NMC Children's Choir HANDBOOK 2026-2027

"Building a Sound Future"

Singing is the major means of musical experience in the NMC Children's Choir program. Singing is a powerfully personal means of musical expression. We hope this experience will form the foundation of a lifelong relationship with music for the singers and their families and provide the choir members with social, educational, and skill development opportunities.

NMC Children's Choir
HANDBOOK
2026-2027

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WELCOME
The Directors of the NMC Children's Choir and the Office of Extended Educational Services (EES) of Northwestern Michigan College extend a warm welcome to the members of the 2025-2026choirs. We look forward to working with you and sharing our love of music with our singers and their families. We sincerely hope that you find your year in choir to be a rewarding, fulfilling experience.

MISSION STATEMENT
The NMC Children's Choir is a program of exemplary choral music performance that develops high levels of artistic, expressive singing for students in kindergarten through grade nine in the Greater Grand Traverse Area. The Children's Choir exists to artistically enrich the lives of the children, their families, and the community.

HISTORY
The NMC Children's Choir was established in 1980 by Mark and Barbara Puchala and has grown from one choir of forty students to five choirs serving over 200 students. The program operates under the auspices of Northwestern Michigan College – Extended Education Services. Over the years, the Puchalas were joined by David and Mary Parrish, and Stephanie Schall-Brazee. In 2011 Jeffrey Cobb was named as Artistic Director of the NMC Children's Choirs, and under his leadership we were fortunate to add Todd Vipond, Joanna Aldridge, Ashley Larimer-Kelly, and Jamie Moreland to our staff. In 2023, Stephanie Schall-Brazee took on the mantle of leadership as the NMCCC Artistic Director.

GOALS
- Develop the skills and understanding appropriate for a lifetime of quality singing for students of all racial, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Develop choral ensembles that attain the highest levels of excellence in public and recorded performances.
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of choral music representative of diverse styles, cultures, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Develop a sense of self-worth, self-esteem, confidence, and pride in all singers.

CURRICULUM
- The students in the NMCCC program study and perform a variety of age-appropriate, quality music ranging from simple folk songs to complex, challenging literature from a variety of historical eras.
- Basic and advanced singing and interpretive skills related to breath, posture, diction, tone production, artistry and musical expressiveness are introduced and developed in each choir.
- Music literacy skills involving reading and interpreting music are incorporated into the weekly rehearsal process.
- Appropriate rehearsal skills and performance etiquette are included as an integral part of the learning process in every choir.

ENSEMBLES
The NMC Children's Choir organization consists of five ensembles. Students are placed in an ensemble based on age and experience level. Our goal is for every child in the NMCCC program to be successful in their experience with us.

Cantus (*kahn'-toos – Latin for "choir"*)
Cantus is NMCCC's largest and most advanced performing ensemble for young musicians. Singers rehearse Tuesday evenings as well as Saturday rehearsals. Cantus performs in NMCCC's Holiday, Winter and Spring Concerts, at community events throughout the season and, as opportunities present, with guest artists and organizations such as the Traverse Symphony Orchestra. Cantus tours each spring, offering singers unique performance and cultural opportunities.
Ashley Larimer, Director

Intermezzo *(in-ter-mets'-so – a musical term meaning "music that connects different movements")*
Intermezzo is comprised of children who audition directly into the ensemble, along with singers who have been promoted from Bel Canto. Singers rehearse Tuesday evenings as well as Saturday rehearsals. Intermezzo performs in NMCCC's Holiday, Winter and Spring Concerts, and, as opportunities present, at community events.
Stephanie Schall-Brazee, Director

Bel Canto (*bell kahn'toh – Italian for "beautiful singing"*)
Bel Canto includes children with some prior musical experience – who audition directly into the ensemble – and singers who have been promoted from the Dolce Choir. Singers rehearse Tuesday evenings as well as Saturday rehearsals. Bel Canto performs in NMCCC's Holiday, Winter and Spring Concerts.
Joanna Aldridge, Director

