

# Parents' Handbook

Boarding 2019/20

Westminster Cathedral Choir School

# PARENTS' HANDBOOK (BOARDING) 2019/20

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# CONTACTS

## THE BOARDING HOUSE STAFF

### Head of Boarding

Mr Nicholas Morrell 020 3051 5381 nmorrell@choirschool.com

### Deputy Head of Boarding

Mr Ivor Simpson isimpson@choirschool.com

### Boarding House Tutors

Mr Matthew Wright mwright@choirschool.com  
Mr Jonathan Jenkins jjenkins@choirschool.com  
Mr Ivo MacGreevy imacgreevy@choirschool.com

### Matrons

Miss Zusanna Klaus 0207 798 9070 zklaus@choirschool.com  
Mrs Kerrian Philips 0207 798 9070 kphilips@choirschool.com

### Junior House Masters

Jackson Phillips jphillips@choirschool.com  
Patrick Johnston pjohnston@choirschool.com

### Designated Senior Lead (DSL) for Child Protection

Mr Edward Graham egraham@choirschool.com

## THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

### Master of Music

Mr Martin Baker 020 7798 9057 martinbaker@rcdow.org.uk

### Assistant Master of Music

Mr Peter Stevens 020 7798 9057 peterstevens@rcdow.org.uk

### Music Administrator

Miss Madeline Smith 020 7798 9057 madelinesmith@rcdow.org.uk

## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

### **School Secretary**

Mrs Rachel Bonnet

020 7798 9081

abonnet@choirschool.com

## **FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

### **Bursar**

Mrs Joanna Stephens

020 7798 9394

jstephens@choirschool.com

## **MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE**

### **Head Master**

Mr Neil McLaughlan

020 7931 6099

office@choirschool.com

### **Designated Governor for Safeguarding**

Mr Mike Pittendreigh

020 7931 6099

office@choirschool.com

# STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES

## Our aims

- To be inspired by our Catholic faith to value the dignity of every child in our care.
- To create an atmosphere where boarders are happy and able to fully develop their talents in a boarding community.
- To value the individuality of each pupil, unfettered by preconceived notions or stereotypes.
- To promote friendship, trust and shared Christian values.
- To actively promote the British values of 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and to ensure that there is no place for unjust discrimination at the School.
- To develop the whole person through a balanced and varied education (i.e. academic work, music, sport, clubs and free time).
- To ensure that pupils are free from teasing, bullying, intimidation and abuse. When pupils do encounter difficulties, we work to enable them to feel they can talk to someone who is sympathetic, respectful and trained to handle their problems effectively according to clear safeguarding procedures.
- To provide ways and means for boarders and their parents to express their views; for example through consultations, through frequent email and face-to-face contact, through the consultative house assemblies, squad groups and the suggestions box.
- To provide high-quality boarding accommodation that is clean, well-maintained and free from safety hazards, so that boarders may be safe whilst at WCCS.
- To enable boarders to grow in knowledge and respect of the wider world outside the school and cathedral. To this end boarders are helped by their experiences as choristers at Westminster Cathedral, by reading newspapers and current affairs magazines, through evening assembly discussions and through the PSHCE programme *Alive to the World*.

## Compliance with regulations

WCCS is obliged to comply with the [National Minimum Standards](#) (April 2015) for boarding schools and the Children Act (2004).

WCCS was inspected by ISI in November 2018; the report is available on the School's website.

# BOARDING AT WCCS

## **Pastoral Care**

The Head Master is ultimately responsible for the overall care and welfare of all boarders. On a daily basis, boarders are under the immediate care of the Head of Boarding and his team. Boarding staff have a weekly meeting to discuss the boarders' welfare. A weekly meeting between the Head Master, Deputy Head/Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Boarding, Master and Deputy Master of Music is also held to discuss chorister welfare, and coordinated the chorister diary. This creates an integrated approach to the boys' welfare and musical commitments. The Chair of Governors also appoints two governors with oversight of the boarders' welfare.

Parents receive a weekly email from the Head of Boarding, sent on Friday evenings, with news about the week ahead, including a daily schedule and visiting arrangements.

There is always a House Master, Matron/First Aider and Junior Housemaster on duty during the day, two of whom, including a First Aider, sleep over in the boarding house. Boarders are made aware of whom to contact if they need assistance during the night.

Should boys or parents have any concerns, they should not hesitate to contact a member of staff. If the concern is pastoral, then parents should contact Nicholas Morrell, Head of Boarding, and thereafter Edward Graham, Deputy Head (Pastoral); if the issue is academic, then parents should contact the Form Tutor and thereafter the Director of Studies, Mr Jonathan Jenkins. It is helpful if email correspondence concerning choristers is copied to the Head of Boarding.

If a boarder is experiencing any difficulty he is encouraged to contact his parents first of all, or to speak to the Head of Boarding or another member of the boarding staff. He may also wish to speak to someone more independent, such as the school counsellor. The School has also appointed an Independent Listener, the Head Teacher of St Vincent de Paul Primary School, which is next door to WCCS. All these contacts are listed on the 'If Something Worries You' poster in the phone booth: please see Appendix 3. Please also refer to the School's anti-bullying policy, on the School [website](#).

## **Rewards and sanctions**

The School operates two systems of rewards and sanctions: a 'school day' system and a 'boarding and chorister time' system. 'Gold stars' are awarded to choristers for particularly good behaviour, and 'black marks' for poor behaviour. The School seeks to reward exceptional choristership and conduct in the Song School and Cathedral but also has a system in place to address persistently poor musicianship. See Appendix 4.

## **Corporal punishment**

Corporal punishment is illegal and no form of corporal punishment will be used by the School. However, the School reserves the right to use such physical contact that may be lawful, appropriate, and proper for teaching, and to provide comfort to a boy in distress, or to maintain safety and good order. The School adheres to the [guidance](#) issued by the Department for Education.

# PROBATIONERS ...

Boys are on probation for their first year both as choristers and as boys in the School. Any decision about a boy's suitability as a chorister or boy is made jointly by the Master of Music, Head of Boarding and the Head Master.

Probationers are usually inducted into the choir at a special ceremony during Sunday Vespers towards the beginning of their second year, given adequate progress.

Probationers will be musically assessed at the end of each term of Year 4 to ascertain their suitability for induction to the full choir. No decision to end a boy's career at WCCS is taken lightly, and not before discussion has taken place between the Music Department, the School and parents.

Once a boy has started at WCCS, any invitation to sing at a public event (or even family wedding) must be referred to the Master of Music.

## **Induction programme for probationers**

New boarders start in Year 4 as probationer choristers (known as 'probs'). During the first year, probationers have a separate and less demanding weekly schedule than the choristers, which gradually increases in stages over the course of the year. From the Trinity term probationers take turns to spend a week following the full chorister routine. Throughout Year 4 probationers enjoy the same holidays as day boys at Christmas & Easter.

On their arrival, probationers are given a mentor from among the Year 8 choristers. They are also provided with written information about boarding life. Probationers, like all year groups, become members of a house 'squad', who meet every week with all the boarding staff on Wednesdays at 5.05 pm.

As part of the selection process, probationers will already have experienced a taste of the boarding life by attending a two-night 'sleep-over'. On these sleepovers the boys will have already got a feel for the boarding and musical routine at WCCS.

At the beginning of the year probationers receive plenty of support from boarding staff who provide regular updates by telephone in the first fortnight of the Michaelmas term.

## **Music**

Probationer choristers are generally trained by the Assistant Master of Music and the Organ Scholar. All choristers learn the piano and an orchestral instrument in addition to professional singing and theory lessons.

## ... AND CHORISTERS

There are many facets to chorister life at WCCS. Here is some useful information.

### **Daily Routine**

All boarders follow a strict daily routine (Appendix 2), designed to create as much time around their busy musical schedule as possible. Those boys who get the most out of the boarding experience make sure that they are highly punctual and effective with their time. They learn to maximise their free time by completing everyday personal tasks, such as changing, brushing teeth, or moving from place to place, quickly, quietly and efficiently.

