

Marcos de Niza High School  
Fine Arts Department

# Choral Music Guidelines & Policies

(updated 7/13/2016)

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# Welcome!

The school year promises to be an exciting one for choral music students at Marcos de Niza High School. I am looking forward to the great opportunities we will have to make music together.

This Handbook is an attempt to outline for you and your parents the expectations associated with participation in choral music at Marcos de Niza High School. Please read it carefully and ask questions about any procedures or policies that may not be clear to you.

The final page of this Handbook includes a place for you and your parents to sign, acknowledging that you have gone over, understand and accept these policies as a part of the requirements for your participation in the Marcos de Niza High School choral program. Please print, sign and return this form with your other documents.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of every student at Marcos de Niza High School, and is of particular importance in the choral rehearsal where individual accomplishment is directly connected to the success of our collective effort. Students who are late or who miss too many class periods will miss important experiences and will not be prepared for individual assessment or group performance experiences without completing make-up work.

In addition, attendance at concerts outside of the regular school day is mandatory and comprises an important part of each student's grade for the class. Concerts in choir are equivalent to major exams in a core class.

## Expectations

**Each student is *expected* . . .**

- To actively participate in all classroom experiences and scheduled concerts
- To be respectful to fellow students, teachers, and classroom guests
- To be honest
- To try

**As a result, each student *can expect* . . .**

- To develop a basic understanding of music fundamentals/theory
- To develop a basic understanding of proper choral/vocal technique
- To develop basic to advanced skills in music sight reading
- To learn and perform great choral music with excellence
- To be treated with respect
- To have extra curricular opportunities to explore music in individual, small group, and competitive experiences

## Website and On-Line Grade Checks

In addition to this document, there are two very important methods of communication available to choir students and their parents. The most up-to-date information will be available at these two on-line sites, and may include copies of any forms, handouts and information that are shared in class. The CDP/Choir website will be primarily used for downloading forms and checking on the calendar. The grade-check site will be used for checking grades.

The websites are:

CDP Website: [www.mdnchoirdrama.org](http://www.mdnchoirdrama.org)  
On-Line Grades: <https://parentvue.tuhsd.k12.az.us>

## Grading

Specific graded activities may vary between choirs, but as a general rule, grades will be assigned based on the following criteria:

### ***Musicianship Development***

Weekly assessments and/or point sheets, sight singing, music fundamentals, music checks, listening logs/worksheets, reading/writing projects, etc. Students in advanced choirs should expect occasional out-of-class assignments (homework ☺) and regular in-class assessments of musical skills.

### ***Performance***

“Performance” is learned by listening as well as by doing; therefore, grades include *performing with your class/choir on scheduled concerts, listening to other classes/choirs perform, proper concert decorum (behavior, e.g. not talking while others perform, no cell phone use, not leaving during the performance) and proper concert dress/uniform.*

Note: *Every effort will be made to work out conflicts between choir concerts and other school sponsored activities, especially athletics, but students should discuss these conflicts with their director as soon as they are known. Because you receive a grade for choir, concerts will need to take precedence over extra-curricular “club” activities and athletic events. Students will never have to worry about a conflict between Performing Arts events (e.g. band and choir, drama and choir, orchestra and choir). In the rare event that this should occur, the Performing Arts staff will always work out the conflict for the students.*

### ***Semester Grades***

Semester grades will be assigned according to the following system:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Grade Average           40%
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Grade Average       40%
- Mid-Term/Final                       20%

### ***Make-Up Work***

Students will be required to make-up any missed work within a time period equal to the number of days absent (excused absences only).

Students who miss concerts for documented reasons beyond their control (serious illness or death in the family) will be permitted to make up the concert by arrangement with the director (excused absences only).

### ***Grading Scale***

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59-0

## Financial Responsibilities & Fund Raising

Choir students will occasionally have some financial responsibilities connected with their participation in choir (uniforms, t-shirts, field trips, banquets, audition fees, etc.). **No student will ever be denied membership in choir because of an inability to pay these fees.** In addition to uniforms, which are discussed below, there are audition and festival fees connected with auditioning for Honor Choirs (All-State Jazz/Show, Regional Honor Choir, AZ All-State Honor Choir). These fees vary by festival and will be posted with the audition information. Fund raising opportunities are provided throughout the year – both to help the choral program in general, and to help individuals cover these expenses.

### Mandatory Fees

Course Fee: \$35 (TUHSD District-Mandated)  
Activity Fee: \$50 (TUHSD District-Mandated)

### Additional Expenses

Choreography: \$25 (Covers choreography expenses for Broadway Show and Pops)  
Dry-Cleaning: \$5 (All uniforms are cleaned by the same vendor at the same time to insure they are all turned in on time and stored properly)

### CHARMS

The MdN Choral program utilizes a program call “Charms Office Assistant” to organize student accounts, music library, uniforms and communication. CHARMS is a new technology for us and is intended to make the inner workings of the choir more transparent for students and adults. This technology is NOT connected to the district bookstore in any way so it is imperative that each student turn in a receipt to the choir office for each deposit made in the bookstore.

At the beginning of the school year, each student will be directed to update their information on CHARMS. This will include updating parent contact information. The Director and the MdN ChoirDrama Parent organization will use this information to communicate with parents about important choir events.

Students and parents will have access to account personal information on CHARMS by logging into the CHARMS website or downloading the CHARMS app on their personal device (smartphone, tablet, etc...).

[www.charmsoffice.com/charms/plogin.asp](http://www.charmsoffice.com/charms/plogin.asp)

## Uniforms

Formal concert uniforms are required for most concerts, as well as a choir t-shirt for more informal performance occasions.

