

# Georgetown ISD Middle School Choir Handbook

## Table of Contents

Welcome Letter .....	2
Required Choir Paperwork .....	2
Choir Handbook Purpose .....	3
Choir Department Mission .....	3
Concepts and Competencies .....	3
Communication with Parents .....	3
Contact Information .....	3
Behavior Expectations .....	3
Choir Room Rules .....	3
Possible Consequences .....	4
Hazing and Bullying .....	4
Concert Etiquette .....	5
Eligibility .....	5
Extra-Curricular Activities .....	5
Curricular Activities .....	6
Concert Eligibility .....	6
Conflicts with Choir Activities .....	6
Grading Policy .....	7
Auditions for Ensemble Placement .....	7
Choir Contests and Trips .....	7
Solo and Ensemble Contest .....	7
Region Choir Auditions – Clinic and Concert .....	7
UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest .....	8
Trips .....	8
Local Trips .....	8
Festival Trips .....	8
Spring Trips .....	8
Trip Policies .....	9
Driving Policies for Off-Campus Trips .....	9
Trip Pick-Up Times .....	9
Trip Attendance Policy .....	9
Private Lesson Program .....	9
Uniforms .....	10
Women’s Uniforms .....	10
Men’s Uniforms .....	10
Formal Uniform Guidelines .....	11
Alteration and Care of Formal Uniforms .....	11
Awards .....	11
Informal Uniforms .....	11
Choir Handbook Contract .....	12
Code of Conduct Compliance .....	13

## Welcome Letter

Dear MS Choir Parents and Students:

Welcome to Middle School Choir! The GISD Middle School Choir Department has established itself as an excellent choral program and we are confident all students in the GISD Choir programs will enjoy being a part of this tradition as we continue to grow musically.

Participation in the choir program is beneficial in many ways. In choir, students develop traits such as responsibility, dedication, self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership, dependability, commitment, and teamwork. As a member of the choir, students will experience a sense of accomplishment and pride, and will develop musical and personal skills that will enrich their lives.

We have many ways to communicate with parents and students regarding choir activities and information. Email is the most efficient way for directors to communicate with parents. **Please fill out and return the forms at the end of this handbook.** Each director has a Choir Web Page – please ask the director for URL. Parents and students will find all choir information, handouts, weekly announcements, updates, calendars, etc.

Please put concert dates and all after school rehearsal dates on your family calendar EARLY to avoid conflicts later. Post the calendar in a prominent location. Please check the choir web site regularly for updates and changes to the choir calendar. There are several sectionals, rehearsals and concerts that students must attend because they are REQUIRED curricular activities. If you have any questions about our activities this year, please contact your director at your convenience.

We look forward to a great year as we continue the tradition of excellence of the GISD Middle School Choirs.

Sincerely,

Bryan Pulver, Benold Middle School Choir  
Jason Gallardo, Benold Middle School Choir  
Deanna Errisuriz, Forbes Middle School Choir  
TBA, Tippit Middle School Choir  
Cassandra Knoedl, Wagner Middle School Choir

### ***Required Choir Paperwork***

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Throughout the year there are many forms students will need to turn in, particularly those forms required prior to participating in a choir activity. This paperwork will need to be completed and returned no later than the director's specified date. The following are required of all students in the GISD Choir:

- GISD Student Medical Release
- GISD Code of Conduct Compliance
- GISD Middle School Choir Handbook Contract

## **GISD Choir Handbook Purpose**

The purpose of the GISD Choir Handbook is to provide choir parents and students with a resource to which they may refer regarding choir policies and procedures. The handbook will provide students with guidance and help them have a positive choir experience.

## ***GISD Choir Department Mission***

The goal of the GISD Choral Department is to create students who...

- are musically literate,
- have a love and appreciation for choral music,
- are prepared upon graduation to gain entrance into a college, church, or community choral program.

