



Northwest Girlchoir Chorister and Family Handbook

Updated: September 2020

2150 N 122nd St. Seattle, WA 98133
www.northwestgirlchoir.org
Phone: 206-527-2900

Welcome to Northwest Girlchoir!

We are so pleased that you have chosen to be part of Northwest Girlchoir, which is both a vibrant music education organization and a welcoming community for choristers and their families. We hope that you and your chorister will be inspired by the beautiful and varied music we sing, by our amazing conductor/teachers, accompanists, and administrative staff, and by the dedicated and talented choristers who make up Northwest Girlchoir. With over four decades of outstanding choral music education, we have had a positive impact on thousands of girls from across the region. We've also shared our music with appreciative audiences from Oregon to Finland, Olympia to Argentina!

The board and staff of Northwest Girlchoir want your choir experience to be the best in every way. As we build and strengthen our parent community, we encourage you to become involved as volunteers, concertgoers, event participants, and financial donors. We hope that this handbook will provide helpful information about our programs, policies, and opportunities. Please feel free to contact either of us, your choir conductor, the administrative staff, or our board members with any questions or suggestions!

Sara Boos
Artistic Director

Jill Clymer
Executive Director

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Northwest Girlchoir

Location and Office Hours

Main Office/Rehearsal Location

2150 N 122nd St
Seattle, WA 98133

Office Hours

To protect our employees during the current phase of COVID-19, we will not be physically staffing the Northwest Girlchoir offices. Our virtual office hours will be Monday and Thursday from 1-5pm. During those times, you can expect live phone response at 206-527-2900. Throughout the rehearsal week (Monday-Thursday) we will respond as quickly as possible to voicemails and emails. To schedule an in-person appointment, contact Hannah at info@northwestgirlchoir.org.

www.northwestgirlchoir.org

info@northwestgirlchoir.org

Phone: 206-527-2900

Rehearsal Times

Fresca - Multiple Classes:	Mondays (4:00 – 6:45pm) and Wednesdays (3:45 – 6:40pm)
Amabile - Multiple Classes:	Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday (all days 4:15 – 6:15pm)
Vivace - Multiple Classes:	Mondays (4:15 – 7:15pm) and Wednesdays (3:45 – 6:55pm)
Amore - Multiple Classes:	Tuesday (5:40- 8:45pm) and Two Sundays Per Month (6:30 - 8:30pm)
Ensemble	Thursdays (6:15 - 7:25pm)

Board and Staff Contact List

Staff:

Sara Boos, Artistic Director; Fresca, Amore, Ensemble Conductor	sara@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-0237
Beth Ann Bonnecroy, Vivace Conductor	bethann@northwestgirlchoir.org
Andrew Seifert, Associate Artistic Director; Amabile Conductor	andrew@northwestgirlchoir.org
Serena Chin-Daniel, Accompanist	
Jill Clymer, Executive Director	jill@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-0236
Kate Speck, Director of Development	kate@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-0238
Kaylyn Springer, Marketing Coordinator	kaylyn@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-737-9123
Hannah Carney, Choir Operations Coordinator	hannah@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-737-9122
Kris Sigloh, Bookkeeper	

Questions? Here's who to ask about the following topics:

Absences/late arrivals:	your conductor
Chorister progress, repertoire/curriculum, promotions to the next level:	your conductor
Auditions, repertoire, musical/community partnerships:	Sara Boos
Board membership, scholarships:	Jill Clymer
Fundraising, parent/chorister activities:	Kate Speck
Registration/tuition, sheet music, t-shirts, volunteering, calendar:	Hannah Carney
Marketing/communications, ChoirWire:	Kaylyn Springer
General questions or don't know who to contact:	Hannah Carney

Board of Directors:

Tera Schreiber, President	Matthew Hinck	Jennifer Lund
Jason Rogers, Vice-President	Laura Hopper	Bina Shukla
Cydly Smith, Treasurer	Emily Li	Ericka Thielke
Rachel Engrissei, Secretary	Becky Kelley	
Kaeli Grant	Dylan Kinard	

Keep in Touch!

Northwest Girlchoir Communication Methods and Channels.

ChoirWire

Look for Northwest Girlchoir's weekly ChoirWire, an email bulletin just for parents and choristers! The ChoirWire contains all of the latest information regarding regular rehearsals, tech rehearsal and concert call times, upcoming events, programs, and performances! The ChoirWire is usually sent out on Mondays. **Let the office know right away if you are not receiving yours!** There may also be an occasional emergency notification (rehearsal change or cancellation).

Website + Families Section

Northwest Girlchoir maintains our primary online presence at www.northwestgirlchoir.org. Parents and choristers will be provided access to our password-protected "**Families Section**." The password will change every year and will be available in the most recent ChoirWire email. The Families Section will provide the following for each choir level:

1. Access to our most-current calendar information, including tech rehearsal and concert call times.
2. Updated roster and carpool information, including chorister and parent names, chorister's school, and pertinent parent contact information, including phone numbers and emails.
3. A recap of information from the ChoirWire plus links to any necessary documents.

Social Media

Northwest Girlchoir maintains a presence on the following Social Media platforms:

Facebook: facebook.com/NorthwestGirlchoir

YouTube: youtube.com/NorthwestGirlchoir

Instagram: instagram.com/NorthwestGirlchoir

Follow us on one of these platforms and stay in-the-know! Concert photos and videos will predominantly be shared via our Facebook page.

