

2023-24 COCPC + COCC Rehearsal & Performance Policies

I. Attendance Policy

Membership in the Children's Choruses is highly competitive in order to ensure artistic excellence. The purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that each member of the chorus is present for enough rehearsals to be prepared for performance in keeping with the artistic standards of the Children's Choruses' mission. Failure to comply with these policies will result in dismissal from the Chorus at the discretion of the Director. If a member is dismissed, tuition is non-refundable. Every musician makes a difference and is of equal importance to the artistry of the choruses. Prompt attendance at all activities is vital to the philosophy of this chorus; thus, any absence or lateness will be taken seriously.

Plan Ahead

Professional and personal responsibility is critical to musical excellence. It is the responsibility of each member and family to look ahead at their schedule(s) for the year and consider whether their schedule allows them to meet COCC/COCPC time requirements. By accepting membership in COCC or COCPC, each student agrees to adhere to these attendance policies and to the full COCC/COCPC schedule of rehearsals and performances.

Attendance is required at all scheduled rehearsals and is mandatory from warm-up to dismissal. Please read below for specific attendance policies:

Absences

An absence is defined as missing an entire rehearsal or any two instances of arriving late or leaving early from a rehearsal. The number of absences is calculated per semester. Typically, the fall semester runs from September to December, and the spring semester runs from January to May.

Attendance at all concerts is mandatory. Missing a concert may result in dismissal from the chorus.

You are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals and to be in your assigned seat prior to warm-up. Please plan on arriving 10 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal start time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the rehearsal process and may contribute to your number of accrued absences. If you are not in your seat, you will be marked late when warm-up begins.

There are three types of absences:

1. **Excused:** Members are allowed two excused absences per semester. Examples include:
 - School performances
 - Religious holidays
 - Funerals
 - Family emergency: must be explained to be considered excused.
 - Family weddings
 - Extreme illness: If you are seriously ill or contagious, please refrain from attending rehearsal. For minor illnesses (i.e., if you are well enough to attend school) chorus members should attend rehearsal and take notes, even if they are unable to sing.

2. **Unexcused:** Members who earn one unexcused absence will be placed on probationary status. Examples include:

- Too much homework
- Studying for an exam
- Any last-minute absence that does not fall under the category of an excused absence.

3. **Last-minute:** Last-minute absences on the day of the rehearsal must be communicated via the Children's Chorus hotline by calling (216) 231-7384. Depending on the nature of the absence, this may be counted as an excused or unexcused absence at the Director's discretion.

Absence Requests

If the nature of an excused absence allows you to inform the chorus office ahead of time, you must submit an absence request form through the following procedure:

- Absence request forms may be found on the COCC website in the MEMBERS section under FORMS. They also may be picked up at any COCC or COCPC rehearsal. Absence request forms also include a space to request early dismissal from or late arrival to a COCC/COCPC service.
- Forms must be submitted via the google doc form at least 2 weeks prior to the requested absence date.
- The Chorus Manager will contact you to inform you if your absence request was denied.

Failure to follow the above absence request procedure will automatically incur an unexcused absence and will result in probationary status (see "Probationary status" below).

Testing Sessions – COCC/PC

If a COCC/PC member miss rehearsal due to an excused or unexcused absence; they will be asked to call into a google voice mailbox and record a testing session. Detailed instructions for using this system will be emailed to the chorus members following their absence, along with notification of what they'll be tested on. Chorus members may be asked to sing excerpts from any of the music that was rehearsed in their absence, including the most difficult passages.

If the results of the testing session are unsatisfactory, the chorus member will be placed (or remain) on probation. The chorister will be notified and asked to either resubmit their testing session or arrive early for the following rehearsal for an in-person testing session with the director covering the same material. A second unsatisfactory performance may result in dismissal from the chorus.

COCC Google Voicemail: (216) 282-7887

COCPC Google Voicemail: (216) 282-4564

Probationary Status

If a member is placed on probation, a parent or guardian will be notified of the member's status and the probation must be cleared the following week in a check-in or makeup session (see "Check-in Sessions")

and "Makeup Session" above). A member may be placed on probationary status for any of the following reasons:

- One unexcused absence
- More than two excused absences within one semester
- One unsatisfactory testing/makeup session
- Non-adherence to the Behavior Expectations described in Section II

Under extraordinary circumstances, the Director may make an exception to the above policies on a case-by-case basis.

