



CINCINNATI **BOYCHOIR**  
— VOICES THAT IGNITE —

Parent & Student Handbook 2016-2017

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Concert Season

# Cincinnati Boychoir Quick-Sheet

## Artistic Staff

Christopher Eanes, DMA  
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Associate Director and Lead Accompanist  
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Assistant Conductor Advanced Division  
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Shiloh Roby  
Accompanist for Intermediate Division  
[sroby@cccath.org](mailto:sroby@cccath.org)

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## Stay Connected!

### Cincinnati Boychoir Social Media Sites:

'Like' our posts, follow us in the digital world for information on concerts, closings, tours, and special recognition: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

## Operations Staff

John Spain  
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Joy Bennett  
Communications Associate  
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## Cincinnati Boychoir Mailing Address

650 Walnut Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202  
Web address: [www.cincinnatiboychoir.org](http://www.cincinnatiboychoir.org)

Office phone: (513) 396-7664  
Boychoir cell phone (for tours & off-site concerts/retreats): (513) 828-8081

Office hours: Monday – Thursday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

General inquiries: [sing@cincinnatiboychoir.org](mailto:sing@cincinnatiboychoir.org)  
Cincinnati Boychoir Board of Trustees: [board@cincinnatiboychoir.org](mailto:board@cincinnatiboychoir.org)

## Schedule Information

To find **schedules** for your son's choir, go to: [cincinnatiboychoir.org/resources/schedules/](http://cincinnatiboychoir.org/resources/schedules/)

## Text Alerts

To sign up for text alerts from the Boychoir regarding schedule changes or other important information, text the following codes to 81010:

**Tour Choir Soprano/Alto:** @toursa

**Tour Choir Tenor/Bass:** @tourtb

**Concert Choir:** @joincon

**Resident Choir:** @joinres

**Training Choir:** @jointng

**BeauxTies:** @beauxties

## I. BOYCHOIR INFORMATION & HISTORY

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Cincinnati Boychoir! We have been making music together for more than fifty years, and 2016-2017 is going to be an exciting season. Please take a moment to read this handbook; in it you will find useful information about the rehearsal and performance process, as well as our history, upcoming performances, and tour information.

### The Value of the Boychoir Experience

We believe in the education of boys through teamwork, discipline, physical and intellectual hard work, and exposure to a diversity of ideas, music, languages, and religions. The opportunity to work as a pre-professional musician is a unique opportunity that will enhance confidence, stage presence, and teamwork abilities. We ask each boy to come to the rehearsal and concert process with a curious and open mind; a love of learning will be rewarded at the Boychoir.

### Profile | The Cincinnati Boychoir

Since 1965, the Cincinnati Boychoir has been dedicated to the musical, intellectual, and emotional development of young men and has served as one of the foremost music education and performance organizations in the region; now in its fifty-first season, the Cincinnati Boychoir is recognized as one of the premiere Boychoirs in the United States. Located in the urban arts core of Cincinnati, the Boychoir reaches approximately 200 young men each year from more than 75 schools in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, and focuses its mission on reaching under-served parts of the region and supporting the revitalization of the downtown area. Boys audition for the choir by recommendation of school music teachers and attend weekly rehearsals, retreats, music theory classes, and the annual SongFest Summer Music Camp for Boys at Xavier University.

Each year, the Cincinnati Boychoir presents approximately forty annual performances in the Greater Cincinnati community, and has performed concerts and completed residencies both at home and abroad; most recently, the Boychoir undertook a two-week concert tour to Australia where they visited Sydney, Brisbane, and Port Macquarie (July 2015). As an organization that values collaboration, the Boychoir has built artistic partnerships with Cincinnati's Vocal Arts Ensemble, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, the musicians of Christ Church Cathedral, Collegium Cincinnati, the Taft Museum of Art, and Elementz, as well as the many other choirs that together make Cincinnati 'The City That Sings.' In 2013, the Cincinnati Boychoir was the subject of a thirty-minute special on WCET, Cincinnati's public television station, entitled "A Treasure of Youth and Song."

The Boychoir performs regularly with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra & May Festival Chorus, most recently under the direction of James Conlon in 2012 (Orff: *Carmina Burana*), 2011 (Mendelssohn: *Elijah*), and 2010 (Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*), and under the direction of Rafael Frúbeck de Burgos in October, 2012 (Mahler: Symphony No. 3). Soloists from the Boychoir have performed with the Cincinnati Opera, the Dayton Philharmonic, the Dayton Opera, the Blue Ash-Montgomery Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and with many other national and

regional orchestras. Six members of the Boychoir have gone on to join the world-famous Vienna Boys' Choir.

Recent projects include Britten's *Saint Nicolas* with Collegium Cincinnati (March 2013), a boys-and-men-only performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra (December 2011), and participation in the Champion's Competition of the World Choir Games in July 2012, where the boys took home silver medals in the mixed choir and the youth choir divisions.

### History | The Cincinnati Boychoir

Originally founded on March 6, 1965 as the Cincinnati All-City Boys Choir, the choir made its debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and May Festival Chorus for a presentation of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. At that time the Instructional Consultant of Music for the Cincinnati Public Schools, Robert McSpadden, conducted the choir's weekly rehearsals and organized its program and concerts with no budgetary support from the Cincinnati Public Schools other than the provision of rehearsal space and the use of copiers for duplication of music; the director and his assistant wrote all of the early arrangements for the boys to sing, pieces which remain in the Boychoir's repertoire to this day. The choir program came to its demise at the end of the 1976-1977 season when the tax levy for the Cincinnati Public Schools failed and the choir lost both its rehearsal space and the use of the copiers.

Founded anew in 1978, the new Cincinnati "Boyschoir" (later "BoyChoir," and finally "Boychoir" to be consistent with the formal term later adopted by the American Choral Directors Association) permitted singers from the newly developing surrounding school districts to participate. The choir rehearsed in churches, with the exception of the 1985-1986 school year when practices were held at the School for Creative and Performing Arts. The choir began its presentation of an annual tour outside the greater Cincinnati area in 1981.