Photo-Sharing Site

Throughout the year, staff members may take photo or video from performances, rehearsals, or concerts. These photos will be uploaded and made available to parents at www.northwestgirlchoir.smugmug.com. Parents may submit their photos to share by emailing them to kaylyn@northwestgirlchoir.org.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission:

Northwest Girlchoir transforms the lives of girls and young women through outstanding music education, dynamic choral performances, and an enduring community.

Vision:

A world where everyone is transformed by the beauty of choral music and the power of women's voices.

Values:

Artistic Excellence: Vibrant music making of the highest quality.

Education: Developing each chorister's musicianship, vocal skills, confidence, and potential.

Equity: Ensuring equitable opportunities for all participants regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background, or sexual orientation.

Community: Nurturing friendships, shared values, and pride in belonging.

Collaboration: Fostering teamwork while valuing each person's contribution.

Service: Sharing our talents to enrich the greater community.

Global Awareness: Cultivating understanding of, and connections with, the world and its people.

Artistic Excellence

- Healthy vocal technique (including use of head voice or "light-mechanism").
- Outstanding, high-quality, diverse repertoire.
- Teacher/conductors who are role models as musicians, vocalists, and people.
- Professional-level performing experiences
 - Northwest Girlchoir-produced concerts in December, March, May, and June, at places such as Town Hall, Benaroya Hall, First Free Methodist Church (at SPU campus)
 - Chances for each of our choir levels to experience our "all choirs combined" concert as well as to shine in more age-specific combinations during the year.
 - Performances for "high profile" arts gatherings, such as NW-ACDA (American Choral Directors Association Conference).
- Collaborations with other artists and arts organizations, such as Sondra Segundo, Kaleidoscope Dance Company, Seattle Women's Chorus, and the Seattle Collaborative Orchestra.
- Participating in tours and festivals

Music Education

- Nurturing the individual chorister within the context of the group.
- Music literacy and musicianship training inspired by the Kodály approach—learning to hear and see how music is put together (the elements of music and music notation).
- Learning how to work as an ensemble (balancing your voice with others; responding to the conductor; making musical choices in context).
- Conductors encourage and challenge through developmentally-appropriate and inspiring music and texts, teaching techniques, and vocal technique.
- Building skills for a lifetime of music-making as vocalists, musicians, students, performers, composers, leaders, collaborators, citizens, and human beings.
- High expectations—we expect choristers to learn and grow in each choir level that they are with us and to be mentors and examples to their younger fellow choristers.

Repertoire

The music we choose for our choristers is one of our main teaching tools. In addition to selecting music that will provide a varied, educational, and exciting experience for our audiences, we also select music for the following educational reasons:

- Quality of the text: high quality poetry, age-appropriate, inspiring, has stood or will stand the test of time, that speaks to a shared human experience, set by the composer/arranger in an artful way.
- Music by master composer and arrangers (from the past or present) that combine music and words in well-crafted, satisfying, profound, artistic ways.
- Highlight music composed and arranged by women, and continue to look for music from composers of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Teachability/suitability of the music—will the piece teach specific aspects of melody, rhythm, form, harmony, style, culture, and/or vocal technique? Is the piece both accessible and challenging to the chorister? Will the piece allow choristers to succeed and to grow?
- Cultural and social context—will the piece add to the chorister's understanding of different cultures, people and places in the world, and/or historical time periods? Languages other than English help teach this.
- Music that represents the diversity of our choristers, their families, our region, and our world.
- Sacred and secular. Choral art music comes from a 1500+ year old tradition of sacred (church) music. Until the early 20th Century, the vast majority of the highest quality published choral music was sacred. We still sing this music and other sacred music because of its musical and cultural value, and we approach it as music, culture, and history. At Northwest Girlchoir, we aim to sing a wide variety of music-- fast and slow, serious and light, secular and sacred, old and new, composed and folk--with the aim of providing a high-quality concert music experience for our choristers and audience.

Community

- Choristers see how their individual hard work and talent contribute to the whole.
- Choristers experience the importance and satisfaction of working as a team.
- Choristers experience a nurturing, supportive, fun environment in which to sing and grow up.
- Friendships—singers come back year after year because of the friendships formed with girls from across the region. They build a community of friends, outside of their regular school friends, who love to sing, to work hard, and to learn together. Conductors provide many activities to foster community in rehearsals and on tour.
- Mentoring—Choristers from our high school choir volunteer every week in our Fresca choir level sections, serving as teacher assistants and as role models for our younger choristers.
- Connection to the local and global communities
 - Our choristers sing out in the community, at places like the Seattle Aquarium and Pacific Place, as well as at retirement homes and community events.
 - We have friends all over the world through our national and international touring and festival appearances.
- Chorister-led community building at the high school level--the Amore Social Activities Committee sponsors social events to build friendships and connections among Amore choristers.
- 46 years of Northwest Girlchoir alumnae
 - If you've sung with Northwest Girlchoir for at least one year, and you are over 18, you are a Northwest Girlchoir alum!
 - Our alums are studying in great colleges and universities, working in amazing fields, raising children, giving back to their communities, singing in college and community choirs, and serving on our board of directors.
 - Some of our current choristers are daughters of Northwest Girlchoir alumnae!

Racial Equity:

Northwest Girlchoir is committed to racial equity, creating a welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing experience for all choristers, families, and audiences. We honor each individual's history, heritage, and talents. Our community is strongest when all voices are affirmed and everyone is connected through the joy of singing.

