

lightsout



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ON THE COVER

The Cloisters at Christ's Hospital School, Horsham, UK

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Boarding Standards *for Australian Schools*

AUTHOR

Dr T F Hawkes, Chairman
Australian Boarding Schools Association



The time has come for ABSA to start the process of formalising national standards for Australian boarding schools. In this introduction to the first of a number of discussion documents which will be circulated in the coming months, Dr Tim Hawkes, our ABSA Chairman, has suggested a possible way forward in how to frame the standards. Colleagues are invited to comment on the suggested way forward and send any suggestions to Dr Hawkes at tfh@kings.edu.au.

Introduction

Central to the purpose of the Australian Boarding Schools' Association (ABSA) is the promotion of high standards of care in boarding schools throughout Australia. To achieve this goal, ABSA has identified key standards as being important in the delivery of proper support to students of school age that are boarders.

It is a mark of maturity when a profession is able to determine its preferred standards and is able to promote those standards within its membership. ABSA is the peak professional body for boarding schools in Australia and has a membership that includes

most Australian boarding schools. Therefore, ABSA is well-placed to decide the standards appropriate for Australian boarding schools.

There already exist mandated standards for boarding schools in many states and territories. The ABSA standards would not be designed to replace any boarding standards required by Federal or State law. At the moment, the ABSA boarding standards would be industry-based standards rather than legally mandated standards.

What the ABSA standards would offer is an evaluative tool that brings together the best state and territory standards found throughout Australia. It has also added best practice from overseas. Most importantly, the ABSA standards would represent the collective wisdom of a large number of dedicated boarding staff and administrators. These would be standards determined by the boarding profession for the boarding profession.

The ABSA boarding standards would also be relevant to boarding hostels that service school-aged children. Boarding hostels cater for about one out of 13 boarders of school age within Australia. A warm invitation is extended to boarding hostel to use the ABSA boarding standards.

Areas to be assessed

Throughout the world and even across Australia, the matters assessed for compliance as a properly operating boarding school varies greatly. ABSA suggests choosing enough standards to be accurate in its assessment but not too many to make the evaluation process excessively burdensome.



Three main areas which would need to be assessed:

- Student matters.
- Staff matters.
- School matters.

Quite properly, the centre of attention for boarding standards needs to be the student. Their well-being is the main priority for ABSA. Staff also need to be considered for it is generally the staff who determine the quality of the boarding experience. Finally, there is the school who, with its management, provide the direction for a boarding school.

Within each of the three main areas, a further three domains would need to be assessed:

- Welfare.
- Development.
- Management.

Welfare relates to well-being. It encompasses health and happiness and the degree by which people and an organisation, flourish. Development is a different concept. It is a measure of the level of growth and maturity. Management differs yet again and incorporates administration and leadership. It is a term that describes the processes used to direct and govern. Ensuring welfare, proper development and good management, describes the central task of a boarding school.

Conclusion

A discussion paper has recently been sent to all boarding schools in Australia. If you would like a copy, please contact the ABSA office at absa@boarding.org.au. We encourage everyone in the Boarding School Industry to get involved in the discussion on standards so that our processes and practices reflect our members' needs.

Central to the purpose of the Australian Boarding Schools' Association is the promotion of high standards of care in boarding schools throughout Australia.

1. Dr T F Hawkes, Chairman,
Australian Boarding Schools Association



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Happiness-Stop

“shoulding”!

AUTHOR
Dr Bronnie Ware



For happiness, you shouldn't "should"!

Three separate incidents have led to seed being sewn which eventually led to the development of this article column; although all separate, there was a common theme and that theme has become the heart of this short message.

The first incident involved a disagreement with my mother about the most appropriate (and inappropriate) ways to respond to our children under certain circumstances (an all too common occurrence, disagreements about raising children, given the incredible complexities of this wondrous challenge); the second incident occurred during a coaching session with a client (a very successful young businessman); and the third, well that's a personal one about which I can't reveal too many details but in short, came about because I was disappointed in my own reaction to a particular event.

What could these seemingly disparate events have in common? Well, they all revolved around the issue of expectations. One of the more common "thinking mistakes" that we all make from time to time (and that unfortunately

some of us make far too frequently) is referred to as "should statements". On watching your children misbehave, for example, you might think that they "shouldn't do that" or that "they should know better". While running a business or managing staff someone might think that "they really should be able to do better". And during personal reflection someone might believe that they themselves "should have achieved far more than they have".

As you may have guessed from the examples above these "shoulds" reflect our expectations, of ourselves and of others. Now there's nothing wrong with holding expectations of yourself and of others (in fact it's virtually impossible not to have any expectations) and there's not even anything wrong with having high expectations but, and as is often the case this is an important but, there is something wrong with holding expectations that are unrealistic.

Realistically high expectations are fine; in fact realistically high expectations are great because they drive us to achieve and to be our best. Unrealistically high expectations, however, are unhelpful and in fact can be downright dangerous as they typically lead to destructive and unpleasant emotions such as disappointment, frustration and worse, anger and rage.

Now clearly the experience of emotions such as disappointment and anger is not conducive to the experience of happiness; but at the same time, it's perfectly normal to experience frustration and similar feelings from time to time. So what am I saying?

First, accept that it's perfectly normal and in fact perfectly appropriate, at times, to experience some negative emotions such

as those describe above. It's not, however, very healthy if good for anyone if you're experiencing these types of feelings constantly.

Second, be cognisant of the fact that to experience happiness it's important to do what you can to minimise the experience of these unpleasant emotions and that this can be achieved by reducing the frequency with which you experience them, and/or the length of time you experience them, and/or by reducing the intensity of the emotions themselves.

Third, you can do this by noting that the root cause of disappointment, frustration and anger is often "should statements" which as I've described above, can often be tied back to some form of unrealistic expectation.

Finally, the solution, therefore, is to challenge your expectations of yourself and of others. This isn't the same as lowering your expectations but rather, it involves an ongoing process of assessment them and where appropriate, modifying them so they are, quite simply, more realistic.

Let's face the facts – I'm not perfect; you're not perfect; the world's not perfect and...nothing ever will be perfect. This is not "negative thinking" but rather, this is a realistic appraisal of the world and one that if adopted, can effectively reduce the experience of those unpleasant and unhelpful emotions (unhelpful because they don't help us improve the situation in any way).

In summary, to get happy get real!



Duty Of Care:

Boarders On Leave

AUTHOR

Andrew Knott, Partner
Macrossans Lawyers

The Challenge

Without doubt one of the more challenging aspects of boarding house life from the point of view of boarding house staff is students leaving the school premises (particularly on leave such as to shops, to the city, to friend's places, to parties) in circumstances where they are not in the care of their parents or of any staff member of the school.

Basic Principles

To deal with this issue it is important to recall the basic principles. The duty is a duty imposed by the general law on both the legal entity conducting the school and on staff members (insofar as they have relevant duties) to ensure that reasonable care is taken. Liability to compensate students in damages only arises where there has been proof that the duty exists, proof that that duty has not been discharged and a causal connection between that failure to discharge the duty and the student's injury. These issues are in fact examined carefully in court proceedings before awards of damages are made.

Particularly in relation to older students, an important issue to take into account is balancing the need for protection against the need for students to learn to take responsibility for themselves and to develop the capacity to succeed in the world as autonomous adults.

Another general point we should make is that it is always risky to act outside the parameters laid down by experienced and responsible boarding house staff. In this area being a "maverick" or a "pioneer" has the potential for serious legal consequences if harm results to a student.

The Issues

The first issue which arises is whether the proposed activity is a reasonable one. This involves analysing what is to occur, thinking about the environment, thinking about the "track record" of students generally and the particular students in question, and making sensible judgments about whether the proposal is an appropriate one.

If a decision is made that the proposed leave is appropriate then consideration needs to be given to planning. In particular, what instructions are to be given to the students about what is permitted as to where they go, when, when they have to return to the boarding house, any communications which are appropriate while they are on leave, eg. phoning in by mobile phone etc.

Once the planning has been completed, appropriate instructions should be given to students, possibly in writing, so there can be no dispute about what was said and to reinforce to students the importance of what has been said.

In some cases the duty of care may require that particular activities, or particular students, or particular venues not be approved, or approved only subject to certain strict conditions.

The duty of the school authority includes the duty to monitor and review the experience of the school and to disseminate relevant information about unfortunate events occurring so that decision-makers and supervisors and boarding house staff generally can take all of this into account when making future decisions. Staff conferencing in the light of experience and review of instructions, protocols and so on is important.

Whether or not parental permission is required or appropriate in particular cases is a matter which should be considered but would presumably be covered by the more general documents between the school and the parents and the students in relation to the conduct of the boarding house. It is obviously imprudent to permit students to go on leave in circumstances which have not, at least in general terms, been approved by their parents, as parents may well complain that an accident has occurred because the student was permitted to participate in some activity of which they may have communicated disapproval to the school.

