



lightsout

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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IS BOARDING GETTING ANY EASIER?

The character of boarding is changing. This is important to realise for many of the alarming tales about boarding schools reflect an era that has now past. Boarding today is a very different experience to 20 years ago.

Pg 3

THE AGE OLD PROBLEM!

Students are enjoying the choice of a wider range of subjects taught with the assistance of interesting advancements in technology.

Pg 10

TO SKYPE OR NOT TO SKYPE?

Suddenly, by downloading an ingenious computer program, it was possible to transform one's computer into a telephone and to call any other computer which was running the same piece of software. Oh, and there was one additional, minor benefit: It was completely free.

Pg 14

TEACHING GIRLS TO COPE WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH

Unrelenting rain, leeches and continual mud set the scene for a journey-based leadership camp for St Hilda's students that turned out to be a taxing test of endurance. Yet students emerged from the ordeal with a wealth of new understanding about themselves and others.

Pg 16



Very *Superstitious*

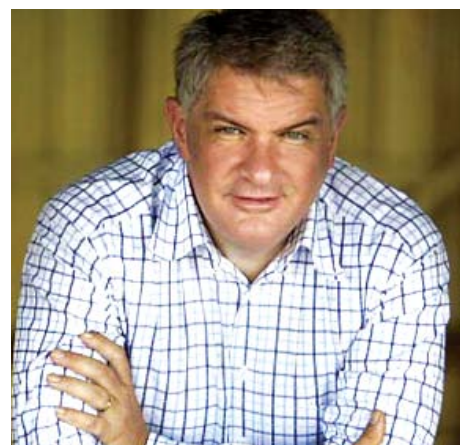
By Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

Superstition holds that Friday the 13th is a day of bad luck. So perhaps it was appropriate that it was on Friday 13th last month, that the British public woke to the sensational news headlines "DAD AT 13" in the British tabloid The Sun.

On this auspicious day, the Fleet Street press converged en masse on the agricultural town of Hailsham, in East Sussex, where young Alfie Patten, barely into puberty himself, was admitting that he hadn't a clue how he and the 15-year-old mother of his child, Chantelle Steadman, would support their baby daughter Maisie Roxanne - born five days earlier - but nonetheless promised to be a doting dad.

Subsequently, the British public have lapped up a steady stream of tasteless revelations about Alfie's family - and that of Chantelle, with much of the attention focused on Alfie's missing father, and "serial love cheat" Dennis Patten, who has nine children with different women. Then two other teenage boys thrust themselves in to the media limelight, claiming they had were Maisie's father. All and sundry are now demanding DNA tests to settle the issue of paternity presumably because suddenly there is a lot of money involved. At last count, at least 15 media outlets were vying with each other to buy the true story behind the birth of Maisie Roxanne and media experts are estimating that the lucky winners could earn up to half a million pounds.

Up until now, most of the media have focused on the baby-faced Alfie and the other competitors in the, Britain's Youngest Dad, competition. The media have virtually ignored new Mum Chantelle, whose life has been turned upside down in the last few months. Only one journalist, the Daily Mirror's Coleen Nolan, pointed out that it wouldn't be Alfie getting up in the night to breastfeed Maisie or rock her back to sleep. It isn't Alfie's



education, hopes, dreams and aspirations that have been put on hold and he hasn't been branded a skank, slut and whore by the entire country. No, as Nolan points out, this has all that fallen on Chantelle's young shoulders.

It seems as though almost everyone has missed the point in this sorry saga. This is yet another example of the appalling parenting practices of Generation X. Is it not reasonable to ask what part of the word 'parenting', Chantelle's parents don't understand? Did they even think about the possibility of pregnancy, let alone STI's, as a succession of Lothario's bonked their daughter overnight?

I'm sure Chantelle threw numerous tantrums, screamed, yelled, chucked things about the house, even threatened to run away if her parents wouldn't let Alfie and the others stay over. It is highly likely that she told her parents that she and Alfie were in love, that there would never be another etc etc. The trouble is that while she clearly had the reproductive capacity of a woman, she had the brain of a 15 years old girl, and according to neuropsychologists across the world, it will not be fully developed until her mid twenties.

CONTENTS

- 03 From the Chairman
- 04 How to Keep Your Inbox Empty
- 06 Noticeboard material: Sleep
- 07 Boarding at St Gregs
- 09 Spinifex
- 10 The Age Old Problem!
- 13 Tour'n'Talk of Boarding at
Westminster School in Adelaide
- 14 To Skype or Not to Skype?
- 15 I'm a Saleman
- 16 Teaching Girls To Cope
When Life Gets Tough
- 17 Boarding – Where We Live And Learn
- 20 ABSA Research
- 22 Conference Registration
- 23 Q&A: Towards the Light
- 24 Coming Events

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 and send us some high resolution photos.

For further information, go to page 24 of this newsletter or contact ABSA.

So, not that we really needed it, we now have living proof that a unique characteristic of 15 year old girls is an inability to predict the consequences of their actions, (shock, gasp) which is why parents have to set limits and boundaries, use moral language and set standards.

So here is some official advice for all Boarding Staff to give to students as early and as often as possible:

Many love-struck girls believe that when a boy says "I love you":

- That he means it and it is true
- That this will last forever and ever
- That the first two mean that everything else is going to be OK and they will live happily ever after in a house with a white picket fence and a fluffy dog

But it is the adults' job to explain:

- Many boys lie through their teeth so they can have sex with you
- Unprotected sex can lead to pregnancy
- Nothing is ever guaranteed to be "OK" and the only thing you can truly rely on is yourself.
- It is okay to say no

This is a what authoritative parenting is about – for us to give our children guidance, values and a moral compass along with enough self-respect so as the Daily Mirror's Coleen Nolan put it so succinctly, 'that she won't just roll over, literally, every time a boy demands it.'

It would be nice if Chantelle passes these life lesson to little Maisie - because it would appear her own mother failed to get the message across to her daughter. The post script to this tragic tale, is that on the 27th March the Mirror reported that Alfie Patten had lost the title of Britain's youngest father after Alfie's DNA test indicated that he's not the father of baby Maisie. Chantelle, who had previously said that Alfie was the only boy she had slept with, is once more the target of the nation's opprobrium.

How Alfie will deal with the news and where the adults in this sad story go to from now, is anyone's guess one option is to give DNA tests to all the boys one can only hope that Maisie gets the love and care she deserves.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is an adolescent psychologist and is honorary psychologist to the Australian Boarding Schools Association



LIGHTS ON:

Getting to the Crux of Leading and Managing Boarding Houses

DATE OF CONFERENCE: Sunday 16 August and Monday 17 August 2009

VENUE: Novotel Melbourne on Collins

Early bird closing date for registrations is 30 June 2009. Registration forms and further information is available at www.boarding.org.au



Is Boarding Getting *Any* Easier?

By Dr. Tim Hawkes

The character of boarding is changing. This is important to realise for many of the alarming tales about boarding schools reflect an era that has now past. Boarding today is a very different experience to 20 years ago. Some of the major changes are

Greater flexibility

- Full boarding
- Weekly boarding
- Occasional boarding
- Day boarding

Greater accountability

- To parents
- To school/hostel management
- To government authorities

Greater transparency

- Openness
- Greater access by parents

Greater commitment to providing a total education in the boarding setting with conscious attention being paid to a student's academic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs.

