# Lights Out

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actura

**AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION**

CREATING THE FUTURE FOR BOARDING SCHOOLS

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REAL RESPONSE

Edstart

BUNNINGS

# Lights Out

## Who Would Have Predicted....

## Contents

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ABSA

Neale Poole
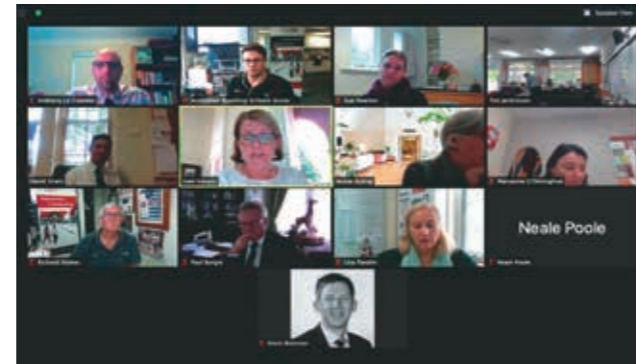
As I write this we should have just concluded our 2020 International Boarding Conference in Fremantle, and, as for so many of us, we are actually stuck in our home States thanks to border closures and quarantine requirements. So I thought it would be useful to ponder what ABSA has had to do, and where it might end up in the next few years.

*Who would have predicted that we would have transformed every ABSA event into an online offering, ranging over more than 100 different topics?*
The ABSA Strategic Plan under B: Learning, number 7, states: Online professional learning – Review the current approaches to professional development offered by ABSA and where feasible set up online formats to improve efficiencies and accessibility of programs. What was expected to be a second semester project for us became a task for one week in March, and we are very proud of how far we have come.

*Who would have predicted that we would produce the first of our online training courses and that over 400 people would have completed it?*
We always knew that online training would be a worthwhile addition to our offerings, but the original lockdown faced by us all in Australia gave us time to research worthwhile platforms and develop our first course entitled 'Active Duty'. Work is already underway to develop two additional courses - one a generic induction course for boarding school staff joining the profession, and the second a course aimed at more established boarding staff entitled 'Ten Tips to be a Successful Boarding House Supervisor'.

*Who would have predicted that 3557 people would have been online for our events?*
It is so exciting to see just how many people have joined in to one of our webinars, the online boarding conference and/or courses. Our Strategic Plan challenges us to have the critical outcome of having the status among boarding schools as the number one provider of knowledge and information relevant to their needs - and we are getting there!

*Who would have predicted that we could provide such great service to our remote and rural members?*
The professional learning opportunities we have now opened up to every boarding staff member in Australia, from Broome in Northern Western Australia to Hobart in Tasmania, from Weipa in Far North Queensland to St Joseph's School in Port Lincoln, South Australia, and everywhere in between, have been not only exciting to do, but really well received.

*Who would have predicted that so many International Schools would reach out and take part in our webinar series?*
Our New Zealand and Singapore members have continued to be well connected and attended many of our meetings and events. However, we have had many schools from China, Malaysia, India and more recently Armenia and Bosnia take part in our webinar series - again a key part of our Strategic Plan Under A: Engagement, number 2: International membership – To add a global perspective to the Association, explore opportunities to gain overseas membership of ABSA, expand professional learning for boarding staff, and provide cross-cultural networking for ABSA members.

*Who would have predicted that our relationships with the media and Government Ministers would grow so strong?*
One learning for me has been that it takes an issue to find out who needs information and who needs support. The issues surrounding COVID have really highlighted this, and so Section C: Influence, Numbers 2 and 3 from the Strategic Plan - 2. Government and corporate relationships – Establish an authority position such that ABSA is recognised as the peak body regarding all matters relating to boarding and, as a result, to ensure support and access to government funding options and a voice at the table on policy and related matters and 3. Media relationships – Develop stronger relationships across all elements of the media to ensure ABSA is the number one recognised authority in the sector and to communicate all positive aspects of boarding have both been outcomes of this challenging six months. The issue at hand is how to keep this going, as the positive relationships both with government and the media are ones we are keen to continue and strengthen.

*Who would have predicted that we could run Virtual Duty of Care Workshops?*
What more can I say - those who have attended one of our workshops have really enjoyed the chance to share stories, learn from and complete the workbooks, and all for a fraction of the cost of having to run these workshops face-to-face. We will endeavour to offer both options in the future, depending on Government regulation.

*Who would have predicted that up to 90 of our Heads of Boarding would come together, firstly weekly, and more recently fortnightly, and that each of our State groups of Heads of Boarding has also grabbed the virtual world to share stories, successes and challenges so often?*

This speaks for itself - the opportunity to discuss current and relevant topics across a broad range of different schools from all State is something we had never worked out how to do - but were forced to and have really enjoyed. These virtual gatherings will continue for Heads of Boarding, and will expand to cater for our boarding school nurses, general boarding staff, and other if a need arises.

*And who would have predicted that we could do all that without getting on a plane - something I did 137 times last year!*

So, overall, there have been so many good things to come out of the COVID-19 situation which we have all faced. Let's all look forward, enjoy the wonderful opportunities offered through our online webinars, virtual Duty of Care workshops and get togethers, until we can (hopefully) come together in Fremantle, or possibly somewhere else this time next year.

# Lights Out

## Preparing our Boarders for the Future

AUTHOR
Dr Michael Carr-Gregg
Honorary Psychologist

With the impending festive season, combined with the added pressures, disruptions, frustrations and disappointments of the coronavirus, the concern that some psychologists have is that once the year is over, some boarders may feel that it is a 'rite of passage' to let their hair down, and party especially hard during the holidays. Some experts like Drug and Alcohol Educator Paul Dillon, have expressed concerns about the return of the #YOLO (You Only Live Once) phenomenon - a call for people to live life to its fullest extent while they have the chance. In addition, there seems to be, in a few student, a fatalistic 'what's the point sentiment?' - a view that the world will never be the same and that their hopes, dreams and aspirations for a career and travel are now forever dashed.

For some boarders, having been in isolation, having had a disrupted year, denied many of the expected rituals, forced into close contact with adult carers and siblings, struggling with remote learning and unable to socialise with their age-mates for a couple of months - a psychological 'cabin fever' is understandable. When the restrictions are eventually lifted who knows how some will respond and realistically we could potentially see some engage in particularly high-risk behaviour. Research shows that adolescents have a hundred billion brain cells and a thousand trillion connections, but they are not all wired up and depending on which articles you believe, won't be until their mid to late twenties. The young brain can be poor at assessing risk, slow at calming down emotions, poor in impulse control and often eager to please friends, often allowing peer pressure to dictate what they do when it comes to decision making.

So what can be done? Jump back in time to 1955, Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith began a longitudinal study of 698 children born on the island of Kauai during that year. Kauai is the fourth largest island in the Hawaiian chain and was the setting for the 1993 Jurassic Park where terrifyingly realistic dinosaurs ran amok trying to chow down on Sam Neil and Laura Dern.

More importantly, it was the setting for one of the most important studies in the field of child psychology - with findings highly relevant to parents in the coronavirus era. They selected that island because at the time, there were high levels of unemployment, drug and alcohol use and mental illness amongst the adults and they wanted to see what happened to children growing up in circumstances of pervasive adversity. Following up the children for 40 years, the investigators' landmark finding was that while two thirds of the sample crashed and burnt, one third of the cohort displayed extraordinary resilience and developed into caring, competent and confident adults, despite their environment.

The ones that made it had access to mitigating elements known as protective factors, which helped to balance out risk factors at critical times in their development. Among these factors were a strong bond with a charismatic adult, good social skills and involvement in a church or community group like the YMCA. The study reinforces the fact that kids do best when they have someone in their lives who will make them feel safe, valued and listened to, have a sense of connection, meaning, purpose and belonging and are adept at conflict resolution, anger management and problem solving.

So we can only hope that the young men and women leaving their dorms for the last time in 2020, do have access to what Maggie Dent calls a 'lighthouse person'. An adult person who will have the courageous conversations around drugs, alcohol and sex - communicating their values, attitudes and beliefs and essentially setting limits and boundaries, post COVID-19. Some parents may not realise that even though their sons and daughters are young adults, the parent can still have a lot of influence and say in how these young people conduct themselves while they are away.

The reality is that we are all in completely uncharted territory and it is impossible to accurately predict how any students coming out of 2020 will respond. The truth is that not much is known about the long-term mental health effects of large-scale disease outbreaks on students but there is a need to monitor young people's mental health status over the long-term, and to document how prolonged school closures, strict social distancing measures, and the pandemic itself impact the wellbeing of our boarders.

Our job is to prepare the young people for an uncertain future and the research of Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith offer all boarding schools a much-needed template to follow, so that our graduates do not face psychological extinction, like the make-believe brachiosaurs and dilophosaurus of Jurassic Park.

*Dr Michael Carr-Gregg BA (Hons) MA, PhD MAAPI Cert Child Internet Safety (UCLAN)Child and Adolescent Psychologist FOLLOW Michael on Twitter @MCG58 www.Michaelcarrgregg.com*

# Lights Out

# Cardinal Pell's Case – Lessons for Employers

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The decision of the High Court of Australia in Cardinal Pell's case is an important reminder for those conducting institutions in which staff may be suspected of serious misconduct towards students. It emphasises the importance of careful investigation and consideration. The term "employer" in this article relates to responsible boards or committees, or managers, of school boarding houses.

In an unanimous joint judgment delivered on 7 April 2020 all seven judges of the High Court of Australia allowed the appeal and quashed all convictions. Although this was a criminal law case, there are important features just as relevant to employer decision-making about complaints involving sexual matters, bullying or harassment. (Whilst the standard of proof is lower, these features are equally relevant). With responsibility "24/7", boarding houses have acute responsibilities.

### The Question for the Employer
The question to be asked is not what the employer thinks is (or might be) true but whether, on considering ALL of the evidence, the allegation is proved to the relevant standard (on the balance of probabilities).

### The Unsupported, but Impressive, Complainant
The difficulties facing employers, common in such cases, are particularly challenging where, as in Cardinal Pell's case *"… the prosecution case was wholly dependent upon acceptance of the truthfulness and the reliability …"* of the complainant's evidence.
Forming a favourable view of the complainant's evidence is the beginning, not the end, of the enquiry.
As the Court said:
*"It suffices to refer to the evidence concerning (i), (ii) and (iii) to demonstrate that, notwithstanding that the jury found A to be a credible and reliable witness, the evidence as a whole was not capable of excluding a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's guilt."*
Interestingly, the Court commented:
*"The division in the Court of Appeal in the assessment of A's credibility may be thought to underscore the highly subjective nature of demeanour based judgments".*

#### Impossible or Improbable
Accused persons not uncommonly claim that something is impossible (a risky approach in many cases). For the employer decision-maker, the critical point is that, even if that claim is rejected, improbability must still be considered, especially where there are a number.

As the Court said:
*"Upon the assumption that the jury assessed A's evidence as thoroughly credible and reliable, the issue for the Court of Appeal was whether the <u>compounding improbabilities</u> caused by the unchallenged evidence summarised in (i), (ii) and (iii) nonetheless required the jury, acting rationally, to have entertained a doubt as to the applicant's guilt. Plainly they did. Making full allowance for the advantages enjoyed by the jury, there is a significant possibility in relation to charges one to four that an innocent person has been convicted."*
(underlining added)

#### Habit or Practice
The Court observed:
*"Evidence of a person's habit or practice of acting in a particular way to establish that the person acted in that way on a specific occasion may have considerable probative value"*
and noted that it was *"powerful"* in that case. Whilst much will depend on the particular case, what is important is that such evidence should not be lightly dismissed.

