



Choir Handbook 2023-2024

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www.StewartsCreekChoirs.com

www.twitter.com/schschoirs1

www.instagram.com/schschoirs

www.youtube.com/schschoirs1

www.facebook.com/schschoirs

www.TikTok.com/schschoirs

Mission

The Stewarts Creek High School Choral Department is devoted to the cultivation of the choral art, developing vocal technique, musicianship, and music literacy by analyzing and performing a variety of music representing numerous musical styles and genres, studying music literacy and theory, and by performing a variety of programs at the school and in the community, including participation in choral festivals and adjudicated events.

Goals

- Study and perform quality literature.
- Demand a disciplined, professional approach in rehearsal and performance.
- Provide a well-rounded musical experience, including knowledge of music history, musical terminology, listening experiences in a variety of genres, and a strong foundation in music literacy.
- Integrate music into other disciplines of study.
- Properly use and take care of the vocal mechanism.
- Learn and apply performance skills, audition techniques, and concert etiquette.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Encourage and build upon students' strengths and talents.
- Build students' self-esteem and confidence.
- Create a friendly and accepting choral family.

Communication

Communication is most effective when it is proactive, collaborative, and cordial. Email is the fastest and easiest way to reach Dr. Kelly (kellysu@rcschools.net) & Dr. Russell (russellb@rcschools.net). You can also follow SCHS Choirs on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for updates and information.

A **Gig Sheet** is usually passed out to students a week or so in advance of a concert or other performance and will outline details for each event.

An emailed **Newsletter** is sent out periodically, more frequently in close proximity to performances.

Remind101 is a text service you can sign up for such that Dr. Kelly & Dr. Russell can send text reminders to students/guardians about upcoming events/policies.

The **Choir Website (www.StewartsCreekChoirs.com)** is the central hub of information for the Choral Program. All handouts given to students are posted on the “Forms/Handouts” portion of the site. You can also listen to media and see videos of past performances.

It is the student’s and parents’ responsibility to check social media, email and the website regularly. If your contact information changes, please notify your choir directors. Parents, please feel free to contact Dr. Kelly and Russell anytime about your student’s progress in school – We’re happy to discuss ways we can work together to make his/her experience a good one!

Ensembles

Apollo

Audition Only – Grades 10-12

Apollo is the premiere tenor-bass vocal ensemble at Stewarts Creek High School. With a strong emphasis on music literacy and a dedication to the finest performance aesthetics, Apollo will perform for the Regional and State Choral Festivals as well as lead the choral ensembles in multiple yearly performances and occasional student body gatherings and athletic events. Students in Apollo are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons and audition for the Mid-State and All-State Choirs. This course may require significant after-school commitments as a part of the evaluation process, including rehearsals and an aggressive performance schedule. All efforts will be made to accommodate students involved in extra-curricular activities, athletics, or other school-related commitments.

Athena

Audition Only – Grades 10-12

Athena is the premiere treble vocal ensemble at Stewarts Creek High School. With a strong emphasis on music literacy and a dedication to the finest performance aesthetics, Athena will perform for the Regional and State Choral Festivals as well as lead the choral ensembles in multiple yearly performances and occasional student body gatherings and athletic events. Students

in Athena are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons and audition for the Mid-State and All-State Choirs. This course may require significant after-school commitments as a part of the evaluation process, including rehearsals and an aggressive performance schedule. All efforts will be made to accommodate students involved in extra-curricular activities, athletics, or other school-related commitments.

Bel Canto

Audition Only – Grades 10-12

Bel Canto (*Italian for “beautiful singing”*) is an auditioned ensemble for treble voices. They will perform multiple times per year during the evening choral concerts. Students in Bel Canto are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons and audition for Mid-State and All-State Choirs. Few after school events will be required outside of the scheduled choral concerts.

Giovani Voci

Non-Auditioned – Grade 9

Giovani Voci (*Italian for “young singers”*) is an entry-level ensemble for treble voices. They will perform multiple times per year during the evening choral concerts. Upper-level treble students with free periods are strongly encouraged to join Giovani Voci. Students in Giovani Voci are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons and audition for the Freshmen Honor’s Choir as well as the Mid-State and All-State Choirs. Few after school events will be required outside of the scheduled choral concerts.

