

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL

MAKING MUSIC • BUILDING COMMUNITY • CHANGING LIVES

CHORISTER HANDBOOK



ST PAUL'S IN ENGLEWOOD

*an Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Newark
and the Anglican Communion*

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ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL is based on our belief that all children are able to sing, given encouragement and instruction. We offer free music education and performance opportunities for girls and boys, kindergarten through high school. We are a unique after-school program that offers professional choral training, voice and piano lessons, leadership development, academic tutoring, and mentoring to children and teenagers. Our students come from Englewood and surrounding towns, representing a wide range of cultural communities, and from all faith traditions.

THE MISSION OF THE ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL:

MAKING MUSIC • BUILDING COMMUNITY • CHANGING LIVES

In our program, we seek to—

- Provide solid musical instruction in a friendly and fun environment of mutual respect and achievement;
- Create an opportunity for children to grow in musical and spiritual strengths that nurture their growth;
- Provide children of diverse abilities and backgrounds with a program of music appreciation and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's musical potential.

BECOMING A CHORISTER

- Children may join at any time;
- Families may visit us for a rehearsal or service; phone or email the Director of Music to arrange an informal audition and interview;
- No prior training or experience is expected or required;
- The program is offered at no cost to participating families who show commitment to the choir schedule;
- Children of any religious affiliation, or no affiliation, welcome;
- Perfect attendance at rehearsals and all regularly scheduled services and concerts is mandatory and expected;
- A small stipend, based on leadership and performance, is paid each chorister, emphasizing the seriousness of the commitment to the choir

FAMILY SUPPORT OF THE CHORISTER

The St Paul's Choir School program has many built-in incentives and rewards; however, parental support and encouragement is **essential!** During the course of the choir season, the chorister will experience many high points and exciting opportunities. Parents and family members can provide praise and share in the joy and satisfaction of these achievements.

Parents also need to provide the chorister with encouragement and support during those times when he or she may be tired or need a boost in maintaining a positive attitude.

The Choir School program includes a combination of short-term and long-term goals, discipline and a nurturing environment, can be a significant investment in the child's future.

Choir School families do not have to be members of St Paul's Church, nor of the Christian faith. We are open to children and youth of all faith traditions.

Parental attendance at Choir School events is optional and is strongly encouraged as choristers seem to especially blossom when parents attend services and concerts in which they sing.

As a full-scholarship program, the Choir School is dependent on volunteers. Parents are needed and invited to support by providing snacks, helping with transportation, and other such activities.

AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES AT A GLANCE

1. Students may arrive at anytime after 3 p.m. on Monday and Wednesdays. A snack will be provided, and we ask that every family take a turn providing snacks. Primary Choir rehearses from 4-5; Middle-High School from 5-6.
2. Every student must sign in and sign out. Students must turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices upon sign-in.
3. During unstructured time, students may do homework, singer's workbook, practice, play games, or read. Students must be engaged in an appropriate activity. Activities include (some weekly, some monthly):
 - a) Music Theory and Solfège Class
 - b) Yoga
 - c) Dalcroze-Eurythmics Class
 - d) Cooking
 - e) Crafting
4. All absences must be reported to a member of the staff. Phone numbers and emails are found at the back of this handbook.

MUSIC THEORY

One of the most important elements of our program is training choristers to be fluent in music theory and *solfège* (sight-singing). As affiliates of the Royal School of Church Music in America (RSCM) we use the *Voice for Life* Curriculum for all choristers. Everyone is given a Singer's Workbook for his/her appropriate level, and every singer should work at his/her own pace. Each workbook has targets; that is, tests that must be completed in order to move to the next level. Each of the levels have aural (ear training) and sight-reading tests. **Workbooks are \$10 each; any lost books must be replaced at the chorister's cost.**

VOICE FOR LIFE LEVELS

Probationer's Workbook: Given to a brand-new chorister who is working toward earning a surplice

- I. **White Level Workbook:** For a chorister who has earned the surplice.
Main targets: five simple tests centered on the elements of pitch and pulse; namely
 1. Match the pitch of a note played on the piano;
 2. Sing 5 notes that move up and down by step;
 3. Identify which of 2 notes is higher or lower in pitch;
 4. Sing back a simple one-bar melody within a 5-note range;
 5. Clap the pulse of a familiar hymn.

- II. **Light Blue Level Workbook:** Given to a chorister who has earned the white ribbon.
Main targets:
 1. Reproduce simple melodies and rhythms after hearing them;
 2. Sing a major scale after hearing its key chord and tonic;
 3. Tap the beat and identify the meter of a short extract.