Greater communication. Phones, faxes, emails enable more immediate and more effective communication with the home.

Greater provision of specialist boarding facilities with an increase in middle school and senior college boarding institutions. However, this trend is far from universal.

Greater international element in many residential institutions.

Greater comfort and privacy

Greater professionalism. Those involved in residential care are more likely to be credentialed and trained.

Less institutional and more homelike.

Less students boarding in general and many fewer children boarding who are of primary school age.

Less students boarding due to allegiance to their parents' school and more students



Much of what has changed in boarding schools is very good news. However, there remain new issues for boarding staff which are problematic.

boarding due to broken marriages and other relationship difficulties associated with the home.

Less tolerance of bullying and prejudice.

Less austere boarding environments and a more friendly environment. This is partly due to both the mother and the child taking more responsibility than before in the process of selecting the boarding school or hostel.

Much of what has changed in boarding schools is very good news. However, there remain new issues for boarding staff which are problematic. Many of these problems just did not exist a few decades ago.

Perhaps one of the most significant new threats to the well-being of our boarders is that of cyber bullying and the risk to student privacy.

Now that most mobile telephones have in-built cameras, the capacity to take a covert photo and send this image to others, is very great. This constitutes a gross breach of privacy and may be considered as breaking the law. If the image is particularly inappropriate, such as a photo of a student in the nude, then the chances of criminal charges being laid are high.

The simplicity of taking photos and transmitting them to others combines with ignorance of the severity of the infraction, to ensure far too many students are falling foul of the law in this area.

An associated problem is that of cyber-bullying by sending inappropriate text messages, posting abusive or defamatory comments on Face-book sites, and a myriad number of other ways misery and harassment is inflicted using modern electronic means. Our boarders need to understand the seriousness of these actions. They can bring discredit on the student and on the boarding community. More importantly, these actions can bring distress into the life of another and may lead to criminal charges being laid against the perpetrators.

To the contemporary problems detailed above is the relative ease by which boarders can now access pornography via electronic means. In the end, no filter is able to safeguard a boarding house from porn. This does not mean that net filters should not be used. It does mean they cannot be relied upon. Vigilance, sanctions and frank teaching about the problems associated with pornography, must also be undertaken by boarding staff.

The following reflection about pornography, may be of some help in this regard.

Continued on page 24

How to Keep **Your Inbox** Empty

By Robyn Pearce



The two panels at the bottom of the dialogue box are the key to it all. Tick 'Move email to folder' and then 'Select Folder'. This will open up your entire list of folders, if you've got some. Highlight your chosen folder and click OK.

Now you've got a simple rule.

How to set up folders whilst working in Rules:

If you don't yet have folders for different topics, don't worry. You can create them as you go. Essentially you're setting up a filing cabinet, only this one is electronic. Leaving everything in your Inbox is just as bad as having a big filing cabinet with all your papers thrown randomly in and no system at all. Not only is it brain-clogging, messy and confusing but eventually (if you're on a corporate server) you'll have problems. (I recently heard of 12,000 emails in an Inbox – and yes, that server did indeed crash!)

(Tip when creating a new folder – check carefully where it will sit. It will default to below whatever folder was highlighted in the dialogue box unless you choose differently. Some people file everything under Inbox; I go higher and file under Personal Folders.)

The cool and sophisticated part!

'Advanced Options' covers all the variables. Take a tour through all the screens and prepare to be delighted. The Wizard will walk you through a bunch of additions, inclusions and exceptions.

For instance, suppose you want everything with the word 'Media' in either the subject line or in the body of the text, and which comes from your PR firm, to go to a Media folder. In the first page of the Advanced Options Wizard you'd tick both **'with specific words in the body'** and **'with specific words in the message header'**. In the Edit box below, click on both sets of **'specific words'** (this will show up once you've ticked as directed in the top panel). Now you can add any words you like.

You'll almost certainly have a few people who send mail on multiple topics. Suppose you want most of the mail from Bill, your

As I work with people around the world on their productivity issues, almost everyone shares one common challenge – too much time spent on email.

One really simple strategy can make a huge difference, and yet hardly anyone uses it. When correctly set up, Rules save you filing time, make it far easier to keep your Inbox empty, and simplify finding things. (If you're a Mac user, check your Help menu for specifics. Sorry, but this explanation is for Outlook users.)

Many people know vaguely that Rules are useful. Some know that they can be created to assist in automatic filing of much of our mail. But even those who do know, often don't follow through for fear that they'll lose sight of new mail. (I was just the same for years!) In fact you won't lose anything – as long as you change one tiny action when you first go to your Inbox.

- First we'll examine both the simple and advanced applications and some basic tips.

- We'll discuss how to file the 'Sent' mail
- Then I'll show you how to keep everything under your nose in a beautifully elegant and time-saving way.
- We'll finish with very cool extra options that will save you hours of time.

How to create a Rule:

Choose an email in your Inbox that you'd like to keep. Right-click on it. A menu will open up. Choose 'Create Rule'.

In the small 'Create Rule' dialogue box that opens you'll see the email of the sender and the subject line in the top two boxes. If you want to save all correspondence from that person to only one folder, tick the top box. (How to manage a person who covers multiple topics is explained below.) Only tick the second one if the subject line is always the same.



Administration Manager, in one folder but travel bookings he organises for you in a separate Travel folder. Use the 'exception' facility. (And ask him to put the word 'Travel' or 'Bookings' in his subject line.) The description will then look something like this:

Apply this rule after the message arrives from Bill
move it to the Office folder
except if the subject or body
contains Travel or Bookings

How to manage outgoing mail:

At time of writing Outlook can't apply the same Rules process to Sent mail. For a long time this really frustrated me. So, you can imagine my delight when I discovered SpeedFiler – it's a fantastic and very intuitive piece of software (and very inexpensive) that saves me **hours** of filing time plus takes away the risk of important emails disappearing into the bowels of my Sent box.

Get a trial here - https://www.plimus.com/jsp/download_trial.jsp?contractId=1698029&referror=adminime

How can I keep track of filed mails if they're automatically filed?:

Some will tell you to watch out for the bold font beside each folder but that is not the best answer. If you've got any sub-folders you'll miss things.

One tiny action solves the problem. Instead of going to Inbox when you check new mail, go first to 'Unread Mail'. If you've not activated it you'll find it (shown in italics) under Search Folders, usually near the bottom of your entire list of Mail Folders. The first time you click on 'Unread Mail' it will populate with any unread mail, no matter where it's sitting in your email system. (What you see in 'Unread Mail' is a replica – the mail doesn't move.) Now click and drag the 'Unread Mail' folder up to the top left Favorite Folders panel. Whilst you're there, do the same with 'For Follow Up' – it's another really useful folder we'll talk about in a minute.

Now, here's the tiny behaviour change. When you open your email programme, don't start with Inbox. Instead, begin with 'Unread Mail'. Then it doesn't matter in which folder your mail has automatically filed itself. Everything unread shows up in this folder, patiently waiting your attention.

