

Saint
John's

college school

A Handbook for Probationers,
Choristers and their Families

2017-2018

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Admissions

Admission to the St John's College Choir and to St John's College School takes place annually in September. Numbers vary according to the number of boys departing the choir, but the maximum places in any one year is unlikely to be more than 5.

The College Director of Music is very willing to hear boys aged 6+ informally, prior to the formal voice trials which take place twice each year, to offer parents an indication of their child's prospects and advice about any preparations that might be appropriate. Children are not admitted under the age of 8 and it is rare that a child will be admitted over the age of 10 at the time of entry.

The formal Voice Trial takes the form of an audition, in which the children are given oral/aural tests, perform a prepared vocal piece of the candidate's choosing and play any instrument they may have studied. The audition is informal and relaxed in atmosphere. A singing coach is in attendance and at least part of the audition may take the form of a lesson rather than a formal test. The Headmaster is also in attendance to ensure that the children are comfortable with the process.

In addition to the musical aspect of the Voice Trial, the children are assessed academically to ensure that they will cope happily with the demands of a curriculum that leads to Common Entrance or Public School Scholarship examinations.

If successful, a Chorister Bursary of two-thirds of the boarding fee (all Probationers and Choristers are boarders at the College School) will be offered by the College, in addition to which the College funds the cost of individual singing lessons and tuition on one musical instrument. It is the College's intention that no child should be prevented from taking up a Choristership as a consequence of financial difficulty.

Further details of the Voice Trials are available from:

The Admissions Secretary
St John's College School
Grange Road
Cambridge CB3 9AA

01223 353652
admissions@sjcs.co.uk

The Choir Administrator
St John's College
Cambridge CB2 1TP

01223 33871
choir@joh.ac.uk

A short history of the choir

The choral tradition at St John's stretches back to the foundation of the College in the early sixteenth century. Two endowments in the early 1680s secured the future of the Choir from the Restoration onwards: one by Bishop Gunning, 22nd Master of St John's, and one by John Ambrose, Senior Fellow. These endowments were made for the 'maintenance of some singing youths' and the 'maintenance of a Quire in the Chapel'. John Gosling, Purcell's most celebrated bass at the Chapel Royal, sang at St John's during this period.

The Choir flourished in the early nineteenth century under T A Walmisley and later George Garrett, and the magnificent new Chapel by Gilbert Scott was consecrated in 1863. Walmisley and Garrett established the basis of the present-day musical foundation. Cyril Rootham (Director of Music from 1901-1938) and Robin Orr (1938-1951) continued the tradition and with the advent of broadcasting and recording, the Choir's reputation was established from the early 1960's under the direction of George Guest, Chapel Director of Music from 1951 until 1991. That reputation was maintained and enhanced by Dr Guest's successors, Christopher Robinson and, thereafter, Dr David Hill, formerly Director of Music of Winchester Cathedral and himself an Organ Scholar at St John's under George Guest's tutelage. His successor, Mr Andrew Nethsingha, another former St John's Organ Scholar and Director of Music of Gloucester Cathedral, continues the tradition from 2007.

The Choristers and Probationers therefore stand in an unbroken tradition of children who have sung in the Choir stalls for centuries. The Choir stalls themselves are the original stalls from the old Chapel of 1511, the foundations of which can be seen in First Court.

Singing in the choir

The Pattern of Services

The Choir sings Evensong during the University Terms (each term is approximately eight weeks long) and for three further weeks during the summer.

In addition to Evensong, the Choir sings at Eucharist on Sunday mornings.

The Choristers do not sing Evensong on Mondays and Wednesdays unless there is, for example, a Saint's Day: in which case, they have one of the other services free in lieu of this. On Monday, the service is sung by St John's Voices (the College's mixed choir), and on Wednesday, the Gentlemen of the Choir sing a service of men's voices.

During the School's Half Term Holidays, the choristers are usually free for Half Term from the Sunday evening to the Friday lunchtime, with occasional variations to accommodate Ash Wednesday if it falls during the February Half Term week.

