



ECC's Company and Prelude Parent/Student Handbook

Evergreen Children's Chorale

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Mission

Inspiring and engaging young performers through quality experiences that create community and nurture a love of the arts.

Guiding Principles

- Pursue excellence in the performing arts
- Provide a fun, joyful and professional atmosphere
- Foster collaboration, teamwork and trust
- Connect to the heart of our community
- Cultivate empathy in a nurturing environment
- Respect individuality, diversity and inclusion
- Lead by example and with integrity

PREFACE

Congratulations on your acceptance into the **Evergreen Children's Chorale Company or Prelude to the Evergreen Children's Chorale**. We are extremely proud of our organization, the outstanding musical caliber of our members, and the exemplary performances that we put on throughout the year. To many of us, the ECC/Prelude is more than simply 100+ voices on-stage....it's about inspiring a lifelong appreciation for the arts among young members, sharing the gift of music with audiences from all walks of life, and fostering a sense of pride within our community.

The **Evergreen Children's Chorale** is a 501-c-3 community arts organization whose mission is to provide musical performance opportunities for youth in 5th through 8th grades. The ECC was formed in January, 1991, in response to a need in the mountain area for a high-quality music performance ensemble specifically designed for children. ECC's developmental group, **Prelude**, was formed in September, 1997, as an ensemble designed to prepare young voices for the rigorous demands and expectations of ECC.

ECC's Company and Prelude are performance-oriented groups. Specific vocal/dance instruction does not occur except in the practical context of rehearsals, (i.e., this is not an organization dedicated to 'teaching' the child to sing. Improvement in range and tone will naturally occur with practice and self-confidence; however, 'lessons' are not given.)

Because we are performance oriented and have paying patrons, rehearsals are extremely important. **Please be alerted that during the 2 weeks before each performance there will be additional "tech week" mandatory rehearsals.** All of the children are needed for the sound and lighting people to set accurate levels to ensure quality performances. Helping your children pace themselves, eat correctly, and get solid rest when possible will greatly enhance their thrill of opening night as well as their enjoyment of subsequent performances.

This handbook has been compiled as a guide to families who may have questions regarding the organization as well as the responsibilities of its members and their families. Members and parents are responsible for acquainting themselves with its contents. Special thanks to the many parents and community volunteers who have graciously donated their time, energy and contributions to the success of the **Evergreen Children's Chorale**.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. AUDITIONS

To become a member of the **Evergreen Children's Chorale Company**, a child must be in fifth through eighth grade of school (or age equivalent to) and must be selected by an auditioning committee consisting of the Director, Choreographer, Assistant Director, Prelude Director and Accompanist. The audition shall consist of solo and group singing, pitch matching and choreographed movement taught at the time of audition. The Manager will notify those who have auditioned within 24-36 hours regarding their selection. Current chorale members may remain a member of the ECC through their eighth grade of school. Upon acceptance, all commitment and release forms must be signed and fees paid as specified.

To become a member of **PRELUDE**, a child must be in second through fourth grade in school (and at least age seven) and must be selected by an auditioning committee consisting of the Director, Accompanist, and Assistant Director. The audition shall consist of solo and group singing and improvisational and choreographed movement taught at the time of audition. The Manager will notify those who have auditioned within 48 hours regarding their selection. Current PRELUDE members may stay in through their fourth grade of school. Upon acceptance, all commitment and release forms must be signed and fees paid as specified. PRELUDE members must audition for membership into the next level of Evergreen Children's Chorale.

B. COMMUNICATIONS

Members and their parents may contact the Chorale via phone or email. However, the Chorale usually relies on email for its communication on important Chorale happenings, news, updates, and more. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH MEMBER FAMILY TO INFORM THE MANAGER OF ANY EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES. If a member is not receiving the emails, someone should contact the Manager to verify the correct address. To report a rehearsal absence, members should call the manager on her cell phone or the Chorale phone so that it is communicated in a timely manner.

C. MEMBER DUTIES AND COMMITMENTS

Because we are performance oriented and have paying patrons, rehearsals are extremely important. Once selected, a member shall attend rehearsals in their entirety, shall participate fully in rehearsals and performances by cooperatively giving 100% of his/her physical and mental attention to the

directors and the tasks at hand, and shall bring all rehearsal/performance equipment needed. This equipment includes water bottle, music notebook, script/libretto, pencil, Chorale calendar, appropriate shoes, and any other props/costumes required by the directors.

