



# ABC HANDBOOK

## Academic Guidelines

A Better Chance is a college preparatory program. Our objectives are to provide a quality secondary school education for students and to help develop their talents so they may attend competitive four-year colleges. Ultimately, we hope the students will assume positions of leadership in American society.

ABC scholars are expected to strive for academic excellence. Scholars will enroll only in college preparatory classes, at levels 1,2, or AP. Andover ABC provides support to help the scholars maintain their grades. Tutors are available, and students should seek their help whenever necessary. Students also may stay after school and request help from their subject area teachers. (Failure to take advantage of after-school help is considered a serious lack of interest on the student's part.)

The RD and Academic Committee review students' academic progress at the end of each quarter. They report their findings to the students' families and guardians, the Board of Directors, and Host Families. The RD and Academic Committee calculate grade point averages (GPA) and inform each student of her academic status as soon as possible after term report cards are issued. ABC uses Andover High School's (AHS) weighted rank-in-class grading system for determining academic honors and probation. (A table listing the value of each grade is at the end of this section.)

### Academic Honors

ABC honors are different from AHS honors because the school uses a simple GPA, while ABC uses a weighted GPA. Scholars who achieve a weighted average of at least 3.5 in all major subjects, with all effort grades at acceptable levels, and no grade less than a "C," receive ABC Honors. Scholars who achieve a weighted average of at least 3.7 in all major subjects, with all effort grades at acceptable levels, and no grade less than a "C," receive ABC High Honors.

Scholars who achieve ABC Honors for any one term will receive the following:

- A letter of commendation from the RD and Academic Committee, with a copy going to the student's parents or guardians and host parents.
- The privilege of a 10:15 PM curfew on host family Wednesdays and on the Sunday of host family weekends.

Juniors or seniors who achieve ABC Honors for two consecutive terms will receive:

- A letter of commendation from the RD and Academic Committee, with a copy going to the student's parents or guardians and host parents.
- The privilege of a 10:15 PM curfew on host family Wednesdays and on the Sunday of host family weekends.
- The student may have mandatory study hall waived, at the discretion of the RD and Academic Committee.

Academic Minimum Standards

The Andover ABC expects the following minimum weighted GPAs for major subjects:

- Freshman students – 2.5
- Sophomore students – 2.8
- Junior and senior students – 3.1

Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation for two reasons: low achievement or academic misconduct. Low achievement is defined as a GPA below the academic minimum standards stated above, or a single term grade below a C-. Academic misconduct includes: excessive tardiness, cutting classes, poor effort, plagiarism, cheating, or any action that the Academic Committee judges to be inconsistent with Andover ABC.

Students placed on probation will be notified within three days after report cards are issued. In addition, ABC will notify the student's parents or guardians, host parents, the Executive Committee, National ABC, and the student's AHS academic advisor.

Students on probation will enter into a written contract that states the conditions and academic performance necessary to continue with Andover ABC. At a minimum the student will observe three hours per week of supervised study time, in addition to regular study hours. The RD and tutors will determine when the additional hours will take place. Other conditions may be included in the contract. The Academic Committee will monitor the student's progress.

Academic Termination

The Academic Committee will recommend termination of a student if she has been on probation for two terms in a year, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The termination may occur during or after the end of the academic year. Freshmen will not be dismissed for solely academic reasons before the end of the first academic year. The President of Andover ABC makes the final decision on termination, after consulting with the Board and other appropriate people.

Weighted Grade Point Average

When determining a weighted GPA, the following values are assigned to grades:

	<b>AP</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2 &amp; 3</b>
A = 94-100	5.0	4.5	4.0
A- = 90-93	4.7	4.2	3.7
B+ = 87-89	4.3	3.8	3.3
B = 83-86	4.0	3.5	3.0
B- = 80-82	3.7	3.2	2.7
C+ = 77-79	3.3	2.8	2.3
C = 73-76	3.0	2.5	2.0
C- = 70-72	2.7	2.2	1.7
D+ = 67-69	2.3	1.8	1.3
D = 63-66	2.0	1.5	1.0
D- = 60-62	1.7	1.2	0.7



