

Benson High School Magnet
Choral Handbook 2017-2018



Table of Contents

Welcome.....	Page 3
Important Dates.....	Page 4
Music Education Standards.....	Page 5
Benson Choral Ensembles.....	Page 5
Rules and Procedures.....	Page 5-6
Grading Policy.....	Page 6
Rehearsals and Performances.....	Page 6
Choral Uniform.....	Page 7
Fundraising and Fees.....	Page 7
Travel.....	Page 7
Auditions.....	Page 8
Choral Literature.....	Page 8
Parent/Teacher Communication.....	Page 8

Welcome!

It's another exciting year for Benson High School Chorus! My name is Ms. Gibbons, and I am the Chorus Director at Benson High School Magnet. I'm very excited to get to know the students and help to further their musical training. This handbook contains very important information for chorus students and parents such as course objectives, the grading policy, required materials, and a calendar for the year. Please read carefully over this information as it is all very important and many aspects will effect student grades.

I'm very excited to be starting my first year as chorus director at Benson. I grew up in South Carolina and received my Bachelor's degree in Music Education. I taught three years of middle school chorus outside of Columbia, SC. I just completed a Master's degree in choral conducting at the University of Louisville. I may be new to the Omaha area, but I know that it's a wonderful place. I'm glad I get to start my high school teaching career at Benson, and I can't wait to meet all of the students I'll be working with in the future.

Important Dates:

September 16- All-State Audition Workshop at UNO

September 18- Deadline to register for All State Auditions

October 6-7- All State Auditions

October 23-31- Boo Gram Fundraiser

November 16-18- All-State Weekend (if selected)

Week of Nov. 27- Auditions for Spring Musical

Nov. 27- Dec. 1- All City Auditions

November/December- Swing Choir Camp (Friday and Saturday)

Month of December- School Musical Rehearsals Begin

December 14- Vocal Music Winter Concert

January- School Musical Rehearsals Continue

February 1-4- All City Rehearsals and Performance (if selected)

February 16- Swing Choir Competes at South Invitational, South HS

March 26- Vocal Adjudication (Concert Choir)

April 19-21- District Music Contest (Concert Choir)

May 1- Spring Concert

May 11- Bunny Tracks

District Power Standards for 9-12 Chorus

1. Performing Music
2. Literacy (Reading and Creating)
3. Cultural Connections (Responding)

Benson High School Choral Ensembles

Treble Chorus

Mixed Chorus

Concert Choir

Swing Choir

Individual course descriptions may be found in the course catalogue or in your student's syllabus.

Rules and Procedures

My classroom adheres to the schoolwide Bunny Code:

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, SAFETY, WILLINGNESS TO ACHIEVE

Just as in any other class, chorus has its own set of rules and procedures. These need to be followed in order to maximize our rehearsal time and opportunities for success.

The Chorus classroom rules are as follows:

1. Be respectful- to your director, your classmates, and materials
2. Be prompt- be on time to all classes and rehearsals, take quick breaks when needed
3. Be prepared- have all necessary materials
4. Be participating- always be active, even when you may not be singing, work ahead!
5. BE A MUSICIAN- we always want to display the culture of music

Not adhering to the rules will result in the following consequences:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Parent Call
3. After School Detention
4. Discipline Referral to administrator

Appropriate consequences will be assigned based on the severity of behavior.

Grading Policy

Chorus is a performance-based class. The final product of learning is the music, and students' grades will be based primarily on performances. Students will also be expected to complete written work such as music theory worksheets and performance evaluations. Minor assignments will be counted as formative assessments, and major assignments will be counted as summative assessments. Examples of formative assessments include written quizzes, in-class performances, and short reflections. Examples of summative assessments include major performances, written tests, and long reflections. Formative grades make up 35% of the final grade, and summative grades make up 65% of the final grade.

Rehearsals and Performances

In order for students to perform at their highest potential, after-school rehearsals will be held immediately before concert and festival dates. Students will have advance notice of all rehearsals and concerts. It is crucial that each student attend all rehearsals and performances- we are a unit, and missing one voice can make a big impact on our sound. The following are guidelines for rehearsals and performances:

- All dress rehearsals and concerts are **MANDATORY**. They will be counted as a test grade.
- If students have an unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal or performance, they will receive a 0 in the gradebook.
- Excused absences include personal illness, death in the family, unexpected family emergency or religious obligation. Any other situation must be explained to the director at least **one week** before the rehearsal or concert.
- Any absence must be documented with a concert absence form. Ms. Gibbons will send the form home directly following the concert. The student is responsible for getting their form signed and turned back in within a week in order to make up their concert grade.

Uniform

Proper performance attire is essential for each chorus student. Uniforms vary between classes. All major uniform pieces will be provided by the school. All students must wear closed toe dress shoes. If students are in Swing Choir and Concert Choir, they may wear their dance shoes for the full performance.

Concert Choir members will wear robes. Those students should wear dressy clothes to the concert (collared shirt and black slacks for men, black slacks or dress/skirt for ladies).

Swing Choir members will either wear silver and black knee-length dresses or black dress shirt and slacks with provided tie. All swing choir members are required to wear appropriate dance shoes, such as character shoes.

Mixed Chorus and Treble Chorus members will wear provided Benson Chorus polos. These students are responsible for wearing appropriate black pants (no holes, tears, or leggings) and black dress shoes.

Fundraising and Fees

Students may be asked to participate in a fundraiser in order to help pay for extracurricular choral trips. Fundraisers will take place at school or at a designated location (restaurant percent night, etc.) All care will be taken to help provide financial support to students who need it.

Travel

Benson High School students are fortunate to be a part of a thriving choral community in our district. Opportunities for travel include All-State Chorus in November, BOCH Honor Choir at UNO in January, and All-City Chorus in February. Students are expected to represent Benson and the choral community with professional behavior and attitude. If students are selected to be a part of any honor ensemble, they will be asked to sign a conduct and commitment statement located at the end of this handbook.

Auditions

Auditions will be held in the spring to determine membership in Concert Choir and Swing Choir. Look for more information regarding auditions in the spring semester.

Choral Literature

Choral literature at Benson High School encompasses a variety of styles and time periods. The chorus will sing classical, contemporary, jazz, and world music. Due to the history of choral music, much of our literature is of a religious nature. Please understand that the extent of our learning is technical, historical and musical, not theological. No student will be forced to participate in rehearsal or performance of music that conflicts with their personal beliefs. Alternate musical opportunities will be offered in every instance to these students. A written request from the parent or legal guardian is required for exemption.

Please send a written statement with parent/guardian signature if your choral student has any limitations regarding choral literature.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Parents are the backbone of the choral program and we can't be successful without your support! Communication is essential, especially leading up to concerts and other events. In addition, Ms. Gibbons will be in touch with individual parents when discipline problems arise or the student owes a late assignment. Contact information is included in every letter sent home, in addition to all emails sent by Ms. Gibbons.

Conduct and Commitment Statement

I, _____ (student name), state that I am obligated as a member of the Benson High School Magnet Choral Program to attend and participate in all events and rehearsals to the best of my ability. I state that my conduct will reflect that of a respectable young adult and team member on and off the stage, in and out of the classroom at all time. Since I represent Omaha Public Schools, Benson High School, and the Choral Program, I am responsible for respectfully fulfilling the standards and obligations outlined in this handbook and by all administrators and teachers. I promise to fulfill these responsibilities to the best of my ability.

Student Signature Date

Parent Signature Date