

FORESTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR

Choir Handbook 2024-2025

CONTACT INFORMATION

Kateri Lavacek

Head Choir Director

Lavacekk@lisd.net

469.713.5972 ext. 2723

4TH PERIOD CONFERENCE

Hannah Watkins

Assistant Choir Director

watkinshannah@lisd.net

469.713.5972 ext. 2723

4TH PERIOD CONFERENCE

WELCOME, 2024-2025 FORESTWOOD CHOIR SINGERS AND PARENTS!

Welcome to the Forestwood Middle School Choir program! We are committed to providing a positive learning environment for your child. It is our belief that every child can be successful in choir with a positive attitude and a good work ethic. Choir is a group activity that depends upon the collaborative work of many individuals. The actions of one person can have an effect, both positively and negatively, on the entire group. For this reason, we must have guidelines that everyone must follow in order that each student may grow as an individual musician and also make a positive contribution to the choir. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a written policy on the organization and operation of our choir program. Please take the time to read each page carefully as a family, and then keep this for reference throughout the year. Congratulations on joining the Forestwood Middle School Choir! Feel free to contact us anytime with questions or concerns.

CHOIR CLASS SCHEDULE

1st Period - 6th Grade Cambiata

2nd Period - Cantus

3rd Period - Tenor Bass Choir

4th Period - Conference

5th Period - 6th Grade Treble

6th Period - Bel Canto

7th Period - Lyric

8th Period - 6th Grade Treble

CHOIR SUPPLIES

In order to utilize our class time wisely, students must be prepared for rehearsal each day. Students who do not bring their required materials could earn a grade reduction. Daily supplies are your black 1" binder (with all your music), pencil (you may only use a pencil on your music), and a highlighter. These supplies will be covered through your Choir fee and generally stay in the binder slots in the room. There are extra supplies located at the student center in the back of the classroom.

FEES & EXPENSES

There is a \$125 activity fee for all 7th/8th graders, and a \$80 activity fee for all 6th grade members of the FMS Choir program. This covers a large portion of the cost of Choir supplies, t-shirts, music, field trips, buses, clinicians, choreographers, social events, accompanist fees, contest/competitions fees, meals during field trips, and other expenses necessary for a fun and successful year. Scholarships can be applied for from the Boosters if the fee cannot be paid; simply notate your need on the Choir Fee form. Please email Mrs. Lavacek at Lavacekk@lisd.net if you have any questions or concerns.

Fees are due by FRIDAY, Aug. 23 with this [Fee Form](#) (only needed for paper payments). You may pay by cash or check, made out to [FMS Booster Club](#). Please put your student's name in the memo line of the check. You may also choose to pay online with a credit card through Cheddar Up, but there is a small convenience fee to pay this way.

Pay Online:

[6th grade Fees](#)

[7/8th Grade Fees](#)

FUNDRAISING

In order to keep our Choir fees low, we will need to participate in occasional additional fundraising to cover some of our costs the fees don't cover. We are fortunate that many local restaurants offer support through spirit nights! Our program will get a portion of the proceeds from sales on those spirit nights when you mention that you're there for or FMS Choir. We will be sending out information about those nights as they come and are so grateful for the community support. If you wish to make a donation to the Choir program or have connections to a business who could help, please reach out to Mrs. Lavacek.

You can also designate our Forestwood Choir Boosters as your Kroger plus card beneficiary! Simply sign in to your account and navigate to "Community Rewards" to enroll. To see a screen recording of how to do so, please click here:

From the app on your phone: [How to do Kroger Rewards - Phone App](#)

From a computer: [How to do Kroger Rewards Desktop.mov](#)

As always, participation in fundraising activities is both optional and encouraged.

CHOIR UNIFORMS

- Casual uniform (all 6th grade concerts, some 7/8 concerts, social events, auditions, and field trips)**

Provided by Choir:

- Choir t-shirt!

YOU must provide:

- **Non-ripped jeans**
- **Tennis shoes**

2. Formal Uniform (7/8th only, 2 choices)

a. Formal Dress option:

Provided by Choir:

- black velvet and blue satin formal dress

YOU must provide:

- **Flat black closed-toed dress shoes (No flip flops, athletic shoes, sandals, Crocs, Chucks, or open toed shoes.)**

Dresses must be hemmed at the bottom to one inch above the floor (**please try not to cut off much fabric**). Should you not return the dress or damage it in any way, you will be responsible for paying the full price of the dress (\$75 + shipping). **Dress hemming is each family's responsibility and must be completed by October 4, 2024.**

b. Formal Shirt and Pant option:

Provided by Choir:

- Black pants
- Black button down shirt
- Blue tie

YOU must provide:

- **Black dress shoes (no sneakers!)**
- **Black socks**
- **Black belt**
- (You may provide your own black dress pants if you prefer)

Slacks must be hemmed to just touch the floor when bare-foot (please try to cut minimal fabric). Should you not return the slacks, shirt, tie or damage them in any way, you will be responsible for paying the full price for that item. **Hemming is the family's responsibility and needs to be completed by Oct. 4, 2024.**

You will be issued a **tie** before each concert. You must turn the tie back in to a director or a parent helping **BEFORE** you leave the concerts.

