

# *Voices* IN THE LAUREL

## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

Choristers and parents should read these policies and procedures and refer back to them as needed

## **COMMITMENT**

### **5 P's of Success**

Presence

Punctuality

Participation

Parents

Performance!

Perseverance, Patience, Precaution (BONUS: especially during Covid 19 )

Membership in Voices in the Laurel is a commitment to faithful, consistent, punctual participation in activities of the assigned choir.

Enrollment in Voices in the Laurel is the official season, which begins in August and ends in May.

Each member of Voices in the Laurel is expected to participate in the program for the entire term.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of **Voices in the Laurel** is to provide an opportunity for young singers to develop as musicians through the study, rehearsal and performance of quality choral literature, while fostering a sense of self-worth, discipline and an appreciation for music and the arts.

## **WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE SING**

For 25 years, Voices in the Laurel has served the western North Carolina region as a non-profit, independent, community-outreach choir program for singers in first through twelfth grades from Haywood, Buncombe, Jackson, Macon and Swain Counties. Based in Waynesville, North Carolina, membership requires each participant pass a musical audition and participate in weekly rehearsals. During this unique season of Covid 19, Voices in the Laurel rehearsals and performances will be a combination of virtual, small-group, and large group, as deemed safe by the CDC, local authorities, and the Voices in the Laurel staff and Board of Directors.

Voices in the Laurel includes three ensembles: Treble Makers for singers in Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grades; Concert Choir is an intermediate choir for singers who grades three through middle school; and Encore is for advanced singers in grades six through twelve. These choristers rehearse weekly on Zoom or in person, and perform public concerts or virtual performances, benefit concerts and other special performances during the regular season, which is from August through May. Some participate in special concerts, music camps, choral festivals, international and domestic performance tours, and other activities during the summer months.

Rehearsals focus on teaching music through choral music, developing healthy singing habits and vocal techniques, and blending as an ensemble. In addition to the vocal coaching and musicianship, the choir members learn teamwork, discipline, leadership, as well as history and culture through the texts of the music. Voices in the Laurel Choirs sing many styles of music, including classical, music from the US and around the world, spirituals, gospel, Broadway, pop, contemporary a cappella and jazz. The choirs are often accompanied by professional instrumentalists, including rhythm sections, solo instrumentalists, and chamber ensembles. These are profound and authentic music experiences for these young singers, many of whom would not have these opportunities outside of Voices in the Laurel. It is the premiere youth choir program in Western North Carolina!

Martha Weathers Brown founded Voices in the Laurel in 1996, and continues to serve as the Artistic Director for all of the choirs. Now in her 30<sup>th</sup> year of teaching music in the public schools, Brown is the choral director at Tuscola High School, having also taught elementary and middle school music. In addition, she has worked with children and adult choirs in several churches. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky; a Master of Music in Education from the University of North Carolina Greensboro; and finally, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. "I have always had music in my life, but after an accident at age 15; music filled a void, then became my life's work. Singing in choirs took me all over the world and offered so many wonderful experiences. My goal with Voices in the Laurel is to give young people today similar opportunities.

## **REHEARSALS**

Membership in Voices in the Laurel is a commitment to faithful, consistent and punctual attendance. Rehearsals **should take a very high priority in each chorister's life**. VIL choirs have a reputation for quality music and a professional sound. These characteristics have been earned through great performances, which result from rehearsals. **Attendance and punctuality are essential for excellence in performance, and to be considered for awards through the organization. All rehearsals are mandatory unless indicated on the choir calendar.**

**In order to minimize distractions, in-person rehearsals are closed to everyone except choristers, musical staff and designated chaperones.**

**Regular rehearsals will be on Zoom until the beginning of October, or until deemed safe. From that point forward, rehearsals will be on Mondays in the Sanctuary of Long's Chapel United Methodist Church in Clyde as follows:**

**Treble Makers (Beginner choir): 4:00-4:45 pm (Kindergarten - 3rd grades)**

**Concert Choir (Intermediate choir): 5:00 to 6:00 pm (3<sup>rd</sup> - middle school )**

**Encore (Advanced choir): 6:15 to 7:55 pm while virtual; 6:15 - 7:45 in person (6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades)**

**TBA as needed.** Occasionally, extra rehearsals may be needed to prepare for a concert. These will be announced with at least one week's advance notice.

