



PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

The Pennsylvania Youth Chorale fosters a community of enthusiastic singers, knowledgeable musicians, and model citizens through the joy of choral singing.

VISION STATEMENT

The Pennsylvania Youth Chorale provides children with transformational musical opportunities, deepening their connections to one another, to their community, and to the world through singing and performing.

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the structure and procedures of the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale. Please read it carefully and refer to it frequently throughout the year.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY CLAUSE

Since its founding in 1977, the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale has served children from diverse backgrounds and economic situations. The Pennsylvania Youth Chorale is a nonsectarian choir committed to children without regard to race, national origin, handicapped status, or economic situation. No qualified child is denied the chance to become a member of the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale because of his/her family's inability to pay the choir fees.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The board will have the following functions:

- Trusteeship, i.e. the nomination, selection and training of new members
- Financial Management and Fundraising
- Long-Range Planning
- Personnel Management and Program Planning.

There will be no limit on the number of terms which can be served consecutively.

Manager

The manager will have the following responsibilities:

- Organization and maintenance of the choir's committees
- Liaison to the professional and artistic community
- Liaison to the general public

The manager will be appointed by the Board of Directors. There will be no limit on the number of terms which can be served consecutively.

Treasurer

The treasurer will maintain all financial records for the PYC, handle all bank transactions, and be responsible for receiving and recording payments including, but not limited to, payments for tuition and touring.

Artistic and Associate Directors

The Artistic and Associate Directors will plan and direct all musical programs, structure and deliver the educational program, maintain regular communication with parents and serve as voting members and officers of the Board of Directors.

Committees

The program of the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale is carried out through the work of committees composed of staff and parents.

PROCEDURES**Attendance**

Choir members are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals. For Senior Choir members, missed rehearsals must be made up at the provided make-up rehearsals. If you know of an absence in advance, you are expected to communicate this to the Artistic Director. Repeated absences will put the singer's choir membership in jeopardy.

All choir members are required to e-mail or phone an absence excuse before returning to rehearsal for every absence.

Choir members are required to attend all concerts. Each child's attendance is crucial to the success of the performance. Children will be excused only for illness or serious family emergency. Contact the director as soon as you know that your child will be missing a concert. Unexcused absences from concerts may result in membership termination.

Disciplinary Action

All members are expected to maintain the choir's high standard of behavior, courtesy and diligence at rehearsals, during performances, and on tour. In the unlikely event that a disciplinary problem arises, the child will be reprimanded by the Artistic Director or another designated authority figure. If the problem continues, the parents will be notified and the member will be placed on probation. If the problem cannot be resolved, the child's membership will be terminated.

All choir members are bound by the rules of touring while on tour. The Artistic Director and the chaperones designated by the Board will assume responsibility for discipline on the tour. If a disciplinary problem arises, the child will be reprimanded. If the problem continues, privileges will be restricted. If the problem is very serious in nature, parents will be contacted and the child may be sent home before the end of the tour at the parent's expense.

Regular Rehearsals

The choir shall meet for regular weekly rehearsals. At the beginning of each new year, the Artistic Director will contact each choir member by mail to notify families of the first rehearsal date. Parents will be notified about special rehearsals at the beginning of the season. On rare occasions the Artistic Director may schedule extra rehearsals. Parents will be notified in a timely fashion of such rehearsals. Cancellation of rehearsals (due to inclement weather or director illness) will be communicated by the free app Remind.

Special Rehearsals

There are six retreat rehearsals (called Sing Ins) per year for Senior Choir and two for Junior Choir. These take place at locations throughout Montgomery and Bucks Counties.

- Oct. (half-day/SC), Nov. (half-day/SC), Dec. (full-day/SC and JC), Feb. (two half-day/SC), and Apr. (full-day/SC and JC)
- All members are required to attend in order to sing the following concerts.

There are two special rehearsals (called Fantastic Fridays) per year for SC. These take place in January and March, usually at our regular rehearsal location. There will be additional rehearsals scheduled as needed for SC students attending Long Tours.

Warm-up rehearsals are held during the “call time” prior to each concert. Usually, these warm-ups are scheduled well in advance of the concert start time, but the exact time will be announced by the Artistic Director in a timely fashion before each concert.

Communications

The director will communicate with parents every week by email. Parents are expected to read these emails and to respond in a timely fashion when a reply is requested.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Families of choir members must have a significant interest and commitment to the choir program and activities.

Parents/guardians are required:

- to provide punctual transportation to and from rehearsals, concerts, and events (whether it be transportation by the parent, a family member/friend, or in a carpool).
- to support their singer at home. Families are expected to provide time and space for choir members to practice their music and complete their theory lessons.
- to cover all financial responsibilities of choir membership. These include but are not limited to tuition, tour expenses, choir uniforms and theory books. All tuition payments must be made on time according to the payment schedule.
- to serve on one of the PYC committees each year.

Parent/guardian involvement in the PYC fundraising projects, parent meetings and other choir activities is also expected.

Uniforms

It is the family’s responsibility:

- to supply and care for their singer’s uniform pieces. Uniforms will be purchased directly through the choir. There is a formal concert uniform as well as several additional informal uniform pieces.
- to make sure the choir child’s uniform is complete and all uniform parts are cleaned, pressed, and hemmed for performance.

All uniform parts are to be labeled with the child’s first initial and last name. Please label as follows:

- Pants- on the inside back of band
- Shirt - on the inside neck in back
- Tie- on the back of tie

Fundraising Projects

Projects will be offered throughout the year to allow each choir member and their family a chance to earn money for

their tuition, uniform, and tour expenses. Instructions and rules for each individual project will be provided and parental permission will be required before any items are given to a child to sell.

