



Chorister Parents' Handbook

Last updated January 2025

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Contents

Who's who	Meet the Team	page 3
Choristers' experience	Rehearsals	page 5
	Choir Diary	page 6
	Youth Work	page 7
	Code of Conduct	page 8
	Dress Code	page 9
	Junior Progression	page 10
	Music Theory	page 11
	Singing lessons	page 12
	Religion	page 14
Parents' involvement	Giving to the choir	page 15
	Our Chaperones	page 18
	Other ways to help	page 19
	Keeping in touch	page 20
	Other events and opportunities	page 21
Information we need	Chorister Information and Permissions	page 22
Further information	Our Policies	page 23
Glossary	Words you might find interesting!	page 25

Meet the Team

To meet more of our team visit steelcitychoristers.org.uk/team



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Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsals take place at St John the Baptist Church, 712 Penistone Rd, Owlerton, Sheffield, S6 2DF. We usually take a break from regular rehearsals during school holidays but sometimes have performances. We sing on various dates in different locations around the Sheffield area and beyond: a mixture of church services, concerts and other events, often on weekends but sometimes midweek.

A choir diary is produced in advance of each term setting out the dates of all rehearsals and performances as well as social activities. We are a small choir so attendance affects what pieces are viable to perform. We therefore ask for full attendance as far as possible and to **please let us know at the start of term if there are any dates in the diary your child is unable to make**, or as soon as possible.

Juniors rehearse on:

- Mondays 4.30-6.00pm (*Music Theory until 6.30pm is optional*)

Probationers rehearse on:

- Mondays 4.30-6.00pm (*Music Theory until 6.30pm is optional*)
- and when they are ready, on Fridays from 4.30pm until 6:30pm

Choristers rehearse on:

- Mondays 4.30-6.00pm **plus** Music Theory 6.00-6.30pm for 16 weeks a year
- Fridays 4.30-6.30pm, including 30 mins with our adult singers. (Senior choristers may sometimes be invited to sing with the Clerks until 7pm)

Teenage boys with changing voices rehearse on:

- Mondays 5.10-6.30pm for youth work, a Senior choristers' sectional and music theory (or until 6pm when there's no music theory).
- Fridays 4.30-6.30pm, including a sectional, full choir and 30 mins with the adult singers. (Older boys may sometimes be invited to sing until 7pm).

Rehearsals can be a stretch for children at first and children can take a while to settle, but they will be well supported and guided in what they are doing and we are always available to talk if you need to discuss anything. Parents are welcome to sit in on rehearsals for a few weeks while their child settles; please just make yourself known to the chaperones when you come in so they know who you are.

We provide a snack at most rehearsals because it's good to give the children an energy boost; they are welcome to bring their own drinks and snacks to eat in the break if they prefer. When the weather is fine, they can use the church garden for their breaks. Please make sure we know about any allergies or dietary needs.

Parents may park in the Owlerton stadium car park free of charge. The church has an arrangement with the stadium allowing us to park near the church.



Choir Diary

The Choir Diary sets out everything that is happening each term. It is a detailed record of all of our rehearsals and performances and will be your main point of reference to know what is happening.

The reason Steel City Choristers is able to sing at the standard of a cathedral choir is because we sing together so much. Music can be so powerful when performed at a high level and it is hugely rewarding for the children to sing with a back row of highly skilled adult singers. This is possible because of our heritage in cathedral music - several of our adult singers used to be paid to sing almost every day at the cathedral so we are very lucky to have them singing with us now pro bono. We sing for a wide variety of services and concerts each term; this means that we have a lot of music to learn as well as the opportunity to keep maintaining and raising our standards.

Attendance is therefore crucial. Cathedral choirs typically have 4-5 rehearsals and performances a week; while we only have 2 rehearsals plus performances. We realise it is a significant commitment and really appreciate parents' support in making sure children attend all our rehearsals and performances as far as possible. The Choir Diary is sent out before the start of each term and future dates are published in advance on our website. Attendance affects our repertoire planning and absences can sometimes make a performance unviable. Our choristers sing all of the rehearsal and performance dates in the Choir Diary except for Clerk-only gigs, but Juniors only sing about once a month. Their commitment gradually increases as they become Probationers.

