



Policy Handbook 2020-2021

Table of Contents

ABOUT	3
ATTENDANCE POLICY	4
REHEARSAL, RETREATS, AND TOURS.....	6
DRESS REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS.....	7
COMMUNICATIONS.....	7
CONCERT DRESS	8
ENROLLMENT AND FEES	8
VOLUNTEERING	9
FUNDRAISERS.....	10
SLIDING SCALE TUITION RATES	11

About

Mission

The mission of PGC is to welcome girls of all races, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds into a supportive community committed to artistic excellence through an exemplary music education program.

Slogan

Pittsburgh Girls Choir: Where girls find their voice and community.

Vision

PGC seeks to share the transcendent beauty of girls' voices and strives to transform the lives of choristers by creating communities of compassion, excellence, mutual respect.

Staff

Artistic

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Administrative

Erin Schmura, Executive Director
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Rehearsal Location

Shadyside Presbyterian Church (5121 Westminster Pl., Pittsburgh, PA 15232)

COVID-19: Virtual Rehearsals through Zoom as needed with the COVID-19 pandemic

Mailing Address and Business Phone Number

Pittsburgh Girls Choir
PO Box 9062
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
412-267-7707

Invitation to Return

Each year, choristers will receive an invitation to return for the next season if they have fulfilled the requirements of membership including attendance, completion of homework, being respectful towards staff and other choristers. All tuition balances and fees must be in good financial standing.

Open Class and Auditions

All potential choir members in grades 1st-5th are encouraged to attend an Open Class prior to enrollment. Grades 6th-12th are auditioned to determine musical skill and experience before placement in the appropriate ensemble.

Re-Audition and Interview (for Concentio members only)

Every year all invited Concentio members will re-audition in order for director to evaluate progress and to assign proper voice placement. If the chorister leaves the choir for any period, the former choir member is permitted to re-audition one time after leaving the choir for any period. The re-audition will include an interview, where the potentially returning choir member and at least one parent will meet with the Artistic Director to evaluate their potential return to the choir.

Attendance Policy

Fall semester

- 2 absences for 1st – 10th grades (Excludes dress rehearsals which are mandatory)
- 3 absences 11th – 12th grades (Excludes dress rehearsals)

Spring Semester

- 3 absences for 1st – 10th grades (Excludes dress rehearsals)
- 4 absences for 11th – 12th grades (Excludes dress rehearsals)

Retreats: PGC holds the following retreats – exact dates will be scheduled prior to 1st rehearsal:

- Harmonia February Saturday retreat day
- Via: September Saturday Retreat Day; January week-end retreat
- Concentio: January week-end retreat

Attendance is mandatory. In the event a chorister has to miss part or all of a retreat, every 3 hours missed counts as an absence against the maximum for that semester.

- Maximum for retreat day is 2 total
- Maximum for week-end retreats is 3 total

Concentio camp: Concentio camp in August is a required part of Concentio membership.

However, we realize there are extreme situations which arise making it difficult for chorister to attend. If a chorister is unable to attend camp, she must do the following:

- Request permission from Artistic Director. Request must include reason for missing camp
- Arrange a meeting time with Artistic Director before camp to:
 - Have voice placement audition
 - Receive choral binder and practice CD
- Prior to 1st rehearsal, chorister must meet with Artistic Director to demonstrate they have learned music for the holiday concert (does not need to be memorized) – Artistic Director will contact parent(s) to arrange time
- Chorister must attend camp the following year (dates are published 12 months in advance)

Consequences for breaking attendance policy

Via, Concentio and Chamber Choir

- Chorister who has absences in excess of the policy must meet with Artistic Director to demonstrate they have learned music for the upcoming concert
- Student must be up to date on memory pieces

Reporting Absence

Attendance is taken at each rehearsal. If your chorister must be absent, arrive late or be dismissed early from rehearsal, notice must be given to the choir director at least 24 hours before said rehearsal. In the event of a day-of emergency, **please call or text 412-267-7707** as early as possible.

Choir Calendar

While it is not possible to foresee an entire Choir season, every attempt is made to include all events on the season Calendar, so that families can plan accordingly and balance their commitment to the Choir with other commitments. An updated Calendar will be provided in January. Particularly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be adjustment to the choir calendar as needed.

