

Grand Paws Show Choir



2026-2027
Handbook

www.mantenoshowchoirs.com

Grand Paws is an extracurricular choir serving as an extension of the Manteno Middle School music program, Manteno Middle School, and the Manteno community. Grand Paws has been in existence for decades, having performed both locally and around the state, winning numerous awards during its tenure. Manteno Grand Paws show choir strives to provide the highest quality of music education for its members, while continuing to uphold its reputation as a fine performing ensemble.

Attitude is the key in making this experience successful for you. What you get out of your participation is a product of the attitude you bring and the effort you put forth, and has an impact on those around you.

Respect from others is a reflection of what you give. Support one another in all efforts, both during and outside of performances. In this group, you are only as good as the person next to you.

Commitment occurs in EVERY rehearsal and performance. We depend on one another to put forth the best show.

Prepare for each and every rehearsal. In order to be at your best, you will need to work on individual issues with the material outside of rehearsal to ensure that all time spent with the group is as productive as it can be.

Each student is responsible for these established guidelines. If, after reviewing these policies, you feel you cannot commit to the program, it is recommended that you not participate at this time.

Contacting the Show Choir Team

If there is ever a need to contact Mr. Hoffmann or Ms. Schnitzler regarding anything Show Choir related, they can be reached at the following:

shoffmann@manteno5.org

(815) 928-7158

ischnitzler@manteno5.org

(815) 928-7166

The Manteno Show Choir Booster Board is readily available to answer any questions as well. They can be contacted at: mantenoscbooster@gmail.com

It is imperative that we have all of the information possible in regards to contacting you. You are what keeps this program going, and without you being in the know, we cannot be successful. Please make sure that we have your up to date information, especially email address. Weekly emails will be sent out to parents that contain practice dates, competition schedules, and any other information you need to know regarding Grand Paws. ParentSquare text messages, described below, will also be utilized to stay in contact with parents and students. The director relies on ParentSquare to stay in contact with students & families while at performances.

ParentSquare

ParentSquare is our school's communication platform that allows teachers, staff, and administrators to easily stay connected with families. It's where you'll receive important updates, reminders, and messages—all in one place.

Key Features for Families:

- **School-wide Announcements**
- **Direct Messages from Teachers/Staff**
- **Event Reminders & Info**
- **Emergency Alerts**
- **Permission Slips & Forms**

You can access ParentSquare via the **app** or **website**, and choose your preferred language and notification settings. It's the easiest way to stay informed and involved. All of my communication will come via this platform, so please get on and get connected!

Show Choir Website

Grand Paws has their own website (www.mantenoshowchoirs.com). Grand Paws utilized this website to display important information for students and parents. The following information can be found on the Grand Paws page of the show choir website,

- Contact information for the director
- Contact information for the show choir boosters
- Grand Paws Handbook
- Dance and vocal tracks

Follow Us on Facebook

The official Manteno Choir Department Facebook page launched this year! We are excited to share news about the group, upcoming events, and photos on this page.



General Guidelines

The show choir season lasts throughout the entire school year. It begins with the Oktoberfest Parade and ends in the spring with the annual Show Choir Gala. Throughout this time, students will attend a number of rehearsals to prepare the Grand Paws show.

Grand Paws will rehearse on Tuesday nights from 6-8pm in the Show Choir Room at MES and Thursday mornings from 7-7:45am in the MMS Choir Room. As the competition season gets closer, we will continue Tuesday night rehearsals with less morning rehearsals.

Performance Schedule **Competition locations and dates are subject to change**

1. Oktoberfest Parade - September 26th
2. Parent Preview - January 23rd
3. TBD - February 6 (Saturday)
4. Main Event - MHS February 12th and 13th
5. El Paso-Gridley Showdown - February 19th
6. TBD - February 26th
7. Glenwood - Chatham, IL - March 5th
8. Wheaton-Warrenville South Classic - March 12th
9. Gala - MMS April 3rd

Attendance

Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is required with very few exceptions. If you have any conflicts with practice or competition dates, please bring them to the attention of Mr. Hoffmann as soon as possible.

1. Students will be allotted no more than 5 absences. Allotted absences cover all absences, from illness to family trips. Students who use more than their allotted absences will be removed from the group.
2. An absence from school due to illness is also an absence from show choir and will count towards your allotted absences. Students must be in attendance for the entirety of the school day in order to attend a night rehearsal.
3. Communication with the directing staff (phone call, text, or e-mail the day of the absence) will help to alleviate potential misunderstandings. Students who do not communicate an absence will result in a double absence..
4. Excused tardiness or absences due to a school-sponsored event will be considered exempt. *Prior communication with the directing staff is essential in these cases.* Students who do not communicate a school sponsored absence will result in a counted absence.
5. Tardiness will not be tolerated. 3 late arrivals (5 minutes plus) will result in a counted absence and/or possible removal from the group. Warm Ups will start on the dot at the beginning of rehearsal time.
6. Students who miss any rehearsals during the week of a competition may be held out of performing at that weekend's competition.

Eligibility

Members of Grand Paws are student-performers. With this in mind, it is crucial that all participants stay on top of their classwork and keep passing grades throughout the school year. Per the Manteno Middle School student handbook:

- A grade of A, B, C, or D will be recognized as a passing grade.
- The director will check eligibility each week.
- Starting in January, any student that is marked scholastically ineligible for three consecutive weeks will be dismissed from Grand Paws..
- Students who are deemed ineligible are still expected to attend Grand Paws practices.