So far as individual staff are concerned, the nature of the duty owed by each person will be a function of their particular role and responsibility. Some boarding house staff will have responsibility for supervising other boarding house staff. Individuals can only be liable for damages for their own actions so a supervisor, for example, can be liable for not mentoring or supervising staff reporting to them but cannot be liable merely because somebody who reports to them has been negligent (without any negligence by the supervisor personally).

Liability and Insurance

Presumably all staff will be acting within their course of their employment and thus the employer will also be liable. It is important to enquire of the employer what insurance cover is in place and whether that insurance cover extends to staff accused of negligence (and legal expenses that may be incurred) as well as to the employer.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasise that merely because something goes wrong, that does not necessarily mean negligence has occurred. The fact that something has gone wrong will raise the issue. The law certainly recognises that, even in situations where boarding house staff exercise great care, injuries or accidents may still occur even without boarding house staff negligence having been involved. The duty however is one which needs to be discharged with care, given the nature of the responsibility involved.

The VICARIOUS BURDEN

AUTHOR

Conrad Mathias,
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill



Outback NSW is much like outback anywhere, expect perhaps Victoria and Tasmania – but even they have their disenchanting distances. Floods and droughts figure largely in the public panorama, but it is the day to day minutiae of the lives of our parents and families in boarding which most impacts on their children, away from home for forty weeks of the year.

Things going badly at home. A grandparent slowly dying; an estranged brother or sister, or tension in the parent marriage which leads to depressive symptoms, or even anger. Local events such as the family dog getting in the way of a travelling ute can seem all encompassing when played out against such backgrounds.

Outback kids seldom wear this stuff on their sleeves. It is often only a telephoned event; the acting out of anger or despair in a school or boarding situation; or even just a weight change, a flatness, or the distant look when at other times eyes have sparkled with mirth and mischief.

We need to watch our children carefully. Ticking rolls, managing meals, and supervising study are all part of what we do. But the most important thing that we do is look after someone's else's child. This great task can neither be mechanical nor hierarchical. As well, we are not their parents, their friends, or their mates. But we do do some of the

things which make such people important in the lives of our children. What we can be for them is a haven of kindness, good example, a consistent narrative, and a model for the ethos of our particular school.

Our advice to parents at the beginning of the partnership and oft reminded during the ensuing years should be the importance of our knowing what is going on at home. We have to frame that imperative in such a way as to ensure that parents and caregivers recognise that the partnership can only work if we know what's what. To that end, a call from a parent can be similar to a chat with a child – it starts out as one thing and if we show patience, it becomes something else.

Spotting the child carrying the vicarious burden of a troubled home event or situation is not easy, and they will seldom blurt it out. We need to watch our children carefully.

Conrad Mathias works in the Boarding Program at St Joseph's College, Hunter Hill.



Dealing with a Psychological *Crisis in Schools*

– What Boarders Should Expect From Their School.

AUTHOR

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg PhD MAPS
Consultant Adolescent Psychologist



“There are two types of boarding schools, the ones that have had a crisis and those that are about to.”

Can you imagine being a student at Columbine High School on Tuesday, April 20, 1999? Or a primary school student in Marysville, Victoria on 7th February 2009, as bushfire destroyed most of the town, including your primary school? While such epic school crises are mercifully few and far between the reality is that random and chaos exists in the universe and in schools and no community is immune from a crisis event, albeit not on the scale of Columbine and Marysville.

A psychological crisis is a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death. The key characteristic of a crisis include the fact that it is unexpected, creates uncertainty, is perceived as both

dangerous and distressing, it challenges student's beliefs that events can be predicted and understood and almost always includes elements of physical or emotional loss. Crises are not forgotten. They stay in the minds of those involved and may do so, for a long, long time. They become a significant reference point around which other experiences are organised and the boarding school's response can be a significant determining factor as to the nature of those memories.

Because we live in a society that is becoming increasingly complex and volatile it is unlikely that any boarding school will escape the necessity of responding to a significant psychological crisis (large or small) at one time or another. Therefore it is essential for all boarding schools, irrespective of their size or geographic location, to develop a crisis plan and equip its staff with the skills, knowledge and strategies to cope at such times.

It is reasonable for boarders to expect that all schools have a carefully thought out crisis response plan, set up, practiced and ready to be activated at the drop of a hat.

When it comes to crises in boarding schools, if not addressed, four things are certain to happen. First, the crisis is almost certain to escalate in intensity, as one of Murphy's Laws is that, "... left to themselves things will always go from bad to worse". Second, an unaddressed crisis will significantly interfere with the ability of staff members and students to focus on learning. Third, it will almost inevitably draw media attention and scrutiny (see what happened at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney 2000 www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s243511.htm) and finally, if not handled well - it may jeopardise the school's positive image in the community.

The good news is that experience shows that, when school personnel are well prepared and drilled to deal with a crisis, such incidents can be used to unite students and staff. The reality is that we live in an increasingly secular and disconnected community and schools are more than ever, called upon to serve the wider community, substituting for the church and the extended family and in so doing, help maintaining a cohesive school community, reduce the effects of trauma and stress and of course, arguably fulfil a legal responsibility.

The need for crisis intervention plans and programs in schools has become more evident during the past decade with the increased incidence of school bullying and violence and other traumatic situations experienced by students, educators, school personnel, parents and relatives of those involved. This need has resulted in an increase in research, professional literature, curriculum, and resources devoted to crisis intervention in school settings. Much has been learned from tragic school incidents in the USA, and that knowledge and experience has contributed to more comprehensive planning and development to meet the needs of school communities.

Be it sudden student, parent, staff deaths by accident or illness through to bush fires, suicides, motor vehicle accidents, homicides or abductions - the reality is that generally, such crises cannot be predicted, but by being aware of and understanding beforehand, how parents, students and staff will react in a critical situation - makes it possible to implement a plan that defuse those reactions and prevent them from precipitating a secondary crisis.

Such planning is possible because the human response to such crises tends to be consistent and very predictable and a good crisis response from any educational institution can be growth producing, bring about permanent positive change and provide an opportunity to rebuild a more substantial foundation in the wake of a disaster.

So what should boarders and their parents expect from their boarding school in terms of preparing for a crisis?

A Plan - It is reasonable for boarders to expect that all schools have a carefully thought out crisis response plan, set up, practiced and ready to be activated at the drop of a hat.

Crisis Response Team - The plan should be overseen by a Crisis Response Team that is comprised of a Chairperson who co-ordinates the team (almost always the Principal), a Deputy Chairperson - who deputises when the Chair is absent, a co-ordinator of counselling - who oversees the provision of mental health services to students, a Co-ordinator of Staff Notification - who establishes and initiates telephone trees and arranges meetings, a Communications Coordinator - who conducts all in-house communications and maintains a log of all communications, and a Media Co-ordinator - who is the 'go-to' person for the media and initiates and co-ordinates the media communications. It is also useful to assign a team member to the role of evaluator, whose main responsibilities includes, conducting drills and readiness checks designing questionnaires and structured interviews, and collecting data on crisis team performance and outcome.

A Principal who has Taken Charge - boarders should also expect that during a crisis the key leadership role to be taken by the Principal and not delegated elsewhere. The best crisis response is headed up by a Principal who remains highly visible, who chairs the crisis response team, is proactive in engaging the media, keeps the school council informed and sets the tone and direction by being authoritative and in control.

Information - all boarders and their parents are entitled to accurate, up to date and timely information which states facts and avoids speculative statements, emphasises the positive action that the school is taking to



help the students, informs parents about the existence and implementation of the school crisis plan, and does not allocate or abdicate responsibility for the incident until all the facts are known.

Prompt and appropriate psychological support for students - boarders would be within their rights to expect that all schools have a mechanism to screen all students, identify those most in need, and provide these young people with ongoing crisis counselling, through the establishment of support rooms and recruiting professional psychologists experienced in this type of counselling.

Follow up - At the tertiary level of intervention, boarders should expect that follow-up services be provided for certain times and events, such as when the schools reopens and classes resume, anniversaries of the disaster, graduations, and other school activities that remind students of the incident. The school is also responsible for memorialization services and the provision of support groups and community referrals as needed for the students, their families, and school staff.

Conclusion

Crisis intervention has two main purposes. Initially it aims to reduce the intensity of a student's emotional, mental, physical and behavioral reactions to a crisis and second, to help them return to their level of functioning before the crisis. Functioning may be improved above and beyond this by developing new coping skills and eliminating ineffective ways of coping, such as withdrawal, isolation, and substance abuse.

Done well, the result should be that students, as result of the experience, ought to be better equipped to cope with future difficulties. Through talking about what occurred and the feelings about what happened, while developing ways to cope and solve problems, crisis intervention aims to assist the individual in recovering from the crisis and to prevent serious long-term problems from developing.



