



PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised: August 2008

Saint Thomas Choir School
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THE CHOIR SCHOOL MISSION

Saint Thomas Choir School founded in 1919 to educate, house and nurture the boys who sing in the choir of Saint Thomas Church in New York City. A select group of students in grades three through eight experience a remarkable combination of music and education in a rich Christian community. Its graduates are capable, intelligent young men who embrace life with a sense of hope, skill and confidence.

The Saint Thomas Choir School admits students of any race, color or national origin to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of color, race or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarships and loan

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INTRODUCTION

The Choir of Saint Thomas Church is considered by many to be one of the world's finest choral groups. Musicians from all parts of the globe recognize the outstanding musical and choral standards that the choir has maintained throughout its history. These standards have become world-class, especially during the past two decades.

Under the leadership of Headmaster, The Reverend Charles F. Wallace, and Rector, The Rev. Andrew C. Mead, the music program of Saint Thomas Church continues to be of the highest priority. Father Wallace has been on staff at St Thomas since 2003. His first year was spent as Chaplain. In August 2004, he became the 12th Headmaster in the history of the St Thomas Choir School. Prior to his appointment here, he was on the clergy staff of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, UK and Chaplain of their Choir School. He is a graduate of Dalhousie University (King's College), Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Trinity College at the University of Toronto.

The Rev. Andrew Mead came to St. Thomas Church in September of 1996. Before beginning his ministry at St. Thomas, Father Mead had been rector of Church of the Advent in Boston, Massachusetts for eleven years. He holds a BA from Dupaw University, Greencastle, Indiana and a M.Div. from Yale University Divinity School.

These men understand the importance of providing the parish, the City of New York, and, indeed, the entire nation with the finest possible choir of men and boys. To make such a choir possible, this boarding choir school has been firmly established, well staffed and maintained. The only church-affiliated boarding choir school in America, it provides an outstanding total educational program for its choristers.

For many young boys taking on the task of becoming essentially professional singers at such a young age is not easy. This is especially true in America where one can find many young singers who have talent and ability but have had little or no formal musical training. The boys at St. Thomas Choir School respond to the challenges presented to them with pride and enthusiasm.

The Choir School is a Church School; we are a Christian community. Our education encourages its citizens to become fully human, to respect life, and to be religious in the broadest sense. The choir shapes much of what we do. It requires both an individual and a group discipline in performance. All participants learn that one moment's inattention can destroy the group effort.

The musical leadership and direction of the choir is provided by one of the world's most gifted church musicians, Mr John Scott, the Organist and Director of Music. Prior to coming to Saint Thomas in August 2004, Mr. Scott had been associated with Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, UK, where he had been Organist and Director of Music since 1990, and before that Sub-Organist since 1984. Mr. Scott is an outstanding organist and choir-trainer who enjoys an international reputation as a result of his work at St. Paul's. Not only is he a brilliant performer, he is a natural and highly effective teacher. His daily rehearsals provide a challenge for even the most experienced chorister. The church and the school provide able assistance to the Organist and Director of Music and his staff, which includes an Associate Organist, an Assistant Organist and Vocal Coach. Boys also receive weekly instruction in instrumental

music which is arranged through the Director of Music in School, Simon Holt, and from the Music Theory Teacher, Mr. Scott Eyerly.

The Saint Thomas Choir is patterned after the Continental and English cathedral and collegiate chapel choir models, which consist of both men and boys. Fifteen professional singers from the New York City Metropolitan area sing countertenor, tenor and bass parts while boys from the Choir School provide the treble section. This choir performs from mid-September until early June each season, at least six times each week. Consequently, the choir is responsible for a very large repertory of mass settings, canticles, anthems, cantatas and oratorios; the choir might perform as many as 450 separate pieces of music each season. Three major concerts are given annually, accompanied by an orchestra at the church. The choir tours, both in the United States and abroad, records once each season, and appears with major symphony orchestras. Concerts and special services are frequently broadcast nationally and abroad.

From the resulting demands of such a schedule, the boys acquire a sense of responsibility and self-reliance. They learn how to use their voices in singing, and how to interpret the words and music they sing. While they are taught much about the composers' techniques and the music's structure, the choristers also discover themselves as musical personalities.

It is a well-known fact that participation in a musical group requires a degree of competitiveness if performance standards are to be at the highest level. For the choir to maintain world-class standards, each chorister must constantly strive for improved vocal, choral and musical skills. When teachers, conductors, and staff work to produce a balance of skill attainment and positive reinforcement, the student benefits from learning, growth, a positive self-image, and an increasing self-confidence.

When the Choir School was founded in 1919, the intention was to have a school similar to English Choir Schools so that the music at Saint Thomas Church could be of the highest standard. During the decades since its founding, the Choir School has been dedicated to this purpose. It is especially rewarding to find that as the school enters the new millennium, in an era not always appreciative of the arts, and specifically church music, the Saint Thomas Choir continues to set the standards which many others seek to achieve.

In order to train the boys who will eventually become the performing treble singers, a system has been established whereby the boy progresses by stages from that of a raw beginner to that of a polished performer. When a probationer chorister shows sufficient progress as a musician, singer and citizen, the Director of Music promotes him to become a full chorister. The probationer choristers have their own separate schedule of rehearsals, concurrent with the main choir. While a probationer, the chorister learns leadership skills by continuing to sing with other junior choristers at the 9:00 a.m. Sunday service.

A typical day's rehearsal schedule at the school might look like this:

Tuesday – Friday morning:

8.00 – 9.15 All boys rehearse in Gym with Mr Scott
8.15 – 9.15 Chorister/Probationer rehearsals

Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday afternoon:

4.15 – 5.15 Chorister rehearsal (in church)
Joined by the Gentlemen of the Choir at 4.30 for Choral Evensong at 5.30.

Saturday morning:

9.00 – 10.30 Chorister and Probationer rehearsals

Sunday morning:

9.30 Chorister rehearsal
Joined by the Gentlemen of the Choir at 9.50 for Sung Eucharist at 11.00

Sunday afternoon:

2.30 Chorister rehearsal
Joined by the Gentlemen of the Choir at 3.00 for Choral Evensong at 4.00

Full choir rehearsals have proven especially effective because the younger boys learn a great deal from the examples set by the more experienced boys and men.

Each chorister's progress is assessed four times a year (fall, winter, early spring and late spring) by means of written comments from the Organist and Director of Music and the Associate Organist. The comments are both of a general and a specific nature. These comments provide written direction to the chorister both vocally and musically, and also give equal consideration to citizenship. A good choir is a good team, as all the singers or players are interdependent.

Thus, a chorister will learn and perform in public – a unique and demanding discipline in itself – a very large number of musical works that he will understand and interpret. He will be familiar with works written centuries ago as well as with works written yesterday. A chorister will be at ease with the music of the great masters, and will learn to sing in several languages, both old and new. Through it all, he will learn the meaning, weight, and challenge of discipline, responsibility, self-reliance and citizenship.

The primary goals of the choir then are clear: maintaining and extending a standard of musical excellence and instilling in each chorister the desire to grow through this experience as a musician and person. These goals are often met while individual growth continues. There are always new works to be learned, new problems to be solved and new sights to be set.

