

# Woodlands Boys Choir

*More than a song ~ voices for the future.*

## Handbook

2017 - 2018

### Our mission . . .

The Woodlands Boys Choir provides the vehicle to transform boys into men of faith and character through excellent music education and performance of inspired choral repertoire, ancient through modern. Our mission is to instill a lifelong love of music and learning in a positive and supportive environment that develops self-discipline, self-esteem and maturity, which carries them through to adulthood, whatever their chosen field.



## **From the Artistic Director:**

In this, the beginning of the third year of the Woodlands Boys Choir, it is important that we continue to build a solid framework for a tradition of excellence for the future. This Handbook is to make clear the rules, policies and procedures of our organization which are for the mutual benefit of your sons and our choir. It is these guidelines which will help fulfill our mission of “transforming boys into men of faith and character, . . . whatever their chosen field.”

The best of handbooks is of no value unless its contents are communicated, committed to and followed. Establishing our boys choir as one of excellence requires discipline and commitment by all involved. As we seek mold our choir into the company of the great boys choirs in the tradition, the personal lives of our boys will be shaped as well.

Know how excited we are about what this year holds for us as a new organization. We are blessed to have amazing doors opening for us!

Sherryl Smith Pond  
Founder/Artistic Director

## Rhythm of Life in the Choirs

(Specific dates to be determined)

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### August - September

Ongoing recruitment

Retreat/workshop weekend, Friday evening/Saturday morning (no sleepover)

Rehearsals begin

Parents Meeting

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### October

Fundraising

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### November

Performance at Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast, first Friday evening

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### December

Christmas concert season

Christmas in the Woods, HopePointe

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### January

Recruiting

Parents meeting

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### February

Mini-Retreat for Concert Choir

Fundraising

Possible out of town festival

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### March

Spring Break

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### April

Sing for HopePointe Evensong (Sunday evening)

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### May

Spring Concert season

Baltimore Boychoir Festival (weekend before Memorial Day weekend)

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### June

Possible Tour or festival for Concert Choir

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### July

Vacation

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## The Boys, the Rules and Code of Conduct

To keep rules to a minimum, we have so far been establishing them only when there is a problem where expectations were not self-evident. These rules are strictly enforced in order to respect everyone's time and for the good of the whole. Everyone profits from the orderly and efficient atmosphere of rehearsal time, as well as time together before performances.

It is each boy's responsibility to respect these few rules, which are contained in this Handbook.

A conduct code is utilized to get the boys' attention. This "Code of Conduct" is posted on the back of the choir room piano and is as follows:

- Code 1 = Silence/No disruption
- Code 2 = No-voice whisper only
- Code 3 = Quiet talking only
- Code 4 = Releases all other codes

Any breach of these or other rules are dealt with between the boy and the director. Only if all else fails will the parent be included. In the event that is necessary, it is imperative that the parent is supportive of the director.

# Parents' Responsibilities

## Attitude

As our mission states, music is the vehicle which transforms boys into men of faith and character. A successful choir requires set of disciplines, skills and demands that is uniquely its own, and these have been developed through the experience of choral organizations throughout history, indeed since Biblical times. These qualities will certainly benefit your son in his life, and many of them seem to be obscured in today's society. Our choir culture requires honesty, pursuit of excellence, punctuality, maturity, bending individuality to the common purpose and enthusiasm, all of which will cause your boy's spirit to soar. Parents must first and foremost foster all of these attributes and communicate them implicitly, if not explicitly, to their boys.

## Health

Supplying us with a healthy choirboy who can be present on time and able to work at every rehearsal and performance is the parents' responsibility. Protect the boys from sudden temperature changes, which can affect their voice and their general health. Watch weather forecasts and make sure to provide appropriate gear to stay comfortable and dry. The voice is sometimes the first part of the anatomy to be affected when contracting colds. Every boy's voice is important at every rehearsal and every performance, just like a sports team, but *there is no "next man up" from the second and third strings to fill in if they are sick!*

## Care of the Voice

The boys should not be coming into or out of rehearsal running and yelling. Vocal chords and bodies are warm from use in rehearsal and need rest on the way home. Not unlike athletes, your son has been involved in physical activity in a highly developed way; like any athlete, he must pace himself. You can help in this area.

## **Parent of the Day/Snacks**

One parent will be assigned to be Parent of the Day for each rehearsal. The Parent of the Day is responsible for bringing a simple snack for the boys. We provide small water bottles.

The break will usually take place the last 15 minutes of rehearsal. The schedule will be printed on the weekly *News and Notes*, which the boys will bring home most weeks. Parent phone numbers will be listed so that parents may contact each other if they need to switch dates.

While parents are serving as Parent of the Day, it is helpful for them to also be on hand in rehearsal to assist with the younger children who may need help managing their music.