We sing at various venues around the city and choir parents are always happy to help each other out with transport. Informal arrangements are made between parents in the Steel City Parents' WhatsApp group - please text Kate or Angela if you'd like to be added to this. (Kate: 07790 869278; Angela: 07985 925570)

When you receive the Diary please read it thoroughly, noting all the dates in your own diary - especially those outside of our regular Monday and Friday rehearsals - and **let us know at the start of term, or as soon as you can, if you know your child will be unable to make any of them** by emailing Eleanor at eleanor@steelcitychoristers.org.uk.

Planned absences are communicated by email, but if your child is unable to attend a choir rehearsal at the last minute or is running late, please call or text the chaperones on the Choir Phone on 07435 650350 (rather than texting the Parents' WhatsApp group).

Communicating absences

In advance: Email eleanor@steelcitychoristers.org.uk

On the day: Text the chaperones on the Choir Phone on 07435 650350

Youth Work

Monday sessions include 20 minutes of youth work for the choristers and 30 minutes for the Juniors. The primary purpose of this is to create an opportunity for the children to get to know each other better, and to have the chance to talk about and explore their experience of singing with the choir and understand more about the repertoire.

Not only is it really nice for the children to make friends, but also if they feel comfortable with each other and enjoy each other's company then this creates bonds which can have a tangible impact on the choir's musical performance. Choristers also have the option of helping out with the Juniors' rehearsals during this time, which also helps build relationships in the choir.

Our youth work on a Monday provides a context for children to talk about anything they see or hear in choir that they would like to question or discuss. We feel it is important that children have a voice and the opportunity to talk about why we do what we do, and to get to know each other better. We are a choir that sings in an ancient tradition of church music, but we have respect for all faiths and beliefs, with the spirit of our conversations being one of openness and curiosity with permission explicitly given to differ and express opposing views.



Some of the stories we use as a stimulus for conversation are being developed by OutoftheBox, a social enterprise co-led by Kate Caroe, our Chair of Trustees. We use OutoftheBox to help create a space for the children to raise questions and express how they feel about their experience of choir. This includes exploring stories relevant to the music we are singing such as Bible stories like the Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter and Pentecost, as well as stories around other music we might sing; examples might include for Remembrance Day, caring for the environment (e.g. because we are singing at an Eco Church celebration), scientific discoveries (e.g. if we sing at a Science Fair), ancient history (e.g. if we sing the Lamentations of Jeremiah at our Lament gig). We also may share stories that help us talk about how we are with each other, such as The Cape which looks at who gets listened to, and Feather which looks at how important it is to talk kindly. Find out more at outoftheboxstories.org

Our youth work is currently led by parent volunteers. We also often invite guest speakers, such as representatives of charities with whom we are working, or people from the Sheffield Music Hub or local churches and other organisations.

Code of Conduct

To ensure a happy and harmonious environment, all children in the choir are expected to:

1. Behave at all times in line with our organisational **CARE** values: **Community**, **Ambition**, **Resilience** and **Enjoyment**.
2. Sing to the best of your ability every time you come to choir.
3. As far as you can, ensure that you arrive at choir sessions ready to begin on time and ask your parents to let us know on the Choir Phone if you are running late.
4. Be kind and respectful to and supportive of your fellow choristers and adult choir members, including choir chaperones and the Director of Music. This includes looking out for, and taking care of new and younger choristers, and ensuring no one is left out.
5. Take good care of things around you to avoid damage to property, including music copies that we sing from, and the buildings that we sing in.
6. Put mobile phones on silent during rehearsals and not use them or other electronic devices during choir sessions, other than during breaks (unless being used as an assistive technology).
7. Always sign in when you arrive and sign out when you leave, making sure a chaperone is aware that you have arrived or are leaving.
8. Report any bullying to a choir chaperone or the Director of Music immediately.
9. Obey any public health regulations or advice that may be in place from time to time. Parents, chaperones and the Director of Music will know what these are, and will make sure that you are aware of them.
10. Never engage in:
 - Bullying – physical, verbal or written (including on digital and social media)
 - Aggressive behaviour – pushing, hitting, fighting, or verbal aggression
 - Bad language – swearing, insults, or name-calling
 - Shouting (unless in an emergency)
 - Running indoors
 - Invasion of personal space (such as uninvited touching of others).

