

# Maryvale Middle School Chorus Handbook



**2026-2027**

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## Letter to Parents/Guardians

Welcome/welcome back to the middle school chorus program! I am looking forward to working with your students to engage in rewarding musical experiences, foster a collaborative classroom environment, and contribute to the rich traditions behind the Maryvale choral program. This handbook is intended to serve as a guideline of the expectations, procedures, and dates of the Maryvale Middle School choral program.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will help in any way I can. I am very grateful for your support of the music program at Maryvale, and look forward to working with an excellent group of students this year!

Magdalene Lord  
Middle School Chorus Director  
[mlord@maryvaleufsd.org](mailto:mlord@maryvaleufsd.org)

## Choral Objectives

Chorus class will consist of learning about music through performance. The four areas of study that we will focus on throughout the year include:

1. Personal Vocal Technique – the skills needed to become the best vocalist you can be
2. Music Literacy – fluency in decoding music notation and symbols to become an independent musician
3. Ensemble Skills – how to collaborate to create the music intended by the composer/arranger
4. Culture, History and Style – explore how the music we study and perform reflects the culture in which it was created, in addition to exploring student's individual musical culture

My goal as an educator is not only for students to develop these musical skills, but to develop a sense of community, dedication, creativity, and lifelong music appreciation through chorus.

## Required Materials

1. Pencil- All students must have a pencil in their folder at all times! Make sure you have one at the beginning of rehearsal. Pencil checks will happen for a grade at least three times per quarter, so students should have one at all times.
2. Music and Folder- All music and a chorus folder will be provided to the student, and must be returned in good condition. Students may bring folders and music home, but it is the student's responsibility to bring back their folder each day.
3. Students are highly encouraged to bring water to class.

## Concert Attire

Students will wear **all black** to perform at concerts. All articles of clothing **must** abide by the school's dress code.

Acceptable attire includes:

- Blouses
- Button down shirt
- Slacks/Dress Pants
- Skirt with black tights
- Dress with black tights
- Flat/low heeled, comfortable black dress shoes

Jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers are **not acceptable** for performances.

## Grading Policy

Your grade in chorus is not based on how well you can sing. Rather, it will be based upon your contribution to the success of the group, and your growth as a musician.

Your grade will be determined by:

- **20%- Class Participation and Preparedness**
  - Students are expected to come to class on time, with all materials, and be ready to engage in rehearsal when the bell rings.
  - Each student receives a participation grade out of 100 points each week. Since choir is a class that requires active participation from each of its members, points will be deducted for not following daily expectations.
  - Please see Page 8 of the handbook for an outline of daily expectations.
  
- **40%- Concert Attendance**
  - **All performances are mandatory.** All concert dates are listed at the end of the handbook. Concert performance grades should be considered equivalent to a major unit test or final exam. **Students must stay for the entire concert to support their peers.**
  - If there is an unavoidable conflict with a concert performance, please let me know **at least two weeks in advance through a written note or phone call from a parent/guardian.**
  - Last minute absences because of a death in the family, severe illness (with a doctor's note), etc. will be counted as excused.
  - Students with excused absences will be given the opportunity to make up their concert performance grade with a make-up project. Students who are unexcused from the concert will only be able to make up their concert attendance grade for partial credit.
  
- **20%- Assignments and Assessments**
  - Students will be given assignments to demonstrate their learning, as well as a chance to share their thoughts and opinions in writing. Students will also have the opportunity to write evaluations on several different performances, such as their own concert recordings as well as other performing groups.

- There will be one written assignment per quarter to assess learning, in addition to any work given out to support the rehearsal/performance process (e.g. flashcards)
- Students will also perform a voice test each quarter. Students will either sing a portion of their chorus music or a portion of their lesson solo, depending on what we are focusing on at that point in the quarter.
  - **This will be an assessment of a student's knowledge of the music and musical growth.** This is not meant to be high pressure or based on musical talent!

