

BISHOPS' CHORISTER AWARD

The purpose of this award is to encourage musicianship, loyalty, and a growing awareness of faith, in choristers, and to give a tangible recognition of the attainment of such a standard.

ADMINISTRATION

1. The award is open to all choristers in church or school choirs within the area covered by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood and the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford. This award is also open to choristers of other denominations in this area, and to individual church singers and cantors.
2. There is no age limit on candidates for this Award. Candidates for this Award (validated at RSCM Silver Standard) are encouraged to complete 'Voice for Life' RED level as preparation for entry.
3. The examination should take about 30 minutes for each Part, with the time allocated to each section in proportion to the marks available. Candidates will be offered a warm-up time for Part One in the examination room prior to the commencement of the examination.
4. The examination is held twice a year in late Spring and late Autumn in Brentwood and/or Chelmsford.
5. Application for entry. Careful note must be made of the following requirements: Applications must be:-
 - i. made by the choir-trainer, in the case of choir choristers, who should give assurance with respect to regular attendance, diligent work, reliability, example to other choristers, and qualities of leadership. Candidates over the age of 16yrs can enter themselves or be entered by the choir trainer.
 - ii. endorsed by the Parish Priest/Minister. With regard to Part Two (Religious Knowledge), such endorsement is still required even if the tuition of the candidate has been delegated to another person.
 - iii. Supported by a parent or bona fide guardian, for candidates under the age of 16yrs, as declared by their signature. Candidates who are over the age of 16yrs can enter themselves, or be entered by the choir trainer. However, in both cases the reference from the parish priest or minister is required.

NB: On signing the entry form candidates, their trainers and representatives are deemed to be accepting the entry conditions and the examiners' judgements.

6. The cost of entry for each candidate is indicated on the letter accompanying the application form.
7. It is now a requirement that candidates should provide their own accompanist. If there is a problem with this, the Awards Administrator should be informed as soon as possible.
8. The closing dates for entry for the examination in each year are 31st March for the Spring session and 30th September for the Autumn session. Please note these dates may be subject to variation, dependent upon the actual date of the examination fixed in a particular year. Late entries will not be accepted.
9. The completed project for the Religious Knowledge section must be submitted to the Administrator, as directed on the application form, at the time of entry. The Project will be assessed for presentation and neatness, and for the extent of its content in compliance with the syllabus, using the following minimum requirements:-
 - a. The Project must be securely and neatly bound; the candidates name and church must be on the front cover.
 - b. The Project must adhere to the syllabus requirements
 - c. The Project must be neatly arranged and legible.

This assessment will be carried out by a validated examiner, usually that one examining for the next session, and the Award Administrator Projects that meet these minimum requirements will be retained. Candidates are assured that, at examination, they will not be further questioned on presentation or neatness. However candidates will be questioned on the meaning and understanding of what they have written in the Project, as defined in Part Two section B.

The quality of presentation will, however, be commented upon in the 'General Remarks' box on the report sheet.

If the project does not meet the above minimum requirements then it will be returned to the candidate, with helpful and constructive comments, for revision. The candidate may then present at a subsequent session of examinations. An administration charge of £5 will be made and the balance of the entry fee returned.

10. An examiner's report will be prepared for each candidate, for which an A4 envelope stamped and addressed to the choir-trainer must be supplied. Examination results cannot be given over the telephone.
11. Successful candidates will be presented with their Award Certificate at the annual presentation service in either Brentwood Cathedral or Chelmsford Cathedral on a date to be notified to the candidates. Their names will be entered in the Awards' record book, which is displayed at the Award Ceremony. They will be entitled to wear the Bishops' Chorister medallion which can be purchased at the price indicated in the results letter.
12. All cheques should be made payable to 'Bishops' Chorister Award'.
13. Prospective candidates, together with those supporting their application, are encouraged to attend one or both of the Training sessions, as advertised, prior to each examination date.
14. Should there be any serious mitigating circumstances which might affect the candidate's performance at examination these must be made known to the Administrator as soon as possible before the examination in order that appropriate action if any, may be taken.