



ABINGDON



Sport & PE

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Contact details

Contact details of all relevant members of staff can be found by visiting abingdonsport.org.uk

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Follow us on Instagram

Follow our Sport Instagram account to stay connected and see highlights from across our sports programme.



@abingdon_sport

Welcome

Sport plays a central role in the journey of Abingdon pupils in various different forms, whilst also providing the platform in which pupils form some of their fondest memories throughout their time at school.

As a co-educational school, we recognise that our pupils will arrive from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and different levels of motivation for sport and exercise.

We aim to provide a range of sporting experiences and opportunities; inspiring, nurturing, encouraging and challenging pupils to seek engagement with, and enjoyment from, sport and physical activity, in order to develop their abilities to the full.

Now, more than ever, sport is valued far beyond its physical benefits, and students form inter-personal qualities and life skills alongside communication and leadership abilities within our programme of traditional and contemporary sports, which is enhanced and supported by a wide range of alternative options and delivered through our four separate programmes - Core Sport, Physical Education, Other Half Sport and Athletic Development.

Crucially, engaging in sport offers profound mental benefits, acting as a powerful tool for stress reduction and improved emotional wellbeing.

We also hope to instill in our pupils the motivation to find a lifelong activity that they can pursue for its sustained physical, mental, and social wellbeing benefits long after they leave Abingdon.

These programmes, together with further information on the sporting structures, systems and expectations at Abingdon are outlined within the following pages.

I very much look forward to welcoming you to Abingdon.

Mark Hanslip
Director of Sport



Sport at Abingdon: A Three-Tiered Approach



Sport at Abingdon is designed to engage every pupil, regardless of their ability or ambition, by operating across three distinct, yet interconnected, levels. This structure ensures that every student can pursue physical activity in a way that best supports their personal development and goals.

1. The Participation Level

The Participation Level is fundamentally about enjoyment and fostering a positive relationship with physical activity. The primary focus here is on promoting physical, social, and mental wellbeing. Through a broad range of options, pupils are encouraged to explore different activities with the aim of finding a lifelong activity they can pursue well beyond their school years. This level stresses the holistic benefits of sport - reducing stress, building social connections, and laying a foundation for long-term health.

2. The Performance Level

Moving beyond general enjoyment, the Performance Level caters to pupils who thrive on rivalry and structured development. At this stage, pupils enjoy competition and are committed to improving through regular training. The programme emphasises structured development across physical, mental, and technical domains. Pupils learn the value of consistent practice, team cohesion, and tactical thinking, often representing the school in regular fixtures while building the discipline required for sustained success.



3. The Elite Level

The Elite Level represents the pinnacle of sporting achievement at Abingdon. This stage is designed for individuals, groups, and teams who operate at the highest level of performance within their chosen sport. Their demanding programme is expertly underpinned by comprehensive support systems, including Strength and Conditioning (S&C) training tailored to maximise physical performance. Furthermore, their development is guided by detailed analysis and the technical expertise of elite coaches, ensuring they have the specialised resources needed to compete and succeed nationally or even internationally.

The philosophy of sport at Abingdon School is founded on breadth, choice, and opportunity, ensuring that all pupils benefit from excellent coaching, access to quality facilities, and sufficient time dedicated to their physical activities.

Sport Department Vision, Philosophy and Outcomes

Abingdon School aims to be the leading co-educational academic independent school in Oxfordshire, the surrounding counties, and the wider independent school community, recognised for excellence in sports participation, performance, and elite level.

Our targeted outcomes are based around developing physical and mental wellbeing, championing inclusivity, fulfilling potential and striving for excellence, community partnership and sustainability. These are linked and supported to the School's values of:

Seizing Opportunities

Fostering Respect

Pursuing Excellence

“

Abingdon, even given its jam-packed days and tight bus timetable, gave me the ability to pursue sport to the highest level. I found a sense of purpose, I found role models, and I learned what delayed gratification and hard-earned results are. It was the foundation of a long career in rowing, but not only that it was a big part of my personal development that has led me to being able to face life challenges as the person I am proud to be.

