

Kalamazoo Children's Chorus Handbook

2023-2024



P.O. Box 50414 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

(269) 547-7183

www.kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Index

Introduction, p. 2

Purpose, p.2

Curriculum, p.2

Chorus Organization, p.2-3

Admission Policy p.3

Auditions, p.3

Rehearsals & Performances p.3-4

Uniforms, p.4-5

Concert Tickets, p.5

Financial Obligation. p.5

Scholarships, p.6

Additional Expenses. p.6

Fundraisers, p.6

Travel Escrow Accounts, p.6-7

Attendance Policy, p.7

Weather Cancellations. p.8

Religious Holidays, p.8

Behavior Policy, p.8

Dismissal, p.9

Withdrawal, p.9

Video Recording, p.9

Donations & Development, p.10

Contact Information, p.11

Welcome to the Kalamazoo Children's Chorus! KCC is a nonprofit community arts organization that was founded in 1981. The chorus is open by audition to all children from third grade through high school and is composed of singers in two choirs that correspond to the children's age and vocal development: The Songbirds and The Rising Voices.

Purpose

The purpose of the organization is to offer an opportunity for children to explore and develop an appreciation of choral music in all of its forms and styles. The Kalamazoo Children's Chorus believes that we can "build our community, one voice at a time" by investing in our young people and experiencing our world and its different perspectives through music. We hold our singers to high standards of musicianship and professionalism, helping to educate while also finding joy in the beauty of our creations.

Curriculum

The Kalamazoo Children's Chorus singers study and perform a variety of music, from traditional folk songs to contemporary musical literature. The music is chosen from a wide variety of traditions and an array of settings, offering children the opportunity to sing in many languages and learn music styles from many cultures and periods in history. Through the art of song, students have an opportunity to fully appreciate the poetry, philosophy, and human emotion expressed in the lyrics of the music they learn. At no time is religious music programmed to endorse a particular faith or ideology. The repertoire is selected to introduce our choir to different styles, cultures, and themes and is not intended to impose or intrude upon anyone's personal beliefs. All music is studied for music's sake. Therefore, we encourage all singers to keep an open mind to the music and texts we sing. Beauty can be found in the most unexpected places, and even materials that may not speak to who we are as individuals may shed light on the lives of others.

Chorus Organization

Board of Directors

The Kalamazoo Children's Chorus is managed by a professional board of directors. Two positions of the Board of Directors are reserved for members whose children are choristers. Those elected to the Board serve a two-year term. The Board of Directors is elected by the Parent League.

Parent League

All parents of KCC singers are ex officio members of the Parent League, which meets at least once a year under the direction of the Board officers to elect the Board of Directors. **At least one parent per family is required at the Annual Parent Meeting**, which is held one week before the start of the season (usually the last Tuesday in August). Please note each child, no matter what chorus level or how many years with the chorus, must have an adult member attend the fall meeting. This meeting is important, and **attendance is mandatory**.

The KCC Parent League coordinates all social activities for the organization and offers a variety of opportunities for parents. Essential activities coordinated by the Parent League include, but are not limited to: assisting with uniform fittings, acting as weekly room chaperones, ushering

concerts, transport and set-up risers, arranging carpools, taking candid photographs at events, assisting at auditions, etc. Committee sign-ups are provided at the Annual Parent Organizational Meeting and periodically throughout the year.

Admission Policy

Membership in the Kalamazoo Children’s Chorus is by audition and is open to individuals entering third grade through twelfth grade. Admission is based on the audition and available space in the choirs. KCC is committed to creating a safe, loving space that welcomes any student despite their race, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender expression, learning style, ability status or socioeconomic class.

Auditions

Before each new season begins, we will host in-person auditions- held at Portage Chapel Hill Church. After that, prospective students may submit virtual auditions or request a private audition to be eligible for the next concert cycle (Holiday, Cabaret, Spring). See below for a description of what to expect.

In-person Auditions

Before each new season begins, we will host in-person auditions- held at Portage Chapel Hill Church. The Director(s) shall conduct the auditions, which include: singing a familiar song, pitch matching/memory, voice range/timbre, and harmonization ability.

