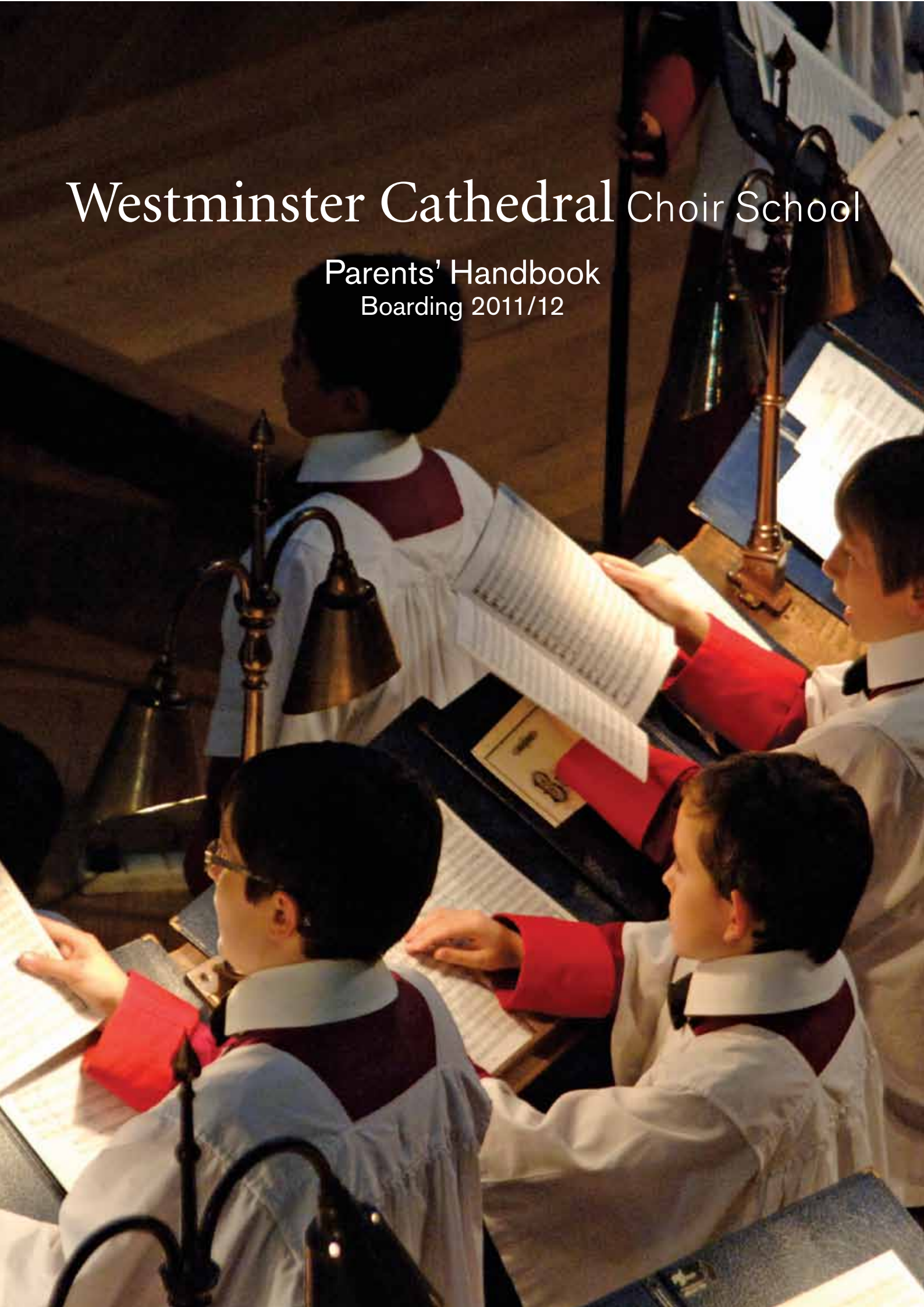


Westminster Cathedral Choir School

Parents' Handbook
Boarding 2011/12



PARENTS' HANDBOOK BOARDING 2011/12

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FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

Head Master

Mr Neil McLaughlan

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office@choirschool.com

Designated Governor for Boarding

Mrs Maria Church

020 7931 6099

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STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES

Westminster Cathedral Choir School is a Catholic school, and its whole activity is inspired by the faith of the Church and the Christian vision of the dignity and potential of every individual person.

At Westminster Cathedral Choir School we aim to create an atmosphere in which the boarders' happiness and personal development come first. We believe that the boarding experience should be fun, and that it offers an opportunity to build friendships and a team spirit of great depth and breadth.

At WCCS we believe that the individual personality of each boarder should be encouraged to flourish and develop in its own way, unfettered by preconceived or stereotyped notions.

Central to our boarding community are friendship and respect between persons, whether staff or fellow boarders. Friendship and respect in turn create an atmosphere of trust within which the communication of values, especially the values of the Catholic faith, which are so critical in the development of the 'whole person', can thrive. Boarders learn to value each other for their distinctive characteristics and differences, which are not only tolerated but prized.

At WCCS boarders have a unique opportunity to develop and unlock their talents, whether these are musical, academic, sporting, or in some other activity or pastime. Insofar as chorister duties allow, boarders have the opportunity to develop their own interests and skills, for example through after-school clubs, photography or tennis.

We believe that all boys have a right to grow up at WCCS in an atmosphere free from teasing, bullying, intimidation and abuse. We therefore aim to create an open and trusting environment in which every boarder knows that he may approach a member of staff confident in the knowledge that he will be listened to sympathetically and respectfully, and that his concerns will be addressed appropriately. The boarding team receive training in all aspects of safeguarding children, are alert to children's vulnerabilities and risks of harm, and know how to implement safeguarding children procedures.

WCCS is 'home' to children during chorister term times: their views and concerns are listened to, and responded to using both formal and informal means. Formal chorister and parent consultations, questionnaires and regular email contact ensure that the School demonstrates its commitment to openness and transparency. Boarders in each year group are represented by the Boarders' Council, and a suggestion box enables boarders to have their views listened to and considered.

Integral to the running of the boarding House is the relationship between boarding staff and parents. Parents are, therefore, encouraged to discuss their concerns or raise questions either formally or informally at the many occasions when they visit the School: over coffee after Mass, or when they come to pick up or drop off their son at visiting times. Boys themselves are encouraged to make frequent use of email and telephone to keep close to home.

As part of a global, multi-ethnic Church, we learn to embrace all world cultures and to respect people of all religions, regardless of gender, ethnicity or disability.¹ We also greatly prize our close proximity to Westminster Cathedral as a place of prayer, reflection and sacramental life. We believe that the boarders benefit greatly from their special role in the Cathedral's day-to-day life

¹ See *Gaudium et Spes*: 'every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.'

welcoming a diverse congregation from all over the world. Participating in such this rich and diverse community contributes to the cultural, spiritual, moral and social development of all choristers. This is reinforced through the School's PSHCE programme, *Alive to the World*.

We provide comfortable and suitable accommodation for boarders, which guarantees appropriate privacy. We also aim to provide an environment that is, as far as is reasonably possible, free from physical hazards and dangers of any sort in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of each boarder.

Child protection policy

The School's procedures for safeguarding children are fully compliant with *London Child Protection Procedures*. The School's policy is published in full in the Parents' Handbook.

ISI Integrated Inspection

From 1st September 2011 responsibility for boarding welfare inspections resides with ISI rather than OFSTED. WCCS is obliged to comply with the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and the Children Act (2004).

The Choir School was inspected by OFSTED in March 2011 and subsequent report published in April 2011. WCCS was rated Outstanding in all categories. The inspection may be read online at www.ofsted.gov.uk or in this handbook (Appendix 8).

