



S01: ADMISSIONS AND ABSENCES

GUIDANCE AND FRAMEWORK

This policy has regard to the following:

- DfE Guidance: *Children Missing Education* (2016)
- DfE: Advice on School Attendance (2019)
- DfE Guidance: *School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities* (August 2020)

Westminster Abbey Choir School exists to educate and care for the boys who are accepted as choristers of Westminster Abbey. We welcome staff and pupils from a wide variety of social and ethnic backgrounds; we do not permit race, ethnicity, social background or disability to be used as a criterion for or against admission. Whilst a Christian foundation, we do not select candidates for entry to the school on the basis of religious belief. However, given the particular nature of the Choir School and that its pupils are members of the Choir of Westminster Abbey, boys, their parents and staff are required to support Christian worship in Westminster Abbey.

Parents are requested to provide full written details of any disabilities and/or special educational needs in good time and to inform the school of any changes to these needs that become apparent prior to their son's entry to the school. The school will consider carefully whether it is able to provide adequately for such needs and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments to avoid putting a child at a substantial disadvantage. However, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to a prospective pupil whose specific needs cannot be supported. For further details please request a copy of our AEN policy.

Boys are usually admitted to the school at age eight, though older boys may be admitted if there are vacancies. Before admission boys will be required to satisfy the Master of the Choristers as to their suitability for choristership musically and the Headmaster as to their suitability academically and socially.

Procedure for Admission

Parents will be required to complete an application form. Boys will usually be invited for an informal audition to assess potential before the formal assessment procedure begins. Following this informal assessment, the Master of the Choristers will write to the parents outlining his recommendations. If the application is to be pursued the Headmaster will request a confidential report from the candidate's present school. Formal assessment of a candidate's suitability will usually be made at audition and interview and through written academic examination, which will normally include assessment of English and mathematics.

Following successful audition and academic assessment, an offer of a place will be made, which will be conditional on the receipt of a satisfactory medical report from the boy's GP. The offer will be accompanied by a copy of the Parents' Handbook containing a formal contractual



agreement between the School and the boy's parents. This agreement must be signed by each parent that holds parental responsibility and returned to the school.

Absences

Boys are expected to attend school during normal school or singing terms. Where exceptional circumstances render a boy unable to do so, for example in the case of illness, his parents must inform the school at the earliest opportunity explaining the reasons. Where a boy is absent for more than 7 days the school will seek further clarification of the nature of the problem. The school may require a satisfactory medical report before the boy returns to school.

Requests for leave of absence in cases other than illness should be made in writing to the Headmaster who will discuss them with the Master of the Choristers. Leave will normally be granted only for very significant family events, such as close family weddings or funerals, or for interviews or examinations for secondary school.

The school will notify the local authority if a boy fails to attend regularly or is absent without leave for more than ten consecutive school days.

Suspension and Exclusion

The school seeks to bring out the best in all pupils but reserves the right to request the removal of a boy who is not making satisfactory progress in the choir or the school, or whose work or conduct is deemed unsatisfactory, or whose conduct or health is having a significant adverse effect on other boys. The procedures for suspension and exclusion are set out in the Behaviour policy document.

Admissions Register

The school will maintain admissions register in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulation (ISSR) Paragraph 15. The School will inform the local authority where a pupil's name is to be deleted at a non-standard transition. In addition, the School will inform the pupil's home local education authority in such circumstances.

Attendance Register

The School is not required to maintain an attendance register since all pupils are boarders, though written daily record of attendance is kept so as to be able to assist government departments' requirements for information and ensure that attendance is regular. A written overnight register of presence in the building is also maintained. These measures help to ensure the welfare and health and safety of the boys.