New member auditions for **3rd-5th graders** will be held in groups of 4. Come ready to learn a song and sing together!

New member auditions for **6th-12th graders** will be held in individual slots. Please prepare a short selection that showcases your voice (ex: a choir piece you are working on at school or lessons, a song from a favorite musical, or even “Happy Birthday!”). An accompanist will be provided; please provide a copy of the sheet music you will sing.

Rolling Virtual Auditions

Rolling audition video submissions will also be accepted three rehearsals into the concert cycle (Holiday, Cabaret, Spring). Please record a video of yourself singing (can be done a cappella or with accompaniment) and include your name and grade. Email submissions and questions to Taylor Gudbrandson at taylor@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org.

Please note that admission and ability to advance into a choir are at the discretion of the KCC Directors.

Rehearsals & Performance

KCC rehearses every Tuesday evening from September through April. All choirs perform a minimum of three formal concerts per year. Additionally, the choir may perform at a variety of community events by invitation that contribute to the cultural environment of Kalamazoo County and the surrounding areas.

The general schedule is as follows:

ALL Weekly Tuesdays Rehearsals

6:00-7:30pm – Songbirds & Rising Voices

Traveling Choir Rehearsals

Saturdays from 10:00am-12:00pm OR Thursdays: 6:00-7:30pm

Concert Week

Members can expect additional rehearsals during concert week. A typical concert week will have the following rehearsal schedule:

1. Tuesday at the regularly scheduled time
2. Saturday from 10:00am-12:00pm at Portage Chapel Hill Church

Performance Call Times

Call time for most performances is typically 90 minutes before curtain. So, for example, the call time for a 3 P.M. performance is 1:30pm.

Specific Dates/Times can be found on our Season Calendar located on the KCC Website www.kalamazoochildrenschorus.org, our social media, and will also be distributed to you in newsletters as well as hardcopies.

Uniforms

The Kalamazoo Children's Chorus is expected to present a polished concert appearance. KCC has chosen a uniform as the best way to accomplish this. We want all choristers to feel comfortable and confident in their uniform and each individual will select the KCC uniform style that best fits that identity.

KCC will provide the following uniform items: plaid skirt OR dress pants, KCC embroidered vest, and a red bow tie.

****We have limited supplies of Oxford Shirts, and shoes. First come first served.**

Each chorister will provide black dress shoes (simple, matte & closed toe please), a Dennis Oxford Shirt (to be ordered through KCC) and black tights or socks. If you have black dress pants at home, bring them to your fitting.

****Optional matching plaid hair scrunchies and headbands can be ordered.**

Uniform fittings are available by appointment. Sign Up links are located on your Season Calendar and in the Weekly Newsletter.

Dennis Uniform items can be purchased at www.dennisuniform.com. School code is HKC.

The articles provided by KCC are to be kept in good condition. They are distributed at the beginning of the year and collected at the end of the year. Any article that becomes soiled during

the year should be professionally dry-cleaned. KCC dry-cleans all uniforms at the end of each season. Abnormal wear or failure to return the uniform will result in a \$250 assessment that will be charged to replace that item.

Members not in complete and correct uniform for a performance will not participate that day. All parts of the uniform must remain on until out of public view.

Concert Tickets

Tickets will be sold through an online ticketing platform, Ludus. You may also call the KCC phone (269) 547-7183 and leave a message with your name, your child's name, how many tickets you would like to purchase and a number to reach you.

Financial Obligation

The financial obligation for the 2023-2024 Season has been set at: **\$425**. Payments may be made in full at the beginning of the season or in installments- due the first of the month to be paid in full by December 1st.

Payment schedule:

May 1st: \$50 Hold My Spot

Sept. 1: \$100

Oct. 1: \$100

Nov. 1: \$100

Dec. 1: \$75

Tuition can be paid directly in Charms. When you make a payment, leave a description for what the money goes to. Full tuition payments are labeled "Fixed Payments." If paying in installments, you will be logging it as a "Miscellaneous Payment."

