

CHOIR TOUR 2018: DETAILS ON 7/8/18

Dear Pupils and Parents

7/08/18

It is always exciting to be able to provide all our final details at the last rehearsal before we set off on tour! Please make sure that you read this thoroughly and also go through it with a parent. You should then bring it on the tour with you and refer to it a few times each day to make sure that you know what is going on. Parents may wish to make a note of anything they need, or alternatively should find a copy of this letter on the school website under Senior School, Noticeboard. As usual, we first include our normal reminder of the most important point, which is that everyone on the tour must have their **passport** in their hand luggage plus their EHIC, when we meet at school at **7.30am** on **Thursday August 9th**. If anyone does not appear on time we will try to make contact, but will have to leave promptly in order to arrive in Dover on time for the Ferry. Pupils should also make sure they have read all of this information and have a copy of it in their hand luggage.

Most of the following information has already been given out although we have yet to mention that it is good if pupils can bring some DVDs with them to watch on the coach journeys. This year we are all on one coach so 12 or 12A will be the highest classifications possible. Pupils should use the same seat throughout the tour unless they arrange a swap with everyone's prior agreement. It is worth mentioning that the universal rule of school trips is that the staff (and quietest pupils) sit near the front and the oldest pupils aboard have the choice of the back seat! However, European law also says that adults will also need to sit on the seats by any (emergency) exits. This means that officially seats 1-8, 27,28,31,32 will need to be reserved for staff but that still leaves enough. The other important rule about coaches is that, of course, seat belts have to be worn at all times. We would also encourage pupils to bring a novel or two to read on the coach as being thus engrossed helps the time pass very quickly. If pupils bring a personal device on which to watch films they should look after it carefully and have personal insurance. We have been told that, like last, year there should be a usb charging point for each seat, though that is not confirmed until the day of departure. The coach has an on-board toilet but these are only really for emergencies as they can become effluvial if used frequently. The coaches will stop every few hours for toilets and pupils should generally 'take every opportunity' whether they want to or not! It would also be advisable not to drink too much before or during the longer coach journeys. We ask pupils not to spray deodorant or perfume on the coach (roll-on is best!) as not everyone enjoys the same smells and some people are allergic to such sprays.

We would also repeat our recommendation that everyone has about €200 for spending money (which includes paying for 5 meals as we are half board), plus around £40 for meals at service stations in the UK and on the Ferry. The original tour letter explained it may be necessary to ask for up to another €60 from each person on the tour when we finally know the cost of the excursions we are taking and that those going to the Canyon Forest Adventure Park would have to pay another €30 with those visiting the Aquasplash Water Park needing another €25. The tour firm has been able to negotiate those costs down to €20 for Canyon Forest and €15 for Aquasplash. That means that, including a necessary €5 donation to the John the Baptist Church the totals needing collecting are: Adventure Park and Aquasplash people €40; Adventure Park only €25; Aquasplash only €20; neither park €5. There will be lunches and optional activities still to pay for, so pupils should budget carefully but not be afraid to ask a member of staff if they are in danger of going hungry.

We hope that everyone has checked the school's insurance policy which was given out with the letter on April 14th. Whilst the policy looks good, we can never *guarantee* to be able to replace lost, stolen or damaged items and it is always difficult to *prove* that any particular amount of money has gone, so we must remind pupils that they need to take care of all their possessions at all times. We have previously advised having a lockable suitcase though please do not lose the keys or forget the codes. We would also remind everyone that the tour firm (Voyager School Travel) also 'strongly recommends' that everyone takes a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) with them on this tour.

The uniform for the concerts reflects the high temperatures we are used to on our summer tours and includes the special T shirt that most received at the last rehearsal, **a black skirt which must reach the knee**, black school shoes and flesh coloured tights (or bare legs) for girls and the T shirt plus normal school trousers, shoes and socks for boys. I would add one more sentence emphasising the need for the black skirt to reach the knee when standing up, as a couple of girls failed to do that a few years ago which made them stand out as looking considerably less elegant than the rest of the group and cheapened the overall appearance of the choir. Otherwise, packing would include clothes for the hot weather we expect; something water proof just in case it is needed, a towel and washing equipment, soap, shampoo, swimwear, sun tan lotion, a sun hat, a couple of plastic bags to put dirty and wet clothes in on the journey home, personal medication, travel pills, inhalers, nightclothes, mobile phone charger, electric socket adapter, music, instruments, etc. Boots own brand of *Soltan* sun tan lotion is highly recommended because of its built-in insect repellent. We are asked to take one **medium-sized** suitcase each (which may have to be carried up hotel stairs by the pupil) plus one bag for hand luggage.

