

FOR CHORISTERS
COMMENCING YEAR 3 IN
THE YEAR
2025-2026



PETERBOROUGH
CATHEDRAL

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL CHOIR

Past, Present and Future

Thank you for your interest in Peterborough Cathedral Choir. This guide gives an introduction to the Cathedral and its musical foundation, together with an outline of the Choir's weekly schedule and information about the practicalities of Choristerships. If you need further information please contact music@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk

The origins of Peterborough Cathedral can be traced back to a monastery on the site in 655AD, which was almost entirely destroyed by the Vikings in 870, and then rebuilt as a Benedictine Abbey between 960 and 970. The Abbey church then survived Hereward the Wake's attack in 1069 and remained intact until an accidental fire destroyed it in 1116. It was rebuilt in its present form between 1118 and 1238 and became the Cathedral of the new Diocese of Peterborough in 1541. It is now known as the Cathedral Church of St Peter, St Paul and St Andrew.

Singing has been part of daily worship in Peterborough Cathedral for around 900 years. As a Benedictine Abbey the building resounded to music, as generations of monks sang daily services. At the Reformation in 1541, King Henry VIII elevated the Abbey to a Cathedral, and in this same period both the Choir and The King's School were established. Today's choral foundation consists of around 50 boy and girl choristers aged 7-13, together with adult singers and choral scholars, who supply the alto, tenor and bass lines. Choristers are all educated at King's School Peterborough; successful candidates will be required to move schools and progress into year 3 and parents are responsible for making an application to the Local Authority. The King's (The Cathedral) school is a publicly funded Independent Academy and close links have been maintained since its establishment in 1541.

In addition to its main role providing choral music at eight regular services each week, the Choir frequently gives concerts, and has undertaken a number of recordings. The Choir has also made a number of television and radio broadcasts, in addition to CD recordings.



CHORISTER TRAINING

Benefits

Choristers receive a first-class musical and social education. They develop advanced skills in reading and performing music, and enjoy daily exposure to inspiring literature and architecture. The training they receive aims to develop lively, inquisitive thinking, instil a strong team and work ethic, and enables the children to develop personal qualities of leadership, self-discipline and determination from a young age.

Aside from a love of music and the satisfaction derived from gaining a high level of vocal accomplishment, choristers benefit from trips, foreign tours and many social activities. In recent years the girl choristers and Lay Clerks toured to Madrid in 2017, the boy choristers and Lay Clerks toured to Holland in 2018, the girl choristers and Lay Clerks toured to Belgium in 2019 and in February 2020 the combined choirs toured the West Coast of America. The most recent tour to Yorkshire included the Choristers singing Evensong in York Minster.

Whilst at the Cathedral, the choristers are always looked after by employed music staff and parent volunteer chaperones. All these staff are DBS checked and many are first-aid trained.



CHORISTERSHIPS

Commitments & Responsibilities

Choristers are all educated at the King's (The Cathedral) School. Upon commencement of school year 3, they must transfer to the King's School where they will remain whilst choristers, until the end of year 8. During this time, they will enjoy a specialist timetable and receive individual voice lessons, paid for by the Cathedral. Since the Cathedral and school do not select more choristers than the available places, all choristers complete their full term of service in the Choir; Choristerships are offered on the understanding that the child is committing six years of service in the Choir. The Choir depends on this commitment, first to bring the child up to the level of being able to contribute effectively (this takes three years), and then to benefit from this contribution (the last three years). The worst of all scenarios is to have invested time and money in a chorister's training for neither them nor the Choir to benefit from that investment. During their time the chorister will not be expected to reach any absolute level of achievement, but by hard work and enthusiasm they are expected to make the very best of their training and talents. The secret to their success lies in children discovering that they can achieve more than they (and indeed their parents or carers!) imagined possible.

In order to maintain the high standard required of the Cathedral choir, Chapter expects every child to attend on time all practices and services. Permission to be absent may be given in exceptional circumstances, such as a close family wedding or funeral, or for certain religious observances. Where a chorister place is awarded, singing lessons may only be taken with Cathedral singing teachers.

Please also note that:

- A chorister place at The King's School means that the Choir takes priority over all other activities in and outside school. A Choristership is an extension of the child's education, and a place at King's School is given on the understanding that chorister duties are not optional anymore than the rest of their school timetable is. Parents and children sign the Memorandum of Understanding upon commencement of the child's Choristership, so that everyone is clear about the expectations and responsibilities involved. It is good for choristers to have other hobbies during their six years in Choir, but a Choristership is not compatible with a serious commitment to any other activity.
- Clashes with school events are discussed between the Director of Music and The King's School, and avoided wherever possible. However, there will inevitably be occasions when choristers are unable to take part in an activity or event which they would like to attend because of Choir duties.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Rehearsals and Services

On weekdays, the choristers rehearse at 08.00 most mornings at The King's (The Cathedral) School. After school, choristers are brought to the Cathedral by transport which is provided by the King's (The Cathedral) School. The Choristers sing Evensong at 1730 each day of duty, according to their age.