Randall Wolfe, the choir's assistant director and accompanist beginning in 1981, became director in 1986. In 1988 the choir saw its first development into a two-tiered structure which included a Preparatory Choir for first-year singers and a Concert Choir for the more skilled veteran boys. In 1993 the system became three-tiered, including the Training Choir and the Resident Choir. In 2011, the Boychoir restructured to place a high value on the older boys teaching the younger ones; while the Training Choir remains the initial experience for novice boys, the Concert Choir handles the bulk of in-town performances, and the Tour Choir boys (all of whom sing in the Concert Choir) perform nationally and internationally in special appearances.

Having rehearsed in fourteen different schools, churches, synagogues, and halls over a period of thirty-three years, the choir purchased in 1998 its first permanent rehearsal home, which included a 900 square foot rehearsal hall and space for offices, wardrobe, and music. In 2012, the space needs of the Boychoir outgrew the building, and operations were partially shifted to Hamilton County Memorial Hall on Washington Park. In the fall of 2014, the Boychoir became a Resident Company of the Aronoff Center for the Arts and moved its rehearsal and office space to its current location on Walnut Street.

## Directors of the Boychoir

Robert McSpadden  
Founding Director 1965-1977

William Dickenson  
Director 1978-1986  
Assistant Director 1965-1977

Randall Wolfe  
Director 1986-2008  
Assistant Director 1981-1986

Bryan Mock  
Interim Director 2008-2009  
Assistant Director 1996 - 2008

Christopher Eanes  
Director 2009-present

## Mission Statement

The Cincinnati Boychoir experience provides exceptional concert opportunities and music education in a safe, diverse, and respectful environment.

## Vision Statement & Statement on Religion

The Cincinnati Boychoir instills a passion for vocal arts excellence in its members and audiences and reflects the cultural diversity of Greater Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Boychoir embraces all forms of spiritual belief among its employees, members, and patrons. The Cincinnati Boychoir chooses musical programs based on the quality of the music and the educational value for young people.

## All-City Boychoir

The Cincinnati Sings initiative (now known as the All-City Boychoir) was begun in 2009 as an effort to bring music into underprivileged and under-served communities, by creating long-term relationships rather than one-time appearances. The program has evolved into an effort, specifically, to reestablish relationships with the Cincinnati Public Schools. In 2016-2017, we will reach five schools (Evanston Academy, Bond Hill Academy, Academy of World Languages, Hays-Porter, and Carson Elementary), culminating in our sixth annual All-City Boychoir Festival.

## Statement of Respect

*Written by the 2010–2011 Tour Choir*

We, the young men of the Cincinnati Boychoir, in order to form a more perfect brotherhood,

- Will be respectful of the people and places around us;
- Will be good sportsmen and think positively;
- Will be aggressively nice and treat others how we want to be treated;
- Will own our mistakes, and not point out those of others;
- Will lose proudly and win graciously;
- Will listen when others are talking;
- Will not talk with a potty mouths;
- Will always work at 110%;
- Will never, ever complain.

## Safety at the Cincinnati Boychoir

The Cincinnati Boychoir is committed to providing a safe environment for all its members, one that is free from bullying, harassment, or abuse in any form. Members of the Boychoir are inclusive of all people regardless of differences in socioeconomic background, religion, culture, sexual identity, or ethnicity.

The specific actions that are taken to keep your child safe are as follows:

- Any staff member or chaperone that will directly supervise your child must successfully complete a criminal background check.
- Under no circumstances may a staff member or chaperone be alone with a child; an additional staff member, a parent, or another student must be present.
- Complaints of harassment or bullying are addressed immediately by the director with the student and his parent/s.
- Any student who bullies a fellow Boychoir member physically, verbally, or otherwise in person or electronically will be liable for immediate dismissal from the Boychoir.
- Disciplinary action appeals may be made to the Board of Trustees in the case of irreconcilable circumstances ([board@cincinnati-boychoir.org](mailto:board@cincinnati-boychoir.org)).

## The Curriculum

Boys will work with a variety of music fundamentals every day: key signatures, intervals, rhythm and meter, sight-singing, and ear training using the theory curriculum from A Young Singers Journey. Additionally, healthy vocal technique will be taught from the very first day in the Training Choir. It is our mission to send boys into the world as confident musicians and singers, with a curiosity for different types of music, language, and culture.

## Auditions

Auditions are held three times per year: September, January, and April (for the following fall). Please check the Boychoir website (<http://www.cincinnati-boychoir.org>) for exact dates. Boys must be in the first grade (or entering first grade in the fall) to audition.

## Commitment to School Music Programs

Members of the Boychoir are required to be active participants in their school band, orchestra, or choir, where such groups are available. Boys should be leaders in their school musical programs, and approach school rehearsals and performances with the same discipline with which they approach those of the Boychoir.

## Press

"The Cincinnati Boychoir ... is an outstanding cultural asset to Cincinnati's rich musical life. I have had the pleasure of collaborating with them in the context of the 2010 May Festival and look forward to working together with them again in the future." - James Conlon, Music Director-Cincinnati May Festival; Music Director -Los Angeles Opera

"Cincinnati Boychoir is not just any children's choir." – Cincinnati Enquirer

For links to all of our recent press, visit [cincinnati-boychoir.org/about-the-cincinnati-boychoir/press/](http://cincinnati-boychoir.org/about-the-cincinnati-boychoir/press/)

## II. BOYCHOIR PROGRAMS

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### Primary Division: Boychoir Experience

*Open to: any boy grades 1 – 5*

**Instructor: KellyAnn Nelson**

**Accompanist: Bonnie K. Spain**

Boychoir Experience provides an opportunity for boys in grades 1 – 5 to participate in the Cincinnati Boychoir without an audition. During each 6-week session, boys learn about music-making and participation on a choral “team” within the confines of a friendly and fun environment. Basic musical concepts are taught through singing, movement, games, and a variety of other activities. At the end of each session, Boychoir Experience participants join with the entire Cincinnati Boychoir in a concert.

