



ABINGDON

A Rough Guide to the Middle School

The pages of a brochure can only hint at what the flavour of a School is like; it is the people and relationships that matter more than glossy pictures and fancy text. I hope, however, that this booklet offers you a flavour of Middle School life at Abingdon. The text is written by existing Middle School boys for Middle School boys; it is, essentially, your rough guide. Hopefully it will answer some of your questions.

At Abingdon staff work very hard to create a friendly and collegiate environment where you can thrive and excel in a myriad of ways. Personally, I take great pride in the School and I believe that this is due, in no small part, to the quality of the relationships amongst the staff and boys. I am confident that you will find the School a friendly place and I am sure that you will soon make some life long friends.

I hope that you will seize the numerous opportunities available to you at Abingdon and grow in many ways: in your learning, your self-confidence, your sport, your music and in your zest for life beyond.

My advice can be boiled down to this: work hard and play hard; seize opportunities, take risks, don't be afraid to try new things, treat others as you would have them treat you, and, if you need help – ask!

I look forward to meeting you in due course. If you have any questions you can email me: paul.gooding@abingdon.org.uk or refer to the school website www.abingdonschool.org.uk.



Rev Paul Gooding

Middle Master & Assistant Chaplain

Abingdon is a very warm and welcoming school that gives you many opportunities to excel. This rough guide to the Middle School is designed to give you a few hints in order to help you through your busy Abingdon life.

Organising Your Belongings

When joining Abingdon, you will be allocated a locker in your houseroom, where you can keep your books and valuables. Your teachers will provide your books as you attend your first lessons. It is quite convenient to keep all your books at school and just carry around the books that you need for the next few lessons and only take home the books that you need for prep that evening. Alternatively, you could keep all your books at home and bring the books for a whole day in your school bag; the disadvantage of this is that it can become quite heavy. Just try whatever works for you.



Keeping your valuables in your locker is a good idea but most of the time it is also fine to keep items such as a mobile phone in a school bag or inside blazer pocket. Whatever you decide to do, you need to get into and out of your locker many times a day and it needs to be padlocked. Either a number or a key, it doesn't matter; you can buy good padlocks from the school shop (they come with three keys and it can be useful to keep one on a key chain on a belt loop).



Good Quality Folders

I have lost count of the number of folders I have broken! Therefore, you should buy one good quality folder for each subject (definitely not the cardboard ones!). It seems expensive but in the long run it's worth it. Keep everything for one subject together and in one folder to accommodate all the loose, but important, pieces of paper as well as your textbooks. For your GCSEs a ring binder or lever arch file can seem more useful, but for your time in third year this is not always necessary.

Games Kit

The games kit that you will need varies completely on the sport that you will be doing that term but there are shelves in each house room and games kit can be stored very easily here.



Lost Property

Lost property is open every morning break time, so if you are unfortunate enough to lose something at school, then within a few days it is normally there. Everything that the cleaning staff find will end up in lost property. After a term of being in lost property, your stuff will be taken to the second hand shop, so beware!

Other Half

As you can tell from its name, the Other Half (activities) plays a large part in your Abingdon life. Therefore it is good to make the right decisions. There is an Other Half brochure to help you and lots of information on the School website.

On one of your first days at Abingdon the Activities Fair will be held. This is where, in going around each stall, you can find out information and choose which activities you want to do. It can sometimes be difficult to switch from one activity to another once you have signed up, therefore pick wisely. Try to take part in as much Other Half as you want to – there is a huge variety on offer.



Clubs and Services

There are also practical things to do, like art, ceramics and the Combined Cadet Force (C.C.F.), for example. The main thing is to choose wisely and practically. There is a wide range of choice and the best advice is to give something a try. Within the CCF, you sign up initially for a year, and you attend the recruit camp on Salisbury Plain Army Training Area. After you have graduated from this camp you can choose to specialize in either the Army or RAF sections.

Drama and Music

The school has brilliant drama facilities and every year there are many plays to get involved with, and, as we are an all boys school, most productions are joint with the school of St Helen and St Katharine (a local all-girls school).

We have a thriving music department who have just returned from a tour of the USA. Approximately two out of three boys in the school take music lessons and there are a huge number of orchestras and bands for the boys to get involved in.



Sport

There are many sports to choose from and there should be something for everyone. You can choose from: rugby, hockey, fencing, badminton, squash, swimming, water polo, sailing, and many more. We are also proud of our new state of the art sports centre which has some superb facilities on offer.

If I have a problem

There are many people that you can talk to if you have a problem. Your tutor is your first port of call, or for a problem with a particular subject, your teachers. You see your tutor and teachers almost every day and you will get to know each other well. Your housemaster is also useful to talk to if you have a problem within the house, as he can talk to all the boys. Any serious news should be given to your housemaster, who will always have his door open for you. There are other ports of call too, such as the Head of Middle School, the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Head.



