



ABINGDON

Parents' Handbook 2011/2012

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This Handbook is designed to give you an outline of the School's administrative arrangements and policies. It should be seen as a supplement to the standard Terms and Conditions, which parents signed when they accepted a place for their sons in the School. It is designed to help by answering most of the questions you might want to ask. If at any time, however, there is anything you do not understand, or anything you are worried about, please do not hesitate to email or write to us. A copy of this Handbook can be found on the School's Website (www.abingdon.org.uk).

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Abingdon School – Notes for Parents

I Sources of Information

Up-to-date information about School events and activities is provided in:

- a) The School website (www.abingdon.org.uk) – updated daily. We are keen to encourage parents to see this as their principal source of news and information. School mailings are archived in the ‘News’ section of the website.
- b) The boys’ prep diaries which contain a list of useful email addresses.
- c) The online School calendar is available from the School website (<http://calendar.abingdon.org.uk>).
- d) The School Other Half Activities booklet which contains information about both compulsory and voluntary sports, School societies and service activities.
- e) Weekly mailings from the Second Master are sent by email to parents and nominated guardians.
- f) The *Abingdon News* which is produced three times a year and the *Abingdonian*, produced annually.
- g) For boys joining in the Lower School, the booklet ‘Helpful Hints for New Boys’.
- h) For boys joining Middle School, the booklet ‘A Rough Guide to the Middle School’.
- i) For new boarders, a Boarding Handbook containing additional administrative information specifically for boarders.
- j) School Policies, which are available on the school website under the ‘Home’ menu. This page also contains general information for parents, which we are required to provide. Information about staff, including temporary staff, and qualifications, is available from the Additional Information booklet available via the ‘Admissions’ menu.

II Enquiries and Communications

- a) Parents contacting staff: parents of boys at the School are encouraged to contact members of staff by e-mail wherever possible. If the appropriate e-mail address is not evident, please use the Common Room e-mail address, indicating who the message is for. General telephone enquiries from parents should be directed in the first instance to the Common Room Secretary (common.room@abingdon.org.uk; 01235 521563). Direct telephone line information for some members of staff is available on the website under the Contact tab.

The principal School number 01235 521563 will be answered by a receptionist between 8.30 am and 6.30 pm Monday to Friday during term-time and between 9.00 am and 4.00 pm on week-days during the School holidays. On Saturdays contact should be made with the Sports Centre receptionist: 01235 849062 for matters relating to sport. Outside office hours, messages can be left on the answer machine. The porters’ mobile, for out of hours emergencies only, is 07801 782351. Please note that if use of the 1471 facility shows that a call has been made from the School's principal number, the receptionist cannot know from where or by whom the call was made.

- b) Letters: letters may be hand-delivered to the Reception in the Lodge (on the right immediately beside the main School gate) during office hours. Outside office hours

letters should be delivered to the Lodge; for urgent messages for the Head or Registrar there is also a letterbox at Mercers' Court.

- c) During a normal working day all visitors, including parents, should report to the School Reception, situated in the Lodge at the entrance to the School, where visitors will be requested to sign in upon arrival, and sign out when leaving. Visitors will be requested to wear a visitors' badge. Visitors will be directed to the appropriate offices, or asked to wait in the reception area until the member of staff has been notified of the visitor's arrival. Visitors wishing to meet individual members of staff are requested to make appointments beforehand.
- d) Parents contacting boys: it is not possible for us to bring individual boys to speak to their parents on the telephone. Boys in the Lower School are not allowed to use mobile telephones during school hours. Boys in the Middle and Upper Schools may use mobile telephones at break, during the lunch hour and after School, but not between lessons, during lessons, during supervised activity or private study, or at any formal School occasion. Mobile phones must be switched off when not in use. They must not be used to send offensive messages nor to access inappropriate websites. The unsolicited taking of photographs or videos, by such equipment, is strictly prohibited. Otherwise they must not be used in a way that inconveniences others. Boys must not be telephoned on their mobile telephones during the teaching day. The School telephone number must not be used as a means of sending messages to boys, except in cases of emergency.
- e) Boys contacting parents: there are pay telephone boxes in the School for use by boys. Boys should only ask to use office telephones in an emergency. Mobile phones may only be used by boys at break, during the lunch hour and after School. See note d) above and Rules and Regulations in the prep diary.
- f) Boys contacting staff: boys wishing to contact members of staff will usually find it easiest to do so by email or enquiring for them at the Common Room or calling at their individual offices. Boys who wish to see a senior member of staff will usually find it most convenient to ask their Tutor or Housemaster to make an appointment for them. They may however, if they wish, ask the Common Room Secretary for an urgent appointment - and the Head may always be approached directly by any boy who needs to speak to her.
- g) Staff contacting parents: we keep contact information for the purpose of sending reports, fee invoices and so forth and also rely upon the same information in the case of emergencies. We therefore ask parents and guardians to keep us up-to-date as and when necessary with any changes of address, email and phone numbers for each contact. An annual update of contact information is conducted each year. The information supplied is subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act of 1998.

III Times

1. *Beginning of Term*

Dayboys are asked to arrive by 8.35 am on the first day of term as published on the website. Boarders should be back for roll-call in houses by 6.30 pm the previous evening. Arrangements for new boarders are separately communicated. On arrival on the first morning, dayboys should ask to be directed to their houseroom.