- III. **Dark Blue Level Workbook:** For a chorister who has earned the light blue ribbon.
Main targets:
 1. Reproduce simple melodies and rhythms;
 2. Distinguish between major and minor chords;
 3. Identify the key of a piece of music from its two opening bars;
 4. Name and sing the starting note in their own part;
 5. Sing a specified interval above a note played by the teacher;
 6. Tap the beat and identify the time signature of a short extract.

- IV. **Red Level Workbook:** For a chorister who has earned the dark blue ribbon.
Main targets:
 1. Sing melodies in a wide variety of keys and time signatures after hearing them played;
 2. Sing a one-octave arpeggio (major and minor) ascending and descending, after hearing the key chord and tonic note;
 3. Identify and sing keys and notes in extracts of printed music;
 4. Sing any major, minor, perfect interval up and including the octave;
 5. Mark the pulse and identify the time signature of a short extract.

- V. **Yellow Level Workbook:** For a chorister who has earned the red ribbon.
Main targets:
 1. Identify notes, chords and inversions (from printed notation and heard music);
 2. Sing any interval up to an octave from a given note;

3. Sing a melodic or harmonic minor scale (singer's choice) ascending and descending, after hearing the key chord and tonic note;
4. Identify different types of cadences;
5. State the number of beats in a bar after hearing a passage of music.

Choristers may decide to take national RSCM exams: the Bronze award follows the Dark Blue Level; the Silver award follows the Red Level; and the Gold award follows the Yellow Level. These awards are given by a national examiner, often at RSCM Summer Courses or at another venue.

CHOIR PLACEMENT AND REHEARSAL TIMES

Probationers (K up to grade 4) have rehearsal and activities from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. and are dismissed at 5; Choristers (grades 5 and up) have rehearsals from 5 to 6 and are dismissed at 6.

PROMOTION

Choristers are guided and promoted through the Voice for Life program as they study. Promotion comes upon mastering specific skills and knowledge and meeting attendance and conduct requirements. Promotion results in a pay raise.

Promotion to the Light Blue through Yellow Levels require singing a solo in church.

STANDARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Choristers receive a Standards and Progress Report every pay period that evaluates how each chorister is progressing in the following areas:

1. Attendance and punctuality (Showing up **early**)
2. Communication (answering e-mails, keeping the Choir School informed)
3. Leadership and attitude (Showing courtesy to others, respect for the team)
4. Musical skills (Progress on Main Targets recorded in the workbooks)

Immediate behavior concerns will be addressed via a phone call to parents.

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL STANDARDS SYSTEM

Standards are worth:

- \$.05 each before a Chorister has earned the surplice
- \$.10 each with the earned surplice
- \$.25 each with the earned **WHITE** ribbon and badge
- \$.30 each with the earned **LIGHT BLUE** ribbon and badge
- \$.35 each with the earned **DARK BLUE** ribbon and badge
- \$.40 each with the **BRONZE AWARD** (RSCM)
- \$.45 each with the earned **RED** ribbon and badge
- \$.50 each with the **SILVER AWARD** (RSCM)
- \$.55 each with the earned **YELLOW** ribbon and badge
- \$.75 each with the **GOLD AWARD** (RSCM)
 - A prize is awarded to each student who achieves honor roll. **A certificate or note from a teacher is required;**
 - Extra standards are often offered during rehearsals for increased effort and quality work.
 - A \$2.00 bonus will be given to Choristers who have perfect attendance at all rehearsals AND services during that pay period.

RSCM Badges and Skill Cards

1. Choristers receive choir vestments and Royal School of Church Music in America ribbons and badges as they are promoted from one level of achievement to the next.
2. Progress is recorded on Main Targets in the workbooks—when the appropriate card is filled completely and the exam for a particular level is satisfactorily completed, the Chorister is promoted to the next level.

Our system reflects attendance, attitude, and the quality of participation in all St Paul's Choir School activities. A chorister may earn up to five standards at every rehearsal:

- 5** Chorister is always focused, shows leadership and a positive attitude and sets a good example for other choristers.
- 4** Chorister is mostly focused, shows leadership and a positive attitude and sets a good example for other choristers.
- 3** Chorister is focused some of the time and needs to set a better example for other choristers.
- 2** Chorister is mostly unfocused and does not set a good example for others.
- 1** Chorister is in attendance but is uncooperative, unfocused and sets a poor example for other choristers.
- 0** Chorister is absent or is unwilling to comply with rules and follow directions.
- E** Excused absence.