Classes: Saturdays 9:00 – 10:00 am

Locations & Dates:

Session I (Aronoff Center for the Arts, Downtown):

- Rehearsals October 22 – December 3, 2016 (no rehearsal Thanksgiving weekend)
- Concert Saturday December 3 (Aronoff Center for the Arts)

Session II (Aronoff Center for the Arts, Downtown):

- Rehearsals March 4 – April 8, 2017
- Concert Sunday April 9 – (Aronoff Center for the Arts)

Cost: \$115 for a six-week session (register here)

### Intermediate Division

**Director: KellyAnn Nelson, Associate Artistic Director**

**Accompanist: Shiloh Roby**

The Intermediate Division assumes no prior knowledge nor experience with music and singing, and provides each boy the fundamental skills he will need to achieve success throughout the Boychoir program. Regular music theory lessons (taught during scheduled rehearsal times) enhance the teaching of basic vocal and musicianship skills. All rehearsals are structured to fit multiple learning styles and are specifically “boy-friendly”, including opportunities for them to sing together, develop choral “teamwork” skills, play music games, and become contributing citizens within the Cincinnati Boychoir family. All boys participate in a program of mentorship (in which returning boys serve as “big brothers” to new boys) and periodic assessments are given in order to monitor each boy’s progress.

#### Training Choir (Level 1 in the Intermediate Division)

*Open to: any boy in grades 2-5 who successfully completes the entrance audition.*

The Training Choir is the first year-round choral ensemble in which a Cincinnati Boychoir singer participates. Specific music theory topics include identification/understanding of musical symbols & terms, identification/reading of simple rhythms & meters, and identification/reading of diatonic scales & melodies. Vocal instruction emphasizes the ability to access their head voice, proper breathing technique, phonation/placement, and diction. Training

Choir singers work on repertoire that is unison or 2-part, and special attention is paid to developing “music listening ears” so that singers can focus on intonation and holding their own part in a choral piece. Training Choir performs in approximately five concerts per year, and has one outreach tour for a day in March to multiple retirement homes in our community (with a bus and pizza).

Rehearsals: Mondays, 6:00 – 7:00 pm, Aronoff Center for the Arts  
Cost: \$285 per semester (September & January)

#### Resident Choir (Level 2 in the Intermediate Division)

*Open to: any boy in grades 3-6 by audition.*

The Resident Choir is the newest year-round choral ensemble in which an Intermediate Division Cincinnati Boychoir singer participates. Boys must demonstrate a strong ability to match pitch, focus in rehearsal and show aptitude for figuring out the “puzzle” of music.

Specific music theory topics include identification/understanding of musical symbols & terms, identification/reading of simple to intermediate rhythms & meters, and identification/reading of diatonic scales & melodies. Vocal instruction emphasizes the ability to access their head voice, proper breathing technique, phonation/placement, and diction. Resident Choir singers work on repertoire that is unison, 2-part, or 3-part, and special attention is paid to developing “music listening ears” so that singers can focus on intonation and holding his own part in a choral piece. Resident Choir performs in approximately 5-10 concerts per year, and has one overnight outreach tour within the Greater Cincinnati area.

Rehearsals: Mondays, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Aronoff Center for the Arts  
Cost: \$305 per semester (September & January)

### Advanced Division

**Director: Dr. Christopher Eanes, Artistic Director**

**Accompanist: Mrs. Bonnie Spain, Associate Director**

*Boys must complete at least one year in the Intermediate Division before they are eligible to audition for the Advanced Division.*

Boys will be invited to audition for the Advanced Division after completing at least one year in the Intermediate Division. Boys must have completed Book I in the theory curriculum and demonstrate success in the four areas for advancement: Vocal Technique, Behavior/Citizenship, Attendance and Sightsinging/Music Theory. Boys will continue their music theory studies as well as performing throughout the city, region and world at the highest musical level. All rehearsals are structured to fit multiple learning styles and are specifically “boy-friendly”, including opportunities for them to sing together, develop choral “teamwork” skills, play music games, and become contributing citizens within the Cincinnati Boychoir family. All boys participate in a program of mentorship (in which returning boys serve as “big brothers” to new boys) and periodic assessments are given in order to monitor each boy’s progress.

#### Concert Choir

*Open to: any boy in grade 4 and up who has successfully completed at least one year in the Intermediate Division and has been invited to audition for the Concert Choir.*

Concert Choir serves as the Cincinnati Boychoir’s main performing ensemble. The Concert Choir performs at most of the concerts

located within the city limits of Cincinnati, including an annual major work with orchestra, and periodic appearances with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, May Festival, and the Cincinnati Opera, among others.

Specific music theory topics include sight-reading of increasingly complex rhythms & meters, diatonic scales & key signatures, and basic interval identification. Vocal instruction continues to emphasize respiration (particularly as the boy matures physically), phonation/placement, and diction. The International Phonetic Alphabet is taught to all singers in order to manage proper diction in foreign languages.

Rehearsals: Mondays, 6:30 – 8:30, Aronoff Center for the Arts  
Cost: \$325 (September & January)

### **Tour Choir**

*Open to: any boy within the Concert Choir who is invited to audition, based on criteria stated above.*

The Tour Choir is an SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) chamber choir within the Concert Choir, and is the Cincinnati Boychoir's premiere performing ensemble. The Tour Choir performs approximately 35 concerts each year throughout the Greater Cincinnati area, and undertakes an annual performance tour. Boys that wish to sing in the Tour Choir must show the highest level of dedication to their music-making, as well as maturity and leadership within choral rehearsals and performances. Criteria for joining the Tour Choir include: boy's score on the Tour Choir entrance test; vocal & physical maturity; leadership capability; discretion of the director. Participation in the Tour Choir requires a great deal of time & commitment both from the boy and from his family, and the ensemble works professionally as a contracted choir when called upon.

Music theory skills continue to be honed in the Tour Choir; boys learn non-diatonic scales, interval naming, and basic triadic harmony. Vocally, the boys are encouraged to continue to learn healthy singing; often, the boy's voice will begin to change during his Tour Choir tenure, and individual instruction may be necessary to aid him through the transition.

