

Boarding at Abingdon



ABINGDON



Why board?

Boarders have more fun!

- **B**e part of a lively, vibrant community.
- Enjoy the huge **O**pportunities on offer – the facilities, activities and social life far exceed those available at home.
- Experience **A**cademic and Other Half activities as part of everyday life.
- Build **R**elationships – the multi-cultural environment is often the making of lifelong friendships.
- **D**evelop independence – taking responsibility for yourself and learning to plan and prioritise your time are important life skills; ideal preparation for university and further education.

Boarding is available from the Third Year.
Boarders are aged from 13 to 18.



Click on any of the pink links on the following pages for further information.

Why board at Abingdon?

Boarding has been at the heart of Abingdon for 750 years; we have a strong boarding ethos and it is an integral part of our school. Every boarding school promises a 'home-from-home' experience but rarely is it quite as comprehensive as the one offered by Abingdon. We are not setting out to be *in loco parentis*, but to offer a co-parenting partnership where boys are not living completely different home and school lives, the two being very much combined.

We understand the needs of a modern family, where time together is precious. We fit around our families' busy lives. Parents are encouraged to have as much communication with their sons as they wish. There are no exeat or home weekends – boys can go home as and when they choose (outside of lesson time).

“ I thought settling into boarding would be very hard, but I was wrong. I've been here for almost 3 years, and I wake up at home every day. ”

A boarder



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Weekly boarding has provided a really good balance... the space for our son to grow from boy to man but still seeing him regularly to feel like we can keep the close family contact.

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A parent





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Through boarding I have been able to get to know people of many different nationalities; my understanding of varied cultures has risen and my grasp of different languages has grown.

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A boarder



Our boarding houses

There are three **boarding houses** at Abingdon: School House, Waste Court and Crescent. Two thirds of our boarders are full boarding with the remainder weekly boarding. Our boarders come from the local area, London and much further afield with a wealth of nationalities represented which provides a truly global environment. All boarding houses also have a strong day-boy contingent. Day boys and boarders are fully integrated within the houses and are indistinguishable within the school.

All boarding houses have study bedrooms, a kitchen and a games room. They have a distinctive 'family home' feel to them and offer a range of entertainments, including table football, pool and table tennis. Boarders also have full access to the School's stunning **facilities** including the **sports centre** with its 8-lane 25m swimming pool, gym, ergo suite, multi-activity sports hall, climbing wall and dance studio. There is Sky TV and Wi-Fi available throughout the boarding houses.

Take a virtual tour of a **study bedroom**, **houseroom** and **computer suite and workroom**.



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Symbolic of the importance placed on the connection between boarding and home life are the clocks on the wall in School House. Each clock shows the time from the capital city closest to a boarder's home, from Sydney to Beijing, Moscow to Nairobi.

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A parent

“ The support and care the boys receive from all those connected to the house is reflected by the kindness and respect the boys show each other. ”

A parent



Pastoral care

The School's excellent **pastoral care** is the backbone of our boarding. Our aim above all is to ensure boys are happy within our community. Boys' tutors, their housemasters and the house matrons form strong relationships with families. All of our boarding housemasters and tutors also teach and run **Other Half** activities, ensuring important continuity between the boys' day-time and boarding experience. Should they need it, boys have access to a health professional 24/7. We also have a **Health Centre** on site and a team of school councillors.

“ We have always been reassured by an approach that treats all the boys as though they are part of an extended family and that encourages the older boys to take care of the younger ones – in contrast to the historical picture of British public schools! ”

A parent



Study time

Set homework times help boarders to keep on top of their academic performance and the seamless integration between academic and boarding staff ensures that each boy's work is carefully monitored. All boarding houses have their own **workrooms** on top of the School's **library** and many of the boarders find the boarding routine, its environment and the help of staff and their peers beneficial to their studies, particularly in the Sixth Form.

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Boarding in the Sixth Form is great academically. You do not have to spend any time travelling and there is plenty of support available from teachers and other students.

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A boarder

Catering

We fully appreciate that most of our boys have insatiable appetites and so we provide breakfast, morning break, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and supper and there are further snacks available at any time of day. Our award-winning **caterers** provide a wide variety of international food cooked on the premises and ensure a healthy, balanced diet. Boys are also able to cook in our boarding house kitchens. Indeed we encourage them to learn life skills, whether it's how to tie a bow tie or iron a shirt.







