



**Singer & Family Handbook**  
**2016-2017**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the South Hills Children's Choir (SHCC)! The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with basic information about the SHCC. Please feel free to contact our office if you need further information or clarification of procedures.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of SHCC is to provide quality music education with the goal of attaining the highest level of artistic excellence in choral music performance. SHCC endeavors to enrich the lives of youth from all religious, racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds from Southwestern Pennsylvania's youth. We seek to foster the ideals of musical excellence, beauty, goodness, and truth.

The SHCC is a music performance and education program for children and youth that emphasizes the development of musical skills, discipline, sense of accomplishment, and understanding. Singing, as a powerful means of expression, is the major focus of the SHCC musical experience. We hope this experience will form the foundation of a life-long relationship with music for the singers and their families.

## **ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

This corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law) or (b) by a corporation contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

Upon the dissolution of this corporation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code) or shall be distributed to the Federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed by the Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

## THE PROGRAM

Currently our program is divided into two main choirs: **Canticle**, our newcomer group for ages 8-10, and **Concordia**, the Intermediate Choir for ages 11-15. We also have a touring group, **Chorale**, that requires a further audition. This group is selected from the Concordia choir and requires a more serious commitment, but has the opportunity to sing at special venues throughout the year.

## CURRICULUM

High quality music from all styles/periods forms the foundation for musical learning and serves as the basis for the curriculum. We believe that "children should be led to musical masterpieces by means of musical masterpieces." (Zoltán Kodály)

SHCC members study and perform a variety of music from traditional folk songs to contemporary musical literature. The music chosen is commonly from the widest variety of traditions and performed in an array of settings. The repertoire is selected to educate the SHCC members and is not intended to impose or intrude upon anyone's personal beliefs. Therefore, it is essential that all singers are willing to sing all of the repertoire.

Since the best musical experiences for children are inherent in great music, the SHCC repertoire will include the music of Mozart, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Britten, Kodály, Vaughan Williams, Copland, and Bartok, among others. Folk, popular, gospel, spiritual, and patriotic music will also be included.

The children are taught to use their vocal instruments through vocalises, posture, breathing, and tone production. The essence of the musical experience is based on pitch and movement as it is felt and heard. The ability to audiate (hear music in one's head), to conceptualize music, to perceive and respond musically develops naturally from the human voice. Singing skill and musical understanding are essential components of the creative process and fundamental concepts of music education.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The SHCC is meant to be a positive learning experience for the singers – one that they will carry with them throughout their lifetime. These young people will be sharing wonderful times together both musically and socially. SHCC members are expected to understand and practice commitment and responsibility. We encourage all youth to take pride in their membership of this unique choir program. Every member is expected to remain active and committed to the program for the entire season of his/her enrollment, which begins in September and concludes with a spring concert in May.

## **AUDITIONS**

Auditions for the SHCC are held May through September for children entering grades two through ten. Scheduling will be handled through our website. Special auditions may be arranged by contacting the SHCC office by phone or email.

## **COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS**

The success of the SHCC is dependent in large part on the support of music teachers throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. SHCC singers should be leaders in their school music ensembles. Every SHCC singer should strive to be an active participant in his or her school choir if one is available.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### TUITION AND FEES

The SHCC requires each member to pay fees annually based upon his/her choir assignment. A non-refundable registration fee of \$25 is required at the time of registration. This fee does not apply to tuition.

Tuition is \$400 (Concordia) or \$350 (Canticle) per year if paid in full by October 1. This is a discount of \$70. Tuition includes a choir t-shirt and two tickets to each of the Winter and Spring concerts.

Tuition may also be paid in installments **by check only** (see amounts below). All checks must be submitted together by October 1 in order for students to participate in the choir. For your safety, checks will be kept in a secure location until deposited per the following schedule:

# of Checks	Date of Check	Concordia Initial/Subsequent	Canticle Initial/Subsequent
One	October 1	\$400	\$350
Two	October 1 and January 1	\$210/\$210	\$185/\$185
Seven	1st of the month, October - April	\$117.50 (1) / \$58.75 (6)	\$105 (1) / \$52.50 (6)

Some financial assistance may be available upon request. Students are encouraged to sell ads for the concert programs to offset the cost of the uniform and tuition.