Teachers will look after medicines, valuables and money, should this be particularly necessary. However, generally pupils will be responsible for their own possessions and money. In fact, this kind of tour presents a good opportunity to develop personal responsibility and maturity. There may or may not be safes in hotel rooms but these are not always easy to use well when a number of teenagers are sharing a room. It is helpful to have a lockable suitcase or other lockable bag where money and valuables can be kept. It is unwise to leave money and valuables on display in a (potentially untidy) hotel room as things can easily get lost at the best of times. Students may also have to cooperate over the use of the room key.

For additional safety during the tour, pupils and parents should record the following emergency mobile phone numbers: +447925564699 (Mrs Lewis) and 0(044)7415605968 (Mr Millest) although when abroad texts will be cheaper to receive than calls and we expect that, as has always been the case to date, these numbers will be treated with respect. milleste@westholmeschool.com and lewisc@westholmeschool.com are also valuable means of communication. Ideally, we hope to receive no calls at all from parents or pupils unless there is an absolute emergency. There will be occasions when we allow choir members to look around the shops or sights in groups of four or more for limited periods. This number has proved to ensure everyone's safety on previous tours, though pupils will have to concentrate when shopping and not get so engrossed that their group has moved on, or someone is missing, without them noticing.

Tuesday 7th August: 10am to 4/5pm: final tour rehearsals in the Music Centre. (This is a good point at which to mention now that punctuality is important on Choir Tours, as in the whole of life! Good manners suggest that it would be rude to expect people to wait around in uncomfortable weather or poor surroundings, or to have to practise music an extra time, because other individuals are badly organised. We understand that very occasionally something unexpected occurs but generally when meeting times are given everyone should aim to be 5 minutes early to allow time for unanticipated delays. Some people are more prone to the unexpected and should aim to be 10 or more minutes early!)

Thursday 9th August: 7.30am: Meet at Wilmar Lodge ready to depart as soon as possible. Please will parents park on the overflow car park on the old tennis court or by the side of the Sports Hall to allow the coach space to turn around safely. We will check everyone's passport before departure and after we have been driving for 20 minutes or so we will collect the DVDs brought for the coach and then organise an order for watching them. After a stop for food we should arrive at Dover around 16.00 ready for the 17.25, 90-minute crossing. 19.55 depart Calais. At some stage on the journey in Europe we will collect everyone's passports to ensure that they do not go missing before the return journey. Between 11pm and 8am we will call for complete silence throughout the coach so everyone has the opportunity of sleeping or at least resting so all are fit to enjoy the tour as it continues.

Friday 10th August: We hope to arrive at Auberge de Jeunesse Nice Les Camélias, 3 Rue Spitalieri, 06000 Nice around lunchtime. It is never easy to be precise about arrival times as one cannot be sure about traffic conditions either side of the channel or if we catch an earlier or later ferry. If we arrive early we will leave cases etc at the Auberge and go into Nice for lunch. If we arrive close to our official check-in time of

3.30pm we will have had lunch on the way. We will have to play this somewhat by ear but are hoping to arrive as early as possible in Nice and leave cases etc at the hostel before going to the Nice beach in a large group, or sightseeing around Nice in groups of 4+. (You may want to pack a towel and swimwear in your hand luggage (a rucksack is very useful) or easily accessible in your suitcase. Don't forget that students may only swim in the sea if a member of staff gives permission and is supervising and if there is a life guard on duty nearby. It is a beach of large pebbles so you might want to use swimming shoes but many people do normally go on the beach, so it should be fine. The sea goes out of your depth quickly so take great care if you are not a strong swimmer.) Otherwise see the map for other things to do. Don't worry if we do not get much time in Nice or on the beach today as we will have much more time on our last day in town! We might only return to the hotel for check in, unpacking, bed making, shower etc as late as 4.30pm. The staff members on your floor should come and check that your room is OK while you are unpacking, but if you find something untoward you can go and knock on their door to ask for their help. 18.15 roll call/fire drill in the garden. 18.30 Evening meal in Le Ligure Restaurant, 15 Rue Biscarra (Salade mixte, Pâtes à la Niçoise (Penne), Glace.) 19.30 Rehearsal in the Auberge garden or adjacent breakfast room. 22.00 To rooms: The Hostel has a very strict 'silence between 10pm and 8am' policy. We will ask all students to retire early on this evening to ensure full recovery from the journey and that all pupils are well rested for an early start the next day and fully fit for the coming concerts and other activities, so please don't keep anyone else awake by talking late at night!