BUILDING DIRECTORY

<u>Location</u>	<u>Occupant/Office</u>
Basement	Gym, Choir Rehearsal
Mezzanine	Mat Room and Parents' Storage Room
1 st Floor	Reception, Rec Room, Practice Rooms
2 nd Floor	Dining Hall, Living Room, Main Offices
3 rd Floor	Classrooms for Latin/French, Math, Music Theory and 3 rd /4 th Grade. Computer Lab Library
4 th Floor	Tuck Shop, Housemothers' Office, Classrooms for History, Science, Art and English
5 th Floor South	Dorms for Grade 8 boys
6 th Floor South	Dorms
7 th Floor	Dorms for Junior boys
9 th Floor SW	Infirmary

SCHOOL STAFF

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
3rd & 4th Grade Teacher, Curriculum Coordinator	Mr. Steve Kelly	skelly@choirschool.org
Admissions & Alumni Relations	Mrs. Ruth Cobb	rcobb@choirschool.org
Art Faculty	Mr. Scott Wolfson	swolfson@choirschool.org
Athletic Faculty	Mr. Nate Leslie	nleslie@choirschool.org
Building Superintendent	Mr. Rick Viera	rviera@choirschool.org
Director of Music	Mr. John Scott	jscott@saintthomaschurch.org
Director of Music in School	Mr. Simon Holt	sholt@choirschool.org
English Faculty	Ms. Tonya Fisher	tfisher@choirschool.org
Finance	Mrs. Fazeela Bacchus	fbacchus@choirschool.org
GAP Students		
Headmaster	The Reverend Charles F. Wallace	cwallace@choirschool.org
History Faculty	Mrs. Mary Beth Benbenek	mabenbenek@choirschool.org
Household Staff	Ms. Edith Rivera	
Housemothers	Ms. Susan Sullivan Mrs. Sue Eyerly	sully@choirschool.org seyerly@choirschool.org
Chef	Ms Heidi Thomas	hthomas@choirschool.org
Languages Faculty	Mrs. Delia Ahouandjinou-Geter Mr. John Lee	dgeter@choirschool.org jlee@choirschool.org
Laundry Staff	Ms. Olga Matos	
Maintenance Staff	Mr. Miguel Osorio Mr. Jose Roman	
Math Faculty	Mr. Michael Rose	mrose@choirschool.org
Music Theory Faculty	Mr. Scott Eyerly	feyerly@choirschool.org

Receptionists	Mr Tom Clemente Mr Stephen Smolinski Mrs Suki Rohacek Mr. Eduardo Tello Mr Ron Weaver	
Rector	The Reverend Andrew Mead	
School Counselor	Mrs. Robyn Rosenthal	rosenthal@choirschool.org
Science Faculty	Dr. Matthew Gilbert	mgilbert@choirschool.org

IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

SAINT THOMAS CHOIR SCHOOL

202 West 58th Street
New York, NY 10019 (Between Broadway & 7th Avenue)
www.choirschool.org

☎: 212.247.3311
📠: 212.247.3393

SAINT THOMAS CHURCH

1 West 53rd Street
New York, NY 10019 (Between 5th & 6th Avenues)
www.saintthomaschurch.org

☎: 212.757.7013
📠: 212.977.6582

REACHING YOUR SON

If you wish to call your son, there are pay phones on each dormitory floor. Because many of the boys use the few phone lines, we suggest that you arrange to have your son call you at a specific time each week. Many boys call collect or use a calling card to call home. **From September 2006 cell phones are permitted at school.** Cell phones are kept in the housemothers' office and may be used only at bedtimes and Saturdays. If you are having trouble reaching your son, please feel free to call and leave a message with a housemother.

Pay Phone Numbers:
5th floor: 212.246.4497
6th floor: 212.246.4533
7th floor: 212.246.5102

The best time to call your son is in the evening Mon -Thurs:

Grade 3, 4: 8:00-8:45 p.m.;
Grade 5: 8:45-9:05pm
Grade 6: 9:05-9:35 p.m.;
Grade 7 & 8: 9:30-10 p.m.

Please do not call school phones after 10pm.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding your son's health, please call one of the housemothers, Susan Sullivan or Sue Eyerly. Both housemothers are registered nurses. One of them is on duty at all times.

HEALTH FORMS

You will receive two small packets of Health Forms. One packet is to be filled out by your doctor, the other is to be filled out by you. It is VERY IMPORTANT that these are completed and returned to the housemothers on or before the first day of school **each year**.

Forms to be filled out by your doctor:

1. Physical Examination Form

New York State Department of Health mandates that all students have a physical examination performed **each year**. This is to ensure that all children are reaching their developmental goals, are fit and well, and are free of any new illnesses which may affect their educational development for that year.

2. Immunization Record

The Department of Health requires that all students be currently immunized for the following diseases: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, tuberculosis, hemophilus influenzae, hepatitis B, and varicella.

Students will not be allowed to remain in the school without proof of these immunizations or a detailed letter of exemption from both parents as outlined by the Health Department.

The school recommends that all students also get flu shots in the fall (a good time for this would be during the half-term break in late October/early November).

We further recommend that boys in grades 7 and 8 receive the vaccine against meningococcal meningitis, given that the disease is especially contagious and we live in a residential school.

Medication Forms. New York State requires a doctor's written order for the administration of all medications and vitamins to a minor other than by a parent or guardian. There are two forms used by the Choir School which enable the housemothers to legally administer medications/vitamins. They are:

3. The Physician's Order Form: Required for **ALL** prescribed medication **and** for any over-the-counter medication or vitamin that will be administered on a continual basis (e.g. throughout the year). A separate form is required for each medication/vitamin.

A physician's order form MUST be completed by your doctor if your child is commenced on any medication during the year (e.g. antibiotics for an ear infection).

We therefore recommend that you make several copies of the Physician's Order Form and leave it with your doctor in your son's file.

4. Over-the Counter Medication Administration Form: This allows the housemothers to administer over-the-counter medications as they deem necessary for minor ailments (e.g. Tylenol and ibuprofen for fever, etc), and enables the doctor to alert them of medical conditions that may contraindicate their administration in certain conditions (e.g. administering aspirin to a child with hemophilia).

Forms to be filled out by you:

5. Medical History Form

This gives us a brief overview of your child's health throughout his lifetime, and gives you a chance to highlight any concerns you may have with his health or development. Please feel free to alert the housemothers of any such concerns. This form also gives us your contact information in the event of an emergency, and an alternate contact should you be unavailable.

Included on this form is a medical release. **Please ensure that you read and sign it. By doing so, you will permit the housemothers to give consent to medical treatment in case of an emergency or severe illness.** All States have recently enacted stringent privacy laws and may decline treatment to a minor if this is not completed.

6. Medical Insurance Form

This allows the nurses to give the medical provider your insurance information at the time of treatment. Failure to complete this form will result in the entire bill being sent directly to your home by the provider.

Please ensure that you complete all 3 pages of this form. It will become part of your child's medical file (which is separate from his academic file) and will be the only file taken to all doctor and emergency room visits. Please note that it may be the only place where we will have your contact information when we are on tour, at camp or at the hospital.

IN-HOUSE ILLNESSES AND THE INFIRMARY

The housemothers watch carefully for minor illnesses. If a boy is not feeling well, he should always report this to the housemother on duty after obtaining permission from his teacher, coach, Headmaster or Choirmaster. During the day, he should then report to the housemothers' office. If a housemother is not there, he should report to the school office. At night he should go to the apartment of the housemother-on-duty (e.g. the housemother who put him to bed). **Under no circumstances should a boy be in the infirmary without the housemother being made aware.** Boys are admitted to the infirmary if they are not feeling well, running a fever, or simply need a little rest. A written record is kept for each boy in his medical file. Symptoms, temperatures, all medications given to the child and any action taken are noted in a daily log. These

records are helpful when referring a child to a physician and in observing patterns of behavior and illness with each boy and throughout the school. The nurse-on-duty will contact parents if their son is in the infirmary for a prolonged period of time or stays overnight. Rules of the infirmary are posted therein and are to be observed by all. The school is not responsible for lost items left in the infirmary.