BOARDING IN PRACTICE 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 assistants. Boarding staff have a weekly House meeting to discuss the boarders' welfare.

There is always a House Master, Matron/First Aider and Assistant House Master on duty. 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 the Head of Boarding and thereafter the Deputy Head; if the issue is academic, then parents should contact the Form Tutor and thereafter the Director of Studies.

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 chaplain, Father Alexander Master, or one of the other Cathedral chaplains. The School has also appointed an Independent Listener, the Head Teacher of a neighbouring School whose telephone number is clearly displayed in boarders' phone booth. Posters on the dormitory walls give boarders telephone numbers of a number of individuals and agencies they can contact if they wish. Please see Appendix 3. Please also refer to the School's anti-bullying policy: Appendix 5.

Rewards and sanctions

The School operates two systems of rewards and sanctions, a 'school day' system and a 'boarding and chorister time' system. WCCS is, after all, home for boarding choristers for much of the year.

The rewards and sanctions policy for boarding choristers is detailed in Appendix 4.

Corporal punishment

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.

PROBATIONERS ...

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

No decision to end a boy's career at the Choir School is taken lightly, and not before discussion has taken place between the Music Department, the School and parents.

Once a boy has started at the Choir School, 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. In the Michaelmas term probationers do not attend Mass on Thursdays. From the Lent term probationers take turns to spend a week following the full chorister routine. From the Trinity term probationers have the same visiting times as the choristers.

On their arrival probationers are given a mentor from among the Year 8 choristers. They also have their own Tutor on the boarding team who meets them one evening per week and monitors their progress and pastoral welfare.

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

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. Parents are encouraged to help their son practice, if they are able to visit on Wednesday afternoons.

... AND CHORISTERS

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

Birthdays

If a chorister's birthday falls during term time, he can celebrate his birthday with a party at School, normally on Wednesday evenings (the non-singing day). The birthday boy can choose whom to have sitting with him at his table, with up to nine chorister and day boy guests from his year group, or the year group directly above or below his own. The whole House joins in the celebration and the chefs provide a special birthday menu and a personalised cake! 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. They also complete up to three preps at the weekend. If you are able to assist your son with prep on Wednesday afternoons and on Saturday, please check and sign your son's prep diary. During visiting times, parents are welcome to use an empty classroom for prep. If you have any concern with academic work, parents should contact their son's form teacher.

Jewellery

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

Games consoles

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.

The boarding House does own several games' consoles which each boy can play for a thirty minute slot up to twice a week. Occasionally other activities may be organised instead of such slots.

Boys are not permitted to bring in their own consoles or ipods, with the sole exception of for 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.

Pocket money

Boarders rarely need pocket money. £5 per half-term (no more than £10), deposited with the House Master in £1 or £2 coins on the first day of each half-term, will usually suffice. Please provide a named wallet. Boarders must hand pocket money in to the House Master to be locked in the staff room safe.

Tuck

Boarders may bring a moderate amount of 'tuck' to School, which they may eat on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Any boarders not going visiting on Saturdays will also be given some sweets.

For the smooth running of this system, parents are asked to bring in tuck at the beginning of each half of term, with two tubes of sweets/ bars of chocolate (or equivalent) for every week of the half

term. Please do not bring in larger bags of tuck which need measuring out. Tuck must be handed in to the House Master for storage in the staff room.

Hair

Choristers are constantly in the public eye. Choir dress requires that hair should be short and discreet in style. 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! Every boy has a lockable area in his bedroom to keep personal items.

Television

Boys look forward to the film night every Friday evening and there are opportunities throughout the week to watch television. 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.

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 may phone home on alternate nights using the phone booth in the boarding House. Calls can be made between 7.30 pm (7.00 pm for probationers) and 8.20 pm, when assembly begins. Calls should last approximately five minutes, so that other boarders can have access to the phone.

Boarders in Year 4 and 5 may phone on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; boarders in Year 6, 7 and 8 may phone on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays.

Incoming calls, or a text requesting a call from your son, can be made to the Duty House Master:

Duty House Master

Tel 07717 493 509

If you do not receive an answer and your call is urgent, please try the Matron Mobile:

Matron

Tel 07803 634 237

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 except Fridays (when the evening house film beckons, and all boys can phone).

Boys in Year 4 and 5 may email on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Boys in Year 6, 7 and 8 may email on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Boys must use their @choirschool.com email address.

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.

Social events

Coffee and cake is served after 10.30am Mass every Sunday morning in the School refectory. This is a brief opportunity to see your son before the 12.10 pm Song School, and to talk to House and Cathedral music staff and other parents.

Parents and siblings are invited to lunch on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. A charge is made for adults over 16 years of age. In addition, families and friends are invited to a reception with the boys after the Christmas Celebration in December and after Vespers on the last Sunday of recording week in July.

Due to the late hour of the night there is no opportunity for visiting after the Easter Vigil or after Midnight Mass.

Visiting

The Choir School recruits choristers from across the UK and provides frequent visiting

opportunities for families. We ask that parents fully support the School's visiting policy which aims to balance the need for visiting without causing inconvenience or resentment on the part of those who are not able to visit.

Therefore, boys may go visiting with their parents, relatives or friends (with written parental permission) on either Saturday or Sunday, *but not both*. The majority of boys visit on a Saturday. The School arranges activities for boys staying at School on Saturdays.

There is also the opportunity for visiting on Wednesdays after School. (When major feasts or occasions fall on a Wednesday the choristers' day off and visiting generally switches to Thursday.)

When picking your son up or dropping him off after visiting, we ask you to understand the need for privacy for other boys who may be changing by not entering the bedrooms.

For the formal procedure for requesting absences, please see p 18 in this handbook. Boarding staff are not able to grant absences on an ad hoc basis, even if the request does not directly infringe on chorister duties.

Probationers' parents' visiting times

Please note that a boarder may go out visiting before 2.30 pm on a Saturday if a parent is satisfied that his or her son has satisfactorily completed his prep. Please inform the House Master on duty and complete the sign-out sheet.

Saturday: (10.30 am – 11.00 am for prep, optional)
11.00 am – 8.00 pm (from the Trinity term visiting begins at 2.30 pm)
or
Sunday: 4.30 pm – 8.00 pm

Wednesday: 3.45 pm – 4.50 pm
(5.00 pm – 5.30 pm for prep; 5.30 pm – 6.30 pm instrument practice,
– parents welcome to assist)

Choristers' parents' visiting times

Saturday: (2.00 pm – 2.30 pm for prep, optional)
2.30 pm – 8.00 pm
or
Sunday: 4.30 pm – 8.00 pm

Wednesday: 3.45 pm – 4.50 pm

Chorister parents do not normally visit their sons during the week, unless there has been a special service or concert that they have attended, in which case they are welcome to drop into the Choir School to mingle with other families. Whilst there is not a strict limit we ask parents to be considerate of the feelings of boarders whose parents cannot easily visit on weekdays by not visiting regularly on non-visiting days.

Boarders not going out with their parents on Saturday afternoons will normally enjoy an organised activity, publicised well in advance in the termly School diary.

Visiting arrangements are usually made by email with the Head of Boarding. A form is provided for the signing in and out of boarders; its completion is mandatory.

A House Master is available every Saturday, at the beginning and end of visiting time, to provide informal feedback to parents and discuss any matters of concern.

After School music concerts boys are permitted to go out until 4.20 pm and must be back for Song School at 4.30 pm. They should not have drinks that will have a deleterious effect on their voices, i.e. drinks and food with a high sugar or dairy content.

