



## **S01 – ADMISSIONS AND ABSENCES**

**Reviewed: Education and Policy Committee**  
**Approved: Full Governing Body**

**Approved Date: June 2025**  
**Next Review Date: June 2026 by E&P with recommendation to FGB**



This policy has regard to the following:

- DfE [Children Missing Education](#) (August 2024)
- DfE [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (August 2024)

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 Headteacher 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 their recommendations. If the application is to be pursued the Headteacher 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 completed medical questionnaire from the boys' parents. An additional report from the boy's GP may be required to provide additional detail of any medical needs to ensure that they can be met by the school. The offer will be accompanied by a copy of the Form



of Acceptance and the Chorister Contract. This Form of Acceptance 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 Headteacher 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. Where a boy is absent for 15 days cumulatively or consecutively because of illness, the school will also be required to notify the local authority.

## **Suspension and Exclusion**

The school seeks to bring out the best in all pupils but reserves the right to request the temporary or permanent 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, Discipline & Exclusions policy document.

## **Admissions Register**

The school will maintain admissions register in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulation (ISSR) Paragraph 15. The names of new pupils will be entered on the admission register on the first day that the school have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. The School will inform the local authority where a pupil's name is to be added or deleted at a non-standard transition within five days. As the standard entry time to join Westminster Abbey Choir School is in Year 4, most pupils who join the school will join at a non-standard transition time. In addition, if a pupil ceases to attend the



school, before the child's name is re-classified on the admissions register, the Headteacher will satisfy themselves that he has been officially registered at another school. If the headteacher is unable to identify a new school they will contact the local education authority in which the boy's parents live and the Bi-Borough to report the fact before adjustments to the register are made. See also guidance in the government's [Children Missing Education](#).

### **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.

### **Attendance Champion**

The school's Attendance Champion is Chloe McNeely, Deputy Head and DSL.