EMERGENCIES

Decisions to consult a physician are at the discretion of the housemothers, in consultation with the Headmaster. It is the Choir School's policy to err on the side of caution and safety and visit the emergency room or other recommended specialists if there is any concern. The housemother on duty will attempt to contact the parent or guardian before taking a boy to a physician or Emergency Department. However, in the case of an emergency, the parents may not be reached until after the child has been seen by a doctor.

HOME RECUPERATION

Occasionally, a boy may be sent home due to illness but only after Headmaster approval. **Parents must check with a housemother before leaving the building and taking their child home.** If the housemother cannot be reached, please contact the faculty member on duty.

If a boy does go home to recuperate, his advisor will coordinate communication of assignments and class work.

Students should not return to school until they have completely recovered and the parents have discussed the situation with the housemother. Parents should inform the housemother of any medications the child is taking, if there are any physical limitations on his activity and what follow-up care is necessary.

ROUTINE DOCTOR VISITS

If a boy needs to visit a dentist or doctor and a parent or guardian cannot take the child, a housemother or faculty member will escort him. The boy's account will be charged transportation costs for both the boy and the faculty member. If medical appointments need to be made, the school asks that parents coordinate this carefully with the school schedule so that appointments cause as little conflict with school activities as possible. Please arrange this with a housemother. All appointments that interrupt the school day must be confirmed with the Headmaster.

DENTISTRY AND BRACES

Middle school is usually the prime time for dentists to recommend corrective braces for children. However, their placement can create temporary speech impediments which may affect the clarity of a child's diction, particularly when singing. We therefore recommend that you thoroughly discuss the implications of this with your dentist/orthodontist prior to placement.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FEES AND FINANCIAL AID

It is the custom of the Finance Office of the church to bill parents twice a year. One-half of the tuition is due in early July and the remainder in January. However, it is possible to make payments in monthly installments; this is arranged through Fazeela Bacchus at the school.

Scholarships are awarded after financial need is established. The Choir School uses the forms and computer services of the School and Student Services for Financial Aid in Princeton, New Jersey. Information on tuition payments and financial aid is available from the staff in the office.

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Each boy at the Choir School has a personal account which is administrated by Fazeela Bacchus and the Headmaster. This account is used for Saturday outings, personal travel expenses, dry cleaning, toiletries and medications purchased by the housemothers, instrumental music purchased while at School and any other miscellaneous expenses incurred by the boys. At the beginning of each semester we ask that parents bring their son's account up to \$200.00. You will receive a monthly balance statement.

When your son's account becomes low or overdrawn, you will be notified by the Headmaster or Mrs. Bacchus. Any money left over in the account at the end of the year is forwarded to the next year. Graduating eighth grade parents will receive the balance from the school.

If your son frequently travels away from the school, i.e.: weekly doctor visits, or needs to be taken to the airport to travel home, you may want to deposit more than \$200.00 in his account.

Boys should not keep money in their rooms. This is for their own safety. We ask that each boy keep his money with the Headmaster. If the Headmaster is not available, he can ask a housemother to hold it for him. **The school is not responsible for lost or stolen money.**

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Academic schedules for your son will be available at the beginning of the school year.

REPORT CARDS

There are normally four marking periods during a school year. Interim reports are distributed twice a year: October and March; termly reports are prepared at Christmas and in June. A traditional system of letter grades is used to rate academic achievement. For all reports, teachers will write comments on the student's progress; termly reports include a letter grade. For interim reports, marks for effort and conduct are given (Good, Satisfactory or Needs Improvement).

ADVISORS

Every student in Grade Five through Grade Seven will have two faculty advisors assigned to them, and in Third, Fourth and Eighth Grade, they normally will have one. An advisor is not a psychologist or trained counselor. However, the advisor and the advisee's teachers should work together to give the greatest support and encouragement to the advisee. The advisor must make sure that the advisee understands that what is told to the advisor cannot always be held in confidence. The advisors will be announced opening weekend.

The advisors will contact parents whenever there is an occasion to do so. As this is a boarding school, we highly encourage phone and email contact between faculty and parents. In the case of academic problems, the subject teacher should make the first contact with the family. The advisor should be made aware of the problem and of the contact as soon as possible after a situation arises. An advisor will monitor the academic progress of the advisee and will receive a copy of the comment sheets that are sent home after each marking period. The Headmaster will be made aware of academic difficulties prior to conversations with a student's parents.

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the calendar twice a year. You may choose various subject teachers for 10 minute interviews. The purpose of this conference will be to discuss academic progress. Interim and semester reports will be mailed home to parents, prior to scheduled conference period.

Boys who are struggling academically will be placed on a weekly status report. This only is done at the request of the Headmaster not the parents.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

During the admissions process, reading comprehension and mathematics tests are administered. On occasion, the following tests may also be used: The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, a Bender-Gestalt Inventory and Tree-Person drawing. The Choir School is a member of the Educational Records Bureau, a consortium of

independent schools and suburban public school districts from around the country. All boys normally write the ERB's in October. The Choir School uses their Comprehensive Testing Program, a series of achievement tests measuring proficiency in mathematics, vocabulary, spelling, reading, and related skill areas.

Boys who intend to apply to independent schools for their high school years are required to take the Secondary School Admissions Test. While the faculty provides courses in test-taking to prepare the boys for the SSAT, boys are expected to use their time at home during the summer months before commencing Grade 8 to study the SSAT workbook. Grade Eight takes the SSAT in November, and have an opportunity to re-sit the exam in December if necessary. The tests normally are administered at test sites in several independent schools in the metropolitan area. However, from time to time, boys will write the exam at the Choir School.

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

The school counselor is Robyn Rosenthal. Robyn is available to meet with boys or parents most Sunday afternoons following lunch. The counselor will observe and assess students who have been referred by teachers for learning or behavioral problems, and also will assist at auditions. Robyn may be reached by leaving a message at the school, or by email: rrosenthal@choirschool.org

ATHLETICS

Part of each day at St. Thomas is set aside to provide exercise and recreation for the student body. Most often this time is used for organized team sports: soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter and softball in the spring. Care is taken to see that each boy has the necessary skills and competence to ensure his safety and that of others. In team sports, emphasis is placed on participation, sportsmanship and teamwork, as well as on helping each boy with the basic skills required.

Most games are played in Central Park. During basketball season, many games are scheduled for the Choir School gymnasium.

It is our usual pattern to divide the boys into two teams, a Lower School team or "Junior Varsity" for grades four, five and six, and the Varsity Team for the senior boys. Each team has its own coach. Outside competition is arranged so that each team competes with competitive teams from local schools at the height of the season.

Schedules of games will be mailed to parents and are available in the school office, but these tend to be provisional. Parents are encouraged to attend games. We urge you to call the Choir School on the day of the game to confirm the details. Last minute changes are not unusual. The Sports Hotline can be reached at extension 345.

GAP STUDENT

The GAP student, or intern, provides support for the teachers and assists in tasks associated with a boarding school. In addition to assisting boys in their academic work during study hall, they also help the housemothers with dorm duties and the Athletic

Director with sports. Some GAP students at St Thomas are former choristers themselves, and at the discretion of the Organist, are invited to sing in the choir during their three month internship.

