



**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE**  
**CHORISTERS AND PROBATIONERS**  
**A RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Revised June 2018**

The College recognises the additional pressure that singing with the Choir places on the Choristers and Probationers. The College will work closely with the Headmaster and other staff of St John's College School to safeguard their safety and welfare whilst in the care of the College, and will fulfil the requirements of the St John's College School Risk Assessment.

All Choristers and Probationers receive a bursary from the College which covers two-thirds of the St John's College School boarding fee. Additionally the College funds instrumental music and singing tuition. No child is prevented from taking up a Choristership for financial reasons and the College will draw upon the income from trust funds to provide further support for those Choristers who require supplementary assistance.

### **Admissions**

All Choristers, whether already a pupil at St John's College School or from beyond the School, are auditioned through informal and then formal Voice Trials.

The recruitment process for Choristers is managed by the Registrar at St John's College School and follows the process as described in the St John's College School Risk Assessment.

When a child is successful in being awarded a Choristership, the College issues a formal contract to the parents for signature. The contract contains details of the bursary awarded and gives an outline of the level of commitments a Chorister is required to fulfil.

### **Outcomes**

Choristers achieve very highly, both as musicians and in general. They receive a specialist musical education and will almost all gain music scholarships to senior schools when they leave. A number of Choristers return to the College to study for their degree and as Organ or Choral Students with the Choir. Some of these will go on to study on post-graduate courses at institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, prior to pursuing a career in music.

The College recognises, however, that the demands on the Choristers are significant and that the nature of their lives as Choristers carries risks with it. These risks are carefully identified and strategies, arrangements and procedures are put in place to remove such risks as far as possible.

The following **analysis of risks** relates to those risks specifically associated with a Choristership or Probationership and for which the College is responsible. St John's College School conducts its own risk assessment with regard to those aspects of care and supervision for which it is responsible.

## **Abuse**

The Choristers and Probationers are at increased risk of abuse when their work takes them out of the School. Their work as performers exposes them to a wide range of adults and requires them to be accommodated off-site when on tour in the UK and abroad.

To minimise the risk, the College will:

- Follow the Safe Recruitment Policy when recruiting all adults in the Chapel and Choir Department;
- Provide training in child protection to all staff in the Chapel and Choir Department;
- When in the College, the children are in the care of St John's College School staff and will be supervised either by the Director of Music, during e.g. a rehearsal, or will be supervised by a member of the School's staff;
- When events take place outside of College, the College will make arrangements in accordance with the College Policy for Choir Tours and Other External Events and the School's Choir Tour Planning and Management document;
- The College will consult with the School Headmaster regarding the arrangements for all non-routine events which take place both inside and outside the College. No event will take place without the School Headmaster's approval of the arrangements.

## **Onerous demands**

There is a clear structure for determining the routine and non-routine commitments of the Choristers to ensure that their welfare is given the highest priority. The availability of Choristers for non-routine engagements during term time and within the School's holidays was reviewed in January 2012 and the document, Availability of Choristers for engagements and tours, was approved by the Choir Advisory Committee and the College Council. A copy of the paper is appended to the St John's College School Risk Assessment.

The weekly routines are planned in advance of each term by the Director of Music, the School Headmaster and others as appropriate.

The Choir Advisory Committee consults the School Headmaster before agreeing to undertake a non-routine engagement or tour. With very few exceptions, no engagements are accepted during the School working day and the total amount of time for touring is restricted to approximately three weeks per year.

## **Exclusion from School activities**

St John's College School recognises that the nature of the Choristers' commitments with the Choir precludes them from taking part in certain School activities and every effort is made, in conjunction with the College's officers, to minimise the exclusion of Choristers from such activities.

The Director of Music liaises regularly with the School Headmaster to ensure that Chorister commitments are planned carefully in order to allow the Choristers to have a normal life within School.

### **Poor academic performance**

St John's College School has effective systems in place to monitor the academic performance of the Choristers. The Director of Music meets regularly with the School Headmaster and others as appropriate to discuss the Choristers' progress and address any areas of concern.

### **Accessibility Policy**

The College recognises its duties as laid down in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and has developed an Accessibility Policy for the Choristers and Probationers. The College liaises with the School to ensure that arrangements are made for any Choristers or Probationers with special needs to receive appropriate assistance to enable them to fulfil their duties.

### **Health & Safety**

The College will ensure that both the College and Chapel Health & Safety policies are complied with at all times.

### **Special medical conditions/illness whilst performing**

The College Nurse, Choir Administrator and School Nurse meet annually to discuss the requirements of any Choristers and Probationers with specific medical conditions. Guidelines for supervising Choristers and Probationers who are taken ill whilst performing are given in the St John's College School Policy for Staff Supervision of Choristers and the College Policy for Choir tours.

The Choir Administrator will ensure that special dietary requirements are included in all catering instructions, both for College functions and whilst attending external engagements.

### **Welfare within the Choir**

The College will follow the guidelines laid out in the School Risk Assessment. The College will work closely with the School Staff to resolve disciplinary matters and to ensure that the risk of unhappiness is minimised.

### **Welfare of Families**

The College recognises that the demands of Chorister life are felt not only by the children concerned, but also by their families. The College will make every effort to communicate with and be hospitable to Chorister families.

Special arrangements are made in the Chapel to ensure that families are seated as closely as possible to the Choir. For special services and other events in College, the Chapel Clerk and Choir Administrator arrange for a special ticket allocation to be made to parents.

### **Lack of Communication**

The College recognises that regular and extensive communication is required with St John's College School and with Chorister families.

The Director of Music meets regularly with the School Headmaster and other teaching staff to discuss matters relating to the Choristers and Probationers. The Director of Music communicates any relevant issues relating to the Choristers and Probationers to all Chapel staff during weekly meetings.

The Director of Music prepares written reports on each Chorister and Probationer at the end of the Michaelmas and Easter Terms. The Director of Music meets informally with Chorister and Probationer parents at their request, and meets formally with them to discuss their child's progress within the Choir at least once each academic year.

A special calendar of all Chorister commitments is agreed with the School Headmaster and sent by the School to parents in advance of each term. Special mailings (predominantly e-mailings) to Chorister parents occur frequently to ensure that all relevant information, including e.g. arrangements for concerts, is communicated.

A termly meeting with Chorister parents takes place prior to the beginning of each term, chaired by the Headmaster, to which the Director of Music and Choir Administrator are invited, to inform parents of forthcoming commitments and engagements and to discuss any matters arising therefrom. An annual formal meeting of Chorister and Probationer parents with the Director of Music and School Headmaster takes place, with parents invited formally to contribute to the agenda.

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