

Swift High School Choral Handbook



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**Becca Cline
Swift High Vocal Music Teacher**

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Students, families and friends of the choir,

Welcome to an exciting year in choir at Swift! I look forward to working with all of you to make this a fun, successful year for everyone involved, especially our students!

In this Handbook, you should find the materials you need to participate with our Fighting Falcon Choirs, including outlines of important dates, wardrobe requirements, as well as our Code of Conduct, grading policies, and other important items we use to run the choirs. Please look over the entire Handbook and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Please discuss these policies between students and families so that everyone feels very clear regarding expectations.

Also, please take note of all the important dates on the Choir Calendar; some choirs may have additional commitments throughout the course of the year (certainly Show Choir and Chamber choirs) that may not be reflected on this list. Adequate advance notice will be given of any additions or other changes to the choirs' schedules. And, while you're marking calendars, don't forget we will be taking all choirs to Disney World during Spring Break of 2014 (next year).

Again, a big welcome to all new and returning students and families! I'm looking forward to a great year together!

Sincerely,

Becca Cline

Vocal music director, Swift High School

OUR MISSION here in the Swift High School Choirs is to work together to explore many facets of music including a variety of genres and styles, cultures and historical periods of music. We will grow as musicians through sight reading activities, performances, developing performance etiquette, vocal health, and interpretation of music. We will exist in a positive atmosphere that welcomes creativity and soar like falcons to new heights in choir through discipline, dedication, and determination in order to create an inspiring experience for all choir members and audiences while making music that truly has an impact in our lives and our community.

OUR GOALS are to:

1. *Help* build an outstanding reputation for choral singing here at Swift, and in our community by providing performances that demonstrate musical intelligence and growth
2. *Strive* to make every student an active, involved, and responsible member of a fun organization that will bring great pride and satisfaction as a result of active learning and hard work.
3. *Grow* as a professional individual through commitment, dedication, and self-directed learning.
4. *Encourage* respect for music, musicians, teachers, fellow students, audience members, and our physical rehearsal and performance facilities
5. *Learn* to appreciate the beauty of all music, and to use the power of music to motivate, inspire, communicate, and to improve character and enrich the quality of life for everyone in our community.

OUR CHOIRS

A Cappella Singers:

Swift's premier varsity mixed choir, chosen by a competitive audition process and made up of primarily juniors and seniors with proficiency in sight-reading, an outstanding academic and community service record, and at least 1 year in another ensemble here at Swift. The A Cappella Choir performs literature of various styles and genres.

Vivace!:

Swift's mixed show choir, made up of 24 students selected by a competitive audition process from members of the A Cappella Choir. Vivace! Specializes in pop and jazz literature with choreography and performs frequently throughout the community.

Bel Canto Chorus:

This is Swift's non-auditioned entry-level choir, which is for any student in grades 9-12 who are interested in furthering their choral experience, begin a choral experience, or who just wish to learn more about music. Emphasis will be placed on developing basic skills in tone production, performance technique and etiquette, music literacy, and appreciation of music and the arts.

Falconet Choir

Our all female non-auditioned singing group comprised of grades 9-12. Like Bel Canto, Emphasis will be placed on developing basic skills in tone production, performance technique and etiquette, music literacy, and appreciation of music and the arts.

Bravo Chorus

Our all male non-auditioned singing group comprised of grades 9-12. Like Bel Canto, Emphasis will be placed on developing basic skills in tone production, performance technique and etiquette, music literacy, and appreciation of music and the arts.

CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Make the best music possibly at all times!
2. Respect-yourself, your peers, your teacher and all equipment. This includes all chairs, music stands, folders and personal belongings.
3. No food or drinks (including gum) will be allowed in the classroom. You may have water as long as it is in a clear container with a spill-proof lid.
4. Each student is to arrive to class on time. Please leave all non-music related items in your storage spot – do not bring them into the choir room.
5. Talking during rehearsal is not acceptable when the director is in front of the ensemble.
6. Students should use restroom facilities before coming to class.
7. Students are responsible for their own folders and music. Each choir member will be issued a choir folder, and will fill out a form indicating the condition of the folder upon receiving it. Replacement cost for choir folders is \$10.00 and the cost of replacing the music will be \$4.00 for each piece missing or damaged. Students will pay for new folders if they are damaged beyond normal daily wear, or if they are misplaced during the school year.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory at all concerts/performances and dress rehearsals. A schedule is attached to this handbook for your reference. If there are additions, deletions, or changes, I will give as much advance notice as possible. The schedule is prepared in advanced to give ample time to arrange work schedules, vacations, visiting relatives, etc. Work is never an excuse to miss a dress rehearsal or performance. Please do not ask to be the exception. Students are expected to keep a calendar of all school events; and if there is a conflict; (sports, theater, band, etc) see me immediately. All staff at Swift makes every effort to share students so that students are not forced to make a choice of one activity over another. A performance/game takes priority over practice/rehearsal. Students are expected to inform coaches and myself of any potential conflicts at least one week in advanced. In case of problems that arise at the last minute, parents are expected to help drive the students to accommodate the student's conflict. Once every effort is made to share the student, and we are not successful, a parent must call Swift (123-1234) in order to excuse the absence. If you do not notify me in advance, the absence is unexcused.

(Severe illness, wedding or death in the family are acceptable excuses.)

Remember: EVERYONE is important and must be at all rehearsals/performances/dress rehearsals, and on time in order that we utilize our maximum potential. If a member receives an unexcused absence from the director for a performance, that student can expect not to pass choir for that quarter. Students are encouraged to check in the attendance office periodically for accuracy of daily attendance. A printout is always available of a student's attendance record. This will help keep everyone informed before the grade is altered.

Policies for Grading and Participation

Students will be graded on the following class elements:

1. Participation in required performances.
2. Daily attendance, promptness and participation.
3. Completion of Board Work and other in-class assignments.
4. Exams: written or audio recorded.
5. Other assignments and points-on-completion events (such as promptly returning required forms, etc.).

System for Grading

The actual point system used to grade students assumes that:

1. All students have varying degrees of natural talent, and it is unfair in a public school setting to weight grades too heavily in this area,
2. There are many different levels of choirs at Swift in which students may participate, and talents and abilities to complete the work for that choir, and
3. Daily grades, therefore, are weighted heavily in the areas of participation, work ethic, personal responsibility, and behaving in a manner that is constructive to the success of everyone in class.
4. ANY GRADED ELEMENTS IN CLASS MAY HAVE SERIOUS INFLUENCE ON AUDITIONS FOR THE NEXT YEAR OF CHOIR.

Grades as Salary

Grades will come from concert participation, daily participation, completed written assignments, in-class assignments and other Board Work, exams (written and recorded) and points-on-completion activities.

Grades will be based on a real-world salary concept. Students will be treated like professional singers who have been contracted to sing for one semester at \$100,000 salary. Another way to think of this is that grades are on a 100-point scale (\$100,000). All students will start with a \$100,000 (100 points) clean slate. They may be fined for

any day-to-day behaviors that are destructive rather than constructive.

Concert Participation

Concert participation is considered a required class element, the same way written exams are required in other classes. Therefore, a concert that is missed for any reason, including illness, must be “made up” just like a written exam would be made up if missed in another class. Concert participation is worth \$25,000 (25 points) per concert. There are generally two concerts per semester, although advanced choirs may add more. Students who choose to not participate in a concert (for any reason) will lose \$25,000 (25 points) on their semester grades. The fine will be levied for each concert missed. However, these points can be made up without any penalty.

Lateness to a concert call-time or inappropriate wardrobe (or behavior) is worth \$5,000 (5 points) per infraction. However, students in unacceptable wardrobe may be sent home and denied permission to participate in any concert; these students will suffer the \$25,000 (25 point) fine for missing a concert.

Board Work

Each day, students will have a very brief Board Work assignment they are to complete as they enter the room. Students will have a Board Work Journal provided to them so they can record all assignments.

All Board Work must be completed and checked at the end of each quarter. Board Work is pass/fail only; any incomplete Board Work will fail. Students will be given opportunity to correct Board Work until it is complete for full credit. Board Work must be complete even for days missed in class. Board Work is worth \$10,000 (10 points) per quarter. Students who do not complete Board Work (or do not make it up) or lose their Board Work (and do not make it up) will receive zero points.

Singing Tests

Students will be given one Singing Test per quarter. These tests will be conducted in a private location, away from any audience. Students will be evaluated only on learned, classroom elements of singing. **STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED SINGERS TO PASS SINGING TESTS, THEY ONLY NEED TO HAVE WORKED ON ELEMENTS TAUGHT IN CLASS.**

Singing Tests will be pass/fail only. Each quarter, students will have one chance to retake the Singing Test if they failed previously that same quarter.

