



# B Lights Out

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SCHOOLS  
ASSOCIATION

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CONTACT US  
Australian Boarding Schools Association.  
Postal: PO Box 5569, Brendale, Qld. 4500  
Office: Unit 6, 3 Hinkler Court,  
Brendale, Qld. 4500  
P + 61 7 3205 4940  
F + 61 7 3205 6567  
E absa@boarding.org.au  
[www.boarding.org.au](http://www.boarding.org.au)

EDITOR  
Richard Stokes, Executive Director,  
Australian Boarding Schools Association

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
ddprint - ddprint@mac.com

PRINTING  
Clkprint - info@clkprint.com.au

# 13 Things Boarding Schools Should Know About 13 Reasons Why

## AUTHOR

Dr. Christopher Thurber  
Clinical Psychologist and Faculty Member  
Phillips Exeter Academy,  
United States

In response to a growing concern with suicidality and media dramatisations of mental illness, I encourage all boarding school faculty, staff, and parents to familiarise themselves with this latest controversial piece of content. Most important, I encourage everyone who works in boarding schools to engage students in conversations about their own thoughts and feelings regarding mental health. This is just one of dozens of topics about which I would be honoured to deliver trainings at your school.

**1. What it is.** *13 Reasons Why* is a popular Netflix web television series. There are 13 one-hour episodes that viewers can access on the website Netflix.com. Select scenes are also posted elsewhere online.

- The series is based on the 2007 young adult book, *13 Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher.
- The plot revolves around two high school students, Clay Jensen and Hannah Baker, the latter of whom dies by suicide before the story begins. She has left behind cassette tapes wherein she describes the demoralising circumstances in her life. The tapes provide her version of the reasons why she died by suicide and name the people she feels are most responsible.

**2. Why it's worth a look.** If you don't have 13 spare hours, you might watch a few parts of a few episodes of *13 Reasons Why*, even if it bores or disturbs you. Once you have a feel for the style and content, you could read the plot summaries of the episodes online.

- Watching some of the series will help you understand its pros and cons better than simply reading this info sheet.
- Watching some of the series will give you additional credibility with anyone interested in discussing or debating its content and merits.

**3. Why talking about it helps.** It is far better to talk about the phenomenon of suicide than not to talk about it. The Netflix series strikes some viewers as tiresome, melodramatic, or too disturbing to watch, but it has sparked some helpful conversations.

- When a caring person listens, empathises, and discusses suicide with a distressed person, it decreases the chances of that distressed person ever making an attempt. Yes, suicide is an uncomfortable topic, but talking about any uncomfortable topic demonstrates your concern. Talking about Hannah's suicide in *13 Reasons Why*, even if you haven't watched the series, is an opportunity for candid discussion.
- In addition, you can point out some of 13's inaccuracies, including: the unethical and unprofessional behaviour of the (apparently unlicensed) school counsellor (see Point 9 below); Hannah's elaborate pre-suicide planning; the depiction of suicide as a logical and viable way to cope with break-ups, bullying, assault, and betrayal; and the disinclination of Hannah's classmates to seek adult support. Sure, most teen films portray adults as unhelpful. But in real life, most adults are helpful and most adolescents know whom they can lean on for support.
- For more inaccuracies, check out Point 7 below.



**4. How it recycles timeless themes.** *13 Reasons Why* is not uniquely violent or provocative, but the rape and suicide scenes are particularly disturbing.

- Similar emotional turmoil, interpersonal violence, self-harm, and intrigue exist in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (wherein both main characters commit suicide) as well as in his plays *Julius Ceasar*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*. (Two of Shakespeare's late plays feature cannibalism and incest: *Pericles* and *The Tragedy of King Lear*.)
- These 16th-century themes were dramatised more recently in the 1995 independent film, *Kids*, directed by Larry Clark, and the semi-autobiographical *Thirteen*, the 2003 film written by Catherine Hardwick and Nikki Reed. Both of these films and *13 Reasons Why* are more gratuitous and less literary than Shakespeare, but that makes them more accessible to a teen audience. Still, the content is classic, which further supports Point 3 above.
- Conclusion: Many adolescents have seen worse online or read something similarly disturbing for their English class. Young people are growing up in an environment that is more saturated with violent and sexual media (e.g., news, movies, video games) than in any previous generation. To read my thoughts on exposure, visit: [http://campspirit.com/files/2016/03/CM-XXX-posed\\_2015.pdf](http://campspirit.com/files/2016/03/CM-XXX-posed_2015.pdf)
- Recommendation: Whenever possible, parents, teachers, and other caring adults should sensibly restrict and monitor the exposure young people have to content. Whenever possible, adults and young people should watch and read together, or learn about that content together by sampling it or reading summaries. Then, discuss it. Only by engaging in candid conversations that contextualise content can we promote healthy development and model healthy choices around relationships and entertainment.

**5. How to distinguish fantasy from reality.** Death by suicide is tragic, not romantic, not glamorous, and not an effective coping strategy.

- Suicide is a permanent action that causes widespread distress in all survivors. Hannah's leaving a box of cassettes to wreak havoc on her peers (and the threat of back-up boxes if they stop the chain of listening) shares something chaotic in common with Heath Ledger's portrayal of the violently sociopathic Joker in *The Dark Knight* (2008).
- Hannah has symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; she may also have antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder. There is more here diagnostically than a mood or anxiety disorder.
- Healthy and effective ways of coping with distress, as well as evidence-based treatments for mental illnesses, offer hope for anyone in emotional pain. Psychotherapy and medication may take time and effort, but they work.

**6. Why the series is controversial.** In addition to its graphic cinematography and disturbing content, *13 Reasons Why* has also stirred debate about whether it glamorises suicide. Having watched many parts of the series, I am confident saying that it does indeed glamorise suicide. So why the debate?

- On the one hand, most of the characters in this fictitious series have glamorous dimensions: good looks, fancy homes, fashionable clothes, trendy mannerisms, impeccable manicures, etc. On the other hand, the main character is clearly in pain, having been the target of serious mistreatment. The guilt that many of the survivors feel is also clear and somewhat realistic.
- On the one hand, this is a stylish, web television series, which makes it inherently glamorous, albeit fictional. Millions of people have ogled at Hannah's painful experiences and tragic, calculated suicide. On the other hand, the series does try to illustrate individuals' psychological diversity and the painful interpersonal worlds of some adolescents.



**7. Which parts are most inaccurate.** The title and plot falsely suggest that the reasons people die by suicide are typically discoverable and logical.

- In many cases, suicide is an impulsive action, taken by someone whose judgement is clouded by one or more of the following: depression, substance use, trauma, or hopelessness. (The series does illustrate how alcohol abuse, reckless online behaviour, relationship violence, and plain old gossip fuel psychological distress.) Suicide is rarely the last step in an elaborate plan.
- In many cases, the unknown and undiscoverable details of a person's state of mind before dying by suicide add a lugubrious cloud of suffering to the death itself. In some ways, *13 Reasons Why* provides an abundance of answers to the questions everyone asks—but precious few ever get to answer—after a suicide. Therein lies the lurid popularity of the series.

**8. How to understand the causes of suicide.** The title and plot falsely suggest that suicide is the sole fault of the survivors. Only sensitive and well-intentioned Clay is exonerated, barely.

- Dying by suicide is more a symptom of mental illness than a direct consequence of other people's actions or inactions. With the exception of violent perpetrators, suicide is rarely the fault of the survivors, even those who are named in a note, tape, or video.
- Yes, certain people may have traumatised the person who attempts to end their life by suicide. And yes, we must continue to prevent bullying and assault, in all their forms. But suicide is not an effective way to retaliate or get revenge. Perpetrators of traumatic violence are unlikely to be effected by their target's suicide, let alone remediated by it.
- One interesting conversation to have is about which characters in *13 Reasons Why* contributed most to Hannah's deep distress. Some are clearly guilty, but viewers will find themselves asking how some people who are the targets of physical and interpersonal violence recover and live happy, productive lives; others live, but in emotional pain; and a few others die by suicide. Research suggests that one important factor distinguishes resilient survivors: Having at least one, loving, reliable interpersonal connection.

**9. Where to find support.** Watching *13 Reasons Why* and other provocative content is likely to stir up uncomfortable feelings, whether viewers admit them or not.

- You can provide support to others by empathising and asking open-ended questions. Comments such as, "It was hard to watch" and questions such as, "How else might she have expressed or copied with her pain?" help to start supportive conversations.
- You can remind others of the professional and lay resources available to them, such as licensed mental health professionals, clergy, parents, teachers, coaches, peers, mentors, and family friends.
- Rest assured that trusted adults are rarely as negligent as the "school counsellor," Mr. Porter. In response to Hannah's concern about being sexually assaulted, Porter asks, "Did he force himself on you?" Hannah replies, "I think so," at which point Porter incorrectly and unethically asserts that if she can't give him the boy's name and is unwilling to press charges, then "there really is only one option...you can move on."
- NOTE: Almost anyone, regardless of educational qualifications, can call himself or herself a "school counsellor." Reputable schools, camps, and other youth-serving organizations employ only licensed professionals with a master's or doctorate in clinical social work or clinical psychology.

**10. How to respond to suicidality.** There are excellent online courses for anyone wishing to learn the best ways to spot and respond to signs of distress.

- Screening for Mental Health, Inc. has the best 90-minute online course for non-mental health professionals and unlicensed counsellors. The course is called Plan, Prepare, Prevent: The SOS Signs of Suicide® and is available here: [mentalhealthscreening.org](http://mentalhealthscreening.org) Gatekeeper.
- You should consult a licensed mental health professional whenever you have a concern about a friend's mental health. Handouts on suicidality are intended to provide context and assist you in the initial stage of providing support. This does not qualify you to make an assessment of lethality.



**11. The reality that underlies 13's fantasy.** The dramatic fantasy in *13 Reasons Why* is that Hannah can connect with others after her death. We all want to connect, to feel that we belong, and to nurture relationships. The tragic flaw in Hannah's magical thinking about posthumous connection, retaliation, and justice is that no mere mortal can connect with others after they die.

- It's normal to imagine what it would be like to be dead. We've all wondered how others would react, but we will probably never know.
- However, we can connect while we are alive, even with those who have hurt us or whom we love but feel disconnected from. Seeking help and forging new connections in times of distress is a sign of strength. That support can lead to healthier mental states and improved relationships.

**12. How to reframe distorted thinking.** Many young people (especially those with symptoms of anxiety or depression) believe everything they think. We do not need to believe everything we think.

- If a person is catastrophising or engaging in black-or-white thinking (e.g., "I'll never get into a good university" or "I'm a total failure" or "I have zero friends" or "My life is meaningless"), then provide empathy and a gentle nudge to look at themselves and their circumstances in a more accurate, nuanced way.
- Try saying something like, "It may feel bleak right now. I can see how upset you are." You might add something like, "It hasn't always been like this, but it's hard to imagine things getting better. Maybe part of it is how you're seeing things right now. Let's talk about it some more. What's one time when you haven't felt completely alone or like a total failure?"

**13. What to expect next year.** The young people talking about *13 Reasons Why* today will be talking about something else next year. New media and new people will enter the conversation. But like today, everyone will benefit from conversations about the meaning and effects of the latest content. Sex and violence have always been part of the human experience. One could even argue that some places in the world are more civilised than they were 1000 or 10,000 years ago. It's the daily, vivid, gratuitous saturation with this content that seems to have accelerated.

It will probably continue. What to do?

- Don't just talk about what you see (e.g., "There was another ISIS suicide bombing in London."). Talk about how it makes you feel. (e.g., "When I watch the news and see pictures of dead bodies on the street, I feel helpless and angry. Groups like ISIS really frighten me, even though I don't want to let them. It's just awful.")
- Just as you may be a supportive rock for someone, you need your own supportive rock. Reach out to someone you trust and lean on them when you need it.



Dr. Christopher Thurber is a board-certified clinical psychologist and teacher who enjoys creating original content for independent schools and camps worldwide. He has served on the faculty of Phillips Exeter Academy since 1999 and has been invited to deliver keynotes, faculty trainings, and staff workshops in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. He lives with his wife and boys in New Hampshire.

Dr. Chris will be returning to Australia in August, 2017 and is currently taking bookings through ABSA. Please contact [richard@boarding.org.au](mailto:richard@boarding.org.au) or write directly to Dr. Chris [chris@drchristhurber.com](mailto:chris@drchristhurber.com)







## Underage "Sexting" and the Law

### AUTHOR

Jezlyne Ghanimeh  
LLB(Hons)/BPsychSc

It is no wonder that when the explorative, inquisitive and impulsive nature of adolescence is combined with the rapid development and adoption of online digital technologies, something like 'sexting' is born.<sup>1</sup>

### What is Sexting?

'Sexting' is a term that originated in the media (derived from a combination of the words 'sex' and 'texting') and is the practice of sending or posting sexually suggestive text messages and images including nude and semi-nude photos via mobile phone messaging or through social network sites on the internet such as Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, Skype, Twitter, Tumblr, MySpace and YouTube.<sup>2</sup>

The phenomena of sexting continues to emerge amongst our younger generation, with a recent Australian survey of over 2,000 participants finding that almost half reported having sent sexual pictures or videos of themselves to others, while two-thirds had received a sexual image. It also found sexting to be prevalent among age groups from 13 to 19 years old, with 13 to 15 year olds particularly likely to receive sexual images from others.<sup>3</sup>

With most Australian boarders being under the age of 18, the sexting phenomena creates a live issue for the boarding school community, due to the serious legal implications associated with the behaviour. This article aims to discuss the legal consequences of underage sexting in the context of Australian boarding schools, emphasising the need for ongoing innovative discussion on effective ways to address such behaviours amongst our young Australian boarders.



### Sexting and Australian Law

Many boarders may not be aware that under current Australian criminal law, sexting can be classified as 'child pornography' if the content of the communication portrays a person under the age of 18.<sup>4</sup> Child pornography is defined as material that depicts a young person:<sup>5</sup>

- (a) showing their private parts (including their genitals, anus or breasts);
- (b) posing in a sexual way;
- (c) doing a sexual act; or
- (d) in the presence of someone who is doing a sexual act or pose; and does this in a way that is offensive to the average person.<sup>6</sup>

If boarders are involved with communication classified as child pornography (whether as the sender, receiver or as an intermediary person), they can potentially be charged with child pornography offences. Offences include where the communication is:

- (a) asked for (procuring child pornography);
- (e) taken or created (producing child pornography);
- (f) received and kept (possessing child pornography); and
- (g) sent, posted, passed around or uploaded to the internet (distributing child pornography).

Indeed, teenagers, like adults, can be charged with child pornography offences with the maximum penalties being up to 15 years in jail and being placed on the sex offender register. These penalties are controversially high because the laws were designed to stop adults from sexually abusing children. No thought was given (until very recently) to the chance that children might themselves be found to be offenders under these laws. Put eloquently by Dan Svantesson.

*It is interesting to note that, under Australian criminal law, the 'victims' of, and the parties responsible for, the act of child pornography are the same — a somewhat absurd situation bearing in mind the serious purpose for which child pornography laws exist.<sup>7</sup>*

In order to protect children from such harsh penalties, the ability to prosecute children under Federal law is now subject to permission of the Attorney-General. In 2011, Victoria was the first State to lead inquiry into the practice of sexting, where a defence was subsequently created to prevent prosecution of minors in possession of child pornography.<sup>8</sup>

### When to Report

Where sexting communication classified as child pornography is discovered in Australian boarding schools, such behaviour becomes reportable to local Police authorities (and ideally to the Heads of Boarding and parents of the children involved).

However, police and prosecutor discretion presently appears to keep most young people out of the criminal justice system, with few young people being charged and prosecuted for consensual sexting alone.<sup>9</sup> Cases that are charged and prosecuted tend to involve aggravating factors such as malicious intent or reckless misuse. The severity of the legal consequences seems to be dependent on the harm that has been caused to the subject/victim of the sext.

