



Handbook for Singers and Families

Welcome to the Worcester Children's Chorus! We are thrilled to have you be part of our organization. This handbook lays out specific expectations required for membership in our ensembles. We strive to maintain standards of excellence. We hope that this information will be helpful to you as you embark upon your musical journey with us.

MISSION STATEMENT

Worcester Children's Chorus unites diverse youth in an inclusive community to foster choral excellence, self-discovery, and cultural enrichment through collaboration, education, and performance as a vibrant part of Worcester's arts and cultural landscape.

Worcester Children's Chorus at Joy of Music program.

WCC holds rehearsals on the campus of Joy of Music - a community music school at 1 Gorham Street. Worcester, MA.

Worcester Children's Chorus shares an active parking lot with the Joy of Music.

Student drop off/pick up:

Students in grades 3-6 should be walked into the rehearsal room.

Students in grades 7-12 may walk in on their own.

Singers may be dropped off ten minutes prior to the start of rehearsals. Likewise, family members may wait in the lobby area ten minutes before the conclusion of rehearsals.

Students should be picked up promptly at the conclusion of rehearsals by checking out with WCC staff or volunteers. *Students in grade 7-12 should check in with their director if they are not driving themselves or are waiting on a parent pick-up.*

Students who are not picked up 15 minutes after scheduled rehearsal times will be subjected to a \$25 late fee. In case of an emergency and you will be late picking up your child, you MUST email your child's director with details.

Waiting Area:

Families may wait in the lobby area at JOMP.

Children (siblings) must be supervised by parents at all times.



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STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

One of the criteria for acceptance and continued membership in the Worcester Children's Chorus is the ability of the student to commit him or herself to a high standard of behavior. This personal discipline is every bit as important as a student's musical ability.

1. Students will exhibit exemplary behavior wherever they happen to be representatives of the Worcester Children's Chorus.
2. Students will demonstrate a commitment to musical excellence through a positive attitude and diligent effort in rehearsal and performance.
3. Students will work cooperatively with choir personnel at all times.
4. Students will treat one another with respect and dignity. Harassment or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
5. Students will treat the rehearsal and performance facility with respect and dignity.
6. Students cannot dispense any type of medication to one another, such as Tylenol, Advil, Pepto Bismol, etc.
7. Students will not possess alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or weapons. Smoking, drinking of alcoholic beverages and use of illegal drugs is not permitted at any time.
8. Any student whose behavior, work ethic and/or performance drop below the standard of the group may be reviewed by staff at any time to maintain and protect the integrity of the ensemble. This review may result in dismissal.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

1. Please plan to arrive a few minutes ahead of the scheduled rehearsal time.
2. A maximum of three absences per semester are allowed. If there are more than three absences, the singer may not be allowed to perform with the ensemble and could jeopardize membership in WCC. Any rehearsal or performance missed, excused or unexcused, is considered an absence. Chronic tardiness will be considered in the total number of absences.
3. Your director should be notified of an absence prior to rehearsal or as soon as possible the following day.
4. **Singers are responsible for learning material covered when they are absent.**
5. **All performances are required unless special permission has been given well in advance of the performance.** An unexcused absence from a performance can result in dismissal from WCC.
6. Returning from year to year is at the discretion of the artistic staff. Decisions are based on singers exhibiting positive attitude and diligent effort in rehearsal and performance.



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REHEARSAL POLICIES

1. **The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is NOT permitted at all during rehearsal.**
2. Check in when arriving at rehearsal. Please arrive early enough to be in your seat, ready to rehearse by the start time of your rehearsal.
3. Please use the restroom before coming into rehearsal.
4. Students are welcome and encouraged to bring water to rehearsal. Keeping your vocal cords hydrated during rehearsal is very important. Only water should be in your water bottle.
5. No candy, gum, or drinks (other than water) are allowed during rehearsal.
6. WCC rehearsals are “closed”. No visitors may sit in on a rehearsal without receiving prior permission from the staff.
7. Weekly emails will be sent to singers and families with information about rehearsals, assignments, concerts, and other upcoming events. Families will be held accountable for the contents of this information. Please add your director’s email and info@worcesterchildrenschorus.org to your contacts to ensure you receive all emails.
8. All choir members are allowed to take their music folders home. The singer is responsible for the folder and must remember to bring it each week. Music should be marked in pencil only. No pictures, stickers, or decorations should be added to any part of the folder or music. The music and folder must be returned at the end of the choir season. You will be charged for missing or damaged music. Please Note: The replacement fee for lost WCC folders is \$100.
9. Singers should be picked up promptly following rehearsals and performances. If for some reason you are unavoidably delayed, please email the director. Contact info is included below.
10. In case of severe weather, rehearsal will be canceled if the Joy of Music campus is closed. An email will be sent in case of a cancellation. Do not assume that rehearsal has been canceled simply because your school is not in session.

ANNUAL TUITION FEES

2025-2026 Full Year membership (September - May)

All singers receive an automatic tuition subsidy through the generosity of our supporters, business sponsors, community foundations, and partnerships that is reflected in our regular tuition rates below.

- Da Capo (Gr 3-5): \$700
- Bel Canto (Gr 6-8): \$775
- Cantare (Gr 9-12): \$850



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Tuition includes all weekly rehearsals (over 30 sessions), music, music folders, scheduled WCC produced performances, and additional local performances (some exceptions apply from time to time). Trips, festivals, tours, concert tickets, uniforms and some expenses related to social gatherings are not included in tuition.

