

Pike Place HS

Choral Program Handbook

2020-2021 School Year



“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent”

- Victor Hugo

Mr. Daniel Behler, Director of Choirs

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WELCOME TO THE PPHS CHORAL FAMILY!

Thank you for joining one of our wonderful choirs at Pike Place HS! It's wonderful to have your voice amongst the many amazing students that make this ensemble – and program – what it is! Within this handbook, you'll find all the information you need to succeed in this group. Read it thoroughly and contact me with any questions or concerns. Additionally, after reading in full, please present this to your parent or guardian to read.

On the last page, there is a contract for you and your parent/guardian to fill out – this is due back by **Tuesday, August 31st, 2021.**

Statement on Inclusivity

The Pike Place High School Choral Program prides itself on creating a safe and compassionate community for *every* student, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or ability. Any behavior which actively undermines this will not be tolerated and will be met with a proportional reduction of the offending student's grade, disciplinary action congruent with the policies of the PPSD, and/or removal from their ensemble(s). Additionally, the choir director reserves the right to set relevant conditions for the offending student to remain in their ensemble(s), such as a written or verbal apology, an inclusivity-geared research project, etc.

Statement on Repertoire

Each ensemble will study, rehearse, and perform a wide variety of repertoire, representing different cultures and from different points throughout history. It is the responsibility Director of Choirs to research each piece, in order to accurately teach and perform it through lenses of cultural appreciation, empathy, and respect. Likewise, it is expected that every student approach the selected repertoire with an open heart and mind – there will be no room in this program for harmful or intolerant attitudes. At times, music with sacred texts and meaning will be selected. It is the position of NAfME (the National Association for Music Education) that:

“Since music with a sacred text or of a religious origin (particularly choral music) constitutes such a substantial portion of music literature and has such an important place in the history of music, it should and does have an important place in music education.”

As a guarantee, at no point will the choir classroom serve as a sanctuary or place of worship; the selection of diverse repertoire, including sacred music, is strictly for educational purposes.

ENSEMBLES: ELIGIBILITY & MEETING TIMES

The ***Pike Place Blended Choir*** is a non-auditioned SATB ensemble, available to all students grades 9 – 12. Participation in this ensemble counts as a one-credit elective course and will appear on the student’s transcript as such. This ensemble meeting every day during second period. However, due to scheduling constraints, full-ensemble rehearsals alternate daily with the Pike Place Symphonic Band, aligning with the district’s six-day cycle:

- Members of both the Blended Choir and the Symphonic Band are expected to attend choir rehearsals on Days 1, 3, and 5. They will attend band rehearsal on even days.
- Students who are not members of the Pike Place Symphonic Band are expected to attend rehearsal every day.

Students are expected to attend all rehearsals mandated by this policy. Grading of attendance will be discussed later within this handbook.

The ***Veranda Voices*** is the Treble Choir. Participation in this choir is mandatory for all Soprano and Alto singers within the Blended Choir and grading for the ensemble will be reflected in the students’ Blended Choir grade. Rehearsals will occur every other Wednesday during Noon Activity Hour, alternating with the Tenor/Bass Choir.

The ***Sumatra Singers*** is the Tenor/Bass Choir. Participation in this choir is mandatory for all Tenor and Bass singers within the Blended Choir and grading for the ensemble will be reflected in the students’ Blended Choir grade. Rehearsals will occur every other Wednesday during Noon Activity Hour, alternating with the Treble Choir.

The ***Espresso Ensemble*** is the auditioned Chamber Choir. Auditions will occur during the first week of the school year. To audition and become a member, students must participate in the Blended Choir. Upon acceptance into the ensemble, students will be enrolled in the half-credit elective course and will be graded for this ensemble independently. As the top ensemble, this group will have a slightly more intensive schedule, including multiple performances at school and community events. Rehearsals will occur at 7:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays – a time approved of by Dr. Ryan Havens, the PPHS Athletics and Activities Director.

Ensemble Purposes and Goals

Each ensemble within the Pike Place Choral Program strives to:

- Provide experiences for musical, intellectual, social, and personal growth through the study, rehearsal, and performance of varied choral repertoire.
- Serve as an inclusive and safe community for self-expression, free from judgement.
- Challenge students to engage in productive and difficult conversations regarding prejudices, inclusivity, and mental health.

PROGRAM POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

General Expectations!

All members of the Pike Place Choral Program are expected to:

- Be present – both physically and mentally – at all rehearsals and performances.
 - o Follow the attendance policy for absences.
- Be prepared for rehearsals and performances with all necessary materials.
- Be respectful – to your peers, teachers, audience members, and even your materials.

Materials

Every choir member is expected to have a sharpened pencil and music at rehearsal. Black folders will be provided to each member, and are required for performances, if music is being used.

