R.A. Jones Middle School

Choir Handbook

**2016 – 2017**



### Dear Parents and Students,

### Welcome to the choir program at R.A. Jones Middle School!

### It is my hope that this experience is both fun and challenging for you. We will be working really hard this year to learn our music and to enhance our vocal technique. Students will also be expected to put in practice time outside of class in order to reach their full potential.

### As we strive for the success of all of our students, it is necessary that we create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. The following few pages outline the objectives, expectations, and procedures that are in place in order to help us achieve excellence.

Remember, I have high expectations for each and every one of you because I know that you are all capable of being GREAT!

### Please read through the following few pages carefully, sign and return the last page only!

### -Miss Castle

### Materials

### Students are expected to bring the following materials to class EVERY DAY:

* Your folder AND music
* A pencil
* A good attitude

\*Failure to bring required materials to class will cause you to lose points on your daily grade.

**Conduct**

Individual student conduct in a performance-based class reflects directly on the individual, as well as the other students in the group, the school, and the community. Therefore, each student is required to follow all of the expectations listed below:

1. Treat others with respect and courtesy.
2. Exercise self-control and personal accountability in ALL situations.
3. Have your music, pencil, and folder everyday.
4. Follow the school rules and policies posted in the choir room as well as those outlined in the RAJMS Handbook.

**Choir Room Rules & Procedures**

1. NO GUM, CANDY, FOOD, or DRINKS in the choir room. I understand that this is different from other classroom policies, but you cannot consume any of these items while singing. The only exception to this rule is water and it should be brought in a container/bottle with a lid.
2. *Beginning of class:* Enter the classroom before the bell rings. Grab a drink or use the restroom before you come to class – it’s right there! Gather your materials and be in your seat ready to go when Miss Castle enters the room.
3. All personal belongings need to be placed under your chair or on the bookshelf at the side of the room.
4. Check the daily agenda on the white board. We follow a pretty regular routine.
5. When the teacher or any adult steps onto the podium, get quiet and give them your attention (eyes and ears). This will be the signal used to start class.
6. Once rehearsal begins sing only when instructed to do so.
7. Be attentive during class and respect the rights of others to learn.
8. Always raise your hand if you have a question.
9. Talking and conversation is not allowed during rehearsals except to ask questions or during discussions.
10. Cell phones should not be out in class unless you have permission from the teacher. They should never be kept on a music stand, even if they are not in use.
11. *End of class*: Quietly return your music to its home, collect your belongings, and return to your seat. Be sure to clean up after yourself and make sure your chair is in its row before you leave. Remember, the bell does not dismiss you, the teacher does.

**Discipline**

Students need to be taught the steps for professional behavior in order to have performing ensembles with the ability to be self-disciplined. The following discipline procedures are meant to address that issue and to maximize learning for all students:

* Students found off task will be given low intervention prompts (i.e. eye contact, teacher proximity cues, etc.) to help redirect behavior. If the student continues to be off task, they will be given a respectful verbal reminder of the class expectations. Each off-task action will lower the student’s daily grade. Alternate seating arrangements will be explored as the next consequence; the intent of this being to remove the child from the distraction or environment promoting the behavior.
* After the student has been given several reminders (4) regarding a behavior, parent contact will be made by letter first, then by phone if necessary, to solicit support. If the behavior persists at this point, the student will be assigned an after school detention with the director. Detentions are served in the band room from 2:45 – 3:15pm.
* Administrative referrals will only be made after the above interventions have been attempted, unless the infraction is so severe that it warrants an immediate referral per school policy.
* Please do not be discouraged if assistance in improving class conduct is needed at some time during the course of the year. School is a place for learning. Proper interaction with peers and adults is an important skill that positively influences a student’s achievement in every class and aspect of life!

**Grading Policy**

Choir students will be graded upon the following throughout the school year in compliance with school and district grading policies:

* **Summative (75% of overall grade):** singing tests, book tests, and concert contribution
* **Formative (20% of overall grade):** singing quizzes, theory quizzes, and written assignments/reflections
* **Homework/Classwork (5% of overall grade):** daily participation grade (5 points per day based on preparedness, attitude, and effort), theory and vocabulary worksheets

**Tests and Quizzes**

Students will have singing or written quizzes (formative) every two weeks at a minimum. Summative assessments will occur less frequently (at least once a quarter) in the form of singing tests, written assessments, and concerts. These tests will require that the student demonstrate skills taught and rehearsed in class. **Individual practice outside of class will be necessary for students to excel on the tests and quizzes.**

**Concerts**

Choir is considered a curricular class and performances outside of the school day are considered an extension of the school day. Therefore, **PERFORMANCES ARE MANDATORY**! A performance also serves as a summative assessment for a unit of study. Our choir depends on every student. YOU are important to an outstanding performance. If you should have to miss a performance or special rehearsal for an emergency, you must present a note from a parent to the director the NEXT school day. Planned absences will only be excused if a note is presented to the director 1 WEEK IN ADVANCE. An excused absence will require a “make up” assignment, typically a singing test over the concert material. Make up assignments for unexcused absences will automatically be docked 15%.

Performances are also to be taken seriously. You are representing your class, your grade level, your director, your school, and our community and you should do so with pride. Students will not be allowed to attend a concert if they have received an administrative referral in choir that term.

**Concert Dress**

Stage presence is a very important part of being a musician. All students are expected to dress in the following attire in accordance with the school dress code (i.e. no sandals, shorts, etc.)

**Black shoes (no sandals)**

**Black socks**

**Black pants**

**Black dress shirt**

**Black dress (appropriate length according to school dress code)**

**Black skirt (appropriate length according to school dress code)**

**Black blouse**

**Other Classroom Supplies**

We go through a lot of supplies in the choir room. Below is a list of items that are not required for students to bring, but that we would definitely put to use if you wanted to send some in:

* Tissues
* 9V batteries for metronomes/tuners
* Hand sanitizer
* Pencils

**Fundraising**

We will hold several fundraisers throughout the school year. Participation in fundraising activities is VITAL to our program regardless of what you play. We use the money from fundraisers to purchase classroom supplies and sheet music, as well as to bring in accompanists. These funds also help to offset the cost of the any trips that we take throughout the year.  The costs of all this adds up quickly, so please do your part to help out!  If everyone contributes, it adds up much faster than when one person does all of the work.

**Contact Information**

Miss Castle can be contacted at school by calling 282-4610 ext. 20204 or by email: [emily.castle@boone.kyschools.us](mailto:emily.castle@boone.kyschools.us)

Please do not hesitate to e-mail or call if you have any questions. I will respond to all messages/emails at my earliest availability.

The RAJMS Music Department also has a website where information is updated regularly, pictures are posted, and much more! Please visit us at: [www.rajmsmusic.weebly.com](http://www.rajmsmusic.weebly.com)

**Text Reminders**

Communication is key to our success, and occasionally things get lost between school and home. If you would like to sign up for text message reminders and announcements from Miss Castle, please send a text message with the code for your group to the number 81010.

* 6th Grade choir students text @dg6af
* 7th/8th Grade choir students text @g8426

**Parent/Student Signature Sheet**

Return this sheet to Miss Castle by Wednesday, August 24, 2016.

This signature sheet counts as your first written grade! Please get it in on or before the due date.

Student name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Home:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, you agree that you have read and understand the information contained in this handbook and that you will uphold the philosophy and carry out those responsibilities of an R.A. Jones Choir member to the best of your abilities.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_