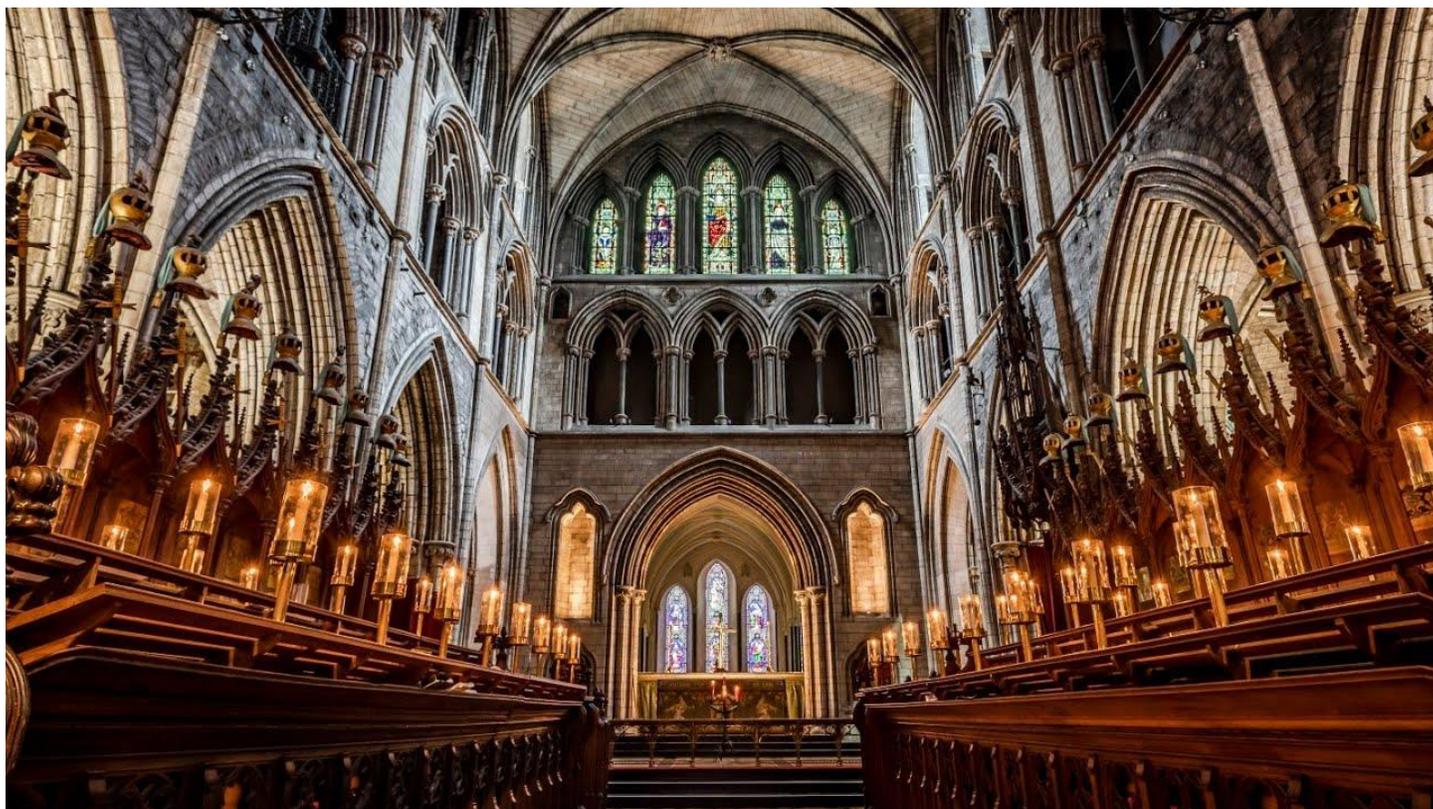




SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL DUBLIN

Girl Choristers
Parent Handbook · 2021



INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to serve as a reference for choristers and their parents. We hope you find it helpful.

THE CATHEDRAL STAFF AND CLERGY

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.

The Master of the Music, Stuart Nicholson is what is often referred to as a director of music, who 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 Organist and Assistant Master of the Music, David Leigh is also Director of Schola Patricii (the senior girls' choir).

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.