*A note on change voices: boys who are accepted into the Tour Choir whose voices change are invited to stay in the ensemble. Boys whose voices change prior to their acceptance into the Tour Choir may audition for the Tour Choir, or may sing in the Men's Glee Club.*

Rehearsals: Soprano & Alto Mondays 6:30-8:30 Aronoff Center for the Arts

Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass Thursdays 6:30-8:30 Aronoff Center for the Arts

Cost: \$375 per semester (\$325 for changed voices) (September & January)

### **BeauxTies**

The BeauxTies is an ensemble for jr/high schoolers with changed and changing male voices, and is open to all graduates of the Cincinnati Boychoir, as well as non-graduates by audition or permission of the director. The ensemble performs on all major Boychoir concerts, including the annual major work with orchestra.

Rehearsals: Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, Aronoff Center for the Arts  
Cost: \$220 per tri-mester

## **Additional Boychoir Opportunities:**

All-City Boychoir Festival: The Cincinnati Boychoir was founded as part of the Cincinnati Public Schools in 1965. In honor of that beginning, the Cincinnati Boychoir celebrates its connection to the local schools with an annual All-City Boychoir Festival.

Teachers from throughout the Greater Cincinnati area are invited to send up to 10 boys in 1st – 4th grades to sing with the Cincinnati Boychoir on a Saturday afternoon filled with music, friends, and fun! Teachers are also invited to attend a simultaneous music education workshop at which they can earn continuing education credit and gain new ideas for their classroom.

No advance preparation is needed, and each boy will receive a t-shirt and a pizza lunch. Participating boys are assigned a "big brother" from the year-round choir, and in a very short time, boys from across the city are singing and having fun together. The day ends with a public concert at the end of the day, at which parents and other audience members can celebrate the hard work and joy that hundreds of boys from dozens of local schools have put into creating beautiful choral music in just one day.

Timeframe: November 5th, 11:00am – 6:00pm (t-shirt provided)  
5:00pm concert

Registration Cost: Free

### **SongFest Summer Music Camp for Boys:**

SongFest offers a unique and rewarding musical experience for boys entering grades 1-12. This week-long day camp includes choral rehearsals, music theory classes, games, recreation, and even an African drum circle! SongFest serves as a great introduction to the Cincinnati Boychoir for incoming students, as well as a focused way to start the year for returning members. The program of mentorship is strong at camp, and over a hundred boys of all ages & background interact, work together and create phenomenal music during a week filled with fun, friends, and exciting music education!

## **III. ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

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### **Guidelines for Rehearsals**

All rehearsals, including Boychoir Experience, except for certain ones as announced, are held at the Aronoff Center for the Arts. Entrance to the rehearsal space is on the corner of Main Street & 7<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Cincinnati.

When coming to rehearsal, you may either pull up in the lane closest to the building and let your boy out in Fifth Third Theatre Plaza, or park and walk him into rehearsal. Parking is available on the street or in one of the many garages or pay lots in the area.

Please finish all food and drink before entering the buildings.

Tour Choir & Concert Choir rehearsals are closed to the public unless previous permission is obtained from the director. Training and Resident Choir parents may watch the Training and Resident rehearsals at the Aronoff, **providing there is no talking, and electronic ringers & sounds are turned off.**

### **Rehearsal Expectations**

Boys must arrive fifteen minutes prior to the rehearsal start time. Boys must have the following with them at all rehearsals: choir music and all related papers, and a sharpened pencil. Boys must refrain from bringing any toys or anything that might cause a

distraction in rehearsal. Any boy caught with a weapon or illegal items or substances will be immediately suspended from the program. Boys are not permitted to use iPods, phones, or video games before rehearsal or during breaks; for this reason, boys are encouraged to leave all electronics at home or in the car.

Boys must leave all distractions at home, speak only when called upon to do so, and keep their hands and feet to themselves. Disciplinary issues that arise are treated with consequences similar to those in the boys' schools. Directors may suspend or dismiss boys for unruly behavior, poor attitude, irregular attendance, or lack of punctuality, and no monetary or credit refunds are issued. The success of a boychoir rests upon the regular attendance and punctuality of its members. In order to achieve the highest performance level possible given our restrictions, attendance at all rehearsals, concerts, and recording sessions is mandatory.

### **Attendance Policies**

#### **Attendance at all Boychoir rehearsals and concerts is mandatory.**

We ask that you observe the following priority list when planning your schedule:

- Medical, family, religious, and academic requirements
- School music concerts
- Boychoir dress rehearsals and concerts
- Boychoir regular rehearsals
- Sports team responsibilities (including games, meets, and competitions) or other extra-curricular community activities
- Other

### **Rehearsal Attendance Policy**

Parents are asked to call the choir office as early as possible beforehand to advise of their son's absence from any scheduled rehearsal. It is important that the choir directors know who will be absent before the rehearsal or concert because absences cause changes to the overall lesson plan and warm-up routine. For colds, sore throats, and laryngitis, the determining factor is whether the boy has a fever and is therefore contagious. Boys or their parents are asked to call other boys or parents in the choir before the next event to find out what was covered and what memoranda were distributed.

Two instances of tardiness are treated as one absence. Parents are asked not to enter the rehearsal room and interrupt the rehearsal to announce their son's tardiness or its cause.

### **Concert Attendance Policy**

It is vital that every boy be healthy and present for each concert. Absences from concerts will be handled on a case-by-case basis, provided at least two weeks' notice is given.

Unplanned/unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the Boychoir.

### **Dress Rehearsals**

Dress rehearsals are vitally important to the quality of a performance. Singers that are late to or absent from a dress rehearsal may be prohibited from performing in the concert. A dress rehearsal is defined as the final full rehearsal prior to a concert. If a

concert is Sunday and the last rehearsal before that is Monday night, the Monday night rehearsal is counted as the dress rehearsal.

### **Religious holidays**

Absence for a major religious holiday will be approved with two weeks' advance notice in writing.

### **Accumulation of Absences**

If a boy's number of absences and tardies up to a given point in the semester total three or more for Tour boys, and two or more for Concert, Resident, and Training boys, the boy is asked to arrive fifteen minutes before the next rehearsal or concert report time to meet with the choir director to assess his progress. After a boy has successfully fulfilled the requirement asked of him to retain his seat in the choir, he will need to meet again with the director for each successive absence thereafter during that same semester.

