



# SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL DUBLIN

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## SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL GIRLS' CHOIR

### Choristerships: *A guide for parents*

#### THE GIRLS' CHOIR

Saint Patrick's Cathedral Girls' Choir (in its current form) was founded in September 2000 with the intention of providing girls with an opportunity to benefit from the experience of singing in a Cathedral Choir, an opportunity available to boys for many centuries. Since the first service at which the girls sang in November 2000 they have taken an increasing role in the musical and liturgical life of the Cathedral. In addition to which they are often heard on RTÉ radio and regularly join forces with other Dublin choirs including performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* & Vaughan Williams' 'Hodie' with the University of Dublin Choral Society in the National Concert Hall & Trinity College and the yearly performance of Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols' alongside the boys of the Cathedral Choir and harpist Dianne Marshall in Saint Patrick's. In 2016, the Girls' Choir was split into two separate groups, a junior (Choristers) and senior choir (Schola Patricii) along with a new bursary/scholarship scheme for 40 girls studying at either the Cathedral Choir or Grammar School.

#### CHOIR TIMETABLE and COMMITMENT

The vast majority of services and rehearsals for the girls will take place during the school term, one notable exception being Easter Sunday when the girls are required to sing at the Cathedral Eucharist - one of the biggest services in the year. A termly diary is sent out to parents well in advance of the beginning of term.

NB attendance at all rehearsals/service is mandatory. Choristers are absent for only one of two reasons: because they are unwell, or because *with prior consultation* they have been given permission to be absent. For sick Choristers the routine is as follows: parents should notify the Master of Choristers and the School early on the morning when their child is unwell. Leave with the agreement of the Master of the Choristers occurs under the following limited circumstances: important family events such as weddings and funerals and visits to the dentist or doctor that cannot be fitted in at more convenient times. Please note that informing the Master of Choristers of absences is not just a courtesy, but is vital in making sure that all children are accounted for.

## WEEKLY TIMETABLE

TUESDAYS		
08.30-09.00	<b>Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i></b> The Choir School opens at 8.25am for the Choir School Choristers to drop off their belongings/homework before heading into the rehearsal.	Choir School Girls only
09.00-09.20	Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	
WEDNESDAYS		
13.00-13.45	Lunch <i>Hewson Room</i> NB Girls will need to bring a packed lunch.	All
13.45-14.45	Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	
14.45-15.45	Prep/Free Time <i>Hewson Room</i> Parents of <b>Grammar School Girls</b> may wish their daughters to be free to leave the confines of the Hewson Room during this period – in which case please tick the appropriate section of the safeguarding form. Without specific permission from you your child will have to remain in the care of the Cathedral staff along with the Choir School Choristers for the duration.	
15.45-16.00	Chorister Tea <i>Hewson Room</i> Cake, fruit and juice will be provided by the Cathedral.	
16.00-16.45	Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	
17.00-18.15	Full Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	
THURSDAYS		
08.30-09.00	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	Choir School Girls only
09.00-09.20	Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	
SUNDAYS <i>occasional</i>		
The Girls' Choir will sing occasionally on Sundays in rotation with the rest of the Cathedral Choir in which case the girls must be dropped off at the Cathedral with enough time for them to robe and be in the Choir stalls to start singing at the time advertised. Details of these services will be sent out well in advance of the term starting.		
10.15-12.30	Rehearsal & Eucharist/Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	All
2.30-4.15	Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	

## INSTRUMENTAL and VOCAL TUITION

Choristers are encouraged to learn an instrument during their time in the Cathedral Choir – to help with this free in-house tuition is available in voice, piano, guitar, flute & saxophone (24 half hour lessons PA). If parents would prefer for their child to remain with an existing instrumental/vocal tutor then bursaries of up to €500p/a are available from the Cathedral. This provision is subject to review - the Cathedral must be satisfied that satisfactory progress is being made i.e. sufficient effort is being made to practise at home.

