

# Willamette Girlchoir

## Operations Handbook

### **Organization:**

The choir is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Board consists of members who volunteer their time. The choir employs an artistic director, and other paid staff as required. A listing of current Board members and staff is found on the website.

### **Mission Statement:**

Willamette Girlchoir (WGC) provides a challenging performance-based program of vocal and music education for committed young women from kindergarten through high school to develop an appreciation of music through the shared experience of song. Our program inspires choristers to strive for vocal and personal excellence by providing rewarding performance experiences locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

### **Membership:**

Membership in WGC requires commitment and responsibility. Choristers need to develop a sense of commitment to their particular ensemble as integral team members, since no chorister "sits on the bench." Each singer is an important contributor to the strength and success of the entire ensemble sound and performance. Enrollment in WGC is considered to be year-long. All choristers are expected to be active members for the entire year, and to participate in all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Under special circumstances, choristers may arrange a leave of absence in the spring for the next choir year.

### **Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Policy:**

With a view toward ensuring the safety and well being of choir members, WGC is committed to maintaining an environment free of the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. Accordingly, the choir enforces a zero tolerance policy. Violation of this policy will be basis for removal from the program.

### **Communication:**

WGC will employ email and written notices on the bulletin board outside the office. If you ever have any questions or are unclear about something, call the office 503-370-6383 or email [info@willamettegirlchoir.org](mailto:info@willamettegirlchoir.org). WGC is also on Facebook so you can "like" us there. Facebook and our website will also have most information but may not be updated quite as frequently as the bulletin board and email.

### **Email:**

There will be a weekly email update sent during the choir season. If you do not have email please be make sure that you check the bulletin board as important info will also appear there.

**Website:**

Forms are available to download off the website. Concert dates and other information will also appear there.

**Calendar:**

The most current calendar will be available on the website. This includes any added rehearsals, Board meetings, and concerts. We will do our best to give ample advance notice for any changes but appreciate your flexibility in rare cases when that is not possible.

**Music:**

The cost of music rental is included in the tuition fee. Music is for use while in choir and should be protected by keeping it in the folder assigned each girl by WGC. At the end of each season girls will return their music and folder. Replacement charges will be incurred, at a rate of \$3.00 per piece, if music is lost or damaged.

Please observe the following practices in caring for the music:

- All markings are to be made in pencil only!
- Please make all markings in the music neatly (allowing the next person to use the music the opportunity to read and benefit from your markings).
- Please handle the music with care - avoid folding, rolling, crunching or tearing the music.
- Do not doodle on the music!
- Keep all of your music in your Music Folder.
- Please tape torn music (with invisible tape) as soon as the tear occurs -- certainly before the music is returned.
- Please erase all pencil markings before returning music to the choral library.

***Take good care of your music--it is VERY precious!***

**Rehearsals:**

All regular rehearsals are held at FUMC. To provide for the safety of the girls, please escort your daughter to and from the building. The front door may be locked while the girls are rehearsing, so we will have the rehearsal parent at the door to let you in to get them. Safety is our main concern and we appreciate your cooperation.

All final or "Dress" rehearsals are mandatory. If you are absent from the final rehearsal without the prior approval of the director, you will not be able to participate in the associated performance. Choristers should, therefore, not arrive at that concert with an expectation of performing.

NOTE: A dress rehearsal doesn't necessarily require uniforms be worn - please check the notice prior to the rehearsal.

### **Attendance:**

Regular attendance is expected. As absences hold back the progress of the choir as well as the chorister, we ask parents to support us in limiting excused absences from rehearsals. We ask that absences be limited to serious illness, scheduling conflicts with significant family, school, community service or religious responsibilities. Attendance will be taken at each rehearsal and if a child is absent without prior arrangements or excuse, his or her parent will be contacted by phone. This callback policy is in place to ensure the safety and well being of choristers, and to make certain everyone receives necessary information communicated at the rehearsal.

### **Pre-Arranged Absences:**

To be excused from a rehearsal, we ask that the chorister's parent or guardian submit a written request as early as possible, but at least seven days prior to the rehearsal in question. Requests should be submitted to choir director at a prior rehearsal or sent to the choir office. A 'Pre-Arranged Absence Form' is available on the website or from your choir director.

### **Emergency or Urgent ('Non-pre-arranged') Absences:**

For emergency or urgent absences occurring on the day of a rehearsal, parents or guardians should **call the choir office PRIOR to rehearsal time.** (503) 370-6383.

### **Tardiness/Early Dismissal:**

In the interest of child safety, a written note is necessary for late admittance to or early dismissal from a rehearsal. Parents must submit a written excuse for each Tardiness or Early Dismissal. A Tardiness/Early Dismissal Excuse Form is available on the website or from your director.