How to keep track of mail and tasks:

Once you've opened a mail, if you go out of the 'Unread Mail' folder, naturally the mail will disappear. If you haven't finished with it you have at least four simple options.

Right click and choose 'Follow Up'. You'll get a selection of flags. It will still disappear from 'Unread Mail' but will remain in the 'Follow Up' folder.

A right click will also give you the choice to 'Mark as Unread'. Very useful if you like to use the 'Unread' folder as a form of 'to do' list.

If you use the Task function in Outlook you can simply click and drag the entire email into Tasks. It will also stay in whichever email folder it's filed in.

If it's an appointment or big task you need to block time out for, you can also click and drag an email into an appointment in your Calendar.

Once you start setting Rules you'll delight in an Inbox with hardly anything in it. Of course you still have to deal with the mail, but many users save themselves easily up to half an hour a day.

Have fun with that Rule creation and easy filing!



Robyn Pearce CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is the Time Queen. She mastered her own time challenges and now helps people around the world overcome theirs. She can show you how to transform your time challenges into high productivity and the life balance you desire.

Enrol for your free Top Time Tips – practical advice every two weeks and you'll get your own free report "How to Master Time In Only 90 Seconds", a simple yet powerful diagnostic tool to help you identify your key areas for action. You'll find it at

<http://www.gettingagrip.com/ttt/index.asp>

Sleep

NOTICE BOARD MATERIAL

Although it is probably not a popular fact, teenagers need between 9 to 10 hours sleep a night.

This is not good news for those whose pursuit of 9 to 10 hours sleep would seriously compromise their social life.

For how many hours do you sleep a night?

Note that for the hours to count as sleep, you must be asleep. Being in the bedroom does not count as sleep and neither does being in bed. This is important to note given the significant invasion on sleep time which can occur due to the distraction of 24 hour access to the internet and mobile phone.

Anything less than 9 to 10 hours sleep a night will lead to fatigue, and fatigue is not good news. It has been blamed for the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, the Challenger space shuttle disaster, the Chernobyl nuclear accident and 1 in 6 fatal road accidents in Australia.

Fatigue and "sleep debt" interferes with the brain's working memory. Judgement can become impaired, a person can become more accident prone, irritability and bad temperedness can occur, alertness can be reduced and grogginess can be increased. There can be a loss in motivation and concentration and an increase in periods of being "spaced" out and engaging in micro-sleep, which is a short involuntary sleep often lasting just a few seconds.

Therefore, studying late into the night to cram for an exam the following day can backfire. Academic performance will probably decline if you do not have 9 – 10 hours sleep a night.

To get to sleep, the body needs to cool off a little...and not be full of stimulants like sweet fizzy drinks or caffeine. Likewise, drugs and

alcohol can interfere with deeply restful and restorative sleep.

A person sleeping typically goes through cycles lasting about 100 minutes. These cycles move from Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep to non REM sleep which involves both light sleep (drowsiness and sometimes twitches) to deep sleep which is the sleep in which bed-wetting, sleep-talking and sleep-walking will occur if it is going to happen at all. REM sleep is important for brain development and non REM sleep is important for healing and bolstering the bodies' immune system. Interestingly, elephants lie down for their REM sleep but stand up for their non REM sleep!

The desire to sleep is controlled, among other things, by a person's circadian clock which is a type of inner time-keeper. Typically, this circadian clock runs a little later in teenagers than in adults. This means teenagers generally like to go to bed later and sleep in longer. Some schools have recorded improved academic performance when they start their school day an hour later.

The military has experimented with giving soldiers glasses that shine bright white light into their retina. This light is designed to simulate sunrise and can keep a soldier on active duty for up to 36 hours without sleep.

We need to pay conscious attention to the quality and quantity of sleep we have. Failure to have the right sort of sleep and the right amount of sleep can have an adverse affect on learning and on health and well-being. If there should be any problems in this regard, then a visit to a doctor is recommended for there are remedies to most sleep problems.

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,

The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,

Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,

Chief nourisher in life's feast
Shakespeare – Macbeth, Act ii Scene ii





Boarding at St Gregs

By Wendy White



Boarding life at the St Gregory's College, Campbelltown offers boys a unique schooling experience. The boarding houses bring boys together from all over the world, predominately from country NSW but also places such as Lord Howe Island, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Queensland, the Northern Territory and ACT.

This mix broadens their outlook on life and produces lasting friendships. The boarding routine encourages boys to develop responsibility through the sharing of duties and the positive interaction with other boys and the supervising staff. The boys benefit greatly from the structured routine of two periods of nightly study, prayer, organised social events and weekend sporting competitions, which together foster their balanced development.

Weekend boarding life also provides various opportunities for boys to interact with each other as well as representing the College in sport. Time is also allocated over the weekend for study and social activities and excursions. These include such outings as visits to the City and Manly, go-karting, ten pin bowling, rock climbing, white water rafting, ice skating, movies, theatre and laser skirmish. Sunday is also a great opportunity for family and friends to visit and for senior boys to go on day leave.

The weekend culminates with the gathering of the boarding community to celebrate

Mass on Saturday evenings. The Mass is an important expression of the Catholic mission and ethos of the College and is a definite highlight of the week. The College has a proud tradition of singing and is well known for its celebration of the Eucharist and people travel from far and wide to join the boys for the Mass each week.

A free weekend every four to five weeks allows the boarder to go home to his family for four days.

The boarding facilities are refurbished, modern and the envy of many other boarding schools. Individual rooms for all boarders from Year 7-12 allows privacy yet the small houses with common room and kitchen facilities make the environment very inclusive and family orientated. Each house has a live in supervisor who lives in a studio room in the house with a house co-ordinator and their family living in a home directly behind the boarding house.

The boarding houses are situated away from the main school buildings allowing boys to make the distinction between school and home. At the end of the school day, the boarder goes home to his house where he is cared for by the boarding staff.

Tutors are also available to assist boarders with study.

The boys eat together in two dining rooms at breakfast and dinner. Recess and lunch

are provided outside so the boarders can mix freely with their other friends and participate in the usual recreational games. Afternoon tea and supper are served in the boarding houses.

The College also has fully trained medical staff with a doctor seeing boys twice weekly and a nurse on five days a week in the boarding clinic.

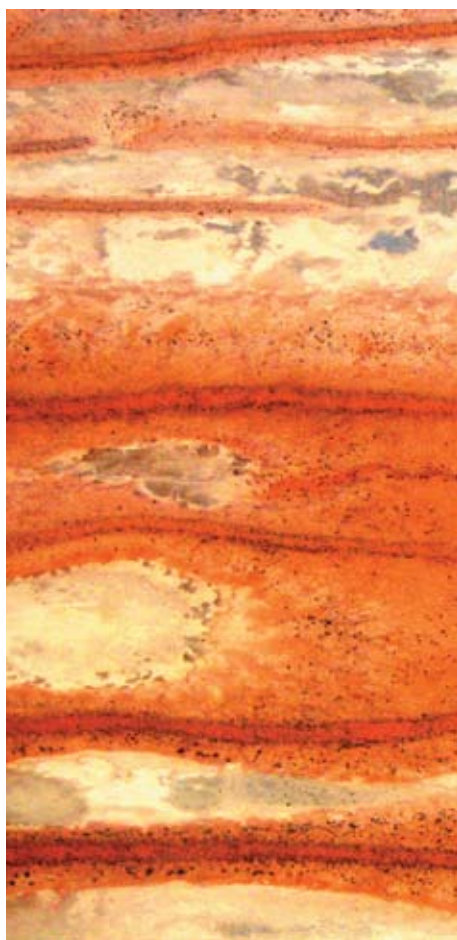
The boarding houses are elevated in a picturesque setting, surrounded by rolling green hills on one side and the sprawl of Sydney below on the other. This provides a safe and peaceful environment while still allowing ready access to the local shops and the city. In their recreation time boys have the opportunity to use the many College facilities, including the 11 playing fields, swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, cricket nets and the College library is also open for extended hours for the boarders.

