Course Description

The Music Department at Vista del Lago High School is designed to provide opportunities for students to sing and/or play an instrument in a group setting. This program strives to lead the student to acquire the musical skills needed for successful performance in the class and in public, which in turn is designed to help the student acquire beneficial habits for later in life. We strive to offer students a true musical experience - one that sends them down the path of becoming a better student, a stronger leader, a more confident decision maker, and an overall well rounded individual.

Through music education at Vista del Lago, students will learn the following: discipline, teamwork, independence, leadership, focus, responsibility, dignity, insight, cultural awareness, and most importantly a better understanding of our human nature.

As a music teacher at Vista del Lago, it is Mrs. Carlson’s goal to help all musicians to be the best they can be and to be lifelong lovers of music. Being a part of a positive musical experience is a high priority at our high school. Although the classes are “performance-based,” all classes will have a strong music appreciation element as well. There will be units on topics such as: listening, history, theory, composition, recording/technology, conducting, and small ensemble work.

Course Expectations and Standards

1. **Arrive** in the classroom on time with materials needed. Prompt attendance to class is extremely important, as class begins when the bell rings. Music classes do take some time to set up. I expect all students to be ready for instruction/rehearsal no later than **3 minutes after the tardy bell**.

2. **Participate** in rehearsals and all classroom activities and assignments.

3. **Attend** all concerts and school performances. You are an important part of the group! You will be representing your school, your class, your teacher, the community, your family, and yourself.

4. **Follow Directions.** Follow all classroom/school rules and instructions from the teacher. I will always have all daily instructions posted. You will also become familiar with the routine and know what to expect.

5. **Complete** assignments on time as given; both written and playing.

6. **Practice** your music. Really get to know the music that we will be exploring and own it! Have fun with it! Make it an important part of your life and daily routine.

7. **Be responsible.** Keep all music, handouts, books, etc. and have them available for class. You are required to have your instrument and YOUR copies of sheet music each day. This will be a part of your grade.
Class Rules: Please contribute to a positive classroom environment.
- While instructions are being given, please do not talk or play instruments. Cooperate and listen. Listen to others when they “have the floor” and raise your hand.
- Remain seated. Please do not roam around during class time.
- NO leaving the room before the bell rings or leaving the room during class without permission.
- Have your organized music folder in class each day, and put it away at the end of each rehearsal.
- Excessive restroom breaks will result in detention unless you have a medical condition.
- Practice rooms are for practice only.
- No food, drinks, or gum. Water is fine.
- You may not do homework or work for other classes during rehearsal.
- NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES (including headphones) DURING REHEARSAL.
- You are a member of our music department family! You are not expected to “like” everyone, but you must show them kindness and respect. There is a zero tolerance policy for bullying.
- Be respectful and careful with instruments, the music, the classroom, and all other materials.
- If there are any concerns or problems- please bring them to Mrs. Carlson’s attention. She will help out the best she can!

Consequences in regards to above rules:
1. Verbal warnings/Detention w/ parental notification  2. Removal from class w/ parental notification)
3. Administrative/Counseling dept. intervention and meet w/parents  4. Removal from music department

Homework/Practicing
In order for one to become a successful music student one must put some time into practicing on his or her own. When practicing, one should apply what they have learned in class. It is wise to devote at least 15 minutes everyday to growing musically. I do understand and respect the “busy life” that many of our students and their families face today. I hope that some time spent out of class will go into their music.

As a music teacher and musician, I can identify the ones who spend that extra time on their music. The “practicing musician” improves dramatically, and accomplishes in-class challenges easily. These students are usually the ones who move the entire group into successful musicianship as a whole. Written homework assignments should be completed before class and submitted on time. See below for the make-up policy.

Concert Attendance, Absences, and Make-ups
Music students are required to attend occasional after school and Saturday concerts and any other functions that arise throughout the year. I will give plenty of notice and will communicate through fliers sent home as well as on my webpage, and campus calendars, etc. Remember, the success of our Choir depends on ALL members attending every performance! Keep in mind that Choir is curricular (on your transcript), and not extracurricular.

