

## 2009-2010 ROBERT E. LEE HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR HANDBOOK

The Choral Program at LEE Freshman and Senior High Schools offers a unique educational experience in which you may gain not only musical skills and a lifelong appreciation of music, but discipline, self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment by working with others toward THE COMMON GOAL OF EXCELLENCE. As a member of the LEE High School Choir you are expected to be a credit to your choir, your school, and your community. Because we are committed to EXCELLENCE we must have a common high standard. The purpose of this handbook is to define that standard. Chorale, Ladies' Ensemble, Lee Singers, Men's Ensemble, and Freshman Choirs are competitive ensembles requiring travel and participation in UIL /TMEA competitions.

### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Be on time to all rehearsals and public performances prepared to give your best.
2. Be a responsible member - bring your music to rehearsal with pencil, keep your music in order, know your music.
3. Maintain respect for the Choir Room, the instruments and the equipment. This includes your music and folder. Keep the room clean and orderly. The piano, recording equipment and sound system are not toys. Do not use any of the equipment unless you have received permission from the directors.
4. Take pride in your personal appearance.
5. Remember, your actions and attitude reflect on you, your choir, and your school.

### REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

The success of a choir depends on how it rehearses. How it rehearses depends on the conduct and cooperation of the student. Rehearsals are the place to correct mistakes. The fewer the mistakes and the less individual distractions, the greater your contribution is to the choir. Be patient, attentive, careful, and cooperative in observing these rehearsal expectations. When the directors have to discipline and control rather than direct, the rehearsal and eventually the choirs are headed for failure. Good behavior, attitude and self-discipline are essential to producing a GREAT CHOIR. If you are successful, the Choir is successful.

1. Be ON TIME to all rehearsals (school or extra) and performances. You are to be in your place with your Music and all visiting stopped BY THE TIME THE BELL RINGS or THE REHEARSAL IS TO BEGIN.  
\*\*\*\*LHS tardy policy is enforced.
2. Always have your MUSIC, CHOIR FOLDER, and PENCIL.
3. Please, no gum!
4. Be conscious of GOOD POSTURE at all times.
5. Keep your EYES on the conductor during rehearsal.
6. LISTEN to the conductor at all times. Talking while the conductor is rehearsing or giving instructions is **NEVER** appropriate.
7. **The use of cell phones are not allowed at rehearsals or concerts. (School policy enforced.)**
8. Take a MATURE ATTITUDE toward correction. Don't be a "know it all".
9. Rehearsals are not over until the director dismisses the choir. Don't begin to put your music away until instructed to do so.
10. Stay involved in the rehearsal from start to finish. Rehearsals are not for personal grooming, catching up on the latest gossip, or doing homework.
11. Keep the room orderly and clean. Do not bring food, candy or drinks in the Choir Room unless given permission by the director. If you are not taking your music home, make sure you return it to the correct shelf. The Choir Room is not to be used as your personal locker.
12. Approach rehearsals as well as performances with OPTIMISM, ENTHUSIASM, DETERMINATION, AND YOUR WHOLE-HEARTED ATTENTION.
13. The success of the Choir is your individual responsibility.
14. Before asking a question-- ALWAYS refer to your handbook.

## **EXTRA REHEARSALS & CONCERTS**

1. Choir is a performance-based class. Concerts AND rehearsals are required. Every effort is made to schedule concerts and rehearsals around other SCHOOL-related activities. Unfortunately, we cannot schedule around community activities, private lessons or tutorings. Students are expected to keep a calendar and inform the Director **IN ADVANCE** of any conflicts.

2. Extra rehearsals are called for all choirs INCLUDING FRESHMEN before major performances. It is the directors' wish to keep these rehearsals to a minimum. Refer to your calendar for these rehearsals & be alert to rehearsals announced in class. **KEEPING A CALENDAR IS A MUST!**

3. Each choir member is required to attend his or her respective section rehearsal which may meet one to two times a week at the lunch hour, before school, or another agreed upon time. This schedule varies depending on the particular contest or concert.

4. The CHORALE will meet every MONDAY evening for rehearsals. During Contest season the Chorale meets on MONDAY and THURSDAY evenings for Mixed Choir in addition to special clinics.

5. ALL CHOIRS (Freshman Choirs, Ladies' Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, Lee Singers, and Chorale) meet every MONDAY evening during Contest season. (Contest season begins in late February- see calendar).