The Pattern of Rehearsals

The Choristers have a 'dumb day' on Mondays, free from rehearsals and services. On other weekdays and on Saturday mornings, they rehearse with the Director of Music, in school, for an hour each morning.

After the end of school on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, the Choristers go over to the College for rehearsals in the Song School and the Chapel prior to Evensong, which takes place at 6.30p.m.

On Saturdays and Sundays, the Choristers likewise go to College to rehearse prior to Evensong and on Sunday mornings, they also rehearse in College prior to the 10.30 a.m. Eucharist service.

The pattern of rehearsals provides for a generous amount of rehearsal time for each service and invariably accommodates rehearsal time for other events, e.g. concerts, without additional rehearsals being required.

Other Engagements

The pattern of engagements for the Choir is determined by the College's Choir Advisory Committee of which the Headmaster is an ex officio member. The Headmaster represents the children's interests at these meetings at which chorister welfare is a standard agenda item.

Every effort is made in the planning of future engagements to ensure that they do not adversely affect the children's schooling: tours very rarely impinge on the school term; concerts are rarely given on weekdays; recordings occur, in the main, on those weekends when the Choir is not required for Services in the College or in the school holidays.

The Choir normally records two CDs per year, performs a number of concerts, often at prestigious venues, and undertakes international tours. The tours (and, sometimes, individual concerts) take place during the children's holidays, in the period before Christmas and during the Easter and Summer holidays. It is unlikely that all three holidays would be affected.

Probationership

All children are admitted to the Choir as 'Probationers'. There are usually four probationers at any one time. In the period before becoming Choristers (which is usually a full academic year), the children are, in the main, taught separately from the rest of the Choir. Under the tutelage of the Organ scholars, overseen by the College's Director of Music, they learn the basics of vocal technique and how to sight-read, and are gradually and carefully introduced to the Evensong service. They also learn how to pronounce Latin, which is no mean feat at that age.

It is important for the Probationers to be gently introduced to the demands of Choristership and to their new life in the school, so they attend rehearsals of the full Choir, and Evensong in Chapel, only twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in the first two terms, and three times a week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, in the Summer term. They are free every weekend and are not required for recordings, concerts, broadcasts or for touring. Parents are also free to see their child in the course of the week by arrangement with the Housemaster, if this is deemed to be in a child's best interests. Probationers who choose to stay on at the weekends are included in the Saturday morning arrangements involving Choir practice and instrumental practice, but do not usually attend Saturday Evensong. Those not on leave-out on Sunday will attend the Sunday morning Eucharist with the other boarders.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays (and, eventually, Fridays), the Probationers take part in the rehearsal and 'shadow' the choir in the Chapel; Probationers follow the Service without singing, from the choir stalls, wearing their cassocks.

Before taking up a Chorister position, it is almost certain that the Probationers will have been asked to sing with the Choir on a number of occasions as part of their induction. Sometimes, a Probationer may join the Choir before the probationary year is completed. However, a Probationer can only proceed to a full Choristership if the College Director of Music and Headmaster are satisfied that he will cope.

Very occasionally, the College Director of Music or Headmaster is unable to allow a Probationer to become a Chorister. In such rare cases, the Director of Music will have discussed a child's vocal and choral progress with parents on a number of occasions before reaching a decision that it would not be in a child's best interests to proceed or the Headmaster will have raised concerns relating to the child's ability to cope with the demands of the choir.

Early in the Michaelmas Term of each year, there is an event organised for Probationer parents at which parents are given a tour of the College and are encouraged to raise any questions over a cup of tea with the Director of Music.

The Director of Music is always willing to meet with parents to discuss any child's progress and welfare and, for probationer parents, formal review meetings take place with the Director of Music over the course of the year. In general, of course, the news is highly positive and simply confirms that which will already have been communicated informally to parents on the many occasions when they have been in the Chapel or the school.