Each member shall participate in ALL dress rehearsals and performances of the two regularly scheduled productions, i.e., the production in fall and the production in spring. All of the children are needed for the sound and lighting people to set accurate levels to ensure quality performances. Helping your children pace themselves, eat correctly, and get solid rest, when possible, will also greatly enhance their thrill of opening night as well as their enjoyment of subsequent performances.

D. ATTENDANCE POLICIES/REQUIREMENTS

- All *known* absences should be communicated at the start of the semester to staff (no forms necessary – email will suffice).
- All *unanticipated* absences need to be communicated to staff at least two weeks before the absence (no forms necessary – email will suffice)
- Only three absences per semester/per member.
- The expectation is that all members will be present the last two weeks before opening night.
- Any deviation from these guidelines is strongly discouraged due to the nature of live theatre and the importance of these rehearsals to the success of all members on stage. It is an extreme imposition to the entire company when a member misses rehearsal. Exceptions should be rare and should be requested through the Business Manager. Decisions will be made collaboratively, on a case-by-case basis, with strong consideration given to the importance of the conflict to the family/ECC member and the impact of their absence on the production.

E. ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE PERFORMANCES

The ECC also often performs at outside venues such as schools and nursing homes. These performances are considered mandatory like tech rehearsals, students are highly encouraged to attend so that we have a full-choral sound. These special performances may be added throughout the year.

The children accepted into the Chorale have some of the finest talent in the mountain area. The Chorale is proud of these children and the talent they possess and bring to the organization. It is understood that children are sometimes asked or wish to appear in performances outside the Chorale. Therefore, it is requested children have the courtesy to discuss the dates and responsibilities with the

Director before making such a commitment. Each member is expected to conduct him/herself with grace and dignity in keeping with the high standards and expectations of this select group.

F. DUES, DEPOSITS, FEES, & FUNDS

MEMBERSHIP DUES: The membership fee for **ECC's Company is \$675.00** for the whole season.

You may also choose to sign up for the fall only or the spring only (or you may just want to pay your tuition by semester). If so, dues are \$325 for fall and \$450 for spring. Each additional child within the family may receive a \$25 credit for one of the membership fees.

The membership fee for **Prelude is \$405** for the whole season.

You may also choose to sign up for the fall only or the spring only (or you may just want to pay your tuition by semester). If so, tuition is \$200 for fall and \$255 for spring spring.

MEMBERSHIP FEE DUE DATES: The entire membership fee is due on the first day of rehearsals. If not paid, the child will be given a warning at the 4th rehearsal and if the dues are still not paid by the 5th rehearsal, he/she will be asked to call his/her parent to pick him/her up from that rehearsal. The child will be counted absent for that day. The child may start rehearsals once the fee is paid subject to the absence requirements. The Manager is to be contacted if the above schedule cannot be met so other arrangements can be made.

REGISTRATION FEE: Included in the membership fees is a **\$50.00** non-refundable registration fee. This fee will cover the administrative expenses that occur all year long in anticipation and preparation for the season.

EXTRA EXPENSES: Extra expenses may include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Black pants; the uniform committee determines style.
- B. Performance shoes - design to be determined by the costume and uniform committee in accordance with the choreographer's direction. Currently the chorale is wearing black jazz shoes
- C. Black socks
- D. Individual costume and props needed for performance (i.e., for play, for dance).

REFUND POLICY:

- With full tuition payment, 100% of tuition (less \$50 registration fee) is refundable if written notice is received within 21 days.
- No refunds are issued if a family receives any amount of Angel Fund support, even if partial payment is made, unless it is requested within the first 21 days of each semester and as long as the registration fee has been paid. Then, refunds are granted as previously defined for the amount actually paid each semester.

· All requests for refunds must be made in writing and emailed to the Business Manager. No refunds are given after 21 days of each semester and/or unless approved by the Board of Directors.