2. *Daily Routines*

Dayboys should normally arrive between 8.20 am and 8.35 am each morning.

To assist parents who need to drop their sons off early, Middle and Upper School dayboys who arrive at school between 7.50am and 8.20 am should go to Webb's House, where they should sign in, and remain until 8.20 am. Lower School boys should go to the Lower School Houseroom, arriving no earlier than 8.10 am.

Considerable importance is attached to punctuality and registration is an integral part of School administration as well as a legal requirement; the School's registration procedures are inspected regularly. We ask for parents' co-operation, therefore, in ensuring that their sons arrive on time.

Late arrivals are required to report in person to Mr Wickes' office in Room 10, by the Chapel, to register there.

Below is an outline of a typical day at Abingdon from September 2011. Timings do vary across year groups and from day to day - more specific templates for each year group are downloadable from the school website http://www.abingdon.org.uk/the_abingdon_school_day/. However, the table below gives a general idea of the shape of the day.

8.35am	Boys meet with their tutors
8.50 - 9.45	Period 1: Lessons for all
9.50 - 10.45	Period 2: Lessons for all
10.45-11.05	Break
11.10-12.05	Period 3: Lessons for all
12.10-13.05	Period 4: Lunch/activities/tutorial/assembly for some, lessons for others
1.10-1.55	Period 5: Lunch/activities/tutorial/assembly for all
2.00-2.55	Period 6: Lunch/activities/assembly for some, lessons for others
3.00-3.55	Period 7: Lessons for all (except Wednesdays when after school activities take place for all)
4.00-5.15	Period 8: After school activities

After school activities are normally over by 5.00 pm, except sometimes in the Lent and Summer Terms. Dayboys should normally leave School premises by 5.20 pm, unless specially required to stay behind or arrangements for this have been made.

Unless they are taking part in an official School activity, dayboys are no longer the responsibility of the School once they have left the premises at the end of the School day, latest 5.30 pm on weekdays. School discipline rules, however, do apply whilst they remain in School uniform and are travelling home, whether on the School bus, public transport or on foot. Dayboys who remain on School premises after these hours, for music practice, School events, societies and so forth must ensure that their presence is correctly registered at all times. The School buses leave the School coach park for the return journey at 5.20 pm Monday to Friday.

On Saturdays large numbers of boys will be required to play school games as well as being involved in other school activities (such as Open Days). This year's Open Day will take place on Saturday 1 October 2011 and all boys are expected to attend. School buses will run on the Open Day.

Detention, when necessary, is for two hours after School on Fridays (for misbehaviour or for catching up on longer pieces of work) or for Sixth-formers to catch up on essential work. Prep detention is after lessons on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 16:00 until 16:45. Head's detentions are held on Saturdays.

Boys may appeal against detention, using the procedures set out in their prep diaries in the School Rules and Regulations, but parents are requested to support the School in imposing the detention.

3. *Holidays*

The School is closed to boys during the holidays (chiefly so that maintenance programmes and other School works can be carried out).

IV *Absentees (unplanned)*

If parents know their son is going to be absent they must let the School know by telephoning Mrs Bosley, the Attendance Secretary on 01235 849031, or by emailing: attendance@abingdon.org.uk (and copy the email to their son's tutor), by 9.30 am each morning. Parents should give their son's name and tutor group. If a boy fails to register, the School is obliged to ring the parents to ascertain the whereabouts of their son. Failure to do this has led to a number of complications, not least Mrs Bosley having to ring parents only to find the boy is in school. This can set alarm bells ringing with parents. We would be very grateful if parents could encourage their son to report to Mrs Bosley in Mr Wickes' office, room 10, if they arrive late.

On Saturdays if an unplanned absence arises for a sporting fixture or another activity (such as a rehearsal) contact must be made with the teacher in charge of the team or activity either by email or phone call. The Sports Centre reception is on 01235 849062. The school main number 01235 521563 will be manned for Open Days and similar events.

V *Leave out of School*

4. *Dayboys*

Requests involving the absence of any boy for more than a day of School time should be made in writing to the Head. His Housemaster may deal with requests involving absence of a day or less.

Parents are strongly requested not to take their sons out of School for any but the most pressing reasons. It must be said that we object strongly to applications for leave that have the effect of extending the already generous School holidays.

5. *Full Boarders*

A boarder may have leave to go out with parents or friends, or to go home on Saturday morning or Sunday, at the discretion of his Housemaster, if he has no games or other school commitments. Saturday leave starts at 10.30 am. It is probably wise for parents not to distract their sons by too frequent visits – especially when the boys are in their first term at School. For any special leave of absence from the House, parents are asked to write in the first instance to their son's Housemaster; leave out of lessons is arranged as laid down in paragraph 4 above.

6. *Weekly Boarders*

Weekly boarders may go home at 5.15 pm on Fridays, or remain until Saturday lunchtime. This may suit those with sporting or other School commitments later on a Saturday. They may then return either on Sunday evening or Monday morning by agreement with the Housemaster. Weekly boarders can usually stay at School over a weekend by prior arrangement although frequent weekend stays may be subject to a charge. For any special leave of absence from the House, parents are asked to write in the first instance to their son's Housemaster; leave out of lessons is arranged as laid down in paragraph 4 above.

7. *Sporting Fixtures*

Boys are expected to be available for matches against other schools unless specific permission has been sought from and granted by the Head. Any request should be made well in advance, at least one week before the fixture and copied to the Director of Sport and PE.