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, and in the diary sent to parents at the beginning of every term.

Probationers follow academic term dates. In the Michaelmas term, probationers and choristers have a long weekend (exeat). Choristers stay in residence until Christmas Day and Easter Day.

For choristers there is a further exeat immediately following Prize Giving in July, before returning for Recording Week.

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.

HEALTH

Matron is responsible for the health of the boarders. If your son is ill during term time, Matron or another member of staff will contact you by telephone, particularly if your son has had to go to medical room. 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 doctor is Dr A. Thakore.

Dr A. Thakore
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, the Matron or 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 GPD (General Patient Directive) from your 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 such as a physiotherapist or counsellor.

Parents should contact Matron direct if they wish to discuss their son's health.

Tel 0780 363 4237

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 suitably trained member of staff (First-Aider).

Matron and the domestic staff are responsible for ensuring that the School is clean and hygienic. They also supervise the laundry.

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.

Check-ups

Optician: We recommend that boys have their eyes tested every two years, as their eyesight changes.

Dentist: We recommend six monthly check-ups, with appointments made in School holidays. If your son needs a dental appliance, such as a brace, please contact Mr Martin Baker to discuss its musical impact.

Tel 020 7798 9057 **Email** martinbaker@rcdow.org.uk

Hair

Beside the requirements of public performances, short haircuts helps to check for, and prevent the spread of head lice. Parents are asked to check for head lice regularly, and at least during holidays. Clean hair does not preclude head lice, though keeping hair short helps. Three of the best brands for treating head lice are NYDA, Full Marks and Hedrin.

Fingernails

Boys should have had their finger and toe nails cut before returning to School from holidays. Long fingernails can get in the way of playing musical instruments! It is possible to keep on top of this on Saturdays before visiting when the boys change from uniform into casuals. Matron can advise you in the case of ingrown toenails.

Verrucas

The School requests that parents check regularly for verrucas (planter warts). We recommend liquid nitrogen as the best over-the-counter treatment; it requires administering once a week which can be done by a parent or guardian on Wednesday or Saturday visiting. 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.

Hayfever

If your son suffers from Hayfever 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.

Vocal Hygiene

As recommended by speech therapist:

Harmful habits

- Shouting
- Throat clearing/coughing
- Whispering
- Talking over background noise

How to help your voice:

- Drink plenty of water – at least 8 cups a day
- Try plain steam inhalations and keep rooms humidified/ventilated
- 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
- Learn to relax and make time each day to do so
- Take regular exercise
- Avoid excessive throat clearing – try swallowing hard (chin tuck)

Chorister diet

As recommended by speech therapist:

1. Prior to singing, avoid rich dairy products such as cream, full fat yoghurts, ice cream and cheese
2. In breaks during performances a suitable snack is water only and a plain dry biscuit or half a banana
3. Boys should avoid chocolate due to the dehydrating effect of its caffeine and dairy content
4. Curries should be avoided as they can cause reflux
5. 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
6. Sucking strong mints/mentholated lozenges should be avoided. Sula drops and Ricola are

preferable and are available from Holland and Barrett and pharmacists.

Medical visits

Please also refer to the whole-school Health and Safety policy and Medical policy, which are available upon request from the Head of Activities, Mr Alexander Thomas.

Tel 020 7798 9032 **Email** athomas@choirschool.com

SAFETY

The School's full Health and Safety policy is available on request from the Head of Activities, Mr Alexander Thomas.

Tel 020 7798 9032 **Email** athomas@choirschool.com

Accidents

All accidents which required medical attention are recorded by the Matron or First-Aider on duty.

Disaster plans

Should the School need to be evacuated, all pupils 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 pupils 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.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment for the whole complex is the responsibility of the Diocesan Trustees. The School has two Health and Safety Committees, one domestic and one academic, which raise any concerns with the Cathedral's Clerk of Works. The Health and Safety Advisor is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments for all on-site and off-site activities involving pupils have been done.

In addition, staff and pupils complete a risk assessment exercise on all areas of the School annually, as part of the PSHCE programme, to heighten awareness of potential risks and hazards.

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 lock-up procedure every evening.

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 (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. A number of contemporary works has 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.

To request an absence, please email Robert O'Brien who will liaise with the Head Master and Master of Music.

Email robrien@choirschool.com

Communication

The Master of Music makes direct contact with parents with details of forthcoming concerts and tours. He will also advise which choristers will be involved.

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.

Recordings

The Choir regularly records CDs on the Hyperion label.

Services in the Cathedral

Choristers sing at the following services.

Holy Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday	5.30 pm
Saturday and Sunday	10.30 am

Solemn Vespers and Benediction

Sunday	3.30 pm
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Song School

Boarders attend Song School (choir rehearsal) every day, except Wednesdays.

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 abroad and in recent years has visited Brazil, the USA, Belgium, Norway, Italy and Northern Ireland. 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. 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.

School music department

All choristers learn the piano, plus one orchestral instrument. In addition, they have a singing lesson on a Saturday morning and a theory of music lesson during the academic week. 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.

Chaplaincy

The School Chaplain is Father Alexander Master. His role is to work with the Head of RS and SMSCD to organise School services, prepare boys for sacraments and develop spiritual and pastoral initiatives within the School. He also leads prayers at Monday evening House assembly for boarders.

Canon Christopher Tuckwell, the Administrator of the Cathedral is also involved in the School, and a Governor.

Sacramental life

Boys may be prepared at School for their First Holy Communion. Preparation is usually from January to May or June. The Sacrament of Confession is available to boarders formally twice a year (before Christmas and Easter) but also on request when the chaplain visits for evening prayers.

School Masses

In addition to the capitular liturgy which the choristers sing, there are School Masses at the beginning and end of each term, every Wednesday during term, on Holy Days of Obligation and on Ash Wednesday. Details are published in the School Diary. Parents, relatives and guardians are most welcome at all services. When, for major events and feasts that fall on a Wednesday, choristers sing the capitular liturgy, they do not attend the School Mass.

Prayers

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

On Wednesday morning there is a whole-School Mass. On Mondays and Fridays prayers are said during Form registration. Grace is said formally before and after breakfast, lunch and supper.

Within the boarding House night prayers are said at assembly every evening.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Governance

His Grace, the 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, including education. The Governors delegate responsibility for the day-to-day running of the School to the Head Master. The governor who has a special brief to oversee the boarding provision at WCCS is Mrs Maria Church, who can be contacted via the School office.

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 Appendix 7.

Suspension and expulsion policy

Please see Appendix 6.

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

Termly fees for boarders for the academic year 2011/12 are £2494. Fees are payable by direct debit, termly and in advance. They represent about a quarter of the true cost of educating a chorister at WCCS.

Fees are inclusive of books, food, piano lessons, 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 Hardship Fund

For parents who have applied successfully to the CSA and need further assistance, application may be made to the Hardship 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

Extras

The following activities are charged as 'extras'.

Academic and examinations

- Termly prep diary
- Termly calendar
- Common Entrance examination fees
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT)
- External interview training

Music

- Hire of musical instruments (£40.00 per term)
- Individual music tuition (£37.40 per hour)
- Sheet music
- Instrumental music exams
- Music theory exams
- School Mass & Assembly Book

Clubs

- These change on a termly basis and are charged as extras only where there are professional fees to be paid.

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.

Subsidies from the Chorister Music Fund

Any income received on behalf of the choristers is used for the benefit of all, for outings to the cinema, theatre, ice skating etc. It also pays for items that are extra and beyond those normally provided by the School to enhance the boarding environment, like recreational equipment for the Common Room. On leaving the School, choristers also receive a financial gesture towards their five years' service.