### "Sext" Education

The legal consequences associated with sexting highlights the need for ongoing innovative discussion on effective ways to address such behaviours amongst young people in Australian boarding schools. The motivations for young people to engage in sexting behaviours therefore becomes central to considering, designing and implementing effective prevention strategies for such behaviour.

Contrary to popular media hype, recent Australian research found that young people are motivated to engage in sexting behaviours as a consensual and enjoyable part of their intimate relationships, with little evidence of peer pressure or coercion to engage in the behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

In light of these motivations, prevention strategies that emphasise methods of overcoming peer pressure, or present sexting as a shameful behaviour that is dangerous to young boarders may not be an effective educational tool, as such strategies appear to be unaligned with the motivations of most young people who engage in the behaviour. Rather, recent research suggests that prevention strategies should aim to regulate behaviour by emphasising harm minimisation—recognising young people often consensually engage in sexting at some point, and focusses on educating them on ways to minimise the negative outcomes of the behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

'ThinkUKnow'<sup>12</sup> is a helpful Australian internet safety program that is designed to help young people become aware of the risks associated with online communication and develop methods to reduce those risks. Mounted by the Australian Federal Police and Microsoft Australia, ThinkUKnow delivers interactive information on online safety tailored to young people, with sections explaining what is appropriate online, what can go wrong, what to do if things go wrong and how to develop strategies to manage risk when using online and digital technology. There is also information for adults on how to protect children in the online world.

It is the responsibility of educators and supervisors in the Australian boarding school community to help educate their boarders on their rights and responsibilities regarding sexting, to help Australian boarders make good decisions when managing their intimate relationships and engaging in the online world.

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Arcabascio, 'Sexting and Teenagers: OMG R U Going 2 Jail???' (2009) 16(3)"

<sup>2</sup> "Richmond Journal of Law and Technology 7; Thomas Crofts and Murray Lee, 'Sexting, Children and Child Pornography' (2013) 35(1) Sydney Law Review 93."

<sup>3</sup> Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, Parliament of Australia, High Wire Act: Cyber Safety and the Young, Interim Report (June 2011) 136 [4.47]."

<sup>4</sup> As defined by Australian Federal law (see Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) pt 10.6, div 473, s 473.1). It is important to note that according to State law, three different age levels can be found for the definition of 'child' in relation to child pornography and abuse material (in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia a child is a person under 16 years, in South Australia the relevant age level is under 17 years and in the remaining States the relevant age is under 18 years). For more information on your relevant State legislation see: Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) s 91FA; Criminal Code 1899 (Qld) s 207A 1; and Criminal Code 1913 (WA) s 217A; Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA) s 62; Legislation Act 2001 (ACT) pt 1; Criminal"

<sup>5</sup> Code (NT) s 1; Criminal Code 1924 (Tas) s 1A; Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) s 67A)."

<sup>6</sup> Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) pt 10.6, div 473, s 473.1."

<sup>7</sup> Interpretation of what is 'offensive' to the average person varies slightly between each State. The New South Wales standard to be applied is 'the standard of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults ... the literary, artistic or educational merit ... the journalistic merit ... and ... the general character of the material (see New South Wales Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Report of the Child Pornography Working Party (January 2010) 3 s 91FB(2)(a)). This is a similar position for Queensland, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia (see Criminal Code (NT) s 125A(1); Criminal Code 1899 (Qld) s 207A; Criminal Code 1924 (Tas) s 1A; Criminal Code 1913 (WA) s 217A). In South Australia, the material must be such that it is intended, or apparently intended, to excite or gratify sexual interest (see Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA) s 62) and in Australian Capital Territory it must be created substantially for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of someone other than the child (see Crimes Act 1900 (ACT) s 64(5))."

<sup>8</sup> Dan Svantesson, 'Sexting and the Law - How Australia Regulates Electronic Communication of Non- Professional Sexual Content' (2011) 22(2) Bond Law Review 42."

<sup>9</sup> Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) s 70(2)."

<sup>10</sup> Lee et al., above n3."

<sup>11</sup> Lee et al., above n3."

<sup>12</sup> Australian Federal Police, ThinkUKnow Australia Youth Site, ThinkUKnow Australia, "<[http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids>)>."



# Lights Out

## Leadership Brisbane Grammar Style

### AUTHOR

Berian Williams-Jones,  
Director of Boarding  
Brisbane Grammar School

*Adapted from the address at the Annual  
Harlin House Dinner, 2016.*

"At The Hutchins School he was told that he was a leader because only leaders were admitted into The Hutchins School. Leadership, he was told, was his natural destiny because it was the natural destiny of all people born leaders, who were all the boys at Hutchins. And so the world went on telling him ...." The Narrow Road to the Far North (Richard Flanagan).

There was a time when schools would be best known for their fine buildings, for the uniform worn by their students, by an elaborate crest, and the colours of their sporting jerseys. Much has changed however and today, almost all schools now also present well-honed statements of intent, straplines that succinctly define the benefit of the program they offer, and of course a series of value or virtues that are at the core of the educational experience. Of the values or virtues that are identified by schools, few appear more often than that of leadership.

For many of us, when we use the term leadership, our thoughts are drawn to those who lead sporting teams, to those who have built large and successful companies, to those who have left their mark upon our history. For many of the current boarders at Harlin House, their first response to identifying leaders is to name great sporting figures such as Steve Smith or Jonathon Thurston, captains of industry such as Bill Gates at Microsoft, or the late Steve Jobs at Apple, or political activists such as Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King who have been at the heart of significant political change.

However, we must remember that leadership means different things to different people, and most certainly means different things according to context and situation. Put simply, leadership is not always about being the player with the armband, being the CEO of a global company, or the catalyst for a sociological

movement. At Harlin House, leadership is much more about being an example of good behaviour, setting the tone, playing their part, and most of all, making well-judged decisions that impact positively on those around us.

A brief tale from the American Civil War succinctly and eloquently illustrates that leadership can take many different forms. It is said that a rider on horseback came across a squad of soldiers who were trying to move a heavy piece of timber. A corporal stood by giving 'lordly' orders to heave, however the piece of timber was too heavy, and too firmly set in the soil, for the squad to have any impact.

"Why don't you help them?" asked the quiet man on the horse, addressing the self-important corporal. "Why, I'm a corporal sir!" was his response. Dismounting, the stranger carefully took his place with the soldiers. "Now, all together boys – heave," and the big piece of timber soon slid from its resting place and into position.

The stranger mounted his horse, and addressed the corporal. "The next time you have a piece of timber for your men to handle corporal, send for your commander-in-chief." The horseman in question was reputed to have been George Washington, later to become the first American President. His example was not to lead by giving orders, but to lead through actions.

Leadership isn't just about being the leader of the team, sometimes it's about doing your part, in order for the team to succeed. It isn't about being the CEO but being part of an organisation and making a significant contribution. It isn't about leading a protest or a rally, but about making a difference to those around you. That is what I see every day at Harlin House. Young men who are leaders not because they have been given an office, not because they bark instructions like the 'self-important colonel', but who are leaders, because they have been given the opportunity to make a difference.

For example, in Harlin House we allocate some of the senior boys the responsibility of leading a junior cohort. When I have spoken to these boys, what I have heard is a true care and concern for their fellow boarders. A willingness to put their own wants and needs second as they look

after younger boys. That, for me is true leadership.

In the evenings, the junior boys attend the Lilley Centre in order to complete their prep. They have access to some wonderful resources and are very well supervised by a House Tutor. However, most importantly, there is always a senior boy present, ready not only to assist or guide, but to provide an outstanding example of application and focus. That, is true leadership.

You only need to walk over the ovals on a Tuesday afternoon to see a hugely competitive game of touch in action. If you are lucky you might see someone dart through a gap, or throw an outrageous dummy pass. However, what you will also see, is a group of young men whose inclusivity is at the heart of this house. That, is leadership.

And finally, if there is a litmus test of any boarding community – it must be the conduct of the boys in the dinner queue. What I have witnessed is young men dutifully lining up and engaging in good natured conversation, enjoying the company of fellow boarders whilst waiting to be served. Boys who readily engage with the kitchen staff and who are appreciative of the efforts made to prepare the food. That, is leadership.

Next year will bring new opportunities for many boys. For those elected as officers, the opportunities are clear and apparent: for some others less so. However, in reality; each boy has an opportunity to lead, to grow, and to develop, be it through wearing the arm band of office, or by serving others. Our House Families system needs good role models, as we seek to re-invigorate our in-house tutor groups. Opportunities abound to be part of the Public Purpose programme and in doing so to assist with Rosie's or the Orange Sky Laundry, and to help those who live on the streets of Brisbane. Our various forums or committees, from the editorial group of our 'Boarderline' house newsletter, to the all-important Food Committee, all need boys who are able and willing to contribute. For me, leadership is about playing your part and serving others. As it says on a poster in the office of one of my esteemed colleagues, "If serving is below you, leadership is above you."

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## Being Well in Boarding is all About Your Words

Manage Boarding Anywhere ... by unleashing your inner voice for relationship success.

### AUTHOR

Tracey Shand  
Boardingology

You are more than just boarding. You are a person who has hopes, dreams and challenges in the same way as others working in any organisation. With our boarding lifestyle, we are all on the go 24-7 in our lifestyle choice so tiredness sets in and stress levels rise.

Managing Boarding Anywhere means that you need to reduce stress levels to stay well so that you are at the top of your game. Conversations happen everyday in boarding school life and it is through the power of words that actions happen or do not happen. Attach emotions and body language – and wow that is another article! But, what impact are these ‘words’ having on you, your relationships and community? What words have you used today to move forwards or backwards? Who have you said them to?

Often the things we say to ourselves we wouldn’t even think of saying to another person. We blame, shame, call names of the meanest sort, belittle and bully ourselves through self-talk. As part of my development, one day I put a rubber band around my wrist. Every time I said something negative to myself I pinged the band. I was shocked at how many times I pinged it and decided it was time for change. Try it and see what happens, how many times will you ping the rubber band?

What if, instead, we were more gentle with ourselves, asked questions and listened to the responses. You do this everyday with colleagues and young people – how about doing this for you? What if we treated ourselves as we treat a best friend or someone we love.

Here’s a TOP FIVE list of loving things to say to yourself.

#### 1. Good Job

Congratulate yourself on a job well done. It does not matter how big or small it is – give yourself a pat on the back. Keep a celebration book so that you have recorded the moment. Note to you – also good for job applications later.

#### 2. I apologise

Saying ‘I’m sorry’ for all the wrongs we have done ourselves can be the first steps in healing. Everyone makes mistakes but it is how you act after them that can define your self-talk.

#### 3. Be Present

Staying present, being aware of the physical, acknowledging the moment, this is when we are truly alive. How can you be more alive today?

#### 4. I forgive you

Sometimes it is easier to forgive others than ourselves. Yet, to have closure and to move on, often means we have to forgive ourselves. We are always harder on ourselves when things go wrong, take time to acknowledge it happened, learn from it and then let it go.

#### 5. What do you feel?

Asking ourselves what we feel can help put names to, and identify emotions. Take the emotional temperature that other people see. Listening for the response and being honest with ourselves is the first step in moving. So, what do you need? A need is different from a want. Pay attention to your needs, they are about caring for yourself!

Behind every great boarding professional is ...

What words would you use? It does not matter which level you are at in your boarding organisation, relationships are the key to success. Relationships you have both inside and outside the workplace come from interactions and perceptions. From your team to the love of your life, the right communication is important. Your partner or other half is a big part of your life – but reflect now on the last conversation you had with them? What do you want for dinner? And did you take out the rubbish last night? Maybe two of the most frequently made comments, one partner to another, but in order to maintain intimate and loving communication in their relationship couples may need to become more intentional in the messages they give one another.

Try these TOP TIPS for successful communication for couples in a boarding world.

#### 1. Thank you for ...

People need to be acknowledged and appreciated for what they do. Not just for the things they are asked to do but just because.

#### 2. How do you feel about ...

Asking the question, then listening to their response with no judgment or feeling the need to change their feelings. Let your partner know that they have been heard. Your relationship depends on it and it is never too late to start. ‘I feel’ is different to ‘I think’. Claim your feelings, state them and tell the truth about how you feel. Start the conversation you need to have today and get help if you need it to move forward.

#### 3. What I appreciate about you is ...

Shining a light on your partners’ qualities is good for both of you.

#### 4. Would you please ...


Expecting your partner to read your mind is expecting the impossible but we all try and do it! Say what you want and need. You are in this partnership together for a reason. Be specific.

#### 5. I love you ...

Find your own variations on these words, you can’t say them too often. We say it to others, why not say it to ourselves. Go on say it!

Your world tomorrow is built on how you act today. Your words belong to you and are interpreted by others. What other words could you use? Take the step now to unleash your inner voice for success, one conversation at a time.

A published boarding author and thought leader, Tracy’s mission is to put the ‘i’ back into your boarding life. Described as ‘motivational and inspirational’, her book *Boardingology* continues to change the boarding world one professional at a time. She is currently a sixth form housemistress working in Korea.



You have always had your boarders back to help them be successful this school year.

**But, who has your retired teenager?**

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## Bespoke Boarding

Curating residential spaces to maximise learning

### AUTHOR

Dr S J Middleton,  
The King's School

Building programs occurring within schools have gained a great deal of attention lately. Media interest has focused on large scale construction projects, emphasising dedicated facilities and spaces designed to enhance student well-being. This focus has certainly got me thinking about building and design, especially in relation to the residential facilities within our boarding schools. Debates provoked by these discussions have also prompted discussion with colleagues about how to maximise residential environments to guide student learning. This article considers how we as educators in residential schools can enrich our learning cultures by transforming our boarding environments to communicate values.

What is at the heart of an exceptional education for the young people of today? Whilst the majority of external attention is focused on academic achievement and the measurements that go with performance, there are other significant considerations. For me, Millikan's (2011) perspective that "secondary schools are *person developing*, highly instructive, human service organisations," (p.21) continues to resonate. The emphasis placed on person developing is deliberate, taking into consideration the totality of educational growth in realms other than quantifiable intellectual development. This to me, sums the boarding and residential context nicely. Perhaps more than any other educational context, the residential environment is one which enables educators to develop philosophy, programs and places which seek to educate individuals for life, not merely the successful completion of examinations. This to me is a key ingredient which separates good schools from great ones. This perspective places notions of values and character squarely on the agenda as we consider those types of behaviours we wish to promote and celebrate and those which ultimately differentiate our offerings from other organisations.

The complexity of school culture and how it can influence student growth and development is a fascinating topic.

Developing an appreciation of how culture can be created, strategically massaged and altered to change outcomes and shift expectations is an important element for today's educational leader. The North American authors Deal and Petersen (2009) have written extensively on school culture, describing it vividly as a "complex web of traditions built over time, where unwritten rules, informal expectations, rites and rituals express what is valued." (p.14) More specifically in relation to residential contexts, such a perspective argues that each of our boarding spaces has a particular culture developed and evolving over time. Identifying this culture, understanding it and then leveraging it to achieve the best student outcomes is a valuable asset in promoting the types of behaviours we wish to see in our students.

