



NKU Youth Choir

Member Handbook

2025-2026

The NKU Youth Choir provides full choral experiences to area youth who excel vocally, exposing them to choral literature and ensemble performing in a challenging and nurturing environment. The NKU YC meets weekly on the campus of Northern Kentucky University in the School of the Arts building. The NKU YC is under the leadership and direction of Mrs. Holly Bowen, an expert conductor, music educator, and pianist. The NKU YC is part of the award winning NKU Music Preparatory Program and is designed to prepare students for a future in music.

Rehearsals: Tuesdays, 4:30–6pm

Location: FA 378 (choir room)

Tuition: \$200 for the academic year (September–April)

Prerequisites: Ages 10–17, a one-time vocal placement recording is required. This is not an audition. (See below for details.)

Tuition: The annual tuition for participation in the NKU YC is \$200. This tuition must be paid no later than 7 days prior to the first rehearsal. Members may not participate until their tuition has been paid in full or financial arrangements have been made with the NKU Music Preparatory Program.

Membership Requirements: The conductor's goal is to make rehearsals meaningful for all involved. While performances often provide the most memorable highlights of the year, our rehearsals reveal who we are as an ensemble – our musical maturity and dedication, our respect for one another, and our ability to work together. Extraordinary responsibility is placed on each musician for preparation of individual parts. Both the conductor and ensemble members are expected to arrive to rehearsals having practiced their part with the practice tracks provided. (See below for how to access rehearsal tracks.) It is important that students and parents are familiar with and understand the policies set forth in this handbook. Failure to observe them could result in denial of permission to participate in a concert or dismissal from the choir.

School Music Programs/Private Lesson Suggestion: Participation in the NKU YC is designed to enhance, not replace, school music instruction. School music programs provide essential daily ensemble and rehearsal instruction required for serious musical progress. Our program is not designed to be a student's sole source of vocal instruction. The YC believes that school music programs are vital to the development of young musicians – educationally, artistically and socially. By participating in school music programs, young musicians can serve as role models, receive leadership training, study sight-reading, and share their talents with others. School programs also provide other important opportunities such as access to All-State and Honor Choir, Solo and Ensemble Assessments and performing in school productions.



Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory for all rehearsals and performances. Our attendance policies in the NKU Music Preparatory Program are strict to ensure the highest quality learning experience and performance. Please evaluate your schedule to be sure that you are able to meet the expected ensemble commitments. **No more than three absences per year are allowed.** Students may use the absences for sickness, school concerts, vacations, or other acceptable and unavoidable conflicts. After three absences, the student may be dismissed. *For an absence to be excused, you must contact the conductor, Mrs. Holly Bowen, directly via e-mail.*

Performance Absences: Members are required to participate in all concerts. The conductor and Music Preparatory Department administration must approve any performance absence, unless the absence is due to sudden illness. Missing a performance is very serious and doing so is grounds for probation or immediate dismissal from the program.

Withdrawal or Dismissal from the YC: Members are expected to make a full season's commitment to the YC. Early withdrawal from the program must be done by letter, indicating the reasons and circumstances for withdrawal. No refund of tuition will be extended.

Behavior: YC members are required to treat all rehearsal and performance venues and all equipment in the buildings with utmost care and respect. All members are required to behave appropriately while representing their choir. Disrespectful behavior of any kind during a concert or rehearsal may result in dismissal from the choir. All choir members are expected to maintain a professional manner at all times.

Rehearsal Procedures: YC members are expected to be in their seats and ready to sing no less than five minutes before the start of each rehearsal. A call time will be specified for performances. Students must bring to each rehearsal a black binder with their sheet music hole-punched inside, as well as a pencil. (Students will be given the music at their first rehearsal.) After each rehearsal, choir members are to be picked up immediately in the circle in front of the SOTA building at 6:00 pm. *Students that are not picked up promptly at 6:00 pm are subject to dismissal from the ensemble.*

Rehearsal Etiquette: All electronic devices must be silenced prior to rehearsal. Cell phones are not permitted in rehearsals or performances and must be put away in a pocket or bag during rehearsal, with the exception of break time. Students who are texting or otherwise engaged with their phones or other electronic devices during rehearsal time are subject to dismissal from the rehearsal. Dress rehearsals, despite the name, **do not** require concert dress.