The boarding staff, many of whom are also teachers at the College, are committed to the quality care and supervision of the boarders, under the direction of the Director of Boarding. Supportive relationships are forged, which are based on trust and mutual respect so that boys are valued for their individual qualities and talents. It is this teamwork that ultimately provides the boarder with the support and space to grow and develop to the fullest.



spinifex

By Andrew Kube





I'm gazing down on the winding Georgina River meandering its way down to Lake Eyre. Its fibrous arms full of characteristic clay coloured water seeping into the surrounding soil, turning everything green with life.

Ahead of me is Bedourie – a small outback community where several of our students live.

This harsh country has been transformed by a generous northern wet season. Last year this journey showed barren red plains, empty waterholes and dusty river beds.

During today's visit I will be speaking to a parent who has withdrawn her student from our campus, another who is unhappy about some of our policies regarding phones, and another who seems content with her daughter's progress. Dealing with parents, happy or otherwise is a part of the job I enjoy. Usually when the time is set aside to discuss the issues, the outcome is that we all understand each other a bit better. Any niggling problems are sorted out.

In the last few years we have prioritised home visits to parents and carers, usually at least twice a year. Fortunately I have a pilot's licence and hiring a small plane makes the long journeys pleasant and relatively quick. The visits certainly go a long way to helping me and any staff who accompany me understand what it's like in the students' home communities. We have talked to parents under mango trees in Doomadgee, sitting on verandas at isolated dusty stations, swatting flies in the street in Boulia, leaning on the bar in the Birdsville pub, and many places in between.

It seems that most of our 'successes' happen when we have parents involved. This means different things to different parents of course but the intention is to invite the parents to join us in the education and upbringing of their

children. For all sorts of reasons this can be an extremely difficult task.

Another recent idea that is going well is inviting all parents to have a 'weekend sleepover' a couple of times a year. This way they get to try out our food, sleep in our beds, meet the staff and so on.

Bit by bit the parents are becoming relaxed with us. Bit by bit they are speaking up in meetings and having the courage to air their concerns directly to us. Sometimes this new found confidence can mean they say exactly what they think – which can be hard to receive graciously. I guess the alternative – not hearing anything – is worse.

Just south of Bedourie are a small group of lakes – full to overflowing with the waters of the Georgina River. Last years visit saw some very different conditions. From the air the dried creek beds made patterns like a lizards back, crusty and dry. This year the lizard has become a rain forest gecko, shimmering, translucent and green.

As I sit in the plane enjoying all this, I wonder at change. It comes so quickly when the conditions are right. It is so welcome after extended hard times. I think it's like this with the children we care for. We have to put the 'right conditions' in place and wait for the changes – be patient and hopeful.

In any other journal I might get away with words spruiking our successes, talking up our retention rates, hailing our happy students and celebrating our family involvement. Most reading this will know how hard it is to achieve these things, and would rightly view such comments with scepticism.

The wins we have are due to hard work, dedicated staff, the ability to rebound from disappointments and recognising the small steps we are making. The concerted effort we make at building honest relationships with parents and carers seems to be paying off.

Our 45 students this year are a great bunch. Full of life and stories. Their parents help keep us honest. For a few years we share their children and between us we try and find opportunities for them to flourish. They celebrate with us at graduations and are showing an increasing pride in the place.

The day has passed. I have visited the parents, showed my promotional pictures



to the local school students and now I'm chasing flies out of the overheated cockpit of my plane. The control column is too hot to touch and the lead in my chinograph pencil has melted. Inland Australia is indeed a tough place to live.

The flight home in the cool air at altitude is a lovely time for ponderings. The changing beauty of the surroundings, the endless metaphors about determination and resilience that confront you in the outback. I feel fortunate to be in a position where I can make a difference to young people and to be welcomed into the lives of families in the rural and remote NW Qld.

Interesting statistics:

- *Spinifex State College - residential campus: opened in 2003, the first of its type in Qld. Jointly funded by Education Qld and Federal Government sources.*
- *On average 50 students from all remote areas in NW Qld*
- *All students attend Spinifex State College – junior of senior campus (year's 8-12)*
- *Approx 2/3 indigenous – and slightly more than half are girls*
- *Aircraft – A hired Cessna 182, four seats, single engine & perfect for the job*
- *Necessary requirements for journey – Thermos full of Lavazza stove top espresso coffee, chocolate biscuits, Canon IXUS pocket camera - plus aircraft remote area survival kit*
- *Average photos per journey – 60 +*

Andrew Kube is Head of Campus at Spinifex State College - Residential Campus, Mount Isa, Qld.

The Age *Old Problem!*

By David Anderson



Due to the greater understanding and innovation into the teaching and learning process, the academic programs in all schools are becoming more exciting for teachers and students. Students are enjoying the choice of a wider range of subjects taught with the assistance of interesting advancements in technology.

Boarders benefit from opportunities of higher levels of pastoral care from well trained staff, extra academic tutoring after school hours and access to school facilities seven days a week.

The retention rates of students at school continue to increase and parents encourage their children to further their education after they have left school. Rural boarders who once may have returned home after they have completed Year 12 now continue to tertiary education to gain further qualifications to succeed in the more diverse and competitive economies of both city or regional areas. Twenty years ago at Shore School, North Sydney about 35% of the boarders graduated from university, today this has increased to eighty percent.

The academic culture in schools has been greatly enhanced as parents and teachers

are quick to recognise, praise and support the academic achievements of their students at school. Boarders today support each other in the learning process in the same way as the students encourage their friends in co-curricular activities and in games.

One aspect of the organisation of our schools that has not changed sufficiently in recent decades is the large number of the student population who are younger than the average age of the year group. Students entering school below the age of their peers are disadvantaged in comparison to children at the correct or older range of the year group. The age discrepancy is particularly noticeable in a boarding environment when children live together comparing and competing against each other seven days a week. A child that is suffering from immaturity will be hindered in their academic and social development through the most crucial years of growth and development at school.

It is important that a child's psychological world expands to include developing interests (relative to his age, sex and culture), attitudes, values, beliefs, physical, social and mental skills, knowledge and ideas. Children who are younger than others around them will have fewer earlier experiences, since every personal experience involves the

affect of preceding observations. Whatever the expectations parents have of their child's performance at school they can't ignore the most important influences affecting the behaviour of pupils in school are: the family and social origins of the child, the age group or friendship patterns of the child, the school itself and the pupils perception of his or her future career. In each grade at school there is an instrumental order in respect to conduct, character and manner and the acquisition of specific skills. These functions could be potentially troublesome to a child if faced by a student younger than his academic year group.

