

Fort Collins High School



Choir Handbook

2021-2022

“Where Excellence Is Expected”

revised 7.27.21

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“Body, mind, spirit, voice...it takes the WHOLE person to sing and rejoice!”

Dear Choir Parent & Student,

You have begun a valuable and enjoyable experience, which will be fun, challenging and educational. It is our goal to teach you to be successful. The success we seek is a result of a commitment to excellence by each member, parent, director and the school as a whole. We cannot value success in terms of ratings, awards or trophies. The FCHS choir department is successful when each member gives the maximum effort and has done the best with his or her abilities. We want the performance opportunity for you to be the best possible experience. This philosophy carries over into other academic areas as well as your adult life. Students learn that commitment and a desire for knowledge are the road to success in all areas of life.

As a member of the FCHS choir department, you are automatically in a social peer group with which you will have much in common. Friendships will be made that will last a lifetime. You will be given opportunities to develop interpersonal and leadership skills, and will have many opportunities that might not be possible outside of the choir world.

Just as the choir has a commitment to excellence, so must the individual make a commitment to the choir and its goals. As a member of the FCHS choirs, each individual is an integral part of the whole, and for the choir to perform at its very best, each member must do his or her part. Acquiring personal responsibility to the choir before personal preference is sometimes a sacrifice that must be made. This often involves students thinking ahead regarding scheduling of concerts and festivals so that there are no last-minute schedule conflicts. This may mean that students need to work ahead in other classes for the occasional missed day of school to attend a festival. Part of our expectation is that each student will be well versed in the policies and schedule laid out in this handbook. We expect each member of the FCHS choir department to act with foresight and responsibility, and we will hold them accountable to this expectation.

To the parents, the success your child enjoys in choir is largely due to your support as a parent. Please encourage your child to practice at home, and see to it that they are prepared and punctual to rehearsals and performances. If possible, one of the most beneficial things you can do to help your student is to provide them with private lessons. Show an interest and support your child's music study by enthusiastically attending every performance possible. YOU are their most important audience. Your presence means more than you might suspect.

The following handbook is designed to give you information that will enable you to have a highly successful year as a member of the FCHS choir department. It will also allow you to better understand what it means to be a choir member. There are guidelines, regulations, and information to ensure the success of YOUR choir. This is your choir program and your willingness to work to uphold a high standard is of utmost importance. Please, **read this handbook carefully** so that you may understand what is expected of you and what you should expect as a choir member. Consult this handbook to answer any questions you may have about the FCHS choral program. **Please sign the required form by Friday, August 20th.**

Thank you for sharing your student(s) with us. These talented young individuals are the heart and soul of the FCHS music program and are an enormous gift!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kaitlin Miles & Mr. William Ecker

Choral Department Policies and Responsibilities

Statement of Choir Policy

This document allows choir members and parents to understand their areas of responsibility. Becoming familiar with this document will help each choir member to make the most of his/her opportunity to become a better person through their involvement in music.

We firmly believe that each student should improve through daily progress. It is felt that when a student has lost the will to improve and make a contribution to the choir, he/she is not fulfilling their obligations to the school, fellow students, and the community by continuing in the program. The happiest choir member is the one who is improving through regular practice and daily progress and who has developed a high sense of purpose toward which he/she is willing to work.

Choir Member's Responsibilities

- Be regular in attendance and account for all absences.
- Be prompt and prepared. Pencils and music required at EVERY rehearsal!
- Make a real effort to learn and improve daily.
- Be respectful and attentive during all rehearsals.
- Become responsible for and assume the consequences for your actions.
- Follow all choir rules, school regulations, and all travel instructions.
- CARE FOR YOUR VOICE!!! Your voice is your instrument, and unlike other instruments, you cannot put it away and leave it alone after rehearsal. As a member of the choir, it is your responsibility to get adequate rest and hydration, refrain from yelling and smoking, and make every effort to have your instrument in top condition each and every day.
- Be honest and fair with others concerning equipment, music and school life.
- Cooperate with fellow choir members and share with them the responsibilities and privileges that are part of the choir program.

