



Guide to Boarding at Abingdon



Boarding at Abingdon is at the very heart of the school, its aims, ethos and the quality of relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and staff. We believe that the boys and staff work together to create a positive, happy community in which everyone feels comfortable and has an important part to play.



WELCOME TO BOARDING AT ABINGDON

**We believe that the boys
and staff work together to
create a positive, happy
community.**

This handbook, written by the boarding housemasters, is designed to tell you briefly about boarding life - how boarders live here, the practicalities of daily living in a boarding community, the importance of communication and an open relationship between the boys, parents, housemasters, tutors and matrons. We very much hope that your son will be happy and thrive in this happy, 'home from home' environment.

For detailed policies please see our website:
http://www.abingdon.org.uk/school_policies/

Boarding at Abingdon and our statement of principles

Boarding at Abingdon is at the very heart of the school, its aims, ethos and the quality of relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and staff. We believe that the boys and staff work together to create a positive, happy community in which everyone feels comfortable and has an important part to play.

At Abingdon we aim to:

- develop each boy, encourage him in all that he does and support him in an environment that is safe and secure.
- ensure that every boarder can live in a community where relationships with others (boys and staff) are respectful, tolerant and positive.
- celebrate and encourage the individuality of those in our boarding community, encouraging each to achieve their potential and discover new horizons.
- communicate with boarding parents and guardians effectively and honestly, trusting in a collaborative partnership for the benefit of boarders in our care.

Boarding as a teenager brings with it all the hopes and expectations of boys growing up to be young men, ready for university and whatever life has to offer. Along the way, there will inevitably be times of anxiety, concern and difficulty as well as times of real celebration and happiness. Supported by a highly experienced team of tutors, matrons, the Chaplaincy, Counsellor and Health Centre doctor and nurses, we aim to offer the support, care and personal attention to every boy in our houses so that they genuinely look back on a very special, and successful time as boarders. We encourage you, as parents, to develop a close dialogue with us, and to always feel that you can contact us at any time.

New Boarders induction

A thorough induction programme is arranged for all new boarders at the start of the Michaelmas Term in September. The timetable, daily and weekend routine, school layout, medical, spiritual and uniform matters will all be covered, as will a trip to Oxford using public transport during the first weekend. We ask that full-time boarders and, if possible, weekly boarders stay in on that weekend as we plan exciting 'bonding' activities.

As part of our peer support programme, every boy will be paired with a 'mentor', usually a sixth-form boy who will, over the days, weeks and months ahead, be there to support and assist your son as he starts to settle into life as a boarder.



**Communication is the key
for an effective relationship
between you, your son and
the School.**

Parental contact

Your son will, inevitably, experience a wide range of emotions in the initial settling-in period. This is quite normal and we simply ask that you allow him to settle into his new environment by encouraging him to mix with new friends and take part in the activities.

Please, in the first few days and weeks, plan the phone calls to your son so that they do not become a daily event. Boys generally settle quite quickly into boarding life and the security of a routine.

House receptions for parents of new boarders take place on the day of arrival. This is a good opportunity for you to meet some of the key staff in your son's life at Abingdon.

Day and Boarding

Day boys are an integral part of our boarding houses and friendships extend across both day and boarding boys. The structure allows boys to mix freely in lessons, activities, sports and socially and boarders particularly welcome the opportunity to spend time out of school with dayboy friends and their families. Dayboys are not allowed into boarders' bedrooms however, and must remain in the communal areas of the House.

Communication

Communication is the key for an effective relationship between you, your son and the School. Keeping in touch is important, even more so if you are overseas or many miles away from your son.

You are always welcome to visit or take out your son, but please let us know before you come; an email to the housemaster is fine.

Your son has various ways of contacting you including E-mail, Skype and, of course, his mobile. Mobiles should not be used during lesson times, during prep in the evenings or after lights out, but otherwise he is able to contact you as he wishes.

We hope that your son will feel able to talk to staff about any issue. Often boys will talk to certain teachers or his House Matron; it doesn't matter who they talk to as long as we can help and be there for them. All staff are trained to deal with issues, understand confidentiality and the need to refer matters at other times.

