



SHS Chorus Program

August 11, 2025

SHS Chorus Students, Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2025-26 school year! Our handbook keeps our program running smoothly, please read and refer to it to explore our policies, objectives, procedures, and events. We are delighted for you to join us and for trusting us to take you on a journey of music-making and discovery!!!

Now more than ever, we have information to justify why we participate in this demanding yet rewarding activity. Experts have concluded that studying music helps with spatial reasoning, test taking, and overall quality of life! Factor in social skills, emotional development, leadership training, group interaction, aesthetic perception, music-making, and the discipline of being in a Chorus program. Our goal is to provide our students with a well-rounded Chorus music education that will serve them for the rest of their lives. We strive to create independent musicians that will know how to read music, understand basic concepts of music theory, and learn how to use their chosen instrument, the voice. We realize that we are not only training-up young musicians but young men and women as well. The goal is a lifelong understanding and appreciation for high-quality music and music-making!

We trust that the contents of this handbook will answer most, if not all, of your questions about the upcoming year. So please read the following information and sign and return the attached parent form by Friday, 8/15/25.

Thank you so much for your support of the Spartanburg Chorus Program! Go Vikings!!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kimberly Colón
**District 7 Choral Coordinator/
Chorus Director**
*University of Illinois, M.A in Ed. Leadership
Northwestern University, B.M in Choral
Music Ed and Vocal Performance*

Miss. Alexa Cotran
Chorus Director
*Mercer University, M.M in Choral Conducting
University of South Carolina, B.M in Choral Music Ed with
Vocal Performance Certificate*

Music Advocacy's Top Three for Parents

- 1. A ten-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background.**
- Dr. James Catterall, UCLA.
- 2. In a 1999 Columbia University study, students in the arts are found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident, and better able to express their ideas. These benefits exist across socioeconomic levels.**
- The Arts Education Partnership, 1999.
- 3. College admissions officers continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness.**
- Carl Hartman, "Arts May Improve Students' Grades," The Associated Press, October, 1999.

The Spartanburg High School Chorus Program

The SHS Chorus Program is recognized across our state as a program of quality and excellence. We consistently receive the highest marks possible at the SCMEA (South Carolina Music Educators Association) State Concert Performance Festival. We are sought out by regional universities who wish to recruit our graduates into their collegiate choral programs. In 2024 and 2025 our choirs were honored to perform at the Treble Choir Invitational at the University of South Carolina and for the SCMEA State Music Educators Conference this past February.

We strive to provide a well-rounded music education for all chorus students. A successful chorus music education program has several necessary components, which contribute to the success of all students. It is our goal to:

- Provide a comprehensive music literacy program.
- Develop excellent ensemble musicianship skills.
- Expose students to music theory and history.
- Develop student leaderships and teamwork skills.
- Instill a love for music that will last a lifetime.

Mrs. Kimberly Colón, M.Ed, NBCT
District 7 Choral Coordinator/Director
Email: kdcolon@spart7.org
Phone: 864-641-2666

Ms. Alexa Cotran, M.M.
Choir Director
Email: acotran@spart7.org
Phone: 864-641-2763

Vocal Ensembles

BLOCK 1: Chorale HONORS SATB (Honors Chorus 5 and Chorus 6) The Chorale class section is the second or third sequence in the Choral Program. Students that advance to Chorale must pass their vocal placement qualifications to move to this section. Members will perform at three major concerts in addition to some additional performances. Members must have a very strong commitment to the chorus program and must demonstrate the ability to work well with others as a group and in sections. Students must have a strong work ethic, be solid individual singers, and have a great stage presence. Class instruction focuses on highly advanced sight-reading, melodic and rhythmic dictation, independent singing/harmony skills, and more advanced chorus repertoire. These students are highly encouraged to audition for the SCMEA All-State Choir.

Students are encouraged to take Honors Chorus 5 and Chorus 6 all year, which means they take a full block of this ensemble all year long. These students will receive 2 units of honors credit for the academic year. However, to accommodate AP course work conflicts or involvement in band or orchestra, some students will take a “skinny” of choir during either period 1 or period 2. They will receive 1 unit of honors credit for the academic year.

BLOCK 2: SATB Viking Voices Choir (Chorus 1 and Chorus 2) - This new SATB choir is a combination of the previous Bel Canto Treble Choir AND Viking Voices Tenor/Bass Choir. Now, in block, the two sections are now one SATB choir, directed by both Mrs. Colón and Miss. Cotran. The SATB Viking Voices Chorus is the first sequence at Spartanburg High School for all 9th grade students and all new choral singers, regardless of grade level. This course will meet for a 90-minute block each day all year long. Members of this ensemble will perform at three major concerts and their concert performance assessment in March. Class instruction focuses on developing a healthy vocal tone, sight-reading, pitch and rhythm exercises, and choral rehearsal techniques

Students are highly encouraged to take Chorus 1 during Semester 1 and Chorus 2 during Semester 2 during the same academic year, resulting in two units of earned credit for the academic year.