6. All rehearsals and concerts are REQUIRED unless excused IN ADVANCE by the director.

7. Definition of an "EXCUSED ABSENCE" -- Absence resulting from illness, serious illness in the family, or bereavement. A note or phone call from the PARENT must be submitted to the Director **WELL IN ADVANCE** for review and consultation with the student. In the case of sudden illness, a **parental** note or **parental** phone call should accompany the student's return. ***It is the parent's/student's responsibility to clear the absence within 3 days of the student's return.***

8. Consequences for an "UNEXCUSED ABSENCE"

a. 1st Absence- One or more of the following consequences can occur:

- Loss of performance privileges
- Loss of tour or trip privileges
- Parent conference
- Suspension of rehearsal privileges with alternative class work requirements
- Loss of letter
- Chorale: Reassignment to another ensemble

b. 2nd Absence

- Consequences of 1st Absence may be used
- Conference with parent and student to decide continuation or dismissal from the Choir.

**\* Any of the above consequences may also be used in a disciplinary capacity.**

9. EACH STUDENT'S contribution is crucial to rehearsals and concerts. One student's absence can upset the balance of a rehearsal or the success of a concert. Never lose sight of the importance of your individual contribution to the Choir.

***If there is a conflict with a rehearsal or concert, let the Director know WELL IN ADVANCE. School conflicts can almost always be worked out. The key phrase is IN ADVANCE! I.e. Weeks or months in advance – NOT DAYS!***

### **ORIENTATION- ALL MEMBERS & PARENTS (September)**

1. ***To insure a student's successful participation in the LHS Choral Program, an orientation is required for all students and their parent(s).*** The Orientation provides students and parents the year's calendar, expectations of the Choral program, and an opportunity for questions and answers.
2. Student Travel Forms, Uniform Training Rules, Choir Contract, and Assessment Agreement Forms are signed by parents and students at this time.
3. In order to participate in the choral program, the student AND parent must attend an orientation. All forms are due **by Sept. 4** in order to participate in the choral program.

### **ALL STATE AUDITIONS (Oct., Nov., Jan.)**

1. Members of Chorale and Ladies' Ensemble are expected to prepare and audition for the first level of auditions – REGION. All entrance fees are covered by MISD.
2. Students are given rehearsal CD's and music to practice for the auditions.
3. If a student advances to the next level, he/she is required to attend rehearsals and learn the music for the next level of competition.
4. If a student makes the Region Choir, he/she is required to attend the Clinic/Concert. (See Lettering Policy)
5. Refer to your calendar for auditions and performance dates.

### **FRESHMAN ALL-REGION CHOIR (October)**

1. All "academically eligible" freshmen are required to prepare and audition for the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Region Choir.
2. Entrance fees and music are covered by MISD.
3. If a student makes the Region Choir he/she is required to attend the Clinic/Concert.
4. Refer to the Lettering Policy on pg. 7.

### **BROADWAY REVUE (Oct. )**

1. ALL CHOIRS participate.
2. Eligibility rules apply. (See **DEFINITIONS OF "GOOD STANDING" & "ELIGIBILITY"- pg. 4**)
3. Tux pants, vests, & tux shirts are worn.
4. Admission is charged to defray the costs: sets, costuming, staging, instrumentalists, & dessert.
5. A rehearsal schedule for the week of the show (specific to each choir) will be posted as soon as possible.
6. All seating is reserved.

### **FESTIVAL OF YULETIDE CAROLS (December)**

1. ALL CHOIRS participate (FHS & SrHS).
2. Eligibility does NOT apply to this concert.
3. Formal attire will be worn.
4. No admission is charged.

### **RENAISSANCE MADRIGAL DINNER (February)**

1. All "academically eligible" students will participate and perform in the Madrigal Dinner.
2. Costumes/uniforms are provided and cleaned for all choirs. The Chorale costumes are costly and students are expected to return the costume in the same condition it was issued. Students are financially liable for any damages.
3. Members of Lee Singers, Ladies' Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, and Freshman Choirs are expected to purchase a black long-sleeved turtleneck to be worn with their formal tux pants and vests. (For more information see "FORMAL WEAR".)
4. Members of Chorale are responsible for providing their jewelry and shoes. The Ladies of Chorale must furnish their hair adornments.
5. Admission is charged to cover the cost of the meal, the rental of the hall, sets and props, and costumes.