Concentio or Chamber Choir Opportunities

If an extraordinary performance opportunity is presented to Concentio or Chamber Choir, it will be added to the Calendar and families will be updated as soon as possible.

Choir Conduct

The following requirements govern conduct in Choir rehearsals and events, including breaks.

Choir Environment

- No cell phones (will be collected at beginning of rehearsal)
- No texting
- No iPods, headphones
- No smoking
- No bullying, excessive teasing
- No romantic activity
- No alcohol, drugs, or illegal substances

Zoom Etiquette

1. The camera should be on apart from technical difficulties. Student should remain in front of the camera unless an activity requires movement away. This allows for better feedback and interaction
2. If an early dismissal is needed please let the instructor know. Email in advance if possible, and let the assistant know via the chat function in Zoom before singing off.
3. Each week an email will be sent out listing needed rehearsal supplies. Please make sure they are ready and accessible in advance of rehearsal.
4. The chat box is only to be used for troubleshooting technical problems, or if a student has been instructed to use the chat box as part of an activity. Any questions concerning technical issues should be sent to the rehearsal assistant for assistance.
5. Please leave microphones on mute unless told otherwise by the instructor. Even if muted, sing along and engage with all activities.
6. Please disengage from your cell phone, unless needed for rehearsal.

Cell Phone Policy

Your child should not make calls to you on her cell phone during a rehearsal, even during a break. Calls are to wait until the rehearsal is dismissed. If your child needs to reach you during a rehearsal, in the event of an emergency or special circumstance, the chorister will seek permission from the Artistic Director to call you.

Homework

Choir members complete a minimum of 30 minutes of homework per week for Training Choirs, 60 minutes for Concentio and Chamber Choir. Assignments are given each week at rehearsal and are due to be turned in on the following week at rehearsal.

Rehearsal, Retreats, and Tours

Rehearsals are held at Shadyside Presbyterian (5121 Westminster Pl, Pittsburgh, PA 15232). Choir members should remain in designated areas and treat the church facility, staff, and volunteers with respect and courtesy at all times. Virtual rehearsals are held on Zoom.

Training Choir Rehearsals

Tuesday rehearsals are 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. for Melodia, 6:00 to 7:45 p.m. for Harmonia and 6:00 – 8:00 for Via unless otherwise noted.

Concentio Rehearsals

Friday rehearsals are 4:10 to 6:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Monthly Saturday rehearsals are 10:00am to 2:00pm.

Chamber Choir Rehearsals

Monday rehearsals are 7:00pm-9:00pm, unless otherwise noted. Monthly Saturday rehearsals are 10:00am-2:00pm.

COVID-19

Concentio rehearsals while virtual will move to Monday evenings during the Chamber Choir timeframe. Friday afternoons will be used for individual coachings for Concentio members.

Camp and Retreat (Concentio and Via)

Camp and Retreat are required for all Concentio and Via members. Dates for camp will be released at the beginning of the Fall semester.

Dress Rehearsals and Concerts

Each concert has two dress rehearsals for Concentio, and one dress rehearsal for other choirs. All choristers are required to attend all dress rehearsals and concerts.

Tour (Chamber and Via)

While we hope to have tour in the 20/21 season, there is no guarantee with the current pandemic. Should we be able to schedule a tour in the spring or summer of 2021, the following applies. Tour is required for all Concentio members, with the exception of grand tours. Parent Tour Information Meetings are listed on the calendar, available at the beginning of the season.

Communications

Communication for rehearsals, announcements, and program needs will be through **MailChimp**. Please do not unsubscribe as you will miss important information. Emails from PGC staff will be sent directly as needed.

Choir Family Meetings

Choir Family Meetings are scheduled for each choir at the beginning of the choir year and before tour for parents of Via and Concentio members. Concentio tour requires multiple meetings. Attendance at meetings by at least one parent/guardian per family and chorister is expected. Attendance by all parents/guardians/supporting family members is encouraged. Choir Family Meetings provide updates, materials, and important information regarding upcoming program events and tours. The goal of these meetings is to streamline communications.