Additional discounts available:

- Pre-Registration before May 30: 10% off following year tuition.
- Additional sibling discount: \$50.
- Bring a Friend Enrollment: \$40.

## PAYMENT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

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.** You are required to sign and return a Financial Contract with your Registration Form in order for your child to participate in the SHCC for the season.

You will receive a statement of account in September that shows your known fees for the year. Additional fees will be billed as they are incurred, though we strive to keep these at a minimum and choir costs affordable.

## METHODS OF PAYMENT

Currently, tuition and donations can be accepted in cash, by check (made out to "South Hills Children's Choir"), or via Paypal. **Those paying tuition by installment must provide checks by October 1.** Any checks returned by the bank to the SHCC will be subject to a \$30.00 fee per item.

## **REHEARSALS PROCEDURES**

These procedures are enforced for the singers' safety, to ensure orderly rehearsals, and out of respect and courtesy for each other.

- Arrive *not more* than 15 minutes before the designated rehearsal time and go directly to the attendance table to sign in before reporting to the rehearsal area.
- After signing in, go directly to your place.
- Late arrivals must always sign-in immediately upon arrival. Any child arriving more than 30 minutes late to two separate rehearsals will receive one unexcused absence. A written note is necessary for early dismissal from a rehearsal.
- Singers do not leave the room after signing in unless there is an emergency or special permission has been granted. Please use the restroom and get drinks before you sign in.

- Always bring your music folder, music word sheets, and two sharpened pencils to rehearsal.
- Leave attendance notes, payments, permission slips, etc., at the attendance table.
- Do not roam about the building at any time. Students should only be in the rehearsal area, the foyer, or the upstairs bathroom. Running, yelling, and rowdy behavior are not permitted in the building or on the grounds at any time.
- Do not bring food or drink into the rehearsal area. Try to eat a nutritious meal before you arrive at the rehearsal facility. You are encouraged, however, to bring bottled water to rehearsals or make use of the drinking fountain on site.
- If, for any reason, a child cannot actively participate in a rehearsal, the singer should bring a written note and observe quietly and attentively. Non-participating siblings must be supervised at all times.
- Singers are responsible for taking home any handouts that are distributed at rehearsals. These notices are important sources of information and should be requested by the parents from the singer. The SHCC will attempt to communicate through e-mail as much as possible.
- Parents and interested members of the community are always welcome and are encouraged to observe rehearsals as space allows. A parent should always accompany minor siblings.
- At all times show respect for each other, parent volunteers, directors, staff, and the facilities. Pay attention to the director at all times. Do not behave in a manner which is disruptive to the rehearsal or distracting to fellow singers, directors, or accompanists, or which prohibits a positive and successful rehearsal.
- SHCC is not liable for any accident, injury, or altercation that may occur.

### **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Disruptive behavior will result in the following consequences:

1. First offense - verbal warning
2. Second offense - a verbal warning, specifying that it is your second warning and removal from rehearsal is imminent.
3. Third offense- parents will be invited to sit on rehearsal with their singer.

4. Fourth offense - removal from rehearsal. Following the rehearsal, there will be a brief meeting with the director and the singer may receive a discipline infraction form that must be signed by the parent and returned. This will remain in the singer's permanent record.

Removal from a second rehearsal will result in a meeting with the singer, parents, director, and an SHCC staff member.

Removal from a third or subsequent rehearsal will result in a leave of absence from the program, the length to be determined on an individual basis. It may also result in removal from the program.

Any singer caught with drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any type of weapon (including pocket knives) will be immediately suspended from the program.

### **REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE**

Membership in the South Hills Children's Choir is a commitment to faithful, consistent, and punctual attendance. It is expected that rehearsals take a very high priority in each child's life. Each child is holding a valuable place in this choir. All rehearsals should be a priority unless otherwise indicated on the choir calendar.

#### ABSENCES FROM REHEARSAL

A choir member is allowed three excused absences per semester. Any absence beyond three *will require a make-up rehearsal*. In order to be excused, the SHCC office must be notified prior to the rehearsal. Failure to notify the office of an absence will result in an unexcused absence. In the case of a planned absence, notice as far in advance as possible is appreciated.