Each house has a duty mobile phone that the member of staff on duty at any given time carries. This phone will be manned nearly always between 9am and 11pm. Your son should make sure this number is in his mobile, so that he is always able to contact the member of staff on duty within the house. Parents are also encouraged to use this number to make contact with the House. It is a good "first port of call" for general enquiries that do not require a specific member staff, but rather any member of staff who happens to be on duty.

All boys must provide updated mobile numbers to housemasters. Boys update phones frequently and we need to be able to contact them.

A 'confidential box' can be found in each house and is checked regularly for any concerns that have been posted by boys. A 'whistleblower' policy exists to support anyone who wishes to raise concerns but is worried about the implications.

Your son's tutor is normally the first point of contact. You will receive reports throughout the year and we will contact you on any specific issues relating to your son's education or welfare. Please contact your son's tutor with any information that might influence his welfare and happiness or if you have any concerns about his life at school. Tutors will make contact with parents early in the first term and exchange contact details.

Email is our preferred means of communication, and staff contact details are available on the website: http://www.abingdon.org.uk/staff_list/.

The boarding houses have a diverse range of accommodation

Parental consent and activity costs

Parents are asked to complete a Consent Form, allowing your son to take part in the varied activities programme. This needs to be done at the start of every academic year. Please complete and return this by the start of term in September.

The School generally funds the majority of trips and events for boarders. However, with the rising costs and increasing number of such activities we may charge up to £150 a year to help subsidise some costs of the more expensive trips, such as meals out or visits to Theme Parks, Paint-balling etc. We will not seek additional permission for such charges so please advise if you do not wish your son to take part in these activities.

The Houses – practical information

The boarding houses have a diverse range of accommodation and we try very hard to ensure room allocations are carried out fairly and appropriately. Any concerns should be expressed to the relevant housemaster. In addition to normal bedroom furniture, boys also have a desk, an individual safe and a lockable cupboard/drawer. Rooms are central-heated.

We expect boys to keep their rooms tidy to help the cleaners who come into the houses each morning. We hope that boys will personalise their room area and having suitable posters is a great way of doing this. They can be put up on the boards provided.

Communal Areas and Facilities

Each house has a kitchen for eating and preparing snacks. No take-aways are permitted between Monday and Thursday nights inclusive. Boarders are expected to go to all meals. Houses keep kitchens stocked with bread, butter, milk, jam and spreads. A snack tea is provided at 5.00pm. Boys are expected to wash up their own dishes and cutlery and duty 'teams' of boys do a final tidy up each evening.

Games Rooms comprise a range of activities such as table tennis and pool tables and table football. TV rooms have large screen televisions and facilities for movie nights. Movies are aimed at the age range of the boys watching.

Computers (i-Macs) are available in houses. Most boys now bring laptops with them and each house has wireless internet throughout. Boys will be expected to sign the 'Guidelines for Use' and boys must not be on computers after lights out. The School has a number of checks and filters in place to prevent boys from using the internet irresponsibly. Irresponsible or inappropriate usage will result in the facility being withdrawn.

The houses all have sufficient showers, toilets and washbasins for the boarders.

Property and Damage

Boys should take care of their own property and show respect for the property of others and of the school at all times. Please make sure that your son's belongings, including laptops and phones, are named and insured. Personal items are not covered by the school's insurance. Boys should not 'borrow' items from others without asking. In the rare event of a suspected theft, it should be reported swiftly and will be investigated. Valuable items, passports and large quantities of money may be handed in to house matrons or housemasters for safekeeping, although we would strongly encourage boys to open their own bank accounts to keep money safe. Damage should be reported to the House Matron so that repairs can be made quickly. If damage is caused deliberately, the cost of repair to property belonging to either the School or another boy may be charged to a parents' bill and parents will be informed.



The Boarding Houses are kept secure and the safety of boarders is enhanced in various ways

Money

Bank accounts can be set up with any bank in Abingdon. If necessary, housemasters will provide a letter from the School confirming your son's residence at Abingdon, although if possible, overseas' students should seek assistance from their guardians in setting up a bank account prior to arriving at Abingdon.