We have set goals to reduce racial barriers and increase equity and inclusion over the next several years. Steps we have already taken:

- Created a formal Racial Equity Plan and invested in racial equity training for board and leadership staff.
- Formed a Racial Equity Committee made up of Northwest Girlchoir parents, board members, and staff; this committee works to identify racial barriers and areas for improvement, including recruitment of choristers, board and staff, partnerships/collaborations, programming, and more.
- Launched the free after-school Bravo Choir at Northgate Elementary and held outreach concerts in schools that are culturally, racially, and socioeconomically diverse.
- Significantly increased the scholarship budget over the last five years, building access to choir, tours, and summer camp. During COVID-19, further removed barriers to scholarship.
- Worked with a consultant to carry out a survey and focus groups of our key constituents to assess Northwest Girlchoir's readiness for – and barriers to – racial equity progress.

Email jill@northwestgirlchoir.org if you'd like to get involved in our racial equity efforts.

Tuition

The main choir fee is the annual tuition, which ranges from \$1,260 to Fresca to \$2,270 for Ensemble. A complete list of tuition rates is available on our website. In addition to music instruction, the tuition fee covers the cost of instruments, equipment, sheet music, and a choir T-shirt. There is an additional annual registration fee, which is \$100 for all choirs. For mid-year (January) enrollments, tuition will be pro-rated and payments adjusted accordingly.

Our preferred method of payment is via the FACTS tuition management service. FACTS accepts payment through ACH (bank account transfer) or credit card. There is a 2.85% fee for using a credit card, and there may be additional FACTS fees of \$10-\$45, depending on the payment schedule you select. When using FACTS, your registration fee is payable with your first tuition payment.

Northwest Girlchoir offers the following four payment plans via FACTS:

- **Payment Plan A** - One-time payment of tuition and registration fee, with an additional 2.85% processing fee on credit card payments. Full payment due before the first rehearsal.
- **Payment Plan B** - Two tuition payments, with an additional 2.85% processing fee on credit card payments and a one-time \$10 FACTS installment fee. The registration fee is paid with the first tuition payment. The first payment (tuition and registration fee) is due before the start of rehearsals and the second payment is scheduled for January.
- **Payment Plan C** - Eight tuition payments, with an additional 2.85% processing fee on credit card payments and a one-time \$45 FACTS installment fee. The first payment (tuition and registration fee) is due before the start of rehearsals and subsequent payments are scheduled monthly.

We also offer the alternative of a one-time, lump sum payment of tuition and registration fees prior to the first rehearsal via personal check or cash.

Accounts must be current (no more than 30 days past due) in order for a chorister to participate in classes and virtual performances. Severely delinquent accounts may result in a chorister being asked to leave the choir until their account is settled.

Withdrawal Process

If a chorister withdraws from choir for any reason before the end of the season, Northwest Girlchoir will offer a tuition refund or reduction according to the schedule below. Note that we are offering more flexibility in our deadlines this year due to our new learning models. Chorister parents must give written (email or letter) notice of their intent to withdraw. The tuition refund or reduction will be based on the date that the written notice is sent to the Northwest Girlchoir office. Please note: if you are on an installment plan, you must continue paying installments until you have paid the required portion. Registration fees are non-refundable.

If you join in the fall

- If written notice is given by September 14, 2020 the family is liable only for the \$100 nonrefundable registration fee and any FACTS installment fees (\$10-\$45).
- If written notice is given by October 31, 2020 the family is liable for the \$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and 1/4 of the annual tuition.
- If written notice is given by January 11, 2021, the family is liable for the \$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and 1/2 of the annual tuition.
- If written notice is given AFTER January 11, 2021, the family is liable for the \$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and the entire 2020/2021 tuition.

If you join in January

- If written notice is given by January 11, 2021 the family is liable for only the \$100 nonrefundable registration fee and any FACTS installment fees (\$10-\$45).
- If written notice is given by March 31, 2021 the family is liable for the \$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and 1/2 of the annual tuition.
- If written notice is given AFTER March 31, 2021, the family is liable for the \$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and the entire 2020/2021 tuition.

Scholarships

Northwest Girlchoir is committed to access and offers an established, need-based scholarship program. Currently 10% of choristers receive scholarships, and the organization is committed to expanding both scholarship funding and recruitment of choristers who would not otherwise be able to participate.

Scholarship Program Guidelines:

- Scholarship awards are based on need and on funds available; we will work with you to find the right amount for your family.
- Chorister families can receive up to 85% of tuition
- Scholarship applications are completed online, with application periods in late August and late December.
- The Board of Directors approves the Scholarship Program budget. The Board Scholarship Committee sets the award procedures and evaluates applications.
- The Executive Director coordinates the Scholarship Program with the assistance of the Choir Operations Coordinator. Each application is handled confidentially; neither the names nor the amount of specific awards are shared publicly in any way.

Choir Levels

See page 4 for information about rehearsal days and times, and page 17 for details on the Northwest Girlchoir audition and promotion process.

Non-Auditioned Choir Level

Fresca (Grades 2+)

Artistic Director Sara Boos leads the Fresca choir, the first auditioned level of Northwest Girlchoir. In Fresca, choristers build skills, experience, focus, and friendships that are the foundation for enjoyment and success in Northwest Girlchoir. Our goals are to learn to sing with relaxed, healthy tone and beautiful vowels, follow a music score, read basic rhythms and pitch patterns, to sing unison and 2-part songs, and to have fun!

