



# The Arlington Children's Chorus

## Member Handbook

### (2023-2024 Season)

*The Arlington Children's Chorus (ACC) presents choral performances of distinction. Our goals are to foster the musical growth of our members, increase knowledge and appreciation of choral music in Arlington and surrounding communities, and help the public understand that exposure to high-quality musical arts is an essential element of a comprehensive education. The members of the ACC are children from elementary through high school with a passion to serve their community through vocal music.*

*The ACC is a diverse and inclusive group who embrace the joy of singing in a non-judgmental and non-competitive manner while enjoying high quality instruction and performance opportunities to develop character, responsibility, teamwork, kindness and community spirit.*

This handbook is available to parents of all current members of the ACC.  
Thank you in advance for your participation and support of the ACC.  
We look forward to enjoying a very enriching musical year with our ACC families!

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need clarification on any information contained herein.

## Table of Contents

Communications	3
Music	3
Choral Tiers	3
Promotions	4
Auditions	4
Non-Discrimination	4
Rehearsals	4
COVID-19	5
Safety	5
Performances	5
Attendance	5
Code of Conduct	6
Membership Dues	7
Tuition Assistance (Financial Aid)	7
Volunteering and Fundraising (Parent Involvement)	7
Parent on Duty (POD) Responsibilities	8
Uniforms ( <a href="http://concertattire.com">concertattire.com</a> )	9

## Communications

- **Staff Email:** Please email this address to reach Artistic Director (Felix Polendey), Executive Director (Anika Tené), and Chorus Manager (Julie Thompson): [staff@arlingtonchildrenschorus.org](mailto:staff@arlingtonchildrenschorus.org)
- **Treasurer:** [acchorustreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:acchorustreasurer@gmail.com) (Caleb McClay)
- **Mailing address:** PO Box 7724, Arlington, VA 22207
- **Website:** [www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org](http://www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org)
- **Telephone:** (703) 636-2275 (this is for phone and text - received by the Executive Director and forwarded to others to respond as needed)

Rehearsal notes and updates are posted on the website and sent via email. Each chorister is responsible for knowing and doing the weekly homework.

Our **calendar** is maintained on the chorus website ([www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/calendar](http://www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/calendar)). Notice of changes or updates to the calendar will be provided via email and posted on the website.

## Music

The music for the chorus is commonly derived from many traditions and will be performed in a variety of settings. It is essential that all choristers be willing to sing all selections.

Music and other materials issued at rehearsal are the property of the ACC and must be maintained in good condition. Appropriate markings in the music should be neat and must be written only in pencil at the Artistic Director's direction. Music and all other materials must be returned to the Artistic Director at the end of the season at the conclusion of the final performance.

At least one library binder with current music will be available to check out and use during rehearsal. If music is lost, replacement music is available for a fee of \$30 per notebook.

## Choral Tiers

The ACC is composed of three choral tiers: the **Dolce** Chorus, the **Troubadour** Chorus, and the **Bel Canto** Chorus.

The Dolce Chorus is composed of elementary school students in the second grade and above. These young singers focus on basic vocal production, music reading, solfeggio, and rudimentary rhythmic training. The repertoire includes predominantly arrangements in English with texts suitable for the age group. Singers are introduced to the concept of ensemble rather than solo singing. The Dolces appear in self-sponsored concerts and occasionally sing in independent concerts when opportunities for their special talents arise. Dolces spend an average of one to three years in this chorus before moving to another level.

The Troubadour Chorus is the ACC's intermediate level tier. Building on skills acquired in the Dolce Chorus or another choral group, children are introduced to a higher level of musical and vocal development and learn music featuring more sophisticated musical structure, texts, voicing, and languages. The Troubadour Chorus can expect to perform four or more times during the year including ACC's schedule of seasonal concerts and other community events. On occasion, individual choristers may be called upon to perform with the Bel Canto Chorus in major orchestral, operatic, and choral productions.

The Bel Canto Chorus represents the ACC at regional and national events as well as at special engagements with professional performing groups including the National Symphony and the Washington Ballet. Bel Cantos perform complex music that represents numerous styles and cultures in several foreign languages. These singers work to achieve superior sound as they become proficient in the highest level of artistic musicianship.

Each member of every chorus is expected to remain active and committed to the program throughout the entire season.

Choristers are invited back the following year without audition if they have met the expectations of the chorus during the previous year. This includes excellent discipline, professional behavior, participation in fundraising, and care of chorus music.