Dolce (*dohl'-chay – Italian for "sweet"*)
Dolce is NMCCC's introductory choir for younger children with little to no prior musical experience. Singers rehearse Tuesday evenings as well as Saturday rehearsals. Singers build their foundational music skills in a fun, interactive learning environment, learning recognizable folk-based repertoire appropriate for beginning singers. Dolce performs in their November "Informance" and in NMCCC's Holiday, Winter and Spring Concerts.
Jamie Moreland, Director

Prelude (*a musical term meaning "introductory music"*)
Prelude is NMCCC's introductory program for Kindergarten and 1st grade students. This non-auditioned group meets Tuesday nights for a shortened eight-week session. In Prelude, young singers have the opportunity to learn about their voices and learn basic singing techniques in a friendly, nurturing environment.
Jamie Moreland, Director

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees are to be paid on or before September 12. Partial financial assistance is available through NMC-EES for families that qualify; contact the EES office at 995-1700 for an application. There are a limited number of spaces available in each choir; it is a good idea to enroll early.

Tuition and Material Fees: Cantus – $425
Intermezzo – $399
Bel Canto – $375
Dolce – $349
Prelude – $149

NMC CHILDREN'S CHOIR STAFF

Stephanie Schall-Brazee –Artistic Director, Director of Intermezzo

Stephanie Schall-Brazee serves as an elementary general music teacher in the Traverse City Area Public Schools, where she also directs the select treble choir, Bella Voce. Under her leadership, Stephanie's choirs have consistently achieved first-degree ratings at various festivals and have been honored with invitations to perform at the Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids. In both 2022 and 2023, Bella Voce was selected as one of only ten small ensembles to participate in the prestigious MSVMA All-State concert at Michigan State University. Alongside her work in public schools, Stephanie takes on the role of Artistic Director for the Northwest Michigan College Children's Choir Program, where she also directs the Intermezzo Choir. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Central Michigan University and a Master of Music Education from The Hartt School, The University of Hartford. As an endorsed Teacher Trainer for First Steps in Music and Conversational Solfege, she has taught courses and presented at state music conferences. Her presentations cover topics such as "Singing Development in Young Children," "First Steps in Music," "Music and Movement in Preschool," and "Conversational Solfege." In 2018, she contributed to the field of music education by co-authoring a chapter in a book inspired by her mentor, John Feierabend, titled *Feierabend Fundamentals*. In recognition of her contributions to education, Stephanie was named an Outstanding Educator by the Traverse City Area ISD in 2018. She has also served two terms on the board of the Feierabend Association for Music Education (FAME) and continues to play an active role in this vital organization as President-Elect.Passionate about teaching students of all ages, Stephanie devotes several weeks each summer to instructing graduate students and music educators in the First Steps in Music and Conversational Solfege curriculums at various summer graduate programs across the country. When not teaching, Stephanie enjoys reading, shopping, hiking, biking, and spending time with her husband, Curt; daughter, Katie; and border collie, Gracie. Working with the NMC Children's Choirs has been a joy for Stephanie for many years!

Ashley Larimer– Director of Cantus

Ashley Larimer directs Cantus, NMCCC's largest and most advanced performing ensemble. Each spring, she loves touring with Cantus and guiding our young singers in making beautiful music, close friendships, and life long memories in amazing places. As an educator, Ms. Larimer has enjoyed teaching elementary general music and choir as well as directing middle school and high school choir and musical theatre. Ms. Larimer also serves as assistant choir director at First Congregational Church in Traverse City and tours abroad with the FCC Choir every few years. Ms. Larimer attended Albion College where she studied Vocal Performance, earned her bachelor's degree in K-12 Music Education, and started a women's a cappella group. Ms. Larimer is a proud graduate of the Traverse City Area Public Schools choir and band programs. She loves being a mother of two wonderful kids, two silly dogs, and one regal kitty. In her free time, she loves to enjoy nature with her family.

Joanna Aldridge – Director of Bel Canto

Joanna Heiman Aldridge serves as both an English and music teacher for Leland Public School. Joanna earned both her Bachelor of Arts in Choral Music Education and English and her Master of Arts in Choral Music Education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. While Joanna enjoys working with singers across the K-12 setting, she has a

special fondness for the Bel Canto age group and their infectious energy! In addition to her love of choral singing, Joanna has spent time in Ghana studying the music, dance and game songs of local children. She has lived and worked in the Traverse City area for all of her adult life. In addition to choral music, Joanna enjoys reading, cooking, swimming, kayaking, and being in the woods. She lives in Traverse City with her husband, Eric, daughters Eliza and Clara, and their two dogs.