8. *Half-Term and Exeat Weekends*

All boys must leave the School for the half-term breaks. It is the responsibility of boarders' parents to make arrangements for their sons during half-term. At Boarders' Exeat and activity priority weekends boys may choose to remain at School.

9. *Occasional Boarding*

We encourage occasional boarding for a modest charge as a way of improving the opportunities available to dayboys. Priority will be given to those who are considering a move to boarding or to those who have a need to board for family reasons. However availability cannot be guaranteed, as the Boarding Houses are usually full. Enquiries about availability should be made in the first instance to the Registrar, and as much notice as possible is suggested.

VI *Medical requirements*

The parents of each pupil entering the School are asked to complete a form detailing their son's medical history. Please bring any special requirements to the attention of the School Nurse before your son joins the School.

VII *Learning Support*

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the School if their son has had an Educational Psychologist's report or has a special requirement of any description. A copy of the specialist assessment should be forwarded at the time of Registration for entry to the School or in the case of later reports as soon as received. Failure to provide such information may make it more difficult for us to meet your son's needs, be they learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. The Learning Support department consists of a Learning Support Coordinator, Mrs Christine Cross, and other specialist teachers. Specialist teaching, for which a charge will be made, may be provided where necessary.

VIII *Work*

10. *Curriculum*

Details of each stage of the curriculum are given to parents as their son's progress up the School. Booklets describing the curriculum at each level of the School may be accessed from the School website and are also available on request from the Director of Studies. Choices of subjects have to be made from time to time in a boy's School career, and at these points the parents can exert a major influence; however, we are obliged to make it clear that the composition of a boy's timetable, and the arrangements made for teaching him (e.g. by setting) must ultimately be at the School's discretion.

11. *Curriculum, Timetable and Subject Choices*

Curriculum arrangements are made by the Director of Studies to whom enquiries about the curriculum and subject choices should be addressed. The School is always willing to consider special timetabling or curricular arrangements for individual pupils.

12. *Books and Materials*

Textbooks and stationery are at present issued, generally speaking, without any separate charge. Books remain the property of the School and a charge is made for any lost, damaged, or defaced. Boys may buy their own copies of textbooks if they wish. A small number of necessary items (a bible – the Good News Bible is recommended as particularly suitable for examination purposes – a dictionary, mathematical instruments, etc.) are normally bought by boys. We recommend Heinemann's School Dictionary or the Pocket Oxford Dictionary. A small charge is made for materials used in Art and Design and Technology GCSE and A level course work. There is also a charge made for careers advice to boys in the Fourth Year if they choose to join the Independent School Careers Organisation.

13. *Prep*

Prep properly done is the corner-stone of most subjects. As a rough guide, boys in the first two years should do about one hour each evening (Mon to Fri), rising to two hours each evening by the fifth year (also Mon to Fri). Prep time-tables are published for years 1 to 5, and parents of dayboys are asked to ensure that their sons comply with these programmes, and that they carry out the assignments recorded in their prep diaries. Parents may raise questions about their son's prep at any time, with his Tutor or with the subject teacher concerned.

14. *Music Lessons*

We encourage all new boys to consider learning a musical instrument or taking singing lessons at School; more than half of the boys in the School regularly take this opportunity. Normal arrangements provide for 11 half-hour individual lessons each term, taken once a week; in long terms, extra lessons may be available. Details of charges are available from the Director of Music; it is possible to hire instruments, and to buy sheet music and other musical accessories, from the School.

All charges connected with music tuition are made in advance by the teacher concerned. A full term's notice is required for lessons to be terminated; such notice must be given in writing to the Director of Music and a term's fees may be charged in lieu.

15. *Reports, Assessments and Academic Monitoring*

A boy's progress is monitored, and reports are made to parents, by a variety of means both formal and informal. Subject teachers and tutors consult regularly, and tutors are primarily responsible for bringing to the attention of parents any special problems that may arise during the course of a term.

Reports and Parents' Evenings: Parents receive a formal written report on their son's progress five times a year, with shorter reports at the Michaelmas and Lent half terms, and full reports at the end of each term. All subject reports, be they short or long, carry grades for Effort and Achievement over the relevant period of reporting. All reports are commented on by a pupil's Tutor and Housemaster. The grading system is explained on each report and Effort and Achievement grades are converted into two overall percentages that can be monitored from report to report. As a rough rule of thumb, percentages of around 65% indicate that all is mostly well, in the region of 80% and above that things are going very well indeed and in the region of 50% and below that there may be some causes for concern.

Every boy's parents will be invited once in the course of a year to meet the boy's teachers. These "parents' evenings" are organised on a year-group basis, and interviews are arranged by appointment. Senior staff address parents on these occasions, on matters relevant to the year group.

Assessment – internal examinations: Alongside the on-going monitoring and assessment that naturally takes place during lessons as well as in the report sessions outlined above, all pupils have one formal internal examinations session during the year quite apart from any public examinations for which they may be entered. For the fifth year, this takes place at the beginning

of the Lent Term (their 'mock' GCSE exams), for the fourth year just before the Summer half term and for years 1-3, just after the Summer half term. The L6th have a set of 'tests' in November that take place during lesson times and the U6th have a similar set of 'mocks' that take place after the Lent half term. On each examination occasion the results are analysed and reported home (often via the next reporting session) and if performance in the exams raises a concern then contact will usually be made aside from the normal report, for example via a letter from the Academic Deputy Head.