When someone's behaviour is not in line with our Code of Conduct, we will:

- Step 1 Speak directly to the person
- Step 2 Speak to parents (when appropriate)
- Step 3 Write formally to them (or their parents) and inform Trustees
- Step 4 Meet with them (and/or their parents) to discuss whether the issue can be resolved and whether there can still be a future for them in the choir.

Dress Code

Polo Shirts



All children will be provided with polo shirts to wear for performances, which they wear with dark trousers or skirts and **black shoes**. When we sing a performance for which we will not be robing, we wear polo shirts with black trousers or skirts and black shoes. There is no dress code for regular rehearsals at St John's.

When children grow out of their polo shirt they can swap it for a larger one. If they would like to keep their polo shirt when they leave choir we ask for a £15 donation for the cost of the shirt. Extra polo shirts may be purchased for £15.

Robes



When the choir sings a church service they are usually robed. Cassocks, amices and surplices are provided by the choir and are kept at home; parents are sometimes asked to wash and iron them or sew on buttons! Children wear their cassocks over the top of the choir polo shirt, with dark trousers or skirts and **black shoes**. The amice creates a smart white collar underneath the cassock.

Juniors and Probationers wear only cassocks and amices; they receive their surplice when they progress to being Choristers.

Hoodies



Choir hoodies are an optional extra and can be purchased from the choir. We put in orders about twice a year. If you would like to order a choir hoodie please email Angela Holman at angela@steelcitychoristers.org.uk

Junior Progression

We believe any child can be taught to sing. Children who join the choir as Juniors have fun developing a strong foundation of music skills before progressing into the main choir, first as a Probationer, and then full Chorister.

Being a Chorister won't suit every child, so the time they spend as a Junior and a Probationer gives both the child and us a chance to see if singing with the Steel City Choristers is going to suit them for the long term.

The stages in progressing from a Junior to a Probationer and then on to a Chorister are as follows.

Juniors

1. Juniors start off in the choir by coming on Mondays 4.30 - 6.00pm. This is the format of their rehearsal:
 - 4.30 - 5.10pm Singing with Kate - including Kodaly singing games, sight reading and basic theory
 - 5.10 - 5.30pm Rehearsal with Eleanor
 - 5.30 - 6.00pm Youth work or music & movement, when possible outdoors

Probationers

2. Children can be ready to progress to becoming a Probationer from anywhere between after one term and two years. Signs of readiness include being able to sing reliably at the correct pitch, being able to follow direction, and a good enough level of concentration to cope with full rehearsals. When they first become a Probationer they join the main rehearsal on a Monday at 4.30pm for 40 minutes, and then continue with the Juniors again for the rest of the rehearsal.
3. After a while they start to join in all of Monday's main rehearsal.
4. They then start attending on Fridays from 4.30 - 6.00pm, during which time they will start to have some small group singing lessons.
5. When they feel ready they attend the full Friday rehearsal 4.30 - 6.30pm.

Choristers

6. When Eleanor considers that they have found their feet and are contributing well to the choir, she will have a conversation with them and their family to confirm that they would like to graduate to becoming a full Chorister.
7. They are admitted as a Chorister at one of our services when they receive their surplice and a certificate.

Music Theory

We teach music theory to our choristers on Mondays after choir rehearsals in 4 week blocks in the autumn and spring terms, but not in the summer term. This means that on weeks when theory is not on, choir will finish at 6.00pm instead of at 6.30pm.

Understanding Music Theory is really important for the children to be able to sight-sing and interpret the music intelligently and with understanding. It is also really fascinating and fun - and that is what we want to inspire the children to feel!

We make it relevant to the music we are currently singing in choir, and we do hands-on activities to make it fun and kinesthetic. As they grow to understand the technicalities behind the music we are actually singing in choir, they will come to love and appreciate the music more.

There is a high ratio of adults to children so that children can get as much support as they need. We have a fantastic team of volunteers from amongst our adult singers:

Julie Doubleday	Violin, piano & theory teacher, composer and accompanist
Matt Doubleday	Head of Music at King Edward VII School
Clare Wallace	Former Head of Music at Sheffield Girls High School
Jeremy Dawson	Trustee, Chair of Hallam Sinfonia orchestra, Extreme Cellist, former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral
Kate Caroe	Trustee, Junior choir lead, home educator
Angela Holman	Trustee, Former Deputy Head

Grade 5 Music Theory is needed for anyone wishing to take a practical music exam at Grade 6 or above. If children would like to take their Grade 5 Music Theory exam we will support them in that. Please let us know if your child is interested in this.