Auditioned Choir Levels

Amabile (Grades 5+)

Led by Andrew Seifert, this level offers choristers the opportunity to develop confidence in singing a wide variety of 2-part repertoire. Amabile singers develop more advanced ear training and music reading skills, as well as more accurate intonation and an expanded vocal range. With more rehearsal time, girls also start to build stronger friendships and a deep sense of responsibility for, and pride in, their choir community.

Vivace (Grades 7+)

Under the direction of Beth Ann Bonnecroy, the choristers in Vivace sing in three or more parts, experience more sophisticated repertoire, and often pair with the Amore level on commissioned new works. Vivace singers receive instruction in developing their maturing singing voices and are choral leaders-in-training.

Amore (Grades 9-12)

At the Amore level, led by Sara Boos, choristers participate in sophisticated music making, through the complexity and beauty of the repertoire, the independence and skills necessary to learn the music and texts, and the increasing demands for consistent, healthy, and brilliant vocal tone.

Ensemble (Grades 10-12)

Ensemble is made up of a small group of auditioned Amore singers who want the experience and challenge of performing in a smaller group. Their repertoire includes more a cappella music, chamber music, and pop and vocal jazz arrangements. Each Ensemble singer has one individual voice lesson with the conductor during the year.

Participation, Attendance, and Conduct

Participation policy

The artistry and success of our performances and recordings rest on each singer and her family making class attendance a very high priority. The directors plan the repertoire and how it will be performed, and the choristers rehearse together, with the expectation that each singer will be present for the performances or recordings.

Chorister participation in virtual/video presentations (for showing to families and the public) will be contingent upon consistent attendance at in-person and online rehearsals and positive contributions to these projects.

Summer Camp

Summer Sing

Northwest Girlchoir offers Summer Sing, a week-long day camp held in July/August. It is open to 90 girls entering 2nd-7th grade, both current choristers and non-choristers. The camp is held at North Seattle Church. Activities include choral singing, instruments, group dance, art, games, and an extended beach and movie night. The week ends with a free Friday afternoon performance to which families and the general public are invited. The musical experiences of Summer Sing are led by the choir directors of Northwest Girlchoir. Our high school aged Amore choristers serve as counselors, and 8th and 9th grade choristers serve as counselors-in-training.

The fee for Summer Sing Day Camp is not included in the regular annual tuition; the camp is optional but encouraged for current choristers. Scholarships are available.



Virtual Voice Class guidelines for all choirs

The following guidelines will help you, your fellow choristers, and your conductor have the most success learning and working together on Zoom! Please email your conductor if you have any questions or need help with any of the following:

1. Sign in to Zoom using the links and passcodes emailed to you on September 4.

The link and passcode for each class will be the same all year. If you lose or forget your links/passcodes, you can find them in the Families Section of the Northwest Girlchoir website (password in the weekly ChoirWire), or you can email Hannah at info@northwestgirlchoir.org for help.

2. Sign in as close to your scheduled start time as possible.

Enter the Zoom waiting room no more than 2-3 minutes early. If you sign in more than 5 minutes late, you may not be admitted to that rehearsal period (unless you have pre-arranged this with your conductor). Sticking close to the start time will allow the conductors to focus on teaching.

3. Be ready to sing when rehearsal begins.

For every age level, it is best if you can be in a quiet, distraction-free room, away from anything (or anyone) that may cause you to "hold back" or disengage during rehearsal. Finish eating before rehearsal starts, and keep your hands free (no phones, toys, books, schoolwork, etc.).

4. Use a computer (desktop or laptop), instead of a mobile device.

This allows you to most easily see your conductor's shared screen and your conductor and peers in action. In a case where you must use a phone or tablet, make sure that it is resting somewhere stable (not held in your hand) and that you are always visible.

5. Be able to both "sit tall" and stand comfortably.

Choir is active—be able to easily move between sitting and standing (and some moving/dancing!). Sit on a sturdy chair, not hunched over on a cushiony chair or on top of your bed. Arrange the camera so that you can be seen on the screen in both sitting and standing positions.

7. List your name (first or first plus last initial) below your video.

8. Clear your surroundings.

Think about what's behind and around you, so that there isn't something that will distract others from learning. Virtual backgrounds are allowed, but only if they are simple, still, and NOT distracting. Your conductor may ask you to switch to your "real" background if it's hard to see your face or body consistently.

9. Have your printed music in front of you.

There will be a few pieces and worksheets to print out each quarter that you will need to have with you at rehearsals. Print these out and have them ready to hold when rehearsal begins. If printing at home is not possible for you, please let your conductor or Hannah know, and we will find a way to get you the music. Choristers in Vivace and Amore, see if you can also have a second device with you (like a phone) that you can use to play an audio track during rehearsal.

10. Optimize the sound settings on your computer or laptop.

Download the Zoom app, or sign in to your account, then click on your Login area in the upper right corner, then Settings. Choose Audio, then "Advanced Settings." Then turn OFF "automatically adjust volume" and turn ON "enable original sound." When you are in the Zoom meeting, you should then be able to click a button called "enable original sound."

11. Keep your screen on.

We are a choir community—it's more fun to see everyone in your choir, especially since we can't hear everybody at the same time. Your choristers joined choir because YOU are in it. We expect you in the screen and your screen on!

12. Even when you're muted, you can still participate!

Choir is best when everyone is engaged, either by respectfully listening to others, or singing along when it's your turn to sing.