### **UIL CONTESTS (Feb. & April)**

1. All "**academically eligible**" students **participate** in UIL Concert & Sight-Reading and UIL Solo and Ensemble Contests. All entrance fees are covered by MISD.
2. Freshmen, Lee Singers, Ladies Ensemble & Chorale will participate in an ensemble for Solo & Ensemble Contest.
3. For Solo & Ensemble Contest Men's Choir will participate in either a solo or ensemble (director's discretion).
4. Sunday dress is worn for Solo & Ensemble.
5. Concert attire is worn for Concert & Sight-reading.
6. **A special contest rehearsal schedule** will be posted for UIL Concert & Sight-reading Contest. During this rehearsal period, the Men's and Women's Choirs (Chorale, Ladies Ensemble, Lee Singers, Men's Ensemble, & Freshman Choirs) will rehearse on Monday evenings. Chorale will rehearse on Thursday evenings. There are often one or two UIL Clinics with a guest conductor and a UIL Concert before the Contest. Students are required to participate in all.

### **FRESHMAN "VEGAS NIGHT"**

1. All academically eligible freshmen will participate and perform.
2. Formal wear will be worn.
3. The fundraising portion will be run by a parental "Vegas Night Committee".
4. Proceeds will benefit the assessments of all participating freshman students.

### **SENIOR HIGH COMPETITIVE CHOIRS- SPRING TRIP/UIL RETREAT (March)**

1. SENIOR HIGH Choirs will attend an out-of-town retreat at MO Ranch in the Spring semester for the purpose of preparing contest music with guest clinicians.
2. The cost of the retreat (lodging, meals, and transportation) is covered in the assessment.
3. Participation is **REQUIRED**. Students must be "**in good standing**" and "**eligible**" to participate.

### **CHORAL CLASSICS (March)**

1. ALL CHOIRS (SR HS & FHS) participate in this concert.
2. No admission is charged.
3. Formal concert attire is worn.

### **FRESHMAN CHOIR TRIP- Six Flags (May)**

1. The FRESHMAN Choir will attend an out-of-town competition in the Spring (after UIL contest).
2. Students must be "**eligible**" and "**in good standing**" to participate in the trip.
3. The cost of the trip is a *portion* of the assessment.

### **HONORS CONCERT & RECEPTION (May)**

1. This is the final concert for ALL SENIOR CHOIRS & PARENTS.
2. This event includes performances by all choirs, recognition of honors, and presentation of awards, a slide show, senior farewell, and a reception.
3. Attire for the event is TBA.

### **COMPOSER CONCERT (May)**

1. All Senior High choirs participate.
2. No admission is charged.
3. Formal attire is worn.

## DEFINITIONS OF “GOOD STANDING” & “ELIGIBILITY”

1. “**In Good Standing**” means that a student has no unexcused absences and has **positively** contributed to the choir in attitude and work ethic.
2. **Academic eligibility** is defined by UIL and MISD. A student must be passing or regain eligibility in all classes to participate in TMEA auditions, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Region, UIL contests, Madrigal, Broadway Revue and trips that would take a student out of classes. The Fall concert, The holiday concert, Choral Classics, Honors Night and rehearsals (extra or in class) DO NOT fall under the eligibility guidelines. Eligibility is solely based on the MISD computer generated “failure lists” and “progress reports”. **A student cannot fail or regain eligibility between the times that the lists are published.**

## MUSIC AND FOLDERS

1. All concert music is furnished at no expense to the student. (Some music for individual competition must be purchased by the student, i.e. Pre-Area/Area and UIL Solo)
2. Music is expensive and students are expected to take care of it. **Music is to be kept in the choir folder at all times.**
3. If music is lost or damaged, the student will pay for the replacement of the music.
4. Music left out of the folder or slot and not in its place in the choir room is considered "lost".

## CONCERT ATTIRE

All formal wear is the property of the Lee Choir Boosters & Lee Freshman/Senior High School. Part of the assessment covers the maintenance of the formal wear with the exception of the tux shirt and any unusually difficult alterations. Since the formal wear is the property of the Lee Choir Boosters & the School, it will be used for LHS/LFHS Choral performances only.

If formal wear is lost or damaged, the student will pay for the replacements.