Each project will have a definite time period and every participating member is required to turn in all funds at the specified times. Each member is responsible for all items of the project and will owe money for missing or lost items.

Each family's contribution to a fundraising project will be recorded under their singer's name. The balance will be carried forward from year to year during child's membership. Since the choir is non-profit, all funds raised through contributions belong to the choir and remain in the choir treasury when the singer leaves the choir.

Keeping profits for personal gain is fundraising under false pretenses.

Music Folders

Choir members are expected to bring their music in the given choir folder to every rehearsal and to keep their music in good condition. If music is damaged or lost, the cost of replacement shall be the responsibility of the family. Flyers with time sensitive choir information are often sent home in the music folder. It is the family's responsibility to check the choir folder after each rehearsal for important paperwork.

If a choir member comes to rehearsal without their music folder, a rental folder will be provided for that rehearsal.

DRESS CODE

The look of a live performance is as important as the sound of it; therefore, the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale has developed a Performance Dress Code. This dress code applies to all performances.

Uniforms

- Uniforms must be complete for each performance. They must be clean, pressed and in good condition. Uniforms that don't fit properly must be replaced. Pants should be hemmed so that they rest on the top of the foot.
- Girls must be sure bra straps do not show when wearing the concert uniform top. (no racerback/sports bras)

Hair

- For formal performances, long hair will be worn half up/half down, provided that the style allows. If style does not allow, hair must be worn so that it is out of the singer's eyes. All singers must be able to keep hair out of the eyes and off the face during performances.
- No large or distracting hair ornaments may be worn.
- Hair ribbons, scrunchies, headbands, etc. must be black.

Make-up

- Make-up is not required or expected.
- If any is worn it must blend with the skin tone and must not be noticeable.
- Any nail polish is fine, but it should be on natural nails.

Jewelry

- No jewelry may be worn with the uniform except small post earrings and one ring. No dangling earrings, necklaces, wrist or ankle bracelets, etc. may be worn.
- No watches with alarms/beepers or smart watches (ex. Apple Watch, FitBit) may be worn.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT

(For reference only; this was completed electronically during registration.)

Please enroll my child in the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale for the season. I understand that enrollment is for the entire choir year and that tuition and miscellaneous fees are not refundable. I understand that early resignation from the choir will prevent my child from participating in the program in the future.

I understand that acceptance and retention in the choir is dependent upon my child's willingness to abide by the choir rules and that my child's participation in performances is subject to the judgment of the Artistic Director.

I understand that all reasonable precautions are taken to ensure that programs and activities sponsored by the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale are conducted by mature and qualified personnel in a safe and responsible manner. However, I accept that it is my responsibility as a parent/guardian to insure that a choir staff member is present to receive my child at each rehearsal and concert and that my child is picked up by an authorized person at the conclusion of each rehearsal and concert.

I have read the PYC Parent Handbook in its entirety, and I understand all information presented in that handbook.

I further agree to provide the staff with the necessary medical information and release for emergency care as stated on the PYC Medical Form, and that this form will be completed and returned to rehearsal no later than Sept 30.

SINGERS CONTRACT

(For reference only; this was completed electronically during registration.)

Parents will be required to witness the choir member's signature on the *Pennsylvania Youth Chorale Singer's Contract* agreeing to the following:

I, (choir member's name), being a mature and responsible person, promise to accept my responsibilities as a member of the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale.

I promise to accept responsibility for the care of my music. I understand I am responsible to replace music that is damaged or lost. I promise to bring my music to every rehearsal.

I promise to accept the responsibility for my behavior at rehearsals. I understand that if my behavior is in the least bit disruptive to the goals of the choir, I will receive a warning from my director. If there is a second disruption, I will be placed on probation and my family will be notified. If the disruption continues, my membership in the choir will be terminated.

I promise to accept responsibility for the image of the Pennsylvania Youth Chorale in public. I understand that I am a representative of my community and the choir when I am in uniform, and therefore, I must be a fine example of courtesy and manners at all times. If my behavior is ever any less than this, my membership in the choir will be immediately terminated.

I promise to attend all rehearsals unless I am excused by the director for sickness or some other serious matter. All excuses must be written and signed by my parents.

I promise to attend every concert, and I understand that an absence will only be excused for serious illness. A written excuse from my parents will be required. Poor attendance at rehearsals or concerts will result in the termination of my membership in the choir.

I promise to participate in my school choir, provided that I am eligible by grade and schedule. If I do not participate in my school choir, I will bring a letter excusing me signed by my school music teacher before the end of September.

CHOIR RECOGNITION

Choir Karate (Senior Choir)

When a child joins the Senior Choir he/she will be given information which outlines in detail what is expected of him/her musically, personally and professionally.

- The Basic Training Section includes such things as care of the music, preparation for and participation at rehearsal, following directions, etc.
- The Musical Training Section includes aural skills, reading skills, vocal technique, individual performance, etc.
- The Performance and Touring Sections include stage presence, public manners and behavior, bus courtesy, etc.

In addition, each child must perform several pieces of repertoire by memory, study the composers of the music, and complete a theory book.

As students master and accomplish the Basic Training, Musical Training, and Performance/Touring skills, they will move to new levels of the Choir Karate Program (yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, red, black). However, achievement in the Choir Karate Program is highly dependent upon the singer's personal commitment to completion of the required tasks.

Pro Slips (Junior Choir)

Junior Choir members have the opportunity to earn Pro Slips at rehearsals and events for professional and musical accomplishments (ex. being punctual, bringing music and materials to rehearsal, participating actively during rehearsal, preparing assignments). Pro Slips are exchanged for prizes.