Saturday 11th August: 7.00 Get up! 7.30 earliest time to arrive at breakfast. 8.00 The latest time to arrive at breakfast. 8.40 Room Inspection. 9.00 Get on coach. 10.30 arrive Monaco. We have not arranged anything for everyone to do compulsorily in Monaco but many choices are shown on the attached map. Google Maps says that it is about 23 minutes' walk from the Monte-Carlo Casino/Café de Paris area to the Oceanographique Museum/Car Museum/Prince Palace (look it up yourself!). You may want to see the changing of the guard at the Palace at 11.55am precisely, though having visited Monaco (on a choir tour!) before, Mr Milleste has developed a dream to swim in the Stade Nautique Ranier III outdoor swimming pool, as it looks like the epitome of Riviera holiday chic and it is nice to shout 'I've swam there' when it appears on TV during reports on the annual Monaco Formula 1 GP! He will therefore be willing to supervise anyone who wants to go there though it will probably be as soon as we get off the coach before it gets too full in the afternoon. 16.00 Leave Monaco. 17.00 Get changed in Les Camélias. 17.45 Meet in the Hostel garden in concert uniform with instruments etc, walk to Eglise Saint Jean-Baptiste – le Vœu, 2 Rue Alfred Mortier, Nice. 19.30 Perform Haydn's Creation. We may add (religious) solo items to this concert so if you can contribute, ideally email milleste@westholmeschool.com with the title before midnight on August 7th so we can put it on the programme and/or just bring the music on tour. 20.45 Walk back to Hotel, leave instruments. Probably no time to change... 21.00: Restaurant Le Ligure: Quiche Lorraine, Cuisse de poulet rôtie, Fruit au sirop. Then to rooms and sleep!

Sunday 12th August: 7.00 Get up. 7.30/8.00 arrive at breakfast. 8.40 Room Inspection. 9.00 Get on coach with a packed lunch and packed concert uniform plus instruments and music etc. 9.30 37 students and 5 teachers will be dropped at the Canyon Forest Adventure Park where there will be a 30-minute walk through the forest before beginning the zip wires etc. You will have your own choice of the level of challenge/excitement! The less adventurous ones will be taken to Cannes to explore the town with all the usual rules! 15.30 the Cannes group depart on the coach. 16.15 The Canyon Forest group will be picked up. 17.00 Arrive Kiosque à musique, Place Nationale, Antibes. We have rooms for changing and will also set up and briefly rehearse before our 7pm performance: Hamilton, The Greatest Showman, Swing Band, Soloists etc. (If you can contribute a solo to this, ideally email milleste@westholmeschool.com with the title before midnight on August 7th so we can put it on the programme and/or just bring the music on tour.) 8pm End concert, pack away. No time to change. Load coach by 8.15 as we have to get to the Hippopotamus Restaurant just outside Antibes by 20.30! This time you may choose your meal in advance if at the rehearsal on August 7th: Starters: Poached eggs and chive cream/Carpaccio of beef with parmesan flakes/Cretoise salad (tomato, cucumber, feta, onions, black olives, salad leaves). Main: Bacon burger or chicken burger with choice of fries or green beans/Classic Caesar salad/Fish and chips. Dessert: White

Chocolate Tiramisu with mascarpone and red berries/Crème Brulee/Chocolate Mousse/Dame Blanche (vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce and Chantilly). 22.20 Back to hotel and sleep!

Monday 13th August: 7.00 Get up. 7.30/8.00 arrive at breakfast. 8.40 Room Inspection. 9.00 Get on coach (+ swimming equipment?) 10.00 Arrive Aquasplash Water Park. Those signed up for that will all go into the park together and have a set base location initially, but it may be possible for groups to move on to other attractions in the area (Marineland, Adventure Golf, Kid's Island) from 1pm onwards if checked with the supervising teacher. The Non-Aquasplashes will be taken to Antibes for a day in town or on the beach with the usual rules. 16.30 The Non-Aquasplashes will be picked up from Antibes. 16.50: All meet by the main entrance to Antibesland then you will have the rest of the day in Antibesland. There is no entry fee as each ride has to be paid for separately. You will also have to buy your own food from one of the restaurants there. 21.45 Meet ready to board the coach and depart at 22.00. 22.30 Bed and sleep.