## **Promotions**

Choristers who would like to be promoted to the next tier are asked to participate in a vocal check-in at the end of the year for assessment by the Artistic Director.

## **Auditions**

The ACC is a primarily treble-voice chorus, open to all children and youth in the second grade and above living in the Washington D.C metropolitan area. Acceptance as a member of the chorus and placement in a specific choral tier is determined by audition with the Artistic Director.

Auditions are by appointment and routinely held in May/June, August, and January. Specific dates are posted on the ACC website ([www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/auditions](http://www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/auditions)).

## **Non-Discrimination**

ACC does not discriminate with regard to race, gender, creed, ethnicity, or sexual orientation in the hiring of staff or selection of singers. Musical factors may be a factor in decision making.

## **Rehearsals**

Musical concepts such as melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, dynamics, form, style and performance practice will be taught at each rehearsal. Artistic staff and instructors will also work to develop musical skills such as singing techniques, theory, and sight reading.

Indoor rehearsals will be held on Wednesday evenings unless otherwise noted in advance at [Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington \(UUCA\)](#). Dolces and Troubadours meet from 6pm-7pm and Bel Cantos from 7pm-8:30.

Choristers should arrive no later than 5 minutes before the beginning of rehearsal and notify the Parent on Duty (POD) of his or her arrival. Sign-in does not require the presence of a parent or other adult; however, sign-out does require the presence of a parent or guardian unless a parent opts out prior to rehearsals. Each chorister must be signed out by the POD. Choristers will not be released from a rehearsal until a parent or guardian has come to pick up the chorister.

Arrangements for choristers to arrive early or stay late are not available at our new location. The doors will open 15 minutes prior to and after rehearsal. Please pick up your chorister(s) on time.

Choristers should bring their music binder to each rehearsal. Electronic devices, other than a cell phone which must be silenced during rehearsal, should not be brought to rehearsals.

An emergency contact file is kept on-site at all times. Only individuals specifically authorized by the Board of Directors (for example, the Parent on Duty) have access to this information.

In the event of inclement weather, parents will be notified as soon as possible via email. If Arlington County schools are closed or if after-school activities are canceled, then rehearsal will be canceled. In addition, ACC may cancel practice due to inclement weather even if the school system does not cancel evening activities.

## COVID-19

The ACC follows CDC and Virginia Commonwealth guidelines with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic and may impose further guidelines or restrictions as deemed necessary. Choristers and their parents and guardians will be notified in advance should any COVID procedures be required.

## Safety

The ACC takes the safety of each chorister very seriously. PODs and staff have access to choristers' special health requirements as noted on their registration form at all times. PODs are on hand at each performance and rehearsal to ensure each chorister has assistance if required. Choristers are meticulously signed in and out at each rehearsal, and choristers will not be released from any event until a parent or guardian has come to pick up the chorister. Staff or a POD will remain with any chorister until a parent or guardian arrives.

## Performances

The dates of performances are posted on our website and have been emailed through [this document](#). Notification of changes or additions to the schedule will be sent to parents by email with as much advance notice as possible.

At some events, all choristers will be invited to sing. At other times only a representative group will be able to participate due to venue size, security measures, or other factors. The Artistic Director will choose the choristers for those unique performances.

**Unless the Artistic Director has given specific permission, a missed dress (final) rehearsal will mean that the chorister may not participate in the upcoming performance. The dress rehearsal is a mandatory event that ALL choristers are required to attend. Non-attendance of the dress rehearsal means they are not permitted to sing in the concert.**

## Attendance

If you have not done so already, please complete the Fall Attendance Survey [here](#). We know there are many demands on your chorister's time during the school year. This information helps

us to plan accordingly. Occasional absences are allowed for illness and/or irreconcilable schedule conflicts during the semester. However, to build a cohesive choral ensemble, it is necessary for all the singers to be present. **Individuals with excessive absences – even if for good reasons – undermine the ensemble and may be asked to sit out the concert for which those rehearsals were in preparation.** When the singer is prepared to attend regularly, he or she can be readmitted to the chorus.

**Promptness Is Essential.** Please be **On Time** to each rehearsal and event. If you know you will be absent or late to a rehearsal or event, email first.

Frequent absences may result in the child being asked to re-audition for the Artistic Director to demonstrate his/her knowledge of the music. If the music is not learned in a satisfactory manner, the chorister may be asked to withdraw from an upcoming performance.