Women: All women are required to wear the uniform checked out to them at the beginning of the school year. In addition, each is to wear the following accessories:

Shoes: Black, close-toed character shoes (2" heel preferred)

Nylons: Nude

Jewelry: A Cappella - Earrings and necklace from Formal Fashions

AWE/Chorale – Silver posts for pierced ears – no necklace

Makeup: Simple and evening-appropriate.

*\*The Chorale uniform may change depending on availability of concert attire. You will be notified of any changes.*

Men: All men are required to wear the uniform checked out to them at the beginning of the school year. In addition, each is to wear the following accessories:

Shoes: Black, close-toed dress shoes

Socks: Black

Jewelry: Must be approved by the director (i.e. ear-rings)

Shirt: Tuxedo shirt purchased from Lesuers Tuxedos.

Makeup: None

\*\*\*Tongue rings, nose rings or other body piercings must be removed prior to and for the duration of the performance.

\*\*\*Tattoos or other body art must not be visible from the stage.

\*\*\*No jewelry other than listed may be worn (no friendship bracelets, rubber bracelets or bands, etc...)

\* Other costume requirements will be made throughout the year to meet the demands of the particular concert (i.e. Fall Broadway Show, Seasonal, Pops, etc...)

\*Students wearing an incomplete uniform will not earn full concert points.

## Concert Write-Up

Each quarter choir members is required to write one concert review. This review must be one-two pages, typed, double-spaced, with proper grammar and spelling. It will be about a live concert that you have attended (must be within the quarter) and will be submitted on CANVAS. Proof of attendance may be requested for verification (photos of you at the event, if no tickets or programs were available). The review must include the following items:

Your name and date of review

Concert date, location, and group(s) performed

Description of concert using rich and robust music vocabulary:

Setting (ex: concert hall, theater, small club, etc....)

Mentioning specific selections (pick two)

Instrumentation (what instruments/ vocals were featured)

General plot (if a musical or play)

Comment on quality of performance

(ex: sound, presentation, selection of charts, style, musicality, etc...)

What you liked/disliked and WHY!

Any distractions from the performance (ex: bad lighting or sound system, noisy audience)

## Calendar

The performance calendar for the entire year is listed CANVAS and is posted CHARMS and the CDP (Mdn ChoirDrama Parents) website. Any changes or additions to this calendar will be made with adequate notice (two weeks). If adequate notice is not possible, then an added event will be considered *optional*.

Because of the availability of this calendar (which will also be posted in the choir room), it is expected that all conflicts will be worked out well in advance of any concert. For example, students should provide their employer with a list of required events immediately and explain that they cannot be scheduled to work on those days. "I have to work" will never be considered an excused absence. Likewise, families should avoid scheduling out of town trips on concert days.

While no policy can ever account for unusual or unexpected circumstances, as a general rule, the only concert performance absences that will be considered as "excused" will be those resulting from serious illness or a death in the family. The EARLIER an unusual or unexpected circumstance is communicated, the more likely it will be that an excuse or compromise can be worked out.

## Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Choir is considered a Co-Curricular class, which means that certain activities are required as a part of the choir curriculum, and other activities are optional, and thus extra-curricular. These types of activities include:

- All-State Jazz/Show Choir auditions/participation
- Regional Honor auditions/participation
- All-State Honor Choir auditions/participation
- School Musicals
- Choir Leadership
- Team-building events
- Special opportunities that may present themselves

## **Varsity Lettering in Choir (A Cappella Only)**

### CRITERIA TO RECEIVE A MUSIC LETTER

- Student must attend all choral festivals and performances
- Student must audition for Regional Choir, All-State Jazz, or All-State Show Choir. If accepted, the student is required to participate in the festival. If accepted into Regional Choir, the student is required to audition for All-State and participate in the festival, if selected.
- Student must maintain a choir grade average of "A" each semester.
- Student must earn 98% or higher of all possible letter points.
- Student must go on tour.
- Student must receive a Choir Council recommendation.

### EARNING REQUIRED LETTER POINTS – NOT GRADE POINTS

- Wearing choir shirt on required days
- Going on Tour
- One concert assist (usher, helper for band, drama, dance or orchestra event)
- Attend A Cappella events and activities

\*\*Extra letter points may be earned in a variety of ways. Students are encouraged to sign up for extra help with council members, or to ask council members for opportunities for extra points. ALL EXTRA POINTS MUST BE SIGNED OFF BY A COUNCIL MEMBER.

## **TOUR (A Cappella Only)**

A Cappella is the touring vocal ensemble of Marcos de Niza High School.

**EACH MEMBER OF A CAPPELLA IS EXPECTED TO TOUR AS A PREREQUISITE FOR BEING PLACED IN THIS PRESTIGIOUS ENSEMBLE.**

Therefore, fundraising events will be held on a regular basis to allow students to earn the necessary funds for the ensemble to travel. The total cost to each student will be directly related to his/her participation in these fundraisers and their participation in performances and other A Cappella events.

### TOUR DEPOSITS

- Tour deposits are due every first Tuesday of the month in the form of a receipt given to the Treasurer.
- Payments are to be deposited in the bookstore under your name in account #102, marked with "tour deposit."
- The first deposit in the amount of \$100 is due on Tuesday, September 6, 2016.

*Failure to make this payment could make you ineligible for this year's tour.*

In order to encourage sound financial planning habits, students are asked to make regular monthly deposits in the amount of \$100. Fundraisers are planned monthly to meet this goal.

Tax credit donations may be used in addition to or in place of regular monthly deposits.

REMINDER: The total cost of tour for each student will be directly related to participation in fundraising, performances and A Cappella Choir events.