The predicament of a boarder enrolled at a young age compared to their peers can especially affect the performance of a new student upon their arrival at boarding school. The boarder is confronted with a greater level of adjustment to match a living away from home environment than a day student. Many new boarders require extra support and they do not need the additional pressure of competing against students who are many months older living in close proximity with them as they adjust to life on campus. Indeed, the child must, in their new environment achieve status on the basis of his own physical, social and cognitive skills and personality traits, where previously the



child was dependent for status upon his parents. As the child becomes established in the school and peer group, the peer group influence will tend to overshadow that of the teachers, whilst the boarding house parent and teachers overshadow the family. How important is it, therefore, that the child has the maximum maturity and age to handle these challenging tasks?

Children are sent to school early by parents for valid reasons in response to family pressures and often in the case of boarders due to access and location of available education.

In the early years of education a child's age or size does not seem to be an issue and throughout primary school immaturity does not manifest itself quite as much as it might in years to come.

Toward the conclusion of primary years parents and teachers often discuss concerns about the age and maturity of a child before the promotion to secondary school. Teachers and parents weigh up the situation of advancement however the need to repeat a year of primary school is usually strongly dismissed by the child. Parents are also reluctant to cause any extra stress to their child at this sensitive time when peer pressures and friendships have become significant in the life of the child. The excitement of moving on with friends, especially relationships established between junior boarders (who are generally of similar size and who have not commenced advanced physical development) in primary and early secondary school years, usually overweighs the need to repeat, after all it is much less trouble for all concerned if the child simply proceeds to the secondary school.

When I was a Year 6 classroom teacher I was often asked by concerned parents about whether a child should repeat 6th class or move on to the secondary school. Many parents requested this information after the

final primary school report was received which immediately caused the situation to be stressful as the decision had to be made quickly without the student fully understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the situation. Each individual circumstance was different and although many of the students referred to me were coping adequately with their academic work there were often signs of immature behaviour. Both teachers and parents noticed that the child was struggling to keep up with natural development of their peers. Immaturity was often identified by attention seeking by the young child trying to impress his classroom friends.

One proof of maturity is when a child is comfortable understanding the thoughts and ideas of their peers into an appropriate framework, so that an awareness of a single perspective is not mistaken for absolute reality when it is only a single point of view.

Hard decisions have to be made by many parents making the decision in regard to the choices for their young person many lacking the ability to forecast the full potential of their child. Even after considerable counselling very few parents of under age children who have displayed signs of immaturity actually make the decision to duplicate a year of the child's education.

Many years since my time as 6th grade teacher I have often been reunited with the students and parents of the primary school 'repeaters' and without exception they have identified the repeating year as a major reason for the student achieving their true potential at school. The parent and student expressed some horror imagining what level of achievement their child would have attained if they had completed their education a year earlier at the age of 16 or 17 years.

The difference in age between students whose age falls in the upper range of the age group and the youngest in the class can often have a variation of eighteen months. In the early years of high school the disparity in age will reveal obvious differences in the levels of the mental, physical and social behaviour of young adolescents. This is also the time when parents of immature adolescents will reflect upon their previous thoughts and concerns regarding the placement of their child who struggles to keep up with the maturity of his peers. The most obvious sign can be the lack of physical growth and development compared with older children

combined with social pressures can be of great personal embarrassment to student falling behind.

In Queensland the age of school leavers is a source of much debate. The traditional model of education in Queensland results in students leaving school at 17, a year younger than students in most other Australian states. The matter of the reception age of a child in Queensland is being reviewed as a reaction to the problems of students leaving school prior to attaining the age of 18 which is the 'age' for a number of legal requirements in Australia.

A boarder on campus has greater difficulties enduring the effects of immaturity as he or she gets very little respite from the competition of peers 24 hours a day. This can result in boarders experiencing complications trying to be 'someone that they are not' both day and night. In later years privileges enjoyed by the older age group may not be extended to the younger student in respect to applying for driving licences and entry to places restricted to over 18 years in activities such as the 'schoolies' holiday period. These matters may not be of the highest priority for adults but are very important milestones for adolescents.

I am reminded of the 'age' discrepancy in our schools every time I read the title of a feature horse race in the newspaper. The age of the horse permitted in a race is the first criteria for entry to a race. Obviously a two year old horse would not be permitted to compete against three year old horses. The 'age' restrictions continue until horses reach their maturity.

Another irregularity in many schools is that school policy will allow a child who is under age to participate in classroom learning activities however when it comes to sport the student will be required to register in the correct lower age group. This produces a further dilemma for the younger student who then is challenged to move between ages and friendship groups for different activities. The younger student is not necessarily accepted into one peer group at school but becomes a member of two age groups. If the student is moving between age groups they will not receive the full recognition of their peer group resulting in a reduction of self esteem and a reduced feeling of belonging in the school.

Having observed children in boarding houses and the classroom for many years, I have become aware of many manifestations of the immature student. The normal reaction of the child feeling that he or she is falling behind socially or physically is to draw greater attention to themselves which can be a distraction to the individual or to those around them. The immature child will also notice, but not fully understand changes in the attitude and relationships with other children who are becoming more mentally and physically mature. Often attempts by the younger child to imitate the more mature student will become a source of embarrassment and frustration to the younger student. When children at school feel that they are already behind physically or mentally before new challenges present themselves it is easy to understand that immaturity will produce a demoralizing effect upon the child's self-concept. Is it any wonder that the younger child gives up, or becomes rebellious and aggressive? The child's pride is shattered and their self-concept dulled. If the notion of individual differences is to mean anything to teachers in primary schools, it must imply the necessity for insisting children are in the correct cohort to allow children to experience achievement and improvement commensurate to their ability among other children on a level playing field.

A study in California produced some impressive research regarding the development of males from infancy to adulthood. Boys in the older age group who matured at a faster rate than others were found to be relaxed, less animated and more matter of fact. The younger child in age and maturity compared to their peers were described as attention-getters who were always on the go. When the same males were examined years later some of the differences seemed to persist. At the age of 33, the more mature students scored higher on a test measuring the ability to make a good impression, and they tended to show less rebelliousness than those who were under the age of their friends at school.

The academically gifted or capable sports person are not immune from displays of immature behaviour. I have been surprised that immaturity has spoiled the performance of capable students early in their teenage years and others in the final stages of their school career. There are many examples of students suffering from immaturity at school and in social situations which have caused major periods of disruption to their confidence attempting to embrace the learning process. The failure of under age students to have strong and balanced relationships with

peers can lead to student becoming anxious and isolated. The same child is also more likely to be subject of ridicule and bullying. Relationships with the opposite sex can also be challenging due to age differences. Boys are usually behind the maturation rate of girls and if the boy is younger than the age of his peers this will further exacerbating developing social relationships with girls.