Tom Digby OA
Olympic Gold Medallist, Paris 2024



Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Sport at Abingdon is a vital pillar of mental wellbeing, providing pupils with a necessary cognitive break that reduces stress and builds emotional resilience. Beyond the physical benefits of improved levels of fitness, our purposeful programmes foster the self-esteem and social cohesion essential for a balanced school life.

Championing Inclusivity

Inclusivity in sport ensures that every individual, regardless of background, ability, gender, or socio-economic status, has the opportunity to participate, enjoy, and excel in physical activity at Abingdon. A truly inclusive sports environment fosters respect, accessibility, and equal opportunities while embracing diversity at all levels of participation.

Fulfilling Potential and Striving for Excellence

Fulfilling potential in sport is not solely about reaching the highest level of competition; it is about personal growth, resilience, teamwork, and the pursuit of excellence in a way that is meaningful to each individual. Through high-quality coaching, outstanding facilities, and a culture of support, we provide the opportunities and resources necessary for every pupil to challenge themselves and achieve their best. We recognise that potential is unique to each individual.

Creating a Lifelong Engagement with Sport

Engaging in regular physical activity has been proven to improve cognitive function, concentration, and overall wellbeing, all of which contribute to better learning outcomes. Sport teaches valuable skills such as time management, discipline, and resilience qualities that are essential for life and academic success. Pupils who take part in sport develop the ability to set goals, manage pressure, and maintain focus, which translates directly into their studies and will stay with them through life.

Community Partnership and Sustainability

At Abingdon School, we believe that sport extends beyond individual achievement and competition. It is a powerful tool for building community and promoting sustainability. Through sport, we foster teamwork, leadership, and social responsibility, encouraging pupils to engage positively with the wider community while being mindful of their environmental impact.

Sports Programme

Core Sport is part of every student's timetable and takes place during timetabled lessons.

In the First and Second Year, students receive two lessons each week from a broad curriculum of rugby, netball, football, hockey, tennis and cricket. In the Third to Fifth Year and the Sixth Form, students receive four lessons each week in two double periods from a choice based options system. All activities are open to all students.

	Michaelmas	Lent	Summer
Middle School	Badminton	Badminton	Athletics
	Cross-Country	Cross-Country	Cricket
	Dance	Dance	Rowing
	Hockey	Football	Tennis
	Netball	Hockey	Water Polo
	Rugby	Netball	
	Squash	Rowing	
	Swimming	Squash	
	Rowing (Fifth Year only)	Swimming	
	Michaelmas	Lent	Summer
Sixth Form	Badminton	Badminton	Athletics
	Climbing	Cross-Country	Cricket
	Cross-Country	Dance	Health Related Exercise
	Dance	Football	Rowing
	Fencing	Health Related Exercise	Tennis
	Football	Hockey	Volleyball
	Golf	Netball	Water Polo
	Health Related Exercise	Rowing	
	Hockey	Rugby 7s	
	Netball	Squash	
	Rowing	Swimming	
	Rugby		
	Sailing		
	Squash		
	Swimming		
	Tennis		



Physical Education

This is a timetabled activity for all students in Lower School (First and Second Year) and Middle School (Third to Fifth Year). The curriculum focuses on activities that are predominantly not defined as 'traditional games' such as swimming, health related exercise, physical literacy and athletics. In First Year to Third Year: students receive one 50 minute lesson each week. In Fifth Year: students received one 50 minute lesson each fortnight.

Other Half Sport

Offered outside students timetabled lessons, the Other Half expands sporting opportunities as well as providing an extension to the Sports curriculum. These sessions are run during lunchtimes, after academic lessons during period 8, and at weekends. There is an extremely wide range of options available and students choose what activities they would like to do each term, in consultation with their tutor. Some of the activities on offer include basketball, yoga, clay pigeon shooting, fencing, canoeing and water polo.

