

FINE ARTS HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY

Aesthetic beauty is near to the heart of God. His creativity is demonstrated repeatedly through the pages of Scripture. The most obvious account is in Genesis. God created the earth and everything in it in six days, after which He saw that it was good. The books of Psalms and Job speak often of the specifics of creation. The animals, the seas, the mountains, the skies, and mankind are all repeated themes in these books of poetry. Since beauty is important to God, we as Christians have a responsibility to pursue it in our lives. For this reason it is important to include the arts in the education of the total person here at ECA.

God uses musical references throughout the book of Psalms. We are instructed to praise the Lord with all kinds of music. Psalm 150 tells us to praise the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, with the timbral and dance, and with different types of cymbals. The Psalm concludes with, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord." Psalm 33:1 adds, "Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise Him." These exhortations from the Word of God command us to use our talents in worship. Since this is what the Word of God requires of His people, it behooves us as a Christian school to teach these things to our young people.

In addition to being useful in worship, the arts have a great effect on our emotions. Each of us has witnessed the effectiveness of a pastoral landscape in calming our spirits, or the way a rousing patriotic song stirs our hearts with pride for our country. In the book of I Samuel, David played his harp to soothe King Saul when the king was troubled and emotionally spent. Because we are more than one-dimensional beings, we need to be educated in the emotional, physical and spiritual realms in addition to the mental.

If the arts are so important in the full development of people, then its value must be considered as part of a school curriculum in producing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to serve God with their lives.

An important issue to deal with in today's culture is contemporary music. Let us begin with the assumption that music is amoral. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate otherwise; therefore we believe that music is a tool to be used by the musician. It is not intrinsically good or evil. Obviously many have chosen to use the tool for evil, but this does not make the tool evil in and of itself. Vitaly important are the lyrics attached to the music and the purpose for which it is used. Because of the controversial nature of some styles of music we choose not to use them as part of our school curriculum, but this does not make the particular style wrong or unable to be used for the Lord's service.

In order to be fully well rounded in the arts, it is important to be historically and culturally relevant. With this in mind, the programs at ECA will include performances of material from the Renaissance to the present. In this way students will be exposed to important literature from the past as well as having ministry opportunities using contemporary styles.

PURPOSE

Our purpose as a Fine Arts Department is to lovingly train students to pursue the talents, which God has given them in the arts. The end result is that students will use their God given gifts and abilities to minister for Him in their churches and communities, fearlessly proclaiming the gospel of Christ through whichever medium He has called them. This is accomplished through instruction of necessary skills in vocal and instrumental music, visual arts, and drama.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Within the first month of the school year, the director of each performing group will distribute a “commitment contract” to each group member. The contract will include performance dates, general expectations and consequences for absences. The contract will be signed by the student and his/her parent or guardian and be returned to the director. Directors may choose to make this an assignment and give a grade. Students must understand that every member of a performing group is important to the successful performance of the whole ensemble and therefore, attendance is of the utmost importance.

The terms of the contract are as follows:

1. Students are expected to perform in all scheduled concerts throughout the school year.
2. Students are expected to dress in the appropriate apparel for the performing group and arrive on time.
3. Students are expected to understand that they are representing ECA and the LORD and conduct themselves appropriately. This includes staying for the entire concert and being courteous while other students are performing.
4. Absences will be reviewed on an individual basis:
 - a. Sickness from school on the day of a concert will be excused with appropriate prior communication from the parent to the director.
 - b. Other absences that could be excused during a school day may result in a deduction of 10 percentage points off the quarter grade. These absences must be approved at least one week in advance by the Fine Arts Director.
 - c. Unexcused absences will result in failure for the quarter (60%).

COMMITMENT

The arts at Elkhart Christian Academy are an integral part of the overall school program. Christian witness and testimony can and should be exemplified through participation. Our fine arts programs are some of several means of developing the total Christian person. Any worthwhile activity requires commitment. The arts are no exception. The construction of facilities, employment of personnel and building of schedules are very real commitments on the part of the school. Parents, too, commit time, dollars and energies toward the arts for their children. **THE SAME COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED FROM THE STUDENT.**

When representing the school and the Lord Jesus Christ, the student should endeavor to maintain a Christ-like attitude before others, committing his or her life as a witness and testimony for the Lord. There should be continual evidence of academic responsibility and growth. There should be a continual commitment to practice outside of the school day to perfect skills, and learn parts. A student should consider this commitment before choosing to participate.

CURRICULUM

Music

Elementary General Music: The music curriculum begins with general music for all students in grades K-5. Here the elements of music are taught together with much singing. Elementary music students participate in one concert program each year.

Elementary Band: The beginning band program starts in the summer after fourth grade. All fourth grade students are encouraged to participate during the summer. Those who are unable can begin at the beginning of the fifth grade year.

Middle School Band: Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who are able to play at an intermediate level are encouraged to participate. This is an opportunity for students to further develop technique, tone and ensemble skills. Music is selected primarily from level two and three band literature.

Middle School Choir: This choir is open to all students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Three and four-part singing are explored as well as a cappella singing. This is designed to be a developmental choir for training in vocal technique and literature.

Concert Band: This band consists of students in grades 9 through 12 who have at least an intermediate proficiency on their instruments. Level four band music is studied and performed with the goal of each student having the ability to play at the college level after graduation.

Concert Choir: The concert choir consists of all freshmen choir members as well as any other students who are first year high school choir members or who are not selected for the chamber choir. Development of tone, vocal technique and sight-reading skills are among the goals of this performing group.