**Solos** will be assigned through auditions witnessed by the Musical Director and/or an outside judge. Auditions may or may not be announced. From time to time it may be necessary for solo auditions to take place at a time other than during rehearsal. If this is necessary, an announcement will be made at rehearsal, and a follow up email will go out. **If a chorister is absent for an audition he/she forfeits the opportunity to audition.** **In addition to vocal ability, solo assignment will be determined by attendance and behavior at rehearsals and performances.**

## **ABSENCES FROM REHEARSALS:**

Attendance will be taken at each rehearsal and this information will be maintained. An absence reminder will be sent via email to each singer/parent for those who have not made prior arrangements for an absence. While we know we must be flexible during online rehearsals, it takes longer to learn online, and therefore, harder to make up. To maintain excellence in performance, and to be awarded solos and other awards, members must be present consistently.

When we meet in person, members of Concert Choir and Chamber Choir may have **one absence** per concert period. If more than one absence occurs, that chorister **must attend a make-up rehearsal for each rehearsal missed thereafter**. The make-up rehearsal schedule is listed in the master calendar. **If a chorister is tardy or leaves rehearsal 30 minutes or more for two rehearsals, the chorister must attend one make-up rehearsal. If you don't make up missed rehearsals, you may not be eligible to sing in the concert!**

**For in person concerts, final rehearsals for each major concert are mandatory for all singers. Any chorister who misses the dress rehearsal will not be allowed to sing in the concert.** All absences from final rehearsals must be approved by the artistic director at least 2 weeks prior to the dress rehearsal.

**Mandatory school music performances:** Children that are required to be in a mandatory school performance and turn in a Pre-Arranged Absence Form signed by the school music director will not be charged with an absence. **School social activities do not count as mandatory school activities!**

If a chorister misses rehearsal for a school activity one week, and misses the week before or week after for illness, one of those must be made up, as missing two consecutive rehearsals interferes with that chorister keeping up with the progress of the group.

**Documentation of absences:** Parents must submit an **Absence Notification Form** (via Google Forms on the website) **OR a written excuse for each absence, tardy or early dismissal**. Online and written notices of absences should occur at least one week in advance, except in the event of illness or other emergency.

**Please file the Absence Notification Form to the Operations Manager regarding absences. If the absence occurs within two weeks of a concert, the Artistic Director must also be notified by email.**

## **REHEARSAL PROCEDURES:**

1. Arrive at the rehearsal site a minimum of ten minutes prior to scheduled rehearsal times, so the choir is fully ready to begin rehearsal on time. This is a great time to socialize!
2. Dispose of all gum, food and drinks other than water before entering rehearsal. Please bring a water bottle into rehearsal. Hydration is important!
3. **Use the restroom BEFORE coming into rehearsal.**
4. Wear your nametag from the chaperone, mentor or Operations Manager.
5. Give notes, payments, order forms, permission slips, or any other paperwork to the chaperone/Operations Manager.
6. Place all personal belongings under assigned seat or in designated locations.
7. Cell Phone use during rehearsal is strictly prohibited. If a chorister is found using their cell phone during rehearsal, it will be taken away and given to their parent at pick up. Cell phones may be checked during rehearsal BREAKS only!! Of course, if you are using your phone to join Zoom, PLEASE DO SO!
8. Socialize before or after rehearsals, NOT DURING.
9. Show respect at all times to each other, parent volunteers, directors, staff and the facilities. Pay attention to the director at all times. Do not behave in a way that is disruptive to the rehearsal or distracting to fellow singers, directors, accompanists, or which prohibits a positive and successful rehearsal.
10. Raise or your hand if you have any questions.
11. Contact a chaperone if you feel ill or have a problem.
12. Running, yelling, and rowdy behavior are not permitted in the building or on the grounds at any time.
13. Do not wander around the church before or after rehearsal. Stay inside in the designated area for Voices in the Laurel use.
14. Non-participating siblings must be supervised by parents/guardians at all times. VIL is not liable for any accident, injury, or altercation that may occur.