Monitoring – the Lists system: For boys in the 3rd year and above whose academic progress causes concern during the year, Abingdon has a 'Lists' system to look more closely at them for a period of time to help them to put things right. The first level (the Tutor's List) highlights a boy to his Tutor and his teachers, who will keep a closer eye on him and encourage him to address the specific issues that have arisen. Tutors will usually contact parents via email or a telephone call to let them know this is happening. More serious cases are elevated to the Middle Master's (years 3-5) or Upper Master's (Sixth Form) List, which involves a more formal reporting back from teachers to the Tutor on a regular basis and a letter home. The most serious level of monitoring is the Deputy Head Academic's List, which will usually involve a letter home and a regular meeting between the pupil and the Deputy Head to encourage specific improvement in agreed areas.

At each stage of this process a pupil's background and specific needs are considered alongside the potential involvement of the Learning Support department. Often boys will appear on the Tutor's List only for a brief period before putting right whatever has led to the concern. It should be emphasised that the system is designed primarily to be supportive, to give boys the chance to recognise, articulate and address their problems.

16. *Extra Tuition*

Extra tuition is normally necessary only in special cases (e.g. where a boy starts a subject late). N.B. arrangements for extra tuition require written permission from the Head. Special arrangements apply if a boy needs help with English as a second language, payment for which is made separately.

IX *'The Other Half'*

17. *Approach*

The Other Half Activities booklet describes the philosophy which animates our approach to the boys' activities. We expect them to take the fullest possible part in all out-of-school activities. Of course we are happy that a boy should continue to help others by membership of local groups, but the boy who confines his attendance to taught periods is missing many of the best things this School can offer. We refer to non-timetabled activities as 'the other half' of the curriculum, and urge parents to give their utmost support to this part of their son's education. Dayboys are welcome to take their evening meals in the School providing this is arranged in advance through their Tutor. A small charge will be made.

18. *Sport*

The School policy on boys' sporting commitments is set out in the Other Half Activities booklet. All boys who are medically fit are expected to play School sport at least twice a week, in proper kit, as a normal part of their education. Requests for leave 'off games' on any occasion will only be granted if supported by a note from parents, brought beforehand. We assume, in the absence of written instructions to the contrary, that every boy has parental permission to use the swimming pool, under proper supervision.

Abingdon has a strong tradition of participating in interschool fixtures and we have a comprehensive fixture list for all the major school sports across all age ranges. For matters relating to absence from fixtures please refer to section's IV and V.

Responsibility for the purchase of sports kit and equipment (such as tennis racquets or golf clubs) is the responsibility of the individual, and all items must be clearly marked with the owner's name.

Sport is provided as part of our service to our pupils. In certain sports, for example rowing, specialist equipment and/or coaching results in small additional charges.

Sports offered include rugby, hockey, rowing, cricket, tennis, cross-country running, fencing, athletics, basketball, squash, swimming, karate, soccer, sailing, badminton, golf and shooting. It should be noted that it is, in general, against School policy that a boy should concentrate on any particular sport, to the exclusion of others, during all three terms of the year.

19. *Service Activities*

It is considered important that every boy should undertake a period of service-type activity during his time at Abingdon School, and it is therefore a requirement that all boys should at some stage pass through one of the following units or organisations: the CCF, an accredited First Aid course, the Voluntary Service Unit, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, the Amey Theatre technical crews, the library team, the Abingdonian editorial team, or an agreed equivalent organisation. There is a compulsory service activity for Third Year boys on Tuesdays from 4.00 pm until 5.00 pm.

20. *CCF*

The Combined Cadet Force currently operates both Army and RAF sections and offers a full range of activities. It makes a valuable contribution to a boy's education, and parents should consider their sons joining in the third year. The annual Camps for RAF and Army Sections are held close to the beginning of the summer holiday. The main camp for the year is in the first week of the Easter holidays so this should be kept clear by all members of the Contingent. An annual ski camp to Switzerland subsidised by the MOD, is open only to cadets. Strong links exist with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and CCF training does count towards this. There is an initial subscription of £65 to cover boots and tee shirts, and thereafter a termly subscription of £35. The cost of camps is heavily subsidised (the average cost of a week's camp is £80.00).

Boys wishing to join the CCF are given a detailed set of joining instructions and a DVD that lay out exact costs and describe life in the CCF. A copy of these instructions will be posted to you, if not, they are available from the Contingent Commander.

21. *Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme*

A group of boys work towards bronze, silver or gold medals in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, which is designed to develop self-reliance, dedication in acquiring skills, a sense of social and community spirit, a taste for adventure and physical fitness. Small charges are made for enrolment and expeditions are charged in addition to this.

22. *Voluntary Service*

The School has a contingent of volunteers, who give service in the local community to elderly people and in local schools.. Boys may join the Voluntary Service Unit at the end of the third year or at any later stage.

23. *Societies*

All boys are encouraged to join one or more of the officially sponsored societies of the School. Certain societies may be given permission to levy personal subscriptions.

24. Expeditions

The School organises a wide variety of expeditions, to places within the British Isles and abroad, with a view to supplementing the teaching activity, and broadening a boy's experience. When attendance on such an expedition is compulsory, charges will be made on the school bill, or by special arrangement with the parents concerned. Your son should consult you before putting his name down for any voluntary expedition. In cases of financial hardship, where a boy might be prevented from going on an expedition that could be educationally of great importance to him, certain discretionary grants for aid may be available on direct application made by parents to the Head.