Clothes and Laundry

Name tapes for labeling all clothes are required and parents should order these in good time. Spare labels should be given to your son's house matron. Please ensure everything is named prior to your son arriving at Abingdon. A charge is made for any naming of clothing done by school staff.

Clothing requirements:

Boarders wear school uniform until 5.00pm when they may change into their own clothes. In addition to school uniform, we suggest that your son should have:

- 10 pairs of socks and underwear
- 2 changes of nightwear
- Slippers / flip-flops
- 2 bath towels and personal toiletries
- Single duvet, a pillow, 2 duvet covers and two pillow covers
- School swimming trunks, goggles and swimming hat
- Own clothes for evenings and weekends

Where possible, we encourage parents to provide their son's bedding as it helps personalise their room.

Please do not send your son with too much extra clothing or excessive amounts of personal items as space is limited in boys' bedrooms. As a guide, your son should be able to fit all his luggage in one suitcase and one holdall. Similarly, if your son is unlikely to use an item more than a couple of times a term, it probably is better left at home. Limited storage capacity for a single suitcase is available over the holidays in the house. New boarding parents should note that it is not possible for you to store any luggage in the house prior to your son's arrival on the new boarding induction day. If you do need to store luggage before this date, you should make arrangements with your son's guardian. The exception to this is uniform ordered from the School's uniform supplier.

School uniform can be purchased online or from the uniform suppliers shop in Oxford. For details as to how to purchase please see: http://www.abingdon.org.uk/school_uniform/

The Laundry

Your son's laundry is done in the School Laundry. He will have a named shelf to store spare clothes and Matrons will place clean laundry on the shelf.

Bed linen is changed weekly and boys place used sheets and pillowcases in the laundry baskets by 8.30am on change-over day. Socks are packed into sock bags (please note, these are provided by the School and charged to the bill).

Fire Regulations and Practice

Fire-extinguishing equipment is checked monthly, fire safety checks are carried out regularly and fire practices are held at least once a term. All boarders are briefed on fire evacuation procedures during their induction days. Electrical appliances are checked every term for safety and every boarder's electrical items are regularly tested.



The boarding houses follow the School's system of Rewards and Sanctions.

Security and Safety

The Boarding Houses are kept secure and the safety of boarders is enhanced in various ways:

- Duty staff are provided with a mobile and the duty porter's contact number. All boarders have a direct contact number to their house duty mobile and/or housemaster's mobile.
- Keypad locks are fitted to all doors leading into the boarding houses, with codes changed regularly.
- Boarders must sign visitors in and out of boarding houses and they must inform the member of staff on duty whenever they go off-site and as soon as they return.
- School gates are closed at night.
- Electric sockets must not be overloaded (only one four socket extension per socket).
- Windows are fitted with safety restrictors
- Boys must not climb over gates or walls
- Cooking equipment (e.g. kettles etc.) is only allowed in the house kitchens and not in bedrooms

The Role of the Staff

The boarding housemasters have overall responsibility for the welfare of boys in their houses and are *in loco parentis*. They are ably assisted by a team of tutors, a house matron and a team of cleaners.

A member of staff is on duty at all times, and is assisted in the evening by duty prefects.

Prefects

The Head of House and house prefects are appointed from the Upper Sixth by the housemaster. They are essentially the conduit between boys and the house staff where necessary, their role is to make the lives of boarders in their respective houses happy, free from incident and a positive, fulfilling experience.

Prefects' responsibilities include assisting the staff in the running of the boarding house and helping in both the pastoral support and safeguarding of welfare of the boys in their house.

Prefects are expected to use their status and authority in a mature and sensitive manner, and in turn expect the respect of those under their care. They are given training by the housemaster in how to carry out their duties and in Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Rewards and Sanctions

The boarding houses follow the School's system of Rewards and Sanctions, although the boarding community also approaches discipline as parents might at home, matching sanction to inconsiderate behaviour. In addition boarders' equipment such as mobile phones and computers may be confiscated for improper use.