### **Birthdays**

If parents wish to visit their son at School on his birthday, they should contact the Head of Boarding in advance to make arrangements. (This may not always be possible due to choral duties.)

### **Prep**

Boarders complete one prep on weekday afternoons and four preps over the weekend. Boarders will always be fully supervised during prep and staff will be sympathetic with a boy who missed a lesson or is stuck. However, as a rule they are expected to work largely independently and to give their best effort, even if this means that the work is not perfect.

Boys are encouraged to see prep as part of the learning process, and mistakes are useful for teachers to see, as they show where the weaknesses lie. If you have any concern with academic work, please contact your son's form teacher.

### **Jewellery**

Boys are not permitted to wear any item of jewellery, except for a simple watch, with any alarm sounds switched off.

### **Games and recreation**

As a School we encourage team games, board games, reading and other creative tasks. Whenever possible, we try to enable the boys to spend recreation time outside in the playground or a nearby park.

Boys are not permitted to bring in their own consoles or iPads, with the sole exception of tours that involve significant journey times. Such items are entirely the responsibility of the boy concerned. Electronic devices should be locked in the staff room safe whilst at School. (E-readers are permitted, but must have only appropriate books downloaded, remain in the dormitory and be securely locked.)

### **Pocket money**

Boarders rarely need pocket money. £10 per half-term, deposited with the Head of Boarding in £1 or £2 coins on the first day of each half-term in a named envelope, will usually suffice. Boarders must hand any change in to the Head of Boarding to be added to his account and locked in the safe. Please do *not* give money directly to your son.



## **Tuck – please read carefully**

Boarders bring their own ‘tuck’ into School. The system is as follows.

### *What and when to bring tuck*

- Tuck is brought to school at the *beginning of each half of term*, to last them until the next holiday (i.e. twelve items of tuck per half term) – please do not bring in tuck at other times during the term.
- Tuck is in the form of individual *tubes or bars*, for ease of distribution, not big bags of mixed sweets, crisps or drinks.
- Tuck must be handed in to the Head of Boarding to be stored in his named tuck box; secret supplies of tuck will be confiscated and tuck privileges withdrawn.

### *When boys get tuck*

- Boys receive tuck on Sunday afternoons after Vespers.

## **Hair**

Choristers are constantly in the public eye. Choir dress requires that hair should be short and discreet in style and needs to be cut **at least once**, and often twice, per half term. Boys are not permitted to dye their hair or use hair gel or other styling products. Haircuts should be arranged during visiting or in the holidays. The Head Master reserves the right to require a boarder to have a haircut.

## **Toys and personal belongings**

Boarders should bring with them some books, games, and of course a cuddly toy (a maximum of three)! Every boy has a lockable area in his dormitory to keep personal items.

Parents should exercise common sense when allowing their son to bring toys into school. Toys should not be excessively big (e.g. large construction games) or inappropriate for boarding house use (e.g. remote control cars/ helicopters).

## **Television**

Boys look forward to the film club every Sunday evening and there are opportunities to watch television when there is live sport on. The boys will only be permitted to see films which are classified as appropriate to their age group and should not bring unsuitable films into School. Only boys in Year 8 will be allowed to watch 12-rated films (and only then at the discretion of the House Master).

# YOUR FAMILY AND WCCS

There are many ways for families to keep in touch with their sons during term time and to get involved with the Choir School and Cathedral communities.

## Contacting your son

### Telephone

Boarders are able to phone home on request. Calls can be made between 7.30 pm and 8.20 pm, when silent reading begins.

Boarders in Year 4 and 5 have designated phone nights on Tuesdays and Thursdays; boarders in Year 6, 7 and 8 on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Boys are not permitted to bring personal mobile phones to School.

### Email and post

All boys have a School email account, and are given the opportunity to email home on alternate nights.

Boys in Year 4 and 5 may email on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Boys in Year 6, 7 & 8 may email on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Boys must use their school email address (made up of first initial and surname; John Smith would be [jsmith@choirschool.com](mailto:jsmith@choirschool.com)).

We strongly encourage boarders to write one letter or email home per week. Boarding staff will arrange for letters to be posted out, and also for deliveries to boarders to be delivered promptly. Paper can be provided but we suggest boarders bring notepaper, envelopes and stamps with them.

## Contacting the School

If you need to contact the boarding house please try the Head of Boarding, in the first instance, leaving a short message if there is no answer: **0203 051 5381**

If your need is urgent, please try the first aid mobile:

### First aid mobile

Tel            07961 579 840

## Watching School matches

If your son is playing in a team you are most welcome to come along and support on the touchline.

## Term dates and calendar

Term dates are published well in advance on [www.choirschool.com](http://www.choirschool.com), and in the diary sent to parents at the beginning of every term. Inevitably, there are alterations, but these are kept to a minimum.

Chorister welfare weeks – where commitments beyond the normal schedule for the boys should be avoided where possible – have been agreed between the School and Cathedral Music Department. There are four chorister welfare weeks every year: the weeks before the Michaelmas and Trinity exams, the week before the Year 8 mocks, and the week before Common Entrance.

Probationers follow academic term dates. Choristers stay in residence until Christmas Day and Easter Day, leaving after Solemn Mass at 12.00 pm.

### **Travel**

The School is inside the congestion zone and Parking Attendants in the City of Westminster are particularly zealous. Unfortunately, the School has no parking facilities for parents, though parking is free on Sundays along Ambrosden Avenue.

# COLLECTION & DROP OFF

Parents collect and drop off their sons either at the Forte gate or the school playground, except for the beginning and end of term when parents are welcome to come up to the boarding house. All visitors must be supervised by school staff during their visit to the boarding house.

## **Boarders' collection and drop-off times:**

Friday collection: 3.40 pm or 5.00 pm

Sunday drop off: 9.00 am (Boys go straight to the refectory)

Boarding staff are not able to grant absences on an ad hoc basis, even if the request does not directly infringe on chorister duties. Any request for absence outside those instances specified must be addressed in writing to the Head Master.

Chorister parents do not normally visit their sons during the week, except for birthdays, major cathedral events or choir concerts, in which case they are welcome to drop into the Choir School to mingle with other families for a short time. The school's policy is that parents should not visit after routine daily services, out of consideration for other boarders and the need for a smooth-running schedule.

Boarders will enjoy an organised activity on Sunday afternoons after Vespers.

The Head of Boarding and Matron are available every Friday afternoon to provide informal feedback to parents and discuss any matters of concern.

# HEALTH

Kerrian Philips and Zusanna Klaus (hereafter referred to collectively as 'Matron') are responsible for the general health of the boarders. If your son is ill during term time, Matron or another member of staff will contact you by telephone.

## **Matron**

For specific enquiries about the GP, administration of medication or anything relating to vocal health (ENT), contact Zusanna:

[zklaus@choirschool.com](mailto:zklaus@choirschool.com)                      **0207 798 9070**

For household enquiries about clothes, toiletries, packing or anything relating to your son's hygiene and diet, contact Kerrian:

[kphillips@choirschool.com](mailto:kphillips@choirschool.com)                      **0207 798 9070**

You will always be informed of an accident involving your son that requires treatment or any visit(s) he makes to health professionals, including the treatment prescribed and administered.

## **Medical care and welfare**

On arrival at the School, boys are registered with the Victoria Medical Centre and become temporary patients at home. The School doctors are Dr A. Thakore and Dr J. Thaxter.

c/o Victoria Medical Centre  
29 Upper Tachbrook Street  
London  
SW1V 1SN

The School requests that parents accompany their son to Doctor's appointments. In emergency visits to Accident and Emergency, Matron or a member of the boarding staff will accompany the boy and acts on his behalf. The boys are all minors, and therefore are never left on their own.

On arrival please bring your son's medical card.

If a boarder has a pre-existing medical condition which requires regular medication, the School needs a letter from his GP in order to administer the medication.

