



Northwest Girlchoir Chorister and Family Handbook

Updated: September 2019

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 distinguished music education organization and a vibrant 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 Fort Worden 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

Table of Contents

Welcome to Northwest Girlchoir!	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Location and Office Hours.....	4
Rehearsal Times.....	4
Board and Staff Contact List	5
Keep in Touch!.....	6
Mission, Vision and Values	7
Tuition.....	9
Scholarships	10
Choir Levels	11
Tours.....	12
Summer Camp.....	13
Participation, Attendance, and Conduct	14
Auditions and Promotion Guidelines.....	17
Rehearsal Pickup and Drop-off Policy	19
Concerts and Performances.....	20
Uniform Information.....	21
Music Folders (for Fresca through Ensemble choir levels)	22
Volunteer at Northwest Girlchoir!.....	23
Fundraising	24
In Case of Emergency.....	25

Northwest Girlchoir

Location and Office Hours

Main Office/Rehearsal Location

2150 N 122nd St
Seattle, WA 98133

Office Hours

September – May:

Monday through Thursday 11:00 AM – 6:30 PM

June - August: Monday through Thursday, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Closed Fridays

www.northwestgirlchoir.org

info@northwestgirlchoir.org

Phone: 206-527-2900

Rehearsal Times

Prep Choir	Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday	4:30 PM - 5:30 PM
Fresca	Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday	4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
Amabile	Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday	4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
Vivace	Monday/Wednesday	4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
Amore	Tuesday	6:30 PM - 8:45 PM
	One Sunday per month	5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Ensemble	Thursday	6:15 PM - 7:45 PM

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
Jura Litchfield, Prep Choir Conductor	jura@northwestgirlchoir.org
Dori Baunsgard, Vivace Accompanist	
Serena Chin-Daniel, Fresca Accompanist (Tues/Thurs)	
Harumi Makiyama, Amabile (M/T) & Fresca (W) Accompanist	
Annie Chang-Center, Prep Choir Accompanist	
Ellie Kok, Bravo Choir Conductor	
Jill Clymer, Executive Director	jill@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-0236
Jeannine Clarke, Director of Development & Community Engagement	jeannine@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-0238
Carol Kupyn, Choir Administrator	carol@northwestgirlchoir.org 206-527-2900
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	Jeannine Clarke
Registration/tuition, music folders, tickets, volunteering, calendar	Carol Kupyn
Marketing/communications, ChoirWire	Kaylyn Springer
Tours, uniforms	Hannah Carney
General questions or don't know who to contact	Carol Kupyn

Board of Directors:

Tera Schreiber, President	Lina Fine	Becky Kelley
Rachel Engrissei, Vice-President	Matthew Hinck	Vanessa Miller
Cydly Smith, Treasurer	Laura Hopper	David Sweeney
Jason Rogers, Secretary	Elizabeth Kain	Ericka Thielke

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 Tuesdays. **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.
4. Formal uniform guidelines and care instructions.

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 and access throughout our organization, and has 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, reducing financial barriers for choir, tours, and summer camp.
- 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.

Tuition

The main choir fee is the annual tuition, which ranges from \$990 for Prep Choir to \$2,390 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 uniform rental, sheet music for the year, and a choir T-shirt, as well as contributing to concert venue rental and accompanist fees (tuition does not include tours, summer camps or concert tickets). There is an additional annual registration fee, which is \$75 for Prep Choir and \$100 for all other choirs. If you have more than one daughter in choir, all but the eldest receive a 10% discount on their tuition. For mid-year 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.
- **Payment Plan D (ONLY AVAILABLE FOR REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED BY JUNE 30)** - Ten 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 in July 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 rehearsals and concerts. 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 during the season, Northwest Girlchoir will offer a tuition refund or reduction according to the schedule below. **Parents of choristers must give written notice of their intent.** The tuition refund or reduction will be based on the date that the written notice (email or letter) 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 written notice is given before **September 1**, the family is liable only for the *\$75/\$100 nonrefundable registration fee* and any installment fees paid to FACTS.
- If written notice is given **by October 15**, the family is liable for the *\$75/\$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and ¼ of the annual tuition.*
- If written notice is given **by January 1**, the family is liable for the *\$75/\$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and ½ of the annual tuition.*
- If written notice is given **AFTER January 1**, the family is liable for *\$75/\$100 registration fee, FACTS fees, and the entire annual tuition.*

Scholarships

Northwest Girlchoir is committed to accessibility 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 and 2 free tickets per concert.
- Award calculations are based upon a mathematical formula using household income, the number of dependents in the household, the amount of funding available, and the total number of applicants in the pool. Special consideration may be given for extenuating circumstances.
- Scholarship applications include an application form and the previous year's tax form; applications are accepted through late August and again through late December for January enrollment.
- 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 Administrator. 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

Prep Choir (Grades 1-2+)

Through singing games, focused choral experiences, and other musical activities, fundamentals of music and healthy vocal production are introduced and practiced, under the expert and nurturing guidance of Jura Litchfield. Prep Choristers participate in three Northwest Girlchoir performances per year, including a Prep Choir-only showcase in December, a shared concert with the Fresca level in March, and the All-Choirs concert at Benaroya in June. No audition is required at the Prep Choir level.

