

WORCESTER CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Handbook for Singers and Families

Welcome to Worcester Children's Chorus! We are thrilled to have you be part of our program. This handbook explains specific expectations required for membership in our ensembles. We strive to maintain standards of excellence. We hope this information helps you as you begin 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.

REHEARSAL & OFFICE LOCATION

Worcester Children's Chorus is in residence at the Joy of Music Program (JOMP) - a community music school located at 1 Gorham Street, Worcester, MA.

CONTACT INFO

www.worcesterchildrenschorus.org

General email: info@worcesterchildrenschorus.org

WCC staff are available by email. We do not have a phone number or phone receptionist.

Pamela Mindell, Artistic Director & Director, Cantare and Bel Canto

pmindell@worcesterchildrenschorus.org

Philip Montgomery, Asst Artistic Director & Director, Bel Canto & Da Capo

pmontgomery@worcesterchildrenschorus.org

Chris Wychorski, Executive Director

cwychorski@worcesterchildrenschorus.org

Ellie Hanson, Program Assistant

ehanson@worcesterchildrenschorus.org

Mailing Address

Worcester Children's Chorus

1 Gorham Street | Worcester, MA 01605

Chorus Connection, Membership Portal Log-In Page: https://app.chorusconnection.com/sign_in

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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, snacks, 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.

HEALTH POLICY

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.

All families must sign the WCC medical release found in the registration form.

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PARKING, DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Parking at Joy of Music school

- Worcester Children's Chorus shares a busy parking lot with the Joy of Music Program. Parking can be tight during busy hours, so being flexible is very important. Please plan to arrive early so you have plenty of time to find a spot.
- Due to the limited parking, there is no "standing" or "waiting" in the parking lot.
 - IMPORTANT: If you choose to wait in your vehicle, you must move to the Nordgren Funeral Home parking lot or Lincoln Street. *Pick up your Nordgren Funeral Home parking pass at the Joy of Music front desk.*
- If you cannot find a spot to park in the JOMP parking lot, park on Lincoln Street.
- PLEASE do not block driveways or other cars in the parking lot (even for "just a second").
- PLEASE do not use the Handicap spots unless you have a MA Disabled Parking Pass that hangs from your rearview mirror.

Student Arrival & Waiting Room

- Students in grades 3–5 must be walked into the JOMP lobby to wait for rehearsal. Students in grades 6–12 may walk in on their own.
- Singers can be dropped off up to ten minutes before rehearsal starts. Family members are welcome to wait in the lobby during this time, but parents must supervise siblings at all times.

Pick-Up After Rehearsal

Students must be picked up right after rehearsal by checking out with a WCC staff member or volunteer. Students in grades 7–12 should check in with their director if they are waiting for a ride or are not driving themselves.

A \$25 late fee will be charged if a student is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of rehearsal. If there is an emergency and you are going to be late, you MUST email your child's director right away with the details.

Please note that JOMP closes the building at 8:45 pm. We need to be out of the building well before then, so that they can lock up.

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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 students to commit themselves 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.

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.

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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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.

UNIFORMS

Da Capo & Bel Canto Uniforms (Grades 3–8)

- **WCC Polo Shirt:** All singers in Da Capo and Bel Canto must wear the official red WCC polo shirt. You can buy this shirt through Lands' End for between \$25 and \$35. This cost is not included in your tuition.
 - *How to Order:* Ordering instructions and a direct link to the Lands' End website will be shared at the start of the season.
 - *How to Wear It:* Shirts must be tucked in with the top button buttoned.

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- *Gently Used Shirts:* Please ask our staff about free, gently used polo shirts, as we often have some available.
- **Black Pants:** Plain black dress pants are required. Jeans, stretch pants, leggings, or baggy pants are not allowed. Dark navy blue or gray pants are also not acceptable. Your polo shirt must be able to tuck into the pants comfortably. If you wear a belt, it must be plain black.
- **Black Socks & Shoes:** Shoes must look solid black with little to no colored markings. Sandals, sneakers, and clogs are not allowed. Wear them with plain black socks.