6. Attendance during study hours is required unless specific permission for exemption or a specific modification in individual study schedule is made with the RD.
7. Care must be taken that noise or other activities do not bother other members of the House or the neighborhood. Television, stereos, radios, and voice level must be moderate and reasonable.
8. Students are encouraged to bring their friends to the House. Guests of the opposite sex are to be entertained in the common rooms only. Students must inform a RD or RA of guests.
9. Prompt attendance at all meals is required. Students must ask the RD at least one hour in advance for the following privileges:
  - To miss a meal
  - To have a dinner guest
  - To come late to dinner
10. Quiet hours are to be maintained during study periods and after lights out. This means no use of laundry facilities or electronic devices such as stereos and cell phones.
11. RAs are available to help students with their studies. The RD or Board may also bring in outside tutors, as needed.
12. Residents are responsible for the tidiness and cleanliness of the House. Each student is responsible for doing chores -- in the House and on the grounds -- and extra jobs upon request of the cook, RDs, and RAs. Weekly chores must be completed before noon on Saturday.
13. In addition to weekly House chores, students are responsible daily to see that their rooms are clean and neat.
14. An individual's personal privacy should be respected. Students should not be in another student's room unless that person is present.
15. Students are allowed to arrange and decorate their own rooms. Painting or otherwise altering the room must be cleared with the RD. Decorations must be hung in a way that does not harm the walls. Any decoration may be removed at the discretion of the RD.
16. Soiled clothing must be kept in a laundry bag or hamper.
17. House damage should be reported to the RD immediately. The person who caused the damage may be responsible for speedy replacement or repair. Anonymous damage is the shared responsibility of the whole House.
18. No pets are allowed in the House.
19. Students are not permitted to smoke.

20. No student may drive a car while participating in the ABC program. An exception is made for students participating in a driver education course. Students enrolled in this course may drive with supervision of the driver education instructor or an adult connected with the ABC program.
21. Students are responsible for reading all posted information on the House bulletin board.
22. The ABC House is part of a larger neighborhood and community. The care of the exterior of the house and yard are part of the shared responsibilities of the House residents and the Board.
23. Inappropriate computer use is grounds for disciplinary action. Inappropriate use includes, for example, downloading offensive or inappropriate material, sending harassing or fraudulent e-mails, installing software, or downloading free games, utilities, or software.

## Discipline

The RD will administer discipline in a progression from less to more-severe. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Warnings,
- Additional work duty,
- Notification of parent(s) or legal guardian(s),
- Grounding,
- Loss of House privileges,
- Probationary period (determined by RD, with appropriate committee heads),
- Termination from the program (determined by Board President).

### Termination

Andover ABC views termination from the Program as a last resort. A student may be terminated for unsatisfactory completion of a probation period, whose terms and conditions have been communicated to the student, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), and the host family. Students may also be terminated for an action of such extreme gravity that it warrants immediate, non-probationary, dismissal.

The following are strictly prohibited and are grounds for immediate dismissal:

- The use, possession, or sale of drugs, alcohol, illegal substances, or firearms or other unauthorized weapons.
- Any illegal acts, such as theft, assault, or vandalism.
- Hazing or conducting any form of initiation, intimidating, or harassment.
- Driving a motor vehicle, other than in a school-sponsored driver's education class, without the permission of the RD. (Permission will be given only to practice driving in connection with a driver's education class.)
- Conduct judged to be detrimental to the Program.
- Conduct judged to be detrimental to the health or safety of self or others.

### Termination Procedure

Appropriate committee heads, with the RD shall recommend termination to the President. The President shall make the final decision for dismissal.

## HEALTH

### *Insurance*

All ABC students are required to have health insurance and the appropriate health insurance identification card while attending the ABC program. Health insurance may be obtained through National ABC in the event that a student does not have medical insurance; a scholar's family may contact the Andover ABC Board President to discuss payment. Andover ABC has access to limited free medical care and occasional dental care.

### *Medical Forms*

Over the summer, each student will receive several medical forms that include Medical Insurance Coverage, Medical History (including immunizations), and Authorization for Consent to Medical Treatment. The Consent to Medical Treatment form gives authority to Andover ABC, the RD, and host families, to obtain medical treatment for the student while she is living in Andover. These forms are distributed to the host families. The above medical forms *must* be signed and mailed back, or delivered in person, *before* the start of the school year. Andover High School also requires medical forms, which must be returned before the first day of school.