Auditioned Choir Levels

Fresca (Grades 3+)

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!

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 (twice weekly, instead of once), 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. They have expanded performing opportunities, during mainstage concerts, throughout the community, and on yearly week-long tours (June-July) 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. Amore choristers share their talents and love of singing in performances throughout Puget Sound and participate in regional choral festivals and international tours.

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. Ensemble is one of the featured performers at Spring Fling, Northwest Girlchoir's annual fundraising event.

Tours

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.”



Amore Tour to Poland & the Czech Republic 2019

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 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.



Amabile Tour to Vancouver B.C. 2019

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.

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—2-3 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.

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.



Participation, Attendance, and Conduct

Participation policy

To build individual musicianship skills and to prepare for the high level of performance that distinguishes Northwest Girlchoir, regular attendance is necessary for all choirs. Choir singing is more than each chorister just “learning the notes” for herself. It is a team activity and a group art form that requires the presence of every singer in the ensemble. Consistent attendance is necessary for outstanding music to happen and is a factor in each chorister’s participation in next year’s choir, as well as consideration for promotion to the next choir level.

Rehearsal attendance guidelines for all choirs:

- Choristers are expected to regularly attend rehearsals.
- Parents/choristers, please notify your director by email for any rehearsal absence--in advance whenever possible.
- Choristers should not miss more than two consecutive weeks of rehearsals, whenever possible.
- Please be on time for rehearsals. “On time” means that the chorister has used the restroom, has signed in, and is in her seat, with a folder and pencil, ready to sing when the rehearsal is scheduled to begin.
- When a chorister arrives late to rehearsal, she is marked tardy. Tardiness affects a chorister’s attendance average.
- Attendance average is calculated by dividing the number of hours present at rehearsal by the total rehearsal hours possible. For instance, in Amabile and Vivace, 80% attendance means missing no more than 4 rehearsals, September–December; 3 rehearsals January–March; and 4 rehearsals, March–June.

Concert attendance guidelines:

- Choristers are expected to perform in *all* scheduled Northwest Girlchoir concerts. Please contact your conductor by email and use the concert participation contract (distributed in the fall) to communicate conflicts.
- Out of respect for fellow choristers, the director, and our audiences, please contact your director at least three months in advance (or as soon as possible in September for fall events) to discuss concert performance conflicts. Notifying the director with only a week or two notice jeopardizes the quality of the performance we are preparing for our audiences; repeated “failure to notify in advance” will affect a chorister’s future participation in the choir.
- Choristers are *required* to participate in scheduled pre-concert tech rehearsals in order to sing in those concerts.
- Chorister part check—readiness for concerts
 - A chorister whose attendance average is below **80%** at the time of a ticketed concert, regardless of the reasons for the absences, will be asked to schedule an individual “part check” with her director to show her readiness for the concert (correct pitches and rhythms, language pronunciation, breath marks, style choices, and movement/choreography).
 - The chorister will be allowed to sing in the concert *only if* she can demonstrate competency during the part check.
 - Out of respect for the rest of the choir, a singer whose attendance falls below **60%** at the time of a ticketed concert will not be allowed to perform in the concert.

Leave of absence:

Choristers are allowed one leave of absence during their tenure with Northwest Girlchoir. You may take a leave of absence from September–December, January–June, or September–June. Any tuition refund due is calculated according to the Schedule for Tuition Refund or Reduction. Because a chorister will miss instruction during the leave of absence, her readiness for promotion to the next choir level may be affected; your conductor will make that assessment on an individual basis.

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. Remember that in your behavior you are a role model for them.

2. Be safe

- Do not run in the building or engage in horseplay before or after rehearsal (especially younger choristers).
- 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

- 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 rehearsal and concert.
- 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 the rehearsal starts. Use bathroom breaks during rehearsal for emergencies only.
- Do not eat food or chew gum during rehearsals or concerts.
- We recommend that you have a water bottle with you at every rehearsal. A well-hydrated body means a healthier voice.
- Have your music folder and pencil with you at every rehearsal.
- Have all of the components of your uniform clean, in good repair, and with you to wear at concerts. Wear concert-appropriate shoes, jewelry, etc. (as described in the "Uniform" section).
- Take care of yourself (get enough rest, eat well) so that you are healthy for rehearsals and concerts.