Zero Tolerance Policy: The YC does not tolerate negative comments or behavior regarding race, ethnicity, political stance, sexual orientation or religious preference at any time. Such negative comments or behavior will result in immediate dismissal from the choir. The use of any illegal substances including tobacco, drugs, and alcohol is also not permitted. Those in violation are subject to immediate dismissal from the YC program.

Vocal placement recording: Upon initially joining the ensemble, each student is required to send in a recording to be placed in their vocal part. Recordings may include video footage, but it is not required. Recordings are due no later than 7 days prior to the first rehearsal; the results of students' placements will be released at the first rehearsal. Vocal placements are decided based on each member's range, technique, and musical needs as well as the needs of the ensemble. Placements are not open to request and are subject to change each year at the director's discretion. Instructions for what to include in the placement recording, as well as how to submit, can be found in the YC Virtual Classroom. (See below for how to access.)



Rehearsal Tracks: All YC members are expected to practice singing their pieces outside of rehearsals. Tracks for students to sing along with as they practice are provided in the YC Virtual Classroom, which is accessible through the NKU Prep website on the YC page. This Virtual Classroom also includes directions, as well as an example recording for how to complete and submit the vocal placement recording.

Solos: Occasionally, opportunities for solos or duets will be offered. All choir members are encouraged to audition for these opportunities. Students can audition for as many solos and/or duets as they'd like but can be selected for no more than one solo/duet per concert. Results of solo/duet auditions are final.

Special Rehearsals: On October 28th, students are encouraged to attend rehearsal in costume, though this is optional. All costumes must be appropriate; no full-face masks or intimidating costumes will be permitted. If unsure if a costume is appropriate, please consult the director in advance. On April 14th, the YC will have an open rehearsal where choir members are encouraged to invite their friends to sing along with them. Those invited/visiting do not need to bring anything when they attend this rehearsal.

Concert Dress (all items solid black):

Top/bottom including the following options:

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|---|--|
| ❖ Dress with $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeves or longer (floor length) | ❖ Dress Shirt w/ $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeves or longer |
| ❖ Formal skirt (floor length) | ❖ Black/natural hose or tall socks |
| ❖ Dress pants/trousers | ❖ Dress shoes (No gym shoes) |
| (No rips/tears, leggings may not be worn as pants) | ❖ Optional Tux/Blazer Jacket |
| | ❖ Optional Tie/Bowtie |

Note: Any member who is not in compliance with the dress code, as determined by the conductor, he or she will not be permitted to participate in said performance.

NKU Choir Concerts: In the NKU YC, we understand the immense benefits of experiencing professional choral music first-hand. Members of the YC are encouraged to attend concerts presented by the NKU Choirs under the direction of Professors Katie Barton and Adam White.

- ❖ **Fall concert** - October 23rd at 7:00 pm, Greaves Concert Hall
- ❖ **Winter concert** - December 7th at 5:00 pm, St. Thomas Church
- ❖ **Spring concert** – March 2, time TBA, Greaves Concert Hall



Parent / Student Contract:

We, _____ (student name)
and _____ (parent name), have read the contents of the
NKU Youth Choir Handbook and consent to its enforcement. We recognize the responsibility made
to the YC and promise to follow through to the best of our abilities. In addition, we have cross-
checked the YC calendar dates for the academic year with our personal schedules, school music
schedules, fall/spring breaks, sports schedules, and any other current commitments to ensure that
YC rehearsal and concert dates are a priority and will not be compromised.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

Date: _____

This form is due upon arrival at the first rehearsal.

