

The logo for the Pittsburgh Girls Choir features the word "pittsburgh" in a black serif font, with the letter "i" in red and a red musical note above the "b". Below "pittsburgh" is the phrase "—girls choir—" in a red sans-serif font, flanked by horizontal lines.

pittsburgh
—girls choir—

Policy Handbook 2021-2022

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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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COVID-19

- Rehearsals will be in-person or hybrid.
- Rehearsals will follow current CDC guidelines. This currently includes wearing a mask over nose and mouth during in-person rehearsals.
- Families are also expected to follow CDC guidelines regarding reporting exposure. In the event of a rehearsal exposure, all families will be contacted by PGC.

Rehearsal Location

Shadyside Presbyterian Church, 5121 Westminster Pl., Pittsburgh, PA 1523

Mailing Address and Business Phone Number

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

Auditions

Girls entering grades 1-5 (Fall 2021) should schedule a meet-and-greet with the director of their respective choir prior to enrollment. Girls entering grades 6-12 (Fall 2021) are auditioned to determine musical skill and experience before placement in the appropriate ensemble.

Audition and Re-Audition (for Chamber Choir members only)

- Choristers are invited to audition for Chamber Choir after completing one year in Concentio.
- All Chamber Choir members will re-audition annually in order for the director to evaluate progress and to assign proper voice placement.
- If the chorister leaves PGC for a season, the former choir member will be placed in Concentio and invited to audition for Chamber Choir the following season.

Attendance Policy

Fall semester

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

Spring Semester

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

If the student breaks the attendance policy, the student and at least one parent will have a conversation with the teacher and determine a plan for moving forward.

Retreats: PGC holds the following retreats

- Harmonia: January 29th, 2022 Saturday retreat (location TBA)
- Via: February 4th-6th, 2022 week-end retreat (Camp Guyasuta)
- Concentio: January 7th-9th, 2022 week-end retreat (Camp Guyasuta)

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.

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)

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 email the student's teacher AND the assistant 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.

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 headphones
- No smoking
- No bullying or excessive teasing
- No romantic activity
- No alcohol, drugs, or illegal substances

Zoom Etiquette (should virtual rehearsals be needed)

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 approximately 30 minutes of homework per week for Training Choirs, 60 minutes for Concertio 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.

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

While we hope to have a tour in the 21/22 season, there is no guarantee given the current pandemic situation.

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. Attendance at meetings by at least one parent/guardian per family and chorister is expected. Choir Family Meetings provide updates, materials, and important information regarding upcoming program events and tours.

Concert Dress

Concentio (and Chamber Choir)

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. The dress, shoes and pearl necklace are to be provided by chorister. Chorister is responsible for dress hemming and additional alterations (if needed.) Hair must be neat, away from the face and in a style that will not block another chorister's view.

Via, Harmonia, Melodia

PGC will provide instructions on how to order the appropriate dress. Concert attire includes the choir dress, flat black shoes and skin-colored hose. Chorister is responsible for dress hemming and additional alterations (if needed.) Hair must be neat, away from the face and in a style that will not block another chorister's view. For virtual recordings, choristers should wear their PGC T-shirt.

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

- No perfume, body spray or any other scented product
- Hair must be neat, away from the face and in a style that will not block another chorister's view
- 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)
- Tongue piercings must be removed
- 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 10, 2021
- 2nd installment due November 5, 2021
- 3rd installment due January 7, 2022
- Final installment due March 5, 2022

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**. 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 Interim Managing 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 Interim Managing 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

While we hope to have a tour in the 21/22 season, there is no guarantee given the current pandemic situation. 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. If you are interested in chaperoning a tour, express your interest to the Artistic Director promptly. Your interest will be carefully considered. 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. This fundraiser is necessary to subsidize every choir member to cover the cost of her choral education. The choirs will perform at local nursing homes, hospitals, etc. In order to reach our financial goal, it is suggested that each chorister send 10 solicitation letters (the letters will be provided by PGC.)

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.