Athletic Development and Talented Athlete Programme

Our Athletic Development programme has been implemented in the Physical Education and Core Sport curriculums, as well as the Other Half opportunities. It focuses on holistic and long-term training with the aim of benefiting the health, wellbeing and physical literacy of all students as they progress through School into adulthood. As part of this approach, students will learn to become accountable for their actions within sport, PE and daily exercise. This helps to create an appreciation for the countless health benefits that exercise has to offer, along with solidifying life-long habits. For talented performers on National Governing Body pathways, there are extra sessions available in strength and conditioning, as well as sports science lectures and visits to renowned sporting institutes and universities. There is more information available here. [Link to the scholarship page.](#)

Medical Provision

We are aware that participation in sport brings with it a risk of injury and we would like to reassure parents that the following provision is available in the event a student does become injured.

Health Centre

Our onsite Health Centre cares for students who are unwell or injured, and parents are contacted if their child attends.

Staff

All staff are Emergency First Aid trained with regular renewals, and sports coaches receive a medical briefing at the start of each academic year.

Medical practitioners

A doctor, paramedic or qualified first aider is present pitch-side for all contact sports fixtures. They are easily identifiable in Hi-Vis jackets.

Physiotherapist

Our school physiotherapist offers free injury triage on Mondays. Staff can refer students for assessment, so if your child has an injury - especially one that isn't obvious - please ensure they inform a member of staff.

Further treatment

Following this initial assessment, your child may be advised to return to training; given a short-term action plan; or be referred for further treatment. Physiotherapy treatment is offered on a Wednesday afternoon and can be booked through the School physiotherapist. This is charged to students at a reduced rate. Further information is available in the School Health Centre or in the physio suite within the Sports Centre.



Facilities

Our extensive sports facilities are located between four main sites.



Senior School (OX14 1DE)

Our Senior School has a number of sports pitches which are used throughout the course of the year for rugby, football and cricket. There are also outdoor courts for tennis, netball and basketball. Our Sports Centre accommodates a selection of multi-sport activities, including badminton, volleyball, basketball and indoor hockey, and has space for four cricket lanes. In addition, there is a High Performance Centre, an Athletic Development Gym, two squash courts, a climbing wall, a large multi-purpose studio, ergo suite, and an eight lane indoor swimming pool.

Boat House (OX14 5NP)

Our Boat Club is situated on Wilsham Road, about a mile from the School site. In addition to having direct access onto the river, it features its own ergo suite for training, as well as being well equipped with a variety of boats.

Tilsley Park (OX14 1PU)

Abingdon School took over the management of Tilsley Park in 2014 and since then has undertaken a comprehensive programme of improvement and investment. Today, Tilsley Park offers some of the best sports facilities in the area. We have use of a 3G hockey / football pitch, two full-size ATP hockey pitches and a running track. This offers all-year-round, high-quality floodlit sports facilities for our students.

Cox's Fields (OX13 6QL)

Some sports matches are played at Cox's Fields which is located at Abingdon Prep School - 4 miles from Abingdon School at Frilford. There are six rugby / football pitches and three cricket squares that we regularly use for training and fixtures.

Fixtures and Match Day Protocols

All information on fixtures, including team sheets, results, locations and staff contact details for all sports can be found on abingdonsport.org.uk and we recommend parents add this to their favourites. If accessed from a mobile device, this webpage loads as a mobile app.

Expectations

In order for us to honour our competitive fixtures list and provide the well-documented benefits team sport can provide, the School expects every student to be available for all sports fixtures within their own core sport and Other Half co-curricular options. We ask for parents' support in this matter. We do, however, recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances (such as a family wedding) where students are unable to participate on a Saturday. On these rare occasions, leave can be requested by emailing the Head and copying in the Director of Sport. Please provide as much notice as possible, and at least one week in advance.

Selection policy

Team selection and management is the prerogative of the team coach (or coaches). They give due diligence to the selection of players within particular teams and, throughout the course of the year, continually review and assess a pupil's ability and potential. As a result, they are best qualified to take all factors into consideration and to make the right decision for the team as a whole, endeavouring to strike a balance between encouraging excellence and giving opportunities for all. It can be disheartening for a child to be dropped from a team but our coaches will always explain why this has happened. Not all children can be in 'A' teams but it is also very important that those who are, do not boast or criticise the play of those who aren't as this can be very hurtful and undermining and the School will not condone this behaviour.

