

Our Partnership with Parents and Guardians

At Andover, we believe that a positive partnership with parents and guardians is essential to supporting the growth and development of each student in our learning community. Our shared goal is that our students graduate from Andover as healthy, independent, engaged, and empathic individuals. Our partnership must be grounded in a collective commitment to the well-being of our students, mutual respect, regular communication, and goodwill. We know that our students thrive when they receive consistent, caring, and positive support from the adults in their lives.

Shared Commitment to Community Values

Andover is a diverse and inclusive community of “youth from every quarter” whose *non sibi* (not for self) motto requires community members to honor and respect the identities, needs, and values of others. We are a learning community founded on the belief that “goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble; yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous; and that both united form the noblest character and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to [hu]mankind.”

Student-Centered Approach

Andover faculty, staff, and administrators, serving “in loco parentis,” prioritize building relationships with students first. For this reason, these Andover adults will often communicate with students before reaching out to parents and guardians and will encourage shared conversations with students and families. We ask that parents and guardians support and respect this prioritization. And rest assured that faculty will reach out and include parents and guardians if or when concerns rise to a level that warrants more direct communication.

Mutual Goals and Respect

Andover’s highest priority is the well-being and development of our students. We understand that our students, as adolescents, will experience triumphs, challenges, hiccups, failures, delights, disappointments, losses, and successes during their time at Andover. To promote their growth, independence, and resilience, our responsibility is not to eliminate problems or manufacture successes, but rather endeavor to equip them with the necessary skills and mindsets to address their challenges and pursue their goals. We must, together, as adults in their lives, steadily stand by—offering freedom and space for growth (and even struggle), clear guidelines, regular feedback and support, and consistent care.

We understand that parents and guardians have tremendous insight into and a deep understanding of their child. This valuable parent and guardian perspective often serves to inform the ways that Andover supports students. Andover adults have deep experience and expertise about our program, our policies, and adolescent development and needs. Together, in a supportive working relationship in which all adults respect and value each other’s varied perspectives, we can achieve the best possible outcomes for our students. As members of a larger community with a commitment to *non sibi*, we ask all of us to understand that Andover will strive to make the decisions that are best for our entire community.

Good Communication

While Andover adults dedicate the bulk of their efforts to the students in their care, they adopt a multipronged approach to communicating with parents and guardians. Andover conveys personalized messages from core team members to offer updates and share concerns when they arise, regular community updates on school life and events, and progress reports from instructors on a cadenced schedule throughout the year. In all communications, Andover adults make every effort to be honest, caring, fair, and helpful. Andover adults seek to listen well to students and parents and guardians, and we ask that parents and other adults share necessary information and insight so that we may care for your children.

The student’s point person is the primary liaison with each family. Together, the point person, parents and guardians will seek ways to celebrate student progress, growth, and learning. If a family needs support beyond their student’s point person, we ask that the family reach out to the student’s cluster dean.

Support Networks

We know that our students develop best when they are seen, known, and valued. Teachers, coaches, deans, and advisors work to foster a nurturing, inclusive, and respectful living and learning environment, providing every student with the resources and support they need to flourish. Every student has a core team and full team of adults ready to support them. The core team includes a student’s point person (primary house counselor for boarding students, day student advisor for day students), advisor (for boarding students), and cluster dean. The full team comprises a student’s core team, instructors, coach and/or activity supervisor. If and when a full-team meeting is convened, members of the Sykes Wellness Center team, Academic Skills Center, and College Counseling Office join the gathering.

Clear Expectations and Processes

We expect our students to navigate Andover with independence and integrity. We set and communicate clear individual and community expectations to serve as guardrails so they can make safe and healthy choices. When our students' behavior does not meet these expectations, our responses are designed to promote learning, ensure safety, and offer support. We outline our community expectations, policies, and processes in our annual publication titled *The Blue Book*.