ABINGDON

Boarders' Handbook

Introduction to Boarding

Austin House 2019-20

Welcome from Mr Golding

Welcome to Austin House - I am very much looking forward to meeting you! I am Mr Golding, the Housemaster of Austin House, and it is my job to look after you while you are at Abingdon School. I live in the boarding house with my wife Beccy and our children Henry, Oliver and Emily as well as our friendly pet dog, Max. I will be spending time getting to know you when you first arrive and will also be helping you get to know your new surroundings.

I know that you will be feeling excited but also nervous about arriving at Abingdon School and joining Austin House. I am here to help you get to understand the life of the school and the house. This short handbook is designed to answer some of the questions you may have before you arrive. You may have many more questions and you should ask me, or any one of the members of staff, for help whenever you need it.

I look forward to meeting you in person in September.

Mr James Golding
Housemaster of Austin House

Who will be looking after me?

Living with you in Austin House will be several members of staff. Mr Golding and his family live in one section of the House. The Assistant Housemaster, Mr Cook, lives in the House too. Other tutors live on the School site and do evening duty in Austin House.

One of the most important people in your life in the boarding house will be Helen, the Austin House Matron. She helps with the running of the House but most importantly she is someone you can go to for help if you need help. She will be happy to talk with you, to help sort out any medical problems you have, mend your clothes and many other things.

Housemaster:	Mr Golding
Assistant Housemaster:	Mr Cook
Boarding Tutors:	Mr Allen Mr Davies Mr Richardson Miss Rocker-Cook
Matron:	Helen Whitworth

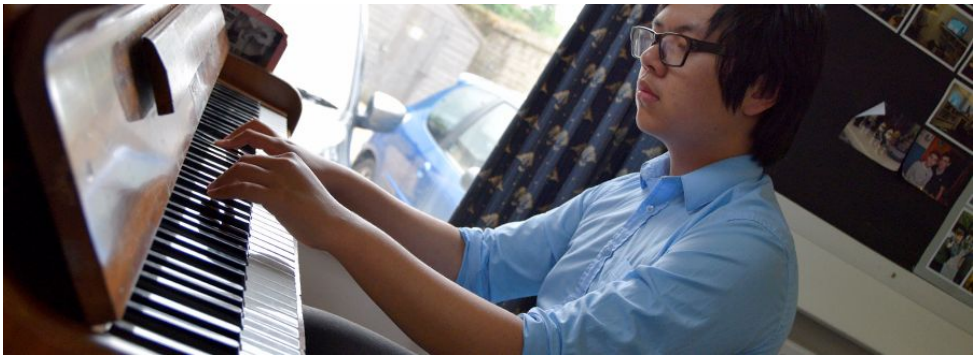
What is Austin House?

Austin House is first and foremost a home, where you will live while you are at Abingdon School. Located next to the Sports Centre, Austin House is home to 29 boarders and 71 day boys aged 13-18 years. The House consists of two buildings - the main house, traditionally known as Waste Court and the adjoining Coach House. We are fortunate to have close access to the Sports Centre and sports fields as well as having a large garden, providing plenty of space for outdoor games and (weather permitting!) barbecues. You will have a room in Austin House, and the House as a whole has communal facilities that are shared, such as the Kitchen, the Games Room and the House Library with access to workspace and computers. Boys have access to a large-screen TV with Sky in the Kitchen and an Xbox in the Games Room. The large kitchen allows the boys to make snacks or cook for themselves.

Middle School boys (13-16) are accommodated in three or four bedded rooms while the older boys are in twin or three bedded rooms, of which the majority are en-suite. At the end of each term, boys rotate rooms so that they have the opportunity to create a wide network of friends. The House has a mixture of boarders and day boys and our teams compete against other houses in the School Inter House Competitions during the year, as well as enjoying the social events that bring different groups together. The other pupils in the House will quickly become your friends and will probably be the people with whom you will share your best moments at Abingdon.

What will happen on the first day I arrive in September?

1100 New boys and parents arrive at the House. You will be shown to your new room.
1230 Welcome talk by Headmaster, and other staff
1245 Lunch for New boys and parents
1330 Tour of the school
1430 Formal welcome by Mr Golding and outline of day's activities. Parents depart @1515
1515 "Walk-through" of the daily routine, followed by further unpacking
1600 Sports activities
1815 Dinner
1900 Registration
1905 Games and drinks
2130 Bed times



What are Registration and Signing out?

We are required by law to know where you are at any time while you are in our care. There are a number of times in the day when you will need to register in the House with the member of staff on duty. These are usually at 8.30am, 5.00pm and 7.00pm during the week, and at different times at the weekend. It is very important that you do not miss these.

