

**Van Hoosen Middle School**  
**Vocal Music Department**

3200 W. Tienken Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48306 (248) 726 – 5200 ext. 5374  
<http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/van-hoosen-middle-school/pages/67456/blue>

Director of Choirs: Thomas Blue  
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September 2018-2019

Dear Van Hoosen Vocal Music Students and Parents;

Here is your “current edition” of the Van Hoosen Vocal Music Handbook. I hope it contains all of the information you need to make your participation in vocal music pleasant and rewarding. I have included an **Overview** of our program, a **Calendar** of events, a **Procedure** to follow when a singer must be absent from a required performance, an explanation of the **Grading System**, and a listing of our **Rehearsal Rules**.

Students in the Van Hoosen vocal music program are challenged to grow musically and vocally to their greatest potential. They are required to show **Respect** for their fellow students, the music they perform, their director, and the work which must be done to make our choirs perform at their highest possible level of achievement. They are also required to show **Responsibility** for their individual contribution by trying their best at all rehearsals and performances.

Students who do these things will be **Rewarded** with an experience unlike any other they can have in school - including pride, accomplishment, success, and fun!

It is important that the information in this handbook be shared between students and their parents. Students will need to share their handbooks with their parents/ guardians during this opening week of school. If the parent/ guardian would like an additional copy, please request one to be brought home. The information is valuable and opens the lines of communication between the home and school. **Students should keep their handbooks in their notebooks for easy reference after that date.**

Parents who have any suggestions for future handbooks or any questions or comments about vocal music activities should always feel free to call me at VH 248 726 4900. (Voice mail at Adams HS is 248 726 5200 ext. 5374 and is also available, email is the most efficient way to contact me: [tblue@rochester.k12.mi.us](mailto:tblue@rochester.k12.mi.us))

We are off to a great start and 2018 - 2019 will be the beginning of an exciting musical experience for our Van Hoosen student singers! **The choir program continues to grow and gain interest thanks to the commitment of parents and student singers!** Let’s work together - students, parents and director - to make it a wonderful year!

“Sing” cerely,

Thomas Blue, Director

Sign below and return by Friday, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Yes, we have read the vocal music handbook together!

(Parent signature)

(Student signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **WHAT KEEPS US BUSY NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?**

Attending District and State Choral Festival  
Presenting Fall Concerts  
Presenting Winter Concerts  
Presenting Spring Concerts  
Singing at Adams High School  
Helping to train future music teachers from area universities/colleges  
Singing the National Anthem at School Events  
Singing the National Anthem at the Lansing Lugnuts baseball game  
Taking Private Voice Lessons  
Participating in the Sixth Grade Musicals/ Concerts

## **WHAT DO WE DO BESIDE “JUST SING”**

Study and perform music of different time periods and cultures  
Study music history and art  
Study proper breathing techniques for singing  
Work on unifying our pronunciation of vowels and consonants  
Practice vocal exercises to extend voice range and vocal projection  
Learn to listen analytically to ourselves and others as we sing  
Explore music literature, performance styles and performance practices  
Study characteristics of “our” voice types  
Learn the vocabulary of music  
Practice music literacy  
Learn to participate as an active member of a performing ensemble (team)  
Gain self-confidence as a musician (individual singer)

## **WHAT ELSE MAKES US SUCCESSFUL?**

Singing, of course!  
Having people support our program by attending our performances!  
Having a willing supply of chaperones!

## Van Hoosen Choir Program POWER Classroom Expectations

1. Please be in your assigned place with your music **BEFORE** class begins. You may leave your place with teacher permission.
2. Please do not chew gum or have any food at any time during rehearsal. No food is to be brought into the classroom. (For the safety of you and your voice)
3. Please do not do homework during class time (rehearsals).
4. If you're sick and/ or your throat hurts, please notify the director before rehearsal starts. *A note from a parent would be very appreciative and appropriate.* You are then asked to participate in the rehearsal by listening and learning.
5. Please listen when rehearsing our music and whenever the choir director is teaching or a fellow student is speaking to the class. Plan to talk very little and sing a great deal when you come to class (rehearsal).
6. Please sing with correct posture/ body alignment at all times. Make singing posture an unconscious habit rather than something you save for performances!
7. Please bring all necessary materials including a pencil to class **every day!**
8. Please focus your attention on the music and the class activities. Make eye contact – let's communicate together.
9. Please “try everything” that you are asked you to do. Try very hard to get it right! Trust your teacher's skill, knowledge and experience. It is for a musical reason!
10. Please no cell phones, I-Pods, electronic devices, hats or other similar distractions in the choir room. We want to use our time for learning.
11. **A respectful attitude toward the director and fellow students must be maintained at all times.** Improper attitudes, language or teasing will not be accepted.
12. Remember “Work Hard, Be Nice!”