## **Uniforms**

You are required to provide and maintain the regulation, publicly worn choir uniform, which is through Lands End School Uniforms. You will be informed of exactly what the boys need and how items should fit. We have a committee in charge of this, which will also have periodic “uniform checks” when appropriate, generally well in advance of the first performance of each semester. Of course boys grow fast, so be prepared to accommodate that fact!

In addition, the boys have casual shirts for travel and away rehearsals, which we specify should be worn with either their uniform dress pants, jeans or shorts, depending on the occasion.

## **Communications**

Most weeks, boys will be bringing home a newsletter, *News & Notes*, which will keep parents apprised of upcoming events and other necessary information, including the snack schedule. We explain to the boys that it is their responsibility to bring you the News & Notes and to follow through with any action items that need parental attention.

In addition group emails are sent out periodically when necessary.

It is important to maintain open communication. Please do not hesitate to express any concerns with the Artistic Director and/or with members of the Executive Board.

## **Fundraising**

As the operations of the WBC organization are not covered by our low tuition, we will undertake several fundraising activities during the year. This is one of the ways the boys take pride and ownership over their choir. Boys will love competing for prizes for top-fundraisers, and they will know that it will make activities, tours, and festivals more affordable for them as well.

## **Parents' General Responsibilities**

On an adult level, choir living (or living through choir) takes creative planning by parents, director and accompanist. How you arrange to meet the sometimes complicated scheduling, the care and consistency with which you approach problems which are bound to arise, serve as a testimony to your sons about your concern and interest in their work.

Together, we (boys, parents and staff) must apply ourselves to the everyday detailing that will make the Woodlands Boys Choir organization successful. As parents, you should strive constantly for constructive understanding of the work being done by the director, accompanist, and your sons in rehearsal. All of us can assume our roles as caring adults, always ready to encourage and bolster when spirits sag, aiming for the objective approach, rather than the subjective one often taken by the boy in his immaturity. If a problem is a serious or persistent one, either individual or collective, then help should be sought from the Director. She is at your service, even though the process of cultivating the culture of our choirs and growth of the boys may not take the patterns often seen in our permissive society. Perspective will show that we care for the wellbeing of each and every boy.

## **Parent Meetings**

The WBC Board of Directors will conduct parent meetings when necessary and with notice to parents. These will typically occur at the beginning of each semester and before major events.

## Carpooling

Another real contribution parents can make is to drive carpools with a real sense of purpose, insisting on standards of behavior consistent with those held before the boys in rehearsal. That is, ground rules should be explained (and there should be as few as possible); failure to comply will bring a suitable adult response. If problems persist, then the offender's parent should be contacted. Simple standards of safety preclude play of several passengers in a moving car so it should not be permitted in choir carpools.

If every parent checks with his choirboy to make certain he expresses appreciation to the various drivers of the carpools by saying "thank you" as he leaves the car, we will have the beginnings of thoughtfulness that will pay big dividends when our boys begin making trips and tours!

Carpool driving is a wonderful way for parents to show a real interest in the work of the boys in our choirs. It is life-giving for the parents in the car to meaningfully engage each child and to create an inclusive, positive atmosphere.

# **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

## **Rehearsal Grounds**

At any rehearsal or performance setting at any time, unless directed otherwise, any form of fighting, rough-housing, pushing, shoving, etc., is prohibited. When two or more parties are guilty, both will be punished, regardless of who began the dispute. A boy who has repeated trouble controlling himself regarding this will likely be dismissed. This rule will be strongly enforced and “we were just playing” and other such excuses will not be accepted.

Boys must never go to any area of the church other than the atrium (when coming in and having snack time), the hallways and restroom, unless specifically instructed to do so by the director, accompanist or adult in charge. Boys may never go behind the counters in the atrium. They are not to touch any church property or equipment unless specifically told to do so by an adult in charge.

Boys are not to bring any play items to rehearsal, including small items in their pockets. The choir will distribute such when time and opportunity permits.

## **Attendance**

In order for our choirs to be worthy of their high calling, it requires faithful attendance at all rehearsals and performances by each and every boy. Boys may be excused from a rehearsal by advance notice. Keep in mind that, since we only rehearse once a week, every rehearsal is vital to the individual chorister being fully prepared for performances. The goal is that they may be free to give their all without anxiety over the music (or any choreography or logistics).

## **Attendance, cont'd . . .**

Part of attendance responsibility includes making sure boys arrive a few minutes early, in time to have their folders out of the cubbies and organized so that they are in their seats for the rehearsal to start exactly at the appointed time. They should also be picked up on time. We make every effort to honor the boys' and parents' time by starting on time and ending on time.

## **Folders & Music**

Choir boys will each be assigned a folder that will be kept in the choir room at HopePointe. They are responsible for keeping it neat and organized, to get it out of their folder cubbies upon arrival, to keep the music in good condition, to make their informed markings in the music, and to put it back in their cubbies before leaving. There will be a charge for replacement if any music is returned in an unacceptable condition.

