



Handbook of General Information

2026-27

Grand Rapids Youth Choruses

P.O. Box 68665

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

www.gryouthchorus.org

616-901-2778

Our Mission Statement:

The Grand Rapids Youth Choruses strive to instill in the children of West Michigan a lifelong love of music by providing a program in which they can discover and refine their musical talent as choral singers, demonstrate personal growth and leadership, and develop a lifelong passion for singing. Grand Rapids Youth Choruses aspire to provide a mutually respectful system of preparation, a dedication to excellence in the performance of quality choral literature, and a commitment to seeking collaborative musical opportunities locally, nationally, and globally.

It is our mission to make the world a more beautiful place through music and community.

Connect with us!



gryouthchorus.org



info@gryouthchorus.org



[gryouthchorus](https://www.instagram.com/gryouthchorus)



Grand Rapids Youth Choruses

GRYC STAFF

Artistic Director

Leah Ivory 616.856.8093 leah@gryouthchorus.org

Pianist

Dutcher Snedeker

Melodia Director

Cameo Haaksma Elzinga cameo@gryouthchorus.org

Administrator

Emma Ivory 616.901.2778 info@gryouthchorus.org

GRYC Board Members

Candice Amey
Dave Bardolph
Camille DeBoer
Josie Ellerbee
Gideon Sanders

Dear Grand Rapids Youth Chorus community,

Welcome to the GRYC 2026-27 season! We are thrilled to be able to continue to offer our singers and their families the high level of music education and performances that you have come to know and love. Our choristers regularly deliver inspiring concerts wherever they sing - at our family concerts, at public events like the Griffins games, in collaboration with professional musicians, and on tour in the United States and overseas. We teach music from around the world to increase appreciation for other cultures and awareness of historical and current events happening both locally and in places far away from us - because issues of justice, peace, reconciliation, and restoration affect us all, no matter where we live.

The Grand Rapids Youth Choruses is in its 19th season as a west Michigan choral community and its 5th season as our own independently operating organization. We have an action-packed season planned for you, as usual, featuring all our regular events: retreat, fall/holiday/spring concerts, Griffins game, and Holiday Pops with the Grand Rapids Symphony. Check out our season schedule and mark your family calendars!

Why do I love GRYC so much? Thanks for asking! I am passionate about the work we do here because I see how much good happens when we make music together. Participating in music teaches us to listen. Participating in music teaches us that together, we are better. Participating in music teaches us that our voice matters. I could go on...there is an endless list of incredible benefits, both physical and developmental, that we receive from being a member of an ensemble. But I will conclude with the observation that participating in music teaches us that humans from around the world are more alike than they are different. To me, this is the heart of why we do what we do - to help our singers learn to see and value our commonality as humans. I see this idea in action when I watch a concert put on by Syrian musicians who collaborate with musicians from surrounding countries to show the world that they are more than the war and fighting that has taken over the region. It is concrete evidence that "people who make music together cannot be enemies". This message of hope is worth leaning into and putting into practice whenever and wherever we can. So come and sing with us, and be a bridge builder and bringer of hope. Together, we are making the world a better and more beautiful place.

Sincerely,

Leah Ivory

YOUNG VOICES, Kindergarten-1st grade

Director, Cameo Elzinga

Pianist, Dutcher Snedeker

Standard tuition: \$600 (minimum \$475)

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 5:00-5:45pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

MELODIA, grades 2-3

Director, Cameo Elzinga

Pianist, Dutcher Snedeker

Standard tuition: \$650 (minimum \$525)

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 6:00-7:00pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

MOSAIC SINGERS, grades 4-6

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Dutcher Snedeker

Standard tuition: \$775 (minimum \$650)

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 5:00-6:30pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

YOUTH CHORUS, grades 7-12

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Dutcher Snedeker

Standard tuition: \$825 (minimum \$700)

Rehearsals: Mondays from 6:30-8:30pm, room 115 in the Fine Arts Center of Calvin University

MANDALA, select treble voices grades 7-12

Director, Leah Ivory

Pianist, Dutcher Snedeker

Standard Tuition: \$775 (minimum \$650) **members who also sing in the Youth Chorus can join Mandala at the significant discount of \$175*

Rehearsals: Thursdays from 6:30-8:00pm, lower level of the chapel at Calvin University

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

For GRYC family concerts, the performance attire will be GRYC t-shirts with blue jeans and comfortable shoes.

For the holiday concerts, choristers will wear all black concert attire.

