

Birmingham Boys Choir — Summer Camp – What to Expect

Parent FAQ

1) What is Summer Camp?

Summer Camp is our multi-day music intensive that helps set the tone for the entire year. It's where we do a huge amount of musical progress in a short, focused window — essentially “a semester's worth of work” concentrated into camp.

2) Why is Summer Camp so important?

Summer Camp matters for three big reasons:

Musically: Camp gives half a year's worth of rehearsal time, thus accelerating learning in a way that weekly rehearsals simply cannot.

Vocally: Camp helps each boy get established in the right voice part and makes the semester smoother because we can build healthy habits and confidence quickly.

Relationally (often the biggest reason): Our rehearsals during the year are fast-paced and focused. There's not much time during rehearsal nights for social connection. Camp is where friendships form, boys learn to trust one another, and the “choir brotherhood” becomes real, especially through rec time and shared meals together.

3) What happens if my son misses camp?

Boys who miss camp usually start the year behind and need significant make-up work to catch up. It *can* be done, but it is much better (musically and relationally) when a boy is able to attend camp.

If your boy DOES miss camp, prioritizing the Summer Camp Prep Videos will help your chorister feel more confident in his ability to catch up in the Fall.

4) What do the boys do all day? (Is it really choir all day?)

Yes — camp days are full, structured, and intentionally designed.

During camp we include:

- Full rehearsals
- Sectional rehearsals (separate voice-part rehearsals)
- Recreation time

- Snack breaks
- Meals together
- Rest / quiet time (screenless)

Parents sometimes see the hours and think, “How could choir take that long?” But the truth is: we are building skills and relationships that support the entire year, and we structure the day so the work is sustainable and balanced.

5) How much singing is there each day?

Camp is often described as roughly six hours of singing spread across the day.

6) Is BBC camp a day camp or overnight?

This can vary depending on the year and facility options.

We prefer overnight camp, as it multiplies the benefits both musically and relationally. But some years we must settle for a day camp due to venue availability.

7) What does a typical day look like?

A day camp schedule draft includes:

- Staff arrival and setup
 - Check-in and music games
 - Warm-up
 - Sectionals
 - Snack break
 - Full rehearsal
 - Lunch
 - Quiet/rest time (If a day camp, SA’s only. If overnight camp, full choir.)
 - Recreation time and snack
 - Dinner
 - Evening rehearsal and dismissal
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8) When is parent attendance needed?

- Briefly at registration on the opening day of camp
- Open Rehearsal and Parent Meeting on the last day of camp

9) What should my son bring?

You'll receive a final packing list — but here are common expectations:

Bring:

- Water bottle (non-metal is encouraged because metal bottles can be surprisingly loud)
- Books or writing materials for rest time
- Hygiene items (toothbrush/toothpaste, deodorant, towels, etc.)
- Play clothes and pajamas (and swim gear if swimming is part of the week)
- Any medications (see medication section below)
- A good attitude and readiness to work hard and encourage others

If camp is overnight, bedding is not provided and families should send pillow/sheets/blanket or sleeping bag.

10) Concert Black: When is it needed?

Concert Black may be required on the last day of camp for all choristers in order to capture a full group photo:

- Keep Concert Black on a hanger in a suit bag or dry-cleaning bag if possible
 - Include a black undershirt, black dress shoes, and long black socks
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11) What should NOT be brought?

Please do not send:

- Cash (they won't need any)
 - Snacks (unless medically required due to allergies)
 - Electronic devices (including phones/smart watches)
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12) Phones and electronics policy

There are **no electronic devices** at camp, including phones and smart watches. Devices may be collected and returned at the end of camp. This is a working camp. Work time, as well as rest time and play time, are best protected without the presence of any electronic device.

If a parent wants a phone available, it may be checked in at registration (in a labeled baggie) for emergency use only. Proctors will have phones for camp administrative purposes and emergency communication needs.

13) What if my child needs medication while at camp?

- All medications (prescription and over-the-counter) are turned in at check-in to the camp medical professional
 - Medications should be clearly labeled (boy's name + instructions + emergency phone)
 - Parents must pick up medications at the end of camp
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14) Emergency contact during camp

- Staff and Volunteer contact info will be included in each year's final information.
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15) Roommates

If camp is overnight, boys will give roommate preferences during June voice checks.

16) Will there be practice music and videos for camp prep and voice checks?

Yes — there is a lot of music to learn in order to prepare for the full upcoming concert season. Practice music/video and instructions for accessing and using them will be given at voice checks.

17) Cost, payment, and scholarships

- Final cost will be announced each year via the weekly memo
 - Camp Scholarships are limited and require requesting an application from the Finance and Operations Director
 - Scholarship applications and documentation have a May deadline and are not automatically renewed
 - Payment will be handled through autopay systems once invoiced
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18) Who do I contact with questions?

- **Music/Camp program questions:** Music Director (Mr. Berg) – ken@bhamboyschoir.org
 - **Payments/scholarships:** Finance & Operations Director (Mr. Megginson) – joel@bhamboyschoir.org
 - **Emergency during camp:** TBA in final camp information
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19) Final encouragement (why we ask families to prioritize this)

Summer Camp is one of the most important pieces of the year because it sets the musical foundation and builds the relationships that make the BBC feel like a brotherhood. Boys rehearse hard — but they also eat together, rest together, and grow together.