Cantare Uniform Options (Grades 9–12)

Singers in Cantare may choose the uniform option they feel most comfortable wearing:

- **Option 1 (Dress):** The black Laurel dress with a red sash, ordered from Tuxedo Wholesalers. You will receive ordering instructions after the first rehearsal. Wear this with black dress shoes (flats or low heels only). Stockings are optional.
- **Option 2 (Pants):** A long-sleeved black button-down shirt, black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes.

WCC Pins

At the end of each choir year, singers receive a special pin that shows how many years they have been with the WCC.

- **Cost:** The cost of the pin is covered by your tuition.
- **Performances:** Singers are highly encouraged to wear their most recent pin on their uniform during performances.

ANNUAL TUITION FEES & PAYMENT POLICIES

2026–2027 Full Year Membership (September–May)

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, business sponsors, and community partners, all singers receive a tuition discount. This savings is already factored into the regular tuition rates listed below:

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

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What Your Tuition Covers

- All weekly rehearsals (over 30 sessions)
- Sheet music and professional music folders (on loan - to be returned to WCC)
- Regularly scheduled concerts put on by the WCC
- Most extra local performances (though a few exceptions may apply)

Tuition does not include: Trips, festivals, tours, concert tickets, uniforms, or some costs for social events.

Tuition Rates and Discounts

- Early Bird Discount: WCC offers a lower rate for full standard tuition if you register early.
- Mid-Season Rate: Singers who join after mid-season auditions will pay a reduced rate for January through May.
- Sibling Discount: WCC offers a sibling discount for families who pay their tuition in full. After you pay full price for your oldest child, each additional singer in your family will receive 20% off their tuition.

How to Pay

Tuition must be paid on time, whether you are on a payment plan or paying in full.

- Deadlines: Tuition is due before your singer's first rehearsal. The only exceptions are if your family has set up a payment plan or applied for financial aid.
- Instructions: Our staff will send out detailed payment instructions at the start of each season (or after your audition if you are new to WCC).
- Payment Methods: Once you receive your instructions, you can pay online through the WCC Registration Form on our website or through Chorus Connection.
- Cash or Checks: If you need to pay with cash or a check, please contact our office. Checks should be made out to *Worcester Children's Chorus*.

Payment Plans

Payment plans are available for a \$75 fee.

- Auto-Pay Required: To use a payment plan, you must set up automatic payments with a credit or debit card through our membership portal, [Chorus Connection](#).
- Late Payments: Please note that if a family falls behind on their payments, they may not be allowed to use a payment plan the following year.

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Financial Aid

WCC is committed to building a welcoming and diverse community. We never want cost to stop a child from singing. On average, we provide financial help to 30% of our members each year.

- How to Apply: You can find our need-based Financial Aid application on the WCC website. Click on the Register button and check off Yes, I want to apply for financial aid.
- Expected Contribution: For families with an income under \$75k who receive financial aid, the family contribution is usually between \$50 and \$200 per child. Please contact us if you need to discuss a different plan or a lower contribution.

Withdrawal and Refund Policy

- Before the Season: If a student withdraws before the first rehearsal, you will receive a refund minus a \$50 administrative fee.
- After the Season Starts: Once rehearsals have begun for the season, there are no refunds.

Returned Checks Policy

If a check is returned for insufficient funds, the office will notify you right away.

- Fees: You must pay the full amount of the check plus a \$50 returned check fee in cash immediately upon receiving the notice.
- Future Payments: Once a check is returned, all future payments for the rest of the choir season must be made in cash or by money order.

Our Membership Portal: [Chorus Connection](#)

WCC uses an online membership portal called **Chorus Connection**. Think of this as your central hub for the choir season! Once you log in, you can easily view the rehearsal & concert calendar, pay your tuition, and set up automatic payment plans. It also features an information board and a secure member directory, which is a great tool for families looking to set up carpools. Our staff will send you an invitation email to set up your account at the start of the season.

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

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Non-Discrimination Policy continued.

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.