



ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL

CANTERBURY

Choir House Handbook

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Introduction

Chorister life is often exciting, somewhat complicated and undoubtedly busy. This handbook is here to help you as a parent to understand routines, terminology and the organisational set-up of Choir House.

We hope that, read in conjunction with the St Edmund's Junior School Parents' Handbook, this document will serve as a useful reference tool, whilst providing a valuable insight into the life of a chorister.

June 2022

Welcome to Boarding at Choir House, part of St Edmund's School

I am delighted to welcome you to Choir House! Choir House is one large family, and I hope that your son will soon feel completely relaxed, comfortable and at home.

Being a chorister at Choir House is a very special experience which combines the fun of boarding with the busy and enriching daily chorister routine. This incredible experience will help your son to become independent, create lasting friendships, and to integrate wholly into the life of the school and cathedral communities.

Life at Choir House will allow your son to thrive emotionally, socially, and musically in addition to maintaining high academic standards. The experience of being a boarder and a chorister also cultivates leadership, teamwork and tolerance; skills nurtured and developed in all pupils at St Edmund's School.

Your son's safety and wellbeing are of paramount importance, and this is why there are clear and simple rules regarding the boys' conduct within the boarding community. Respect for others is fundamental, and excellent behaviour is expected from all members of Choir House at all times.

In keeping with the family atmosphere of Choir House, it is imperative that your son feels he can approach the staff at any time; I will always be available, as will Miss Jordan (Matron), Mr Southey (Deputy Houseparent), and our visiting tutors. Whether your son feels uncertain about something, would like advice, or would simply like to chat, we will always be there to listen. I send out a weekly newsletter (The Choir House Times) to all parents so that you can see what has gone on during the week – just in case you son failed to keep you informed. Staff accommodation is incorporated directly into the boarding house, so we are always available. The boys should never feel lost or lonely - they can just knock at the door - we are always here and happy to help, and my dog (Arthur) is always available for strokes and cuddles when required.

Miss Mary Morley
Houseparent at Choir House

The Aims of St Edmund's Boarding

We aim to create a safe, enjoyable and happy boarding environment by:

- ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in the boarding house and the school. This is, of course, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability
- providing a stimulating, secure and supportive environment in which each child can flourish, develop and fulfill his/her potential, socially as young people and in their school lives
- staffing the house with resident and visiting adults who genuinely care about the children, who celebrate their successes with them and support them when they feel down
- building a culture in which bullying is recognized to be unacceptable and dealt with swiftly and decisively when it occurs
- promoting an open and trusting ethos, ensuring each child's right to privacy, dignity, independence and individuality
- encouraging high standards of politeness and an awareness of others

The Aims of being a Chorister

Being a chorister is a unique experience. The Acting Director of Music, Dr David Newsholme and his assistants aim to:

- provide the opportunity to experience the joy of achieving with natural talent, and having fun whilst striving to improve
- give more scope for fulfilment to a musically gifted child than could be provided in most other educational environments
- teach and promote the value of team spirit and of commitment
- provide an opportunity to work within a team to achieve high standards along with adults
- allow choristers to achieve the same recognition and reward as other (adult) professional musicians.
- provide a special cultural and spiritual education and the opportunity to take a full and important role in the life of the Cathedral, a world-famous building, and the hub of Anglican Church worldwide
- widen choristers' horizons through concerts, recordings and tours

Staff – those with whom choristers and chorister parents have frequent contact

Choir House Staff

Resident

Houseparent

Mary Morley

Deputy Houseparent

Adam Southey

Matron

Anne-Marie Jordan

Non-resident

House Tutor

Jane Linkin

House Tutor

Joseph Tebbs-Warner

Cathedral Staff

Acting Director of Music

Dr David Newsholme

Assistant Organist

Jamie Rogers

Second Assistant Organist

Junior School Management

Head of School

Edward O'Connor

Acting Head of Junior School i/c Chorister matters

Ross Comfort

School Music Department Staff

Director of Music

Spencer Payne

Head of Performance with responsibility for
Junior School Music

Ian Swatman

Music Administrator

Katherine Walker

Communication

Communicating with your son

The boys are allowed mobile phones, which are kept in a locked cabinet and made available in the evening if they wish to contact you. Boys are also welcome to contact you via a Choir House landline. (01227 478251). This phone (located in the computer room) is solely for the boys to use to contact family. You are also welcome to phone them on it.

Contacting your son by email is not a practical option as the boys only use computers for prep, rather than for 'social media' purposes (except on Saturday mornings). Many choose to Face Time and we have access to wifi throughout the ground floor to facilitate this.