We believe it is healthy for our boarders to be allowed to leave the house. If you wish to leave the school site at any time you need to get permission from your housemaster, the house matron or from the tutor on duty - this is called 'signing out'. After 7pm you need permission to leave the boarding house to go anywhere. You are also expected to tell them when you return to the House.

We do not believe in forcing you to stay in over the weekend and in special circumstances (for example if your parents are visiting from abroad) you may be allowed out during the week. If you want to stay out of the house overnight then your housemaster will need confirmation from your parents or guardian before you will be allowed out. If you are not going to be staying with your parents or guardian your housemaster will also need confirmation from the adult you will be staying with.

How do I contact home?

Internet
You will have access to desktop computers on which you can access the Internet. There is also wireless access to the internet throughout the house. However, you will not be allowed to set up your own private Internet access. We recognise that the internet is a wonderful resource as a means of communication and a source of information. We encourage you to make responsible and safe use of it.

Email
You will be keen to stay in touch with your family and friends outside school and the school will provide you with your own gmail account. Your teachers will also communicate with you through this account so it is really important that you check it regularly and use it for your schoolwork. You will also be able to access and use your own personal accounts as well.

Skype
You will be able to use Skype while in each house. You can use the school computers in your house or the wireless network to Skype family and friends.

Telephones
There is a phone in the Matron's office and also a house duty mobile. Your housemaster will give you the number so that your parents can call you on it. Most boarders also have their own mobile phone. We believe it is a very important communication device so that you can stay in touch with your friends and family. You will also find it useful for contacting the member of staff who is on duty in your house. You should take care to look after your mobile phone.

What should I bring with me?

Clothes

Casual Clothes:
Ten pairs of socks and underpants
Enough own clothes to wear in the evenings and at weekends if necessary (but please not so much that it cannot be stored. As a guideline five pairs of trousers, seven T-shirts, four warm sweaters, three sets of casual sports kit including T-shirts, shorts, sports socks)
One warm jacket and one light waterproof jacket
Two pairs of pyjamas
Three bath towels and personal toiletries
A duvet, two duvet covers and two pillow covers
Swimming trunks, goggles and swimming hat
One pair of casual shoes and one pair of trainers for sports activities

School Uniform for Middle School (3rd - 5th Year):
Navy blue School blazer
Blue school shirts
5th year (optional) – blue/white stripe shirt
White shirt (for formal occasions)
Grey flannel trousers (with black belt)
Dark plain socks
Black plain shoes
Appropriate School tie
Navy blue v-neck pullover

School Uniform for Upper School (L6th - U6th Year):
One dark plain suit
Two pairs of plain black shoes
One navy School blazer (for use in the summer term)
Two pairs of plain light chinos (for use in the summer term)
One pair of plain brown shoes (for use in the summer term)
Ten pairs of dark plain socks
One white shirt (for formal occasions)
Seven plain light coloured shirts or with light stripe/fine check
Appropriate School tie (there are a wide variety of school ties that are awarded to pupils. New boys should make sure they have a house tie and a Sixth Form tie)
Navy blue V-neck pullover

Sports Kit:
Two pairs of black rugby shorts (used for a number of sports as well as rugby)
Two school reversible rugby shirts (if you play rugby)
One school tracksuit (no other type of track suit to be worn)
Two school white polo shirts
Five pairs of white sports socks
Three pairs of school sports socks (long football sock style)
One pair of indoor training shoes – non marking sole (in addition to the trainers mentioned above)
Sports towel
Swimming trunks, cap and goggles

Electrical equipment

We recognise that you will have lots of electrical equipment that you use in your everyday lives and as part of your studies. It is important that you only bring what you need, otherwise there won't be enough space for it.

Home comforts

Many boys bring certain home comforts with them; things that help them adjust and remind them of home. This is fine as long as you don't bring too much stuff. It is best to pack light until you get a good idea about how much space you will have in your room. You should know that you will not be allowed to boil water or cook, or toast food in your room so please don't bring any cooking equipment with you. The house kitchen has all the necessary facilities for cooking.

Valuables

You will have many valuable items at home. Before you bring a valuable item to school you should ask yourself whether you really need it at school. If you decide you do need it, then you need to make sure it is kept safe. In your room you will have a lockable drawer, a lockable cupboard and a safe (operated by a code that you can set). You can also give valuable items to your housemaster to look after. There is also a house bank for those pupils who bring their pocket money to school. Most sixth formers have their own bank accounts that they set up with English banks. This means that they can keep their money safe and withdraw it when they need to. You should speak to your housemaster for help setting up a bank account.