Competitions

Competition days usually consist of an all night commitment. We will travel together by bus and arrive early enough for setup and preparation. After our performance, we stay and support the other show choirs and participate in the awards ceremony. Students must stay for the entire competition with few exceptions. Please plan your day accordingly.

1. Students are expected to wear their competition shirts and nice jeans while not performing at competitions - this is our uniform. While performing, students are expected to wear all costumes and makeup properly.
2. Students are expected to follow all school rules while riding the bus to and from competitions.
3. The Homeroom will be for Grand Paws members and helpers only. Other students/families will not be allowed in the Homeroom unless given permission by Mr. Hoffmann. Competitions have common areas, such as cafeterias, for students and families to meet. The Homeroom will be locked when not in use.
4. After we have completed our performance, the student members will go directly to the Homeroom and organize all garments. Any loss of garments could result in removal from future performances and/or expensive replacement costs.
5. Please be respectful of all performances; refrain from talking or using your cell phone. Do not speak negatively about choirs, students, schools, parents, judges, etc. Rather, choose to celebrate the accomplishments of others. (This applies to both students AND adults representing Manteno Middle School!)

Travel Guidelines

We represent our communities and state as musical ambassadors. We are called upon to demonstrate for the duration of our travels the very best in personal behavior, integrity, group/team attitude, and, of course, musicality, which is, in turn, representative of the highest standards. By behaving responsibly and mindfully, by planning ahead, and having some basic guidelines, we will all have a GREAT experience. Some specific guidelines:

1. All members must ride the bus to competitions. We will not wait for members who are late; the bus will leave at its set departure time.
 - a. Students may opt to ride home with parents/guardians following the awards ceremony at competitions. Protocol for this will be shared closer to competition season.
2. Please remember that the bus is our home on the road for the tour, and that each member will be responsible to take care of his/her belongings, space and any trash. We are guests on the bus and must treat the vehicle accordingly.
3. The MMS Handbook and Code of Ethics still counts for events not taking place at MMS. Student behavior as visitors at other schools shall reflect those standards accordingly.

Performance Etiquette/Costumes/Appearance Standards

It is our responsibility to entertain and emotionally move the crowd with each of our performances. Thus, each performance is important and each student shall be prepared and focused to give their best performance possible. Because of that, students should tend to their appearance (hair, makeup, and uniforms) in the same way every time they are in front of an audience so that our looks will not in any way take away from the audience's focus on our group performance. (The directing staff will clearly communicate any exceptions to this policy.)

Members are responsible for ALL costume pieces purchased and assigned. All costumes are your personal responsibility to look after, keep track of, and most importantly, store correctly. You will not perform if this condition is not met. All assigned jewelry and garments shall be worn appropriately for performances, and no unassigned jewelry or clothing will be permitted. Hair should be worn out of the face, and girls should wear stage-appropriate makeup.

Costumes will be purchased for students. We will have fittings throughout the start of the season to make sure everyone has the proper attire. However, students will need to purchase a few items on their own. These items will be stored with the show choir costumes, but will be returned to students at the end of the season. Items needed for purchase will be communicated at a later date.

Costs

Show Choir fees help support the many expenses that make our season possible. These fees are used to cover items such as music, choreography, costumes, equipment, props, clinicians, and other operational costs throughout the year. Our goal is to provide students with a high-quality performance experience while keeping fees as reasonable as possible. We appreciate your support in helping create meaningful opportunities for our performers.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Position Fee</u>	<u>Volunteer Fee</u>	<u>*Activity Fee</u>	<u>Toal to Boosters</u>
Singer/Dancer	\$400	\$200	\$75	\$600

Activity Fee - The **\$75 activity fee** at Manteno Middle School helps support extracurricular programs by covering costs such as school transportation, equipment, supplies, and event expenses. This fee is due to the MMS Office and does not go towards the Show Choir fees or to the Show Choir Booster organization.

Payment Schedule

<u>Payment Date</u>	<u>Singer/Dancer</u>
Sep 15th	\$50 Acceptance Fee
Sep 30th	\$75 Activity Fee to MMS
October 1	\$140
November 1	\$140
December 1	\$140
January 1	\$130

Fundraisers

Throughout the year, Manteno Show Choirs hosts an array of different fundraisers to help support the students and the program. Some of our fundraisers, such as our Main Event Ad Sales, benefit the student on a personal basis by helping pay for their Show Choir fees. Other fundraisers, such as our weekly Bingo, go into the General Fund and are distributed and budgeted to help support our students as a group.

Parent Involvement

In addition to the student leadership positions, there will be many opportunities for parents to become involved with Grand Paws to help coordinate other volunteer activities, head committees, and provide valuable assistance throughout the course of the year. Most of the parent positions are filled on a volunteer basis, and opportunities will be available in many of the following categories as well as several others not mentioned here:

Remember: our success is contingent upon your participation in the operation of the group. Please feel free to volunteer for the committees as much as possible. Thank you in advance for your help!

*All policies and their administration are at the discretion of the director with no exceptions. If you have any questions or concerns about the above guidelines, please free to contact
Mr. Hoffmann or Ms. Schnitzler.*