



The Wilmington Children's Chorus:

Stages of COVID-19 Response

A detailed guide on program delivery, precautions,
and restrictions.

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Disclaimers:

The purpose of this document is to guide the choices made by Wilmington Children's Chorus's (WCC) staff and board members, as it pertains to COVID-19. It is not intended to serve as advice to any other organization, or medical advice for any individual. It is the responsibility of every organization and individual to make informed and independently researched decisions that are in the best interest of themselves and their broader community.

The information and guidance provided in this document have been compiled from various resources including the CDC, National Institute of Health, State of Delaware, Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement, Chorus Connections, San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, and the World Health Organization.

Each stage includes guidelines, restrictions and precautions for operations, and a list of prerequisites which must be met to move into said stage. This is intended to be a living document, which will adapt and improve with new research and advancements in best practices and medical care. It will be updated often.

Background

As of August 18, 2020, there have been 16,536 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 593 deaths attributed to the virus in the State of Delaware. Wastewater analysis in New Castle County (where WCC operations are based) indicates the actual infection rate is approximately 15x higher. On August 18, there are 29 individuals hospitalized, and 7 of those individuals are considered "critical."

Delaware cases continue to trend upwards, although disease spread is slow. There are no known hotspots in New Castle County or the state of Delaware.

Governor Carney signaled to school districts that they were able to start their school year utilizing hybrid-instruction. However, many school districts have elected to start their school year fully virtual.

Singing-based musical organizations have additional safety considerations, in light of preliminary research linking choirs to Super Spreader Events (SSE's). More information can be found in the attached presentation, compiled by Philip Doucette titled "COVID-19 Presentation, August 2020"

Definition of Safety

It is important to recognize that there will never be a 0% chance of contracting COVID-19 again. Like the common cold and the flu, this virus is here to stay. That said, we do believe there is a way to sing together safely. In this situation, WCC defines safe as "having mitigated risks to the extent possible for the current situation."

Risk-Benefit Analysis

There are risks and benefits to both virtual and in-person programming. This analysis is intended to serve as a frank review of both and guide the decision-making of WCC's staff and board.

RISK & BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL REHEARSAL/EVENTS

RISKS/COSTS	BENEFITS/REWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential drop-off in engagement (particularly among low-income members) • Sudden change in support system could prove detrimental to student's mental health • Excessive screen time has negative impact on developing minds • Loss of classroom connections & classroom management • Limitations on virtual platform (issues of latency & quality). Virtual instruction cannot adequately substitute for in-person rehearsals. • Removes essential tenant of choral singing – togetherness • Exploration of distance learning costly (both time and tech) • Copyright restrictions • Loss of revenue from in-person fundraisers & events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfillment of mission • Protects health of students, staff, and families • Protects choir from liability • Could be seen as creative & innovative (positive impact on brand) • New emphasis on virtual programming allows staff time to explore tools for future classroom use

RISK & BENEFITS OF IN-PERSON REHEARSALS/EVENTS

RISK/COSTS	BENEFITS/REWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain health risk • Potential drop off in engagement (particularly among high-risk members) • Providing synchronous hybrid instruction is challenging • Liability for organization • Negative impact on brand in the event of SSE • Could be seen as “rash” or “risky” move (negative impact on brand) • Huge logistical undertaking • Costly (time and materials needed) • Loss of revenue due to restricted attendance at fundraisers & events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfillment of mission • Sense of ensemble • More opportunity to create quality arts programming • Connection to choristers & families • Bold step forward – could be seen as leaders in the arts sector

Stage 1

“Living in a Virtual World”

100% of program delivery and business conducted virtually

- Performing Choir rehearsals conducted entirely online
- Study tracks, music, and videos to aid in distance learning made available
- Personal connections facilitated through online social events and social media content
- All business meetings conducted virtually

RESTRICTIONS & PRECAUTIONS

- No in-person gatherings of more than two people at any time. Brief interactions are permitted, provided both individuals take necessary precautions such as wearing masks, to distribute necessary materials.