COLLECTION PROCESS:

If tuition or fees are not paid by the prescribed due dates, the following steps will occur:

- o After 7 days of the due date, the ECC treasurer will send an invoice with amount due.
- o After 14 days of the due date, the ECC treasurer will send a second invoice with amount due.
- o After 21 days of the due date, the Manager will call the parent and inform them that payment must be made and/or Angel Funds requested or the parent will need to discontinue their child's current involvement in ECC or Prelude.
- o Any further action will be determined by the Board of Directors as necessary.

ANGEL FUNDS: The Board of Directors has established an Angel Fund to assure no child is excluded from participation in the Chorale for monetary reasons. Families in need of these funds are to contact the Manager in writing. All requests are kept in the strictest confidence. Angel funds are only available for the membership dues.

G. DRESS AND ATTIRE

When present at all activities of the **Evergreen Children's Chorale and Prelude**, members are expected to dress appropriately. While ECC recognizes that the responsibility for dress and appearance of the members rests with the members' and parents, and that members may wish to express themselves by the manner of their dress, members shall not wear clothing or affect an appearance that may be disruptive to a learning/performing environment. ECC/Prelude staff members may make any final decisions regarding appropriateness of dress and appearance. The Dress Code will apply to rehearsals and performances. It is requested that members make responsible decisions regarding their dress based on the following:

- o Hats and caps may not be worn in any building.
- o Hair color will be natural, securely fastened off the face, and bangs cut above the brow (for performances only).
- o Pants must be worn in a manner that they are securely belted around the waist and underclothing must not be revealed.
- o Clothing that is considered too bare in nature, including thin-strapped tops or crop tops that reveal the mid-section are not allowed.
- o Members wearing clothing with suggestive or explicit language or insulting statements will be asked to change their garment or wear it inside out.
- o Any clothing that promotes the use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol is not permitted.
- o Underwear or swimwear must never be visible.

REHEARSAL ATTIRE: Comfortable, easy care clothing and lightweight footwear should be worn. Children will be told when to wear Chorale footwear. Members must have a pencil with them at all

times. A water bottle is also recommended. Members may not eat food or drink beverages other than water at any time during rehearsals or performances. Members should bring homework or other quiet work to use during times when their voice/presence is not required during part of the rehearsal. However, members should remain attentive and ready to rehearse when needed.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE: ECC members are provided with uniforms, which are not to be worn other than for Chorale dress rehearsals and performances so that they remain in good condition and the Chorale can look its best. Uniforms are to be returned to the Chorale in good, clean, spot-free condition. Members should **not** eat anything while wearing your uniform. ECC expects boys to wear double pleated, 100% cotton, black slacks, socks and jazz shoes provided by each child to receive the same care as the pieces owned by the Chorale. Girl's will wear ECC's Palazzo pants at no additional charge. Members will be given specific instructions for proper attire at the beginning of the year.

PRELUDE members are provided with a blue polo shirt that is the property of the Chorale. It should not be worn at any time other than for Chorale dress rehearsals and performances so that they remain in good condition and the Chorale can look its best. Polo shirts are to be returned to the Chorale in good, clean, spot-free condition. Please do **not** eat anything while wearing your uniform. Girl's will wear ECC's Palazzo pants at no additional charge. ECC also expects boys to wear double pleated, 100% cotton, black slacks, socks and jazz shoes provided by each child to receive the same care as the pieces owned by the Chorale.

COSTUMES/PROPS: Specific requirements for roles will be discussed prior to each performance. It is the member's responsibility to have and maintain the proper footwear, uniform, costumes and/or props at rehearsal and performance. Failure to have needed items could mean no participating. Members are also expected to handle costumes with the utmost care and they may be asked to pay for damages to the costumes should they occur while in the possession of the member.

LOST AND FOUND: Members are expected to keep track of their own belongings. Shoes and pants should be labeled with the member's name. The Manager will hold onto lost and found items until the end of each performance semester, but will donate all unclaimed items to a local charity at the close of each production.

USE OF ELECTRONICS: The use of cell phones or other electronics is not allowed during rehearsals or performances unless approved by the Manager.

H. EXTRA PERFORMANCES

The Chorale receives many requests each year for outside performances and we accommodate as many as possible since these are excellent exposure for the group. These include performances at schools, parties and requests from other group. The Chorale charges a fee for these performances

and expects members to participate in as many as possible. To avoid having a missed outside performance counted as one of your absences, you must call the Manager before the show to be excused

I. INSURANCE - RELEASES

The **Evergreen Children's Chorale** has secured a commercial liability policy to protect members of the audience during performances. This policy, however, does **not** cover the Chorale members should they be injured during rehearsals or performances. Any expenses are the responsibility of the parents or guardians and should be covered under personal medical insurance. The Directors take every reasonable precaution to insure children remain injury free.

