



E L G I N

MASTER

CHORALE

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Chorister Handbook

Welcome to the Elgin Master Chorales Children's Chorus

Critical to the success of our organization and its choirs is the receipt of the information in this Handbook. It is imperative that both choristers and their parent/guardian read and fully understand the information herein.

Contact Information

Elgin Master Chorale
1700 Spartan Drive H104
Elgin, IL 60123
847.214.7225
info@elginmasterchorale.com
www.elginmasterchorale.org

EMC Children's Chorus is an In-Residence Ensemble at the ECC Performing Arts Center.

Vision, Mission, the Pursuit of Excellence, and Goals

The Vision of the EMC Children's Chorus is supported through our mission as represented by three pillars: Members, Organization, and Community.

Vision

We teach life through song.

Mission

Members

Through listening, creating, and performing, the EMC Children's Chorus provides opportunities to facilitate growth, musically, artistically, and emotionally.

Organization

The staffs, both administrative, and artistic, generate an environment through which we enlighten, enrich and engage.

Community

Excellence pervades all facets of our organization fostering a positive relationship with, and providing a unique impact on, our world, ultimately increasing our understanding of each other.

Pursuit of Excellence

The EMC Children's Chorus fosters the pursuit of excellence through singing. Excellence takes on a myriad of forms both musical and otherwise. Members of our Chorus pursue excellence in:

- vocal technique
- music diversity
- performance
- aesthetic development
- aesthetic awareness
- aesthetic communication

- audience enlightenment
- audience entertainment
- listening
- creating
- music literacy
- respect
- cooperation
- manners
- discipline
- stage presence
- confidence
- self esteem

Goals

- provide opportunities for singers with unchanged voices to develop their musical potential
- develop the skills requisite to fine choral performance
- promote the understanding of the value of music in our lives
- provide opportunities for aesthetic expression
- develop the potential for, and foster the desire to continue involvement in music
- beyond the Chorus, whether through performing, listening, creating, or supporting music in the community, provide the community with stellar performances

Membership

Participating in the Chorus provides a positive learning experience for children. Members must participate with commitment and responsibility. It is hoped that membership in this special organization will provide a sense of pride. Adherence to the rehearsal and performance schedule is expected. Enrollment in the EMC Children's Chorus is for the current season, which begins in September and concludes in June. Each member is expected to remain active and committed to the program for each semester.

Financial Information

We hold several small fundraisers throughout the year, as well as our major fundraising event, the ENCORE Campaign. Each Chorus family is expected to support our major fundraising event, as it is imperative to keeping tuition reasonable, as well as providing opportunities for special clinics given by musicians who visit ECC several times a year. Smaller, optional fundraisers help choristers raise money to fund their tour account and to offset chorus expenses. Choristers are also responsible for purchasing a uniform, which is a separate expense. Questions concerning financial obligations should be directed to the Children's Chorus Coordinator at 847-214-7225.

Parent Expectations

Acceptance in the Chorus is dependent on at least one parent from each family attending the **required** Parent Orientation Meeting are typically held the evening of the first rehearsal. Parent volunteers are crucial to the success of our organization. Please look over the sign-up sheets at the

orientation meeting. We require parents to volunteer for at least two (2) hours during our season.

Tuition Policies

Tuition for the 2016-2017 season will be due by October 1st. Forms of payment accepted include cash, check (made out to "Elgin Master Chorale"), or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). If you would like to set up a payment plan please contact Barbara Lewis at blewis@elgin.edu or 847.214.7225. We never want cost to be a barrier for families; please don't hesitate to contact me.

Elgin Master Chorale
1700 Spartan Drive. Room H104
Elgin, IL 60123

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for all returned checks, in addition to any NSF charges incurred by the Chorus.

Rehearsal Attendance

All choirs rehearse on Monday evenings at Elgin Community College, Visual and Performing Arts Center, 1700 Spartan Dr., Elgin, IL.

Rehearsal will take place on Monday's from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

You have committed yourself to the Chorus. *It is expected that rehearsals take a very high priority in each child's life.*

Excused Absences

A choir member may only be excused from rehearsals for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Death in the Family
- Graded Mandatory School Music Performance

In order to be excused, a parent/guardian must notify the choir no later than one hour prior to the rehearsal by calling 847-214-7225 and leaving a message, or emailing info@elginmasterchorale.org. Please include the chorister's name, chorister's number, and reason for absence in your message.

The Chorus must be notified via email at least one week in advance for planned absences except in cases of emergency at info@elginmasterchorale.org. Please include the chorister's name, chorister's number, and the reason to be excused.

If a choir member is tardy or must be dismissed early, a written explanation is required via email at info@elginmasterchorale.org. Please include the chorister's name, chorister's number, and the reason for tardiness or early dismissal.