Necessary Readiness for Stage 2

- ✓ Liability insurance with coverage of up to \$1,000,000 is required for WCC to move forward with any in-person instruction or rehearsals.
- ✓ Access to screening and cleaning supplies
 - Contactless thermometers for screening at the door
 - Masks for participants, plexiglass & eyewear protection for conductor & accompanist, PPE for screeners
 - Anti-viral cleaning solution for sanitizing all high-contact areas including
 - Doorknobs, light-switches, and chairs
 - Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Staffing and volunteers to support in-person instruction & necessary screening
- ✓ Supplies such as pencils, music, etc (enough to supply every child with their own/no shared supplies)
- ✓ Location
 - Access to venue willing to allow rehearsals to take place
 - Adequate cleaning procedures within venue
 - Square footage to accommodate socially distant rehearsal
 - Appropriate air circulation (minimum: 3x/hour)
- ✓ Comfort of families in participating in occasional in-person rehearsals
- ✓ All participants signing waiver of liability
- ✓ Landscape
 - DE enter Phase 2 (indicating downward trajectory of confirmed cases & hospitalizations for a period of 28 days)
- ✓ No known hotspots in New Castle County (NCC) area
- ✓ Essential elements of phase legally permissible under DE & Federal laws, not in defiance of any Executive Orders.

Stage 2

“Venturing Forward”

70% of program delivery virtually/ 30% in-person
90% of business conducted virtually

- Performing Choir rehearsals conducted mostly online, with a few group rehearsals conducted to provide a sense of ensemble
 - 30 singers indoors/50 outdoors
 - Flexible attendance policy, especially for high-risk individuals
- Study tracks, music, and videos to aid in distance learning made available
 - In-person rehearsals recorded and posted online for high-risk individuals
- Cumulative Experience pre-recorded and posted online
- Personal connections facilitated through online social events and social media content
- Most business conducted virtually

Restrictions & Precautions for Stage 2

- Shorter rehearsals (not exceeding 90 minutes) in total – target 30 minutes of singing time per room if indoors.
- Extended “Change-over” periods to allow for appropriate cleaning and room ventilation if indoors.
- Strict “wellness” policy. Only those who meet the following criteria may attend:
 - Choristers and all members of their household show no symptoms of COVID-19 (shortness of breath, fever, coughing, gastrointestinal issues, or new loss of taste or smell) or those of any other illness.
 - Choristers and all members of their household have not been notified of contact with any individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Extensive cleaning procedures for all high-touch areas
- Screening* (*see addendum*)
 - Temperature >99.5 will result in chorister being denied entry to rehearsal building and being sent home.
 - Symptom screening prior to rehearsals completed online.
- Masks required for entry (and other regulations regarding masks as applicable)
 - Flexibility in this policy may be required for those with conditions that make mask wearing hazardous (asthma, anxiety, etc.) Target – 95% of singers wearing masks.
- Staggered entrance & exits times & points of entry
- Doors propped open
- All singers kept 6 feet apart during entry and exit, 8 feet apart during singing times.
- Singers kept in straight rows (no curves, circles, or facing of one another)
- No breaks
- No moving of seats
- Extremely limited bathroom use (emergencies only, one chorister at a time, etc.)
- No shared materials (pencil box, extra music, etc.)
- Only essential staff members and choristers permitted in the building (no parents, visitors, etc.)
- Only occasional rehearsals may be conducted in-person at this time. No concerts with live audience, fundraisers, or other events may proceed in-person

Necessary Readiness for Stage 3

- ✓ DE enter Phase 3 (indicating downward trajectory of confirmed cases & hospitalizations for a period of 42 days)
- ✓ Organization streamlines systems for maintaining social distance during “high-traffic times” such as entering and exiting the buildings & screening choristers at the door.
- ✓ Essential elements of phase legally permissible under DE & Federal laws, not in defiance of any Executive Orders.