## ***Concepts and Competencies***

Several different areas are addressed in the classroom during the school year. While all classes utilize the state adopted TEKS, the following concepts and competencies are addressed as core ideals in our classrooms:

- Vocal Techniques
- Choral Techniques
- Music Theory
- Hand-signs and Solfege
- Music History and Literature
- Listening Skills
- Performance Skills
- Mental and Physical Development
- Citizenship
- Self-Expression

## **Choir Communication with Parents**

### ***Contact Information***

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone (Ext.)</b>
Patricia Douglas	East View HS	<a href="mailto:DouglasP@georgetownisd.org">DouglasP@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-1800 x8103
Cassandra Knoedl	Wagner MS	<a href="mailto:KnoedlC@georgetownisd.org">KnoedlC@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-5000 x8633
Joey Lowrance	Georgetown HS	<a href="mailto:LowranceV@georgetownisd.org">LowranceV@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-5100 x7182
Stacey Brandenberger	Georgetown HS	<a href="mailto:BrandenbergerS@georgetownisd.org">BrandenbergerS@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-5100 x7183
Deanna Errisuriz	Forbes MS	<a href="#">TBA</a>	943-5000 x7725
TBA	Tippit MS	<a href="#">TBA</a>	943-5000 x6492
Bryan Pulver	Benold MS	<a href="mailto:PulverB@georgetownisd.org">PulverB@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-5000 x6992
Jason Gallardo	Benold MS	<a href="mailto:GallardoJ@georgetownisd.org">GallardoJ@georgetownisd.org</a>	943-5000 x6992

## **Behavioral Expectations**

### ***Choir Room Rules***

1. Singers are required to show respect for their fellow choir members, the music which they are to perform, the director, and the work which must be done to make the choir perform at their highest level of achievement.

2. Singers are required to show responsibility for their individual contribution by trying their best at all rehearsal and performances.
3. The director and the students will not tolerate a student infringing on another student's right to learn.
4. The director and the student will not tolerate a student infringing upon the directors responsibility to teach.

***Possible Consequences – To be assigned based on the offense/frequency. All may result in lowered participation grade.***

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1. Choir Service – The student signs up before or after school to help out in the choir room performing various tasks until teacher dismisses him or her.
2. Re-assigned seating
3. Removal from risers – written assignment
4. Removal from room – until he or she feels they can return and behave. If he or she causes problems there then he or she will be sent to the office and receive a referral.
5. Tally (Tally System consequences apply)
6. Phone Call Home
7. Choir Detention – before or after school. Detention slip must be signed and brought to detention for admittance. If no slip is brought then a second detention is assigned
8. Lunch Detention
9. Participation in trips revoked
10. Other Choir privileges revoked
11. Office Referral
12. Removal from Choir as elective

### ***Hazing, Bullying and Intimidation in GISD Fine Arts Programs***

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It is the philosophy of the Georgetown ISD Fine Arts Department that every student enrolled in a Fine Arts course is entitled to a positive experience that encourages a life-long love for and involvement in the arts. Based upon this belief, it is critical that each student, parent and faculty member have a positive experience while participating in GISD Fine Arts activities. Students have the right to a safe and positive learning environment. This learning environment should be free of disruptions to the learning process. Hazing, bullying, intimidations, and physical or emotional threats must be considered as serious impediments to the learning process and cannot be tolerated. These incidents could occur in any combination between students, parents and/or staff members. Any event such as these must be reported to school district personnel immediately so that corrective actions can be made before events could escalate. All students must be made aware of how to recognize these dangerous behaviors and must be informed of procedures to safely report these types of activities with no fear of retribution or negative consequence. Likewise, parents have the responsibility to report inappropriate activities to school district personnel with no fear of reprisal by district personnel toward any student in the program. The recommended course of action when inappropriate action is witnessed or experienced is as follows:

- a. Witness, victim or any other person who is aware of a potential problem should report the inappropriate behavior to the activity sponsor as quickly as possible – normally within 24 hours.
- b. The activity director will immediately report this information to campus level administration. The director and campus administration will begin investigating the report with the intention of quickly putting an end to the inappropriate behavior(s). The Director of Fine Arts will be informed of the report(s).
- c. When appropriate, the campus administrator will instigate disciplinary action if such action is warranted.