Special Educational Needs

Individual SEN support is charged to parents. 35-minute one-to-one lessons are £17.50; paired/group lessons are £13.50. These costs include a 50% reduction for SEN support.

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 drama production is organised for all boys in the Year Group; the costs for choristers are paid out of the Chorister Music Fund.

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: Old Boys' tie, regular mailings and an invitation to the annual Cardinal Hume Dinner. Parents who wish to opt out must write to the chairman of the Old Boys' Association at the School address by the first day of the Michaelmas term in Year 8.

Appendix I

What to bring to School

The School requests that all uniform is purchased from the School supplier, Stevensons.

It is essential that all belongings are clearly labelled with stitched on labels. *Please bring spare labels in September so matron can add any should the need arise.* Due to the limitations of space in the boarding House, we like to keep a minimum of casual clothes, which can be changed seasonally. If boys do exchange their casual clothes regularly, it is essential that these are labelled.

Please ensure that all articles of clothing are machine washable at 40 degrees, able to be tumble dried, and in good condition. Clothes can shrink in the wash and we advise parents to buy bigger sizes.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The School has a summer and a winter uniform. Summer uniform is worn for the whole of the Trinity (summer) term and for the first half of the Michaelmas term.

Summer uniform

Short trousers for boys in Years 3, 4 & 5

Long trousers for boys in Years 6, 7 & 8

Winter uniform

Long trousers for all boys

ALL BOYS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

Uniform

- School blazer: *with loop for hanging on peg*
- School tie x 2
- School shirt x 3: *charcoal*
- Pullover x 2: *Stevensons: grey with school trim*
- Long trousers: *charcoal*
- Short trousers: *charcoal: summer term, Years 3, 4 & 5 only*
- 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, for school use. NOT moccasin, suede or boot style*

Games

- Rugby shirt: *Stevensons: school colours*
- Tracksuit top and bottoms: *Stevensons: school colours; must be black*
- Rugby shorts: *Stevensons: black with school colours*
- Games shorts: *White*
- Rugby socks: *Stevensons: school colours*
- Gym socks: *white*
- Swimming trunks: *Preferably a plain dark colour, not shorts*
- Polo shirt: *Stevensons: white with school crest*
- Cricket whites: *Summer term only, and only if your son is chosen for a School team*

- Football/Rugby boots/shin pads: *Michaelmas and Lent Terms only*
- Trainers: *white*
- Swimming goggles: *Named please*
- Swimming kit bag (available from matron: £3)
- Bootbag: *waterproof*
- Gum shield: *Lent Term for contact rugby: www.shockdoctor.com*

Boarding

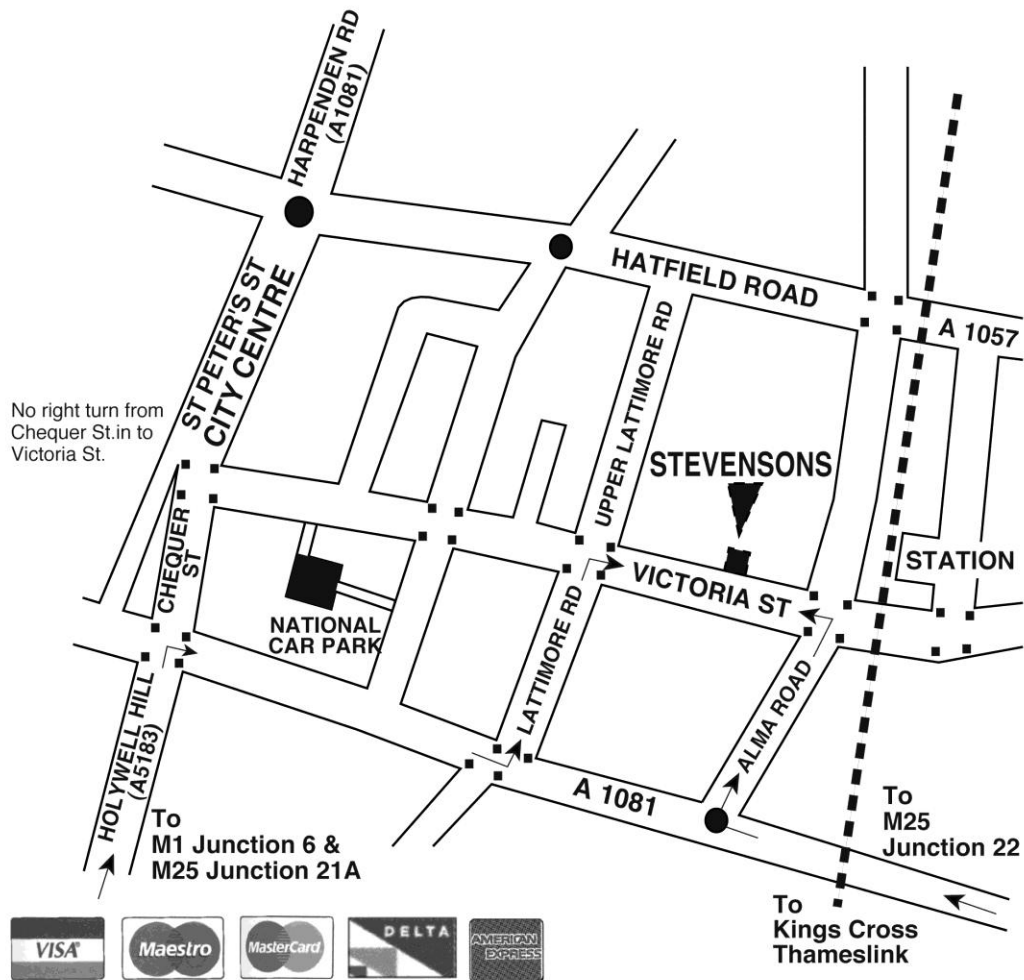
- Shoes: *In addition to school shoes, one pair black leather traditional lace up for the Cathedral and professional concerts*
- 1 white shirt: *plain with button cuffs. Try Peter Jones: www.johnlewis.com*
- Trainers: *black, for the playground*
- Jeans: *2 pairs*
- Casual shorts: *summer term, optional*
- T-shirts: *x 2 plain cotton for casual wear. NO football shirts please*
- Casual shirts x 2: *long sleeved for casual wear*
- Rugby shirt: *For casual wear*
- Long sleeve top: *For casual wear*
- Fleece
- Duvet covers and pillow cases: *Easy Care: 2 sets, named*
- Dressing Gown: *towelling, looped for hanging on peg, and belt sewn on*
- Pyjamas: *x2 cotton knit for winter; x2 cotton for summer*
- Flip flops: *for use in the shower*
- 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 white cotton*
- Washbag: *clearly named, containing the following NAMED items:*
- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Shower gel, shampoo
- Nail clippers
- Pocket combs x 4
- Roll on deodorant (Years 6-8)
- Handkerchiefs: *x 4 cotton, named for the vestry*
- Shoe polish: *Named, tin of black polish*
- Wash-in-net-laundry bag: *named very clearly; large (17" x 24") net bag: most resilient product available from matron for £6*
- Cuddly toy
- WCCS music bag: *For storing sheet music. Obtainable from Mr Kennedy*
- Pencil case: *fully equipped and named*
- Named large suitcase on wheels
- 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

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

STEVENSONS

131-135 VICTORIA STREET ST ALBANS HERTFORDSHIRE AL1 3XS
 Telephone: 01727 853262 Fax 01727 845123 Email: sales@stevensonsschoolwear.co.uk

Westminster Cathedral Choir School – Order Form

ITEM	Size	Quantity	Item Price	TOTAL PRICE
BLAZER – cherry red				
TIE – red/magenta				
PULLOVER – grey with school trim				
WINTER SHIRT – grey oxford				
LONG TROUSERS – medium grey				
SHORT TROUSERS – medium grey				
SCHOOL SOCKS – grey for long trousers				
KNEE HIGH SOCKS – grey with school colours				
SCHOOL COAT – black, Target Dry				
RUGBY SHIRT – red/magenta, embroidered				
POLO SHIRT – white, embroidered				
TRACKSUIT TOP – school design				
TRACKSUIT BOTTOM – school design				
RUGBY SHORTS – black, WCS embroidered				
GAMES SHORTS – white, polyester/cotton				
RUGBY SOCKS – school colours				
GYM SOCKS – white				
WOVEN NAME TAPES				
SWIMMING TRUNKS – plain dark colour				

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS **TOTAL**

Child's name for name tapes Blue/Red

My name and address is:

Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss Initials Surname

Address

Post Code

Telephone

I wish to pay by: *Please tick*

Visa
 Mastercard
 Maestro
 Delta
 American Express

Card Number or Cheque, payable to Stevensons Ltd.