In his excellent text "Creating Cultures of Thinking" (2015), Ron Ritchhart talks about the eight forces which educators can harness to transform schools. Whilst focused on the rhythms of what those in residential schools may class as a day school, the provocative and reflective nature of the text raises certain aspects for consideration within boarding contexts. Of the eight forces Ritchhart identifies, perhaps the one element which has the most equitable impact for educators in boarding schools relates to the notion of environment and importantly focuses on how space can be used to support thinking and learning. The author describes environment as "the conditions or influences in which a person operates as the body language of the organisation, conveying its values and key messages..... to influence how individuals interact, their behaviours and their performance." (p.226) Further, Ritchhart argues that environment "sets up and facilitates certain ways of acting and interacting." (p.226)

Such a perspective offers those charged with responsibility for leading residential communities with a genuine opportunity to have impact and promote certain values. Designing and shaping physical space and environment within boarding houses has the potential to shape the way students view themselves and build relationships. It also prompts a perspective which considers student living spaces also as learning spaces to reflect how this environment can

evolve to promote the types of behaviours we value. For instance, an opportunity to shift the arrangement of desks in studies so students look at each other and are given the opportunity to collaborate rather than work individually seems a simple starting point. Further, in the design of new spaces, Ritchhart's argument for flexibility in both environment and furniture has the capacity to create dynamic areas for students to meet and consult. Issues of lighting and temperature also become apparent as these issues are explored.

Of course, such a perspective also extends to the types of symbols and artefacts which are on display in public and communal spaces. I would encourage educators to cast a critical eye over these elements of their environment to reflect honestly on the types of messages they communicate to stakeholders. For instance, how do the symbols of your residence represent the manner in which you value learning, achievement and aspiration for excellence? What do they say about relationships? The most obvious types of symbols quite commonly relate to sporting endeavours and achievement. Trophies and medals are great items to be displayed prominently but how are notions such as service, leadership and resilience communicated and celebrated in your House? Whilst student rooms and dorms are private spaces, there should also be some level of control about the types of images and paraphernalia on display, either on noticeboards or screensavers.

Ritchhart (2015) advocates strategically curating classroom spaces to communicate both subtle and overt messages about the value placed on learning in school environments. By extension, his provocative values have significant implications within the environment of residential spaces and the manner in which we seek to communicate values for life to our students. I would commend his work, along with the writing of Deal and Petersen to any educators wishing to shift and change culture through the physical expression of environment in residential spaces.

Millkan, R. (2011). *Authentic Educational Leadership* (Xlibris Vic.)

Petersen, K.D. & Deal, T.E. (2009) *The Shaping School Culture Fieldbook*. (Jossey Bass, San Francisco CA)

Ritchhart, R. (2015) *Creating Culture of Thinking*. (Jossey Bass, San Francisco CA)

## The Rise of the Relational Leader

A new language and a new leader

### AUTHOR

David Runge  
Executive Search and  
Leadership Development  
Hutton Consulting

As we sit with School Boards and Leadership Teams discussing their Human Resource requirements, a new language has begun to emerge and a new leader is now highly desired. As schools attune to their deep purpose we are increasingly being asked to develop and find "relational leaders" who can bring 'life' to the educational settings they lead. Although seemingly not new, this article attempts to capture the characteristics of a leader in demand.

A relational leader lives in a way that authentically models and embodies care for individuals and the organisation. Such leaders have a deep moral commitment to developing agency and connected relationships. An attuned moral compass supports relational leaders to find purpose, to act ethically, and engage with people inclusively. Schools increasingly need leaders who can bind people around their core principles, as it is through this deep connection that the organisational purpose comes to be known and lived.

Relational leadership is a way of being, and relating with others, that supports a quest towards a higher purpose. It is inclusive and seeks to empower. Relational leaders 'lead by example' as they demonstrate confidence, optimism, hope, resilience, and consistency between their words and actions. These leaders are true to themselves and motivated by their deep purpose and personal beliefs.

Relational leaders understand the dynamics of the organisational environment and are aware of, and attuned to, the context in which they operate. Furthermore, they recognise relationships as living and embedded between people and appreciate the interconnected, social nature of schools as organisations. Relational leaders are thought to use the following sensibilities when leading and as such are in tune with the dynamic setting in which they function.

### Relational Sensibilities

- Tact: Skill and sensitivity in dealing with others or with difficult issues.
- Attunement: Being receptive or aware of others and context.
- Nous: A practical intelligence, reading the game.
- Practical wisdom: Virtuousness, excellence of character.
- Improvisation: To provide or construct in the moment.
- Resoluteness: Firm and determined direction and action.
- Moral Judgement: Living towards a greater moral good for all.

Relational leaders foster and grow the capacity of those that they lead by modelling authentic relationships. These authentic relationships, are symbolised by transparency, openness and trust, whereby there is guidance towards worthy objectives and a commitment towards follower development. To this point, leaders and followers are in a reciprocal relationship where each has the capacity and responsibility to influence the other's experience.

Relational leaders continually seek to refine their self-awareness to display more authentic actions and form increasingly meaningful relationships. By reflecting introspectively, these leaders gain insight and clarify their core values, identity, emotions, and motives, thus forming a more complete and accurate picture of their world. The quest to heighten one's self-awareness is part of an emerging process whereby these leaders continually refine an understanding of their strengths, talents, sense of purpose and beliefs.

It could be argued that leadership at its core is relational and therefore to lead is to be in relationships whereby sensibilities such as nous, tact and moral judgment allow the leader to shape the relational space. Seeing people in the organisation as 'in relationship,' as compared to viewing them through a lens of power and position, has the potential to support the reframing of schools and assist leaders to do the work of leadership. Commitment to the organisation's objectives may well be harnessed if people in the organisation prioritise the building of relationships and refine the deep human connections that bond our schools.

Although identifying leadership as relational is not in itself hugely revolutionary, there is an increasing desire to attract leaders who can build, create and collaborate with the myriad of stakeholders that make up the complex environments that are our schools. Therefore, the reflective question for those who seek educational leadership opportunities is: How are you developing and growing your relational leadership?

For a confidential discussion about how to leverage your experience and best represent yourself in the current educational landscape, please contact david.runge@hutton.education







## Through the Labyrinth ... and Beyond

### AUTHOR

Jeremy Holt  
Head of Boarding for 2017-18  
Utahloy International School Zengcheng



### Dà jiā hǎo

Greetings everyone, from Utahloy International School Zengcheng (UISZ), recently affiliated to ABSA.

UISZ is a K-12 international day and boarding school since 2003, offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at all levels (PYP, MYP and DP) with approximately 200 students with 100 boarders. Our boarders and staff are truly international and eclectic in flavour, with at least 25 nationalities represented. The school is based in southern China in the Guangdong province, near the metropolis of Guangzhou – 100 square miles accommodating over 100 million people, the most densely populated region in the world – and a stone's throw away from Hong Kong. Located on 85 hectares of botanic gardens – beautiful waterways, bike-tracks and walkways – the school is, in a sense, in a bubble given the nature of the environment beyond its walls.

Apart from the IB programs, the school also offers an international experiential program, China New Horizons (CNH), as well as an integrated, dynamic and organic boarding program (INSPIRE).

CNH is unique in that it offers tailor-made programs for school groups from all around the world, premised on building global awareness, international mindedness and inter-cultural understanding. The program is built on five overlapping domains, namely, Chinese language and culture, globalization and modernization, environment and sustainability, leadership and adventure, and service.



INSPIRE is our fledgling residential program which will come into effect in the 2017/18 school year, after wide consultation with the broader school community. Built on the key idea that 'better people make better boarders', its core principle, underpinned by the school's mission statement and IB learner profile, is the education of the whole person in all dimensions. Methodologies include integrating learning from different sources and complementing the IB programs with project based learning; using knowledge creatively and humanely; being respectful of difference; creating opportunities for service and mindfulness; preparation for life beyond school; shifting the concept that intelligence is static by emphasising a growth mindset; valuing and rewarding effort and developing a sense of connectedness and belonging.

The school offers seven day, five day and flexi-boarding options. The boarding community is housed in the four-storeyed Dragon House, which can cater for up to 400 people. The ground floor houses the secondary boys, the first floor, the senior girls, and the third floor, primary boarders as well as our China New Horizons (CNH) groups. Boarding and academic staff live side-by-side with house parents and local Chinese staff on each level, or in the separate staff accommodation in Phoenix House. All academic staff live on-site and contribute to the INSPIRE program and, in many cases, to the CNH program. All students and staff take meals in the 'mythical' Restaurant on the Lake and life on campus is generally a leisurely and co-operative affair.



Socrates asserted that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'. The converse is also true: 'The un-lived life is not worth examining.' So, I'll hope you will forgive the personal digression here. I have been in China for nearly a year and, in many ways, my head is still spinning from the experience thus far. Ashleigh Brilliant, in his little book called Potshots, observed, 'If you send a donkey around the world, it would still return a donkey.' While he may be right in his assertion, I would like to think that this particular donkey would eventually return a more enlightened ass. Travelling is not necessarily about the destination, but rather a new way of being and perceiving.

As we all know intuitively, going anywhere for the first time is stressful, as we have no internal map of the territory. Is this why first time journeys appear to be longer? Edward De Bono declared that the brain is generally lazy – it likes the patterns of the familiar. Hence, he argues, that challenging the brain into the unfamiliar is the key to growing genuine creativity. No rebuttals here. I am 'down the rabbit hole ... through the labyrinth and beyond the looking-glass ...'

One cannot help but be struck by the many contrasts and contradictions in China: the first and third world yoked together like a metaphysical conceit. The old and the new China are ironically juxtaposed. Shakespeare would have enjoyed himself here ... think of Romeo's oxymoronic machinations in Romeo and Juliet: 'Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms! ... bright smoke, cold fire, sick health ...' His words could have many meanings here and they would be interpreted differently, depending on who



one speaks to. One is also confronted with the overwhelming greenness of trees and plantations buttressed with the grubby, unpainted and uncared-for buildings, many of them derelict and crumbling, counterpointed by postmodern monolithic skyscrapers, bullet trains or beautifully manicured public gardens. From Yangzhou and Shenzhen to Dongguan, in-between and beyond, this is China. TIC.

Each unto his own. Each school and boarding community has its own way of doing things, its own unique culture. There is much to learn from the UISZ way; however, there is much that it can learn from a different cultural and operational experience. The challenge is always how to remain committed and true to the vision and the often-intangible culture of a school community, yet enhance what it already has? And how does one effect change for the betterment of all? It is a nuanced and sensitive process. (A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools.) To my mind anyway, one must first seek to understand before being understood, listen before speaking, walk with rather than impose on ...



Despite the obvious cultural and ideological differences which abound, we all share a human commonality. Beneath our skin, as Herman Charles Bosman reminds us in his powerful short story, Unto Dust, our blood and bones are the same colour. Scout says it most succinctly in Harper Lee's novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, 'Naw, Jem. I think that there is just one kind of folks. Folks.'

And so it goes ...

Should your school be interested in an international immersion experience for your boarders or students in general, China New Horizons may just be the program you are looking for. If you are interested in finding out more, please feel free to contact me. Or, if you would like to drop in for a visit, or if you would like to just contact me, I'd be happy to hear from you.

St Augustine remarked that 'the world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.' I am well into chapter one and am finding some momentum after ten months at UISZ. Has the transition – from a boarding community in rural Victoria to rural Mainland China – been a challenge? Yes. Any regrets? Probably. Was my decision to move to Zengcheng worth the effort? Undoubtedly. Will I keep at it? Absolutely. The book's just starting to get interesting ...

Zàijiàn



Jeremy Holt - jholt@uiszc.org



# Lights Out

## Changing the World One Bite at a Time

AUTHOR  
Nicholas Volpe  
founder  
gnibl

In the last edition of Lights Out magazine I wrote about my career in reality television, producing the show *The Biggest Loser Australia* and how that moved me to do something about the crisis of obesity in Australia.

A good friend said I was crazy. Why give up the glamour of television and the opportunity of reaching out to a million viewers every night, for the humdrum world of business? "It's not your problem" he said; "it's *their* problem, isn't it?" He was referring to the 63% of Australians who are overweight or obese and the *one out of every four children!* I had no choice but to justify this massive step I was taking. When I thought about it, it boiled down to two different ways of looking at the world. In a nutshell, it was a contest between free choice versus social responsibility.

The 'free choicers' are fervent believers that people have a right to choose and if they make the wrong choice, it is their problem and no one else's. The social responsibility crowd also believe in free choice but have a more nuanced view of what free choice involves.

Firstly, choices are seldom 'free'. In the case of food choices, choices are strongly influenced by advertising which is often deceitful and is almost always designed to sell rather than to inform. Even if one were to set this aside in the case of adult consumers, *we undoubtedly have a duty of care* to children. Secondly, bad choices don't just affect the individual himself, they affect everyone. It affects us all in increased taxes, increased healthcare costs, loss of productivity and carers' costs. This cost to Australia's collective well-being has been estimated as \$120 billion a year - the equivalent of about 8% of the economy's annual output (Herald/Age Lateral Economics Index).

Other sobering statistics find Australia ranked as one of the fattest nations in the developed world, and if the current trend continues, almost ¾ of Australians will be obese or overweight by 2025.

And we hadn't even begun to speak about the effects on personal well-being, the increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and certain forms of cancer. And the statistics paint a painful

picture - one could safely say that there is hardly a family in Australia that isn't affected.

It's sometimes easy to forget the direct connection between a child overindulging on junk food and the obesity and diseases this behaviour can lead to. For many kids, the effects of bad eating habits aren't felt until they are grown up. But the habits formed in those early years can be very difficult to change later on in life.

However, it's not all doom and gloom - there is a solution. We need to teach our kids good eating habits as early as possible. We need to educate them to be able to make the right choices. The Department of Health has recently released new healthy school canteen guidelines which is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. And schools can do much to improve the eating environments in which kids learn and play.

gnibl is here to help create that environment - to make it easy for kids to get what's good for them. Such small steps have far-reaching consequences. Every healthy bite counts - let's do all we can to make that important difference.



## THE GNI BL story

While working as a TV producer on five seasons of *The Biggest Loser*, I was struck by just how difficult it is to snack well. The biggest difficulty is knowing what is healthy & what is not, as well as finding time to prepare snacks yourself. I decided to concentrate on something that would really make a difference to people's lives - and that's how GniBL was born.

GniBL cuts through these difficulties. We make healthy snacking convenient & fun. Every item in our range is rigorously curated by an Accredited Practising Dietitian so you can snack with confidence. Whether it's through our touchscreen vending machines or directly into your canteen, we can bring health into your school. Let's make a difference together!

-- Nick, GniBL founder

# 2

## WAYS TO Get Healthy SNACKS & DRINKS INTO YOUR School

### 1. HEALTHY SNACK MACHINES

- \* Dietitian curated range of snacks & drinks
- \* Nutritional info on touch-screen display
- \* Cash or credit card
- \* Refrigerated
- \* Cost free

### 2. HEALTHY CANTEEN SUPPLY

- \* Dietitian curated range of snacks & drinks
- \* Nutritional info display cards for your canteen shelves
- \* Point of sale display options
- \* Competitive pricing



## CONTACT GNI BL:

Nick Volpe - Director | Phone: 1300 818 088  
Email: [nick@gnibl.com.au](mailto:nick@gnibl.com.au) | [www.gniBL.com.au](http://www.gniBL.com.au)

gnibl



# HALE SCHOOL

BY CHARTWELLS

Chartwells has had a busy and exciting start to the 2017 year with a number of new partnerships, and the further extension of existing, around the country across both the Independent School and Tertiary space.

In this edition of Lights Out we will showcase our mobilisation at Hale School, at the commencement of this year, which involved a significant refurbishment and relaunch of their catering services across boarding, retail and functions. Having spent the December period planning for this, in readiness for the return of the boys and the broader school community, there was major activity on site with our builders and project team.

Our goal was to create a warm and engaging dining space for the boarders – a sense of place that was reflective of a modern and reinvigorated food service based on innovative, well executed and wellbeing focused menus designed around the specific needs of boys. Our focus was on the introduction of modern, streamlined service counters that would facilitate both speedy service as well as the contemporary presentation of a reinvigorated menu design where our smart food program underpins the use of fresh seasonal produce, wellbeing, batch cooking and a fresh is best policy.

The boys and wider school community have responded very favourably to this, as have the teaching staff who enjoy lunch daily.