#### Conclusion
These can be challenging cases for employers, in which early advice on how to approach decision-making can improve fairness to employees and reduce the risk of legal and managerial expense and reputational damage. There are many competent lawyers in Australia capable of advising boarding house managers how to go about it. Early legal advice is likely to be cost-effective legal advice.
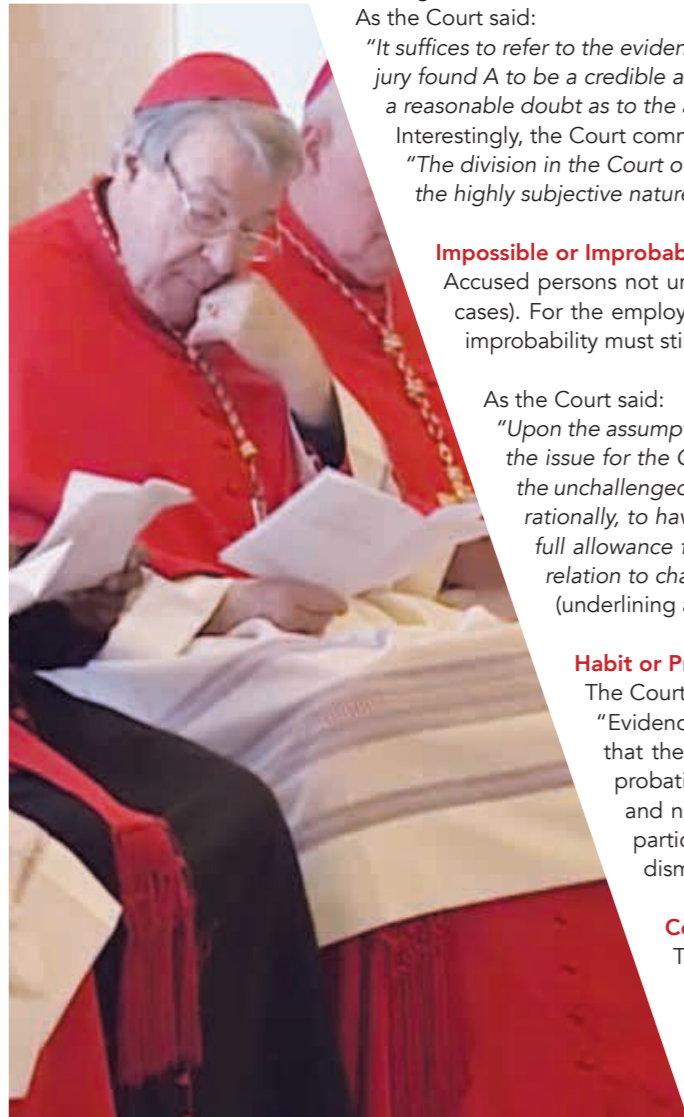
# Why So Many Questions…
Question Asking and its Usefulness Within a Student's Development - Educational and Boarding Settings

AUTHOR
Ryan Fowler
Head of Boarding House
Toowoomba Grammar School

*"Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking a student's potential"* – Liane Cordes

Boys require effort, that is a fact, but at the same time boys thrive on the effort of others. Boys need to show effort and have it acknowledged as part of their understanding. Like riding a bike, when their effort is applauded, they feel a sense of accomplishment.

Therefore, due to its importance, effort is a great way to demonstrate a boy's commitment to the task as well as to hold them accountable to the goal. In education this is paramount, but within a boarding framework it is crucial in establishing a house that nurtures and supports the boy and his progress / journey forward.

Boarding is a unique world. It is a microcosm of a student's experience at school in an intensive environment:
• Positive, negative, character building, exceptional, dramatic, engulfing, creating life-long friendships, engaging, developing one's self-confidence, high, low, and feeling like a family (Boys responses).

When all these experiences are mixed it creates a high intensity, refining process that boys must quickly learn, adapt, and develop from. With such intense focus, boarding becomes a life changing experience (maybe not straight away), that at some stage a boy will recognise as a significant cornerstone within their school journey and development. If effort is such a valuable tool when it comes to education and boarding, then how can we help to encourage and promote a boy's effort? What can help solidify effort as the key to unlock his potential?

One of the ways boys explore this concept is through questions and asking a lot of them. With question after question being asked, it goes without saying that boys require multiple levels of clarity. Being able to clarify a position, direction, or rule, promotes safety within the student (especially boys). When perceiving safety, boys are more likely to increase their effort, which hopefully improves their understanding and knowledge for future reference. But as is the case with most teachers and boarding professionals, clarifying the situation just once (whatever it is) is never all that is required. Most likely, boys will need multiple clarifications before they get it, before they are assured, reassured and confident to move forward.

Now most of the time this can be frustrating (having to repeat yourself constantly) and can seem like a waste of time. The challenge though, as an educator, is to see this process of clarification as part of the boy's development rather than just their unwillingness to do something the first time they are asked. Within my years in boarding and education I have often seen (through experience) that boys will ask questions all the time, and with this develop a habit I like to call the six-question process.

Before unpacking how the six-question process can help to develop and encourage both boys and teachers, it would be great to unearth (as highlighted above) why boys need to have multiple clarifications / instructions given, or more to point, why boys consistently ask multiple questions before they can move forward and get the job done.

In communication, the purpose of clarification is really an extension of reflecting. This allows students to communicate back to the teacher their understanding in efforts to get something right. Clarifying reassures the teacher that the student is attempting to understand the message being expressed. Further it allows the student to summarise what has been said, but due to this, can open the door to series of questions being asked. This then, is where the importance of clarification has its most dramatic impact in a boy's development - asking a question and then asking again.

Boys need reassurance. By simply asking a question, boys are initially not wanting an answer per se, but rather are asking just trying to engage you and make sure that you are willing to assist / listen to them. This then starts the six-question process that, when seen not as a waste of time but rather an opportunity that you have to better service the need of the boy's development, allows you to positively engage with the questions being asked and created a trusted space between you and the boy.

# Lights Out



GREAT QUESTION!

By asking a lot of questions, this becomes (as mentioned above) the trusted space that once you used to dread (question after question). This trusted space occurs, because you are willing to become part of the process and understand when boys come back multiple times for clarification, it is part of their growth and by doing so they trust you. With this changed mindset, teachers and boarding professionals will be able to assist and use the process as a positive aspect within the boy's development instead of a daunting one.

*"We live in a world our questions create"* – David Cooperrider

As described within this quote, it is in our questions where the journey of life is lived.

Seeking, exploring, investigating, clarifying, caring, and trusting are all areas boys live their lives in, trying to make sense of it all and understand the world they are in. This process of having boys ask question after question allows us to become part of the boy's world and his journey, if we have the PATIENCE.

Now some may ask why six? In a nutshell this is because its approximately six questions that boys will ask when grappling with things, when trying to process your response to a question, before they truly understand. With each question the boy will:
1. Seek you out
2. Check what you said
3. Check again
4. Try to find out if you really care and mean what you say
5. Clarify if what they are doing is right and
6. See if you can be trusted.

After all this, they will then finally ask the real question, which looks to consolidate their understanding and trust in you. If able to get there and see the multiple questions being asked as important steps in their development, you will witness a boy transform and become even more invested in his educational journey, simply because they asked, asked, and asked again.

So, let the boys ask their questions. As boarding and educational professionals, invest in their question asking, because that is where the true journey really lies and where the greatest impact can be made.

And if you chose not to let them ask the question and invest in their journey – then ask yourself the question, why am I in the field of education and boarding?

Food for thought…

# REDEFINING SERVICE

Our Chartwells team have worked tirelessly, over recent months, to support our existing partners to tailor and redefine their services during these unprecedented times. Our approach has been to demonstrate proactivity, flexibility and speed while being committed to the continued focus around the delivery of quality and creative catering solutions.

While none of us can predict what lies ahead, or how long it will take to resume "normal" behaviour, we continue to be dedicated to making a difference in this market and to supporting our partnerships and boarding communities. We are also available to offer any assistance where we can add value.

We thought we would take this opportunity to showcase some images from our business taken over recent months and to thank our partners and our staff for working collaboratively, and tirelessly, to keep things going!



## boarding.

Chartwells focuses on nutritionally balanced and innovative food services for boarders and the wider school environment, adhering to the 'smart food' program while at the same time addressing portion size, quality and freshness. We also focus on atmosphere and a sense of place.
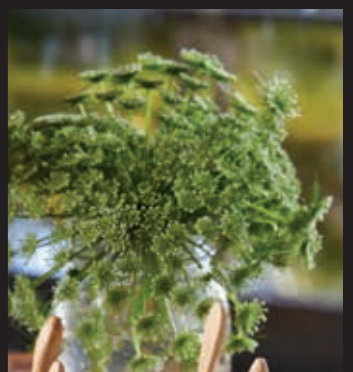
## Chartwells

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1.5m DISTANCE
please keep the space, so we can all stay safe.

# Don't Call it a Club!

AUTHOR
Ken Swan
The Wealth Academy

*The Southport School (TSS) is an Anglican day and boarding school on the Gold Coast for boys from Preschool (Kindergarten) to Year 12 with boarding available from Year 7.*

*TSS provides a balanced and holistic approach to boys' education, with integrated programs of academic and co-curricular with a low student-to-staff ratio.*

Boarders from The Southport School recently met with Ken Swan from The Wealth Academy to discuss the idea of starting a 'club' to talk about financial concepts that will impact on their future. Here are some of their comments about what the club should look like, talk about and how it could be run. In your boarding house, would your students have similar perspectives?

## How long should the 'club' session run for and how many times per term?
Each session should be no longer than one hour and there should only be two sessions per term? (We are busy!)

## How should each session be organized?
Each session should have:
- A topic that the boarders choose.
- A topic that the teacher or our parents would think is important.
- Five minutes at the end to discuss and vote on a preferred student topic for the next session.

## Who should come to the club?
The boarders had mixed views on whether both year 11 and 12 students should attend or just year 12. They thought year 10 boarders may be too young for the topics they wanted to discuss!

They believe all boarders in the appropriate year level should be invited but that it must be optional.

## What other comments can you make about these sessions?
- Don't call it a club! Boarders won't come if it is called a club!
- Until we can find a good name for it, we will call it 'After-School Finance'.
- Don't give homework.
- Make sure it relates to our lives in the near future.

## TSS SNAPSHOT
## What excites you about your financial future?
- Being successful in my job.
- Being independent, being in control.
- Having money.

## What confuses you about the financial world?
- Share market, investing.
- Taxation.
- The impact of every day expenses.

## What will stop you from reaching your financial goals?
- No financial education.
- Distractions.
- Making lots of mistakes.
- Too many expenses and liabilities.

## What support do you need to reach your financial goals?
- Family support.
- Accountant, trusted advisers.
- Someone teaching me along the way.
- What is wealth?
- Number of assets.
- Achieving your financial goal.

Thank you to the Year 11 boarders from The Southport School for sharing their views.



## What should the club focus on?
The club should focus on those financial considerations we will have to face in the four years after we leave school, from age 18 to 22.

## What topics could this include?
Topics should include:
- How to open your own bank account.
- Types of banks.
- How to make a good financial decision.
- Purchasing assets.
- Basic investment ideas.
- Saving money and budgeting.
- Buying and looking after cars.
- The do's and don'ts of loans.
- Rent and bonds.
- First job.
- Insurance.

## Other ideas
The boarders would like the sessions to be:
- interactive, involving multimedia.
- not a lecture.
- a bit of fun.
- at the beginning of each term, away from exam periods.

## Do you think having these sessions is important?
- We don't really know.
- We do know that our parents would think this is very important. We know that our teachers would say it is important.
- Because we haven't had to make many financial decisions before we just trust that our parents and teachers know what is best.

## What worries you about your financial future?
- Knowing what to do.
- Not being able to find work.
- Relying on other people.
- Going into debt, not having enough money.

# When and Why Should I Conduct a Review?

AUTHOR
Andrew Monk
Director of Boarding
The Hamilton and Alexandra College

As a Director of Boarding you may be asked to review the operation and performance of your boarding precinct. This could include reflections from the current strategic plan of the school, or, it may be requested separately. Either way, an external review is an appropriate approach in providing professional feedback to gauge how you are perceived as a boarding school and guide you in future planning.

After attending the Boarding Leaders Conference in Adelaide last year, I reflected upon where we were as a boarding school, and more importantly, where were we going. In meeting like-minded Boarding Directors from across Australia there were many ideas I could have implemented straight away. And with all good intentions of improving our boarding houses we sometimes dive deep into implementing all the bells and whistles without asking some of the bigger questions about who we are? what do we stand for? and where are we going for our boarders and boarding families? In my first year as Director of Boarding at The Hamilton and Alexandra College in Western Victoria, conducting a 360degree review was a likely starting point to best answer these questions.

The Hamilton and Alexandra College are proud to have achieved the ABSA boarding school Level 2 self-assessment, and it seemed timely to once again request Richard and Tom to return to Hamilton, in Western Victoria, and help us best understand our strengths and guide us in our own direction.

Having a review of any sort can be a daunting and seemingly intimidating experience, but, after the initial contact with ABSA I was quickly put at ease. The process is aimed to focus upon strengths which currently exist whilst search and uncover opportunities you may not have known. As a Director our time is precious, and employing ABSA over two-days to get in touch with over 30 key staff was invaluable in itself (executive, parents, boarders, medical, catering, and marketing were all interviewed).

Richard and Tom toured the boarding precinct, experienced meals with the boarders, and observed evening routines such as prep and lights out. They observed how staff interact with boarders, their professional standards, and how boarders too interacted with staff. After the review was conducted Richard and Tom sent a detailed report including:

- Six key action points to consider in the near future,
- A detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats analysis,
- Key observations from Governance, Managements, Boarders, Staff, Parent engagement, and Facilities, and
- A concluding vision statement on what our Boarding House is perceived to be and what it could be in the future.

The experience of a review for our professional improvement is something we expect and need, however, an operational review that includes how you are leading is a vital cog in the wheel of continued improvement. So, what have we done to continue to improve? Amongst other points here are a few that come from our review and boarding staff discussions:

- Review and update all position descriptions,
- Implement Key Performance Indicators for staff
- Include termly survey's from staff regarding operation and leadership
- Connect deeper with boarding families and understand their area
- Review our prep and evening routines to reflect good sleep hygiene practice
- Employ House Mothers specifically for our Year 7-8 boarders who deliver a Lifeskills program.
- Introduce regular pet-therapy evenings.