Footnote:

Throughout 2011, Booked Out Speakers Agency (<http://www.bookedout.com.au/>) Phone 03 9824 0177 - will be running a one day workshop entitled Dealing with a Psychological Crisis in Schools. This workshop represents a crash course in psychological crisis management which functions as a time-limited, problem-focused intervention designed to identify, confront and resolve the crisis, restore equilibrium, and support appropriate adaptive responses.

This workshop will cover:

- A brief introduction to Crisis Intervention
- How to responding to a crisis - including drawing up a crisis plan, forming a crisis teams
- Outline the most Common problems with crisis plans
- The ABC of Crisis Communication - How to listen, What to Say and How to React
- How to manage the media
- Provide a list of resources to help with Crisis intervention

It will be run by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, who is one of Australia's most high profile psychologists, he works in private practice in Melbourne and has worked with many schools in crisis. He has worked as a consultant psychologist to the Victorian Association of Secondary School Principals and the Australian Boarding Staff. He has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne; he has been one of the key figures in research, education and advocacy in adolescent mental health in Australia. He is a founding member of the National Coalition Against Bullying and CanTeen. He has been a columnist for many publications including Girlfriend Magazine, Australian Doctor, the Herald Sun and regularly appears on Channel 7's top rating Sunrise program, The Morning Show and Today Tonight as well as being the program psychologist on Fairfax radio 3AW's Morning Show.



Better Health, Better School *Performance*

AUTHOR

Jenny Pham, APD
Scholarest Dietitian

Good nutrition and increased physical activity are important factors contributing to improving academic performance of school students.

Being well-nourished is more than the absence of hunger; it requires a balanced intake of the many nutrients that our bodies require to grow and optimally function.

Poor diet and hunger have been shown to decrease attentiveness, motivation and other behaviours critical to school performance. Malnourished children are often tired and unable to concentrate.

Even short-term nutritional deficiencies influence children's behaviour, ability to concentrate and to perform complex tasks.

Did you know?

Low energy intake at breakfast can negatively impact on physical endurance, creativity and wellbeing.

The Dietitian's Association of Australia encourages everyone to start a day with a healthy breakfast. Eating breakfast contributes in many ways to good health and nutrition.

Some facts about the Importance of Breakfast for school students

- Breakfast improves alertness, concentration, mental performance and memory.
- Students who skip breakfast are more likely to snack on less nutritious meals during the day, resulting in higher intake of fat, which contributes to weight gain.
- Breakfast can help to increase a person's mood. That's why students and people in general get tired and irritable when they miss breakfast.
- Students who are breakfast eaters have higher intake of essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, dietary fibre and certain vitamins and minerals. It has been shown that if breakfast is missed, the nutrients normally provided by breakfast are not replaced during the rest of the day.

A healthy breakfast is one which provides a variety of foods, is low in fat and high in carbohydrates.

Although breakfast is often stressed as the most important meal of the day, we cannot forget about the other meals such as lunch and dinner. Remember mid-meals too, it

doesn't have to be a fancy meal for morning and afternoon tea, its as simple as having a piece of fruit or a small tub of low fat yoghurt.

It is important to have healthy regular meals throughout the school day for students. Skipping just one meal can also negatively affects problem solving ability for school students.

Physical Activity & better school performance

Physical activity can improve emotional wellbeing by reducing depression and anxiety and improving mood. It also improves sleep and attentiveness, energy levels & ability to concentrate.

Healthy Lifestyle Habits including healthy eating and patterns of physical activity are formed early in life and usually continue into adulthood.

Its important to encourage our students to adopt a healthy eating habit and regular physical activity not only to optimise their school performance and excel to the top of their class, but also to keep them fit and healthy for life.



Empathy & Forgiveness

AUTHOR

John Hendry, Director of Student Welfare
Geelong Grammar School

Recent discoveries in brain science and child development are forcing us to rethink the long-held belief that human beings are, by nature, aggressive, materialistic, utilitarian, and self-interested. The dawning realization that we are a fundamentally empathetic species has profound and far-reaching consequences for society. At the very core humanity is defined by Kindness and Forgiveness and the understanding of others.

On the evening of December 24, 1914, at Flanders when the First World war was entering into its fifth month, millions of soldiers were bedded down in makeshift trenches latticed across the European countryside. In many places the opposing armies were dug in within thirty to fifty yards of each other and within shouting distance. The conditions were hellish. The bitter-cold winter air chilled to the bone. The trenches were waterlogged. Soldiers shared their quarters with rats and vermin. Lacking adequate latrines, the stench of human excrement was everywhere. The men slept upright to avoid the muck and sludge. Dead soldiers littered the no-man's-land between opposing forces, the bodies left to rot and decompose within yards of their still-living comrades who were unable to collect them for burial.

As dusk fell over the battlefields, something extraordinary happened. The Germans began lighting candles on the thousands of small Christmas trees that had been sent to the front to lend some comfort to the men. The German soldiers began to sing Christmas carols—first “Silent night,” then a stream of other songs followed. The English soldiers were stunned. One soldier, gazing in disbelief at the enemy lines, said the blazed trenches looked “like the footlights of a theatre”. The English soldiers responded with applause, at first tentatively, then with exuberance. They began to sing Christmas carols back and forth to their German foes to equally robust applause.

Eventually these men came together in a sense of brotherhood and thousands of soldiers shared the joy of one another's company at Christmas time, sharing life stories, cigarettes, cakes and photos of family. They joked about the absurdity of war. By sunrise on Christmas morning tens of thousands of men – some estimates put the number as high as 100,000 soldiers – talked quietly with one another. Enemies just 24 hours earlier, they found themselves helping each other bury their dead comrades. More than a few pickup soccer matches were reported. Even officers at the front participated, although when news filtered back to the high command in the rear, the generals took a less than enthusiastic view of the affair. Worried that the truce might undermine military morale (and resolve), the generals quickly took measure to rein in their troops.

These men reached out to each other's plight. The strength to comfort each other flowed from a deep unspoken sense of their individual vulnerability and their unrequited desire for the companionship of their fellows. It was, without reserve, a very human moment. Fundamentally this represents what it really means to be human. Humans are, at the core, kind. Research confirms that humans are hard-wired for kindness and this implies forgiveness. These soldiers chose to be human. The central human quality they expressed was empathy for one another. Human beings have a genetic predisposition – an innate hankering – to seek empathic affiliation and companionship. Empathetic attunement is what is promoted in “emotional intelligence” and this is a critical marker by which we judge the psychological and social development of children. New teaching models designed to transform education from a competitive contest to a more collaborative learning experience are emerging as schools attempt to catch up to a generation that has grown up on the Internet and is used to interacting and learning



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BE THE RIPPLE EFFECT

DATE OF CONFERENCE: 31 July and 1 August 2011

VENUE: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Adelaide

FACILITATOR: Helen Hartley



in open social networks where they share information rather than hoard it. The initiatives in positive education, in meditation and in pastoral care at Geelong Grammar School are nurturing empathetic sensibility and nurturing individuals as they grow to adulthood. The traditional assumption that “knowledge is power” and is used for personal gain is being subsumed by the notion that knowledge is an expression of the shared responsibilities for the collective well-being of humanity, the “we” rather than the “I”. Empathy provides the path from “I” to “we”; empathy leads to less “I” self-destruction to more sharing and caring, from independence to interdependence, from the “iPod” to the “wePod”. Early evaluation and observation of student performance has shown marked improvements in mindfulness, communication skills, and critical thinking as students become more reflective, emotionally attuned, and cognitively adept at comprehending and responding intelligently and compassionately to others. This again has promoted a sense of shared meaning and endeavour, the “we” approach. A kinder approach to living is appearing. A kinder approach to mistake management being implemented through “relationship reparation” at Geelong Grammar School is advancing a more positive outcome from the inevitable

mistakes the young make. This compliments the nurturing and empathetic approach which is essential for all in life. Forgiveness presents as the essential ingredient to life relationships, especially in the young where mistakes are in a way licensed through lack of life experience and developing judgement ability.

This empathetic approach to living is now underpinning the more advanced thinking in relation to leadership in life and in business. The neuroscience of “fair play” and the recently discovered mirror neurons endorse the need for empathy to rule. This is a “bottom line” aspect of life and living. Studies of children raised in founding hospitals early in the 20th century indicated that children deprived of empathy in a nurturing sense were deprived of an essential life skill. Harry Harlow’s famous laboratory study of infant monkeys and their affectional responses (University of Wisconsin, 1958) shocked the world of biology and has spread into the social sciences and other fields. The baby monkeys wanted care, nurture and kind body contact. Empathy was sought. Human nature is not to seek autonomy – to become an island to oneself – but, rather, to seek companionship, affection and intimacy. The conventional belief that equates self-development and

self-consciousness with increasing autonomy has begun to lose its intellectual cachet. A number of child development psychologists now argue the contrary – that a sense of selfhood and self-awareness depends on and feeds off deepening relationships to other people. Empathy is the means by which companionate bonds are forged. Were seeking companionship not so basic to our nature, we wouldn’t so fear isolation or ostracization. Facebook would not be such a flourishing enterprise. To be shunned and exiled is to become a nonperson, to cease to exist as far as others are concerned. Empathy is the psychological means by which we become part of other people’s lives and share meaningful experiences. It promotes meaning in living and life. The very notion of transcendence means to reach beyond oneself, to participate with and belong to larger communities, to be embedded in more complex webs of meaning.