Experience shows that what the boys love most, even though it seems old fashioned nowadays, is to receive post. They love to come through the door in the afternoon to find a letter, card or parcel and we strongly encourage you (and friends and family) to write to them. The correct postal address for Choir House is:

18 The Precincts
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2EL

Communicating with staff

Should you wish to contact a member of staff, please do so by phone using:
mlm@stedmunds.org.uk (Mary Morley Houseparent)
or
01227 769580 (main Choir House landline)

We realise the importance of communication and helping you feel connected to your son. Miss Morley is available for phone calls or meetings and will always respond as quickly as possible to emails. Please feel free to contact us whenever you need.

Information from Choir House and from School usually arrives via email.

In addition to normal school parent consultation evenings, we will also be holding additional chorister parent consultation evenings twice a year in the Cathedral Precincts. These will give chorister parents the opportunity for a collective meeting between themselves, Dr Newsholme, Miss Morley and Mr De Silva, to allow for a full and frank discussion of every aspect of the boys' lives.

Parental Access to Choir House

Feeling part of the Choir House community is an important way of sharing your child's experience as a Chorister. Social events aim to nurture this sense of community, but we also recognise the precious nature of that individual quick 'hello' or 'well done' after Evensong.

On **Thursdays** we have 'parent time' (approx. 6.15-6.45) after Evensong. Supper is later than usual to allow family time and you are most welcome to stay in any downstairs part of Choir House except the kitchen. A bell signals supper and time to say farewell.

On **Sunday evening**, drop off time is at 7pm. We recommend this is a quick 'hug and go' in the front entrance hall if possible, as many of the boys tend to find the *physical* goodbye the hardest part of the week. However, as soon as they are back with their peers and we hold the weekly house meeting (at 7.15pm) to tell them about the week ahead, they are fine and settled. Of course, if you would like to assist them with bags and instruments, you are welcome to help them put these in the right place, but we would ask you *not* to go up to the dorm areas upstairs.

All Choir House staff are on duty on Sunday nights, so there should always be someone available to talk to, but if you require a fuller discussion we are all available on Sunday afternoons from 4-7pm. Please make an appointment as and when you need.

If you need to visit at times other than those stated above or drop anything off for your son during the day, it is best to email/telephone in advance to make sure a member of staff is available.

With security in mind, there is a 'visitors' book in the front hall, and we ask anyone visiting the House outside the times already mentioned to sign in and out. At regular visit times a member of staff will log you in and out of the building. This is an essential safeguarding measure as well as a basic precaution in terms of fire safety.

Typical Weekday Boarding Routine at Choir House

The boys' routine is very regimented due to the amount that is needed to be fitted in to their day and there are peculiarities to each day (e.g. extra rehearsal on Tuesday, no singing on Wednesday etc). In addition the full and detailed routine for each individual day will be provided to parents annually by Miss Morley.

Wake up time:

At 6.30am (7am on Fridays) all boys are woken by staff.

Breakfast/music practices sessions:

From 6.50am the boys have breakfast and do a 20-minute session of instrument practice.

Singing rehearsal:

After breakfast, bags and instruments etc. are put on the minibus ready to go to school. At 7.35am Dr Newsholme collects the boys and takes them to the Cathedral practice room from an hour-long rehearsal. (Mr Rogers teaches the Probationers at Choir House).

School day:

At 8.35am the boys are driven up to St Edmund's. They have a normal school day with their peers.

End of the school day:

At 4.00pm the boys take the minibus back to Choir House where they have tea (biscuit, fruit, drink), shine their shoes and are then collected once more by Dr Newsholme at 4.45pm for a rehearsal followed by Evensong (at 5.30pm). (Probationers stay at Choir House).

Supper:

At 6.15pm the choristers return to Choir House and have supper.

Prep:

Straight after supper (at approx. 6.45pm) the boys complete their prep, supervised by staff. When it is finished the prep is checked by staff and the prep diary is signed. Lower school pupils usually complete prep at the end of school (3.30pm to 4.00pm).

Activities and free time:

As prep time finishes there is a certain amount of free time before the bedtime routines take over. This is a good time for practising instruments, relaxing in the TV room, or playing outside in the garden.

Getting ready for bed:

- From 7.30pm Forms 4 and 5 begin to prepare for bed. This involves showering, changing into pyjamas, hanging up uniform and tidying personal dormitory space, with lights out at 8.00pm. Matron usually reads to them before they go to sleep.
- Form 6 and 7 boarders follow the same routine at 8.00pm with lights out at 8.30pm. They usually read silently before going to sleep.
- Form 8 boarders may go up to their dorm as soon as prep has finished and relax, watch a DVD or read. Their lights go out at 9.00pm.