Students who miss a required concert or event will receive a “zero” for that portion of their grade unless the absence is excused by Mrs. Carlson PRIOR to the event. Only students with excused absences will have the opportunity to complete a make-up assignment. Notifying Mrs. Carlson alone will not guarantee that the absence will be excused as they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of excused absences (student would be eligible for a make-up assignment):
- Illness or urgent medical reasons (doctor’s note required)
- A family emergency that would realistically prevent you from attending (parent/guardian verification required)
- A major religious/cultural event, holiday, or reason (parent/guardian verification required)

Examples of unexcused absences (student would receive a “zero”):
- Athletic practices or games, meets, etc. Occasionally exceptions are made at Mrs. Carlson’s discretion.
- Non-urgent appointments that could have easily been planned around our concert calendar.
- Part time jobs, having to work (please give your concert dates to your employer ASAP).
- Had a lot of homework, needed to study for a test, just didn’t feel like going, etc.
- If Mrs. Carlson finds out you lied about why you missed a concert you will receive an automatic “0”
Dress Code for Music Events

For every music department event, students will be advised on the proper attire. Please use the below guidelines to locate or purchase clothing for concerts as soon as possible so that they will be ready when the time comes to perform. All outfits must follow Vista’s school dress code. See the student handbook for details about what is appropriate. If you need financial assistance obtaining concert clothes, please let Mrs. Carlson know at least one week before the concert and clothing will be provided for you. On music department trips students must adhere to the school dress code at all times.

Concerts and Festivals

Dress code for all concerts and festivals will be “concert black.” Concert black means solid black clothing that is professional looking and does not draw attention to yourself.

Examples of concert black clothing:

- **Tops:** Solid black button down dress shirts (must be tucked in) or a dressy, modest black blouse. Tops must have either short or long sleeves and may not be sleeveless or strappy (a solid black sweater or shrug would be appropriate to cover a strappy or sleeveless top). Necklines should not be plunging or revealing.
- **Bottoms:** Solid black slacks (dress pants) or a LONG black skirt. Skirt hems should be to the ankles or floor. No shorts, jeans, leggings, or yoga/athletic pants.
- **Dresses:** If you choose to wear a dress it must follow the guidelines listed above for “Tops” and “Bottoms.” Dresses must have sleeves (short or long but NOT sleeveless or strappy) and hems should be ankle or floor length.
- **Shoes:** Black dress shoes are required. They may be closed toe, open toe, heels or flats as long as they look professional and you can move equipment safely in them. No flip-flops! Black socks and hosiery are required (tights, stockings, etc.).
- **Approved Optional Accessories:** Solid black ties, bow ties, black vests. Jewelry is allowed but should be minimal and hair/make-up should not draw unnecessary attention to you. Hats are not allowed unless they are for medical or religious/cultural purposes.

Casual Events

For casual performances we will wear the following:

- Tops: Concert Choir T-Shirt OR a blue Vista music/class/team shirt OR any school appropriate solid navy blue shirt.
- Bottoms: Casual pants (jeans, khakis, cords, etc.) in a neutral color (blue, black, tan, brown, etc.). Jeans are great as long as there are no rips or holes.
- Shoes: Casual shoes. Keep in mind that you may be asked to help with moving equipment.

Materials Recommended:

- Small binder or folder for sheet music. Clear plastic sleeves are recommended.
- Music dept. T-shirt. (optional) Cost is about $25 – more information on ordering to come.

Fundraising and Volunteering:

There is no fee to participate in the music performance ensembles at Vista del Lago High School, however students may be asked to participate in ONE group fundraiser this year so that we are able to afford the expenses of running our music program. Please make every effort to do your fair share of the fundraising work so that we can continue to offer the experiences and traditions that make our program special. Would you like to make a donation to our program? We can accept cash and checks made out to the Vista Music Boosters. We also could use volunteers to donate their time, especially by chaperoning field trips. Contact Mrs. Carlson for information on how to become a volunteer!