School Music Programs

Please take the time to review your family and school schedule. If there is a foreseen conflict with any of these rehearsals or performances, it is important to notify the Manager of Children's Chorus as soon as possible. We ask that you please follow these guidelines when making decisions about potential schedule conflicts:

- School music program performances take precedence over Children's Chorus rehearsals.
- Children's Chorus performances take precedence over school music program rehearsals or other school-related activities.

If a conflict exists between a school music program performance and a Children's Chorus performance, every effort should be made to find a possible compromise between the two services (arriving late to a warmup, leaving a rehearsal early, etc.). If such a compromise is not possible, the student should prioritize the school performance.

II. Behavior Expectations

Any organization that has high performance standards must also have high behavioral standards. Being a member of any of The Cleveland Orchestra choral ensembles should be a positive and enriching experience for everyone. Choristers are therefore expected to treat all directors, staff, and other chorus members with respect.

All members of the Children's Choruses are expected to:

1. Choose comments and actions that are positive, kind and constructive.
2. Choose learning behaviors that show the best possible effort.
3. Choose to be an active listener at all rehearsals and performances.
4. Choose to occupy their own learning space in a manner which shows dignity and respect, and free of distractions that interfere with teaching and learning.

If a chorister does not adhere to the expectations described above, the Director will first have a private conversation with the student to discuss the exhibited behavior and identify solutions for improvement. Should the behavior not improve, the following steps may be taken:

- The Manager of Children's Chorus will contact the member's parent/guardian on behalf of the Director to discuss the Chorister's behavior.

- The Director will meet with the Chorister's parents/guardians, and at this time the Chorister may be placed on probationary status.
- The Chorister may be removed from the Chorus.

Depending on the severity of the infraction, the Chorus Directors and Staff reserve the right to immediately act upon any of the steps listed above.

III. Communication & Rehearsal Information

If you wish to contact the Chorus Office, please address all Children's Chorus questions or concerns to Angel Tyler, Children's Chorus manager at atyler@clevelandorchestra.com or (216) 456-8408. This is the direct line to Angel's office at Severance Hall. The Chorus staff occasionally works from home during the week. Therefore, **email** is currently the preferred form of communication. However, you are welcome to call this number and leave a voicemail message for Angel if she is not at Severance or able to answer her phone. She will receive voicemails by email and will reply to you as soon as possible. Do NOT use this number to contact her on a Tuesday evening right before rehearsal – use the Hotline for that.

The Chorus Office communicates ALL rehearsal information such as scheduling and rehearsal changes via email; please make sure to check your email regularly.

Children's Choruses Hotline

For last minute conflicts on the day of a rehearsal, please leave a message on the Children's Chorus hotline: **(216) 231-7384**. All other absence notifications should be communicated via an absence request form. For more information on absences and absence request forms, please see the "Attendance Policy" section above.

You may also call the Children's Choruses Hotline to confirm the status of a rehearsal, if you are ever unsure. Upon calling the hotline, you will hear a recorded message confirming the time, location, and date of the next COCC or COCPC service.

"Remind" Text Messaging System

Chorus members and their families will sign up for text messaging service through Remind to receive day-of reminders about rehearsal times and locations, updated release times in the event of an early end to rehearsal (most often during orchestra or conductor rehearsals), and other regular reminders pertaining to chorus schedule. These updates will generally be sent via email, but chorus members who would like to receive text alerts as well can sign up by following the instructions below:

COCCPC members: text **@cocp** to **81010**

COCC members: text **@coccc1** to **81010**

Standard text message rates apply. All emergency updates (such as last-minute rehearsal cancellations or changes) will be communicated via the emergency phone system discussed below.

I V. Concert Attire

The following attire requirements must be met for all performances. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all elements of their chorister's concert uniform are in order prior to a performance.