Singing Lessons

We are pleased to be able to offer 1:1 or small group singing lessons to all of our Choristers to help them find their confidence and develop their voice. Singing lessons really make a difference to the quality of children's voices and add to the performance of the choir as a whole.

We have two main singing teachers, one for younger children and one for those with more developed voices:

- Tim Peters is a freelance musician - a teacher, tenor, conductor and composer. He teaches with Barnsley Youth Choir and was previously a Lay Clerk at Guildford Cathedral, peripatetic Music teacher at Freeman's School and Music Director of Surrey Rainbow Choir. In 2022 he was appointed as Fellow of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. He has a degree in Music from the University of Sheffield.
- Vivien Pike is a highly experienced and internationally renowned singing teacher, who has been teaching for 56 years. She organises the David Clover Festival of Singing and has adjudicated internationally. Two of her pupils have won BBC Chorister of the Year: Ella Taylor in 2010 and Natalie Fooks in 2023.

During rehearsals the younger children dip out of the rehearsal for 20 minutes individually or in small groups for singing lessons with Tim Peters. He also gives the older children extra support with solos from time to time.

Singing lessons with Mrs Pike are offered to children who have sung with the choir as full choristers for at least a term and who are at an appropriate stage of vocal development. The choir pays for lessons of 20 minutes every two weeks during term time (up to 18 lessons a year) to each chorister. Lessons are held at her home in Ecclesall in southwest Sheffield.

Please note that lessons are arranged privately between parents/guardians and Vivien Pike, and these arrangements are not the responsibility of Steel City Choristers. If you can't make a lesson with Mrs Pike please would you let her know with at least 24 hours notice, as is standard practice for music lessons. You can email her at vpvoices@btinternet.com, or phone (0114) 235 0993.

Mrs Pike's expertise is in finessing a high level of technique, a process which requires a certain level of abstract thinking, physical development and concentration skills. She assesses children's readiness for lessons with her once they are around 10 or 11 years old. The trustees agreed to trust her judgement: children's voices and characters develop at different rates, and Mrs Pike has a wealth of experience to draw on to be able to discern their readiness for her style of teaching. She comes and visits choir rehearsals to hear the children sing in context, and parents are also welcome to arrange a consultation lesson, paid for by the choir, in their own time once their child is 10 or 11.



Some of our families may arrange their own private lessons with different, external tutors for their children and that is fine too. If you do decide to pursue that option please let us know, as we do not recommend having two singing tutors. They will work with the voice in subtle but potentially significantly different ways, which could be counter-productive.

There is no obligation or expectation, but if you can afford it and would like to help cover the costs of the singing lessons please do so through your donations as a Friend of Steel City Choristers. Singing lessons cost the choir around £20 per month per chorister.

Our bank details are:

Account name:	Steel City Choristers
Bank:	NatWest
Sort code:	52-30-50
Account number:	39338894

If you would like to explore the possibility of longer singing lessons for your child, you are welcome to speak to their teacher and make arrangements for extra or longer lessons on a private basis.

Religion

Steel City Choristers welcomes membership from people of every faith and belief and none. Steel City Choristers acknowledge the diversity of faiths and beliefs and their ability to bring people together through singing when approached with respect and a desire to build genuine understanding.

Steel City Choristers sing in a variety of different venues, communities and churches. This range provides us with opportunities to sing within communities, to see different theological perspectives and to learn about people of various different faiths and beliefs.

A large part of our work is singing liturgical music within churches. The choir leads the congregation in worship when they sing for a church service, including processing, bowing, and leading prayer responses through singing and speech. Choir members should be comfortable with and respectful of these liturgical practices, but are not required to say the Creed or take communion. We ask parents to discuss communion with their child and decide with them whether or not they will receive.





Charitable Giving to support Steel City Choristers

We don't charge membership fees to sing with Steel City Choristers because we don't want anyone to be prevented from joining us for financial reasons. However, we do encourage those parents who can afford to, to support our work through regular voluntary donations. All giving helps us inspire and train the next generation of singers and share our music with more people.

Why is Steel City Choristers worth supporting?