If a chorister has excessive absences during a semester (first semester: September to December; second semester: January to May), the chorister may be asked to meet with the director to maintain her position in the choir. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the chorister has fulfilled her responsibility in learning the material missed at rehearsals. Attendance and punctuality that do not demonstrate commitment to WGC may result in probation and possible dismissal from the program.

### **Sore Throats, Colds, and Other Illnesses:**

A note regarding sore throats/colds and other common illnesses is in order. These are inevitably a concern for vocalists of any age! Please operate by the following principle:

***If a chorister is well enough to go to class/school, that chorister is well enough to attend rehearsal. Please do not send if they have a fever!***

If a chorister has a sore throat, it is important that they attend the rehearsal, but inform the director that they will be listening and following the music, marking music as appropriate using their inner hearing skills. Even though not actively singing, choristers still absorb a tremendous amount through listening and watching. If they appear to be infectious, they may be asked to sit off to one side, rather than in close proximity to other choristers.

## **Rehearsal Procedures**

The following procedures help us achieve the discipline and professionalism for which WGC is known. They are enforced for the chorister's safety, ensuring orderly rehearsals, and out of respect and courtesy for each other. Because our rehearsal time is limited, it is important that we make use of every minute available to us. It is important to get into the habit of doing the following at every rehearsal:

- Arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal to pick up memos, and check in;
- Turn in notes, permission slips, etc. to the Rehearsal Parent upon arrival;
- Bring all music and a pencil to all rehearsals, unless told otherwise;
- Use bathrooms before rehearsal;
- Be in your seat ready to sing 5 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal;
- Bring a water bottle to each rehearsal containing water only;
- Gum chewing is not allowed at rehearsals or performances;
- Do not roam around the building at any time. Students should be in the rehearsal area only; running, yelling or rowdy behavior are not permitted in the building or on the grounds at any time;
- Show respect for each other, parent volunteers, and the facilities at all times;
- Pay attention to the director at all times. Do not behave in a manner which is disruptive to the rehearsal or distracting to students, directors or accompanists, or which prohibits a positive and successful rehearsal.

Disruptive behavior may result in the following:

- First offense: verbal warning.
- Second offense: removal from rehearsal. The rehearsal is counted as an unexcused absence. Following the rehearsal there could be a brief meeting with the director. The singer will sign a discipline form, which will be mailed to the parents. Removal from a second rehearsal may result in a meeting with the singer, parents, and director.
- Removal from a third or subsequent rehearsal will result in a leave of absence from the program, the length to be determined on an individual basis. It may also result in removal from the program. NOTE: Tuition is not refunded or discounted in these cases.

## **Performances:**

WGC has two to three major concerts each year. As a non-profit organization, we use our concerts as a fundraising mechanism. We make every attempt to keep the cost of tickets within reason, but there are always costs associated with presenting a concert.

## **Concert Attendance:**

Attendance at major concerts and dress rehearsals is absolutely **REQUIRED**. In our concerts we present ourselves formally to the community. All choristers need to be present for us to be our best. Tuition accounts must be current and attendance regular in order for choristers to perform.

The Board and Artistic Director make every effort to schedule concerts as far in advance to avoid conflicts. However, some performance requests are received during the season. Consideration is given to the preparedness of the choir and the appropriateness of the time and event. Notice will be given as far in advance as possible. We appreciate your flexibility whenever possible. Our ability to respond to these requests helps us fulfill our commitment to the community. As parents, we ask that you make every effort to reschedule conflicts and encourage your daughter's commitment to the choir. Sometimes conflicts are unavoidable so we ask that you notify the office as early as possible if you know your daughter cannot attend a concert.

**Uniforms:**

There are uniforms for Bellissima and Bella Voce choirs. Information on sizing and orders will be provided each year. Uniforms are purchased by each family and must be acquired no later than October 31. As possible, we facilitate a used uniform sale. Information as to the date and times of this sale are distributed prior to the sale. During the course of the choir year if you have a uniform need, contact the uniform coordinator.

**Tuition:**

Tuition fees support the musical education of each chorister, covering approximately 60% of the cost of the program. Expenses include artistic personnel, rehearsal and concert facilities and production, office, mailings, music, other supplies, etc. Tuition is based on the choir level and hours of instruction received. It does not include additional fees, which might be incurred for tours, uniforms or transportation to and from events or performances. Tuition is kept as low as possible with the understanding that families will participate in the all-choir fundraisers. These fundraisers bridge the gap between what it actually costs to run the organization and the amount covered by tuition.

A Tuition Agreement will be written describing payment plans available. It is necessary for a parent/guardian to sign the form and this becomes a binding legal contract between the parties. Enrollment is regarded as a yearlong commitment. Once rehearsals have begun, tuition is NOT refundable and those on monthly payments are responsible for completing all payments. This is spelled out more completely in the Tuition Agreement.