PLACEMENT AFTER GRADUATION

Graduates of the Choir School have gone on to all kinds of schools, public and private, day and boarding, coed and single sex, large and small. Parents are given considerable assistance in finding the right secondary school for their son. In the spring of their Seventh Grade year, each boy is given a list of schools for his and his family's consideration. The Headmaster is Director of Placement, and will help compile the initial list which is then refined after meetings with the student and with his family. Suggestions and guidelines are developed to help the boy and his parents determine which school to apply to and the procedures for visiting and selecting.

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Students and parents should begin to think about suitable high schools for their son(s) during the spring term/summer of Grade 7. Public and private as well as day and boarding schools should be considered. There is a wide selection of printed material (as well as DVDs) from many of private schools in the north-east USA available from the school office. To give your son the best chance of acceptance, it is important to consider schools out of state. Schools are anxious to achieve a degree of geographical diversity in their composition. If you are applying for financial aid, you may have to look at schools at a greater distance from home as competition is stiffer amongst applicants living in the same state.
2. Parents may arrange to speak with the Headmaster about their son's options. A list of suggested schools is normally provided by the school. Make use of the summer while the boys are at home to visit as many schools as possible. Even if you are not seriously considering a school, it is helpful to arrange interviews for the boys. (It provides an opportunity for boys to practice for their first choice schools!) Arrange interviews in the summer if you can so as not to disrupt the busy academic year.
3. In the autumn, it is customary for admissions staff from various independent schools to visit New York. Many staff will visit at the Choir School to meet our boys. While admissions personnel are willing to conduct interviews in New York, it is normally a requirement that boys visit the school campus as well.
4. Final interviews should all be *arranged* with schools by the end of September. If possible, interviews should take place during the October half-term break. With notice, the Headmaster is available to assist by taking boys to interviews. Ideally, all interviews are completed by the beginning of December.
5. Boys attend the Parents' League School Fair at Loyola School in late September. The date of the fair is normally on the school calendar. The Headmaster accompanies the boys. Parents are encouraged to attend this informative event.

There, staff from a variety of schools will be available to meet you and to provide you with necessary printed materials.

6. It is recommended that each boy applies to a **minimum** of five (5) schools during the placement process. There should be **at least** one 'safety' school included on your list. On average, the rate of acceptance is 1:5, especially for those families requiring financial aid.
7. Application essays and forms require considerable care, thought and time. Please ensure that all recommendation forms are given to appropriate teachers. Schools normally request letters from the Math and English teachers. Because we are a specialist boarding

school, the Headmaster and Director of Music normally include letters of recommendation with all applications. Parents also have considerable written work to complete, including detailed financial aid forms. *Do not leave these forms to the last minute!* Some time may be available to boys to work on applications during the academic day and at study hall. Time on Saturdays and during the Christmas holidays will almost certainly be needed in order to complete the material. Plan accordingly!

8. SSAT exams are requested for boarding/independent schools. The school arranges for boys to sit the exams twice – once in early November and once in December. The dates are normally given on the school calendar. The highest score is sent to the school. In the event that you wish your son to write the exam more than twice, please let the school know so that conflicting scores are not submitted to schools. The English and Math teachers normally coordinate and prepare the boys for the exams.
9. Student applications may be mailed from the school. Parents post their forms from home. We request that student applications are reviewed by the school before being posted. All material (students, parents and teachers) should be photocopied in the event that it is lost in the mail.
10. The Headmaster is available throughout this process to advise and guide boys and parents.

***Some of the independent schools accepting graduating boys from the Choir School
since June 2005 include -
(from Classes of 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008):***

Blair, NJ
Boston University Academy, MA
Browning School, NY
Choate-Rosemary Hall, CT
Episcopal High School, Virginia
Georgetown Prep, DC
Groton School, MA (3)
Kent School, CT
The Hill School, PA (2)
Lake Forest Academy, Illinois (2)
Mercersburg Academy, PA
Millbrook, NY
Milton Academy, MA
Northfield Mount Hermon, MA
Portsmouth Abbey School, RI
St. Alban's School, DC
St. Andrew's, Delaware
St Anselm's Abbey School, Washington, DC (2)
St. George's, RI
St. James, Maryland (6)
St Mark's School, MA (3)
St Paul's School, NH
Trinity-Pawling School, NY
Woodberry Forest School, Virginia (2)

THE CHOIR

CHOIR SECTIONS AND REHEARSALS

John Scott was appointed Director of Music in September 2004. Fred Teardo is Assistant Organist.

The boys rehearse Tuesday – Friday morning at the school and Saturday morning until 10:30am, excluding 3rd Grade on Saturday.

Parents who have questions about their son's progress in the Choir should call Mr. Scott at the Church Music Office 212.757.7013

Parents are always welcome to attend the choral services at the church.

CHORAL SERVICES (MID-SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY)

Sunday:	9:00 a.m.	Probationers and New Choristers (excluding 3 rd Grade)
	11:00 a.m.	Full Choir
	4:00 p.m.	Full Choristers Only
Tuesday:	5:30 p.m.	Full Choir (Evensong)
Wednesday:	5:30 p.m.	Full Choir (Evensong)
		<i>*Grade 3 boys normally do not attend the Wednesday service.</i>
Thursday:	5:30 p.m.	Full Choir (Evensong)

AFTER SERVICE ROUTINE

The routine after every service (and concert) at the Church is the same. Boys go directly to the Choir Room. Once they are in their places, all service music must be collected, and vestments properly stored. Since every performance is also seen as practice for the next performance, there are occasions when the Choirmaster asks the boys to review problem passages. After these routine procedures are accomplished, the whole choir lines up for dismissal. Boys are expected to walk back properly dressed in school uniform.

Parents and family members are NOT permitted downstairs in the choir/vesting rooms at the church.

On Sunday mornings and after weekday services, all boys return to the School. However, parents may walk back directly to the school with their sons. **Parents must check out with the Faculty on duty that their son will not be joining the line.** Parents will be able to have lunch on Sunday with their sons *as long as they've notified the housemothers the Wednesday prior.*

After Sunday Evensong boys are free to go out with their parents for dinner in the city. All boys should return to the Choir School by 8 p.m.

Boys who are not meeting parents return to school with the Faculty on duty.

Parents may walk another boy to the Choir School with your son. However, if you do so, please ensure that a member of the school staff is aware; otherwise, we will be anxiously searching for a missing boy!

ST. THOMAS CONCERT SERIES

In addition to their liturgical responsibilities, the choir normally sings four or five concerts at St. Thomas Church during the year. The concerts normally begin at 7:30 p.m. Full choristers participate in these concerts. Probationers normally attend as well, but are expected to sit in the audience with members of staff. Parents are asked to sit separately as this time is used to help the young boys prepare for the time when they will be singing concerts themselves. Remaining focused for long periods is an important lesson which must be learnt early on in a boy's time here.

Prior to the concert, parents are invited to enjoy dinner together at the school. On these occasions, parents eat in the Rec Room and asked to refrain from seeing their sons before the concert. Please show your respect for the considerable work your son is undertaking in his concert performance by not requesting to see him at school or at the church until AFTER the concert has finished.

Following the concert, family and friends are invited to walk back to school with their sons. There is normally a brief reception in the Recreation Room.

