



MC Chorale

Choral Union

Vocal Ensemble

Coterie

Muscle

# **Choral Department Handbook 2020-2021**

**Director Mark McCormick**

**310-318-7337 ext 5067**

**[mmccormick@mbusd.org](mailto:mmccormick@mbusd.org)**

***(please use email during distance learning)***

## Handbook Overview

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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Welcome to the Mira Costa Choral program! I am privileged to work with the greatest kids at the greatest high school in the greatest community. We will spend the year connecting with one another, discovering new and meaningful ways to make music and learning a variety of new skills while having a lot of fun. I'm excited about what this school year will bring and look forward to watching your student grow.

### **A WORD ABOUT THE PANDEMIC.**

There has never been a time in memory during which we as a choral community have faced such a challenge to our art form. Amidst the worry and fear that singing and making music would cease completely, our community went to work and the motto shifted from one of pessimism to one of optimism. "If choir is only about singing and performing, there will be no choir for awhile. If choir is about teaching and learning, growing, connecting, community, cultural exploration and transmission, and innovating, we will find a way to have choir." Therefore...

### **FOR ME, CHOIR IS...**

...an opportunity to learn about life through experiencing music. In Choir we learn that everyone—everyone—makes a contribution. We learn that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. We learn that sometimes we are featured and sometimes we are not. In Choir, we learn to surpass what we thought we were capable of doing by working diligently, by breaking down big tasks into small ones, and then putting it all back together as a glorious whole. Through this process we learn that our achievements reflect our vision. In choir we learn to trust: our bodies as instruments, ourselves and our peers as musicians, our teachers as mentors, and our music as our message.

There are three curricular ensembles in the Choir Department:

- MC Chorale** – SATB, open to all
- Choral Union** – SSAA, by audition
- Vocal Ensemble** – SATB, by audition

As your Director, I am committed to providing every student of each ensemble with the highest possible quality of choral instruction appropriate to the student's ability level. By the end of this year, each and every student will have gained skills in vocal performance and acquired knowledge of music theory that they can take with them in their lives after Costa.

### **When in choir, please remember the following:**

1. **Be impeccable with your word.** Make your actions match your word. Own your accomplishments and your mistakes. Be honest (and gentle) with yourself. Be honest (and gentle) in your work. Be honest (and gentle) in your interactions. Be honest (and gentle) in your reactions. Be honest (and gentle) with each other and your conductor. We are all here to become better at what we do.
2. **Don't take anything personally.** Compliments and critiques are two sides of the same coin—both geared towards producing the best performances possible. Therefore, receive both compliments and critiques openly and with gratitude. Make change where change is needed. Remember: Choir

is, paradoxically, all about you and not a bit about you; everything—every moment, every compliment, every critique—is about building the ensemble.

3. **Don't make assumptions.** Believe in your best; do not assume the worst. Beware the assumptions that will limit your goals and achievements. Beware especially your assumptions that limit the goals and achievements of others. Be open to the abilities and power of: *yourself, each other, your teacher, the music, the environment, the audience and the community.*
4. **Always do your best.** Always!

## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

1. **Be prepared.** Show up ready to learn. Arrive to the zoom call early and commit to being fully present in choir. Set up your environment to be as distraction free as possible.
2. **Be presentable.** Wear school appropriate clothing and have choir in a space where you stand in front of a music stand, sit in a chair, sing openly and move freely.
3. **Be on time.** As the saying goes, “Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable”
4. **Do not call out or make random comments in class.** If you have an important contribution to make that must be made in the moment, ALWAYS raise your hand and wait to be recognized. Speaking out of turn deprives the entire ensemble of valuable time and interrupts class.
5. Water is allowed during class, but no food (including gum).
6. Be a responsible singer. Take care of your voice and practice your music.
7. Be respectful to everyone at all times.
8. Do your best to leave personal problems outside the classroom and focus on singing.
9. Stay positive.
10. Give your best effort at all times. Your classmates depend on you (and you on them). Be on your best behavior at all times; when in class and when performing outside of class.
11. Chronic class disruption, tardiness, or absence may lead to following MCHS intervention strategies.
12. Sing and Move! Physical body movement in conjunction with singing can produce amazing results. Enjoy the movement and learn to use it individually in rehearsals. You will find it will take care of many musical issues. Everyone sings and moves!