NOTE: It is never the intention of the organization to eliminate talented girls from participating in choir. If during the year you find your family in a hardship situation, such as a sudden job loss, please contact the office. We will work with you to make accommodations for your daughter to continue in choir. We ask for a year-long commitment from you and we make a commitment to you. Don't just disappear, this is disruptive to the girls and leaves the organization in limbo.

**Full Year Leave of Absence:**

Choristers wishing to take a full year leave of absence from WGC must fill out a request. This must be completed and returned to the office during spring vocal evaluation week for the following choir year. Traditionally, choristers are only granted one leave-of absence during their tenure with WGC.

## Scholarships

Please contact the office for scholarship information.

## Ways Parents/Families Help WGC

Parents assist individual choristers by:

- Providing assurance that each member is critically important--reinforcing the special role that each member plays in the ensemble.
- Encouraging the wise use of time and the anticipation of heavy school assignments.
- Having a designated, visible place in your home for the music folder.
- Chauffeuring choristers to, and being punctual for, all rehearsals, workshops, and performances.

Parents assist the choir by:

- Reading all communications from WGC.
- Completing and submitting forms as requested.
- Attending all parent meetings.
- Participating in fundraising programs.
- Distributing concert promotion.
- Promoting the choir to friends, relatives and colleagues.
- Selling and buying concert tickets
- Serving as a parent volunteer

Should problems arise (frustration, conflicts) parents are strongly urged to bring this to the attention of the artistic director or a board member by calling the office or any board member.

### Parent Volunteers:

WGC would not exist without parent volunteers. Parent/guardian volunteer hours enable WGC to conduct rehearsals, concerts, educational tours/trips, etc., and provide administrative support to keep tuition affordable. **Every family is required to perform at a minimum, 10 hours of volunteer work each year.** Current needs and opportunities are outlined at registration and throughout the year. If you have questions, special needs, or concerns, please call the Volunteer Coordinator or talk with a board member.

**Everyone Is Needed!** Your help is critical to the success of the choir. Thank you in advance for your involvement.

### Board of Directors:

Board membership fulfills all your volunteer time. Board meetings are held monthly at FUMC, for the most current calendar check the website. Meetings are public and everyone is encouraged to attend. Your input and help are vital to the success of WGC. Anyone interested in applying to serve on the board please call the office or any board member. Applications can be found on the website under "Board Information."

## **Fundraising:**

There are two kinds of fundraisers for the WGC. All-choir fundraisers benefit the general operating fund of the choir. Tour fundraisers specifically raise money for individual girls' touring accounts.

As tuition covers only a portion of the expense of running the choir, all singers and parents are expected to do their fair share in fundraising for the choir and selling concert tickets.

### **All-choir fundraisers:**

Money raised through all-choir fundraising projects goes towards choir expenses. These activities may include:

#### **Concerts:**

These include all ticketed performances. We encourage families to support the choir by purchasing tickets and inviting friends to attend.

#### **The Turtle Race:**

This is a fun event where we use turtles in place of raffle tickets. Girls sell numbered tickets that correspond to a bright green plastic turtle that then 'races' down Pringle Creek. The fastest turtles win prizes. When we hold this event, we need parents to help acquire prizes, organize ticket sales and make the race happen

### **Touring Fundraising:**

When we have parent volunteers, smaller fundraisers occur throughout the year for choristers to build a tour account. Choristers raise these funds with the intention of participation in a future WGC tour. The funds earned go into each chorister's account. All girls may participate in the tour fundraising. For the younger girls, starting early will ensure adequate funds are available by the time they are eligible to tour. Types of tour fundraisers have included Entertainment Books, Tupperware sales, candy, plants, and a variety of other options.

At the start of the year, WGC will recruit for a Tour Fundraising Coordinator(s). Choristers will be asked if they wish to participate in the tour fundraising program. They will then receive the information for the fundraisers throughout the year.

The following policy addresses funds raised by WGC choristers during fundraisers specifically designated for touring versus for use by the general choir. Funds raised for touring are designated to be specifically for the chorister's touring account.

1. All funds raised by choristers for the purpose of touring are to remain in their touring choir account and are to be used for touring.
2. If a chorister leaves the choir prior to using touring funds, the balance of the chorister's touring account will be transferred to the general touring account for WGC.

3. Choristers in their last year with the choir may use their touring account balance to offset their tuition for their final year under the following conditions:
  - A. Choristers must have participated in any available tour event sponsored by WGC during the time frame in which the funds were raised.
  - B. Funds raised and not used by the chorister for an available tour are not eligible to be used for offsetting tuition.
  - C. The unused touring account balance of a chorister will be transferred to the general touring account for WGC.