Introduction

Welcome to the Burlington High School Choral Department and Music Department. I am so excited to be joining the musical family here at BHS. I am beyond thrilled to be working with such talented students who have chosen to have music, choral music, in particular to be part of their high school careers. Through BHS Choral Program you will many opportunities and experiences in music that will contribute to your personal growth and leave you with memories that will last a lifetime.

What is a choral handbook? This handbook is designed to help you answer any questions you may have in regards to many things, how your grade is determined, performance dates, festival and concert information, and much more! Of course I will answer any and all questions you may have for me whenever! And there is always something you need to remember, a music program is only as strong as the parents and community members who support it! So thank you parents and supporters for all you do! :)

Performance ensembles are only as successful as the individuals that comprise the membership. When members do not plan ahead, and consequently miss performances, it does not only affect the individual but also all other individuals within the ensemble. It is a “team” effort, and a missing team member is a serious detriment to the organization, and to the performance. Each individual plays an important part, and each member is vitally important to the success of the entire group. I am relying on the parents and students collectively to help ensure the success and integrity of our performances.

If you ever have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at bpoli@bsdvt.org or at the music department office at 802-864-8590

Billy Ray Poli
Choral Director
Burlington High School
52 Institute Road
Burlington, Vermont 05408

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.” - Plato
Burlington High School Choral Mission Statement

The Burlington High School Chorus is devoted to the cultivation of the art of choral music in the lives of its students and in the broader community; to teach techniques of musical expression and to provide a sequential developmental music curriculum which allows each student an opportunity to build musical skills and understanding through a wide variety of quality musical expression. Through choral music, we affirm the mission of Burlington High School; to graduate individuals that will be prepared for lifelong learning and able to make a positive contribution to the world beyond BHS.

Burlington High School Choral Music Ensembles

Concert Chorus Most singers in the High School start in this ensemble as freshmen and advance to other ensembles the following year. This is the place where basic elements of music are learned and reviewed so that all students who continue with any musical ensemble throughout their time will be successful. (Solfege, Theory, Sight-Singing, Rhythm) A variety of music will be performed, such as but not limited to; Madrigals, Spirituals, Musical Theater and Opera Selections and Major Classical Works. This ensemble will perform both on its own, and combined with Senior Chorus for larger musical works.

Senior Chorus This group consists of singers in grades 10-12, although occasionally there are freshman in this group that are not able to schedule the Concert Chorus into their day. This chorus, will perform more music in the level 4 and 5 categories. A variety of music will be performed, such as but not limited to; Madrigals, Spirituals, Musical Theater and Opera Selections and Major Classical Works. This Chorus will perform on its own and combined with Concert Chorus for larger musical works.

Vermont Voices This auditioned, select choral ensemble of 16 singers (ideally) is by choice the most highly accomplished in the Music Department. Singers will work on a variety of repertoire that is challenging and represents the finest choral literature available. The group as a whole will decide when we will rehearse, and due to the challenging nature of the music, work outside the actual rehearsal time will be expected. (You must be in a school day music ensemble in order to be eligible to be in this group: Senior and Concert Chorus, Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, String Orchestra, or Symphonic Strings)

It is the hope that there will be enough interest among students that either and or both an all female and or all male group can be formed! Please see Mr. Poli if interested!
Note: The BHS Music Department does not offer Independent Study credit for any performance ensemble class.

Choir Membership

Students that are members of the Burlington High School Choirs should adhere to the following:

UNITY, ACHIEVEMENT, LOYALTY
AND THE COMBINED PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

We are dedicated to developing musical knowledge and experience using a wide variety of styles of music. Members are to give 100% of their cooperation, concern and support to the Director and to each other. Together we strive to meet these expectations for continued success.

Participation yields:

- Development of ability to sight-read
- Development of strong, pure vocal quality
- Development of tonal memory
- Development of self-confidence and pride on stage
- Mastery of diverse choral literature
- Development of aesthetic appreciation

Playing a Musical Instrument or Singing

Regardless of the initial attraction to a musical ensemble, there are many reasons to sing music. Did you know that:

Making music requires the development of higher-level thinking skills. Students are called on to analyze, create, evaluate, and make informed judgments.

Self-discipline, confidence, and a sense of pride and personal worth grow out of meaningful musical experiences. When students sing or perform on a musical instrument, the joy of learning becomes real, tangible, and powerful.

Participating in a music ensemble prepares people for the world of work by fostering skills identified as critical by the business community—indeed, independence, cooperation, teamwork, craftsmanship, responsibility, and leadership. The independent student-worker becomes capable of making decisions in situations where there are no standard answers.
Music has value in and of itself, and plays a role in the human experience. Participation in a music ensemble will challenge and heighten aesthetic perception, and nourish the quest for beauty and self-expression.