Jamie Moreland – Director of Prelude, and Dolce

Jamie Moreland joined the NMCCC team in 2019. She is the director of the Prelude and Dolce ensembles. Jamie taught elementary music for the Traverse City Area Public Schools as a K-12 certified music educator from 2012-2019. During those years she helped direct the TCAPS All City Childrens Choir. She also taught music for Trinity Lutheran Schools in 2021. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education with Choral emphasis from Central Michigan University. Jamie maintains a small private piano and voice studio. When she is not teaching in the evenings, Jamie works as a homeschool mom and nanny extraordinaire. She lives in Maple City with her husband, three daughters, and large flower garden.

Jeffrey Cobb –Managing Director

Jeffrey Cobb is the Director of Music Programs and Choirs at Northwestern Michigan College, Artistic Director of the NMC Children's Choirs, and Director of Music at Traverse City Central United Methodist Church. He holds a M.M. in Choral Conducting from Oakland University and a B.A. in Music Education from Western Michigan University. Jeffrey has held positions at Traverse City Central High School, Judson ISD in San Antonio, Texas; Parchment Schools in Parchment, Michigan; and the Leysin American School in Leysin, Switzerland. Choirs under his direction have toured throughout Michigan, Texas, Chicago, New York, Salzburg and Vienna and have been invited to perform at State and National Conferences including the Michigan Music Conference, the Michigan Youth Arts Festival, the ACDA Michigan Conference, and the ACDA National Convention. In addition to his work as a conductor, Jeffrey is also a regularly commissioned composer. His pieces have won several awards including honors from the Ithaca Choir Composition Contest, the New York Virtuoso Singers Choral Composition Contest, the Vanguard Premieres Choral Composition Contest, the Summit Chorale's Composition Contest, the Outside the Bachs International Choral Music Competition, the C7Prize, and the Composition Competition of the Chiayi City (Taiwan) International Band Festival. Jeffrey's choral works are published through G. Schirmer, Santa Barbara Music, Walton Music, Colla Voce, and Roger Dean Publishing. Jeffrey is also a sought-after composer and arranger in other genres. His music can be heard on several television series, radio spots, and in television advertisements.

Mark and Barbara Puchala – Founders of the NMC Children's Choirs

Mark and Barbara Puchala grew up on the East and West side of Detroit respectively. They met at Central Michigan University and graduated with degrees in Choral Music Education. They married in 1973 and moved to Traverse City to accept teaching positions in the Traverse City Area Public School District in 1974. Barbara served TCAPS as an elementary music specialist until her retirement. Mark served TCAPS as a choral director for fourteen years and retired Professor Emeritus from his teaching career at Northwestern Michigan College as choral director and Music Department Chair. They started the regional Northwestern Michigan Children's Choir thirty years ago to fill a need for children wanting to be in a choir but didn't have opportunities in their respective schools. The choir grew into choirs with enrollments approaching 200 children grades 2-9. The Cantus Choir made numerous appearances at state and regional conventions under their direction. They continue to live in Traverse City with their two dogs, Feebey and Lulu and enjoy their four-year old twin grandchildren Jack and Rowan.

David Husser – Accompanist

David Husser is a pianist and teacher living in Traverse City, Michigan, where he maintains a large independent studio. He collaborates as a pianist with numerous area soloists and ensembles, including the choirs of Traverse City West Senior High School and the Northwestern Michigan College Children's Choirs and Canticum Novum. He also teaches group and applied piano at both NMC and Interlochen Arts Camp. Mr. Husser's compositions have been performed by pianists and choral ensembles in multiple states. His articles have been published by American Music Teacher, and he has served as a presenter and panelist at a variety of national conferences. He holds a Master of Music Education degree from the University of Oklahoma and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Illinois.

Margie Hunter – Accompanist

Margie Hunter recently retired from Traverse City Area Public Schools, having been a K-12 music educator in the area for several years. Margie earned both her Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music Education degrees from Central Michigan University. She has conducted, accompanied and sung in church, school, and community choirs in the Grand Traverse area for over 25 years.