Stage 3

“Woah, We’re ‘Halfway’ There”

*40-50% of program delivery in-person, remainder virtual
Business conducted mostly in-person*

- Performing Choirs conducted using a hybrid model, leaning towards in-person instruction
 - Flexible attendance policy
 - Groups of up to 50 may rehearse together indoors if rehearsal space can accommodate that number with precautions listed below.
- Study tracks, music, and videos of rehearsal to aid in distance learning made available
- Business conducted mostly in-person

Restrictions & Precautions for Stage 3

- Shorter rehearsals (not exceeding 90 minutes) in total – target 30 minutes of singing time per room if indoors.
- Extended “Change-over” periods to allow for appropriate cleaning and room ventilation
- Strict “wellness” policy. Only those who meet the following criteria may attend:
 - Choristers and all members of their household show no symptoms of COVID-19 (shortness of breath, fever, coughing, gastrointestinal issues, or new loss of taste or smell) or those of any other illness.)
 - Choristers and all members of their household have not been notified of contact with any individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Extensive cleaning procedures for all high-touch areas
- Screening* (*see addendum*)
 - Temperature >99.5 will result in chorister being denied entry to rehearsal building and being sent home.
 - Symptom screening prior to rehearsals completed online. Participants will be checked for running nose, sore throat, cough, fever, shortness of breath, and gastrointestinal issues.
- Masks required for entry (and other regulations regarding masks as applicable)
 - Flexibility in this policy may be required for those with conditions that make mask wearing hazardous (asthma, anxiety, etc.) Target – 95% of singers wearing masks.
- Staggered entrance & exits times & points of entry
- Doors propped open
- All singers kept 6 feet apart during entry and exit, 8 feet apart during singing times.
- Singers kept in straight rows (no curves, circles, or facing of one another)
- No breaks
- No moving of seats
- Strictly monitored bathroom time (one chorister at a time)
- No shared materials (pencil box, extra music, etc.)
- Only essential staff members and choristers permitted in the building (no parents, visitors, etc.)
- 40-50% of rehearsals conducted in-person at this time.
- Fundraisers & events held virtually, unless outside, with adequate social distancing.
- No indoor concerts with an audience. Outdoor venues may be considered, providing there is adequate space for choristers and audience to practice social distancing.

Necessary Readiness for Stage 4

- ✓ Steady decline of COVID-19 cases & hospitalizations in DE, PA, MD, and NJ for a period of 60 days after WCC enters stage 3.
- ✓ No known hot spots in NCC and the surrounding counties (including those in other states).
- ✓ Essential elements of phase legally permissible under DE & Federal laws, not in defiance of any Executive Orders.

Stage 4

It's beginning to look a lot like "Choir"

100% of program delivery & business conducted in-person

Gradual loosening of restrictions for rehearsals

"Live" concerts with a small audience (30% capacity or more if permitted by state) may be conducted indoors

- Performing Choirs conducted completely in-person, with some safety measures in place.

Restrictions & Precautions for Stage 4

- Rehearsal times may extend to 60-75 minutes per ensemble/per room
- Reasonable cleaning procedures in place
- Screening* (*see addendum*)
 - Temperature >99.5 will result in chorister being denied entry to rehearsal building and being sent home.
 - Symptom screening prior to rehearsals completed online.
Participants will be checked for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Masks required for entry
- Social distancing in place during rehearsal (singers spaced 8 feet apart)

Necessary Readiness for Stage 5

- ✓ Effective vaccine, herd immunity, or 95% effective treatment
- ✓ Essential elements of phase legally permissible under DE & Federal laws, not in defiance of any Executive Orders
- ✓ Audience comfort with attending indoor event

Stage 5

“Life as We Knew It”

100% of program delivery & business conducted in-person

Concerts with audience size of 300+ may be held indoors

No anticipated restrictions relating to COVID-19.



Addendum

*A previous version of this document stated we would check pulse ox at the door, and a reading of <94% (for person baseline) would result in a chorister being sent home. Upon receiving further screening advice from medical professions, we opted to remove this guidance.

* A previous version of this document indicated WCC would be performing symptom checks at the door. To streamline screening at the door, medical professionals recommended that symptom screening be done at home. This will be done online within 12 hours of choristers attending rehearsal.

*A previous version of this document indicated singers should be kept 6 feet apart. Some research has suggested 8 feet provides greater protection. WCC has elected to maintain 8 foot distance between singers during our rehearsal time.

*This document has been updated to reflect a desired air re-circulation rate of at least 3x per hour.