Daily Rehearsal Expectations

Class participation and cooperation on expectations will contribute to the success of the choir.

Get your choral folder as you enter the room. Be seated. Make sure you have a pencil and prepare to arrange your music for the order of rehearsal. Check boards for dates, due dates, and announcements.

Place all book bags out of the way in assigned areas. Under no circumstances should you go to someone else’s folder unless asked to do so by the director. All you should have at your chair is your folder, a pencil, and a water bottle.

If for some reason you cannot participate in rehearsal, clear it with your director before class begins.

Misbehavior, talking without being recognized or any disruptions will not be tolerated at any time and will result in quarter point deductions.

Warm-up begins promptly after the bell rings (2 minute flexibility). Students will be counted tardy if not seated and attentive WHEN THE DIRECTOR BEGINS THE REHEARSAL. Listen for announcements, due dates, committee meetings, etc.

No food or drink should come into the rehearsal space. Only bottled water is allowed.

Members should remain in their assigned seat during rehearsals unless otherwise instructed by the director.
Grading Overview

Performance (30%)
How well you perform your parts
Good tone quality
Expressive dynamics – wide range between piano and forte
Technical and rhythmic accuracy
Accurate pronunciation and enunciation
Good intonation – singing “in-tune”
Phrasing and Interpretation – breathing, singing musically
How well you fit your parts into your section and the rest of the chorus
Blend – tone quality matches with the rest of your section
Balance – dynamic level is appropriate
Intonation – making adjustments to sing “in tune”

Rehearsal Participation (20%)
What you contribute to the rehearsal
Be prepared to sing your parts
Ask thoughtful questions about your parts, etc.
Participate in class discussions about the music
Listen respectfully to classmates
Take instructions from the director and mark parts with pencil accordingly
Be on time and assist with the setup and breakdown of the rehearsal room

Concert Participation (30%)
On the date of the performance
Arrive 40 minutes prior to concert time
Warm up responsibly and effectively
Stay for the entire concert, being a respectful audience for other groups
Assist with breakdown of equipment after the concert
Excuses for absences or early departures must be submitted in writing two weeks before the event.
   Absences may be excused at the director’s discretion.

Singing Reviews (20%)

Students perform one Singing Review per quarter
Singing Reviews will occur during regularly scheduled class or exam time.
Singing Reviews are the student’s opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency of the ensemble music.
Burlington High School Music Department
Choral Music Program Grading Policy

It is the policy of the BHS Music Department Choral Program that students be assessed on the basis of ensemble performance, rehearsal technique, individual enrichment, individual performance, and written assessments. Each student is expected to contribute to the musical success of the ensemble through his or her demonstrated dedication, commitment, maturity, and diligence during rehearsals and performances. The music faculty members believe that any student, regardless of musical ability or aptitude, can achieve high levels of excellence in these areas.

Students’ grades will be based on a point system. The total points will be adjusted up or down throughout the marking period as the student strives to meet the expectations listed below. The student’s grade will thus be the number of points attained by the conclusion of the marking period.

Students are expected to meet the following expectations at every rehearsal and performance:

Students will…
be on time
attend all rehearsals and performances
store music in their folder and keep in the properly numbered slot in the folio cabinet
bring a sharpened pencil with an eraser
take care of his/her music (no tearing, folding, curling or marking in ink)
exhibit proper singing posture
conform to the performance dress code set by the program
abstain from eating, drinking (except water) or chewing gum
abstain from talking out of turn
strive to improve his/her individual musicianship
**Rehearsal Technique**- Students daily rehearsal grades can be reduced by the following but not limited to:
- Exemplary Rehearsal Technique/Etiquette
- Failure to have music or pencil
- Inadequate singing posture
- Talking out of turn in rehearsal
- Chewing gum, eating in rehearsal
- Abuse or loss of music
- Failure to put music away properly

**Individual Performance and Test Grades** (singing and/or written)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Achievement</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>18-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>12-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Acceptable</td>
<td>less than 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Performances and Dress Rehearsals**

- Attendance at October Performance and Dress Rehearsals
- Attendance at January Performance and Dress Rehearsal
- Attendance at February Performance and Dress Rehearsal
- Attendance at May Performance and Dress Rehearsal

- 1-10 minutes late for Performance or Dress Rehearsal
- 11-20 minutes late
- 21-30 minutes late
- More than 31 minutes late = missed Concert Performance or Dress Rehearsal