***Consequences of failing to meet these expectations may include lowering of your grade, calls home, referrals, future removal from the class, and others as stated by the MCHS discipline matrix***

## ETHICS

To create a fair and positive learning environment, the Mira Costa Administration and Faculty require that students act with honesty at all times in their academic endeavors. To this end, consequences have been established for all cases of cheating. Cheating includes plagiarizing, copying another student’s work, using notes or other means of assistance on an assignment or test that are not permitted by the teacher, passing answers or information to other students about an assignment or test when such action has been prohibited by the teacher, and taking a copy of a test without teacher permission in order to use it for personal advantage or for distribution to other students. Depending upon the category of unethical

behavior, consequences, will range from a zero recorded for the assignment, quiz, test or exam, to suspension for 1-5 days, to possible legal action. See Mira Costa's Guidelines for Student Behavior Handbook for the complete policy.

As a member of a Mira Costa High School performance ensemble, the department expects that you will go beyond avoidance of the behaviors listed above and behave in a way that brings honor to you, your ensemble, and your community. Always think before acting; always strive to do the right thing even if it is not the most popular.

## GRADES

### ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS 50% of Total Grade

**Musicianship skills:** Students will be assigned school work through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous ways. All assignments will build skill in content areas. Students will be given multiple opportunities to express creativity and mastery of concepts.

**Singing skills:** Students earn grades through the development and performance of tone, posture, mouth shapes and musical expression as demonstrated by making recordings of performances at home and through class participation. This is essentially a portfolio demonstrating growth over time.

**Listening skills:** Quiet, engaged listening is a technique practiced in choir. Students will be asked to listen, reflect and draw conclusions about different types of singing and music as a whole.

**Music Preparedness:** Individual preparation will be evaluated through the results of individual home practice as observed by the director in daily rehearsal. This includes both vocal progress and checking music to ensure that all markings have been made.

**Recorded Performance Participation:** Each student will create audio and video recordings to practice performance skills. These recordings may also be used to show the collective achievements of the choir and to share the joy of music with others in a virtual performance.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION 50% of Total Grade

**Materials:** Three ring binder, pencil, music, handouts, iPad/Chromebook/computer

**Pencil:** Students should have a sharpened pencil every day. The pencils are used to mark on the music. Never use ink on music or books. Unnecessary markings, drawings, or notes, will not be made in music or on folders. Students may also use a stylus for writing on iPad/Chromebook music worksheets.

**Participation/Engagement, Preparation & Citizenship:** Daily participation, being prepared for class and choosing a positive outlook/growth mindset is vital to the success of both the individual and the group and is factored in as a part of the academic grade. This includes:

- Being attentive to teacher's instructions, and prompt reaction to directions
- Participating with a positive and respectful attitude
- Respecting school, class and zoom rules
- Not texting or chatting online unless asked
- Raising hands for questions, answers, and comments
- Showing respect for the opinions and contributions of fellow musicians

## **ASSESSMENT THROUGH PERFORMANCES AND RECITALS**

Until singing together in the same space can safely be done, we will rehearse and perform music separately in synchronous and asynchronous ways. This work will culminate in opportunities for class recitals and virtual performances. Students will create audio and video recordings of their work and benefit from hearing their progress throughout the scope of the semester.

## **A CAPPELLA GROUPS**

Mr. McCormick will coach two extra-curricular a cappella groups, Mira Costa Muscle (men) and Coterie (women). Students must be enrolled in one of the three curricular ensembles to be eligible to participate in either group. Auditions are held early in the school year and will be announced in class. Mr. McCormick has sole discretion over which students are selected to these groups.

The groups are expected to meet regularly after the school day, at dates and places determined by the groups' members. Each group will elect a leader from its members. These groups are largely self-directed, providing students serious about singing with the opportunity to learn arranging, vocal coaching, and music education methods. Muscle and Coterie will be expected to each perform at least one number in performance at the end of each semester. Mr. McCormick may schedule other performances of either of the groups during the year.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This year especially, we all need to be flexible and stay in touch. As well as we plan, changes will happen throughout the year, and we need to be able to inform students and parents quickly.