The accumulation of absences always adversely affects the boy's performance readiness as a member of the choir. Since boys will occasionally need to miss a choir event for illness, death in the family, school concert, or spring break, they are asked to avoid missing for other reasons. A Tour boy who has missed three times, or a Concert, Resident, or Training boy who has missed two times, for such absences as illness, a school concert, or a death in the family, will find his assessment meeting with the director a positive experience that will help him identify the techniques and music on which he needs to be working. However, boys with excessive absences due to illness will be asked for doctor's notes and may be put on medical leave for the semester if necessary.

Also, boys are asked not to audition for musicals or dramas which will require extended or multiple absences from Boychoir events. Boys who miss Boychoir events because of conflicting commitments they or their families have scheduled are more likely to be dismissed from the program, or not to be advanced from one choir level to the next, because the choir depends on each and every boy doing his part to achieve a consistent choral blend and to offer our audiences the high level of quality performance for which our program is known.

Factors considered in the assessment meeting include the nature of the boy's absences and/or tardiness, his ability to blend and balance within the choir, his intonation, his vocal techniques, his phrasing, his attention to proper vowel formation and diction, his ability to perform the musical nuances as rehearsed by the choir, his behavior, his attitude, his level of participation, and his practice record. The director of the choir will then advise the boy and his parent of the next step. This may consist of any of the following, at the discretion of the choir director:

- the boy may retain his position in the choir
- the boy may retain his position conditionally
- the boy may be asked to practice and to study certain repertoire or techniques, possibly requesting the assistance of a music teacher or instructor, and to audition again at a later date
- the boy may be dismissed from the choir program

Please remember that excellent attendance and punctuality are criteria which are considered for advancement to the next choir level. These factors are also considered when choosing boys for professional roles as soloists or choristers with the Cincinnati May Festival, the Cincinnati Opera, or others.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of inclement weather or other calamity, the rehearsal or performance will usually take place for all who are able to get to the site of the activity. A record of tardies will not be kept for such occasions. If blizzard-like conditions exist, notification will take place by email or will be posted on the website. Rain is not considered inclement weather.

## **IV. SCHEDULES**

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Tour Choir: Mondays 6:30–8:30pm Aronoff Center for the Arts  
Thursdays 6:30-8:30 pm Aronoff Center for the Arts

Concert Choir: Mondays 6:30–8:30pm Aronoff Center for the Arts

Resident Choir: Mondays 6:30-8:00pm Aronoff Center for the Arts

Training Choir: Mondays 6:00-7:00pm Aronoff Center for the Arts

BeauxTies: Wednesdays 6:30-8:30pm Aronoff Center

Exact calendar information can be found on our website,  
<http://www.cincinnatiboychoir.org>.

The Cincinnati Boychoir uses Google calendars for all choir scheduling. Links to each choir's calendar are available through the website (under Resources). Parents must check these calendars at least once a week for changes.

### **Communication**

The Boychoir will make every attempt to communicate through a variety of sources, but tracking schedules is ultimately up to you. Schedules are always available online, and changes will be posted on the website and emailed to you. It is vital that you check both your email and the website regularly (at least once each week) in order to stay informed about calendar information. If you have a question, you can always call the Boychoir office (513-396-7664). Please keep in mind that the Boychoir office is not open on Fridays. Please contact the Boychoir office if your contact information changes.

Text alerts will also be sent in the case of schedule changes or cancellations. We encourage you to sign up for these alerts via the link on page 2 of this handbook; messaging rates may apply, but there is no additional charge for the service.

### **Concerts**

Occasionally concerts will be added or removed from the choirs' schedules, or changes will be made to rehearsal schedules. In this case, changes will be immediately available online; also, an email will be sent to the relevant parents. Concerts normally take place only on weekends, except in an occasional circumstance such as a television or radio appearance. Parents will be given a minimum of two weeks' advance notice for all concerts, except in the case of last-minute opportunities for television or radio. The Training Choir presents approximately 8–10 performances per year; the Resident Choir 10-12; the Concert Choir 15–20; and the Tour Choir 30–35.

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets for concerts are available online. Please consult the website for exact information. While we encourage families to attend, please be aware that small children may disrupt the concert enjoyment of others. In such a case, we would ask you kindly to take your child outside.

## **V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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### **Tuition**

Tuition covers only a very small part (about 20%) of what a boy's education at the Boychoir costs. Tuition is due in full prior to the second rehearsal each semester unless alternate arrangements have been made. Financial aid is available; please contact the Boychoir office for more information.

Tuition per semester:

Tour Choir: \$375

Changed voice Tour boys: \$325

Concert Choir: \$325

Resident Choir: \$305

Training Choir: \$285

BeauxTies: \$220 per tri-mester

Tour Payments: Parents will be notified regarding the cost of tours.

### **Payments**

Payments may be made in cash or check (to the Cincinnati Boychoir) at the Boychoir office, or online with Visa, MC, Amex, or Discover. Payments by Visa or MC can also be made by calling the Boychoir office.

### **Fundraising Option**

Each boy is given the option to raise funds for the Boychoir, in turn offsetting the cost of his tuition. Fundraising opportunities will be made available throughout the year.

### **Financial Assistance**

It is the policy of the Boychoir that we do not turn boys away for financial reasons. Please contact the office in case of financial hardship.

The Boychoir wants to make it possible for every interested boy to participate. We offer a limited amount of financial assistance on a need basis to families that qualify. If you would like to be considered for financial aid, please contact the Personnel Manager for a financial aid form. Forms must be completed and reviewed before the tuition deadline each semester.

### **Financial Policies**

Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

When a parent's check to the Boychoir is returned for insufficient funds, the bank charges the Boychoir a fee, and the Boychoir passes the fee (\$30) on to the parent.

Applications for financial assistance are available. Please contact the Director of Operations John Spain for the appropriate forms.

### **Music**

Music is the property of the Boychoir and must be returned in good condition. Music must not be missing, torn, or defaced in any way. Any markings on music must be made in pencil. Failure to return music in good condition will detract from a boy's good standing in the choir.

## VI. CONCERT ETIQUETTE

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### Audience Members

All photography is prohibited during concerts and rehearsals because it distracts the performers. Group photos of the choirs will be taken in the fall.

Audio- and/or video-recording equipment is prohibited during concerts.

The proper audience response in concert is applause. Whistling and shouting are inappropriate.

