



Contact with Parents, Guardians, Agents & Carers Policy

Related Documents Include:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- 'Who to Talk to if You Have a Problem' Poster
- Behaviour Management Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by Welfare.
- The Principal will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.
- The next official date for review is **September 2022**

Introduction

If a parent, guardian or agent has any concerns about their child's life at Abbey College, they are asked to contact the College as soon as possible. In order to resolve issues, we have to know about them and we are committed to treating all expressions of concern seriously and fairly and to follow up on them swiftly.

Factors that can make parents and students reluctant to raise issues:

Language issues.

We recognise that contacting the College can seem daunting for parents who do not speak English. We strive to make contacting us as easy as possible by keeping in close contact with agents, who can provide translation and assistance where necessary, and employing staff that speak a variety of languages in addition to English, including Farsi, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, German, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, and Greek. Where parents do not have an agent to assist them we will work with the parents to arrange facilitate translation whenever possible.

A fear that the issue will not be deemed important.

Any issue that is important to the parents is important to the College and we encourage parents to raise any concerns they may have with us.

A fear of repercussions.

Under NO circumstances will Abbey College discriminate against a student because of a complaint or an issue being raised. In situations where more than one pupil is involved (such as bullying) we will actively work with the students to ensure we limit any possible repercussions.

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Who to Contact:

Generally, all issues should be directed to the Academic Registrar, who will then contact the relevant academic or pastoral staff.

In urgent cases the parent or carer should telephone the office, who will put you in touch with the correct member or staff.

Out of Office Hours

Office Hours are 09:00 – 17:00 (UK time), Monday to Friday. Outside of these times the answer phone message on the main Abbey College number will give parents and agents an emergency number to call.

Maintaining Contact with Your Child:

At Abbey College we recognise the importance of students being able to maintain regular contact with their families and appreciate that, as most of the students are living far from their homes, this contact becomes all the more important. We also appreciate that different time zones may be an issue with our students.

Mobile Telephones/Phablets

The majority students have mobile phones and these are usually the primary means of communication for students. The College has free SIM cards in Student Services if the students require an English SIM when they arrive. Please note these will only work in unlocked phones.

Whilst students may choose to bring their phones with them when they attend classes a teacher will ask students to leave mobile phone in a special box and student will be able to collect it after class. A teacher can confiscate the phone if student keeps the phone with him/her and it rings or makes any sound during lesson or student is using it to make calls, text, message, play games, etc. If confiscated, the phone is usually returned at the end of the lesson or if it is not the first time the issue has occurred, at the end of the school day or in the next 24 hours. Mobile phones are not confiscated longer due to the impact it would have on the student contacting their parents.

Staff are aware that many students live in different time zones than their parents but students are not permitted to answer their mobile phones in class, nor use speaking to their parents an acceptable excuse for lateness.

Mobile phones are not taken from students at Bed Check, though if academic staff report that students appear tired in class students are warned that mobile phones may be taken if they are becoming a distraction. Equally, if a student disturbs other people after Bed Check by loud use of their mobile phone, the mobile phone will be confiscated. If a mobile phone is confiscated at Bed Check, it is returned to the student at 08:30 the following day to ensure communication with their family is not affected.

Computers/Wi-Fi

Students use their laptops/tablets/phablets to communicate with their families, and whilst the College respects this, the College Rules state that students (aged under 18) should not use their computers (defined as desktops/ laptops/tablets/phablets or any similar device) after Bed Check.

There is Wi-Fi in all the houses, though we cannot guarantee that all rooms will receive it nor be a strong signal.

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To ensure students get sufficient rest **the Wi-Fi is switched off between 23:00 – 07:00** during the week and **00:00 and 07:00 at weekends**. If academic staff report that students appear tired, in class students are warned that their desktop/laptop/tablet/phablet or any similar device may be taken if it is becoming a distraction. If a desktop/laptop/tablet/phablet or any similar device is confiscated at Bed Check, it is returned to the student at 08:30 the following day to ensure communication with their family is not affected.

College Phones

If a student needs to contact their family, but does not have the means to do so (e.g. no credit on their phone), they can use the College phone if the need is urgent.

If a family member phones the College, a message will be taken and given to the student.

The College answer machine is switched on at 19:00 each day. The message states that the emergency number given is for emergencies only and parents cannot be put through to the child.

All students are given the Student Services/Emergency mobile phone number, which is manned 24 hours a day.

House Parents Mobile Phones

All students are given residential staff (House Parents') mobile numbers. Usually students will contact the House Parents by knocking on their door. However, if, for example, a student cannot leave their room to see the House Parent, they can use the House Parent's phone to contact. If they can't contact their House Parent, they should call the Student Services/Emergency mobile phone number.

If a Parent is Not Happy with the Help from the College

If a parent feels that an expression of concern has not been handled properly, they should refer to the College's Complaints Policy.

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