Some boarders and day students in their final years at school are appointed to leadership positions. Immaturity can destroy the chances of these students to successfully establish themselves as leaders. It is enormously challenging for those younger to exercise discipline and issue instructions to older and possibly more confident students who are a little more sophisticated and worldly

School registrars and administrators must continue to ensure that prospective parents are discouraged from enrolling a child into a year group where the child will be clearly younger than their peers. Many years of personal observation and experience across many levels of learning have confirmed to me that a child placed in his or her correct year group will be advantaged compared to the younger counterpart.

It is important that every child has an equal opportunity to succeed at school in order to reach their full capability without hindrances beyond their control. Commencing at the same age as other children will create a basic platform for this to happen. If a under age child does have difficulties at School the child's parents and the student will never fully understand the possibilities that an additional year would have made to the career of the child at school and other life experiences.

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Shore School

2009
School Marketing



Aforia
in Adelaide in August

12 & 13
August
2009

Program includes

- Marketing in hard times
- Selling boarding to local & o's students
- Innovative recruitment strategies
- Commercialisation of school facilities
- Training staff in customer relations
- Measuring customer satisfaction
- Writing for Influence
- Trends, opportunities and threats in a weak economy

Host school:
Westminster
School

Convenor:
Dr Linda Vining



Tour'n'Talk of Boarding at Westminster School in Adelaide

By Dr Linda Vining



A curve of modern home units at the end of a quiet suburban street in Adelaide is home to 60 girls who are boarders at Westminster School, one of South Australia's largest co-educational boarding schools.

Each morning the girls take an off-street walk to their classrooms via the school's farm where they pass horses and chickens and other farm animals. Some students take a right turn to the school's vineyard, glasshouse or aquaculture shed for Agriculture Studies, others make their way along a path that runs parallel to the school's expansive sporting fields, swimming pool and handsome performing arts centre.

I visited Westminster School at the invitation of the registrar, Darin Betro, because Westminster will be a host school for the 2009 School Marketing Aforia to be held this year in Adelaide in August. The hands-on conference is designed for people engaged in school promotion, admissions, development and community relations. The focus will be on "Marketing in hard times and overcoming hard issues."

On a preview tour with Darin, he explained that their boarding models are different for boys and girls. Cottage care accommodation, well separated from the main school, gives girls a sense of independent living.

"This is a lovely environment for our boarding girls," he said.

Four girls of various year levels generally share a unit. Seniors have their own room



and juniors share a double. Each unit is air-conditioned with its own kitchen, bathroom, laundry, lounge room and a sunny courtyard and garden.

"Located away from the classrooms and nestled in a secure and quiet section of the school with a backdrop of the farm and large trees makes the girls' boarding units feel almost rural in their surrounds," said Darin.

"The future of boarding is largely dependent on the quality of the residential environment that schools offer their students."

At the School Marketing Aforia, Darin will conduct a Tour'n'Talk for delegates interested in boarding where he will outline how he attracts local, country and overseas families and measures the success of his strategic marketing plan.

Then it's back to the farm, Sturt Grove, for all delegates to sample another aspect of school life.

Westminster has been described as having the best curriculum-based facilities for agriculture in a metropolitan school anywhere in Australia, and it is here, in a marquee in the school's vineyard, that we will have lunch.

Delegates will enjoy commercial wines made by Westminster students from vines grown on the school farm. I have sampled these wines and can recommend you try them. You will be able to buy bottles of wine to take home and also fresh farm produce grown by the students, sold at the farm shop. Nobody

should ever come to South Australia without having lunch in a vineyard!

The Uniting Church School at Marion is set in 23 hectares of beautiful grounds just 11 km from Adelaide's CBD and is an oasis in the heart of a capital city only 15 minutes from Adelaide's CBD. It is an independent school with 1200 students, but like all schools, it is unsure about the recession's impact on educational services and it is putting in place strategies to survive a prolonged financial downturn.

Director of Development, John Kramer, has been at the school for 8 years, in which time he has raised \$5 million and seen a 20 percent increase in enrolments. He will be a keynote speaker at the Aforia talking about marketing in hard times and overcoming hard issues with a focus on staff roles, strategic planning, budgeting and accountability. Delegates will hear what Westminster is doing differently in 2009 in response to the depressed economy.

Images From Left to Right:

Westminster School has excellent curriculum-based facilities for agriculture studies where the focus is on agriculture as a business. The school has its own vineyard for commercial production and employs a full time farm manager. It is here that delegates will have lunch.

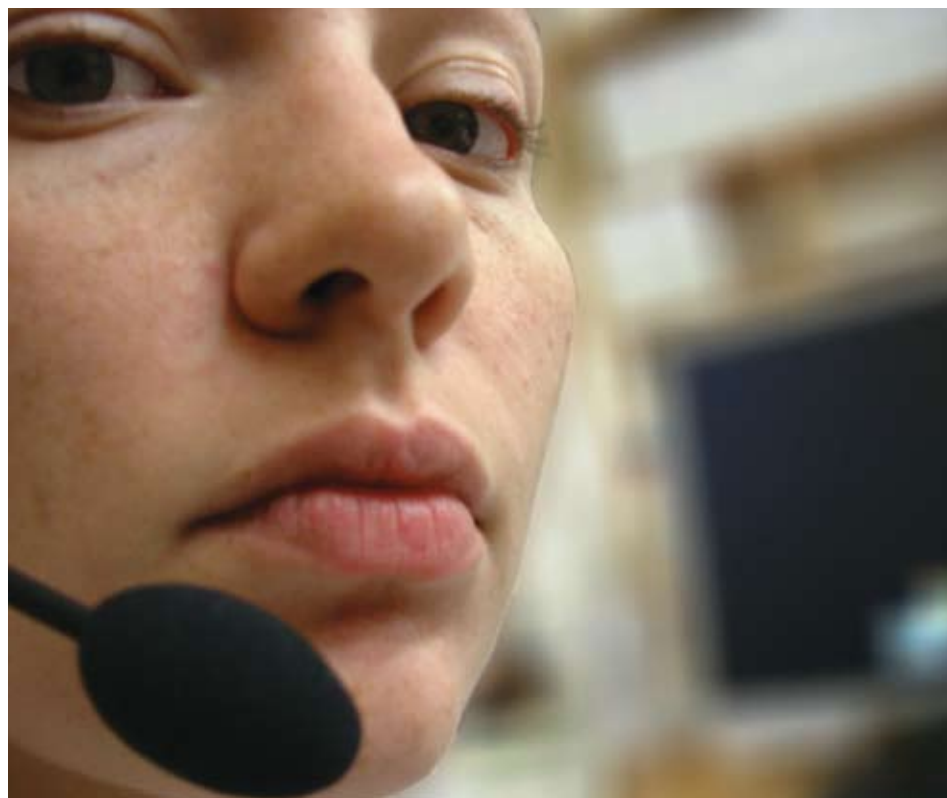
Westminster School, set in 23 hectares of beautiful grounds just 11 km from Adelaide's CBD, will host the 2009 School Marketing Aforia (www.marketingschools.net)

Dr Linda Vining is the convenor of the 2009 School Marketing Aforia to be held on 12 and 13 August in Adelaide. For a registration form and a list of speakers and their topics go to:

www.marketingschools.net

To Skype or Not to Skype?