The Matron/First Aider on duty administers and records any medicines or treatments that may be prescribed by a doctor or other medical professional.

A daily diary is kept, recording any treatments and/or other incidents requiring medical attention. The Head of Boarding and Head Master may monitor the diary to keep track of medical issues. Any problems concerning individual boarders are discussed with the Head of Boarding as they arise, and also at the weekly House staff meeting. When Matron is off duty, treatments are dispensed and recorded by a member of staff trained in First Aid.

### **Absence due to illness**

If your son is unwell, we appreciate regular updates regarding his health. If you wish to ring matron about his health then parents are welcome to do so. Boys should only return to school once they have been symptom-free for *at least* 24 hours. If a doctor has said that a boy may still be contagious, he must not return to school.

### **Policy for giving proprietary and non-prescription medicines**

Parents must sign a consent form indicating that they give their permission for the School to administer non-prescription medicines such as simple linctus or paracetamol.

An up-to-date summary of the parents' consent or otherwise is listed in individual medical files. This will be referred to before any medication is given.

### **Medications**

The School requests that, in the case of all over-the-counter medications, the following information is supplied in a doctors' note to Matron:

- the medication
- the reason for medication
- method of administration
- dosage
- any other relevant information

Some boys may be able to manage their own skin creams and asthma inhalers (with parental permission) but Matron checks that these treatments are regularly and correctly carried out.

### **Vitamins**

Vitamin supplements are not recommended<sup>1</sup>. All meals are cooked on-site by three professional chefs who are responsible for providing nutritious menus. If you feel that your son requires a vitamin supplement, the School requests that the information is supplied in a note to Matron. We can only administer vitamin supplements once a day at breakfast unless a doctors' note is supplied to indicate a different dosage for medical reasons.

### **Check-ups**

Optician: we recommend that boys have their eyes tested every two years, with appointments attended in School holidays.

Dentist: we recommend six monthly check-ups, with appointments attended in School holidays.

If your son needs a dental appliance, such as a brace, please contact the school to discuss its potential impact upon your son's voice.

### **Hair**

Beside the requirements of public performances, short haircuts help to check for, and prevent, the spread of head lice. Parents are asked to check for head lice regularly, and at least during holidays. Three of the best brands for treating head lice are NYDA, Full Marks and Hedrin.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/1122.aspx?categoryid=51>

**Fingernails**

Boys should have had their finger and toe nails cut before returning to School from holidays as long fingernails can get in the way of playing musical instruments. It is possible to keep on top of this over the weekend. Matron can advise you in the case of ingrown toenails, which must be dealt with urgently.

**Verrucas**

The School requests that parents check regularly for verrucas (planter warts). We recommend bazuka or liquid nitrogen as the best over-the-counter treatments. Verrucas should be fully treated during the summer holidays, in consultation with a chiropodist if necessary.

**Athlete's foot**

The School requests that parents check regularly for athlete's foot; we require that boys wear flip flops in the shower as a precaution.

**Threadworms**

Threadworms are common in children, especially if they have domestic pets. Please ensure that your son is free of worms before returning to school after half terms and holidays. For treatment we recommend the brand Ovex.

**Eczema**

If your son suffers from eczema, please supply the medication and, in a note to matron, state which part of the body is affected.

**Hay fever**

If your son suffers from Hay fever please supply the medication. We recommend a one-a-day, non-drowsy treatment.

**Diet**

Boarders receive a varied and well-balanced diet and we encourage boarders to try new things and become accustomed to new tastes. In the case of allergies, where a boy cannot eat a particular food, the School requests a doctor's note. Vitamin supplements are not necessary and will only be distributed with a doctor's note.

**Sleep**

The School recommends that probationers and choristers receive plenty of rest during short holidays, such as half-terms. Later bed times at home can make it hard to get to sleep on return to School. During longer holidays it is recommended that bedtimes approximate to School times in the days preceding the start of term. This helps boys to settle back into boarding.

**Spectacles**

Boys wearing spectacles should have a second pair at home in case of breakage, damage or loss. There is a Specsaver opposite the Cathedral in Cardinal Place and a Boots optician on Victoria Street.

# VOCAL HEALTH

Choristers learn to become vocal athletes. An awareness of how to maintain good vocal health is a critical part of helping your son to flourish here as a young singer and musician.

An unhealthy voice may have audible huskiness, breathiness or a creaky quality; it may have a limited pitch range, limited vocal loudness or limited stamina. This can prove frustrating and demotivating to your son which is why we aim to promote a culture of good vocal health at home and at school.

## Important information for your family

### Protecting your voice

*Avoid harmful habits such as:*

Shouting

Throat clearing/coughing<sup>2</sup>

Whispering

Talking over background noise

*How to help your voice:*

### **Avoid shouting, bellowing or screaming at all costs**

Drink plenty of water – at least 8 cups a day

Try plain steam inhalations at home or supervised by Matron

Eat regular, balanced meals and do not eat just before going to bed

Get plenty of sleep

Rest your voice if you have a sore throat or cold

Take regular exercise

Avoid excessive throat clearing – try swallowing hard (chin tuck)

### **Chorister diet**

Prior to singing, avoid rich dairy products such as cream, full fat yoghurts, ice cream and cheese

In breaks during performances a suitable snack is water only and a plain dry biscuit or half a banana

Boys should avoid chocolate due to the dehydrating effect of its caffeine and dairy content

Curries should be avoided as they can cause reflux

Choristers should avoid drinks that contain caffeine (cause dehydration), as well as orange juice (acidic) and fizzy drinks (reflux); after water, the best drink is apple juice

For specific enquiries about anything relating to your son's vocal health, contact Zusanna:

**Email** [zklaus@choirschool.com](mailto:zklaus@choirschool.com)

**Tel** 0207 798 9070

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/voiceware\\_take-care-of-your-voice.htm](http://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/voiceware_take-care-of-your-voice.htm)



# SAFETY

The School's health and safety policy can be downloaded from the School website [www.choirschool.com](http://www.choirschool.com) or is available on request from the School office.

## Accidents

All accidents which required medical attention are recorded by Matron or the First-Aider on duty. Serious accidents (including, but not limited to, fractures of limbs) are reported under RIDDOR.

## Disaster plans

Should the School need to be evacuated, all boys and staff will transfer to Holy Apostles' Church, Winchester Street, Pimlico, SW1V 4LY.

The School can contact all parents by text-message in the event of an emergency. A full name-list of all boys is kept at Holy Apostles' Presbytery.

The School also holds supplies of dried food, water and blankets.

## Fire alarm

The School has a wireless fire detection system (radio-linked to the Fire Brigade), which is connected to the whole Cathedral complex. The Fire Officer makes an annual visit to inspect facilities and make recommendations. Regular fire drills are held (at least twice termly with one of those two drills taking place at night).

## Security

All entrances to the School, whether from the street or via the Cathedral complex, are fitted with locks; the House Master on duty follows a comprehensive lock-up procedure every evening.

## Certified security advisor

The Cathedral has its own Head of Security, Andrew Grange, who advises the School. He should be consulted in the event of any queries or concerns.

Andrew Grange

**Email**            andrew.grange@rcdow.org.uk

**Mob**                07801 572 433

# MUSIC

## **Cathedral music department**

The Cathedral music department consists of the Master of Music, his PA, the Assistant Master of Music and the Organ Scholar (normally a year-long post-graduate placement). The Master of Music has responsibility for providing daily choral liturgies in the Cathedral. The Choir is famed for its singing of plainsong and Renaissance polyphony. Several contemporary works have been written for the Choir in recent years.

## **Absence from choir services**

Westminster Cathedral Choir is a world-class choir. To make this possible, the Master of Music must have consistent attendance. Absence from School must be authorised by the Head Master in advance. If an absence from School entails missing a service or rehearsal, the Head Master will consult with the Master of Music. Absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Boys are usually released for family occasions, such as First Communion Masses or Confirmations. In the case of senior school open days, *absences are limited to two visits a year*. Each request is dealt with on its merits.