At the Weekend

Probationers are collected from school on Friday at 4.00pm and are free until Sunday at 7.00pm when they return to Choir House. The XVI have Evensong on Friday night is sometimes followed by a rehearsal and then they sing two of the three weekend services on a rota. Between the times that they boys are singing they are allowed to go home, although Choir House will be open seven days a week in case you are unable to pick them up at any time.

You will receive a clear rota which outlines the boys' expected commitments for the term. However, the arrangements for when the boys are free to spend time with parents will generally work as outlined in the table below:

Weekend service when NOT SINGING:	<i>Friday night pick up time</i>	<i>Saturday drop off time:</i>	<i>Saturday pick up time:</i>	<i>Sunday drop off time:</i>	<i>Sunday pick up time:</i>
Saturday Evensong	6.15pm	None	None	9.15am	4pm til 7pm (optional)
Sunday a.m. Eucharist	6.15pm	12.30pm	4pm	1.30pm	4pm til 7pm (optional)
Sunday p.m. Evensong	6.15pm	12.30pm	4pm	9.15am	12.30 til 7pm (optional)

Whenever boys leave Choir House with a parent, either the parent or child **must** sign OUT with the member off staff on duty.

Accommodation

Our boarding accommodation consists of 3 dormitories – the first is for the Form 4 and 5 choristers, the second for the Form 6 and 7 choristers and the third is for the Form 8 choristers.

All boys bring their own duvet covers, duvets, pillows and pillow cases, which can be any colour or design. This makes it feel more like home. Mattress toppers for an extra touch of comfort are also very popular! We also encourage the boys to decorate the area around their beds with posters, photos or anything personal to make the spaces feel more individual. The also love to have a calendar with the holidays marked in!

There are a range of common areas where the boys can socialise together, do activities such as snooker and table tennis, play games and occasionally play on the X-Box. There is also a Computer room, and the Library or Sunley room for prep. We have a suite of music rooms for the boys to practise their instruments in – each boy is allocated a room (usually shared 1 between 2) so they can also store music and music bags in there too.

Administration

Exeat weekend and half-term

Boarders enjoy four exeat weekends throughout the school year. This is when the boys may have an entire weekend off and go home from 6.15pm on Friday until 7pm on Sunday evening. Choir House is closed during this time so there is no opportunity for the boys to stay in.

The exeats give the choristers a break from their busy routine and to have the chance for a well-earned rest and some family time. As moments of respite, they are carefully timed throughout the year and the dates of exeat weekends, as with all term dates, are published well in advance (please refer to the Calendar).

Half terms for choristers begin on Friday at 6.15pm after Evensong and the February/May half terms finish at 7pm on the second Sunday (giving 9 days holiday). The October half term is two weeks long and the boys are required to sing on the final weekend, usually returning on the Saturday lunchtime (giving 14 days holiday). Half-term and end-of-term dates are available on the school website and Calendar at least a year in advance.

Boarder Choir

Membership of the XVI also requires singing at 3 out of term time periods of the year. This time is known as 'Boarder Choir'. These normally consist of;

- the period leading to and including Christmas Day (approx. 9-10days)
- Holy Week and Easter Day (approx. 9 days)
- one full week after the conclusion of the Summer Term (approx. 9 days)

Before any Boarder Choir begins you will be circulated with a list of the activities we have planned for gaps in the rehearsal/service schedule. We try to give a good balance between active pursuits, visits and much needed relaxation.

Rest weeks may be required before major Cathedral festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. These often mean that the boys are off singing. If parents wish to discuss a break from schooling, this must be submitted in writing to the school. The boys are guaranteed 12 weeks' clear holiday each year.

Probationers are never required to take part in Boarder Choir.

Time out

Permission to miss a service is granted only in exceptional circumstances. If, for any reason, you need your son to be away, please contact the Houseparent and Director of Music giving details. If your child needs to miss school, you will also need to contact Mr De Silva, Head of the Junior School, to gain permission for this.

Pocket Money and Valuables

Each boy has a pocket money account managed by the Houseparent. Pocket money should always be handed to the Houseparent - £25 is a good starting sum. The Houseparent will notify you when your son's account needs a top-up.

It is intended that pocket money be used for:

- buying small treats on a weekly basis (on Saturday morning)
- buying tuck on a Wednesday evening from Matron (choice of sweets, a chocolate bar, crisps, dried fruit or fruit sweets)
- buying snacks from Mrs King at the Junior School
- paying for non-uniform days and occasional book fayres/charity stalls etc.
- extras during Boarder Choir (e.g. souvenirs from visits etc.)

We are of course happy to give out more on occasion (i.e. buying a birthday present for family members etc.) if they have had permission from home.

