

Chetham's Summer School 2026

Frequently Asked Questions



If you don't see an answer to your question below, please email summerschool@chethams.com

What is Chetham's Summer School?

The Summer School is a week-long event that delivers four different music courses:

- Orchestral Course
- Piano Course
- Singing and Performance Course
- Jazz and Improvisation Course

Depending on your main or preferred instrument, you can apply to any of these four courses. You will study one main instrument throughout the week (for example, violin as part of the Orchestral Course) and then perform in a concert programme at the end of the week, showcasing the music you have learnt throughout the course.

What are the course dates for 2026?

The course dates are Monday 3 August to Sunday 9 August 2026.

Is this course for me?

We would love to hear from you if you are:

- Aged between 11-17 years old (14-17 years old for the Singing and Performance Course)
- Play an orchestral or jazz instrument, the piano or sing
- Play at ABRSM Grade 4 level or above

What does a typical day on the Summer School look like?

The daily schedule well structured. A typical day may be:

7.45am	Breakfast
9.00am	Physical warm-up for all
9.30am	Full orchestra rehearsal Piano 1-2-1 lesson Vocal health session Jazz sectionals
11.00am	Break
11.30am	Orchestra sectionals Piano jazz class Vocal 1-2-1 lesson Jazz 1-2-1 lesson
12:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm	Choral session for all
2:30pm	Orchestra ensemble group Piano duet class Vocal coaching Jazz duet class
4.30pm	Break
5:00pm	Social activities for all
6.30pm	Dinner
7.30pm	Full orchestra rehearsal Piano masterclass Vocal ensembles Jazz jam session
9.00pm	Wind-down time with hot chocolate for all

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What happens when we are not rehearsing or performing?

Chetham's is a great place to meet some of the best friends you will ever make. There is plenty of time throughout the week for socialising in the afternoon and evening. Group activities include rounders, cookie-decorating, a ceilidh, a tour of Chetham's Library, dance and movement workshops, Samba workshops, a paper plane competition, dodgeball and much more!

Can I still apply if I haven't sat any music exams?

Yes! The ABRSM Grade 4 is a guideline only. We don't need to see any certificates, but we do need you to give us an idea of your playing standard by telling us the pieces you are working on, and any ensemble experience you may have. It's totally fine if you don't have any ensemble experience – that's what we're here to provide!

Can we play music other than the set pieces of music?

Yes! At Chetham's, you are surrounded by like-minded musicians who are as passionate about music as you. Throughout the week, you can practice your solo pieces or group up with your friends and play any music you like. There's even a chance to showcase what you've been working on at the Cabaret! Last year, the horn section performed an arrangement of 'Hogwarts March', which was much enjoyed by everyone!

Can I apply to play more than one instrument?

No. We ask each student to choose one main instrument to study for the week. This is because we will need to tailor each course and make sure each group has enough for each class.

When will I find out about my application?

We will let you know the results of your application within four weeks. At that point, we will send you another form to finalise personal information and then the payment links to confirm your place.

What music do I need to prepare before the course begins?

Orchestral students will be sent their music about six weeks in advance. This will form the repertoire you'll perform as part of the final concert programme.

Piano students are asked to bring four pieces they're currently working on for their 1-2-1 lessons. Please choose pieces that are at different stages of readiness, for example:

- One piece that you've just started to learn
- One piece that you're currently working on
- One piece that you're ready to perform
- One piece that you've performed previously

We'll ask you to let us know which pieces you're bringing closer to the start of the course. As well as your 1-2-1 lessons, you'll also have duet lessons with another student. We'll send you your duet music about six weeks in advance.

Singing and performance students are asked to bring four pieces they're currently working on for their 1-2-1 lessons. We're happy for you to explore a variety of styles, but please ensure that:

- Three pieces are with piano accompaniment
- One piece is unaccompanied
- At least two of your four pieces are from the classical genre

We'll ask you to let us know which pieces you're bringing closer to the start of the course.

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Jazz and Improvisation students will be provided with details on what you need to prepare closer to the start of the course.

All students are expected to have looked at their own music and parts, and to have a basic understanding of what their music involves. We don't expect any student to be note-perfect, and we don't want you to worry if you're finding a specific section difficult. It's likely that you're not alone in finding specific sections difficult and all of our tutors are on hand to advise and help throughout the week. If you have any questions regarding your music, please get in touch with us and we'll be more than happy to help.

When will we be expected to arrive at the start of the course?

The course starts on Monday 3 August 2026. We will allocate specific timeslots in the afternoon for when you can arrive. This is to help with registration queues so you can settle into your boarding houses comfortably.

When will we be expected to leave at the end of the course?

The course ends on Sunday 9 August 2026. There will be concerts on the final day to showcase the fabulous music all the students have been working on. The timings of these concerts are currently being finalised.

What is the Closing Date for applications?

The closing date for all applications is Sunday 28 June 2026 at 11.59pm. However, if you play an instrument that is less common, e.g. oboe, bassoon, etc., then please get in touch after this date as we may still have spaces available.

Is there financial support available?

We can provide a select number of fully funded spaces for students whose families are in receipt of Universal Credit (or equivalent if not moved over to Universal Credit) or free school meals. If you are not in receipt of Universal Credit or free school meals but would still like information regarding financial support, please see our list of External Bursaries and Grants that you can apply for.

If you have any further questions, please do get in touch with us at:
summerschool@chethams.com

Best wishes,

Mimi Palmer-Johnston

Summer School & Development Coordinator

Chetham's School of Music | Chetham's Library | Stoller Hall

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