If you have a private or personal problem that, for some reason, you do not wish to speak to your tutor or housemaster about, you can contact the School Counsellor, the School Health Centre, the School Chaplain or Assistant Chaplain. You may also wish to speak to a school or house prefect who are there to help and look out for you around the campus.

Sports Teams

Abingdon is a large school that can field many teams for one sport. Therefore, if you like rugby, but are not A-Team material, don't worry because there are many teams. Training sessions for any sport always welcome new people. Matches are often on Saturdays; so keep them free because if you are selected you will need to represent the School. If you are lucky enough to be selected for a prestigious sports team then it is worth becoming more organised; it is hard work, but rewarding too.



Homework

You are given homework every weekday night. When taking the school bus you may not return home until six thirty after a tiring day and the task can seem daunting. My advice is to get your homework out of the way when you return home. Possibly have supper in-between, but finish it and then relax and watch television or go on

the computer. You may also have time to get some work done at lunchtime in the library.



Em@il

Abingdon is reliant on ICT and the email system so this is a really quick and easy way to contact teachers, tutor, friends, the school chaplain or counsellor at any time. Anyone and everyone's email address can quickly be found on the email system and the school calendar is available on line. However, getting your parents to send an email to your tutor or subject teacher can be more help; so if the dog really has eaten your homework an email from a parent is more suitable! Do check your email every day however.

Written by Tom McGivan

FOR BOARDERS

The boarding community is integral to Middle School life. I have been a boarder since joining Abingdon and have enjoyed every step of the way. I've got a great bunch of guys around me, and, after the years I've spent with them, we've really bonded and we all get along well with each other. Sure there has been the occasional issue but, overall we've become a close group of mates. The boarding house is almost a second family for some boys, with teachers and prefects helping you with any issues, be it academic or more personal matters, and acting as a friendly helping hand. Then the people you share rooms with, acting almost as siblings, helping you with work, overcoming home sickness and other inevitable issues.



When joining a boarding house in the third year, it is often hard to adjust from old routines, especially if coming from a day school. Many new boarders have not spent more than a few days away from home and are unsure of what to expect. From my own experience I know that being away from home is especially hard when left to dwell on it and my mates around me really helped me forget about any homesickness. However, I found that there is little

time to worry about home, as there is always something to do and I am often too busy playing squash, swimming or just jamming in the music school with my friends to even think of home, much to my mum's disappointment when I forget to call!



A normal boarding day starts with breakfast at 7:30 – 8:00am. This is always a treat as there is a huge choice, a cooked breakfast, and a selection of cereal, croissants, pain au chocolate, porridge and toast everyday. The bacon is especially good! After school at 5:00pm every day each boarding house has tea, this is normally a sandwich, a drink and a chocolate biscuit. There are then scheduled boarders' activities from 5:30 – 6:30pm. With the wonderful new sports complex there is now an even greater range of activities at this time. The gym is open every day at either 5:30 or 9:00pm as is the swimming pool and the sports hall. There are often arranged activities in the sports hall for boarders including indoor football, basketball, and badminton. There is also a thriving karate club that operates in the studio; this is open to both dayboys and boarders.



Supper is at 6:45pm and lasts until about 7:20pm. There is always a hot main and a hot vegetarian main. There's also a pasta meal, salad bar, a hot and cold dessert as well as a selection of fresh fruit. There is then registration in the boarding houses at 7:25pm and prep time from 7:30 – 9:00pm. This is an hour and a half where it is compulsory for boys to be working in their rooms or in the library if in need of computers. It is brilliant as it means there is a set homework time meaning that you do not feel that you are missing out on doing something with your friends, as they are doing the same thing. At 9:00pm there are more arranged activities but it is often a nice time to watch television or socialise in the games room over pool or table tennis. Bedtimes start in the third year at 9:45 and are made later by 15 minutes each year.

A useful new feature to each of the boarding houses is the boarders' council. This council of around twenty people meet in the School House games room and it is a great opportunity for boys of all ages to express their feelings about what's going well or what they would like to see changed in boarding.

There are a few things that I would advise new boarders to bring along with the obvious necessities. All rooms have pin boards and it always gives a dorm a more homely feel to have some posters up.

In the summer the tennis courts are open after 5:00pm and a tennis racket is therefore a good thing to bring even if you are not doing tennis as a sport as you can always play recreational tennis before supper. With the new sports centre now in place I would also advise bringing swimming trunks too. Bringing snacks from home is always a good idea too, as teenage boys are always hungry and it is cheaper than relying on the school tuck-shop.