5. Contribute positively

- Strive to learn something new, do something better, and sing with more artistry in every rehearsal and concert.
- 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 concerts (notes, words, and artistry decisions). Get markings and other information if you miss a rehearsal.
- Do not use cell phone during rehearsal, 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
 - Change of seat in rehearsal
 - Removal from activity
 - 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

Prep Choir

Prep Choir is a non-auditioned choir for girls in 1st and 2nd graders (and older on a case-by-case basis). Just sign up (through September in the fall; through January for the rest of the school year)! We recommend that choristers who join *mid-year* (particularly 1st graders) have good word reading skills to feel comfortable with the pace.

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.

Prep Choir auditions for Fresca

2nd graders and older in Prep Choir have the opportunity in April or May to participate in Fresca auditions. Prep Choristers audition in groups of four; in addition to checking for tuneful singing, vocal independence, and listening skills, Prep Choristers are asked to sing one or two of their Prep Choir songs. The Artistic Director facilitates these group auditions.

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.

Rehearsal Pickup and Drop-off Policy

Rehearsal drop-off policy: Fresca, Amabile, Vivace, and Amore choristers

Fresca, Amabile, Vivace, and Amore choristers may sign themselves in no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal. Northwest Girlchoir is not responsible for choristers who arrive earlier than 15 minutes prior to rehearsal. Choristers in Prep Choir, Fresca, and Amabile are not allowed to wait alone in The Bridge Coffee Shop – they must be supervised by an adult.

Make sure your chorister signs in when she arrives for rehearsal. In an emergency, this list will be used to make sure everyone is accounted for.

Prep Choir Rehearsal drop-off guidelines:

- Prep Choir parents must accompany their chorister to the rehearsal room and sign them in.
- Have your chorister use the restroom AND wash her hands before rehearsal.
- Please note on the sign-in sheet if your chorister is being picked up by someone other than the usual parent, caregiver, or carpool driver. Please also ask this person to make contact with your conductor when they pick up your chorister after choir.

Pickup Policy

- Prep Choir—the Prep Choir conductor brings Prep Choristers down to the East Lobby to meet their parents and be signed out.
- All other choirs—you may meet your chorister outside the rehearsal room after rehearsal, or in the downstairs lobby in front of the East Entrance, whatever feels best to you and your chorister.
- Choristers in Prep Choir, Fresca, and Amabile are not allowed to wait in The Bridge or outside the building after rehearsals without adult supervision.

Late policy

If you will be late to pick up your child, please call the office to let us know. Prep Choir, Fresca and Amabile choristers will be brought to the choir office to wait for you. This service should only be used on a rare occasion, and should not be abused. Do not have your child go alone to another part of the building to wait for you – they need to wait in the Northwest Girlchoir office so that they can be under staff supervision.

Vivace and Amore choristers may wait in the East Lobby if their ride is late.

Waiting areas

Parents and siblings may wait in the hallways or lobby of the church, or in The Bridge Coffee House, located on the west side of the building. The Bridge closes at 6pm on rehearsal days. You may also wait in the Family Chapel, if available. The gym is off-limits, as sound carries into the rehearsal rooms.

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.

Uniform Information

All auditioned choristers (Fresca, Amabile, Vivace, & Amore) wear uniforms for concerts. Uniforms do much more than make our choirs look lovely on the stage. By dressing alike, our choristers come together as a single artistic entity uniting our separate talents into one voice. Many choristers also say that their uniforms create a feeling of belonging to the choir family.

General rules of dress that apply to all choirs:

- Northwest Girlchoir recommends that choristers who wear a uniform wear deodorant, even if she does not regularly wear deodorant. This will help to extend the life of her uniform.
- **Hair should be off the face and shoulders (e.g. in a ponytail or bun, with bangs fastened away from the face) for all choristers.**
- Hair should appear a natural color (no extreme-colored dye). Choristers who dye their hair an “extreme” (i.e. purple or blue) color in day-to-day life are asked to find a way to minimize this appearance as much as possible for concerts. This might mean pulling her hair back in a pony tail or even using a temporary (washable) dye to mask the extreme color.
- Barrettes or headbands should be either black or “hair-colored”. No flowers or other adornments should be worn.
- No jewelry (beyond stud-sized earrings). No bracelets, wristbands, or friendship bracelets.
- Make-up may be used in small amounts and should be tastefully applied, giving a natural look.
- Shoes should be plain, simple black flats or low heels. Remember to check shoes often for fit; children’s feet can grow very fast and what fits in December might be too small by June. A free shoe exchange is available in the choir office – stop by to drop off a pair of too-small shoes and/or to find a new-to-you pair that fits!