Start date Expiry date last 3 Digit Security code Issue No.

Card holders signature from signature strip Date

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

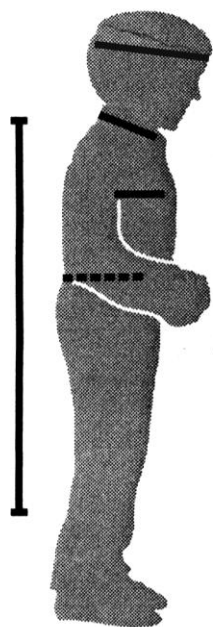
Telephone orders will be promptly dispatched free of postage. Call our order line on 01727 853262 selecting option 1. Having your Credit/Debit Card details to hand.

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@stevensonschoolwear.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



Age years	Height cm/inches
Cap	Measure round the fullest part of the head starting at the middle forehead	 cm/inches
Collar	Measure around base of neck, inserting two fingers between neck and tape to allow for growth	 cm/inches
Chest	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
Waist	Measure around natural waistline	 cm/inches
Coat/Overall length	Measure from nape of neck to length required	 cm/inches

Appendix 2 BOARDERS' ROUTINE (SAMPLE)

BOARDERS' ROUTINE

Mon/Tues/Thur/Fri

Time	Choristers	Probationers
Morning		
6.45 am	Rise	
7.00 am	Breakfast	
7.30 am	Prepare for music practice	
7.35 am	Music practice begins	
8.00 am	Music practice ends	
	Washroom	
8.10 am	Song School	Probationer rehearsal
9.00 am	Registration	
Afternoon		
3.35 pm	Tea	
3.50 pm	Prepare for prep	
3.55 pm	Prep begins	
4.25 pm	Prep ends. Assemble	Prep continues until 4.40 pm
4.30 pm	Song School	4.45 pm Instrument practice
4.50 pm	Wash hands & vesting	
5.05 pm	Song School	5.15 pm: Vesting
5.30 pm	MASS	MASS (not Thursdays in Michaelmas term)
Evening		
6.30 pm	Supper	
7:00pm	Prepare for instrument practice	
7.05 pm	Instrument practice begins	Free time
7.30 pm	Instrument practice ends	
	Email/ phones/ free time	
7.45 pm	Year 4 to showers	
7.50 pm	Year 5 to showers	
8.00 pm	Year 6 to showers	
8.05 pm	Year 7 to showers	
8.10 pm	Year 8 to showers	
8.20 pm	Assembly & prayers	
8.35 pm	Silent reading/ tutor groups	
8.40 pm	Junior bedroom lights out	
8.45 pm	Middle bedroom lights out	
8.50 pm	Senior bedroom lights out	

BOARDERS' ROUTINE

Wednesday

Time	Choristers	Probationers
Morning		
7.30 am	Rise	
7.45 am	Breakfast	
8.15 am	Washroom	
8.20 am	Free time	
8.35 am	Playground bell	
Afternoon		
3.35 pm	Tea	
	Showers	
	Clubs, visiting or free time	
4.50 pm	Visiting ends	
	Prepare for prep	
5.00 pm	Prep begins	
5.30 pm	Prep ends/Prepare for instrument practice	
5.35 pm	Practice (1) begins	
6.05 pm	Practice (2) begins	
6.30 pm	Practice ends	
Evening		
6.35 pm	Supper	
7.05 pm	Free time	
7.45 pm	Year 4 and 5 to showers	
7.55 pm	Year 6 and 7 to showers	
8.00 pm	Year 8 to showers	
8.20 pm	Assembly & Prayers	
8.35 pm	Silent reading/ tutor groups	
8.40 pm	Junior bedroom lights out	
8.45 pm	Middle bedroom lights out	
8.50 pm	Senior bedrooms light out	

BOARDERS' ROUTINE

Saturday

Time	Choristers	Probationers
Morning		
7.15 am	Rise (in uniform)	
7.30 am	Breakfast	
8.00 am	Washroom	
8.05 am	Assemble	
8.07 am	Song School	Song School
8.30 am		Prep
9.00 am		
9.15 am	Free time (outside)	Music theory
		9.45 am: Tidy desks
9.35 am	Wash hands, vesting, assemble	10.00 am: Prep
9.45 am	Song School	
10.30 am	MASS	Singing lessons and prep
11.00 am		Casuals & visiting**
11.25 am	Snack	
11.30 am	Free time	
Afternoon		
12.05 pm	Assemble	
12.10 pm	Song School	
1.00 pm	Lunch	
1.30 pm	Prepare for prep	
1.35 pm	Prep begins*	
2.30 pm	Prep ends	
	Casuals & visiting	
3 pm	Schools closes	
Evening		
6 pm	School re-opens	
6.30 pm	Supper (for non-visiting boarders)	
7.00 pm	Free time	
7.30 pm	Juniors to showers	
7.40 pm	Seniors to showers	
8.00 pm	End of visiting, showers	
8.30 pm	Assembly and Prayers	
8.40 pm	Lights out all rooms	

* Song School is occasionally timetabled during this time in preparation for Sunday's music.

** Note that from the Trinity (Summer Term) probationer visiting is from 2.30 pm

BOARDERS' ROUTINE

Sunday

Time	Choristers	Probationers
Morning		
7.45 am	Rise (in full uniform) Tidy lockers, prep rooms, common room	
8.15 am	Breakfast	
8.45 am	Free time (outside)	
9.15 am	Wash hands & prepare for vesting	Playground/ board games
9.20 am	Vesting	
9.30 am	Song School	
10.15 am		Vesting
10.30 am	MASS	MASS
11.45 am	Tea for parents	
Afternoon		
12.10 pm	Assemble	
12.15 pm	Song School	Free time
1.00 pm	Lunch	
1.40 pm	Free time (outside)	
2.30 pm	Wash hands & prepare for vesting	Free time
2.35 pm	Vesting	
2.45 pm	Song School	3.10 pm: Vesting
3.30 pm	VESPERS	VESPERS
4.30 pm	Free time: computer slots, DVD, tuck Visiting	
Evening		
6.30 pm	Supper	
7.00 pm	Free time	
7.30 pm	Year 4 to showers	
7.35 pm	Year 5 to showers	
7.45 pm	Year 6 to showers	
7.50 pm	Year 7 to showers	
7.55 pm	Year 8 to showers	
8.00 pm	End of visiting	
8.20 pm	Assembly & Prayers	
8.25 pm	Reading period	
8.40 pm	Lights out all bedrooms	

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 boarding staff (House Masters, Matrons, Gap Students)
- A teacher
- The Head Master, Mr McLaughlan
- The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children (DSP), Mr Jenkins.

