An Agreement for Choir Membership: St Mary's Boys', Girls' and Training Choirs

Aims of the Choirs:

- To help children discover the pleasure of singing and its many benefits.
- To offer opportunities for talented young singers from Nottingham, especially from inner-city areas, to make the most of their abilities.
- To develop the role of St Mary's as a centre of excellence in the Anglican choral tradition.

Why should children sing?:

- Studies have shown that children who sing in choirs have greater academic success and more advanced social skills than children who don't sing.

- In one study, 70% of parents/carers reported that, since joining a choir, their child had become more self-confident and that their self-discipline and memory skills had improved.

- Singing releases endorphins which make singers feel happy and energetic. It increases children's self-esteem and their sense of social inclusion, bonding them together.

- The physical act of singing improves breath control and strengthens the immune and cardiovascular systems, making us more healthy.

- Choral singing helps children to express their emotions in a suitable way and to manage their feelings more appropriately.

Commitment:

Full attendance is expected at rehearsals. This benefits all members of the choir by ensuring that the choir's musical output is of the highest calibre and that the ensemble is sustainable musically, educationally and socially. A maximum of two absences per term (other than in the case of illness) is allowed. Permission for absence should be requested at least a month in advance for rehearsals, and before the start of choir term for services or performances. Choir

rehearsals continue as usual on school training days, as these are different for each school. If your child has a sore throat but feels well, they should attend the rehearsal but not sing. Parents/carers are asked to give complete support to their child in playing a full role in the musical team. Choir timetables will be sent to parents/carers in advance, detailing the regular weekly practices along with the dates for services, concerts and other events. Choir commitments should take priority over other extra-curricular activities (such as sports fixtures) and social events (such as parties). Please keep choir dates in mind when arranging family holidays, as we do need to be able to rely on all singers being present at advertised services and concerts.

From time to time, children's enthusiasm for any activity may wane: we ask that you encourage your child to continue their commitment and to benefit from all the long-term advantages of choir membership. If your child is definitely going to leave the choir, we ask that you give us half a term's notice please. This allows us to plan appropriately, to offer the place to another child, and to thank the departing member for all their hard work.

Rehearsals:

The choir timetable gives the times at which practices will begin, rather than the time choir members should arrive. It is expected that all children will arrive at least five minutes early, so that rehearsals can begin on time. Supervision of children is available before each weekday rehearsal, from 3.45pm. Please collect your child punctually at the end of each session. Responsibility for the transport of choir members rests with parents/carers unless explicitly indicated otherwise on the choir timetable.

We expect the highest standards of behaviour at all times and always aim to manage behaviour in a positive manner. Please read our Behaviour Policy and discuss it with your child so that they understand what is expected of them. Should serious problems arise, children may have to be excluded from the choir on a temporary or permanent basis.

Dress:

School uniform is worn for the weekday rehearsals (except on school training days etc., when home clothes may be worn). Members of the **Training Choir** also wear school uniform for services. The **Boys' and Girls' Choir** members are robed for services, but underneath they should wear:
Shirt with a collar- white or other neutral colour eg. black or grey (this can be a school polo shirt if necessary) School shoes- black or as close as possible (no trainers please)
Long hair should be tied up with black accessories please

Other Musical Activities:

All members of our choirs are encouraged to have instrumental and/or singing lessons if time and finances allow. The Director of the Junior Choirs is happy to advise according to individual circumstances. It is hoped that singers will play a full part in their school choirs and ensembles, but their commitment to the St Mary's Choir should be mentioned at school so that there are no clashes.

Admissions Policy:

The choirs are open to all children with the necessary musical and vocal potential, provided that the family is willing to support their commitment. Informal group auditions are conducted in local primary schools on a regular basis and individual auditions are also held at St Mary's on an ad hoc basis. It is not essential for choir members to be practising Christians, as long as their parents/carers are happy for them to sing at services at St Mary's and elsewhere. Continued membership of the choir is contingent upon fulfilling the expectations of commitment and attendance.

Basic Information:

For each child we require full details of parents/carers, emergency contact numbers, and information about the child's medical conditions, allergies etc.. Should these details change please inform us as soon as possible.

Attendance:

Itis the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that children are delivered safely and collected from rehearsals, services and concerts.

If you are unable to collect your own child, please supply us with a list of approved adults able to collect them after rehearsals.

Our Commitment to Child Safety:

The safety of children and young people is paramount. Rehearsals at St Mary's in the Lace Market and elsewhere are covered by the St Mary's in the Lace Market Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures, a copy of which can be found on our website: https://www.stmarysnottingham.org/safeguarding/

1. **Health and Safety:**

1.1 A risk assessment will be completed for choir rehearsals, services, concerts and visits.

1.2 A named health and safety person will be available for all choir activities. This person will hold a current First Aid certificate.

1.3 A First Aid box will be available for all choir activities and immediate medical attention will be obtained if necessary. Parents/carers will be immediately informed of any accidents or injuries and what steps have been taken.

1.4 Accidents and injuries will be clearly recorded and reported to the St Mary's in the Lace Market Health and Safety Group for an assessment of any potential future risk.

1.5 Fire safety and emergency procedures will be explained to children when they join the choir. Emergency drills will be carried out once a year.

1.6 Smoking by either adults or young people during activities involving children will be prohibited.

1.7 Health and safety checks of the building and grounds are routinely carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

2. Safe Supervision of Children and Young People:

2.1 Children will be supervised at all times.

2.2 There will always be at least three adults to supervise activities. Additional supervising adults will be available for visits to ensure that the child-adult ratio is adequate.

2.3 Safe recruitment procedures will be followed, as required by the diocese, in the recruitment of staff and volunteers. All choir staff and chaperones will have an enhanced DBS with barring check.

2.4 All choir staff and chaperones will undertake safeguarding training. They will have an awareness of child protection issues appropriate to their role and an understanding of the procedures to be followed in response to allegations or suspicions of non-accidental harm.

2.5 Children will be informed, when they join the choir, who to speak to if they feel worried, unsafe or have been harmed.

2.6 Allegations or suspicions of non-accidental harm will be reported to the Director of Junior Choirs and the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who will be advised by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. If necessary, allegations or suspicions of non-accidental harm will be reported directly to statutory agencies.

2.7 Contact information:

Director of Junior Choirs	07731 485 494
Parish Safeguarding Officer	07703 120 158
	safeguarding@stmarynotts.org
Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	01636 817 200
	safeguarding@southwell.anglican.org

2.8 Children in school years 2 - 6 will not be allowed to leave rehearsals, services and concerts unless they are collected by an adult from their approved list. For those in school years 7-9 written consent from a parent/guardian must be provided in order for children to arrive or leave unaccompanied.

3. General Data Protection Regulation:

Photographs/videos etc.: As part of the contact details form, parents/carers will be asked to state what they do and do not consent to. We ask parents/carers to complete this form annually to ensure that the data we hold is up to date. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the Director of Junior Choirs of any changes.

4. Reviewing Child Safety

St Mary's in the Lace Market will review their policies and procedures in relation to child safety on an annual basis.