Choristers with lost, damaged or un-repairable uniforms will be responsible for the replacement cost:

Fresca: \$75 dress

Vivace: \$75 shirt/\$50 pants

Amabile: \$100 dress

Amore: \$50 shirt/\$50 pants/\$25 scarf

Uniforms will be issued in August/September and January as singers join or are promoted. All alterations are at the discretion of Northwest Girlchoir. Any alterations or mending after January is the responsibility of the chorister’s family. **Northwest Girlchoir will collect all uniforms at the end of the season, and the replacement cost will be charged for unreturned uniforms.**

Uniform Care Guidelines

It may be necessary to have your chorister’s uniform cleaned during the year. Here are the care instructions for each uniform:

DRESS (Fresca, Amabile) or PANTS/SHIRT (Vivace, Amore):

- Turn inside out before washing, and place inside a mesh lingerie bag if possible.
- Machine wash in cold water, on the gentle cycle.
- Hang dry only.
- Do not dry clean.
- DO NOT IRON!

AMORE SCARF:

- Remove before washing top.
- Machine wash in cold water, on the gentle cycle, inside a mesh lingerie bag.
- Do not dry clean.
- DO NOT IRON!

Tour uniform and dress code instructions and guidelines will be provided to choristers in advance of travel during tour meetings and via the packing list and behavioral expectations handouts.

Music Folders (for Fresca through Ensemble choir levels)

- The cost of music rental is included in tuition. All music and folders used by choristers are the property of Northwest Girlchoir.
- Folders can be taken home for practice but must be brought to every rehearsal. Singers who consistently forget their folders at rehearsal will not be allowed to take them home.
- Music folders must be left at the last rehearsal before each concert, so that old music can be filed and new music distributed before the next rehearsal. If there is an exception, choristers will be notified to turn in their folders at the concert location.
- Treat the folders and music with care—each season's folder and music is worth approximately \$50, which will be charged to the chorister if the music folder is lost or damaged.
- Singers are provided a pencil at the beginning of the year and are expected to have a pencil with them at every rehearsal.

Volunteer at Northwest Girlchoir!

Help our Northwest Girlchoir community thrive by contributing your volunteer energy to our mission. We are often looking for volunteers to pitch in on concerts, events and office tasks. We also seek professionals to share their skills in specific volunteer roles, or as members of our committees or board of directors.

Please consider the opportunities below and contact our office at info@northwestgirlchoir.org if you are interested in any of these roles. We will also announce volunteering opportunities regularly in the ChoirWire.

Concert & event volunteers can earn complimentary concert tickets for volunteering.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Concert Support	Help ensure chorister safety, smooth operations, and a welcoming audience experience.
Event Helper	Assist with fundraisers and engagement events.
Uniform volunteer	Help with uniform fittings and year-end collection.
Music Library volunteer	Prep music folders and file sheet music.
Office volunteer	Assist with mailings, data entry, and other office tasks.
Skill-specific volunteer	Share professional skill areas such as foreign language, choreography, sewing, photography, legal, and design.

Board and Committee Opportunities:

Board of Directors	Join this leadership body responsible for governance and fundraising for Northwest Girlchoir.
Alum Engagement Committee	Organize, promote and attend engagement events for Northwest Girlchoir alums.
Development & Community Engagement	Focus on fundraising and engagement activities, including major gift cultivation, the planning of Spring Fling, and parent events, and connecting with Northwest Girlchoir parents, choristers and alums.
Finance Committee	Provide financial oversight for the organization, including budgeting and quarterly review.
Racial Equity Committee	Work to increase equity and access for people of color across the organization.

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 covers only 60% 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 scholarship for choir, tour, and summer camp.

Being a donor also brings you closer to the choir through fun donor benefits! 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.

Donation Levels and Benefits

Donations of any amount receive recognition in Northwest Girlchoir concert programs

Choir Supporters \$250

Invitation to a “behind the scenes” look at our music education program in action

Choral Patrons \$500

Two pre-concert wine and cheese receptions

Leadership Circle \$1,000

Preferred seating at all season concerts, for you and up to three guests

Composer's Circle \$2,500

Invitation for two to an intimate dinner party with Artistic Director Sara Boos and a distinguished special guest.

Donors at this level also receive a copy of Northwest Girlchoir's current CD.

Benefactor's Circle \$5,000

Sponsor or dedicate a concert, including recognition on concert materials and a champagne toast at the concert.

Reserved VIP parking at select concerts.

Director's Circle \$10,000 and Up

Northwest Girlchoir Ensemble sings at your private event, on a mutually agreeable date

In addition, we have opportunities 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 and Community Engagement Jeannine Clarke for more information 206-527-0238 or Jeannine@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 on March 7, 2020, and our annual concert ask in June.

Or you can call our Director of Development and Community Engagement, Jeannine Clarke at (206) 527-0238 or Jeannine@northwestgirlchoir.org to make a donation.

In Case of Emergency

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.