Checks are also accepted via mail or by handing them in at the attendance desk when you arrive at rehearsal.

Always remember: KCC has never and will never turn down a student who wants to sing but can not meet the tuition requirements. Tuition Scholarships are available.

***If tuition is not paid in full or if other arrangements have not been made with the financial director by December 1st, the member may be removed from KCC. Fees for the season are due in full even if a child drops out of the program or is removed at any time during the season. Alternative tuition arrangements must be made with our Program Manager Caitlin Kramer caitlin@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org.*

Scholarships

The Kalamazoo Children's Chorus believes that any child who wants to sing has a place within our choir. No one will be turned away due to their inability to pay tuition. With help from our community sponsors, Scholarships are available. We ask that scholarship applicants contribute what they can toward tuition and only ask for what they truly need to make KCC a reality.

Scholarship application forms are available online at <http://www.kalamazoochildrenschorus.org/forms/> or by calling 269-547-7183.

Additional Expenses

Each chorister is required to purchase, or obtain, the necessary uniform requirements (see "Uniforms" on page 6)

Social events, like the Fall Retreat, are both optional and additional expenses.

Formal Concert Tickets

Tours and Trips with the Chorus

Fundraisers

Evergreen Sale

At the end of September, we will be launching our annual Evergreen Sale! Friends and Family can reserve their holiday wreaths, swags, and centerpieces! Items can be shipped directly to the buyer, or to the church for the kids to deliver. All proceeds go to helping the Chorus.

Traveling Choir Fundraisers

During tour seasons, KCC will host 1-2 additional fundraising opportunities to help students reduce the cost of a tour. See "Travel Escrow Accounts" for more information.

Travel Escrow Accounts

Opportunities are available for advanced singers to participate in tours to various locales, both foreign and domestic. KCC maintains a separate "travel escrow" account for all singers who choose to participate in a KCC-sponsored fundraiser. If a child chooses to participate in a KCC-sponsored travel fundraising activity, the profits from their individual sales are designated by the KCC Board to be held in escrow in the singer's personal travel account.

- The credits held in escrow are available to help pay for any future tour expenses the singer might incur. They are not available to pay any other KCC fees. The escrowed funds are owned by KCC and are not eligible for cash withdrawal by the singer.
- Direct deposits made by a family toward a singer's or chaperone's tour costs as well as charges for the tour, are also accounted for in the singer's travel account.

- Statements showing activity in the travel account are provided once each year and more frequently if your child participates in a tour. You may also request a statement for your singer's account at any time, and parents are encouraged to review the account activity and accuracy of the information shown.
- Any balance remaining in the travel account at graduation or withdrawal/removal from KCC reverts to the KCC general travel fund. This fund is used to provide financial assistance and pay general travel costs not covered by the touring fees charged to participants. Upon request, any balance remaining in a graduating singer's travel fund can be transferred into an active sibling's travel fund.

Attendance Policy

With limited rehearsals before a performance, we expect each chorister to be present at every rehearsal. In the event of an absence, communication is essential.

Your music binder barcode will be scanned upon your arrival each week. ALWAYS bring your music binder to rehearsal and concerts.

If a chorister is absent for more than one rehearsal it will be necessary to schedule an additional "make-up" session with their director to cover missed material. Excessive absence, absence without communication or failure to attend make up sessions may result in removal from the concert cycle.

Planned Absences:

Each chorister is allotted one planned absence per semester. Please download and fill out the Planned Absence Form at the beginning of the season.

In the event of an emergency, or illness/exposure:

Email in to caitlin@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org and CC your child's director as soon as you are able. Virtual Tune-Ins are available every rehearsal via Zoom so students do not fall behind during sickness. Join with the following link: <https://bit.ly/3zDkvLe>

Mrs. Herrera (Songbirds): hannah@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Mrs. Gudbrandson (Rising Voices): taylor@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Concerts and Dress Rehearsals are mandatory for all and are only excused due to illness/emergency or if participating in a conflicting school concert. Communicate known conflicts at the beginning of the season.