WCC offers a further discounted Early Bird registration period, May - June 30th. Singers that join following WCC's Mid Season Auditions will receive a mid-season rate for January - May membership.

Tuition is due prior to the singer's first rehearsal unless the family has signed up for the Payment Plan or applied for Financial Aid.

Tuition Payments

Timely tuition payments are expected, regardless of whether you are on a payment plan or paying in full. Payment for tuition can be made online via the WCC Registration Form on our website. If you need to pay by cash or check, please contact the office. Checks should be made payable to *Worcester Children's Chorus*.

Sibling Discount: WCC offers a sibling discount to families making full payment. Each singer after the oldest singer receives 20% off tuition.

Financial Aid

WCC is committed to building and maintaining an inclusive community of diverse singers. For all of our programs, we do not want cost to be a factor in a child's participation. On average, we provide financial assistance to 30% of the choir membership per year. Application for Need-Based Financial Aid is found on WCC's website. Family Contribution is generally \$50-\$200 per child from each family that receives a financial award with income under \$75K. Please be in touch if you need to discuss an alternate plan or a lower Family Contribution.

Conversely, if you are able to contribute a gift to WCC to support a singer's tuition, please go to the website and give using our online form. Thank you!

Payment Plans

The Payment Plan policy is under review and will be finalized by July 1, 2025.

Withdrawal/Refund Policy

A refund, minus a \$50 Administrative Fee, is payable if a student withdraws prior to the first rehearsal. After the season has started, there are NO refunds.



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Returned Checks Policy

Parents will be notified of checks returned due to insufficient funds. Payment, IN CASH, of the face value of the check plus a \$50 returned check fee is due upon receipt of the notification. All payments for the remainder of the choir season must be made in cash or money order.

UNIFORMS

Worcester Children's Chorus Polo Shirt

The red WCC polo shirt, purchased through Land's End/Guertin's Graphics, is required for the uniform. The cost for the polo is not included in the cost of tuition. Instructions for ordering the polo shirts will be available at the beginning of the season. Shirts cost between \$25-\$35.

Black Pants

Plain black dress pants are required for the WCC uniform. No stretch pants, jeans, or baggy pants are permitted. If you choose to wear a belt, it must be black. *Dark navy blue or gray pants are NOT acceptable.*

Black Socks and Dress Shoes

Black means very little or no colored markings on the main body of the shoe. It should look solid black. *No sandals, tennis shoes, or clogs.*

Cantare Uniform (Grade 9-12)

Black Laurel dress* with red sash from Tuxedo Wholesalers. Instructions for ordering your dress will be available after the first rehearsal. Black dress shoes (flats or short heel only). Stockings optional.

**Options exist for non-binary singers*

WCC Pins

Singers receive a pin at the end of each choir year, reflecting the number of years the singer has been with WCC. The cost of the pin is covered by the student's tuition. Singers are encouraged to wear their most recent pin to performances.



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PERFORMANCE POLICIES & APPEARANCE

1. At WCC, we take performance appearance very seriously. We strive for professionalism in every aspect.
2. Singers must arrive promptly at the designated Call Time, in order to warm up and rehearse with the group before performances.
 - a. What is Call Time? This is a term used in the performing arts that means the expected time of arrival for participants in a performance event. The performer should be at the location, inside the building, with everything they need, ready to warm up at the call time. I.E. Concert is at 4:00 pm; Call Time is 2:00 pm; Get dropped off at 1:50 pm to be in the building and ready to go at 2:00 pm.
3. WCC red polo shirts must be fully buttoned and tucked in for all performances.
4. Singers should have neat hair that is out of the face. Long hair should be pulled back and secured.
5. Keep makeup and jewelry at a minimum. Remove any watches that make an audible signal.
6. Do not leave your cell phone in your pocket!
7. Refrain from using perfume, cologne, scented lotion, scented hairspray, etc. The close quarters during performance make it very difficult for people to breathe, especially if they have allergies. Deodorant is a lovely idea!
8. Any singer arriving for a concert without a complete uniform may be unable to perform. This missed performance would count as an absence. Students' uniforms should remain in proper order until leaving the concert hall.
9. Appropriate, respectful behavior is expected from singers during concerts when they are not performing. No books, gadgets, devices, or other distractions are permitted.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Illness: If the singer is exhibiting symptoms of illness like sore throat, cough, sneezing, fever, body aches, nausea or stomach upset, please do not send them to rehearsal or a performance. Please contact the singer's ensemble director prior to the absence.



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NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Worcester Children's Chorus rejects and condemns all forms of harassment, discrimination and disrespect and is committed to equality in employment, volunteer, and performance opportunities. The Chorus commits itself to maintaining a welcoming environment for all people prohibiting discrimination without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or family medical history, military or veteran status, immigration status, or other legally protected status. We intend this list to be inclusive, not exclusive.

This policy applies to all areas of employment, volunteer participation, and membership, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation, benefits, social and recreational programs, and all other conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Worcester Children's Chorus Mailing Address

info@worcesterchildrenschorus.org
Worcester Children's Chorus
Joy of Music Program
1 Gorham Street
Worcester, MA 01605
www.worcesterchildrenschorus.org

STAFF CONTACT INFO

Pamela Mindell, Artistic Director & Director, Cantare and Bel Canto, pmindell@worcesterchildrenschorus.org
Philip Montgomery, Asst Artistic Director & Director, Young Artists & Da Capo, pmontgomery@worcesterchildrenschorus.org
Chris Wychorski, Executive Director, cwychorski@worcesterchildrenschorus.org