Peer Relations and Bullying

The School has an effective policy on bullying with specific reference to the boarding community. Peer relations and friendships are particularly important within a boarding house.

We acknowledge that living together can be challenging and requires the development of patience, consideration and diplomacy.

All boys are encouraged to speak up swiftly about 'bullying' or any physical or verbal abuse. Attempts are then made to defuse tensions where they occur between particular boys and to repair relations before any boy is tempted to engage in verbal or physical bullying.

Our policy assumes that sometimes adolescent boys lack awareness of the impact of their behaviour on other people, which can explain their own behaviour. Our first step, therefore, is to discuss the effects of bullying behaviour with the parties involved and encourage self-awareness before resorting to disciplinary measures.



Looking after the health of the boarding community.

Drugs, alcohol and smoking and management of disciplinary incidents

The whole-school policies on drugs and substances, alcohol and smoking apply to boarders. Boarders over the age of 18 however may sign out to a pub with the housemaster's permission, and on occasion, the housemaster may offer an alcoholic drink to sixth form students at house social occasions. The whole-school policy on guidelines for disciplinary interviews with boys will be followed in any disciplinary investigation. Parents will be informed of any serious incident or disciplinary matter involving their son.

The Health Centre

Telephone: 01235 849059

Duty mobile: 07748 591057

Email: healthcentre@abingdon.org.uk

The Health Centre is open 08.00 - 19.30 Monday to Friday and 09.00– 17.00 on Saturdays. One of the Health Centre team is then on call outside these hours. Boys may visit to discuss health matters or any other concerns. The Health Centre has a treatment room and two, two-bedded rooms.

The Health Centre Team is made up of: the Senior Nurse (previously a Nurse Practitioner in A/E with previous school nursing experience), Assistant Nurse and three Health Care Assistants all with a wealth of experience.

A doctor, the Senior Nurse, a paramedic, physiotherapist and first-aiders provide pitch-side support for rugby and football matches.

The School Medical Officer, Dr Khan, is an experienced doctor from The Malthouse Surgery in Abingdon and boys are registered with him. Boarders have a brief medical examination soon after arrival at Abingdon. This also informs us about any medical problems your son may have and allows him to familiarise himself with the Health Centre. Any significant medical condition your son is diagnosed with needs to be communicated to the Health Centre and your son's Housemaster.

The Doctor holds a weekly surgery at 08.00 every Tuesday

in the Health Centre, and boys may also have appointments at the Malthouse Surgery at other times. Boys may see the doctor on their own.

An Out of Hours service is available at Abingdon Hospital.

NHS or Private

Referrals from the GP can be made on the NHS. Many parents have private health cover and the school also offers a scheme through the Bursary. Parents will be notified of referrals to consultants. Boarders may be accompanied to appointments either by parents, if practicable, or a member of school staff.

Medication

Below is guidance regarding medication and its use at school:

- Please only provide a small initial supply of **essential** medications, such as asthma inhalers, Epipens and prescription medications.
- All medications must be in a named pharmacy-labelled container in English. We cannot accept medications which do not have instructions in English.
- All subsequent medication will be provided on prescription through the School Health Centre
- On arrival, **all** medications must be listed and handed to the Senior Nurse or Matron before you leave. This includes all natural and herbal remedies.
- Where appropriate, boys may be authorised to store and administer their own medication. Medicines should be locked away in their rooms.
- Your son will be advised which medicines he may hold himself and which may be stored in the Health Centre.
- Sixth formers may hold a small supply of pain-relieving medication such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen but these must be listed on the medications list.
- Boys who carry Epipens must provide a minimum of 2 Epipens on arrival. One is carried at all times, and a spare is held in house.
- Matrons and house staff can issue simple pain-relieving medications and throat lozenges.



Looking after the health of the boarding community.

Health Centre and Matrons

The Health Centre team works closely with boarding house matrons and they receive training in the administration of Homely Remedies. They may treat minor illnesses and can seek advice when needed. Matrons also take boys to the Minor Injuries Unit and hospital when necessary and play a key role in liaising between home and school on medical matters.