Although, we have experienced and continue to experience the impact of COVID-19 upon our boarding operations, it is still good practice to regularly return to the strategic plan for the boarding house and use this is a measure of your progress in reporting to Executive or the Board. Whilst COVID may have slowed the progress down a little, almost all recommendations are still relevant and are on the agenda to be achieved over the course of the next two years.

# The Long Road to School

AUTHOR
Maree Ganley
Author

This is the story of the journey through schooling and boarding school life for girls, and for a time boys, in a seaside settlement of Yeppoon forty kilometres north east of Rockhampton. The voices and recorded memoirs over 100 years of women and men about their childhood and schooling, as boarders, are important components of this history. Through oral history there is a stronger understanding, both of the history of Australian boarding school life and of the broader historical, and social contexts in which the students and their families lived some located in the remotest regions of the country.

In 1996 Loretta McKeering at age 13, from a property near Aramac in central Queensland, 660 klms west of Rockhampton, began her boarding school life after never having been inside a classroom. Boarding school students like Loretta brought many personal skills and knowledge from their farming and rural backgrounds. She is a graduate in agricultural engineering and after tertiary studies she partnered with her parents in running two properties in western Queensland.

Loretta classified herself as a 'bush kid' and in later years summarised her life and experiences at boarding school.

The bush kids and miners' daughters had a different outlook there and did not want to let their parents down. My memories of St Ursula's are that we were a mob of mostly poor kids who worked bloody hard to get what we've got, so we did not complain but appreciated what we had.

Her reflections of the experiences of negotiating daily life constantly in the company of large groups with a rigorous time-table provide a valuable insight into the changing nature and the social order of Australian boarding school life and how educational practices and boarding school culture were received by students.

**About the Author**
Maree Ganley drew on her personal and professional life in Australian education in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors to graduate with a PhD in educational history in 2018. Her experiences in positions of educational leadership included secondary boarding schools for girls and boys in the remote central west and the south east corner of Queensland, Australia. The voices of women and men about their childhood and schooling are important components of this history.

$35
+ $10 Postage*

## The Long Road to School

### Sea Pictures of a Convent Boarding School: St Ursula's Yeppoon *Founded in 1917*

Maree Ganley

# Lights Out

# Boarders - Risk Assessments that Protect your Staff and Students

## AHPPC Requirements for a Risk Management Plan

AUTHOR
Craig D'cruz
National Education Lead
CompliSpace

As I write this article, Victorian schools are back in lockdown, New South Wales has closed its borders with Victoria for the first time since the Spanish Flu and the other States and Territories are watching to see if the 'second wave' of this COVID-19 pandemic will cross their borders, also resulting in a return to the March/April lockdowns.

Boarding schools are reeling from this constant state of flux, not knowing if governments will require them to fully open or to completely close while still trying to ensure that they cater for the needs of their students. However, regardless of the government closures, in mid-June, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) released a statement (AHPPC Statement) about risk management for boarding schools and school-based residential colleges. Within this document AHPPC requires that each boarding school or facility:

*"undertake[s] a facility-specific, systematic risk assessment, analysis and mitigation process to inform development of risk management plans which include their planned response to scenarios such as single or multiple cases being identified amongst the boarders with multiple close contacts, to manage the risk posed by COVID-19."*

Basically, the AHPPC requires boarding schools to undertake facility-specific, systematic risk assessments and to ensure that parents agree to the risk management plans before returning their children to boarding. A risk management plan is required no matter how the situation unfolds!

Richard Stokes, CEO of the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) in an email response on 18 June to all member schools regarding the AHPPC Statement stated:

*"Whilst this did not go quite as far as I had asked them to, it does relieve most of our concerns. Firstly, it has removed the Health Departments from the equation, and put the responsibility firmly back onto Education Departments, and in most Independent Schools cases, your own, shoulders."*

Richard also went on to say that the AHPPC had determined that each boarding school was responsible for reducing the numbers of students staying at their facility. Further, while the AHPPC Statement mentioned that dormitory accommodation was associated with increased risk of transmission, there were no requirements set by the AHPPC regarding numbers within these dormitories. Once again, this responsibility sits with each school.

Richard also noted in his email that the AHPPC Statement relaxed the requirements regarding boarders' leave - reducing out of facility visits (e.g. home visits) to reduce the risk of virus introduction into facilities, and finally, as per the scope of the Australian Boarding Standard, the AHPPC Statement required parents to agree to the terms of their child's boarding school's risk management plan before their child returns.

According to the AHPPC, 'risk assessments' conducted by boarding schools should include but should not be limited to:
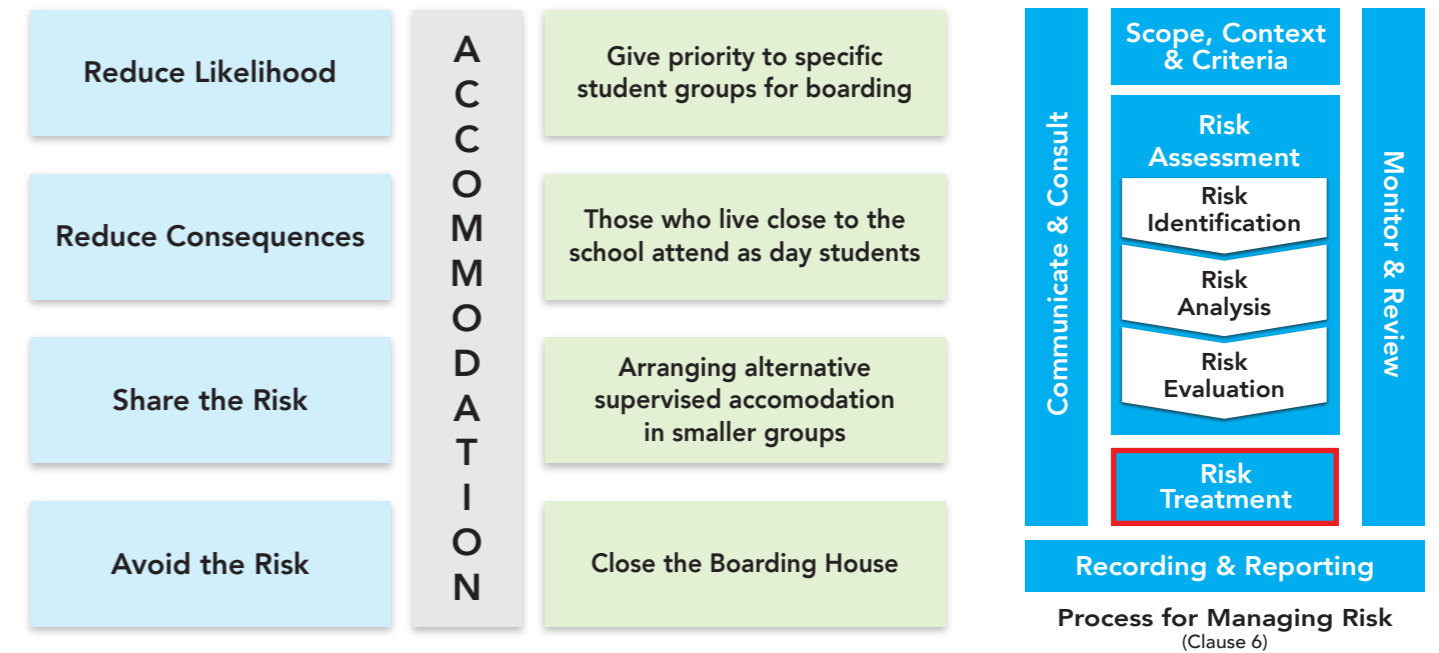1. accommodation and sleeping arrangements
2. hygiene facilities
3. catering processes
4. mealtimes and processes
5. classroom procedure interface with dormitory procedures
6. study requirements
7. control of entry and exit to the site
8. process for and records relating to visitors
9. off campus visits
10. policy and possible gaps
11. vulnerable students
12. vulnerable teachers or other staff
13. cleaning regimens
14. education and training in relation to COVID-19
15. indoor/outdoor recreation areas
16. laundry areas and other ancillary areas
17. the mental health of students.

According to Safe Work Australia, a risk assessment involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard (for example, COVID-19) and the likelihood of it happening. Risk assessments help schools to determine:
- how severe a risk is
- whether any existing control measures are effective
- what action the school should take to control the risk
- how urgently the action needs to be taken.

The AHPPC also offered a number of suggestions or 'risk treatments' that a boarding school should consider in order to develop their risk management plan. They were valuable suggestions and many boarding schools may wish to use them as risk treatments to support their current risk controls.

A useful way to explain how their suggestions could be used effectively as risk treatments involves the example of accommodation and sleeping arrangements. If we follow the structure of the International Risk Management Standard ISO 31000 and use some of the AHPPC's suggestions as risk treatments (note that the last treatment is not an AHPPC suggestion) the analysis would look something like this:

| ACCOMMODATION | | |
|---|---|---|
| Reduce Likelihood | | Give priority to specific student groups for boarding |
| Reduce Consequences | | Those who live close to the school attend as day students |
| Share the Risk | | Arranging alternative supervised accomodation in smaller groups |
| Avoid the Risk | | Close the Boarding House |

**Process for Managing Risk**
(Clause 6)

### The Boarding Standard and Risk

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated infectious diseases risks that boarding schools face, there are also other new challenges that have developed over the past few years and boarding schools will need to identify any new risks based on the:
- increased complexity in the needs of adolescents, including mental health issues, the impact of social media and technology, increased socio-economic and cultural diversity, and physical health issues such as obesity and allergies.
- increased complexity in the needs and expectations of parents, including changes in parent/child relationships, parenting styles, and family structure, increased or decreased parental involvement and engagement.
- need for boarding staff to have increasing skills sets, through training, to respond to these complexities within the boarding environment. (See AHPPC 'risk assessment' 14 above)

Of course, the student duty of care obligation is an obligation that sits above ALL boarding risks to ensure that the boarding school identifies and eliminates any foreseeable risk and takes all necessary measures, having regard to all the circumstances, to prevent students from injury and harm. Boarding schools and their employees, especially those in charge of students, have a duty to exercise "reasonable care" to protect students from risks of harm that are "reasonably foreseeable" and this extends to all school-sanctioned activities including co-curricular and recreational activities and all incursions and excursions.

However, another way to categorise the risks in your boarding facility in order to ensure that they are all being identified and controlled is to group them by the five major headings of AS 5725: 2015 Boarding Standard for Australian schools and residences (Boarding Standard), excluding the first section of Scope and General. Remember, with the development of any risk management system, a first priority is to determine the common language of your risks and to then communicate the agreed understandings to all members of your community.

"Governance and Management" has nine sections and several of the AHPPC 'risk assessments' such as processes for and records relating to visitors, off campus visits and policy and possible gaps could be classified under this heading. Many more could be classified under the heading of "Boarders", and others under "Staff", "Parents, Families and Community Engagement" and finally, "Facilities".

### Summary

But why the Boarding Standard? To be blunt, it is the only national document that provides schools with the necessary scaffolding to prepare for, and be compliant with, ongoing legal reform! So, why should boarding schools look at their risk profiles through the lens of the Boarding Standard?

This would be for the uniformity in Classification, Communication and Reduction of Risks as follows:
- Governance and Management: Registration, ERM
- Boarder Injury or Death: Duty of Care, Child Abuse - situational, vulnerability, propensity and institutional
- Staff: OHS, Competence, Performance Management
- Parents and Community: Communications, Complaints
- Facilities: Security, Design, Infection Control

Failure to understand and to mitigate for risks such as these could result in injuries or worse for boarders (think about the social issues for the students), possible legal action by parents or ex-boarders and possible irreparable reputational damage.

# Fifty Shades of Grey

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St Joseph's Nudgee College





Don't worry, unlike the film, there is no explicit content in this piece. Instead, this article will discuss the complex nature of boarding and the necessity for staff to be able to adapt, change and demonstrate flexibility based on individual circumstances. We know that Boarding is complex for all involved. As staff, we face issues that are not encountered within a regular schooling environment, we connect with students in a different and often more personal way, and we invest so much of ourselves in the residential community. Due to this, staff and students exist in a unique, delicate setting, which requires different methods of behaviour management and decision making. Therefore, it is very rare that a situation is "black and white" - we live in a world of grey.
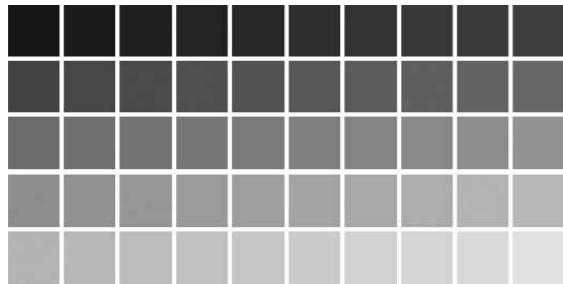


The idea behind this article was sparked by a regular statement made by Christian Oneto, our Dean of Boarding at Nudgee College. He continually encourages staff to "find the grey" in our interactions with the boys in our care, particularly the more challenging students. It would appear that Christian has done this better than most in boarding, with early-career pictures showing jet black hair. Nowadays, he looks like a less handsome Richard Gere. Whilst Christian's hair colour is not what we are referring to when discussing the concept of "finding the grey", it may be indicative of the toll that boarding takes on staff as they negotiate difficult situations and endeavour to find solutions that are beneficial for all involved.