Major expeditionary activities will include: field work in connection with geography, biology, CCF camps, an adventure week for first year boys, an adventure trip for second year boys to Snowdonia, skiing trips, and linguists' expeditions to France, Spain, Germany and the Eastern Mediterranean. The School also participates in overseas adventure trips, which have in recent years included visiting Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Peru and Tanzania.

The School operates exchange arrangements with French and Spanish schools, and is particularly closely linked also with the Ratsgymnasium at Bielefeld near Hanover. Special importance is attached to these exchanges, as means of developing boys' language work and improving their social understanding.

X Personal, Social and Health Education

25. Curriculum

The School recognises that education in the fullest sense means that it has a responsibility to convey information and provoke discussion on important ethical issues and matters of personal morality and public duty. All through School, boys are made aware, in both a structured and an incidental way, of these and related matters through the contributions of tutors and Housemasters. The PSHE Coordinator and team of specialist teachers have developed a full programme of personal and social education, details of which may be had on application to the Head.

However, the School does not, and cannot, pretend to offer to boys all the good advice and information that they require. The efforts of parents are at least as important as those of teachers in this field, and the School wishes to see its function as that of supporting the parental lead in fostering sound values and behaviour, rather than the other way round.

XI Religious Education

26. Chapel

Weekday morning prayers are inter-denominational. Details of chapel services for boarders are published in the calendar. Parents of boarders are warmly encouraged to join their sons at chapel services when they come to visit them.

Boys may be prepared at School for confirmation.

If parents have conscientious objections, they may obtain leave of absence from chapel or religious studies lessons for their sons by informing the Head in writing before their boys join the School. Such leave will not be granted during a boy's membership of the School.

XII Discipline

27. *The School Rules and Regulations*

A copy of the School Rules and Regulations is printed in the boys' prep diaries and is available on the website. It is a condition of a boy's admission to Abingdon that his parents should undertake to ensure, as far as they can, that he will observe these, together with any additions that may be issued from time to time.

28. *Dayboys*

The School's position on discipline for dayboys is clearly set out in the Rules and Regulations – parents are requested to study these with care. We are heavily dependent on parental co-operation in managing dayboys, and ask parents of dayboys to recognise their own responsibilities, particularly in "frontier areas", for example when boys are travelling to and from School.

Your attention is drawn to the stipulation that the Rules and Regulations apply equally to all boys while they are in the School, whether or not they are over eighteen.

29. *Boarders*

Boarders are subject to House regulations in addition to the ordinary School Rules and Regulations. These House regulations are posted on House noticeboards and listed in the Boarding Handbook which is available on the website.

30. *Smoking, Drinking, Drugs*

Parents are especially asked to familiarise themselves with those parts of the School Rules and Regulations dealing with smoking, drinking and drugs, and to give full support to the School's stand on these matters.

The School regards seriously any infringement of the law, but we also wish to advocate sensible regard for consideration of health. Parents are asked to note that the entire School is designated a 'No Smoking Area' and smoking is not permitted by staff or visitors.

31. *Hair*

Boys returning to School at the start of the term should have had a recent haircut. We hope for parental co-operation in ensuring that hair is kept neat and of a reasonable length, clear of the collar but not close-cropped; extravagant styles, including conspicuous dying, braiding or bleaching, will not be permitted. A boy may be excluded from School during the period of time that his hair style is considered inappropriate.

32. *Codes and Policies*

The School has fully worked codes and policies on a range of matters which can be found on the School's Website www.abingdon.org.uk; those most likely to be needed from day to day by the boys are set out in the prep diary.

XIII Pastoral System

33. *Houses and Tutor Groups*

- a) *Lower School:* Dayboys entering the Lower School (first and second years) are allocated to a tutor group, looked after by a Tutor who is responsible for their general well-being, and who deals in the first instance with problems connected with work, attendance or

discipline. The Lower School comes under the general supervision of the Lower School Housemaster (see below for the roles of Housemasters).

- b) *Middle School:* On entering the Middle School (third, fourth and fifth years), whether as a new boy or from the Lower School, each boy is allotted to a House; allocations to the nine Houses are made by the Middle Master, Lower School Housemaster and Registrar, taking account of preferences expressed by parents. Brothers usually join the same House. Academic scholars are integrated into the House system, although subject also to some special arrangements. Boys transferring to another House, for example in order to board will, in normal circumstances, transfer to the new House tutor group.
- c) *Upper School:* New boys entering the Upper School will be allotted to a House; the Registrar in consultation with the Upper Master, boarding Housemasters and other staff concerned makes allocations to the Houses, taking account of preferences expressed by parents and boys.
- d) *Allocations:* Allocations to Houses must be at the School's discretion. It may be necessary from time to time to rearrange House allocations in the interests of administrative convenience or for social reasons.
- e) *Through Houses:* A boy usually remains a member of his House throughout his time in the Middle and Upper School, and during that period the Housemaster exercises a general responsibility for his well-being and development. In particular, the Housemaster and tutor will want to get to know the parents of the boys in his House, and to ensure that there is a harmonious relationship between them and the School. The tutor is in a position to deal with the majority of parental enquiries and worries, at least in the first instance, and it is hoped that parents will quickly come to regard their son's tutor as someone with whom they have a close and confidential relationship. Housemasters and tutors comment on boys' reports during the term, write general reports from time to time, and, in some cases, write references for boys leaving at the end of their GCSE year.
- f) *Pastoral Co-ordination:* Pastoral co-ordination across House lines is provided by the Middle Master for the Middle School, and the Upper Master for the Upper School. Personal and social education is co-ordinated by a number of staff with departmental responsibility for this area; a team of careers teachers provides careers guidance; university applications are the particular responsibility of an individual member of staff.