The School secretaries: Lesley Vigurs or Madeline Smith in the office (you can pop into the office and ask Lesley a question, or send her an email or note; Lesley could also find a time for you to chat to Mr McLaughlan)

Outside contacts

- Mr Jack O'Neill, Independent Listener, is 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 07711 347584

- Childline

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

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

APPENDIX 4

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS POLICY FOR BOARDING CHORISTERS

The purpose of this policy is to raise the standard of behaviour among boarding choristers at Westminster Cathedral Choir School. The policy has two aims.

1. To reward good behaviour
2. To provide a coherent system of sanctions for minor and major breaches of discipline for boarders, outside the academic day

REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOUR THE MERIT SYSTEM

The purpose of the chorister merit system is to reward good behaviour.

The chorister merit system applies outside of the normal academic day.

Chorister merits are awarded for:

Musical	Behavioural	Organisational
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribution to music• Exceptional behaviour during choir time• Application to instrument practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting an example in the boarding house• Fostering house spirit• Good time-keeping• Kindness to others• Politeness and thoughtfulness to fellow boarders, staff and guests• Productive or creative use of recreational time• Service to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tidiness• Helping staff with house chores• Exemplary deportment as a chorister

Recording Merits

- Choristers are given a merit slip which staff drop into the merit box
- Merit totals are compiled once weekly

Rewards for Merits

Weekly

- The boarder with the most merits receives extra tuck

- All boarders who receive three or more merits receive a small prize, often sweets

Annually

- The Hannigan Prize is given at Prize Giving to the boarder in Year 8 who has made the biggest contribution to boarding life

SANCTIONING POOR BEHAVIOUR THE DEMERIT SYSTEM

The purpose of the demerit system is to sanction poor behaviour.

Demerits may be issued for:

Musical	Behavioural	Organisational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupting music • Poor behaviour in the sacristy or when vesting • Lack of effort in instrument practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption at quiet times in the boarding house • Poor time-keeping • Graffiti • Unkindness to others • Foul language • Rough or harmful behaviour • Being out of bounds • Littering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untidiness • Persistent scruffiness

Recording Demerits

- Choristers are given a demerit slip which dropped into the merit box by the member of staff issuing the demerit

Sanctions

In addition to receiving a demerit, 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 7.00 pm - 7.45 pm)
- Lines
- Stand outside bedroom

MAJOR BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE

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

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

Disciplinary Breach	Range of Sanctions
Theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil sent home • Suspension • Invitation to withdraw • Expulsion
Persistent aggressive, abusive or disruptive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Suspension* • Step 2: Invitation to withdraw • Step 3: Expulsion
Bringing illegal substances on to the premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension** • Invitation to withdraw • Expulsion (in grave cases)

* Followed by formation of an Individual Behavioural Plan, including meeting with the Head of Pastoral Care, other relevant members of staff and/or experts

** Followed by Individual Behaviour Plan

Reporting Major Breaches of Discipline

Any major breach of School discipline must be recorded on a School Incident Report Form, available on the staff drive.

This report should be submitted directly to the Head of Pastoral Care. He will speak to the pupil(s) involved, research any incident and then take action in accordance with the sanctions policy.

Pupils returning to school

Any pupil sent home must return to School accompanied by his parent(s)/carer/guardian for a meeting with the Head of Pastoral Care and/or Head Master.

Pupils who have been sent home may be placed on a Behaviour Report Card for a period.

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 pupil is at issue.

(See Terms and Conditions, 49)

APPENDIX 5

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aims and objectives

At Westminster Cathedral Choir School, we base our ethos upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Westminster Cathedral Choir School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website, and on request. It is also available and known to staff and boarders, including junior and recently-appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the school.

Definition of bullying

‘Bullying may be defined as: behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally.’ (DCSF: *Safe to learn*)

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Cyberbullying – definition

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

‘Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.’

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking sites, like Bebo, Facebook and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

The school’s response to bullying

At Westminster Cathedral Choir School (in line with the DCSF’s *Safe to Learn* guidance) we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school’s policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying, should be investigated by parents and teachers.

Preventative measures

We take the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with Westminster Cathedral Choir School:

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the School's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first week at Westminster Cathedral Choir School. They are required to read the School's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHCE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other
- Boys have a *Love thy Neighbour* section of their prep diary that outlines whom boys can talk to and what to do if they feel someone else is being bullied
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama may also highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place, in line with our policy on whistle-blowing
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely by the Head of Pastoral Care in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, who support the Head of Pastoral Care and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Inset sessions are held regularly
- The School Chaplains will give support and guidance to pupils of all beliefs who are able to refer themselves to them, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a diverse community
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour
- In boarding houses, there is a strong team of tutors supporting the Head of Boarding and the Matron, all of whom act *in loco parentis*. The informal House environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. A member of the boarding House staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils
- We encourage close contact between the Head of Boarding, Head of Pastoral Care, and parents/guardians
- All boarders and their parents are made aware of the contents of the school's anti-bullying policy and are aware that they can download copies from the school's web site. All boarders know how to report anxieties to their House Master or to another member of the pastoral team

- Our medical room displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline; this information is also displayed in the boarders' phone booth
- All pupils have access to a telephone should they wish to call a helpline
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boys and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils
- We have banned initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the School, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures

Cyberbullying – preventative measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Westminster Cathedral Choir School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in assemblies, which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists' and sharing personal data
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe
- Mobile phones are not permitted in School and must be handed in to the Deputy Head
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed at any time

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved
- The victim will be interviewed on his own and may be asked to write an account of events
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events
- The incident should be recorded on a school Incident Report Form and signed and dated before it is given to the Head of Pastoral Care (if he is not investigating the issue) who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences, securely in a locked cabinet in his office
- The Head of Pastoral Care will inform the tutors and/ or the House Master of both the bully/bullies and the victim[s] as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Head Master should be informed
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him why revenge is inappropriate. He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He will be offered guidance on modifying his behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the School's Behaviour Policy; for

example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect permanent exclusion

- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head Master has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Westminster Cathedral Choir School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The School may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level

APPENDIX 6

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

The School reserves the right to suspend a pupil 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

No chorister will be suspended without consultation with the Master of Music. 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:

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

The Chairman 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 Chairman of Governors, having taken appropriate professional or other advice from whomsoever he considers suitable. For example, a boy may be expelled from WCCS 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
- Gross rudeness to members of staff or other employees of the School

- Parental failure to disclose all known facts about the pupil, 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 pupil they should write within two weeks of receiving the letter of exclusion to:

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

The Chairman 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.

APPENDIX 7

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The WCCS complaints procedure is provided to parents of current and prospective pupils, and to all staff. It is also posted on in the School's website, www.choirschool.com. Boarding pupils have their own, separate complaints procedure, which is displayed publicly in the boarding house, and available to parents upon request.

The School's complaints procedure complies with Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the regulatory body which now inspects boarding schools.

ISI is not responsible for individual complaints about the day-to-day running of a school. The chain of complaint is:

1. Head Master
2. Governing body
3. Department for Education

(There is a possibility that Local Authorities may be involved in the chain of complaint; for example, when the complaint concerns prolonged absences from school or statements of special educational needs.)

Guidance on school issues can be obtained from DFE public enquiries.