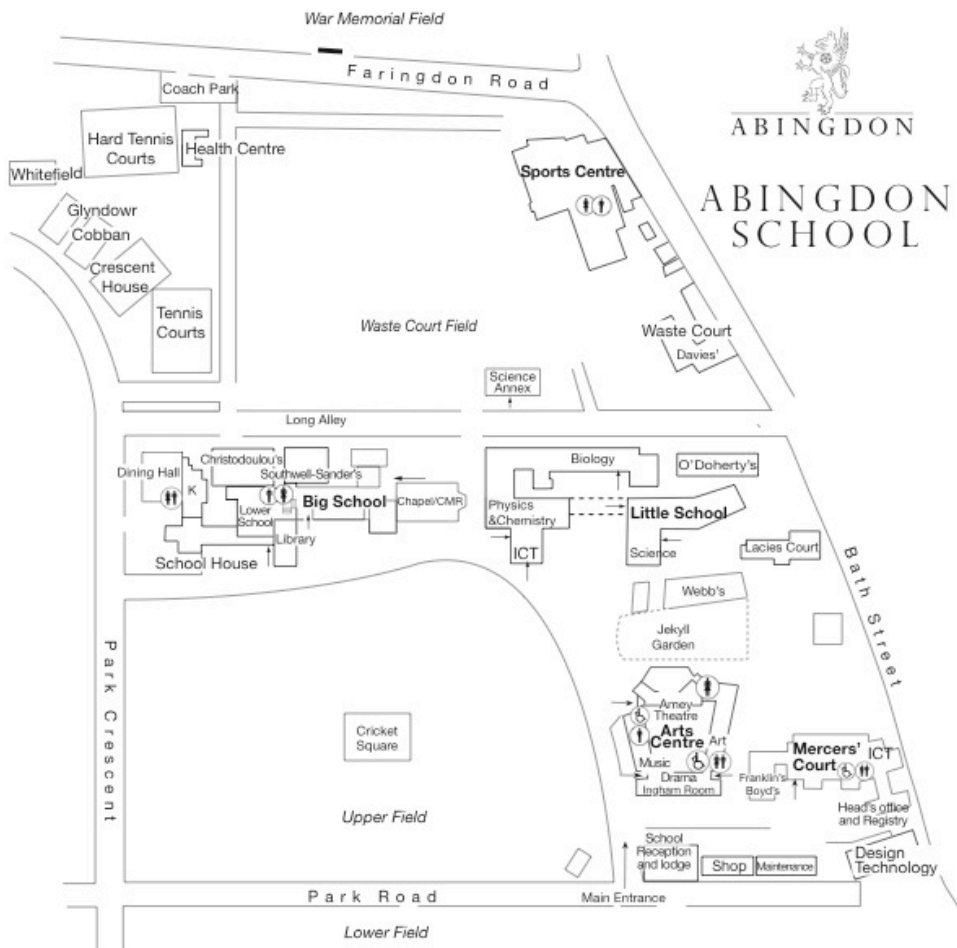


Another good thing about boarding here is that all the laundry is done for you, so parents need not dread to think of the vast load of washing coming home every weekend! As long as you put the right item of clothing in the right laundry basket, the matrons will whisk it off to the laundry to be washed. This leads to one of the most essential bits of kits that new boarders need to bring in: labels! Labels are essential; clothes can tend to go walk about in the boarding house, being put in the wrong drawer by accident etc. If you make sure that all of your clothing is clearly labelled then you are all set and need not worry about clothing being mixed up.

The last thing that I would say to advise new boarders is that there is always someone to talk to and that boys should never be embarrassed about wanting to talk to someone about a problem. There is a great network of support in every boarding house. There is your housemaster and tutors who are always willing to help. However, if boys prefer not to speak to teachers there are many other options. Each house has a matron who can offer great support and can be a good person to talk to about anything. House prefects are brilliant for problems in the house or for advice about school from a boy's point of view. Lastly, the school nurse can provide brilliant advice on both health and personal problems; no boy should ever feel that they have nobody to talk to about anything.

I hope that this short article helps to introduce new boarders to what it is like and will give you some ideas of what to expect as a boarder. I would recommend it to anybody and I am sure that you will all enjoy it as much as I do.

Written by Nick Acutt (Head of School) and Oscar Buckland



Key to Department and other rooms

<p>Big School</p> <p>Careers Library B10</p> <p>English B7-15</p> <p>Modern languages B1-6, B9</p>	<p>Mercers Court</p> <p>Economics M106-108</p> <p>History M100-104</p> <p>ICT M109</p> <p>Mathematics M110-117</p>	<p>Sport Hall</p> <p>Sport S80</p>
<p>Laboratories</p> <p>Biology S26-29</p> <p>Chemistry S18-21</p> <p>Physics S22-25</p> <p>Science Annex SA1-2</p>	<p>Arts Centre</p> <p>Art A203-204, A216-219</p> <p>Drama A221-222</p> <p>Music A202, A210-215</p>	<p>Other Rooms</p> <p>CMR Charles Maude Room</p> <p>D Dining Hall</p> <p>K Kitchens</p> <p>ICT Information and Communication Technology: Computer suite</p>
<p>Little School</p> <p>Classics L30-33</p> <p>Geography L37-39</p> <p>Religious Studies L34-36</p>	<p>Warehouse</p> <p>Design Technology T70 - T74</p>	<p>⬇ ⬆ ⬇ ⬆ ⬇ ⬆ Toilets</p>