Stationery

You will of course need stationery (pens, pencils, files, paper, calculators etc.) for your time at school. You may choose to bring this with you. However, if you feel that you don't have space in your luggage there are several shops in Abingdon where you can buy stationery.

What will I eat?

All boarders' meals take place in the school dining hall (breakfast, lunch and dinner). We are always trying to improve the quality of our food so we are very happy to listen your views. If you come from another country you may be worried about English food. However, you should make sure you always go to meals and try our food. It may be different but it is very nice and food is an important part of experiencing a new culture. Each house has a kitchen where you can make snacks and cook your own food. Sometimes in the summer the houses have a BBQ in their gardens.

Who will look after me if I am unwell or get injured?

If you are ill or if you suffer an injury you will be looked after by the school medical staff. They will take you into the Health Centre for supervision. It is open from 0800-1800 during the week. At the weekend and in the evening there is always a nurse on call, and if it is necessary for you to stay in the Health Centre overnight they will look after you. The school doctor is available to see pupils who are ill and to prescribe any necessary treatment. If the situation is more serious then you will be taken to the small Abingdon hospital or the large John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford.

It is of vital importance that we know of any medication you are taking. This means that you should make sure that you and your parents complete the medical details form very carefully before you arrive. It is also very important that if you start taking any new medication over the school holidays you and your parents tell your housemaster and the school health centre.

What happens in a typical day?

There is no such thing as a typical day at Abingdon but below gives you an idea of the usual daily routine. Lunchtimes, lessons and activities can vary depending on what year you are in.

0730:	Wake up
0730 - 0800:	Breakfast
0800 - 0830:	Prepare for school
0830:	Boarding Registration
0835-0855:	Tutor Period/ Chapel/ Assembly
0900 - 1045:	Lessons
1045 - 1105:	Morning Break
1110 - 1305:	Lessons
1310 - 1355:	Lunch
1400 - 1555:	Lessons
1600 - 1700:	Other Half Activities
1700 - 1715:	Registration and Tea
1705 - 1830:	Free Time / Activities
1815 - 1855:	Dinner
1900:	Registration
1900-2030:	Prep time
2030 - Bed time:	Activities / free time
Lights Out:	3rd Year: 2145
	4th Year: 2200
	5th Year: 2215
	Sixth Form: 2300

At weekends there is less of a formal routine, although there are still registrations. Many boys are involved in sports teams and play matches, while there is also a Saturday Morning Programme, and a Boarders' Trips and Activities programme with lots of interesting and exciting things going on.

Where can I find help if I need it?

House and School Staff

The easiest place for you to find help is the house staff. There will always be a member of staff in the house in the evening and the weekend and the house matron will be in the house all day during the week. Never be afraid of asking a member of the house staff for help. They will always do their best to fix the problem.

School Counsellor

Sometimes you might want to talk to someone who is not one of the teachers or a member of your family. There is a School Counsellor who is a trained expert with lots of experience in helping young men your age.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

There are a number of teachers at school who have a special responsibility for child protection (looking after all of the pupils). They are Mr Hindley (the Deputy Head Pastoral), Mr Kendry (the Head of Boarding), Mr Crisp (the Middle Master), Mrs Morris (the Senior Nurse), and Mr Gooding (the Director of Wellbeing).

Health Centre

The Health Centre is also a good place to go for help. You can go for help about medical issues but they are happy to help you with other problems as well. The nurses are very kind and understanding.

Prefects

Sometimes you may not want to speak to an adult about a problem you have. School and House prefects are senior pupils who have proven that they are mature and sensible.They know the school very well and will be able to help you find the support you need if they can't provide it themselves.

How do I get the most out of boarding?

