Choir Handbook



A Guide for ATC Choir Families

Last Revised: February 2026



Around the Curtain Choirs perform a diverse selection of music, including both sacred and secular works, designed to challenge and enhance each singer's abilities. Through this varied repertoire, students develop vocal technique, musicianship, and expressive performance skills while exploring different styles and traditions.

Fees for Choral Groups go towards music costs and Studio Sustainability as we strive to keep the arts an accessible option for all of the children within our community.

Contact Information:

Dr. Rebecca Whited
Director Junior, Senior, Chamber Choir
rebecca@aroundthecurtain.org

Becky Alatorre
Director, Primary Choir
becky@aroundthecurtain.org

Jackie Henderson
General Admin Assistant
jackie@aroundthecurtain.org

Captain Parent:
Diana Prue
dianismonto@gmail.com

General Studio
Info@aroundthecurtain.org

Anna Nicely, Executive Director
anna@aroundthecurtain.org

ATC Choirs

Primary Choir (Pre-K – Grade 2)
Primary Choir students will learn the fundamentals of music through singing and solfege. Students will also prepare 2-3 songs in class to perform towards the end of the semester. (Students younger than 5 may be selected on a case by case basis).

Times: Tuesdays 11:15 - 11:50
Director: Becky Alatorre
Grades: PreK - 2nd
Minimum Enrollment: 6

Junior Choir (Grades 3-8)
Singers in Grades 3rd through 8 (7th & 8th option for either choir) will be taught to value and experience excellent singing through musical activities which develop skills, sharing, self-expression, and personal growth. Students will learn to read basic rhythms and melodies. We will learn a variety of songs that will be presented in our Studio Showcase at the end of the semester.

Times: Tuesdays 12:00 - 1:00
Director: Dr. Rebecca Whited
Grades: 3rd - 8th

Senior Choir (Grade 7-12)
Singers in Grades 9 - 12 will continue in their musical journey through song. These singers of varying levels of interest and ability will explore vocal technique, choral tone, sight-reading and performance techniques. The Senior Choir participates in the end of the semester Studio Showcase. Students are required to attend 80% of rehearsals to participate in performances and are able to receive homeschool credit and grades. Singers in grades 7th and 8th are welcomed on a case by case basis and must have approval from Dr. W prior to registration.

Times: Tuesdays 1:15 - 2:15
Director: Dr. Rebecca Whited
Grades: 9th - 12th

Chamber Choir
This auditioned ensemble meets on Tuesdays from 2:15–3:00 and is designed for dedicated singers seeking additional performance opportunities and more challenging repertoire. Members refine their vocal technique, musicianship, and ensemble skills through advanced choral literature and special performances.

Times: Tuesdays, 2:15 - 3:00
Director: Dr. W
Suggested Grades 8th - 12th

Musical Theatre Show Choir
(Grades 6th - 12th)
This energetic class combines singing and movement as students learn a full musical theatre

number from start to finish. Participants focus first on mastering the song, then bring it to life with choreography, building confidence, performance skills, and stage presence along the way.

Times: Fridays, 1:00 - 1:50
Instructors: Dr. W & Anna Nicely
Grades: 6th and up (younger may be considered on a case by case basis)

General Administrative Assistant of Choirs: Jackie Henderson
jackie@aroundthecurtain.org

General Choir Guidelines

The Around the Curtain Choir program is designed to foster musical growth, confidence, and collaboration in a structured and encouraging environment.

- No chewing gum or food in rehearsal.
- Water is the only permitted drink during class.
- Choir is a collaborative environment. Singers are expected to show respect to the director and fellow singers, refrain from side conversations, and contribute to a focused and positive rehearsal atmosphere.
- Phones and personal devices should be silenced and put away during rehearsal unless being used for approved music or practice purposes.
- If a student is ill (fever or contagious symptoms), please remain home to protect the health of the group.
- Students should be picked up promptly at the end of rehearsal. The studio is not responsible for supervision outside of scheduled class times.
- Studio updates, rehearsal tracks, and announcements will be communicated through the Band app. Families are responsible for checking regularly.

Choir meets for one hour per week, so rehearsal time is valuable. Students are expected to remain engaged and actively participate. When not singing, students should be following along in their music so they are prepared when their section is needed.

Junior Choir typically leaves their music at the studio. Senior and Chamber Choir members are encouraged to take their music home to practice. If music is taken home, students are responsible for bringing it back to rehearsal.

All music is the property of Around the Curtain and is issued to students, tracked by number. All music must be turned in in good condition at the completion of the semester or the family will be charged for replacement.

Performance Dress

- **Junior Choir:** white top and black bottoms with blue sash for the girls and blue tie for the boys
- **Senior & Chamber Choir:** all black with blue sash for the girls and blue tie for the boys

Skirts or dresses should be floor-length (preferred) or tea-length, and black tights or socks and black shoes should be worn.

Sashes and ties may be purchased from the Studio for $15.

At the spring concert, graduating seniors will be given a cord to wear in recognition of their achievement. These cords should be returned following the concert.

Performances

Each choir will have one required performance per semester. Students must attend at least 80% of rehearsals throughout the semester in order to participate. Students are expected to arrive on time. Excessive tardiness may count toward absences. Please notify the director in advance of any planned absences when possible.

