

**Course Syllabus**  
***Middle School Concert Choir***  
**Ms. Ward**

**Contact Information:**

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**Phone-** (906) 635-3839 ext. 5744,

**Conference Period-** 2nd hour, 8:55 am - 9:45 am at the high school

**Concert Choir, Course Description:**

Concert Choir offers students the opportunity to continue to develop healthy vocal skills and provide musical experiences, which help to develop students' knowledge and appreciation for a variety of music. Participation in scheduled concerts and festivals is considered a vital part of the course and attendance is mandatory. Grading is based on class participation, singing tests, written assignments, and performing at scheduled performances.

**Purpose Statement:**

The purpose of this course is to teach you how to navigate the world of vocal music in a fun, engaging, and realistic way. It is my sincere hope that you all leave my class as more confident, happy, and knowledgeable than you entered. If you always make your best effort and keep a positive attitude, you will experience much success, both individually and as a choir. You matter. Your music matters.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Grades will be based on:

- Attendance
- Weekly Citizenship grades - 5 points per week, may be adjusted for shortened weeks
- Two to Four Performances- 50 points per performance
- Singing tests - 25-50 points each depending on the material
- Exams - 50 points each
- Written assignments

Your grade will be based on earning points for the activities listed above.

The grading scale for Concert Choir is as follows:

100-93 is an A

90-92 is an A-

87-89 is a B+

73-76 is a C

70-72 is a C-

67-69 is a D+

83-86 is a B  
80-82 is a B-  
77-79 is a C+

63-66 is a D  
60-62 is a D-  
0-59 is an E

Our school employs a semester grading system with report cards issued to students four (4) times during the course of the school year. A term will be approximately nine (9) weeks. Final grades are calculated on a semester basis. Final grade calculation is based on 40% for each of two marking periods and 20% of the final exam.

**Citizenship Grades:**

Excellent attitude and citizenship are paramount to each student's success and the success of the choir program. Each student is given a citizenship grade each week between "1" and "5"- one being the worst and ten being the best. Within the grading policy, the citizenship grade constitutes 25% of the student's overall grade.

The criteria for each citizenship grade are as follows. Points will be awarded on a weekly basis:

A "5" in citizenship will be given if the student:

- Shows a positive attitude at all times
- Is attentive and contributes 100% of the time
- Is free of unexcused absences
- Is ready to play on time
- Is always prepared (music, pencil, etc)
- Always puts music and materials away (chair and stand if applicable)

A "4" in citizenship will be given if the student:

- Is generally positive
- Pays attention most of the time
- Is tardy or has an unexcused absence
- Is prepared most of the time with only occasional lapses
- Always puts music and materials away

A "3" in citizenship will be given if the student:

- Is apathetic or not always positive
- Tends to be disruptive or does not pay attention
- Does not always participate in classroom activities
- Occasionally forgets music and/or instrument
- Is tardy or has two unexcused absences
- Is sometimes not prepared
- Sometimes forgets to put away music and/or materials
- Has more than three (3) tardies or one unexcused absence in a marking period

A "2" in citizenship will be given if the student:

- Has a negative attitude
- Is continuously disruptive
- Does not participate in classroom activities
- Regularly forgets music or materials
- Is almost never prepared
- Consistently forgets to put away music and/or materials
- Has more than five (5) tardies or one unexcused absence in a marking period

A "1" in citizenship will be given if the student:

- Shows some or all of the characteristics to get a "4" in citizenship
- Executes a suspendable offense in the band/choir classroom (per Sault Schools Student Handbook)

**Performance Grades:**

"A"-You arrive on time as specified by Ms. Ward, are dressed appropriately (uniforms, when appropriate), behave appropriately and attentively on stage and in the audience and stay for the entire performance.

"B"- You fulfill all but one of the requirements for an "A."

"C"-You fulfill all but two of the requirements for an "A."

"D"-You fulfill all but three of the requirements for an "A."

"F"-You fail to fulfill four or more of the requirements for an "A."

- ❖ An unexcused absence from any scheduled performance will result in a grade of "F" for that performance and your final grade for that grading period may be lowered two letter grades. If you have an excused absence from a performance, the student will have an opportunity to make up those points by singing their concert music before the class.

**Singing Test Grades:**

Singing test grades will be based on the accuracy of the rhythms, notes, articulation, diction, dynamic markings, posture and tone of your individual performance. Singing tests will consist of scales and/or musical excerpts. Singing tests may be performed in front of the class, in Ms. Ward's office, or recorded at the director's discretion.

**Attendance:**

Regular attendance by all members is vital to the success of the Sault Area Public Schools choir program. This is a performing organization and all performances are required.

