



SHS Chorus Program Handbook

August 6, 2026

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 Wednesday, August 12, 2026.**

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 Mission Statement

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.

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SHS Choir Ensembles

Instructions for Selecting Music Courses

1. Students interested in Band, Orchestra, and Chorus may enroll in these courses for four years. If possible, students should remain in these courses for both semesters during each year
2. Students enrolled in Band, Orchestra, and Chorus are expected to furnish their own concert outfits or rent a "concert uniform" from the school for a set fee which might change from year-to-year. (Chorus will rent from school, \$10 per year)
3. Students enrolled in Band, Orchestra, and Chorus will be REQUIRED to attend concerts and corresponding rehearsals.

BLOCK 1 (1-2): VIKING VOICES/BEL CANTO CHOIR – ENTRY LEVEL

Chorus 1 – 354181CW - ONLY OFFERED 1ST SEMESTER

Chorus 2 – 354231CW

Chorus 3 – 354300CW

Chorus 4 – 354400CW

This is the foundation level chorus at Spartanburg High School. Available to all ninth-grade choir students and any student new student to choir.

Students will start with Chorus 1 and will take Chorus 2, 3 or 4 in subsequent semesters.

Students will learn the fundamentals of choral singing including music theory, vocal development and choral pedagogy, choral singing techniques, and ear training.

Music Difficulty: Grade I and II.

Participation in concerts out of the regular school day is required.

Chorus 1 is only offered 1st Semester.

1 Unit Grade: 9-12 NEW TO PROGRAM

Prerequisite: selection by audition; a year of choir in middle or high school is preferred.

BLOCK 3: CHORISTERS/ HONORS - TREBLE CHOIR

Honors Chorus 1

Honors Chorus 2 – 354200HW

Honors Chorus 3 – 354300HW

Honors Chorus 4 – 354400HW

Honors Chorus 5 - 354500HW

Honors Chorus 6 - 354600HW

This is the honors level choir for female voices. Students must demonstrate a high level of sight-singing and vocal ability in their respective grades to place into this ensemble; they must be musically independent. Honors chorus students are required to participate in SCMEA Concert Performance Assessment. Honors students are strongly encouraged to audition for SCMEA Region Choir and are encouraged to audition for the SCMEA All-State Choir.

Music Difficulty: Grade III and IV.

This course builds on the fundamentals of singing introduced in Viking Voices (Chorus 1,2).

Participation in auditions and concerts out of the regular school day is required.

1 Unit Grade: 9-12

Prerequisite: Chorus 1 and 2 with Teacher Recommendation; special auditions available for 9th grade.

**Choir Directors may make exceptions to prerequisite for special circumstances.*

BLOCK 2: CHORALE/HONORS – MIXED CHOIR

Honors Chorus 3 – 354300HW

Honors Chorus 4 – 354400HW

Honors Chorus 5 – 354500HW

Honors Chorus 6 – 354600HW

Honors Chorus 7 – 354700HW

Honors Chorus 8 – 354800HW

This is an honors level mixed voice ensemble of upper-classmen who demonstrate the highest level of sight-singing and vocal ability in their respective grades. Honors chorus students are required to participate in SCMEA Concert Performance Assessment. Honors students are required to participate in additional community events, such as with the Spartanburg Philharmonic and Greenville Chorale. *Students in this ensemble are HIGHLY encouraged to audition for the SCMEA All-State Choir.*

Music Difficulty: Grade IV, V, and VI music.

Participation in auditions and concerts out of the regular school day is required, including weekend occasional weekend community concerts.

1 Unit Grade: 10-12

Prerequisite: Audition required. Men: Chorus 1 and 2 plus Teacher recommendation.

Women: Honors Chorus 3 and 4 plus teacher recommendation.

**Choir Directors may make exceptions to prerequisite for special circumstances.*

Period 8: HONORS CORPORATION – Skinny YL

This is Spartanburg High School's premiere show choir. To receive honors credit, students must perform within the Spartanburg community, including D7 elementary schools, community events, etc. These students will learn to sing in the popular and jazz genres,

Music Difficulty: Grade of III, IV, V and VI.

Auditions for the Corporation will take place in May of the preceding school year.

1 Unit Grade: 11-12

Prerequisite: Selection by audition.

Must be in 11th or 12th grade.

Honors Chorus 3 and 4 (or greater)

Must be enrolled in Honors Choristers or Honors Chorale for the same school term.

**Choir Directors may make exceptions to prerequisite for special circumstances.*

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:** SHS tardy policy will be enforced.

Chorale members are required to purchase the Choir RingBinder Music Folder to be used in class and at community performances. These binders belong to the student, they can be used multiple years and take them upon graduating. Binders will be purchased through SHS Choirs for \$20, can be paid online @ <http://shschoirs.com>

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 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 for all persons in a performing group dress and groom themselves uniformly. A student's jewelry, make-up, clothing, 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 2026-27

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 rented to each choir member. Uniforms will be used throughout the 2026-27 school year and returned in May.

A uniform maintenance fee of \$10 is due August 22, 2026.

An additional fee will be charged if the uniform is not returned in its original condition. **Uniforms are expected to be returned by May 7, 2027.**

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 provided at the beginning of the school year to allow for time to plan 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. Class referrals given by the directors may also result in the student not being permitted to participate in any choir events. Students will receive an EX for the assignment grade, meaning the absence of attendance will not hurt nor help their 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.

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 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 15, our Fall variety show, which helps to raise money for our scholarships.
- Chaperones and volunteers will be needed to help with CPA (March 18 and 19, 2027). Spartanburg High School will be hosting the event this year and will need parents to help with running the event.

Communication

Chorus Website: http://shschoirs.com	Phone and Email:
• Latest concert recordings • Updated events calendar • CPA recordings • Sight Singing and theory practice for students • Link to Booster Club • Paying fees	<u>Email:</u> Mrs. Colón: kdcolon@spart7.org, <u>Email:</u> Miss. Cotran: acotran@spart7.org <u>Phone:</u> Mrs. Colón's Desk: 864-641-2666 <u>Phone:</u> Miss. Cotran's Desk: 864-641-2763 <u>Travel Phone:</u> 864-416-1528 <i>(for contact while on field trips, etc)</i>



Handbook Contract and Information Form

Please sign and return this form by Wednesday, Aug 12, 2026

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student First and Last Name: _____

26-27 Grade in School: _____

Choir Class: (Circle one)

Block 1 (1-2) Viking Voices

Block 2 (3-4) Honors Chorale

Block 3 (5-6) Honors Choristers

Home Address: _____

PARENT INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

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

☐ *I am interested in running or chaperoning CPA on March 18-19, 2027.*

☐ *I am interested in helping to distribute uniforms*

☐ *I would like to help with Club Allegro, September 15, 2026*

☐ *I am including the Uniform Rental Fee of \$10*

ALL STUDENTS - Uniform Rental Fee (\$10) is due by August 22, 2026

CHORALE ONLY – Choir RingBinder Music Folder (\$20) purchased by Friday, August 14, 2026.

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: _____