WHITGIFT

CHORISTERS AT WHITGIFT SCHOOL
INFORMATION BOOKLET



Introduction

Whitgift School is proud to nurture choristers of exceptional musical calibre for the Choir of Croydon Minster. Becoming a chorister at Whitgift offers boys far more than an outstanding education and superb facilities - it opens the door to one of the most inspiring musical and cultural traditions in the world: the Anglican choral heritage.

This is a role that stretches, challenges, and rewards in equal measure. Your son will develop an advanced level of musicianship while gaining invaluable life skills that reach far beyond the choir stalls. Discipline, teamwork, confidence, resilience, and leadership all take root here.

Choristers become part of a close-knit community where lifelong friendships are formed. They experience the thrill of singing glorious music in the awe inspiring surroundings of Croydon Minster, performing with one of the region's finest choirs. It's an environment that sparks joy, pride, and a sense of purpose.

Most importantly, the journey doesn't end when their choristership finishes. Almost all boys continue singing in some form afterwards, and many progress to top universities - some earning prestigious choral scholarships along the way. The chorister experience stays with them for life, shaping who they become both musically and personally.

Minster Choral Scholarship

Minster Choral Scholarship: 10% Off Day Fees

Whitgift provides Minster chorister scholarships for boys in years 6-8 to sing both in the Whitgift Chamber Choir and the Choir of Croydon Minster. Each Scholarship carries a remission of 10% of the school day fees and may be added to any other scholarship a boy may already hold, up to a maximum of 50% (provided that Minster commitments are not infringed upon by any other scholarship commitments).

Free Flexi-Boarding

Whitgift is able to offer free flexi-boarding on Tuesdays when the boys return from Evensong, depending on availability.

Vocal Coaching

Choristers receive vocal tuition from an expert team of coaches.

Religious Background

All boys are invited to consider a Minster choristership at Whitgift School, regardless of religious background. However, since their primary job is to lead the musical and spoken portions of the Minster's liturgies, Minster choristers must be willing to be sympathetic towards the ethos of the Minster.

Friends Of Music

The Friends of Music of Croydon Minster (FOM) provide refreshments, sheet music, robes, and training material for all Minster choristers. To support the Friends' work, parents are invited to join the FOM; the termly subscription fee is £25.00.







Weekly Timetable

The normal weekly timetable is as follows:

Monday	
8:00am - 8:50am	Chorister rehearsal (choristers go to the Song School instead of form time)
4:00pm-5:00pm	Chamber Choir rehearsal
Tuesday	
8:00am-8:50am	Chorister rehearsal
4:30pm	Rehearsal at the Minster (a minibus is provided from school)
5.30pm	Choral Evensong
6.15pm	Finish; pick-up by parents or flexi-boarding
Thursday	
8:00am-8:50am	Chorister rehearsal
Friday	
8:00am-8:50am	Chorister rehearsal
Sunday *(morning and evening services alternate each week)*	
8.45am	Arrival at Minster; robing
9.00am	Rehearsal
10.00am	Sung Eucharist
11.20am	Finish; pick-up by parents
OR	
4:15pm	Arrival at Minster; robing
4:30pm	Rehearsal
5:30pm	Choral Evensong
6:30pm	Finish; pick-up by parents

Minster Staff



Justin Miller BMus MMus
Director of Choral Music, Whitgift School
Director of Music, Croydon Minster

In addition to his role at Whitgift School, Justin Miller is Director of Music at Croydon Minster, where he oversees a wide-ranging programme of choral services, concerts, broadcasts, and partnerships. Under his direction, the Minster choir has broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3 and collaborated with leading ensembles including the London Mozart Players and the Oxford Bach Soloists.

A committed and experienced music educator, Justin previously served as Specialist Music Coach for the David Ross Education Trust, developing high-quality music provision across a national network of schools. His work prepared young singers for major projects with Nevill Holt Opera, Gabrieli Roar, and the Malcolm Arnold Festival, ensuring access to exceptional musical opportunities.

Justin has held music posts at several of the UK's leading cathedral music foundations, including Worcester, Winchester, Ripon, St Albans, and Blackburn. He studied in the United States at Westminster Choir College and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and has performed widely as an organist and pianist in the UK, Europe, and the USA.

Mr Stephen Disley
Sub Organist
Mr Disley accompanies the choirs in services and concerts at the Minster

Ms Sophie Garbisu
Vocal Coach
Ms Garbisu is the specialist vocal coach for the choristers.

Mrs Diane Edwards
Choir Matron
Mrs Edwards and her team of chaperones are responsible for the well-being of the choristers.

Commitment

All Minster choristers are expected to complete their full term of service. Scholarships are offered on the understanding that a chorister is committing to reaming in the choir until the end of Year 8, reflecting the significant training and resources invested in each chorister.

Not all boys' voices change by that time, and for those who wish to continue, their scholarship can be renewed until the end of Year 13. After their voices break, they are invited to continue as choral scholars.

This commitment is essential to the choir's success: it allows the boys to develop to the level required to contribute effectively, and it ensures the choir can benefit from their musicianship in the years that follow.

Priority Over Other Activities

To maintain the high standards of the Minster Choir, all choristers are expected to attend every practice and service punctually. Permission for absence may be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as a family wedding, funeral, or specific religious observances.

Please note:

- Being a chorister at Croydon Minster means that choir commitments generally take priority over other activities.
- Communication is key. Any clashes with school events are discussed between the Director of Choral Music and the relevant member of staff and avoided wherever possible.





Choir Term

'Choir Term' Versus 'School Term'

'Choir term' is the period during the year when the choir needs to be available. The choir is always needed for Holy Week, Easter, and Christmas, and will sing on certain other special days (to be advised). The choir term is longer than the school term and usually includes the last weekend of the half-term holidays; dates should be carefully checked before booking holidays.

Choir Diary

All singing commitments are scheduled in the choir diary which parents receive at the beginning of each academic year.

Special Events

In addition to their regular weekly timetable, Minster choristers are occasionally required to sing at special services and high profile events both at the Minster and further afield. These opportunities are an exciting and integral part of their musical experience. Engagements have included BBC broadcasts, performances at Fairfield Halls and the Royal Albert Hall, and services at Southwark Cathedral and St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. The choir has also collaborated with leading ensembles and professional musicians. Recent performances include Messiah with the Oxford Bach Soloists, Mozart's Requiem with the London Mozart Players, and Brahms' Ein deutsches Requiem, among others.

Choir Tours

As a Minster chorister, your son may have the opportunity to tour abroad. Foreign tours are an excellent way for the Minster choir to see how things are done in churches and cathedrals across the globe, and to experience singing in some of the most beautiful buildings imaginable.

What Should I Do Next?

Having read this prospectus, talk to your child about the commitment and expectations, and decide whether you would like to make an appointment with Mr Miller to have an informal discussion.

"The Whitgift Chamber Choir was superbly trained and prepared ... with commitment, vibrancy, tenderness and real understanding."

Nicholas Cleobury
Principal Conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir

Croydon Minster

WHITGIFT

Contact Details

Mr Justin Miller
Director of Choral Music

Whitgift School
Haling Park
South Croydon
CR2 6YT

Tel: 020 8688 9222
Email: jdm@whitgift.co.uk