***Steps will be taken to schedule concerts on days with as few conflicts as possible, but at times there may be an unavoidable overlap. Please take any action necessary to ensure that you can be present at our concerts. If you have athletic events, please let Ms. Ward know as soon as the conflict is known so that we may work out a compromise. We are currently a small choir and all players are vital to our success!***

### **Sickness**

Unfortunately, getting sick is a part of life that we must all deal with sometimes. If you happen to be sick on performance day, please send an email or call so that the proper adjustments may be made. I am assuming that if you are well enough to be in school that day that you will be at the concert that evening.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Student employment is NOT an excused absence for rehearsals or performances. Students should schedule their work hours around pre-scheduled choir commitments.

Homework is NOT an excused absence. Every effort to complete school work should be made around our scheduled performances. Remember, our choir needs you in order to perform our best at our concerts.

Conflicts such as sporting events or practices, church activities, or other after school extracurriculars will not count as excused absence, as I will notify you of all concert dates well in advance. If you should need assistance taking care of possible overlapping schedules, please let me know and I will be happy to assist in any way possible.

Every unexcused absence will affect a student's overall citizenship grade by 25%. This means that if a student does not come to a concert for any reason other than an emergency or with prior notice (see excused absences) dressed appropriately and ready to perform they will lose 25% off of their overall citizenship grade.

- For example: Suzy did not go to the holiday concert scheduled in December. She was not sick and did not fill out a pre-excused absence form indicating she had a prior conflict. That means that Suzy's 100% citizenship grade is automatically lowered to a 75%.

### **Excused Absences**

Students may be excused if a pre-excused absence form is filled out, signed, and returned no less than 7 days prior to the missed performance. These forms will be available in the band and choir room for students to take. Additionally, these forms will be made available on my class website to be printed at home as is convenient.

### **Materials:**

You are expected to bring all choir music, worksheets, handouts, and a pencil with you to class every single day. If you are sick and cannot sing with us you are expected to take notes and make markings in your music to reflect your engagement with class that day. Proof may be requested at any time.

***Any choir materials: warm-ups, music, folders, etc. are just like a textbook in other classes and must be returned in good, reusable condition or you will be charged the cost of replacing it.***

### **Classroom Expectations:**

- Be in the right place, at the right time, with all of your materials, and an award-winning attitude. Hint: don't forget your pencil.
- Do your best to make decisions that will help you grow as a person, as a musician, as a student, and as a friend. Encourage others around you to make similar decisions.
- Please keep our room clean by leaving all food and drink in your lockers. You may be allowed clear water in a clear water bottle, but it must be completely sealed in case you knock it over.
- Participate in class discussions and rehearsals. We are fortunate enough to have quite a bright bunch representing our choir program and your opinions can absolutely make us more well-rounded and educated. Please share your insights as often as they will be helpful to our growth as a choir!

❖ *Please observe the expectations of Sault Area High School and Career Center as outlined in your student handbook. This can be found at <http://sault.eup.k12.mi.us/domain/481>*

### **Classroom Procedures:**

#### **Seating Chart:**

There will be a seating chart for this class to start. We may be adopting a new seating system, but until otherwise noted please stick to your assigned seat for safety and emergency situations. The more disciplined you are with this the better off we are in the event that an emergency were to occur.

#### **Tardiness:**

Tardies will be given to any student that does not have their music out and ready to sing by the time the bell rings.

#### **Dismissal:**

Our time together is very precious and that I expect you to respect yourselves and the time that we spend together in class. Please wait to pack up until I have given you permission.

**Extra Help:**

I would love to help any and all students that would like the opportunity to get more individualized help with their voices or general music knowledge. Please let me know if you are interested in receiving additional help and I will set up a time that works for both of us to meet!

**Fundraisers:**

Fundraisers are used to pay for the purchase various materials and opportunities that the choir program intends to partake in. All students enrolled in choir are expected to participate in at least one of the fundraisers if there are multiple as every student will benefit in some way from the funds generated.

-Please know that fundraising opportunities may pop up at any time and that more information will be given for each fundraiser that is scheduled.

**Concluding Thoughts:**

I am incredibly excited to join the staff at SAPS and cannot wait to meet our wonderful students. I am confident that we will have an incredible year full of growth, discipline, and happy moments.

**Please sign and return by Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup> for a grade.**

I have read the Choir Handbook with my child and reviewed the guidelines.

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

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

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my child to be photographed and the photo to be used without identifiers (such as name) for the purpose of newsletters, websites and promoting the choir program.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT give permission for my child to be photographed.