Audience members remain seated throughout a performance.

Audience members refrain from waving at the performers, eating, drinking, and talking during a performance.

### Performers

Boys eat meals as usual on concert days. Well-prepared boys have cereal bars or snacks available in their cars for the days that they find themselves on the run.

Boys focus their eyes on the conductor at all times.

Boys allow their hands to fall naturally to their sides while walking onto the stage. They keep their hands behind them during the performances.

Boys end all conversation before walking onto the stage.

Boys keep their knees slightly bent and unlocked while singing.

Should a boy need to yawn while singing, he simply keeps moving his mouth.

Should a boy need to yawn at any other time, he bites down on his back teeth, and the yawn takes place inside his mouth.

The proper response to a compliment is "thank you" and a smile.

Boys wear their concert attire until the car in which they are riding has left the parking lot where the concert was held.

## VII. UNIFORM INFORMATION

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The image which the Cincinnati Boychoir projects at rehearsals, concerts, recording sessions, and on tours is extremely important.

Formal performance attire for Tour and Concert Choir consists of a solid white, button-collar Oxford-cloth shirt (no visible brand logos, please) and khaki slacks with a black leather belt, black dress shoes, black socks, a Boychoir tie, and a black v-neck sweater with the Boychoir logo. Tour boys with changed voices wear blazers in lieu of sweaters. Informal performance attire is black polo with Boychoir logo, khaki slacks with black belt, black socks, black shoes.

Performance attire for Training Choir consists of a grey polo with the Boychoir logo, khaki slacks with a black leather belt, black dress shoes, and black socks. Resident Choir performance attire consists of a burgundy polo with the Boychoir logo, khaki slacks, black leather belt, black dress shoes, and black socks.

Performance attire for the BeauTies consists of khaki flat-front dress pants, white long-sleeved dress shirt, and bow tie. These may be purchased at any store.

White dress shirts, black belts, black socks and black dress shoes may be purchased at any store of your choice.

All other uniform pieces must be purchased through Educational Outfitters, which has two locations:

2656 East Sharon Road Cincinnati, OH 45241

(513) 771-1234

6560 Glenway Avenue Cincinnati OH 45211

(513) 417-8373

Order forms are available online ([cincinnati-boychoir.org/resources](http://cincinnati-boychoir.org/resources)).

Shoes: Black, plain-toe, lace-up, oxford-style dress shoe in black leather.

NO suede, patent (high-gloss) leather, athletic shoes, slip-ons or loafers, heavy/lug-soled shoes, or boots

Belts: Black leather, no ostentatious buckles

Service pins, awarded after each year of participation in the choir, are worn on the right breast in order from top down (star, musical lyre, treble clef, longevity bar, choir lyre). Families may also purchase souvenir polos and sweatshirts through our uniform provider.

Hair should always be clean, well-groomed, off the collar, and above the eyebrows. Earrings, tie tacks, and other jewelry are not permitted in concerts or rehearsals, and "trendy" hairstyles and dyed hair are to be avoided.

Boys who are inappropriately dressed may be excluded from concerts or rehearsals at the sole discretion of the choir director.

## VIII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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### Parents' Guild

The Parents' Guild is comprised of several committees whose purpose is to support the program of the Cincinnati Boychoir. Job descriptions for these committees are available through the personnel manager.

### Choir Parents

Each level of choir of the Cincinnati Boychoir has two choir parents. These parents are responsible for many aspects of the running of the choir including getting to know each boy, attending all rehearsals and concerts and assisting with discipline and behavior at both, as well as serving as a chaperone on tour. Choir parents will receive discounted tuition and tour fees.

### Tours and Chaperones

All members of the Tour Choir are required to participate in the annual concert tour and other short tours as scheduled. Costs are assessed to the boys, and fees are paid directly; throughout the year, periodic fundraisers will be dedicated specifically to bringing down the cost of the tour.

The Cincinnati Boychoir travels as a single tour unit with approximately one chaperone per eight boys. Choir members and chaperones are not permitted to make special arrangements that deviate from the tour unit's schedule, including departure and arrival at initial and final destinations.

Chaperones pay their own costs, although it is possible, through fund-raising activities, to raise sufficient funds to offset these costs as well as their son's.

Chaperones are selected by application based on their experience working with groups of children, their volunteer experience with the Boychoir, their seniority in the choir program, prioritized needs specific to each tour, the need for an even number of men and women for rooming purposes, and the son's record in the choir.

A background check is required for each chaperone.

Each chaperone will be responsible for several boys in a group, which will not include his or her own son(s). Some of these responsibilities include maintaining the boys' spending money, airline tickets, and room keys; dispensing medications; enforcing bedtime and other rules; waking the boys; checking hotel rooms for lost possessions; and occasional laundry duty as needed.

Board policy dictates that chaperones refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking while on tour.

Chaperones must be able to keep pace with the boys physically.

## **IX. LEGAL INFORMATION**

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### **Background Checks**

The Cincinnati Boychoir performs criminal background checks on its staff members, board members, choir parents, and chaperones.

### **Publicity**

All press releases, interviews, quotations, and photographs must be approved by the choir's managing director. Any use of the choir logo must be approved by the managing director.

### **Recording**

Recording, including video, audio, or still photography, of concerts and rehearsals is strictly prohibited by the Boychoir. Not only is it disruptive, but legal issues can arise, including those dealing with copyright, music union legal restrictions, and distribution of images of minors.

Furthermore, it is illegal to publish or distribute the following in any manner, without the written consent of the Boychoir: images or recordings of Boychoir performances, rehearsals, or other activities, either in print or electronically. Publishing videos or recordings to YouTube, Facebook, or similar sites is strictly prohibited.

Boychoir performances and recordings are the exclusive property of the Boychoir and may be distributed and sold without prior consent of the boys and/or their parents & guardians.

## **XI. TOURING GUIDE FOR PARENTS & SINGERS**

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It has been a major part of the mission of the Boychoir since 1991 that our top performing choir undertake a yearly trip to share our music making with other communities around the country and around the world. Indeed, touring is usually the highlight of the year for the choir boy, and often serves to unite the boys in a way that the regular performance and rehearsal schedule cannot.