Because we can be proud of the work we do. Steel City Choristers is unique! We are a dynamic and vibrant child-centred all-age community that is pioneering a fresh approach to the ancient tradition of English choral music. We have fun working hard and achieving high standards together and we go out of our way to sing for churches and other communities all across the city, most of whom would not have access to choral music. Our singing is bringing joy to lots of people, and we are in huge demand with bookings up to two years ahead. As a charity we are independent and able to pursue all sorts of exciting opportunities and projects, but this means we have to do the work ourselves to raise all of our own funding.

How do children benefit from singing with Steel City Choristers?

Steel City Choristers offers children a fantastic musical education, with 200+ hours of choral training each year including rehearsals, music theory sessions, singing lessons and a diverse and exciting range of performance opportunities. Our children sing in a multi-age group with highly experienced adult singers, providing them with inspiring role models and a pathway to progress to become exceptional musicians themselves. As choristers, children imbibe musicality through an incredible education that will set them up with a love of music for life. They are supported to explore and reflect on the historical and musical context of the music that they sing, and given the opportunity to experience a wide range of church traditions and other performance venues, enlarging their worldview and life experience. Choristers also benefit from developing character-building life skills such as teamwork, discipline, responsibility and attention to detail, as well as enjoying being part of a warm and friendly community.

How is the choir funded?

Full details of the choir's income as well as our expenditure are published every year in our annual accounts on the Register of Charities on the Charity Commission website. In summary, they show that we receive 6% of our money from the communities we sing for, 15% from Friends of the choir, 24% from major donations and 42% from grant funding.

Currently therefore, everyone in the choir benefits from a huge amount of charitable grant funding that subsidises their involvement. Grant funding takes a lot of time and effort to secure, and more importantly, it is not a reliable source of income as we cannot take for granted that funders will be willing to continue funding us year after year into the future. As trustees, our responsibility is to secure a long term sustainable future for our charity. So we



are not complacent about the success we have had securing grants in our first few years, but rather see as buying us the time to grow year-on-year the amount of recurring income we receive regularly from our Friends.

How much does it cost to run Steel City Choristers?

Each year it costs between £35,000 and £40,000 to deliver our core activities (i.e. excluding projects like Reasons to Sing! and any trips and tours). The majority of our management and administration is currently undertaken by Trustees and others on a voluntary basis. So our costs mainly relate to the Musician's Union hourly fees we pay to our professional Director of Music, singing teachers and Junior lead, as well as to the cost of accompanists, our rehearsal venue, music purchase, insurance, printing, publicity and various other costs.

If we were to divide out the total cost of running the choir, it would amount to about £7 per hour per child. Given the amount of contact time we have (approximately 200 hours a year) this works out at £120 per month per child.

How much do you suggest I give?

Families are not required to give anything at all to the choir - there are no financial strings attached to singing with Steel City Choristers. But we know that many parents are in a position and are keen to support the charity financially to help sustain our work. We have in the past suggested a level of monthly giving, but we know every family is different. We know that some families are not in a position to give much money to the choir but may have time to support in other ways; other families may not have any time to give, but have more disposable income available.

So rather than suggest an amount, we ask each family to consider what they are able to afford, and to give as generously as they can to support our charitable work.

We are really grateful to everyone who supports us financially - you are part of a group of people who, behind the scenes, are quietly helping Steel City Choristers to survive and to thrive.

How do I set up or amend my giving?

However much or little you are able to give, regular monthly giving is the best way to support us because it means we can make plans on the basis of secure future income. To pledge your financial support to the charity, please visit steelcitychoristers.org.uk/friends. If you are eligible, please also use the form to sign up for Gift Aid; this makes a huge difference to the value of your donations. Once you have signed up as a Friend we will email you with a unique reference number for your giving via standing order to: Steel City Choristers, NatWest, sort code: 52-30-50, account: 39338894. You can let us know if you change how much you are giving by emailing us at friends@steelcitychoristers.org.uk.

What if I can't afford to give very much, or anything at all in fact? Are there other ways that I can support the choir?



Aside from financial support there are many other ways to help, such as chaperoning, helping with fundraising and publicity, or supporting our youth work or music theory. Please get in touch if you are able to offer any help in any of these areas. Following us on Facebook or Instagram and sharing what we post also really helps raise our profile and amplify our messages.