Remember!

- **Wear deodorant. This means you!** Please be courteous to those around you!
- The whole idea behind wearing uniforms is for the group to look "uniform." Please do not wear big/flashy earrings, hair ornaments, etc., and keep hair accessories simple. No necklaces, bracelets, or watches allowed; one ring per hand is ok.
- Make sure hair is secured away from your face.
- No perfumes/colognes/body sprays.
- Make-up is left up to the discretion of the student and/or parent.
- You are a representative of the FMS Choir Program when wearing your t-shirt or formal wear. Wear it with pride, and model great behavior choices!

GENERAL FMS CHOIR POLICIES

Hall Passes:

FMS will have a new digital pass required to leave the classroom. This requires a teacher to approve the pass digitally, interrupting instruction. Because we teach by direct instruction the entire class period, we may not be able to stop class for general requests like refilling a water bottle, etc. It is advised that students make good use of their passing periods by using the restroom, filling their water, etc. so they are not left waiting for us to approve a pass. There are no passes issued the first or last 10 minutes of class, per FMS policy.

Tardies:

Class begins as soon as the bell rings, so we expect students to be in their spot on the risers with all of their supplies at the sound of the bell. If you are not in your spot as the bell begins ringing, you will have to scan the FMS Tardy QR code. Please refer to the FMS policy for tardy consequences, which are cumulative throughout all class periods and the year.

Cell Phone Policy:

There is a **zero tolerance cell phone policy in the choir room. Cell phones must stay in your backpack against the photo wall during the school day as per school policy.** Cell phones and other devices are NOT allowed on the risers unless given permission by Mrs. Lavacek or Ms. Watkins. Apple Watches may not be used during class to text/scroll/check the weather/message, etc. If your device is noticed by making noise, flashing lights, being in your hands, etc., your cell phone or Apple Watch will be taken up by your director for the remainder of the class period or the school day at their discretion.

Pencils Policy:

Please mark in your music in PENCIL ONLY. We will conduct random “Pencil Checks” for a grade, so make sure you always have a sharpened pencil in your choir binder! You will be provided with a pencil at the beginning of the year, and extra pencils will be in the back of the room should you need another, but it’s your responsibility to be sure you have one ready each class period.

Gum:

Gum is yummy, but you cannot sing well with it in your mouth - and you could choke! Please spit it out **before class begins.**

RESPECT:

Above ALL else, students are to show respect to one another, the choir room, and your director at all times! **Be kind, helpful, and inclusive to all students.** The choir room will be a safe and fun place to be for all students to enjoy.

CLASSROOM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS- BE PROMPT, BE PREPARED, BE POLITE!

1. Come to every rehearsal with a positive attitude and all class materials.
2. Keep hands, feet, and all objects to yourself at all times. **Do not touch each other.**
3. Food, drinks (except water), and gum are not allowed on the risers. ****Stanley cups/others with a straw are not allowed on the risers. Your water bottle must be able to close securely.****
4. Be in your assigned seat when the bell rings with your materials.

5. Raise your hand when you have a question or need to leave the room for any reason. Make sure your questions are **relevant**.
6. Treat all fellow students, teachers, and materials with respect and care.
7. No cell phones are allowed on the risers.
8. Participate fully at all times.
9. Create a positive classroom culture where mistakes are ok, we lift each other up, and work together toward excellence! Mean comments or looks to other students are not acceptable.

Consequences:

These guidelines will be enforced in the classroom and anytime we are together as a group representing Forestwood Middle School.

1st and 2nd Time: Verbal redirection/warning

3rd Time: Removal from group setting for the Stop and Think Sheet, possible lunch detention/parent contact depending on infraction

4th Time: lunch detention and parents will be contacted

5th Time: Student referral to the office

Severe Disruption: Any serious behavior that compromises the safety of the students, teacher, or learning environment of the students will result in an immediate office referral.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Concerts/Live Performances:

Choir concerts are one of the major ways that the students show what they are learning in class and is the culminating event of a unit of study. **The concerts are our EXAMS for each unit and are each worth two major grades to show mastery of our TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).** We have four major concerts throughout the year, and student **attendance is mandatory** unless the absence is excused according to the absence policy. We work hard to be respectful of your time outside of the school day and schedule as little as we can outside of class. Please prioritize concert dates in your calendar - everyone matters!