## **ZOOM ETIQUETTE**

1. BE ON TIME – If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, you will miss something important! Plan ahead. Log in 10 minutes early to connect technically and socially!
2. Have required materials/music folder with you. (You will need a mat/blanket).
3. ENTER with your MIC MUTED and VIDEO ON. If you are placed in the waiting room, please wait to be admitted.
4. KEEP VIDEO ON DURING REHEARSAL for full participation credi.
5. Use the chat for class purposes only, unless given directions for a social time.
6. Give your full attention to the rehearsal. Do not be on your devices texting, on social media, shopping, etc.
7. When you want to speak, raise your hand. When you are done, say something like "That's it," or "I'm done."
8. Be aware of your surroundings....they can cause distractions. As much as possible, avoid people walking in the background, noisy appliances running, ceiling fans on the screen...
9. Click "Leave Meeting" when the meeting is over.
10. AUDIO/VIDEO hints:
  - a. Go to settings and be sure "Original Sound" is on.
  - b. Adjust your camera so you are in the center of your screen – as in a picture frame. Have the camera slightly higher than your face.
  - c. Have your face lit from the front or side – light behind you will cast shadows on your face.
  - d. Be seated at a desk or table with a chair or seat that is easy to get in and out of, as we will be moving around during our classes.
  - e. Close out of other apps for better audio and video.
  - f. External camera, mic, and headphones will allow the best audio and video, but are not required.
  - g. Contact Keisha with technical issues. You can send a message in the Chat, or by calling or texting (828) 699-4005.

## **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:**

**Cell phones are permitted in rehearsal but may not be used and they must be in silent mode. Absolutely NO TEXTING or SOCIAL MEDIA activity is allowed during rehearsal.** Unauthorized use of cell phones will be handled as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> offense – warning. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense - phone will be taken away and parents must retrieve it from the Chaperone or Operations Manager; 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Cell phone must be turned in to the chaperone at the beginning of each rehearsal for the remainder of the year; 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – possible removal from the program.

**Music folder MUST be brought to every rehearsal.** If a singer does not have his or her music folder, it will count as a half absence.

Other Disruptive behavior will result in the following consequences:

First Offense – a verbal warning during a rehearsal or performance.

Second Offense- a verbal warning and parent contact, specifying that it is your second warning and removal from rehearsal/performance is imminent.

Third Offense – removal from rehearsal/performance. The rehearsal/performance is counted as an unexcused absence. 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.

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

## **NAME TAGS**

Each chorister will be given a nametag to be worn at each rehearsal. Singers need to obtain their nametag before each rehearsal and return it after rehearsal. They must be worn at all times during rehearsal. Nametags will identify each singer as being a part of Voices in the Laurel. VIL is responsible for each person who is present during rehearsal as well as in the facility areas we use at the church or other rehearsal/performance venues.

## **MUSIC FOLDERS**

**During Covid 19 precautionary period** (1st trimester), folders will consist of photocopies of music made in compliance with copyright laws. Each chorister family will pick up a folder at an assigned time. All titles within the folder will be in alphabetical order, and a pencil will be provided. **Each chorister must have his or her folder at each online or in person rehearsal.** Once the trimester is over, VIL will collect photocopies to be shredded.

**Once the Covid precautionary period is over** (2<sup>nd</sup> trimester or after), each chorister continuing from a previous trimester will receive a packet of music for the new trimester. This music should be placed in the folder from the previous trimester. Each new chorister will then receive a folder will receive a music folder with the appropriate music enclosed. The folders and all music are the property of VIL. All music must be turned in at the end of each trimester. Folders must be turned in at the end of the year or the last trimester the chorister participates in. Choristers and parents are financially responsible for all music assigned to them, and must repay the choir for any lost or destroyed music. Photocopies must be counted so that we remain in copyright compliance. **There will be a \$5.00 charge for each lost piece of music.** (This is to cover the cost of each piece of music, taxes and shipping,) The date the folders need to be returned will be determined by the Artistic Director and will be communicated to the choristers and parents at the end of each trimester. There will be an automatic \$50 charge for lost folders.

### **MUSIC FOLDER PROCEDURES:**

**Bring your music folder to every rehearsal!**

1. Mark areas of music only as instructed by the director. Do not draw or doodle on the music.
2. Write only in pencil.
3. Never fold or roll music.
4. Do not mark on the folder or the dividers.
5. Turn in the folder promptly when requested.