Director's Responsibilities

- Provide a quality rehearsal setting.
- Encourage daily progress of the individual student and the entire choir.
- Provide members with a full musical education through rehearsal, performance, teaching, testing and listening.
- Deal appropriately with members that are not contributing to the choir program.
- Supervise students in class and on school-sponsored music trips.
- Evaluate each choir member on his/her musicianship and music education.
- Be of service to FCHS students in any and every way possible.

Student Leadership Possibilities

CLASS OFFICERS

(President, Vice President, Spirit Leader)

The Choir Officers will be selected by the ensemble for each major ensemble. These students will be asked to assist in any of the following ways:

- Set an example for the choir through constant preparation, promptness and energy.
- Attend ALL concerts.
- Conduct warm-up exercises at the beginning of class if necessary.
- Assist in concert set-up.
- Assist in classroom set-up and clean-up.
- Report and record attendance.
- Lead rehearsals on occasions of director's absence.
- Plan team-building activities.
- Other responsibilities assigned by directors.

SECTION LEADERS

Section leaders will be selected by Mrs. Miles & Mr. Ecker based upon each student's musicianship and leadership qualities. These students will be asked to assist in any of the following ways:

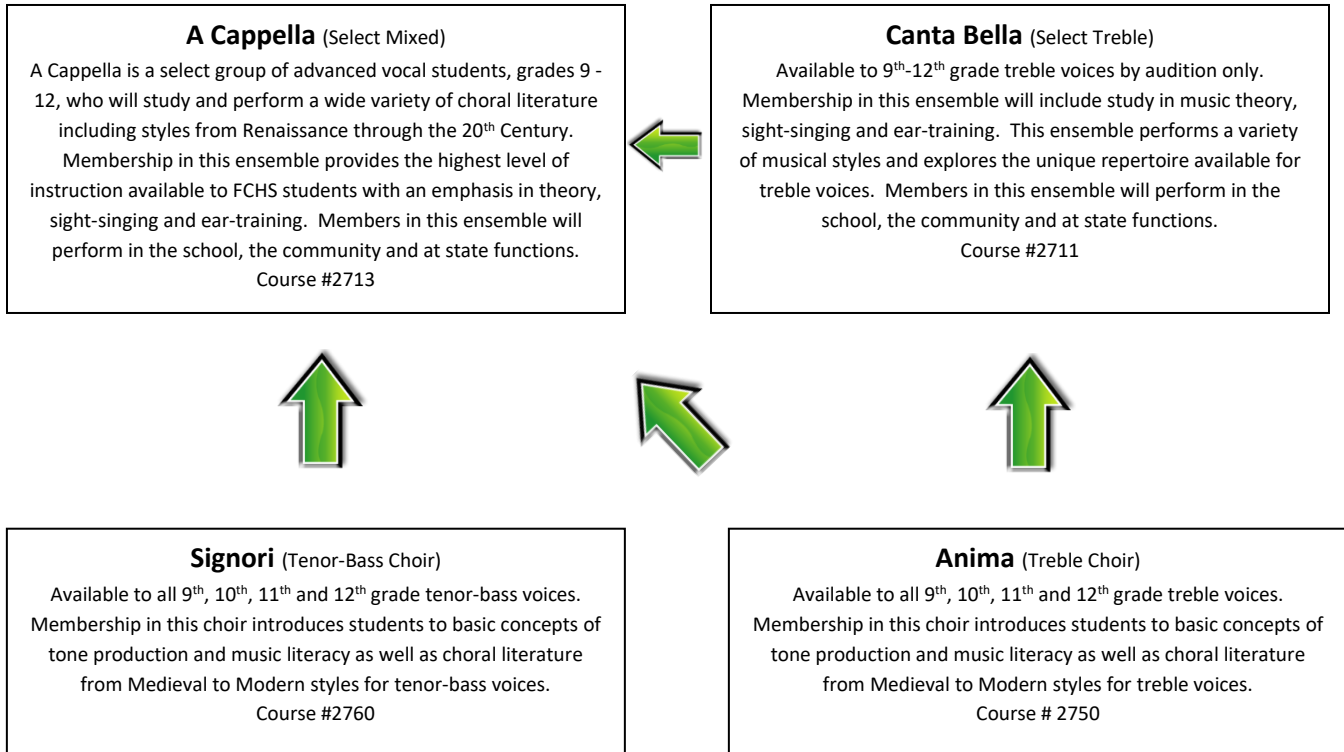
- Set an example for the choir through constant preparation, promptness and energy.
- Attend ALL concerts.
- Lead regular sectionals and monitor progress and musical needs within a section.
- Help coordinate music distribution and collection.
- Assist in planning team-building activities.
- Other responsibilities assigned by directors.
- Help Choir Librarian facilitate check-in and resulting fines at the end of each quarter/concert.