The easiest way to run a dormitory is as an authoritarian. However, it is the least conducive to building relationships and fostering genuine growth within the students. Many will argue that there need to be clear boundaries in boarding and that boys need consistency. I completely agree. The tricky part, though, is keeping this consistency and maintaining boundaries, whilst also considering the individual circumstance of any given situation or student. In a 'normal' or non-boarding household, a parental figure generally takes into account the individual needs of a child. This is easy for one child, or even four. However, it becomes more difficult as we try to apply this style of parental guidance in a dorm of 75. Regardless of numbers, though, this is our goal.

A million questions can influence the way in which a staff member approaches an incident or situation:

- What is happening in the students' home context?
- How long has the student been in boarding?
- How is the student performing/behaving in the day school?
- Have there been any friendship issues surfacing?
- When did the student last go on leave?
- What is the student's cultural background?
- What extracurricular commitments is the student juggling?
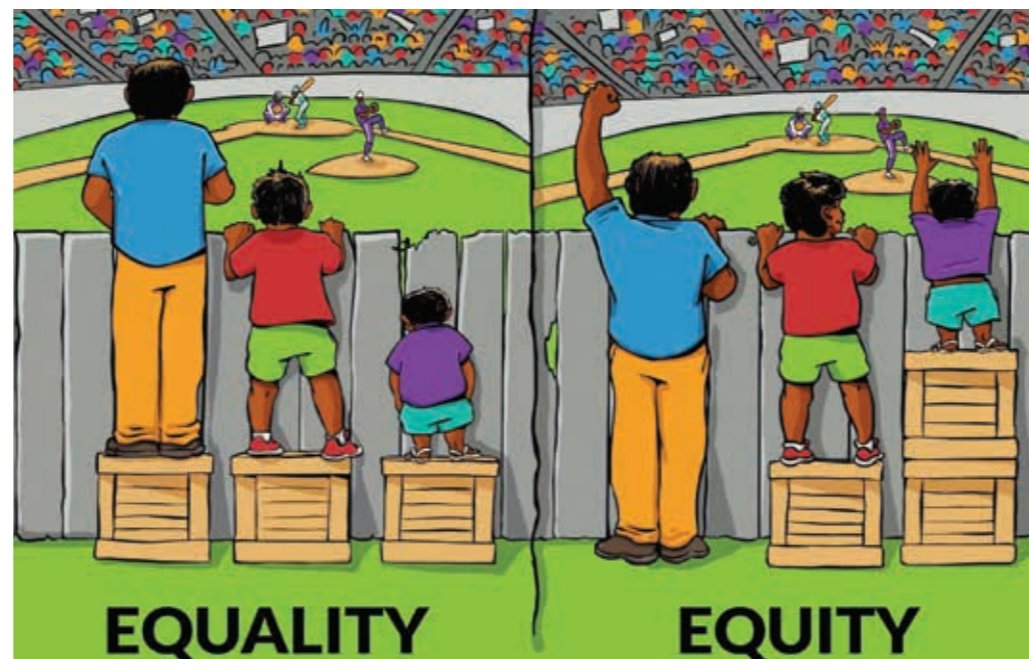- How does the student respond to conflict and/or authority figures?

Clearly, the above considerations raise significant issues when it comes to what some would call a more "traditional" or "one size fits all" model to behaviour management. Some will argue that rigid rules and clear outcomes lead to fewer issues and more compliance. However, we always need to be mindful that compliance is not our end goal - personal growth is. In this sense, often harsh deterrents, and rewards for that matter, are not necessarily the answer. Respected author and lecturer Alfie Kohn speaks to this in his book *Punished* by Rewards.



"*What rewards and punishments do is induce compliance, and this they do very well indeed. If your objective is to get people to obey an order, to show up on time and do what they're told, then bribing or threatening them may be sensible strategies. But if your objective is to get long-term quality in the workplace, to help students become careful thinkers and self-directed learners, or to support children in developing good values, then rewards, like punishments, are absolutely useless. In fact, as we are beginning to see, they are worse than useless—they are actually counterproductive*" (Kohn 1993).

To me, this simple insight should guide our practice as caregivers, and I use that word selectively. Parents place their most valuable assets in our hands and trust us implicitly to provide quality 'care' to their child. This being said, our primary role should not be disciplinary or punitive, although we may have to wear that hat at times. Realistically, above all else, including academic results, sporting success and career pathways, parents want to know that their children are cared for in a similar way to how they would be at home.

Additionally, when considering the use of 'black and white' strategies based on deterrents or incentives, it is important to think of the overall outcome. In an ideal world, we want students to do the right thing because they are a good person, not because they are fearful of harsh repercussions. I know this all seems very utopian. I am also aware that often it is harder to foster growth, as opposed to changing behaviour. However, we need to remember our key purpose in a boarding context - to shape young men and women and broaden their post-school horizons (both professional and personal). Unfortunately, in life after school, one is rarely rewarded for doing the right thing. To me, it seems that the old adage of 'the carrot and the stick' completely undermines the moral fortitude and independence that we are trying to build.

Without doubt, the challenges are manyfold when 'navigating in the grey'. Firstly, this model challenges boarding staff to truly know the student and what is happening in their life. This asks a lot of staff and requires them to stay abreast of a multitude of individual stories. However, in trying to create an authentic 'home away from home' this expectation is vital.

Secondly, how do we as boarding staff avoid the temptation to deliver equality, in the pursuit of achieving and maintaining equity? We have all probably seen some version of the cartoon below. With this simple image in mind, it is so important that we remember equality is not always effective. Unfortunately, at times, decisions made based on equity may be misconstrued as inconsistency or even favouritism; however, staff, students and parents need to understand that each student and each situation is different.

The third challenge is trusting your own judgement and professionalism. When working in the world of 'grey' we must truly be comfortable in our ability to flexibly navigate our way through unchartered territory. Of course, this includes establishing your own list of non-negotiables or clear boundaries of how far you are willing to 'flex'. In order for this approach to be successful, it is vital that the staff are confident in their ability to provide equity and they are comfortably able to justify the decisions they make. Realistically, also, the ability to work flexibly is also reliant on the ability to create strong relationships and build mutual respect.
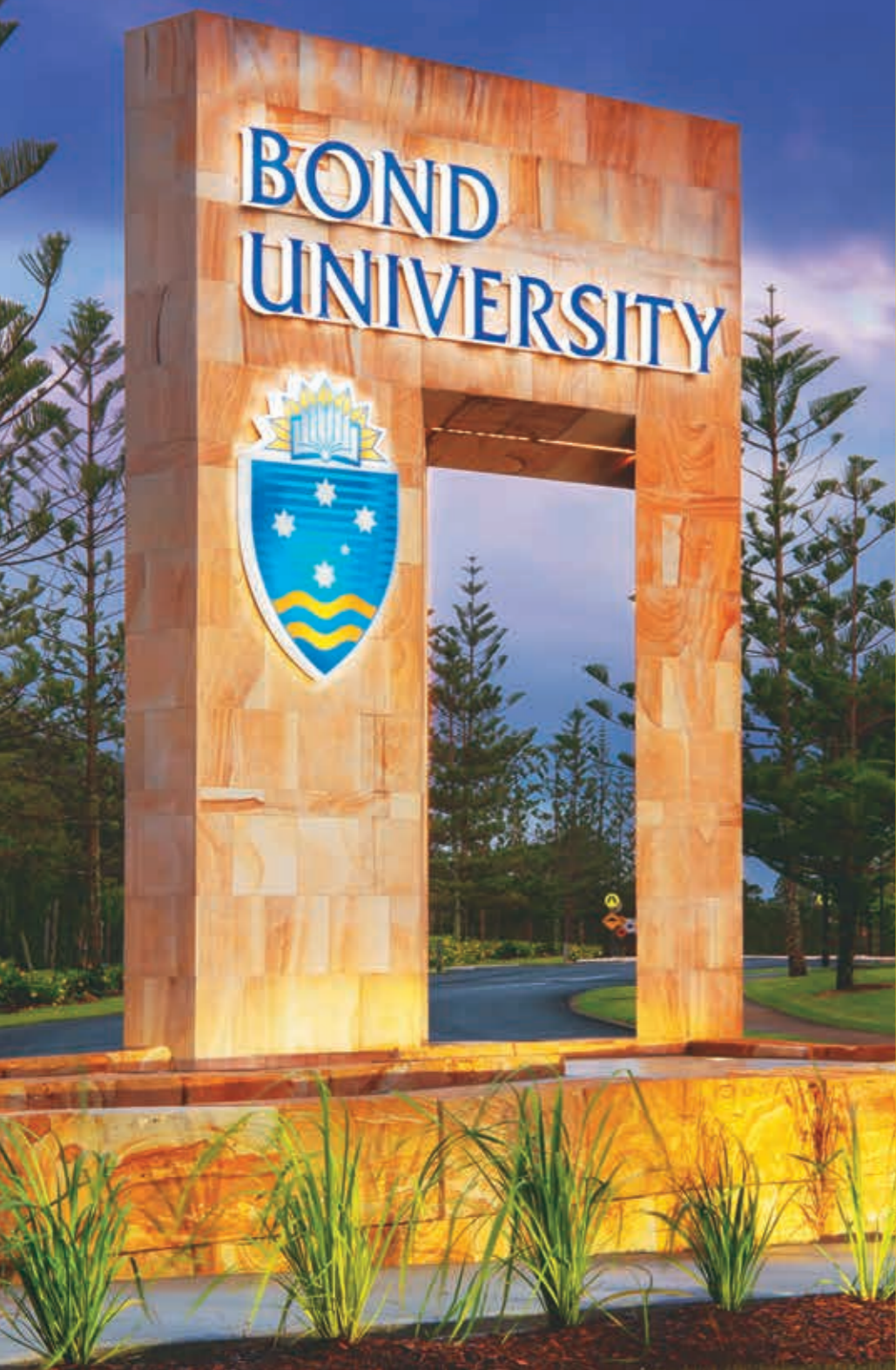
So, what is it that I am actually saying in this piece? I have waffled about black, white and grey; equity and equality; and the ineffectiveness of rewards and consequences. I worry that I may have become a little convoluted. In essence, I am urging boarding staff to shift away from rigid and defined structures in what is meant to be the students' home. Of course, at times consequences will need to be enforced and there is nothing wrong with occasional incentives (I still award a Boarder of the Week in my dorm). However, in every dealing with a student, we need to consider a plethora of individual circumstances in order to make the best decision. There may be discomfort in his world of grey for some staff; however, if boarding is aiming to replicate a home environment, we simply cannot apply black and white practices.

# Psychology and The Ethics of Decision Making

There's such a dichotomy between what you want to do and what you actually do, and there's constant trade-offs as an ethical consumer.

As a marketer, it's one of those areas where it's really hard to know exactly how to tap into changing people's behaviour.

"How do you overcome main drivers like price and quality and convenience? How do you get people to actually follow through with their ethical beliefs? If we just convert the people who are ethically-minded into ethical buyers we can make real change. We don't have to change people's attitudes; we just have to change the behaviours. But even as an ethical-thinking person, it's really hard to do the right thing because there's so many barriers."

For students heading into their final years of high school, deciding which subjects to study in years 11 and 12 can be a daunting task.

This is because those subjects can play a crucial role in the structure of a student's tertiary education and to the success of their future work and life.

Following a decade-long syllabus investigation in Queensland, 2020 will see the first Queensland senior secondary students graduate from the new QCE system in the same year the state has moved away from the Overall Position (OP) rating system to the nationally adopted Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) system.

The review of senior secondary curriculum and assessment in Queensland has also provided the opportunity for new subjects to be introduced to broaden students' options.

This year, senior secondary students in Queensland were finally given the opportunity to develop their knowledge in a popular scientific vocation, when psychology was introduced into the sunshine state as a senior subject.

The new course aims to develop students' interest in psychology, enhance their understanding of applying the scientific method to human behaviours, and focuses on core domains of psychology including human development, individual differences in behaviour, human cognition, and behaviour in a social context.

Bond University has a well-recognised and extensive psychology program and has been supporting our local and Brisbane-based year 11 and 12 psychology teachers with professional learning workshops hosted by Dr Bruce Watt, Associate Professor of Psychology.

The workshops have been very well received and have addressed the key areas within each of the four units of study of the QCE psychology general subject.

A degree in psychology can lead students in many directions: it can form the basis of other fields of study, be applied to research human behaviour, or for the pursuit of becoming a registered psychologist. The options are diverse.

An example of the outstanding psychology research being done at Bond University is a new study by Bond PhD student Robyn McCormack, which is set to examine ethical consumption and the psychological processes that determine why people make the choices they do.

Have you ever received too much change while shopping, and not given it back? How about jumping the fence to get into a music festival?

Ms McCormack, who has a background in marketing, says changing people's behaviours around consumption is not easy.

The core of Ms McCormack's research is the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, defined as the gap between what ethical consumers believe and how they act.

"The current research suggests that although awareness has increased significantly, the actual purchasing behaviour hasn't matched people's beliefs," Ms McCormack says.