## **PERFORMANCES**

**All performances are mandatory unless you are otherwise informed and attendance is required.**

If a school performance, mandatory school function, SAT or ACT conflict occurs, the absence must be reported on a Performance Absence Notification Form, a minimum of two weeks prior to the performance. This may be submitted via Google Forms on the website, or submit a hard copy to the Operations Manager. School performances that conflict with a mandatory VIL performance will not count as an absence against the singer if the singer completes the Performance Absence Notification Form, and submits (a) a schedule or printed program signed by the coach or teacher, OR (b) a note signed by the teacher or coach of the program that conflicts with the VIL performance.

Absences for any other reason must be reported to the Operations Manager prior to the concert. A courtesy email to the Artistic Director is appreciated.

### **DRESS REHEARSAL and PERFORMANCE PROCEDURES:**

Dress rehearsals should be treated just the same as a performance!

1. Get a good night's sleep and eat a nutritious meal before a performance. Drink plenty of water. DO NOT drink carbonated beverages.
2. Refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, or scented hair sprays.
3. Arrive ten minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time, but not more than 15 minutes prior to call time.
4. Tardiness to a performance may exclude a singer from participation at that performance.
5. All performers must arrive wearing the proper VIL uniform as noted in the performance detail sheet or email. Failure to wear the proper uniform may result in non-participation in the performance. Singers should remain in their complete uniform until they have left the performance site or are otherwise instructed.

NOTE: "Dress rehearsal" refers to going through the concert. WE USUALLY DO NOT WEAR PERFORMANCE ATTIRE TO THE DRESS REHEARSAL unless there is some special costume or costume change.

IT IS SUGGESTED THAT CHORISTERS WEAR CONCERT SHOES FOR THE DRESS REHEARSAL.

6. All singers should conduct themselves at all times in a calm, polite, and professional manner. They must give their undivided attention to the VIL staff and appointed chaperones at all times.
7. If a chorister 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.
8. **Remember, members of Voices in the Laurel represent our entire organization at all times.**

**NOTE: Final dress rehearsals and pre-performance rehearsals are always closed to the audience, including families. Only designated chaperones will be allowed in the rehearsal/performance area until the designated time.**

### **CONCERT TICKETS:**

Voices in the Laurel is a non-profit arts organization and charges admissions for all choir families and the general public for its season concerts. Ticket sales help offset the cost of producing each performance. These costs include, but are not limited to hall/space rental for rehearsals and concerts, equipment rental, sheet music (all within copyright law), publicity and printed program costs, moving costs, food (at dinner concerts), and expenses for most guest musicians (a few donate their services). Specific ticket information will be available from our Operations Manager and our website before each concert.

Performances that are not in person, but held on Facebook Live will not involve ticket sales. However, we will encourage anyone who tunes in to consider making a donation in lieu purchasing a ticket to support the ongoing programming of Voices in the Laurel. Virtual performances allow for a wider audience. Be sure to invite friends and relatives who live away to enjoy your performance on Facebook Live! This is one advantage of the virtual world we are living in.

## **RULES FOR USE OF LONG'S CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Long's Chapel supports the mission of Voices in the Laurel by giving us rehearsal space rent-free. In return, we must be very respectful of the space. Choristers and families/authorized transportation givers must follow the rules stated in the rehearsal and performance procedures sections. In addition:

1. All parties associated with VIL **MUST** stay in the designated areas-the church hall, choir room, sanctuary, gathering area or other assigned areas. There must be no wandering into any other part of the facility at any time, unless specified by Voices in the Laurel staff.
2. Do not bring food or drink, except water, into the rehearsal area, unless directed to by the Voices in the Laurel staff.
3. It must be emphasized that non-participating siblings must be supervised by parents/guardians at all times. Children are not allowed to be outside the building without supervision **at any time** during rehearsals.
4. VIL or Long's Chapel is not liable for any accident, injury or altercation that may occur.
5. Long's Chapel has a Child Protection Policy. VIL must meet the standards set forth by that policy. A copy of that policy can be reviewed by parents/guardians upon request.

## **UNIFORMS**

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!

During this period of Covid 19 precautions, VIL **will not issue uniforms** until further notice. Instead, for the *Sounds of the Season*, each chorister will dress to suggest the time period of the story of *The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree*, which is World War I. Should the performance be virtual, only a top/shirt from that time period will be necessary for the virtual choir video. You would be able to wear the pants/skirt of your choice. These items could include plain white shirts with vests, flannel shirts, overalls, dresses or skirts, blouses that look suggest circa 1918.