PRIVATE VOICE INSTRUCTION

Every chorister in the program is required to enroll in private voice instruction through our program. Lessons seek to explore each child's vocal potential and increase confidence in sight-singing. Voice and piano recitals are given by the students periodically.

PRIVATE PIANO INSTRUCTION

Piano instruction is encouraged, but not required. Students are eligible to receive free lessons after they have shown a full commitment to the choir program, generally after four to six months of choir attendance. In addition to the enjoyment one receives when playing a musical instrument, piano study also

- Increases overall musicianship;
- Enhances abstract reasoning skills that help children in academic studies, including math and science;
- Promotes healthy discipline that is transferable to other areas of interest;
- If possible, the Choir School will provide a keyboard or digital piano to families who do not have an acoustic piano or adequate keyboard in their home.

PROCEDURES

The St Paul's Choir School is a musical and educational outreach of St Paul's Episcopal Church. Choristers should always remember that they are the public face of worship and representatives of the Choir School at all times.

Communication, Attendance and Transportation

All Choristers must sign in and out with the staff. No chorister may leave the building without permission.

At no time is a child to be absent from any rehearsal or service without informing the staff. Three such unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. We are a team and we are only complete when everyone is here. **It is important not to let your teammates down! Email addresses and phone numbers of the staff may be found in this handbook.**

It is not possible for the Choir School to provide transportation for children for rehearsals and services. A number of parents help out by providing transportation from time to time, and parents are encouraged to discuss ways of helping out in this matter. The policy of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark regarding end of events is attached at the end of this handbook.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES AT ST PAUL'S ARE MANDATORY. No child may miss a Sunday service for any reason other than illness or emergency without permission from the Director of Music.

Conduct

All members of the Choir School are expected to conduct themselves in all areas of the building and at all times in a respectful, Christian manner.

Bullying and insubordinate behavior will not be tolerated, and may result in an immediate dismissal for the day. Running, rough playing, and the like are not permitted at any time. Use of cell phones is forbidden during Choir School hours.

We look for choristers to excel in courtesy, arriving on time, leadership, and respect for all.

Rehearsals and Services

During the academic year, choristers are required as a part of their training to sing for Sunday morning liturgies (once each month) and regularly scheduled community engagements. ***Attendance at all events is expected.***

Rehearsals

- No talking during rehearsal;
- For important questions, raise your hand;
- Do your absolute best at all times;
- No food or drink (water excepted, although please be careful);
- Make sure you have the correct music before rehearsal begins;
- Always have your music with you;
- Arrive **early** for the beginning of rehearsals, and services;
- Put music away after end of rehearsal;
- Strive to be a helpful team leader at all times.

Electronic Devices

No chorister is allowed to use electronic devices (including cell phones, iPods, tablets, headphones, and the like) at any time during rehearsals or services. Rehearsals and services are the work we share as an ensemble, and these devices are a distraction for the entire choir. If these items are discovered during rehearsals and services, they will be taken and may only be retrieved by a parent or guardian.

Choir Trips

Only choristers who have shown outstanding work will be invited join us for trips to sing. Every child must have a signed permission form to attend an event off-campus.

RSCM CHORISTER'S PRAYER
Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants,
who minister in Thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips,
we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts,
we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ST PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

When I am

RESPECTFUL, I:

Treat others fairly,
Listen to what other people are saying,
Am polite and courteous,
Recognize adult authority.

ABOVE ALL,

I honor others and treat them
as I want them to treat me!

When I am FAIR, I:

Take turns,
Am a good sport,
Respectfully stand up for myself and
others.

ABOVE ALL,

I treat others with equality and think
about how my actions affect other
people!

When I am RESPONSIBLE, I:

Use self-control,
Think before I act,
Follow directions; do as I am told,
Give my best effort and complete my work.

ABOVE ALL,

I take ownership of myself and my
behavior!

When I am TRUSTWORTHY, I:

Am reliable and keep my promises,
Am honest,
Am loyal.

ABOVE ALL,

I am the one others can count on
to do the right things!

When I am CARING, I:

Am kind,
Am thoughtful,
Am sensitive to people's feelings,
Am careful.

ABOVE ALL,

I love and adore others!

As a CITIZEN, I:

Clean up after myself,
Take care of the environment,
Help others and am a good neighbor.

ABOVE ALL,

I am a leader and help make the
world a better place for everyone!

Examples of DISRESPECT:

Being mean, bullying or insulting,
Interrupting, or talking over others,
Arguing, shouting, or cursing,
Being dismissive or back talking.

Examples of UNFAIR:

Being disagreeable,
Ignoring the rules,
Acting threatening or rude.