Chamber Choir: Members are selected by audition from among the sophomore, junior and senior classes. Students must have had one year of experience in Concert Choir or a like experience at another school.* Technique and tone are further developed along with intermediate and advanced sight reading skills. The ability to perform difficult literature is required.

*Any exceptions must be made by the Fine Arts Director.

Art

Elementary Art: Weekly art classes are offered to students in grades K through 5. Skills are developed through a variety of projects and mediums.

Middle School Art: This semester long elective course is offered to those students who desire to learn the basic elements of visual art and gain basic skills using a variety of mediums.

High School Art: An overview of different visual art skills is taught. Drawing, water colors, oils and charcoal are among the mediums explored. Art history and appreciation are also included.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Students who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities (including sports, academic teams, drama, etc.) must meet certain academic requirements.

Eligibility:

To be eligible scholastically, students must have a “C” (75) average or better and no “F’s” (64 and below) at the end of their last grading period. Eligibility is determined by a student’s first quarter, first semester, third quarter, and/or second semester grades. Eligibility for the fall season is determined by the spring semester grades of the previous year. Therefore, the eligibility guidelines become effective on the following dates: **October 25, 2010; January 3, 2011; March 21, 2011; August 1, 2011.**

Probation:

Students with less than a “C” (75) average or one failing grade will be placed on probationary status. Students are permitted to participate while on probation, but must raise their grades to eligibility status by the end of the next grading period.

Ineligibility:

Students receiving more than one failing grade at the end of any grading period will be ineligible for the next nine weeks. Students who are on probation or ineligible status, and fail to raise their grades to eligibility status by the end of the next grading period will be ineligible to participate in athletics and other extra-curricular activities for the following nine weeks. Ineligible students may not practice or compete during the period of ineligibility. In order for a student to be removed from ineligibility, he/she must attain eligibility status by the end of the next grading period.

EXTRA CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Chapel

Performing in chapel is one way in which students are encouraged to use their talents for the Lord. The student should see a music faculty member or the Principal to schedule a chapel performance, and must perform before a music faculty member prior to performance in chapel.

Drama

ECA produces a play in the fall and a musical production in the spring. Auditions are open to all academically eligible senior high students. Audition times are announced at least one week in advance for each production. Students are also encouraged to be involved in non-acting roles. These include stage crew, set construction, props, costumes, advertising, program and ticket design, make-up and tech crew.

Pep Band

The “Screamin’ Eagles” Pep Band plays for all Varsity Boys’ Basketball home games. The group is open to any member of Concert Band and by invitation to Middle School Band members. Standard Pep Band music is played with the emphasis on firing up the team and having lots of fun.

Solo & Ensemble Contest

Band and choir members from grades six through twelve are encouraged to further develop their talents by participating in the Indiana State Scholastic Music Association

(ISSMA) Solo and Ensemble contest. Piano students may participate in the fifth grade also. All students participating in secondary and elementary contest are required to perform before a member of the music faculty within two weeks of the contest. The week before contest, all solos and ensembles will be performed before the performance group in which the student participates.

Accompanist

Each of the choral groups depends a great deal on student accompanists. Soloists for contests and chapel also regularly need people to play for them. Any student desiring to take part in the music program in this way should contact a member of the music faculty.

Honors Bands & Choirs

Throughout the year the school receives applications and enrollment information for several honors performing groups. Directors will make information available to students as it arrives. Students are highly encouraged to pursue these opportunities.

Other

Throughout the school year outside performing opportunities arise. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these often. Every opportunity to perform is a challenge and further helps to develop the student into the musician that God wants him/her to be.

Senior Awards

At the last concert of the year, each senior who has participated in band or choir at ECA will be recognized with a compact disc of selected performances.

The John Philip Sousa award is given at graduation each year to the senior band member who best represents the band in musical excellence and leadership. The recipient will receive a certificate, desk set, pin and a \$250 scholarship to the college of choice.

The National Choral Directors Award is given at graduation each year to the senior choir member who best represents the choir in musical excellence and leadership. The recipient will receive a certificate, desk set, pin and a \$250 scholarship to the college of choice.

The standards considered for these awards are:

1. Participate all ECA years in the group – minimum of two years to qualify
2. Private study
3. Leadership within section and entire ensemble
4. Solo & ensemble contest participation
5. Honors groups & scholarships

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Occasionally, scheduling dictates overnight road trips. All provisions set forth in this handbook apply to any overnight trips. The Fine Arts Director will arrange lodging. The only exception to staying in school-arranged lodging is the possibility of staying with parents who have also made the road trip. Prior approval by the Fine Arts Director is required.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private music lessons are available to ECA students beginning in grade 3. Detailed information will be provided each year as to which teachers/types of lessons are being offered. Lessons are scheduled so as not to disrupt the student's academic learning process.

The school establishes fee guidelines, but fees are paid directly to the teacher. Each teacher will set his/her own payment schedule, practice and attendance requirements.

TOURS

Each year one of the high school performing groups represents the school in a spring tour. The group may be gone for several school days, visiting other Christian Schools and churches.

The school covers the costs of transportation and lodging. Those participating cover other costs of the tour and all members of the group are expected to go.

All students participating on a tour must meet extra curricular eligibility requirements, and are expected to be back in school the day following their return from tour.

TRANSPORTATION

All group members are required to travel to and from Fine Arts activities in school-provided or school-sponsored transportation. Permission will be granted to allow the student to return home with his/her parents. However, please be sure to communicate such arrangements with the director.