***It is critical that all students and parents provide all necessary contact information, check the Choir website regularly ([www.miracostachoires.org](http://www.miracostachoires.org)), and review emails and texts from the Choir Boosters and your ensemble liaisons.***

***If you have a change in email address or cell phone number, please send a message to the Choir Boosters notifying them of this change. You can email the Choir Boosters directly from the Directors/Boosters page of the choir website.***

A parent volunteer from each ensemble will be designated as its liaison, responsible for communicating important ensemble-specific information to students and parents and for facilitating any activities or performances in which their ensemble participates. Parent liaisons will be in contact with students and parents shortly after the beginning of the school year. Please add their emails to your "known good sender" lists.

## Performance Attire

Stay tuned for any performance attire that will be required throughout the year.

## CHOIR PROGRAM SUPPORT

### Funding

As you might imagine, a lot of time, work and resources go into making choir one of the most positive and enriching experiences available at Mira Costa High School, and **we need your help**. The funding received from Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) is extremely limited and does not come close to covering the actual operating expenses of the choir program.

That's where the Choir Boosters come in. In addition to providing Mr. McCormick with the administrative and organizational support he needs to run the program, the Choir Boosters exist to raise funds that allow your child to have an extraordinary choral experience. In fact, over half the cost of our high quality program is paid for by the Choir Boosters.

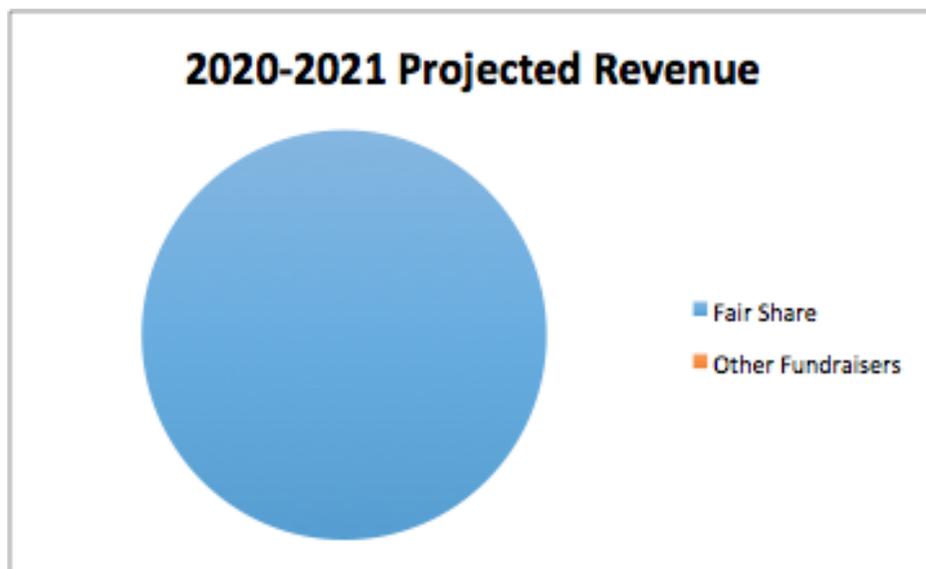
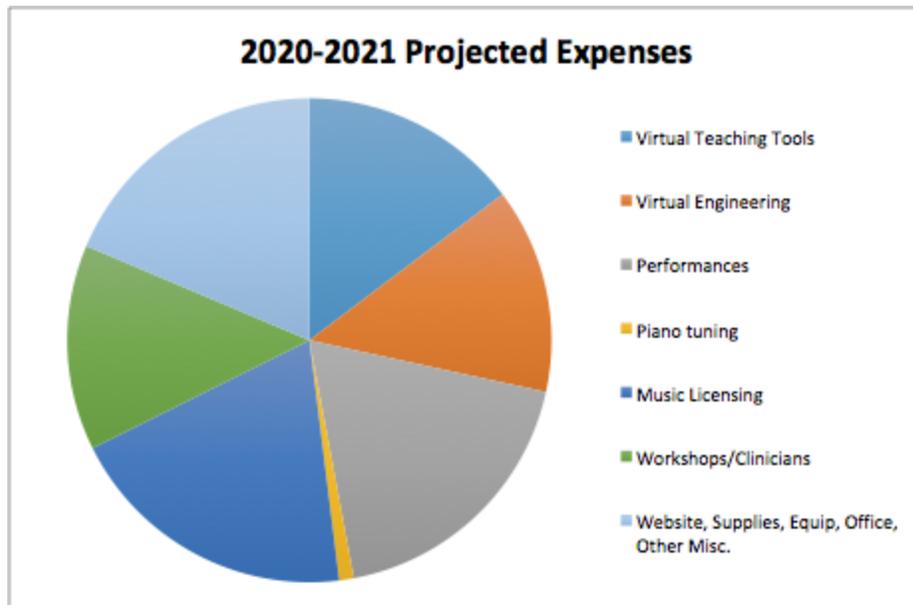
**Without parent contributions, many of the activities that make up your student's choir experience would be cut from the program (e.g., performances, festivals, our accompanist, work with expert clinicians, etc.).**

