This does not guarantee that the absence will be excused.
  7. UIL Concert / Sight-reading Contest participation is required.

#### **IV. General Expectations**

- **Academic Eligibility.** Students are expected to maintain UIL academic eligibility calendar always. Student may be reassigned to another choir if they are not academically eligible.
- **Turn in all items and fees on time.** Develop this life skill now so that you will be a productive, responsible adult. When items are not returned on time, it causes a ripple effect of work for others.
- **Come to each rehearsal with a positive attitude about working.** You are expected to arrive in class on time wanting to sing, and eager to tackle the task at hand...making music.
- **Stay informed of all dates, concerts, trips, and events.** Feel free to come to the director for help in resolving a conflict. Many times, we, as teachers, can approach/help with another teacher/coach. In advance of an upcoming problem/conflict, communicate with the other teacher and the director as soon as possible. This is another life skill you will need to have as a responsible adult.
- **All student performances and extra rehearsals are an element of the curriculum.** Everyone in choir will perform. Every member of a performing ensemble is vital to the ensemble. Never think otherwise. Failure to meet extra rehearsal and performance criteria may result in not being allowed to perform or removal from the choir department.
- **Choir concerts are designated as an extension of the classroom and therefore, are considered co-curricular.** All students are to participate in co-curricular concerts regardless of their UIL “no-pass, no play” status. All the student’s school grades,

including choir, play a crucial role in the student's ability to participate in extracurricular activities.

- **Extra-curricular activities are affected by the student's UIL "no-pass, no-play" status.** The student must be passing all classes in order to participate in *extra-curricular* events. Some of the activities affected by all subject grades are:
  1. District/Region tryouts
  2. Singing at football games/basketball games
  3. WHS musical participation
  4. UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest
  5. Field trips
  6. Spring Trip (you must participate in UIL Concert/Sight-reading contest to be eligible for the spring trip.
- **Attend school.** You cannot excel as a student or choir member if you are not here. Excellent attendance is expected in all choirs.
- **Do not spray perfume or hairspray, apply scented lotions, or put on make-up in the choir room.** Please use the restroom for personal grooming.
- **Bring only your choir folder and sharpened pencil to your seat.**
- **Your folder and your music are your "textbooks" in choir.** The replacement costs vary.
- **Represent the Wakeland High School Choirs in a positive, mature manner and you will further develop pride in your choral department.** You are our biggest advocate for choral music. Your attitudes and behavior are a direct reflection of your directors and the WHS choir program. Both teachers and students have a responsibility to fulfill this if we are to be successful.
- **We expect students in the choir to be alcohol, drug and tobacco free, and vape free.**

## V. Choir Classroom Policy

- Classroom/ rehearsal norms:
  1. Sing every day.
  2. Have music and a sharpened pencil every day.
  3. Follow all directions.
  4. Do not chew gum, eat or drink in the choir room.
  5. Respect everyone.
  6. Take care of our school property (uniforms, music, etc.)
  7. If you have a concern, please visit with the director respectfully.
  8. Any behavior that is a negative reflection on the choir may result in a change of choirs or permanent removal from the choral department.

## VI. Choir Discipline Plan

- Behavioral Norms:
  1. If your behavior distracts me or the other students ... please don't do it.
  2. ***Keep your personal and social media drama/issues out of the choir program.*** I will not hesitate to remove you from the choir program.
  3. ***Negative behaviors and negative speech toward others will not be tolerated.*** Again, I will not hesitate to remove you from the choir program.
  4. Act mature and seek mature solutions and we'll all benefit.
  3. A good attitude will always be to your advantage.
- Behavioral Reminders / Resolutions:
  1. Reminder of expectation
  2. Call to parents
  3. Detentions
  4. Office referral
  5. Reassignment to another choir
  6. Removal from the WHS choir program
  7. Disapproval from classmates whose time is being wasted because of your poor choices.

## VII. Grading Policy

During each grading period, grades are based on the FISD grading policy.

- Examples of Grades:
  1. Holding up music while singing (not covering your face or having elbows on your lap)
  2. Use of correct hand signs / position when singing sol fege
  3. Posture (sitting and standing)
  4. Breathing Techniques
  5. Assessment of video/audio recordings of rehearsals and performances
  6. Music memorization tests
  7. Recorded part-singing, music reading, rhythm counting assessments
  8. Music Sight-reading / music theory
  9. Individual Music Progress / Concert and Contest Preparedness

## VIII. Facilities and Equipment

- We are fortunate to have nice facilities and we need to make the care and maintenance of these rooms a daily priority.
- We are not responsible for any personal items left in the choir room.
- Pianos may be played with the director's permission.
- Choir computers may be used with the director's permission.
- Auxiliary Rooms may be entered with the director's permission.

- Choir Office: *Please knock*. If you do not receive a reply, it is most likely because we are during a conference. Please do not keep knocking.
- School phone may be used with the director's permission.
- Any property damaged by student will be repaired or replaced at student expense.

## **IX. Bring Your Own Devices**

- According to WHS policy, cell phones must be placed in the phone caddy before the bell rings.
- Bring a charged laptop or Google Chromebook to class every day.
- Bring ear buds or another way to listen to recordings on your Google Chromebook.
- Cell phones, iPods, iTouch, laptops, etc., may be used in the choir room with director permission.
- Privileges may be revoked if BYOD policies and/or the director's instructions are not adhered to.
- All devices are subject to being taken up and turned into the main office if used without director permission or if FISD "BYOD" policies are violated.

## **X. Alternate Travel**

Any student who does not ride to a choir event for which FISD transportation is provided, must submit an alternate travel form/request signed by the parent or guardian prior to the event. Students may not drive.

Example: Traveling from school baseball practice and joining the choir at the destination.

## **XI. Letter Jackets**

Any student who is in a WHS Choir may purchase (optional) a choir letter jacket.

It is my philosophy that our students earn the letter jacket every day. We work very hard. I want the students to wear them with pride and I want the student body to see them throughout the school.

We are one of the most award-winning groups at Wakeland High School and it's because of the commitment of excellence by our students.

The letter jackets may be ordered each fall and each spring.

Again, this is optional and a family decision.