



ABINGDON

From Acting Middle Master: Ben Phillips

22 September 2017

Dear Parent

A Guide to the Middle School

Tutoring/Houses

The school has six day-boy houses – which are named after the housemaster: *Southwell-Sander's, Franklin's, O'Doherty's, James', Morgan's and Border's*; and three day-and-boarding houses: *Crescent, School and Austin*.

We hope that the new team building afternoon that we ran for 3rd year recently will help in starting to forge these new friendships which in many cases last for many years and continue into life as an OA – way beyond their school years.

Tutor groups are horizontal, within year groups, and boys have a specialist 3rd year tutor + assistant, then a different tutor to guide them through the 4th and 5th form – those key GCSE years. In sixth form they will stay in the house but have another specialist tutor who takes them through the UCAS / USA uni system and towards A-Levels. During this 5 year journey boys will remain in the same house – so the housemaster will be a key shepherding influence for your sons.

We also operate a mentoring system with L6th form boys mentoring 3rd form boys. This is another layer of the pastoral safety net for your sons to help them settle into middle school life. Mentors are senior boys in the house who are a friendly face for your sons and Hsms match them up carefully.

Pastoral Channels

At Abingdon we recognise that pupils have worries, problems and difficulties from time to time; they fail at things as we all do – this is normal and part of life and learning! We urge boys to share problems and not to bottle it up. The School's pastoral system supports boys through their time at Abingdon. Help and advice can be sought from Tutors, Housemasters, the School Chaplaincy, School health centre, Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Headmaster. However, there may occasionally be circumstances when it might be preferable to talk to someone not directly connected with the School or home. We have a Team of School Counsellors; they are extremely experienced in their field and boys can contact them on school.counsellor@abingdon.org.uk to make an appointment.

Boys also attend chapel once a week and those who wish to be confirmed (in the Anglican Church) should speak with the chaplain Rev'd Dr Steer:
simon.steer@abingdon.org.uk.

What we stress to boys at the outset is that we all have problems and need help from time to time – there are many staff happy to provide help, guidance and support.

Communication:-

You will receive reports at the end of each half term (apart from the summer term) and the end of each term. A more detailed, end of year report, is written following your son's end of year internal exams in the summer term.

Parents' meetings are held once a year, this is in February 2017 for 3rd year parents. This is also the time when GCSE options need to be chosen. The Curriculum Director, Mr Lomax, will write to you about that nearer the time.

Academic matters

Boys will be given homework on each weekday evening. Homework is seen as a vital and serious part of the learning process. Boys should be doing between 1hr- 1 1/2hrs prep a day – alarm bells should ring if they are spending significantly more than this on a regular basis – please contact the tutor.

We also have a Learning Support department which offers individual help with study skills. Many boys in the school receive help from that department. Do speak with Celia Collins (Head of Learning Support), or your son's tutor, if you have any concerns here; they will be happy to help.

ICT – we expect boys to check their emails twice a day otherwise they could miss various notices and events.

Yours sincerely

Ben Phillips – Acting Middle Master
ben.phillips@abingdon.org.uk