### **UNIFORM/APPEARANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The specified uniform (casual or formal) must be worn and complete.
2. Boys - Shirts must be tucked into pants.
3. Choristers are expected to be bathed, use deodorant, and have clean teeth.
4. Hair should be clean and **away from the face so that each singer's eyes are visible.** Only black barrettes, headbands, and bows should be used.
5. If singers wear make up, it must be used conservatively.
6. Jewelry is limited to earrings that do not extend past the earlobe. No watches, necklaces, arm or ankle bracelets are permitted.
7. Any singer who fails to dress or groom properly or whose appearance is otherwise not in good character for an event will not be allowed to participate.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK THAT YOUR UNIFORM IS COMPLETE WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE CONCERT. IT IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLACE UNIFORM PARTS THE DAY OF THE CONCERT!**

Voices in the Laurel Choristers will be required to have both casual and formal uniforms

### **CASUAL UNIFORMS:**

All VIL choirs are often requested to wear their casual uniforms for some performances and the final rehearsal before the performance. Each singer receives a t-shirt with the Voices in the Laurel logo with registration. Choristers must purchase any replacements. These must be purchased directly from Voices in the Laurel. They will be worn with pants designated by the Artistic Director.

### **FORMAL UNIFORMS:**

Formal uniforms will be worn for some performances, as well as other events that call for formal attire. **All singers are responsible for purchasing their own uniforms from the VIL selected companies.** Please refer to the Uniform Information Sheet for each choir's required uniform pieces.

There are several uniforms available for use from our uniform storage closet. Please check with the Uniform Chairperson or Operations Manager to see if there is a uniform to borrow before you purchase.

## **TUITION**

Tuition should be paid in accordance with the current tuition schedule. **If the chorister withdraws from Voices in the Laurel for any reason, the amount paid is non-refundable. If a chorister withdraws after the deposit is made but before the first rehearsal, the amount paid less a \$25 music fee will be refunded.** Chorister account balances remain the property of Voices in the Laurel and will not be refunded except in the case of a cash payment in the choristers name made to the account, and that has not been paid out for an activity such as, but not limited to, tours, Atlanta Braves, and choral festivals.

Payments can be mailed to :  
Voices in the Laurel  
P.O. Box 1581  
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

We anticipate that payments will be able to be made on our website by September, 2020.

## **PAYMENT POLICY:**

All tuition and/or payment arrangements must be up to date or paid in full by each due date in order for each chorister to participate in any tours that are available for the choirs. All agreed tuition arrangements must be honored in order for choristers to be allowed to participate in optional activities such as festivals, Atlanta Braves game or performance tours. For example, any chorister who is on a payment plan to pay tuition must regularly pay the installments before paying toward an optional activity.

## **CHORISTER ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

Each chorister has an individual account from which choir expenses may be paid. These expenses include tuition, tours, and other activities. Families may deposit cash into these accounts **AND/OR** raise money by participating in VIL fundraising events. A Chorister Account Record will be maintained for each chorister by the Voices in the Laurel Board Treasurer. Forms are provided for each chorister to keep track of his or her own account. Money will only be taken from chorister account by written request using the "Request For Use of Chorister Account Form".

Chorister Account monies obtained through fundraisers are the property of VIL and will not be refunded except in the case of a cash payment made to the account. If a chorister withdraws from the choir for any reason, the unused tour account balance will be held in his or her name for one year. If after one year they chorister does not return to the choir, that chorister's account balance will be transferred to scholarship fund or the general budget.

## **SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

It is the belief of VIL that everyone should be able to benefit from the services provided by our organization no matter their economic situation. In this spirit, scholarships are offered to those in need. Please note that there are no full scholarships, but financial assistance and payment plans. To apply for a scholarship, please request a scholarship packet be mailed to you. You will then need to complete the forms and return them along with supporting documents in the self-addressed envelope provided. The decision of the Scholarship Committee is final.