### *Medical Facilities*

Andover has access to a wide range of excellent health care facilities. Lawrence General Hospital is located in Lawrence, approximately five miles from Andover. This facility provides emergency care and a wide range of other health care services. The Andover ABC is fortunate to work with a number of outstanding pediatric primary care doctors in town who see ABC students for well and sick visits. ABC will arrange physician appointments when necessary. The ABC program also has relationships with local counseling services.

### *Medical Care*

*Physical examinations, eye examinations, dental examinations, orthodontics, etc. are the responsibility of each scholar's family. Students are expected to take care of routine medical, dental, and orthodontic appointments during school vacations.*

Professional fees, laboratory tests or service fees (such as for x-rays, medicines, etc.), or other expenses as prescribed by a health care professional must be paid by insurance or by each scholar's family. The family is also responsible for the costs of prescription and non-prescription medications, and for eyeglasses and contact lenses. ABC does not assume any financial responsibility for medical services.

Andover ABC will help a student access non-routine medical care during the school year. If a student needs medical care, either in the case of illness or a school-related requirement, she should speak with the RD. The RD will contact the appropriate board member or medical facility to arrange for the appointment. Times and transportation will be coordinated with the student. Emergency care will be sought at the nearest emergency facility.

### *Prescription Drugs*

Students are expected to inform the RD of any prescription medication they are taking.

### *Right to Privacy*

ABC students have a right to privacy for all medical conditions or related issues, except in the case of a condition that may affect the student's functioning or health while living in Andover. If

such a situation arises, the medical conditions or related issues may be reviewed by the Board President, relevant Board members, and the RD to determine what action is necessary. If a student has a health-related issue that requires privacy she should contact the ABC Board President, who will coordinate with only those members of the Board that might provide critical expertise or support. Any Board member assisting a student in dealing with a medical issue understands that a student's privacy is paramount.

## PARENT'S FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Andover ABC covers many of the expenses the students will have. Families provide students with pocket money, health insurance, and travel expenses not listed below. The ABC Program will pay for and arrange transportation between Andover and home for the following:

- School's start in August or September
- Thanksgiving Break
- Winter Break
- February Vacation
- April Vacation
- School's end in June

The ABC Program requests that families pay \$200 per year to Andover ABC for program expenses. We encourage students to contribute to this payment. No student will be refused admission into ABC or terminated from the program because of a family's inability to pay these funds. (A family may request a waiver by talking with the ABC President.)

Students are allowed to have jobs, after receiving permission from the RD. Juniors and seniors may hold regularly-scheduled jobs. Freshmen and sophomores may accept jobs such as babysitting and yard work.

## TRANSPORTATION

Andover ABC's Transportation Coordinator will help arrange round-trip transportation at the beginning and end of the school year (September and June), and for four school vacations (Thanksgiving, Christmas, February and April). The Coordinator arranges transportation between the ABC House and a designated arrival or departure location. Girls are expected to transport themselves to or from the designated meeting place. The parent/guardian should make sure that their student is at the meeting place on time. If a student misses the pre-arranged time, then it becomes the student's or parent's/guardian's responsibility to cover the cost and arrangements to return to the ABC House.

ABC students should arrive promptly at the beginning of the school year and depart on time at the end of the school year. Students will be notified of specific arrival and departure times. Before school vacations, students are expected to remain at the ABC House through the end of all scheduled classes and exams. The RD may adjust the departure time in case of extenuating circumstances.

### Special Arrangements

The RD must be notified as soon as possible if a student can not go home for vacation. The RD will make alternative arrangements after talking with the student's parent/guardian and the ABC Executive Committee. The ABC House is closed during host family weekends, school breaks, and vacations. Students may not remain in the ABC House when the house is closed.

A parent/guardian must notify the RD if their student wants to travel to someplace other than her home address. The RD must have the written request before the student may leave the ABC House. The student's parent/guardian is responsible for arranging and paying for the trip.

Occasionally a student is required to go home at a time other than the above-mentioned vacations. The parent/guardian must request permission in writing from the RD before the student may go. The parent/guardian is responsible for arranging and paying for the trip. Experience has taught us that frequent home visits hinder students' adjustment to Andover and interferes with House unity. Andover ABC **discourages** extra home visits and **strongly discourages** visits before Thanksgiving.

### Seniors

Seniors must remain in Andover from the time their last classes and exams are finished until graduation day and any ABC-sponsored festivities are completed. Seniors are required to leave the ABC House within a reasonable amount of time after ABC- and school-sponsored activities end. The RD will determine seniors' departure time.