### What MBUSD Covers:

1. Mr. McCormick's regular salary and benefits
2. Hourly compensation for an accompanist for 3 periods and asynchronous recording services
4. Partial funding for sheet music and continuing education
5. Personal protective equipment should in person singing resume

### What Choir Boosters Cover:

1. Music licensing & piano tuning (\$7,000)
2. Workshops and clinicians (\$5,000)
3. Performances, virtual engineering, virtual tools (\$15,000)
4. Website, supplies, equipment, office costs & other misc. (\$7,000)



## Fair Share

The biggest source of the money we raise is donations, almost all from choir families. This year will be even more so, as most traditional ways of supplementing the fundraising are simply not possible. Even though this year is starting in a distance-learning model, the music program still has costs that need to be covered. And again, precisely because of the distance learning there are new costs this year as Mr. McCormick works hard to bring a meaningful program to everyone. To run our GRAMMY® award winning music program, **we are asking for a tax-deductible Fair Share contribution of \$200 for each student participating in choir.** We understand that not everyone can give this amount, and that others can give more. We also understand that you already may have been asked to donate to other booster clubs for

programs in which your student participates. Unfortunately Mira Costa Choir Boosters does not receive any of the money donated to other programs. Your donation in no way affects your student's ability to participate in the Mira Costa Choirs. However, we would very much appreciate your donation in any amount to help us continue to run the program.

**Donations may be made by check, credit card, or stock transfer:**

--- Checks should be made out to **MBX**, with "Choir Donation" on the memo line. Throughout the year, please put your child's name and ensemble on any check you submit, and note what the check is for (e.g., choir clothes, donation, etc.). Checks can be mailed to MCHS Choirs, 1822 10th St. Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266.

--- For credit card payments, go to the choir website ([www.miracostachoirs.org](http://www.miracostachoirs.org)) and click on the tab to "Donate Online" via MBX (5% additional processing fee for all online orders).

--- Stock transfer donations also may be made through MBX. To initiate a transfer, please contact Kathy Duffy at MBX [kathy@mbxfoundation.org](mailto:kathy@mbxfoundation.org).

For other questions regarding Fair Share donation payments, please contact booster treasurer, Michele Gentile [michelegentille@yahoo.com](mailto:michelegentille@yahoo.com).

This year, we are simply asking for a single **fair-share level of \$200 per student**, tax-deductible support for the program. If you are able, please donate generously to maintain the program's excellence, now or any time during the year.

Note: The Mira Costa Choir Boosters Club is a partner of MBX. MBX is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a Section 501(c)3 organization and, as such, donations received are deductible to the extent allowed by law. (MBX Tax ID #02-0603467.)

We're happy to answer any questions about the budget. For more information, please contact choir booster president, Sue Crain [scrain97@roadrunner.com](mailto:scrain97@roadrunner.com).

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **PARENTS:**

We need each parent to help in any way they can. This year our fundraising efforts have been greatly curtailed. It is likely that we won't be able to have any but in the event that we are able to have a Spring concert, we may need volunteers for the the following:

1. Obtaining ads for the concert programs -- more info to follow in the coming weeks.

We also ask each parent to volunteer for at least **one** additional committee or event.

### **STUDENTS:**

- 1) All students are expected to assist with concert program ad sales if we are able to have a concert. Additional information regarding student ad sales requirements will be distributed soon.