Please also support us by telling grandparents, friends and other family members about the amazing work we are doing to share our love of singing with our choristers and communities across the city. If every family could encourage two or three others to become a Friend and donate a proportion of their regular charitable giving to Steel City Choristers, it would make a huge difference!

In summary, please visit steelcitychoristers.org.uk/friends and fill in the form to pledge your giving and sign up for Gift Aid. We will then email you with a unique reference number for your giving via standing order to:

Account name: Steel City Choristers
Bank: NatWest
Sort code: 52-30-50
Account number: 39338894

Thank you very much!

Our Chaperones

We have a team of chaperones who look after the children in the choir and support the Director of Music. Both practically and by law, the choir cannot operate without them. They play a vital role during both rehearsals and performances:

- Signing children in and out and following up unexpected absences
- Caring for the children by welcoming them and supporting those who need help
- Fitting and caring for the cassocks

We have a rota and chaperones are on duty to the extent that they are available.

Chaperones enjoy getting to know the children, hearing the choir rehearse, and being part of the team that helps the choir run. When you are serving as a chaperone you don't need to pay for concert tickets and will always get saved seats!

We are always on the lookout for new chaperones. If you are interested please speak to Angela or Eleanor, or email angela@steelcitychoristers.org.uk or eleanor@steelcitychoristers.org.uk

The process of becoming a chaperone usually takes about two months and involves:

- Completing a confidential disclosure form
- A DBS check
- Online safeguarding training.
- Shadowing others in the role

Thank you.



Other ways to help

Recruitment

We are always on the lookout for new choristers, as well as experienced adult singers with good sight reading abilities. If you know any children aged 6 - 18 who like to sing, please do tell them about us! It is always harder for us to recruit boys, so we'd particularly love you to encourage any boys you know to join us. We'd also be very interested to hear from adult singers with good sight reading abilities; we currently have vacancies for basses.

Our website provides helpful information for anyone interested: steelcitychoristers.org.uk/join. We hold auditions in September and January each year. If you can help spread the word amongst friends or put our leaflets in a school, library, church or community centre near you that would be great.

Performances

If you know a community who would like us to come and sing for them do let us know. We sing a lot for churches, but are also very keen to find other opportunities to sing. Wherever someone can raise an audience and likes the idea of our music then we'd love to explore possibilities with them.

Sponsorship

If you know a business please recommend us to them as a charity they might consider supporting as part of their corporate social responsibility. We would love to build links with businesses that align with our CARE values:

- Community** We value, trust and empower our people
- Ambition** We aim for excellence and pursue innovation
- Resilience** We work hard, accepting and learning from our mistakes
- Enjoyment** We have fun doing what we do together

Keeping in Touch

Director of Music emails

The main way in which our Director of Music, Eleanor Jarvis, keeps in touch with parents is via email. She sends the choir diary via email before the start of each term and will email further updates and reminders as appropriate so that parents are well informed of the choir's activities. Her email is eleonor@steelcitychoristers.org.uk.

Choir parents' meetings

We ask all parents to attend choir parents' meetings once every half term, as detailed in the choir diary. These meetings are led by Eleanor and Kate; they provide an important opportunity to hear first-hand about the choir's activities and discuss any questions or issues arising so that our planning can take account of parents' needs.

WhatsApp group

We have a Steel City Parents' WhatsApp group for parents to ask questions, confirm arrangements, organise lifts and check in with each other. Trustees who are also choir parents use this group to consult people informally and ask for opinions about things. Please send a message to Kate on 07790 869278 or kate@steelcitychoristers.org.uk.

Social events

We have social events for the choir at least once a term, such as bowling, ice skating or rounders. Some of these are specifically for the children but others are aimed at whole families, so we very much hope you will be able to join us at these :-)

Newsletter

We send out a regular email newsletter to all the choir's supporters, including choir parents. You can access previous editions of the newsletter and add additional email addresses to the distribution list at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/newsletters.

Social Media

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram and share our posts when you can! Please see: facebook.com/steelchoristers and instagram.com/steelchoristers.

Website

Our website has lots of information, including our calendar of upcoming events at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/calendar that may list events ahead of the Choir Diary being ready, and our published policies steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback direct or via our Feedback Bucket, available at all choir rehearsals. Our [feedback policy](#) is published on the policies page of our website.

