

Welcome to LMS Choir!

I am looking forward to getting to know your child and creating some outstanding music this year. This class will give students an excellent opportunity for them to develop their voices and prepare to perform at the highest level. We have a few set concert dates but I would like to add more as opportunities arise. A website will be set up for our choir to establish a clear line of communication. This can be found under my name for Teacher Websites on the LMS website.

Choir Dates

November 13th -Fall Concert-7:00 pm at LHWHS- PAC (Singers arrive at 6:15)

December 5th - Sixth Grade Demo Concert—LMS Gym (IN SCHOOL CONCERT, 6TH GRADE ONLY)

January 11th - St. Louis All Suburban Honor Choir - Ritenour High School, 9:00 AM - 4PM (Selected 8th grade Students Only)

April 4th - Solo/Ensemble Festival- at Holman Middle School- All Day- (Selected 8th graders only)

April 14th -Spring Concert - 6:30 pm at LHWHS- PAC (Singers arrive at 6:00)

Musical Dates (optional - after school- Activity busses available)

Check with Ms. Alrutz for info packet!

Sept. 10th- Hairspray Jr. Auditions

Sept. 12th - Hairspray Jr. Call Backs If Needed

Dec. 11th and 12th - Performance @ LMS - 7:00 pm

General Expectations for Middle School Choir Class

- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Responsible**
- **Follow Directions**
- **Participate in All Activities**
- **Practice Your Music**

Vocal Music Attendance Policy

It is important for students to be in class each day. Choir rehearsals are daily performances and all students are expected to be in attendance.

1. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated and will require parent notification.
2. Students will receive 1 class period to turn in assignments/take tests missed during their excused absence.
3. Tardies will result in a loss of participations points for the day.

Vocal Music Instructor - Leah Alrutz - Lalrutz@ladueschools.net

4. Absences to performances should be avoided at all costs. Parents must contact the director by phone/e-mail **prior** to the concert for an excused absence which would be an absence related to illness or emergency. Students must indicate on the vocal music contract any known scheduling conflicts. There will be no make-up concert assignment for unexcused absence.

Vocal Music is a performing art and there are limited performing opportunities! Students must participate in the act of performing and listening/watching to fully realize and experience the musical and aesthetic values of the discipline.

Below are concert dress guidelines. If the clothing requirements are a problem in any way, please contact me early on so we may come to a solution. **The school dress code still applies.**

Gentleman: Black dress pants (no jeans), black shoes and black socks, black dress shirt (no logos), and no hair covering the face.

Ladies: Black skirt or dress (preferably knee length) or black pants, black shoes, a black top that covers the shoulders (**no logos**), and no hair covering the face. ** If you choose to wear a skirt or dress you must wear black tights/hose/or leggings.

Daily Expectations

1. Be on time!
2. Be prepared: Bring folder, music and pencil.
3. No headphones, cell phones, gum, candy, food or drink (water bottle is OK)
4. Proper use of class time
5. Respect the rights, safety and property of others
6. Be positive about yourself and others
7. Practice! Practice! Practice!

Behavior Policy

Ladue Choir students are usually model citizens, but the following actions will be taken if a student is acting inappropriately in class.

1st Offense: Student will be asked to leave the room and the instructor will meet the student after class for a discussion about their behavior. Student's parents will be notified by phone or email about the student's inappropriate behavior.

2nd Offense: Student will be removed from the classroom and referred to the principal's office. A phone call will be made to the student's parents informing them that the student has been referred to the office.

3rd Offense: Student will be sent to the principal's office for disciplinary action. The student's parents will be called and asked to schedule an appointment with the director to discuss their student's participation in choir activities.

Why Study Music?

1. **Music is a Science.** It is exact, specific, and demands exact acoustics. A conductor's score is a chart, or graph, which indicates frequencies intensities, volume changes, melody, and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.
2. **Music is Mathematical.** Rhythmically, it is based on divisions of time into precise fractions, which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.
3. **Music is a Foreign Language.** Most of the terms are in Italian, German or French. The notation is certainly not in English but a highly development kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. Music itself is the most complete and universal language.
4. **Music is History.** Music reflects the environment and time of its creation, including its national and ethnic sources.
5. **Music is Physical Education.** It requires great coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lip cheek, and facial muscles, and extraordinary control of the back, stomach, and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.
6. **Music develops insight and demands research.** Organized, independent thought is required.
7. **Music is all of these things, but most of all, Music is Art.** It allows a human being to take all these technical terms, facts, and techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate: Humanism, feeling, emotion, call it what you will. Organized, independent thought is required.

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Did you know...

Singing is a skill that requires highly developed muscle reflexes.

Singing does not require much muscle strength, but it does require a high degree of muscle coordination. Individuals can develop their voices further through the careful and systematic practice of both songs and vocal exercises.

Tone deafness affects less than 2% of the population. Many people who say they cannot “Carry a tune in a bucket” can; they simply lack experience and coordination of the vocal mechanism and their ear.

Normally, a person of exceptional ability should be able to sing two and a half octaves without straining, breaking, or any other disruptions in the sound. There are various sets of muscles that control the vocal folds. The farther away from one’s optimum pitch, the more delicate the balancing act between those muscles.

The female voice can take up to four years to fully change and generally begins between the ages of 10 and 14. Females go through their growth spurts approximately two years before males. Many physical changes occur which include a size increase of the larynx in thickness and length.

Psychophysically, artful singing is the dynamic (ever changing) act of coordinating instantaneously the physical sensations of respiration (the will to breathe), phonation (the will to utter a sound), resonance (the will to form a particular vowel position) and articulation (the will to communicate by forming both vowel and consonant) into a disciplined utterance.

The vocal folds are not muscles. In fact, they are soft tissue. As the name ‘soft tissue’ implies, your vocal folds are quite fragile. Therefore, it’s no use to force the vocal folds with too much air. Less air is needed to sing higher notes because less of the vocal fold is opening and closing.

2019-2020 Vocal Music Contract

Leah M. Alrutz, Vocal Music Director
Ladue Middle School
Lalrutz@ladueschools.net

I _____, have read the vocal music course description and attendance policy. I am aware of the responsibilities and expectations required of a vocal music student. I will work my hardest to live up to the standards set forth in the vocal music department. I have checked the calendar and have noted any conflicts that I may have with scheduled vocal music events below.

I understand that vocal music concerts are an important part of the vocal music program. Absences from performances should be avoided at all costs. For absences related to illness or emergencies, I will contact Mrs. Alrutz

I will be responsible for all equipment, folders, music, CD's, books, costumes, and any other vocal department supplies that are assigned to me.

Please list any schedule conflicts:

Student signature

Parent Signature

Parent Email Contact: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY AUGUST 31st