By Jack Goodman



When it was first released in 2003, the software program Skype was something of a revelation. A decade earlier the Internet had first filled computer screens with dynamic, engaging information that seemed to come miraculously (albeit tediously) from nowhere. It's hard to remember, but in those pre-Internet days (which none of today's students remember), all the content in our computers was the result of what we typed or scanned into them.

Suddenly, by downloading an ingenious computer program, it was possible to transform one's computer into a telephone and to call any other computer which was running the same piece of software. Oh, and there was one additional, minor benefit: It was completely free.

I confess to being overwhelmed by the power of this application – now commonly known as VoIP or Voice over Internet Protocol – when I discovered it. In the last six years, “to Skype” has become a verb, much like “to Google,” and it has become more and more sophisticated. A few years ago integrated video was added to the software and now – ho hum – you can send live two-way, high

definition images half way around the world. For free. At any given moment, anywhere from 10 to 20 million people are logged in to Skype and using it to stay in touch -- all at the expense of the big Telco's.

Other companies (including Google) have jumped on the VoIP bandwagon, and now, like so many things online, we have a surfeit of choice when it comes to online, audio and video communication software. Many newer laptop computers come with built-in webcams and microphones so that they can take advantage of web-based video conferencing without requiring any extra hardware.

Without going into the relative merits of the various applications, we need to ask the question: If software like Skype is so amazingly useful, why isn't it used more often in boarding houses?

Let's think for a moment how VoIP software can serve a boarding community's needs. First, parents obviously need and want to communicate regularly with their children. Having the ability to speak with – and see – their children is incredibly powerful at

overcoming some of the emotional challenges inherent in boarding. Why not support this need by making available a computer in the boarding house with a built in webcam and a handful of the most popular VoIP applications installed? This is the st century equivalent of a payphone in the boarding house, except it's about a thousand times more useful and infinitely less expensive.

Many of your boarders may already be using VoIP to stay in touch with their families. Your staff should be aware of this and working to ensure your school's IT team is supplying sufficient Internet bandwidth to enable these types of connections to be of a high quality.

Even today many schools think of the Internet more in terms of security risks than as delivering essential communications and learning technologies. If your school's network currently blocks access to VoIP applications like Skype, or takes other steps to interfere with live, one-to-one communication, you should insist that such blockages be removed for your boarding house.

Most importantly, you should give VoIP a try. Download Skype (or GoogleTalk or another application), grab a \$10 headset and see if it doesn't change the way you think about audio and video communication. Better yet, ask one of your boarders to show you how. And where there are concerns about how, where and when students are using VoIP, develop good, reasonable policies and teach your students to make sensible judgements.

Whatever you do, don't make the mistake of throwing out the baby with the bath water. I've been to too many schools where the Internet has been rendered useless out of misplaced and excessive security and safety considerations. Such situations don't just frustrate staff and boarders. They also irritate parents. And that's a situation we all want to avoid.

www.skype.com

Jack Goodman is CEO of Tutoring Australasia and has been a strong supporter of ABSA over many years.



I'm A Salesman.

By Danny Cheung

What are the first thoughts that come to you when you hear the word; -SALESMAN- ? Pause for a minute and think.

If those adjectives you conjured were anything like; shonky, sneaky, sleazy, con-man, money-hungry, annoying, fake, cheap-suit or just plain cheap, you are firmly with the majority!

-SALESMAN- can be such a provocative word, it never ceases to amaze me the level of emotion and hostility it can raise in some whenever I have asked the question above (and let that be a warning to you!). As a business owner working in the education market, I occasionally face resistance from some schools when it comes to their marketing and promotion – in other words, their sales activity. Mostly the resistance comes from those who are horrified at the thought of associating business concepts with educating children.

The two activities of business sales and child education appear to clash. On one hand we have the sullied reputation of sales people and on the other we are more likely to respond with positive words like growth, virtuous, diligence when it comes to -EDUCATION-. It begs the question; Why does our society have such a negative instinct towards sales? I suspect it has to do with conditioning attitudes over a long period of time, a judgemental society and the perpetuation of negative stories in the 6.30pm media.

Whether you're a Priest, Protester, School Principal, Politician, or Pilates Instructor your job involves selling products or services or encouraging others to buy your ideas. Congratulations - You're probably a sales person! Consider the following world's greatest or highest paid sales men and women and your preconceptions may begin to change; Barack Obama, Kevin Rudd, Gail Kelly (Westpac CEO), Nicole Kidman, Al Gore, Steve Jobs (Apple), Princess Mary, The Mormons (fastest growing religion in the USA), Allan Moss (Macquarie Bank).

When you think about it, the world as we know it could not function without sales



**“Congratulations -
You're probably a
sales person!”**

people. Business could not operate and schools would suffer were it not for the execution of a sales strategy. From the local green grocer right up to your elected leaders, sales is a vital thread in the fabric of society. My business mentor used to say to me “If you are good at sales, you'll never be out of work”. But it's interesting that sales is never considered a virtuous or aspirational career option at school.

I love nothing more than being sold to by a professional sales person because in my experience there are so few of them around. Salesmanship requires mastery of reading people and relationships. A professional sales person garners your trust, is a good active listener, anticipates your needs, is knowledgeable about their product and makes you feel good about your purchase. Then you might ask; how are these qualities different to those of a con-artist? The old

saying goes like this; the only difference between a professional salesperson and a conman is Belief - a belief in what you are selling is credible and should offer some improvement to the buyer.

Whether you're a public or private school, competing for enrolments, funding, staffing and open days is a frenzy of sales activity. Look around you and you will see more schools implementing sales strategies used in business and my work with our school clients is playing a leading role in that paradigm shift.

Have I sold you on this? I guess it's about time I proudly admit it; I'm a Salesman too!

Danny Cheung is Creative Director of Artspec, Graphic Design and Marketing for schools www.artspec.com.au

Artspec is ABSA's design and print partner.

Teaching Girls To Cope *When Life Gets Tough* By Ben Vining



Unrelenting rain, leeches and continual mud set the scene for a journey-based leadership camp for St Hilda's students that turned out to be a taxing test of endurance. Yet students emerged from the ordeal with a wealth of new understanding about themselves and others.

The rain started on day one as we got off the bus, and by nightfall everything was soaked, nevertheless, we walked and cycled for 6 days. The awful weather moved girls far beyond their comfort zone and exposed a side of themselves that most had never seen before.

I was a school representative on the camp run by Inter-Action in northern NSW. Alongside two other outdoor education specialists, I was assigned to a small group of twelve Year 10 girls.

A good outdoor camp will stretch students and offer physical challenges, which in turn will lead them to examine their values, their abilities and their relationships. Our camp was a journey of self-discovery for the 15-year-olds who learned many practical lessons about group dynamics and the attributes of leadership. I observed 8 domains of learning, as follows:

Respect: It became clear to students early on that a team is only as strong as its weakest link and so girls had to assist and

care for each other and find talents in each person that would get them through difficult situations – this sometimes came from the least likely person.

Collaboration: Girls had plenty of time for meaningful conversations with each other and as they got to know and trust one another they were better able to face the challenges and divide up the tasks. Gradually group cohesion made life easier.

Responsibility: Stripped of modern conveniences and technology the girls had to look after themselves. An urgent phone call to mum or their best friend was out of the question. No outside help. Decisions had to be made, food prepared, camps constructed and gear divided up. Girls found new confidence in their abilities to find solutions.