Other events and opportunities

From time to time, parents may want to organise or choose to get involved in things such as lift-sharing, inviting others for socials at their houses or opportunities to sing for other choirs. Parents may ask Eleanor or Kate to pass on details of such things or communicate them directly to other families using the Parents' WhatsApp group. These are not activities for which Steel City Choristers takes responsibility.

In particular, parents may find it convenient for their chorister children to share lifts to rehearsals and/or performances, including some performances that happen outside Sheffield. These are private arrangements between parents, and Steel City Choristers is not responsible for such arrangements. If a performance outside Sheffield happens and a child does not have a means of getting there, we will ensure alternative provision is made.

We will make a clear distinction between events organised by the choir and other opportunities, that parents or others may organise, that are not.

All events organised by Steel City Choristers will be:

- communicated by the Director of Music by email
- inclusive of everyone in the relevant sections in the choir (Choristers, Juniors or Clerks)
- formally risk assessed, and chaperoned in line with our safeguarding and other policies, and
- normally included in the Choir Diary, unless arrangements have to be made at shorter notice.

Information and Permissions

We need some information about you and your child, preferably before the first rehearsal your child attends. You can provide this online at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/permissions, or if you prefer, we can give you a paper form to complete.

The key information is:

- Contact information, including your name, email address, and contact telephone number(s) in case of emergency. We will use the email address you provide to send you our newsletters. You can unsubscribe at any time.
- Relevant medical information about your child (e.g. allergies)
- Permission for your child to be included in photos/videos for publicity, recordings etc. Making video recordings is a key part of the choir's activity, so if you have any concerns about this, please do speak to us
- If applicable, permission for your child to travel to and from rehearsals by themselves. We recommend this only for children of secondary school age.
- Information for the purposes of diversity monitoring

We will also ask you to confirm the following:

- My child will attend all commitments in the choir diary, unless I give advance notice by email of their absence (barring unforeseen circumstances)
- I am comfortable with my child contributing to leading worship in church services, and am happy for my child to hear and discuss Christianity for the purposes of contextualising their musical education. I will discuss Communion with my child and help them decide whether or not to receive, and will seek advice if I'm not sure about anything.
- I and my child agree to behave in accordance with the Steel City Choristers' Code of Conduct.

The information you provide will be stored and used in line with our Privacy Policy, available at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/privacy.

Policies

We have published on our website at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies, a range of different policies, including:

Safeguarding Policy

We value, trust and empower our people. This includes making sure that everyone feels safe. To achieve this, we operate at all time in line with our comprehensive safeguarding policy.

Our policy describes how Steel City Choristers seeks to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults. This commitment is shared by everyone involved, and all have a responsibility for protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm. As a registered charity, the safeguarding of everyone entrusted to our care is the responsibility of our trustees.

For any enquiries about safeguarding or to report a concern, please refer to the procedures and specific contact details within our policy. If you need to contact the safeguarding team urgently, please use one of the following phone numbers:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Angela Holman - 07985 925570

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Jeremy Dawson - 07801 868218

Gill O'Connell - 07796 898044

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour that we expect of everyone involved in Steel City Choristers. As well as some general principles that apply to everyone, there are separate sections for adult volunteers, paid workers, Clerks, Choristers and Trustees.

Feedback Policy

We value feedback because it helps us to understand and meet the needs of the people we work with and the communities we serve. We hope that people will feel able to raise any issues they have early so that they can be addressed before they cause any significant concern. This policy explains how you can provide feedback, or if necessary make a formal complaint.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Steel City Choristers is committed to celebrating equity, diversity and inclusion and eliminating inequity and unlawful discrimination and bias in all that we do.

This policy explains our commitment to EDI and its implications for the way we work. It applies to everyone involved with the choir and everyone has an individual responsibility to uphold its aims and standards.

Privacy Policy

Steel City Choristers considers the privacy and confidentiality of data as a matter of the utmost importance.

We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and all our policies are written taking account of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As a registered charity, our compliance with these regulations are regulated by the Charity Commission.

Our Privacy Notice sets out what data we collect, how we use and store it, and what your rights are.

Reserves Policy

Steel City Choristers keeps money aside as a reserve to protect against drops in income and allow us to take advantage of new opportunities.

Our Financial Reserves Policy explains in more detail why we need reserves, and how much we aim to hold in reserve and why.