In addition, parents must submit a written excuse for each tardiness or early dismissal (this can be done via e-mail). A written excuse should include the child's name, name of his/her choir, reason for tardiness or dismissal, and a parent signature. If a singer is tardy 30 minutes or more to two separate rehearsals, the singer *may be required to attend one make-up rehearsal*.



The final dress rehearsal before a concert is mandatory. If a singer is absent from this final rehearsal (as noted on the rehearsal schedule as "Dress Rehearsal"), he or she **may not be allowed to perform**. Sound checks, staging, and other final details are handled at these rehearsals, and, thus, it is important that the director knows how many singers to expect.

### SPRING BREAK GUIDELINES

SHCC does not take a spring break but respects that many of our singers do. With the large number of school districts represented, please inform the choir via e-mail or phone message if your choir member will be taking a spring break and when.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If the weather is bad, check the choir website by 5 p.m. on the rehearsal night to see if it is cancelled. The SHCC will do its best to find a make-up time for these missed rehearsals. If you feel that weather is not safe for you to travel, but the choir is still meeting, please leave a message with the Choir office.

### RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Any singer absent because of a major religious holiday shall not have the absence counted against him/her. These absences should be pre-arranged.

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FROM REHEARSAL

If no contact has been made with the SHCC prior to an absence, it will be considered unexcused. All unexcused absences must be made up. If a singer is unable to demonstrate commitment to the SHCC through good attendance and punctuality, the singer may not be allowed to perform. Should an excessive number of excused or unexcused absences occur, removal from the program will be considered.

## PERFORMANCE PROCEDURES

Performances require the very best conduct, appearance, and musicianship. Information concerning specific concerts will be distributed on performance detail sheets prior to these events. Singers should conduct themselves at all times in a calm, polite, and professional manner. They must be respectful of the SHCC staff and appointed chaperones at all times.

- Singers should always eat a nutritious meal and get plenty of rest before a performance. Be sure the singer has used the restroom prior to arrival at the performance site.
- Singers should arrive ten minutes before the performance call time and immediately check in.
- Tardiness to a performance may exclude a singer from participation at that performance.
- All performers must arrive wearing proper concert dress attire as noted in the performance detail sheet. Failure to wear proper concert dress will result in non-participation in the performance. Singers should remain in their complete uniform until they have left the performance site.
- All singers must know the music. Each musician must have a confident command of the performance repertoire. Failure to demonstrate this at the final rehearsal may result in release from the corresponding concert commitment.
- If a singer feels ill during a performance, he/she should quietly sit down on the riser and rest for the remainder of the song. Then, if feeling better, the singer may get up and sing again, or if not, quietly leave the stage. Chaperones are always watching and will help if necessary. Once a singer leaves the stage he/she may not return.

## PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required at all scheduled performances. If a school performance conflict occurs, the absence must be reported BOTH in person and in writing two weeks prior to the performance.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES FROM PERFORMANCES

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence from a MANDATORY PERFORMANCE:

\*Illness            \*Death in the Family            \*School Music Performance

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence from a MANDATORY PERFORMANCE DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

\*Illness            \*Death in the Family            \*School System Will Not Excuse Student

All absences from mandatory performances must be pre-approved by the director two weeks prior to the performance. Any exception to the above reasons must be in writing to the director two weeks prior to the performance.

## TICKETS

The majority of the ticket revenue helps offset the costs involved with the performance. These costs include hall/space rental for concerts and dress rehearsals, equipment rental, moving costs, and expenses for additional musicians.

Four to six weeks prior to the SHCC concerts, choir members and families will be given specific instructions for the purchase of individual concert tickets.

## FORMAL AND CASUAL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

### *Girls' Formal Uniform*

Girls will wear a Target black skirt & Lands' End white shirt to be purchased from the SHCC for \$27. Please keep the shirt and skirt only for choir performances so it is free from stains and wear. Black opaque tights and plain black flats (with no embellishments) are to be worn on the feet. Tartan headbands will be worn in the hair; the SHCC will provide these for each student.

