



# Milwaukee Children's Choir

*Building Noteworthy Character*

## COVID-19 Response Framework

(Adapted from Pensacola Children's Chorus)

### PREAMBLE

As the governing body of the Milwaukee Children's Chorus (MCC), the Staff and Board of Directors recognizes its role in providing necessary guidance and oversight as the organization navigates current and upcoming challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the Board commends MCC's staff for their innovative response to this crisis, a response which unequivocally places the safety and well-being of our singers, families, volunteers, and patrons above all else. As we look to our 27th Season, and in consultation with MCC's staff, we have developed this framework to guide crucial decision-making in the near and distant future.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles, in order of importance, will guide the Milwaukee Children's Chorus during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Our #1 Priority is the **safety and well-being** of our singers, families, staff, and supporters.
2. We will continue to **fulfill our mission** of using choral music education to foster creativity, personal expression and social growth of our singers and inspire our community through impactful performances.
3. The strategies we employ and decisions we make will be to ensure the **current and future prosperity** of the organization for years to come.

**Principle 1:** Our #1 Priority is the **safety and well-being** of our singers, families, staff, and supporters.

The feeling of safety is not something presumed; it is earned. At the same time, current research suggests that the spread of aerosolized viruses (such as COVID-19 and influenza) can be magnified through singing and aerobic activity. Therefore, for in-person activities for the 20-21 Season, we will implement the following measures:

## Facilities

- For facilities under our direct control, we will implement sweeping **measures to maximize health and safety**.
- These measures may include, but are not limited to, the use of personal protective equipment (e.g. face masks, plexiglass shields), capacity limitations, intentional entry and exit procedures, temperature and symptom checks, and more frequent and robust cleaning.
- For facilities outside of our direct control, we will **work with coordinating officials to adopt and/or expand in- place procedures** aimed at minimizing risk to health and/or safety.

## Well-Being of Singers

- From the 19-20 Season, based on feedback from our singers and staff, it was clear that mandatory isolation and distance learning has taken a toll on the mental well-being of young people. As such, MCC's staff intentionally strived to **create a supportive learning environment that mitigates feelings of stress and anxiety**. MCC will continue with this framework mindset for the 20-21 Season.
- To preserve the health and safety of our community, we will implement a **modified attendance policy** to allow singers with questionable symptoms to remain home. At-home learning materials will be made available with the expectation that singers will fulfill their personal contribution to the success of their individual choir from home.

**Principle 2: We will continue to fulfill our mission of using choral music education to foster creativity, personal expression and social growth of our singers and inspire our community through impactful performances.**

Even during a global pandemic, this mission will remain our guiding light as we strive to meet the needs of our singers and serve our community to our fullest potential.

## Foster Creativity, Personal Expression and Social Growth of Singers

- MCC's staff has and will continue to creatively find ways to infuse **more opportunities for creativity, personal expression and social growth** during regular programming.
- Should the pandemic require more strict isolation in the future, MCC's staff will **continue supporting the mission** through online means of engagement.

## Performances

- A sticking point in many societal reopening plans is mass gathering, which creates an obstacle for live musical performances. MCC will continue to plan for different scenarios and **investigate alternate performance options which minimize risk** to the health and safety of our singers, staff, volunteers, and patrons.

- We hope to move forward with our regular season calendar as planned. However, we will **create contingency plans for all events and in-person operations** which take into account potential social and physical distancing requirements.

### **Principle 3: The strategies we employ and decisions we make will be to ensure the current and future prosperity of the organization for years to come.**

The Milwaukee Children's Chorus is fortunate to have stored resources to weather the financial onslaught wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these resources are finite, and measurements must be taken to ensure that MCC's legacy of transforming music can continue for years to come.

#### **Tuition Assistance**

- Historically, MCC has awarded tuition assistance to 10-15% of families each year. With the sweeping loss of jobs due to COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate an increased need in tuition assistance for several years. Therefore, MCC will pursue a creative fundraising strategy in an effort to **raise enough funds to cover the financial need of all eligible singers**.
- Therefore, the **tuition assistance application process will be restructured with regard to current and future economic challenges**. Review of applications will be conducted by a special committee of the Board of Directors, and we will do everything in our power to provide adequate financial aid.

#### **Financial Stability**

- While reserve funds are available, MCC will not hesitate to **alter or cancel an event due to unforeseen financial risk**, especially if societal health and safety measures pose a significant threat to fiscal stability. In doing so, we will strive to communicate openly and often with patrons and financial contributors as decisions are made.
- We will be **respectful of the economic challenges** facing many families due to the COVID-19 pandemic as we continue our fundraising efforts.

#### **Telling Our Story**

- Successful storytelling is key in sharing the impact of our organization on the lives of young children across Southeast Wisconsin. As a crucial part in securing our future, we will work with MCC's staff to develop a **comprehensive marketing and advocacy plan** to ensure our story is told in a positive light even among challenging circumstances.
- We as an organization will be **transparent** with regard to decision-making to our community, and especially to our singers, families, and financial supporters.