*Make-up for dress rehearsals and performances will be the individual performance of the programmed repertoire. Students **excused** from performances or dress rehearsals may receive full credit for make-up. Students **unexcused** from performances or dress rehearsals may receive up to half credit for make-up. This make-up performance must be completed within a pre-arranged time as per discussion with the director. The director must be notified prior to this make-up performance.*
**Individual Enrichment**

- Individual Practice during school or after school
- District Festival Audition
- District Concert Festival
- NEMFA Solo & Ensemble Adjudication
- NEMFA Concert Festival Participation
- VMEA All-State Audition
- VMEA All-State Participation
- Documented Private Lessons
- Individual Projects *must be pre-approved*
- Attendance and written review of a performance *(please see concert critique form)*
- Equipment assistance
- Administrative assistance
  - (music collating, folding programs, filing, music sorting, etc.)

**Honors Credit in Music Ensemble Classes**

Students in grades 10-12 who are enrolled in Performing Ensembles will earn honors credit if they successfully prepare and perform a grade 4-6 (medium advanced-advanced level) solo piece. This performance can be in the form of an All-State Scholarship Audition, a New England Music Festival Association Solo Adjudication, or a Juried Recital graded by a BHS Music Department faculty member. A rubric/evaluation sheet will be used to assess in determining the degree to which the performance was successful. Students in the following ensemble classes are eligible to attempt to earn honors credit status: Senior Chorus and The Burlingtonones

Students who are interested in attempting honors credit should make an appointment with Mr. Poli to discuss appropriate repertoire and set up a recital performance date and time.

The deadline for Honors Credit performances to be completed is the end of the 3\(^{rd}\) Marking Period.
Daily Procedure
Students are expected to be in the Music Complex at the bell. Students will have two minutes after the bell to be in their seat, conducting a personal warm-up, unless other arrangements have been made with the director.

The school policy for tardiness will be enforced. If you are tardy, please sign-in at the Student Affairs Office: do NOT come to the Chorus Room first. Present your pass to Mr. Poli when you enter the room.

Every effort will be made to release students one - two minutes before the end of the class period to put music away. **It is imperative that students not leave the chorus room area prior to the dismissal bell.**

Care of the Rehearsal Space
During rehearsal all students will be held responsible for the cleanliness of the entire Music Suite. Absolutely no food or drink other than bottled water is allowed into the Chorus Room at any time.

Rehearsal Attendance
All ensemble members are expected to attend each and every scheduled rehearsal. Promptness is expected of all members. Students are expected to be in the music room at the scheduled start of the rehearsal block. When the director takes the podium to begin rehearsal, all musicians should be seated and ready to begin – warmed up with music in rehearsal order, pencil in hand. Students who are not in their seats when the director begins rehearsal will lose points on their quarter grade per Grading Policy.

Sectionals
Sectionals will be scheduled on a regular basis. These sectionals will be announced by the director at the beginning of the rehearsal week. Student run sectionals are encouraged, and may be specifically assigned, during the school year.
Concert Day

Performances are “special” occasions; a time when we all come together to not only share our love of performing choral music, but also a time when we get to showcase all of our work for the past three months of preparation. As such, we should make sure that we clear our calendars of all responsibilities on those days so that we can focus ONLY on the performance. When school is done, go home and get ready for the performance; get your music folder in order and ready to bring to school with you. Have your concert attire ready the night before, and allow yourself ample time to get from home to school so that you arrive in plenty of time to organize yourself and be seated and ready for the warm up. It is up to you as the performers to let your parents know what time you have to be at school, and then make sure that happens. Don’t try to balance all kinds of responsibilities before the concert; on concert days the performance should be your ONLY after school business.

Absences From Performance

The only justifiable excused absences from performance as mandated by the Burlington High School Music Department are: illness, death in the immediate family, religious belief conflict, immediate family funeral, subpoena, court or “pre-arranges” by the Principal. The student should notify the Director well in advance of the absence if possible. In order to be excused and to avoid a grade reduction, the student MUST BRING A WRITTEN EXCUSE OF THE ABSENCE THE FIRST DAY RETURNING TO CLASS AFTER THE PERFORMANCE. Absences from performance due to any other reasons are considered unexcused and will result in a reduction of grade (30 pts.). As the performances are scheduled in advance, it is the responsibility of the STUDENT AND PARENT to plan ahead to avoid conflicts with work schedules and appointments. An absence is a detriment to the rest of your performing group, as well as the elimination of the student’s opportunity to learn performance skills, which are an essential element of choir.