BLOCK 3: Choristers HONORS SSAA (Honors Chorus 3 and 4) The Choristers class section is the second sequence in the Choral Program for treble voices, providing students have completed a successful year of choral study in the Bel Canto Singers, now Viking Voices SATB. Students that advance to Choristers must pass their vocal placement qualifications to move to this section. Members will perform at three major concerts in addition to some additional performances. Members must have a very strong commitment to the chorus program and must demonstrate the ability to work well with others as a group and in sections. Students must have a strong work ethic, be solid individual singers, and have a great stage presence. Class instruction focuses on advanced sight-reading, pitch and rhythm exercises, independent singing/harmony skills, and varied chorus repertoire. These students are highly encouraged to audition for the SCMEA All-State Choir.

Students are encouraged to take Honors Chorus 3 and 4 all year, which means they take a full block of this ensemble all year long. These students will receive 2 units of honors credit for the academic year. However, to accommodate AP course work conflicts or involvement in band or orchestra, some students will take a “skinny” of choir during either period 3 or period 4. They will receive 1 unit of honors credit for the academic year.

Period 8: Corporation (Honors Chorus 8) Corporation is a highly selective SATB ensemble that meets daily for 43 minutes. Members of this group must demonstrate the highest level of musical ability, must have a successful audition and be a member of the Chorale. Corporation members are expected to be role models of the chorus program, have dance skills, stage presence and the highest level of sight-reading skills.

This ensemble meets as an 8th Period skinny all year. Students will receive one unit of honors credit for the academic year.

Private Voice Lessons

We are delighted to be able to offer private vocal instruction during your choir class at school.

We are partnering with Dr. TJ Turner to bring lessons directly into our school and choir program. This means Dr. Turner will come to SHS to give interested students one-on-one voice instruction during this choir ensemble rehearsal.

Lessons are 30-minute pull-out sessions during your regular choir class time during the school day!
Lessons are \$30 per session paid to Dr. Turner.

Dr. Turner holds degrees from Furman University, University of South Carolina and earned his Doctorate from University of Memphis, TN. He is an active performer throughout the southeast as well as Lecturer of Music at Lander University and piano and voice instructor at the Lawsons Academy of Arts at Converse University.

Voice Lessons during your choir class.

Reach out to Dr. Turner through his website, we will work to schedule your lesson during choir.

<https://upstatevoicelessons.com/>

Rehearsals/Class Procedures & Policies

ARRIVE ON TIME AND BE PREPARED TO START CLASS. Students should pick up their music folder and classroom supplies and read the board in the front of the room for the class rehearsal plan. All book bags should be stored away from their chair. When the tardy bell rings, students will be seated in their assigned seat with their MacBook, Black Music Binder and a PENCIL. **Consequence:** The school tardy policy will be enforced.

ALWAYS have your music and a pencil in class. Mark your music appropriately during rehearsal. Pay attention to the director's comments and make markings in your music without being asked. This will help you learn the music much faster. **Consequence:** You will lose ten points from your daily grade for that day.

NO TALKING DURING REHEARSAL. Whether the director is standing or sitting at the piano, students should follow their music, and pay attention, even while their section is not rehearsing. **Consequence:** First time-10 points deducted from daily grade. Additional Times-disciplinary consequences following school code of conduct.

NOT ALLOWED IN CLASSROOM:

- Gum, Food, Drinks, Candy or other consumables.
- Putting on make-up, brushing hair and other personal grooming.
- Horseplay, wrestling, or goofing off.

Consequence: First time-10 points deducted from daily grade. Additional Times-disciplinary consequences following school code of conduct.

OFF LIMIT AREAS:

Piano and sound equipment are off-limits. Please do not touch.
No student will be allowed in the directors' offices without permission.
Students may not be in the Chorus room without a teacher, administrator, or substitute.

CELL PHONE USE! Consequence: 1. verbal warning; 2+: Office Referral per school policy

CLEAN UP: Put choir supplies back where they belong. This includes your own folder, equipment, chairs, and office supplies. Pick up your own trash. We need to keep our own room as clean as possible. **Consequence:** -10 points deducted from daily grade.