Liz Williams – Program Assistant

Liz Williams has been an active volunteer in and around the TC Community for over 18 years. She has served on numerous PTO's and has worked extensively with the TCAPS Music Department. Her volunteer work has also lead her to share her organizational skills, enthusiasm, and love of all kinds of kids, with organizations such as: TAGS, TC Thunder Softball, American Legion Baseball, TBAYS, Girl Scouts, Girls on the Run, and the National Cherry Festival. In the midst of this, Liz also found time to work as a para-pro at various TCAPS elementary schools. Liz has also been a proud NMCCC parent since 2012. Liz knows this program is the "Gold Standard" for youth choirs across the United States - she'll tell you all about it!

Ann Isola - Box Office Manager, Stage Manager

The daughter of a music teacher, Ann has been a musician all of her life. That musical experience and her job by day as a Paraplanner/Office Manager has prepared her well to be the Box Office Manager for NMC's music programs. She currently resides on Torch Lake with her husband Dan where she enjoys singing, gardening, outdoor activities, visiting with friends and travel, especially to see their children and grandchildren!

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Rehearsal and Performance Attendance Policies

Membership in the NMC Children's Choir is a commitment to faithful, consistent and punctual attendance. It is expected that rehearsals take a very high priority in each child's life. Every singer plays an important role in the success of their choir and consistent rehearsal attendance is essential to the success of both the individual singer and the organization.

Except for those absences relating to illness, family emergency or a school event that is based on academic merit, attendance is required at all rehearsals and concerts. Should an absence be necessary, please contact your child's director via email as soon as possible before or after an absence to inform them of the nature of your child's absence. Communication is key to ensure your child's success in our ensembles!

Because each child's success in the NMCCC program is directly tied to regular attendance, the following protocol for absences will occur in each concert cycle – a concert cycle consists of a concert and the rehearsals leading up to that particular concert.

1st missed rehearsal (excused or unexcused) – NMCCC staff will send an email to the singer's parents acknowledging the absence.

2nd missed rehearsal (excused or unexcused) – NMCCC staff will send an email to the singer's parents acknowledging the absence.

3rd missed rehearsal (excused or unexcused) – The singer and singer's parent(s) may be asked to meet privately with the NMCCC director. The singer will be asked to sing the current repertoire to ensure that the singer is adequately prepared and comfortable enough with the repertoire to sing on the upcoming concert.

4th missed rehearsal (excused or unexcused) – At the director's discretion, the singer may not be allowed to sing on the upcoming concert.

A missing performer changes the dynamics of the ensemble and has a detrimental effect on the artistry of a performance. Therefore, attendance at dress rehearsals and concerts is mandatory. *The director reserves the right to exclude singers who are not adequately prepared from performing in the next scheduled concert.*

At the director's discretion, singers who are absent from the school tour or a dress rehearsal will not be allowed to sing on the upcoming concert.

Absence from a concert may lead to removal from the NMCCC program. Singers who are absent from a concert will be required to meet with their director, along with the singer's parents, to determine if continued participation in the NMCCC program is appropriate.

II. Inclement Weather Policy
Please be aware that the NMCCC Program does not necessarily cancel rehearsals according to area school closings. If rehearsals are cancelled due to weather, you will be notified via email, the Remind app, and on our website: nmc.edu/childrenschoir.html. Cancellations will be posted by 3:00pm on the day of the rehearsal. Because of the uncertainty of Northern Michigan weather, we have built a few "Snow Day Rehearsals" into the schedule – to be used in the event of a cancellation of a regularly scheduled rehearsal. Families will be notified if when/if any of those "Snow Day Rehearsals" will be implemented.

III. Music and Folders
All students will be given music and either a folder or packet in which the music is to be kept. Each student must have their music and a pencil (for taking notes and adding rehearsal reminders) at every rehearsal. No pens or markers! If music or folders are lost, irreparably damaged, or not returned, an additional fee will be charged to cover the replacement costs.