Singing Tests are worth \$15,000 (15 points) on semester grades. Students receive zero points for failed tests (if the re-take is also failed). These points may be made up (see below).

Singing Test are designed to evaluate how a student is keeping up in class; they are not designed to test which students are the most naturally talented or gifted. Students of basic or average ability will be able to pass Singing Test easily if they have worked hard in class and sing with confidence.

Penalties for Unexcused Absences, Tardies, and Non-Participation

Each unexcused absence to class will cost the student \$4,000 (4 points). There is no fine for excused absences. Each unexcused absence to class within five school days before a concert will cost the student \$10,000 (10 points). Students who do not fully participate in class, or prevent others from doing so, will be fined as though they had skipped class \$4,000 (4 points) Each tardy to class is a \$2,000 (2 point) fine.

Grading Scale

Money (points)	GRADE
Up to \$100,000 (100)	A
Up to \$89,000 (89)	B
Up to \$79,000 (79)	C
Up to \$69,000 (69)	D
\$59,000 (59)	F

Making up Points Missed

Students who have missed points on their grades due to absences, tardies, missed concerts, or failed Singing Tests may request the opportunity to make up those points. Students may NOT make up points for missed Board Work, since Board Work can be turned in late at any time without penalty.

Students may not earn points beyond a total of 100.

In order to make up these missed points, students will be expected to write a two page paper over one of the following:

Composers:

To get full points include the following: Birth/death dates of the composer (identify musical period), country of origin, brief life history, list of choral literature composed by this person. Listen to 3 pieces of recorded choral music you identified as their creation (include citation) and give your opinion of the piece (how the piece makes you feel, is there something it reminds you of? Would you like to perform this piece some day?...etc.)

J.S. Bach

Samuel Barber

Bela Bartok

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Leonard Bernstein

Georges Bizet
 Aaron Copeland
 Claude Debussy
 Gabriel Faure
 George Frideric Handel
 Franz Joseph Haydn

Works:

To get full points include the following: composer, composer's birth/death date, date of composition, country of origin, where the work can be found (opera, musical (which act, scene?), song cycle (which number?). Was the song written for some kind of festival or for some other specific audience? What is the piece about? who is singing, and to whom are they singing? (If no singer/audience is specified, make one up, based on the lyrics and character of the piece. Listen to a recording of the piece (include citation) and give your opinion of the piece (how the piece makes you feel, is there something it reminds you of? Would you like to perform this piece some day?...etc.)

Introit et Kyrie from Requiem- Faure
 I Got Rhythm- Gershwin
 Ah! Paresseuse Fille from Faust- Gaunod
 O Magnum Mysterium- Lauridsen
 Ruth- Ayers
 Tonight-Eternity Alone- Clausen
 1. Dieu! Qu'il la fait bon regarder from Trois Chanson de Charles D'Oleans- Debussy
 Oedipus Rex- Stravinsky
 Harmonium- John Adams
 Stabat Mater- Szymanowski

Private Lesson Information

The Swift Choir Program offers private lesson teachers who teach during the school day and after school. Students may take private lessons during a lunch period, study hall, after school, or even during choir once a week with Miss. Cline's approval. Teachers can charge a maximum of \$20.00 per twenty-eight minute lesson. All payments are arranged through the instructor and the student's parents. Payment is never given to Miss Cline. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity!

Choral Attire

As a choir, we are adjudicated on appearance; don't jeopardize our scores/reputation because you don't look professional! Students may not be allowed to perform if the following rules are broken. Ladies wear a formal black dress and men wear a tuxedo. It is important that your uniform is clean and in good condition: don't leave it in the choir room to get lost or ruined! Used uniforms can be purchased through alumni or the choir department, and new uniforms can be ordered as well.

No jewelry; including watches, facial jewelry, earrings, bracelets or chains. Small earrings may be worn with the director's approval. Hair must be worn out of the face. All students with long hair and/or bangs are required to have their hair secured away from their face (simple black headbands are acceptable means of securing hair/use only small dark hair accessories.)

Please wear deodorant, but no perfume or lotions.

Wash and iron your shirts and dresses (INSIDE OUT). Dry-clean your tux jacket and pants.

No colored nail polish is to be worn.

All men must have black socks. Women must have black nylons.