Option 1

- Black lay down collar dress shirt
- Black “symphony circle” skirt, hemmed to 11” from the floor in dress shoes
- Black dress shoes, flat (NO heels, jewels, or distracting embellishments)
- Black opaque tights or hose (NOT patterned)

Option 2

- Black lay down collar dress shirt
- Black tuxedo/dress pants
- Black dress shoes
- Black dress socks

In addition to the above attire pieces, all members of the Preparatory Chorus will wear a black vest, and all members of the Children's Chorus will wear a black COCC blazer. These items are provided by the Musical Arts Association and must be returned to the Chorus Office at the end of the season.

All choristers should abide by the following:

- Sneakers, sandals or open-toe shoes are not permitted.
- The only permissible jewelry is stud earrings and non-electric wristwatches.
- Perfumes or colognes are not permitted.
- Hair must be tied back and pulled away from your face. Large and/or colored jewelry and headbands are not permitted.

Failure to adhere to attire guidelines will result in removal from the concert.

V. Inclement Weather

It is extremely rare for a performance to be cancelled due to inclement weather. In the unlikely event that a performance is cancelled, all of the above messaging systems will be implemented (text, email, and phone).

Additionally, the Children's Chorus Hotline will be updated and you may call this number at any time to hear the most current information on the outgoing message. If you leave a message for the Chorus Manager in the middle of a weather emergency, she will likely not have the opportunity to return your call. Please assume that your message has been received even if you do not receive a response.

If a service is NOT cancelled, and you feel it is unsafe to travel to the service location, then you should not do so. Chorus members commute from all over northeast Ohio and the weather in one area may be more severe than in another; you have to decide what is in your best interest. If you must miss rehearsal due to weather, you will be required to text or call the google voice number to leave a message with your testing session prior to the next rehearsal.

VI. Membership & Tuition

The Cleveland Orchestra Children's Chorus is open to students in grades 6-8 The Cleveland Orchestra Preparatory Chorus is open to students in grades 5-7. All boys must have unchanged treble voices to participate in either chorus. Membership is by invitation following competitive auditions.

For the 2023-2024 season, there will be no tuition fee for participation in the Preparatory, Children's and Youth Choruses. Assistance with the purchase of uniforms and concert attire is available to those who request it.

VII. Music

The music choristers receive is part of a greater choral music library, which is an important part of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus archives. Please take care of your music: do not fold corners, throw away loose covers or write miscellaneous notes in the scores. If a score is returned damaged or marked with colored pencils, highlighters, ink, or anything other than pencil, choristers are financially responsible for the replacement cost of the score. Scores are on loan to singers from the Musical Arts Association and must be returned promptly at the end of the season. Scores that are not returned within one week of the final concert will be considered lost, and choristers will be billed for their current replacement costs, regardless of their age or condition.

Choristers are encouraged to make notes in their music to assist them in remembering musical instructions. However, under no circumstances should choristers mark their scores with anything other than a No. 2 pencil unless you are planning to purchase their score. Pencils are always provided at rehearsals.

A black folder is provided free of charge; please use this folder to protect your music. This folder may also be used for performances. If you'd like to purchase a sturdier stringed black chorus folder, we recommend purchasing the **Standard Black Folder** from MUSICFOLDER.com.

If illness or an emergency causes you to miss a concert, please return your music in person to the Manager of Children's Choruses. Music may also be returned by mail to 11001 Euclid Ave, Cleveland, OH 44106, or dropped off to the Severance Music Center Security Office during business hours (please be sure to let security know the music is for the chorus office).

VII. Online Resources

COCC Website

The Cleveland Orchestra Children's Choruses website (<http://cocc.cochorus.com>) is maintained by the Children's Chorus Manager and contains a wealth of information and helpful resources. All pages of the website are accessible to the public, with the exception of pages accessible in the MEMBERS section. These pages are password protected and can only be accessed by chorus members, parents or guardians, directors, and staff.

Chorus members should check the website regularly for the chorus rehearsal and performance schedules, updates, announcements, study materials, messages from the Director, text translations, and other materials. All pages under the Members tab can be accessed using the current season's password.

Google Calendar

All Children's Chorus and Preparatory Chorus services are documented on two separate public Google Calendars. Chorus members and families may sync these calendars with their own Google calendars. Syncing the Google calendar is not necessary for general viewing but will allow you to access the listed dates without logging onto the COCC website.

