

Absence procedure for flexi-boarding.

Notes for Staff:

1. All boarding pupils who spend one night or more per week at home should specify which nights during the week they would normally expect to be in the boarding house or at home. It is important that parents and pupils are clear that we do not expect them to vary these nights from one week to another. The start of term, Open Days or casual enquiries must all be occasions when this aspect of our policy is made perfectly clear by Housemasters.

Occasional departures may be allowed by Housemasters in case of need, yet any situation where a pupil goes unpredictably absent and present on different days from one week to the next is not acceptable. This needs to be made clear to parents and pupils, although this of course needs to be done appropriately in the process of suggesting to parents that they do not abandon boarding. Rather, they need to accept these arrangements as good discipline for their child and entirely commensurate with the security of their child as looked after by the house.

2. There must be a written note from parents to Housemasters confirming the days on which their children will be in the boarding house. Parents must write formally to Housemasters regarding this.

If parents ask to change the arrangements on a long term basis, written confirmation needs to be obtained.

An application to change status is a different and important matter. This needs the Headmaster's agreement. See *Change in Status*.

3. Details of which nights pupils will be boarding in the house need to be recorded on the house list used for taking Call and by the master or mistress on duty. It should not be assumed that staff on duty are automatically aware whether or not a pupil is expected to be in the house on a particular date.

4. In the case of flexi-day boarding, the same rules apply and must be strictly observed.

5. Trial boarding is an exception to these rules but written details must be obtained in advance and made clear to staff on duty.

6. Procedure for variation from the above.

Occasional changes from these procedures may be agreed by Housemasters. However, the procedure outlined below must be adhered to in order to ensure the safety of the pupil, in fulfilment of the School's "duty of care" and in order to protect the School and staff from legal redress.

(a) Pupils wishing to be absent from a house on the day when they would normally board, or wishing to be present on a day when they would not, must present the Housemaster with a written request from their parents or legal guardian. This letter must specify the date or dates on which the parent wishes their son or daughter to stay in School. It must also include details of when the pupil will come into, return to or leave the House.

(b) If a Housemaster is prepared to allow it, a request may be made by telephone. However, the request may only be made to the Housemaster, his wife, or a member of the House staff

(tutor or matron). The precise details of what is being asked for must be written down complete with the time of the telephone call, the person who made the call, the name of the member of staff taking the call and the response which was given.

Staff in the boarding houses receiving this information are under an obligation to ensure that it is passed on to the Housemaster well in advance of the evening to which it refers.

Parents and legal guardians should be encouraged to write and Housemasters should only allow calls by telephone in genuine emergencies or where they judge it appropriate because of the particular circumstances of the pupil and his or her family. Such an emergency might include a request on the same day to stay in the house or to go home but the completion of the call is vital.

(c) Written authority or communication by telephone must be received *prior to* the child staying in the house or going home.

(d) Staff on duty in the boarding houses must ensure they have with them any alterations to the normal procedure when they commence duty. Housemasters are, likewise, responsible for ensuring that this information is attached to the duty list given to a master or mistress on duty.

(e) A check must be made on all pupils after the start of prep at 7.15pm. Any pupil whose absence or presence is not confirmed by the duty list must be followed up immediately. If the Housemaster is not available, the pupil's home should in any case be contacted. Under no circumstances, should a check be left until later on in the evening in the hope that the pupil "will show up" or until the Housemaster returns from an engagement elsewhere.

For this reason, it is clearly important that duty staff are aware of any commitments such as away matches or evening School expeditions which may mean a pupil is returning after 7.15pm. An additional check needs to be made on the pupils who are under such arrangements at the time that they are expected back at School. Housemasters will undoubtedly wish to encourage pupils in the good practice of notifying them when they are going to return late to the house. Likewise, members of staff organising such activities should notify Housemasters of likely late returns.

(f) If it is not possible to determine the whereabouts of the pupil, DEM or, in her absence, another member of SMT should be contacted for assistance.