Positive Education initiatives are promoting a greater exploration in the education of the young at Geelong Grammar School. The well-being of students is essential to learning and life management. Empathy promotes the understanding of others and the development of more positive relationships. Pastoral care



We are, as humans, obliged to forgive if we are to conserve humanity. Without forgiveness there cannot be peace. Without peace there is destruction.

at Geelong Grammar School is constructed upon love and the establishment of positive and enabling relationships. Love of course is built upon empathy, the capacity to value another beyond the level one values oneself. Relationships are constructed on the contribution one can make to the other, not on what advantage one can gain from the relationship. Empathic relationships are natural and define humanity. Mirror neurons ensure this empathy in an innate way and one has to consciously override this to harm another. The intention to act without empathy, science is clearly showing us, must be a deliberate and learned, therefore practised, response. Geelong Grammar School, through positive education is promoting empathy, promoting what is it to be human and is developing in all students the intuitive strength responses of kindness, forgiveness and the allied strengths of awe, gratitude, the capacity to love and be loved and leadership.

The empathic strength of forgiveness deserves special attention. As Desmond Tutu states "Forgiveness gives us the capacity to make a new start...And forgiveness is the grace by which you enable the other person to get up, and get up with dignity, to begin anew...In the act of forgiveness we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to change". Forgiveness renews life by finishing unfinished business..... even an unsuccessful attempt at forgiveness has the considerable power of intention. We cannot force forgiveness because it closes the heart, but we can explore its possibilities, its capacity to heal the forgiver, and sometimes the forgiven. To forgive one has to purge oneself of revenge and the want to harm. One's emotional response is driven by the actions of the other person. One must forgive oneself for the emotional response in order to then have the capacity to forgive the other. This is simple once one practices forgiveness however it is tough going at first as we are emotional beings. We are however hardwired

to be kind: forgiveness is showing mercy. It is an act of self-compassion. Forgiveness is not transactional - it is transformational. It does not remove what has happened, but it does remove the destructiveness of the impact of what has happened for all parties as best it can. It is enabling. It allows all to "move on". It is found in every faith as the underpinning enabling ethic of behaviour. It is an act of the heart as opposed to the mind. It is about love in every sense.

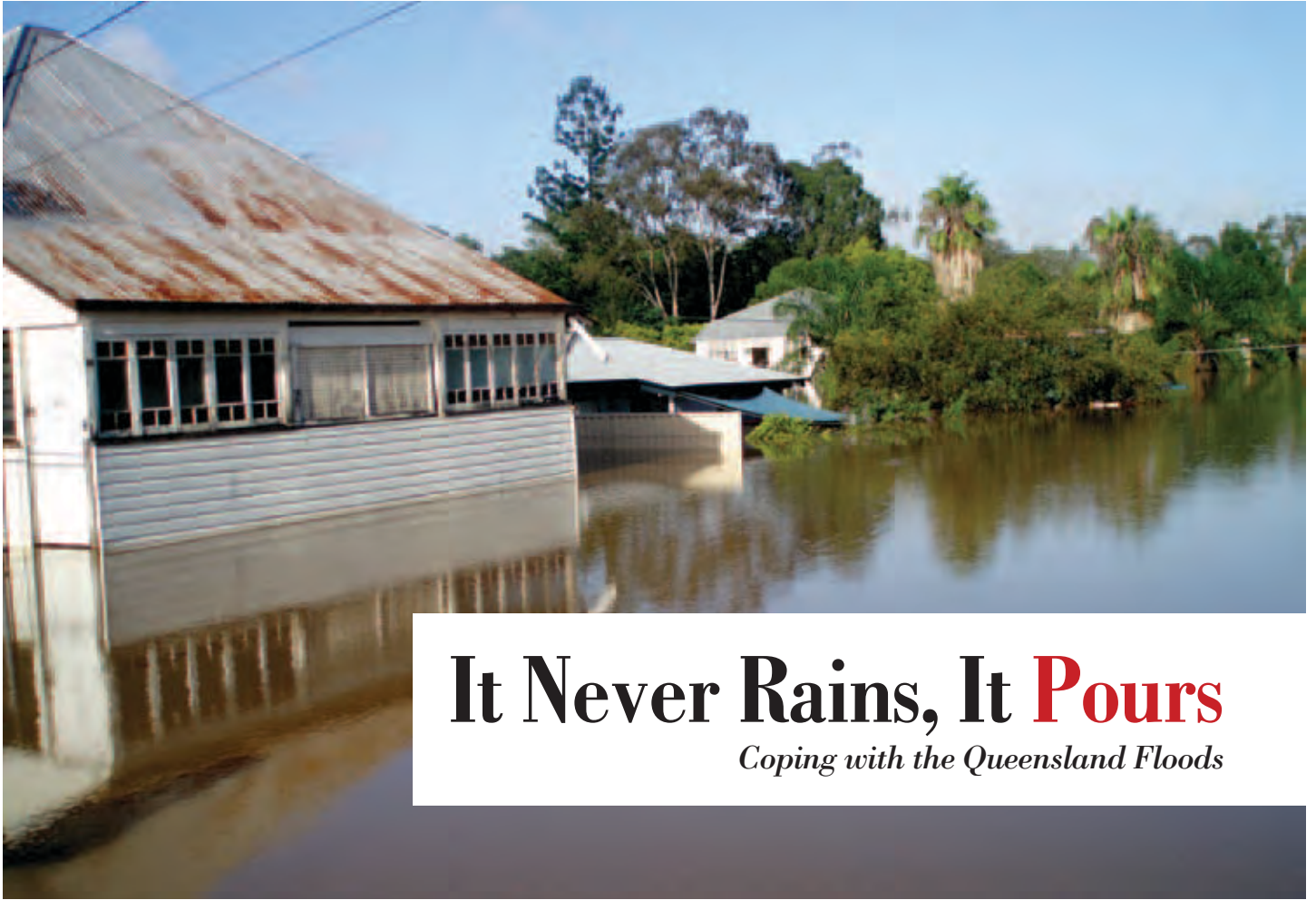
Forgiveness prompts the employment of the Golden Rule and life is again made enabling for all. It releases us from the overbearing burden of lasting suffering and self-destruction. The Lord's prayer does get it right, (and in the right order). "Forgive us our trespasses as We forgive those who trespass against us". We are, as humans, obliged to forgive if we are to conserve humanity. Without forgiveness there cannot be peace.

Without peace there is destruction. As the wonderful book on the Golden Rule states "It all begins with me". We are obliged to take the initiative. The soldiers at Flanders on Christmas day 1914 did just that. The heart must rule for the mind to forgive. Forgiveness permits life to thrive and relationships to be positive. It is based on the belief that all are kind and can be kind. It is fundamental to the health of individuals, families, communities and societies and importantly, to evolution. Without forgiveness contentment is not truly possible. Without forgiveness good decisions cannot be made. Empathy for another is defined by the innate capacity to forgive.

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It Never Rains, It **Pours**

Coping with the Queensland Floods

AUTHOR

John Beaumont, Director of Boarding
Ipswich Grammar School

An offer was made by the Headmaster, Mr Robert Henderson, to the Ipswich City Council that if the inclement weather was to continue and evacuations were to take place then Ipswich Grammar School would certainly offer its facilities.

This offer was made at 9.00am on Tuesday January 11, 2011, the first family had arrived by 2.00pm that afternoon and what was to follow was nothing short of frenetic.

The initial family arrived in a lovely Honda Accord and emerged with a basket of groceries, nothing more. People knew that trouble was on the horizon and preparations were well underway. There did not seem to be panic in the air, a massive under estimation unfortunately.

By 2.00am the next morning the Boarding Houses were full and we were now accommodating people in the Auditorium. At the height of the devastation, Ipswich Grammar housed 200 evacuees from all over the city.

As the devastated residents started to arrive, the Ipswich Council were busily processing and assessing the needs of the families. We thought we had everything under control until the floodgates opened. People were now arriving from youth hostels, caravan parks, retirement villages and facilities administered by Queensland health. We were inundated.

That first evening was simply a nightmare upon recollection. We were still moving mattresses, pillows and blankets at 3.00am only to be on deck again at 6.30am preparing the first meal of the day. I cannot praise highly enough the efforts of the Boarding Community. When word was spread that we would be opening our doors, the phone calls began. The rallying was magnificent, not only Staff but wives, girlfriends, partners, friends and children all answered the call. I sit here even now with a tear in my eye reminiscing about the generosity and compassion of people. It was without doubt one uplifting aspect of the whole experience. Still the waters rose and we now had no room



left at the Inn. Ipswich Girl's Grammar was in a similar state and both evacuation centres were full. Ipswich Showgrounds was filling fast and so Blair State School, St Joseph's Primary and St Mary's primary opened their doors. Would this suffice?