If your absence request is for something specified above, such as a First Holy Communion, please email Nicholas Morrell who will liaise with the Head Master and Master of Music. If, however, the absence is for some other reason, please direct your request directly to the Head Master.

## **Head of Boarding**

**Email** nmorrell@choirschool.com

## **Head Master**

**Email** office@choirschool.com

## **Communication**

The School gives as much notice as possible about forthcoming concerts and tours, but due to the nature of commercial music such events are sometimes cancelled or modified.

## **Concerts**

The Head Master sends a weekly e-newsletter to all parents which lists any forthcoming concerts or events, with details of how to obtain tickets.

## **Audio recordings**

The school facilitates recording sessions throughout the school year, by arrangement with the Cathedral music department

## **Services in the Cathedral**

Choristers sing at the following services:

*Mass*

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 5.30 pm

Sunday 10.30 am

*Vespers and Benediction*

Sunday 3.30 pm

## **Song School**

Boarders attend Song School (choir rehearsal) every day.

## **Special services**

The Choir sing at a number of special services during the year, in addition to the daily capitular liturgy. These include: the Red Mass for the beginning of the legal year, the Festival of St Cecilia (which alternates between Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's) and the Christmas Celebration(s) in the Cathedral.

## **Tours**

The Choir is often invited to tour and in recent years has visited the Vatican, Budapest, the USA, Belgium, Italy, Northern Ireland, North Yorkshire and Lancashire. All costs are underwritten by the concert promoter. Boys attend tours by invitation, and not every boy should expect to participate, especially in the junior years (4 and 5). Tours take the form of a long weekend or a major tour (which may last a fortnight and take place during a School holiday). As a general rule, the Choir will go on one major tour or two shorter tours per year. A packing list is sent out in advance to parents. It is important that boys have a smart pair of blue jeans for tours and that the Head of Boarding is notified of any issues relating to travel, such as sickness.

## **School music department**

All choristers learn the piano, plus one orchestral instrument. In addition, they have a 30-minute singing lesson each week during term and take part in a comprehensive class music programme. Parents of boarders are only charged for orchestral instrument lessons.

# OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

At Westminster Cathedral Choir School we aspire to transmit the Catholic faith with joy and fidelity to the boys of the School.

## **Governance**

The Governor for RS is Father Stuart Seaton, the Catholic Chaplain at Harrow School.

## **Sacramental life**

Boys may be prepared for their First Holy Communion at School if they have not yet made it. Preparation is usually from October to May. The Sacrament of Confession is available to boarders formally twice a year, before Christmas and Easter.

## **Mass**

The choristers sing Mass in the Cathedral on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 5.30 pm and at 10.30 am on Sunday mornings. They also sing Vespers at 3.30pm on Sundays.

## **Prayers**

The whole School meets on Mondays and Thursdays for Assembly: a hymn, prayers and notices/ speaker.

Grace is said formally after breakfast, before and after supper on weekdays and at Sunday lunch.

Within the Boarding House, night prayers are said in the dormitories before lights out.

# **MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

## **Governance**

His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, is the President of the Choir School. He appoints a Chairman to the Board of Governors. Governors include specialists in a number of areas. The Governors delegate responsibility for the day-to-day running of the School to the Head Master. Mr Mike Pittendreigh is the designated governor for safeguarding; Mrs Maria Church is the designated governor for chorister welfare.

## **Authority of the School**

The Head Master has the authority to act at all times in the best interests of a boarder placed in the School's care. The Head Master may take such measures as he reasonably believes are required in order to maintain discipline, obtain compliance with School policies and ensure the safety and well-being of an individual boarder and others in the School.

## **Complaints procedure**

The School makes every effort to deliver an outstanding standard of pastoral care for boarders. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the procedure set out in the Parents' Handbook.

## **Suspension and expulsion policy**

Please see behaviour policy in the Parents' Handbook.

## **Property and liability**

### **Personal property**

Boys are expected to use all personal property in a responsible and safe way. All items must be clearly named. Boys are advised not to bring unnecessary items of value to School, and to always keep them locked in their lockable area. There is also a safe in the staff room in which pocket money and other valuable items are safely stored.

### **Communal property**

The School may invoice a boarder's parents for damage, however caused, to School property.

### **Liability for injury or damage**

The School does not accept responsibility for accidental injury or loss of property unless caused by negligence of its own or Cathedral staff.

# FEES AND EXTRAS – BOARDERS

## Fees

The true cost of educating a boarder for the academic year 2019/20 is about £10,000 per term.

A school bursary is, however, available to chorister parents reducing the termly fee to £3,362. Fees are payable by direct debit, termly and in advance.

## Sibling fee concession

Second and subsequent chorister siblings are eligible for a 20% concession on the School fees only when two or more siblings are concurrently choristers at the School. The discount will automatically be applied to the termly invoice.

Fees are inclusive of books (except when annotated and kept by boys on leaving), food, up-to-ten piano lessons a term, music theory lessons, singing lessons and timetabled games.

## Choir Schools Association (CSA)

Parents who need extra assistance may apply to the CSA for a bursary. This is money apportioned by the government to assist boys who have the potential to be choristers. Applications are means-tested and must be reviewed annually.

## The Basil Hume

For parents who have applied successfully to the CSA and need further assistance, application may be made to the Basil Hume Fund. Resources are limited and help is prioritised where it is needed most. Applications should be made to:

Mr Paolo Camoletto  
Financial Secretary to the Diocese of Westminster  
Vaughan House  
46 Francis Street  
London SW1P 1QN

**Email** [paolocamoletto@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:paolocamoletto@rcdow.org.uk)

## Extras

The following activities are charged as 'extras'.

### Academic and examinations

- Termly prep diary
- Common Entrance and other year 8 examination fees
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT)
- External interview training (which is voluntary)

## **Music**

- Hire of musical instruments (£40.00 per term)
- Individual music tuition (£46.16 per hour)
- Chamber music groups/orchestra (£25.50 per term)
- Any piano lesson more than ten in any one term (£46.16 per hour)
- Sheet music
- Instrumental music exams
- Music theory exams
- School Mass & Assembly Book

## **Clubs**

These change on a termly basis and are advertised to parents in advance.

## **Educational trips**

All trips are advertised to parents in advance. The total cost of the trip (including coach and adults), divided by the number of boys, is charged.

## **Special educational needs**

Individual SEN support is charged to parents. 35-minute one-to-one lessons are £18.50; paired lessons are £14.50; group lessons are £11. These costs include a 50% reduction for SEN support.

## **Parents' Association**

The Parents' Association has an annual subscription fee of £40 *per family*. The fee is collected in the Michaelmas term. Parents who wish to opt out should write to the Chair of the PA at the School address by the first day of the Michaelmas term in each academic year.

## **Old Boys' Association (Year 8 only)**

£150 is set against parents' deposits at the end of Year 8 for their son's lifetime membership of the WCCS Old Boys' Association. This includes an Old Boys' tie, regular mailings and an invitation to annual OBA events. Parents who wish to opt out must write to the Chair of the Old Boys' Association at the School address by the first day of the Michaelmas term in Year 8.

## **Post Common Entrance programme (Year 8 only)**

Common Entrance examinations at 13+ are set externally by the Independent Schools Examination Board in the first week of June. On completion of the examinations, Year 8 boys remain at School until the formal end of term – normally about four weeks. A programme of activities is organised for all boys in the Year Group; the cost for this is notified to parents prior to the start of the programme.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

The School requests that all uniform is purchased from [Stevensons of St Albans](#).

