

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *When should I arrive for my audition and what should I bring?*

A: Arrive 15 minutes before your audition to check in. Bring a water bottle, if you would like to have one! We will already have received your audition application, photo and \$20 audition fee, and your music teacher should have already sent in your recommendation form, but if we don't yet have the teacher's form, you can certainly audition before we receive it.

Q: *How long will my audition last?*

A: Each audition lasts approximately 10 minutes. For part of that time you will be singing, and part of the time we'll chat and get to know each other a little bit.

Q: *Who will listen to my audition?*

A: Two of our directors will listen to you together.

Q: *What happens during the audition?*

A: Depending on your age, you may be asked to:

- Sing ascending and descending scales to determine your vocal range
- Echo-sing tonal patterns played on the piano
- Sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" first alone, and then as a round with one of the directors
- Sing the highest, middle or lowest sound when two or three notes are played on the piano
- Sight-read a brief passage of music.

Q: *What will the directors look for in my audition?*

A: They will look for:

- A pleasant singing voice, one that has the ability to unify with other voices
- The ability to sing in tune
- The ability to correctly sing the musical patterns
- The ability to identify and sing the highest, lowest, and/or the middle note in a three-note chord or a two-note interval
- The ability to hold your own part while singing a round
- The ability to stay focused and follow directions
- A pleasant and expressive face while singing

Q: *Is it necessary to be able to read music?*

A: It depends on the choir level. At the introductory choir it is not expected. For the intermediate choir, it is very helpful. It becomes important to be able to read music at the Concert-Choir level. If there is any doubt, we can discuss ways to develop the musicianship skills necessary to succeed in the choirs.

Q: *What does my parent do while I am auditioning?*

A: Your parent will wait with an audition volunteer who will explain the program and the commitment involved, and answer questions.

Q: *How will I know the result of my audition?*

A: Letters to all auditionees will be mailed mid-June.

Q: *If I am accepted, can I ask to be in the same choir with my friends?*

A: Our directors will have listened carefully to your audition and taken note of your point of musical development, and will place you in the choir in which you will be successful and have the best experience. This won't be based on your age, but on your musical abilities. If your friends are in a different choir, you will often have opportunities to sing together in concerts and retreats, and then will be able to introduce each other to the new friends you have made in your own choirs.

Q: *When and where does Princeton Girlchoir rehearse?*

A: It depends on the choir. Currently, all choirs rehearse at Princeton Day School, except for the Cantores, who rehearse at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church. The rehearsal times are as follows:

- Grace Notes: Tuesdays from 5:45-6:45
- Quarter Notes: Tuesdays from 6:15-7:30
- Semi-Tones: Tuesdays from 7:00-8:30
- Concert Choir: Mondays from 6:15-8:30
- Ensemble: in addition to their Concert Choir rehearsal, the Ensemble has a second weekly rehearsal on Wednesdays, from 6:30-8:00
- Cantores: Sundays, from 2:30-4:30, although it is likely that next year the rehearsal will be extended to 2.5 hours.

Q: *What if I have to miss rehearsal?*

A: Your parent must contact the Choir Manager to let him/her know that you are unavailable and the reason for your absence. If you are able to borrow a friend's music and copy the marks from the rehearsal you miss, it will be very helpful. If you miss more than three rehearsals in a semester, it will be up to the director's discretion whether you may participate in the following performances.

Q: *How many performances are there during the year?*

A: Again, it depends on the choir. All choirs perform two major concerts and have two Saturday retreats together each year. Grace Notes and Quarter Notes generally have another 3-4 community performances, Semi-Tones and Cantores might have 5-6, and Concert Choir as many as 7 or 8. The Ensemble has by far the most performances; in addition to their performances in the Concert Choir, Ensemble members might have six or seven performances that include the Ensemble alone.

Q: *What happens if a concert is scheduled during the year and I am unavailable to sing in it?*

A: Princeton Girlchoir makes every attempt to set its concert schedule by the beginning of September and to give its families ample notice of performances planned. During each year, however, several opportunities arise for the choristers to make music and to enjoy some extraordinary experiences, some of which our directors have had no way to anticipate. Participation in all performances is expected; if you have an irreconcilable conflict, you will need to discuss it in advance with your director.

Q: *What is the cost for tuition?*

A: The tuition varies by choir. At present the tuition levels for 2011-12 have not yet been established, but we anticipate that they will all fall between \$775 and \$975.

Q: *Are there any scholarships, and how do I apply?*

A: The Board of Directors is committed to fostering a chorister's participation in the choir unhampered by financial constraints. The Princeton Girlchoir is proud of its history of supporting requests for financial assistance through a need-based scholarship program.

We encourage families in need of assistance to contact the office for more information. Scholarship applications will be made available at the time that contracts are issued. All assistance requests are kept strictly confidential and are reviewed on a blind basis by the Scholarship Committee.

Q: What do the girls in Princeton Girlchoir wear for their performances?

A: For each choir there is a uniform dress for performances, which you will be asked to purchase at the beginning of the year. Usually there are gently-used dresses available for purchase from choristers who have moved up into another choir, or which have been donated back to PGC and can be purchased at a discounted rate to benefit the choirs. Choristers in the Grace Notes, Quarter Notes and Semi-Tones are also asked to wear opaque black tights and low-heeled black character shoes. Concert Choir, Ensemble and Cantores wear black stockings and mid-heel character shoes. Retailers and group discount information will be provided during the summer.

All new choristers are given their first Princeton Girlchoir t-shirt, which is required for certain informal occasions.

Helpful Hints for an Audition

1. Be on time! Arrive at least 15 minutes before your appointment to allow time to find the audition area and not be rushed. Be sure to get a good night's sleep the night beforehand.
2. Good posture will help breath control, and keeping the knees relaxed will help you relax.
3. Remembering to breathe deeply, relax your jaw and open your mouth are techniques that will enhance your vocal production.
4. Relax and have a good time! We're singers too, and we know how nervous you feel. It'll be okay.