

WORCESTERSHIRE CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL RULES 2026

Reviewed and applicable from: 1ST September 2025

GENERAL

1. Entries open on 1st September 2025 and must be submitted electronically via the PlayandPerform platform by 23:45 on 19th December 2025. Verbal or paper entries will not be accepted.
2. The person making the entries should ensure that each entrant is aware of all the rules and has read the Safeguarding Policy and the Privacy documents.
3. No entry can be accepted unless accompanied by the correct fee. Fees can be paid via credit or debit card or by BACS transfer at the point of making the entry via PlayandPerform. Cheque payment may be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Please email admin@wcaf.org.uk to discuss.
4. Where relevant, adjudicators copies, manuscripts of original work, videos and backing tracks and must be submitted electronically by 23:45 on 16th January 2026. Late submissions may not be accepted and entry fees may be forfeited if submissions are not received by the deadline.
5. Entries may be withdrawn at any point, but fees are non-refundable. Competitors withdrawing from classes are asked to let us know as early as possible: admin@wcaf.org.uk
6. The Committee reserves the right to:
 - i. Offer and withdraw discounts or free entry offers;
 - ii. Change any class to a virtual class, meaning that video submissions will be required by the advertised deadline;
 - iii. Cancel any class and return the fee;
 - iv. Divide and/or combine some classes;
 - v. Change the order of individual performers in a class and if necessary, the class itself; and
 - vi. Make any changes necessary to the festival to accommodate current government guidance on infection control
7. The Competitor's age on 1st September 2025 shall be regarded as his/her age for the purposes of the competitions. (This corresponds with the academic year 1st September - 31st August.) Therefore, age groups usually equate to the following school year groups:

8 years and under - School year 4 and below
10 years and under - School year 6 and below
12 years and under - School year 8 and below
14 years and under - School year 10 and below
16 years and under - School year 12 and below

If you have any queries regarding this (for example, if a child is in a different school year than would be expected) please contact us: admin@wcaf.org.uk to discuss.

8. Open categories can be entered by anyone of any age. Entrants to Open Adult categories should be aged 18 or over. For ensembles, if the majority of members are aged 18 or over, this may be acceptable. Please email: admin@wcaf.org.uk to discuss if necessary.
9. Competitors may enter only ONE age or standard class plus the OPEN CLASS in each SECTION. Performances on two DIFFERENT instruments may be entered in the same class/section. Individuals may take part in more than one group or ensemble in the same section.
10. A different piece must be played or performed for each entry in the same section. Pieces performed in any section may be performed again in the special classes.
11. It is the performer's responsibility to ensure that they have the correct equipment and music to enable them to perform. Due to difficulties experienced in other recent festivals, our festival advises against the sole use of digital devices as a digital score.
12. Competitors who overrun time limits or perform in the incorrect genre will receive adjudicator's comments only and will not be placed. The adjudicator's decision is final and in no circumstances will any subsequent discussion or correspondence be entered into.
13. No eating or drinking is allowed in the performance rooms (except at the Marr's Bar), but water bottles are permitted.
14. Individuals should bring their own music stands with them. Bands and orchestras requiring music stands please contact admin@wcaf.org.uk AT LEAST one week before the festival.
15. Recording and photography of Classes is NOT allowed during performances and adjudications. We may have an official photographer who will take photographs during festival days, which may subsequently be used by the Press or on the Festival website. Where parents, guardians or carers do not wish photos to be taken at all, then the responsible adult attending should ensure that a committee member is aware so that their child/pupil/vulnerable adult is not included in official authorised photos.
16. One of the following categories will be awarded to each performance: Developing, Progressing, Merit, Commended, Honours, Outstanding, Exceptional. In all cases the Adjudicator's decision will be final. The Adjudicator will announce the winner of each class. In classes of 5 or more, a 2nd place will also be awarded. In classes of 10 or more, a 3rd place will also be awarded.
17. Copies of the Adjudicator's remarks should be collected from the steward at the close of each Class. Certificates should be collected from the certificate area in the foyer. There may be a slight delay, as certificates are prepared as quickly as possible following the end of the class.
18. Trophy winners are required to sign a form on receipt of their trophy.

19. The timetable will be available in advance on the WCAF website: www.wcaf.org.uk It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure they are in the correct place at the right time. A map and signage will be available at the venue.