In her research, she will also examine the locus of control, or the level of control people feel they have over the outcome of events in their lives, as opposed to external forces such as global powers or corporations.

Another factor is moral disengagement, or people's ability to turn their moral code on and off, which has predominantly been studied in criminology and considered as a way to explain why individuals commit crimes like genocide.

Potentially of particular relevance to the average Australian is neutralisation techniques, the rationalisations and justifications people use to make themselves feel better when they do the wrong thing.

"For example, if you normally recycle, but there's one time you can see the bin over there, it's a really long walk and you can't be bothered…you might make yourself feel better by telling yourself 'I've recycled most of the time this week, this one time won't matter,'" Ms McCormack says.

People's levels of cynicism can also have an effect, and that in turn can be impacted by events such as the controversy earlier this year when the Australian Red Cross was found to have spent up to 10 per cent of its bushfire relief donations on administration costs.

Psychology research such as Ms McCormack's not only provides valuable insight into individuals' behaviours and thinking, but also gives context to our wider community attitudes; it enables us to understand the very fabric of our society.

At Bond we offer undergraduate, fourth year and postgraduate study options in psychology, accelerated through three semesters each year. Students who undertake education in psychology at Bond can pursue a sequence of study that leads to full registration as a psychologist, and qualifications up to doctoral level.

With nationally and internationally recognised psychology academics, our research facilities cater to a wide range of areas including clinical, forensic, and organisational psychology, social psychology, health psychology and human cognition.

For more information about studying psychology at Bond, please visit https://bond.edu.au/about-bond/academia/faculty-society-design/school-psychology

# Lights Out



# Dealing with COVID @ Somerville

AUTHOR
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Somerville House

As we gradually adjust to the new normal that the pandemic has framed for us, we have focussed on what this looks like for our boarders and the ways in which our boarding community can respond proactively and positively to this paradigm shift. At the heart of our response to the challenges of 2020 has been two questions: What does this (latest news, restriction, border closure, mandate) mean for our girls and their families? How can we ensure that we continue to build on the relationships we had worked so hard to establish in a pre-Covid world?

Regular communication has been key in ensuring our families stay connected with both the official documentation of Covid (and there is plenty of that!) as well as the more anecdotal and light spirited windows into the girls' boarding experiences. We have made sure that Spotlight, our weekly e-newsletter, is brimming with photos and videos of boarding life; by continuing to include the faces and stories of our international girls who have not yet been able to return to campus living, we keep these relationships watered. Our weekly videos, which capture the authentic 'behind the scenes' footage that our parents love, provide our community with a fun, end-of-week overview of the week that was; they remind us that, amidst the seas of constant change, there are some 'essentials' about boarding life (such as supervised prep, weekend movie nights, brownie baking and games on the oval at dusk) that cannot be cancelled.

Of course, we remain acutely sensitive to the plight of our girls who have not been able to go home since the start of the school year. Like all Boarding Houses, ours resonates with the diversity and stories that our International Boarders bring and we have had to consider new ways in which to hear these stories, as well as ensure the girls feel connected to home and place. Some examples of how we have aimed to stay connected include:

- Our Boarder Captain Thyra, in PNG, regularly gives Grace and makes an appearance at our special dinner events such as Invite Night
- Our online Trivia night with BBC saw all of our boarders compete in a fierce online trivia competition that pitted boarders from Japan, to Singapore to Brisbane against our PMSA boy school rivals. (That the boys triumphed on the night was not due to a lack of connection and competition from the girls.)
- The wearing of Meri Blouse by our PNG girls who celebrated Independence Day with music and food from home. Appreciating cultural diversity provided a way for the girls to showcase their cultural pride and was the catalyst for conversations amongst staff and students about their home, families and traditions.
- Zooming into our families and international boarders for regular meetings and having them on the 'big screen' through Microsoft Teams at our special dinners.



In an absolutely gorgeous display of cultural pride, our PNG boarders all celebrated PNG Independence Day by wearing their traditional Meri Blouses to school and inviting day girls to participate in the music and language of their island home. The boarders wore their cultural pride with such joy, and their love of home and family was evident to all. Appreciating cultural diversity provided a way for the girls to showcase their homeland and was the catalyst for conversations amongst staff and students about their home, families and traditions.

Our focus on mental health and wellbeing, needed more so in this year than perhaps ever before, was showcased with our RUOK dinner. We held this dinner towards the end of an exhausting Term 3 when even our interstate boarders were facing the prospect of not being able to go home for the holidays. The 'bling' of yellow ribbons, a themed dessert table, and our Superhero toga wearing Year 11 leaders helped to focus the Boarders' attention on how to look for the signs that you have a friend in need, and what to do if your gut



instinct tells you somebody is not OK. The inclusion of our absent International girls in this dinner helped to bring us together as a community.

**So how are we going and are we OK?**
We believe that a Boarding House is a microcosm for broader society with all its beauty, vulnerability, strength and frailty. Like the rest of the world, we are working hard to stay positive, stay connected and pivot towards what remains an uncertain future. On some days we get this absolutely right; the girls are happy, we adjust traditions and find clever new ways to connect with each other. On other days, the change and new normal can seem insurmountable; on these days we remember to tread gently, offer a Milo supper and remind everyone in our community that we are a constant 'here' for all, no matter how much distance may remain between us.



# Orientation Ahead!

AUTHOR
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Term Four, take a deep breath…the wrapping up of another successful, dynamic and challenging year. As this year draws to a close the new year creeps closer. For the many new 2021 boarding families, the idea of their child leaving home is approaching more quickly than they ever imagined, bringing about plenty of excitement and trepidation for what is to come!

With the new year firmly embedded in the minds of many new boarding families so too are the wave of burning questions. Answering all these questions coincides perfectly with an orientation process run by boarding schools and/or residential colleges.



Orientation days can come in many forms and experiences; a morning event, an evening sundowner, a sleepless sleepover, a casual barbecue even a smorgasbord of academic testing. During orientation events there can be a lot to cover in a short period of time. With so much information alone how can these few hours have a positive impact for both boarding staff and new incoming families?

**How to create an engaging orientation day**
What is it that families and new students most want? Is it a verbal explanation of the boarding student handbook, a sea of new boarding staff faces, a perfectly clean and shiny premises, one which looks and feels like no smelly teenage boy ever stepped foot in, let alone lives in?

Apart from getting the general gist of the location and surrounds, what families most want is connection. They want to leave knowing they have made the right choice for their child and family alike.

So what are some of the key elements that can spark and create this connection with new boarding families? Here are a few of the do's and don'ts of your orientation day:

Best to avoid
If you don't want to cancel connection during the orientation process, try minimising the following;
- Spending the day sharing the information that are usually in printed format e.g. handbooks
- Making students or parents sit down for extended periods of time e.g over an hour
- Introducing too many staff in a short amount of time
- Focussing on the physical landscape/environment only e.g grounds and accomodation

Ways to win your audience
Make the day personal to your students and families alike by implementing a few ideas below;
- Images and stories stick, it's what people remember most
- Get current families or students to share their boarding story/experience
- Give families time to get to know each other with activities or longer food breaks
- Show that boarding staff are human too! You could do this by creating a short video to introduce a few key staff
- Treat the adults in the room like the kids, who also prefer creativity, fun, movement, have some fun games and activities
- Games or footies/basketballs are a great way for kids to interact with ease (parents too!)
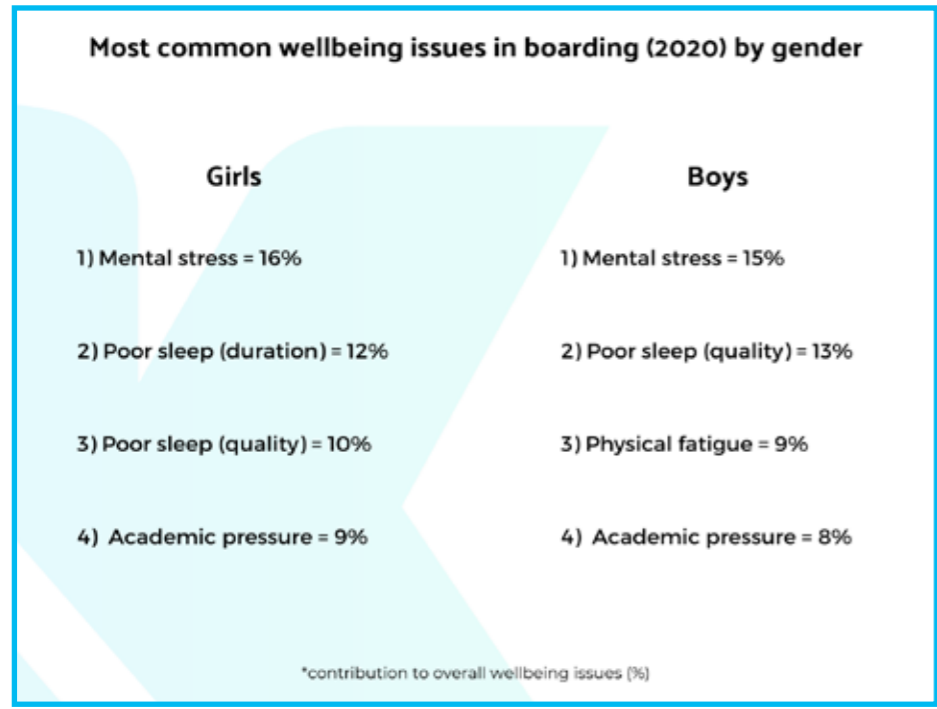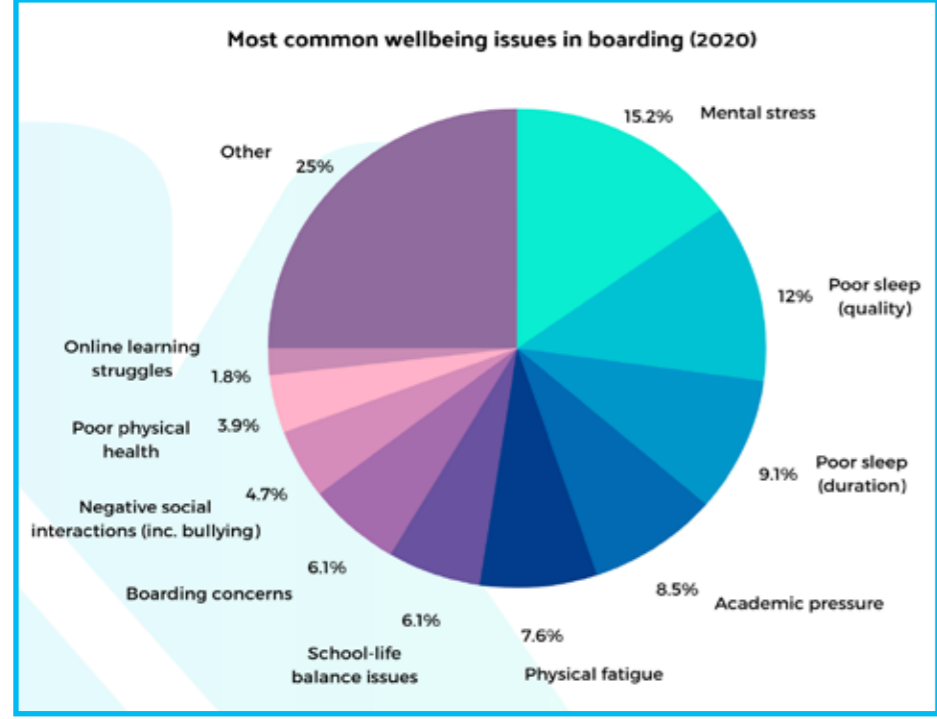
The best orientation days to organise, run and be a part of are the days that are simple for boarding families and boarding staff alike. Have fun with your new boarding families, ensuring everyone feels welcome, safe and excited about their upcoming boarding journey!

Want to know more…let's connect!



**parent connect**
A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING

# Lights Out

# Boarding School Wellbeing: What did it Look Like in 2020?

AUTHOR
Jack Wood
Co-founder & Chief Customer Officer
Komodo

Most common wellbeing issues in boarding (2020)

- Mental stress — 15.2%
- Poor sleep (quality) — 12%
- Poor sleep (duration) — 9.1%
- Academic pressure — 8.5%
- Physical fatigue — 7.6%
- School-life balance issues — 6.1%
- Boarding concerns — 6.1%
- Negative social interactions (inc. bullying) — 4.7%
- Poor physical health — 3.9%
- Online learning struggles — 1.8%
- Other — 25%



Most common wellbeing issues in boarding (2020) by gender

| Girls | Boys |
|---|---|
| 1) Mental stress = 16% | 1) Mental stress = 15% |
| 2) Poor sleep (duration) = 12% | 2) Poor sleep (quality) = 13% |
| 3) Poor sleep (quality) = 10% | 3) Physical fatigue = 9% |
| 4) Academic pressure = 9% | 4) Academic pressure = 8% |

*contribution to overall wellbeing issues (%)

For most, 2020 will go down as either a year to forget or a year to learn from, depending on which "glass half full/empty" outlook we choose to adopt. The boarding community has certainly had some tough challenges to hurdle, like the closure of domestic borders, boarding students being sent home for lockdowns and the implementation of those daily sanitising routines we now know all too well.