Uniforms

For all performances (unless stated otherwise), students must wear **full formal concert black**. From neck to toe to wrists, students should be covered in some form of black clothing. Below are a few options for acceptable outfit pieces:

Tops:

- Long sleeve black button-down shirt
- Short sleeve blouse with black cardigan
- Formal black sweater
- Black suit jacket with short sleeve black polo
- Full black dress with black tights

Bottoms:

- Black dress pants with black socks
- Black skirt with black tights
- Full black dress with black tights

Students are welcome to wear any combination of these pieces! **Black dress shoes are required**, and students will also receive their choice between a silver tie or scarf as an accent piece. If you're uncertain about an outfit piece, or have an idea not listed in the acceptable pieces, feel free to ask me! For reference, below are a few examples of what NOT to wear:

- Anything that isn't concert black
- Black leggings or yoga pants
- Black sweatpants
- Black T-Shirts or casual shirts
- Black sneakers or non-dress shoes

Rehearsal Attendance

Students are expected to attend all rehearsals for their respective ensembles and will be graded on their attendance as outlined below. In addition to being at rehearsal, students must actively

participate and come prepared with the necessary materials, as outlined above, to be considered in attendance and receive full credit. If a student is unable to attend a rehearsal, they must notify the choir director beforehand, and provide the reason for their absence. Students will receive one unexcused absence which will not impact their grade. Starting with the second unexcused absence, students will not receive any points for that day's attendance grade. As participation and grading for the Veranda Voices/Sumatra Singers is attached to participation and grading for the Blended Choir, only one unexcused absence will be forgiven between the two ensembles. No unexcused absences will be forgiven for rehearsals of the Espresso Ensemble. Additionally, as stated above, students participating in the Symphonic Band will not be expected to attend rehearsals on even cycle days.

Performance Attendance

Students are required to attend every performance their respective ensemble has. As with rehearsals, they must come prepared – including in appropriate uniform – to be considered in attendance. Missed performances will be replaced by an assignment to receive points for the missed performance grade. For a performance absence to be considered excused, they must notify the choir director at least one week prior to the performance (exceptions will be made for emergencies and legitimate unforeseen circumstances). Students who miss a performance with an excused absence must:

- Submit recordings of at least two pieces from the repertoire of each ensemble they participate in.
- If available, view the official recording of the performance and reflect on the performance in a brief paper. A minimum of one sentence per performing ensemble, including instrumental groups, is required for full credit.

If a student misses a performance with an unexcused absence, they must:

- Submit recordings of at least two pieces from the repertoire of each ensemble they participate in.
- Research the context of at least one piece from the repertoire of each ensemble they participate in and write a one-page paper per piece on their findings.
- If available, view the official recording of the performance and reflect on the performance in a brief paper. A minimum of three sentences per performing ensemble, including instrumental groups, is required for full credit.

Performance Etiquette

In addition to attending every performance in uniform, students are expected to attend the event in full, to show support for any other performing ensembles on the program. If they are unable to attend the portion of the performance they do not perform in, they must view the official recording of the performance, if available, and submit at least two sentences of reflection per missed performing ensemble.

Grading

In addition to attendance (encompassing participation and preparation), students will need to submit brief voice checks each quarter, singing a brief passage as determined by the choir director from one selection of each ensemble's repertoire. As appropriate, other brief assignments may crop up, to challenge the students and help teach new or fascinating concepts.

Below is a breakdown of how points will be assigned each quarter:

- Rehearsal attendance 5pts. per rehearsal
- Performance attendance 100 pts. per performance
- Voice checks 20 pts.
- Other small assignments 10 pts. per assignment (maximum)

If a student feels they deserve a better grade than what they receive, they may contact the choir director and explain their rationale in an attempt to get their grade changed. The choir director reserves the final decision regarding student grades.

Communication

The primary method of communication will be email for both students and parents/guardians. No personal student emails will be collected; all email communication will occur through their assigned @ppsd.org address. Information will also be posted to Google Classroom, the PPSD's preferred online learning platform. Voice checks and assignments will be submitted there.

Additionally, students are encouraged to register for Mr. Behler's PPSD Choir's Remind System. Through this, they will receive reminders and notes, but cannot reply to Mr. Behler. To do this, students must text 81010 with the following handles, according to their ensembles:

- @pphsblended for the Blended Choir
- @pphsverona for the Verona Voices
- @pphssumatra for the Sumatra Singers
- @pphsespresso for the Espresso Ensemble

At the start of each school year, the Remind roster will be reset for each ensemble. Singers must register for these text alerts annually.

Bathroom Usage

Inflatable innertubes will serve as the bathroom passes in the choir classroom. Only two students may check them out at a time, and they must wear them through the hallway to the nearest bathroom. They may take them off to use the bathroom and wash their hands. If gone for too long, the choir director may request a student go check on them, to make sure they didn't get stuck in a narrow doorway or caught in a stall due to the innertube.

Food and Drink

According to PPSD policy, no food or drinks are allowed in any classrooms. Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to choir, as it is good for their voices to stay hydrated.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

According to PPSD policy, only registered personal laptops and assigned one-to-one Chromebooks are allowed. If necessary, they may use them to complete surveys, assignments, or forms distributed by the choir director. Beyond this, they must be kept away during rehearsals. At performances, all phones must be turned off – not just silenced – turned off.

Please cut the paper at the dotted line and return to Mr. Behler by **Tuesday, August 31st**.

PIKE PLACE HS CHORAL PROGRAM CONTRACT

By signing below, I, Mr. Daniel L. Behler, Director of Choirs at Pike Place HS, promise to put forth my best effort to create an inclusive and safe classroom; to research, study, and select appropriate and diverse repertoire, and to approach every piece through the lens of respect; to hold my students to musical, intellectual, social, and personal standards, and to facilitate growth in these areas, and to attend to the students’ needs in these areas; and to do my part to organize and execute wonderful performances and provide opportunities for artistic and musical beauty.

I, the undersigned student, have read this handbook in full, and promise to adhere to the outlined expectations and policies; to put forth my best effort in every rehearsal and performance; to approach my participation in this choral program with respect, empathy, and an open heart and mind; and to seek out musical, intellectual, social, and personal growth through my participation.

I, the undersigned parent or legal guardian of the undersigned student, have read this handbook in full, and promise to assist my student in their participation in this choir program.

Director of Choirs:

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date: _____

Student:

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date: _____