Conduct policy

Northwest Girlchoir wants each chorister to feel that she is safe, valued, and can contribute to great music making. Consistent positive chorister conduct is fun for everyone, creates an exciting learning environment, and is one of the requirements to advance through Northwest Girlchoir choir levels. There are five conduct expectations:

1. Be kind

- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others.
- Be supportive of your fellow choristers; encourage them to gain more skill and confidence.
- Adopt a positive attitude toward choristers, staff, and activities.
- Strive to make new friends and to welcome and include all choristers, especially new choristers.
- Treat younger singers with understanding and kindness. You are a role model for them.

2. Be safe

- *Many of these policies apply best when we are rehearsing in-person; additional safety policies will be added once we are back in the building.*
- Do not run in the building or engage in horseplay before or after rehearsal.
- Always let an adult know where you are going—never wander off by yourself. Do not use unauthorized rooms at the rehearsal location (NSC).
- Use caution when waiting for rides or walking through the parking lot. Do not wait alone outside the building, especially when it's dark.
- Drivers (parent and Amore choristers) should proceed carefully through the parking lot and respect the one-way policy. Watch for pedestrians and other cars.

3. Be respectful

- Comport yourself on Zoom so that you are able to participate at your best and so that you support (and do not interfere with) the learning of others.
- Treat all choristers, staff, parent volunteers, and our rehearsal and concert spaces, with respect.
- Honor the diverse backgrounds of all choristers, staff members, volunteers, and audiences.
- Listen to and follow instructions the first time that they are given.
- Listen when it's needed—talk only when it's your turn.
- Respect yourself as a musician—always try to give the best of yourself in each class and virtual performance.
- Respect the time commitment that choristers have pledged to each other. Be on time, ready to sing when rehearsals begin, and miss rehearsal only when it is absolutely necessary.

4. Be responsible

- Take care of bathroom, water, and food needs before class starts. Use bathroom breaks during rehearsal for emergencies only.
- Do not eat food or chew gum during Zoom or in-person classes.
- We recommend that you have a water bottle with you at every class. A well-hydrated body means a healthier voice.
- Have your music folder and pencil with you at every class.
- Take care of yourself (get enough rest, eat well) so that you are healthy for classes and virtual performances.

5. Contribute positively

- Strive to learn something new, do something better, and sing with more artistry in every class/performance.
- Fully participate: sing when we are singing, listen when we are listening, and practice when we are practicing.
- Put your music in order and be in your seat, ready to begin, before the rehearsal start time.
- Sit/stand in rehearsals and concerts with your best, healthiest singing posture, so that you can reinforce good vocal technique habits.
- Learn and memorize your music for the virtual performances (notes, words, and artistry decisions). Get markings and other information if you miss class.
- Do not use cell phone during class, including checking messages and texting.
- Choose conduct that helps everyone to work and learn at their best.

Behaviors that will not be tolerated at Northwest Girlchoir:

- Fighting or physical attacks on choristers or staff
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Disruptive or disrespectful conduct toward choristers, staff, volunteers, etc.
- Verbal abuse or harassment
- Racial harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Theft
- Use, possession, sale, or delivery of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, or being under the influence of drugs/alcohol during Northwest Girlchoir activities
- Defacing or destruction of property (including music and folders) belonging to Northwest Girlchoir, North Seattle Church, performance venues or tour locations
- Use or possession of weapons or firearms, including knives, guns, etc.
- Any criminal act as defined by law

How Northwest Girlchoir addresses misconduct

- I. Our conductors have many years of experience with classroom management. They model positive behavior and encourage this in each chorister. If a chorister chooses behavior in conflict with the Northwest Girlchoir rules, the conductor may intervene in the following ways:
 - Chorister will be asked to change/improve her behavior
 - Chorister may be asked to turn off screen. Change of seat in rehearsal
 - Removal from activity. A chorister may be asked to leave a Zoom class.
 - Conductor and chorister meeting after rehearsal
- II. If a chorister is consistently unable to follow Northwest Girlchoir rules over the course of repeated rehearsals, despite conductor encouragement and intervention, the following steps may be taken:
 - The director may call the parent(s) or request a face-to-face meeting to discuss the chorister's conduct. Depending on the age of the chorister, the director may request that the chorister be present.
 - A contract addressing the behavior and expectations for improvement may be created for the chorister.
 - Serious or repeated misconduct may result in a chorister being dismissed from Northwest Girlchoir.

Auditions and Promotion Guidelines

Fresca, Amabile, Vivace, Amore, and Ensemble (by audition)

Participation in the Fresca, Amabile, Vivace, Amore, and Ensemble choirs is by audition/placement.

New member auditions

New Northwest Girlchoir choristers are selected through **individual placement auditions**. All girls entering grades 3 - 12 are eligible. The Artistic Director conducts auditions in the spring and summer for fall placement and in the fall for January placement. Auditions last approximately 25 minutes. Girls should come prepared to sing a non-pop song such as "My Country 'tis of Thee." The Artistic Director talks with each applicant and checks the singer's vocal health, ability to sing in tune, listening skills, and willingness to follow teacher instructions. Singers in grades 6-8 should have some music experience in a school/church/community choir or band, in a musical show, or individual instrument lessons. Singers in grades 9-12 should have two or more years of experience singing in a choir, and facility with pitch and rhythm reading and classical vocal style.

Current chorister promotions for Fresca, Amabile, and Vivace

Promotions to the next level after Fresca, Amabile, and Vivace take place May-early June. Refer to Page 11 for the most typical grades in each level.