From the resilience we have witnessed, we think we can safely say that boarding schools are embodying a "glass half full" attitude, by taking onboard the learnings from this year and improving because of them. At Komodo, we have certainly felt very inspired by the schools we work with and have adopted the same outlook in everything we have done this year.

As the year begins to wind down, we thought it a great idea to use our data to pull together a report to show you what wellbeing looked like in boarding schools for 2020.

Unsurprisingly, high stress levels were the most common issue reported on Komodo this year, contributing to 15.2% of all wellbeing issues reported. 50% of boarders recorded that they experienced serious mental stress at some point. Stress was then followed by poor sleep quality and sleep duration, which contributed to 12% and 9.1% of wellbeing issues respectively.

Additionally, these three issues often coincided with one another, suggesting even stronger correlations between stress and sleep concerns this year.

The makeup of wellbeing issues varied slightly by gender, with energy issues making up 9% of all wellbeing issues for boys, while girls had greater struggles with the amount of sleep they were getting. Academic struggles were a problem for both boys and girls in boarding, with it contributing to 9% of all female wellbeing issues and 8% for the boys.

This year saw us introduce Komodo's new check-in system, which intelligently highlights boarders that are specifically facing higher priority wellbeing problems.

On average, we saw that approximately five critical boarder check-ins were recommended per school on a weekly basis. When equipped with that information, boarding staff were able to proactively check in with boarders and prevent serious wellbeing problems. On average, wellbeing concerns were resolved within one day of the issue being identified by Komodo.

Ultimately, this has been a difficult year for all, with added pressures being placed on boarding schools and boarders which has begun to show. Unfortunately, it is anticipated that there will only be an increase in wellbeing issues over the next six to twelve months (and beyond) due to the influence of COVID-19. We will be working harder than ever to ensure schools have all the right tools to ensure the health and happiness of their boarders.

# The Spiritual Laws of Life and Success

AUTHOR
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1. Being yourself. Get in touch with the field of potentiality by taking time each day to be silent, to just be. Sit alone in silent meditation for 30 minutes a day.

2. Nature. Take time each day to commune with nature – sit and silently watch a sunset, or listen to the sound of the ocean or a stream.

3. Non-judging. Begin each day with the statement "Today I will judge nothing that occurs" and throughout the day remind yourself not to judge.

4. Giving. Wherever you go and whoever you encounter, bring them a gift: the gift may be a compliment or a physical object, it might be caring, or appreciation. Each time you meet someone, silently wish them happiness joy and laughter. Begin the process of circulating joy in your life and the lives of others.

5. Receiving. Gratefully receive all the gifts that life offers you. These gifts may be nature, (sunlight, the sounds of birds singing, snow, rain), or compliments or material gifts from others.

6. Awareness of choices. Be fully conscious in the present, and aware that you are making choices all the time. Witness the choices you make in each moment.

7. Choosing. Whenever you make a choice, ask yourself two questions: "What are the consequences of this choice? Will it bring fulfilment and happiness to me and also to those who are affected by this choice?"

8. Heart. Ask your heart if it feels comfortable with each choice you make. Then depending on the answer either plunge ahead or pause and consider the consequences much more carefully.

9. Acceptance. Accept things as they are at this moment, not as you wish they were. Accept people, situations and events as they occur. The whole universe is as it should be, and all events are for a reason.

10. Responsibility. Take responsibility for your situation and all those events that you see as problems. This means not blaming anyone or anything for your situation, not even yourself. Every problem is an opportunity in disguise – transform this moment into a greater benefit.

11. Letting go. Let go of the need to defend yourself or your point of view. You don't need to convince others of your point of view. Remain open to all points of view.

12. Purpose. Make a list of all your desires and carry it with you wherever you go. Look at it first and last thing each day, but don't show it to anyone else.

13. Flow. Relinquish your attachment to this list – which means don't worry if things don't seem to be going your way, there's a reason, and you'll still get there, just by the scenic route instead. Or maybe there's an even better destination planned for you. Enjoy every moment of the journey of your life, even if you don't know the outcome. Let the universe handle the details.

14. Awareness of the present. Practice present-moment awareness in all your actions, accepting the present as it is. Refuse to allow obstacles to consume and dissipate the quality of your attention in the present moment.

15. Detachment. Allow yourself and those around you the freedom to be as they are. Participate in everything with detached involvement.

16. Uncertainty. Factor in uncertainty as an essential ingredient of your experience. Solutions will spontaneously emerge from the chaos. Uncertainty is your path to freedom. Through the wisdom of uncertainty you will find your security.

17. Openness. Step into the field of all possibilities and remain open to an infinity of choices. Experience the fun, adventure, magic and mystery of life.

18. Service. Make a list of all your talents and the things you love to do while expressing these talents. When you use your talents in the service of humanity you create abundance in your life as well as in the lives of others. Ask yourself daily "How can I serve?" and "How can I help?".

# Station Life – The Cathedral School Townsville Outback Community Boarding Tour

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and St James
Townsville









I am sure many boarding staff would have the same response as I do when I ask my boarders 'How were your holidays?' and they reply with, 'Busy Tom, we worked hard mustering, checking waters, feeding out lick and of course fencing.' Boarders are an essential part of the working team on the stations when they are home from school.

In my new role as Boarding Ambassador at The Cathedral School Townsville, we realised that it's essential for me to understand how our boarders live and also to support their local communities … so over the September holidays, I hit the road for a 3500km trip visiting local towns to speak with potential students and also spend time with two boarding families, the Kath family on Mt Leonard Station and the Whitehead family on Menton Station.

The Kath family have managed Mt Leonard Station in Betoota for 19 years. Lorraine and Henning (aka "Chook") Kath have three children - Cassandra and Leah who have graduated from The Cathedral School, and Jacob who is currently in Year 10. It was great to see Jacob, one of my boarders, hard at work mustering, motorbike riding, drafting cattle and enjoying the country life.

Never would I have thought that Chook would take me flying, but every Sunday he has to check the waters and dams on the station, so I was very privileged to join him in his four-seat Cessna as we checked the two million acre station. He answered my many questions about this fantastic place. Chook got me into the yards with the cattle (but I wasn't going to leave his side), and I found out how to jump up the rails to get out of the way of the cattle. He taught me about branding, drafting and preg testing cows. We even did a killer!

Lorraine Kath gave me an understanding of what it takes to be a female on one of these stations and the work the manager's wife has to do as well. She gets up and makes sure there is a hot breakfast by 6am, a hot lunch by 1pm and dinner ready at 7pm, as well as smoko for the staff and keeping the kitchen, dining room and accommodation clean and doing the office work for the station.

Being on the edge of the Simpson Desert, 200 km from Birdsville and 200km from Windorah, this is a remote station. The quiet hum of the generator runs all day and all night supplying power to the homestead and staff accommodation.

The next property I visited was Mentone Station, 100km north of Winton. It's home to John and Philippa Whitehead and their children Nathan (Year 8) and Jess (Year 10) who board at The Cathedral School and Ashley who is in Year 6 at Distance Education and is ready to join Cathedral boarding in 2021.

When I arrived at Mentone Station, we headed out for a lovely evening in the paddock with nibbles and a fire with some great footage taken with a drone. Over the next couple of days, we worked on putting a tyre on a loader, went out feeding lick to the cattle and I had a grand tour of Mentone Station. I had my first experience of clay target shooting, and wow it's a great sport! It was wonderful spending time with the Whiteheads learning about their property, and Jessica Whitehead's pumpkin scones were amazing for smoko.

I am so lucky to be given this opportunity, and it's so essential in my job to understand where our boarders come from and what they do when they are home working hard over the holidays. It's very important that boarding staff can relate to boarders in their care.

Once again, I am so thankful for the whole experience and so keen to get back out on the property and visit many more of my boarding families.

# Beautiful Boarders: The Huge Value They Add to a School

**AUTHOR**
Posted by Linda Stade
May 21, 2020, Boarding 101
First written for Knowing Girls, which is a blog for Santa Maria College in Perth
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The benefits of boarding school are not limited to the boarding students themselves. The positives that boarders bring to a school community are significant.

Australian boarding schools offer an opportunity for kids from sparsely-populated rural areas to receive high-quality education. They offer kids an amazing array of opportunities and facilities that wouldn't be available to them at home. However, what we often don't talk about is what boarders offer the rest of the school. What do these kids bring to the students from the city?

### INDEPENDENCE
Boarders, by necessity, become very independent. They don't have mum and dad around to schedule them and make sure they meet all their obligations. Boarders do that themselves. They also have to manage their own money, sort out their washing, regulate their diet and so much more. They help to create a culture of independence in the school. It's hard to whine about forgetting your sports equipment when the boarder next to you washed and packed their own sports kit. They set the bar high.

### PARTICIPATION
Boarders are heavily involved in the school and all its activities. Of course they are… they live here. They tend to be the core of sporting groups in particular. Many of them have played a lot of sport in the country because that is a popular form of entertainment in many country towns. Not only do they bring their skill and talent to the field or court, but they also bring the expectation that everyone will pitch in and help with administration and duties. Because that is how sporting clubs in the country are managed, by the community.

### SHARE THE COUNTRY STORY
It is very important for kids to grow up in environments where they are exposed to different people with different ways of life. Boarders are forced into this situation. However, they also provide that experience for city kids. Boarders tell the stories of their lives. They talk about life on the farm or in their faraway places. They tell their stories of driving through paddocks and dealing with stock, shearing, riding their horses and not being able to get the internet all the time. This opens the eyes of city kids. Their pure 'get it done' attitude shows city kids what is possible. In a girls' school like Santa Maria College, it is good for our city students to spend time with girls who have spent their lives in environments and activity that is not stereotypical.

### SENSE OF FUN
Boarders are fun. They have outside voices and big laughs and they are looking for things to be fun. School is their life for months at a time and they decide they might as well enjoy it. They don't wait until after school to have fun, they make their own entertainment at school and they bring that atmosphere to the rest of the school.

### TOLERANCE AND PATIENCE
Boarders live with a bunch of other people in very close quarters. They don't get to choose who those people are and those people are not family. You either get along or life is unbearable. This breeds, in boarders, tolerance and acceptance of difference. They learn how to negotiate conflict and problem solve. Boarders must also be patient. Living in a community means that things don't necessarily happen at the moment you want them to…meals for example. Sometimes you have to wait. The skills of tolerance and patience are also used in their dealings with the rest of the school community. Again, it creates a culture.

### BRING THE COUNTRY TO THE CITY
In the country, it is very normal for teenagers to be quite involved with people of all ages and backgrounds. In the city our kids tend to spend their time with other kids of the same age and people who are just like them.

Country kids will be in sporting teams and clubs with adults, they will know everyone at the football club from Auskickers to the League team. They know the owners of all the shops and they say hello to everyone.

As a result of all this varied interaction, country kids tend to have a comfortable way with adults and kids of varying ages. They bring that easy nature and friendliness to school with them. You can see it in the way they deal with teachers and younger kids. It is contagious.

### TEACHERS
I'm sure day students wouldn't mind me saying that boarders are special for teachers. There is always a little group of them in your class and their needs are a bit different. Their parents have made a leap of faith and sent their child to work with you. It raises the stakes.

I have always loved working with boarders. There is banter and laughs, but there are often stronger relationships too. They know they owe it to their parents to make the most of their opportunities, so they are quick to try hard and access help. It allows you to create bonds and they are always grateful for that time and connection. It gives teachers a great sense of purpose.

### COMMUNITY
The very essence of a successful school is its sense of community. Intangibles like school spirit, loyalty and pride come from a core population who model and share that sense of community. Boarding communities are often that core population. Boarders sometimes refer to themselves as 'rent a crowd', because they are at every school event and function. And they are. They are completely immersed in school community and at the same time perpetuate it.

### GROUNDED
Boarding students bring a sense of levity and maturity that reflects their country communities and lifestyle. Their exposure to many adults and their smaller communities ensures they have always been given a lot of care but also a lot of responsibility. They have been seen and heard in a way that is unique to small communities. It breeds resilience and a quiet confidence that cuts through many potential teenage problems and traps.

### LEADERSHIP
Having been independent and resourceful for a number of years, as well as immersed in school culture, it should come as no surprise that boarders often emerge as leaders in school communities. Their demonstrated ability to problem solve, their tolerance and their advanced social skills make them ideal leaders. They also show teamwork born of years of helping one another with homework, doing chores together and community living.

### FINALLY…
This week is National Boarding Week. It's nice to have the opportunity to celebrate the character, community and resilience of our boarders and all the great things that boarders contribute to city schools.

*Linda Stade is an educator, writer, and speaker. She attended boarding school in Western Australia in the 80s, and maintains an interest in the issues impacting boarders and boarding schools. In her writing, she explores a wide range of educational and wellbeing issues. You can learn more about Linda's work at www.lindastade.com*

# Enhancing Your COVID-19 Toolkit

Five REACH Features that Help you Ensure a Safe Boarding Environment

**AUTHOR**
Garry Jowett
Managing Director
Reach Boarding School Management System

To suggest that 2020 is no ordinary school year is an understatement. The Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted all facets of society globally and the challenges for educators across the world have been immense. For many, these challenges remain considerable.

