

Lancaster Central High School
Vocal Music Department



Welcome Letter
&
Student Handbook

The Lancaster High School Choirs
2020-2021

Mrs. Allison Costanzo-Metcalfe,
Director

Hello Singers, and Families of Lancaster Choral Singers,

My name is Allison Costanzo-Metcalf, and I am the Choral Director at Lancaster High School. I hope that you had a relaxing and healthy summer. As we begin the school year, I know that there is some anxiety and apprehension, but hopefully also some excitement as face-to-face teaching and learning become a reality! The end of last year was filled with uncertainties, however, was also a time of outside the box thinking. Virtual Choirs, though not the same as a live concert, gave students the opportunity to continue collaborating. Virtual instrumental and vocal lessons became the “norm”, and online software helped assist in expanding our musicians’ ability. In this letter, I want to touch on some important topics before they are detailed more extensively in the handbook.

This year, we are taking steps to once again be able to create and learn together in the music room. I could not be more excited to see the students again, and to re-imagine choral singing specifically. With obstacles comes an opportunity for creativity. I plan on fostering that in the choral classroom. I want to assure you that we will do everything we can to provide a safe learning environment. Students will be singing 12 feet apart in masks (more information in the handbook). We will be working on building trust and comfort as this new way of singing will take getting used to.

Virtual Learners will still be part of the ensembles! Though this is a work in progress, I am confident that meaningful learning opportunities will be a reality for our virtual learners. I will strive to continue working on musicality, vocal technique, listening skills, and performing opportunities with student comfort level in mind.

Lesson groups will be all virtual, and will work on vocal technique, sight-reading, and over-all choral music appreciation and literacy. Students will be scheduled in a small lesson group weekly, on their virtual, asynchronous day.

Performances will look very different this year. If you and your student learner are new to Lancaster High School Choir, you might not have seen the virtual choirs that were created last school year. Feel free to check out our “Here’s to Song,” virtual choir in the link below. <https://youtu.be/WNSZUmLjQc>. My goal this year will be to record our choral repertoire in our three groups (virtual learners, and the two in person groups) and put them together for a semi-live recording. I am also open to more ideas as the year progresses. Students will be able to take part in re-imagining this year as well! As the year progresses, more opportunities may arise.

As we envision this school year, I want us to remember one thing. We have the opportunity to see each other again, and create music **TOGETHER**. Though it may feel and look different at times, I have no doubt that meaningful music will be made. Please read through the handbook, and make sure to have a parent or guardian fill out the google form at the end.

Sincerely,



Allison Costanzo-Metcalf
Lancaster High School
Choral Director

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The Lancaster High School

Vocal Music Department

LHS Women's Choir: Open to any female singers from grades 9-12, no audition required.

LHS Mixed Chorus: Open to any male singers from grades 9-12, with no audition required. Female singers must serve one year in the LHS Women's Choir and audition for this group. Instrumentalists in grades 10-12 may join at director's discretion.

LHS Concert Choir: Lancaster High School's select choir. Entrance to this choir is by audition only. Men must serve one year in the LHS Mixed Chorus and women must serve one year in the LHS Women's Choir before being eligible to audition. (Women's Choir or Mixed Chorus membership requirement may be waived for Band or Orchestra members in grades 10-12 at the discretion of the director)

LHS Choir Objectives

1. Members will be able to understand and utilize a vocal octavo. They will observe and apply all musical symbols to their rehearsals and performance.
2. Members will work toward mastering proper breathing and vocal techniques, along with correct and beautiful tone quality.
3. Members will rehearse and perform with proper concert etiquette, both as an audience member and performer.
4. Members will participate in all required performances, whatever form that takes this year.
5. Members will work to build a safe, inclusive, and creative learning environment.

Student Leadership

1. Student Officers will be elected from the membership of each of the choirs that meet during the school day. The concert choir will elect its officers in June for the following year. The Mixed Chorus and Women's Choir will elect officers in September for the school year. You must have one years experience in an LHS Choir to be eligible to run for President or Vice-President (For Mixed or Concert only).

Officer's Job Descriptions

President: Shall coordinate all choir activities or designate a committee to do so. The President shall represent the Choir to the LHS Student Union and to Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf. The president shall take charge in the absence of the director and run a normal rehearsal.

Vice President: The Vice-President shall assume all duties of the president in his/her absence. The Vice-President is responsible for recording attendance at daily rehearsals AND at ALL evening performances and field trip performances

Secretary/Treasurer: The Secretary/ Treasurer is in charge of ALL fund raising, record keeping, and collection of funds. The Secretary/ Treasurer is the ONLY person to collect funds and is NOT to designate anyone else to do so. The Secretary/Treasurer must authorize disbursement of any choir funds.

Secretary: This is a separate position for Concert Choir only. The Secretary shall record minutes for all Choir Officers and Choir member's meetings. He/She shall distribute meeting minutes to membership. The Secretary may also help to maintain financial records at the discretion of the President or request of the treasurer. This should be done in a manner that will be CONSISTENT and beneficial to accurate record keeping.

Librarians: The Librarians are to make sure that each choir member has, or has visual access to, a copy of each piece of music in the choir's repertoire. The Librarians will also keep accurate records of what music is assigned to whom, and will be responsible for collecting said music, or its value in money. The Librarians are also in charge of assigning uniforms and the keeping of records required thereof. They must maintain labels on EACH article of clothing owned by LHS Vocal Music Department. They will also acquire additional uniforms needed for any new members.