By Thursday 13th we were basically cut off. Fresh fruit and vegetables were brought in late at night by Council workers and volunteers but fresh meat now proved to be at a premium. We had plenty of water and our "Young Old boy" chef Daniel Johnson was performing miracles with the supplies he had. Keep in mind that no food was available in storage apart from some frozen goods left over from the end of the previous school term and orders for the Boarding House were not being placed for another week.

The donations and volunteers kept rolling in and thank goodness they did. One volunteer was a nurse and helped give medication to the people with disabilities over the course of the disaster. This assistance was invaluable as medical assistance was in short supply. Not only the days but also the nights seemed endless. Humidity was high, fans were in high demand. Many needed to be ushered to rooms and bathrooms at odd hours, lights blew, drains blocked, fire alarms went off, washing machines and dryers were pushed to their capacity and yet, strangely, there was never complaint or criticism.

The rain eased and the floodwaters fell throughout Friday. Many returned to their homes to survey and assess damage and only then was the true nature of the tragedy brought



to light. The devastation and destruction was everywhere. As the waters receded they left exposed the massive extent of the clean-up process.

The dawning of Saturday saw the Grammar School return to some type of normality. We were shut as an evacuation centre and those still stranded were relocated to the Showgrounds. We now had a week in which to prepare for the incoming residents of a new school year. From start to finish was only four days, yet it seemed an eternity. All involved in the assistance process were left physically and emotionally drained, yet, counting our blessings as we had been spared whilst so many had lost so much.

It is curious the lengths people go to in helping one another. This experience certainly showed the mettle of a community.



Help shed some *light* on **Census** night

AUTHOR

Seb Kilborn,
NSW-ACT Census Management Unit

It's Census time again and the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) is urging all members to offer their assistance to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and help ensure that all of their residents are fully counted.

The Census is conducted by the ABS every five years. The next Census will be held on Tuesday 9 August 2011. This marks a significant milestone - 100 years of national Census taking in Australia.

The Census provides a 'snapshot' of the nation on Census night – the number of people in Australia, their key characteristics and the houses in which they live. Information collected in the Census helps all levels of government, businesses and communities to make vital decisions on services and facilities.

Everyone in Australia on Census night needs to participate in the Census even if they are not an Australian citizen or resident. This includes students and staff staying at boarding schools on Census night.

The ABSA fully supports the Census and recognises that Census data is vital to the planning and development of housing, transport, hospitals, schools and other important local infrastructure.



During May and June, Census Area Supervisors will visit boarding houses across Australia to coordinate the delivery and collection of Census forms. In consultation with the school, arrangements will be made to appoint a Special Collector, usually a staff member, to assist with this process.

From 29 July Census forms will be delivered to boarding houses by a Census Area Supervisor, who will also provide a short on-site training session to the appointed Special Collector on site. The Census Area Supervisor will continue to provide help and support for boarding schools during the Census process and return to collect the completed forms.

It is important to note that no-one outside of the ABS will ever see an individual's answers. Information collected is kept absolutely private. We urge all of our members to help shed some light on Census night this year by offering their assistance to their local Census Area Supervisor, so that all residents have the opportunity to participate in the Census.

By helping to ensure that everyone is accurately counted you will help light the way forward for facilities and services such as transport, community centres, health clinics and other services you use in your local area every day.

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Residential Education:

Key Findings from an International Symposium

AUTHOR

Paul Ginns (University of Sydney),
Andrew Martin (University of Sydney),
and Brad Papworth (ABSA)

Although 'boarding schools' tend to be one of the more salient providers of residential education, boarding school students are not the only young people 'in residence'. We recently returned from a symposium on residential educational settings at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, held in New Orleans. In this Lights Out article, we review some of the papers presented at the symposium, and some of the reflections on the symposium presented by ourselves and the Discussant, Professor Dennis McInerney of the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

The session brought together researchers from the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Australia, to understand the academic (e.g., achievement, motivation, engagement, attainment, retention) and non-academic (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction, personal development) outcomes relevant to residential care across a range of settings and age groups, using a range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Research on academic and non-academic outcomes of Australian day and boarding students presented by Brad Papworth has been discussed in previous issues of Lights Out, so this article will focus on research from the UK and Hong Kong.

Dr Graham Connelly of the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, authored the first paper on "Improving the education of children in public care: Lessons from pilot projects in Scotland". Approximately 17,000 Scottish children in the 0-17 age range are in public care, including foster care, living with other family, or in juvenile detention. Children may be in care for a variety of reasons, including parental physical or mental ill health; neglect, or for having committed offences. Over the past two decades, there has been increasing



recognition of the academic needs of children in care, over and above the traditional focus on behavioural issues. Analyses of reading, writing and mathematics revealed children in care lag substantially behind children, and that this gap widens with age.

In 2006 the Scottish Government made available £2m by competitive bid for pilot projects aimed at improving the educational experience and attainment of children in care. The 18 funded projects varied substantially, but could be characterised by five categories:

- provision of direct support (e.g. tutoring);
- personal education planning;
- support for children at transition points (e.g. primary to secondary);
- developing staff and parent/ carer capacity; and
- using IT/computer-based approaches.

The research identified effects related to the involvement of the young people in pilot activities (but was not able to attribute effects to specific activities, due to the wide range in target age and project type). Improvements in school attendance and reduction in school exclusions were noted as key results, and younger children who had high levels of involvement in the pilot projects made appreciably more academic progress in one year than less involved students. This is encouraging because it also suggests that providing targeted additional support can raise attainment. Interviews with professionals involved in the projects identified several positive outcomes related to attendance and prevention of exclusion; improvements in attitudes towards education; and improvements

1. Residential education symposium presenters: Prof Dennis McInerney, Brad Papworth, Prof Andrew Martin, Dr Paul Ginns and Dr Louis Lee.



related to attainment. Interviews with children noted improvements in self-concept, relationships and social skills; in their attitudes to learning and achievement; and in their perceptions of improved educational outcomes.

Dr Louis Lee of the Chinese University of Hong Kong presented a case study on developing a new residential college for Hong Kong university students. Several themes emerged from interviews with the two Deans in charge of the college's non-academic and academic programmes. Both Deans distinguished the role of the residential college from that of academic departments and the central university administration, emphasising the residential colleges should play more of a "whole person" rather than traditionally academic educational role. The Deans also noted the advantage of the "full residence" model and smaller scale of the college in comparison to other models (e.g. partial residence), arguing these features supported more effective organisation of and participation in college activities and more substantial interactions between students, as well as fostering greater community spirit.

Another emergent theme was the decision to model the residential college on well-established English colleges, resulting in prominent features of residential life such as communal dining sessions. The Deans acknowledged a number of logistical challenges in this early stage of operation, such as alternative catering options on campus which provided students with attractive alternatives to communal dining, and sufficient funding for student life programme activities. A follow-up survey of students attending both the fully residential and partially residential colleges found respondents from the fully residential colleges tended to be more aware of college events; were more proud of

being a college member; felt more obliged to participate and enjoy their participation in college-related events; and felt that they played a role in college life. These students were also more likely to identify with their college's mission and vision, and to perceive college and university life as intertwined. Taken together, these results suggest the fully residential college setting might indeed help realise at least some of the non-academic outcomes that the Deans in Study 1 outlined.

In drawing together major themes from the set of presentations, Professor McInerney and participants raised a number of points and issues relevant to the provision of residential education:

- When considering the diverse forms of residential education, it is evident that it constitutes a major part of the education sector
- Residential education is a vital means by which children and young people can access educational and social opportunity
- There can be variability in the quality and nature of education provided in different residential settings
- There can be tensions between traditional ways of structuring and delivering residential education and the needs and preferences of modern children and young people
- Transitions into and out of residential education can disrupt developmental pathways and thus must be managed effectively
- There can be tensions between specific units (e.g., boarding houses, colleges) and the larger institutions to which they belong (e.g., school, university) and these must be managed effectively (for example, students can be confused as to their identity regarding their boarding house vs. school)

- There can be differences across outcomes such that students may perform well academically whilst in residential care, but have non-academic (e.g., self-esteem, happiness) difficulties
- Residential settings that care for the whole child seem to yield better outcomes than those more narrowly focused – thus, even those with a specific purpose (e.g., sport, detention) benefit from well-rounded approaches

Taken together, the Symposium was an illuminating opportunity for researchers in residential care to share current research practices and findings from international perspectives. Although there were differences as a function of national context, there were also many congruent features and elements relevant to academic and non-academic outcomes across quite diverse residential learning environments that boarding schools might consider.

For further information about the symposium and our current Australian Research Council/Australian Boarding Schools Association project, please contact Brad Papworth for further details: b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au or (02) 9683 8490.

