

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL

Handbook, 2015-2016



www.stpauls-choirschool.org

ST PAUL'S IN ENGLEWOOD

*an Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Newark
and the Anglican Communion*

113 Engle Street
Englewood, NJ 07631
201.568.3276

October 2015

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL is based on the idea that all children are able to sing, given encouragement and instruction. We offer free music education and performance opportunities for girls and boys, 8-through high school. We are a unique after-school program that offers professional choral training, voice and piano lessons, leadership development, academic tutoring, and mentoring to children and teenagers. Our students come from Englewood and surrounding towns, representing a wide range of cultural communities, and from all faith traditions.

THE MISSION OF THE ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL IS TO:

- Provide solid musical instruction in a friendly and fun environment of mutual respect and achievement;
- Create an opportunity for children to grow in musical and spiritual strengths that nurture their growth;
- Provide children of diverse abilities and backgrounds with a program of music appreciation and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's musical potential.

BECOMING A CHORISTER

- Children may join at any time;
- Families may visit us for a rehearsal or service; phone or email the Director of Music to arrange an informal audition and interview;
- No prior training or experience is expected or required;
- The program is offered at no cost to participating families who show commitment to the choir schedule;
- Children of any religious affiliation, or no affiliation, welcome;
- Attendance at rehearsals and all regularly scheduled services and concerts is mandatory;
- A small stipend, based on leadership and performance, is paid each chorister, emphasizing the seriousness of the commitment to the choir

FAMILY SUPPORT OF THE CHORISTER

The St Paul's Choir School program has many built-in incentives and rewards; however, parental support and encouragement is **essential!** During the course of the choir season, the chorister will experience many high points and exciting opportunities. Parents and family members can provide praise and share in the joy and satisfaction of these achievements.

Parents also need to provide the chorister with encouragement and support during those times when he or she may be tired or need a boost in maintaining a positive attitude.

The Choir School program includes a combination of short-term and long-term goals, discipline and a nurturing environment, can be a significant investment in the child's future.

Choir School families do not have to be members of St Paul's Church, nor of the Christian faith. We are open to children and youth of all faith traditions.

Parental attendance at Choir School events is optional and is strongly encouraged as choristers seem to especially blossom when parents attend services and concerts in which they sing.

It costs about \$1,000 per year per chorister in our program. As a full scholarship program, the Choir School is dependent on volunteers. Parents are needed and invited to support by providing snacks, helping with transportation, and other such activities.

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL STANDARDS SYSTEM

Standards are worth:

- \$.05 each before a Chorister has earned the surplice
- \$.10 each with the earned surplice
- \$.25 each with the earned white ribbon and badge
- \$.30 each with the earned light blue ribbon and badge
- \$.35 each with the earned dark blue ribbon and badge
- \$.40 each with the earned red ribbon and badge
- \$.50 each with the earned yellow ribbon and badge
 - A prize is awarded to each student who achieves honor roll. A certificate or note from a teacher is required;
 - Extra standards are often offered during rehearsals for increased effort and quality work.
 - A \$2.00 bonus will be given to Choristers who have perfect attendance at all rehearsals AND services during that pay period.

RSCM Badges and Skill Cards

1. Choristers receive choir vestments and Royal School of Church Music in America ribbons and badges as they are promoted from one level of achievement to the next.
2. Progress is recorded on Skill Cards—when the appropriate card is filled completely, the Chorister is promoted to the next level.

Our system reflects attendance, attitude, and the quality of participation in all St Paul's Choir School activities. A chorister may earn up to five standards at every rehearsal:

- 5 Chorister is always focused, shows leadership and a positive attitude and sets a good example for other choristers.
- 4 Chorister is mostly focused, shows leadership and a positive attitude and sets a good example for other choristers.
- 3 Chorister is focused some of the time and needs to set a better example for other choristers.
- 2 Chorister is mostly unfocused and does not set a good example for others.
- 1 Chorister is in attendance but is uncooperative, unfocused and sets a poor example for other choristers.
- 0 Chorister is absent or is unwilling to comply with rules and follow directions.

PROMOTION

- Choristers are guided and promoted through the *Voice for Life* program as they study. Promotion comes upon mastering specific skills and knowledge and meeting attendance and conduct requirements.
- Promotion results in a pay raise.

STANDARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Choristers receive a Standards and Progress Report every pay period that evaluates how each chorister is progressing in the following areas:

1. Attendance and punctuality (Showing up on time)
2. Communication (answering e-mails, keeping the Choir School informed)
3. Leadership and attitude (Showing courtesy to others, respect for the team)
4. Musical skills (Progress on Skill Cards)

The pay period report must be reviewed by each parent with the chorister. Parents must call the Choir School to indicate that they have read the report. No choir pay will be given until this is done.

Immediate behavior concerns will be addressed via a phone call to parents.

PROCEDURES

The St Paul's Choir School is a musical and educational outreach of St Paul's Episcopal Church. Choristers should always remember that they are the public face of worship and representatives of the Choir School at all times.

Communication, Attendance and Transportation

All Choristers must sign in and out with the staff. No chorister may leave the building without permission.

At no time is a child to be absent without informing the staff. Three such unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. We are a team and we are only complete when everyone is here. ***It is important not to let your teammates down!***

It is not possible for the Choir School to provide transportation for children for rehearsals and services. A number of parents help out by providing transportation from time to time, and parents are encouraged to discuss ways of helping out in this matter. The policy of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark regarding end of events is attached at the end of this handbook.

Afterschool Period

Students who arrive before rehearsal must come with either homework or some other activity. This period is an opportunity for choristers to interact with one another in positive ways. Bullying and insubordinate behavior will not be tolerated, and will result in an immediate dismissal for the day. All members of the Choir School are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, Christian manner. Running in the hallways is not permitted at any time, and choristers are expected themselves appropriately and respectfully in all areas of the building.

Rehearsals and Services

During the academic year, choristers are required as a part of their training to sing for Sunday morning liturgies (once each month) and regularly scheduled community engagements. *Attendance is mandatory.*

Rehearsals

- No talking during rehearsal;
- For important questions, raise your hand;
- Do your absolute best at all times;
- No food or drink (water excepted, although please be careful);
- Make sure you have the correct music before rehearsal begins;
- Always have your music with you;
- Arrive early for the beginning of rehearsals, and services;
- Put music away after end of rehearsal

Electronic Devices

No child is allowed to use electronic devices (including cell phones, iPods, tablets, headphones, etc.) at any time during rehearsals or services. Rehearsals and services are the work we share as an ensemble, and these devices are a distraction for the entire choir. If these items are discovered during rehearsals and services, they will be taken and may only be retrieved by a parent or guardian.

Choir Trips

Only choristers who have shown outstanding work will be invited join us for trips to sing. Every child must have a signed permission form to attend an event off-campus.

Christian Formation Commission, Episcopal Diocese of Newark
POLICY REGARDING END OF EVENTS SUPERVISION
(Adopted by Diocesan Council, June 8, 2011)

The Christian Formation Commission (CFC) designs diocesan youth events, retreats and activities to:

- Respect the parents and youth by beginning and ending on time.
- Assure that all chaperones are properly trained in *Safeguarding God's Children* through the Diocese of Newark
- Provide a safe and fun environment for spiritual growth and learning/formation.

An important part of engaging learning is to set proper boundaries for ourselves and others. With that in mind, the CFC feels that part of our responsibility is to help people set appropriate boundaries of love and respect for time and space. This includes but is not limited to:

- Setting guidelines of respect for all spaces and locations, especially those places that have offered free space for retreats and other events.
- Setting standards of time for both drop-off and pick-up of participants at youth events, activities and retreats.

In order to live into these values of respect, the CFC will expect that upon completion of an event, parents, guardians or other designated responsible adults will pick up their children within a reasonable time. A reasonable time is defined as the time at which the event or meeting notice with a grace period of no more than thirty (30) minutes beyond said time. The consequences of neglecting to do this will result in a \$25 per hour babysitting fee per child starting at the time at which the event, activity or retreat was to end.

If the delay in picking up the child(ren) is in excess of two (2) hours, the youth(s) will not be able to participate in diocesan youth events for the remainder of the program year.

Any potential delay needs to be communicated immediately to the Missioner of Youth and Young Adults at the number provided in the event confirmation letter.

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The logo on the front of this handbook was designed by Michael Robinson, our first head chorister, in the fall of 2014.