IV. Non-Scheduled Performances
Occasionally, the NMCCC program will receive a request to perform at an event not previously scheduled on our calendar. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to ascertain interest and availability. We will accept those performances only if:

1. We have enough performers committed to attend for a viable performance
2. The concert venue will showcase the ensemble in an artistic way
3. The concert has some benefit to the overall organization

V. Student Decorum
Students are expected to be on their best behavior (safe, respectful, and responsible) whether on stage, in rehearsal, or at an NMC Children's Choir event. As a representative of the Children's Choir, it is expected that every child's behavior will be a positive reflection of our organization and will contribute to a supportive, positive rehearsal environment.

VI. Removal and Reinstatement
It is a privilege, not a right, to participate in the NMC Children's Choir. We recognize that the NMCCC is not a good fit for every student – students must be able to demonstrate good behavior, self-control and maintain regular attendance. Only those children exemplifying these attributes will be allowed to participate in the NMCCC. If there are attendance or behavior problems with a singer, the following will occur:

1. The Director will communicate with the child's parents (via face-to-face, phone call and/or email) regarding any concern(s).
2. If the problem(s) persist, the Director will notify the parent of the continued concern and schedule a meeting with the singer and their parent(s). The singer will be considered on probationary status.

If the concerns (attendance, behavior) persist, then the singer will be removed from the NMCCC. (At that time, the singer will return any music and uniform pieces that belong to the NMCCC.)

Students who have been removed from the NMCCC program, may re-apply the next season by accomplishing the following:

1. Re-audition
2. Following the re-audition, meet with the Director and their parents to determine any further steps needed for re-admittance, and/or if the NMCCC is indeed a good fit for the child.

VII. Uniforms

Just as the ensemble's sound is important, so is the ensemble's appearance when in performance, dress rehearsals and touring. A uniformly, neatly outfitted ensemble is essential for a truly artistic experience. A couple of rules for all singers:

- Appropriate concert dress and grooming are a requirement for participation in a performance
- Shirts are to be tucked in
- No obvious make-up, cosmetics, jewelry, earrings, accessories, watches, etc.
- Singers must have their hair pulled back, away from their face

Informal Uniforms

Informal uniforms may be worn to rehearsals, but must be worn to dress rehearsals and when singers are in public touring or traveling or otherwise as designated.

- Navy polos $20 required all singers (not Prelude)
- Green sweatshirts $30 required Cantus only, optional for others

For Dress Rehearsals: Singers will wear their NMCCC polo shirts with jeans in good condition (no rips, frays, holes, etc.) and tennis shoes. No boots on stage, please. Returning singers are encouraged to check the size and condition of their current uniforms. We will ensure that every child has a uniform – please contact us if you need assistance. Polos, t-shirts and sweatshirts are available for purchase or ordering in September and October during Tuesday rehearsals in the Fine Arts building. Checks are preferred or exact change.

Concert Black Formal Uniforms

How an ensemble dresses for a performance is very important! A choir who comes onto stage well-dressed shows a respect for their audience, reflects personal pride, and seems to say "something special is going to happen!" For the majority of our NMCCC performances, the singers will wear their "concert black uniform". The goal is that the choir will look uniform so the attention of the audience will be on the music!

What is the Concert Black Uniform?

The NMCCC concert black uniform is black (not dark grey) from neck to floor. Singers and families are free to choose the components of their concert black uniform within these guidelines:

Uniform choice #1 -worn with an NMCCC issued neck tie

- Plain black dress pants (no leggings, jeggings or jeans)
- Plain black long-sleeved collared dress shirt
- Black closed-toe flat dress shoes (no white soles, colored laces or athletic shoes) and black socks

Uniform choice #2-worn with an NMCCC issued scarf

- Plain black dress pants (no leggings, jeggings or jeans)
- Plain black skirt or long-sleeved dress (skirt must be at the knee or longer)
- Plain black long-sleeved shirt (collared or non-collared)
- Black socks (worn with pants)
- Black opaque tights (worn with dresses/skirts)
- Black closed-toe flat shoes (no white soles, colored laces, athletic shoes or boots)

CANTUS FORMAL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Cantus uniform choice #1

- NMCCC Owned Formal Dress ($25 rental fee)
- Black closed- toe shoes
- Black hose

Cantus uniform choice #2 (worn with an NMCCC issued neck tie)

- Plain black dress pants (no leggings, jeggings or jeans)
- Plain black long-sleeved collared dress shirt
- Black closed-toe flat dress shoes
- Black dress socks

What is NOT to be worn on Concert Day?