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Boarding

Is Better

AUTHOR

Dr Linda Vining

Boarding students have a better educational experience than day students according to Year 12 Satisfaction Surveys undertaken by the Centre for Marketing Schools (CMS).

When CMS was commissioned by schools (boys, girls and coeducational) to undertake satisfaction surveys of Y12 students on the eve of their departure from school, it recorded responses from 4,791 students. Of these, 4,213 were day students and 578 were boarders.

So what do boarders (B) like about their schools? How do their perceptions compare with day students (D) and what improvements can boarding schools make to increase the level of satisfaction of their boarders?

Overall, boarders are more inclined to see their school as a happy place (B=78% D=71%) with a caring atmosphere (B=70% D=63%).

Boarders feel their school is a safe and secure place (B=83% D= 79%).

On a personal level, boarders perceived themselves to be much fitter and healthier than day students (B=60%, D=47%).

When boarders were asked specific questions about the boarding school, two thirds (66%) said that a caring home-away-from-home atmosphere prevailed at their school and that arrangements in the boarding house were parent-friendly (67% were satisfied).

When it came to classroom matters, 79% of boarders felt that staff assisted students reach their full potential (D=70%).

A majority of boarders (73%) felt that students learn to work cooperatively (D=67%). Sixty six percent of boarders said they felt confident and self-assured as they left school.

Most boarders (82%) said they had received useful advice about careers, however there was an undercurrent in the written comments about the need for better career advice in Year 10 and a sense of value for students who do not wish to pursue a professional career. Some respondents suggested that schools teach more real-life skills such as completing a tax reform, first aid, driver education etc.

A high percentage of boarders (72%) felt they were well liked and 82% said they had made strong friendships. There is no statistical difference with day students here.

Areas of low satisfaction

Nearly half the boarders surveyed felt their school did not deal well with discipline problems in class nor handle incidences of bullying effectively. At the dangerous end, a boarder wrote, "I was bullied by my peers in the boarding school and felt terrible. This caused severe depression and suicidal thoughts."

In terms of satisfaction with the principal it seems that boarders have a higher level of satisfaction than day students. (B=66% D=60%). Boarders who were not satisfied sometimes wrote of a principal who was "self centred and more concerned about appearances than students."

When boarders were asked a specific question to do with the integration of day and boarding students within the school, only half the respondents (51%) felt that boarders and day students integrated well.

Tension was evident in the written comments between international and country boarders. This was expressed by a student in the words "country boarders do not receive the same attention as overseas boarders."

On the other hand, international students asked for more support to understand the education system and the expectations of them.

Academic focus

When asked if staff assist students to reach their full potential 79% of boarders showed satisfaction compared with 70% of day students.

Generally, boarders felt that the boarding house maintains an academic focus, however there were a significant number of written comments mentioning that too much emphasis was placed on academic subjects and not enough on vocational pathways. One student summed up feelings when she wrote, "Too much pressure is placed on boarders to be academically minded with little encouragement for those want to go into the trades."

Satisfaction levels with academic matters, resources, student achievements and outdoor education were similar across all students, however, boarders tended to report higher satisfaction levels on most parameters. For example, when asked if students in need of extra help can get it, 78% of boarders gave a satisfied response compared with 74% of day students.

Interpersonal relationships

Boarders are more positive about student teacher relationships with 60% saying that good relationships exist (D=52%).

Boarders believe that staff are willing to give their time to student activities (69%) and teachers provide students with good role models (D=64% B=60%).

In general, students were not so sure that the school helps students build self-esteem. Only 55% of boarders indicated satisfaction with this aspect of school life (D=51%).

A low rating surfaced when students were asked if the school helps them work through personal problems. Only half the boarders were satisfied (50%) and less than half the day respondents were happy.



Office staff did not receive applause. When asked if office staff were pleasant and helpful only 56% of boarders were satisfied (D=58%).

Student leaders are not respected according to 54% of boarders (D=57%), even though 67% of boarders said they had developed leadership skills (D=62%).

School loyalty

Although 89% of boarders said they had received a good education at their school and had a sense of pride in the school (73%), when asked if they would send their own child to the school the number dropped to 64% (still higher than day students at 59%). This may bear a relationship to the statistic that shows that only 60% of boarders felt they were members of a close-knit school community.

Ways to improve a boarding school

Questions that received low satisfaction ratings by boarders suggests that these areas may need attention:

1. The school needs to help boarders work through personal problems.
2. Different learning styles are needed for different students.
3. Staff need to know and recognise a student's best qualities.
4. Better quality sporting instructors /coaches be employed.
5. Boarders be more involved in music art and drama.
6. Discipline problems in class be better managed.
7. Better handling of student complaints.
8. Bullying be dealt with more effectively.
9. Student leaders be shown greater respect.
10. Students receive more/better training in time management and organisational skills.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Linda Vining is the Director of the Centre for Marketing Schools.



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Distributive Leadership

in a Boarding House setting

AUTHOR

Tim Agnew, Head of Boarding
Prince Alfred College, Adelaide

In the first half of last year I was asked by our Headmaster, Mr Kevin Tutt, to undertake a comprehensive review of boarding within the school. This was a useful exercise and timely, as it encouraged me to closely analyze and evaluate the existing staff structure, policies and procedures and, of course, the quality and nature of the duty of care and support offered to the boarders. It also coincided with the final Leadership and Management subject for the Masters study that I had gradually eked out over a number of years. As part of the assessment for the subject I was required to critique a Strategic plan and to then produce my own, which I did for boarding within the school; one that complemented the current school Strategic Plan, 2010-2012.

A key component of the Boarding House Strategic Plan developed was the focus upon a distributive leadership model. Not only was this a model that had struck a chord during my own study but it was also one that had recently been embraced by the school Executive and hence gaining support for the changes I put forward had a greater likelihood of success. Distributive leadership means seeing all members of the boarding community as experts in their own right and importantly for the vision for boarding in the school to be shared and implemented through staff, who feel free to develop and share new ideas. Whilst not everyone is a decision maker, every staff member is an expert to some extent and as such they can



bring to the table knowledge that contributes to the decision making process. Such a model of leadership is empowering, as it taps into already outstanding individuals and allows less experienced staff to learn from experienced practitioners in order to perform more effectively and efficiently.

With 120 boarders at the time, the staffing structure that had been in place over a number of years featured four senior staff members, three of whom, including the Head of Boarding and Deputy Head of Boarding were also employed as teachers in the day school. Two full-time and five part-time residential assistants, along with a GAP student and a part-time Administration Assistant rounded out the team. Upon reviewing this model, especially in light of continued growing interest in boarding places within the school (we will have 135 boarders by Semester Two 2011) I identified the need



to introduce an improved structure and where necessary appoint new staff, suited to the distributive leadership model. The subsequent structure that was approved and is now in place, following nationwide advertising, careful screening of applicants and an extensive interview process, features five senior staff, all of whom also teach in the day school and reside in or next to the four wings of the Boarding House. The five are: the Head of Boarding; Deputy Head of Boarding; Senior Residential Assistant: Academic Support; Senior Residential Assistant: International Students and Senior Residential Assistant: Boarding Activities. Two full-time residential assistants, with specific areas of responsibility: respectively, ICT and Music programs and Student Welfare, complete the senior boarding staff team, a group who meet fortnightly to share both updates on their area of responsibility and ideas to strengthen and improve the boarding program. In addition to this experienced core group, two new graduate teachers have been employed as part-time residential assistants and they and three further part-time boarding assistants have brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the program. A graduate GAP student and Administration Assistant also continue to play important roles in the day-to-day operations of boarding in the school.

Undoubtedly, in the first term of 2011 one of the most impressive aspects of the new distributive leadership model upon which the

boarding staff structure has been developed, has been in the new initiatives that have added to the boarding program. For instance, 2010 was a very successful year academically for the Boarding House with 10 of our 28 Year 12s achieving an ATAR in excess of 95; five through the IB Diploma program and five in the SACE. Despite this success the new Senior RA: Academic Support has increased the amount and quality of tutorial assistance from day school teachers and past students, available to the boarders, interviewed each student to assess their individual learning needs and analyzed their first term results to identify areas where support or extension could occur. While the growth in diversity of the boarding activities program, headed by the school's Outdoor Education Coordinator, who has joined the Boarding House team, has also been very popular with the boarders and their parents. This has especially been the case in new activities such as learning to surf, scuba diving and aviation training, culminating in a solo flight, under instruction. Such leadership opportunities allow both experienced and less experienced staff to contribute in a positive manner to the boarding community and in doing so help provide wonderful opportunities and a high level of support for the students. In addition to their area of responsibility each of the seniors also has responsibility for a wing or group within a larger wing of the Boarding House. This is essentially a pastoral role and involves liaison between the senior and parents, as well as teachers and year coordinators in the day school.