IX. Rehearsal Preparation

As a member of COCC/COCP you are expected to be prepared for each rehearsal. Study materials will be made available as necessary on the Children's Choruses website in the MEMBERS section. Study materials may include audio tracks of separate vocal parts, audio tracks of foreign language pronunciation, and notes from the Director. It is your responsibility to bring all music to every rehearsal. Extra copies of the music are not always available.

X. Rehearsal & Performance Expectations

Rehearsal Decorum

Please be respectful of the people around you and adhere to the following rehearsal guidelines:

- Turn off and/or silence all cell phones, tablets and any other electronic devices and put them in a place where they will not distract you! The Chorus Manager and/or the Directors reserve the right to confiscate a cell phone if it is out during rehearsal. The cell phone may be picked up at the conclusion of the rehearsal.
- Do not wear perfume, cologne, aftershave, scented deodorant or scented hair products to rehearsals or performances. Many of your fellow choristers are sensitive or allergic to such aromas. Take care with personal hygiene.
- Always have a pencil with you during rehearsals. If you forget to bring a pencil, you can pick one up from the Chorus Manager at the check-in table.
- Allow enough time to find your place on the seating chart and your chair before the start of a rehearsal. Be in your seat before rehearsal resumes following a break.
- Do not bring food or drink into any rehearsal space before, during or after rehearsals.
- Do not bring homework or books to rehearsal unless you have been notified in advance that there will be downtime.
- Visitors are allowed in rehearsal only with the permission of the Director. Visitor attendance must be cleared in advance through the Manager of Children's Choruses.

The Director may give the Chorus a break at the mid-point of rehearsals. Please remain in your seat until this break. Use the restroom before rehearsal starts. In the event of an emergency that forces you to leave the rehearsal before a scheduled break, please be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible while exiting and returning to the room.

Stage Rehearsal Decorum

In addition to all of the guidelines outlined above, please note the following for rehearsals held on stage at Severance Hall:

- Only music and folders are allowed on stage. Please leave other items (coats and personal belongings) in the warm-up space.
- If you arrive late for an on-stage orchestra rehearsal, you must check in with the Chorus Manager and she will determine if you are allowed to go on stage or must wait in the Hall until break.
- Talking is NOT permitted once tuning begins.
- Dress rehearsals do not require concert attire, unless specifically noted.

- Guest attendance at Chorus-only stage rehearsals is allowed only with the permission of the Director. All orchestra rehearsals are closed to the public.
- In the event that you cannot sing during a stage rehearsal, please inform the Director and the Chorus Manager. You will be asked to sit in the front section of the Hall and take notes.

Concert Department

Avoid doing anything that might detract from the audience's perception of a concert or your fellow chorus members' performance. On-stage conversation is not only distracting and unprofessional; it is extremely rude to the conductor, chorus members, and orchestra members. Talking is NOT permitted once the concertmaster enters the stage.

- While entering and exiting the stage, carry your folder in your upstage hand (the hand not facing the house/audience).
- Stand and sit as quietly as possible and in unison.
- If for any reason you miss the filing-on process, you must sit out that portion of the concert.
- Please do not applaud after a concert.
- Remember: DO NOT TAKE CELL PHONES onto the stage. Electronic wristwatches (which may have alarms) are also not permitted to be worn during a performance.

XI. Tickets

Complimentary or discounted tickets are not available for Christmas concerts at Severance Music Center in which the Children's Chorus participates. Christmas concerts frequently sell out in advance. Families that are planning to attend are encouraged to purchase tickets to these concerts early in the season.

On occasion, discounted tickets may be offered for other concerts during the week of the concert. In these instances, discounts will not be applicable to tickets that have already been purchased.

Please see our full concert listing to view ticket information for particular performances. To purchase tickets for concerts held at Severance Hall, please call the Severance Hall ticket office at (216) 231-1111, or visit <https://clevelandorchestra.com>.

XII. Parking

Parking at rehearsal venues is free of charge. When the Children's Chorus is rehearsing or performing at Severance Hall, dated parking vouchers will be issued to each chorus member for entry into the Severance Hall garage prior to the rehearsal date.

The Children's Choruses staff and directors reserve the right to change the policies and procedures of this handbook at any time without prior notice. In the event that any changes are made, the Manager of Children's Choruses shall post the updated policies and procedures on the Children's Choruses website and immediately notify COCC/COCP members and families about the changes via email.