Additionally, choral music, by its very nature, is a shared art. While it is fine to perform for our friends and family at each concert, the true reward of performing together comes when we impact the lives of people who have not seen us before. Consider the first time you

heard the Boychoir; it can be a moving experience for the newcomer.

To that end, we do everything in our power to insure safe, healthy, and rewarding trips for the boys. We expect that you read and abide by the policies below, and, if you cannot, to make that clear upon the boy's acceptance to the Tour Choir.

### **Touring Requirement**

The Tour Choir is a small, select ensemble, and each member's 100% participation is vital to maintain the quality of the group. Each member of the Tour Choir brings something to the group, and for that reason is indispensable to the ensemble. Furthermore, when a boy is absent more than he should be, the other boys notice, and it becomes disheartening for all.

Going on the yearly tour is a requirement of participating in the Tour Choir.

### **Touring with the Cincinnati Boychoir**

A Cincinnati Boychoir tour has many aspects to it and is precisely scheduled. There is very little 'free' time, though we do schedule the all-important FOB (flat on back) time into the day as well. The most important aspect of touring, of course, is the sharing of music with new audiences. In addition to concerts, the boys often participate in workshops or masterclasses with other choirs or teachers. These are often the most meaningful experiences for the boys, since they get to interact with fellow singers.

The boys also participate in quite a busy schedule of sightseeing and educational activities.

For some boys, the sheer pace of a tour can be exhausting, and to that end we do our best to insure that each boy is eating and sleeping appropriately.

When in hotels, boys generally stay four to a room. Boys are not allowed out of their rooms after hours (except in case of emergency), but are provided the phone number of their chaperone and the Tour Manager in case they need to contact an adult.

### **Homestays**

Often, we will stay in the homes of people we are collaborating with, whether they be fellow choristers, school groups, or other trustworthy organizations. It is a common agreement to make with fellow choruses, and the Cincinnati Boychoir has played host to some of the finest choirs in the world, including the Drakensberg Boychoir from South Africa and Gaude Iuventus from the Czech Republic. The expectation for those organization homestays is, of course, that they put our boys in the same situation in which they would want their singers to be. We do have several policies, however, for our homestay families. Anyone hosting Cincinnati Boychoir boys must:

- Be able take at least two boys at a time;
- Have children of their own;
- Have a separate room for the boys;
- Not smoke or use other substances.

We provide every homestay family with each boy's medical information, including allergies and medications, as well as his family's emergency contact information, and the Boychoir Tour Manager contact information.

The Boychoir Tour Manager also receives a list of homestay family information and contact information in case of emergency. Boychoir staff personally meet the homestay hosts.

We generally also bring gift bags for our homestay hosts; while the Boychoir provides these to the boys to bring, we also encourage boys to bring small gift items which are meaningful to them, representative of the city, or otherwise a nice token or conversation piece.

### Parents on Tour

Aside from chaperones, **parents are prohibited from following Boychoir tours.** While it is ok for parents or other friends/relatives to attend tour concerts, it is extremely disruptive for parents to follow their boys on tour. Following your son on tour not only creates problems for chaperones, but it will in all likelihood ruin the tour for your son. You must trust us on this!

Boys, even when away from home for the first extended period of time, will do better learning to function independently than they will with parents constantly in contact.

Difficult as it may seem for the boy (and as difficult as it absolutely is for the parent), we ask that you limit contact with your son to one phonecall per day, and that you do not follow the tour (other than catching the occasional concert). If a boy is constantly looking around the corner for his parent, he will lose the freedom to discover his independence, and thus the true joy and learning that comes with touring.

If you are considering making a trip the parallels the tour in any way, you must contact the Boychoir to discuss your arrangements. In extreme cases, you may be asked to remove your son from the tour.

### Chaperones

Chaperones for tours are chosen based on previous volunteer experience with the Boychoir as well as experience working with (and rapport with) children. While we try to invite chaperones who have not yet had the experience, our primary consideration is the well-being and enjoyment of the boys, and not the enjoyment of the adults!

Those interested in chaperoning a tour are asked to fill out a brief application form. All chaperones that are chosen to travel with the tour undergo criminal background checks. Chaperones do not chaperone their own children.

### Homesickness

Homesickness is both natural and common, and is usually quickly overcome if the boy:

- Involves himself in the choir activities;
- Limits contact with home;
- Gets enough sleep and enough to eat.

### Tour Payments & Financial Aid

Because tours are all inclusive and can be quite expensive, we recommend you begin planning early. A deposit for the tour will be due upon acceptance into the Tour Choir, which will be applied to the tour total. The deposit is not refundable, except in the case, as stated above, of a voice change, or the discretion of the director.

Financial aid is available for tour on a need basis. Because the tour is required, we do our best to accommodate each person's budget. Additionally, we offer fundraising options for boys to be able to help

pay for their own tour. Financial aid applications are available from the Boychoir Personnel Manager.

It is vital to consider costs when planning whether or not your boy will participate in the Tour Choir; while we do our best to make it possible for every boy to go, in the end it is the responsibility of the family to fund the trip.

### Tour Policies for Boys

#### Behavior:

The expectation for behavior is the same as for all Boychoir events as outlined in the handbook and the Statement of Respect, with the added expectation that the boys represent the Boychoir and the city of Cincinnati to the best of their abilities. Any boy who does not represent the Boychoir well in public or private is liable for review and/or dismissal from the Boychoir.

#### Cell phone, iPod, & Portable Game Usage:

Cell phones, iPods/music players, & games may be used on the bus and in hotel rooms ONLY. Any phones or game systems found in use outside of these locations will be confiscated for the remainder of the trip. The Cincinnati Boychoir is not responsible for items which are lost or stolen while on tour.

#### On the bus and plane:

If boys bring movies on iPod's or similar devices, movies must be rated PG or lower.

Boys may bring money for souvenir shopping; please do not send in excess of \$75. Boys are responsible for their own spending money (including loss thereof). All expenses for the trip are paid, therefore no extra money is necessary.

#### Emergency Contact Phone:

In case of emergency, please call the Boychoir travel phone: (513) 828-8081 (different while abroad).