Promotion guidelines, Fresca-to-Amabile, Amabile-to-Vivace, and Vivace-to-Amore

1. Years in choir level - Generally, a chorister will spend two years in Fresca, Amabile, and Vivace (unless they enter a particular level as an older chorister), so she has the opportunity to be both "the new kid" and "the experienced leader." Sometimes exceptions are made.
2. Rehearsal and concert participation (consistent rehearsal and concert attendance, early notification for a missed concert, positive contribution, being on time, focus, rehearsal and concert behavior)
3. Age and social maturity - Choir is a social activity. Choristers need to feel comfortable with their peer group and within reach of their peers in age, social development, and ability to take on responsibility. Sometimes, a chorister joins us with lots of music skills, but fewer skills in working in a group or relating to her peers. We want a chorister to feel a positive sense of community and be able to build friendships among her fellow choristers.

4. Musicianship and Vocal skills

Fresca-to-Amabile (These skills will be assessed during regular rehearsal)

- follow a single line of a choral score
- hold her singing part against another in a round or partner song
- use her "light" or "head" voice
- show developing music reading skills, especially basic rhythm syllables and solfa hand signs.
- focus and participation during every rehearsal

Amabile-to-Vivace (These skills will be assessed during choir rehearsals throughout the year and in an individual "skills check" that Andrew will schedule with each chorister who meets criteria 1-3 above.)

- fluent use of music tools (rhythm syllables, solfa hand signs, handstaff, and IPA [international phonetic alphabet])
- singing technique
- sight reading and dictation
- ensemble singing (focus, part singing, blend, balance)
- score analysis and marking
- the Amabile Chorister Self-Assessment, handed out each year to choristers

Vivace-to-Amore (These skills will be assessed during regular rehearsals, in a short year-end written quiz, and during a May/June audition with Beth Ann.)

- regular participation in mainstage concerts
- vocal technique
- learning her Vivace singing parts well, including languages, breath marks, dynamics, etc.
- focus in rehearsal
- sightreading a line of music with basic rhythms, stepwise and skips
- facility in finding key signatures and reading dotted rhythms
- kindness to fellow choristers; positive attitude

Amore auditions for Ensemble

Ensemble is open to choristers who have been in Amore for at least one year. Auditions occur in June. In addition to outstanding music reading skills and both solo and choral vocal quality, potential Ensemble members must have demonstrated excellence in the following areas: positive, cooperative behavior in Amore rehearsals; regular rehearsal and concert attendance; and the ability/responsibility to learn the music outside of rehearsal time.

- Amore choristers schedule an **individual voice check** with the Artistic Director, which includes the chorister singing her parts from selected Amore music.
- When deemed necessary by the Amore director, there may be an **Ensemble Group Audition**. This involves grouping the choristers in various combinations and listening to the blended sound. Each year the Artistic Director creates Ensemble blending the new voices with those of choristers previously selected. The final Ensemble personnel include choristers whose voices are able to blend well with as many singers as possible.

Uniform Information

We will not be issuing formal uniforms this year. Choristers WILL receive a 2020-2021 Northwest Girlchoir T-shirt to wear for in-person class video recording and at-home, “virtual choir” video submissions.

Music Folders

- The cost of music rental is included in tuition. All music used by choristers is the property of Northwest Girlchoir.
- Folders will not be issued while rehearsing virtually
- Your chorister is expected to print a few pieces of music at home each quarter.
- If access to printing is a challenge, notify the office at info@northwestgirlchoir.org and we will find a way to provide your family with printed music

Volunteer at Northwest Girlchoir!

You are invited to become part of Northwest Girlchoir's dedicated volunteer team! We will be sending out more information and sign-up forms in the coming months. Please review the opportunities below and consider making time this year to help Northwest Girlchoir achieve its mission to transform the lives of girls and young women through outstanding music education, dynamic performances, and an enduring community. Volunteering is also a great way to get to know other parents and choristers!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Board of Directors	Become an active member of the Northwest Girlchoir community and help make decisions about the direction of the organization as a whole.
Racial Equity	Work with committee to increase access and inclusion for people of color across the organization.
Fundraising	Support fundraising efforts and develop relationships with individual and corporate donors.
Music Library	Help file and organize music as it is distributed and collected.
Office Volunteer	Administrative help with mailings, copying, filing, data entry, and other general office tasks.
Event Helper	Assist with Northwest Girlchoir fundraisers and other events. Help us plan, set up, serve, decorate, and/or clean up.
Class Prep/Clear	Arrive early for class to help set up chairs, tables, and instruments, or stay late to put away equipment.
Chorister Recruitment	Assist with marketing efforts to attract new choristers, including promoting Northwest Girlchoir to schools, libraries, and community group.

ADDITIONAL EXPERTISE OR SKILLS

Do you have a specific skill that you could share with Northwest Girlchoir? Let us know if you have skills in the following areas:

IT/ Web Updates	Photo/Videography	Finance/Accounting
Foreign Languages (please specify)	Audio Recording	Graphic Design
Dance/Choreography	Law	Marketing/PR
Sewing	Human Resources	

Please send us an email at info@northwestgirlchoir.org if you can help out in any of these areas. Thank you!

Fundraising

Northwest Girlchoir is grateful to you, our community of parents and families, for all the ways you support our program—through tuition, transportation, ticket purchases, and volunteering—and through tax-deductible donations that keep tuition and concerts affordable.