Vista School Website:

Mrs. Carlson’s webpage will include the following: Course expectations, links to pertinent websites, contact information, private teacher directory, and an instructional calendar outlining concerts, trips, assignments, projects, and all events. You can email Mrs. Carlson at ecarlson@fcusd.org or eliciacarlson@gmail.com
Classroom Policies

Cell Phones and Other Technology

Cell phones, mp3 players, headphones, etc. are not appropriate during class. Using these items during the class are viewed as an action of disrespect during the rehearsal process. If these items are out during the class time you will be required to put your device or headphones into the classroom pocket chart, and you will lose points on your daily assessment grade if your electronics were distracting you from rehearsals. Habitual offenders may be asked to put their phone in a calculator holder at the beginning of class for an extended period of time to reduce distraction.

There is no “warning” for first time technology offenders – this is a serious rule that must be followed everyday, every rehearsal. Consider what would happen if you had your phone out during a professional rehearsal. If you are focused on your cell phone or have your headphones on, you are not participating 100% in what is happening in class. Mrs. Carlson knows how to spot those who are using their phone behind the person in front of them, behind their music folder, or from inside their purse or backpack. Rehearsal is a time for you to escape the outside world for an hour each day…put your electronics away and live in the moment!

In addition, students may not use music department computers and printers without special permission. Students should never use music room printers to print out homework or assignments for other classes.

Cheating, Dishonesty, and Theft

The Vista del Lago Academic Dishonesty Policy will be strictly enforced. Honest behavior is expected from all students. Any unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, forgery, theft, or other dishonest behavior will result in disciplinary action. The consequences followed can be found in the Student Handbook. You are a FAMILY…Concert Choir is MORE than just a class. We strive for an atmosphere of trust…do your part to contribute to that goal.

Tardy Policy

The Vista Tardy Policy will be enforced. You will need to get a late pass from the office if you come in after the bell rings. Be in the classroom each day when the bell rings so that rehearsal can start on time. You should be in your seat no more than three minutes after the bell rings.

Class Procedures

Each day you are expected to arrive by the time the bell rings and be seated in your assigned section. Rehearsal will start promptly 3 minutes after the bell rings. While socializing is important for the culture of our ensemble, talking to your friends shouldn’t delay the beginning of rehearsal. When the bell rings you must be seated and ready for warm-ups and announcements.

Please make every effort to use the restroom before or at the end of rehearsal, or wait for the break at the midpoint of rehearsal. Try not to interrupt the rehearsal process unless it is absolutely necessary.

At the end of class you must put away your own music folder before you can leave. Never leave the classroom before the bell rings – not even a few seconds early. If you leave early you will count as “cutting class” which will result in Saturday School. Do not go into the music lobby or right outside the door to wait for the bell to ring.

Vista Music Boosters

A great way to contribute to our music department is to encourage your parents to be a Music Booster! The Vista Music Boosters are a non-profit organization that raises money and supports the Concert Band, Pep Band, Concert Band, Concert Choir, Guitar Program, Contemporary Music Ensemble, and Drumline. We can’t do everything that we do without their help! Booster meetings are on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM in room G101. If your parents cannot attend meetings but would like to be in the loop, they can email me to request to be put on the booster mailing list.

Contact Information

Ms. Elicia Carlson (previously Spencer)
Music Director – Band, Choir, and Orchestra
Email: ecarlson@fcusd.org or eliciacarlson@gmail.com
School Voicemail: 916-294-2410 X410317
Tentative Schedule of Concert Choir Events

Friday Football! Members of our choir perform the National Anthem at our home varsity fall football and spring basketball games. Performances will be soloists, small groups, and occasionally larger groups. Auditions and assignments for each game will take place in class. Be sure to mark your calendar attend the game that you are assigned to. There will be opportunities to sing the anthem during the spring as well.

AUGUST:
- Wednesday, August 14th to Thursday, August 15th: vocal range testing and section placement auditions during class.
- Friday, August 16th: Audition results announced, rehearsal begin.

SEPTEMBER:
- Thursday, September 5th: Choir Outing - Folsom Lake Symphony FREE concert in Town Center, El Dorado Hills at 7:00 PM. Arrive early to find a good place to sit (first come, first serve). This is NOT a mandatory event, but highly recommended for students and their families!

