



**ST. PAUL'S
CONCERT CHOIR
HANDBOOK
2025-2026**

MARK ALBERSTEIN, DIRECTOR

**ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL
VISALIA, CA**

**PARENTS AND STUDENTS CAN VIEW AND DOWNLOAD
THIS HANDBOOK AND CURRENT PRACTICE MATERIALS
AT:**

WWW.SPSCHOIRS.COM

Welcome to the St. Paul's School Concert Choir 2025-2026

Dear Parents:

Your child has elected to make a year-long commitment to participating in the Concert Choir program of St. Paul's School: a program that is committed to achieving quality and excellence in choral music and in character. It is a big responsibility for your child to be a member of this choir. We expect every member of the choir to support their fellow singers by learning the music and performing to the best of their ability. This requires hard work and dedication to the choir from every member.

This program focuses on developing a solid musical background to create singing musicians for life. Students in the program can expect to sing a variety of styles of music, from early musical forms to more modern, contemporary compositions. Students will learn about the physical mechanisms of voice, vocal development, posture, performance, sight-singing, music history, and other cultures. All the selections and materials used in our class are age appropriate.

As we enter our thirteenth year, I remain extremely honored and excited to have the opportunity to share the joy of music with the students at St. Paul's School. We have worked hard to develop a choir program worthy of your support, and I hope you will see continued growth in our singers this year.

Please feel free to drop by our classroom on any Monday or Wednesday afternoon at 2:25 – 3:20 to watch a rehearsal. There is no need for an appointment: just check in at the office. We love visitors, and we always sing better with an audience! Please feel free to contact me at any time. Please call or text me at 559-205-5574, or you may contact me by email at the address below should you have any questions about our program, or the requirements described in this handbook.

I look forward to meeting with you at our **Choir Parent's Meeting on Tuesday evening, September 9th**, if not sooner. Let's make this year a great memory for your child and a foundation for musical growth in the years to come.

Mark Alberstein

Mark Alberstein
Director of Choral Music Activities
malberstein@spsvisalia.com

St. Paul's Concert Choir – General Info

6 – 8 Middle School Students - This is an un-auditioned, mixed choir, for all levels of musicianship, and with beginning to advanced vocal development. There is no enrollment limit to the size of the choir.

Formal Performance Attire and Appearance

The following information applies to when the choir is performing in a formal setting: concerts, festivals, and occasional community appearances.

GIRLS will wear a long, red formal dress for most performances, supplied by the school. They must supply their own black shoes and hosiery. Shoes must be flats or pumps with no more than a two-inch heel. We do not allow casual boots and athletic shoes on stage. We do allow plain black dress boots. Hosiery must be black and at least mid-calf in length.

Girls must wear no jewelry other than the pearl necklace supplied by the director, with the exception being earrings. Earrings must be studs or small hoops (1/2 inch or less).

Girls must wear their hair pinned back off their faces. We want to see their eyes clearly. Girls may wear their hair either up or down. Bangs are ok if cut clearly above the eyebrows.

BOYS will wear a white tuxedo shirt with buttons and cufflinks, a cummerbund, and a vest supplied by the school. Boys must supply their own black slacks, black shoes, and black socks. Shoes must be leather or give the appearance of leather. They may have shoestrings or be slip-ons. We do not allow casual boots and athletic shoes on stage. We do allow plain black dress boots. Hosiery must be black and must cover the ankle.

COST OF WARDROBE PURCHASE OR REPLACEMENT:

Girl's Red Formal Dress \$75.00

Boy's White Tuxedo Shirt \$30.00

Boy's Red Vest \$50.00

Boy's Cummerbund \$20.00

St. Paul's Concert Choir Grading

1. Daily Behavior and Participation (40%)

- At the beginning of each class period, each student will receive a daily behavior/participation grade of 100 points that begins the instructional period as an "A."
- Students with an unexcused tardy (no note from sending staff member) will receive a 1-point per minute deduction. Students who are unable to sing must be in their places with music and receive instruction and will receive a 10-point deduction.
- Each disruption of instruction during a class period will receive progressively a 20 and 30-point deduction. A third disruption will result in a suspension from class for the day and a daily grade of "0".
- Students who fail to participate will receive a participation grade of "0". Students who have an "unexcused" absence will receive a participation grade of "0". An unexcused absence is a willful failure to come to class. Refer to the "Student Discipline" page (Pg. 7) for requirements to receive 100 pts. each day.

2. In-Class Skills and Song Progress Checks (20%) At least twice per trimester, the Director will evaluate your singer on their choral skills development and their knowledge of the music in progress. Choir students must work frequently on our musical pieces *at home* by visiting the **spschoirs.com** website. The Director will evaluate students in groups of 3 or 4 students, and he will share the results of each evaluation with the student's parents along with recommendations.