There can be no more than three excused absences from rehearsal per semester for any chorus member. Any absence exceeding 3 or any unexcused absence may require a meeting with the Choir Director. Excessive absences, tardiness and/or early departures by students who are eligible for credit from Elgin Community College may negatively affect the student's grade.

Unexcused Absence

Absences for any reasons other than those stated under "excused" will be considered on an individual basis by the staff. If no contact has been made with the Executive Director prior to an absence, it will be considered unexcused. Attendance and tardiness not demonstrating commitment to the Choir will result in probation and possible dismissal from the program without refund. Additionally, excessive absences, tardiness and/or early departures by students who are eligible for credit from Elgin Community College may negatively affect the student's grade.

All rehearsals are mandatory. An absence, for any reason, from a Dress (Final) rehearsal before a performance on the Choir calendar will result in the singer being excluded from the corresponding concert. If the Dress (Final) rehearsal has been missed, singers should not arrive at the concert expecting to perform. The only exception is a **graded, mandatory school music performance** for which the Children's Chorus Coordinator has received written notification via email at least one week in advance of the Dress rehearsal. Membership in the EMC Children's Chorus will be reviewed if more than one scheduled mandatory concert is missed during the season. This includes the EMC Children's Chorus Camp Concert, a required performance for Concert Choir members.

NOTE: Extra-curricular, co-curricular, or voluntary endeavors do not constitute graded mandatory school music performances.

Rehearsal Expectations

Arrive not more than 15 minutes before the designated rehearsal times. Check in immediately with the Rehearsal Aide and report to the rehearsal room. Failure to check in will result in the chorister being marked absent. If you arrive late you are required to check-in. An email message is necessary for late admittance or early dismissal from a rehearsal.

During Rehearsals:

- Choristers are expected to be respectful of the college environment, their director, parent volunteers, and their peers at all times.
- Do not bring food or drink into the rehearsal area (ONLY water bottles are acceptable.)
- Students must have their folder, music, and a sharpened pencil at every rehearsal. (Please note: You will be charged \$10.00 for a lost or damaged folder and a minimum of \$3.00 for each piece of lost or damaged music.)
- Choristers must remain in the room at all times. Leaving the room requires permission and checking out.
- Chorus members are responsible for taking home any handouts that are distributed at rehearsals. Parents/Guardians should check with their choristers for new/updated information.

When dropping off and picking up singers, parents are urged to exercise caution. Please enter and exit from the main entrance on Renner Drive. Children must be picked up in the building at the Renner Drive entrance. The Renner Drive entrance is on the West side of the Visual and Performing Arts Center. For the safety of your child, please come into the building to pick up your child. If your student is waiting for an older sibling, the student must wait in the area outside of Room H122.

Students must be picked up within fifteen minutes of any dismissal time.

Performance Expectations

Attendance is required at all scheduled performances, including multiple performances on a single date. If a graded mandatory school music performance conflict occurs, the absence must be noted via email at info@elginmasterchorale.org at least one week in advance. Graded mandatory school music performances take precedence over EMC Children's Chorus activities. Written requests for absences for any reason are reviewed by the staff. Decisions are based on the degree to which such absences would compromise the integrity of the EMC Children's Chorus program or the child's participation in it. If the Children's Chorus Coordinator does not receive notice of such conflicts one week in advance, the absence will be considered unexcused. Please refer to this handbook's section on Rehearsal Expectations regarding unexcused absences. For the safety of all our choristers and so that the attention of our concert parents may be focused entirely on the well being of our members, **Choristers will remain with the Chorus for each concert in its entirety**. Choristers will remain in the building with the Chorus between performances and will not be available to parents for visits, gift giving or the like. Parents are not to retrieve their child at any time of the concert day until they are officially dismissed following the final performance of the day.

Excused absence

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence from a mandatory performance are:

- Illness
- Death in family
- Graded Mandatory School Music Performance

Note: Extra-curricular, co-curricular, or voluntary endeavors do not constitute a graded mandatory school music performance.

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence from a mandatory performance during school hours are:

- Illness
- Death in the family
- School system will not excuse student.

All absences must be pre-approved by the staff.

Note: An unexcused absence may constitute reason for removal from the program without a refund.

Performance Procedures

Performances require excellence in musicianship, conduct, and appearance.

Singers should always eat a nutritious meal and get plenty of rest before a concert. Be sure the singer has used the restroom prior to arrival at the concert site.

Singers should arrive ten minutes before the concert call and immediately check-in with the

Children's Chorus Coordinator. Tardiness at a concert call may exclude a singer from participation at the performance.

All performers must arrive attired in proper concert dress as noted in the Concert Detail Sheet and below. Failure to wear proper concert dress will result in non-participation in the concert. Singers must wear their official Chorus uniform properly to, from, and while present at any concert venue.

If a singer feels ill during a performance, he or she should quietly sit down on the riser and rest for the remainder of the song. Following the selection, the singer should quietly leave the stage if they feel well enough to do so. Concert Parents are always watching and will help if necessary. It is important to communicate with staff or Concert Parents if any student feels ill.