Mandated changes to school operations have added complexity, impacted capacity and introduced seemingly insurmountable obstacles to continuity. As challenging as these have been it is sobering to consider that in Australia, our Coronavirus experience is more advanced that many other regions and that many schools throughout the world still have a long journey of compliance ahead.

As a service provider, our role during this period has been to assess how REACH could assist schools to meet many new standards for safety. This has resulted in several pandemic inspired enhancements which address some of the immediate challenges presented to schools around the world.

The goal of this article is to make you aware of some of these new features in REACH and to help you understand how they can assist in managing your operations in the current environment.

## Daily COVID-19 symptoms survey
As a first step in providing safe facilities, monitoring the physical symptoms of students and staff on a daily basis has become a common procedure for many schools. To assist with this cumbersome requirement, we have developed a Surveys module. This allows schools to build a custom daily questionnaire which can be used to screen their students and staff for symptoms of Coronavirus through self-assessment.

The daily symptoms survey allows schools to present students (or parents) and staff with a mandatory self-analysis survey. Results from the survey automatically update in real time to a People View dashboard. This dashboard displays your entire population with their Survey status identified.

Colour coding of participant profiles in the People View dashboard highlights any at risk participants that respond in the survey as symptomatic.

Participants that do identify as symptomatic in their self-analysis can be presented with instructions for any procedures that they may have to follow. In addition, any positive results to symptoms by participants can trigger automatic alerts to medical staff or supervisors to highlight participants of concern that may require isolating or further testing.

When operating in the People View dashboard each individual's profile can be opened to display their daily survey results. Staff are also able to record notes to any individual's profile or communicate directly with them via email or text message from the People View screen.

Finally, when completing the daily survey participants are provided with a results card on their mobile device which can be used as a confirmation card or visual pass to confirm their daily status at entry or permission checkpoints.

## Contactless Sign in & Sign Out
Three measures have been added to REACH to assist in reducing physical contact with shared surfaces for common use devices such as Kiosk screens. These include:
- QR codes for use on Kiosk screens for sign in and sign out,
- NFC location beacons for device scanning at sign in or sign out, and
- Remote Auth allows for staff to remotely monitor kiosk screens to approve sign outs or returns.

Each of these measures provide pathways that allow for sign in and sign out transactions to occur on student and staff personal devices, reducing the need for touching of general use or common devices.
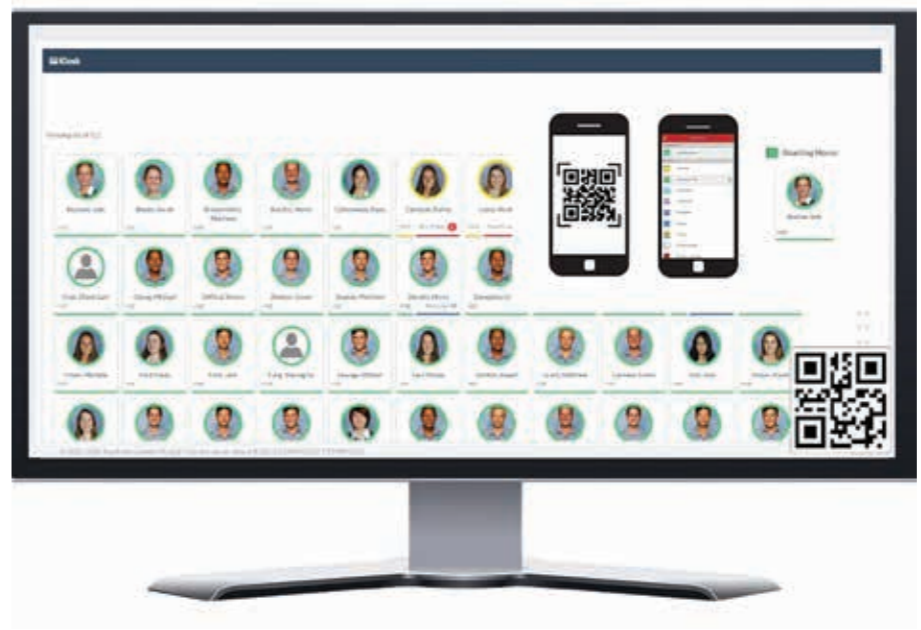
## Physical Distancing – managing location density
Mandated physical distancing requirements have made it necessary for schools to monitor and manage facilities in a way that can ensure population densities at locations are managed. This has involved setting limits to the number of people that can be present in various locations at any time.

Location Capacity Monitoring has been added to REACH to assist with this procedure. This allows schools to set capacity limits for any number of locations and to monitor, in real time, the number of people at those locations.

Current population counts are displayed for each location in real time on the REACH Kiosk screen and a traffic light alarm system is automatically introduced when capacities are implemented to identify locations which are approaching or have exceeded their capacity limits.

## Contact Tracing reports
A critical procedure for assessing the exposure of your school community to any infectious incident in your facilities is the ability to conduct contact tracing when an infected person is identified.

The location tracking features in REACH provide the essential data for contact tracing. We can simplify the contact tracing procedure for schools with a pre-existing feature and the development of a new tracing report which provides direct contact time assessments for any student over any time period.

The **Birdseye view** in Boarder Summary will display students who were in a single location at the same time. This view shows a list of students who have signed in to a location within a 20 minute window of the student's sign in time. It quickly identifies any students who were at any particular location at the same time and is supported with the SISO report in the REACH reporting suite which will provide an extended timeframe view for any location or group of locations.

The **SISO Contact Tracing Report** is a new detailed report for any individual student developed specifically for the current environment. This provides a detailed contact analysis for any individual, over any given time period, identifying how much direct contact time a student has had with other students across all of their known movements. Direct contact time for every student in your school is calculated to identify the amount of time spent at the same location as a potentially infected student.

## Exiting COVID
Despite the massive upheaval across all levels of society, normalcy will return and global progress towards a Coronavirus vaccine is accelerating. We are prepared for this moment also and ready to help schools to easily identify inoculated students with the use of student groups and user defined fields which will provide rapid identification of a student's status.

# Lights Out
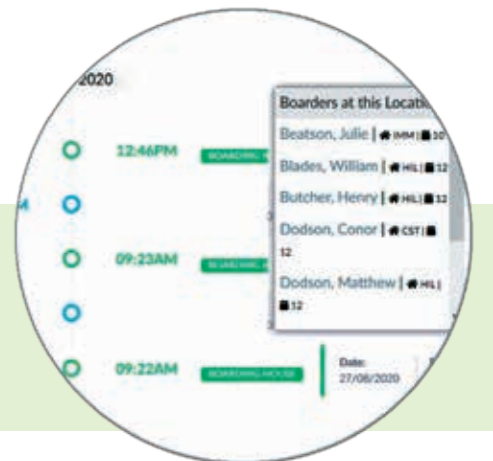
# Students Sharing Nudes: Supporting Wellbeing and Meeting Reporting Obligations

AUTHOR
Taryn Wren
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YSafe

In 2017, a South Australian teenager found himself at the centre of a court proceeding relating to child exploitation charges. The then 16-year-old pleaded guilty to two counts of producing child exploitation material but was spared conviction by the court.

The subject of the photographs in question? Himself.

The boy had taken the nude images of himself and shared them with his girlfriend. Following a tumultuous break-up, the girl shared the boys nude images on social media accompanied by the caption "let's share the **** out of it".

In fact, in the decade preceding 2017 nearly 1,500 young people (with an average age of 14.8 years) were found guilty of child exploitation offences in Queensland alone (Youth Law Australia, 2020).

Cases and statistics highlight two things:
1. As a community, we are not doing a good job of providing young people with access to quality education regarding sexting.

2. Historic legislation addressing young people and sexting has not provided adequate differentiation for the many circumstances that accompany this behaviour in the modern day, particularly in relation to consensual sexting and modern teen sexual experimentation practices, a point which is being gradually addressed through parliamentary reviews and legislative reforms.

**Sexting, student wellbeing, and mandatory reporting**
Nude or sexually explicit photographs or videos featuring a person under the age of eighteen is by legal definition, child exploitation material. The production, transmission, or possession of such material can result in serious criminal charges.

It is widely acknowledged that current legislation addressing child exploitation has not kept pace with the way that technology is integrated in the courting process or sexual exploration of the modern teenager. Consequently, a situation has arisen whereby the very laws that were designed to protect young people, can be used to inappropriately criminalise their behaviour when it comes to consensual sexting. In cases of consensual sexting, the involvement of law enforcement and the risk of criminal charges are likely not the best options we have from a student wellbeing perspective.

Which raises the question, how does this all tie in with boarding environments and staff mandatory reporting obligations?

Most will agree that the chance of a boarding staff member being inadvertently made aware of a student participating in sexting is relatively high. And whilst we all tend to know of our responsibility to report when there is obvious abuse or complexity, such as the image being shared without consent, or any form of adult involvement - What about when the sexting is consensual between teens of a similar age and power status?

With each State and Territory having their own mandatory reporting laws, getting explicit guidance that applies to all, is unfortunately not a possibility. First and foremost, if you hold any uncertainty about your responsibility to report in relation to students sharing nudes, seek clarification from your Head of Agency, Department of Education, or pertinent Regulatory Body. With legislation in place concerning a failure to report by a person responsible for a child, and with a reported one in three Australian teens having some form of experience with sexting, understanding your obligations as a mandatory reporter is essential (Australian Office of the eSafety Commissioner, 2017).

It is important to consider what conditions warrant a mandatory report in your region and how your State or Territory legislation defines child sexual abuse. Using Western Australia as an example: Mandatory reporting legislation in WA relates to certain professionals forming a belief, based on reasonable grounds, in the course of their paid or unpaid work, that a child has or is being subject to child sexual abuse.

The definition of child sexual abuse is: Sexual abuse', in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where: (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

Based upon this definition of child sexual abuse, in WA there is no requirement for a mandatory report to be submitted to the Department unless it fits the above criteria. Teenage sexual activity, including sharing nudes (unless there is coercion, threats, power difference etc.) therefore does not require a report[1]. (Department of Communities WA, Mandatory Reporting Services, 2020).

**Where to from here?**
Whilst understanding mandatory reporting requirements when it comes to sexting is essential, the goal of course is to create an environment where incidents warranting a report do not occur. There are some simple practices that boarding houses should be implementing to mitigate sexting incidents and support the development of digital citizens in their care.

- Education: Providing boarding students with progressive developmentally appropriate education regarding sexting, including the potential legal and social consequences. Core concepts such as respect in relationships and consent should be central to such programs.
- Policy: Boarding house policies should explicitly address cyber safety considerations, including sexting.

These policies should be collaboratively developed; clearly communicated to students, staff and parents; and consistently enforced.
- Help Seeking: Students should be provided with options for help seeking in relation to image-based abuse and other online safety issues, including being made aware of external support agencies such as the Australian Office of the eSafety Commissioner.



- Staff Knowledge and Practices: Staff should receive adequate training and support in relation to sexting and other online safety issues. Staff should exercise caution if collecting students' personal devices and be aware of online safety incident management procedures.
- Device Management: In collaboration with parents, steps should be taken to ensure that students are only accessing age appropriate online platforms and services.

[1] It is important to be mindful that each agency will have different policy requirements which might require them to report the matter to police.

# Lights Out

# Gambling, Online Gaming and Addiction – Education, Awareness and Protection.

Helping Your Child Manage Boredom and the Temptations of the Online World in Uncertain and Unfamiliar Times

AUTHOR
Patrick Foster
Director of Educational Programmes
EPIC Risk Management

These are unprecedented times for everyone, and the world is facing a period of uncertainty and disruption. Challenging times brings the opportunity to be resilient, stick together and fight back, in our own way, but also can present problems that may not have otherwise arisen. With the government taking the decision to shut the doors on schools, young people now face a long period in which boredom, isolation and a lack of routine or normality is going to be an ever-present reality. With that, comes temptation and many will choose to occupy that time online, predominantly in three ways, gambling, online gaming and on social media.
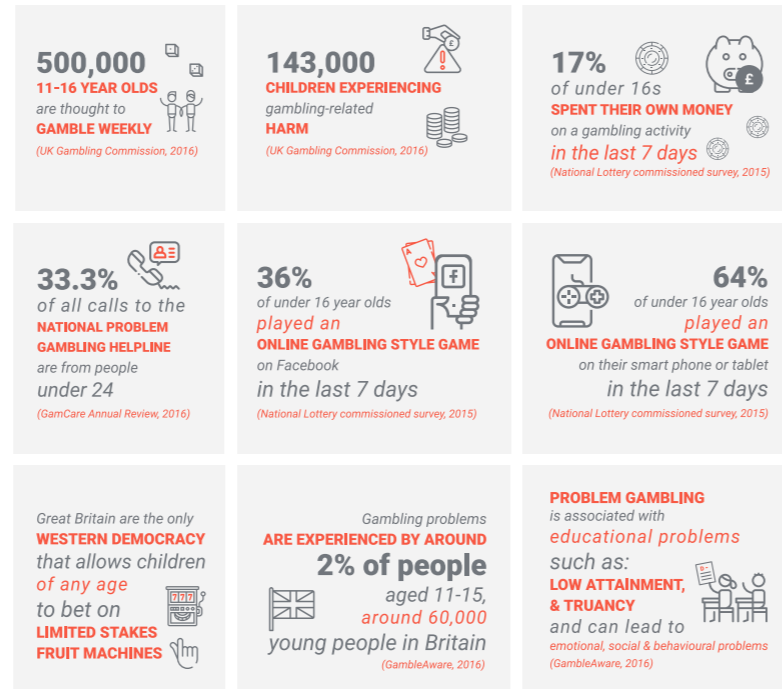
As we are all increasingly aware, the ease of access and exposure of the above activities make it increasingly easy for young people to spend huge amounts of their time and money online.