“ Wonderful and most importantly enjoyable activities fill our spare time. There isn't a single dull moment over the weekends. The amount of effort the teachers put in to make boarding life as interesting as possible is simply amazing.

A boarder

Boarding activities

We recognise the balance between having enough to do and the importance of 'down time' and so we offer a mix of compulsory and optional activities at weekends and at the end of the school day. There is also plenty of time to study. We encourage responsibility, allowing increasing independence as boys move up the school but we do set boundaries, which the boys respect.

“ The boarding staff are great at providing diverse entertainment. Each duty tutor is unique which gives us a different activity every evening – from pizza and movies to pancakes and cards. ”

A boarder



Example activities

Socials with neighbouring schools; trips to London and Oxford, to the theatre, cinema, museums, and galleries; go-karting, sports matches, paintballing, mountain biking, climbing wall, dragon boat racing, sailing, and laser tag.

Weekends – There are usually two organised activities each weekend.

Saturday morning – Structured morning. Sport, study, music and drama are all available although there are no formal lessons on a Saturday.

Saturday afternoon – Free time. Many boys are involved in sport. Others go into Oxford or Abingdon to meet friends and girlfriends, some go home or to stay with friends.

Sunday – A leisurely morning is followed by an organised trip.

Weekdays – School facilities are available for boarders to use every day of the week. Activities include: kayaking, the gym, table tennis, basket ball, climbing wall, music practice, school library, sports hall, dance studio, squash courts, volley ball.

Boarding is an enjoyable experience I will never forget, spent with a diverse group of people you hope to know for the rest of your life.

A boarder







A day in the life of a boarder

The 'normal' day for an Abingdon boarder does not, like a normal household, begin at a particular time but rather over a period of an hour, with the committed minority making it down for breakfast dead on 7.30am whilst the rest of the house, who struggle to make it out of the comfort of their beds at such an 'early' time, perform an excellent dance with time to maximise sleep. To the awe of the younger, less experienced boarder, such a master of time will be showered, dressed and even managed a hearty breakfast in under 10 minutes without even breaking a sweat, and all just in time for registration.

It takes only two morning lessons for the full force of a boarder's appetite to return. Luckily, food is at hand once more, with break-time snacks available in the kitchen. One may think such a popular feeding frenzy for the grazing students would result in congestion, however all happens in respectable time thanks to the three toasters at hand. The hot crumpets, waffles and toast that follow are guzzled down as quickly as they came about, with the kitchen emptying in time for the next lesson, leaving no evidence that a hoard of hungry teenagers had just exited (that is until someone checks the waffle cupboard).



After the school day ends, the boarders encounter another food-based ritual in the form of 5 o'clock teas, where the most prized sandwiches hurriedly disappear in the hands of the chanting victor, leaving the poor tutor on duty with the less desirable egg and cress or tuna mayonnaise to choose from. At this point the boarders have a couple of hours to relax in their rooms, go to the gym, play indoor football or wander into town before making their way to dinner where boarders in other houses catch up on the latest news.

Continues overleaf

A day in the life of a boarder continued

Dinner is followed quickly by registration where students are updated on house-related news and evening arrangements as well as, of course, who is on washing up duty, after which the two rostered boys are met with rapturous applause for their soon-to-be sterling work. Boarders then have 90 minutes to do prep before an evening activity with the duty teacher, usually consisting of loud music and, whilst aesthetically displeasing, enthusiastic dancing; what Abingdon boarders lack in quality on a dance floor, they make up for in quantity.

As the hard-core partygoers tire, younger year groups are put to bed by the duty prefects who, to the wonder of any observer, manage to get 20 students out of the shower and into bed on time, with not a minute to spare. Tutors are also on hand to make sure the well-oiled machine that is the boarding house is running smoothly. Slowly the house settles down, eventually leaving only the Sixth Form awake as they get some extra work done before going to bed, which they try to do as quietly as they can. Unfortunately they aren't renowned for their subtlety. After the occasional late shower, they too head to bed and the house goes to sleep; that is until the duty tutor leaves, after which the odd side lamp switches back on as an unlucky soul remembers that he hasn't done a piece of homework due in the next day.



Boarding 'taster' video – made by our third year boys



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For my boys, boarding at Abingdon has been a life-changing experience. They have made many new friends, learnt to be independent and organised and become part of a unique community.

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A parent



ABINGDON

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