In addition to this, Choir School Choristers also receive fortnightly group vocal tuition with a visiting singing tutor and theory tuition.

## RECORDINGS

From time to time, the Choir makes commercial CD recordings. This usually involves around three sessions of three hours, spread over a number of evenings. Making a recording is a time consuming business, and requires great reserves of patience, but the end result is always worth all the hard work.

## CONCERTS and TOURS

The Choir receives a number of invitations a year to give concerts, both in Ireland and abroad. They provide the stimulus of performing in a different environment from the Cathedral, performing to an audience rather than to a congregation, and widening the range of repertory experienced by the Choir.

## DISCIPLINE

In practice, we are very fortunate at Saint Patrick's in that the vast majority of children have a full appreciation of the necessity to abide by School and Choir rules and regulations. Individual lapses in good behaviour during Choir and Cathedral time are dealt with by the Master of Choristers, Chorister Supervisors or Dean's Vicar. In cases of continuous breaches of discipline a girl would be asked to leave the Choir, and would thus immediately lose all benefits of membership.

## PARENTS' CIRCULARS and LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Chorister Diaries are normally sent to all parents in good time. Whilst attempting to give as much information as possible, there are occasional additions and changes, and the Master of Choristers will always try to give as much notice of these as possible. The vast majority of the Cathedral's communication is done via email so please make sure we have a contact email address that is checked regularly.

## DRESS

On weekdays the Choristers are in school uniform. On those days when the school normally has sport as part of the day, girls need to remember to bring black shoes, socks/tights to wear at the Cathedral services. On Sundays, and for any occasional weekend commitments (concerts, special services) they should be in school uniform.

## THE CATHEDRAL STAFF and CLERGY

The Organist and Master of the Choristers, Stuart Nicholson, is responsible for the training of the Cathedral Choir, its musical repertoire and all its associated activities. He is the person with whom the Choristers most frequently interact.

The Precentor is the dignitary appointed by the Cathedral to oversee all aspects of the Cathedral's music and all Choir related matters. As such, he chairs meetings of the Music Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Cathedral Board.

The Dean's Vicar, Canon Charles Mullen, has considerable responsibility for the smooth running of daily liturgical matters in the Cathedral. He also serves as Chaplain to the Choir School.

*Each of these personnel is available for pastoral care and is contactable through the Cathedral Office.*

The Cathedral Administrator, Gavan Woods, supervises the financial and administrative operation of the Cathedral, and is based in the Cathedral Office.

## CONTACTS FOR PARENTS

Stuart Nicholson <i>Organist &amp; Master of Choristers</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472    Mob. 087 414 3811
	Email: <a href="mailto:organist@stpatrickscathedral.ie">organist@stpatrickscathedral.ie</a>
Canon Peter Campion <i>Precentor</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
	Email: <a href="mailto:campionpr@yahoo.co.uk">campionpr@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Canon Charles Mullen <i>Dean's Vicar</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
	Email: <a href="mailto:deans.vicar@stpatrickscathedral.ie">deans.vicar@stpatrickscathedral.ie</a>
Gavan Woods <i>Administrator</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
	Email: <a href="mailto:administrator@stpatrickscathedral.ie">administrator@stpatrickscathedral.ie</a>
The Choir School <i>Saint Patrick's Close</i>	Tel. 01 454 0588
	Email: <a href="mailto:choirsch.ias@eircom.net">choirsch.ias@eircom.net</a>
The Cathedral Office <i>The Deanery Basement</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
	Email: <a href="mailto:info@stpatrickscathedral.ie">info@stpatrickscathedral.ie</a>

## THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

This voluntary group of parents is playing a substantial role in the success of the Choir. It is a great support to the Choir, School, staff and clergy. Keen to participate, they organise fun events and as well as fund raise on behalf of the Choir School. Parents are encouraged to contribute to its membership. It also allows for fellowship amongst the parents.