All members must complete and return the Release and Indemnity Agreement at the beginning of each performance season along with their dues.

J. SOLOS AND SPECIAL PARTS

Selections for lead roles and/or special solo parts may be handled through an audition process or at the sole discretion of the Director and/or Choreographer based on talent, appropriateness for the part, availability for special rehearsals, and the cooperative, interested and enthusiastic attitude of the member.

K. CAUSES FOR SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL

If a member is having a bad day and is disruptive or disrespectful to those in charge and/or other members of the Chorale, or is not participating to the level expected, that member will be given **one warning** by an appropriate adult and if the behavior does not improve, the child will be asked to call a parent to pick him/her up at that time. That day will then be considered an excused absence.

Other causes for dismissal or suspension include:

- A. Disrespectful behavior to Directors, Choreographer, Manager, parent helpers, or fellow members
- B. Hurtful behavior - verbal or physical
- C. Disruptive behavior - rehearsal is **non-talking** time
- D. Failure to adhere to rehearsal/performance expectations

If a member willingly terminates his/her membership, he/she must re-audition to be reinstated. If a member is dismissed or suspended, he/she must re-audition for reinstatement and be approved by the Board.

L. VIDEOTAPING AND FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

A parent or responsible adult may record, photograph or video any **non-performance rehearsal** providing there is no disruption to the directors or performers and the chorale has authorization allowing videotaping of the given performance. For any **paid** performance, including the paid dress rehearsals, **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY or VIDEOTAPING IS ALLOWED.** The **Evergreen Children's Chorale and Prelude** usually have one or more performances recorded by a designated person for the express purpose of aiding and teaching its members provided it does not violate copyright laws. This DVD may be made available at cost to members. Likewise, photographs may be taken by a parent photographer and made available at cost.

M. MATERIALS OWNERSHIP

All materials purchased, constructed, produced, arranged, photographed, or videotaped by staff, private individuals, and parent volunteers shall remain the express property of the Evergreen Children's Chorale. All costumes, sets, and props that are made for a Chorale production become property of the ECC. The ECC will reimburse you for any items purchased to make costumes, sets, or props and you may not keep anything that is made for the ECC even if you choose not to turn in your receipts.

II. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Evergreen Children's Chorale/Prelude** is strongly dependent upon its parent volunteers. Since the kids cannot do it all, the parents must help. Therefore, it is expected that parent(s) of each child be active on at least two committee(s) and/or the Board of Directors. The level of involvement will of course vary according to the talents, time and Chorale needs. It is up to the parent to get in touch and keep in touch with the Committee Chairperson regarding responsibilities. A list of committees will be made available at the parent meeting scheduled during the first month of the performance season.

Each committee needs a chairperson to coordinate the functions of the committee. The chairpersons report to a designated board member, who will give updates at the monthly board meetings.

Acknowledging people and/or businesses who contribute time, talents and financial resources to the Chorale is an important function of the committee served.

Decisions for the **Evergreen Children's Chorale** organization are made by the Board of Directors which is comprised of the parents and staff and encompass an Executive Committee, the Member(s)-at-large, the Director, the Assistant Director, the Choreographer, Manager, and the Prelude Director and Manager. The Executive committee consists of the President, the Vice President(s), the Treasurer, and the Secretary. Presently, parent(s) or interested community members who step forward and agree to do the job, voluntarily fill all positions except those of Director, Choreographer, Assistant Director, Manager and Accompanists. The Board meetings are open to any interested parents so feel free to attend if you have a question or concern.

HAVE A QUESTION? WHO TO CONTACT?

Questions that do not explicitly relate to the musical, dance, or artistic aspects of the Chorale, are to go to the Business Manager of the Evergreen Children's Chorale. This could include things such as snow days, performance/rehearsal dates and times, expectations, problems, comments, or suggestions. If your question cannot be answered, or your question is of an artistic, musical or choreographic/movement nature, you will be referred to the Artistic Director.