The introduction of stone surfaces, warm paint works, additional lighting and redesigned counters have transformed both the boarding and Cafe spaces providing the perfect backdrop for our Chartwells catering service.

This has ensured that we are meeting the needs of all boys and staff alike and the reaction to new menu items such as smashed avocado and bacon on artisan grain toast with dukkha or our slow cooked beef with spring vegetable and parsley dumplings has captured the interest and enthusiasm of them all.

With 180 boarders, approximately 1200 day boys and 280 staff we are committed to making a positive difference to the daily experience of each and every one and are very excited to have commenced this dynamic partnership.



Hale Event

## Right

The new servery, fitted out with Chartwells merchandise now serves smart food throughout the day.



## Before

Pictured below is the Hale School dining hall during the first stage of refurbishment.



## Above

The new Cafe service has been a hit with the boys across the year groups.

For further details on how we can help you, please contact:

George Michaelides  
Director, Business Development  
Chartwells | 0404 000 931





## Sleep Tips and Tricks

AUTHOR  
Sarah Whitworth  
[www.forevernatural.com.au](http://www.forevernatural.com.au)

In this crazy modern world of screens, busy-ness, commitments and stress, the importance of sleep can be overlooked. Until its too late of course and we wind up in a horrible cycle of restlessness where we can't sleep, have trouble sleeping or can't get back to sleep (early waking). Sleep is a fundamental part of health and many of us function on way too little of it.

Here are some of my top tips to help ease the burden of anxiety that can arise about not being able to sleep:

1. Go to bed at the same time every night, wake up at the same time every morning! Routine and structure are key to balancing the your sleep hormones.
2. Exercise in the morning. Balances cortisol and allows for sunlight (hopefully you are exercising outside) to hit your retina, balancing hormones again!
3. Turn off ALL electronic devices at least one to two hours before bed, dim the lights, light a candle, prepare your mind and eyes for the darkness of sleep, over stimulation of screens and electronics can confuse your brain and overstimulate your mind.
4. Have an epsom salt bath with calming aromas such as lemon balm, lavender or sandalwood.
5. Read.
6. Meditate.
7. Practice deep breathing.
8. Have herbal tea such as chamomile to calm to nervous system.
9. Don't over indulge at dinner - sometimes our digestion works overtime when we do this and sleep can be hard.
10. Stop all caffeine prior to 3pm - since caffeine has a half life of six hours, some people might find they can't sleep simply because they have had too many stimulants late at night or in the afternoon - remember caffeine is in chocolate and black, green and white teas, not just coffee!
11. Don't be too hard on yourself - its ok to go to bed rather than tick off that last thing 'to do'.
12. Turn your phone on airplane mode - especially for those who use the phone as an alarm to wake up, you don't want that by your head, plus you don't want to be drifting off and be disturbed by notifications or texts, that stuff can wait till later the next day!
13. Last but not least, some lavender essential oil (just a drop or two) on your pillow!

Here are some sleep Apps - these were recommended on a recent newsletter I received from Medibank Private, however, most I use regularly:

**1. Relax Melodies**  
FREE - iOS, Android

Lull yourself to sleep with a custom blend of relaxing music and natural sounds. Relax Melodies gives you a huge selection of high quality, mix-and-match ambient soundscapes, so you can choose your favourite to drift off to - whether it's gentle ocean waves with soft piano, or calming wind with birds and a flute melody. It also incorporates binaural beats, and has an alarm and timer functionality to help you customise your sleep routine to best suit you.

**2. Deep Sleep with Andrew Johnson**  
\$3.79 - iOS; \$3.03 - Android

This popular app provides guided meditations designed to help you relax, unwind and get the rest you need at night. Andrew is a Scottish clinical hypnotherapist with over 20 years experience helping people cope with stress, anxiety, fears and insomnia. Listen to his soothing voice as he takes you through a range of visualisations and relaxation techniques, and let it send you into a deep, restorative sleep.

**3. Sleepmaker Rain**  
FREE - iOS, Android

If the sound of rain soothes you, this app gives you a wonderfully comforting way to fall asleep. Choose from 20 different rainfall patterns, from a gentle patter against the window, to a steady rain shower over a forest, to a moody thunder storm. This is also a great app to use during the day, creating a calming, ambient atmosphere to help you relax at work, or to escape the bustling noise of city streets.

**4. Simply Being**  
\$2.99 - iOS; \$2.79 - Android

Take ten minutes before bed to unwind, release the worries of the day, and get in touch with your breath and body. This app takes you through simple guided meditation exercises to help you relax, so you can go to sleep without those racing thoughts. Choose your session length and decide if you want relaxing music, soothing natural sounds, or just a calming voice. Perfect for meditation beginners, this simple app makes it easy to create your own mindfulness practice, with an easy to use interface and plenty of customisable options.

**5. ReachOut Breathe**  
Free - iOS

If you have trouble sleeping because you often feel stressed or anxious, simple breathing exercises can make a big difference in getting your mind and body relaxed. By slowing down your heart rate with a few deep breaths, you can reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety and stress, like shortness of breath and a feeling of tightness in the chest. This fantastic app by ReachOut uses simple visuals to guide you through some slow, deep breaths. It also lets you measure your heart rate, so you can check your baseline and see how you're going from day to day.

**6. Yoga for Insomnia**  
\$4.49 - iOS; \$3.34 - Android

Stretch out and calm your breathing before bed with yoga moves specifically chosen to help you get to sleep. This app gives you simple graphics and instructions to explain how to do each pose, with options to make it easier for beginners. Create your own yoga routine designed to help you relax and see if it helps you fall into a deeper, more restful slumber,

**7. Sleep Cycle**  
FREE - iOS; \$1.49 - Android

This smart alarm clock app has long been a popular choice for waking you up gently, and for tracking your sleep patterns. Sleep Cycle analyses your slumber based on your movements throughout the night. When you're ready to wake up, the alarm function vibrates, timed with your sleep cycle to wake you in your lightest sleep phase. It's a more natural way to be roused from sleep, so you open your eyes feeling more refreshed. Then, you can check the graphs and data from your night's rest, and use the information to help make changes to your routine.

*Feeling like you've tried it all and nothing seems to change? Maybe a more in depth look may be needed. Feel free to contact me [Sarah@forevernatural.com.au](mailto:Sarah@forevernatural.com.au) for a chat and perhaps book in a consult for some further in depth investigation and look at your health overall.*





## Shake It Off

How boarders can manage negative thoughts and why Taylor Swift’s song needed a bit more detail

### AUTHOR

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg  
Honorary Psychologist ABSA

When was the last time something really worried you, but you just couldn’t - as Taylor Swift would say, ‘shake it off’? That ear worm of a song ‘Shake it Off’ was released in 2014 and debuted at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, becoming Taylor’s second number-one single in the United States and the 22nd song to debut at number one in the chart’s history. Taylor has cemented her reputation by singing about the angst-filled teenage years with a kind of wistful, sepia-toned nostalgia and the ‘Shake it Off’ message undoubtedly resonated with her audience. While the sentiment was great, with great respect to Taylor, what was missing was the: ‘how’ does one shake it off.

Many sadly, do lie in bed ruminating - endlessly chewing over the ‘what if’ thoughts that cascade through their heads. Psychologists regard such type of thinking - negative, disagreeable and counterproductive - and in some cases, it can even lead to chronic depression and anxiety. The famous psychologist Guy Winch, author of Emotional First Aid: Practical Strategies for Treating Failure, Rejection, Guilt and Other Everyday Psychological Injuries - likens these thinking processes to a needle in a groove and as the groove gets deeper and deeper, the needle becomes more and more embedded and the longer it goes around the harder it is to get out of the groove.

What is more is that this type of rumination can actually end up increasing anger levels and the result very often is that the boarder ends up more distressed than they were at the start, because whatever it is that they were worrying about, becomes amplified in their mind. Luckily, psychologists can help, by providing four evidence based strategies that can help them and anyone in their boarding house, to stop dwelling on negative thoughts and refocus their mind on something positive; it just takes a bit of distraction and a healthy dose of willpower.

### 1. Go to a virtual 7/11 in Your Mind

Try imagining yourself in a 7/11 store. Visualise all the items on one shelf in the store, and the order that you see them in. You don’t have to do it for long - maybe 30 seconds or a minute, but the key is to be disciplined about it and do it each time that negative thought comes back - even if that means doing it 20 times an hour. You can actually train your brain to go in a different direction when these thoughts come up.

### 2. Trash the thought

To get rid of a nagging thought can be as simple as jotting it down on a piece of paper - and then tearing it up, or putting it through the shredding machine. According to a 2012 Ohio State University study by psychology professor Richard Petty, subjects who wrote down negative things about their bodies and then threw them away had a more positive self-image a few minutes later, compared to those who kept the papers with them. So whether you tag your thoughts as trash or as worthy of hanging on to seems to make a difference in how you use those thoughts.

### 3. Warm up

Yale researchers Idit Shalev and John Bargh discovered in 2012 that when people were given the opportunity to hold a hot pack as they thought about their loneliness, they had less negative feelings about their exclusion experience than people who didn’t get to embrace something warm. Substituting physical warmth for emotional warmth can be a quick fix, the researchers say - just don’t let it take the place of real human interaction in the long run.

### 4. Change your thinking

One of the things that I often say to the boarders that I see, is that in life, if you can’t change something, you can always change the way you think about it. What psychologists have learnt over the years is that the way people think determines the way they feel, and the way they feel then in turn determines the way they act. If someone in a boarding house wants to change the way they are behaving, they must start by changing the way they think. Recently I was flying from Melbourne to Singapore and my plane got diverted to Sydney where I had to wait for five hours. This caused me great inconvenience but there was nothing I could do about it. There were two ways I could have responded. I could have been all angry and frustrated but that would have changed nothing. Instead I changed my thinking, opened my laptop and saw this as a great opportunity to get some work done.

### Conclusion

Taylor Swift is undoubtedly an amazing person, certainly a great recording artist, having sold 40 more million albums than I have! Not just that, but by all reports she is also a generous philanthropist, an activist for good mental health, having taken a strong stance against bullying and frequently makes private visits to hospitals to meet with sick patients and to support them. Essentially a talented young woman who has used her gifts for the betterment of humanity. I am saying her advice to ‘Shake it off’ was great - but just needed some more strategies. So Taylor if you ever read this - knock yourself out...

## Pathway Programs

There’s more than one way to access university

### AUTHOR

Hannah Smith  
Project Marketing Coordinator  
Office of Marketing and Communications

The uncapping of tertiary places has removed many of the barriers to university entrance for our Year 12 graduates.

Since 2010 student numbers at Australia’s public universities have risen by almost 22%. While this is a promising sign in terms of building a more skilled, highly trained workforce, the reality is that not all students are coping with the resultant crowded lectures, large tutorials, online course delivery and the challenge of fully independent study.

Recent data released by the Department of Education indicates that one in five domestic students leave their chosen university course in their first year of study, with 15% dropping out altogether.

As Australia’s leading private university, Bond University has traditionally eschewed the one-size-fits-all approach by offering a personalised, small class learning environment. With a student cohort of less than 5000 and a student:teacher ratio of around 11:1, the teaching process is built on one-on-one mentoring and individual attention.

Bond was one of the first universities to introduce the concept of pathway programs and, with the recent launch of Bond University College, is now offering a comprehensive suite of generalised University Preparation and Diploma programs.

“These courses are designed to address the increasing need and demand for alternative entryways to full Bachelor degrees by delivering courses that prepare students for university life in terms of both academic and personal development,” said Bond University’s Pro Vice-Chancellor, Pathways and Partnerships, Catherine O’Sullivan.

“Delivered on the Bond campus, the pedagogy is based on face-to-face teaching in small groups with one-on-one assistance from specialist educators. Bond University College is fully integrated into the university structure so students are part of campus life from day one, with access to all the facilities, learning resources, clubs and societies that every other Bond student enjoys.”

“The key difference is that they can study a generalised Preparation Program or a discipline-specific Diploma designed to prepare them for the rigours of full degree studies and enhance their chances of success.”

“Our Diploma students actually undertake Bachelor-level subjects and attend regular lectures alongside full degree students,” Ms O’Sullivan explained.



“They then return to the supportive College environment for subjects focussing on learning skills such as study techniques, essay writing and presentations.”

“In addition to developing these critical academic skills, they benefit from extra hours of face-to-face teaching in small groups, working with specialist educators and support staff who can cater to their individual needs by giving them one-on-one help and encouragement.”

Student Zach Burridge says that enrolling in a Diploma of Business at Bond University College helped him “get into the swing of university study” by building a strong routine and healthy work habits.

“The Bond University College experience helped me develop a better understanding of balance in all facets of my life,” he said, “from better financial management and setting career goals to self-development, leadership and personal health.” Zach is now studying a Bachelor of Laws at Bond.

“Because they are completing a number of full degree subjects, our Diploma graduates enter into the third semester of the relevant Bachelor degree so they’re not losing any time by opting for the alternative pathway offered by Bond University College,” said Ms O’Sullivan.

Statistics indicate that there is an upward trend for school-leavers and even mature age students to undertake foundation or Diploma courses prior to commencing a Bachelor degree and it is predicted that, by 2020, more than 20% of first year university students will have completed a pathway program.

“We are already seeing that students enrolling in a university degree straight from Year 12 now account for less than half of all enrolments (44% in 2014) at Australian universities”, said Ms O’Sullivan.

“The pathway programs offered by Bond University College address this growing demand by helping students of all ages and from all walks of life transition to the university classroom of the 21st century.”





# NATIONAL BOARDING WEEK



AUSTRALIAN  
BOARDING  
SCHOOLS  
ASSOCIATION  
CREATING THE FUTURE FOR BOARDING SCHOOLS

14 - 20 MAY 2017

*What a Week it Was*





## Sustainability and Business

### AUTHOR

Tim Jarvis  
Environmental Scientist,  
Author, Adventurer and  
Public Speaker



As with businesses, regardless of scale, schools also face challenges associated with climate change and the need for greater sustainability. When approached with an open mind and an eye for opportunity, adapting to these challenges could benefit both the planet and your school.

#### Let's first look at the relationship of between sustainability and business.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a critical role in our economy. In Australia alone, SMEs account for 97% of all businesses, employing 4.7 million people and generating one third of GDP in 2014-2015. (DFAT, 2016). As major improvements in our nation's sustainability cannot happen without the buy-in of SMEs, it is imperative that they are aware of the risks and opportunities associated with environmental change.

There are numerous opportunities for small business owners to be more sustainable in their business, which will in turn have a positive impact on their bottom line cost savings. Take for example the hospitality industry. Here, installation of solar panels, retrofitting solar control film onto windows and using energy efficient lighting can not only reduce the carbon footprint, but also save up to 25-30% of the hotel's energy needs – the same financial impact as increasing the average daily room rate by almost \$5.

Secondly, there are also various measures that small business owners involved in running sports facilities and associations can do to make their organisation more environmentally friendly. For example, replace grass with artificial turf to reduce irrigation needs, build shade structures and / or install solar panels on buildings to reduce energy bills. These can not only help us adapt to issues like climate change, but also yield long term cost savings and enhance your business's bottom line.

#### Schools, Boarding Schools and Universities.

Schools, Boarding Schools and Universities can also become more sustainable. Examples include implementing a school-wide recycling and composting initiative, reduce waste generation, buy greener products, plant more trees and install campus-wide solar panels and rain-water collection systems. Many of these will not only help the bottom-line but also embed a culture of sustainability into our education systems. Furthermore, those who teach sustainability in schools are developing student's capacity to think critically, innovate and come up with solutions to problems - invaluable skills in all facets of life, not just sustainability.

A green future or a green economy, simply cannot happen without green education in our schools.

Our future depends on protecting the health and wellbeing of our children and the planet in which they live. Therefore, it is our responsibility to educate future generations with the skills to solve the global environmental problems we face.