Formal wear must be fitted as soon as possible. Please listen for announcements and refer to the calendar as to your fitting date and time. *You must be present for your fitting WITH YOUR DRESS SHOES (see below).*

### A. SENIOR HIGH LADIES

1. Formal wear includes a maroon formal dress, tux pants, vest, bow tie, tux shirt, & t- shirt(s).
2. The Tux Shirt is the financial responsibility of the student and becomes the student's personal property. A group order for the tux shirts will be made.
3. **CHARACTER SHOES** (your responsibility)
  - a. Uniform black character shoes will be worn by all the ladies.
  - b. A group order will be made. Payment must be made **IN ADVANCE** of the group order. (Cash or money order --more information will follow).
4. Accessories
  - a. Small earrings only. No multi-piercings, facial, or tongue piercings.
  - b. Limit other jewelry to a watch and favorite ring- no necklaces, no bracelets or excessive rings.
  - c. **No Fingernail polish is to be worn other than natural or clear.**
  - d. Keep hair simple not extravagant- no hair ribbons, bows, or gaudy accessories.
5. The formals come to you freshly dry-cleaned. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WASH OR IRON THE FORMALS, TUX PANTS, BOW TIE OR VEST.**
6. Lee Singers & Ladies Ensemble will need a black, long-sleeved turtleneck for the Madrigal Dinner.
7. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.) Hair will be pulled back out of the face, no bangs, no unnatural colors.

### B. SENIOR HIGH MEN

1. Formal attire includes black tuxedo, tux shirt, maroon bow tie and cummerbund, vest, black bow tie, & choir t-shirt(s).
2. The tuxedo shirt must be purchased by the student and is his personal property. A group order for the shirts will be taken to insure the lowest possible price and a uniform shirt.
3. Shoes are your responsibility.
  - a. Black DRESS shoes and black socks- no tennis shoes or boots.
  - b. Remember you must be able to dance and stand in these shoes. This means leather soles not rubber.
4. Accessories
  - a. NO earrings. No facial or tongue piercings.
  - b. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.) Hair will be pulled back out of the face, no bangs, no unnatural colors.
5. The tuxes come to you freshly dry-cleaned. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WASH OR IRON THE TUXEDOS, VEST, OR BOW TIES AND CUMMERBUND.**

**C. FRESHMAN LADIES & MEN**

1. Concert attire consists of black tux trousers, maroon vest, bow tie, tux shirt, black long-sleeved turtleneck.
2. The Tux Shirt is the financial responsibility of the student and becomes the student's personal property. A group order for the tux shirts will be made.
2. Shoes (your responsibility)
  - a. *Girls*- Uniform black character shoes will be worn by all the ladies.  
A group order will be made. Payment must be made **IN ADVANCE** of the group order.  
(Cash or money order- more information will follow).
  - b. *Boys*- Black DRESS Shoes and Black socks. Keep in mind they need to be comfortable. No boots, no tennis shoes.
3. Long-sleeved Black Turtleneck- You must purchase one for the Madrigal Dinner.
4. Accessories- Boys
  - a. NO earrings. No facial or tongue piercings.
  - b. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.) Hair will be pulled back out of the face, no bangs, no unnatural colors.
5. Accessories- *Girls*
  - a. Small earrings only. No multi piercings, facial or tongue piercings.
  - b. Limit other jewelry to a watch and favorite ring- no necklaces, no bracelets or excessive rings .
  - c. No fingernail polish is to be worn other than natural or clear.
  - d. Keep hair simple not extravagant. No hair ribbons, bows, or gaudy hair accessories. Hairstyle & color should be conservative and neat (directors' & school's definition- nothing that would call attention to you on stage.)
6. The formal wear comes to you freshly dry-cleaned. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WASH OR IRON THE PANTS OR VESTS.
7. Choir shirts will be worn for informal occasions. A group order will be taken. The cost of the shirt is the student's responsibility.

**ASSESSMENT**

The assessment covers the following costs: use, maintenance, and cleaning of concert formal wear, Broadway Revue costuming, madrigal costumes, Spring Trip, travel, audition cd's, receptions, and additional music, office supplies, and accompanist & clinician fees not provided by the school budget. Any fundraising monies which exceed the stated assessment by \$100 or more will be applied to the following year's assessment.