Ladies: please wear lipstick to give your face some color under stage lighting.

SHOES: Patent leather

Men- no tennis shoes, boots, or casual shoes. Remember you are in a tux, dress shoes are required. – please do not ask to be the exception.

Women- a simple black closed toe shoe with a small heel or flats- no platforms, sandals, etc. Please do not ask to be the exception. (Be comfortable! This is not a fashion show.)

ALTERATIONS: if you need assistance, ask for the list of choir moms that will sew your hem. Grey tape, staples, pins, etc. are obviously not appropriate for hems. Students will be asked to redo the hem if it is not done correctly.

All dresses require a ¼ inch machine hem. Please cut the material so the hem is no larger than ¼ of an inch. Triple check this before you cut; measure with your

performance shoes on. Tux pant hems are to be no more than 2 inches.

If you are purchasing a new uniform: (make all checks payable to Swift High School)

Falconets/ Bel Canto/ A Cappella women.....\$80
 Vivace ladies.....\$70
 All Men: tux jacket (\$60), pants (\$30), shirt (\$18)
 Cummerbund (\$7), Button (\$5).....\$130*
 *If you order all five pieces, the discount price is \$10

If you are purchasing a used uniform from the vocal department: FIRST COME-FIRST SERVED. There is a limited amount. Come in at 2nd lunch, 6th period, or after school.

Used Falconets/ Bel Canto/ A Cappella Dress.....\$40
 Used Tux Jackets.....\$30
 Used Tux Pants.....\$15
 Used Tux Shirts.....\$10
 Used Vivace! Dress.....\$30
 RENTAL (dress or full tux).....\$20 (must be returned dry cleaned.)

LETTERING POLICY

In order to "letter" in Choir a student must:

Senior High

Must be a member in "good standing"

Compete in Region Choir auditions (for a major award - jacket or blanket)

Perform in the Region Concert & Clinic (if selected for Region Choir)

Participate in UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest

Compete in UIL Concert & SR Contest

Participate in all concerts, productions, and rehearsals

Choir Community Service (5 hours)

No unexcused absences

Event	Date(s)	Notes
Choir Camp	August 8-11	REQUIRED for all members of Vivace!
Fall Musical Informational Meeting	August 31, after school	For students interested in participating in the fall musical
Fall Musical Auditions	September 6,7 &8	Students do not need to prepare anything in advance. Students do NOT need to be there for both Tuesday and Wednesday auditions; we only need to see them once. September 1 st is Callbacks
Cookie Dough Sales Fundraiser	September 7-14	All students have the option of participation. Money earned may be used to pay for choir expenses.
Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson	September 9	REQUIRED for all Vivace! members. Students will be gone all day, and perform at noon. Students should return to the high school shortly after the end of the school day.
Fall Concert	October 6, 7pm	REQUIRED for all choirs
District/ State Honor Choir Auditions	November 5	Students in 10-12 grades may audition for District and State Honor Choirs, Music for auditions will be distributed in class.
Fall Musical Performance	November 8-12	We will have four performances in five days.
Fall Showcase Concert	November 17 th	REQUIRED for all Vivace! And A Cappella singers.
District Honor Choir Performance	December 3	The actual performance will be at a regional High School, mid-afternoon, TBA
Winter Concert	December 12	REQUIRED for all choirs

January Choir Camp	January 9-12, evenings	REQUIRED for all Vivace! Members
Middle School Choir tour	February 3	REQUIRED for all A Cappella singers
Festival Concert	February 22, 7pm	REQUIRED for all choirs
KMEA State Honor Choir	February 25	Choir performances will be in the afternoon at Century II in Wichita.
Solo Preview	March 14, after school and evening	REQUIRED for all students wanting to take a solo to contest
Final week of choir auditions for next school year	April 9-13	Students may audition any time during the school day in the choir room
Vocal Solo/ Small Ensemble Final Preview Concert	April 10	This is an informal concert, REQUIRED for all students participating in solo/small enser
Regional Solo/ Small Ensemble Festival	April 14	Festival will be at a regional high School (TBA); each student will have a specific assigned performance time and room.
State Solo/Small Ensemble Festival	April 28	For students who receive a "1" (Superior) rating at Regional Festival. Students will be scheduled for early day times
Spring Showcase Concert	May 10	REQUIRED for all Vivace! And A Cappella choi
Final Choir Concert	May 17	REQUIRED for all choirs.