Meistersingers

Audition Only – Grades 9-12

The Meistersingers (*German for “Master Singers”*) is an auditioned ensemble for contra voices. They will perform multiple times per year during the evening choral concerts. Students in Meistersingers are strongly encouraged to take private voice lessons and audition for the Freshmen Honor’s Choir as well as the Mid-State and All-State Choirs. Few after school events will be required outside of the scheduled choral concerts.

Choral Union

Non-Auditioned – Grades 13+

The Stewarts Creek Choral Union is a collaborative ensemble of adult singers who will sing major choral works with orchestra alongside the students of Stewarts Creek High School.

Membership in the Choral Union is free to all choral enthusiasts with minimal rehearsal requirements designed for the working professional/family member who would like to perform major works in a professional manner.

Repertoire

Repertoire for each ensemble will encompass all periods of music history and all styles associated with the Western Classical tradition. Because choral music has its beginnings in the church, many of the texts we sing will be religious in nature. This is not in an effort to endorse nor denounce any particular theological message. Rather, all music is chosen for its *artistic* and *musical* benefits to the individual and ensemble. With this in mind, students are expected to artistically understand and perform music with texts from a variety of authors, even if they do not explicitly approve of the message.

Classroom Materials

All ensemble music will be provided to each choir member. All materials given to students will be assigned a value; fines will be assessed for any materials not returned at the conclusion of a performance cycle.

All students will be provided a 3-ring binder that will include copies of choir literature and information. This folder is for choral music and notes only and should not be used for other classes. Do not mark on the outside of your choral folder as we will use it for performance.

A **pencil** (not a pen) **is required** at each rehearsal.

Choir Fees/Fundraising

Choir Fees

We ask that each student in Giovanni Voci, Meistersingers, and Bel Canto contribute \$65 as a required class fee by the end of August each Fall. Students in Apollo and Athena should contribute \$65 as a required retreat fee each Fall and a \$65 required class fee by the end of January each Spring. This fee helps to defray administrative and artistic costs associated with the choral program. Students who take advantage of a free or reduced

lunch benefits must confidentially speak with Dr. Kelly or Dr. Russell to arrange a modified fee schedule.

Philosophy surrounding Choir Fees

No student will be turned away from the Stewarts Creek Choirs because of financial hardship or inability to pay choir fees. We adhere to an inclusive philosophy, encouraging participation and working with families to devise a plan that includes a combination of delayed payments, scholarships, and aggressive fundraising. Parents can confidentially and freely speak with your choir directors.

Additional Fees

Additional choral opportunities, such as auditions and participation in Honor Choirs, Field Trips, etc, may require additional fees to cover participation, registration, etc.

Money/Payments

Checks should be made out to *Stewarts Creek High School Choirs* and will be deposited immediately in the school accounts by the SCHS bookkeeper. All money should be paid in check/money order (cash a last resort) so that appropriate records will be in place and payments can be easily tracked. If the last name on the check is different than that of the student, please put the student's name in the "memo" line. All cash payments over \$3.00 will receive a receipt upon request.

Fundraising

The annual operating budget for the SCHS Choirs exceeds \$30,000, so choir fees only account for a portion of the moneys needed to run a program of this caliber. The county provides limited funds to purchase music each year. Therefore, it is necessary that we have fundraisers to cover these costs. Your participation in the Stewarts Creek Choirs comes with the understanding that you will help to raise these funds or make donations in lieu of fundraising.

Each fundraiser will be tracked somewhat differently, with a designated amount of initial profit necessary for the general choral account. Once this amount is met, additional profit will be split evenly among all participants in the fundraiser to offset attire fees, trip fees, etc.

Concert Attire

One never gets a second chance to make a first impression. Every choir student will be provided a black choir t-shirt which you can wear anytime, but that is required for choral performances. Each student will also be assigned a choir robe, which will stay at school and be worn for performances.

Each student is required to provide black, close-toed dress shoes (flats preferable, no sneakers or boots) and black dress pants (no denim) that, when worn without the robe, meet SCHS dress code. If you wear socks, they must be black.

Grading

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

40% Performing/Rehearsing

Students are tested regularly on knowledge of the music learned in class.