## VOCAL MUSIC 6, 7, AND 8

The period represented by grades 6 - 8 is especially critical in students' musical development. The music they perform or study often becomes an integral part of their personal musical repertoire. Composing and improvising provide students with unique insight into the form and structure of music and at the same time help them to develop their creativity. Broad experience with a variety of music is necessary if students are to make informed musical judgments. This breadth of background enables them to begin to understand the connections and relationships between music and the other disciplines. By understanding the cultural and historical forces that shape social attitudes and behaviors, students are better prepared to live and work in communities that are increasingly multicultural. The role that music will play in students' lives depends in large measure on the level of skills they achieve in creating, performing, and listening to music.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS IN MUSIC

1. Content Standard: *Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music*
2. Content Standard: *Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music*
3. Content Standard: *Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments*
4. Content Standard: *Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines*
5. Content Standard: *Reading and notating music*
6. Content Standard: *Listening to, analyzing, and describing music*
7. Content Standard: *Evaluating music and music performances*
8. Content Standard: *Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts*
9. Content Standard: *Understanding music in relation to history and culture*

### CONCERTS

Concert dates are listed in the schedule of events. Concert performance is very important to the success of our class. The concert is where we put to practice performance excellence and those things that are accomplished in the classroom. **Concerts are a requirement of the class.**

Grading: This class will require your participation. Therefore your grade will be based on

1. Participation in class and attendance at concerts
2. Assignments and semester projects
3. Quizzes and tests

## *Performance Policy*

One of the good things about our music program is that students have many opportunities to perform, both individually and with their ensembles and peers. Some of these opportunities are optional but some are **REQUIRED. ALL students in a music group must participate in required concerts.** Important musical factors such as balance and blend of individual voice colors are affected by the absence of even just one performer! Students accept the responsibility to be at required concerts when they join a musical group. In view of this, it is proper to consider how well this responsibility has been met when determining a student's grade.

In a busy community such as ours, conflicts with concerts sometime occur. Keeping in mind the **COMMUNICATION** between parent, teacher and student is a prerequisite to success in music, please do the following:

1. Look carefully over the calendar NOW. Note which performances are required and which are not. Discuss which optional opportunities you might wish to be involved in.
2. Write appropriate dates on your family activity calendar NOW. Keep full calendar handy as a reference.
3. Note that it is the student's responsibility to inform parents of changes in the calendar.
4. **WHEN A STUDENT MUST MISS A REQUIRED PERFORMANCE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR (BY WRITTEN NOTE/TELEPHONE CALL OR EMAIL) AS FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE CONCERT AS POSSIBLE. SUCH ADVANCED NOTICE IS NECESSARY IF THE ABSENCE IS TO BE EXCUSED AND THEREFORE CAPABLE OF BEING MADE UP. IN CASES OF LAST-MINUTE ILLNESS OR UNFORESEEABLE EMERGENCIES A FOLOW UP NOTE OR CALL WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCE.**
5. Absences from required concerts will be excused under the following categories:
  - a. illness
  - b. religious observance
  - c. planned absence
  - d. death in the immediate family
  - e. unforeseeable emergency
  - f. suspension from school
6. Excused absences from required concerts can be made up by making an out of class appointment with the director at which time you will be asked to sing some or all of your concert music. You will be graded individually on your performance. **REMEMBER: You must initiate the request for a make-up appointment.**

## POINT SYSTEM USED FOR EARNING GRADES IN THE CHORAL MUSIC PROGRAM

### Grading Procedure:

Grading is done on a point scale. Points vary from as little as five points for a homework assignment to 50-100 points for a test, presentation or paper. The final in January will be cumulative for the entire semester. There is no credit given for late assignments unless the reason for the late work

- 1) is an excused absence (not an exempt/ planned absence)
- 2) has been arranged with the teacher ahead of time.

This class will require your participation. Therefore your grade will be based on

1. Participation in class and concert performance
2. Assignments written and oral/ aural
3. Musical quizzes and tests
4. Semester exam or project

### **Rehearsal Points**

Two points are earned for every rehearsal in which you participate. Rehearsal points can be denied for disruptive behavior, lack of attention, poor participation and other inappropriate behavior that interferes with your learning or the learning of the other students. Chewing gum during rehearsal, not coming to class with the necessary materials can also be reasons for points being denied.

### **Performance Points**

Thirty points are earned for participation in each required choral performance.

### **Test/ Quiz/ Assignment Points**

Points are earned through test, quizzes and other assignments. These may be aural, oral, singing, artistic or written in form.

### **Participation Points**

Excellent participation is shown in such factors as beginning on time, working hard each day, showing respect to the director/ teacher and other students, showing group spirit and demonstrating a desire to help your group improve. The director will grant participation points according to the following scale:

50 points = excellent/ above expected participation

40 points = average/ expected participation

30 points = fair/ below expected participation

### **Make Up Points**

You earn no points when you are absent from any rehearsal, performance, test/ quiz or assignment. However, just as in some of your other classes, you can make up missed points if your absence is excused. Rehearsal points lost through absence can be made up through attendance at certain concerts, participation in extra musical performances or choral/ solo events, recitals, musical productions and other vocal music activities, through written reports on music topics and through other projects that are from time to time announced in class. Test points can be made up by making arrangements to take the test. Performance points can only be made up by coming before school, after school or during lunch to sing the concert music for the director, who will assign you a grade (points) reflecting your mastery of the music. **Remember that any time you want to make up points YOU must ask for them and make the necessary arrangements.**

**VAN HOUSEN MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**VOCAL MUSIC CONCERT ABSENCE FORM**

Today's Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ was absent from \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name - Please Print) (Choir)

concert on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_.  
(Day) (Date)

Reason for absence:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This absence was reported to the director prior to my absence. **YES / NO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE)

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Do not write below this line

The above absence is

**EXCUSED**

**UNEXCUSED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Initials