The St. Thomas Concert Series is sponsored by the Friends of Music at St. Thomas Church. Parents may request a Friends mailing from the Church Music Office and may order tickets in advance in exchange for the specified voluntary contribution. For information about joining the Friends, or to receive a listing of the year's concerts, please ask the Music Office 212.664.9360, or write to: Music Office, St. Thomas Church, 1 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019-5496.

CHOIR TOURS

The boys look forward to choir tours. Normally, the choir travels either domestically or internationally each year. Participation on a tour is a privilege – not a right. Choristers (surpliced boys – not probationers) normally are invited to participate but this decision is ultimately at the discretion of the Organist and Headmaster. Tour dates are given well in advance and normally occur during term time.

Tours are very much considered an extension of the classroom and therefore the boys are the responsibility of the school staff and Director of Music. Furthermore, it is critical that everyone understands that the boys are working whilst on tour. Days can be long and exhausting. For the boys' sake, there are clear guidelines around housing, bedtimes and diet which we ask everyone – boys, staff and parents to respect at all times. While we are pleased to have familiar faces appearing at concerts and services while we are on the road, we ask for parents' understanding that spending family time

with their son during a Choir tour is not in his best interest, or in the interest of the Choir, and therefore is not permitted.

We ask you to help us make a tour as successful and enjoyable as possible for all involved by respecting the following guidelines:

1. While some parents may decide to travel separately to tour destinations to hear the boys sing, we request that parents and family lodge in separate hotels. For a variety of reasons, parents are never asked to chaperone tours. All boys are under the supervision of the Director of Music and the Headmaster and members of the school staff.
2. Please ensure that your son's passport is valid for at least eighteen months at the beginning of each school year, commencing in Grade 4.
3. All personnel (gentlemen of the choir, school staff and boys) abide by the itinerary as set in advance by the Headmaster and Director of Music. Days can often be very long – with early starts and late evenings. Please show your respect for all boys and for the schedule as it is set by the school (and our sponsors) by not requesting special arrangements for your son.
4. In the event that boys are billeted in homes, arrangements will be made by the school and the host church/group. Again, please do not ask for special arrangements for your son. Boys are normally not permitted to stay with members of their family in host cities.
5. Please **do not** give your son cash or travelers' checks. Boys will be given spending money from their school accounts as time permits for shopping.
6. Boys are **not** permitted to carry cell 'phones, blackberries, game boys, portable DVD players *etc.* whilst on tour. Fr Wallace will provide parents with his cell phone number in advance of a tour for emergency contact only.
7. Unless there is an emergency, please do not ask to have your son to call home. Where and when possible, Fr Wallace or one of the staff updates parents via email.

Please do not view a Choir Tour as you would a family holiday. Time with parents is not built into the choristers' daily schedule.

CLOTHING AND APPEARANCE

LAUNDRY

Your son's laundry will be done by a member of our housekeeping staff twice weekly. It is very important that all items are clearly labeled, so that they can be returned to your son promptly. When you visit please check the laundry basket at the end of the hall on each floor for items which may have come back from home unlabeled.

DRY CLEANING AND REPAIRS

The housemothers send blazers out to be cleaned before important occasions. We assume that parents will take care of major dry cleaning needs during vacation periods. Other repairs and cleaning needs should be brought to the attention of the housemothers as they are noticed. Please help us to instill a sense of pride in the boys about how they look and how they take care of their clothing. Encourage your sons to hang up their clothing at the end of the day or after use.

Please check your son's clothing for necessary mending and periodic alterations, especially hemming of trousers as this is the time when most boys experience their fastest growth spurt. The housemothers keep a supply of buttons for blazers in the nurses' office.

CLOTHING LABELS

All clothing and personal belongings that your son brings to school **MUST** be labeled clearly with your son's name. We suggest that if you are using iron-on labels, you also add a stitch to ensure that the label stays on after washing. A sewing and mending kit is also available from the housemothers.

If you send clothing to your son throughout the school year, please make sure his name is clearly marked on it. The school is not responsible for lost items.

CLOTHING CLOSET

Recycled school clothing is available in the Choir School clothing closet. Parents are encouraged to check what is available before purchasing new school clothing. We suggest that you call the school to schedule a mutually convenient time for you to peruse its contents. Your son should be present so that a proper fit can be assured. We also encourage parents to donate clothing that their sons have outgrown. Items should be clean, mended and ready to wear, with the name label removed.

DRESS CODE

School Wear during the Week:

School polo shirt, school sweater or fleece in cold weather, machine washable trousers

(khakis with brown belt on non-church days, gray pants with black belt for church days), shoes (brown lace-up shoes and white socks for non-church days, black shoes and black socks for church days.)

Formal Dinner Wear

Cotton oxford shirt, tie (of your own choice), sports jacket, dress trousers, dark shoes and socks.

Sunday Church Wear, Concerts and Recitals:

White button-down oxford shirt, yellow and blue school tie, gray uniform trousers, blue uniform blazer with emblem, black belt, black lace-up shoes and black socks.

HAIRCUTS

Please keep your son's hair well cut throughout the year. If necessary, we will send him out for a haircut at a barbershop in the neighborhood. Many boys prefer to have their hair cut at home. We encourage this practice. However, necessity for haircuts is at the discretion of the housemothers and faculty. Boys are expected to comply with our judgment in this regard. If your son wishes to have his hair cut by a barber other than the barber the school uses, we ask that parents make these arrangements on their own. Hairstyles must conform to school expectations (i.e. must be kept short & neat, no dyeing, etc.).

HYGIENE

The boys are required to shower daily and after sports activities. This includes washing hair and body. Older boys (12 years and older) should apply deodorant at this time.

The supplies needed for keeping themselves neatly groomed run out quickly. We ask that parents take care of refills on weekends and during holiday times, but if this is not possible, some supplies are available from the tuck shop and will be charged to your account.

Please remember to put your son's name on his toilet articles.

MATTERS OF TIME AND ROUTINE

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILY

Regular communication with parents is a priority at the Choir School. Through the weekly newsletters from either the housemothers or the Headmaster, parents receive regular updates about common concerns, daily life, and future events. Other periodic newsletters inform parents of boys' academic work, trips and special projects. In addition, the Headmaster is happy to talk in person, by telephone or via email at a mutually convenient time about specific concerns. Parents also have a representative with whom they may discuss any concerns about their sons. We also employ a school counselor, Robyn Rosenthal, who is accustomed to addressing all kinds of matters in the school community. Robyn may be reached at rosenthal@choirschool.org or on Sundays after lunch.

WEBSITE

All parents are required to register on the Choir School website as a 'current parent'. By registering on the website you are able to create a profile which allows you to make connections with other choir school families, have access to the online calendar, register for upcoming school events, view photographs and submit your weekend plans. Medical forms, the academic calendar and the school handbook are also available to download here. The website is www.choirschool.org.

VISITING

We feel very strongly that the Choir School is an extended family. We wish all of you to feel welcome here, and we want you all to feel that you have access to your sons. At the same time, we trust you will understand that because of our scheduling requirements, and the necessity to maintain the type of regular routine that frees the boys to concentrate on their studies and other obligations, certain guidelines need to be established. Free nights at home, and Sunday lunch are times built into the schedule for the boys to visit family and friends. Every Saturday at 10:45 a.m., boys may leave with their families and must return by 8 p.m. Special trips are arranged for the boys whose families cannot come on Saturday.

Anyone visiting a boy at the school must have the permission of the school and parent. For people other than close family members who wish to take a boy out, written permission must be obtained from the boy's parents and sent to the Headmaster.