**Winter and Spring concerts:** Attendance at rehearsals and ACC Winter and Spring concerts is required.

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled in advance of performances. These rehearsals may be on weekends or weeknights in addition to the standard weekly rehearsals. Additional rehearsals may be held at sites other than the typical rehearsal venue. The Artistic Director will provide advance notice to all ACC families regarding additional rehearsal times and locations.

Parents and choristers should inform the Artistic Director via email prior to rehearsal regarding an expected absence or early departure.

It is the responsibility of the absent chorister to find out what was covered during a missed rehearsal.

## Code of Conduct

Chorus members are expected to be on their best behavior at all times, thus requiring no need for disciplinary measures. If a child has a problem, the Director will discuss it with the individual and will contact a parent only if the problem persists. Continued disruption of any nature, whether by choristers, parents or guardians, that is deemed detrimental to the mission of ACC, constitutes grounds for dismissal.

Rehearsal notes and updates are usually sent via email following the weekly rehearsal. The Chorister is responsible for knowing and doing the weekly homework.

To ensure the safety and welfare of all participants at ACC, every member is required to follow our ACC Code of Conduct during all ACC activities to ensure the highest respect and courtesy towards one another. Violating the Code of Conduct can result in the immediate disciplinary action at the discretion of the Artistic Director and/or board, up to and including dismissal.

- Appropriate attire must be worn when attending an ACC function. Vulgar language or images on clothing is not appropriate.
- Bullying is prohibited. Bullying is intentionally aggressive behavior including verbal, physical, social, relational, or emotional abuse or a combination of these. Bullying can consist of one person bullying another, a group of people ganging up against one lone person, or one group of people targeting another group.

- Removal or destruction of ACC property or the property of someone else without his or her prior consent constitutes theft of property.
- Lack of respect to staff, parents or other members of the chorus is not acceptable and will result in suspension and/or termination of membership privileges.

**Membership Dues**

Membership dues for the current season are as follows:

<b>Membership Dues</b>	
<b>Year (Sept 2023-May 2024)</b>	
Yearly Membership Dues	<b>\$ 700*</b>
Returning Choristers Early Bird Registration - Payment by July 31, 2023	<b>\$ 650*</b>
<b>One Semester (Sept-Dec; Jan-May)</b>	<b>\$ 400*</b>
<i>* Dues include a \$50 non-refundable materials fee (only one fee per year)</i>	

Payment for the year may be made in full or in three (3) equal installments as follows:

- \$300 due by September 1
- \$200 due by October 1
- \$200 due by November 1

There is a 10% discount for siblings.

**Membership dues are non-refundable, however, a refund due to special circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

**Tuition Assistance (Financial Aid)**

Waivers of membership dues and alternative payment plans for appropriate, approved reasons are granted by the ACC Board. All information provided is kept in strict confidence. **Scholarships are available to choristers who commit for an entire season (Fall and Spring).** ACC will help qualified families on a sliding scale ranging from partial to full tuition assistance and may be limited based on available resources.

To request assistance, the parent or legal guardian should fill out the scholarship application form found on the website ([www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/scholarship-application](http://www.arlingtonchildrenschorus.org/scholarship-application)) and audition during a regularly scheduled audition period.

A request is valid for one year only. A written request is required for each year. Select members of the ACC Board and the Artistic Director will review the applications and, in each case, make a determination together based on ACC’s financial resources. The ACC Board President will inform each family in writing of the reviewing committee’s determination.

Upon receipt of tuition assistance, the child will be expected to fully participate at all rehearsals, required concerts, and most other performances. If these requirements are not met, ACC has the right to collect tuition in the amount of the financial assistance granted and all fees associated with the administration of recovery of tuition.

## Volunteering and Fundraising (Parent Involvement)

The ACC is a 501(c)(3) organization and strives to keep membership dues as low as possible while continuing to provide the choristers and the community with opportunities to share in the delight of performing and listening to choral music at its best. To this end, each family should volunteer and/or fundraise to the best of their ability. Parents are vital to success of ACC. Their most important duty is to have their child at every rehearsal and performance on time and fully prepared.

The ACC needs your support. Below are some ways you can help us in our mission:

**Each family is asked to contribute a minimum of 20 hours (10 hours per semester) throughout the season.**

**Donations:** Direct monetary contributions may be donated via the [website](#) or mailed to us at Arlington Children's Chorus, PO Box 7724, Arlington, VA 22207. An end of year tax statement will be sent upon request and for all contributions above \$100.