CHOIR LIBRARIAN

Choir librarians will be selected by Mrs. Miles & Mr. Ecker based upon each student's level of responsibility and organization. These students will be asked to assist in any of the following ways:

- Set an example for the choir through constant preparation, promptness and energy.
- File all music and keep the music library up-to-date and orderly.
- Number, stamp and sign out new music to choir members.
- Facilitate check-in and resulting fines at the end of each quarter/concert.
- Other responsibilities assigned by directors.

Ensemble Information and Progression Chart



Other Ensembles

Viribus

Course #2730 (0 Hour)

Viribus is a select group of tenor-bass voices, who will study and perform a variety of literature. Public performances outside of class are part of this course and attendance is required. Students must be concurrently enrolled in a concert ensemble to participate in Viribus.

Barbershop

Course #2730 (0 Hour)

Barbershop is a select group of 4 men or women who will study and perform a variety of literature including barbershop, vocal jazz and contemporary a cappella. Public performances outside of class are a part of this course and attendance is required. Students must be concurrently enrolled in a concert ensemble to participate in barbershop.

GRADING POLICIES

Choir is a unique course at Fort Collins High School. It has curricular requirements, just as any other academic discipline, but it also has out-of-class requirements. The level of commitment from each individual student is the driving force behind the organization and is reflected in the level of achievement reached by the individual and the program. Rehearsals are the means by which students learn, and by their very nature cannot be reproduced or made-up. Therefore, it is imperative that students be present unless absence is unavoidable. Excessive rehearsal absence or non-participation will undoubtedly affect a student's performance. Although we frequently function as the conductors, we are primarily teachers who are responsible for the musical and aesthetic education of each student in the choir program. This is the reason we are insistent upon each student's daily participation. Rehearsals are not optional and are reflected in the student's daily grade.

Grading Scale Breakdown

Participation/Daily Assignments/Attendance – 30%

Sight-Reading/Theory/History/Skill Evaluations – 50%

Concerts/Performances – 20%

PARTICIPATION/DAILY ASSIGNMENTS/ATTENDANCE

Daily Rehearsal Expectations

Students will receive 5 points/day for participation

In order to receive full participation points, students are expected to abide by the following policies:

Attendance

- Attendance at every rehearsal is mandatory. We function together as a unit – anytime you are absent, it diminishes the results obtained by all other choir members.
- Poudre School District Attendance Policy and the FCHS Discipline Policy will be the governing policies for all attendance issues. This includes the issuing of attendance contracts and/or the removal of a student due to excessive absences.
- **Students will lose their 5 points for an absence whether it is excused or unexcused.**
- **Excused Absences:** An excused absence from a rehearsal will be defined as:
 - Personal illness of the student. Excuse by a parent is **required**.
 - Any student who is absent from regular school classes of the day of a performance is considered to be too ill to attend the performance that evening.
 - Death of a family member. Written excuse is required.
 - Students will be given the opportunity to make up an excused absence for **full** credit by completing make up to be determined by the student's director.
- **Unexcused Absences:**
 - An unexcused absence from a rehearsal will result a loss of all points. Make up points will **not** be awarded for unexcused absences.
 - No student will be excused from our rehearsals to make up work in another class, unless the absence from the other class was due to a direct conflict with a choir activity.
- **Tardy:**
 - When the tardy bell rings, a student is considered tardy if not in place and ready to perform. All tardies are unexcused unless properly excused with a pass. Students with unexcused tardies will automatically lose 1 point/tardy. Students may not earn back points lost from being tardy.
- **Other Daily Expectations:**
 - Bring music, a pencil & water with you to all rehearsals.

- When the director or someone in charge steps on the podium, all other activities must cease. Your full attention must be given to that person. Inattentive or disruptive students will lose their daily participation points.
- While the rehearsal is in progress, students should give their undivided attention to the director, even though the director might be directing their attention at another section of the choir. Talking or singing while the director is speaking should not happen.
- No food, drink (except water), gum, candy, etc. will be allowed in rehearsals. Points will be lost if this instruction is not followed.
- No cell phones are allowed in rehearsal. Ringing cell phones and phones used by students for any purpose during rehearsal will be confiscated.
- You are responsible for your choir music. Students who do not have their music at rehearsals will lose points from that day's participation. Music must be turned in at the end of a concert period or students will be charged the cost to replace the music.

SIGHT-READING/THEORY/SKILL EVALUATIONS

Although performance is an important aspect of the FCHS music department, it is not the only aspect that students are evaluated on. Students will be evaluated every quarter in their sight-reading, music theory and singing skill abilities. We expect that students will leave the FCHS music department as well-rounded musicians, not just trained monkeys. We want you to know the basics of music so that you can go on to be successful whether you chose to major in music or simply continue to be a supporter of the arts through concert attendance. Students will be told in their individual class periods of the requirements for their particular class.

PERFORMANCES

Attendance at all concerts is mandatory!

- **Work is not an excused absence.** A calendar of activities is included in this handbook and posted in the choir room. It is your responsibility to clear your work schedule with your employer.
- Any **excused** absence from a performance will result in the student being given the opportunity to do make-up work for full credit. A message should be left on the director's voice mail as soon as the student is aware of the need to miss a performance.
- A request to be excused from a performance due to schedule conflict must be made well in advance, **at least 2 weeks prior to the concert.** Absences will be approved on an individual basis. Special cases will be considered. Please note that the calendar of events is located on the following page of this handbook. **Check the dates now and discuss any conflicts with your director ASAP!**