The Probationary Year

During their first year in the choir (usually Form 4) the boys are known as Probationers or 'Probs'. Normally, Probs have singing practice in the mornings for one hour at Choir House. On Thursday mornings, they go to full choir practice with Dr Newsholme and sing Evensong on Thursday afternoon. Each boy's vocal development and general approach in Choir House are assessed throughout the probationary year and their progress reported to parents. This is in addition to the normal ARC grade sheets and written school reports which are produced for every pupil in the Junior School. Boys must achieve satisfactory reports to stay on at the end of the year and join the XVI. If a boy's reports are persistently unsatisfactory, discussions will be had with the parents regarding his withdrawal from choristership.

The assessment of vocal development includes:

- learning the physical and technical elements
- reading of music
- theory knowledge
- concentration
- speed of responsiveness
- collaboration and team work
- Instrumental progress.

In each of these areas we expect to see an advance each term and for this advance to increase throughout the year, notwithstanding a wobble from time to time.

In Choir House the assessment is to do with the individual's capacity to live successfully as part of the team and to make a positive contribution to the Choir House community. The requirements are to:

- treat others with respect, consideration and courtesy
- be reliable and trustworthy
- cope with living away from home
- obey House rules.

The Probationary year is equally important for you, as parents. It is fundamental that by the end of the year you feel that this is the right life choice for your son and your family as you will be committing to another four years with an increased workload and more time away from home. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or to discuss chorister life at any time.

Welfare

Some advice for first time boarding parents

Many families find it helpful to say the meaningful 'goodbyes' at home before setting out for Choir House on the first afternoon of the new term. When you leave your child at Choir House our advice is to keep the moment of parting as swift as you can as prolonging the moment of separation makes it harder for all parties. Parents generally find it more painful than the children! Be assured that the staff will be in contact if there are any problems, and that we will be quick to also share early successes.

Once your son has started, please keep up the communication with your child. Plenty of cards and cheerful letters are a great help. Of course, there is communication by telephone, but a word of warning here: children, when upset, typically like to unload their problems and then, having achieved the objective of feeling better, the child puts down the phone and resumes normal activities perfectly cheerfully. Unfortunately, parents often put the phone down feeling that their child's world is collapsing. If in doubt please contact a member of staff - we will always be happy to shed a little extra light on a situation.

Please let boarding staff know if your child is likely to be anxious about a problem at home as we can often lend valuable support. This sort of information can also help us to understand a child's behaviour. Indeed, good communication in all situations between home and school (and vice versa) is extremely important throughout your child's time at St Edmund's.

Settling in

There is a chance that all children will be a little homesick at some stage, although not necessarily during the first few weeks. Do try to explain to them how they might feel and explain that feeling homesick is common, that all fellow boarders will have felt this way at some point and that talking about it will always help. Experience shows that homesickness is almost always a short-lived and temporary feeling. We also talk about it in House meetings when the older boys often offer advice or give strategies to help.

Please do encourage your child to bring in pictures and posters to personalise his or her own bed space, such as favourite photos of family and pets and items of sentimental value such as a beloved cuddly toy.

Parental 'Homesickness'

It can be difficult to become parents of a boarder, 'losing' your son, albeit temporarily to Choir House. Do not underestimate the effect on other members of the family, such as siblings, that this may have. We are very happy to advise on this and can also put you in touch with parents who have had similar experiences based on your individual child's needs.

It is our experience, and that of other Houseparents we meet, that most boys flourish in the boarding environment given the opportunity. We are here at all times to support your son and to allow him to develop and flourish as a chorister and person.

Health and Medical Arrangements

The school Medical Centre is staffed by qualified and experienced nursing staff and the school Doctor (Dr Julian Thompson, from the Ethelbert Road Surgery in Canterbury) visits twice a week. At Choir House, Matron runs our 'surgery' in Choir House, a sick bay where all medication is stored and boys can be moved to if necessary. She liaises with the Medical Centre daily and they are on call to us 24/7.

The Medical and Consent Forms relating to specific medication and medical conditions should be completed and returned directly to the Medical Centre prior to the first day of term or whenever they are issued for the child. The National Health Service number should be entered on the School Medical Card, but the NHS Card itself should be retained by parents. The Medical Centre should also be informed of any existing health problem.

All Choristers at Choir House are required to be registered with the school Doctor, so once your son is in the XVI this will need to happen as their primary place of residence is Choir House. If it is necessary for your child to visit a doctor during the school holidays, please ask for them to be treated as a 'temporary resident'.

A Probationer may also register with the school Doctor, or you may keep him with your own GP until the start of year 5.

If your son becomes ill with an infectious condition such as Chicken Pox or diarrhoea or vomiting illness, we will notify you and ask you (or the nominated person on your emergency contact form if we could not get hold of you) to take your son home.

Medicines

Pupils arriving at Choir House with medication need to take it to Matron immediately.