Choristership

There are usually 16 Choristers. The older Choristers look after the younger and stand in the Choir stalls with a younger one on either side. As they gain more experience the Choristers are given more choral responsibility. They are expected to 'lead' and may be given solos or parts in 'verse' anthems, which split into duets, quartets and trios.

Generations of Choristers have derived enormous rewards from the Choir and from the level of musicianship that they achieve. Singing Evensong during University Term creates, for Choristers, a space in their lives when they achieve something very special and during which they forge friendships that last a lifetime. Almost without exception, Choristers gain Music (and sometimes Academic) scholarships to their chosen senior schools. Others come back to Cambridge as Choral Students and many go on to make successful professional music careers. The children develop an enviable standard of professional musicianship but also considerable powers of concentration, personal organisation and self-motivation: qualities which, in turn, lead to success in many areas of life at School and beyond.

The **Director of Music** is responsible for all matters relating to the children's progress within the Choir. He conducts the choir in services, concerts and recordings and, unless absent, takes all rehearsals of the Choir.

Two undergraduate **Organ Scholars**, one Senior and one Junior, assist the College Director of Music. They are elected to Organ Scholarships on the basis of annual Voice Trials. Between them, they play the organ for all the services, broadcasts and recordings. They also conduct and rehearse the Choir in the absence of the Director of Music. Both of the Organ Scholars attend morning practice at School to work with the Probationers.

Mr David Lowe gives singing lessons (which are funded by the College) to each Chorister and works very closely with the Director of Music to monitor each boy's vocal development.

The **Choral Scholars**, known as the 'Gents', sing Alto, Tenor and Bass in the Choir. They are mainly undergraduates of St John's but may be elected as Lay Clerks from other Colleges. The Choral Scholars are highly supportive of the children's work in the Choir but are not given responsibility for their care.

As part of their life in the Choir, the children will encounter other adults within the Chapel who have no direct responsibility for their welfare but with whom they work closely. The Acting Dean, the Reverend Carol Barrett Ford, in addition to leading worship within the Chapel, is the Governor responsible for Safeguarding and Child Protection. She often travels with the Choir on tour. When on tour, the Chapel officers have responsibility for the 'Gents', the children being in the care of two members of the school's staff. The Chapel Clerk is responsible for the organisation of services and the management of visitors and congregations within the Chapel and he is happy to answer any questions about seating or ticket arrangements for any services or other events in Chapel.

The Choristers' life at School

St John's Choristers and Probationers enjoy the highest standards of pastoral care. The special nature of their lives is recognised throughout the school by a sympathetic staff and special provision is made to ensure that they are properly cared for.

Within their weekly routines, the pattern of the Choristers' lives is carefully balanced to ensure that they can participate as fully as possible in the life of the school. Rehearsal routines do not cause them to miss lessons so they gain the same benefits as their peers from the school's rich curriculum. The school deliberately aims to ensure that, whether in the day school or the boarding house, the Choristers lead the normal lives of children, enjoying opportunities to make new friends, play team games, go on trips, and take part in special events. Though their routines after school may differ, the Choristers, when at school, should feel no different from other children. It is the balancing of their extraordinary lives with the opportunity to be ordinary children, in the most positive sense, that is the best guarantee of their success and happiness.

All Choristers and Probationers are boarders and the Housemaster bears overall responsibility for their daily pastoral care. He is assisted by a range of other resident and non-resident boarding house staff and all are well acquainted with the joys and pressures of life in the Choir: the exhilaration of completing a special performance, the thrill of completing a three-day recording, the demands of rehearsals, the rigours and excitement of international touring and the work involved in daily Evensong.

The boarding house staff know the Choir's daily routine and can easily spot when a child is finding the schedule demanding. They are in close contact with the Director of Music and with the day school staff and will always ensure that the relevant staff are aware of any extra demands being made of the Choristers. If necessary, they will arrange for a little extra time for a Prep or project to be completed, and will let all the staff know if the boys are, for instance, tired due to a broadcast the day before.

The Housemaster is responsible for the planning of boarding house routines, for staffing and for the management of non-routine events relating to the Choristers.