### *Boys' Formal Uniform*

Boys will wear a white dress shirt to be purchased from the SHCC for \$12. Please keep the shirt only for choir performances so it is free from stains and wear. Boys are to wear black slacks with a black belt. No cords or cargo pants. Plain, black dress shoes are to be worn. Tartan plaid ties will be worn and will be provided at each performance by the SHCC.

### *Casual Uniforms*

The SHCC provides a casual choir t-shirt for more casual performances, such as singing the National Anthem at local games or participating in community days and parades. In the case that the choir uses casual uniforms for an event, choristers must wear these t-shirts with full-length blue jeans that are clean, not torn, worn, or faded with black flats for girls and sneakers for boys.

### *General Notes*

A call sheet will be sent out for each performance specifying which uniform to wear. All choristers must have the above uniform for each performance unless otherwise noted. If not in proper concert attire, a chorister will not be allowed to perform. No exceptions.

Just as the ensemble's sound is important, so is the ensemble's appearance. A well-groomed, neatly uniformed ensemble is essential for a truly professional and artistic experience. Good personal hygiene is a must for all singers. Shirts must be tucked into pants. Clean teeth and clean, combed hair are always expected of each singer. Hair should be groomed away from the face and may be fastened with natural (matching hair color) barrettes (no bows, ribbons, colored barrettes). No unusual colored hair dye, obvious make-up, or cosmetics are permitted. Excessive jewelry is not permitted. Perfumes should be avoided for the benefit of those around them. One ring per hand and only stud earrings will be allowed (no more than two per ear). Any other accessories, such as watches, etc. are not permitted during a performance.

## **MUSIC**

The SHCC Music Library is a great asset. Care should be taken to keep the music in good condition. Individual folders are issued to each singer at the beginning of the

season. It is the singer's responsibility to take good care of them and to keep from losing them. All folders and music are the property of the SHCC and must be turned in at the end of the season. If music or folders are lost, irreparably damaged, or not returned, an additional fee will be charged to cover replacement costs. The fee will be \$2 per piece of music, \$10-\$20 for books, or \$30 for a folder and music. You should also take care to remove all personal items from your folder at the end of the season.

### HANDLING AND CARE OF MUSIC

Music must be brought to all rehearsals unless you are notified otherwise.

- Never fold or roll music.
- Never write on music without the permission of the director. Any markings should be done lightly, in pencil, and only at the direction of the music director. A sharpened pencil should be brought to each rehearsal.
- Do not deface any piece of music. Blank pages or portions of the music are NOT for drawing pictures, writing personal notes, etc. Photocopied music is done with permission and should be treated the same as an octavo.
- If for any reason a piece of music is in need of repair, please do so properly with clear tape OR bring it to the attention of your director.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

As a non-profit organization, the SHCC depends on volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are numerous and diverse, from office assistance to special projects. The staff of the SHCC, which welcomes all interested parents to help keep the choir going and growing, coordinate all volunteer efforts.

### **SHCC ARTISTIC STAFF**

Jennie Nolan, Founder and Artistic Director  
Patricia Reavel, accompanist

director@shcchoir.org  
preavel@gmail.com

## SHCC ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Shaun Nolan, Business Manager  
Heather Black, Administrator  
Mandy Foulke, Attendance Table

s@nolanclan.com  
office@shcchoir.org

## SHCC BOARD

Melanie Catana, President  
    Director of Choral Music, Waynesburg University  
David Caldwell, Vice President  
    Retired Art Teacher, Canon-Mac School District  
George Willis  
    Associate Professor of Music, Percussion Department Director, WVU  
Andy Foulke  
    Senior Software Engineer, Smith Micro  
Jennie Nolan, Chairman

You can contact them at: [board@shcchoir.org](mailto:board@shcchoir.org).



I(we), the parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ have  
(print name of your child(dren)  
read the handbook of the South Hills Children's Choir and agree to  
comply by the standards therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(parent's signature) (date)

I understand I am entitled to ONLY 3 excused rehearsal absences  
per semester and must attend ALL final run-throughs and the  
WINTER and SPRING concerts (all other concert venues strongly  
recommended):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(student signature)