**Board Positions:** The ACC is seeking outside directors as well as parent directors to oversee the strategy and mission of the ACC and to ensure its sustainability.

**Grant finding and writing:** To help identify potential grant and donor opportunities, and to help prepare and submit grant applications.

**Outreach and Development:** Increasing the network of the ACC and assisting in fundraising activities.

**Marketing and Communications:** Helping the ACC get the word out about auditions and performances; helping with marketing, communication, and graphic design of programs and flyers.

**Parents on Duty (PODs):** Several parents at each rehearsal are needed to assist with arrivals and departures and help keep children secure. ***Please sign up using the Parent Volunteer link in the Member Resources section of the ACC website.*** See the following handbook section for Parent on Duty responsibilities.

To volunteer, please email [staff@arlingtonchildrenschorus.org](mailto:staff@arlingtonchildrenschorus.org) or speak to a board member.

## Parent on Duty (POD) Responsibilities

### **Dolce and Troubadour Weekly Rehearsals:**

- PODs arrive by 5:45 p.m. for set up
- Begin the sign-in process by 5:50 p.m. One POD from each Tier should stay in the Lobby to sign in choristers and direct them to the correct room
- One POD should stay in the room with the Dolces during practice and one POD should stay in the room with the Troubadours during practice. The POD in the room should help maintain order during rehearsal as asked by the attending Director. The POD may need to remove a chorister from the practicing group if asked by the attending Director.
- Ensure that any chorister excused from the room is accompanied by an adult



- Near the end of the rehearsal, the PODs from the Lobby should go to the rehearsal room for their Tier and assist with dismissal.
- Remain until the last Dolce or Troubadour has been signed out by a parent or guardian (such as a carpool driver) or has signed themselves out (if the chorister has permission.) If a guardian has not arrived to check out a chorister by 7:15, please transfer responsibility of the chorister to one of the BelCanto PODs

### **Bel Canto Weekly Rehearsals:**

- PODs arrive by 6:45 p.m.
- Begin the sign-in process by 6:50 p.m.
- Ensure each Bel Canto is signed in
- Ensure that arriving Bel Canto choristers wait quietly without disturbing practice
- Stay with any Dolce or Troubadour chorister not collected by 7:15 and call the phone numbers provided on the sign in sheet to attempt to find their guardian
- Ensure that any chorister excused from the room is accompanied by an adult
- One POD should stay in the room during practice, one POD should stay in the Lobby to sign in choristers and direct them to the correct room
- The POD in the room should help maintain order during rehearsal as asked by the attending Director. The POD may need to remove a chorister from the practicing group if asked by the attending Director.
- Remain until the last chorister has been signed out by a parent or guardian (such as a carpool driver) or has signed themselves out (if the chorister has permission.)

### **Uniforms** ([concertattire.com](http://concertattire.com))

The ACC has a standard uniform for both girls and boys. All uniform pieces must be ordered or purchased by the first Wednesday in October to ensure delivery for the winter season. Parents will be responsible for acquiring the proper uniforms for their children.

The ACC will conduct a uniform exchange during the year.

Choristers must wear their hair pulled back neatly from the face and must not wear any jewelry (other than modest stud earrings), perfume, or cologne.

- **Formal Concert Uniform – Option 1** ([concertattire.com](http://concertattire.com))
  - Black dress trousers
  - White tuxedo shirt and white undershirt
  - Black cummerbund and bow tie
  - Black socks and black dress shoes
- **Formal Concert Uniform – Option 2** ([concertattire.com](http://concertattire.com))
  - Black sweetheart neckline blouse\* (Item 2203)
  - Black elastic-waist skirt, hemmed to ankle length\* (Item 2220)
  - Black stockings (opaque)
  - Black closed-toe flat or low heel dress shoes

**Please note and follow the sizing guidelines on the concertattire.com website.**

**2203:  
Daphne Short-Sleeve Sweetheart Neckline Blouse**

Short-sleeve sweetheart neck pullover in easy-care matte jersey stretch knit. Machine washable.

**Product Code:** 2203y or 2203



**2220:  
Tatiana Floor-Length Concert Skirt**

Wrinkle resistant, easy-care matte jersey stretch knit with elastic waist.

**Product Code:** 2220y or 2220