Consent

The medical form should be completed and returned prior to your son's admission. The form requires parents to give consent for medical staff to administer medicines and first-aid treatment and give immunisations as recommended by the Department of Health. An annual Influenza vaccination is also recommended for boarders.

The form also requires details of your son's past medical history and is a record of allergies, immunisations and medications. It also requests permissions for some homely remedy medicines to be administered, such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen.

If given consent to do so on the medical form, housemasters act in loco-parentis and will, in the very rare situations when a parent cannot be contacted, give consent for emergency treatment, operations etc.

Confidentiality

Most medical matters do not need 'strict confidentiality' and it is often best that staff know what is happening. We encourage boys to discuss their medical care with their parents, although a patient's expectation of confidentiality must be respected. Any child over 16 years old may give consent for their own treatment. If under 16, but considered mature enough, they can also give consent. All boys are entitled to the same level of medical confidentiality as anyone else.

Medical computer record systems are separate and secure from the school system to ensure confidentiality.

Local Hospitals

The Minor Injuries Unit is at Abingdon Hospital and the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust (John Radcliffe Hospital, Churchill Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre) are within easy access. Most private referrals are made to the Manor Hospital, Oxford.

Holiday Treatment

If your son requires treatment during the holidays in the UK you can register him as a 'Temporary Resident'. If he has any operation, accident, severe illness or is given vaccinations during the holidays, please notify the Health Centre, in writing, on return to school. If your son returns with medication, please inform the Health Centre.

In the event of him being ill your son will not be able to stay in the Health Centre in the holiday, and you or his guardian should be prepared to collect him. The same applies at weekends for weekly boarders.



DAILY TIMETABLE, ACTIVITIES AND DUTIES



		Weekday Time Table				
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
MORNING		0730: Wake up	0730: Wake up	0730: Wake up	0730: Wake up	0730: Wake up
		0730-0800: Breakfast	0730-0800: Breakfast	0730-0800: Breakfast	0730-0800: Breakfast	0730-0800: Breakfast
		0800-0830: Prepare for school	0800-0830: Prepare for school	0800-0830: Prepare for school	0800-0830: Prepare for school	0800-0830: Prepare for school
		Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration
		0835-0855: Tutor Period (Year 3 Chapel)	0835-0950: Tutor Period (Year 4 Chapel)	0835-0950: Tutor Period (Year 4 Chapel)	0835-0950: Tutor Period (Year 5 Chapel)	0835-0950: Tutor Period (Year 7 Chapel)
DAYTIME PERIOD	1	0900-0950: Lesson	0900-0950: Lesson	0900-0950: Lesson	0900-0950: Lesson	0900-0950: Lesson
	2	0955-1045: Lesson	0955-1045: Lesson	0955-1045: Lesson	0955-1045: Lesson	0955-1045: Lesson
		1045-1105: Break	1045-1105: Break	1045-1105: Break	1045-1105: Break	1045-1105: Break
	3	1110-1205: Lesson	1110-1205: Lesson	1110-1205: Lesson	1110-1205: Lesson	1110-1205: Lesson
	4	1210-1305: Middle School Lesson / Upper School Lunch or Activity	1210-1305: Middle School Lesson / Upper School Lunch or Activity	1210-1325: Tutor Period and Lunch (times vary throughout the year)	1210-1305: Middle School Lesson / Upper School Lunch or Activity	1210-1305: Middle School Lesson / Upper School Lunch or Activity (Year 6 Chapel)
	5	1310-1355: Lunch	1310-1355: Lunch		1310-1355: Lunch	1310-1355: Lunch
	6	1400-1455: Middle School Lesson or Activity / Upper School Lesson	1345-1440: Middle School Lesson or Activity / Upper School Lesson	1330-1425: Lesson	1345-1440: Middle School Lesson or Activity / Upper School Lesson	1400-1455: Middle School Lesson or Activity / Upper School Lesson
	7	1500-1555: Lesson	1445-1540: Lesson	1430-1555: After School Activities	1445-1540: Lesson	1500-1555: Lesson
EVENING	8	1600-1700: After School Activities	1545-1700: After School Activities	1600-1700: After School Activities	1545-1700: After School Activities	1600-1700: After School Activities
		1700-1715: Registration and tea	1700-1715: Registration and tea	1700-1715: Registration and tea	1700-1715: Registration and tea	1700-1715: Registration and tea
		1715-1830: Free time/Activities	1715-1830: Free time/Activities	1715-1830: Free time/Activities	1715-1830: Free time/Activities	1715-1830: Free time/Activities
		Dinner	1815-1845: Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
		1900: Registration	1900: Registration	1900: Registration	1900: Registration	1900: Registration
		1905-2035: Supervised homework in house	1905-2035: Supervised homework in house	1905-2035: Supervised homework in house	1905-2035: Supervised homework in house	1905-2035: Supervised homework in house
		2040-bed time: Activities (compulsory for 3 rd form) / free time	2040-bed time: Activities (compulsory for 3 rd form) / free time	2040-bed time: Activities (compulsory for 3 rd form) / free time	2040-bed time: Activities (compulsory for 3 rd form) / free time	2040-bed time: Activities (compulsory for 3 rd form) / free time
		Sixth Form: 2300	Sixth Form: 2300	Sixth Form: 2300	Sixth Form: 2300	Sixth Form: 2300