YOUNG VOICES/MELODIA/MOSAIC SINGERS: Find your own concert-appropriate combination of dress pants, dress shirt (long sleeve), skirt or dress. All clothing must be opaque black (not see through). Black opaque leggings must be worn with skirts or dresses. No designs or sequins on clothing. All black shoes - comfortable but concert appropriate. No sneakers or athletic shoes. No high heels.

Young Voices singers are invited to wear a white accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

Melodia singers are invited to wear a red accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

Mosaic Singers are invited to wear a green accessory of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

YOUTH CHORUS/MANDALA: Black formal concert appropriate clothing that can include a floor length dress (we will provide a link to order), or black trousers, black buttoned/collared long sleeve shirt, black dress shoes and socks.

Youth Chorus/Mandala singers are invited to wear gold or silver accessories of your choosing - ie. Scarf, belt, necklace, tie, etc.

TUITION PAYMENTS

We will send an invoice via email, to be paid online.

Payment option 1: one payment for the season (\$3 processing fee if paying with a card)

Payment option 2: two payments for the season, payment in September and January (\$3 processing fee if paying with a card)

Payment option 3: 8 monthly payments processed on the second Friday of each month (Sept-April) *note: this option includes a \$10 processing fee each month

The two payment plan and monthly payment plan options are for financial purposes only. Choristers with this payment plan are committed to attend the season from September to May.

The tuition form must be filled out and turned in at rehearsal to Emma **by September 14 or 17,** or at the chorister's first rehearsal.

No refunds will be offered.

****If, due to an unforeseen circumstance, you need to drop out part way through the season, a \$50 cancellation fee will release you from any remaining monthly payments.***

Tuition Scholarships:

We offer scholarships to families who are experiencing financial hardship and may not be able to participate in the choir without assistance. Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.gryouthchorus.org for a link to an application.

Tuition Discount for Multiple Children:

For households that have more than one child in our choirs we offer the following discounts:

1st child: full tuition

2nd child: 25% deduction off of the lesser expensive choir. Each additional child is an increasing 5% discount. IE - the 3rd child would receive 30% off and the 4th child would receive 35%. Please see the "Parents" section of our website www.gryouthchorus.org for a link to an application.

CLOSURES/CANCELLATIONS

If rehearsal is cancelled, GRYC will notify you by email.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Each singer represents the Grand Rapids Youth Choruses. We are a professional organization and our students are expected to behave in a courteous manner with other adults as well as with their peers. GRYC does not provide supervision for choristers prior to or following rehearsal times. Young choristers should be accompanied by their parents/guardians at all times outside of rehearsal. Please be mindful that indoor shared common spaces and hallways are not playground areas. Thank you!

All singers should plan to arrive five minutes before the scheduled start time of their rehearsal so that they can be in their places and ready to sing at the designated hour.

Singers may not leave after rehearsal has begun unless special permission has been granted. An email is necessary for late admittance to or early dismissal from a rehearsal.

Please give payments, paperwork, etc. to Emma, our choir manager.

Singers are encouraged to bring a bottle of water. Please make sure it has a lid or cap on it to prevent spills and if possible labeled with their name. No food, candy or gum is allowed in the rehearsal space. For optimal focus and energy, please have your chorister eat a nutritious snack before rehearsal.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones may not be used during rehearsals. If communication is necessary, please call Emma (616.901.2778) who can handle messages or emergency situations as needed. If a singer does bring a cell phone to rehearsal, it must stay in a bag/backpack inside the rehearsal room or collected by section leaders and kept in baskets. Phones may not be kept in pockets/clothing/folders, etc. **This will be enforced to help our singers practice and develop the ability to focus on the task at hand without being distracted by their phones.**

Game-playing devices are not allowed to be brought into rehearsals.

COMMUNICATION

Directors will send regular communication via email as needed. **These emails will contain important information and should be read thoroughly.**

Parents, please communicate through our manager, Emma. If she is unable to answer a question or if a response is needed from a director, she will pass it along and make any necessary connections. Do not expect immediate responses on a performance day. Thank you for understanding!

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Regular attendance is expected and integral to our success as a choir. **Unavoidable absences must be communicated to the director in advance and/or as soon as possible.** Illness and emergencies are examples of excused absences. Homework is not an excusable absence. If more than two unexcused absences are accrued/semester, a chorister may be excused from participation in a concert or possibly for the semester. Please sign below and turn in the signature page at the first rehearsal. :) Thank you.

PARENTS: PLEASE SIGN THE SIGNATURE PAGE TO CONFIRM THAT YOU AGREE TO GRYC POLICIES. TURN IN BEFORE OR AT THE FIRST REHEARSAL. THANK YOU!

I, _____, (printed name) acknowledge that I have read the GRYC 2026-27 handbook, and accept the information and terms that were provided.

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____