RESTROOM POLICY: Using the restroom or getting water during class/rehearsal is a distraction to the entire class. Students should use the restroom before or after class. If students absolutely need to use the restroom during rehearsal, they will ask the directors' permission at an appropriate time. When given permission, the student will use the approved pass and be back quickly. **Consequences:** Remaining outside of class too long or abusing breaks will result in the loss of these privileges.

Concert Attire

It is essential that all persons in a performing group dress and groom themselves uniformly. A student's jewelry, make-up, clothing, fingernails, and hairstyles need to be such as not to call attention to them as an individual. Formal Concert Uniform will be rented from the Spartanburg High School Choir Program:

- Uniform Rental Fee: \$10
- Fee can be paid in the choir room with cash or check
- Credit Card payment can be made in the SHS Treasurers Office
- Fees can be paid online at <https://shschoirs.com/membership/>
- Additional fees will apply for dirty or lost items
- **Students are responsible for their own black dress shoes and black socks if appropriate.**

SHS Choir Uniform 2025-26

Tenor/Bass Voices	Treble Voices	Chorale - Tenor/Bass Voices
Black Tux Shirt Black Tux Pants Cummerbund	Black sparkle top Long black skirt Black velvet belt OR Black Tux Shirt Black Pants	White Tuxedo Shirt Black Tux Pants Tux Coat Cummerbund and bow-tie

Please make sure that no under-garments are showing when your uniform is on.

Uniform Fee Information

Uniforms will be distributed to each choir member prior to our first choir concert this Fall. Uniforms will be given to each choir member to use during the 24-25 School Year.

A uniform maintenance fee of \$10 is due September 1, 2025.

An additional fee will be charged if the uniform is not returned in its original condition. **Uniforms are expected to be returned by May 8, 2026.**

Replacement Fee will be charged for any missing uniform items:

\$35 - sparkle tops

\$30 - skirts

\$75 - tuxedo coat

\$50 - tuxedo pants

\$25 - tuxedo shirt

Concert Attendance Policy

Resolving conflicts between chorus and other activities or events is the responsibility of the student. Rehearsal and performance schedules are given out at the beginning of the school year to allow for time to make arrangements and avoid conflicts. **Work is not an excuse for missing any chorus activity.**

You must make every effort to be at a concert and all related rehearsals. We firmly believe that most conflicts can be worked out if we start the conversation with plenty of time. **Please contact your director as soon as you notice a potential conflict.**

Any reason for concert absence that could have been avoided with proper planning WILL NOT be considered an excused absence (like not having a ride). **An Unexcused Absence from a concert means you will receive a 0 for the concert grade.**

In the event of concert conflicts concerning other school activities, it is expected that you notify your director and coach/sponsor/teacher of the conflict as soon as possible, but at least two weeks before the event. Students with an **EXCUSED ABSENCE will have an EX entered into PowerSchool for the concert. The concert will neither help nor hurt your grade.**

Students that have been given OSS for discipline consequences by the assistant principal for any reason will not be permitted to participate in any choir events, field trips or concerts. Students will receive an EX for the assignment grade, meaning the absence of attendance will not hurt nor help your grade.

For Pre-Arranged Absences:

Pre-arranged school conflicts, religious holidays, immediate family wedding

1. The directors must be notified well in advance (two weeks minimum) via email, phone call, or conference.
2. The director will then determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. **The student will receive a zero for any unexcused absence from a rehearsal or performance event.**
3. **If approved, student will have an excused absence from the concert which will not help or hurt the student's average.**

For Illness or Emergency:

1. A parental or doctor's note must be submitted upon the student's return in a sudden illness or emergency.
2. If the student is absent from school and there is a chorus event that evening, email the director to inform him or her of the absence and why. Submit a proper doctor's note upon your return to school.

Performance No-Shows: The student will receive a zero for their performance grade if they do not attend a performance. Performances and after-school practices are 40% of the student's grade.

Grading

<u>Grading Scale</u>		Daily Grades/Participation.....20%
100-90	A	Concerts and Performances.....40%
89-80	B	Musical Skills.....40%
79-70	C	<i>Musical Knowledge 20%</i>
69-60	D	<i>Performance Skills 20%</i>
Below 60	F	

1. Participation/Daily Grades 20% The teacher observes students on the physical elements of singing, which include but are not limited to posture, head position, lip and vowel formation, facial expressions, breathing techniques, holding music, attention to the director, following instructions, and being prepared at the beginning of class with a pencil and music. Students must refrain from excessive talking during rehearsals and always remain on task.

2. Concerts and Performances 40% Major concerts will be given each term. All students must participate in the dress rehearsals, lunch rehearsals, and concerts in order to pass the class for that grading period. Students will arrive on time, already wearing their concert attire, and stay through the entire event. Rehearsal end times will be announced before the event so transportation can be arranged. Parents/families must see that the student gets to the appropriate place at the proper time.