Tel 01727 853262

Email [sales@stevensonschoolwear.co.uk](mailto:sales@stevensonschoolwear.co.uk)

- School blazer: *with loop for hanging on peg*
- School tie x 2
- School shirts x 2 (long-sleeve); x 2 (short-sleeve): *charcoal*
- Pullover x 2: *Stevensons, grey with School trim*
- Long trousers: *charcoal, Years 4 – 8 boys only*
- Short trousers: *charcoal, Reception, Years 1, 2 & 3 all year and Years 4 & 5 for summer uniform*
- School socks x 3 pairs: *Stevensons, short, grey and no trim for long trousers/ long grey, with trim for use with shorts*
- School coat: *Stevensons, black with loop for hanging on peg*
- Shoes: *black leather, lace-up, or Velcro, for School use. NOT moccasin, suede or boot style*

#### Games

Games for Years 4 – 8 boys are on Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

#### Games kit

For boys in Years 3 – 8, for football and rugby in the Michaelmas and Lent terms

- Rugby shirt: *Stevensons, School colours*
- Rugby shorts: *Stevensons, black with School colours*
- Rugby socks: *Stevensons, School colours*
- Tracksuit top and bottoms: *Stevensons, School colours only*
- Football/rugby boots/shin pads: *Michaelmas and Lent terms only*
- Bootbag: *waterproof*
- Gum shield: *Lent term for contact rugby in Years 5 – 8: [www.shockdoctor.com](http://www.shockdoctor.com)*

For boys in Years 3 – 8 for cricket in the Trinity term

- Cricket whites: *white trousers, white socks and white cricket shirt*

For boys in Years 3 – 8 for swimming throughout the year

- Swimming trunks: *a plain dark colour, not shorts*
- Swimming goggles: *named please*



## Casual clothes

All boarders require two sets of casual clothes (clearly labelled) to wear for Sunday activities and for Wednesdays after gamres. These should be kept at School for the duration of the term:

- Jeans: *1 pair*
- Casual trousers: *1 pair*
- Casual shorts: *summer term, optional*
- T-shirts: *x 2 plain cotton for casual wear. No football shirts please*
- Casual shirts or long-sleeved top x 2
- Fleece

## Toiletries, underwear and bed linen

- Duvet covers and pillow cases: *standard single fit, easy care, 2 sets, named*
- Dressing gown: *towelling, looped for hanging on peg, and belt sewn on*
- Pyjamas: *x 2 cotton knit for winter; x 2 cotton for summer (no Onesies)*
- Flip flops: *for use in the shower*
- House slippers: *traditional, navy blue*
- Towels: *x 2, 125cm x 70cm, looped half way down long side for hanging on peg*
- Vests: *x 2 white cotton, optional*
- Underpants: *x 4 cotton (colours)*
- Washbag: *clearly named, containing the following named items:*
  - *Toothbrush, toothpaste*
  - *Shower gel x1, shampoo x1*
  - *Nail clippers*
  - *Pocket combs x 4*
  - *Hairbrush*
  - *Roll on deodorant (Years 6-8)*
- Handkerchiefs: *x 4 cotton, named for the vestry*
- Wash-in-net-laundry bag: *named very clearly; large (17" x 24") net bag: most resilient product available from matron for £6 (added to bill) or from washingnet.org.uk*

## School bags

There are three School bags that choristers need:

1. The *Westminster Choir bookbag* for sheet music
2. The *Westminster Choir swimbag* for swimming trunks
3. The *holdall* for taking home books at the weekend

All available from Stevensons.

Tel 01727 853262

Email [sales@stevensonsschoolwear.co.uk](mailto:sales@stevensonsschoolwear.co.uk)

### **Additional items**

- Cuddly toy
- Shoe shine: *named, quick shine sponge*
- Spare name labels (stitch on, not iron-on)
- Named overnight suitcase on wheels

### **Labelling**

All items of clothing and equipment must be clearly labelled.

- Shirts, t-shirts, jackets, blazers, sweatshirts, vests, jumpers etc should all be labelled behind the neck on the collar.
- Trousers, shorts and tracksuits should all be labelled at the centre back of the waistband.
- Socks: name tags should be folded in half and two ends should be sewn together onto the top of the ribbing of the sock, on the inside.

### **Second-hand uniform**

Second-hand uniform sales take place once a term on the Ambrosden Avenue site, organised by the Parents' Association. They are advertised in advance in the Head Master's weekly e-newsletter. Parents may also contact Mrs Anneleen Akle direct.

Email [anneleen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anneleen@hotmail.co.uk)

Tel 07767 445520

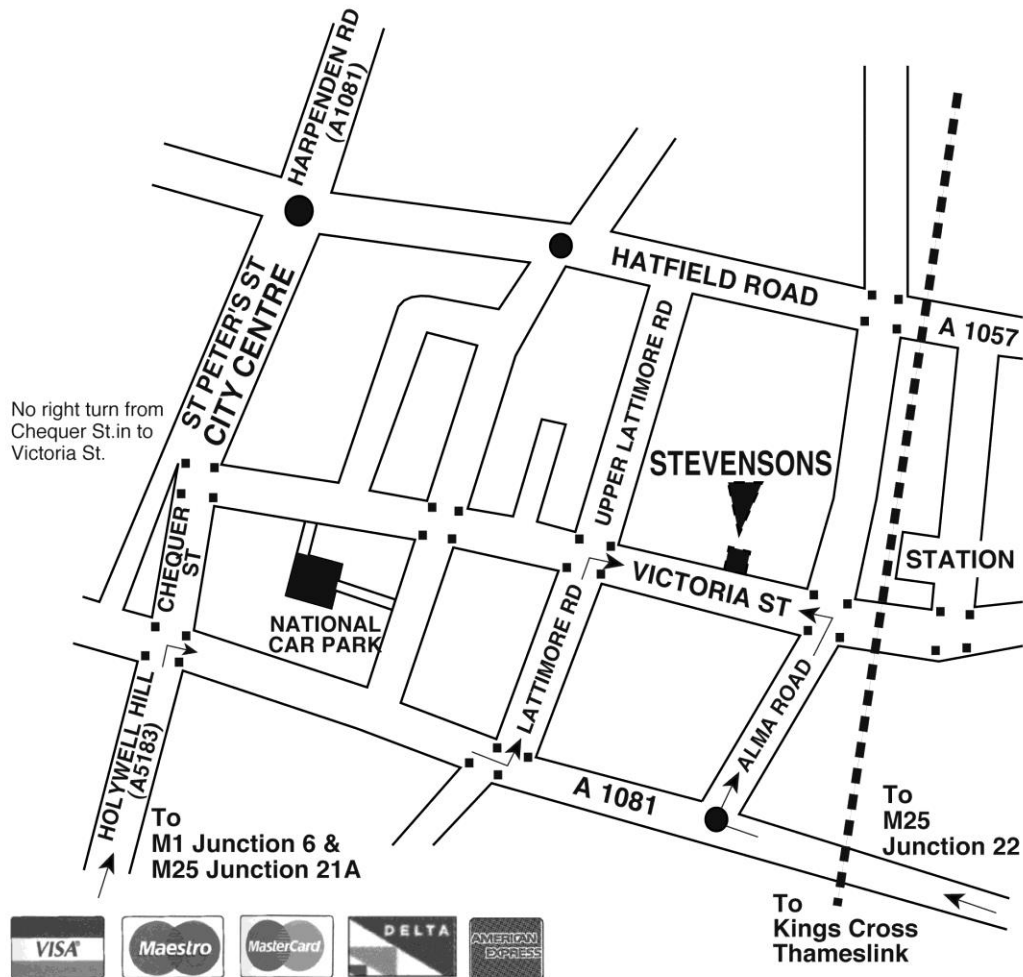
### **Stationery**

Stationery for Reception, Years 1 & 2 boys is provided, so no need to bring any into School.

Boys in Years 3 – 8 should come equipped with a well-stocked pencil case, which will need to be maintained by parents throughout the year.