## **CHAPERONES**

This is a volunteer position and a vital part of our organization. Chaperones are necessary to ensure support, safety, and a productive rehearsal and performance environment. A chaperone can be a parent, a grandparent or volunteer; however chaperones cannot have non-member children present in the closed rehearsal area or during performance while chaperoning. There must be at least one chaperone available for each rehearsal and concert. They should help create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. **Each Family MUST chaperone once per semester.**

### **REHEARSAL CHAPERONE GUIDELINES:**

1. Arrive at least 10 minutes prior to rehearsal to obtain the needed supplies and greet choristers as they come in.
2. Make sure each chorister has his or her nametag before rehearsal begins.
3. Assist in taking attendance, by documenting if a chorister is absent, writing down tardy entrance and early departure times, and documenting if a chorister does not have his or her folder for rehearsal.
4. Sit in the designated area or where there is a good view of all singers. Be proactive in supporting an efficient rehearsal. In addition to helping in any way asked, chaperones will assist the director with disciplinary issues by circulating frequently, quietly addressing any disruptive behavior seen by making eye contact with the chorister displaying the disruptive behavior or quietly asking them to be on task. At no time may a chaperone make physical contact with a singer.
5. Collect any cell phones or other electronic devices that singers use during rehearsal, then consult with the Operations Manager for proper follow-up.

6. In the event of continued disruptive behavior, the chaperone may be asked to escort a chorister out of the room.
7. In the event of injury or illness, the chaperone should alert the Operations manager and assist as asked to contact parents, obtain first aid supplies etc....
8. Assist with distribution of materials.
9. Assist with sign out procedures making sure each chorister has a parent present for pick up.
10. Peruse the rehearsal or concert space and pick up trash and items left. Turn in items left to the Operations Manager.
11. Check and tidy the bathrooms after the assigned rehearsal.

#### **CONCERT CHAPERONE GUIDELINES:**

1. Arrive at least 10 minutes before Call Time to obtain the needed supplies.
2. Greet choristers and guide them to the correct warm up location.
3. Take attendance (see regular rehearsal guidelines) or assist mentors with attendance.
4. Assist director with logistics (line up, entrance and exit cues, etc.) getting into and out of performance positions and into assigned seats or waiting areas.
5. Check uniforms for dress code compliance.
6. Assist choristers who have uniform/dress code problems.
7. In the event of injury or illness, the chaperone should assist the chorister and Operations Manager help notify the parents.
8. Collect any personal items that choristers may not take on stage.
9. Locate yourself in a logical position to assist choristers who may become ill during the performance.
10. Assist as choir departs the stage.

11. Make sure choristers do not leave the designated areas until instructed to do so.
12. Assist in collecting and signing in chorister folders if they are being collected.
13. Return personal items.
14. Remain with assigned choristers through dismissal.
15. Check and tidy designated holding area for choir. Collect items left and turn in to Operations Manager.

### **TOUR CHAPERONES:**

Any parent interested in being a chaperone on a VIL tour or performances out of town must submit an application to be considered for this fun, rewarding, yet serious task. Applications will be reviewed and chaperones selected by members of the Board of Directors and the VIL staff. Background checks will be performed on any parent who applies as a tour chaperone or drives choristers to performances out of town.

### **TOUR CHAPERONE GUIDELINES:**

1. Demonstrate a high level of dependability, an ability to handle unusual situations as they arise, coordinate schedules, should be flexible and friendly but firm, and be willing to chaperone up to six choristers at a time.
2. Realize that their primary emphasis while on tour is the safety of the choristers. Tour chaperones should not plan on having time off away from their choristers to do any sightseeing on their own, unless there is opportunity during rehearsals and concert preparations.
3. Oversee the same group of choristers for the complete tour.
4. Must travel with the choristers to and from the designated city (not arrive early, stay late, or take alternate means of transportation). If you will arrive late, travel by other means than the choir, or need to leave early for personal reasons; do not apply to be a chaperone.
5. Maintain a small file containing emergency information on each of their choristers, meal money for each chorister, prescriptions, etc. as needed.
6. Enforce the dress code and all rules of the VIL Handbook, as well as rules of the tour, camp, or festival choristers are attending. This includes room assignments, curfew and lights out.

7. Perform the duties of rehearsal and concert chaperones. (See lists above.)
8. May not take their choristers on any “side trips” or activities not sponsored by Voices in the Laurel.
9. Plan on paying full price for tour, although, in some instances, chaperones may pay a reduced price or chorister price.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERISM**

Volunteers are the heart of the Voices in the Laurel organization. Each family is expected to give of their time and talents to help Voices in the Laurel run smoothly and keep the tuition costs low. There are many volunteer opportunities throughout the season which include chaperoning, organizing or working at fundraising events, assistance with concerts etc...