Dress Rehearsals and Concert Calls are closed to the audience including families. Only designated Concert Parents will be allowed in the rehearsal area during Dress rehearsals and prior to performance.

Concert Dress Uniform

Currently we have two different uniforms for our choristers, depending on which performance the chorister is in. Choristers are wearing either dresses (girls) or slacks and dress shirt (boys) from Rivar's. Please contact the Chorus at 847-214-7225 for additional information. Size and number of ensembles is based on chorus enrollment.

The required concert dress uniform for girls consists of:

Girls

- Black velvet dress
- Black flat shoes (Plain, with no ornamentation. No heels. No patent leather. No platform shoes. No thick soled shoes.)
- Black hose/tights

Boys

- Black dress pants
- Red and Black shirt and tie set
- Black flat shoes (Plain, with no ornamentation. No heels. No patent leather. No platform shoes. No thick soled shoes.)
- Black dress socks

A well-groomed, neatly uniformed ensemble is essential. Choristers must wear the full official uniform without substitution of any uniform piece (e.g. pants, shirt, vest, dress, etc.). Choristers must also have:

- Shirts tucked in
- Bow tied on dresses
- Vests buttoned
- Concert shoes
- No make-up, cosmetics, or fingernail polish
- No perfume or scented hair products

- Hair fasteners must match hair color (No bows or ribbons)
- Good personal hygiene

A singer who fails to dress or groom properly will not be allowed to participate in the performance. Help your child be successful by ensuring proper dress on concert days. If in doubt about part of the uniform, ask a staff member or board member, not a volunteer.

For all dress rehearsals or for casual performances as noted, choristers are required to wear their EMC Children's Chorus Polo shirt. Please wear tennis shoes with a back to the heel. No Sandals or flip-flops! When we appear in public, all choristers must be appropriately attired to look presentable as a group. No designer-ripped or tattered clothing is allowed!

Respect

Expectations for mutual respect are high. At all times choristers must show respect for each other, staff, parent volunteers, and all facilities. Choristers are expected to pay close attention to the conductors and announcements from parent volunteers. Choristers are not to talk or in any way distract other singers.

Procedures for Removal from the Chorus

As determined by the Board of Directors and following written notification to the chorister's parent/guardian regarding policy infractions or conduct unbecoming a chorister, such may result in the choristers' dismissal from the Elgin Children's Chorus without refund.

The Elgin Community College Connection

Elgin Community College requires a social security number for all students participating in a college program, credit or non-credit. The Chorus is bound by the Illinois Community College Board regulations.

Video/Audio Recording Prohibition

No video or audio recording in concert or rehearsal is permitted. We will make professional audio recordings available to singers and their families for purchase whenever possible. Do not take any pictures at any time during a concert or between numbers, even without flash. It is very distracting to both performers and audience members and is prohibited by Elgin Community College.

Electronics Policy

All cell phones must be turned OFF during rehearsals. Choristers should not make or accept any calls or texts during rehearsal. In case of an emergency, parents may contact the Children's Chorus Coordinator at 847- 214-7225 or Campus Security at 847-214-7777. When calling Campus Security, parents should be prepared to provide the choristers name as well as the room number in which he/she can be found.

During rehearsals, choristers should neither have nor use any electronic devices including cell phones, mp3 players, DVD players, or hand-held digital games. Between performances at concerts, choristers may make use of electronic devices but choristers and parents are asked to carefully

monitor the material played on these devices. EMC Children's Chorus staff in charge at performances reserves the right to take possession of any item they deem inappropriate. Such items will be returned to the chorister parents at the end of the performance day. The EMC Children's Chorus is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Tour Regulations

Periodically, Concert Choir members are offered a musical tour experience. All eligible choristers are invited to participate in such tours. Tour participants must adhere to the specific payment and rehearsal policies presented with each tour.

Tour Fund Raising

Fund raising opportunities are made available to all EMC Children's Chorus members several times each year to build individual tour accounts. Tour accounts function under the following guidelines:

- Chorister tour accounts are opened for any member, regardless of their choir, who participates in qualified fund raising opportunities.
- Tour accounts are cumulative and are maintained for the duration of the chorister's membership in the EMC Children's Chorus.
- Tour account funds may only be used for payments towards an Elgin Children's Chorus tour.
- Choristers may only transfer funds to a sibling member's account when leaving the Chorus.
- Tour account funds revert to the Elgin Children's Chorus corporate account when a chorister leaves our organization.

Tickets

Tickets to concerts may be made by calling the Elgin Community College box office at 847-622-0300.

A Final Thought

Rules, regulations, and policies as set forth in this handbook, are designed for one reason, to afford the Chorus, and ultimately, each member of the Chorus, the finest opportunity for achieving excellence in choral singing and best serves the vision, mission, and goals of the Chorus.