## Mira Costa Choirs Calendar 2020-2021

### FIRST SEMESTER

#### August

Wed., Aug. 26 - 1st Day of School

#### September

Wed., Sep. 2 - Choir Board Introductory Meeting, 7 pm

Mon., Sep. 7 - Labor Day, NO SCHOOL

Wed., Sep. 9 - Choir Registration Forms and Payments Due, All Choirs

Wed., Sep. 16 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

Wed., Sep. 23 - MANDATORY Choir Parent Meeting, Zoom Meeting, 7 pm

Mon., Sep. 28 - Local Holiday, NO SCHOOL

#### October

Wed., Oct. 14 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

#### November

Mon., Nov. 11 - Veterans Day, NO SCHOOL

Wed., Nov. 18 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

Mon.-Fri., Nov. 23-27 - Thanksgiving Recess, NO SCHOOL

#### December

Wed., Dec. 16 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

Mon., Dec. 21-Mon, Jan. 4 - Winter Recess, NO SCHOOL

### SECOND SEMESTER

#### January

Wed., Jan. 13 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

Mon., Jan. 18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, NO SCHOOL

#### February

Wed., Feb. 10 - Choir Board Meeting, 7 pm

Mon.-Fri., Feb. 15-19 - Presidents Holiday Recess, NO SCHOOL

#### March

Wed., Mar. 16 - Choir Board Virtual Meeting, 7 pm

April

Fri, Apr. 2-Fri, Apr, 9 - Spring Break - NO SCHOOL  
Thur., Apr. 21 - Choir Board Virtual Meeting, 7 PM

May

Mon., May 31 - Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL

June

TBD - Spring Choral Concert Rehearsal, MCHS Auditorium, All Choirs, 3-5:30 pm  
TBD - Spring Choral Concert, MCHS Auditorium, All Choirs, 5:30 pm call time, 7 pm performance  
TBD - Choir Virtual Banquet, 5-8 pm  
Thur., Jun. 17 - Last Day of School

There will be changes as the year progresses.  
Please check your email and the choir website [www.miracostachoirs.org](http://www.miracostachoirs.org) for updates.

## MIRA COSTA CHORAL DEPARTMENT STUDENT CONTRACT 2020-2021

Please complete and submit this contract by FRIDAY, September 4th, 2020. Music will be given to your student once the contract has been received. These forms can also be filled out online at [www.miracostachoirs.com](http://www.miracostachoirs.com).

### Student:

I understand the rules and expectations for participating in Mira Costa Choirs as presented in this handbook, and I will abide by them for rehearsals, performances and any other Mira Costa High School choral activity.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Choir Ensemble \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/ Guardian:

I have read the Choral Department Handbook and I understand what is expected of my child as a student in the program. ***I understand that if my child loses or destroys music belonging to the department, I will be charged for the cost of replacement.***

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Father/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please identify) Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please identify) Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

## PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM 2020-2021

PARENT 1 NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT 2 NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT 1 PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT 2 PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME/CHOIR ENSEMBLE \_\_\_\_\_

In the event that we will be able to have concerts, we ask each parent to help with our fundraisers:

- Selling ads for the spring and fall concert programs, AND

- Any others that may be allowed this year.

In addition, we ask each parent to volunteer for at least one additional committee. Please indicate your availability for these efforts by checking the appropriate boxes below:

**Parent 1: Parent 2:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ CHOIR ATTIRE COMMITTEE (help measure students, organize orders, distribute clothing)

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ AD SALES COMMITTEE (assist with ad sales for winter and spring concert programs)

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ CONCERT COMMITTEE (help organize and staff concerts)

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ BANQUET COMMITTEE (help organize choir banquet to take place in June 2020)

**Open Choir Board Positions: If you'd like to be more involved, become a member of the choir booster board. We love to have new parents join our leadership team! Please click below, and we'll contact you with additional information.**

**Parent 1: Parent 2:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ SECRETARY – Distribute to-all emails to parents and students, create online permission slips for offsite events, handle concert music licensing, take notes at choir board meetings, and maintain meeting records.

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR – Manage choir website and keep it up to date, upload content and photos as needed, and maintain choir calendar on easy-to-use, user-friendly Wix website. Some computer experience helpful, but no previous website or computer programming skills needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ PERFORMANCE ATTIRE CHAIR: Oversee the ordering of choir performance apparel for all choirs, manage student fittings, and distribute clothing items to students.

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ PROGRAMS CO-CHAIR – AD SALES: Take charge of business and personal ad sales for winter and spring concert programs.

\_\_\_\_\_ PUBLIC RELATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA CHAIR: Handle choir department publicity efforts, including photographing events and posting to social media sites and school newsletters.