- d. Campus administration will report to the Director of Fine Arts: 1) the alleged incident; 2) investigation outcome(s) and 3) actions taken, if any, to correct the behavior(s)

### *Concert Etiquette*

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Choir students will exhibit proper concert behavior during all performances in order to reflect positively on the GISD Choir program. Students will be graded on their concert etiquette. The following rules will be followed at all performances:

1. Talking is not allowed. It is disrespectful to the performers on stage and audience members who wish to hear the performance, and does not show support for the GISD Choir program.
2. Do not leave your seat FOR ANY REASON other than extreme emergency. You will be given ample opportunity to use the restroom and drinking fountain before concerts begin; therefore, these are not considered extreme emergencies. If you must leave, do so as quietly and as inconspicuously as possible ONLY between songs or during applause (making sure doors do not slam shut).
3. No food or drink is allowed in the performance area, including the stage, backstage, and seating area. This includes water bottles.
4. Support your fellow choir members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. are not acceptable. The audience should never cause attention to be shifted from the performers on stage.
5. During serious music, applaud only after the conductor has lowered his or her arms.
6. During pop or jazz music you may applaud for a soloist during the song.
7. In songs that have multiple movements, applaud only after the final movement. This will be noted in the concert program. The conductor will lower his or her arms when the final movement is over.
8. Set a good example for the audience and other students. Other people may not know how to act at a choir concert and will be watching you for clues.
9. Cell phones and pagers should be set to silent or turned off during choir concerts.
10. Move between the stage and seating areas in quiet, single file lines. Sit in your assigned seat/row.
11. Enjoy the concert. This is the only time you will ever get to see it!
12. Stay for the entire concert.

### **Eligibility**

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#### *Extra-Curricular Activities*

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Extra-Curricular Activities are those choir activities, particularly contests, which occur beyond the regular, required choir activities, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Students are eligible during the next grading period if they pass all of their classes on their report card with a grade of 70 or above.
- Students who receive grades of "Incomplete" on their report card in any subject are considered ineligible. They have 7 days after the end of the 9 weeks period to complete the missing work and have their grade changed to passing to regain eligibility.
- Students who receive grades of Incomplete on their report card but make up the work AFTER 7 days after the end of the 6 weeks period will not regain eligibility.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report card in any subject are ineligible, even if the student completes work to get the grade changed after the 9 weeks is over, unless the failing grade was given in error by the teacher.

- According to UIL, there is no special compensation given to Special Education students if the modifications set out in the A.R.D. have been met by the teacher.
- Students who are ineligible due to grades may regain eligibility at the end of the 4th week of a 9 weeks period by receiving passing grades for all of their classes on their progress report (given at the end of the 3rd week of the 9 weeks period). If eligibility is not regained at that time, the student will have another opportunity at the end of the 7th week by the same process as stated earlier. Students who fail to follow through with their responsibility regarding grades may be removed from choir or placed in a lower choir.
- Students who receive failing grades on their report cards or UIL grade checks may or may not be allowed to participate in choir activities. Participation will be determined by the choir director, in accordance with choir policy, school district policy and UIL rules.

### ***Curricular Choir Activities***

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Curricular Choir Activities are those choir activities that occur as an extension of the choir class, as designated by Texas State Law and UIL.

- Curricular Choir Activities include graded choir concerts, rehearsals and sectionals.
- Curricular Choir Activities may occur during school, before or after school, or on the weekend.
- Eligibility is not a factor when determining participation in curricular choir activities.

### ***GISD Concert Eligibility***

Students do not have to be eligible to participate in the required evening concerts. Students in I.S.S. at the time of an evening concert are not allowed to perform in or attend the concert. If a daytime performance or rehearsal causes the student to miss another class, the student is responsible to promptly make up all missed work.

### ***Conflicts with Choir Activities***

When a student is involved in more than one activity that requires after school time, conflicts may occur. The student must notify all affected parties (choir directors, parents, coaches, employers, sponsors) when there is a conflict so that there is time to determine how to handle the conflict (compromise, miss one or the other activity, work out a ride, etc.). Here is a list of activities a choir student may be involved in and their "priority".

This list should help students to know when they have a commitment how to handle it.

- A UIL event takes precedence over any non-UIL event.
- A district level event takes precedence over any non-district, lower level event.
- A performance/district level event takes precedence over a practice.
- A practice for a UIL or district level event takes precedence over a practice for a non-competitive performance/game.
- When there are two activities of equal importance (practices, performances/games, competitions) the student will need to work out a compromise with all parties involved.
- A practice for a one time performance takes precedence over a routine, regularly scheduled practice.
- A school event takes precedence over a non-school event, even if that non-school event is a competition.
- A Varsity level event takes precedence over a Non-Varsity level event.