Students are central to the future of sustainability. Not only are they inheritors of the planet, but also because of their sheer weight in numbers. Today, nearly 22% of Australia and New Zealand's population are currently enrolled at school or university. Moreover, students and school children are a major influence on their families, who make up 75% of our population, (Australian Bureau of Statistics; Education Statistics of New Zealand).



#### So what can we do?

There's a number of practical things that we can do to embed sustainability into our schools, boarding schools and universities - all while reducing our carbon footprint and engaging students in sustainable practices:

- Establish a school-wide recycling or composting initiative, and educate students on the need to reduce waste generation.
- Teach students about native plants, animals and how organic food is produced. Have them consider how interconnected life is.
- Create green campuses by planting more trees and engage students in local nature based initiatives.
- Consider campus-wide solar panel and rain-water collection systems.
- Calculate the carbon footprint of their trip to school and then as a learning exercise, have them come up with ways to reduce this.
- Nature is also a great place for students to learn, so consider holding some lessons outside of the traditional classroom. In doing so, this can help develop their problem-solving skills, build emotional resilience and physical fitness.

Sustainability should be a cross-curriculum priority within the Australian and New Zealand curriculums. Teaching sustainability not only builds awareness and knowledge around sustainability issues but also develops students' capacity to think critically, innovate and come up with solutions. Invaluable skills in not just sustainability, but all facets of life.

The author of article is Tim Jarvis - an environmental scientist, author, adventurer and public speaker with Masters Degrees in Environmental Science and Environmental Law.

To help mitigate these risks, speak to the ABSA endorsed Steadfast Insurance Broker – Con Kalavritinos at ADK Insurance Brokers (ADK). Con will be able to review your current insurances and arrange the appropriate level of cover for your school to help ensure your school is protected.

*ADK in partnership with ABSA have recently and proudly launched the exclusive Personal Property Insurance Program for Boarders, now available.*

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THESE OFFERS PLEASE CONTACT:

Richard Stokes or Thomas Dunsmore at ABSA.  
Ph: 07 3205 4940  
email [absa@boarding.com.au](mailto:absa@boarding.com.au)  
Con Kalavritinos at ADK.  
Ph: 03 9348 1775  
email [conk@adkinsurance.com.au](mailto:conk@adkinsurance.com.au)

More on ADK can be found here  
[www.adkinsurance.com.au](http://www.adkinsurance.com.au)







## The Schools’ Slice of the International Pie

### AUTHOR

Dr Tim Hawkes  
Headmaster  
The King’s School

Nearly a billion dollars is spent by overseas parents on educating school-aged children in Australian schools. This amount is likely to increase in future years, but it is a fickle market that needs to be managed properly.

Over 140 countries send students to be educated in Australia. Three quarters of these 650,000 students are in the 20 to 29-year-old age bracket, with most enrolling in higher education, vocational education or in English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS). However, there are also 20,000 students of school age that come to Australia to be educated.

Australian schools contribute to an international education market that is worth over \$16 billion to our country. It is a market that is growing at 10% per annum. Our nation runs second only to America and the United Kingdom as the preferred education provider for international students.

However, schools cannot take this market for granted. The transnational education scene is enormously competitive.

Fortunately, Australia has a number of significant advantages, the most important are that our schools are usually of an excellent quality and are generally cheaper than U.S. and U.K. alternatives. Our lifestyle, climate, friendly disposition, relative safety and geographical closeness to Asia, adds further allurements.

To these worthy reasons of wanting to study in Australia can be added more Machiavellian motives such as wanting to become skilled in operating socially and professionally in the western world. Other reasons include looking for residential status in Australia and seeking an introduction, via schools, into our tertiary institutions.

Before schools charge off to Asia to scatter their prospectus around, sign up a dozen educational agents and put their shingle up at a variety of educational fairs, they need to ask whether they are able to meet the educational needs of overseas students.

A good working knowledge of the relevant acts and government bodies that oversee the enrolment of overseas students is essential. The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act of 2000 is worth knowing, as is the National Code of 2007 that establishes and reinforces standards for education providers who offer courses to international students. Visa regulations also need to be understood together with the bewildering number of acronyms such as CRICOS, PRISMS and OSHC (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, Provider Registration and International Management System and Overseas Student Health Cover).

The logistics of enrolling overseas students in schools are not insignificant. They include marketing, promoting and advertising, testing students for suitability and English fluency, processing enrolment forms, confirming guardians, offering an electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE), informing appropriate government agencies, sorting out health cover, finalising visa conditions with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), organising travel arrangements, insurance and induction – to name but a few.

Even more important is ensuring your school has a cultural climate that is able to welcome overseas students. The heroic task of leaving your loved ones, travelling to a distant land and studying in a non-native language, is not always recognised by the more xenophobic in our land.

A failure to nurture your overseas students can dry up enrolments quicker than bird-flu or an appreciating dollar. Simple things such as ensuring there is pot of rice available at lunchtimes, appointing mentors and minders, giving extra help with English and putting in place an effective induction program, can go a long way to shoring up international reputation. Checking to see that the appointed guardian knows their job and is doing it properly is also important. There are rather too many guardians who embrace the task for pecuniary gain rather than to exercise a pastoral heart.

In the end, the Australian school that is going to be attractive to overseas students is the school that has established a culture that embraces diversity, respects cultural differences and is sensitive to the needs of the international student.

## The Value of Boarding

### AUTHOR

Troy Stanley  
Head of Boarding  
Newington College



*“The difference between privilege and entitlement is gratitude.”* - Brené Brown.

As part of the natural course of parenthood we challenge our children to help them make the most of their innate potential. Yet so often we balk at the risks that come with letting our children make mistakes.

My children are currently at the age where I hesitate at Kindy drop off and during Mathletics homework sessions. Do I drop and run to avoid hearing the tears? Or in Mathletics, do I hint that the number after four is five to maintain that perfect score?

Similar questions arise for parents who are considering boarding for their children, but at a much greater magnitude. Two-thirds of the boys who reside in Edmund Webb House (Newington’s Boarding House) live outside a commutable distance, so they have no other option if they want to attend Newington. On the other hand, one-third live within a 30-minute transit. These boys chose boarding so that they could have a school life enhanced by routines to maximise all that the school has to offer.

The risks that come with boarding are the same for all the boys. What if my son doesn’t fit in? What if he never feels at home? What if boarding diminishes our relationship? What if he’s homesick?

When deliberating these questions, it is important to weigh up the pros and cons. What could he gain and what could he lose? What is the best case scenario and what is the worst?

Boarding provides a wonderful environment to take on these risks from both a student and parent perspective. The pastoral care in Edmund Webb House sits at a minimum of 1:10. Furthermore, in a vertical system (Years 9-12), seniors have opportunities to lead and juniors have the opportunity to receive mentoring from their peers.

Structures are set in place to practice important life skills such as time management, planning, organisation, washing and cleaning. One of the most important life skills that boys gain during boarding is the ability to build relationships with boys and adults from different cultures, nationalities, philosophies and age groups.

When boys are placed in an environment where they are tested, it is merely an opportunity to exercise their life skills. For some the risks are greater and for these boys they grow the most. They often require more support along the way and as long as they are prepared to face the challenge, they will surprise everyone, especially themselves. As parents and boarders grow more comfortable with the feeling of vulnerability, they become more courageous and in turn extend themselves further than they thought they were capable.

Our boarders also develop stronger relationships with their families. In the boarding house boys learn the importance of gratitude - arguably one of our most underdeveloped virtues. Through their own growth in independence, they increasingly value the efforts that parents make to ensure that they are safe and happy.



## Biometrics in Boarding

A new frontier

### AUTHOR

Garry Jowett  
Director  
Reach

When most people think of biometrics, they think about high security technology that is used by government for passports and border control, security that banks use to combat identity theft, or methods that police use to find criminals.

While large scale public sector implementations has driven the initial rollout of biometric-based applications, biometric-enabled consumer devices like smart phones, laptops, car doors/home security systems, mobile banking accounts etc are driving broader public awareness and willingness to use biometrics today.

***“Biometrics are suited to all applications where the accurate identification of an individual is essential.”***

### What are Biometrics?

Biometrics are automated methods of recognising a person for identification and authentication based on a physiological or behavioural characteristic. It covers a wide range of unique attributes for individuals that can be accurately measured including fingerprint, facial recognition, hand geometry, handwriting, iris, vein design, ear geometry, voice, gait recognition and even body odour measurement. Of all the biometric methods available, fingerprint recognition is by far the most widely used today.

Whilst it is often considered a high-tech product of the 21st Century, biometrics is not a new technology. Ancient Egyptian society was known to use bodily characteristics to identify workers to ensure they did not claim more provisions than they were entitled to and Chinese merchants in the fourteenth century were recorded using palm prints to identify children.

### Biometrics use in Schools

Biometrics are suited to all applications where the accurate identification of an individual is essential. Its utilisation in school administration has grown rapidly in the past decade because it provides an ideal solution for school administrators in their effort to identify students, provide accurate and auditable student records and provide a safer and more secure environment for students, teachers and staff.



Virtually unknown in the school environment just a decade ago, the use of biometrics in schools is rapidly growing. The United Kingdom has been an early adopter of biometrics and it is now estimated to be utilised by more than 40% of schools in England.

The most common applications for biometrics in schools is in access control, library, canteen, payment processing and attendance monitoring. By adopting biometrics technologies, schools can implement higher standards of accuracy with the efficiency gains that are common with biometric applications.

***“Biometrics are not the enemy of privacy. In fact, biometrics and privacy and security enhancing.”***

### What about Privacy & Security?

At the outset, it is important to recognise that biometrics are not the enemy of privacy. In fact, biometrics are privacy and security enhancing and this is the driving force for widespread implementation of biometrics across multiple industries, including education.

It should be acknowledged however, that biometric information carries with it both information privacy and physical privacy considerations for when we collect biometric information from a person, we are not just collecting information about that person, but information of that person.

The very nature of biometric information and its major advantage in terms of its powers of identification can also create significant privacy risks and community anxiety about its use. So, for biometrics to be successful in any school community, students and parents need to be able to trust that their privacy and security is not being eroded but, where possible, enhanced.

Regulators throughout the world recognise the sensitivity of biometrics data and this results in stricter privacy and security considerations and regulations relating to the use of biometrics in schools and other applications.

In Australia, biometrics data has an elevated privacy status and is treated as “sensitive information” under the Privacy Act. This governs the general principles on the collection, utilisation and safe storage of this data. In essence, biometrics data is afforded the same security status as a person’s medical information. This change formed part of the update to the Privacy Act in March 2014 and it gives individuals greater confidence that their sensitive biometric information will be appropriately treated by both agencies and organisations.

### REACH BioPad brings biometrics to boarding schools

With the introduction of the REACH BioPad in March 2017, biometrics for boarding schools is now both accessible and affordable. Eight pilot schools in Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Singapore and New Zealand will pioneer the use of biometrics in boarding schools for student sign-ins and automated roll calls.

The REACH BioPad allow for students to authenticate by several means including fingerprint biometrics, RFID cards, NFC device (eg: mobile phone scan), barcode, QR code or PIN Number. Facial recognition and electronic access control (ie: security doors) will also be available from the REACH Biopad in future.

In addition to being a valuable, fixed monitoring and transaction device, the REACH BioPad can also be used as a mobile tablet for use around campus, on excursions or bus trips with travelling student groups.

For more information about the use of biometrics in your boarding school or the REACH BioPad visit [www.reachboarding.com/biometrics](http://www.reachboarding.com/biometrics)







## Building Authentic Staff Student Relationships

7,136 steps in the right direction

### AUTHOR

Casey Brealy  
Boarding Staff  
Toowoomba Anglican College  
& Preparatory School

*"7,136km. 13 families. Unbounded experience."*

Around this time last year, I wrote an article reflecting on the lessons I had learnt in my first year of boarding. One of the key lessons I highlighted was the need to build genuine and authentic relationships in the boarding environment. I also discussed the differences that I had observed between student/teacher relationships in the classroom and in the boarding house. I explained that boarding staff are often required to "let their guard down" in order to achieve some kind of authenticity in their relationships with boarding students.

Another year down and of course I have learnt further lessons. In particular, though, I wanted to discuss some experiences that have had a profound influence on my interactions with my students and my philosophy on education as a whole - my road trips to visit boarding families.



Before I get into the crux of it, I will briefly summarise my revelations. This way, those of you who lose interest and stop reading after this paragraph will hopefully hear at least a part of my message. Very basically, invest in visiting your students. Invest time, invest money, invest effort and most importantly, invest yourself.



I must pre-empt this article by saying that I know visiting students in boarding is certainly not a new idea or a radical change in any way, shape or form. However, for any educators out there who have not had the chance, do it! I must also say that my message is not exclusive to boarding staff - teaching, academic and admin staff at a school can get just as much out of the experience.

Nevertheless, without further ado, here is a brief summary of some lessons I learnt in my travels. Through this article, I aim to give you some insight as to how my time "out west" influenced me as an educator.

### Changing the dialogue

The first thing I noticed after returning from my travels was the change in dialogue. The stories quickly changed from "we have this place on our property where..." to "Sir, remember that old shed down by the dam? Well...". Now this may seem like a surface level change; however, I feel that it indicates much more than familiarity. As boarders from rural areas, it is a rarity to have visitors. So, the fact that this student now has someone who knows their property and can visualise particular structures, paddocks, fence-lines, etc. is a big deal. It allows the student to open up about events that are occurring at home and I have found that after a visit, they are far more likely to share news, events or stories with me when they get off the phone.

More importantly, visiting the boarder's home and engaging in their day-to-day life allows me to understand their unique family dynamic and gives me an understanding of how that child may feel when they are removed from their "normal" environment.

It helps me in the way that I approach certain issues with that particular child. For example, having witnessed the way a certain family interacts with each other may give me insight into why that child suffers significantly from homesickness. This allows me to adjust my dialogue to suit a different child and a different family.

### The student as a teacher

Handing control to a student is never easy, especially when guns, cars and other dangerous goods are involved. However, I quickly gained the understanding that I was no longer the expert, the authority or the educator when visiting the students. In fact, I almost felt that I should have taken a notebook to make annotations. Seeing a student in their element is something that is truly special and learning from them is even better. Every student I have visited has taught me something, whether it be how to ride a motorbike, how to shoot a gun, how to fix a fence, how to brand a calf, how to plough a field or how to play golf on sand greens. Unfortunately, as educators we often miss opportunities to tap into the wealth of knowledge that our students possess. Stepping into their environment highlights their expertise and unlocks a unique learning experience that is enjoyable for both parties. Also, the smirk on a student's face when the visiting teacher makes a "rookie error" is absolutely priceless.



### Independence

In addition to their knowledge, it is wonderful to witness how independent these young people can be. In the schooling environment we can often underestimate what our students are capable of and sometimes we are guilty of "spoon feeding" them information or instructions they don't necessarily need. This realisation hit me like a tonne of bricks when I arrived at the first property of my trip. Within 15 minutes of arrival, a student of mine picked up his gun, took the LandCruiser keys and went out to fix some electric fences, whilst culling some pests on the way of course! This was the same boy that I had routinely pestered, with the goal of ensuring he had brushed his teeth.

For the first time I could see why many of our students are frustrated and "confined" by some of the rules placed on them in their schooling institutions. Unfortunately, we are not able to holistically emulate the freedom and responsibility they have whilst on their properties; however, I do believe that we can take small steps to acknowledge them as growing young adults and that these small steps go a very long way. For example, I know that this experience has certainly altered the way I approach the students in boarding and it has encouraged me to give them further autonomy at times.