#### Phonecalls from Home:

While we will allow the boys to carry phones for safety reasons, we will discourage them from making multiple calls home, and we likewise discourage parents from calling except on important business. When possible, please handle logistical business through the Boychoir. We want the boys to make the most of their time on the trip!

The possession of any illicit or illegal substances or materials will result in the immediate dismissal of the boy from the Boychoir, and the contacting of authorities as necessary.

#### Additional Guidelines for Tour Boys

- You may never be without at least one other person; don't wander off alone! You must always be in sight of your 'buddy'.
- You may never go anywhere out of sight of a chaperone. Ask if you need to use the bathroom; don't wander off without telling anyone.
- You may not leave your hotel room without a chaperone, unless there is a life-threatening emergency and you need to get help.
- Always say 'please' and 'thank you' to those helping you, feeding you, and hosting you.

- On the bus, you must stay in your seat unless you need to speak to a chaperone.
- You must keep track of your personal belongings, especially your suitcase, backpack, and tour uniform.
- You must keep your room clean; prizes will be given for the cleanest room upon checkout! Judging will be done by the music director.
- You may only use your electronics & cell phones on the bus and in the hotel rooms. (Do not use electronics – aside from cell phones – at homestays. Cell phones should only be used in case of emergency.)

## **Appendix A: REHEARSING AT THE ARONOFF CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

Welcome to downtown! We are thrilled to now be making our home at the Aronoff Center for the Arts in downtown Cincinnati. Downtown Cincinnati is the urban arts hub of the city, and we are now right in the heart of the ‘action’.

In this guide you will find information to make your transition to the Aronoff rehearsals easier, and, hopefully, productive and enjoyable.

### **Dropoff & Parking:**

When coming to rehearsal, you may either pull up in the lane closest to the building and let your boy out in Fifth Third Theatre Plaza, or park and walk him into rehearsal. Parking is available on the street or in one of the many garages or pay lots in the area.

### **What to do during rehearsals:**

While Training Choir & Resident Choir rehearsals are open to parents to watch (please sit in the balcony), Concert Choir rehearsals are not. However, you may sit in the lobby and get to know other parents or do work, etc.

However, we hope you will get out and explore the neighborhood!

### **Public Library**

The Cincinnati Public Library – the busiest library in America! – is open until 9:00 pm on Mondays. It’s about a three-minute walk from the Aronoff Center at Vine & 9<sup>th</sup> Streets.

## **Cincinnati Boychoir Youth Protection Policy**

The Cincinnati Boychoir provides exceptional concert opportunities and music education in a safe, diverse, and respectful environment. The Boychoir is committed to providing a safe environment for all its members, one that is free from bullying, harassment, or abuse in any form. Members of the Boychoir are inclusive of all people regardless of differences in socioeconomic background, religion, culture, sexual identity, or ethnicity.

### **Boychoir Member Behavior Guidelines**

One of the developmental tasks of childhood is to learn appropriate behavior. The Boychoir provides many opportunities for growth and development. The positive examples set by the directors and older boys in the program play a role in shaping that development.

All members of the Cincinnati Boychoir are expected to conduct

themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Boychoir Handbook. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and drugs and alcohol have no place in the Boychoir program.

**Any student who bullies a fellow Boychoir member physically, verbally, or otherwise in person or electronically will be liable for immediate dismissal from the Boychoir.**

The director will address complaints of harassment or bullying immediately with the student and his parent/s. Boys and their parents are encouraged to bring any concerns to the directors or to the Boychoir board if necessary.

Disciplinary action appeals may be made to the Board of Trustees in the case of irreconcilable circumstances ([board@cincinnati-boychoir.org](mailto:board@cincinnati-boychoir.org)).

### **Statement of Respect – written by the 2010-2011 Tour Choir**

We, the young men of the Cincinnati Boychoir, in order to form a more perfect brotherhood,

- Will be respectful of the people and places around us;
- Will be good sportsmen and think positively;
- Will be aggressively nice and treat others how we want to be treated;
- Will own our mistakes, and not point out those of others;
- Will lose proudly and win graciously;
- Will listen when others are talking;
- Will not talk with a potty mouth;
- Will always work at 110%;
- Will never, ever complain.

### **Leadership Selection**

The Cincinnati Boychoir takes great pride in the quality of its adult leadership. In order to maintain a safe environment, the Boychoir has implemented a code of conduct for directors and for any other paid personnel and volunteers in positions of trust who have regular contact with the boys and young people. The directors, paid personnel, and volunteers such as Choir Parents and Tour Chaperones must complete a criminal background check prior to working with the boys. While no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential child abuser, we can help reduce the risk of accepting a child abuser by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position. In addition, the directors and other paid personnel, as well as any volunteer that wishes to chaperone an overnight tour, are required to participate in a Safe Child Training program that includes information on child abuse.

### **Leadership Behavior Guidelines**

In order to ensure that boys are kept safe at the Boychoir, directors and other adults working in the program must follow certain policies. These policies are primarily for the protection of its youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders.

- **One-on-one contact between adults and boys is prohibited.** Under no circumstances may a staff member or chaperone be alone with a child; an additional staff

member or parent must be present. In situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults.

- **Privacy of boys is respected.** Adults must respect the privacy of Boychoir members in situations such as using bathroom facilities or changing into uniform, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- **Discipline must be constructive.** Discipline at the Boychoir should be constructive and reflect the values of the Boychoir. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- **Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, or digital devices is prohibited.** Recording devices are easily accessible with the use of cell phones, making it very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in restrooms or other areas where privacy is expected.
- **No drugs or alcohol.** Drug and alcohol use is not permitted by boys or adults at any time during rehearsals, concerts and/or tours. Failure to adhere to this may result in dismissal from the choir.
- **Social media is restricted between adults and boys.** The use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Instagram, etc. between adult leaders and youth members is **prohibited**. Boys may follow the *public* Cincinnati Boychoir Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages assuming they have permission from parents. Adult leaders may not communicate with youth members via social media such as Facebook until boys are the age of eighteen; **paid staff of the Cincinnati Boychoir are expressly prohibited from 'friending' or otherwise communicating or following (and being followed by) Boychoir students under the age of eighteen.** In the case of a personal email exchange with a student, the parent of the student will be copied on all communications originating from the staff member.