\_\_\_\_\_ BANQUET CHAIR: Organize the choir year-end banquet scheduled for Wed., June 9, 2021, at Ayres Hotel.

\_\_\_\_\_ PARENT LIAISON – A parent liaison is needed for each choir. Serve as the primary contact for your student’s choir, including coordinating communications with students/parents, organizing the collection of permission slips, and chaperoning field trips.

If interested, please check the box indicating your child’s choir:

\_\_\_\_\_ MC Chorale                      \_\_\_\_\_ Choral Union                      \_\_\_\_\_ Vocal Ensemble

Thank you for volunteering with the Mira Costa Choirs!

## FAIR SHARE DONATION FORM:

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM AND DROP IT IN THE BOOSTER MAILBOX IN THE CHOIR ROOM.

MCHS Choir Boosters' Fair Share suggested donation is \$300 per student.

Please indicate your donation level below:

- \$300 Bronze Level:** Your name is listed in the concert program.
- \$500 Silver Level:** Your name is listed in the concert program, plus 2 reserved seats at the winter and spring concerts
- \$750 Gold Level:** Your name is listed in the concert program, plus 4 reserved seats at the winter and spring concerts
- \$1,000 Platinum Level:** Your name is listed in the concert program, plus 6 reserved seats at the winter and spring concerts
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Other:** We welcome any size donation. Please contribute as generously as you can.

Student Name(s) and Choir(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Names to be listed in concert programs: \_\_\_\_\_

My employer has a Corporate Matching Gift Program. I would like to participate in the program and have enclosed the necessary forms (or will provide them). Corporate Matching Gifts are an easy way to contribute to your child's music education. If you or your company representative have questions or need additional information, please contact Kathy Duffy at [www.mbxfoundation.org](http://www.mbxfoundation.org).

Mr.    Mrs.    Ms.    Dr.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone  Home    Cell \_\_\_\_\_   Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check. Please make payable to **MBX** and note student's name and "Choir Donation" on the memo line.

Donate online. Go to [www.miracostachoirs.org](http://www.miracostachoirs.org) and click on "Donate Online".

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.





## CHOIR REGISTRATION CHECKLIST (OFFLINE VERSION)

For use ONLY when registering offline (without using the computer).

(Please print and turn in with required forms and payments)

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CHOIR ENSEMBLE: \_\_\_\_\_

### (v) Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Student/Parent Information Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Signed Student Contract
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Performance Attire Commitment Form (Men's or Women's) and payment:** attach check (payable to MBX, with "Choir Attire" on the memo line) or printed MBX receipt
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. **Fair Share Donation Form and payment:** mail check (payable to MBX, with "Choir Attire" on the memo line) to MCHS Choirs, 1822 10th St., Manhattan Beach, 90266 or send a screenshot of the MBX receipt to [MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com](mailto:MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com) with student name and choir in the subject line.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Parent Volunteer Form

Email all forms (screenshots) to [MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com](mailto:MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com).

Please include student name and choir on the subject line.

**FORMS AND PAYMENTS DUE FRIDAY, September 4TH.**

Questions? Please contact Sue Crain, Choir Booster President [scrain97@roadrunner.com](mailto:scrain97@roadrunner.com)



## ONLINE Choir Registration Checklist

For use when registering online only.  
(Print this page and turn it in with the items listed below.)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Choir Ensemble: \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist (please attach the following):

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. **PAGE 1 of the "Form Submission Received" email sent automatically to Parent 1 at completion of registration:** *attach screenshot of Page 1 only*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Fair Share Donation PAYMENT:** *mail check (payable to MBX, with "Choir Attire" on the memo line) to MCHS Choirs, 1822 10th St., Manhattan Beach, 90266 or send a screenshot of the MBX receipt to MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com with student name and choir in the subject line.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Performance Attire Order PAYMENT:** *attach picture of check (payable to MBX, with "Choir Attire" on the memo line, mailed to MCHS Choirs, 1822 10th St Manhattan Beach, CA 90266) or screenshot of MBX receipt*

Email all forms (screenshots) to [MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com](mailto:MCHSChoirInfo@gmail.com).

Please include student name and choir on the subject line.

**FORMS AND PAYMENTS DUE FRIDAY, September 4TH.**

Questions? Contact Sue Crain, Choir Booster President [scrain97@roadrunner.com](mailto:scrain97@roadrunner.com)