As the Head of Boarding I find that I now have more time to address broader issues associated with the Boarding House, as I have a high level of confidence in the boarding team and in their ability to take the lead in the area of responsibility that they have been given. While I know conversely through regularly interacting with the staff, both in formal meetings and informally, that they appreciate the opportunity to meaningfully contribute, which a distributive leadership approach affords them.

- 1 Ron Pippett, Jeremy Browne, Tim Agnew, Phil Noble and Susan Kukeste from Prince Alfred College, Adelaide
1. 2011 Boarding Prefects with Head and Deputy Head of Boarding
- 2 BH clean up crew

2011

BSA Conference for Heads

AUTHOR

Richard Stokes, Executive Director,
Australian Boarding Schools Association

May 2011 saw me attend the UK BSA Conference for Heads together with our Board Secretary, Tina Twigg. The theme of this conference held in Leeds was Boarding: Opening Doors and included some wonderful Keynote Speakers and some equally useful Breakout Sessions. Specific challenges were set down by speakers such as Patrick Derham, Headmaster of Rugby School regarding Unleashing Aspiration, including ensuring that those children who would benefit the most from a boarding school education have access to it, and Dr Anthony Seldon, Headmaster of Wellington College who spoke on Active Schools, Active Heads, and Active Classrooms. We were challenged by Rachel Johnson, Writer, Journalist and Editor of 'The Lady' Magazine when she spoke about how boarding saved her life and the session I found particularly interesting was the last at the conference by Professor Vince Mitchell, Professor of Consumer Marketing and Head of Marketing at Cass Business School when he challenged the whole audience to learn that 'Everything Sells' – marketing is a key issue for boarding school.

Especially useful were the breakout sessions on ICT in Boarding Schools and the issues arising from Boarding School

Inspections. We enjoyed two wonderful dinners, excellent friendship from Hilary Moriarty, my counterpart in the UK and her BSA staff and the Chair of the UK BSA, Jan Scarrow, and a perfect opportunity to see how boarding is operating in the UK.

Special thanks to Jan and the BSA team for hosting us and making us feel so welcome. Whilst in London I took the opportunity to spend an afternoon and evening with Hilary Moriarty, National Director of the BSA. We shared many stories of the work we are doing, the challenges we experience and I learnt a great deal about the ever expanding training sessions the Director of Training Alex Thompson and his assistant Mark Robinson, are running. The time we spent together flew, but it was interesting to note just how similar our two organisations are and to share ways we can grow our working partnership for the future. Hilary has agreed to speak at our next National Conference; her understanding and advice regarding Boarding Standards and Inspections will be worth listening to!



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1. Tina Twigg, Hilary Moriarty, Jan Scarrow and Richard Stokes at the BSA Heads Conference Annual Dinner
2. BSA Conference Delegates
3. Hilary Moriarty and Richard Stokes at the BSA Office in London



New Girls Boarding Facilities at *Cathedral*

AUTHOR

Emma Josselyn, Year 12 Boarding Student
The Cathedral School



As the second term at The Cathedral School in Townsville commenced, excitement was at its peak as the keys for the recently renovated and extended girls boarding complex, known as Sister Frances, were handed over to the school. The girls from Years 10, 11 and 12, who will be residing in this complex, waited anxiously over the Easter break for news on their new dormitory's progress. Having previously been spread over different parts of the school during the construction phase, the anticipation for our new dormitory and bring reunited with friends again was overwhelming.

Delays in the dormitory's progress occurred throughout the construction of the building, each out of the control of the builders and the school. These included the recent natural disasters that could not have been foreseen. As the renovation of the complex had just

begun to proceed smoothly, major flooding had hit Central and South East Queensland meaning materials in particular the windows for the building that were to be transported from Brisbane could not get through on the roads. In addition, the start of 2011 also brought with it Cyclone Yasi which also severely affected the construction time.

When the travel day for all boarders arrived, excitement was in overload and the girls were saying "hello" to state of the art facilities, and their very own room. Each of us was amazed by the difference including the newly painted walls in bright, modern colours, brand new furniture and accessories and of course the elevator! On each of the three floors there were girls buzzing about their rooms as they unpacked. Each room is now fully equipped with an air conditioner, wall fan, a study desk

as well as various cupboards and shelves for storage. Each floor also has a common room with comfy lounges and TVs and includes new kitchen and laundry areas.

The renovation of Sister Frances has also included the addition of accommodation for the Head of Residence, Rayna Page and four dormitory supervisors. The building also extends to join with the younger girls boarding complex known as Kardinia. The extension has created a main reception office, meeting rooms and enables the two dormitories to be united as one.

On behalf of the girl boarders, I would like to say a tremendous thank you to the builder Mike Dickson from MBD Constructions, architect David Butcher from Ralph Patterson Architects and all other major contractors for their hard work on a very successful project. Secondly, I would like to thank our Principal Mr Ian Gamack, Business Manager, Mrs Kathy Romano and the School Board for the organisation and effort that has been put into the creation of the new facilities. Finally, I would like to thank the Director of Boarding, Mr Jock Walker-Campbell and all the boarding staff for their cooperation and help leading up to the opening of our new dormitory as well as all the staff and students who were relocated because of the building project. Thank you all very much, we appreciate it a lot and love our new rooms!

1. Year 12 students Meredith Teitzel (left) and Emma Josselyn (right) check out Meredith's new room.

Interactive School Website.

Put it at the centre of a Socially Connected & Integrated Mobile Strategy!



AUTHOR
Simon Noakes, Managing Director of
www.interactive-schools.co.uk

Your school website should be the cornerstone to both an efficient and successful school marketing and communications strategy. Sadly, most school websites are under invested and implemented as a tactical project – with no future planning, flexibility and third party channel integration thought about!

Just 3 years ago, the marketing department of an independent school was only concerned with a small number of channels – all of which have been around for a decade or more: the prospectus, the website, the termly magazine, and of course email. This was manageable by one full-time marketing person.

Fast-forward 3 years to June 2011, and the school marketing person now needs to also manage Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, plus many more), and mobile platforms (iPhone, BlackBerry, Android and iPad). These will continue to multiply as new channels and platforms emerge.

This increase in the number of new communication channels has left many schools falling further and further behind – as the administration overhead to manage them all has also increased.

Why? Because these websites were never designed to be integrated into any other communication channel – and the cost of retrofitting this functionality can be a lot more expensive than starting from scratch with a proven [and usable] website Content Management System (CMS).

Developing social media channels and mobile apps should be part of a multi-channel, multi-platform, integrated communications strategy – centred on a robust and feature-rich school website CMS, like Interactive Schools' TIARC CMS.

Why should a school have to manage the same information in different applications – when it can all be managed centrally on the website – and then federated out into every other channel? They shouldn't!

Not only do these websites need to be integrated, they need to be refreshed with new content regularly. In a world where we are continually 'connected' and have access to digital cameras and smartphone apps – there is no reason why content uploaded to these websites should not be near enough real-time. This is the expectation of a modern parent.

If schools are to truly engage with the current 'internet generation' of parents and children, they need to ensure that they plan and invest in a website solution and holistic digital strategy that will enable them to keep up – or better still – stay ahead!

Kincoppal-Rose Bay, School of the Sacred Heart in Sydney has bought into this 'Socially Connected' strategy, and have just launched an updated [and integrated] website. This will be followed shortly by their iPhone Prospectus App and Facebook App for Parents.

More information can be found at
www.interactive-schools.co.uk
twitter @schoolwebsites



The US Association of Boarding Schools Conference

AUTHOR
Richard Stokes, Executive Director,
Australian Boarding Schools Association

I was delighted to accept the invitation of our sister organisation in the USA, TABS, to attend their Annual Conference in Baltimore in December, 2010. This conference was attended by over 450 delegates from their 300 member schools, with a mixed audience including School Governors, Heads, House staff, teachers, Registrars and Directors of Admission. The program offered 70 different workshops, with only two plenary sessions run concurrently. Practitioners apply to run a workshop, and, if accepted, share their good practice as developed in their own school. Speakers are not paid and in fact pay to attend the conference, but rather present their sessions for the item on their Resume. The workshops are aimed at specific groups within the conference audience, including admissions, Heads, sports and house staff.

One of the excellent opportunities of the conference was to meet with our counterparts from both the USA and the UK. As this was the first conference attended by all three

Association Directors, we set aside time to meet together. I joined with BSA Chairman Jan Scarrow, UK National Director Hilary Moriarty, TABS Executive Director Pete Upham and TABS Chairman Rob Hershey for a discussion of boarding in these three major providers of boarding education across the world, allowing a strengthening of relationships with both organisations.

During the conference I attended a wide range of presentations on many topics, but the one which resonated most was that of the positive impacts social media can have for schools. I am actively sourcing a speaker for our next National Conference on this topic, as there is much to learn.

1. Richard Stokes (ABSA), Jane Scarrow (BSA) and Pete Upham (TABS).

Time for New Thinking on School *Funding*

AUTHOR

Dr Tim Hawkes
ABSA Chairman

The funding of Australian schools, including its boarding schools, is currently under review. The enclosed article, written by our ABSA Chairman, puts forward some interesting and even controversial thoughts on the matter.