### Peeling back the layers

On reflection of myself as a teacher, I have come to realise that I wear a multitude of metaphorical protective layers. As I move into the boarding environment, some of these layers are peeled off, allowing me to be slightly more open and somewhat more vulnerable in this setting. When visiting a student's home, once again layers are removed. You lack the protection of a controlled environment, you lack the protection of school rules, you lack the protection of policies and procedures - in many ways you are "layer free". This shifts the student/teacher and family/teacher relationship significantly, as there are no formalities that we come to expect at in a school setting. The student is given a new insight into the teacher as a human being, rather than an English-teaching, rule-enforcing, authority-holding being. Now, I like to think that I am being hyperbolic and that my students do not see me in this light, but you get the point regardless.



It is in the process of stripping back the "layers of protection" that authenticity is found in a relationship. I was able to see the student in a more natural environment and the student was able to see me in a different context. Of course, as a professional, there are still lines in place and some guards up; however, it was in this environment where the students saw the most unobstructed, unfiltered version of me as a person.

What I have been pleasantly surprised with is the way in which the students have identified these different personas and how they are applied in the different environments. I am yet to have a significant issue with a student being overly familiar or informal upon return to the schooling environment. That being said, teenage boys will always push the boundaries. A few have attempted to use language that I turned a blind eye to on the property; however, a swift reminder that "we are not in the cattle yards anymore" has quickly alerted them of the different expectations in different settings.



### Mutual respect

After my experiences on the road I have come to the conclusion that there is one major by-product of the home visits - mutual respect.

Visiting these properties has certainly changed my perception of my students. I have seen them a new light. I have noted that they can deal well with great responsibility and act independently. I have experienced the enormous journeys that they endure to arrive at school. I have witnessed their isolation and I have immersed myself in their family dynamic. After all of this, I have left their homes with great admiration and respect for these young people.

Similarly, the students and their families have seen that I am not afraid to get dirty. They have seen me out of my general suit and tie. They have seen that I am willing to travel great distances and give up my time. Most importantly, they have seen that I am invested in their children.

The mutual respect developed through all of the above has a lasting impact and assists the teacher and the student equally. When it comes to building authentic relationships, this is the gold standard.

### Take the plunge.

Now it is easy for me to sit here, write this article and say that every boarding staff member should travel. However, I understand that life often gets in the way - kids, work, money, family etc. Additionally, it is often a long way! It takes time and we all live it a world where this is a rare commodity. However, the cost is certainly worth the reward. There will always be a reason not to go... the challenge is focusing on the reasons to go.

I am lucky that my lovely wife is happy for me to leave her for weeks at a time, as she understands the importance and value of these trips. On my return she is bombarded with stories and anecdotes that further demonstrate the significant impact of my experiences. My next challenge is, her job permitting, bringing her with me. Personally, I think this will add another layer to the experience, as the students get an insight into my family, as I do theirs.

### Conclusion

As you have probably gathered from my article thus far, I believe that authenticity in relationships is crucial to a successful boarding operation. I consider myself very fortunate to work in a boarding community that embraces a "family" approach in everything that we do. This enables our staff (and their families) to develop meaningful and genuine connections with our students on a daily basis. After all, we always need to remember that boarders generally spend more time at school than they do at home. With this realisation, it becomes glaringly apparent that the relationships formed in this environment, with students and staff, are vitally important. Therefore, the more authentic we can make these relationships the better. I am certainly not saying that visiting students is the only way of building this authenticity; however, it has been very effective in my experiences. As one of my students beautifully summarised it whilst I was on his property, "You can tell someone how much something means to you and people can read books, but until you come out and see it, and feel it and smell it, you don't understand truly." Sam Sargood - Tambo.



## Insights into Positive Parent Relationships

### AUTHOR

Mark Vincent  
Director of insight Plus



You need to develop with parents a relationship that can best be described as a partnership. Keep in mind the golden rule in all your dealings with parents, 'Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you', or better still, 'Treat others as they would like to be treated'. This set of tips focuses on creating a partnership relationship.

1. **Be discreet.** Never underestimate confidentiality. Don't report on a parent's situation to anyone outside the school. Ever!
2. **Common courtesy is essential to good relationships.** It's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice.
3. **Develop your own standards for your dealings with parents:**
  - Return phone calls and emails promptly
  - Closely monitor delivery of your 'deliverables'
  - Keep in touch with parents frequently
  - Seek parent feedback on your service.
4. **Anticipate parents' expectations.** When you make a promise to a parent discuss possible roadblocks or delays a.s.a.p. Make it clear how you will respond and what they can expect.
5. **Recognise that parents value reliability.** Research shows that most educators feel that parents value responsiveness above all else. So, they fall into the trap of over-promising and under-delivering. It is better to say 'no' to a parent than to say 'yes' and fail to deliver.
6. **Under-promise and over deliver.** Do not raise parents' expectations to unrealistic levels. If you fail to deliver, you disappoint. Set realistic expectations and exceed them. But do not under-promise to the point of insulting your parents. Never tell a parent a task will be easy. If you give a parent the impression that a task is 'easy' just to reinforce your capabilities, you can create a millstone for yourself. Multiple factors are always at play.
7. **Scale down expectations.** Let parents know about the concept of multiple factors. Your efforts can be affected by many things outside your control. You can influence events, not control them. Parents must also play their part in returning phone calls, in communicating with you, in ensuring their child achieves deadlines and completes tasks you have jointly agreed to etc.
8. **Conduct a 'What do you need to know?' program.** Find out what your parents with children in your boarding house most need or want to know. Compile a list and get parents to prioritise the items. Systematically work on communicating with them about those issues.
9. **Exceed your parents' expectations, but let them know you have done so.** If you do not, they will think that what you have done is the normal practice. From then on you have raised the bar for yourself unless they are told that what you did was the exception.
10. **Provide unsolicited little extras.** Find innovative little ways of delighting parents – an unexpected note about a child's progress, a print of a photograph to be used in the school newsletter etc. Little unexpected extras cost very little in time or effort but yield great dividends when it comes to positive relationships.

Mark Vincent is a Director of insight Plus. He has consulted to more than 150 schools on a wide range of assignments. He has recently published the book 'Social Media is not Enough' through deGroots Publishing ([www.degroots.com](http://www.degroots.com))

## The Thing About Pastoral Care

### AUTHOR

Conrad Mathias  
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill.

The thing about pastoral care is not that it's about when you're rostered to deliver it, but it's about you being there when it's needed.

These two planets don't always do what planets do - intersect astronomically - when you want them to.

Budgets are a good thing. They are measures of accountability for costs and for the harbingers of costs - staffing. Unfortunately, staffing is a nominal concept. You can meld it with student/staff ratios; or you can be Quixotic and make an educated guess. Likely both will fall wide of the mark.

Business managers will explain in sentences underpinned by six decimal places that having open ended pastoral care arrangements is a case of over egging the pudding. That mixed metaphor relates to the back office view of the excess of having "people there just in case something's not right".

Boarding schools don't run on air, and it is certainly important to place the disposable dollar in the right place, or at least, nearby.

But the best boarding schools have people around who seem to do not that much at all - but as far as the students are concerned, they are very busy indeed. A two minute conversation which resumes four days later with a half hour chat is priceless. And cheap.

Let's go back to "something not right" - maybe not just right. So much of what we deal with is not crisis management, it is just about getting the students through the next twenty four hours, which, in turn, will get them through the next week. And then the corner will be turned, and they will sail on into whatever success awaits them.

The "something's (just) not right" syndrome is unlikely to knock on your door. No. It'll be there in the school yard, in the classroom, in the dining room, during supper, or in a hiatus just before lights out. If you're distracted by the leave arrangements, damage to a light fixture, or the next day's whole boarding house outing - it'll pass you by.

The leave will sort itself; the damage will be repaired; and the outing will be a splendiferous success. But something won't be right.

So, the thing about pastoral care is.....







## Strength in Collaboration

### AUTHOR

Mika Browning  
Director of Boarding  
St Michaels Collegiate School

The boarding school community in Tasmania is a small one, with there being only six boarding schools across the state. One of the results of this small community is that the spirit of co-operation and support is high. Most of our boarding houses total less than 50 students, and as such our staffing numbers are low. This means that the support we can find in our peers at other schools is valued greatly. This spirit of co-operation has been influenced significantly by the support ABSA provides, especially through their co-ordination of an ABSA tent at Agfest.

Agfest is Tasmanian's premiere agricultural event, attracting a diverse crowd from all over the state. Over three days, all Tasmanian boarding schools, hosted by ABSA share one large marquee, encouraging families to consider boarding as an option for their child's education. As well as sharing this marquee during the day, ABSA also hosts a networking night on the Thursday, which is always well supported. During Agfest there are many opportunities to chat, share and plan. It was during Agfest 2016 that our latest plan to support international students was hatched.

The continuing growth in international student numbers poses many challenges and opportunities for boarding schools. In Tasmania, one of the significant challenges is the holiday periods. There are no organisations in Tasmania that we can outsource to, and it has been increasingly difficult to find families within our school communities who are prepared to fulfil the administration requirements and take on the duty of care for these periods. In Hobart our solution to this was to stay open for the Term One and Term Three holidays and insist that students go home for Term Two holidays. This solution then raised issues of catering, staffing, cost and program. In 2013, St Michael's Collegiate, The Hutchins School and Fahan School combated these



issues by joining together for a combined school holiday program. I first wrote about this program for Lights Out in 2014. Now five years on, this program has evolved significantly and in the April holidays this year we held our most successful boarding program to date, all because of a shared conversation at Agfest.

In April 2016, we had taken the students staying for the holiday boarding program to the West Coast of Tasmania. While there we had visited and taken part in many of Tasmania's premier tourist attractions, for example a cruise through the world heritage area of the Gordon River. This had been a successful trip, and we were sharing this with others at Agfest, (which is held the first week back of TermTwo). While sharing about this trip, and the struggles other boarding houses were facing with the holidays, it was decided that we would invite all Tasmanian Boarding Schools to



participate in the trip part of our Combined Boarding Program. By the end of Agfest we had a venue booked, preliminary program organised, transport, catering and outdoor education staff sorted - we were on a roll.

April 2017, saw 40 international students and eight staff from St Michael's Collegiate, The Hutchins School, The Friends School and Launceston Church Grammar embark on a five day adventure on the East Coast of Tasmania. We based ourselves at a campsite and participated in a program that was fifty percent camp site based and fifty percent touring. Fourteen international students even rose at 5am to attend the local ANZAC Day Dawn Service.

Previously the focus of the trips had been on sightseeing, but it was interesting to note that the success of the program this year was in the traditional campsite based activities. The international students thrived



on meeting others in the same situation and building friendships with a wider circle of international students. The success of this camp significantly enhanced the wellbeing of the international students, and also assisted the staff in building deeper, quality relationships with the students. You can see from the comments below that it was a valuable experience for all involved.

*I enjoy going to the camp because I can meet new people from other school. I'm happy and grateful to be put in a group that I can talk to and play. I met so many nice people and if I could, I would like to go to the camp again. Activities in the camp were awesome, we got to play lots of games and exciting stuffs. The most important thing about the camp that I enjoyed was the "FOOD", thanks to the chef from the Friends' school, we got to eat a whole ton of food. Collegiate girls are grateful.*

Amanda Yr 10 from Malaysia

*This is one of my last two camps at Collegiate. We went to East Coast and Maria Island. I want to say, Maria Island is a good place to camp. There has wonderful views and good camping conditions. This camp was different than those before. I think the most successful thing was not only Hutchins and Collegiate, also some other schools joined us, which brought a different vibe than before. In the camp, my favourite activities are flying fox and basketball competition. Basketball competition was very good and easy way to get closer with other people who we didn't know previously. I would like to join if we have it again next time.*

Hannah Yr 12 from China



*This camp was soooooo good! We went to the east coast and did a lot of interesting activities. The views were really beautiful even though the weather was often rainy or cloudy and windy. I loved the archery so much and the basketball competition made me very excited. Finally, our team won the game! Wow! From this competition I found all of boys in my group are all good at playing basketball and because of this I want to play basketball! Flying fox was good as well but I felt that it was not enough stimulated! I hope next time it could be longer and higher. I also made friends from other schools not only those from Hutchins hahahaha! They are all very friendly. By the way, I hate taking a bus!!!*

Angelia Yr 10 from China

*I really enjoyed the flying fox that I played on the second day in camp, because it's very cool to slide down from a high place and that really challenges me. The food in camp was delicious! I love the chicken wings and the rice was good as well. The view in the Maria Island is amazing, I took so many pictures of those amazing views and showed my mum, she is very pleased of this camp. I had a fun time during this camp and I really wish that I can come here next time!*

Biying Yr 7 from China

*The entire boarding house went on a trip to the East Coast this Easter holiday. To me and I believe to all the international students, it was exotic. The camp was particularly special because it was the first time ever we had a combined school trip with Hutchins, Friends and Grammar school.*

*It was an unprecedented opportunity to mingle with so many international students from other schools and it was interesting to hear differences between boarding houses. We have created precious memories throughout this camp.*

Cherie Yr 12 from Hong Kong

In theory, most of our Boarding Schools are in competition with each other for students, and traditionally this would prevent us from working closely together, however, by putting competition aside we have been able to achieve great results for all our students and schools. By pooling our resources the cost of the week was significantly reduced, the cost of this camp was fifty percent less than the one held in April 2016. The enjoyment and benefit to students was tangible and this has resulted in great feedback from families and agents.

*"The camp received positive feedback from both students and their parents. Our students returned from the camp with fresh skills gained whilst safely exploring new environments, they also connected with other students which in turn taught them the importance of team work and spirit. They can put this into practice when they return to study and it will be a positive advantage for their future working life. For the international boarders this has been a very precious experience, and one that will also be helpful in promoting your school. Thanks again for the excellent job!"*

Chian G&L International

This positive feedback benefits significantly all schools involved. As a staff member on the camp, it was fantastic to have colleagues to share the week and the organisational load with, my own personal wellbeing was significantly increased by having other schools involved.

Moving forward we have already put in place several weekend activities for our students to continue to build friendships and plans are in place for the September holidays and beyond. By working together, we are making each of our boarding schools stronger, collaboration not competition is reaping rewards.





## Financial Life Skills Have Never Been More Important

### AUTHOR

Ken Swan  
Director  
The Wealth Academy



Secondary students across Australia are exposed like never before to financial concepts that have the potential to negatively impact on their wellbeing. It should be a concern for every parent, and every teacher who is trying to best prepare students for their exit from school.

For boarding school students the negative impact can be even greater.

### Learning

Every educator knows that students learn from what they see, listen to and interact with. Every parent knows this as well. They not only learn this way formally through schooling, but they learn this way informally by what they see and listen to on television and in the various forms of social media in which they interact.

Here lies both opportunity and danger.

In the context of financial life skills students see and listen to hundreds of gambling advertisements weekly, hundreds of marketing messages about spending, constant messages about buying the latest gadgets, gizmos and fashion items, and regular advertising about quick and easy access to money to purchase the latest want.

These messages become normalized because students see them so regularly. Unfortunately, they can also become normalized for teachers and parents.

How is this constant messaging counterbalanced with messages about responsible financial decision-making?

Unfortunately the teaching of financial life skills is not front-and-centre in the curriculum. While there are pockets of financial numeracy and some budgeting concepts interspersed in mathematics and business studies, most students, especially in the final years of schooling, will have little or no exposure to financial life skills education unless it is incorporated into a school's student wellbeing program.

This was reaffirmed in recent research undertaken by QUT. Findings from that research included:

- Over 65% of first year tertiary students aged under 20, believe that their high school did not prepare them with the financial life skills they will need as adults.
- 71.1% of respondents believe financial life skills should be taught weekly, monthly or at least once per term. Most students indicated they received little or no financial education when they were attending high school.
- Only 15% of respondents believed there school thought financial education was very/quite important.

Such findings are alarming but not a surprise. It is very difficult for schools to commit to a financial life skills focus in schools with so many competing interests.