UIL/Contests:

Choir UIL in the spring is another way the students demonstrate the skills they've been working on all year long. 7th and 8th grade choirs sing three pieces of music and sight-read for a panel of judges each Marc. They receive a rating and comments from each. Our PreUIL (practice) will be a field trip during the school day; parents will need to drop their student off at Flower Mound HS as our schedule begins before the MS school day.

All students, 6-8th grades, will also participate in a spring contest where they will receive a rating from judges.

Students MUST be eligible (passing ALL classes with a 70% or higher) to leave campus on field trips.

Elementary Tour:

7th/8th grade varsity choir members will take a field trip in December to local elementary schools to perform for the students there and to show them what choir will be like when they join in middle school! This is a great opportunity to engage with the elementary students, see their old teachers, and have a great time bonding with each other.

Nursing Home Tour:

We also love going out into our community to visit our area nursing homes. We attempt to bring all 7th and 8th graders every year and love singing for and talking with the residents!

Social Events:

There will be a variety of optional choir social events students can participate in throughout the school year. Come join in the fun - all are welcome!

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

All-District Choir:

Each *sixth grade student* is invited and encouraged to audition for the LISD All-District Choir. If students are selected for the choir, they will participate in a clinic during part of the school day and will perform in a concert later that night. This is a wonderful honor for any student who is chosen! See the choir calendar for audition and performance dates.

All-Region Choir:

Each *seventh or eighth grade student* is invited and encouraged to audition for the LISD All-Region Choir. They will participate in an all day clinic on Saturday, November 9th, and perform in a concert later that evening. This is a HUGE honor for any student chosen! See the choir calendar for audition and performance dates.

Solo and Ensemble Contest:

Seventh and eighth grade students may also elect to perform a solo and/or an ensemble in a closed setting for a judge and receive helpful, personalized comments on their performance and a rating. Students are highly encouraged to participate! Being enrolled in voice lessons is a great way to get individualized help with your solo or ensemble selection.

GRADING POLICIES

Major Grades: 40%

Major grades can include, but are not limited to:

- Live concert performances (worth 2 major grades each)
- Singing tests
- Sight-reading tests
- Written tests
- Required combined rehearsals outside of class time

Minor Grades: 60%

These grades are taken during the development of knowledge and skills. Some examples

include:

- Written class work
- Binder and music checks
- Sight-reading
- Music theory assignments
- Music composition activities
- Class presentations
- melodic/rhythmic dictations
- rehearsal performances
- other components of learning how to sing with an ensemble.

Late Work:

We do not assign very much homework; in the event that we have, please do your best to get work turned in on time. The FMS Choir program follows the Forestwood Middle School guidelines for late work.

ELIGIBILITY/IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

All **extracurricular** activities require students to be passing ALL their classes with a 70 or higher to be eligible to participate. There will be plenty of advanced warnings and reminders to check their grades so there aren't any surprises.

- Concerts, UIL competition, recitals, sectionals, and before/after school rehearsals are considered to be **CURRICULAR** activities.
- All Region, PreUIL, all district, solo and ensemble, and other certain contests and field trips are considered to be an **EXTRACURRICULAR** activity.

Students who receive in-school suspension may not be able to participate in certain choral activities at the director's discretion. If a student is in ISS for consecutive days and the concert is the evening of the first day, the student may not participate.

CHOIR CONCERTS

Please click here for the calendar of events: [Choir Calendar](#). This will stay posted on Canvas and reminders will be sent both digitally and on paper for each event, but please put the dates into your calendar now.

Concert Attendance:

Concerts are the most important display of our daily hard work in the FMS Choir Program. Please check the calendar and note the dates of our concerts on your family calendar.