THE CHORISTERS

The Cathedral Choristers have been at the heart of Saint Patrick's since 1432. For nearly 600 years the choristers have sung daily in the Cathedral and have been educated in the Choir School – the last of its kind in Ireland and the Cathedral Grammar School. In addition to their school education, the choristers receive vocal and aural training, as well as free instrumental tuition either in-house or via generous bursaries available for private instrumental/vocal tuition.

In addition to singing for the daily services in the Cathedral, concerts, broadcasts, recordings and tours are now also part of their annual programme. Recently the Choristers have sung live on TV & Radio, performed in front of the President, appeared at venues including the National Concert Hall and released two critically acclaimed CDs.

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL TUITION

Choristers are encouraged to learn an instrument alongside their vocal studies – free instrumental tuition is offered in house on piano, guitar, flute & saxophone. If parents would prefer for their child to remain with an existing music tutor then bursaries of up to €500p/a are available from the Cathedral. These instrumental lessons that are provided are subject to an termly review. The Cathedral must be satisfied that satisfactory progress is being made – i.e. sufficient effort is being made to practise at home, remember music books & instruments. The bursaries are also subject to a termly review. The choristers also receive weekly group vocal tuition with a visiting singing tutor.

TIMETABLE

The vast majority of services and rehearsals for the girls will take place during the school term, with the occasional exception for which plenty of notice will be given..

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 the Music and School early on the morning when their child is unwell. Leave with the agreement of the Master of the Music 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 the Music of absences is not just a courtesy, but is vital in making sure that all children are accounted for.

TUESDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.00	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i> Choir School Choristers need to arrive at school at 8.25am to drop off bags/homework as necessary (earlier for Grammar School Choristers) – after which they walk through to the Hewson Room for the rehearsal ready to start singing promptly at 8.30am.	All
09.00-09.20	Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	
WEDNESDAY <i>weekly</i>		
13.00-14.00	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	All
14.00-15.00	Chorister Hot Lunches/Prep Time <i>Hewson Room</i>	
15.00-16.00	Music Theory Tuition/Prep Time <i>Hewson Room</i>	
THURSDAY <i>weekly (* currently only fortnightly)</i>		
08.30-09.00	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	All
09.00-09.20	Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	
14.30-16.00	Rehearsal/Prep Time <i>Hewson Room*</i>	Choir School Girls only
16.00-16.30	Chorister Hot Tea <i>Hewson Room*</i>	All
16.30-17.00	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room*</i>	
17.00-18.15	Rehearsal & Choral Evensong <i>Cathedral*</i>	
SUNDAY <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.		
10.15-12.15	Rehearsal & Eucharist/Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	All
2.30-4.15	Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	

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.

RECORDINGS AND BROADCASTS

From time to time, the choir makes recordings for compact disc. This usually involves around three sessions of three hours, spread over three to five days. 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.

The choir also frequently makes radio broadcasts. These are often live broadcasts, but when they are recorded they may involve extra time for re-recording. The choir has also been involved in television recordings occasionally – once again, considerable reserves of patience for this time-consuming work are needed.

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 Organist, Chorister Supervisors or Dean's Vicar. In cases of continuous breaches of discipline a boy and his parent(s) would be asked to meet with the Discipline Committee, which is chaired by the Precentor and in addition comprises the Dean's Vicar and Organist. This committee reports directly to the Music Committee and thence to the Cathedral Board and the Dean. In extreme cases, a girl would be asked to leave the choir, and would thus immediately lose all benefits of choir 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 well in advance as possible, there are inevitable additions and further changes, and the Master of the Music will always try to give as much notice of these as possible. The vast majority of communication is done via email.

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 to wear at the Cathedral services. On Sundays, and for any occasional weekend commitments (concerts, special services) they should be in school uniform, complete with black shoes.

THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

This voluntary group of concerned parents is playing a substantial role in the success of the choir. It is a great support to the choir, staff and clergy. Keen to participate, they organise fun events and as well as fund raise on behalf of the choir school. Of late are the tempting bake sales after morning service which accompanies the refreshments on offer. Parents are encouraged to contribute to its membership. It also allows for fellowship amongst the parents.

CONTACTS FOR PARENTS

Stuart Nicholson <i>Master of the Music</i>	Mob. 087 414 3811
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Canon Charles Mullen <i>Dean's Vicar</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
	Email: deans.vicar@stpatrickscathedral.ie
Gavan Woods <i>Administrator</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
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