## Rehearsal Procedures & Daily Expectations

The success of a choir depends on how it rehearses. Rehearsals are the place to experiment musically and to correct mistakes. **Coming to choir with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn is essential to our success as an ensemble.**

### Rehearsal Policies:

1. Come in, grab your folder from the folio cabinet, and store personal items under your chair.
2. You must have a pencil at all times, and you are encouraged to mark your music to help you!
3. Attend class on time and be ready to sing when the bell rings.

### Daily Expectations:

1. Be positive.
2. Be kind.
3. Try your best.
4. Come to all rehearsals, concerts, and events on time and with all materials.
5. Respect yourself, others, and property/equipment.
6. No gum chewing is permitted during rehearsal, lessons, or concerts.
7. Abide by all other school policies including the dress code, cell phone, and attendance policies.

## Maryvale UFSD Attendance Policy

### *“VI. Attendance and Promotion*

*Any absence from school or class whether excused or not, detracts from the learning process. Therefore, all absences of any nature shall be included in this policy. Students who are absent more than 20 days per school year may be subject to grade level retention or an incomplete for their course completion (10 days for semester courses). A portion of the student’s grade at the secondary level is based on participation within the classroom setting. Class absences will directly impact the student’s ability to be successful in that course.”*

## Festivals and Extracurricular Opportunities

Western New York has a rich tradition of excellence in student musicianship outside of the classroom. In the Maryvale Middle School choral program, we are dedicated to encouraging students to reach their full potential through extracurricular opportunities. The following are optional festivals in which students can participate to receive a musically enriching experience.

### NYSSMA Area All State

- 7-8th grade students are nominated based on their previous year’s NYSSMA score. Students who are interested in participating in this festival should plan on performing a NYSSMA solo at the end of the year.

### ECMEA All County

- **Elementary (5-6th Grade)**
  - Students audition by singing two scales within their selected vocal range as well as a vocal round with their peers.
- **Junior High (7-9th Grade)**
  - Students audition by singing two scales within their selected vocal range as well as a vocal round with their peers.

### NYSSMA Solo Fest

- Students may perform a selected solo at NYSSMA where they will receive constructive feedback on their performance as well as sight reading. Solos that receive a high score may be eligible for Area All State or Conference All State in the Fall of the next school year.

### Sign Up Procedure

- Students will first sign up in class so Miss Lord can gauge interest.
- In order for students to officially register, they must have an **in person conversation** with Miss Lord and return their permission slips by the given deadline to confirm their interest as well as their understanding of the expectations of participating in these extracurricular activities.

### Chorus Calendar

Listed below are chorus events as well as extracurricular opportunities. Mandatory dates are in bold. If dates are added to the calendar, students will receive advanced notice.\*

| <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Time</u></b> | <b><u>Event</u></b>                                        |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9/18               | N/A                | Handbook Signature Due                                     |
| 9/28- 10/9         | N/A                | Cherrydale Fundraiser                                      |
| <b>12/10</b>       | <b>6 pm</b>        | <b>6th Grade Winter Concert</b>                            |
| <b>12/10</b>       | <b>7:15pm</b>      | <b>7/8th Grade Winter Concert</b>                          |
| 1/9                | TBD                | Junior High All County Auditions<br>@ Depew High School    |
| 2/26- 2/27         | 7 pm               | High School Musical                                        |
| 3/12- 3/13         | TBD                | Junior High All County Festival @<br>Amherst Middle School |
| <b>3/18</b>        | <b>7 pm</b>        | <b>HS &amp; MS Pops Concert</b>                            |
| March/April<br>TBD | TBD                | NYSSMA Solo Fest                                           |
| <b>6/2</b>         | <b>6 pm</b>        | <b>6th Grade Spring Concert</b>                            |
| <b>6/2</b>         | <b>7:15pm</b>      | <b>7/8th Grade Spring Concert</b>                          |

## Handbook Signature

**Please read through this handbook with your parents/guardians, sign, and return only this page to Miss Lord by Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>**

I have read the 2026-2027 Maryvale Middle School Chorus Handbook and understand the expectations and policies listed.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**If there is anything you would like me to know about your student, please include it on the back.**