Medicines may be administered by trained staff at Choir House (or the Medical Centre Staff at school) once a consent form has been completed by the parent or guardian. This is always stored in the surgery or transferred by staff to the medical centre if needed during the school day. Under no circumstances should ANY pupil carry medicine around during the school day, with the exception of emergency medication: adrenaline auto injectors, asthma inhalers and diabetic equipment only.

Choristers are not permitted to keep medications in their own possession or to administer their own medication unless given permission to do so by the Medical Centre.

Dentist/optician

Routine dental treatment should be carried out by your own dentist in the holidays. If emergency treatment is required in term time, this remains a parental responsibility, though of course we will assist if there is no alternative.

Boys who wear spectacles must have safety lenses fitted; a clearly labelled spare pair is also required in case of accident or loss, which should be given to Matron. Opticians' appointments are also a parental responsibility.

Physical Recreation

We encourage the boys to use the garden as much as possible and take them to the Oaks in the summer (grassy area in front of the Cathedral). If they want to bring ride their bikes to ride in the Precincts in the summer they will need to have a cycle helmet.

Bullying and unkindness

We are proud of our reputation as a friendly school. We do not tolerate bullying nor do we accept bullying as an inevitable part of school life. By its nature, bullying - mental or physical - does not often occur in circumstances that are easily detected but when detected, bullying behaviour will be dealt with swiftly and firmly by a senior member of staff. In more serious cases bullies can expect to be dealt with by suspension and counselling. The most serious outcome could be a ban from boarding or final exclusion if the problem persists.

Bullying is any form of behaviour that causes someone to feel hurt, to dread coming to school, to be unable to be themselves, to fear for their personal safety or to fear that the safety of their possessions is at risk. It includes the following:

- Physical assault – punching, slapping, shaking, jostling, kicking etc
- Emotional assault – teasing, belittling comments, treating a person as if they are worthless, sending offensive emails, text messages, exclusion etc.

Any pupil who is bullied MUST tell someone. He or she should talk to any member of staff or to their parents. Bullied pupils can worry about the consequences of reporting the problem, but if it is not addressed it is unlikely to be resolved: grinning and bearing it simply means that the bully has won and injustice has triumphed.

Pupils are regularly briefed on what to do if they experience or observe bullying and members of staff have guidelines to follow in dealing with incidents of bullying.

If parents feel that their child is experiencing difficulties of this nature, they should bring it to our attention. Please do not delay in bringing the matter forward: delay does not help the bullied - or the bully. Details of the school's Anti-bullying policy may be found in the Parents' Zone on the school website.

E-Safety and Cyber Bullying

Online security is a key priority of the school. All pupils must abide by an ICT Code of Conduct. The school monitors email and internet security.

Parents are likely to know a fair amount about their child's visible social life but not perhaps so much about their cyber social lives. By developing a culture of open talking about all aspects of their social lives—including cyber socialising - parents can create a climate in which children can tell them if they are unhappy about any electronic communications. In this way parents can help to reduce the likelihood of mobile telephones, messaging systems, emails and networking sites being used as vehicles for bullying.

Parents can also underline to their children the following rules:

- Never send or post a message that is negative or unpleasant about another person.

- Always remember that any message sent has potential to appear in the public domain and to be used against the sender. It may implicitly say as much about the sender as it does about the subject of the message.
- Children should always tell an adult if they are worried or upset by a message they have been sent.
- Always save an unpleasant, threatening or bullying message as this will be vital evidence in dealing with the perpetrator.

The school's E-Safety Co-ordinator is Ross Underwood, Designated Safeguarding Lead. He can be contacted at rpu@stedmunds.org.uk or on the telephone number overleaf.

Help at Choir House and School

Your child will always have someone he can talk to. As well as the regular staff at Choir House, contact details of key staff and our Independent Listener are prominently displayed in Choir House. The Acting Head of Pastoral Welfare (Kelly French) also attends Choir House frequently throughout term time to meet with the boys.

Safeguarding including Child Protection

All staff at School and all Cathedral staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children and/or vulnerable adults have been DBS checked. The School and the Cathedral both have Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policies and their staff are given Safeguarding training regularly. There is liaison between both the School and the Cathedral over training which sees overlap and sharing of best practice.

There are a number of people for you to contact if you have concerns about Safeguarding/Child Protection. In doing so, please bear in mind the following (taken directly from the School's Safeguarding Policy):

The School is responsible for the welfare and safeguarding of the Canterbury Cathedral Choristers when in residence at Choir House. This includes the 'boarder choir' periods when the main school is closed and also when Choristers are involved in non-Cathedral recreational activities off site. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Mr De Silva or in his absence, the DSL for Junior School (Kelly French). They will be progressed in line with our school's safeguarding procedures with the Head of the Junior School directly managing the case.