School activity conflicts should be worked out with the teacher/coach involved. Every effort by the student to reach a reasonable compromise is expected. Students have a responsibility to all organizations they are involved in—not just one. Therefore, communication is VITAL. Conflicts in schedules can usually be resolved if given adequate time.
It is not possible to produce a quality performance without ample preparation. **TO MEET EXPECTED STANDARDS, THERE WILL BE TIMES THAT REHEARSALS OUTSIDE OF CLASS ARE NECESSARY. IN ORDER FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP TO BENEFIT, ALL MUST BE PUNCTUAL IN ATTENDANCE.** Advance notice will be given and attendance is necessary. An unexcused absence from dress rehearsal will result in grade reduction and may result in THE STUDENT’S SUSPENSION FROM THE ENSUING PERFORMANCE.

**Concert Attire**

Members are expected to arrive in full concert attire to all concerts, and remain in concert dress until they leave the building. Absolutely NO sneakers are allowed. Students dressed inappropriately will not be allowed to participate in the performance and will receive a zero for the grade associated with that performance.

Ladies: Black dress pants or Black skirt, knee length or longer.
White dress top, black stockings and black dress shoes (no flip-flops).

Gentlemen: Black dress pants (no jeans).
White dress shirt, necktie, black socks and black shoes.

**Festivals**

The annual music festivals sponsored by the Vermont Music Educators Association include the Champlain Valley District Festival and the Vermont All-State Music Festival. The BHS Music Department also participates in the New England Music Festival. Participation in these festivals is by audition only and some restrictions apply. A schedule of audition, rehearsal and concert dates can be found on the BHS Music Department Performance Calendar. **To participate in any of these festivals, the student must:**

Be a member of one of the following BHS Ensembles: Concert Chorus or Senior Chorus.
Be able to perform the audition requirements.
Be able to attempt a sight reading exercise.
Attend an audition on the scheduled date.

**Champlain Valley District Choral Festival**
This Festival is a great opportunity to “get your feet wet” and perform with a large choral ensemble consisting of singers from other high schools in Chittenden County. As with all festivals, an audition is required, but THIS audition is the least stressful. As in you will set up an appointment with Mr. Poli and he hears you sing the audition piece. The festival will be held on November 6th and 7th at Essex High School. Luckily the audition piece will be taught to you in class! :)

New England Music Festival
This Festival is a great opportunity to sing with singers from many of the high schools in New England. As festivals go, the “invitation” process is the most competitive of the three annual festivals that we participate in. The process is a bit different that the other festivals however. There is actually NOT an audition but instead a “performance” at the Solo & Ensemble Festival held on December 5, 2015 at Hartford High School in White River Junction, Vermont. If you do well with this performance you will be invited to be a part of the Concert Festival on March 17-19, 2016. The 2016 Concert Festival conductor will be Dr. Sandra Snow of Michigan State University.

All State Music Festival
This Festival is a great opportunity to rehearse and perform with other singers from all the high schools in Vermont. The audition process consists of a performance coupled with some sight singing and rhythmic exercises. The audition will take place on January 16th, 2016 at Champlain Valley Union High School. The festival itself takes place on May 5-May 7 at Missiquoi Valley Union High School.

### Concert Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 29th</td>
<td>Fall Preview Concert (District Festival)</td>
<td>BHS Essex High</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 6th</td>
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<td>BHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hartford H.S</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 3rd</td>
<td>Solo and Ensemble Concert</td>
<td>Unitarian Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5th</td>
<td>New England Solo and Ensemble</td>
<td>Champlain Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 11th</td>
<td>Madrigal Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16th</td>
<td>All State Auditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27th</td>
<td>Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2nd or 3rd</td>
<td>Choral Night</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17th-19th</td>
<td>New England Music Festival</td>
<td>Gilford H.S. (N.H.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7th</td>
<td>Solo and Ensemble Concert</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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<td>May 5th-7th</td>
<td>All State Music Festival</td>
<td>Missiquoi Valley HS</td>
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<td>May 19th</td>
<td>Spring Concert</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 9th</td>
<td>Vermont Voices Concert</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10th</td>
<td>BHS Graduation</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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Contact Sheet

Student Information – please print clearly Student

Name__________________________ Grade___________ Ensemble:__________ Home

Address________________________________________________________________________________

City_______________________________ Zip Code_______________ Telephone

Number__________________________ E-mail Address________________________________________

Students Parents Name (First and Last) ________________________________________________

Do you take private lessons? YES   NO   If so… with who? ______________________________

Student and Parent/Guardian Signature I have read the Burlington High School Choral
Handbook and understand the policies and procedures it explains. I also understand the
Grading Policies and requirements for membership in the BHS Bands.

________________________________________________ ___________ Student’s
Signature

________________________________________________ ___________ Parent’s Signature

RETURN TO MR. Poli BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th, 2015