Jeans, athletic pants, yoga pants, leggings, jeggings, mini -skirts, sandals, boots, booties, sneakers, black shoes with white stripes, logos, sparkles, polka dots, colored socks, bare feet or bare legs.

All singers are required to wear their complete informal uniform (polos, etc.) to the Tuesday, October 14th rehearsal to check for conformity. This includes Dolce too!

All singers are required to wear their complete formal uniform to the Saturday, November 8th rehearsal to check for conformity. This includes Dolce too!

VIII. Commitment to School Music Programs
The success of NMC Children's Choir is dependent in large part on the support of music teachers throughout the Grand Traverse Area. Children's Choir singers should be leaders in their school music ensembles. Every NMC Children's Choir singer is strongly encouraged to be an active participant in his or her school music program.

IX. Fundraising
The NMC Children's Choirs will organize planned fundraising activities to offset the cost of program, scholarship and travel expenses. Individual participation in these fundraisers is a vital component in our organization's success. It is expected that all singers will participate in the fundraisers.

- Our Holiday Pies & Poinsettias Sale will begin on October 1 and wrap up on October 29. (This allows for the items to be delivered by the weekend at Thanksgiving time.)
- Our Flower sale fund-raiser will begin February 8 and wrap up March 11.

XI. Volunteerism

The NMCCC program depends greatly on volunteers. Opportunities run the gamut from office help to concert management. Families can contribute time to the choir from home, at rehearsals, on tours or at a concert in the following broad categories:

- Troubleshooting
- Box office
- Ushering
- Chairs
- Chaperones
- Fundraising orders
- Sponsorships
- Uniforms
- Stage crew

Volunteer efforts are coordinated by our Program Manager. Please submit the Parent Volunteer form with your registration.

XII. Music Literature
The music that is studied in the NMC Children's Choir program ranges from simple folk songs to sophisticated, complex compositions written expressly for children's voices. Works using both a secular and a sacred/religious text are presented in an age-appropriate manner in the various ensembles. It is important to note that the use of music with a sacred text does not in any way imply that NMCCC is promoting a particular religious agenda. Rather, the program attempts to expose singers to the rich and varied tradition of music from many cultures and belief systems that is part of our rich choral heritage.

** Please see the article from the American Choral Directors Association regarding the use of music with a religious text in Addendum A.*

XIII. Parental Understanding
By enrolling your child in NMC Children's Choir it is assumed that there is parental understanding and acceptance of the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook. Any questions should be referred to the directors of the program.

XIV. Conclusion

We welcome all singers and their families to the NMCCC program. We believe that through singing, children can experience the "inner life" of the music in a way that transcends the surface of notation and words. Singing is a way of "touching" the music and a way of being "touched" by the music. The process of learning and performing quality music in an expressive, artistic manner can provide each child with a unique, enriching experience that can lead to a lifelong love of skillful singing. We eagerly look forward to our shared journey into the wonderful world of choral music.

Stephanie Schall-Brazee –Artistic Director, Director of Intermezzo	231-944-6142	schallbrazee@gmail.com
Ashley Larimer – Director of Cantus	231-631-3646	aclarimer@gmail.com
Joanna Aldridge – Director of Bel Canto	231-631-3945	jmaldridge77@gmail.com
Jamie Moreland – Director of Prelude and Dolce	231-499-9781	jamiemoreland88@gmail.com
Jeffrey Cobb – Managing Director	231-995-1338	jecobb@nmc.edu
Liz Williams – NMCCC Program Assistant	231-499-8885	elwilliams@nmc.edu
Ann Isola – Box Office Manager, Stage Manager	231-995-1340	aisola@nmc.edu
Extended Education Services	231-995-1700	ees@nmc.edu

Questions regarding registration, financial aid, or tuition should be directed to NMC Extended Educational Services at (231) 995-1700 or at ees@nmc.edu.