Team sheets

Parents are asked to presume their child is in the squad for their chosen sport unless informed to the contrary. Team sheets are published on SOCS on the Thursday ahead of a Saturday fixture; and on a Monday evening ahead of a mid-week fixture. Sometimes, however, selection is only finalised a day beforehand, so please bear with us. In addition to being published on the website, players will be informed verbally about selection. It is the responsibility of parents and students to check the team sheets and we recommend this is done the day before a fixture. Furthermore, there is an option on the team sheet to inform the member of staff whether you are taking your child to and/or from the fixture directly.

Timings

We work on the principle that students should be at the venue to change and warm up, approximately 1 hour before the published start time. Parents should normally allow 2 hours for the duration of the match, to include changing and match tea. For away fixtures, travel time also needs to be taken into consideration for a departure and return time. Please be aware that all listed times are provisional and, on rare occasions, weather conditions may result in start times or locations having to be rescheduled.

Cancellations

In the event of an on the day cancellation, students and parents will be informed by email. We strongly advise parents to regularly check the fixture card throughout each term on abingdonsport.org.uk.

Direct travel to and from a fixture

If students are travelling directly to a fixture, it is important they report to their teacher as soon as the rest of the squad arrives; likewise if they are travelling directly home with parents at the end of a fixture, they should let their teacher know.

Illness on the day of a fixture

In the event your child is unable to attend a Saturday fixture due to illness, we ask parents to contact the relevant member of staff in the first instance (details on abingdonsport.org.uk) so that replacement players can be sought. Parents may also use the sports department emergency number (01235 422858) or contact the Director of Sport.

Uniform

Students are expected to wear school uniform prior to, and after, all sports fixtures (unless specified to the contrary on the team sheet). Students should wear Abingdon sports kit, as requested by their chosen sport (outlined in the School Uniform section of the website) at all matches and training (this may mean a quick turnaround in the washing machine on a Friday).

Match tea

All players are expected to attend the post match hospitality provided and to socialise with their own team and, where possible, the opposition team. We firmly believe this is a vital aspect of the sporting provision, helping players' bodies recover from the physical exertion of the match and also offering students a time to reflect on, and talk about, their individual and team performance.

Spectators

Parental encouragement can be of great benefit to players and the wider team and so we warmly welcome parents to attend fixtures - both home and away.



Sports Kit

Students are expected to wear the correct kit for all lessons, training and fixtures. Kit for core sport and physical education is compulsory and is listed below. Additional kit from the 'optional list' may be needed but will be dependent on the sports selections your child makes during the course of the academic year.



Given how quickly children can grow, it is recommended that kit for use in the summer term is not bought at the beginning of the academic year.

Where to source

Abingdon sports kit can be purchased through our uniform supplier, [Stevensons](#). Kit (including hockey sticks and tennis rackets) is also available to buy through the Abingdon [Second Hand Uniform Shop](#) (SUS) which is located on the main School site in Faringdon Lodge.

Sizing and labelling

To ensure you obtain the correct size kit for your child, we would recommend checking the 'sizing guide' on Stevensons website and, where possible, trying kit on prior to purchase.

We are a large School so it is vital that all kit is clearly labelled with your child's full name so that, in the event it gets mislaid, it can be easily returned to your child.

Kit List

Our uniform keeps students looking smart and ready for sport. All items of clothing must be clearly labelled with name tapes. No jewellery is permitted during sport.

Compulsory Core Kit

- Totem Performance Tee
- Short or Skort
- Totem MidLayer
- Track Pant or Cricket Trousers
- Short White Socks
- Swimming trunks or costume (navy or black)
- Swimming cap

Sport Specific Kit

- Rugby Jersey (required by rugby players)
- Rugby Shorts (required by rugby players)
- Euro Elite Pro socks (required by hockey, rugby and football players)

Optional

- Pouch Pocket Jacket
- All Conditions Training Top (optional for rugby, football and hockey and can be purchased for other sports as well)
- Bench Coat
- Leggings
- Rash vest for swimming (any colour)





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