Concert Dress

Concentio

PGC will provide instructions on how to order the appropriate dress. Concert dress includes the choir dress, flat black shoes, and a 14" pearl necklace for Concentio members. The dress, shoes and pearl necklace are to be provided by chorister. Some companies take a long time to ship dresses. Once it is clear whether we may sing in person or not, further instructions will be sent to our families in regards to deadlines. Once ordered, the chorister is responsible for all fittings and alterations. For virtual recordings, the PGC T-shirt should be worn.

Via, Harmonia, Melodia

PGC will provide instructions on how to order the appropriate dress. Concert dress includes the choir dress, flat black shoes and, skin-colored hose. Hair must be neat and away from the face. No high buns. Once ordered, the chorister is responsible for all fittings and alterations. Same information regarding the pandemic and concert dress applies like Concentio, above.

Additional requirements regarding choir dress for Concentio, Via, Harmonia and Melodia:

- No perfume, body spray or any other scented product
- Hair must be kept out of chorister's face (no high buns)
- Deodorant (Concentio, Via, Harmonia)
- Stud or post earrings, no dangle earrings
- Light make-up (blush, mascara, no lipstick, no sparkles) for Concentio
- No make-up except chapstick for Via, Harmonia and Melodia
- No additional jewelry or ornamental hair accessories
- Natural hair colors only
- No visible tattoos or piercings (except earlobes) and no tongue piercing
- No heels or sandals

Enrollment and Fees

Tuition

The Pittsburgh Girls Choir uses a sliding scale for tuition. Please see the chart at the end of the handbook. Tuition payments are intended to cover the chorister's family obligations for one year of enrollment except for international tours, concerts and event tickets, and money for tour outings.

Payment Plans

Tuition may be paid in a single installment or in two or four payments. Below you will find the due dates if paying in four payments. If paying in two payments, please pay by the dates for the 1st and 3rd payments listed below. A payment plan is chosen at registration.

For all programs:

- 1st installment due September 11, 2020
- 2nd installment due November 6, 2020
- 3rd installment due January 8, 2021
- Final installment due March 5, 2021

Payment Submissions

All tuition payments must be received on or before the due date. Invoices for each installment will be emailed. Payments can be made on-line using the link provided in the invoice. Bank transfer is the preferred method. You may also pay by check. Checks can be mailed to **Pittsburgh Girls Choir, PO Box 9062, Pittsburgh, 15224**. Should in-person rehearsal resume mid-year, please do NOT give checks to Choir Directors. If a check is returned for any reason, there is a \$36 fee. If paying by credit card is preferred, please email bookkeeper@pghchoralarts.org and a 3% surcharge will be added to your invoice. There is a \$25 fee for every installment received past the due date. There are no tuition refunds. **If your chorister withdraws, there is no tuition refund.**

Registration

All registration must be complete prior to the first rehearsal in September. A chorister may not participate in rehearsals until registration is complete. This is for the child's safety and for insurance purposes.

Concerns

Concerns about rehearsals, performances, and scheduling should be addressed to the Executive Director via email, or in person. Concerns about your child's artistic growth and his or her ability to attend rehearsals due to health or other issues should be addressed to the specific Choir Director via email, phone, or in person. Extreme concerns, beyond those of rehearsals and artistic growth, should be addressed to the Executive Director, who will consult with the Board Chair, as appropriate.

Volunteering

Events

PGC families contribute volunteer hours to the organization through a commitment to volunteer as a Volunteer on Duty (VOD) throughout the year and on one choir event. This volunteer work allows us to keep administrative costs down. If a person offers special skills (photography, wardrobe, etc.) and volunteers throughout the year, they may be exempt from participation on a committee, at the discretion of the Choir Coordinator.

Volunteer on Duty

All choirs (including Concentio) will have a Volunteer on Duty (VOD) at each rehearsal at Shadyside Presbyterian Church, usually an adult chorister family member. VOD slots will be assigned by the Choir Coordinator. If the assigned VOD date does not work for the parent, it is the parent's responsibility to trade slots with another family. This can be done through the parent portal and the choir directory. Each family must participate as a VOD in one regular rehearsal per semester.