OCTOBER:
- Tuesday, October 8th: Fall Concert in the multipurpose room. This is a mandatory, graded performance. Students are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM and be in G101 by 6:15 for warm-ups. Student dress attire is Concert Black.
- Elementary School Recruitment Tour! We will be performing at 2 or 3 different elementary schools to recruit singers for Folsom Middle School’s program! By increasing the enrollment in FMS’s choir we will also be preparing students to advance to Vista’s choir in the future. More information will be provided soon, but please add the dates below to your calendars:
  - Friday October 25th during 1st and 2nd block - Empire Oaks Elementary.
  - Wednesday October 30th during 1st and 2nd block - Oak Chan Elementary.

NOVEMBER:
- December 2nd, 3rd, and 4th: Auditions for the Spring Musical, “Zombie Prom”! It is NOT required for choir students to audition, but it will be a great experience! Typically, a large percentage of our cast is made up of choir students and it is a great way to continue singing during the spring term.
- TBA: Possible performance at Folsom Middle School

DECEMBER:
- Friday, December 13th 7:00 PM: Winter Concert in the Black Box Theater. This is a mandatory, graded performance. Students are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM and be in G101 by 6:15 for warm-ups. Student dress attire is Concert Black.

NOTE: Mrs. Carlson looks for performance opportunities throughout the year, particularly around the holidays when singers are in high demand. Be prepared for events to pop up! Sometimes the most exciting experiences are the unexpected ones. Try to be flexible!

Remember, concerts and events are required and part of your grade because the performance experiences are the ones that you will get the MOST out of as a musician. Concert Choir is a family, and we cannot function to our highest potential without all members present. Please make Concert Choir a priority in your life. Our ensemble sounds the best and we have the most fun when EVERYONE is physically, mentally, and emotionally present.
Music Department Grading Policy

GRADING PHILOSOPHY: In a balanced assessment system, both Formative and Summative assessments are essential as tools for gathering and reporting student achievement. See below for definitions of both types of assessments as well as how each category will be weighted in the gradebook. The entire music department uses a 6 point grade scale to report meaningful information on student achievement. The grading rubric that most assignments will be based upon will be passed out in class and posted on my website. I will also use a rehearsal scoresheet to grade daily rehearsals (grades posted every 2 weeks). This scoresheet will be shared with students during the first week of class.

Formative Assessments
- **Formative assessments**: used for practice - skill development - guiding instruction
- Will make up no more than 30% of a student’s final grade and will include any graded learning assessments used as a diagnostic assessment of student’s learning.
  - **Examples**: Daily rehearsal assessment, "Checking For Understanding," daily demonstration of skills, etc.

Summative Assessments
- **Summative assessments**: used as a final measure of student learning at the end of a unit or period of instruction.
- Will make up no less than 70% of a student’s grade. These assessments are end of unit measures and major performance tasks. Summative assessments occur AFTER a student has had sufficient instruction and practice and is prepared to demonstrate mastery.
  - **Examples**: Concerts and Festivals, Written Performance Reflections, Final Project Performances, Tests, Midterms, Finals, etc.

CITIZENSHIP
Citizenship is reported separately from academic grades. Course citizenship includes both work habits and attitude/behavior. Good citizenship is vital to a positive, productive school environment. Because of this, students who receive two or more unsatisfactory citizenship marks on a grade report may not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities including athletics, dances, rallies, nonacademic music and theater performances, and club activities. Please note that excessive lates, tardies, and absences will result in lowered citizenship marks.

FINAL EXAM
Final examinations are mandatory at Vista del Lago High School and will not be scheduled early for any reason. Students who miss their final exams will be issued a grade of Incomplete for the semester. Students are required to make-up missed final exams during the first 2 weeks of the following semester in order to replace the I or Incomplete with a letter grade. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the teacher to arrange a make-up appointment. Failure to do so will result in a failing semester grade or of a grade calculated without final exam included.

*Please read this handbook and return a signed copy of the last page by **Friday of the first week of class.***

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“We have read and understand the 2019-2020 Vista del Lago Choir Handbook and agree to all of the course policies listed within.”
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Student Name (print) --------------------------------------------- Grade: 9 / 10 / 11 / 12

Student Signature -------------------------------------------------- Date: __________

Parent Signature ---------------------------------------------------- Date: __________

PARENT email: ____________________________________________________