34. Housemasters and Tutors

The Housemaster stands "in loco parentis" to the boys in his House, while they are on School premises – and he will try to help them outside the School as well, with the co-operation of parents. Housemasters play a major part in the disciplinary structure of the School, and may be expected to deal directly with parents in matters concerning their son's good behaviour and appearance.

The Housemasters are assisted by teams of tutors, who look after tutor groups within the houses. A boy will stay with the same tutor in the Middle School prior to joining a Sixth Form tutor group in the same house in the Upper School unless special circumstances require a transfer. There are usually about 18 boys in a group. The tutor is primarily responsible for getting to know the boy as a personality and looking after his academic development. At the beginning of the year, the tutor will check that timetables are in order, and, where necessary, will advise on courses and options. The tutor will monitor a boy's academic progress, and will write a general academic summary when School reports are issued.

All tutors see their charges for a brief period every day. Tutor time for each boy amounts to at least one hour a week, in which tutor groups discuss topics such as choices, progress, current affairs and personal and social education. We regard this time as a crucial part of a boy's educational experience at the School.

35. Other Pastoral Support

Boys may make arrangements to see either the School Chaplain, the Senior Nurse or School Counsellor if they wish. Contact details are in the prep diary and on the website.

36. Welfare and Inspection in Boarding Schools

Since 1991, boarding schools have been subject, under the terms of the Children Act 1989, to a system of inspection designed to ensure high standards of health and safety, and to promote the welfare of pupils.

With effect from September 2011, the principal responsibility for inspecting boarding schools will lie with the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and national boarding standards provide criteria which are applied uniformly across the country.

Details of arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare are given in the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy on the website, under the 'Home' menu.

XIV Liaison between School and Parents

37. Parents' Visits to School

Parents are warmly encouraged to visit the School, both to support events and activities, and to discuss matters relating to their son's education. On many school occasions, direct parental help is of great value and much appreciated. To make sure that teachers are available for special discussions, it is necessary to make an appointment (see Section II a).

38. The Abingdon School Parents' Association (ASPA) and other Parent Groups

All parents are automatically members of ASPA, the principal parent group in the School. The main focus of ASPA's activity is to provide networking and social opportunities for parents

Current activities include:

- Provide support at School events.
- Provision of Second-hand Uniform Scheme (SUS).
- Awards of Travel Bursaries to encourage boys to undertake challenging and educational travel for the good of others as well as themselves.

There are also a number of special interest parent support groups, principally the Abingdon School Music Society, the Friends of Abingdon School Boat Club (FASBC) and the Friends of Abingdon School Rugby Club (Touchliners).

39. Overseas Parents

- a) *Clothes:* Boys with parents overseas may leave their belongings, suitably cased, at School over the holidays. Wherever circumstances permit, however, we suggest that they should take these home at least once a year so that their parent(s) or guardian(s) can see what their requirements are. Parents who cannot reach this country may arrange with their son's Housemaster that the House Matron should buy any necessary clothing replacement for their son.
- b) *Travel:* Travel arrangements are the responsibility of the parent, although the School will of course help in any emergency. The School does not provide escorts to London or to airports, though we can put parents into contact with agents providing this service for schoolchildren.

XV Domestic Details

40. Care of Boys' Property and Lost Property

Occasional problems with boys' property are almost unavoidable. The School strongly promotes the nurturing of good habits over the care of property, and hopes for active parental support in this connection. Boys should not be permitted to bring to School more items than they actually need; conspicuously expensive items, in particular, are usually best left at home. All of a boy's belongings should be clearly named; watches and calculators should be engraved, and pens too, if practicable. Parents are reminded that the insurance of their sons' personal property is the responsibility of the parents not the School.

Boys with personal computers would be advised to discuss security with their housemasters in advance before bringing them to School. Mobile telephones or pagers can certainly be useful, but boys who wish to bring them must recognise that they may only be used at certain times and in certain circumstances (see Section II d)).

All dayboys will have the use of lockers, in which they are expected to keep their books and necessary personal belongings. Arrangements relating to keys, etc., will be explained by the Housemasters on a boy's arrival at School. Boarders may like to bring a tuck-box, and if so, it should be lockable.

Lost Property: Lost property is deposited in Housekeeping, and can be collected at morning break from the Housekeeper's Office which is located just off Boarders' Hall. Each week, named items are sent from Lost Property to tutors' pigeonholes for return to tutees. Unnamed, unclaimed items are passed to SUS, the Second-hand Uniform Scheme, after 2 months for resale. Boys' property left on a school bus might need to be collected from the depots of the coach company concerned.

Boys are instructed in the management of their property by a 'Code of Belongings'.

41. Safety

In order to maintain the safety of boys and staff, we are required to ensure that all electrical equipment is safe for use. Any boy bringing in electrical equipment must present it to the master in charge for visual inspection. In some cases a Portable Appliance Test might be considered necessary, for which a charge will be made. Boarders must make available for Portable Appliance Testing all electrical equipment they have brought into the boarding house, for which a charge will be made. Boarders are provided with a small electronic safe and a laptop security cable.