3. Choir Responsibilities (10%) Examples of choir responsibilities are the timely return of clothing, materials, and forms requiring student and/or parental signatures. The form at the end of this handbook is due on or before Friday, Sept. 12th. Forms and letters help ensure that parents are well-informed. The director uses a 100-point basis for grading responsibilities. Parents may respond by email or verbally, but the student will only receive 90-points for this. It is the student's responsibility to return all signed forms.

4. Performances (30%)

Our **MANDATORY Concerts** are the equivalent of "Tests or Final Exams" in other classes. They are the culmination of all our work and there is no "alternative assignment" that can take the place of our performances. The director uses a 100-point basis in grading performances. Special performances may occur throughout the year. If a performance is "optional," students may earn points for these performances, but if they do not attend, there is no penalty. The criteria for grading performances include Appearance, Composure (on and off stage), and Accurate and Artistic Performance of musical parts.

****** IMPORTANT **** PLEASE READ ******

Students and their families must arrange their personal and family schedules to allow every student to attend all scheduled, mandatory performances. Students who have transportation difficulties must ask the director for assistance.

It is the responsibility of the choir student and parents to clear the student's schedule well in advance of all choir performances, and you agree to do so by signing and returning the "Agreement" at the end of this handbook.

This includes students who participate in other outside of school activities. Parents and Students should clear the dates of choir performances well in advance with coaches and other youth leaders.

Students who do not attend a mandatory performance will receive a grade of fifty points (for their preparation). Sickness or family emergencies are the only excuses accepted for missing a performance.

“Discipline is not about Punishment... Discipline is a person’s HABIT of CONSTANTLY MAKING CHOICES that open the door to continual growth, achievement and a true sense of purpose and self-worth.”

CHOIR - STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Goals: Each student should have a desire to:

1. Be an important part of a choir that performs as well as or better than any school in our area.
2. *Learn as much about music and good singing as possible, and to always apply this learning.*
3. Be personally successful in choir and encourage all other choir members to be successful.
4. *Sacrifice personal time and energy to achieve these goals.*

Rules: Infractions of these rules will result in a lowered Daily Performance Grade.

1. Be on time, in your assigned place and ready to begin when class begins. The director will allow 2-3 minutes leeway for students to stop at restrooms on the way to class. A staff member must sign a note sent to the director with the late student, or the student is TARDY. (1 point deduction per minute)
2. *Give your attention to the director and follow all directions. If you DIDN'T hear, you are not listening. If you CAN'T hear, raise your hand.*
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Do not disturb another singer or their possessions. (5-point deduction)
4. *When we are in rehearsal mode, raise your hand and wait quietly until called upon by the teacher before speaking. NEVER start talking when the singing stops!*
5. Show respect to your teacher and your classmates. What you say and the way you say it shows how important the goals of the choir are to you.
6. *No Food.* Students may drink water during instruction. (20 points deduction)

Rewards your student receives for having Great Discipline:

1. Productive and Enjoyable Rehearsals
2. *Superior Performances*
3. Praise from their Teacher and their Audience
4. *Superior Grades*
5. Personal Satisfaction in their Achievements

All Travel is Graded as a Performance Event

When the choir travels, rehearses, or performs off-campus, we represent ourselves, our families, our school, and our community. All choir members must conduct themselves honorably and to never detract from our pride and dignity. All choir members must strictly obey all the rules of our school including the Dress Code. This applies to all travel, including events outside of regular school hours or regular school days.

Any middle school choir student, who violates any school rule while traveling, including serious infractions of the School Dress Code, will receive a grade of “0” for that event.

Chaperones

We will need drivers and chaperones for our off-campus events. Please indicate on the form at the back of this handbook if you are able and willing to provide transportation and chaperoning. Chaperones, like our students, are representatives of St. Paul’s School, and must always serve as fine examples for our students.

Food in Classroom

Students may not bring food into the classroom. Students who bring food to their seat must put it away immediately when told and will receive a 20-point deduction on their daily participation grade. If the student continues to eat, an additional 20-point deduction will apply.

Water bottles - (optional, not required) Water is basic for a healthy singing voice, and students should bring sealable water bottles. Trips to the drinking fountain interrupt practice during instructional time.

Choir Calendar of Events

There is a Choir Calendar of Events attached to the back of this Handbook. Please remove and save it in a place where you can refer to it throughout the year. At the time of this printing, not all calendar dates are unknown, so look for calendar updates from time-to-time.

We will do everything possible to notify you far in advance of choir activities or changes to the calendar. Please do everything you can to ensure that your child will participate.

St. Paul's Choir Boosters

The St. Paul's Choir Boosters includes all choir parents, interested community members and staff. A donation of \$50 makes you a SUSTAINING SUPPORTER. A donation of \$75 pays for FAMILY SUSTAINING SUPPORTER for a couple or family. With either donation, you and your immediate family will receive FREE admissions to all Concerts, and your name(s) will appear with a list of Sustaining Supporters in all concert programs. Additionally, Sustaining Supporters will receive first consideration if there are limited chaperone positions open for an event.