The VOD must arrive 15 minutes early. DO NOT ring the doorbell. A PGC staff member will let VODs into the building. The VOD will also bring a snack for the choir's break. The snack should be something simple and easy to eat with fingers or limited utensils. The choristers have only between five and ten minutes to eat snack. VODs may also have mailing or other administrative work to do during rehearsal as assigned by the Choir Coordinator. If no work is available, VODs may read or do other work as long as they pay attention to the door.

Tour Chaperoning

Tour chaperones are generally selected on their demonstrated willingness to enhance the tour experience and to work in a cooperative manner with the Artistic Director, and fellow chaperones. Chaperone applications are available in September and due by mid-October. Decisions will be made by November. If you are interested in chaperoning a tour, express your interest to the Artistic Director promptly. Your interest will be carefully considered and it is important to understand that there is no obligation to invite you to chaperone a tour. All tour chaperones must have a completed PA background check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI Fingerprinting or notarized Affidavit before going on tour.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Choir volunteers are not permitted to operate a motor vehicle or volunteer in any other manner while under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may impair their ability to ensure the safety and well-being of Choir members. While you are responsible for determining your ability to ensure the safety and well-being of Choir members, volunteers may be removed from assignment due to impairment at the discretion of the Staff and Event Chairpersons.

Fundraisers

The Choir hosts the following fundraisers each year as part of the regular season. Each chorister in PGC is supported financially by the organization. Participation in the fundraisers is essential to supporting every member and making sure all choristers can participate regardless of financial circumstances.

Sing for Service

Sing for Service is required of all choir members (Concentio and all Training Choirs). This fundraiser is necessary to subsidize every choir member. All choristers need to raise a minimum of \$250 (Concentio) and \$200 (Training Choirs) to cover the cost of her choral education. The choirs will perform at local nursing homes, hospitals, etc. All choir members are asked to get a minimum number of sponsors for their three concerts that day.

Sliding Scale Tuition Rates

For the purposes of this table, “Income Level” is defined as total gross income for all family members contributing to the household, as found on line 7 of your 1040. “Family Size” is defined as the total number of family members claimed on the household tax return.

Melodia				
Income Level	Family 2-4	Family 5	Family 6	Family 7+
Under 30,000	105	79	52	52
30,000 - 44,999	157	131	131	105
45,000 - 59,999	209	183	183	157
60,000 - 74,999	261	236	209	209
75,000 - 99,999	314	288	261	261
100,000 - 124,999	340	340	314	288
125,000 - 174,999	366	366	341	314
175000 +	429	416	498	365

Harmonia				
Income Level	Family 2-4	Family 5	Family 6	Family 7+
Under 30,000	131	104	78	52
30,000 - 44,999	235	208	183	156
45,000 - 59,999	340	313	287	261
60,000 - 74,999	444	417	392	365
75,000 - 99,999	549	522	496	470
100,000 - 124,999	704	678	641	596
125,000 - 174,999	777	766	758	731
175000 +	852	829	814	780

Via				
Income Level	Family 2-4	Family 5	Family 6	Family 7+
Under 30,000	157	131	105	79
30,000 - 44,999	286	234	183	131
45,000 - 59,999	494	442	389	337
60,000 - 74,999	703	651	598	546
75,000 - 99,999	912	860	807	755
100,000 - 124,999	1,121	1,069	1,016	964
125,000 - 174,999	1,305	1,254	1,203	1,151
175000 +	1,369	1,358	1,352	1,304

Concentio				
Income Level	Family 2-4	Family 5	Family 6	Family 7+
Under 30,000	225	169	113	84
30,000 - 44,999	421	365	308	252
45,000 - 59,999	701	645	588	532
60,000 - 74,999	981	925	868	812
75,000 - 99,999	1,205	1,149	1,092	1,036
100,000 - 124,999	1,430	1,374	1,317	1,261
125,000 - 174,999	1,628	1,573	1,518	1,463
175000 +	1,685	1,658	1,651	1,629

Covid-19 Clause

Due to the fluidity of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes can and will be made to fit the appropriate situation. This includes but is not limited to dates, policies, due dates, and locations.