42. Insurance

- a) The School cannot accept liability for loss or damage to a boy's personal property. Most home insurance policies cover personal effects taken to school but it would be as well to check with your own insurance that you are properly insured against loss or damage to boys' personal property.
- b) Boys occasionally travel in a School mini-bus on official or semi-official School business (for instance, to a sports fixture or to the theatre in London). These vehicles are of course properly insured and drivers have all passed a test. Unless you have written to the Head to say that you do not wish your son to travel in these vehicles, we assume that you have no objection to his doing so. The mini-buses are fitted with seat belts, which boys are instructed to wear.
- c) *Personal Accident Insurance:* Parents are charged a premium for personal accident insurance on the School accounts, but they may opt out from this arrangement if they wish. However, they are very strongly recommended not to do so – recent well

publicised cases of uncompensated injury emphasise the need for sound insurance arrangements.

- d) *School Fees Protection Scheme:* This scheme covers the refund of fees in circumstances where a boy is ill. Parents are strongly recommended to take out this form of insurance. As with Personal Accident Insurance, parents may opt out of this arrangement if they wish.

43. *Dayboy Coaches*

It is parents' responsibility to arrange transport for their sons to and from School. However, the School arranges private coach services from a number of locations. The costs (billed each term in advance) is shared between the pupils using these services. The routes taken are kept continually under review to enable as great a number of parents as possible to take advantage of the scheme. Lists of current pick-up points and times are available from the school website together with an online form for requesting places. All questions regarding spaces should be referred to the *Joint School Bus co-ordinator*, please email admin@jointbus.co.uk. The School cannot guarantee that there will be a place on the route requested. A term's notice is required of a decision to withdraw a pupil from a coach service, otherwise the School reserves the right to charge fees in lieu. The wearing of seat belts by boys using the School coaches is *compulsory*. Parents should be aware that a boy who repeatedly fails to wear his seat belt may well jeopardise his seat on a School bus. We really do require parental support in emphasizing to the boys the importance of safety on the coaches.

44. *Parents' Cars*

If you are bringing your son to School by car, please drop him outside the School grounds, in order to minimise congestion on the drives and reduce the risk of accident. Boys should be dropped in Park Crescent where traffic circulation can be free flowing **and not in** the cul-de-sac of Park Road by the School gates. If the Christ's Hospital gate across Park Road is closed, please do not enter the School grounds at all unless it is absolutely essential to do so. You should note that Christ's Hospital does not allow cars to be parked in Park Road or Park Crescent (unless you are collecting your son and remain in the vehicle). Clampers operate in Park Road and Park Crescent throughout the day and night. *Christ's Hospital strictly forbids the parking of cars on the grass verges*. Cars may not enter the coach park at any time from 8am up to 6pm.

45. *Sixth-Formers' Cars and Motor Cycles*

The School strongly discourages boys from using their own cars or motorcycles for travelling to School. Limited parking in the Lower Field Car Park is available to Prefects at the discretion of the Upper Master. School grounds are available only for members of staff and visitors.

46. *Lunch*

All boys (dayboys and boarders) are required to take lunch, which is provided in the dining hall. A choice from a variety of hot, cold and vegetarian dishes is available, with filled baguettes as a regular option. Sample menus are shown on the School website. There is no additional charge for this meal, and no refund can be made if meals are not taken. Special dietary requirements (for medical or religious reasons) can usually be accommodated. We attach considerable importance to the social aspect of lunch. *School lunch is therefore compulsory and we ask parents to support this stance.*

47. *Bicycles*

The roads near Abingdon are busy and dangerous, so we do not particularly encourage boarders to bring bicycles to School. Indeed, as far as the younger boarders are concerned, we allow them to cycle only in special circumstances – such as when needing to get to the boat-house. Any bicycle brought to school must be in good working order and it should also have a

strong lock. The use of safety helmets is compulsory. Open sheds are provided for dayboys coming to School by bicycle. For security reasons, bicycles should not be left at the School over half-term or during holidays. Dayboys are recommended not to leave their bicycles at School overnight. Parents are asked to make sure that their sons are aware that, for the benefit of pedestrians, cycling is not allowed on the site.

48. *Boys' Shopping*

The School tuck shop supplies confectionery and break-time snacks, together with soft drinks. No credit can be allowed. Major items can be obtained from the School Shop by dayboys and boarders.

XVI *Health*

49. *Medical Care*

All boarders, on entering the School, are medically examined in the Health Centre and are registered with the School doctor. We have no formal 'health certificate', but we rely on parents to accept the obligation to get in touch with the School before sending their sons back if they have been in contact with any infectious disease, so that the School doctor may give a ruling. The same principle applies, of course, throughout the term.

The Senior School Nurse in the Health Centre cares for boarders who are ill during term. She informs parents by letter the day that a boy is admitted. In urgent cases we get in touch with you by telephone. Parents of boarders are asked on the medical form to authorise the Head or her representative to give permission for their son to have an anaesthetic or an operation in an emergency.

Dayboys who are taken ill during School hours rest in the Health Centre until they can be collected.

50. *Dental Care*

Parents are asked to make sure that their sons pay regular visits to their dentist and appointments must be made out of School hours. Permission will only be given for appointments within School hours in cases of emergency. The School arranges dental treatment for boarders in emergency cases only.