The school's Director of Music, Mr Simon Kirk, plays an important role in the lives of the choristers, from early morning music practice through to weekly meetings with members of the choir.

The Housemaster meets with the College Director of Music every week and is able to raise with him, or hear from him, any joys or concerns relating to the Choristers and Probationers, which he can then feed back to other members of the Boarding House staff.

The Headmaster, Mr Neil Chippington, meets the College Director of Music weekly to discuss all matters relating to the Choristers and to plan for forthcoming events. The overall workload and the distribution of the commitments of the Choristers are carefully considered during these meetings. The Headmaster advises the College's Choir Advisory Committee of all matters relating to the welfare of the children, particularly with regard to proposed engagements.

Overview of Chorister and Probationer Weekday Routines

Probationers follow the same pattern of routines as the choristers but do not sing on the weekends or on Friday evenings. Friday evensong is added to their routine in the Summer Term and they sing one full weekend at the end of their probationary year. On nights that choristers do not have evensong, choristers and probationers complete their prep with the boarders.

6.40am	Wake up
7.00 – 7.25am	Breakfast
7.30 – 8am	Instrumental Practice
8.05 – 9.05 am	Choir Practice except on Mondays
4.25 – 4.55pm	Prep
5.15 – 6.15pm	Rehearsal in College
6.30 – 7.15 pm	Evensong except on Mondays and Wednesdays

Overview of Chorister Weekend Routines

Saturday	6.50am	Wake up and breakfast	
	7.35 - 8.05am	Instrumental Practice	
	8.10 – 9.30am	Choir Practice, School	
	Either:	9.35 – 10.35am	Instrumental Practice followed by theory or Prep
		10.35 – 4.15pm	Leave-out returning for tea for 4.15 pm
	Or:	9.35 – 11am	Sports Coaching (optional) followed by:
		11 – 12.00pm	Instrumental Practice followed by theory or Prep for those returning from Saturday coaching or with Catch-up/revision
		12.00 – 4.15pm	Leave-out returning for tea for 4.15 pm
		5.15 – 6.15pm	Rehearsal in College
		6.30 – 7.15pm	Evensong
Sunday	8.00 am	Wake up & breakfast	
	9.15 – 10.15 am	Rehearsal in College	
	10.30 am	Eucharist	
	After Eucharist – 4pm	Leave-out returning for tea	
	4.50 – 5.50 pm	Rehearsal, Chapel	
	6.30 – 7.25 pm	Evensong with sermon	

Instrumental Progress and Practice

The Director of Senior House Music, Mr Simon Kirk, is responsible for the children's musical welfare within school. He attends Evensong, is in touch with the College Director of Music with regard to the children's musical progress within the choir, and supports that progress within the school.

Choristers play at least two instruments. The College bears the cost of the tuition on one instrument. Competence in a musical instrument will be very important to a Chorister when his voice breaks and he loses the ability to perform vocally as a treble. The opportunity to express musicianship through an instrument is therefore very important to a Chorister's personal development and happiness.

As Director of Senior House Music, Mr Kirk is responsible for arranging and monitoring all aspects of the Choristers' instrumental tuition.

Mr Kirk is able to guide parents on the choice of instrument/s should a child join us without already having begun instrumental lessons or should a change of instrument be advisable.

Choristers practise their instruments on each weekday morning in the Music School, which is designed specifically around their instrumental needs and offers them an individual practice room each.

The practice time is supervised by Mr Kirk and other members of staff with a musical background, who will ensure that scales are progressing, and that pieces are being properly tackled. Staff will also accompany children who are soon to do an exam or visit a senior school for a pre-audition.

In addition to the early morning instrumental practice during the week, the Choristers have instrumental practice time on Saturday mornings when Mr Kirk is again in attendance.