20% Sightreading Pitch

Individual's ability to sing pitches on sight. Assessed through individual sightsinging tests.

20% Sightreading Rhythm

Individual's ability to sing rhythms on sight. Assessed through individual sightsinging tests.

20% Music Theory/History

Individual's ability to identify elements of music necessary to analyze and perform music, such as pitch and note names, meter, key signatures, ability to decode solfege, etc.

Performances

The Stewarts Creek High School Choirs function on a high level due to the coordinated efforts of Stewarts Creek Administration, Faculty, and Parents; we cannot be successful without everyone present at all in-school and after-school choir events. Be proactive in maintaining a personal calendar with your dates for family, church, sports, choir, etc. Only school-related conflicts (such as school-sanctioned clubs, athletics, etc) can be considered for excused absences with choral director approval. Communicate any potential conflicts that might arise to choir directors, coaches, etc *as soon as conflicts arise*.

Call times are concert-specific but are usually an hour before the performance time. The scheduled call time is when *rehearsal*

begins, therefore students should arrive in full concert dress at least five minutes early for roll call. Tardiness has an extremely adverse effect on concert grades; the first minute late will result in a 15% deduction from the grade with 1% taken off for each additional minute late. Call times are in the performance location and for students only – no parents or friends, please! **Students who do not yet drive** are still held to this tardy policy, so it is your responsibility to find a ride to events. In most cases, the choir room will remain open after school for those wishing to stay on a weekday after school.

The Stewarts Creek Choir Calendar can always be found at www.StewartsCreekChoirs.com or on the Stewarts Creek High School website for reference throughout the year. Please make yourself aware now of all choir events found on the Choir Calendar found at <https://sch.rcschools.net/apps/events/?id=7>). Put these events on your calendar now and please do not schedule any other events on these dates.

Performance is a privilege, not a right. Your choir directors can forbid you from performing if you fail to meet classroom requirements of professionalism and/or musical preparation. If a student is forbidden to perform, attendance at the concert may still be required along with a non-performance additional assignment.

Students who are unable to perform *for any non-excused absence* will be given an alternative assignment, consisting of submitting a recording of themselves singing their part to the concert alone or with a recording, writing an analysis paper assessing a recording of the concert, and verbal analyses of choral recordings.

Classroom Procedures

Rules

1. No gum, food, or drink other than bottled water.
2. No computers or mobile devices are to be seen or heard without the prior consent of the director.
3. Respect the rights and property of others, keeping hands and feet to yourselves.
4. Do not talk while another person, including the teacher, has the floor.

Consequences

1. Conference with student.
2. Parent Contact.
3. One day of Supervised Study before or after school.
4. Two days of Supervised Study before or after school.
5. Administrator referral.

Each infraction of the classroom rules will be documented.

Restroom Breaks

Please take care of restroom issues during class breaks. If you have an emergency, you may use one of your hall passes in your student agenda. Your directors' hall pass will not be used for restroom breaks but official school business.

Practice Rooms

The Choir Room has two offset areas available for individual or group practice. You may reserve these through your choir directors; please do not enter them without prior permission. All private voice lessons will take place in these practice rooms.

Final Exam

Students who attend all performances AND meet the exam exemption policies outlined by Stewarts Creek High School can be exempt from the final exam.

Choral Professionalism

One of the goals of the Stewarts Creek Choirs is to give students the experience of being a professional musician. This includes having all class materials, maintaining an accessible and orderly music folder, keeping proper singing posture, and encouraging a rehearsal atmosphere conducive to success. In general, we want

to represent ourselves in rehearsal and performance as the world-class performing ensemble you are.

However, a student's grade in choir is not based on behavior; Choral Professionalism will be dealt with as discipline issues, following the SCHS Discipline plan. Each of these infractions are documented and will follow the same sequence of consequences listed above:

- Not in seat with all class materials (folder/pencil) when the bell rings.
- Failure to bring music or pencil.
- Leaving folders or trash in rehearsal areas.
- Excessive talking.
- Gum/Food/Drink in rehearsal (except bottled water)
- Poor choral posture when singing.
- Failure to fully participate in classroom activities.
- Any action which might require an attitude adjustment.
- Foul language.
- Acting on a field trip in a manner which embarrasses Stewarts Creek High School, your family, or yourself.