FCHS CHOIR CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Event	Location	Performing	
8/5-10	Thurs-Tues	8 AM-12 PM	Dress Exchange/Measuring	Performing Arts Wing	All music students
8/20	Friday	4:15 PM	Choral Contracts Due		All Choirs
8/23	Monday	4:15 PM	Fun Home Auditions	Black Box Theater	Auditioning Students
9/3	Friday	4:15 PM	Concert Attire \$\$ Due	To Miles/Ecker/Bookkeeper	All music students
9/13	Monday	4:15 PM	Tri-M Applications Due	To Mr. Hermanson	
9/13	Monday	4:15 PM	All-State Choir Registration Due	To Mrs. Miles	Auditioning Students
9/20	Monday	7:30 PM	Tri-M Induction Ceremony	Large Rehearsal Room	Accepted Students
10/1	Friday	All Day	PSD Treble Choir Festival	McNeal Auditorium	Canta Bella
10/8	Friday	4:15 PM	All-State Jazz Auditions Due	To Miles/Ecker	Juniors/Seniors
10/7-9	Thurs-Sat	7:00 PM	Fun Home	Black Box Theater	selected students
10/12	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Fall Choir Concert	McNeal Auditorium	All Choirs
10/14	Thursday	7:30 PM	Fall Jazz Concert	McNeal Auditorium	Barbershop
10/15-16	Fri-Sat	All Day	All-State Choir Auditions	Fossil Ridge HS	Juniors/Seniors
11/4	Thursday	All Day	Metro State Choral Festival	Metro State College	A Cappella
12/8	Wednesday	8:00 AM	<i>Hallelujah Chorus</i> Rehearsal	McNeal Auditorium	All Choirs
12/10	Friday	5:00 & 7:30 PM	Holiday Gift Concert	McNeal Auditorium	All Choirs
11/4-5	Tues-Wed	4:00-7:00 PM	Annie Auditions	McNeal Auditorium	auditioning students
1/19	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Pre-CMEA Concert	McNeal Auditorium	
1/20-22	Thurs-Sat	All Day	Colorado All-State Choir	Denver Convention Center	selected singers
1/26-29	Wed-Sat	TBA	CMEA	Broadmoor Hotel	
2/14	Monday	All Day	Singing Valentines	FCHS	Barbershop
2/22	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Jazz Concert	McNeal Auditorium	Barbershop
3/8	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Spring Choir Concert	Location TBA	A Cap & Canta Bella
3/7-11	Mon-Fri	during class	2022-2023 Choir Auditions		All choir students
3/30	Wednesday	TBA	CHSAA Festival	Rocky Mountain HS	Anima & Signori
4/14-16	Thurs-Sat	7:00 PM	Annie the Musical	McNeal Auditorium	selected singers
4/14	Thursday	4:15 PM	Graduation Music Auditions	Rehearsal Room 3	Auditioning Seniors
4/25	Monday	6:30 PM	Academic Awards Night	McNeal Auditorium	A Cappella
5/10	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Senior Recital	McNeal Auditorium	Volunteer Seniors
5/11	Wednesday	8:00 AM	Graduation Music Rehearsal	McNeal Auditorium	All Choirs
5/12	Thursday	7:30 PM	Jazz Concert	McNeal Auditorium	Barbershop
5/13	Friday	8:00 AM	Scholarship Breakfast	Small Gym	A Cappella
5/17	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Honors Concert	McNeal Auditorium	A Cap/Canta Bella
5/18	Wednesday	7:00 PM	End of the Year Concert	McNeal Auditorium	Anima/Signori
5/20	Friday	TBA	Graduation Practice	Moby Gym - CSU	All Choirs
5/20	Friday	6:30 PM	Graduation	Moby Gym – CSU	All Choirs

Miscellaneous Information

Concert Attire

The choral tradition at Fort Collins High School is a rich and strong one. Our program has a statewide reputation for excellence both on and off the stage. Part of this excellence is established not only by the way we perform, but also by the professionalism in our dress. Each member of the FCHS music department is responsible for purchasing their assigned formal concert attire. Choir-specific concert attire information can be found on the FCHS Music Department website: <https://fch.psdschools.org/academics/departments/music>.

All-State Choir

All Juniors and Seniors are HIGHLY encouraged to audition for All-State Choir. Acceptance into All-State Choir is the highest honor that an individual student may receive in the state of Colorado for choir. Auditions for the 2021-2022 All-State Choir will be held at Fossil Ridge High School on October 15th & 16th. The All-State Festival will be held January 20th-22nd at the Colorado Convention Center in downtown Denver. More information will be available to students at the beginning of the school year. More information can be found at www.aschoir.com.

Letter Points/Awards

Recognition for musical achievement and participation is given at the end of each year at the Honors Concert. Students who have met the lettering criteria will receive a letter. The criteria for lettering will be available to all Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior and Senior students in April.

Fundraising

Visit the fundraising tab on the music department website for more information.