Students MUST check event calendars for ALL of their scheduled activities for conflicts as soon as dates are available. Sometimes, a student will need to make a choice regarding activities that are of equal importance without fear of reprisals or forfeiture of status/position. Family events must be scheduled around REQUIRED choir activities.

## Grading Policy

Choral music classes are performance based classes. Students will be graded daily on their performance of sight-reading, vocal technique, and bringing their materials to class. In the event a student cannot participate in the rehearsal, they will be given written work in order to receive a grade for the day. **Concerts are graded, required activities which count as test grades.** 50% of this grade is determined by pre-concert rehearsal grades and the other 50% is determined by each student's contribution to the concert. Approved excused absence from the concert will be able to be made up. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of 50 at most and may be lower dependent on pre-concert rehearsal grades. Each specific grade level will weight grades according to the school's adopted policies.

## Auditions for Ensemble Placement

Placement in choral ensembles is based on participation in the choral program during the school year, TMEA audition process, UIL Solo and Ensemble, UIL Concert and Sight-Reading, and a vocal audition that includes sight-reading, choreography (when appropriate), and vocalization.

## Choir Contests and Trips

### Solo & Ensemble Contest

This is an optional contest for students.

- Students are judged based on their individual or small group performance.
- The director chooses songs from the UIL Prescribed Music List
- Participation in this event will require extra time outside of the school day.
- Students must demonstrate proficiency on the solo before participating at contest.
- **If a student drops out of the contest process at any time for any reason, entry fees and accompanist fees will not be refunded.**
  - MS Students will pay the appropriate fee, which is determined by the director at each campus. This fee will include a practice CD or tape.

### Region Choir Clinic/Concert Audition

This is an optional event for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

- Students audition sections of selected Region Choir pieces at a singular audition held at a different campus.
  - MS Students will pay an appropriate fee to register to audition (specified by director).
  - Registration information must be accurate. If that is not the case come audition day and it is found to be the student's error then there will be a penalty to have that information corrected.
  - Students must have original copies of the auditioned music with them at contest.
  - If a student drops out of the audition after the deadline they will be responsible for any fees still owed and will not be refunded.
- Students are chosen from all over the Region to be a part of this ensemble that meets once for an entire day to rehearse and perform.
  - If a student is chosen to represent GISD he/she must attend the Clinic/Concert for it's duration. Please check calendar auditions to insure the ability to attend rehearsals and performances if selected to be a part of this honor group.

## **UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest**

This is a required contest for all ACADEMICALLY ELIGIBLE students in selected ensembles in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades

Students are judged based on the overall performance of the choir in which they participate.

- This UIL contest takes precedence over other school activities and any absence from school is considered excused. Students are responsible for any missed work.
- Rehearsals for this contest will take place during class; however, sectional and other rehearsals before or after school will be required.
  - Any student who misses required UIL rehearsals may not be allowed to participate in the contest, at the director's discretion.
  - Students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency on the music before being allowed to participate.
  - UIL participation may effect a student's ability to participate in other events.

## ***Trips***

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### **Local Trips**

The GISD MS choirs may take many small choir trips throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend these trips as chaperones. Trips may include:

- Musicals or Operas
- Local choir concerts
- Retreats
- UIL
- Auditions

### **Festival Trip**

Trip location will be determined by the Choir Director and announced during the school year.

Students in all choirs are highly encouraged to attend. This is often an incentive for students who participate in our UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluation.

- Students and parents must sign a permission slip and turn in student medical information when signing up to attend a Festival trip or any trip that costs money.
- Students may need to be eligible for and participate in the UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluation to be eligible for the spring trip.
- Trip refunds may be controlled by the tour company. The refund policy will be set out in the trip information letter and the Travel Contract given to each student when signing up for the festival trip. Students will forfeit all or part of the money they paid to attend the trip if they cancel FOR ANY REASON after the refund deadlines.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Georgetown ISD. Students must follow all GISD Choir and School rules as well as legal, ethical, and moral requests from directors or chaperones while on the trip.
- Trip payments must be made on time so that we may pay the tour company.
- Parents are invited to attend this trip as chaperones, and need to be approved by GISD.

## ***Spring Trips***

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As soon as the most accurate information regarding itinerary and plans are available, this information will be posted on the website and sent home. Parents are needed for chaperones on all trips at a suggested ratio of 1 chaperone to every 15 students.