When the Choristers are in the Cathedral, in transit from Choir House to the Cathedral, or away on Cathedral business, such as on overseas singing trips, the responsibility for their welfare and safeguarding is with the Cathedral. Any safeguarding issue in that context will be progressed through the Cathedral's safeguarding procedures.

We have a close working relationship with the Cathedral and its safeguarding team to ensure the wellbeing of the Choristers. This includes an agreement that if a Chorister safeguarding matter comes to our attention we shall immediately contact the Cathedral and work closely with their Safeguarding Lead, Emma Pennington. Likewise the Cathedral will immediately contact the Head of the Junior School or the Junior School DSL, if a Chorister safeguarding issue comes to their attention. This is to ensure that a joint strategy is put in place between us from the outset over clarifying: the lines of respective safeguarding responsibility; how the matter will be investigated; and what the on-going liaison arrangements should be on the case. The

Cathedral's Safeguarding Lead and the Head of the Junior School hold regular scheduled liaison meetings as well as maintaining ad hoc communications as above. Mary Morley, the Choir House Houseparent, is also DSL trained.

Those in the school with a connection with the Choristers, including all staff at Choir House, have access to the Cathedral safeguarding policy and procedures with key staff receiving safeguarding training delivered by the Cathedral. Likewise those with connections with the Choristers at the Cathedral have access to our school safeguarding procedures. School and Cathedral have each had an input in the drawing up of each other's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding Contacts:

School

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|
| • Kelly French | <i>Junior School Safeguarding Lead</i> | 01227 475600 |
| • Andrew De Silva | <i>Head of the Junior School</i> | 01227 475600 |
| • Ross Underwood | <i>St Edmund's School Designated Safeguarding Lead</i> | 01227 475600 |

Cathedral

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| • Emma Pennington | <i>Cathedral Safeguarding Lead</i> | 01227 865228 |
| • Chris Nickols | <i>Deputy Safeguarding Lead</i> | 01227 865 212 |
| • Max Kramer | <i>Deputy Safeguarding Lead</i> | 01227 865225 |
| • Fiona Coombs | <i>Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser</i> | 07548 232395 |
| • Paul Brightwell | <i>Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser</i> | 07398 009951 |

What are 'rewards'?

Rewards are benefits that recognise the best of what your son does as a boarder.

What are 'sanctions'?

Sanctions are measures taken to address and to discourage poor behaviour. The main purpose of a sanction is to encourage the boys to avoid getting it wrong.

Rewards

The best of what the boys do can be recognised in a number of ways, including:

- **Earning trust and respect:**
This is the most important commodity we have. If they earn the trust and respect of boarding staff, their experience of being a boarder will be that much richer. People who have our trust and respect are much more likely to hear 'yes' rather than 'no' when they make requests.
- **Receiving public recognition:**
Be it in a letter or e-mail home or a commendation in Head's Line, we will make sure that their good work gets the notice it deserves.

- **'Treats':**

It will sometimes be appropriate to recognise the boys' contributions to Choir House in the delicious currency of edible treats or extra time doing their favourite free time activity. When the boys have been awarded 3 reward points, they can choose their treat themselves.

Sanctions

When people get it wrong, we are here to steer them right. Here is the usual structure:

- **A 'cross' for minor misdemeanours could be given for:**
 - Forgetting prep
 - Failing to observe bedtime routines or disruption in the dorm
 - Not keeping their equipment organised
 - Not keeping their bed space clean and tidy

3 crosses in a week would lead to a sanction (see below)
- **Immediate sanction (such as an early bed time, missing tuck shop, could be given for:**
 - A refusal to comply with any reasonable request from/lying to/back-chatting a member of the boarding team
 - deliberately acting unkindly towards a peer
- **Anything more serious would be dealt with in liaison with the school. Further school sanctions could be:**
 - School suspension (internal) – contact will be made with home
 - Meeting with the Head and letter home from the Head
 - External suspension
 - Exclusion

(Please note that more serious offences may be escalated without lower-level sanctions being applied).

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

We hope that most of the information you need can be found on our website, in the pupil and parent handbooks or in our prospectus.

However, we are often asked other questions (by parents and their sons) and hope the following may be helpful. If you can't find the answer to your question anywhere in the information we provide, please do get in touch with us; we will be happy to help.

Q: What is the XVI?

This term, for historical reasons, refers to all the boys in the full choir (Forms 5 – 8).

Q: What is the structure of the Choir?

The Side Leaders are the most senior Choristers (Form 8) and they are identified by their medals. They are the leaders of the Choir and oversee the younger choristers. The Form 5-7 boys are generally known as choristers, although technically they do not go through the ceremony of Chorister Making, when they officially become members of the Cathedral Foundation, until they enter Form 7. Probationers are the Form 4 'apprentices'.