Be responsible and accountable to the whole – your peers are counting on you!

Individual Opportunities

Voice Lessons

At Stewarts Creek High School, we recognize the value of supplementing classroom musical instruction with individualized musical training. As such, private vocal instruction is an **integral part** of a student's musical education. Enrolling in private or group voice lessons allows for very careful investigation of a student's voice, as well as time to explore vocal growth and literature from a variety of styles. A consistent lesson schedule develops a beneficial regimen of practice, discipline and vocal aptitude. Due to their benefits and convenience, **every student should consider enrolling in private voice lessons.**

Voice teachers will offer private and voice lessons on a weekly basis **during a student's choir class.** Students will be excused from choir rehearsal into one of the adjacent practice rooms for voice instruction (which means parents do not need to transport

students after school!). All voice teachers have been vetted by your choir directors, are fingerprinted and undergo a background check, and are considered employees of the Rutherford County Schools.

Some students may wish to take **private** voice lessons; this will, of course, allow the voice teacher to create an individualized course of study unique to your voice and development. Doing so will allow Dr. Kelly and Dr. Russell and the voice teacher to collaboratively take your vocal instruction to a level unattainable in a class setting. **If you want to advance in the Choral Program or make Mid-State/All-State/Governor's School/ACDA National Honor Choir, VOICE LESSONS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!** Think of this as an investment! If you are looking into college scholarships, placement into these honor choirs and advanced vocal development through voice lessons is necessary and will yield a strong return in coming years!

Tuition for voice lessons has been made as affordable as possible, with various options available. Weekly voice lessons are available during the school year with the **expectation of a year-long commitment.**

Voice lessons will be given at the following rates:

45-minute lessons:	\$30/lesson
22-minute lessons:	\$20/lesson

All-County/Mid-State/All-State Choirs

One of the most prestigious honors a high school singer can receive is an invitation to sing with the Mid-State and All-State Choirs. Auditions are held early in the Fall semester, with the Honor Choirs held during the Winter and Spring (see calendar for exact dates). All choir students, grades 9-12, are encouraged to audition! **Note – if you audition and are selected for All County, Mid-State, or All-State Choirs you are required to attend.** Each honor choir is assessed in Skyward just like every other SCHS Choir performance. Sometimes honor choirs include additional fees for hotel, transportation, or participation fees/music. Please take all dates into consideration when auditioning.

Governor's School for the Arts

The Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts is a month-long summer program for rising 11th and 12th grade students in Tennessee. Administered by the State Department of Education, GSFTA offers accelerated programs in art, dance, filmmaking, theatre, and music. Students stay on the MTSU campus at a nominal fee. See Dr. Russell for more information.

Additional Honors/Ensembles

Additional Honor Choirs, such as regional and national performance opportunities through the **American Choral Directors Association**, will be made available as they arise. Similar policies exist for these opportunities as exist for the honor choirs listed above; if you audition and make it, you are required to attend.

Travel

There will be many occasions when we travel off campus. The destinations will range from very close to very far, however student behavior is to be exemplary regardless of distance or duration. We are a class act and are expected to behave that way. Going on trips is a privilege and not a right; Dr. Kelly and Dr. Russell reserve the right to forbid any student from attending an off-campus function if the student does not exhibit the requisite maturity level needed for such responsibility.

Parent Involvement

Parents are an integral part to our success! Please be receptive when needs arise and volunteer to help. But mostly, make every effort to attend your child's concerts! We look forward to seeing you there!

Fine Arts at Stewarts Creek

Belief Statement

We believe at Stewarts Creek High School that the study of fine arts exists to explore, on a deeper level, the human condition. We offer the means for all students to discover more about themselves and guide them through the abstract and conceptual. We value the transformative learning that comes from the process of creating and exploring new potentials in every student.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create collaborative opportunities through which students and the community can encounter the communicative and personal experiences that only the fine arts can afford, producing critical thinkers, creators, and leaders who aspire to become the best versions of themselves.

Mantra

Discovering the Potential in Every Student.

Create. Innovate. Inspire.