



A prospective choir member will initially join the start of normal rehearsals (usually 7.15pm-7.45pm). After a few weeks they will be asked to sing something they have learnt to demonstrate their progress and also to sing a couple of simple tests, such as singing back the same note as is played on the piano and repeating a short melody to help us to see potential and gauge enthusiasm.

Prospective choir members will initially attend just rehearsals, progressing to singing in Sunday services when agreed with the Choir Director (usually around 2-3 months after starting). A blue choir robe is then worn.

Once a prospective choir member has participated enthusiastically in rehearsals, sung well in services and completed some simple singing tests, they will be ready to be admitted to the choir and awarded their surplice (the white garment worn over the blue choir robe). This usually takes around 2-3 terms.

Leaving the Choir

Boys are welcome to remain in the Junior Choir until their voice breaks. It is usual for boys to take a break to allow their voices to settle, after which they are welcome to join the Senior Choir.

Girls are able to remain in the Junior Choir until they are ready for the more demanding Senior Choir rehearsals, usually at around age 14, the precise time of moving up to be determined in discussions with the Choir Director.

If a Junior Choir member's attendance or behaviour is poor, their parents will be consulted to see if the member is still interested in being in the choir, and how their attendance or behaviour needs to change.

Further information

For further information, contact Caroline Bushman 07734 667888.

Information about the Choir at St John's, Hook



The choir consists of two sections, the Juniors and Seniors (adults), who normally sing together to enhance worship at the 10 am Services on two Sundays of the month (2nd and 4th) and at occasional other services, notably the Christmas Carol Service.

The Junior choir members all sing the Treble line (or the tune!) and the Seniors have 20 regular members singing Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass lines. The regulars are augmented by visitors for some services, for instance at Christmas, when we can call upon another 8-12 voices.

The safety and happiness of Junior Choir members is our highest priority. The church operates a safeguarding policy and all relevant personnel undergo regular DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks.

Rehearsals

Junior Choir members are expected to attend rehearsals on Fridays for one hour between 7.15pm and 8.15pm. They rehearse on their own for the first half hour and then with the Seniors for the remainder of the time. The Seniors then continue to rehearse after 8.15pm. There are usually no rehearsals in August and one or two weeks off after Christmas and Easter, plus a few other random Fridays off. The Junior Choir are also expected to attend as many of the scheduled Sunday services as they can and also special festival services, for example the Carol Service. Dates of services are usually known well in advance.

Rehearsals are usually taken by our Choir Director, Caroline Bushman or our Parish Organist, Stephen Davies. Whoever is taking the rehearsal, at least one other choir adult member is present for safeguarding purposes.

All music and a music folder are provided by the church at no charge to choir members. Robes are also provided by the church, choir members are asked to take care of these which should include the occasional wash and iron!

The choristers also work on the Voice for Life training scheme from the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). The book for this is provided by the church. Choristers often need support from their family to complete any (simple) homework and to remember to bring the book with them!

Commitment is very important. We know that this commitment is significant for chorister and family alike, but it does make a big difference. Absences for illness and important events are inevitable, but good attendance at rehearsals and services lets the choir work as a team.

Prompt attendance for a 7.15pm start is essential and it is important to notify the Choir Director of any absences (Friday or Sunday) in advance. We have a Choir Juniors WhatsApp group which parents would be invited to join.

Sunday services

It is our standard practice for the Junior Choir members to attend the start of the 10am service, leaving after the opening hymn to attend our Junior Church, before returning and being involved with the music during communion and the final hymn. Sometimes they stay for the whole service if we are singing something special.

Junior Choir members are expected to arrive in church in time to change into their choir robes and be ready to sing by rehearsal time (often 9.40am but occasionally 9.30am), and we are grateful for the support of parents to ensure that this happens.

All choir members are expected to wear black shoes when wearing robes – school shoes are ideal. Any choir member not wearing black shoes may be asked to join the congregation for that service.

Benefits

Being part of the choir is a bigger commitment than dropping into a club or activity every couple of weeks. What the commitment means is that they can really become part of things. Through regular practice and attendance choir members gain things they won't find anywhere else. For example:

- essential life skills, such as confidence, team work, self-discipline, responsibility, and concentration
- a safe and friendly environment in which to flourish and make friends
- a first-class practical education in music
- experience of performing with choirs from other churches
- the opportunity to gain music awards from the RSCM (see <https://www.rscm.com/voiceforlife/> for more information)
- good fun and memories to carry forward into life
- the occasional opportunity to earn a small fee for singing at weddings.

Joining the Junior Choir

The opportunity to join the Junior Choir is open to any girl or boy aged 7 or above. They must be interested in singing, able to read words in books fairly fluently and keen to learn more about music and singing - but no prior experience is required. They, and their family, must understand that frequent attendance at Sunday services is expected as well as Friday rehearsals.