Tuition this year covers only 45% of the cost of Northwest Girlchoir programs. We rely on donations from our community to close the gap and to fund scholarships to increase access to the choir. Ten percent of Northwest Girlchoir students are on need-based scholarships.

Being a donor also brings you closer to the choir through fun donor benefits! During this unusual year, expect creative opportunities to engage with the choirs, fellow donors, and special guests online.

Donations of all sizes are welcome and recognized throughout the year. Benefits are cumulative and extend one calendar year from your donation date. You may choose to decline benefits and make your entire gift tax deductible.

Opportunities are available to commission a new piece. Musical commissions support composers, and can be dedicated in honor of a loved one. Please contact Director of Development Kate Speck for more information at 206-527-0238 or kate@northwestgirlchoir.org.

How we fundraise

Donations are welcome any time of the year and may be made online, in person, over the phone or through the mail. Upcoming opportunities to give include: the Counterpoint Fundraising Competition in October, our Spring Fling fundraiser in March, and our annual concert ask in June.

Visit our website www.northwestgirlchoir.org to make a donation, or contact our Director of Development Kate Speck at (206) 527-0238 or Kate@northwestgirlchoir.org.

In Case of Emergency

While our programs are virtual, we will continue to hold online classes during inclement weather. Once we are holding in-person classes again, the following policies will be in place:

Snow closure

Northwest Girlchoir will close for snow according to the most conservative Seattle or Shoreline snow closures (whichever closes earlier and stays closed longer). Rehearsals may be cancelled even if schools are in session, depending on afternoon road and weather conditions. Closures will be reported on our website and through emails to families.

In case of illness

Before returning to choir, a chorister must be free of fever for 24 hours.

In case of emergency

Northwest Girlchoir has a supply of water and food for staff and choristers in case of emergency. We maintain a list of choristers with their medical and emergency contact info and a first aid kit in the choir office.

FIRE

- Conductors will lead their choirs outside to a designated meeting place. If you are on site, follow staff members to your designated meeting place. Do not take your chorister home until you have been told that it is okay to do so! Before taking your chorister home, please make sure you have checked her out with her conductor.
- If you are on site and need to report a fire, call 9-1-1 to report a fire at North Seattle Church. Then proceed calmly outside.

EARTHQUAKE

- Choristers will take shelter in place until it has been deemed safe to evacuate. Conductors and staff are familiar with the building and rehearsal spaces and will direct choristers to duck, cover, and hold.
- If you are on site, please duck, cover, and hold under a table. If there is not one nearby, keep your head down, and cover your neck with one arm. If you are sitting, stay in your chair or kneel beside it, but be sure to hold on!
- If you are off site, remain calm. You may pick up your chorister, but please be sure to check her out with her conductor. If the building has been compromised do not enter it!

STRANGER IN THE BUILDING

- If you are on site and see someone who looks suspicious or threatening, inform a staff member immediately. **DO NOT APPROACH THE PERSON.** Tell a staff member what they look like, what they were doing, and where you saw them. Staff will then notify police.
- If an immediate threat is reported, staff will initiate a lockdown. Rehearsals will continue, but rooms will be locked. If you are on site, please go to the Choir Office or the Bridge Coffee Shop until staff gives the all clear. Do not try to take your chorister home unless instructed to do so.

ALLERGIC REACTION

- If your chorister has a severe allergy, be sure that it has been noted on her registration form, especially if she carries an EpiPen.

Northwest Girlchoir 2020-21 Covid-19 Safety Plan

Northwest Girlchoir is dedicated to the physical, mental, and emotional health of our choristers and their families. We will actively monitor local, state and national public health policies.

Parents will sign a COVID-19 agreement in the registration form, to accept and acknowledge the risk associated with group activity.

General Safety Precautions

1. Choristers must wear a mask that covers nose and mouth (family to provide) upon entry to the building and during entire class. There will not be singing during the in-person classes.
2. Only one conductor will be allowed in each classroom.
3. Windows and/or external doors will be open during classes to allow fresh air to move in the space.

Social Distancing

1. Class groups are intentionally limited in size (about 1/3 room capacity) to allow for maximum social distancing.
2. Choristers are limited to their assigned day/time for in-person classes; due to class size and social distancing they cannot make up classes on another day.
3. Choristers must maintain appropriate safe distance (6 feet) from each other when entering/exiting the building and the classroom, and at all times during class. There will be designated, separate entrance and exit doors to maintain social distancing.
4. Only one person at a time will be allowed in bathrooms, with 6-foot distanced spots for waiting.
5. Parents may not wait in the building (lobby, Family Chapel, etc.). Choristers will need to meet their families outside after class.
6. Performances will be on-line only to preserve distancing for choristers and families.

Health Checks

1. Parents are responsible for monitoring chorister's temperature before class; chorister must stay home if fever is 100 or above.
2. If a chorister is coughing/sneezing or not feeling well, chorister must stay home.
3. If a chorister or family member has been directly exposed to or contracted COVID-19, chorister must stay home.
4. If a staff member, chorister, or family member contracts COVID-19, Northwest Girlchoir will alert all families by email and share next steps.

Sanitizing

1. Choristers must wash hands or hand sanitize when entering classroom.
2. Instruments, tables, and chairs will be sanitized before, between, and after classes.
3. Doorknobs and handrails will be sanitized at least twice per day of class.

Further Information about Northwest Girlchoir Programs

In this unusual year during COVID-19, some aspects of our program are temporarily suspended. In the section that follows, you will find information about those aspects, including In-Person Concerts and Tours.