Sundays:

We welcome all of you to the Sunday buffet lunch and evening supper after Evensong. **Meals are normally provided to immediate family (grandparents) only.** This is an excellent time to visit with your son and other families, to tour the school, to join your son at his leisure time activities. Often there is time available between services to take boys off premises to replenish supplies. Boys are to be back in the building by 2pm.

Your plans for Saturday and Sunday Lunch must be indicated to the housemothers no later than the Wednesday of each week. Please

If you wish to eat the evening meal outside the school, we request that boys be back no later than 7:45p.m.

Weekdays:

Weekdays at the Choir School are busy. The boys need to focus on their work. Boys may not have guests during the week. Athletic contests, weekday services, and other special events which may take place are obvious exceptions to this, and we welcome you to those. We do ask that should you come to one of them, that you remember that your son does have other obligations afterwards and you must leave immediately following. You may walk your son straight back to the school, but must say goodbye to him on the first floor, **as parents are not allowed in the dormitory areas at these times!**

Dormitories:

Parents are permitted in the dorms **only** on weekends and when picking up or returning their children to school after vacation. Visits to the dormitories should be kept as brief as possible and should be purposeful.

Boys this age are often acutely sensitive to unexpected presence in the dorms especially when they are changing or taking showers. Once the dormitory bell has rung on Saturday and Sunday evenings, we request that family and friends vacate the dorms **immediately**.

Parents and relatives are not permitted above the 7th floor at any time.

THE MAT ROOM

St. Thomas values the support that families offer their sons through regular visits and acknowledges that the high cost of staying in Manhattan can be prohibitive to many. The school offers parents of boys the opportunity to sleep in the mat room at no charge during their visits. We hope that this will serve as an informative guide to your stay.

WHEN CAN I STAY IN THE MAT ROOM?

Parents may stay over on weekends, parents should arrive **Saturday morning** during the rehearsal time to spend the day with their son and may stay over for Sunday Services. Keep in mind that the boys follow their regular schedule until Saturday morning, and that you should keep a low profile until the boys are free. **Please do not ask to spend Friday evenings with you sons.** This is an important social time for the boys and is really their only ‘evening off’ together during the week. In the event that you need to stay over on Sunday night for a Monday flight home, your son will still be expected to return to the school schedule at 8 p.m. on Sunday with the other boys.

WHEN CAN I TAKE MEALS WITH THE SCHOOL?

Parents may join their son on Sunday for lunch. (The boys must return immediately to school after morning service to eat Sunday lunch.) Please make the housemothers aware of your intention to join the school for lunch by filling out the 'Weekend Plans' form in the parents section of the website.

FACILITIES

Parents may use the first floor restrooms and the shower off of Mr. Leslie's office in the gym. The front desk attendant has a key for the office and the shower. There are also men's and women's restrooms on the same floor as the gym.

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE

All parents need to email their plans by Wednesday of each week. Please fill out the 'Weekend Plans' form in the Current Parent section of the website. You should specify your arrival and departure, which meals you will attend if any, and how many will join your son for the meal eaten at the school. Sunday lunch is for immediate family only. Additional family or friends may attend at a cost of \$25.00 per head with permission from one of the housemothers. Remember, boys must return from church on Sunday to the school and remain in the school until their departure for evensong at 2:15.

BEDDING AND TOWELS

A pillow, sheets, blanket and towel will be provided in a laundry basket with your reservation sheet on top. Many parents purchase inflatable air mattresses to make the stay more comfortable. They are easily folded up and placed on top of your son's wardrobe for storage. **The dormitory floors are open only after the Saturday morning rehearsal.** On Sunday morning, place all items back in the laundry basket and store your air mattresses after the boys have left for church on Sunday morning. There is no natural light in the mat room, and we suggest you bring a flashlight in the event others are sleeping when you turn in or wake up.

PARKING

A word of warning to motorists:

Although free street parking is located in the vicinity of the Church and School, it is virtually impossible at times to find an available space. There are several parking garages located on

58th Street, each charging approximately \$30 a day for full 24hrs \$15 for half day if you enter between 7-10am and leave after 12 hrs. **DO NOT PARK** in front of the school unless:

- a. It is after 7p.m. Monday through Saturday
- b. You may park all day Sunday

Parking Tickets in New York City are approximately \$115.00.

TRAVEL

BOYS' TRAVEL HOME AT THE HOLIDAYS

All arrangements must be made with the housemothers as far in advance as possible. For those families coordinating travel, please keep the housemothers informed.

PROCEDURES FOR TRAVELING

Increased security at airports has caused some difficulty when picking up a student. Faculty who are picking up an incoming child are not always allowed past the security check-point to meet the student at his gate. This can cause some confusion when the student is at the gate and the faculty is at the security check-point.

If the student is in an unaccompanied minor program, a member of the airline will accompany the boy to the security check point and wait with the child until the assigned faculty member arrives. If there is a delay and the faculty member has not arrived in 5-10 minutes, then the student will be brought to a designated, supervised waiting area.

If the child is considered an adult by the airline (12 years old in many cases, but please check with your airline carrier), then the student is responsible for himself. We are instructing each unsupervised student to proceed through the gate to the security check-point where a faculty member will be waiting for him. The boy is not to go past the security check point or go to baggage claim. If the faculty member is not at the security check-point, he should wait 5-10 minutes and then call the school for information and instructions. He should then return to the security check-point and remain there until the faculty member arrives.

Boys who are traveling by bus or train should remain at the gate entrance for the faculty member to arrive. If no one arrives within 5-10 minutes he should call the school for further instructions. It is most helpful to the school and adds another degree of security if boys families living in the same area of the country can coordinate their travel so that boys are together whilst in transit.

The second issue is money. On more than one occasion boys have been traveling without any money on them. If an emergency arises, the boy may need to call the school or get a bite to eat if his plane is delayed. We suggest that every boy carry with him a minimum of **\$5 plus change** to make phone calls, along with the school's phone number and identification.

Finally, confirmation on all return trips should be made prior to departure with a housemother. **Under no circumstance should a boy be placed on a plane, train, or bus without the school knowing when and how the child is arriving in NYC.**

FREE NIGHTS AT HOME

Free nights at home begin after the 4:00 p.m. Evensong on Sunday and continue until 8 p.m. on Monday. The free nights at home are listed in the school calendar sent to every family at the beginning of the school year.

To encourage the Choir School sense of family and hospitality, families are encouraged to invite home other students, when possible. This can be wonderful for boys whose families live too far away for them to go home for the night. The housemothers will do all they can to assist with these arrangements. These plans should be finalized and communicated to the school no later than the Wednesday prior to the free evening at home. The school assumes that boys clear all travel plans with their parents.

If a child is traveling back to school from a free evening via train or bus, a parent or guardian must confirm return trips with a housemother. **Under no circumstance should a boy be placed on a train or bus without the school knowing when and how the child is arriving in NYC.**

In the case of a boy's illness, necessitating his remaining at school, a housemother will look after him.

Boys must sign in when they return. Although the school tries to be understanding about traffic tie-ups, ample time should be built into your plans so that the boys do not arrive later than 8 p.m.

For security reasons, boys remaining at the school on a free day with their families are not allowed to be in their rooms during this time. Boys will have to sleep in the mat room with their parents.

SPECIAL EVENTS

ORIENTATION WEEKEND

Orientation Weekend is the first weekend of term. Activities, workshops, information sessions are held for new parents. A reception for new parents and their mentor families is held in the school dining room. Members of the school staff, and senior members of the Church, including members of Vestry (Governing Council) are also invited.