3. Major: Musical Skills: 40%

- **Musical Knowledge & Understanding 20%** Each student will demonstrate their knowledge of musical concepts through a variety of assessments (tests, quizzes). These assessments will target the student's listening skills and comprehension of music theory, musical terms, and symbols. Students will also complete several written critiques of musical performances throughout the year.
- **Performance Skills 20%** These assessments include vocal pitch exercises, sight-reading tests, and excerpts from the repertoire. These test the student's knowledge of the voice, the elements of music, music reading, and singing skills.

Choir Ensemble Placement

Each Spring, the choir director will review each student's musical progress from the year. Director and student will look at musical skill knowledge and sight singing ability to determine the proper choir assignment for the following school year.

Student Accounts

Each student is given an Individual Choir Activity Account managed by the Choir Department.

- Students will be given opportunities to raise money through various fundraisers to earn money for their account to help with costs throughout the school year (to be used for choir events only).
- Student choir accounts will roll over from one year to the next until student graduates, at which time any unused money will be transferred to the general choir account to be used for future scholarships.

Field Trips, Activities and Concerts

1. Students must maintain a good discipline record to attend any choir activities
2. The following will disqualify a student from participating in any choir events (including concerts, performance assessments or field trips). *Students that are not permitted to attend an assessment or concert due to discipline will have the grade marked as excused, the grade will not hurt nor help the students term grade.*
 - a. Out of School Suspension (OSS) within the same semester of the event
 - b. Any more than three days of In-School-Suspension (ISS) within the same semester as the event
 - c. Receiving a referral from Mrs. Colón or Miss. Cotran for any reason, other than a tardy during the same semester as an event
3. The discipline record requirements will reset with the new semester
4. Students must obey all chaperones while on any choir related event.
5. All students must have a signed permission form to leave the building on a choir event.
6. Always pick up after yourselves while a visitor on a bus or any off-campus location.

In Hotel Situations

1. Rooms are to be locked, at all times.
2. There will be no one of the opposite sex in your room.
3. All school rules will be enforced on trips.
4. No one is to leave the hotel alone. Any student found leaving the premises without permission will be dealt with severely.
5. Chorus members and chaperones are expected to be in the right place, at the right time, and ready to go.
6. Curfews must be strictly observed. Lights out means lights out! No talking or loud singing.

Fine Arts Disney Trip

- January 16-19, 2026
- Trip payments are made to ETA Adventures, not Spartanburg High School.
- Any fundraised money can be used for the FINAL payment only.

Booster Club

The main goal of the SHS Choir Booster Club is to help our directors run the general operations of the choral department and help support our students through various scholarships. Each year our Booster Club presents \$2500 of scholarships to our graduating seniors. Parents can help the Booster Club by making a donation or volunteering in various ways.

Donation Information

- Donations to the booster club helps to fund field trip and college scholarships for current choir students.
- Donations can be made online at <http://shschoirs.com/memberships>

Volunteers and Chaperones

- Volunteers are needed to help run Club Allegro on September 19, our Fall variety show, which helps to raise money for our scholarships.
- Chaperones will be needed to help with CPA (March 24 or 25, 2026)

Communication

Chorus Website: <http://shschoirs.com>

- Latest concert recordings
- Updated events calendar
- CPA recordings
- Sight Singing and theory practice for students
- Link to Booster Club
- Paying fees

Phone and Email:

Email: Mrs. Colón: kdcolon@spart7.org,

Email: Miss. Cotran: acotran@spart7.org

Phone: Mrs. Colón's Desk: 864-641-2666

Phone: Miss. Cotran's Desk: 864-641-2763

Travel Phone: 864-416-1528 *(for contact while on field trips, etc)*



SPARTANBURG HIGH SCHOOL

Handbook Contract and Information Form

Please sign and return this form by Friday, Aug 15, 2025

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student First and Last Name: _____

25-26 Grade in School: _____

Choir Class: (Circle one)

Block 1 (or Periods 1 or 2) Block 2 (Periods 3 or 4) Block 3 (Periods 5 or 6)

Home Address: _____

PARENT INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

I am interested in chaperoning CPA, either March 24 or 25, 2026

I am interested in helping to distribute uniforms

I would like to help with Club Allegro, September 18, 2025

I am including the Uniform Rental Fee of \$10

By signing below, both parent and student agree to follow all school and choir rules, guidelines and policies as outlined in the SHS Student Handbook and SHS Choir Handbook.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____