The Choir sings on Sunday morning and afternoon, although boys and girls usually sing only one session each. As a chorister progresses through the choir, their involvement is gradually increased.

Choristers are required to sing during Christmas week, and on Christmas Eve and Day, and during Holy Week, including Easter Eve and Easter Day. ***Please note that these are statutory duty days despite falling outside term time.***

Weekly Schedule for Year 3 Probationers:

Monday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School (Junior Department)

Tuesday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School (boys only)
Choristers (Boys only) transported to the Cathedral by King's
Boys sing evensong pickup 1820

Wednesday - 0800 - Rehearsal at school

Thursday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School (girls only)
Choristers (boys only) transported to the Cathedral by King's
Girls sing evensong pickup 1820

Friday - 0800 - Rehearsal at school

Weekend commitments are variable, as detailed on the termly schedule. The regular schedule will include one of the following:

Sunday - 0830 - Rehearsal, Matins at 0915, pick-up at 0950
0955 Rehearsal, Eucharist at 1030, pick-up at 1145
1445 Rehearsal, Evensong at 1530, pick-up at 1620

WEEKLY SCHEDULE CONT.

Rehearsals and Services

Weekly Schedule for Year 4 -8 Choristers:

Monday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School

Choristers transported to the Cathedral by King's (year 5 -8 only, no year 4 duties)

Girls sing evensong pickup 1820

Boys rehearse pickup 1715

Tuesday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School (boys only)

Choristers transported to the Cathedral by King's (boys only)

Boys sing evensong pickup 1820

Wednesday - 0800 - Rehearsal at school.

Choristers transported to the Cathedral by King's

Years 6-8 sing evensong pickup 1820

Thursday - 0800 - Rehearsal at The King's School (girls only)

Choristers transported to the Cathedral by King's (girls only)

Girls sing evensong pickup 1820

Friday - 0800 - Rehearsal at school

Choristers transported to the Cathedral by King's

Boys sing evensong pickup 1820

Girls rehearse pickup 1715

Weekend commitments are variable, as detailed on the termly schedule. The regular Sunday schedule will alternate between the morning or the afternoon routine.

In addition, there are some duties in the evenings (e.g. for concerts) and on Saturdays. Choir terms broadly mirror those at the King's School, though please note that the Choir sings up to and including Christmas Day and Easter Day. Parents are warmly encouraged to attend choral services in the Cathedral, where they are always welcome. We hope that parents and families, whether or not they have a church affiliation or Christian faith, will feel welcome here and a part of the Cathedral family. Many parents form close friendships and there are activities aimed at parents, such as a summer BBQ, Dinner & Dance events, Quiz Nights, or wine-tasting evenings.



KING'S SCHOOL OPEN DAY

Thursday 6th November 2025

The King's School Peterborough Junior Department

For parents who are considering a chorister place for their child, attendance at the King's School JD Open Morning is highly recommended. The Open Morning will take place on Thursday 6th November from 0930-1100 and is for parents/carers only.

To further enquire on this matter please contact Mrs Rebecca Pasqualino, the School Registrar:

Admissions@kings.peterborough.sch.uk



AUDITIONS

For Entry in September 2026

Auditions will be held during the week beginning **Monday 10th November 2025**. During the audition, the Director of Music will work with the prospective chorister to assess vocal potential, musical aptitude and character. The audition will consist of:

- A hymn chosen by the candidate — this should be at least 8 lines of text long in total
- Aural and vocal tests
- Reading aloud

The ideal candidate can sing their chosen piece in tune, with a voice which, though not developed, is free and unrestricted; can memorise a short, simple melody; can respond positively to the teaching given during the audition; and can smile. Every effort is made to put candidates at ease during the auditions; we are keen to get the best out of them. Parents may be reticent to enter their child for an audition when they are unsure of their musical abilities. Our advice is to not second-guess your child's musical abilities, but bring them along so that we can assess their ability for ourselves!

We hope that your child will want to audition for a choristership at Peterborough Cathedral.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR AUDITION ENTRIES IS FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2025

Your audition application will be acknowledged and audition information and the date & time will be sent out nearer the audition time.

If you would like to apply for a chorister voice trial, please use the QR code below which will link you to the application form.

