



November 2019

Dear Parents /Carers

Chorister Audition Day 2020 and Application Process for the York Minster Choir

As Head teacher of The Minster School I wanted to write to you with details of the Chorister Audition Day for 2020 and the application process for your child to join the York Minster Choir. I am delighted that you are considering the possibility of your child becoming a chorister at York Minster and so I wanted to give you some more information about that and hopefully to encourage you and your child to apply. I have also included a timetable for the day and some practical information to help you plan the day.

Making your application

In order to become a chorister, a child also becomes a pupil of The Minster School. Children chosen to be in our choir join the school in Year 3 and are eligible for a minimum of 60% right up to 100% of their school fees to be paid by The Minster. That continues up until the end of Year 8 when many children go on to win scholarships to independent secondary schools. If you decide to make the application for the Chorister Audition Day, I would like to extend an invitation to you to visit the school. I would be delighted to meet you, give you a tour of the school and its facilities and of course answer any questions or concerns you may have. This will help you to make an informed decision for your child if they are successful at the audition.

To apply for Chorister Audition Day 2020, please complete and return the application form accompanying this leaflet. Please put your completed form in an envelope and return it to Mrs Sarah Charters, Finance Officer, The Minster School, Deangate, York, YO1 7JA, by post or by handing it in to the school office. Please mark your envelope "**Chorister Application**".

Candidates will hear within a few days of the auditions whether or not they have been successful. Inevitably, some children will be disappointed as there are only a few places available and a large number of applications. However we hope that the day itself will be as enjoyable as possible and that every child will still feel inspired to continue singing, making music and enjoying music for life.

About the Auditions

The Chorister Auditions will take place on **Friday 24 January 2020** and are open to boys and girls who are currently in Year 2 and Year 3 of school. If they are successful they will join the York Minster Choir and will start their education at The Minster School in September 2020.

The audition day will provide opportunities for us to get to know your child, to take stock of their musical capabilities and talents and their current academic progress so that we can assess whether they have the **potential** to become a chorister. We also

hope that the day will give your child the opportunity to get to know us, meet some new children, have some fun at the school and gain some understanding of what it means to be a cathedral chorister.

The Audition tasks

For their individual singing audition, your child will be expected to sing a song, hymn, carol or other suitable song of their choosing. It would be helpful if a copy of the words and music (in the preferred key) can be provided for the accompanist, especially if the song is not standard repertoire. This part of the day will also include some simple tests of general musicianship: for example – the ability to clap back a simple rhythm; sing back as simple melody; differentiate between the higher and lower of a pair of notes played on the piano; simple tests of the flexibility and range of the voice through the singing of scales and other musical patterns.

It is really important to emphasise that what we are looking for is *potential* - not a fully formed chorister! We are looking for a voice that can be trained and developed and a child that has that special almost unquantifiable 'vital spark' and lively musical interest which seems to characterise a York Minster Chorister.

The reading, writing and maths tasks are no more rigorous than would be the case at any school at Year 2 or Year 3; we are not seeking to cherry pick geniuses. The life of a chorister is very busy for children of this age. It might be a little too much for a child who may be struggling in some respect academically so we work really hard to make sure we get the right fit.

However if your child is successful, they will become part of a close-knit community and will have an exceptional and unique experience that will stand them in good stead for their rest of their education and for later life.

If you should have any further queries please do not hesitate to telephone or email the school office. I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Mrs Angela Mitchell
Head teacher
The Minster School

Encs:

1. Timetable
2. Practical information
3. Application Form - Chorister Audition

Timetable for the York Minster Chorister Audition Day 2020

9.00-9.15am Parents to drop off children at the Minster School, Deangate, York.
They will be met on arrival by Members of staff or our older choristers

During the day the children will meet and spend time with:

Mrs Angela Mitchell, Headteacher of The Minster School
The Revd Canon Dr Vicky Johnson, Canon Precentor, York Minster
Robert Sharpe, Director of Music, York Minster
Benjamin Morris, Assistant Director of Music, York Minster
Judith Cunnold, Singing Teacher, The Minster School
Suzanne Wallace, Arts Department, The Minster School.

The children will be split into groups and will then take part in a variety of musical and learning activities. These will consist of:

- Group singing with Judith Cunnold
- Individual singing audition with Robert Sharpe, the Minster's Director of Music
- Basic reading, maths and writing tasks with Year 3 teacher from the school
- Fun art activities with a member of staff from the school's Art department.

12.15pm Lunch will be served. The children will also be given snacks and tea throughout.

3.45pm Tea for children and parents in The Chapter House of York Minster (entry via the Police Cabin in Chapter House Yard car park).

4.30pm Children invited to join in an open rehearsal in the Quire.

5.15pm Children and parents invited to attend Evensong service in the Quire (Attendance optional: we realise your child might be too tired to stay for this).

Practical information for Audition Day

Getting to The Minster School

We strongly recommend travelling to The Minster School on foot wherever possible. The area around the school and the Minster is extremely busy in the morning and again in the evening and there is no onsite parking at the School or anywhere in the Minster Precinct so if you and your child are able to walk you should.

If you have to come by car you are welcome to drive into the school car park (No.9 on the attached map), to drop your child off but you will then need to park elsewhere as parking in the school car park is not allowed. The nearest public car parks can be found at the following locations in York:

Monk Bar Car Park, St John's Street, York, YO31 7QR

Foss Bank Car Park, (Sainsburys), YO31 7PL

Union Terrace Car Park, YO31 7ES

Entry is through the Playground gates (which will be open) in front of the older part of the school. You will be guided to the Old School entrance from the playground by signs and by our older pupils.

Dress for the day

Children should come dressed in home clothes in which they feel comfortable.

Food and drink

The children will be given snacks, lunch and tea. If your child has any form of allergy or food intolerance, please indicate this at the time of application so that we can properly cater for their needs.

Open rehearsal and Evensong

These will take place in the Chapter House at the 4.30pm. Candidates are welcome to attend though it should be stressed that attendance at these events is not part of the audition process and will not affect the outcome. You may decide that after a full and busy day, your child may simply need to go home for a very well earned rest. We leave this for parents to decide.