## HOST FAMILY

Each student is assigned a Host Family who is from the community and has applied and been accepted to fulfill this role. Acknowledging that each student is unique in their personality, needs, and experiences and that the Host Family has its own characteristics, the relationship between the student and their Host Family is necessarily fluid and dynamic.

Host Families will be asked to take in a student of possibly a different cultural and social background. This will be challenging for both the Host Family and the student but also an opportunity to learn from each other and to form lasting friendships. The intent of the relationship is to provide the student with emotional support and an opportunity to experience life in the community from a family perspective. The Host Family has the opportunity to build a relationship with an adolescent and engage in student life from the perspective of the student. The following principles can be helpful in the process.

1. The Host Family encourages the student to be part of their family, yet understands that the family's style of interaction may be quite different from the student's home family.
2. A guiding principle of the ABC program is that students will return to their original environments and that the Host Family should avoid anything that interferes with the students' primary loyalties to their homes and families.
3. The Host Family encourages the ABC student to be involved in the community and in a broad range of activities that may be new to them. The Host Family can support this process by having their student participate in a variety of leisure-time activities, meeting new people, seeing different sights, and visiting colleges.
4. The Host Family should be cautious about encouraging church attendance, and should be aware of the student's wishes in relation to church-related activities. Some students may wish to participate with a particular denomination; in such cases ABC will make every effort to make that possible.
5. Host Families should feel free to write or call the student's family. An open relationship with the family often supports the Host Family relationship with the student.
6. Open communication between the Host Families and the RD is important. Several meetings are scheduled throughout the year to discuss both specific and general issues and to coordinate activities. However, the Host Family can call the RD directly with a question or concern. The Host Family Liaison from the ABC Board is also available for this purpose.
7. Host Family nights are Wednesday after school until the student's specific curfew. Host weekends occur once each month, from Friday after school to Sunday or Monday evening's curfew time. Approximately two three-day weekends are assigned to Host Families. The Host Family should be clear with their student about transportation to their home after school. Luggage can be picked up in the back hallway at the ABC House on the Friday of Host Family weekend. Host Families are welcome to visit with their student at other times, either at the ABC House or at their home. Any extraordinary visits should be cleared with the RD. Also if a student will be late from a Host Family evening or weekend, the RD must be notified.

8. Students are not allowed to make or receive calls during Quiet Hours. In an emergency, Host Families can call the RD during these times in order to contact their student.
9. Students are not allowed to drive motor vehicles. The one exception to this is if they are involved in a driver education program. See the ABC House Rules.
10. The Transportation Coordinator coordinates transportation between Andover and Boston at school vacation times, as well as at the beginning and end of the school year. The coordinator will sometimes ask Host Parents to help.
11. Host Families are sometimes asked by their student to drive on other occasions; however, a Host Family is not obligated to drive and should feel free to say “no.”
12. The Host Family will be invited to approximately four meetings throughout the year to discuss general concerns regarding the Host Family role. There will be a meeting with school personnel once during the year for freshman students and for others, if necessary. Several social functions (such a holiday party and graduation party) are held throughout the year and Host Family members are encouraged to attend. The Host Family will receive monthly board meeting minutes and is welcome to attend board meetings. They will also receive progress reports from Andover High School.
13. The Host Family will receive an emergency permission slip and medical insurance information about their student. Andover ABC has access to some free medical care and very limited dental care. However, because medical coverage is limited, it is important to clear any non-emergency situation with the RD or the Host Family Liaison. Host Families are not responsible for medical expenses.
14. Students are responsible for their own day-to-day expenses. Host Families may choose to pay for small items, especially on Host Family Weekends. Rule of thumb would be to treat students the same as the family’s children. For birthdays and some holidays, gifts are appropriate but should not be lavish. If a Host Family would like to make a special donation, a contribution to the whole program is most welcome. In the past gifts of food, concert or movie tickets, furnishings, or a party have enhanced the program.
15. A Host Family may invite their student to stay with them for a vacation period if the student does not go home.
16. New Host Families are recruited in the spring of each year for new students and in the rare instance that an upperclassman may need a new Host Family.
17. Students, their families, and host families who have concerns or questions regarding the Andover ABC program and their interactions should contact the Host Family Liaison, the RD, or the Board President.