Tel 0370 000 2288

As a parent of a child at the School, you will be informed when the school is about to be inspected. The inspection team cannot investigate or comment on individual complaints, but will look for examples of the School's compliance with its own policies and with regulatory requirements.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally at the Form Tutor/Teacher level, 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 Head Master. The Head Master will then decide the appropriate course of action to take
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of how, and at what stage, they were resolved
- In most cases the Head Master 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 Head Master to carry out further investigations
- The Head Master will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and may ask his PA to record the meeting
- Once the Head Master 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 Head Master will also give reasons for his decision
- Stage 2 of the process will be completed within 28 days (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 the Clerk of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors 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 School. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors, 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, teacher 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 Head Master, the Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been made.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except insofar as is required of the School by paragraph 6 (2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents may ask for the number of complaints registered under our formal Complaints Procedure during the preceding School year.

Tel 020 7931 6099 **Email** office@choirschool.com

APPENDIX 8

OFSTED Report (March 2011)

Westminster Cathedral Choir School

Inspection report for Boarding School

Unique reference number	SC010896
Inspection date	14/03/2011
Inspector	David Coulter
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Choir School, Ambrosden Avenue, LONDON, SW1P 1QH
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Telephone number	020 77989081
Email	
Registered person	Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustee
Head/Principal	Neil McLaughlan
Nominated person	Neil McLaughlan
Date of last inspection	10/09/2008

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Westminster Cathedral Choir School is the only Roman Catholic boarding choir school in the country. All boarders are choristers and are an integral part of the Cathedral community. Boys are admitted from the age of eight until the age of 13. Choristers sing everyday during term time, the exception being on Wednesdays. The choir's duties extend to national and international engagements. Admission follows informal and formal voice trials. Every chorister receives formal musical tuition and the school prepares boys for common entrance and scholarships to leading public schools. The boys have opportunities to see their parents regularly every weekend. At the time of the inspection the school had 27 choristers. All choristers participated in the inspection through group interviews.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The aim of the announced inspection was to determine the nature and quality of boarding provision within the school and to determine how it was meeting the national minimum standards. Particular attention was paid to safeguarding procedures and arrangements for meeting the welfare needs of choristers. All key standards were examined. Information was obtained from interviews with boarders and staff, parents questionnaires, observations of choristers' activities and an examination of a range of records and documents. A full tour of the school, including boarding facilities, was undertaken.

Evidence indicates the school has made great progress in improving all aspects of boarding provision. Since the last inspection the senior staff team have updated all policies and procedures in line with recent legislative changes and best practice guidance. These policies have been translated into working practices that keep both choristers and staff safe in a range of different settings. Choristers are effectively supervised and supported by a group of well motivated staff. The recent refurbishment of the boarding department has been greatly appreciated by both boarders and staff. The new accommodation has been extremely well-planned and maximises the building's limited space extremely effectively. The refurbishment and redecoration programme has created high quality boarding facilities that are tastefully decorated and appropriately furnished.

Choristers continue to make considerable progress and perform successfully academically, musically and in sporting and extra-curricular activities. Choristers spoke in positive terms about their experiences in the school. While acknowledging that the life of a chorister can be demanding, they were also clear it is also stimulating and fun. They were all clearly aware that as members of a world class

cathedral choir they are provided with opportunities to participate in events of often national and international importance. During the last year they have performed on the first night of the Proms and sang at a service for the Pope during his recent visit to Britain. Staff are clearly aware of the unusual demands made upon choristers and are pro-active in ensuring their wellbeing is never compromised. Staff are to be commended on the work they have done to raise the standard of boarding. Although there are two recommendations arising from the inspection, both are aimed at further improving the existing provision which is now outstanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations arising from the last report. All have been appropriately addressed:

Choristers' views are now regularly sought on the quality of food and their suggestions are incorporated into the menu planning process. Choristers reported a great improvement in the quality of food in recent times (NMS 24)

The introduction of newspapers and magazines and access to both a television and the internet provide opportunities for choristers to keep abreast of both domestic and international news (NMS 11).

The views of choristers about all aspects of their lives within the school are now regularly sought both formally through tutorial groups and boarders meetings and informally through discussions with staff and the introduction of a suggestions box (NMS 12).

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The concept of healthy living is promoted within the school and choristers are encouraged to eat wisely. Fresh produce is extensively used to create nutritionally balanced meals and choristers spoke in positive terms about the quality and quantity of food on offer. Catering staff are responsive to the needs of choristers and provide food that meets special dietary needs and cultural preferences. Snacks and drinks are available during regular breaks throughout the day. Staff monitor the eating habits of each individual to ensure they are eating appropriately. Cultural festivals and birthdays are celebrated with special meals. Although staff and boarders eat together, the dining area is somewhat spartan and does not create an environment conducive for social interaction.

The health and well-being of choristers is monitored on an on-going basis by boarding staff and the school nurse. There is an effective system that ensures health information and parental consents for medical interventions are obtained for all new choristers prior to admission. The boarding department benefits from the support of a local general practitioner who holds regular consultations in the boarding department. Boarding staff keep parents informed of the health and well-being of the

young people in their care.

In order to ensure there is appropriate emergency cover available at all times, all boarding staff are first aid trained. Treatment of minor ailments is carried out by the school nurse, boarding staff or the visiting general practitioner. There are clear policies and good working practices relating to the administration of medication. Systems have been established to ensure that choristers do not inappropriately access non-prescribed medicines. Very few of the choristers are in regular receipt of medication. Any chorister wanting to self-medicate has to demonstrate their competence before assuming the responsibility.

A well developed personal social health and citizenship education programme provides all pupils with excellent, age appropriate, guidance on social and health issues. Choristers, like other pupils in the school, are encouraged to be physically active and all regularly participate in sporting and recreational activities. Staff are clearly aware of the need to provide opportunities for choristers to play and all are provided with opportunities to access the school's recently refurbished playground at regular intervals throughout the day. There is an effective laundry system and bedding is changed regularly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Since the last inspection, the senior staff team have undertaken a comprehensive revision of the school's policies and procedures to ensure they comply with recent legislative changes and new child protection guidance. All staff receive annual safeguarding training. Boarding staff draw upon these policies to develop systems and working practices that keep choristers safe. Staff spoken with are clearly aware of their individual responsibilities in regard to the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.

Although boarding does not operate in isolation from the rest of the school, choristers reside within a residential community with its own distinct culture. Staff have created a nurturing environment that supports choristers to develop their musical, academic and social skills. Choristers live very full and active lives that include regular choral commitments in the Cathedral and engagements in other settings.

Choristers reside within a community with clear expectations in regard to behaviour. Boundaries are clear and consistently applied by both teaching and boarding staff. There is a clear rewards and sanctions policy and staff make clear the relationship between actions and likely consequences. Choristers feel they are treated fairly by staff and confirmed they are provided with clear guidance on what is and is not acceptable behaviour. Staff reported that boarders are normally well behaved and accepting of guidance. The academic, musical and sporting success of each boarder is recognised and celebrated. Staff reinforce positive behaviour with praise and encouragement. Although the school has an anti-bullying policy, staff and boarders

reported that bullying is not an issue.

Boarding staff know the young people in their care and are extremely sensitive to their needs. While choristers are all treated as individuals with their own specific needs there is an expectation all will subscribe to the ethos of the school and participate fully in the communal life of boarding. The diverse nature of the boarding population has clearly helped create a tolerant atmosphere in which choristers of different ages, from a wide range of social backgrounds can peacefully co-exist. There is an expectation that senior choristers will act as good role models for those in the younger age groups and provide encouragement and support if they are upset or feeling homesick. The interaction between choristers and staff was observed to be based on mutual respect. It was evident that young people were relaxed and comfortable in the company of staff.