Q: What is the significance of the Choir Order?

Everyone in the Choir has a number. These are allocated in alphabetical order, within year groups. This numbering system is used for administrative purposes within both the House (pegs and lockers) and Cathedral (distribution of music), but does not denote any hierarchy in terms of singing.

Q: How much time per week is spent singing?

In an average week for the XVI, they spend just under 20 hours per week at rehearsals and services with the Master of the Choir. The Probationers have a one-hour singing practice with the Assistant to the Master of the Choir 3 times a week and join the XVI for rehearsal and Evensong on Thursdays.

All Choristers, the XVI and the Probationers, also receive a weekly 15-minute individual singing lesson at school with Catherine Fletcher or Greg Tassell.

Q: Will my son learn a musical instrument in addition to singing?

Yes, choristers are required to learn 2 musical instruments, one being the piano. They have music practice sessions in the morning before singing practice and their instrument lessons take place during the school day in the music department at St Edmund's. The director of Music, Spencer Payne, usually guides the boys on their choice of second instrument at the start of the Michaelmas term (if they do not already have one).

Q: How can we meet or make contact with other St Edmund's parents?

St Edmund's is keen to promote contact between the school and parents, especially as Choir House is on a separate site from the main school. Once your son becomes a pupil at St Edmund's, you will find that there are parents' meetings to keep you informed about his/her academic progress. You will also be invited to concerts, plays, sports (and other events) in which your son or daughter may take part. We also hold social events for parents: coffee mornings, drinks parties, an annual Summer Ball, Speech Day, etc. The Choir House parent

community is very strong and the parents of the senior boys often act informally as buddies to new parents.

Q: How will my child make friends, and will my child have friends of different ages?

When your son arrives he will have lots of people to look after him. The Houseparent will ensure that he has a 'buddy' to look after him during his first days and weeks here (they will meet when your son comes for a trial sleep over in June and are encouraged to stay in touch over the holiday).

The older boys have all been through what your son is going through and are very good at jollyng them along if the need, including them in games of football and telling them where they should be and when. We find that all year groups mix together really well and there is barely a moment to be on their own. Being a chorister means you instantly in a team and the bond grows incredibly quickly between the boys.

Q: How can I find out about key dates?

All dates are published on the school website. Parents also have access to SOCS which tells you which matches your child is playing in. The Houseparent also compiles a date list with all the chorister commitments on which you will be sent termly.

Q: What is 'Prep'?

At St Edmund's, homework is called Preparation or 'Prep' for short. The boarders complete Prep after supper in the evenings which checked by staff, and prep diaries are signed for Lower School pupils by a member of staff.

Q: Do choristers have the same uniform as day pupils?

As Probationers, they will have the same uniform. **A full list of clothing required for school is listed in detail in the Junior School Parents' Handbook and on the website.** Once in the XVI, the boys are permitted to wear a 'Cathedral' jumper in school as opposed to either the three-red-sun or plain navy-blue jumper.

The boys also have a Cathedral Uniform (informally named 'Purples'), which consists of school trousers, with a 'Cathedral' short-sleeved purple polo shirt and a 'Cathedral' navy blue fleece or hoodie. It is used on Sunday and other occasions such as concerts and gives the boys a slightly more informal alternative to school uniform. All three items of Cathedral uniform may be obtained from the Choir House Matron, Anne-Marie Jordan on email amj@stedmunds.org.uk.

Boarders will need name labels to identify ALL their clothes (even socks, bedding and towels!).

A full list of clothing required for choristers is listed in detail in the back of this Handbook.

Q: Do boarders have to do their own laundry?

All laundry is dealt with in School (most is taken up to SES, some is done in Choir House) and during term time there should never be a need for the XVI to take clothes home to launder them. This includes games kit, casuals, towels and bedding as well as School and Cathedral uniform. Probationers follow the same routine, except for their games kit, which should be taken home from school on Fridays to be laundered and of course for the uniform they are wearing on Friday when picked up.

Q: Do boarders have to bring their own bedding?

In order to make your own space feel more personalised and homely, the boys bring their own bedding. We provide the mattress protector and bottom sheet, but you will provide pillows and pillow-cases, duvets and duvet covers and blankets, all of which will be regularly laundered. The boys tell us that mattress toppers provide an extra layer of comfort too.

Q: Can pupils bring their own pictures / posters from home?

Yes, pupils are encouraged to decorate their area of the dorm with appropriate pictures and posters.

Q: Is there Internet access in Choir House?

Yes, Wi-Fi is available throughout the ground floor and boys have access to the Internet in the computer room.

