



SAINT PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL

Dublin

CHORISTERSHIPS
at SAINT PATRICK'S
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF BOY CHORISTERS

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 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).

The Designated Liaison Person, **Clark Brydon**, has responsibility for the implementation of the Cathedral's Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy.

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

CONTACTS FOR PARENTS

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Canon Charles Mullen <i>Dean's Vicar & School Chaplain</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472
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Gavan Woods <i>Administrator</i>	Tel. 01 453 9472 (ext
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THE CHORISTERS *established 1432*

For nearly 600 years the choristers have sung daily in the Cathedral and have been educated in the Cathedral Schools. In addition to their school education, the choristers receive vocal training and music theory tuition, as well as free instrumental tuition either in-house or via generous bursaries available for private instrumental/vocal tuition.

The girls' choir was founded in 2000 and, along with the boy choristers & Lay Vicars Choral, they sing for the 12 choral services held each week in the Cathedral, as well as for concerts, broadcasts, recordings and tours.

Recently the choir has sung live on TV & Radio, performed in front of the President on numerous occasions, appeared in venues including the National Concert Hall & Gaiety Theatre as well as aboard on tours to France, Denmark, Sweden & the UK, and released 5 critically acclaimed CDs.

In 2017, a new junior girls' choir "*The Choristers*" was formed to better cater for younger girls (ie those aged 8-12), offering them training and experiences whilst their voices are still developing and preparing them to join the senior girls' choir, *Schola*, at the appropriate time.

The 2 chorister lines, i.e. boys and girls, are run differently but not because of any historical or traditional reasons, but because their voices mature at very different times. The boys are at their vocal peak in their very early teens before their voices break whereas the girls' voices don't reach that level of maturity until much later. For this reason, we have 3 separate choirs; the boys' choir (aged 8-13/14) and the girls' choir which is split between Seniors "Schola" (13-18) and Juniors "Choristers" (8-12). This way we can tailor better for each age group and help them reach their potential.

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL TUITION

All choristers are encouraged to learn an instrument during their time in the choir. Free instrumental tuition is offered in-house on piano, guitar, flute & saxophone and there are also generous bursaries for those wishing to study instruments other than these as well as those choristers who are already learning instruments privately. These instrumental lessons & bursaries are subject to a termly review to ensure that sufficient effort is being made to practise at home, remember music books & instruments, etc.

TIMETABLE

The vast majority of services and rehearsals for the choristers will take place during the school term, with the occasional exception for which plenty of notice will be given. NB full attendance is required for all rehearsals and services throughout your child's choristership, any unavoidable absences need to be discussed at the earliest possible opportunity. In the case of sickness then please inform the Master of the Music by text ASAP.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE for BOY CHORISTERS

MONDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.20	Chorister Rehearsal & Matins <i>Cathedral</i> <i>All Choristers need to arrive directly at the Cathedral (Order Gate) with their school bags etc. After Matins finishes, they are escorted back over to school to begin their lessons.</i>	All
TUESDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.20	Chorister Rehearsal & Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	All
14.30-16.00	Rehearsal/Prep <i>Hewson Room</i>	CSB only
16.15-17.00	Packed Tea & Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	All
17.00-18.10	Full Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	
WEDNESDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.20	Chorister Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i> <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.</i>	All
THURSDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.00	Chorister Rehearsal & Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	All
FRIDAY <i>weekly</i>		
08.30-09.00	Chorister Rehearsal & Matins <i>Cathedral</i>	All
14.30-16.00	Rehearsal/Theory <i>Hewson Room</i>	CSB only
16.00-17.00	Packed Tea & Rehearsal <i>Hewson Room</i>	All
16.15-18.10	Full Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	
SUNDAY <i>as per diary</i>		
10.15-12.30	Rehearsal & Eucharist/Matins <i>Cathedral</i> <i>Choristers 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. When the boys sing both morning and afternoon services, they will be supervised in-between.</i>	All
2.15-4.15	Rehearsal & Evensong <i>Cathedral</i>	

CSB = Choir School Boys

CONCERTS AND TOURS

In addition to singing for the daily services, the Cathedral Choir regularly give concert performances both at home and further afield. In recent years these have included performances of Britten's *War Requiem* with the National Symphony Orchestra at the National Concert Hall and Brahms' *Requiem* & Handel's *Messiah* with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra here in the Cathedral.

Tours are also a regular fixture for the choir and are largely paid for by the Cathedral or our hosts with additional fundraising undertaken as and when needed. Not only are they great fun, but they also do wonders for morale and confidence and help promote the Cathedral outside Dublin and Ireland. Recent tours include Sweden, Denmark and the UK.

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 behave like choristers rather than just singing like them. Individual lapses in good behaviour during choir time are dealt with by the Master of Music, Chorister Supervisors or Dean's Vicar. In cases of continuous breaches of discipline a chorister and their 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 Master of the Music. This committee reports directly to the Music Committee and thence to the Cathedral Board and the Dean. In extreme cases, a chorister would be asked to leave the choir, and would thus immediately lose all benefits of choir membership.

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, choristers 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 polishable black shoes.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTION

The Cathedral is committed to ensuring it provides a safe, caring, and supportive environment for all. We especially recognise that our work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole Cathedral community and the Dean and Chapter take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all those entrusted to the Cathedral's care.

We carefully select, supervise, and train all those with any responsibility within the Cathedral. Our staff and volunteers, who work with children and vulnerable adults, are provided with regular safeguarding training and support.

We act in an open, transparent, and accountable way.

We use policies which follow current legislation, guidance, and recognised good practice. Our policies and procedures are specifically tailored to those who participate in the events, services, or activities which we provide here.

The Cathedral's Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy can be downloaded here:

[Saint Patrick's Child Protection Policy](#)

If you have a general enquiry or any concern relating to the welfare of any member of our community at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, please contact the Designated Liaison Person.