Staff ensure the safety of young people by working within a risk management framework that requires individual activities to be risk assessed and strategies developed to address any areas of potential concern. Risk assessments are subject to regular review and updated in response to any incidents. The school occupies a secure area within the cathedral complex. Boarding facilities are located on the upper floors of the school. Boarders accommodation is off-limits to other pupils and access to other areas of the cathedral are via locked doors. There is excellent security around the site and access to the school can only be achieved by reporting to staff at the entrance and signing in. Staff are very aware of fire safety and ensure all steps are taken to protect the young people in their care. The fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuation exercises carried out. Fire safety equipment is regularly serviced.

The boarding department operates with a stable group of well-motivated and experienced staff many of whom also teach in the school. Both permanent and part-time staff have to successfully complete a comprehensive recruitment and vetting process before being appointed. Boarding staff work as a team and are clearly aware of their individual roles and responsibilities.

On admission, all choristers and their families are made aware of how to access the school's complaints process. No complaints have been made about any aspect of boarding since the last inspection. Choristers reported they would have no difficulty in reporting any personal worries or concerns to any of the boarding staff. An effective tutorial system ensures that the progress and well-being of each individual chorister is carefully monitored. Boarding staff maintain regular communication with parents and the head teacher provides a detailed weekly newsletter. Staff regularly seek out the views of choristers about all aspects of their lives within the school and address any concerns at an early stage.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Although the school has a clear Catholic ethos, many of the pupils are drawn from non-Catholic families. The population of the school is culturally diverse and contains young people from many different countries. Cultural diversity is celebrated and activities such as special meals are organised to celebrate national festivals. Both boarding and school staff reported that issues relating to discrimination based on race or religion have never been reported.

The school's central London location provides choristers opportunities to access a wide range of social and recreational activities. Recent activities have included visits to premiership football games, trips to the theatre, cinema, swimming and a visit to an indoor climbing wall. Choristers participate in all aspects of school life and are well represented in the school's sports teams and extra-curricular activities. Within the school site boarders can access a number of recreational areas including a large playground with purpose built play equipment. Choristers are also provided regular access to a library, computers, table tennis, television and a wide range of board games. Staff ensure there is a good balance of free and organised time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a well developed admissions policy that requires all prospective choristers to undertake a detailed academic and musical assessment. As all choristers have to reside residentially, trial stays are used to determine if they can cope with the unusual demands of a chorister's life. The full commitment of parents and the prospective chorister are required before a place is offered. New choristers are provided with a range of documents prior to admission that detail the nature of boarding provision. New choristers reported that the mentoring system was effective and that it had helped them settle in and establish relationships.

Choristers are regularly consulted by staff about all aspects of their lives within boarding and their ideas and suggestions are sought formally through regular tutorial group meetings and informally through discussions with individual staff. A suggestions box is also available. Choristers reported that staff respond positively to reasonable requests. Staff maintain frequent contact with choristers throughout the day and mealtimes provide opportunities for exchanging information. Boarding staff provide effective supervision without being intrusive and allow space for choristers to congregate and socialise together.

Choristers are kept informed of national and world events and are provided with access to newspapers, the internet and television. Being a multi-cultural school, staff are particularly adept at relating the significance of major events to the whole school community. As a day school with boarding, the school benefits from the involvement of pupils with a life beyond school. Choristers attend classes with day pupils and

establish many friendships that can often lead to home visits.

Boarders are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their families via a free phone and e-mail. Parents can contact school staff at any time. Evidence indicates that boarding staff are good at maintaining contact with parents and provide regular progress reports. Parents are welcome to visit at set times and are invited to special events. Staff are aware of the difficulties some parents from outside London can face in visiting regularly and aim to ensure that choristers do not feel unduly disadvantaged. Staff provide an exciting activity programme every Saturday for those choristers not being visited by parents.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Since the last key inspection boarding accommodation has been subject to a comprehensive refurbishment programme which has greatly improved the quality of the provision. The refurbishment was well planned and carried out in sympathy with the character of the building. Choristers now reside in three large age-appropriate rooms that have been reconfigured to maximise privacy and increase storage space. Choristers reported that they were generally good at respecting each others designated area. All the boarding areas were observed to be clean, bright and appropriately furnished. Choristers confirmed that their beds were comfortable and that mattresses are regularly changed. Choristers are clearly appreciative of the improvements and special mention was made of the lounge area which is now an extremely popular place in which to relax and play. Staff areas are completely separate and are off-limits to boarders.

The refurbishment programme has included the upgrading of toilet and shower areas to a very high standard. There are currently adequate showers and baths to meet the needs of the current boarding population. Although the boarding area was found to be comfortably warm and draught free, a number of senior choristers reported that it can get very warm during hot summer days. Records indicate that the buildings receive regular maintenance and there is a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment.

There are suitable arrangements for choristers to access pocket money. Treats are provided by parents and distributed by staff at appropriate intervals.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has produced a range of high quality publications and a website that details the educational and boarding provision within the school. The publications make clear the school ethos and role played by choristers within the wider Cathedral

community. The publications and website are regularly updated.

The boarding department operates with a group of experienced and well motivated staff. Staff are provided with a general job description and a staff handbook that details their specific roles and responsibilities. Permanent staff receive additional support from two gap students who assume limited, well defined responsibilities. The head of boarding provides extremely effective leadership and is widely respected by both staff and boarders. The school benefits greatly from the development of clear unambiguous policies and procedures. Within boarding these have been translated into sound working practices. Staff access regular training opportunities and are provided with an annual appraisal.

Daily routines provide a clear and consistent structure for choristers. Each day choristers need to ensure they are in the right place, at the right time with the right equipment. Such demands require each chorister to develop self-discipline and organisational skills. New choristers are introduced to their responsibilities gradually by both staff and senior choristers. Staffing levels are maintained at appropriate levels that allow staff to provide effective supervision across the site. Support at night is provided by sleeping-in staff. All external activities are subject to a risk assessment process to determine appropriate staffing levels.

The boarding department, like the rest of the school, operates within a risk management framework. The deputy head is responsible for health and safety matters and checks health and safety policies relating to the boarding site. His work is monitored by a committee of school governors. The school is not risk-averse and pupils are encouraged to participate in adventurous activities. However, all such activities are appropriately assessed and are managed by suitably qualified leaders. Responses to emergencies and the staff cover are determined as part of the planning process. Choristers get the opportunity to participate in school trips as well as choral tours. All such trips are subject to the school's rigorous risk assessment process.

As a chorister's day extends beyond those of their fellow pupils, staff have to ensure that the demands upon them do not become excessive. Choristers confirmed that life as a chorister is both stimulating and demanding. The senior staff team constantly strive to ensure that choristers have appropriate time for academic study, musical and choral practice, recreation, cathedral commitments and rest. Choristers suggested that a reorganisation of the Saturday timetable could, without much disruption, result in a longer period of free time.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the school is outstanding. The school has a clear ethos based on Catholic teaching. The school community is one in which respect for others is promoted. It provides education for young people with a range of academic abilities. Choristers occupy a significant position within the school and play an important role in the life of the Cathedral. Although the school is justifiably proud of its choristers and their achievements, all pupils are treated as individuals with their own particular talents and abilities. The multi-cultural composition of the school provides a unique opportunity for all the pupils to gain insights into different cultures. The excellent personal social, health and citizenship education programme

challenges pupils to consider the circumstance of others including those less fortunate than themselves.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- refurbish the refectory area to enhance choristers dining experience (NMS 24.5).
- give consideration to a reorganisation of the Saturday timetable to provide choristers with more free time (NMS 27.3).

Westminster Cathedral Choir School
Ambrosden Avenue London SW1P 1QH

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