Example of IRRESPONSIBILITY:

Blaming others,
Making excuses,
Thinking only of myself,
Being shortsighted.

Examples of DISHONESTY:

Ignoring my commitments,
Lying, stealing, or cheating,
Gossiping.

Examples of UNCARING:

Ignoring or excluding others,
Being silly at inappropriate times,
Being mean or hurtful,
Disrespecting people or things.

Examples of SELFISHNESS:

Leaving a mess,
Littering and wasting resources,
Disregarding the needs of others.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION COMMISSION, EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEWARK
POLICY REGARDING END OF EVENTS SUPERVISION
(Adopted by Diocesan Council, June 8, 2011)

The Christian Formation Commission (CFC) designs diocesan youth events, retreats and activities to:

- Respect the parents and youth by beginning and ending on time.
- Assure that all chaperones are properly trained in *Safeguarding God's Children* through the Diocese of Newark
- Provide a safe and fun environment for spiritual growth and learning/formation.

An important part of engaging learning to set proper boundaries for ourselves and others. With that in mind, the CFC feels that part of our responsibility is to help people set appropriate boundaries of love and respect for time and space. This includes but is not limited to:

- Setting guidelines of respect for all spaces and locations, especially those places that have offered free space for retreats and other events.
- Setting standards of time for both drop-off and pick-up of participants at youth events, activities and retreats.

In order to live into these values of respect, the Christian Formation Commission will expect that upon completion of an event, parents, guardians or other designated responsible adults will pick up their children within a reasonable time. A reasonable time is defined as the time at which the event or meeting notice with a grace period of no more than thirty (30) minutes beyond said time. The consequences of neglecting to do this will result in a \$25 per hour babysitting fee per child starting at the time at which the event, activity or retreat was to end.

If the delay in picking up the child(ren) is in excess of two (2) hours, the youth(s) will not be able to participate in diocesan youth events for the remainder of the program year.

Any potential delay needs to be communicated immediately to the Missioner of Youth and Young Adults at the number provided in the event confirmation letter.

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The logo on the front of this handbook was designed by Michael Robinson, our first head chorister.

Tentative Schedule, 2018-19 School Year

Choir School is not in session when the Englewood Public Schools are closed
Choir School is in session every Monday and Wednesday unless otherwise noted.

September 8: Choir School Open House
September 10: No Choir School, Rosh Hashana
September 12: First Choir School
September 16: Evensong (Choir School), 5 p.m. MASP (Music at St Paul's Series)
September 19: No Choir School, Yom Kippur
September 22: Bishop's Consecration, NJPAC, Newark (Adults and older Choir School)

October 7: St Francis' Blessing of the Animals, 5 p.m.
October 14: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
October 21: Evensong 5 p.m. (Choir School) MASP

November 4: All Souls event 5 p.m. MASP (Adults and Choir School)
November 11: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
November 18: Concert, Convent of St John Baptist, Mendham
November 21-25: Thanksgiving break

December 2: Handel's Messiah 5 p.m. MASP (Adults and Choir School)
December 9: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
December 16: Clement Moore "Twas the Night Before Christmas" event, Intercession, NYC
December 24: Jazz Mass at 5 (Choir School)
December 25: Christmas break through January 1

January 2: Choir School resumes
January 6: Epiphany; Evensong 5 p.m. (Choir School) MASP
January 13: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
January 20: Visit to St Luke's, Darien
January 21: No school, Martin Luther King Day

February 10: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
February 17: Evensong, 5 p.m. MASP (Adults and Choir School)
February 18: Presidents' Day, no school

March 3: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
March 6: Ash Wednesday 7 and 10 a.m. no choir; 5 p.m. Evensong; 7 p.m. Adult Choir
March 10: Choral Evensong, Christ Church in Short Hills, 4 p.m.
March 11: No school, Superintendent's Day
March 17: Lenten Vespers with First Pres., 5 p.m. MASP (Adults and Choir School)

April 7: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
April 15: Choir School in session (Schools are closed)
April 16: Adult Choir rehearsal
April 17: Tenebrae (Choir School)
April 19: Good Friday 11 a.m. Kids' Stations; Noon, Choir School, 7 p.m. Adult Choir
April 20: Great Vigil of Easter
April 21: Easter Day

May 4: St Paul's Choir Festival (Adults and Choir School)
May 12: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
May 19: Spring Concert 5 p.m. MASP (Adults and Choir School)
May 27: Memorial Day, school closed

June 2: Last Day for Adult Choir
June 9: Choir School at St Paul's, Sunday morning
June 10: Last Day Choir School, Piano/Voice Recital