THE WEEKEND



Weekend Time Table		
	Saturday	Sunday
MORNING	0830: Wake Up	Sleep-in with continental breakfast in house for those who want it. (If there is a trip it will depart at some point in the day so you may need to get up for that)
	0845-0925: Breakfast	
	0930: Registration in House	
	0935-1100: Sports Centre / Library / Music School (all pupils must participate)	
	1100-1230: Library is open	1030-1230: Brunch
AFTERNOON	1230-1300: Lunch	1230-1815: Free time
	1300: Registration	
	1300-1845: Free time or sports fixture	
	1815-1900: Dinner	1815-1900: Dinner
	1900: Registration in House	1900: Registration in House
	1900-2300: Free time during which social activities may be arranged.	1900-2230: Free time
	Sixth Form: 2300	Sixth Form: 2300

Weekend activities

At the weekend there is a boarders' activity programme that your son may participate in.

Activities are arranged over the weekend on differing times and days, including occasional Friday evenings. All third year boys are expected to take part in all the activities, whilst those in the Fourth Year are expected to take part in one activity per weekend and fifth year boarders are expected to take part in a significant number every term. Sixth form boarders are also strongly encouraged to take part.

There are also weekly sports fixtures that all pupils are regularly involved in as well as lectures, performances of music and drama and trips that all members of the school (day and boarding) are invited to. Please encourage your son to make the most of the wonderful range of opportunities available.



Registration, Coming and Going for Boarders

The housemaster and the house staff have a duty to know the whereabouts, and ensure the safety, of the boarders at all times during the term.

The following rules are therefore applied:

Weekday registration in House:

8.25am each day: Registration in House

During the school day all students, day and boarding, are registered in their Tutor Periods and in Period 7.

5.00pm each day: Registration in House

7.00pm each day: Registration in House

A register is also taken at "lights out"

Weekend registration:

Saturday: Registration at 9.30am, 1.00pm and 7.00pm

Sunday: Registration at 12.30pm and 7.00pm

A register is also taken at "lights out"

Boys must ask and receive permission from the housemaster in person for leave of absence from school. Boarding housemasters can approve a boy missing a single day of school. Any longer periods of absence need to be approved by the Second Master.

Signing out and signing guests in

Any time a boarder wants to go off-site in the evenings or at the weekend they need to sign out in person with the Duty Tutor. If the duty tutor cannot be located, he or she will be contactable on the duty phone. Boys are required to inform the member of staff on duty as soon as they return to the house.

Boys can invite other pupils into their house as guests but must ask permission from the duty staff member and sign the guests in and out. Guests should be accompanied at all times by the friend signing them in, and only visit the common areas of the house. Any guests from outside the school will require the housemaster's permission to come in to the house.