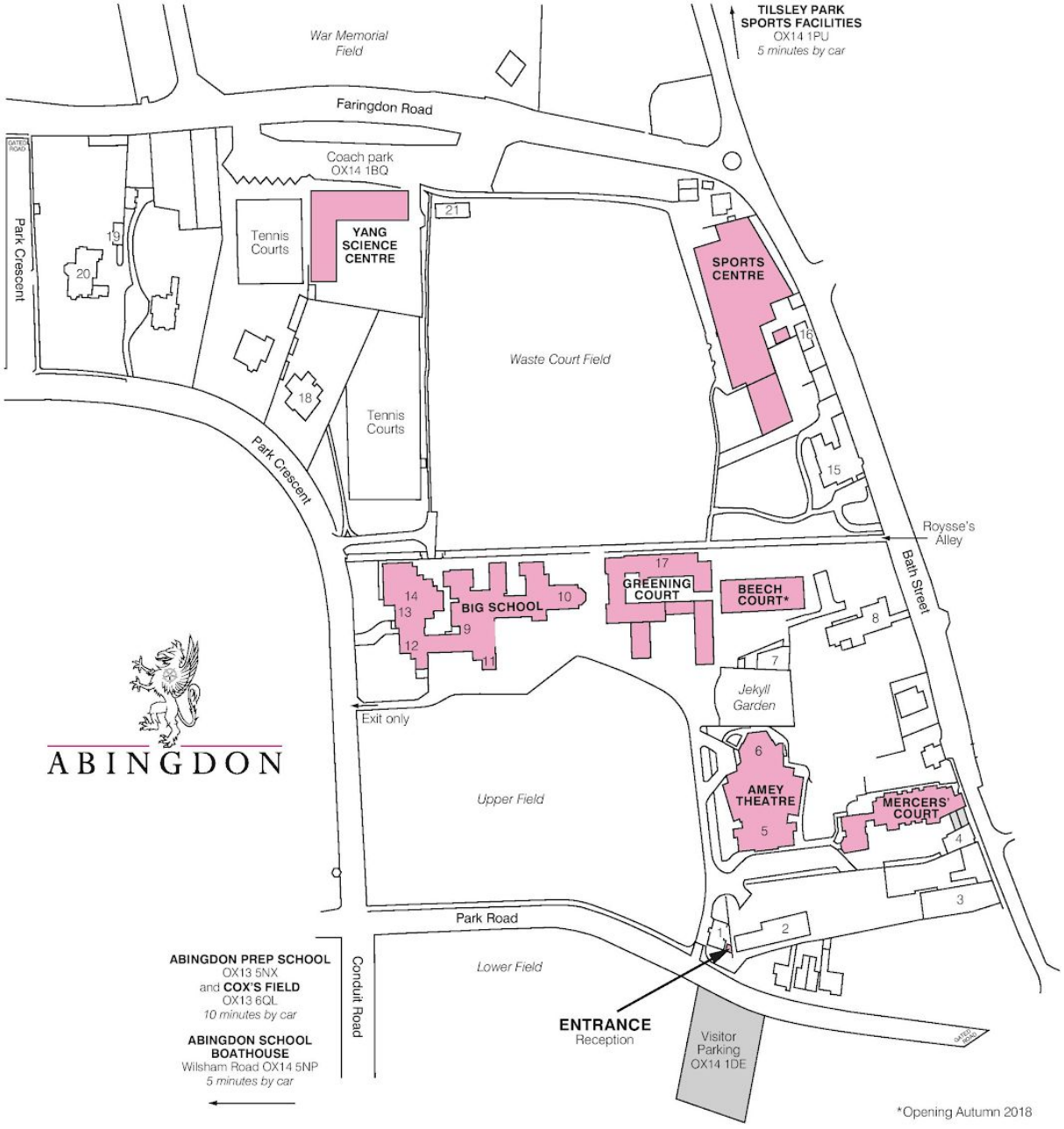
Do

- Come with a positive attitude determined to make the most of your stay
- Do make the first move in meeting new people and making friends
- Make a point of learning and remembering names and greeting people
- Speak English as much as you can
- Keep in touch with friends and family at home
- Join activities you have never tried before
- Use the gym, swimming pool and other sports facilities
- Try food you have never eaten before
- Get help from the prefects, teachers, counselor, housemaster, EFL department if you need it
- Make plans to go out on weekends
- Remember to thank your parents or whoever is making this experience possible for you
- Have a sense of humour

Don't

- Mix only with boys from your country
- Speak your own language when others who do not understand you are in the room with you
- Spend all your free time on the phone or on your computer
- Keep worries or anxieties to yourself
- Be so focused on getting good grades that the only bit of England you see is your desk
- Waste this wonderful opportunity you have been given

How do I find my way around school?



1. Park Lodge / School Reception & OA Club Office
2. Administration
3. Design Technology
4. Admissions / Headmaster's Office
5. Arts Centre
6. Amey Theatre Foyer
7. Caf
8. Lacies Court
9. Lower School
10. Chapel / Charles Maude Room (CMR)
11. Library
12. School House
13. Avernus
14. Dining Hall / Kitchens
15. Austin House
16. Activities Centre
17. Second-hand Uniform Shop
18. Crescent House
19. Learning Support / EFL
20. Health Centre / Whitefield
21. Faringdon Lodge

May 2017