

**Information about Rochester Cathedral Choir for prospective choristers:**

Rochester Cathedral and King’s Rochester (the oldest choir school in the world) have recently embarked upon an exciting development in the 1400 year old history of sacred music at the Cathedral. From September 2020, a single mixed treble line with equality for boys and girls was introduced. All prospective choristers will audition to be in this new set-up, which sees boys and girls singing together in the Cathedral Choir.

Rochester Cathedral and King’s Rochester are committed to equality and co-education. All new choristers will attend King’s Preparatory School until the end of Year 8. Choristers will receive a package of financial and educational support including fee remission (30% off School Fees) and free music tuition. Means-tested bursaries at the school are also available. King’s was recently rated ‘Excellent’ in all areas in its latest ISI inspection.

The experience given to those who become Choristers is unsurpassed, both musically and as preparation for adult life. The School, of course, puts great store on academic and musical matters, but also sets out to achieve the right balance for Choristers between their work, their leisure time, and their involvement in sport. Experience shows us that Choristers usually do well with their academic studies. With the instrumental training available in the school, in addition to the choral singing in the Cathedral, choristers are well-placed to gain a Music Scholarship to Senior School at 13+, provided they have reached a high level on their orchestral instrument. Pupils should not be considered for Choristership if you intend your child to leave King’s at 11+.

Through working together in a close-knit team, the Choristers also learn, amongst other qualities, self-discipline, time-management, and support for each other, especially the younger members of the Choir. Being a Cathedral Chorister is an extremely rewarding experience with multiple benefits for your child’s education.

The usual schedule for Choristers is :

During King’s School Terms:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

07:45-08:35 Rehearsal at school

16:30-18:10 Rehearsal and/or Evensong (NB: there are no chorister duties on a Monday afternoon).

(Wednesdays and most Saturdays are also free from chorister duties. Occasionally the Choristers will be required to sing Saturday Evensong, not more than once each half-term).

Sundays:

08:50-12:00 Rehearsal and Choral Mattins / Eucharist

14:00-16:00 Rehearsal and Evensong

Choristers additionally sing in the lead-up to Christmas (including Christmas Day morning), and during Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter).

We require full attendance at all chorister events, except in the case of illness or exceptional circumstances which are agreed in advance with the school and Director of Music.

In addition to the regular round of cathedral services, choristers may occasionally have the opportunity to perform in concert, participate in choir tours, and sing on Radio or Television broadcasts.

**Auditions**

Auditions normally take place in the Spring Term of Year 3, to start in September at the beginning of school Year 4. Enquiries are welcome at any time, although formal applications are open at the start of the calendar year. Occasionally there are vacancies in other year groups, in which case we are always open to enquires from boys and girls currently in Years 4-7.

At audition (usually around 20 minutes), your child will normally be asked to do the following:

* Sing a prepared piece of your own choice (anything from a well-known carol, hymn or something they sing at school). Please bring a copy of the music for the accompanist.
* Do some vocal exercises to explore how high and low they are currently comfortable singing.
* Do some aural tests such as clapping back rhythms, singing tunes which are played to them, hearing and picking out notes when 2 or more are played together.
* Assessing how much theory knowledge they already have (names/lengths of notes etc).
* Reading a passage of written text.
* Sometimes to play 1 or more musical instruments.

It is important to stress that many of our choristers come to audition having never done any of the above skills before! We are looking for children with potential to learn and an enthusiasm for singing!

**Experience Day / Q&A Session**

In most years we hope to hold an Experience Day at the start of the Calendar Year where children can attend and experience for themselves what it is like to sing in the magnificent Cathedral. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this was not possible in 2021, but please do check the website for future events. The Acting Director of Music, Jeremy Lloyd, welcomes enquiries from prospective chorister families at any time. You can contact him on jeremy.lloyd@rochestercathedral.org