Concerts and Performances

Northwest Girlchoir presents several mainstage concerts each year. *Participation in these concerts and their respective technical rehearsals is required.* Our December and June concerts are sophisticated productions designed for an audience of mature children and adults in a formal concert hall. Northwest Girlchoir also presents more family friendly sing-along concerts appropriate for families with young children.

In addition to the mainstage concerts, individual choirs perform in music festivals, schools, retirement communities, benefits, churches, synagogues, and at public celebrations. *Participation in these community performances is expected.* If a chorister is unable to participate, the *General Attendance Guidelines* apply.



Concert tickets

All mainstage concerts are ticketed. The link to purchase tickets will be available on the Northwest Girlchoir website beginning by October. Tickets are also available at the door on a space-available basis. Discount rates are available for students and seniors. Community concerts are ticketless and pay-as-you-wish donations are gratefully accepted.

Families are our best marketing tool. While we have no minimum ticket requirement, please help us fill the house! Share the season schedule with friends and co-workers, and invite them to concerts.

Concert behavior and recording

Northwest Girlchoir seeks a professional concert experience both for performers and audience. If you are experiencing repeated coughing or your child is restless or noisy, please step out to the lobby. We make an audio recording of each concert; loud noises mean we cannot use the recording to create a future CD.

Taping/Filming policy

No photography or videography is allowed during mainstage performances. Cameras, phones and tablets distract performers and detract from the professionalism of the performance. CD recordings, photographs and concert videos of performances will be made available when possible.

Tours



Amore Tour to Poland & the Czech Republic 2019

group—ordering a meal in another language, sharing a hotel or dorm room with other choristers, and touring an area independently in small groups. Many Northwest Girlchoir graduates speak of choir tours as some of the most memorable and transformative experiences of their choir careers.

Touring and choral festival participation provide great benefits to the Northwest Girlchoir organization as a whole, both immediately and long term. Tours create relationships with directors, choristers, and composers from around the world, and the perspective and reach of the choir is expanded on the national and international stage. Particularly for festivals, our choirs have the chance to prepare and hear new and different repertoire, work with a nationally/internationally-recognized conductor, and observe different ways of running a choir.

It is the intention of Northwest Girlchoir that each chorister experiences the following while on a choir tour:

1. Singing the concert repertoire to an increasing degree of understanding and performance quality at each performance, through being able to add layers of understanding, interpretation, and expression.
2. Musical growth as an entire choir through performing in a wide variety of venues and acoustics, at various times of day, for many different kinds and sizes of audiences, and under many different circumstances (e.g. jet-lagged, after a long day of touring, for an audience that doesn't speak English, right after another excellent choir sings, etc).
3. Performing music for audiences that are not guaranteed to be supportive—certainly not full of Northwest Girlchoir families, and often for people of different cultures and languages.
4. Growth as individuals through the excitement, challenges, and responsibilities of group travel (keeping track of your belongings, sleeping/eating/spending time outside of one's familiar comfort zone, observing the customs of another culture, getting back to the bus on time, making friends with people from different backgrounds, etc.).
5. Growth as a "choir team" and formation of new and deeper bonds with current choristers through many days of unique, shared experiences.
6. The privilege of traveling to another region/country and sharing part of your hard work and culture—not just being a tourist, but bringing something (music and singing) to share with others.
7. Forging friendships with people from around the region/country/world.
8. At choral festivals, the opportunity to work with world-class clinicians in an intense, high-energy environment, alongside other young people from around the region/country/world who share her love of singing.
9. At choral festivals and in collaborative concerts on tours, watching, learning from, and meeting choirs from around the region/country/world—seeing how many different ways there are to do "choir" well.

Touring and choral festival participation are important facets of Northwest Girlchoir. Singers gain valuable experiences through performing for unfamiliar audiences and under a variety of circumstances. Through repeated performances, singers experience a more profound knowledge of the repertoire, and they grow as individual musicians and as a cooperative ensemble. Choristers also forge new friendships and deepen current bonds through days of fun and hard work "on the road."

Choristers on tour have opportunities to meet and interact with people from many different backgrounds and cultures, including other choirs and singers, homestay families, and people in the community. They gain confidence and independence through the challenges and responsibilities of traveling as a



Amabile Tour to Vancouver B.C. 2019

Progression of Tour Opportunities

Tours are optional but highly recommended. Fees for tours and summer camps are in addition to the annual tuition. Need-based scholarships are available--Northwest Girlchoir board and staff are committed to making touring possible for every chorister. Regular touring opportunities begin for choristers at the Fresca level; occasionally, Prep Choir sings out in the community as well.

Fresca—In alternating years, choristers can participate in either a tour day (singing at local schools, senior centers, or a charity event, followed by a fun group activity) or an overnight trip to collaborate with another choir or work with a clinician. Usually occurs in the spring.

Amabile—Usually, a 1-night, 2-day tour to sing at a regional choral festival, such as Leavenworth Tree Lighting, Whistler Cantando Festival, or in a performance exchange with a local choir/clinician, with time for fun and socializing.

Vivace—Annual summer tour, usually for one week in late June/early July. Vivace has participated in choir festivals in Cincinnati, New Orleans, Eugene, Denver, Corvallis, and Vancouver, B.C.

Amore—International tour every other year, usually 12-14 days long. Recent tours include Poland/Czech Republic, Argentina/Uruguay, and Malta/Sicily.