Musical involvement in School

Given their commitments in the College Choir, Choristers and Probationers are very rarely required to take part vocally in the musical life of the school, although they do contribute to the school's annual Services in Preparation for Christmas in the College Chapel. Probationers will be encouraged to continue to sing in the Byron House Chamber Choir, which meets on a Monday between 4.15 and 5.15pm

Instrumentally, Choristers and Probationers are very busy and, in addition to solo performance and rehearsal, they are likely to be involved in a range of chamber groups, depending upon their chosen instrument/s. The school bears the cost of all ensemble and orchestral provision.

The timing of instrumental lessons and chamber group rehearsals is arranged to fit with the choristers' schedules, and whenever possible, Choristers and Probationers will have instrumental lessons during break times to avoid clashes with timetabled lessons. Rather than have a fixed approach, we seek the best individual solution for each of the children which is directly linked to academic progress.

In a similar vein, it can be the case that, with the Headmaster's approval, some particularly strong instrumentalists will be deemed to have 'special musical needs' which require them to be given additional practice time. With the parents' approval, the Headmaster may, with the consent of the child's senior school, allow the child to miss one or more timetabled subjects to allow for additional practice time.

All Choristers are given music Theory tuition, in small groups and are expected to achieve Grade 5 Music Theory in preparation for Grade 6 practical exams. The Choristers do not, in general, take the Associated Board singing examinations.

With regard to Music Scholarships, when a Chorister reaches the age of 10 or 11, and decisions with regard to future schooling have been considered, parents are encouraged to meet with the Headmaster to discuss their child's prospects. Once a shortlist of schools is decided, it is normal procedure during the 6th Form year for pre-auditions in the Michaelmas Term to precede Scholarship auditions in early Lent term. The Headmaster is in close contact with Senior Schools and will be able to advise and support parents throughout the process of finding a school that is right for their child.

Homework and Schoolwork

Homework or 'Prep' is generously staffed within the boarding house and the needs of the Choristers and Probationers in this respect are carefully monitored.

On the days when there is Evensong, the Choristers and Probationers do Prep, and are supervised together, before they depart for rehearsals in the College. We are very aware of the time pressure that Prep can create for some of the Choristers and time is allocated on a Saturday morning for any catching up.

Boarding House staff are in daily contact with Teachers and Tutors at Byron House and Senior House. A Chorister and Probationer 'catch up' sheet is always displayed in the Senior House staff room so that staff may note any work to be completed and we can ensure that any difficulties associated with the completion of Prep are quickly identified.

The Probationers and younger Choristers have half an hour of Prep per night and this should be entirely manageable within the established routines. It is in the final two years, when Prep demands rise to one hour per night, that especially close and supportive tutoring is provided. The Choristers fare very well academically overall and the management of Prep demands is not so much a matter of academic progress as of general pastoral care and of noticing and acting upon any temporary worries.

Chorister Parents and Families

Life as a Chorister has its demands and being a Chorister or Probationer parent can also have its uncertainties. Having a child away from home from an early age is not always easy and parents need to be sure that they are themselves able to cope with this.

The Choristers are free each weekend to see their parents for 'Leave Outs', from lunch time until 4.15pm on Saturdays and 4.00pm on Sundays but it can be awkward to juggle visits with other family commitments. That said, other Chorister families often take children out with them and those children who remain at school are looked after very well by the staff on duty.

Parents are free to visit their children at any time but while this is relatively simple for those who live nearby, it is more difficult from a distance. Families are most welcome and the weekends will often find the swimming pool in use or family groups together having tea in the dining room. Chorister family lunches, arranged by the boarding staff, are a regular feature of weekend life in the boarding house.

The community of Chorister families is wonderfully supportive of the children and of each other and this is very much in evidence at the annual lunch for Choristers, their families, the boarding house staff, the Gents and the Chapel and Choir Staff, with which the year concludes and to which the following year's new Probationers and their families are invited.

Meetings with Chorister and Probationer parents precede the beginning of each term to ensure that all matters relating to the Choir's forthcoming commitments are fully communicated and understood.

The School's website has a password accessed area specifically for Chorister parents, where the current term's Chorister Calendar and information about forthcoming tours and future choir plans are stored. Chorister parents are also kept fully informed of any matters relating to the Choir by email circulars.