ALL Parents are MEMBERS AT-LARGE, and we invite them to attend every Boosters Meeting. We hope you will join us at booster meetings and at choir events throughout the year.

The Choir Boosters assist the choir director in the following ways:

1. Collaborate with the director in setting short and long-range goals for the program.
2. Collaborate with the director in setting standards for the program and periodically consider these standards for modification.
3. Collaborate with the director in determining funding needs for the program and creating fund raising events to benefit the program.
4. Collaborate with the director in planning performance events and handling the non-musical aspects of those events, including but not limited to decorations, taking admissions at the door, providing refreshments, assisting the director and students with wardrobe issues, providing on-site meals for students during special events, and arranging transportation for students on an as-needed basis.
5. Collaborate with the director in finding opportunities for St. Paul's Choir Groups to perform in the community and beyond.
6. Collaborate with the director in creating awards and incentive programs for choir students. These might include such rewards as scholarships toward private vocal instruction, or free student admission to paid events.

The St. Paul's Choir Boosters will NOT be an independent organization with its own bank account. Office staff will deposit all funds raised into the St. Paul's Choral Department account.

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Calendar of Choir Boosters Meetings

Meetings of the Choir Boosters are on selected dates, from 5:45 pm to 6:30 pm.

Tuesday, Sep 9, 2025

MEETING FOR ALL CHOIR PARENTS

Discuss Choir Boosters

Discuss Choir Requirements

Other Highlights of Handbook

Monday, Oct 20 Fall Concert

Disney Choir Trip: March 19-20, 2026

Tuesday, Oct 14, 2025

Planning:

Monday, Oct 20 Fall Concert

Performance at Church/Rest Home in Dec

Disney Choir Trip: March 19-20, 2026

Tuesday, Nov 18, 2025

Report: Fall Concert

Planning:

Church/Rest Home Performances in Dec.

Monday, Dec 15 Christmas Concert

Disney Choir Trip: March 19-20, 2026

Tuesday, Feb 24, 2026

Planning:

Monday, March 16 - Pre-Disney Concert

Disney Choir Trip: March 19-20, 2026

Tuesday, Apr 21, 2026

Planning:

End of Year POP Concert Monday, May 11

End of Year Awards May

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For POSTING AT HOME

St. Paul's Choir Boosters SUSTAINING SUPPORTERS 2025-2026 Enrollment Form

Name(s) as you want them to appear in our program.

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Select Your Membership: (check one box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	INDIVIDUAL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	FAMILY	\$75.00

Checks Payable to: St. Paul's Choir
Memo: Choir Boosters

Amount Enclosed: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Elective Concert Choir Calendar 2025-2026

Tues Sep 9 – All Choir Parents Meeting 6 pm in the Chapel

Tues Oct 14 – Choir Boosters Meeting 6 pm in the Music Room

Mon Oct 20 – Fall Concert 7 pm in the Chapel

Tues Nov 18 – Choir Boosters Meeting 6 pm in the Music Room

Dec ____ – Concert Choir Sing in the Community

Mon Dec 15 – Christmas Concert 7 pm in the Chapel
or at St. Paul’s Church (TBA)

Tues Feb 24 – Choir Boosters Meeting 6 pm in the Music Room

Mon Mar 16 – Pre-Disney Concert 7 pm in the Chapel

Thurs/Fri Mar 19/20 - Disneyland Trip & Performance (on the 19th)

Apr/May? – St. Paul’s Singers and Concert Choir sings the National Anthem @ Visalia Rawhide Game

Tues Apr 21 – Choir Boosters Meeting 6 pm in the Music Room

Mon May 11 – End of the Year “POP” Concert 7 pm in the Chapel

**LOOK FOR THIS PAGE TO BE UPDATED DURING THE YEAR
AS NEW SITUATIONS ARISE**

YOU MAY WISH TO REMOVE THIS PAGE

Important: REMOVE THIS PAGE & RETURN this page in person (student or parent) or by email by Friday, September 12th. The return of this form is worth one hundred points to Concert Choir members as a choir Responsibility. 0-points if not turned in before the end of the trimester. 10-point deduction for each school day late after Sept. 12th. Maximum deduction: 50 pts. if turned in late.

AGREEMENT

We, the undersigned student, and parent have read, understood, and agree to abide by the requirements, policies, and expectations described in the
"St. Paul's Concert Choir Handbook 2025-2026."

STUDENT'S FULL NAME: _____
(Printed)

STUDENT Signature x _____ Date _____

Parent Name _____
(Printed)

PARENT Signature x _____ Date _____

Best Contact Phone _____

Parent's E-Mail Address(es) _____

*****WE NEED HELP!*****

_____ I would like to be a driver when needed, for off campus events.

Name Relationship to Student

Best Contact Phone Number