- 1 stabilo handwriting pen and blue stabilo ink cartridges: *all boys in Year 4-6*
- 1 blue ink fountain pen and cartridges: *all boys in Year 7-8*
- Rollerball pens in blue, red and green: *Years 6-8 only*
- 2 HB pencils, sharpener (with own case), and eraser
- A set of highlighting pens
- 30 cm ruler
- A small set of colouring pencils
- Child-friendly scissors
- Helix Oxford Maths set (labelled with name), with spare protractor
- Pritt stick (several)
- 1 zipped pencil-case (not with sections); Year 8 pupils should have a transparent pencil-case

# STEVENSONS



## DIRECTIONS TO STEVENSONS RETAIL SHOPS

From M1 exit at Junction 6 or M25 Junction 21A follow signs to St. Albans A405 (A5183). Approach up Holywell Hill and turn right into London Road, and then left into Lattimore Road and right into Victoria Street.

From M25 Junction 22 follow signs to St. Albans A1081. Approach under railway bridge across mini roundabout and right at next roundabout into Alma Road and left into Victoria Street. Limited on-street parking available.

**131-135 VICTORIA STREET ST ALBANS AL1 3XS**  
**TELEPHONE 01727 853262**

**BUSINESS HOURS: MONDAY – SATURDAY 9 am to 5.30 pm**

## Purchasing your School uniform from Stevensons

### THROUGH OUR SHOP

Our business hours are Monday to Saturday 9 am to 5.30 pm excluding Bank Holidays.  
No appointments are necessary.

Limited on-street parking available outside our premises – car parking for one hour is available opposite at Iceland for a charge of £1 which is refundable for purchases over £2 at their store. Longer stay parking is available at NCP in Victoria Street – see map on back.

### MAIL ORDER

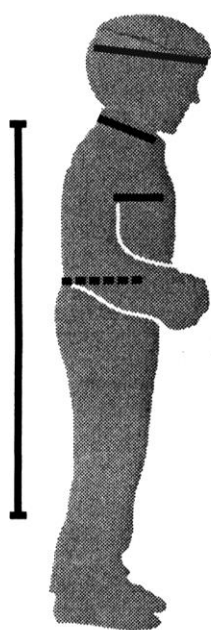
Telephone orders will be promptly dispatched free of postage. Call our order line on 01727 853262 selecting option 1. Having your Credit/Debit Card details to hand.

Alternatively you can complete the enclosed order form and post or fax it through on 01727 845123

Ordering can also be E-mailed to [sales@stevensonsschoolwear.co.uk](mailto:sales@stevensonsschoolwear.co.uk).

As Credit/Debit Card details should not be included, please give your telephone number for us to call you to collect this information.

## MEASURING GUIDE



<b>Age</b>	..... years	<b>Height</b>	..... cm/inches
<b>Cap</b>	Measure round the fullest part of the head starting at the middle forehead		..... cm/inches
<b>Collar</b>	Measure around base of neck, inserting two fingers between neck and tape to allow for growth		..... cm/inches
<b>Chest</b>	Position tape close to underarm, measure chest at fullest point When buying blazers and pullovers you will find you need to add 4–5 inches onto the chest, as measured above, to achieve the required size.		..... cm/inches
<b>Waist</b>	Measure around natural waistline		..... cm/inches
<b>Coat/Overall length</b>	Measure from nape of neck to length required		..... cm/inches

## APPENDIX 2: BOARDERS' ROUTINE

### Sunday

	<b>All Boarders</b>
<b>Morning</b> <b>9.00 am</b>	<b>Boys arrive at WCCS</b> Gather in refectory
9.15 am	Loo / hands / drink Assemble, Long Corridor Vesting
9.30 am	Song School
<b>10.30 am</b> 11.45 am	<b>Sung Mass</b> Unvesting
<b>Afternoon</b> 12.05 pm 12.15 pm	Bell: Assemble, Long Corridor Song School
<b>1.00 pm</b> 1.30 pm	<b>Lunch</b> Free time
2.20 pm	Gather in refectory Drink / loo / hands
2.30 pm 2.45 pm	Vesting Song School
<b>3.30 pm</b> 4.25 pm	<b>Sung Vespers</b> Unvesting / change into casuals Tea / Assemble – Common Room
<b>4.45 pm</b> 5.45 pm	<b>Organised Activity Programme</b> Activities end / clear up
<b>Evening</b> <b>6.00 pm</b>	<b>Supper</b>
<b>6.30 pm</b>	<b>Film club</b> ( <i>showers first</i> ) Optional free time outside
7.30 pm	Tidy playground Remaining boys up to boarding house  Laundry – shower - teeth
8.45 pm – 9.15pm	Lights out after film concludes

**Monday, Thursday**

	<b>Choristers</b>	<b>Probationers</b>
<p><b>Morning</b>            6.45 am            7.00 am            7.30 am            8.00 am</p> <p>8.10 am            9.00 am</p>	<p>Rise            Breakfast            Music practice            Bell            Washroom            Assemble – Long Corridor</p> <p>Song School            School Assembly</p>	
<p><b>Afternoon</b>            3.40 pm</p> <p><b>3.55 pm</b>            4.25 pm</p> <p>4.30 pm            5.05 pm            5.15 pm  <b>5.30 pm</b></p>	<p>Tea            Y4-8 prepare books/music</p> <p><b>Prep check / Music practice</b>            Bell: Assemble, Long Corridor</p> <p>Song School</p> <p>Vesting / Assemble in Sacristy  <b>MASS</b></p>	<p>Free time            Loo break,            Vesting  <b>MASS</b></p>
<p><b>Evening</b>            6.20 pm            6.30 pm</p> <p><b>7.00 pm</b></p> <p>7.30 pm</p> <p><b>7.50 pm</b></p> <p><b>8.00 pm</b></p> <p>8.20 pm            8.30 pm</p> <p>8.45 pm            8.55 pm</p>	<p>Unvesting            Supper</p> <p><b>Prep (Y4-8)</b></p> <p>Bell: Free time            (phone &amp; e-mail per rota)</p> <p><b>Bell</b>            Y4-5 laundry / shower / teeth</p> <p><b>Bell</b>            Y6-8 laundry / shower / teeth</p> <p>Y4-5 silent reading            Y6-8 silent reading</p> <p>Y4-5 prayers &amp; lights out            Y6-8 prayers &amp; lights out</p>	<p>Unvesting            Supper</p>

## Tuesday

	<b>Choristers</b>	<b>Probationers</b>
<b>Morning</b> 6.45 am 7.00 am 7.30 am 8.00 am  8.10 am 9.10 am	Rise Breakfast Music practice Bell Washroom Assemble – Long Corridor  Song School Lessons	
<b>Afternoon</b> 3.40 pm  <b>3.55 pm</b> 4.25 pm  4.30 pm 5.00 pm 5.15 pm <b>5.30 pm</b>	Tea Y4-8 prepare books/music  <b>Prep check / Music practice</b> Bell: Assemble, Long Corridor  Song School  Vesting / Assemble in Sacristy <b>MASS</b>	Music practice Loo break, Vesting <b>MASS</b>
<b>Evening</b> 6.20 pm 6.30 pm  <b>7.00 pm</b>  7.30 pm  <b>7.50 pm</b>  <b>8.00 pm</b>  8.20 pm 8.30 pm  8.45 pm 8.55 pm	Unvesting Supper  <b>Prep (Y4-8)</b>  Bell: Free time (phone & e-mail per rota)  <b>Bell</b> Y4-5 laundry / shower / teeth  <b>Bell</b> Y6-8 laundry / shower / teeth  Y4-5 silent reading Y6-8 silent reading  Y4-5 prayers & lights out Y6-8 prayers & lights out	Unvesting Supper