But commitment, we must have! The unquestionable reality is that every student on every day of their life will be making financial decisions on behalf of themselves and their future families. This fact alone should encourage parents and teachers to find a way to make financial education a focus, if not a priority in schooling.

### Boarding schools

For students in boarding schools the alarm bells could be louder.

Boarders may not be receiving any financial life skills through the formal curriculum program, but they also are missing out on the daily guidance of parents. Parents are a child's first, and remain a lifelong, educator.

Children learn by watching and listening to their parents. They learn a variety of financial life skills, behaviours, habits and attitudes from parents as well. Sometimes, these are not always favourable, but nevertheless, children are watching and listening and interacting with home finance conversations. Learning does occur.

When students live away from the home environment they are also removed from those daily 'money' conversations, including weekly trips to the shops where they see mum and dad making financial decisions. These little, informal experiences matter!

Children hear conversations about what the family needs to buy, rather than things they want to buy. They also hear conversations about saving and budgeting. Family conversations can provide some balanced thinking to financial decision-making.

My view is that boarders need extra guidance and support with regard financial life skills learning. They are living in a special environment that limits their exposure to many necessary financial life skills, and increases their exposure to media messages that normalize potentially harmful financial contexts.

### A way forward

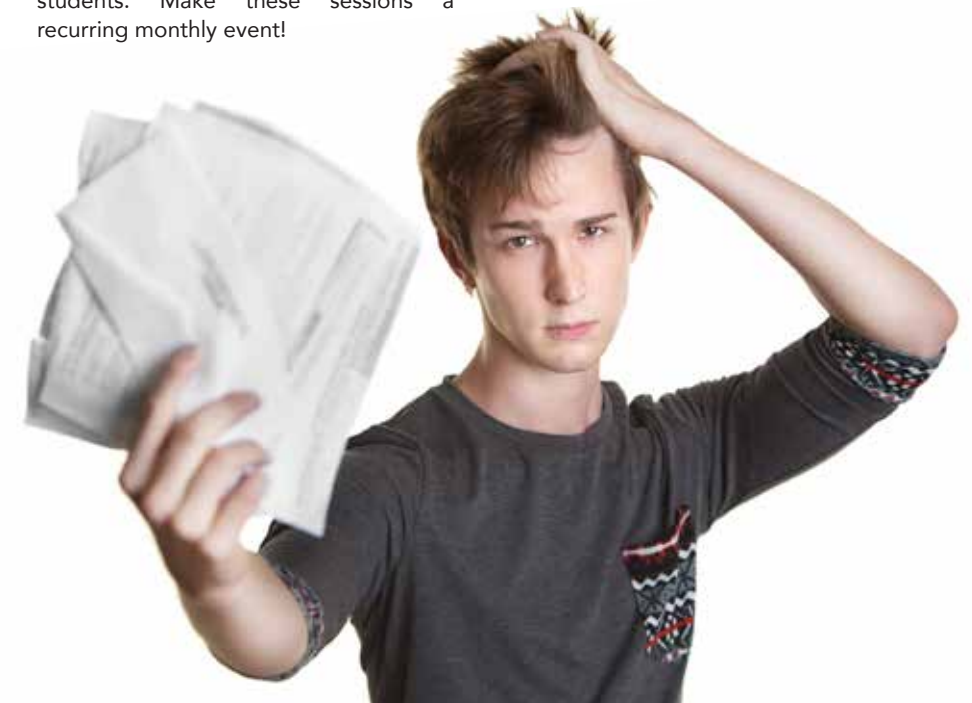
There are various strategies that can be implemented by boarding schools.

1. Accessing unbiased financial life skill resources is a necessity. Resources that can be used both formally and informally will help to raise boarder awareness of various financial life skills. Boarding staff do not need to be highly skilled or knowledgeable in financial life skills, but they should have capacity to use these resources to stimulate conversations with boarders.
2. Including parents in the financial life skills conversation should be a priority. Parents will have many ideas about the financial life skills they would like their children to be learning. They can also follow up with their children, on any lessons given at school.
3. Establishing local partners who can provide expert knowledge and skills to boarders should be an easy solution for most boarding schools. In most schools there will be an Old Boy / Old Girl network, or an existing group of parents who have expertise in the financial world. On most occasions they will be very willing to offer educational sessions to students. Make these sessions a recurring monthly event!

4. Start small and develop incrementally. If financial life skills education is not part of the existing boarding program, then start small and build incrementally. It is important to build at a steady pace so that a commitment to financial life skills education is sustainable.

Financial life skills education should be a shared commitment. Doing it alone is too difficult and throws too much responsibility onto any one person or entity. For this reason directors of boarding schools are encouraged to use community partners, mentors and networks to help prepare boarding students for the financial world in which they will all live. Financial life skills learning should be a priority.

To contact Ken email:  
[admin@thewealthacademy.com.au](mailto:admin@thewealthacademy.com.au)  
[www.thewealthacademy.com.au](http://www.thewealthacademy.com.au)







## Fuel Your Passion

Leadership and resilience develops as HASSE Space School inspires Australian students

### AUTHOR

Naomi Donohue  
Marketing Program Specialist  
iVicon Australia

*“Dream big”  
“find your passion”  
“follow your life trajectory”*

These are bold statements and sage advice. The question is how can a teenager not only grasp these concepts but trust in the relevance? How do they develop their own confidence to employ survival skills throughout their academic and professional years?

HASSE Space School raises students' expectation of success and fosters a long-term interest in science and maths encouraging them to pursue their dreams. HASSE provides interesting learning environments and unique access to the most inspiring people. This is our difference. Hearing such statements from people who have excelled in their fields; who speak openly and humbly about the hard work and perseverance it took and how the arduous journey is exhilarating and rewarding. This is the spark that fuels the students' passion.

Teenagers don't need to know what they want to do 'for the rest of their lives'. They hear that it is OK to not know, so long as they choose to follow paths open with dedication and passion every step of the way. These teens are going into uncharted territory as research shows they will have 14 jobs over four different careers in their lifetime. Multipotentialite is the new descriptor to define those that will thrive but regardless of the terminology they will need resilience. They will need courage. They will need to develop these strengths within themselves early in their lives.

ABSA and iVicon together are looking forward to seeing more STEM-inspired Australian students. The new partnership is rolling out to member schools bringing the opportunity for all students to participate in joint expeditions to HASSE Space School, an immersive international study program.

Here students will meet incredible guest speakers. They will hear from leading professionals such as Dr Leroy Chiao, a patron and advisor of the program - an engineer, a former astronaut and commander to the International Space Station, and special advisor to the Whitehouse. He is also a child of new Asian immigrants and battled against the odds to achieve not only an outstanding career but to achieve his dream. Looking around the faces of the teenagers in the room as he speaks, it is clear they are in awe. The setting is lovely - they are in the Starship Gallery at Johnson Space Centre surrounded by NASA memorabilia - but they are genuinely enthralled by his speech. Then question time begins. An open floor of serious, extremely academic, and sometimes simply entertaining questions from the students are answered with honesty and integrity. No platitudes, teens have a radar for such insincerity, answers are sincere and in-depth.

Dr Chiao is one of several incredible guest speakers the students at HASSE Space School meet during their two-week expedition. Each speaker is equally successful in their fields and all have messages of encouragement with tips for building productive successful lives.

HASSE are confident in the program and know that the students will always be inspired. However, that doesn't dilute the satisfaction of hearing students talk after the event... in the bus back to the hotel and many months later at school.

The lasting effects of these expeditions are most rewarding for the facilitators and educators alike. It is awe inspiring to see the depth of knowledge young minds can absorb in two-short weeks. Their enthusiasm and excitement for the locations and activities is expected but absolutely enjoyable. The reverence and admiration shown for every guest speaker is wonderful to witness. The outstanding component is the lasting effects on students' self-belief, their articulation of their own dreams, and the positive changes they make to their studies and personal lives on their return.

Younger students are much better able to funnel their subject choice, they have their eyes open to the opportunities the world holds in store for them and they are shown numerous avenues for their unique passion.

Senior students find within themselves a strength previously untapped; an ability to bond deeply and productively with new people; to keep their minds open to alternate ideas and opportunities that may arise.

All students develop resilience, confidence, teamwork and leadership skills. They are encouraged to pursue any goal with passion, complete attention, and wholehearted belief in their ability to achieve. They are shown time and again that the path may change and this is a fantastic part of living to the fullest and exploring and embracing your own trajectory.

Joint expeditions will be formed for June and December 2018. Bringing like-minded students from different schools together is an incredible opportunity to build new friendships and promotes collaboration among the schools. All ABSA member schools are welcomed and encouraged to take part. iVicon is reaching out to each school over the coming month, to invite you to take part in an Information Evening for your staff and school community.

### See back cover for more info.

For more information on  
HASSE Space School please contact:  
iVicon Australia [enquires@ivicon.com.au](mailto:enquires@ivicon.com.au)  
[www.ivicon.com.au](http://www.ivicon.com.au) or ph: 1300 303 402

### HASSE Space School Expedition Summary

**Senior Space School**  
Participants: students in years 10, 11, 12  
Location: Houston, Texas, USA  
Dates: 9-23 December 2018

**Junior Space School**  
Participants: students in years 7, 8, 9  
Location: Houston, Texas and Huntsville, Alabama, USA  
Dates: 1-15 July 2018

## Mindful Parenting

How you can help your kids thrive

### AUTHOR

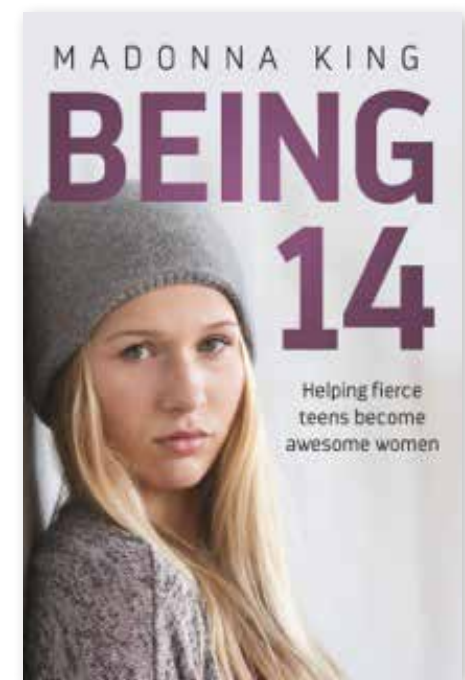
Madonna King  
Journalist and Author

*“Being 14 is a weird in-between age. I feel constantly conflicted about decision-making” - Emily, 14.*

*“It's a time of sadness and constantly feeling you are being judged. There are so many expectations.” - Rose, 14.*

Emily and Rose are two of almost 200 14-year-old girls I interviewed, including day students and boarders, at public and private schools across Australia for my latest book, titled *Being 14*. Their comments, about the tricky age of 14, are replicated over and over again, highlighting a group of articulate, thoughtful young women who are too easily dismissed as “evil princess” or “difficult to get on with”.

Our 14-year-olds agree that they are confused and vulnerable, but are trying their best to navigate their way through an adolescence so different to their parents. And more than anything, they are appealing to us to listen.



As a journalist and as a mother, I learnt so much from them, and how they think. I then put the challenges nominated by the girls to dozens and dozens of experts - school principals, teachers, counsellors, police, parenting groups and CEOs who all provided their insight and advice.

Here are just eight points that are making me think long and hard ahead of my own daughters turning 14.

- Seven in every ten 14-year-old girls get insufficient sleep. Often this is because of the number of extra-curricular activities, not just social media. They need nine hours minimum each night, and 30 minutes of missed sleep records a measurable IQ difference of up to 10 points.
- Setting up false social media accounts, purporting to be another person, is now a common act of revenge when friends fall out. This is having dreadful consequences, as the victim logs on to find she has allegedly sent spiteful and abusive messages to her friends.
- About one-third of teen girls - according to educators and police - will send a half-naked photograph of themselves to someone else. *Being 14* explores the motivation behind girls doing this, but also explains why is it often the “good” student who falls foul of social media.
- Frenetic home lives add to the obsession with social media. A girl, who has a disagreement with her friends, now comes home, into her room, where that argument will grow and continue into

the night. More connected than ever, our teen girls can feel utterly alone. Some are sending more than 100 texts each night.

- The ages of 12-25 are crucial in the brain's development, with the part that provides teens with reasoning skills still developing over this period. Science experts say this is why your 14-year-old might appear disorganised.
- An anxiety epidemic exists, with school refusal and self-harm, on the rise. In some cases, students are seeking counselling because they failed to achieve A-grade marks or get into an extension class. Is this what we want for our daughters? This age group has made contact with Kids Helpline 22,000 times in the past four years!
- We all worry about our teens having too many friends on social media, so think about this: a 14-year-old with 650 friends on one social media app could conceivably have 325,000 people able to contact her because of the number of followers each of her friends boasts. Jon Rouse who heads Taskforce Argos - the undercover police unit that tracks online sex offenders - points the finger squarely at parents, saying it is up to us to understand the social media being used by our children
- Online porn is becoming a dominant “sex educator” for boys, and police and educators say this is impacting on how girls are treated, and how they see themselves. Police are trying to navigate this challenging new environment and educators are teaching our teen girls what they need to know.

In *Being 14*, I walk parents through issues as varied as pocket money and teen parties, self-image and academic pressure, the relationship between teen girls and their mothers, and provide the expert advice on keeping that relationship strong. Importantly, it a book that gives our teen girls a voice. In it, they confide what they really want us to know. And the top wish, across the board, is that we not only hear them, but really listen to what they are trying to tell us.

<https://www.hachette.com.au/madonna-king/being-14>



## Boot Camp

### AUTHOR

Chris Van Styn  
Director of Boarding  
Ballarat Grammar



A feature of every successful boarding community is the structured homework sessions that provide boarders with a focused, distraction free environment to work through their allocated homework as well as study, revise and 'cram' for assessment tasks that appear to be consistently on the horizon. At times, factors such as house layout, climate, age variation of boarders within houses, as well as the sporting commitments, community service and co-curricular activities all seem to conspire against us in achieving that elusive perfect study environment. These factors seem to be ever increasing as the modern day boarder strives to embrace every opportunity on offer to stand out

in the crowd and be the best that they can be. And whilst these aspirations and goals are certainly commendable and to be encouraged, I can't help but feel sorry for the poor old 'prep' routine, that often comes off second best in a crowded and busy school week. Boarding House staff can be forgiven at times for channeling the archetypal prison warden or hall monitor during prep sessions, trying to keep the peace, and allow our students to make the most of the precious time that they have.

Earlier in 2016, when we were forming a response to support our senior boarding students through the bereavement of one of our boarders who was tragically killed

in a car accident over the summer break, it became apparent that a new challenge was emerging for our Year 12 students in their prep sessions. They had the quiet, settled environment; indeed staff were working extra hard to ensure that all was quiet, still and conducive to optimal academic success, but in these sessions, many were struggling to focus on the task at hand. We were very fortunate to have access to outstanding counselling and psychological support, and many students were able to work through their grief and regain the focus that they required for their Year 12 studies. What did begin to become apparent though, when closely examining and reflecting on how we do things in boarding was the fact that so much focus, attention and energy went into ensuring that the environment in each house was conducive for study during these sessions, but what was being somewhat overlooked was how these students were going about approaching study in these sessions in the first place.

The question of student focus emerges quite regularly with regards to research into optimal study. Different theorists have postulated the most effective ways of studying and retaining information through countless research projects. What this all translates to though in the mind of the stereotypical adolescent is: 'what is the quickest way of getting through the homework, and retaining as much of the information as possible.' For many of our boarders, sitting in their study areas in silence until they had completed their allocated work was what they equated with a successful approach towards homework. If this took four hours, they would sit there for four hours, completing the work, without actually thinking about how the work was being completed.