The brutal reality of any addictive behaviour is the more you do it, the more likely you are to develop a problem with it or rely on it for various reasons. Young people have been born into a generation which craves instant response, reaction and immediate gratification; things which the online environment provides in abundance and unfortunately is what makes the online world so appealing. Not only that, but it can often offer a sense of belonging and identity, the opportunity to compete, communicate and compare yourself against other people 'on tap' is everything the young of today crave.

The current climate means that young people do not have the chance to play sport, or even watch it. From my experience many young people will instead be choosing to either bet on or virtualize it. Over the coming weeks, even months, young people face a time where they may not get the same excitement or rush that normal everyday life – whether at school or at home – will bring. Instead, they will try to recreate that buzz, or indeed try to conquer feelings of boredom, online. This is something we all - including them - need to be aware of, particularly the dangerous consequences that can materialize from this.

The combination of this uniquely challenging and anxious time alongside the constant barrage of advertisements and exposure, and let's be honest undeniably addictive products and games mixed with the competitive characteristics of many young people today, gives us the potential recipe for disaster. Gambling can no longer just be seen in the 'old-fashioned' sense of the term; people of a younger and younger age are being drawn into these behaviours and this world through its most modern forms. The advent of loot-boxes, packs, skins and a plethora of other in-app or in-game purchases means that young people can not only waste a lot of valuable time but also enormous amounts of money from an age where, historically, the opportunity to gamble or spend such amounts rarely would have arisen.

Never judge a game by its cover. What may appear innocent or, in the early stages, be about credits and everything being free, can suddenly change unbeknown to the child and parent. Awareness of this is paramount. The lines between gambling and gaming are becoming increasingly blurred and these types of behaviour are being normalised.

**500,000**
**11-16 YEAR OLDS**
are thought to
**GAMBLE WEEKLY**
*(UK Gambling Commission, 2016)*

**143,000**
**CHILDREN EXPERIENCING**
gambling-related
**HARM**
*(UK Gambling Commission, 2016)*

**17%**
*of under 16s*
**SPENT THEIR OWN MONEY**
on a gambling activity
*in the last 7 days*
*(National Lottery commissioned survey, 2015)*

**33.3%**
*of all calls to the*
**NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE**
are from people
*under 24*
*(GamCare Annual Review, 2016)*

**36%**
of under 16 year olds
*played an*
**ONLINE GAMBLING STYLE GAME**
on Facebook
*in the last 7 days*
*(National Lottery commissioned survey, 2015)*

**64%**
of under 16 year olds
*played an*
**ONLINE GAMBLING STYLE GAME**
on their smart phone or tablet
*in the last 7 days*
*(National Lottery commissioned survey, 2015)*

Great Britain are the only
**WESTERN DEMOCRACY**
that allows children
*of any age*
to bet on
**LIMITED STAKES FRUIT MACHINES**

Gambling problems
**ARE EXPERIENCED BY AROUND**
**2% of people**
aged 11-15,
*around 60,000*
*young people in Britain*
*(GambleAware, 2016)*

**PROBLEM GAMBLING**
is associated with
*educational problems*
such as:
**LOW ATTAINMENT, & TRUANCY**
and can lead to
emotional, social & behavioural problems
*(GambleAware, 2016)*

The sooner we start approaching gambling and gaming as being intrinsically linked and the fact that often one creates a gateway for the other, the quicker we can react and prevent the issues of addiction and mental health which are becoming more and more prevalent across this generation.

I spend the majority of my day to day life sharing my story and experiences with young people, and on occasions their teachers and parents, but I wanted to offer some advice to boarding staff and parents that I hope will help with navigating the challenges of the coming months by understanding the dangers and pitfalls of these activities. The aim is to enable you to play your part in educating your young people on these issues, afford them the chance to make more informed choices on the subject and most importantly protect them and indeed yourselves.

This will also give you a complete insight into the warning signs to look out for and identify in your children, as to whether they may be potentially more vulnerable due to their characteristics and personality.

The easiest way to think about this is A - B - C - D...

## A - Awareness and Acceptance
Please take sufficient time to be aware of what your children are doing online when it comes to online gaming and gambling.

Try to be vigilant of and observe how much time they are spending on these games, what is their behaviour like when they are on them and indeed off them.
Are you aware of any changes in behaviour over time and have you raised these with them?

You also need to accept that they are going to spend time gaming and indeed potentially gambling (if they are legally allowed to) because it is now so engrained in culture and society. It is what young people do now and how they like to spend their time both socially and independently.

Total prevention or prohibition is not the solution and can create even bigger problems whether that is them doing it 'underground' or their reaction to you adopting this stance.

## B - Boundaries and Barriers
Ensure that you set very clear boundaries with your children when it comes to online gaming and gambling; both in terms of opportunity and finance.

Limit what they can do, when they can it and for how long.

These boundaries can always be loosened but it is much harder to have very few and then become stricter or implement them at all.

Clear boundaries and mutual understanding and commitment to these is key. You may get 'kick-back' or resistance when implementing or suggesting these but be firm - it's worth it and essential in the long run.

It is also essential to implement and activate 'parental controls' or blocks. These will ensure that young people have definitive barriers in place to resist the temptation to do something, buy something or play in something that they know they shouldn't and you don't want them to or know it is best for them not to. This can be done on devices and specific games. All the information you require can be found here: https://www.esrb.org/tools-for-parents/parental-controls/

## C - Clarity and Consistency
Be clear on what your children are playing and doing and what your expectations are. Please ensure that you are aware of the ratings and content of every game that they are playing regularly.

There will be parents who do not follow these guidelines and chose to allow their young people to do what they want. That is a risk and a risk not worth taking. There are very good reasons why there are age limits and laws around gambling and gaming and ultimately its vital you adhere to these.
You must be in control not them.

It is vital that you maintain an element of control and ensure that you dictate terms not them and be consistent with these and your messages.

It is easy for you to not have the knowledge, understanding or awareness and for them to take advantage of this and abuse this; please do what you can to ensure this isn't the case.

It is all about control and moderation. If a young person can maintain control of time, money and their mental health then they will be able to maintain a 'safe' relationship.

Understanding it is so easy to lose 'control' and the loss of any one of these three factors can be very dangerous. It is vital that both they and you pay close attention to the impact on mental health. Anger, insomnia, low self-esteem or distress can all arise from a negative relationship with gambling and gaming and staying in control of these is essential.

Something that consistently has a detrimental effect on wellbeing cannot be good for anyone.

## D - Discussion and 'Drawing the Line'
Talking is so powerful and the most important thing at all stages of any relationship with gambling and online gaming.

It is vital that you talk to your children about these topics. This promotes transparency and makes them aware that they can ask questions without being judged, put their hands up when they make mistakes without the fear of an adverse reaction and the confidence to speak up if needed.

Facilitate conversations with them, discuss your own relationship with either, talk about adverts, implications etc it is all part of their education. Discuss stories that you read in the media about young people or others who highlight the dangers and pitfalls of this.

Remember to 'draw the line' somewhere. If you have concerns, act on instinct.

# Lights Out

Talk to other parents about it regularly.

Sometimes it's simply a case of saying 'no'. Not always but sometimes and ensuring that you exercise this when most needed can make the difference.

Moderation, understanding, awareness, vigilance and control are the keys to ensuring that you protect your young ones from ever suffering the harm that I did.

**The 'Do's and Don'ts' when it comes to protecting your son and daughter from the dangers of gambling:**

- Don't glamorise gambling in the household. Similarly, one parent who glamorises it and one who hates it or completely discourages it. They will not know who to follow.
- Don't gamble in front of them.
- Don't be blasé about its dangers or indeed encourage them to gamble.
- Don't encourage or expose to small bets from a young age (Melbourne Cup, sports betting etc).
- Don't fund or enable gambling by giving them too much money or constantly 'bailing' them out or 'topping' them up when they have used it for gambling.
- Don't link your personal banking/credit to games they are playing online.

- Do encourage open and honest conversation from a young age.
- Do lead by example – be honest about your relationship with gambling and your views.
- Do set time limits for any online activities.
- Do talk about the potential consequences of gambling.
- Do promote responsibility.
- Do manage and scrutinise finances if you have concerns or you are aware they partake in these activities a lot. If it is not a problem, they should not have anything to hide.
- Do restrict access and opportunity.
- Do encourage them to read literature both about gambling, addiction and self help books.
- Do remove ads from all social media, reduce what they can see on YouTube (block ads)
- Do ask what they already know about gambling and their relationship with it.
- Do make them understand what gambling is, even in its simplest form and further their education on an increasingly relevant topic.

### Practical Steps
https://www.esrb.org/tools-for-parents/parental-controls/
- Block by Age Rating
- Control Spending
- Limit Time Spent
- Restrict Communication

### Initiative conversations:
- What are their favourite games and why?
- Which games are on your children's wish list(s)?
- Which rating categories are OK for your children to play, which ones require permission, and which are off-limits? Don't forget to give them your reasons too!
- Are there specific types of content or content descriptors that are off limits?
  - Do any of the games your children play include online multiplayer features? If so:
- Do they need permission before playing online?
- Are there rules regarding with whom your children can play online?
- Have your children ever seen or heard inappropriate behaviour from other players?
- Do your children know what to do and whom to contact, if they're being bullied or harassed online?
- Do your children know to never give out personal information online?
  - Have you set parental controls on your family's video game system(s), mobile device(s), and computer(s)? If so:
- What's the highest rating allowed?
- Have you set restrictions on in-game purchases, time spent playing, internet and browser access, or with whom your children can play online?
- Do you and your children understand what (if any) personal information will be collected in the game, why it's being collected, and with whom it's shared? (If not, check the game's privacy policy.)
- Are there other house rules regarding which games are allowed, when, and how long they can be played (like number of hours each day, only after homework and chores, etc.)?

### Characteristics of someone who may be potentially most vulnerable:
- High risk working environment - professional sport, financial services, gambling industry.
*(More relevant for adults and older people but useful for those of university age or young adults).*
- Access to money
- Lack of money
- Young for their age and naïve or someone who thinks they are invincible
- Negative life events, loss of job, death, relationships
- Lonely or very independent people
- Gambling to win money rather enjoyment
- Competitive people - drug (winning and losing)
- All or nothing type person
- Impulsive
- Mood disorder
- ADHD/ADD Diagnosis
- People who suffer with mental health issues
- 'Addictive Personality'.



# From the Chair



**Pauline Turner**
Chair

The end of the 2020 school year in the Southern Hemisphere is fast approaching and with that, our year 12 students final departure out of the safety net of boarding schools and into the world at large. With the uncertainty of the world they are moving into we hope and pray for these young adults, that they have been well-equipped to manage all the changes and challenges of life outside the school gates.

Boarding is and has always been about equipping students to manage change and face the challenge of uncertainty with enthusiasm, care and thoughtfulness. Also, we hope that our students remain inclusive of everyone whom they encounter along the way. A boarder has the capacity not only to learn the skills needed for sustained resilience and independence, they have had opportunity to practise these skills while living and sharing their lives within our school walls.

We wish them all God's blessing as they branch out into their adult lives and trust that we have equipped them with emotional, physical and educational skills which they will need for success in the world outside.

For many, 2020 cannot come to a close soon enough, with a year like no other in our living history. It is time for a period of reflection and consideration of all that has been achieved as well as the areas that necessitates radical change. We can consider what we have learnt personally, professionally and institutionally.

In the ABSA office Richard Stokes and Tom Dunsmore have turned the education of boarding staff into a virtual experience with such wonderful success, and together they are preparing the continuation of this form of learning for the future, as well as face to face gatherings to serve all aspects of the boarding world. Their capacity for ingenuity is outstanding.

There has also been great sadness and tragedies for so many across the world and close to home through the year and we want to remember these members as well.

As the year draws to a close the ABSA Board say thank you. Thank you to our membership for your enduring support and encouragement throughout the year. Thank you to Richard, Tom, Jackie and Jared for steering ABSA's work so efficiently, with creativity, expertise and availability to all in need and providing an encouraging word in times of upheaval and disruption.

We hope and trust you have a time of rest to recharge emotionally and physically as you venture into the New Year with belief in humanity's capacity for greater love and compassion in the year ahead.

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We plan to feature two schools each edition
All you need to do, is write a brief article
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absa@boarding.org.au
by 1st February 2021

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