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Dear Parents

NCCGB Tour Choir, Spring 2008

Thank you for your registration forms and other paperwork. I'm afraid that this will be rather a long letter, as there are a number of items regarding preparations for the Tour, plus information about the course at Frensham Heights.

Insurance

As mentioned at the meeting, all tour choir members will need their own insurance. This may be obtained from your usual broker, or from the tour company by contacting thastings@acfea.eu.

Passports

Tour choir members' passports must be brought with them to Frensham Heights. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the date of our return from North America.

Currency

Canadian and US dollars will be needed, in roughly a two thirds/one third ratio. A small amount of UK currency will also be useful, for the period either end of the tour.

Mobiles

As we said at Harrogate, it must be your decision whether or not your child brings a mobile phone on tour. If you do decide that he/she will bring a mobile, please make sure that it is covered by your insurance, as the NCC cannot take responsibility for this.

Packing

Everyone must plan to travel light! Each child must carry his/her own case, so a small wheeled case will be most suitable. Please practice packing the case with your child, and make sure that they are able to lift it. Space must be left for the choir uniform (see below) and for spare tour uniform for those who are collecting it at Frensham. It will be helpful if a packing list is taped to the inside of the case lid, for checking when leaving home stays.

Clothing

I have asked various people for advice on this, and the consensus is that, in April, the weather in North America is unpredictable – it could be snowy, or it might be quite mild. Chicago can be chilly because of the wind. I have been advised that layers are the answer, T shirts, vests etc. At least one warm sweater is essential, and a pair of warm socks. Footwear – trainers, Ugg boots, whatever is warm and above all comfortable. It would be useful to pack a small umbrella. Everyone should bring some form of laundry bag (a plastic bag is fine). Please encourage your child to ask their home stay families to put in a load of laundry for them – the families really will be most happy to do so! Also, the day before we leave, I am quite happy to use the Frensham laundry for the children, so that they can set out with plenty of clean clothes – but please make sure that all items are clearly marked, and the washes will only be for easily laundered clothes that will go in the drier and will not require ironing.

We will be doing quite a lot of walking, so it would be helpful if you could pack shoe/foot deodorant for your child if you think it might be necessary!

Tour uniform

Whenever we are travelling, all tour choir members must wear their tour uniform. This is the jacket and polo shirt as ordered, with black trousers – preferably not jeans, as they are so difficult to dry.

Choir uniform

The choir uniform will be given out at Frensham. Everyone must bring a garment bag with them; this must not be a thin plastic dry cleaner's bag, but the stronger nylon type, clearly labelled with the owner's name. The uniform and bag will be packed for travelling, but will be suitable for transportation to concerts. Each person must also have a shoe bag which will travel inside the garment bag, and the following items of clothing, all named:

Boys

Black trousers
Soft soled black shoes (not trainers)
Plain white vest
Plain white long-sleeved shirt
(school type)
Black socks

Girls

Black tights/knee highs
Low heeled soft soled black shoes (not trainers)
Plain white camisole top (vests sometimes show over the blouses)
Plain white bra (where appropriate)
Hair clips, etc of a suitable colour (no sparkles)

Electrical

Adaptors (2 flat pin) will be needed for any electrical appliances. Also please check that any appliance is dual voltage, as if they are not, a convertor will be necessary.

Medication

Children will be carrying their own medication whilst on tour. If your child needs to bring medication, please hand it in, clearly labelled, at Registration; please also supply written instructions (two copies) of the type, dosage, frequency and reason for the medication being supplied. One copy will be carried by the child, and shown to their home stay parents; I will keep the second copy for reference.

I know that some tour choir members suffer from travel sickness, and we shall be using several forms of transport – plane, coach, boat. If your child needs travel sickness medication, they must bring with them the type that suits them best, again labelled please.

I will carry some Kwells Kids with me, in case someone suffers from unexpected travel sickness. I have added a line to the Contact form asking your permission for this.

Contact & Personal Information Forms

I attach copies of the Contact and Personal Information Forms; please complete and post these back to me as soon as possible, by 1st March 2008 at the latest.

Flights

The flights are fairly long: 8 hours 10 minutes outward bound, 9 hours 5 minutes return. Everyone should bring something to entertain them – hand held games, cards, books etc. The latest baggage restrictions are shown on www.heathrowairport.com, and you should also check www.britishairways.com for advice regarding hand baggage.

Scrap books & diaries

This is going to be a very memorable trip, and it would be very helpful if the members of the Tour Choir could bring a scrap book and/or diary in which to record their experiences.

Meals

As we shall be leaving Frensham Heights School at about 10.00 a.m., we shall be taking a packed lunch with us, to eat in the airport. During the flight out, there will be a main meal and a snack; returning two, possibly three, main meals/snacks.

General conduct

Lissa has asked me to send you the attached sheet which outlines the behaviour expected from all Tour Choir members. Please look through it with your son or daughter, and make sure that they understand its contents.

And now, Frensham ...

Finding Frensham Heights School

A map showing the location of Frensham Heights is available on their website, www.frensham-heights.org.uk or via a link from our website. If you do not have access to the internet, please let me know and I will post you a copy.

Course registration

Course registration will take place 4.00 – 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 3rd April.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones must be handed in as usual (preferably labelled). They will be given out on the morning that we leave.

Bebo

Some of our older choir members have set up a National Children's Choir page on Bebo. Whilst we are very happy that they want to keep in touch between courses, this must not be done under the choir's registered name. We have contacted Bebo to ask them to close the page. Please could all parents speak to their children about this, and make sure it does not happen again.

Final course payment

Just a reminder that the second payment for the course, £137, was due by 15th February.

If you think of any questions that I have not covered here, please either phone or e mail me; if I don't know the answer, I will try to find it!

Yours sincerely,

Kim Reffell
Administrator