Around the Curtain is invited to provide music for additional events throughout the year; Chamber Choir represents the Studio at these performances when we are able to attend.

Concert music is to be memorized. To support this, Dr. Whited regularly provides practice sound files through the Band app. Independent practice is especially important for Senior and Chamber Choir members.

A Note on Cross-Training Activities

We understand that choir is one part of a well-rounded student's life, and many singers participate in other activities and sports. Directors will work with students to help them manage their time and will be patient when rehearsals must be missed for performances, games, or meets. We ask that families extend the same courtesy and avoid sacrificing choir performances for other practices whenever possible as a choir is very much a team collaboration.

Additional Choral Opportunities

(In Calendar Order)

Madison County Honor Choir

Madison County Honor Choir is an opportunity allowing students from the county to spend a day with a guest clinician. The day culminates in a concert. This is NOT auditioned and for grades 7-12 (some 6th graders may also attend). Special music has been purchased and will be handed out. Honor Choir takes place in late September- early October. This is a wonderful introduction into large group choral singing! The Honor choir has three choirs: High School SATB, Middle School Girls and Middle School Boys. There is no limit on the number of students that can attend. There is a cost for this (usually $40-$50) that includes a t-shirt, pizza dinner, pin and music.

Because this comes so early in the year, sign ups must be made in the first weeks of class.

We will have rehearsal tracks, rehearsal during class and an extra Friday rehearsal so that our singers arrive at the Honor Choir prepared.

All State Choir

The All-State Choral Festival is a three-day event that culminates in a professionally recorded concert. The Festival is an opportunity for students with outstanding ability and initiative to receive public recognition, to sing under the direction of nationally recognized choral clinicians, and to perform choral literature of the highest quality.

This year the All-State Choral Festival will be held in March/April in Birmingham. **The middle school festival will be Thursday/Friday with a 7:30pmFriday concert, and the high school festival will be Thursday-Saturday with a 12:00 Saturday concert.**

This is an auditioned choir. Auditions are end of October/beginning of November. Students are responsible for purchasing the music (link will be provided), numbering the music and arriving prepared for the audition. Group practices are an option. Mentoring with a prior All State Student/Parent is an option upon request.

All State Choir is an opportunity in which most home educated don't get to participate. The many students we have taken over the years agree this is an honor and not to be missed.

There is a fee for the festival. There are two overnights. The choir coordinates shared lodging (Airbnb or hotel) to save money for those that are interested. Parents are welcome.

Alabama Honor Choir Festival

The Alabama Honor Choir is designed to give recognition to students of outstanding ability and initiative, provide the opportunity for these students to work with outstanding choral clinicians, and perform music representing the finest choral literature. The Alabama Honor Choir Festival will be held in alternating (even-numbered) years in conjunction with the AMEA In-Service

Conference. The Alabama Honor Choir will consist of students in grades 9-12 who are nominated by their school choral director and approved by a district screening process.

While not auditioned, this choir is by invitation only. Directors can bring up to two balanced quartets. Selections are made in the fall and commitments must be made by November 1.

There is a fee for the festival. There are two overnights in Birmingham. The choir coordinates shared lodging (Airbnb or hotel) to save money for those that are interested. Parents are welcome.

Young Voices Music Festival

The **Alabama ACDA Young Voices Festival** is a unique opportunity for 4th-10th grade public school, homeschool, community, and church choir students in the state of Alabama. The Young Voices Festival offers choral students a supportive opportunity to perform a variety of choral literature under the direction of nationally recognized music educators.

Held every spring since 1993, 4th - 10th grade students from across the state come together for two days to participate in one of three choirs: Mixed Choir, Girls' Choir, and a Boychoir. Rehearsals begin Friday afternoon, and students present a final public concert on Saturday afternoon. Students gain valuable musical and social skills, and leave with a love for singing that lasts throughout their lives. Many former Young Voices singers are now Young Voices parents--or even choral directors now bringing their own students. Young Voices Festival is glad to be part of building the legacy of excellent choral music in the state of Alabama.

There is a fee for the festival. There is one overnight in Tuscaloosa. The choir coordinates shared lodging (Airbnb or hotel) to save money for those that are interested. Parents are welcome.

Choirs

BOYCHOIR

All boys in 4th - 6th grade may participate in the Boychoir. Treble music is performed by this group. Directors may select up to twelve boys to register for this choir. Students selected to participate should exhibit appropriate attitude, behavior, musicality and the ability to sit through long rehearsals. ATC will provide rehearsals so the students arrive at the festival confident of the music.

GIRLS CHOIR

All Girls in 4th - 6th grade may participate in the Girls Choir. Directors may register up to twelve select girls to participate in this choir. Students selected to participate should exhibit appropriate attitude, behavior, musicality and the ability to sit through long rehearsals. ATC will provide rehearsals so the students arrive at the festival confident of the music.

MIXED CHOIR

The Junior High Mixed Choir is for students in 7th - 10th grade and performs SATB

music. 7th-10th grade students will audition in groups and will audition on a portion of every song. Students will hold music for their audition, should be very familiar with all of the music, should be able to match pitch, and should sing with confidence. Directors may bring an unlimited number of students to audition; however, directors are encouraged to balance the audition group by voice parts. ATC will provide rehearsals to help prepare students for the audition.

All choirs combine to perform one song to conclude the performance.