Glossary

There's a whole language around cathedral-style choral music which we thought it might be fun to list. The children will pick up a lot of these words by osmosis. Don't bother with this glossary if it feels overwhelming or if you're not interested, but if you enjoy language and fancy learning some new words then this is for you! If we were ever to use a word that you don't understand and you don't get the chance to ask what it means, then you can always look it up here. Please let us know if you ever hear a new word that isn't on this list and we can add it on!

alto	a low female adult or high male adult singing voice
amice	a white cloth worn under the cassock to act as a collar
Anglican	relating to or denoting the Church of England
Anglo Catholic	a tradition within the Anglican Church which is close to Catholicism in its doctrine and worship
anthem	a musical setting of a religious text to be sung by a choir in a church service, usually as the high point of Evensong
bass	the lowest male adult singing voice
baritone	a higher bass singing voice
Cantoris (Can)	when a choir splits into two parts this side sings the lower part and usually stands on the same side of the church as the Cantor
canon	a member of the clergy who is on the staff of a cathedral
canticles	a piece of music with a biblical text, forming a regular part of a church service - usually the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis
cantor	a person who sings solo passages to which the choir responds
cassock	a full-length garment worn by people who have an office or role in a church
catholic	including a wide variety of things; all-embracing
Catholic	relating to the Roman Catholic Church
chancel	the part of a church near the altar, reserved for the clergy and choir, and typically separated from the nave by steps or a screen
Changing Voice	boys whose voices are changing from treble to an adult voice
Choral Scholar	a student who is a member of a church choir



Chorister	a member of a church choir, usually meaning children
Church of England	the Protestant church started in England by Henry VIII
Clerks	the adult singers in Steel City Choristers
Communion	sharing bread and wine in a church service commemorating the Jesus' last supper with his friends before he was crucified. Also known as The Eucharist
countertenor	a high male adult singing voice (also known as male alto)
Creed	The Creed is a summary of what the Church teaches and of what Christians together believe, rather than a statement of personal convictions
Decani (Dec)	when a choir splits into two parts this side sings the higher part and usually stands on the same side of the church as the Dean (Decani in Latin)
dep	a singer who stands in for someone in the choir, and who usually has very good sight reading skills so they can join in with minimum rehearsal
Eucharist	sharing bread and wine in a church service commemorating the Jesus' last supper with his friends before he was crucified. Also known as Communion
Evensong	a service of evening prayers, psalms, and canticles, conducted according to a set form, especially that of the Anglican Church
high church	a tradition within the Anglican Church emphasising ritual, priestly authority, sacraments, and historical continuity with Catholic Christianity
Lay Clerk	a professional adult singer who is employed to sing several services a week at a cathedral
low church	a tradition that is Protestant in outlook and gives relatively little emphasis to ritual, sacraments, and the authority of the clergy. Usually the music is led by a worship band of guitars, keyboard and drums and clergy don't wear vestments.
liturgy	a form according to which religious worship is conducted
Magnificat	The hymn of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:46–55) used as a canticle in Christian liturgy. Sometimes shortened to "Mag"
Mattins	a Christian service of morning prayer in the Anglican Church
Methodist	a member of a Christian Protestant denomination originating in the 18th-century evangelistic movement of Charles and John Wesley

nave	the central part of a church building, intended to accommodate most of the congregation
Nunc Dimittis	the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32) used as a canticle in Christian liturgy, especially at Compline and Evensong.
organ loft	a gallery in a church or concert hall for an organ
Precentor	a canon who administers the musical life of a cathedral
Probationer	a person who is serving a trial period in a position to which they are newly appointed
Protestant	any of the Western Christian Churches that are separate from the Roman Catholic Church in accordance with the principles of the Reformation
responses	short sentences sung by the minister or cantor in a church service, to which the choir sings a reply
robes	cassocks and surplices
quire	the area of a church or cathedral towards the altar that provides seating for the clergy and church choir, and for a small number of the congregation too in a cathedral
SATB	Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass
Soprano	a high female adult singing voice
surplice	a loose white vestment varying from hip-length to calf-length, worn over a cassock by clergy and choristers at church services as a symbol of their role leading worship
Tenor	a high male adult singing voice
Treble	a child's singing voice
verger	a caretaker and attendant in church who carries a rod before a member of clergy as a symbol of office
vestry	a room or building attached to a church, used as an office and for changing into ceremonial vestments