MUSIC CLASSES

20. In classes where the time limit is 5 minutes or less, ONE PIECE is to be performed. Where the time limit is 6 minutes or more, ONE or TWO pieces may be performed unless otherwise stated. Timings should include breaks between pieces. The competitor should give an introduction (no longer than 30 seconds) including the title of the piece to be performed.
21. A copy of own choice pieces must be provided for the Adjudicator in the same key as the performance. For Rock and Pop and Jazz classes, a formal score might not always be appropriate, but a chord tab or crib sheet **MUST** be provided instead, clearly indicating the title and composer. Unauthorised copying of music is an infringement of copyright. If the music is out of print, permission to copy **MUST** be obtained in writing from the publishers and a copy of their letter or email attached to the music. The Music Publishers' Association has issued a code of practice making the concession that own choice pieces may be copied from volumes only and for the use of the Adjudicator only. The copying of music for the accompanist is forbidden. Photocopies for the Adjudicator must be totally legible. With the exception of the above concession, no other photocopying of music is permitted. If music is downloaded from the internet, the performer should also print off and submit the permission statement that accompanies the music. The adjudicators' photocopies will not be returned.
22. There is no official festival accompanist. Where necessary, competitors should bring their own accompanist (and page turner where necessary). Pre-recorded backing tracks are only acceptable where stated in the syllabus.
23. Where specifically stated in the syllabus, high quality backing tracks may be used, providing that they are balanced and do not detract from the overall performance. Where backing tracks are used, they must be uploaded by 16th January 2026. The backing track should not include the same vocal line or instrument that is being performed. Performers are responsible for ensuring that the uploaded version is correct. No solo instrument or voice is permitted as part of any backing track and the part being played or sung by the entrant should not be duplicated as part of the backing track.

MUSICAL THEATRE, POETRY, PROSE AND DRAMA CLASSES

24. The Festival has an agreement with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society. This means that entrants do not have to seek copyright permission for any poetry, prose or SOLO dramatic item performed, to a time limit of 15 minutes. Authors will be directly reimbursed as a consequence of their works being performed at this Festival. Duologues and group dramatic activity are **NOT** covered by this agreement and copyright for these items should be sought by performers at the time of entry.

25. The title and author of all own choice pieces must be handed to the adjudicator's steward before the class starts. A copy of own choice pieces must be provided for the Adjudicator at the beginning of the Class.
26. For poetry, prose and drama classes, competitors are reminded that due to Performing Rights, no costume or scenery may be used but movement and basic props are allowed. The following props are acceptable - practice skirts, practice trousers, scarves, shawls, headwear, gloves, fans and other hand-held small items. Competitors in these classes are allowed to provide their own prompts. Competitors should NOT wear stage makeup.
27. For musical theatre classes, competitors are reminded that due to Performing Rights, only a suggestion of costume or makeup may be used. Scenery and basic props are permitted if they can be carried on and off the stage by the performer themselves.
28. Unacceptable Language Thresholds. Some works performed often explore adult themes, and contain strong language. However, care should be taken when choosing or devising contemporary pieces. We ask that you present your work in a manner that respects the 'family' orientated nature of the festival and avoids the unnecessary exposure of younger children to inappropriate themes and language. Therefore, all entrants to the speech, drama and musical theatre sections are now asked to confirm whether their performance contains adult language or content upon entry. If you indicate you have potentially contentious language or themes, a representative from WCAF will be in contact to discuss and a copy of the piece as you intend to perform it must be sent prior to the festival. Four letter words (e.g. f***) must be replaced by milder expletives, and such expletives should be used only sparingly. The festival aims to celebrate the best and highest forms of literature and language, and therefore reserves the right to refuse entries that are made up of continuously bad language and/or gratuitous expletives.

ADMISSION

29. The Festival is run by volunteers but, in order to hire the venue and pay professional adjudicators, a charge for admission has to be made. Members of the public will be admitted to spectate at the festival at a charge of:

Adults	£7.50
Children (under 18)	Free
30. Tickets are valid for the whole day. There are no half-day tickets. SCHOOLS ARE REQUESTED TO INFORM ANY PARENTS LIKELY TO ATTEND THAT THERE WILL BE A CHARGE FOR ADMISSION. Competitors, teachers, conductors and accompanists are admitted free of charge.
31. Programmes covering all days of the Festival will be available priced £5.
32. Spectator tickets and programmes will be available in advance via the WCAF website and on the door on the days of the festival. Please bring your proof of purchase to reception on the day of the festival to receive your entry stickers.

33. Car parking and disabled access is limited at some venues. Please contact admin@wcaf.org.uk well in advance so that arrangements can be made for disabled access if necessary.
34. For all policies, including Safeguarding, please visit: www.wcaf.org.uk