Vocal Care

As a member of the FCHS choral program, part of your responsibility is to keep your instrument in good working order. Mrs. Miles & Mr. Ecker will always encourage students to rest voices that are tired or sick. However, actions can be taken on the part of the student in order to keep your voice in excellent condition.

1. Get adequate rest. We know how busy you are, but sleep is one of the most important things you can do for your voice.
2. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Especially in our dry Colorado climate, water is essential for your voice.
3. NEVER, EVER, EVER SMOKE. There are endless reasons for this, but in terms of vocal care, smoking is one of the worst things you can do.
4. Be careful how you use your speaking voice. Vocal damage is often caused by simply talking or yelling too much. When you speak, use the same support and tone production that you use when you sing.
5. Vocal chords are easily damaged and the damage is permanent. You are at an age when it is easy to damage your voice. Be aware of when your voice is getting tired and let it rest. You are stuck with this voice for the rest of your life, and you will regret it if you abuse it now.

FCHS Choral Staff Biographies & Information

Kaitlin Miles

A Cappella, Canta Bella, Anima, Beginning Class Piano, Viribus, Music Theater

Phone: (970) 488-8240

Email: kmiles@psdschools.org



Kaitlin Miles is in her fifteenth year as Director of Vocal Music at Fort Collins High School, where she teaches A Cappella (select mixed choir), Canta Bella (select treble voices), Anima (freshmen treble choir), multiple sections of Beginning Class Piano, and co-directs/vocal directs two musicals each year. Originally from Fort Collins, Kaitlin received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, graduating magna cum laude in the spring of 2007. While singing at UNC, Kaitlin had the privilege of singing under both Dr. Howard Skinner and Dr. Galen Darrough. Under her direction, the FCHS choirs consistently receive Superior ratings at festivals and numerous students in the FCHS choral department are selected annually for the Colorado All-State Choirs. Additionally, her students travel both nationally and internationally, previously performing in locations such as New York City, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic and Australia. In addition to her duties at Fort Collins High School, Kaitlin also currently serves at the Administrative Assistant for Colorado All State Choir.

Mrs. Miles currently resides in Fort Collins with her husband, Shane, adorable sons Landon (5) and Sawyer (1), and lots of extended family. In her free time...who are we kidding? As a high school choir director with two small kids, she doesn't have any free time!

William Ecker

Signori, Viribus, A Cappella, Beginning Guitar, Guitar II, Piano II, History of Rock & Roll

Phone: (970) 488-8171

Email: wecker@psdschools.org



Mr. Ecker is in his 6th year at FCHS but he has a long history with Poudre School District, having attended Dunn Elementary, Lincoln Middle School and graduated in 2003 from Poudre High School. Directly after, he pursued a music education degree with a Vocal emphasis from the University of Northern Colorado. After graduating in 2008, Mr. Ecker took a music position at Weld Central Middle School teaching Choir, Band, Percussion ensembles, Drama, Music appreciation, and Film Scoring. In 2013, he became a founding board member of the Colorado Middle School All-State choir, and is currently the Site Governor for Colorado All State Choir. Mr. Ecker just finished his master's in choral conducting at the University of Northern Colorado and is very excited to back in Fort Collins, teaching music as a Lambkin!

Anna Hermanson

Staff Accompanist

Phone: (970) 488-8240

Email: ahermanson@psdschools.org



Anna graduated from John Brown University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music. Her musical experiences began at a young age with piano lessons and participation in various vocal and instrumental ensembles. In addition, she has performed with the pit orchestras of several musical theater productions including *Company*, *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Into the Woods*, *Shrek the Musical*, and *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Because she really just likes playing the piano and making music with people, accompanying has proven to be a very rewarding use of her education and ability. She also enjoys teaching piano lessons and is eager to take on new students here in Fort Collins. Since moving to Colorado four years ago, Anna has taken to exploring the great outdoors with friends and family.