Tuesday 14th August: 7.00 Get up, pack suitcases etc. 7.30/8.00 arrive at breakfast. 8.40 Room Inspection with everything packed! **Wait in your room until your teacher tells you where to take your baggage etc.** 10.00 We can hopefully spend the rest of the day in Nice. Please see the map and comments under August 10th. If you are swimming, you will need a plastic bag for wet towel and costume. 15.30 Return to hotel to load coach. There should be time to put your wet towel etc in its bag in your suitcase. 16.00 Depart Nice. There will be a stop for supper before silence/sleeping 11pm to 8am.

Wednesday 15th August: 8.50 Arrive Calais. 9.50 Ferry departs. 10.20 Arrive Dover. 17.30 Arrive school. Students are asked to keep some mobile phone battery so they can inform parents if we are going to be earlier or later than our expected arrival time.

Filling in the Risk Assessment Form always reminds us to mention a number of things to pupils with apologies if they are duplicated elsewhere in this letter: Wear seat belts at all times; Check Hotel notices for fire escapes; Lock bedroom doors at night but answer when members of staff knock to check you are OK; If sunny, wear a sun hat, apply high factor sun cream and drink plenty of water; Watch out for traffic driving on the right and also for cycles and cycle lanes; Always use pedestrian crossings; Stay in groups of 4 or more; A minimum of 2 should go in a public toilet while a minimum of 2 wait nearby; Keep hold of your phones and belongings; Keep a record of the emergency phone numbers; Keep the maps with you; Don't take photographs or videos in bedrooms; Watch out for pickpockets in crowds; Keep valuables in a zipped bag or pocket, etc. No doubt parents will also give their advice on having an enjoyable and safe trip and this may well also include switching off any 3G/Data Roaming as it can be expensive abroad and hotel Wi-Fi signals cannot always be relied upon. Our risk assessment also reminds us that during free time pupils will have been told where to meet staff, they all have the two emergency phone numbers and they will be instructed to stay away from any areas that look problematical or risky in any way (e.g. demonstrations, crowd disturbances etc). They will be reminded of government terrorism advice (be alert but not alarmed; Run, Hide, Tell (112/Staff Phones) and to calmly follow any police instructions. If at any time, the foreign office alters its advice regarding travel in Europe, the party leader will communicate with the travel operator and follow any necessary procedures/actions. Generally, do not do anything risky.

It can be worrying to have to think about rules for every possible situation, but, in the past, Westholme pupils have proved to be most cooperative with their teachers' concerns for their health and safety and I am sure that this tour should prove to be as safe as all those in previous years. Westholme policy is of course that all school tours are entirely free of alcohol and smoking for all pupils, not to mention obvious matters such as the avoidance of any illegal substance and considerate use of mobile phones and cameras in multi-bedded rooms. Pupils may need to change clothes at any time and, so this can be as relaxed as possible, no student is allowed into the room of a student of the opposite gender at any time. As we are a 'no nuts and no chewing gum' school - that is true on school trips as well. Furthermore, we insist that everyone cooperates with the timings of meetings, meals and bed times so that everyone is able to perform well and take part with no one hindering the others on the tour owing to tiredness, avoidable illness or lateness. If pupils can look up details on the towns and buildings mentioned above in books or on-line, then they will gain even more from visiting these fantastic places.

Naturally we hope that all choir members enjoy our tour, it certainly includes a lot of interesting places to visit and in the past pupils have always seemed to appreciate each other's company, in addition to these special performing opportunities. We invite any pupils to talk to a member of staff if they develop any worries on the tour be they financial, lost property, homesickness or whatever! In particular, the occasional bout of homesickness seems to be worsened rather than helped by frequent telephone contact with home and all pupils enjoy these tours in the end, providing they drink lots of water, sleep as much as needed and eat normally! Do try to Google everything mentioned above so you have a great idea of all there is to come and when we return please use milleste@westholmeschool.com to send any good photographs to for our website and assembly presentations.

Yours

Mr E Millest