OCTOBER FAMILY OUTING

Early in autumn term, before the weather gets too cold and after the boys have begun to settle in, parents are invited to share in Choir School activities for a weekend. In the few years, we have traveled to Bear Mountain State Park in New York for a day out on the Saturday before Columbus Day. A bus leaves the Choir School at 8:30 a.m. and returns by 6:30 p.m. Parents are welcome to drive, if they wish meeting us at the park, arriving between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. We walk the trails, play softball and soccer. A barbeque lunch is prepared by our kitchen staff.

THANKSGIVING

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, boys who graduated the previous June are invited to return to the school for Thanksgiving Dinner. This tradition has evolved to include graduating boys during Fr Wallace's time here.

BAKE SALES

Bake Sales are organized by the school to raise funds for the Grade 8 class trip in June. The sales take place following the 11am Sunday service during the season of Advent. All donations – baked goods or money – are greatly appreciated. The housemothers contact parents in advance requesting assistance.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

The school is open on MLK Day. However, instead of academic lessons boys normally participate in a variety of different community service activities.

SKI TRIP

Depending on the weather – and their behaviour during the year – a ski trip is organized for the boys. Fr Wallace writes to parents before Christmas with details and costs. The boys stay at a resort in Vernon, NJ for two nights. The cost (approximately \$200) is inclusive of lodging, meals, skiing (with lessons) and transportation.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CHOIR SCHOOL

The Advent Season marks the beginning of our journey to Christmas. On Advent Sunday, there is a service processions, carols and lessons for the season. This service is at 11am and is repeated at 4pm.

The boys have a Tree Trimming Party mid-December, normally after Messiah concerts and exams are behind us. An afternoon is set aside before we depart for the break to do our Christmas shopping, and to enjoy ice skating in Central Park. Academic Advisors organize Christmas parties for their advisees.

A high point of the season is always the presentation of Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. It is one of the few times in the year the boys sing without the men.

The Sunday before Christmas at both the 11 and 4 o'clock services, the Choir leads the congregation in "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols."

Christmas Eve is celebrated with a Nativity Service at 4:00 p.m., which is especially attractive to families with younger children. The Midnight Mass, begins at 11:00 p.m and even though families are issued tickets for this service, they are advised to be seated well in advance,

Parents (and boys' siblings) are invited to a special Christmas Eve Reception before the Midnight Mass.

EPIPHANY CAROLS

A service of Lessons and Carols for Epiphany is normally scheduled for the second Sunday in January. The service is at 11am, and is repeated at 4pm.

CAMP

Each spring after classes have ended for the year, the entire school packs up and heads to Incarnation Camp in Ivoryton, CT for 10 days of relaxation and outdoor pursuits. Although there are still morning Choir rehearsals, the boys have plenty of time to swim, boat, hike, fish and play endless board games.

Parents are invited to visit the camp and join in the fun on the Saturday of camp.

PRIZE DAY/GRADUATION

The academic year ends with Prize Day, held in the Church on the last Saturday of term. Families are encouraged to attend. In addition to recognizing those boys who are graduating, we celebrate the academic, social and musical achievements of boys throughout the school. A guest speaker is normally invited to address the leaving class. A reception follows in Andrew Hall.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

In the spring of each year, the Director of Music arranges a conference for the training of church musicians. One of the world's leading choirmasters is brought in for this occasion. The Choir of Men and Boys is used as the Choir-in-Residence. This is a very special experience for the boys.

INSTRUMENTAL RECITALS

Boys have an opportunity to perform in recital pieces they have been studying during the instrumental lessons and practice periods. Parents and family are invited to attend recitals, normally scheduled before Christmas and at the end of the academic year.

RECRUITMENT CONCERTS

In addition to the St. Thomas Concert Series, the choir occasionally sings concerts and/or Evensong out of town. Parents often help to arrange these concerts by promoting the choir in their local area. These concerts give the choir necessary exposure to help recruit new boys.

TV AND RADIO BROADCASTS

Occasionally church services are televised, or the boys are filmed at the school. Individual boys may be invited to a radio interview or interviewed by a local newspaper. The school gives parents as much advance notice as possible.

All services are now webcast live through the Church website:
www.saintthomaschurch.org

SCHOOL POLICIES

ROOM ALLOCATION

As has been our custom here for years, room assignments and changes are solely at the discretion of the Headmaster. Over the period of a boy's time here, it is most likely that he will room with each of his classmates at some point. **Among such small classes, we demonstrate our respect for each other by not requesting a particular assignment.**

ATTENDANCE

Parents and faculty must first seek the permission of the Headmaster before a child is to miss classes for any reason. If the absence involves missing a Choir rehearsal or Church service, permission must be sought from the Director of Music as well. Family holidays must not interfere with school days. Term dates are set well in advance so that parents can plan holidays accordingly.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Please make the Choir School aware of any special dietary needs, including all food allergies.

While we attempt to serve meals which appeal to school children, part of a boy's overall educational experience at boarding school includes being open to a variety of different foods. Furthermore, boys must learn that eating appropriate food (i.e. fruits and vegetables) is an important ingredient for healthy living! We therefore encourage the boys to eat whatever is served.

BIRTHDAY PROCEDURES

When a boy has a birthday whilst school is in session, the Choir School supplies a cake that is usually served at lunch on his special day. Parents are invited to join him for this meal, if at all possible. Each boy chooses the kind of cake that he prefers.

ADMISSIONS

Parents have always been a good source for finding potential candidates for the Choir School. If you know a family who may be interested in a Choir School education for their son, please contact the Director of Admissions, Ruth Cobb, for a packet of information or provide the address to where the school should send the information.

We are happy to arrange a tour for a family and welcome them to a service and Sunday lunch, if possible. Please check with the Headmaster to confirm a suitable date.

Third grade students participate in a 4 or 5 night boarding arrangement, going home on Friday afternoon and returning either Sunday evening or Monday morning, according to a family's schedule. The Choir School admits boys who live at a greater distance from the city to the fourth or fifth grade.

A School Visit is required of all prospective students. During the visit, a boy sings for Mr. Scott, who evaluates vocal potential. A prospective student then joins the classroom for the morning while his parents meet with faculty and staff. If all parties agree that the boy is ready to audition, he will be invited to attend the next audition date.

Open Houses and Recruitment Concerts are among the events that welcome parental involvement in the process.

LETTERS

Letters from home are much appreciated by the boys. Mail is handed out daily by the housemothers. Sons who write to parents/family may purchase stamps from the school (cost is charged to their account). Boys may receive letters, magazines, and catalogs at school. **However, boys may not participate in mail order clubs (Netflix, Columbia House, BMG, etc.).** If a boy wishes to join a club or order merchandise, he must do this from his home address. Each boy is also provided with his own email address and is permitted to check for email on Tuesdays and Thursday at the end of study hall, and when the computer lab is open at weekends.

GIFTS

Boys are not permitted ever to accept gifts from anyone outside the close Choir School community. If a boy is offered a gift the best policy is to decline politely and to suggest that the person donate to the Choir School Scholarship Fund. The Headmaster should be notified should such instances occur.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Although we want the boys' rooms to feel like home, it is unwise for boys to bring items of great value (either financial or sentimental) to School as they can get misplaced. It is imperative that all personal belongings contain the boy's name. Any form of trading (for cash or other items) is not allowed. Items damaged or lost are not the responsibility of the Choir

School. We also discourage games in the dorms (e.g. toy guns of any kind, basketballs and hoops, dart boards, soccer balls, skateboards, roller blades, rocket launchers, water pistols, swords, pocket knives, etc.). Such distractions can make it very difficult for boys to settle immediately before bed.