Fresh ideas are required on how to fund Australian schools. So far, debate has been unhelpful with most pundits repeating tired clichés and doing little else than restating reasons for their entrenched positions.

The Federal Labor Party, to its credit, is looking for new ways to fund Australian schools. Their review of school funding, led by David Gonski, will report later this year. They need to get it right. With its slender majority in the Lower House, the Federal Government can't afford to make many enemies. For example, it would probably not be wise for the Federal Labor Party to return to the "hit-list" mentality that proved so devastating to their Party and to Mark Latham's aspirations to become Prime Minister a few years ago.

Quite apart from the need to be politically aware, the debate about school funding requires fiscal wisdom. It is worth remembering that a student at an independent school typically gets half the funding of a student at a state school. This results in independent schools saving the Government about three billion dollars a year. Well-resourced independent schools usually receive about a quarter of the funding given to an equivalent-sized state school. Those arguing that this residual amount of funding be reduced yet further are unwise. Costs would rise and drive students out of independent schools and the Government would have to pay more than twice as much to educate them elsewhere.

Detractors of independent schools often wax lyrical about the facilities some independent schools have. These observations are sometimes accurate, but it needs to be pointed out that most of these facilities are a result of fundraising initiatives which, if penalised, would put a stop to self-help activities and usher in a welfare mentality that this country can ill-afford.

Another stick used to beat independent schools is to compare the cost of educating a student at an independent school with that of a student at a state school. The average extra cost is about \$2,600. This surprisingly small difference usually requires the enemies of independent schools to quote the amount spent on students at selected high-fee schools. These breathless revelations do not advance any argument. Most sensible people recognise that high-fee schools are likely to be...well...high cost!

Despite these costs, some parents will still make the financial sacrifices necessary to obtain the educational services of a particular school. That's their right, just as it is the right of Australians to spend more money in order to obtain private health cover.

Some opponents of independent schools will say they are not against independent schools, they are against the FUNDING of independent schools. Such statements are deceitful. It's like saying, we don't mind these people existing, we just don't want them to breathe! Removing Government funding to independent schools would lead to the closure of many independent schools and would force up the fees of the few that remained, making them even more elite. This is not clever thinking.

It is time that some political groups had a rethink about their anti-independent school stance. With nearly a half of secondary



students in Australian cities going to independent schools, there is a lot of support to lose if some groups maintain their negative orientation to independent schools.

The call for better thinking extends to both sides of politics. The Federal Opposition also needs fresh thinking about their funding policies for independent schools. Their commitment to socio-economic (SES) measures to fund independent schools was an excellent idea ruined by their “no losers” policy, which saw overfunded schools maintaining their overfunded status. This rendered useless what would otherwise have been a very acceptable funding model. The use of grouped data to calculate a school’s SES score was also a weakness for it enabled rich families to “hide” their wealth by living in post-code areas with a low average SES. It would have been better to use individual family income.

So, what is the answer? Any funding solution for independent schools will find itself somewhere between an entitlement argument (I deserved my share of the education tax dollar because I pay taxes) and a needs-based argument (needier schools should get more funding). The voucher system epitomises the former and the removal of funding to well-resourced schools epitomises the latter. Neither is likely to attract broad support from the Australian public. A responsible way forward is to have a funding model that is a balance between the needs-based argument and the entitlement-based argument.

The biggest school cost is recurrent funding. In the past, recurrent funding models have been very complex. Any new recurrent funding model should be kept simple such as being based on a score out of ten. The suggested funding model does this and takes into consideration the socio-economic situation of a school, the level of fees charged and a measure of how well a school is resourced in terms of its facilities.

	High - Low
SES	1-4 points
Fees	1-4 points
Resources	1-2 points



This model would protect entitlement because well-resourced schools, with the lowest possible score of three, would still get some funding albeit much less funding than less well-resourced schools.

Then there is the matter of capital funding. Huge sums of money are needed to repair Australia’s aging schools and build new ones. Many of those shouting in the ear of David Gonski wants to solve this problem by changing the way the funding pie is cut. Limited in their thinking to division, these people are unable to suggest a way to increase funds to a school other than to take funds away from another school.

A more creative solution is to place all families who have children attending Australian schools on an income scale of one to ten. The more affluent families would be required to pay a school levy, but the less affluent families would be excused of this obligation. Those families on a medium income would only be required to pay part of the levy. Given that 61 of the 100 wealthiest school communities, as listed on the 2009 My School website, were state school communities, this suggestion is worthy of serious consideration.

Australia already puts a Medicare levy on more affluent families. An extension to this idea by putting in place a levy for education is not illogical. Health and education both need more money and that money should come from taxes, with the greater burden falling on those with the greater wealth.

Finally, there is the issue of funding school children who are disadvantaged in some way. Again, I would propose a ten point scale. Children suffering significant disability would be given a higher score than one who is less disadvantaged. An important caveat is that it is the CHILD who is funded and not the school. This would allow the disadvantaged child to “spend” their funding entitlement at any school, be it government or non-government. Annexed to this initiative would be the obligation of all schools to set aside a number of places for students who are disadvantaged.

The three funding proposals detailed above, represent an attempt to make the funding of schools socially responsible, with needier schools getting more funding than less needy schools. It represents an attempt to keep the funding model simple, and it represents an attempt to bring all non-government schools into the same funding arrangement. This is vital if the Government wishes to avoid accusations of playing sectarian favourites.

Doubtless, the ideas described above can be improved and the details need to be worked out more fully. However, what is not needed is the repetition of tired and destructive clichés from educational commentators who can do little else than attack one sector of education in order to advantage another. We need new thinking.

Woldingham iPhone/iPad Prospectus App



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How To Recover

when you feel you've been wronged

AUTHOR
Dr Timothy Sharp
www.drhappy.com.au



We've all, at times, felt wronged by others. We've all, at times, been hurt by those whom we felt betrayed our trust, were inconsiderate, or by those who in some way hurt our feelings. Clearly, lingering feelings of resentment or anger are not good for happiness so learn how to better manage these feelings and as a result, recover more quickly and experience more positive emotions.

Forgiveness

In his wonderful book, "Beyond Revenge: the evolution of the forgiveness instinct" Michael McCullough makes two very important points.

1. First, revenge is not some sort of abnormal response experienced only by psychopaths or the mentally unstable. Rather, it is a normal human emotion experienced by those who feel they've been wronged and, according to McCullough, an emotion that actually serves a useful purpose from an evolutionary perspective

2. Second, and this is important to note, forgiveness is also a normal human emotion and more so, one we can cultivate in ourselves and foster in others to create, ultimately, a more compassionate and better world

So how do we do this? Try the following suggestions (partly taken from Sonja Lyubomirsky's "The How of Happiness"):

- Imagine forgiveness - sometimes it's easier to begin by imagining what we ultimately want to achieve so ask yourself what it would be like if you forgave a particular person and imagine how you'd feel as a result.
- Write a letter of forgiveness - if appropriate, deliver this letter to the relevant person; if not, just write a letter and read it to yourself but either way, express in words as best you can how you've let go of your anger and bitterness.
- Practice empathy - although this is very difficult at times, try to imagine the other person's position and perspective including why they might have done what they did (and note, this doesn't mean you have to agree with it).
- Ruminate less - if you're struggling to forgive then at the very least, don't make things worse for yourself by excessively worrying about what happened.
- As hinted at above, remember that forgiving someone doesn't mean you endorse their actions or agree with or like what they did. It simply means letting go of the self-defeating, painful emotions that are probably only hurting you and not affecting them.

PS: remember, throughout this, a very important point. Forgiveness is mostly for the forgiver (i.e. that's you!) as opposed to the person who's done wrong!

New Heads

Dr Dean Russell. Principal Dalby State High School

Dr Dean Russell has been Principal at Dalby State High School for two years. Prior to that, Dr Russell was acting Principal at Goondiwindi State High School and Deputy Principal at Toowoomba State High School's Mount Lofty Campus. He has held other leadership positions in high schools at Gatton, Chinchilla and Moranbah. Dr Russell is passionate about, and committed to, rural and remote education. This has been a major driver in his desire to turn the new residential facility at Dalby State High School into one of the state's premier providers of a boarding experience to students from rural and remote areas.



Sincere apologies to Dr Dean Russell, who was not included in the New Heads article in the last issue of Lights Out.

Coming Events

AUS

31 July – 1 August 2011

Leaders of Residential
Communitys Conference
Adelaide

NZ

31 May – 3 June 2011

NZBSA Annual Conference
"Beyond our Doors"
Dunedin

USA

22 – 24 June 2011

Managing Risk Workshop
Wilmington, Delaware

1 – 3 December 2011

TABS Annual Conference
Boston

UK

11–13 July 2011

Annual Conference for Matrons
and Medical Staff
Venue TBA

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