While the demands of being a Chorister parent are significant, many close friendships are formed with other families and with the teaching staff. While we cannot guarantee that children (or parents) will always be happy, parents should be reassured that we shall always wish to know of any concern.

Attending Services in Chapel

Parents are welcome to attend Evensong and Sunday morning Eucharist whenever they wish. Places are not reserved for Chorister and Probationer parents in Chapel but, by tradition, the parents tend to congregate in the stalls on either side of the Chapel between the Choir Stalls and the Altar.

Please make yourself known to the Chapel Clerk, Mr Stephen Stokes, who will be happy to show you where to sit.

Car Parking

Many parents find it best to park at School and walk across the Playing Fields to College. Space permitting, it is possible to park in the area outside the Maintenance Department on Cripps Lane and enter the College via the Cripps Porters' Lodge. Permits to park in this area are issued each year by Caroline Marks, the Choir Administrator.

Details of Chapel Services

Times of Weekly Services

Weekday Evensong:	6.30pm - 7.20pm
Sunday Eucharist:	10.30am-11.30am
Sunday Evensong (with Sermon)	6.30pm - 7.30pm

An Organ Recital at 6.00pm precedes Sunday Evensong.

Any changes to the normal routine in Evensong are indicated in the Chorister Calendar.

Choral Evensong

Choral Evensong follows the same pattern each day: the opening responses (sung), the appointed psalms which are chanted by the choir, the Magnificat (The Song of Mary, 'My Soul doth Magnify the Lord'), the first lesson (read by a junior member of College), the Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'), the second lesson (read by a senior member), the Creed (said), prayers, anthem and hymn. The choir has one of the largest libraries of any choral foundation in Britain and although many of the words remain the same each evening (as in the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis), the settings of these words provided by composers from the 16th century onwards makes for an unequalled tradition of great variety.

Sunday Morning Eucharist

The music sung on Sunday mornings is chosen from a huge repertoire of settings of the words of the Mass, representing composers from every century since the 1500's. The five sections of the mass sung by the Choir are: the Kyrie, Gloria, Creed (plainsong) Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. The words of the Mass have inspired some wonderful music and on certain Sundays, the Eucharist is celebrated as Solemn Eucharist with full liturgical rites and incense.

Orchestral Masses

There is usually one Sunday Eucharist a term in which the Choir performs an orchestral Mass with soloists. The Choir and Orchestra sit at the West end (rear) of the Chapel for these services.

Special Services

Probationers do not sing in special services and their attendance is rarely required. While Evensong forms the central part of the Choir's duties within College, each year there are a number of Special Services, all of which are well established and some of which are broadcast live or recorded by the BBC. These are very popular events and early arrival is recommended. The main Special Services are:

Matriculation Service

This is the first Evensong of the year. All new members of College, in particular, are invited to attend.

Ascension Day

The story goes that Walter Garrett, a previous Director of Music, was challenged in the 19th century to a bet by another College fellow, one evening at High Table, that the Choir could not be heard in First Court from the roof of the tower. The Fellow lost his bet the following Ascension Day when the Choir ascended the tower for the first time and sang the Ascension Day Carol and a motet. The fellow was seen to put his head out of his window in First Court to see where the singing was coming from. Thus was born a well-established tradition whereby the Choir ascends the Tower on Ascension Day after a Eucharist service in the Chapel (which is attended by the whole school) and performs the Ascension tide Carol at noon. Parents are very welcome to come to the service and to stand in First Court in fair weather to listen to the sound of the Choir (now assisted by microphones) waft across the College Courts. That the youngest Choristers are lowered off the tower in baskets is only a rumour. If the weather is particularly bad, the Carol will be sung indoors at the West end of the Chapel.

Advent Carol Services

There are two Advent Carol Services each year. One of the services is either recorded or broadcast live by the BBC.

Epiphany Carol Services

These services are relatively new to the Chapel's traditional calendar of events. The first Epiphany Carol Service was held in January 2006 with such success that a second service was soon introduced.