Weather Cancellations

Every effort will be made to announce cancellations as early as possible. Sometimes, weather conditions deteriorate too rapidly to accommodate this. Announcements regarding canceling rehearsals will be made via text through Charms (please input your phone number!), via KCC social media, and the weekly newsletter. **If Kalamazoo Public Schools are closed due to weather, there will be no rehearsal.**

If parents or choristers do not feel comfortable making the drive to rehearsal due to weather conditions, we encourage members to use their discretion and notify KCC via email for an excused absence. The safety of members and their families is our utmost priority.

Religious Holidays

Any singer absent because of a significant religious holiday shall not have the absence counted against them. These absences should be prearranged.

Behavior Policy

Unprofessional behavior (such as: creating a distraction from others learning, unkind language/interactions, and phone/tablet usage etc) will result in the following consequences:

First offense – verbal warning

The *second offense* is a verbal warning specifying that it is your second warning and that removal from rehearsal is imminent. Removal from a second rehearsal will result in a meeting with the member, parents, director, and KCC Artistic Director.

The *third offense* will result in removal from rehearsal. The rehearsal is counted as an unexcused absence. Following the rehearsal, there will be a brief meeting with the director, and the member may receive a discipline infraction form that must be signed by the parent and returned. *Removal from the program will be left to the discretion of the director should a student engage in three or more offenses.*

Items Not To Be Used/Permitted On School Grounds:

Spray Paint
Laser Pointers
Mace/Pepper Spray
Weapons of Any Kind (i.e. Knives, BB Guns, AirSoft Guns, Firearms)
Drugs/Tobacco Products

Possession of the above items during KCC sponsored events will cause immediate removal from the program.

Dismissal

Failure to follow Attendance and Behavior Policies will result in dismissal from KCC. However, it does not dismiss you from your financial obligation to the organization.

Withdrawal

If you choose to withdraw any time before the second rehearsal, all but a \$50 processing fee will be refunded to you—withdrawal after the second rehearsal results in all tuition being forfeited. Should you experience unusual or extreme experiences outside your control that require you to withdraw from the chorus, refund appeals to the KCC Board can be made. Should you need to withdraw, you must contact us at caitlin@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org or at 269-547-7183 to inform us of your intentions. We ask that you complete an exit evaluation before your withdrawal and return your uniform.

Video Recording Policy

It is the policy of the Kalamazoo Children's Chorus board of directors that video recording is not allowed at KCC sponsored programs. Please enjoy being in the moment of music... flash Photography may scare the nervous singers :)

Donations & Development

KCC continues to be grateful for the support we receive from parents, families, alumni, and friends. Tuition covers approximately 48% of expenses incurred by the Kalamazoo Children's Chorus. Charitable contributions are tax-deductible and are deeply appreciated. KCC is forming strong partnerships with corporations and foundations in the Southwest Michigan area to enhance our participants' musical experiences. If you know of a potential funding source or would like to help us, please contact the KCC office via caitlin@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org or at 547-7183.

PayPal:

www.paypal.me/kcchorus

Help KCC Avoid the PayPal Fee by designating your payment as "Sending to a Friend"

1. Log into PayPal: www.paypal.me/kcchorus
 - a. - if you don't have an account, you can create one at the same link!
2. Type in your info and be sure to leave a note describing what the payment is for: Tuition, Camp, DC Tour etc.
3. Hit "Change" to change the payment to "Sending to a Friend"
4. Enter your payment details and you are good to go!

Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Kalamazoo Children's Chorus, PO Box 50414
Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Website: www.kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Staff Email:

Taylor Gudbrandson, Artistic Director/ED taylor@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org
Caitlin Kramer, Program Manager caitlin@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Directors:

Taylor Gudbrandson, Rising Voices – taylor@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org
Hannah Herrera, Songbirds – hannah@kalamazoochildrenschorus.org

Social Media:

Find us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube!

KCC Phone Number: 269-547-7183