## Wednesday

	<b>All Boarders</b>
<p><b>Morning</b>            6.45 am            7.00 am            7.30 am            8.00 am</p> <p>8.40 am            8.45 am            9.45 am</p>	<p>Rise            Breakfast            Music practice            Bell            Washroom            Free time in playground</p> <p>Assemble – Long Corridor            Song School            Lessons</p>
<p><b>Afternoon</b>            3.40 pm</p> <p>4.00 pm</p> <p>4.55 pm  <b>5.05 pm</b></p> <p>5.25 pm            6.25pm</p>	<p>Showers / change to casuals            Tea (Boarding staff room)</p> <p>Tuck            Optional clubs            Free time</p> <p>Assemble (Refectory)  <b>Squad Group Meetings</b>            Head of Boarding Announcements</p> <p>Music practice / ensembles            Bell: wash hands</p>
<p><b>Evening</b>            6.30 pm</p> <p><b>7.00 pm</b></p> <p>7.30 pm</p> <p><b>8.00 pm</b></p> <p>8.20 pm</p> <p>8.45 pm            8.55 pm</p>	<p>Supper</p> <p><b>Prep (Y4-8)</b></p> <p>Free time            Squad computer time</p> <p><b>Bell</b>            Y4-8 laundry / teeth / change</p> <p>Silent reading (Y4-5)            Audiobook (Y6-8)</p> <p>Y4-5 prayers &amp; lights out            Y6-8 prayers &amp; lights out</p>



## Friday

	<b>All Boarders</b>
<b>Morning</b>	
6.45 am	Rise
7.00 am	Breakfast
7.30 am	Music practice
8.00 am	Bell Washroom Assemble – Long Corridor
8.10 am	Song School
9.10 am	Lessons
<b>Afternoon</b>	
3.30 pm	Change to uniform
3.40 pm	Tea (Boarding staff room) Collection, Forte Gate
3.55 pm	Optional clubs
5.00 pm	Collection, Forte Gate

## **APPENDIX 3 PASTORAL INFORMATION FOR BOARDERS**

### **If Something Worries You ...**

If there are any problems at School or at home it is very important that you feel you can talk to someone. There are lots of people whom you can choose to talk to:

- Your parents (telephone or email – we have the details if you have forgotten them)

### **Inside the School**

- The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children (DSL), Mr Graham
- Your boarding tutor
- The boarding staff (Mr Morrell, House Masters, Matrons, Junior Housemasters)
- A teacher
- The Head Master, Mr McLaughlan
- The Head Master's PA: Lucy Auger (*you can pop into the office and ask Lucy a question, or send her an email or note; she could also find a time for you to chat to Mr McLaughlan*)
- The School Counsellor

### **Outside contacts**

- The Independent Listener is Mr Scott Cree, the Head Teacher of St Vincent de Paul School next door to us, and he is more than happy to talk about any problems if you want to contact someone outside the School

Tel            07939 258 302

- Childline

Tel            0800 1111 or 0800 884 444 (both free numbers)

- Office of the Children's Commissioner

Tel            0800 528 0731 (Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm)

If there is a problem it is always good to share it with someone!

## **APPENDIX 4 REWARDS AND SANCTIONS FOR BOARDING CHORISTERS**

The purpose of this policy is to raise the standard of behaviour among boarding choristers at the School. The policy has three aims:

- to reward good behaviour in the boarding house
- to reward excellent conduct in the Song School and Cathedral
- to provide a coherent system of sanctions for minor and major breaches of discipline for boarders, outside the academic day.

### **REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOUR IN THE BOARDING HOUSE THE GOLD STAR SYSTEM**

The purpose of the chorister gold star system is to reward good behaviour. Chorister gold stars are awarded for:

<b>Instrumental music</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>	<b>Organisational</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to instrumental music-making</li> <li>• Application to instrument practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting an example in the boarding house</li> <li>• Setting an example in the vestry or cathedral precincts</li> <li>• Fostering house spirit</li> <li>• Good time-keeping</li> <li>• Kindness to others</li> <li>• Politeness and thoughtfulness to fellow boarders, staff and guests</li> <li>• Productive or creative use of recreational time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidiness</li> <li>• Helping staff with house chores</li> <li>• Exemplary deportment as a chorister</li> </ul>

#### **Recording gold stars**

- Staff fill out a gold star form and post it through the box at the top of the stairs into the Boarding House. Gold star totals are compiled once weekly.

#### **Rewards for gold stars**

##### **Weekly**

- The boarder with the most gold stars receives extra tuck on Wednesdays
- The year group with the highest average gold stars in a week receive extra tuck on Wednesday evenings.
- Winners receive a mention in the weekly newsletter to parents.

### **Annually**

- The Hannigan Prize is given to the boarder who has made the biggest contribution to boarding life.

## **REWARDING EXCEPTIONAL CHORISTERSHIP**

The purpose of this system is to reward boys in Years 4-8 who show consistent maturity, leadership and musical excellence whilst undertaking the unique duties of choristership in the Song School, Cathedral, or on tour.

Exceptional chorister conduct includes:

<b>Musical</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistently excellent singing</li><li>• Exceptional behaviour during choir time</li><li>• Significant progress made during choir time</li><li>• Setting an outstanding musical example to younger boys</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Setting an outstanding example in the apse and sacristy</li><li>• Good time-keeping</li><li>• Politeness and respect for clergy, lay clerks and cathedral staff</li><li>• Demonstrating correct rehearsal etiquette to younger boys during rehearsals</li></ul>

### **Recording exceptional choristership**

- The Master of Music keeps a log of 'plus points' for choristers who have set the highest standards. These are noted by the Head of Boarding at the weekly meeting with additional relevant comments.
- A record is kept of the chorister(s) who have shown exceptional conduct during the week.

### **Rewards for exceptional choristership**

#### **Weekly**

- The chorister(s) receives a mention in the weekly newsletter to parents and extra tuck on Wednesdays.

#### **Annually**

- The Master of Music Prize is given to the chorister from the middle of the choir, who shows the greatest potential.
- The Oliver Mitchell Prize for a chorister with outstanding academic musical ability.

#### **Exceptionally**

- The Master of Music Award may be presented to recognise outstanding service to the choir.

## SANCTIONING POOR BEHAVIOUR IN THE BOARDING HOUSE THE BLACK MARK SYSTEM

The purpose of the black mark system is to sanction poor behaviour in the boarding house and during choir time.

Black marks may be issued for:

Poor Behaviour	Poor Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrupting instrument practice</li> <li>• Poor behaviour in the sacristy, vestry or in the apse</li> <li>• Disruption at quiet times in the boarding house</li> <li>• Graffiti</li> <li>• Unkindness to others</li> <li>• Foul language</li> <li>• Rough or harmful behaviour</li> <li>• Being out of bounds</li> <li>• Littering</li> <li>• Disrespect or rudeness towards clergy or lay clerks</li> <li>• Disrupting choir rehearsals or Mass</li> <li>• Misuse of the voice by excessive shouting or yelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untidiness</li> <li>• Persistent scruffiness</li> <li>• Poor time-keeping</li> <li>• Failing to start instrument practice</li> </ul>

### Recording black marks

- Black marks are recorded in a book by the House Master or Matron on duty
- The Head of Boarding or Deputy Head Pastoral may issue or record black marks following discussion with the Master of Music or his Assistant about the behaviour of choristers during choir time
- Choristers may be sanctioned by the Head of Boarding, Deputy Head Pastoral or House Master for poor behaviour immediately after a performance
- Three black marks will result in an automatic detention time on a Wednesday evening.

### Other Sanctions

In addition to receiving a black mark, choristers may receive one of the following sanctions from the House Master:

- brief letter of apology
- early night
- move to another bed
- prompt start – have to get out of bed immediately at wake up
- withdrawal of privileges, i.e. tuck, film night, casual clothes
- community service
- detention (Wednesday 4.15 – 5.00 pm)
- lines (should be rare and not overly burdensome)
- stand outside bedroom
- stand at the edge of Song School, facing inwards (issued by the Master of Music)

## **ADDRESSING POOR MUSICIANSHIP**

Instances of poor or careless musicianship are distinct from poor behaviour and organisation and must be dealt with separately.

There are two main aims:

1. To encourage critical feedback on instances of poor or careless musicianship in a sensitive manner that is not detrimental to the boys' enjoyment of singing.
2. To discourage poor or careless musicianship during live performances at Mass or in concerts.