Concerts are a required part of the FMS Choir Program and are major graded events (our "tests"). Please check the calendar and make these conflicts known to the directors ahead of time. **Conflicts with NON-FMS activities are NOT excused absences.**

If it is determined by Mrs. Lavacek that an absence will be **excused**, substitute assignments will be given in place of the two concert grades and the student can earn up to a 100 on each. Absences that are considered **unexcused** will still result in a make up assignment, but the maximum score possible is only a 70. **If a student does not turn in the make-up assignments for either type of absence by their due date, both test grades will become a zero.**

Excused absences could include:

- Student illness
- Unavoidable travel plans
- Family emergency
- FMS/external PE school event conflict

Examples of **UNexcused** absences include:

- Forgetting about the concert
- Transportation problems (not having a ride/parents working)
- Working at your job
- Non-FMS extracurricular events (dance practice, cheer practice)
- Select sport teams, scouts, etc.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Audience members are encouraged to follow certain standards for formal concert behavior:

- Be an attentive audience member and refrain from talking.
- Remain seated during the entire concert if at all possible. If necessary, move only between selections and exit at the nearest door.
- Wait to re-enter until the performing group is finished and you hear applause.
- Applause is the appropriate expression of appreciation. A good rule of thumb is to wait until the conductor lowers his/her hands to indicate completion of the selection or work - sometimes there are intentional silences in the piece and you don't want to have a clapping solo!
- Please eliminate disruptions by turning off or silencing cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices and removing young children who are crying.
- Students are not permitted to leave until the end of the concert and are expected to support all performing groups. This also earns their etiquette grade.

CANVAS

LISD uses Canvas for parents and students to access school communications, assignments and calendars. We will communicate with students through their choir specific classes on Canvas via Announcements. Please have your notifications turned on!

We highly recommend that you acquire a parent login in order to have access to your child's Canvas account. You will need a pairing code to link your child's account to yours. Please refer to the [written instructions](#) for further assistance. If another parent wants to pair with your child, have the child generate a second code using the same steps.

REMIND 101

Parents are encouraged to join our Remind101 classes to receive announcements from teachers. We use this app to communicate essential information because we have so many extracurricular activities and some require a morning drop off at different locations (Elementary Tour, PreUIL) and Canvas does not always reach parents. This is especially important for Bel Canto, Tenor Bass, and Lyric choirs. **Students should not join the Remind.**

To join via text, create a new text to the number 81010. In the body of the message, please type the code for your child's class:

6th Cambiata (1st period): @fms6cambi

6th Treble Choirs (5th and 8th periods): @fms6treb

Cantus (2nd period): @fmscantus

Tenor Bass Choir (3rd period): @fmstb2425

Lyric Choir (7th period) @fmslyric24

Bel Canto (6th period): @fmsbc2425

All Region (7/8th interested students): @fmsar24

PRIVATE LESSONS

All choir students have the opportunity to participate in private voice lessons during the school day. Mrs. McBain, Ms. Mugnolo, Ms. Watkins, and Mr. Powers are incredible and we are fortunate to have such wonderful teachers! Lessons will be scheduled during the student's choir class or before/after school. The payment rate is set by LISD and more information is available as needed. Private lessons are not required, but strongly encouraged.

Private lessons happen every week during school and are to be paid one month in advance. Please consider this an agreement for the entire year, as these teachers are depending on this regular income. If you fall on very difficult economic times later in the year, please communicate with your teacher so that we can work out a plan. It is always your responsibility to contact your private teacher as early as possible before the lesson if you are sick or cannot attend a lesson. **Private teachers will charge you for the missed lesson if private teachers are not contacted ahead of time when a student misses and are not obligated to make up the time.**

To sign up for lessons, please fill out this Google Form: [Private Lesson Enrollment](#)

Please contact Mrs. Lavacek or Ms. Watkins at lavacekk@lisd.net and watkinshannah@lisd.net for any questions regarding private lessons.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents who are interested in volunteering with the choir events must be registered with the district's volunteer website, Voly, each year. After registering through Voly and passing a background check you will receive a confirmation email and be able to log in to your account. **You will not be able to log in before passing the background check.** To access Voly, please click [this link](#) and create an account. Please note that it can take a few weeks at peak times (like the beginning of the year) for volunteers to clear.

Please consider filling out this volunteer interest form to share what you're willing to give!

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Facebook: Forestwood Middle School Choir Booster Club

Instagram: @fmschoir

[SIGN THE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM](#)

[HERE](#) DUE 8/23:

Quick Links:

[Handbook Signature Form](#)

[☰ Choir Fee Form 24-25](#)

[☰ Choir Calendar 24-25 \(Color\)](#)

[Private Lessons](#)

Volunteer: [Voly](#)

Remind 101 Codes: Text the number 81010 with the code @__ as follows:

6th Cambiata: @fms6cambi

6th Treble Choirs: @fms6treb

Tenor Bass Choir: @fmstb2425

Cantus Choir: @fmscantus

Lyric Choir: @fmslyric24

Bel Canto: @fmsbc2425

All Region: @fmsar24 (only for 7/8th graders and parents who plan to audition for all region)