ADDENDUM A. – Music Literature *(from the American Choral Directors Association)*
Choral music educators recognize that choral music may fulfill diverse objectives. At one end of the spectrum are aesthetic education and artistic performance that can ensure development of musicality and sensitivity. At the opposite end of the spectrum is pure entertainment. Between these two poles may be found opportunities to enhance knowledge and understanding through a growing awareness and perspective of history and art as reflected in great music. **To achieve any selected educational objective, the quality of repertoire is of paramount importance.**

An assessment of the quality of repertoire which can fulfill the highest objectives of aesthetic education necessitates careful examination of the relationship of text and musical setting. The wealth of choral literature which represents and reflects peoples, cultures, and traditions of all lands and compositional styles of all eras includes much music in which the composer has utilized a sacred text. The term "sacred" refers to all manner of religious belief and not only to the practices of the Judeo-Christian teachings. **It is important that almost all of the significant choral music composed before the 17th century was associated with a sacred text.**

To study and perform music in which the musical setting of a text is artistically accomplished is a highly commendable objective. While public school teaching objectives and criteria for repertoire selection should not include religious indoctrination, the selection of quality repertoire will invariably include within its broad scope music with a sacred text. **To exclude from a public school curriculum all choral music which has religious meaning associated with the text is to severely limit the possibilities of teaching for artistic understanding and responsiveness.** Such an exclusion has as its parallel the study of art without any paintings related to the various religions of the world, the study of literature without mention of the Bible, or the study of architecture without reference to the great temples and cathedrals of the world.

Since choral music with a sacred text comprises such a substantial portion of the artistic repertoire representative of the choral medium and the history of music, it should have an important place in music education. Its study and artistic performance have nothing to do with the First Amendment to the Constitution and the doctrine which advocates separation of Church and State.

ADDENDUM B. – Consent & Compliance Form *(next page)*

NMC Children's Choir
CONSENT & COMPLIANCE FORM 2026-2027

The following pertains to my child: _____ (please print child's first and last name)

Please check your child's choir: ☐ Prelude ☐ Dolce ☐ Bel Canto ☐ Intermezzo ☐ Cantus

Known allergies/significant medical conditions: _____

_____

I. FIELD TRIP PERMISSION – I grant permission for my child (named above) to attend NMC Children's Choir field trip activities which may occur during the 2025-2026 season. I understand that the NMCCC Staff strive to give timely notice (e.g. two weeks notice) to parents of all field trip(s). We understand and believe that the necessary precautions and plans for the care and supervision of the students during the trip will be taken. We understand that a copy of this permission form will be archived at the NMC-EES Office with a copy taken by NMC staff on all respective field trips my son/daughter may participate in.

II. PHOTO RELEASE PERMISSION – I hereby grant to Northwestern Michigan College the right and permission, in respect of the photographs that are taken of my child alone, or included with others, to copyright the same; and to use, reuse, and publish in any media now and hereafter known for illustration, promotion, art, advertising, or any purpose; and to have the option of using my child's name. I hereby release and discharge NMC from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the photographs including without limitation any and all claims for libel or invasion of privacy. I am the legal guardian of the named child and have read the foregoing contents. This release shall be binding upon me and my heirs, legal representatives, and assigns.

III. STATEMENT OF PARENTAL COMMITMENT – I have read and understand the policies and procedures of the NMC Children's Choir program, have read the Handbook in its entirety, and recognize the commitment associated with enrolling my child in this program**. I understand that a commitment to regular attendance is key to my child's success.** My signature serves as a pledge to assist my child in making the NMC Children's Choir experience meaningful and artistically rewarding.

Parent's/Legal Guardian's Name (please print) _____

Parent's/Legal Guardian's Signature _____

Parent's/Legal Guardian's Phone # _____

☐ My child is a part of a 2-household family Co-Parent's Name _____

The following Agreement of Compliance is for NMCCC Singers to complete.

I, _____ (please print your name) understand the rules and expectations for participation as a choir member in the NMC Children's Choir. I understand that a commitment to regular attendance is key to my success. My signature below is a pledge that I will meet the obligations of the choir.

_____ _____

student signature date

Please bring this form to our first rehearsal on September 9, 2025.