

National Choir Competition

Competition Rules 2026

Section 2: The Grand Final, Birmingham Symphony Hall 3rd March 2026

- If your choir is chosen, you agree that your choir will attend the Grand Final. There will be a total of 30 schools in the final.
- The Junior Final will commence during the morning with an approximate arrival time on site of 10.30am.
- The Senior Final will commence during the late afternoon with an approximate arrival time on site of 4.30pm.
- Each choir will be required to sing two contrasting pieces of their own choice. These can be different to their initial entry submission.
- We would encourage choirs to consider choosing a variety of pieces from any genre which are contrasting in style to fully demonstrate the range and skills of their choir.
- At least five photocopies of the music for the adjudicators must be provided on the day and these will be torn up after use. Photocopies are acceptable provided the choir has purchased and have the original copies.
- Each choir will perform their pieces on stage before the panel of judges and a live audience.
- Both pieces will be judged technically on intonation, tone quality, diction, ensemble, balance, blend, dynamics and phrasing.
- In addition, the choirs will be judged on their creativity, interpretation of music and text, delivery and connection with the audience.
- Choirs must provide their own accompanist in the final, if they wish to use the piano provided.
- Prizes will be awarded as follows in both Junior and Senior Competition:

Grand Prize for Musical Excellence - The overall winner, this prize honours the choir with the highest level of musical excellence and performance across both pieces. The winning choir will exhibit superior vocal technique, ensemble unity, interpretative depth and overall professionalism.

Judges Distinction Award - The choir that delivers an outstanding performance, showing exceptional technical ability, expressive musicality and a strong connection with the audience. This award recognises choirs that captivate both judges and listeners through their performance presence and skill.

Creative Interpretation Award - The choir that demonstrates the most original and imaginative approach to their chosen repertoire. Judges will look for unique arrangements, inventive staging and artistic risk-taking that brings fresh perspective to the music.

Runners up prizes will be awarded in each category

- The winning choirs awarded the Grand Prize for Musical Excellence in the Junior and Senior competition will be invited to attend Barnardo's Young Supporters' Concert at the Royal Albert Hall in November 2026.
- We would appreciate your support in our fundraising by encouraging families/friends of the choir to attend and buy tickets for the competition. All tickets sold means more funding goes directly to children supported by Barnardos.
- The judges' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the results.
- No correspondence will be entered into on comments or rules and regulations by either judges or organisers.
- Choirs will be provided with feedback from the judges post event.
- By entering the competition, participating choirs agree to be bound by the rules and regulations of the competition.