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# Joining the Cathedral Choir

## Girl Choristers

### Information

The English choral tradition is one which has its beginnings many centuries ago. This tradition is very much alive today, sustained by the choirs of the cathedrals and collegiate chapels throughout the British Isles. It is one which is virtually unique to these islands. A girl who is fortunate enough to become a member of such a choir joins that rich heritage. The training and experience involved are without parallel, giving an opportunity to sing some of the finest and most uplifting music ever written for the human voice in some of the grandest settings.

In addition to singing services in the Cathedral, the Choir perform concerts in the local area and nationally. CD recordings and broadcasts on television and radio are also a regular feature of the choir's commitments. Every two years the girl choristers undertake a summer tour where there is a healthy balance of musical and leisure activity.

There are twenty-two girl choristers between the ages of eight and thirteen and selection for a place is made at an audition by appointment. An application for audition should be made on the form provided. Continuation of membership is contingent upon full attendance at rehearsals and services, a record of excellent behaviour and a satisfactory standard of effort. Unfortunately, Girl Choristers cannot be given permission for absence for events such as birthday parties, family gatherings, etc; and appointments (medical/dental) and other commitments should always be arranged where possible so as to not coincide with the Girl Choristers' singing commitments. A special ceremony of admission of new choristers is held on Easter Day at which new choristers from the previous September are formally admitted.

Girl Choristers may attend the Cathedral Choir School (independent co-education) or any other school within reasonable commuting distance to the cathedral, as long as full attendance at rehearsals and services is maintained. Girl Choristers who attend the Cathedral Choir School are awarded a Choral Scholarship worth 20% of the school fees (whether boarding or day pupils) and further financial support is possible in some circumstances.

Rehearsals are held during term time on Wednesdays at the Cathedral Choir School (5.00 - 6.45 pm) and on Saturdays (6.30 - 8.00pm) at the Cathedral. For those who attend the Choir School there are two supplementary rehearsals on Wednesdays (7.50 - 8.30am) and Fridays (3.55 - 4.30pm).

The normal pattern of weekend choral services is: Saturday 5.30 pm Evensong, Sunday 9.30 am Eucharist, 11.30 am Mattins and 5.30 pm Evensong. The girls usually sing Evensong on Saturday every second week and one of the Sunday services every week as well as at certain concerts, broadcasts and special services. When the girls sing evensong on Saturday there is no evening rehearsal. Also, prospective parents must bear in mind that the choir sings services outside school term time during Holy Week, Easter and Christmas.

Further information is available at:

[www.riponcathedral.org.uk](http://www.riponcathedral.org.uk) and [www.webjam.com/riponcathedralchoir](http://www.webjam.com/riponcathedralchoir)

## **Selection and Audition**

Candidates for auditions should have a strong desire to participate in this sort of activity. Ideally the successful candidate will show natural singing skill, a keen musical ear and an enthusiasm for the work which we undertake. Girls from any religious background are welcome to apply, but it is expected that all the choristers will take a full part in the services, following the normal pattern of worship in the Church of England.

In selecting the choristers, the vocal potential of each candidate will be given as much consideration as his attained singing skill, so that a candidate need not be a very good singer before applying. As much of the Audition emphasises the importance of 'a good ear', previous music aural training. Guidance and coaching can be sought from a music teacher. Each candidate should prepare a solo (a song or hymn), and should bring a spare copy of the accompaniment. During the audition the candidate will be asked:

- to sing a prepared solo
- to respond to several aural tests (*Grade 3-4 Associated Board aural test standard*)
- to read a verse from a hymn at sight.
- to have a brief discussion with the selection panel.

Auditions normally take approximately 15 minutes.

While the audition process can be rather daunting for the candidates, a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere allows those auditioning to feel at ease and perform to the best of their ability. Following the audition candidates are notified of the result within one week. For those who have expressed an interest in attending the Cathedral Choir School a choral scholarship worth 20% of the fees is available. Entrance to the school is provisional upon a satisfactory academic and social interaction assessment undertaken during a day visit to the school after the offer of a place in the Choir has been received. Acceptance and attendance at the Choir School does not affect the offer of a place in the Cathedral Girls' Choir.



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# Application Form

Girl Chorister

Personal details	
Candidate name	
Date of birth	
Parent(s) name	
Address <i>including postcode</i>	
Telephone	
Email	
Education and musical experience	
Name and address of present school	
Headteacher	
Singing experience <i>Including lessons and any exams taken.</i>	
Other musical experience <i>Including instruments played and exams taken</i>	

## Other information

Are you interested in a place at the Cathedral Choir School?

Yes       No       Unsure

If you ticked "yes" or "unsure" above, which of the following are you considering?

Day       Weekly Boarding       Full Boarding

If offered a place would you be seeking a bursary in addition to the choral scholarship?

Yes       No       Unsure

The results of the audition are usually posted within one week. Would you prefer to receive these by email?

Yes       No

In order to help us provide effective publicity and marketing please indicate below how you found out about choristerships at Ripon Cathedral.

- Journal/magazine/newspaper advert or article
- Poster
- Internet search
- Cathedral Choir School advert/pupil/publicity
- Recommendation by someone
- Other *please specify below*

Parent signature

Print name

Date

*Please return this form to:*

Andrew Bryden  
Director of Music  
Ripon Cathedral  
Ripon,  
North Yorkshire  
HG4 1QS