All adults, including parents and guardians, are asked to contact the housemaster in advance if they intend to visit the house. If you are not able to get through to the housemaster, please contact the member of staff on duty via the mobile.

In or out at weekends?

Parents register their sons as either full or weekly boarders at Abingdon. Should a change of status be required, parents should inform the Admissions Registrar by e-mail.

Weekly boarders may go home on Friday when their school commitments are complete and should return to the house either on Sunday evening by 9.00pm or on Monday morning by 8.25 am for boarding registration.

Boys may choose to stay in school on Friday evening and Saturday morning as they may have matches on Saturdays. Weekly boarders may only stay on Saturday evenings in special circumstances and with the housemaster's permission. Parents must contact housemasters via email to confirm this is happening or else duty of care automatically transfers to parents at 5.00pm on Friday.

Weekend leave for full boarders

Full boarders wishing to go away for the weekend or weekly boarders wishing to spend the weekend in the boarding house must get the permission of the housemaster in person. The housemaster will require written authorisation from the boy's parents **and** the responsible adult who will be hosting him. Alternatively, the parent of the boy taking leave can specify in their written correspondence that they have spoken to the adult host and confirm that the host is aware of all arrangements. This correspondence should be received by Thursday 9pm.



Beginning and end of Terms

Boarders are expected to return to their houses by 9.00pm on the evening before the start of term. The School cannot accommodate boarders before the publicised start of term, nor can we store the belongings of Upper Sixth once they have 'moved on'. Parents are asked to inform the housemaster of any late arrival or early leaving that may be different from the published dates.

School officially ends at 1pm on the last day of every term and at 5pm on the day prior to half term break. The houses need to be vacated by 5pm on the last day of term and 6pm on the day before half term break. The boarding houses are not staffed after this time so it is not possible for any boy to remain beyond this time and date, nor are they able to access the house at any stage over the school break. It is therefore very important that flights are arranged for the afternoon or evening that school ends. If it is not possible to secure a flight on this day, then the boys will be required to stay with their guardians until the date of their flight.

The only exception to this is when a school excursion is leaving the day after school ends. On such occasions, one of the boarding houses will remain open until 9am the following day. Only those boarders who are going on the trip will be permitted to stay in the house on these occasions.

Due to the requirements of the UK Home Office, all boarders with a Tier 4 visa are required to provide precise details of movements during weekends away and holidays, including flight details and the address at which they will be staying.

May Bank Holiday Weekend

The School does not have any exeat weekends. However there is an expectation that third and fourth year students are out of the house for the May Bank Holiday Weekend (usually the first weekend in May). They can either go on the organised activity trip away from school, or stay with parents or guardians. Fifth Year and the Sixth Form will be allowed to remain in the house.

Transport Arrangements

Booking Taxis

We recommend that parents contact their son's guardian to make transport arrangements between the airport and school. The School does not book taxis on behalf of pupils. This is the responsibility of the parent, the guardian or the boy himself. We do, however, know of **two local taxi companies that the school has used in the past and who only employ CRB checked drivers. These companies are:**

- Auto Taxis Abingdon, +44 1235527711
info@abingdontaxis.co.uk
- Pryors Executive Car and Taxi Service, +44 1235812345

Parental permission for other forms of travel

It is assumed that parents are willing for their sons to travel in a minibus or car driven by a member of staff. Only staff who have passed a professionally assessed test may drive minibuses. Staff are covered by the School's insurance to take pupils in their cars.

The housemaster will appreciate being informed by the parent of arrangements which involve their son travelling to school by any means other than the parent driving their son themselves (e.g. public transport, private car driven by a friend etc.).

Bicycles

Boys may keep bicycles at school and are encouraged to use the locked bicycle sheds. Boys may ride their bicycle outside the school grounds but helmets must be worn at all times.

Older boarders and cars

Due to the limited supply of parking space boarders are not allowed to keep their cars at school. Exceptional request should be made to the housemaster, who will keep the keys between the agreed times at which the pupils can use the car. It is expected that cars left at school are to be used only for commuting from school to home. Only the designated driver may use the car and they may not give lifts to anyone else.