**Because the Booster Club is a NON-PROFIT organization, the assessment is NON-REFUNDABLE.**

- A. Freshman- \$300  
1<sup>st</sup> Payment- \$100 is due **October 22**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment- \$100 is due **December 7**.  
Final Payment- \$100 is due **March 8**.
- B. Senior High (Men's Choir, Lee Singers, Ladies Ensemble)- \$350  
\$175 is due **October 22**. The remaining balance of \$175 is due **December 14**.
- C. Chorale- Cost of Washington, D.C. Tour (See fundraising handout)

**What's covered by the assessment?****FRESHMAN**

Six Flags Trip & Trip shirt  
Maintenance, repair, & replacement of formal wear  
Receptions, staging & props

**SENIOR HIGH**

Mo Ranch Trip  
Maintenance, repair, & replacement of formal wear  
Madrigal costumes, receptions, staging & props

**What's not covered by the assessment?****FRESHMAN**

Character Shoes-Ladies - \$42  
Black Dress Shoes- Men  
Black long-sleeved turtleneck  
Tux Shirt (\$13)  
Choir T-Shirt

**SENIOR HIGH**

Character Shoes-Ladies - \$42  
Black Dress Shoes- Men  
Black long-sleeved turtleneck (LE, LS, Men)  
Tux Shirt (\$13)  
Choir T-Shirt

## FUNDRAISING

Fundraising projects afford the student the opportunity to earn assessment monies. All profits of fundraising monies are credited to the individual students' assessment. Profits of fundraisers average 40% to 50% of selling price. All students are expected to participate and make an effort in fundraising. *\*\*No student will be denied participation because of lack of funds, but ALL students are expected to make an effort to the very best of their abilities.* Students who make no effort or attempt to fundraise will not travel on special trips.

### A. Booster Club Memberships (August-Sept.)

1. **ALL CHOIRS** participate
  2. Parents are strongly encouraged to join.
  3. All memberships receive advance publicity of all events and listing in concert program.
  4. Students receive 100% of monies.
- B. See Fundraising Handout at Orientation(s) for specific projects.

## GRADING POLICY

Choir is a **performance-based class**. Students earn grades by performing in rehearsals as well as concerts. Concerts and rehearsals cannot be "made up". (See "Extra Rehearsals & Concerts", pg.2) Students will earn grades in the following areas.

1. Performances in class by solo and small ensembles
2. Sight-reading/Music Theory/ Ear-Training- solo & small ensembles
3. Concerts & Rehearsals
4. Contribution & Focus

\*\*\*\* Please note: Students are often video-taped and audio-taped in class and in performance for teaching, evaluating, and publicity purposes.

## LETTERING POLICY

In order to "letter" in Choir a student must:

1. *Senior High-*
  - Must be a member in "good standing"
  - Compete in Region Choir auditions (for a major award- jacket or blanket)
  - Perform in the Region Concert & Clinic (if selected for Region Choir)
  - Participate in UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest
  - Compete in UIL Concert & SR Contest
  - Participate in all concerts, productions, and rehearsals
  - Choir Community Service (5 hours)
  - No unexcused absences**
2. *Freshman Choir*
  - Must be a member "in good standing"
  - Participate in UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest
  - Compete in UIL Concert & SR Contest
  - Participate in all concerts and rehearsals
  - Compete in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Region Choir auditions
  - No unexcused absences**

## SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

Membership in the choir is not only an honor but carries with it a responsibility to the entire Choir.

As a member of the choir the student makes a commitment to participate in all activities throughout the year.

As the choirs are auditioned and carefully balanced according to voice parts, a student who does not complete the year penalizes the entire choir.

**Therefore**, if a student chooses not to fulfill his or her obligation and commitment, the following procedure will be observed in this order before any changes in schedule:

1. Required Student/parent conference with Mrs. Edwards OR Mrs. Garza/Mr. Griffith (FHS)
2. Required Student/director/counselor conference
3. Music and formal wear turned in
4. Assessment and fundraising obligations cleared
5. Drop slip signed by Mrs. Edwards OR Mrs. Garza/Mr. Griffith (LFHS)
6. Schedule change initiated

***Dear Parents,***

The Robert E. Lee Senior and Freshman High School Choral Program offers a unique experience whereby a student may gain not only musical skills and a lifelong appreciation of music, but discipline, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment by working with others toward the common goal of EXCELLENCE.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of the expectations, requirements, and activities of the choral program. The Choral Program is a performance-based program. In order to be a member of the Lee High School Choral Program, students are expected to participate in required concerts and rehearsals.

I hope you will become involved by attending rehearsals and concerts. Come see the preparation as well as the results of these rehearsals.

Please feel free to contact us any time you have a question or problem concerning your student or the program.

For current information, rehearsal schedules, and updates: [www.lhschoirs.org](http://www.lhschoirs.org)

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