## ***Trip Policies***

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### **Driving Policy for Off-Campus Choir Events**

For safety and liability reasons, the following rules must be followed:



1. If a student must come late or leave early, they are encouraged to do so with a parent.
2. Students will not be released to anyone unless a permission note, signed by the parent, has been turned in prior to the trip.
3. No changes may be made partially through a trip without receiving notice of the change in writing.
4. Students may not ride with other students or other students' parents unless they bring written permission IN ADVANCE from their parent/ guardian.

### **Trip Pick-Up Times**

Sometimes it is difficult to determine our exact arrival time when itineraries are set for choir trips. To help parents with this, we follow this policy:

- Parents must be prompt when picking up their children from choir trips.
- Students are encouraged to contact parents as they are returning from a trip.
- Itinerary will be sent out prior to the trip.

### **Trip Attendance Policy**

To encourage appropriate behavior in and out of choir, any student who is assigned to BIC for any class during the semester of an optional event (End of Year Trips, Class Parties, etc.) may forfeit the opportunity to attend said event.

### **Private Music Lesson Program**

It is the goal of the Georgetown ISD Fine Arts Department to provide the very best learning experiences for each music student. One of the most valuable learning experiences is the opportunity for students to study privately with a professional music performer/instructor. This enrichment opportunity is open to all music students grades six through twelve that are enrolled in a GISD music course. While private lessons are not required of any student; experience shows that students enrolled in private lessons typically become more skilled, more focused, more dedicated, have more competitive success and generally enjoy music courses more than students not taking private lessons.

The GISD Private Music Lesson Program allows interested students the opportunity to receive additional individualized instruction beyond what can be provided by the GISD director. Some of the credit for the successes of the music groups of GISD no doubt is tied to the individual success of students engaged in the private lesson program.

The GISD music staff works to offer the highest quality private instruction. All instructors have been screened, completed fingerprinting and passed individual background checks required by Georgetown ISD.

Private lesson rates for teachers approved by GISD are as follows -

#### Per thirty minute lesson:

- \$20 for teachers with less than three years experience teaching lessons in Georgetown ISD
- \$25 for teachers with more than three years experience teaching lessons in Georgetown ISD

Students make payment directly to the private lesson teacher, not to the school or GISD.

Some private lessons take place during the school day - usually during your child's class period. Lessons are also offered before or after school depending on instructor availability. Lessons should be taken once per week for a minimum of 30 minutes each. However, other arrangements can be made with the individual private lesson teacher.

Please contact your campus music director to get recommendations about which of the GISD private lesson teachers would be best for your child. The GISD staff has the best understanding of the individual needs of each student and can make the best recommendations for pairing a student with a teacher.

### **General Information about Private Lessons**

1. Verification of personal screening and fingerprinting is completed by the Georgetown ISD Fine Arts Department.
2. Private Lessons are available for students in grades six through twelve enrolled in a GISD music course.
3. Private lessons are *optional*. **No student can be required or expected to take private lessons.**
4. Students electing to study privately are taught once per week during music class or before/after school.
5. If a student must miss a private lesson for any reason the private lesson teacher must be notified in advance. Twenty-four hour advance notice is preferred. If the student attends classes on particular day, but misses his/her private lesson on that same day without proper notification, the student is expected to pay for the private lesson that is missed.

### **Uniforms**

Students are expected to follow the listed uniform guidelines below, without exception. Students may not be allowed to perform and/or their grade may be affected if the following guidelines are not met.

#### ***Formal Uniforms***

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##### **Women**

- Formal length black dress
  - Dresses will be issued in the fall semester.
  - A specified usage fee may be required before the uniform will be issued which includes dry cleaning and any repairs that must be made.
- Black shoes
  - Ladies must purchase BLACK closed-toed flats. Shoes should be low heeled, closed toed shoes. Big heeled, clunky shoes are not appropriate for concert wear.
  - The choir director has final say in acceptable shoes. If in doubt, please bring them well before the first formal concert.
- Flesh colored panty hose
  - Ladies may be required to provide their own flesh colored panty hose.

##### **Men**

- Tuxedo/Dress shirt, black dress slacks, cummerbund and tie.
  - A specified usage fee may be required before the uniform will be issued which includes dry cleaning and any repairs that must be made.
- Men's black dress shoes, black socks.
  - Men must provide their own black slacks, black socks and black dress shoes.
  - Black athletic or casual shoes are not allowed.