GADGETS

Please do not send your son to school with any kind of electronic games (game-boys, DVD players *etc.*). Boys can hone their digital skills at home during the holidays. If boys are found with these distractions, they will be confiscated and return at the end of the term. iPods are permitted at weekends or at the discretion of the Headmaster.

OTHER SCHOOL PRACTICES/TRADITIONS

SOUP KITCHEN

For many years, the parish has run a soup kitchen on Saturday mornings at the church. The soup kitchen was founded by the choristers. Boys who are no longer singing with the choir (due to voice change) normally assist at the Soup Kitchen from 9 – 10.30am Saturday morning.

THE EIGHTH GRADE LOUNGE

The Grade 8 Lounge, located off the Rec Room, is a space reserved for boys in their final year at the Choir School. The room is equipped with a TV, DVD and pool table. The Senior Prefect is given a key and is responsible for keeping the room in good order. Other boys are permitted entry only with the consent of an eighth grade boy. Alumni are honorary members.

TUCK SHOP

The Tuck Shop is a popular place inasmuch as boys are permitted to purchase candy and chocolates there on Friday and Sunday evenings. The cost of a boy's purchase is deducted from his account. The Tuck Shop is located on the fourth floor of the school and is administered by the boys themselves. Senior boys are invited to apply for the position of Tuck Shop Manager at the beginning of the academic year.

HOUSE SYSTEM

Every boy at St Thomas is assigned to a 'house.' There are three houses – Stires, Noble and Steele – named after the three founding fathers of the school (Rector, Choirmaster and Benefactor). Boys accumulate points for their houses for good work in school, good behaviour, extra credit, hard work in choir. Boys also can receive a demerit which is recorded against their

House score. Scores are read each Tuesday at the conclusion of lunch. The winning house is announced at the end of the academic year and is recorded on the plaque in the Rec Room. There is normally a captain for each house.

PREFECTS

Prefects are appointed by the Headmaster in consultation with the teaching staff. Boys are selected for their reliability, trustworthiness and ability to work well with their peers and the faculty. Prefects act as spokesmen for the other boys and meet with the Headmaster to discuss issues of concern to the student body.

PARENTS' DAY

Parents' Day in January is an opportunity for the parents to participate in atypical school day. Parents may attend early morning Choir, go to gym class, attend classes with their sons and join them for lunch. Parents' Day is listed on the calendar.

GRADE 7/8 DANCE

Every year, the boys in Grade 7 and 8 are invited with other children attending New York City independent schools to participate in a fundraising dance for Youth Against Cancer. This dance is normally in January and is held at All Souls' Church, Lexington Avenue. School staff members accompany our boys and assist with supervision of the event.

EIGHTH GRADE TRIP

To mark the end of their time at the Choir School, it is customary for the Eighth Grade boys to take a week after Graduation to travel to England and France. The trip is chaperoned by the Headmaster and another member of staff. Information about the trip is normally shared with parents of boys involved before the Easter break.

HISTORY OF SAINT THOMAS CHOIR SCHOOL

The Choir School was founded in 1919 at the request of Dr. T. Tertius Noble, organist and choirmaster of St. Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue. Dr. Noble had been organist and choirmaster at York Minster in England where all of his boy singers were students at their choir school. Dr. Noble accepted the appointment to St. Thomas by then Rector, the Reverend Ernest Stires, on the condition that a Choir School would be established at St. Thomas. The initial funds were provided by the financier, Charles Steele.

The following are quotes from reports in the St. Thomas Church Yearbook:

“We could not approve this undertaking under present conditions if we were not profoundly impressed with the need of prompt, intensive, moral and spiritual training in the education of our boys, the men of the future. While the service will be better and more spiritually rendered by a choir trained in proper surroundings, yet an infinitely greater value to the community would be the unusual equipment for important service furnished to the most promising boys we can find anywhere.”

The Rev. Ernest M. Stires, D.D.
Rector (1918)

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“It is now nearly seven years since I became organist and choirmaster of St. Thomas Church. During that time I have never failed to plead for a choir school and I am thankful to say I have not pleaded in vain. Thanks to the energy of the Rector, the Music Committee and the generous response of twenty members of our congregation, a school is now established and as far as it goes, it is a tremendous success. We have twenty-one scholars, fourteen of them borders and seven day boys.” (15 boys of the choir were not in the choir school.)

T. Tertius Noble (1919)

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“In looking over the past year at the Choir School, even the most casual observer could not fail to see that the gift of an Endowment Fund is the one outstanding event. Mr. Charles Steele, who was so generous in providing a new building for the school three years ago, has now enabled the work here to be carried on without any thought of financial considerations. For years it has been Mr. Noble’s dream to have an endowed choir school, and that is now a reality, for Mr. Steele’s Easter offering has made it possible.”

Herbert R. Hannon

Headmaster (1925)

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“Much is heard at the present time about the ‘aims of modern education’ as though fundamentals of good education had greatly changed in recent years. Should not these aims still be, very briefly, to make gentlemen and scholars and to awaken in the individual the desire to be a useful member of society? It seems almost self evident if the spirit of religion and the welfare of our country are to be preserved, it must be through the inculcation in the very young of very sound habits of thought, generous and human impulses and the desire to aid in the work of the world.”

Charles M. Benham
Headmaster (1934)

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“Since my last report, we have been able to add ten more choristers to the choir, owing to the generosity of Mr. Steele who, ever since 1918, has shown a deep interest in the development of the Choir School. Instead of thirty boys, we now have forty.”

T. Tertius Noble (1937)

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“This anniversary year - the 25th since the founding of the Choir School, has seen many changes take place. The retirement of Dr. Noble and the resignation of Mr. Benham to assume a new position at Wooster Academy have made it seem that an era has passed.”

James O. Carson, Jr.
Headmaster (1943)

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“The forty-sixth academic year is significant in that the school has its largest enrollment ever and the decision has been made to accept three additional candidates this fall, thus achieving a student body of fifty boys.”

Robert H. Porter
Headmaster (1964)

LEADERSHIP OF SAINT THOMAS CHURCH AND CHOIR SCHOOL SINCE 1919

Rectors of Saint Thomas Church

The Reverend Ernest M. Stires	1901-1925
The Reverend Roelif Brooks	1926-1954
The Reverend Frederick M. Morris	1954-1972
The Reverend John G. B. Andrew	1972-1996
The Reverend Andrew C. Mead	1996-Present

Organists and Choirmasters

T. Tertius Noble	1913-1943
T. Frederick H. Candlyn	1943-1953
William Self	1954-1971
Gerre Hancock	1971-2004
John Scott	2004-Present

Headmasters of the Choir School

Clarence Jack Smith	1919
Raymond Wallace Gauger	1920-1922
Herbert Hannon	1923-1925
Clair J. Smith	1926-1927
Charles Mead Benham	1928-1942
The Reverend James O. Carson Jr.	1943-1944
Leon D. Phillips	1945-1949
Henry B. Roney, Jr.	1950-1954
Robert H. Porter	1955-1966
Gordon H. Clem	1967-1995
Murray E. Lopdell Lawrence (Acting Headmaster)	1995-1997
Gordon Roland-Adams	1997-2004
The Reverend Charles Wallace	2004-Present