At the beginning of Term Two, we launched a new program for our Year 12s boarders, with one aim in mind: to foster an approach

of self-reflection and self-regulation in learning. This was sold to our Year 12s as teaching them to study smarter not harder. A group of our School's academic 'heavy weights' were assembled, intentionally drawing from teaching staff outside of boarding who could add another voice to the chorus regarding approaches to study in boarding. Students signed up for a five-week intensive program that educated them in short tutorials about the most effective study approaches, the latest study apps, and the underpinning neuroscience of the successful learner. The focus of our 'Academic Boot Camp' though was primarily focused on modeling the most effective approach towards study, underpinned by the latest research on the brain. Students were asked to bring with them to each session two things; homework from three different subject areas, and a distraction that allowed them to 'press reset' during the breaks between these sessions.

Each of our sessions followed a similar format: a ten minute introduction with a specific focus on an aspect of optimal study, followed by three, twenty minute intensive study sessions, each punctuated by a three minute study break. In each of these twenty minute sessions, students were taught to identify a specific, measurable focus to work towards achieving. At the end of each twenty minute study block, students then engaged in an three minute activity or 'distraction' that shifted their cognitive thinking process. Some brought along a Rubik's cube, others bounced a stress ball, we had pushups, sit-ups, and even a few engaged in competitive matches of 'paddocks' on the whiteboard; we are a regional boarding school after all! Following this, they were straight back into their second study block, engaged with a renewed focus and goal for the second session. After modeling this over a number of weeks, students were asked to return

to their study areas in boarding houses to apply the 20:3 minute model to their existing prep sessions. The staff involved in each boot camp session then followed up with specific students in boarding houses throughout the weeks at various times to check in and see how students were progressing with employing this model. Whilst the three minute distraction break did need to be somewhat toned down for the boarding house environment for obvious reasons, students reported that this formula allowed them to maintain optimal focus for short periods of time.

The most pleasing outcome of this program though has been the conversations about learning that have been engaged in between students and their peers, but also between academic and boarding staff and the students who engaged in the program. For some students they found the twenty minutes wasn't long enough, and they modified as they still had some momentum 'left in the tank'. Conversely some of the boys involved found twenty minutes of concerted effort without distraction, a challenge at first! Others applied the 20:3 model to certain tasks, particularly those with a Maths or Science focus, whilst continuing on using their existing approach for tasks related to English and essay construction. Very few reported not using the approach at all. For our boarding program, 'Boot Camp' will become an annual feature of our induction process for new students and we are keen to ensure that the premise and the language used to talk about optimal individual focus is used by all staff and students who call our boarding houses home.



## Below the Surface Pembroke Scuba Diving Course

### AUTHOR

Daniel Brummitt  
Boarding House Tutor  
Pembroke School, Adelaide

A scuba diving course is not a small undertaking. It is an in-depth (pardon the pun) activity that takes commitment, cooperation and resilience and our most recent course was a fantastic example of that.



Pembroke's boarding community has had a relationship with Adelaide Scuba since 2008. We have worked hard to put the option to boarders to participate in an introductory course, and to offer an advanced course to those who wish to further themselves. It was started by a past tutor, Duncan Falconer, who had both a passion for the outdoors and for working with children. The continuation of this activity has been a very rewarding experience and a huge learning curve for both myself and the students.



The typical image conjured by 'diving' is the Great Barrier Reef, towering corals in shallow water. South Australia offers a wide variety of diving, from boat to shore, fresh or saltwater, day or night, inland or coastal, wreck, cave or reef. In the past,



our boarders have done combinations of these, from boat dives off Glenelg, where we visit "The Dredge" or Seacliff Reef, to jetty dives at Second Valley, Port Noarlunga and Edithburgh, each offering something different to divers.

With any activity I put to our boarding community, I like to think about what skills it can teach and one of the big appeals of this course is that the skills learnt are lifelong. The skills that students learn in organisation, prioritisation, and internal and interpersonal understanding contribute to the best person we hope each student can be. Their open water course has been very time intensive, requiring private study, group workshops, training dives in the pool, practice dives in the ocean and a final competency test dive. During this course, our students were tried quite extensively due to some terrible weather last year in Adelaide which resulted in many weekends being put on hold for diving. Nevertheless, these boys and girls have come through demonstrating teamwork, commitment and resilience.



The open water dive ticket is also a lifelong qualification which allows them to dive across the globe, and opens the door to further qualifications. For our students who do undertake the advanced diver course, it is a great test of leadership as they use their previously learnt skills to help newcomers. I think it is always a proud moment to look back at the boarders who started and compare them to who they became by the end of the course.

A fundamental skill that our boarders must learn very quickly is teamwork. It is a crucial skill which makes the difference between a safe dive and a dangerous one. The students begin not always knowing each other that well, but as they progress through the course, from helping each other study, to relying on each other for a safe dive, they form a group that looks out for each other beyond the scope of the course. Working in pairs for the dives, each student puts their buddy through a series of checks before entering the water. They are in constant communication with their buddy through the dive using hand signals and then at the end of the dive they debrief, discussing highlights and any issues that could be improved on.

In preparation for open water diving, the students had to learn all the skills that would be required of them in a pool. They had a controlled environment where they learnt, watched and repeated the skills to show competency. These skills are to prepare them to best handle any scenarios that they may come across. Once passed,

we could then move on to the open water dives. This year, our course took us to three dive sites which offered an incredible variety of experiences to the students.



Dive 1 at Seacliff Reef was abundant with Blue Devils, Leatherjackets, Blue Swimmers and Sea Stars, it was quite a lot of work to remain focussed on the goal of the dive – skill demonstrations. Amongst other skills, students showed they could recover their regulators if it was removed from their mouth, clear their masks underwater and breathe from their dive buddy's air supply if they ran out of air.



Dive 2 was done at 'The Blocks' just out of the Glenelg marina. After passing some sunbathing seals on the way out, we did some surface skills including emergency procedures and surface swims. While down below, we demonstrated how to operate in the event of a mask removal - how to cope if it goes entirely, or how to replace and clear it if you can recover it. Due to some afternoon chop, the visibility was reduced which, to draw a positive from it, made it much easier to focus on the skills.

Dive 3 was a chance to see what further qualifications you could look at doing. We went to "The Dredge", a shipwreck,

which sits in about 22 metres of water. The divers tested their limits, going to about 16 metres to the deck of the shipwreck. Two courses we talked about in the review of this dive were the advanced course which would allow them to get to the base of the wreck, and the wreck diver course which qualifies them to enter the shipwreck. The quick demonstrations of their skills allowed the kids to explore the surface of the wreck as a group, sighting plenty of marine life and yet still leaving a lot to come back for.



Dive 4 was our final open water dive. We went back to Seacliff Reef where after one last skill demonstration, students worked in their buddy pairs to utilise all their skills to successfully complete a competent dive. The opportunity to see all the fish that had to be passed over last time could be appreciated and investigated now. A definite highlight was the spotting of a cuttlefish which was lurking under a shelf. I suspect we may have a couple of recreational dives coming up to see some more of these, and maybe even for an elusive South Australian attraction – The Leafy Seadragon!



Reflecting upon my involvement in this course, I believe the reason I provide this activity to the boarding house is because

my own passion for diving started back in 2008 when I was a boarder at Pembroke myself. A completely foreign activity, I signed up not knowing what to expect. Since then, I have had the opportunity to dive reefs in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, wrecks in Mooloolaba, QLD, the Great Barrier Reef and at many sites around Adelaide. Every diver I speak to has a different story as to why they took up the hobby or why some make it a profession. People come from different backgrounds and are different ages but their common interest makes up a strong and supportive community. Organising this has not been without challenges. A lot of work goes into gathering interest and selling the idea of committing to the course. Liaising between students, parents, the dive company and the school. Organising medicals with doctors, transportation, dates and food, then after all of this, the dive could then be thrown out by a day of bad weather. After each course, I have worked to improve for the next time, drawing upon the lessons learnt. So, will I be running the course again? Definitely.





## Real First Aid

**AUTHOR**  
Motti Blum  
CEO  
Real First Aid

For many individuals and organisations, first aid courses are one of many compliance exercises that must be completed. Once the appropriate certificate is obtained, the relevant box can be ticked and everyone can sleep peacefully at night knowing that they are “compliant”. However this is only a very small part of being prepared for a real emergency. Being in a high risk environment such as a boarding school, lends itself to the possibility of serious injury and illness. Whilst having the correct qualification is important “a certificate hanging on the wall can’t perform CPR” and real, practical, hands-on experience is the best way to be prepared.

Take, for example, a student suffering an anaphylactic reaction. There are a range of factors that would exacerbate such a situation in a boarding environment. The student is away from home so may feel a heightened level of fear or stress. There are most likely only a few staff available to deal with the situation. There’s a panicked group of peers hovering around unsure what to do. To make matter worse this incident may be taking place in the middle of the night or in a remote location. These factors add a variety of challenges to the situation that extend far beyond the standard compliance training. Merely knowing how to inject an EpiPen into the student’s leg is only one small part of the equation. The far greater challenge in such a situation is to recall how to administer the EpiPen whilst concurrently trying to overcome the stress, deal with the added distractions, manage the other students and ensure that there is some form of help on the way.

The only way to prepare one’s self to deal with such a situation is by experiencing that scenario as it would be in real life. And the only way to experience that scenario without actually putting a person in danger is as part of a realistic simulation. Simulation training has been



the cornerstone of education in the military, aviation industry and professional medical world for decades. Why? Because this style of learning is proven to improve knowledge retention, improve skills and mitigate some of the human factors that arise during high-stress situations.

We at Real First Aid have taken this well established, proven methodology and applied it to first aid training. In our courses, every possible aspect of a medical emergency is simulated. Fake blood, fake smells, fake wounds and makeup are used to recreate the look, feel and smell of a patient. Sounds, lights and smoke help simulate the scene. Role playing and actors help bring to life the chaotic and distracting nature of an emergency situation. A specialised phone number and answering service is used to simulate 000 calls to give participants real practice with their communication skills.

This style of training ensures that participants have a greater understanding of what to expect when encountering a situation. More importantly, participants have trained themselves to remain calm and think clearly whilst dealing with the distractions, the stress and the adrenaline that is rushing through their body. It allows them to consider the logistical details that would have been glossed over during standard training such as - where the first aid kit is kept? what is the nearest corner street? (a question which 000 responders will always ask,) or where is the easiest access point for paramedics? Knowledge

of these details can ultimately save a person’s life and failing to be prepared in this manner can have the most significant of consequences.

Not only does this style of training benefit the individuals it can also help an organisation holistically assess their emergency response procedures. Take, for example, a school we trained a few months ago. When running through a scenario they realised that the back gate was locked and couldn’t be accessed even in an emergency without wasting precious minutes trying to locate a key. Having not done the course this would never have been uncovered until they would’ve faced a real emergency.

When it comes to financial investments, as a general rule the higher the risk, the higher the return. To an extent the same is true for our children’s education, the more they are challenged and the further they are pushed, the more they can grow and learn. There is no better example of this notion than boarding school education. As readers of this magazine we all know that the potential reward from boarding education is immense. But just as is the case with financial investments, the risks are also heightened. The constant nature of boarding life increases the likelihood of encountering a serious medical emergency and that when a situation arises (maybe at 3am), the responsibility to deal with it will fall on fewer people. Simulation based first aid training can help mitigate the increased risk and ensure that students and staff are safe and prepared for any situation.

## From the Executive Director



Richard Stokes  
Executive Director

As I sit here on a plane to Sydney, my 37th flight this year so far, I can’t help but wonder how far ABSA has come since its formation at the end of 2007. To see the Duty of Care training course in its third edition, our workshops to assist people to complete the workbooks, State Symposiums across the country, Agfest in Tasmania to advertise boarding and the opportunity many schools are taking up to have us analyse their boarding program is staggering! And this week being National Boarding Week, something I have dreamed of happening for more than ten years, as such a successful event in its first year makes me excited for the future.

So where is ABSA heading over the next few years?

During 2017 the ABSA Board will be formulating our next iteration of the Strategic Plan - a working document which directs all that we do. In thinking about the next three to five years we believe these are the areas which will be critical for the development of the Association in providing excellent service to all our schools.

### TRAINING

All boarding staff will need to develop a training plan including these offerings by ABSA:

- Year 1 - Duty of Care
- Year 2 - Cultural Awareness, Technology, Time Management, Update on Active Duty
- Year 3 - Dealing with parents, Team Building, Marketing and Representing Your School, Update on Active Duty
- Year 4 - Refresher on Duty of Care Along with attendance at State and National Symposiums and Conferences, this will lead to them becoming an accredited staff member in boarding

### STANDARDS

- Accreditation - self assessment for years 1 and 2 and external review in year 3
- Reviewing and changing the Standard

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A review of the conferences and symposiums offered by ABSA
- A retreat for those who have worked in boarding for many years
- A growth in State based activities
- Specific boarding training for staff working in admissions, marketing, admin, nursing etc
- A renewal of Lights Out and eNEWS

### NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Young staff gatherings with speakers
- Boarders conferences
- Mentoring by those who are experienced in boarding
- Lunches with Principals

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The Australian Boarding Schools Association will continue to focus its work on supporting our Australian Boarding Schools, but will also be reaching out to countries wanting our services, including New Zealand, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, India, Korea, etc

### ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Developing good relationships with like minded associations
- Working with government departments to better support the boarders in our care

### ADVERTISING BOARDING

- Boarding Fairs in every State
- National Boarding Week develops even more reach

### DIRECT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

- Experience and knowledge provided by those who can help

That should keep us busy!

As many of you know we have welcomed a new Trainee to our office. Josh Drahm, a boarding school graduate from 2014, has been appointed as our Communications and Administration Trainee and will be the voice on the phone when you ring much of the time. It is exciting to note that we received some excellent applications upon advertising this position on the ABSA website, including two young people who really understood boarding, and after an extensive period of consideration and interview Josh was awarded the position. We hope you will make him welcome.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Leaders Conference in Sydney on 13 and 14 August. This is our first experiment in a Convention Centre, and we have returned to having just one presenter to provide a deep learn experience for all. Registrations are coming in steadily for what I believe will be the best Leaders Conference we have offered.



## Coming Events

### AUS

Visit [www.boarding.org/our-events](http://www.boarding.org/our-events) to see upcoming Duty of Care Workshops.

#### 13 - 14 August, 2017

ABSA Leaders Conference,  
Sydney

### USA

#### 15 - 20 July, 2017

TABS Summer Session  
Boston University  
Boston, Massachusetts

#### 30 November - 2 December, 2017

TABS Annual Conference  
Boston, Massachusetts

### UK

#### 10 - 12 July 2017

Annual Conference for Nurses and Matrons,  
Solihull



Roland Nedelkovich with HASSE Victorian students Dec 2016 - (See article page 40)  
*Silver Snoopy recipient and NASA's top engineer; 30years experience working for NASA's Space Shuttle and the ISS programs; an accomplished Senior Technical Manager with extensive experience managing complex programs and projects involving multi-national contributions from early concept through design phase, and ultimately to development and deployment. Roland was awarded the NASA Silver Snoopy as one of the ninety-ninth percentile achievers of the NASA workforce.*  
Roland shares his motivational message that you don't have to work for NASA to enjoy this career!

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## Would You Like Your Boarding School Featured in Lights Out?

We plan to **feature two schools** each edition. All you need to do, is write a brief article (400 to 1000 words) and send us some high resolution photos.

Send all files to:  
[absa@boarding.org.au](mailto:absa@boarding.org.au)  
by 1st September 2017

Australian Boarding Schools Association Ltd.  
Postal: PO Box 5569, Brendale, QLD. 4500  
Office: Unit 6, 3 Hinkler Court, Brendale, QLD 4500  
P + 61 7 3205 4940 F + 61 7 3205 6567  
E [absa@boarding.org.au](mailto:absa@boarding.org.au) W [www.boarding.org.au](http://www.boarding.org.au)

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