#### **Formal Uniform Guidelines (7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> only)**

1. Formal uniforms will be worn to all choir concerts unless otherwise instructed.
2. Formal choir uniforms will be issued during the choir class at the beginning of the school year.

3. Choir students are financially responsible for all parts of their formal choir uniforms that they use, including dresses, jackets, pants, ties, cummerbunds, and garment bags. Repair and/or replacement costs are the responsibility of the student. Costs for replacement:
  - Dress = \$60.00
  - Tuxedo Shirt = \$20.00
  - Tie/Cummerbund (sets only) = \$15.00
4. Formal choir uniforms and other parts are numbered and will be tracked through the choir department.
5. Uniforms should be treated with pride and cleaned/stored appropriately.
6. Proper shoes and socks must be worn with the uniform at all times.
7. Hair must be pulled back as part of the uniform.
8. Jewelry must not be worn with choir uniforms, unless instructed by the director. This includes necklaces, watches, and bracelets. Earrings and rings must be small and inconspicuous and kept to a minimum.

### **Alterations and Care of Formal Uniforms**

1. Never cut any material from a choir uniform when it is altered to fit you.
2. All choir uniforms from the choir MUST be returned to the choir immediately following the last choir event of the school year.
3. Students who do not turn in their uniform by the last day of school will be charged for the uniform. Report cards and schedules will be held until the uniform is returned to the choir. All hems and alterations must be removed before a choir uniform can be checked in.

### ***Awards***

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Choir awards are given at the end of the year. Students vote on many choir awards. Other choir awards may be given by the choir directors and may be determined using the following criteria, but not limited to the following:

- Choir grade average of 100% for each grading period
- Demonstrates exceptional leadership qualities during class time
- Always prepared for class with all materials
- Follows all choir rules
- Always ready to rehearse
- No unexcused absences or tardies in choir sectionals or rehearsals
- Attended all required concerts

### ***Informal Uniforms***

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The informal choir uniform consists of a choir shirt and school appropriate denim color jeans. Informal choir uniforms must be worn on all specified concert days, to all informal concerts, singing the Star Spangled Banner, on choir trips, etc. No other shirt will be permitted. Choir shirts are required for all choir students.

# GISD Middle School Choir Handbook Contract

## PARENT/STUDENT REQUIRED AGREEMENT: GISD Middle School Choir Department

A full copy of the GISD Middle School Handbook can be found and downloaded through each choir web page.

Please read and sign below as indicated.

I have read the GISD Middle School Choral Department Handbook (available online) and I agree to abide by all of the policies stated therein. I realize that it takes full cooperation, a willingness to make sacrifices and dedication from all of us if we want our program to continue to improve. I further realize that failure to follow the stated policies or directions from the Choir Directors will result in appropriate action which could lead to a change in performance status or dismissal from the choir.

**Signature of student**

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**Date**

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I have read the Georgetown ISD MS Choral Department Handbook (available online) and I agree to support the policies stated therein.

**Signature of parent**

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**Date**

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(please also print below)

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address you would like to receive updates to \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred phone number to call during the day \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please return this form to your student's choir director with the GISD Student Medical Release and Code of Compliance Form (on back).

# GISD Choir Code of Conduct Compliance Agreement

## PARENT/STUDENT REQUIRED AGREEMENT: GISD Middle School Choir Department

A full copy of the GISD Middle School Handbook can be found and downloaded through each choir web page.

Please read and sign below as indicated.

In Georgetown ISD, participation in Fine Arts Extracurricular Activities is a privilege not a right. Students who participate in these activities represent themselves, their families, their group, the school, the district and the community. GISD fine arts students are expected to be positive role models and representatives.

As a result, students involved in extracurricular activities will be held to a higher standard than those not involved. This expectation extends to conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property.  
(GISD Policy FNC Local and Policy FO Local)

**Based on these statements, the student named below is willing to –**

- be held to a higher standard of student conduct
- adhere to the GISD Student Code of Conduct, including appendices that apply to extracurricular activities
- adhere to the all guidelines and procedures set forth by the sponsor(s) of this activity

Student Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Activity or Group \_\_\_\_\_

Campus \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please return this form to your student's choir director with the GISD Student Medical Release and Middle School Handbook Contract (on front).