## General Discipline and Character Development

At the base of becoming a man of character is the virtue of truthfulness. A choirboy is expected to be truthful and honest at all times, even when it means admitting to a punishable offense or reporting the actions of another.

An unfortunate misunderstanding in the minds of some boys is that lying or cheating is a sign of being tough. We as parents know that nothing can be further from the truth. Cowards lie; the brave man has courage of his convictions to speak the truth in love. Choirboys who lie will be reprimanded. Those who do so repeatedly will be dismissed from the choir. Men can disagree and be brothers, but when one lies to another, there is no future to their relationship unless trust can be restored.

Boys are expected to immediately admit to infractions to rules. If a boy does not admit his guilt, it becomes a much more serious matter and will be treated as such.

Boys are expected to behave with gentility. They are expected to be mannerly in appearance, actions, forms of address and general decorum. They represent our choir wherever they go.

## Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

The Woodlands Boys Choir does not allow a permissive atmosphere. The amount of time and energy exerted by both boys and parents makes it imperative that we not waste time by allowing disruptive behavior. The magnitude of the job we have before us is one that requires total commitment.

While the director will inform parents if we observe problems in boys that indicates serious issues, we do not ask parents to do our disciplining; infractions remain a matter between the boy and the Choir, unless a serious disorder is suspected. Not only is this important in the building of individual responsibility, but it is also essential for developing a relationship of trust and confidence. But, at the same time, any time you have concerns, please feel free to contact the director.

When offenses occur the normal penalties are, in order of severity:

- (1) The assignment of a theme. Themes are normally 50 words in length and due in one week. When not submitted on time, the length is doubled or other steps are taken.
- (2) Warning slip. After one theme has been assigned, a warning slip is issued. This slip is an indication of a boy's failure to comply with the rules and spirit of the choir. It must be signed by a parent then returned to the director at the next rehearsal.
- (3) Suspension from choir activities. This may result when serious or repeated offenses have been committed, yet the director feels that the boy has potential and a possibility of redeeming himself.
- (4) Expulsion from the Choir. This is the last resort, but may be necessary in some cases. While the Choir makes every effort to help boys solve their problems, participation is an optional activity and a privilege. We cannot jeopardize the program for other boys by one who refuses to embrace the policies and spirit of the Choir.

Since the Choir does not send home a regular progress report, parents should feel free to request such a report on their son at any time. The most effective means is to request the report from the director in writing, allowing the director time to accumulate the necessary information to best respond to your request.

Any boy engaging in an activity that is unbecoming to himself or the choir will be dismissed immediately. This includes, but is not limited to, vulgar and immoral language and behavior and possession or consumption of any alcoholic beverage or any illegal narcotic drug.

### **Academic Standards**

In order to be a successful member of the Woodlands Boys Choir, a boy must have above average ability and achievement in school. We find that this is generally the case with music students, even at the college level, and even though these same students are spending a great deal of time in ensembles, such as choirs.

This may seem counter-intuitive, but these same students tend to make better use of their time, learning the important skill of budgeting time for each activity, as well as studying. The choir provides added incentive to encourage a boy to develop time-management skills and productive study habits in order to become a high-achiever, which will help a great deal in making him successful in high school, college, and life.

In that spirit, we encourage parents and teachers to have high expectations of members of the Woodlands Boys Choir, both in their academic work and in their service of others. We appreciate knowing when boys are academically deficient or less-than-good citizens. Normally, when choir, parents and school work together, a downward trend can be reversed before the difficulty becomes an almost insurmountable problem.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is made up of parents and community and church leaders. The purpose of the Board is:

1. To provide moral, volunteer & financial support to the Director(s) of WBC in order to develop the boys' growth in musicianship, performance, faith, leadership, academic excellence, citizenship & self-discipline;
2. To assist WBC and its director(s) in providing an environment conducive to excellence in music education and performance;
3. To support the director(s) of WBC and not interfere with the administration of the program or HopePointe Anglican Church.

Members of the Executive Board are in the process of forming committees that will assist with the functioning of the choirs throughout the year. Parents of the boys may be contacted by Board members and asked to serve on committees, which include Recruiting, Fundraising, Scholarships/Grants, Uniform, and Concert.

The Executive Board for the 2017 - 2018 season:

President:	Liz Azzarello
Vice-President:	Needed
Secretary:	Fran Purchase
Treasurer:	Russell Dykes
Artistic Director:	Sherryl Pond

Additional Board Members:

Bishop Clark W.P. Lowenfield

Michael Mason

Elder Bruce Lacombe



*Boys can sing~Join Our Song!*

[www.woodlandsboyschoir.org](http://www.woodlandsboyschoir.org)