XVII *School Uniform and School Shop*

51. *School Shop*

All of the uniform and sports kit for both Abingdon and Abingdon Preparatory School (except footwear) can now be purchased on site in the School Shop, which is situated by the Lower car park, next to the Lodge. Boys can charge items of uniform to their School bill, unless parents have advised the Shop otherwise. Payment can also be made by cash, cheque or by card. The Shop also stocks cricket equipment, hockey sticks and rugby accessories. If there is anything your son needs, please ask as we have contacts with several suppliers and can usually find the items you require. The opening times of the School Shop for both term and holidays can be found on the School web site or by telephoning the Shop on 01235 849107.

52. *General*

A clothing list is sent to the parents of all new boys and is also available from the School website or School Shop. Clothing regulations for future reference are set out in the website. All clothes should be properly named with name tapes. (Please see paragraphs 40 and 42a.)

We rely heavily on parental co-operation, especially in the case of dayboys, to ensure an acceptably high standard of dress – but boys who offend in this respect may be sent home to change. Occasionally, if a boy arrives at School in clothes which do not conform to the uniform requirements, the School reserves the right to take him to the School Shop and supply proper items which will be charged to his School bill.

Your son should have a schoolbag or briefcase for carrying his books, and another stout bag for games-clothes. Both should be clearly named.

53. *Second-hand Uniform Scheme (SUS)*

The Second-hand Uniform Scheme is run by members of ASPA, and is used by some parents. The SUS shop is situated on the ground floor at the end of Webb's House Room, and is open most Wednesdays (12.15 to 1.15) and Saturdays (11.30 to 12.30) during term time. A list of dates is available from the website. <http://www.abingdon.org.uk/sus/>

54. *Tuck Shop and Café*

The Tuck Shop is open during morning break and at other times. The café is open in the Dining Hall at morning break during term-time selling a range of hot snacks, homemade cakes, soft drinks and fruit.

XVIII *Terms of Business*

55. *Payment of Fees*

Fees are payable in advance, and accounts for pupils are normally prepared and forwarded to parents shortly after the end of each term. One of the conditions under which pupils are accepted for admission to the School is that fees will be paid by the first day of each term. When the annual fees are calculated and approved by the Governors, a major factor taken into account is School income based on the assumption that all parents pay their accounts by the due date. If such payments are not made as expected, then our cash flow changes to the detriment of our income and expenditure account as a whole. The inevitable result must be a rise of fees in the future. The Governors therefore reluctantly stipulate that unless all due accounts have been settled by half-term, the pupil concerned may not be allowed to return to School. In any case, an interest charge is levied on all overdue accounts, currently at 1.5% per month (18% p.a.) and additional late payment charges will also apply (detailed in the Bursar's annual charges note. However, notwithstanding this ruling, the Governors are most anxious that no pupil whose parents are in temporary financial or other difficulty should be made to suffer unduly, and strongly advocate that, in such cases, the parent concerned get in touch with the Bursar immediately in order that the matter may be discussed and if possible resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parent and School.

The fee is composed on the "inclusive" rather than the "exclusive" principle – that is to say, extras are kept to a minimum, and in almost every case will be incurred only with parental permission. The chief exceptions to this rule are the charges for public examinations, mostly taken in the Fifth, Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth years, which are debited separately.

Payment of termly fees is by direct debit, which is taken from a UK bank account on the day before the start of term. This method of payment applies to all fee payers unless an exceptional arrangement has agreed in advance with the Bursar.

By a rule of the Governors, it is required that parents wishing to remove a boy from the School must first give a full term's notice in writing, addressed to the Head, or else pay a term's fees in lieu.

Circumstances may arise which cause parents to seek a change in their son's status from dayboy to boarding or vice versa. The School would wish to appear sympathetic where such

cases arise from necessity, but it must be stressed that there can be no 'right' to a switch of status. Boys are accepted in the first case either as boarder or as dayboys, and pastoral/tutoring arrangements and the stability of the School's finances depend on the maintenance of a steady ratio between the two categories of pupil. The Head's agreement to any such change will be dependent upon a range of considerations, including the availability of an appropriate vacancy, and will normally only be possible in the case of a change from boarding to day at the beginning of an academic year. A term's notice will be required in any case of change of status.

The School may occasionally agree to keep a boy's place open for a term, or longer, while his parents travel abroad or for some similar reason. In such cases, of course, establishment costs remain unaltered, and it may regrettably be necessary to charge a retainer fee, which is 50% of the fee that the parents would otherwise have paid for the boy's attendance at the School during the time concerned. A term's notice will be required in any case.

XIX *The Future*

56. *Progress through the School*

Most boys stay at Abingdon School until they have completed the full Sixth Form course. However, the School reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any boy whose conduct, progress or diligence is unsatisfactory. There is a careful review of progress at the end of the Lower School, and the School reserves the right to refuse admission to the third year in cases where a boy has not made the necessary progress. In the same way, a boy will only be allowed entry to the Upper School if this is in the interests both of the School and of himself and if he satisfies our requirements at GCSE, which are published annually.

XX *School Constitution*

57. *Complaints Procedure*

Complaints procedures exist both for boys, against those who are responsible for them at School, and also for parents and boarders who feel they have any reason for complaint in respect of any aspect of the School's operation. Both procedures are on the School Website.

July 2011