Poor or careless musicianship includes:

- Not taking on board musical points from a rehearsal
- Repeating mistakes in Mass or during a concert
- Lack of awareness of other singers and other parts
- Setting a poor example by not being ready to sing
- Missing entries
- Poor tuning or elementary pitching errors
- Unsubtle phrasing ('phrasing on' – thumping the last note of a phrase)

### **Dealing with instances of poor musicianship**

- The Master of Music or his Assistant may provide brief feedback to the choristers, geared towards the positive, after Mass or a performance.

### **Recording instances of poor musicianship**

- Instances of poor musicianship are discussed at the weekly meeting between the Master of Music, Headmaster, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Boarding, and a record is kept
- Parents will be notified via email from the Master of Music or his Assistant if their son demonstrates persistently poor musicianship
- Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of Boarding and Master of Music to discuss appropriate strategies
- Boys may be placed on a musical report card as one of these strategies

## MAJOR BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE

In cases of major breaches of discipline by boarders, the whole-school Rewards and Sanctions Policy applies (reprinted below). The Head of Boarding will confer with the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Disciplinary Breach	Range of Sanctions
<p><b>Aggressive, abusive or threatening verbal behaviour</b>, in the form of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comments</li> <li>• facial expressions</li> <li>• bodily gestures</li> <li>• chanting or abusive singing intended to cause unhappiness, fear or distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detention</li> <li>• Letter of apology</li> <li>• Suspension from dormitory (in case of boarders)</li> <li>• Boy sent home</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aggressive physical behaviour</b> any physical act or gesture that is intended to cause genuine pain or injury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boy sent home</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rudeness to Staff</b> any spoken or written comment that is intended to be offensive or disrespectful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detention</li> <li>• Boy sent home</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>
Disciplinary Breach	Range of Sanctions
<p><b>Vandalism</b> any act that deliberately damages any building or contents of the Cathedral complex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detention</li> <li>• Letter of apology</li> <li>• Boy sent home</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theft</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boy sent home</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Invitation to withdraw</li> <li>• Expulsion</li> </ul>

<p><b>Persistent aggressive, abusive or disruptive behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step 1:</b> Suspension</li> <li>• <b>Step 2:</b> Invitation to withdraw</li> <li>• <b>Step 3:</b> Expulsion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning</li> <li>• Parents informed</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Expulsion (for persistent or grave offences)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bringing illegal substances on to the premises (including alcohol and tobacco)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Invitation to withdraw</li> <li>• Expulsion (in grave cases)</li> </ul>

### **Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP)**

Following a major sanction, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) may set an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), formed at a meeting of relevant members of staff, parents and/or experts.

### **Reporting major breaches of discipline**

Any major breach of School discipline must be recorded either via a clearly titled email to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or on a School incident report form - available to staff in the staff room and on the staff drive. The latter must be dated and signed by the member of staff and submitted to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will speak to the boy(s) involved, research any incident and then take appropriate action.



## **SUSPENSION, EXCLUSION AND APPEAL**

The School reserves the right to suspend a boy from School at any time in the event that his conduct or his presence has seriously damaged or is likely to damage the discipline, safety, reputation or good order of the School or Cathedral Choir. Reasons for this include:

- aggressive, threatening or abusive verbal behaviour in the form of comments, facial expressions, bodily gestures, chanting or abusive singing intended to cause unhappiness, fear or distress
- aggressive physical behaviour: any physical act or gesture that is intended to cause genuine pain or injury
- rudeness to staff: any spoken or written comment that is intended to be offensive or disrespectful
- vandalism: any act that deliberately damages any building or contents of the Cathedral complex
- theft
- persistent aggressive, abusive or disruptive behaviour
- bringing illegal substances on to the premises.

If parents, after consultation, still disagree with the decision to suspend the boy they should write within one day of receiving the letter of suspension to:

The Clerk to the Governing Body  
c/o Westminster Cathedral Choir School  
Ambrosden Avenue  
London  
SW1P 1QH

The Chair of Governors will then convene a committee of Governors who have not participated in the above decision to hear their concerns. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not appropriate. The above committee will either confirm the decision on suspension or reinstate the boy having suggested an alternative sanction. The committee's decision will be final.

### **Expulsion on grounds of behaviour**

The School aims to operate by consent not by imposition. If that consent is not forthcoming, in the last resort the School may ask for a boy to be removed permanently. Verbal and written warnings to the parents will be given, except in the case of a single unacceptable action by a boy. The final decision regarding expulsion is that of the Chair of Governors, having taken appropriate professional or other advice from whomsoever he considers suitable. For example, a boy may be expelled from the School for:

- failure to comply with School policies, after warnings and previous sanctions
- not accepting School punishments
- bringing illegal substances on to the School premises
- endangering other boys or staff
- disrupting lessons
- being a bad influence on other boys
- failing to perform adequately in his academic or musical work after warnings

- failing to perform adequately during choir time (choristers only)
- gross rudeness to members of staff or other employees of the School
- parental failure to disclose all known facts about the boy, including Special Educational Needs, or previous suspensions, expulsions, exclusions or major disciplinary incidents, either at application stage or at any stage thereafter
- theft
- bullying

If the parents, after consultation, still disagree with the decision to expel the boy they should write within two weeks of receiving the letter of expulsion to:

The Clerk to the Governing Body  
 c/o Westminster Cathedral Choir School  
 Ambrosden Avenue  
 London  
 SW1P 1QH

The Chair of Governors will then convene a committee of Governors who have not participated in the above decision to hear their concerns. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not appropriate. The above committee will either confirm the decision on expulsion or suggest an alternative sanction. The committee's decision will be final.

**Flexibility clause**

The parents accept that the School will be run in accordance with the authorities delegated by the Governing Body to the Head. The Head is entitled to exercise a wide discretion in relation to the School's policies, rules and regime and will exercise those discretions in a reasonable and lawful manner and with procedural fairness when the status of a boy is at issue.

(See Terms and Conditions, 49)

## **APPENDIX 5: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (IN RELATION TO MEMBERS OF THE CATHEDRAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT)**

This complaints procedure is provided to parents of current and prospective choristers, and to all staff. It is also posted on the School website, [www.choirschool.com](http://www.choirschool.com). (For the complaints procedure in relation to members of the School's staff, please see the Parents' Handbook or the School website.)

Complaints in relation to members of the Cathedral Music Department are handled by the Cathedral Administrator:

Canon Christopher Tuckwell  
Clergy House  
Ambrosden Avenue  
London  
SW1P 1QW

**Tel**     020 7798 9055

### **Stage 1 – Informal resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally with the Head of Boarding, within seven working days.

### **Stage 2 – Formal resolution**

- If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their complaint in writing, within seven working days, to the Cathedral Administrator. He will then decide the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Cathedral Administrator will make the person against whom the complaint has been made aware that a formal complaint has been received as soon as reasonably practicable.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of how, and at what stage, they were resolved.
- In the case of complaints which raise issues of safeguarding children or vulnerable adults, the Cathedral's Safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- In most cases the Cathedral Administrator will meet with the parents concerned, normally within seven days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Cathedral Administrator to carry out further investigations.
- The Cathedral Administrator will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and may ask a member of Cathedral staff to record the meeting.
- Once the Cathedral Administrator is satisfied that, so far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Cathedral Administrator will also give reasons for his decision.

- Stage 2 of the process will be completed within 28 days of the formal complaint being received (unless holidays dictate that it is not practicable to do so). If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to an Auxiliary Bishop or the Vicar General of the Westminster Diocese, who has been appointed by the Diocese to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the Cathedral. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel's PA, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to all parties not later than seven days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, colleague or friend. Legal representation is not appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Cathedral Administrator, and where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been made. The School will record any findings and recommendations, whether or not the complaint is upheld.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. For relevant agencies (e.g. the ISI), full records, including findings and recommendations, are available onsite.

Westminster Cathedral Choir School  
Ambrosden Avenue London SW1P 1QH

**General Enquiries** 020 7798 9081

**Email** [office@choirschool.com](mailto:office@choirschool.com)

[www.choirschool.com](http://www.choirschool.com)

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