The two key rules of thumb are:-

- (i) Always keep a written record.**
- (ii) If in doubt, check with the Deputy Head.**

Change in status

For parents:

Pupils at Aldenham School attend either as boarders, day boarders or day pupils. A pupil's status is decided when they first join the School. From time to time, changes may become appropriate.. They do, however, require careful discussion to ensure that the interests and points of view of the pupil, his or her family and the School are correctly taken into account. Parents are asked, therefore, to ensure that the following procedure is followed when a change of status comes up for discussion.

1. The matter should be discussed in the first instance with the pupil's Housemaster.
2. Following this discussion, a change in status should be requested by parents in writing to the Headmaster.
3. Such a letter should include the family's reasons for the requested change of status and the dates at which it is proposed the change should begin.
4. The Headmaster may then ask the parents to discuss the matter further and, if appropriate, confirm the change in status.

For Staff:

In addition to the above, Housemasters should make clear to the Headmaster by direct communication their view on the change and any background information. The standard "change of status" form must be used for this purpose together with the Housemaster's advice and point of view. Housemasters may of course wish to see the Headmaster in person about such an issue.

The final decision must rest with the Headmaster. Parents should not assume nor be given the impression that the decision is confirmed until the Headmaster has confirmed it in writing.

Any parent requesting a change of status directly of the Headmaster without first consulting his or her child's Housemaster will be referred back to the Housemaster in the first instance.

A copy of the change of status form must be sent to Mrs Collis in accounts.

Policy reviewed by JCF
January 2008

Absence procedure for boarding pupils.

Notes for Parents & Guardians:

1. Aldenham School is very conscious of the advantages of boarding for many of our pupils and families. In order to discharge our responsibilities for the care and supervision of pupils, however, we have to ask you to observe the following procedure in relation to your child or children.

2. Flexi-boarding and boarding pupils should normally stay in the house for the same nights every week.

In both these sorts of case, the arrangement should be for the same days from one week to the next. It makes catering, laundry and important details of supervision extremely difficult in boarding houses if pupils vary from one week to the next nights on which they stay or do not stay at School.

3. Parents and guardians should indicate to the Housemaster in writing those days on which they expect their children to be in the house. A letter should be given to the Housemaster when a pupil starts at Aldenham School or moves from Martineau's to a senior house at the start of Year 9.

From time to time, all parents of boarding pupils may be asked to confirm the arrangements relating to their child to ensure records are up to date.

Any change in these arrangements should also be notified by letter to the Housemaster.

4. The School is aware that occasional changes to this procedure may be necessitated by a pupil's activities and commitments or by family life. In this case, any variation to the usual arrangements must be notified to the Housemaster in writing *prior to* the date(s) on which the variation will occur. In cases of sudden or urgent need, parents or guardians may telephone the Housemaster. However, this should only occur in exceptional circumstances.

It is not acceptable for spoken messages to be transmitted via your son or daughter or for written communication to occur subsequent to the day on which the changed arrangement is applied.

5. If a boarding pupil is absent from School, parents must telephone the Housemaster to inform him of this or the School Secretary after 9am on the morning of the absence. If a pupil is due back to the House on a Sunday evening or after a School holiday, please ensure you call before the expected time of return.

6. Pupils who board and are late to School on a school day must sign in with the School Secretary as soon as they arrive, just as day pupils do.

7. For permanent or long term changes (e.g. from being a boarder to a day pupil) see ***Changes in Status***.

8. If for any reason there is uncertainty over your son or daughter's presence in the boarding house, staff will contact you in order to clarify. Please, therefore, ensure that your son's Housemaster always has up-to-date telephone numbers at which you can be reached including, please, any temporary numbers as a result of your absence on holiday or on a business trip.

9. These arrangements also apply in the case of day boarders.

The School is grateful to parents for co-operating in these arrangements which are designed to ensure that pupils are properly and safely looked after within the context of the School's boarding community.

Changes in status.

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