Position descriptions may be re-imagined this year, depending on the needs of the choir during the pandemic

Audition Procedures

1. Auditions for Concert Choir and Mixed Chorus shall consist of singing in a quartet or trio form, one person to a part, on a song designated by Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf. The audition is for a ONE YEAR MEMBERSHIP in the respective organization. The caliber of your performance at your audition is considered, along with your test grades, concert attendance, school attendance, and involvement in the music department activities such as NYSSMA Solos, Area All-State, All County, solo auditions, school musical, Show Choir, A cappella Ensembles and Vocal Jazz. This past year due to COVID-19, no audition was required. Students previous involvement and level was considered.

Rehearsal Procedures

1. Choir members are to be on time for daily rehearsals. This means sitting in your assigned seat before the bell rings, NOT arriving as it rings. More than two lates per quarter will result in serving one night detention in the choir room. You may serve on the day of the 3rd offense or on the next day of school.
2. Gum should be put in the garbage upon entering the choir room. No eating is permitted during rehearsals unless you have spoken to Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf about it.

3. Take your seat promptly, organize your music according to the agenda, or complete task on board. Always fill out google form for attendance.
4. Talking is not permitted during rehearsal, except for a few moments in between pieces.
5. Proper singing posture is to be exhibited at all times, whether seated or standing. When seated, sit upright with your back away from the chair, and both feet flat on the floor. When standing, your feet should be shoulder width apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other. Never lock your knees. Your shoulders should be back and relaxed. Music should be held up, and positioned so that you can also see the conductor. Chairs with desktops should be placed in down-position for rehearsals. You must have a pencil at every rehearsal in order to write in your music. NEVER PEN.
6. Keep your eyes on the director throughout the rehearsal. Stay focused, and do not pack up until rehearsal is completely finished.
7. Take pride in our choir room. Littering or defacing property will result in a referral.
8. All music will be either digital, or in our music folder, taken home and brought back each day.
9. You may get passes to come to the choir room to practice during your study halls or lunch period. Get the pass before the period that you want to come down. Passes will NOT be given to you to go late to your study hall or lunch period, or during that same period.
10. Passes will not be given for you to go late to your class following choir unless the director asks you to stay.
11. Substitute teachers are to be treated with respect and are “in charge” in the absence of Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf. The choir will NOT take a study hall or free period in the event that Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf is absent. ALL choir members will participate in a normal rehearsal under the direction of the choir President.

Masks

Masks will be worn at all times during the rehearsal. As we continue fine-tuning these procedures, we know that wearing masks while maintaining proper social distancing guidelines is going to be our largest concern. While each student is welcome to wear a “normal” or chosen

mask to sing in, we all know that wearing masks while talking extensively can get tiresome and uncomfortable. Singing in a mask, therefore, becomes **very challenging**. Voices become muffled and breathing may become more difficult. Luckily, musicians and researchers everywhere are exploring MORE COMFORTABLE OPTIONS that make breathing and projection easier! Option 1 is provided free of charge. Mask breaks will be organized during each rehearsal for students that wish to take them.

Option 1) Mask Cages

The district has purchased cages that students can use. These are placed under the students normal mask. These cages keep the mask from being sucked into the mouth or nose when breathing.

Option 2) “The Singer’s Mask”

<https://www.broadwayreliefproject.com/>

Option 2) The Resonance Mask

<https://www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/>

This option may be on backorder, however gives many size options for children.

Option 3) Make your own. Below is the link to the youtube video. If you sew, go for it!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=26&v=azElkHsa7uE&feature=emb_title

There is also a group on facebook called “Masks for Performers” with patterns and DIY directions

Option 4) SafeSing Masks <https://safesing.com/password>

Virtual Learners

Students that have selected to be 100% virtual will still be a part of the ensemble. Our goal of creating virtual/semi-live performances will include the voices of our virtual learners. This will be a work in progress. Virtual learners will utilize the resources on google classroom to practice

warm-ups, sight-reading, choral part-tapes, and small weekly assignments. Virtual learners will also get a weekly lesson in a small group. Virtual learners must consistently check the weekly schedule, and fill out the google form for attendance each day.

Performance Procedures

This year's performance will look quite different. No audience will be present. Details of what this will look like are in the works. All Students, virtual or hybrid, will take part in the performance in some way shape or form.

Lessons

Small weekly group lessons will take place for virtual and hybrid learners, **ALL VIRTUALLY**. Students will be assigned to a lesson group on their asynchronous virtual learning day. If a student has to miss, please e-mail Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf to reschedule as soon as possible. If no email is sent ahead of time, grade for lesson will go down 10 points. This will be a wonderful opportunity for Mrs. Costanzo-Metcalf to provide feedback on assignments, sight-reading, repertoire, and vocal technique.

Grading

Quarterly Grades for the LHS Choirs shall be based on the following criteria:

1. A class participation grade, which will be a reflection of a choir members professional approach to choir with regard to punctuality, responsibility, proper singing posture, and being prepared with a pencil and music. This will be entered bi-weekly. In the event that a student is not prepared, cuts class, or reaches level 1 in the attendance policy, and absence would deduct 10 points from your bi-weekly grade. Virtual attendance will be collected by a google form "check in"
2. Virtual assignments (once a week for both hybrid and virtual)
3. Concert/ performance (virtual or otherwise)

4. Part checks, virtual or in person
5. Attendance to voice labs/sectionals

Google Form Parent Signature

Parents please click the link below to fill out the google form. This ensures that you and your student learner read and understand the policies for this year. This should be completed no later than October 2nd. Remember that anything in this handbook is subject to change due to pandemic changes or learning environment reorganization. I am so excited to make music again in the classroom. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns (contact link in letter on page 1).

<https://forms.gle/CpLJu713PmT4eJxG7>