- Families are expected to sign up for at least two volunteer opportunities each season.
- Each family is required to sell or purchase one ad for the Guidebook/Program and supply/secure two items for the auction.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Should my child take private instrumental lessons?**

Each chorister is strongly encouraged to take private instrumental lessons with a reputable, degreed music teacher. Although private instrumental lessons are not mandatory, the Director wishes for each chorister to have an excellent skill level. It is hoped that all Voices choristers are musicians as well as singers.

#### **Should my child take private voice lessons?**

Many choristers are anxious to study voice privately. Based on the recommendation of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and college and university voice professors the Director and musical staff of Voices in the Laurel encourage students to wait until puberty or later to study voice privately, and that parents and students are extremely discerning in selecting a voice teacher. The Director and other middle and high school teachers are concerned that students are taking voice lessons much too early, and that advanced techniques that might damage the voice are being taught to very young singers. It is not the wish of the staff to have a middle school student turn into an opera singer at ages 12, 13 or 14. Private voice study can be a wonderful thing, but only at the right age and with the right teacher.

**Should we continue with our school and church choirs?**

Absolutely! It is encouraged that all VIL choristers maintain membership in school and/or church choirs. We hope that VIL members are choir leaders and advocates for the school and church music programs and directors.

**How can we spread the word about Voices in the Laurel?**

VIL Choir members and families are the best at public relations and choir recruitment! In order to continue increasing our audiences and community awareness about our choir, families are asked to tell friends, family, schools, churches, music teachers and others about the program all year round. Always ask if you can post something and be sure to remove it after the event. We have a Facebook page where you can post blogs, photos etc. Most VIL choristers heard about the choir from their friends. Feel free to wear Voices tee shirts and apparel out in the community as ambassadors for our organization. There is a store on the Voices in the Laurel website where additional Voices in the Laurel gear and logo items can be purchased. Go to [www.voicesinthelaurel.org](http://www.voicesinthelaurel.org).

**Absence Notification Form**

If there is a day that you anticipate missing a rehearsal, please complete this form at least 1 week prior to rehearsal time. If it is less than 1 week prior to rehearsal time, please contact Keisha Goodman, Operations Manager at (828)699-4005.

Date of Anticipated Absence - \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for anticipated absence -

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## **Policy and Procedure Acknowledgment**

The family of \_\_\_\_\_  
(list chorister names)

hereby agrees to pay annual tuition fees. I further agree that if this chorister withdraws for any reason, the amount paid is non-refundable. I also agree that chorister account balances remain the property of Voices in the Laurel and will not be refunded except in the case of a cash payment made to the account. I understand that I am responsible for purchasing the uniforms and that additional accessories on loan from Voices in the Laurel must be returned in a timely manner, or a replacement fee will be required. I understand that Voices in the Laurel is not responsible for personal belongings brought to rehearsals, concerts, tours or other Voices events.

I agree that my child's photo may be used for promotion of Voices in the Laurel or for advertising purposes in print, television, internet websites and social media. Voices in the Laurel is not responsible for photos shared by others.

I have read the Policy and Procedure Manual and agree with all terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of parent or guardian (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the parent or guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Voices in the Laurel Operations Manager Contact Information**

**Mailing Address:** P. O. Box 1581

Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

**Phone:** 828-699-4005

**Website:** [www.voicesinthelaurel.org](http://www.voicesinthelaurel.org)

**Artistic Director:** **Martha Weathers Brown**  
mwbrown07@gmail.com  
828-734-8413 (call before 9:00pm)  
56 Liberty Road  
Waynesville, NC 28785

**Operations Manager:** **Keisha Goodman**  
[voicesinthelaurel@gmail.com](mailto:voicesinthelaurel@gmail.com)  
828-699-4005

**Musical Staff:** **Mary Ann Cooper**, Accompanist, 828-734-8680  
**Anna Watson**, Accompanist, Music Library  
828-550-5420



Request for funds to be used from Chorister Account

Chorister Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Choir: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be Taken Out of Account: \_\_\_\_\_

To Be Used For: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Request for funds to be used from Chorister Account

Chorister Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Choir: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be Taken Out of Account: \_\_\_\_\_

To Be Used For: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Request for funds to be used from Chorister Account

Chorister Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Choir: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be Taken Out of Account: \_\_\_\_\_

To Be Used For: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_