Ash Wednesday Service

This service is usually broadcast live and worldwide by the BBC. It has become famous for the traditional performance of the Allegri 'Miserere' (Psalm 51) in which a Chorister sings the soaring top C.

Commemoration of Benefactors

The focal point of this service is the reading of the list of major benefactors to the College, which begins with the Foundress, the Lady Margaret of Beaufort who willed the establishment of a college on the site of the old St John's Hospital. Listen out for the 'Ejected Fellow' and the shady former Fellow involved in the Opium Trade. There is an address at this service and the Choir and parents are invited to the Master's Lodge after the service for Madeira (orange juice for the boys) and seed-cake.

Joint Evensongs

Traditionally, the choirs of King's and St John's come together annually in the Summer Term to sing a joint Evensong alternately in the chapels of St John's and King's. In recent years, additional joint Evensongs have been sung with the choirs of Clare College, Jesus College and Caius College.

Confirmation Service

The Choristers may be confirmed in Chapel during a Sunday morning Eucharist at the beginning of the Summer Term. Confirmation classes take place in School.

College Feasts

There are one or two occasions during the year when the Choir is required to sing the Grace Anthem at Feasts in Hall. They sing from the gallery at the back of the Hall. Probationers do not sing for these Feasts. The Choristers are supervised after Evensong and then proceed to the Wordsworth Room where they eat an excellent supper

Concerts and Events outside Chapel

Each year, the Choir undertakes a number of Concert engagements in Britain or further afield. Probationers do not sing in concerts and events outside chapel and do not go on tour with the Choir.

Arrangements for tours and external concerts/events are managed by the College's Choir Administrator. She is responsible for all logistics, insurance, visas and licensing and is in contact with parents prior to each event. At the beginning of each term, the Choir Administrator provides parents with a schedule of information about forthcoming events, including ticketing details.

Tours and Touring

International touring is very exciting and demanding, in equal measure. Concerts are usually held in major concert Halls around the world. In recent years the Choir has toured America, Denmark, Germany, Holland and Japan.

To ensure that the children receive the best possible care, two members of the school's staff will have responsibility for them whilst on tour. One of these is most likely to be the Housemaster or Deputy Housemaster and the other will be another member of staff involved in the lives of the Choristers.

There will always be one or two days off during a long tour and special arrangements are made for the Choristers to enjoy themselves on these days. Accommodation is organised in hostels or hotels, where the children remain within the supervision of the accompanying staff. There are strict guidelines for arrangements for touring and each tour requires a licence to be issued by a magistrate.

A Chorister will need his own passport. Although they do not tour, probationers are required to hold a passport from the start of their probationership. A copy of each Chorister's birth certificate is also required.

There is also a *Consent to Tour* document, which each Chorister and his parents have to sign for each tour, and the Choir Doctor and Headmaster also have to certify that a Chorister is fit to tour. Choristers receive an annual fee in respect of their participation in tours, recordings, concerts and broadcasts which is paid into their accounts held at the Cambridge Building Society.

Other Information for Parents

Entry to St John's College

Chorister and Probationer parents may enter the College free of charge throughout the year on presentation of a Chorister Family Identity Pass. These are issued annually in September by the Choir Administrator.

Purchasing CDs

The choir has a huge discography. Although many of the earlier recordings are now out of print, most recordings since 1990 are available to purchase. It is possible to purchase the most recent Chandos CDs at a discounted price from the Choir Office. Full price CDs can be purchased from the Custodian's Hut at the Front Gate of the College and from the music department in Heffers Bookstore on Trinity Street.

Leave-outs

Chorister parents receive an email each week asking them to confirm their Leave out arrangements for the weekend. Written replies must be received by the Thursday lunchtime prior to the weekend at the latest. It is particularly important that Boarding House staff are aware if you are taking your child out after a service.

Probationer parents are asked to confirm leave-out arrangements by the standard method outlined in the Handbook for Boarders and their families.

Steven Glitherow
Housemaster