Transfers between Day and Boarding

Transfers from boarding to day

In order to maintain a stable boarding community, pupils who have entered the school as boarders are encouraged to remain so throughout their school career. The Head may consider transfers in the following cases:

- where the School has agreed in advance to keep a day place open
- at the end of the Lower or Middle schools
- or in special circumstances.
- In all cases transfer will be at the discretion of the Head and no automatic right to transfer should be assumed.

Transfers from day to boarding

Parents of dayboys who wish to transfer into boarding should contact the Registrar and again transfer will be at the discretion of the Head. A change of house may be required even if your son is currently a dayboy member of a boarding house.

Catering

All meals are taken in the dining hall and boys are expected to attend. Menus are published in advance and considerable choice of hot and cold dishes is available.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss catering issues and concerns through a polite, direct approach or through the School Food Committee or Boarders' Council nominated representatives.

Guardians and Weekends Away

A list of accredited guardians is published on the AEGIS (the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students) website: www.aegisuk.net.

Every pupil whose parents are resident overseas must have a UK based guardian appointed by his parents as a condition of entry into the school. A pupil may have more than one guardian. A good guardian should take an active and interested role in your son's education and welfare and live close enough for the pupil to visit for weekends away

and half terms and on the occasions when the school is closed.

The typical role of a guardian would include: transport to/from school; accommodation during holidays; collecting the pupil in case of exclusion from school; to bridge the gap between term dates and flights to and from home. It is therefore important that your son's guardian is able to accommodate your son whenever needed. Please take this into account when choosing a guardian.

The provision of guardianship is monitored by boarding housemasters as well as by the parents who employ the guardian. In certain circumstances a housemaster may question the suitability of a particular guardian and we ask that, in such cases, parents take the necessary action in the best interests of his or her child.

The School does not recommend or arrange guardianship on behalf of the parents. Responsibility for the welfare of pupils while in the care of their guardians, and while travelling to and from School, rests solely with the parents, not with the School.

Flights and Punctuality

Obviously flights become heavily booked up for the beginning and end of term dates as many schools operate a similar calendar. Early booking is strongly advised and term dates are published well in advance. We expect all boys to be here on the first day of term and leave on the last day. The academic programme runs from the very first day of term until the very last day and any absence will be detrimental to your sons' learning. As such, late returns or early departures are strongly discouraged and require the prior consent. Requests should be made to your son's Housemaster in the first instance, however please remember that they are unlikely to be approved, except in extenuating circumstances. Please note that classes always finish at 1pm on the last day of each term and 5pm the day before half term break.



Visas

It is essential that exact half-term and end of term travel/accommodation details (including all contact information) are provided to fulfill immigration regulations. The UK made changes to the visa system in 2009 for certain groups of migrants entering the UK. Children who are citizens of countries outside the European Economic Area and who are studying, or wish to study, at schools in the UK for a period of more than 6 months (away from parents), need to follow a new points based system. Further information may be obtained from the UK Government visas and Home Office websites: www.ukvisas.gov.uk and www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.

All non-EU boarders should ensure that they have relevant, up-to-date documentation with them on their arrival at Abingdon. We are required by law to take photocopies of passports and visas and to complete an online registration process. Boarding housemasters are required to maintain accurate records of non-EU boarders' movements.

Inspection

The latest ISI full school inspection report (March 2011) which includes a report on our boarding provision is available online:

http://www.abingdon.org.uk/isi_inspection_report_mar11/

Before your son arrives - a checklist

- Have you ordered your son's uniform?
- Have you completed all forms and paperwork received from the Registry?
- Have you nominated a good guardian for your son?

Conclusion

We hope that this information is informative, helpful and reassuring. We understand that the beginning of the boarding journey can result in a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Rest assured that your son will be very well looked after during his time at Abingdon and that he will be part of a warm and caring community who will help him to develop into a confident, independent young man.

And please remember, we are always here for you if you have questions or concerns. Do get in touch if there is anything on your mind.

Matthew Kendry

Head of Boarding Abingdon School

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