Q: Are pupils allowed laptop computers/electronic devices at Choir House?

We have 10 networked PCs in the Choir House computer room, used for doing prep during the week and during free time at the weekends. Laptops may also be brought in for use during prep time.

Boys' own iPads/tablets/smartphones are permitted for limited periods at weekends. They are all kept in a locked cabinet. Boys all sign the Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT: Code of Conduct and the use of all devices must be compliant with the school's directives.

Boys in Form 7-8 may take their phones to school (in line with day pupils) with parental permission and if used according to school rules.

Q: How can pupils keep their belongings safe?

Choir House is a happy and secure place in which to live, and everyone here is expected to respect the property, privacy and welfare of other pupils and staff. However, we also try to take general and internal security seriously. The Houseparent keeps all valuables in the office as well as pocket money. The boys all also have a lockable locker for their personal items.

Q: Can I park in the Cathedral Precincts?

The Cathedral has very strict rules about parking, but Choir House parents are usually granted access to the Precincts without problem once your vehicle is registered on the Choir House visitors list. Please inform the Houseparent at the start of the year of the registrations of any vehicles your family will regularly use and we will add them to our list which is sent to the Cathedral Security team. The Oaks or the South Wall of the Cathedral are the only parking places available for visitors.

Q: Can I take my son out for his birthday?

You are very welcome to bring in a birthday cake (100% nut free) on the appropriate day; we will usually have the cake after supper. The Choristers always sing 'Happy Birthday' to one another in a different and quite magical way! You are also welcome to take your son out for the evening of his birthday (Cathedral commitments permitting) if he can be brought back by bedtime.

Q: Is the food the same at Choir House as at the Main school?

Boys eat all meals at Choir House, except lunch during the week, which is taken at school. The cooks at Choir House are employed by Holroyd Howe, the caterer for St Edmund's School and menus are planned to mirror the main school. We encourage the boys to eat a balanced diet,

and menus are planned carefully with this in mind. We keep a check on what individual boys are eating for breakfast and evening meals and will advise you of any concerns. We are used to dealing with children with special dietary requirements and we can accommodate a variety of regimes. Please discuss your son's needs with the Houseparent or Matron.

Laundry

Uniform

Pants & Socks	daily	CH	
Shirts	daily		SES
Trousers & Jumpers	weekly	SES	

Games Kit

XVI	Fri		CH
<i>Probs.</i>	<i>Fri</i>		<i>taken home</i>

Casuals	when required	CH	
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Towels & Pyjamas	weekly		SES
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Bedding

Sheets	weekly	SES	
Duvet covers	fortnightly		SES

CLOTHING LIST CHORISTERS

Items marked (*) are School pattern items and must be purchased from *Schoolblazer*.

Items marked (+) are available from *Schoolblazer* but may be purchased elsewhere.

Items marked (#) ('cathedral uniform' worn by the XVI) can be ordered by Miss A.M Jordan, Choir House Matron.

All articles must be clearly marked with name tapes.

1	*Navy crested blazer (Forms 7-8)
2	*Navy junior jumper (Form 4)
2	#'Cathedral' jumpers (the XVI, Forms 5-8)
2	+Charcoal school trousers (shorts optional for Form 4 in warm weather)
6	+Long sleeve white shirts
6	+Short sleeve white shirts (optional in warm weather)
2	*Junior tie
5 prs	Pants
5 prs	+Grey socks
1	*Navy crested Stormproof jacket (Forms 3-5, optional for Forms 6-8)
1	Rainproof or weatherproof jacket in navy or black (Forms 6-8 who do not have crested jacket only)
1	#'cathedral' purple polo shirt (the XVI, Forms 5-8)
1	#'cathedral' hoodie (the XVI, Forms 5-8)
1	#'cathedral' fleece (optional for The XVI, Forms 5-8)
1 pr	Plain black shoes with minimum pattern for ease of cleaning
1	Shoe cleaning kit
1	*Art overall (Form 4)
	*House badge (presented to pupils on the first day of term)
	Chorister Badge (presented to F7 & 8 choristers)
1	*Crested rucksack (optional)
1	Duvet
2	Duvet covers
	Pillows
2	Pillow slips per pillow
1	Mattress topper (optional). The boys' beds are 2'6" wide.
1	Blanket (optional)
1	Cuddly toy
2	Looped towels
2 prs	Pyjamas
1	Dressing gown
1 pr	Slippers
1 pr	Casual shoes/trainers
1	Wash bag: toothbrush, paste, shampoo, shower-gel, roll-on deodorant, lip balm & moisturiser
1	Brush/comb
2 sets	Casuals (F4 are fine with one set, as they are home at the weekends)
1	Nail brush