Determination: Opportunities to withdraw did exist but the group undertook to go on – they suffered the lowest points with humour and they found luxury in small things, such as a rough tarpaulin erected to keep out the rain or the shelter of a community hall. This demonstrated a reassessment of values.

Problem solving: They had to perform under pressure, particularly navigational tasks or they would still be walking in fading light. Initiative and confidence were rewarded.

Endurance: Not accustomed to physical hardship, the girls had to push through

fatigue and misery to get their bicycles over the mountains. The sight of the first leech caused mayhem. By the end of the trip a leech was a non-event. They learned to adjust to their environment.

Self-discipline: A trip like this demands that students learn to control their emotions. Whining, snapping at others, attention-demanding antics or expectations of special treatment are not admired attributes in these circumstances. A new behaviour model was required.

Reflection: Each evening we reflected on the day and what we had learned and how the experiences could be related to situations in everyday life. Topics included: staying positive, caring, appreciation, morality, resilience and respect for the environment. Each person built a bracelet from beads they were awarded each day. Girls wore their bracelets with great pride because each bead was earned for something special that she had achieved or done for the group.

From the students' comments at the end of the camp it was clear that through experiential learning in a safe and controlled environment each had emerged as a stronger, more resilient person. New friendships had formed and each student's sense of independence and confidence had grown.

I hope that when life gets tough for these students, as it invariably will in leadership roles, the girls will think back to the challenges they overcame during the camp and remember the lessons they learned about working their way through adversity.
Caption for photo (attached)

A tarpaulin to keep dry, redefined the meaning of luxury on the St Hilda's leadership camp.

Ben Vining (B Applied Science) is Head of Rowing at St Hilda's School on the Gold Coast, Queensland. His contact is 0403 195 339



Boarding – Where We Live And Learn

Developing A Pastoral Care Programme For Boarding

By Greg Wacker



When I first starting working in boarding back in 1995, I soon realised that my role as a Residential Supervisor was more than just covering my set duties and helping boarders with their homework. It involved assisting each boarder through a journey - one in which I was to play a significant role. It was working in boarding where I first starting hearing about “pastoral care”. Being quite naive at the time, I associated it more with religion, rather than the life experiences and skills so important in boarding. My experience in boarding (in particular my last four years as Head of Boys’ Boarding at The SCOTS PGC College) have reinforced my philosophy of the importance of residential staff, the boarding community, parents and past experiences in boarders becoming life-long learners and achieving their potential.

At the beginning of 2008, I began work on developing a Pastoral Care Programme specifically addressing the needs of boarders. To develop this programme I began with the basics and analysed the primary role of the residential staff. Residential staff adopt the role in “loco parentis” ;striving to replicate the best aspects of care as practised by a loving and supportive family. In a Boarding House setting, not all aspects of family life can be replicated. Although staff will model the family values of belonging, fairness, justice, affection, esteem and respect, they will never replace the levels found in a well functioning family. Where the residential staff member is unable to replicate these values, their main focus must be the welfare of each individual boarder. That is, ensuring the maintenance of a healthy and happy lifestyle as a member of the boarding community.

Best practice for ensuring a healthy and happy lifestyle at my current boarding house, are clearly expressed in the Boarding Mission Statement and aims for our community:

Statement:

“The members of the “Boarding Family” will always strive to support The SCOTS PGC Boarding Mission t and encourage each other in an atmosphere of safety, security, tolerance and respect for all at all times.



The Boys' Boarding House is our home away from home and shall be treated accordingly."

Aims of Boarding:

- To provide a secure, safe, educational environment for each boy so that he may function as a confident individual and develop to his maximum potential.
- To promote sound personal and social values within a cohesive and caring community.
- To provide boarders with support and guidance in matters of spiritual, academic, and personal growth.
- To encourage the student to widen his horizons through engaging in an extensive school programme – both in during and after academic hours.
- To develop leadership skills.
- To build resilience and determination.
- To provide the best possible academic education.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their actions.
- To adopt a set of rules and policies to promote a healthy and happy community.

Although these stand as evidence of our endeavour to ensure that each boarder might "develop their full potential as an individual and a life long learner", I still felt that more could be done in assisting the boarders during their life journey. The development of our Pastoral Care Programme was seen as one way of potentially achieving this outcome.

The SCOTS PGC College Boarding Pastoral Care Programme

The Pastoral Care Programme has been developed using a holistic and year group

specific model. Common 'life skill' dimensions run through all year group programmes and address the care and welfare of all Boarders. Other initiatives address the need for age specific programmes which are more relevant to certain year groups and are designed to meet both their academic and developmental needs.

During the development of the programme content, it was important that boarder input was sort. According to Hamblin (1986)

"A pastoral programme can leave pupils with impression that they are not being respected if activities are imposed on them without explanation and their involvement in the construction of materials is sought"

As a result, boarder input was gained through our Boarding Executive and its subcommittees.

Key Principles of the Programme

The Pastoral Care Programme is underpinned by the four characteristics of lifelong learners as identified in the UNESCO Report (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007) these being:

- Learning to do** (acquiring and applying skills, including life skills)
- Learning to be** (promoting creativity and personal fulfilment)
- Learning to know** (an approach to learning that is flexible, critical and capable)
- Learning to live together** (exercising tolerance, understanding and mutual respect)

Using these four characteristics as the key principles, the following Life Skill Dimensions (LSD) were developed to assist in defining and selecting the elements and resulting

outcomes of the programme

Recognition of Differences

- Cultural differences and tolerance

Self-efficacy

- Goal setting

Self-regulation

- Accountability and decision making

Supportive Environment

- Health care/personal hygiene

Engagement

- CPR and first aid

Safety and Security

- Theft

Self-actualisation

- Peer Support Programme

It is envisaged that through the delivery of programmes associated with these **LSD** there will be a resultant cognitive and physical development of desirable lifelong learning traits. These being (Lillico, 2001, p4):

- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Commitment
- Creativity
- Courage
- Generosity
- Good mental and physical health

Strategies for delivery

The delivery of the programme will be achieved through formal and informal training.

- **Formal** – Those elements of the **LSD** that would have a tangible outcome or are delivered in a formal setting e.g. guest speaker or classroom.
- **Informal** – Those elements of the **LSD** that would need observation, feedback or a change in cognitive responses in order to assess the outcome e.g. the element is part of the daily routine.

Development of the Programmes elements

The following example outlines the delivery for one element of the Pastoral Care Program.

(Each element has been expanded utilising the general template.)



LIFE SKILL DIMENSION – RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENCES

Element – Bullying // Delivery - Formal

BOARDERS LEARN ABOUT	BOARDERS LEARN TO	OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Bullying?• College Bullying Policy• Four C's• Restorative Justice practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The definition of bullying.• The types of bullying.• The short and long term effects of bullying.• Legal issues surrounding bullying• Boarders receive a copy of the College Bullying Policy.• Boarders receive a copy of the Four C's pamphlet.• Define each C.• What is Restorative Justice?• Why use Restorative Justice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boarders are aware that the College has a bullying policy and the content contained in it.• Boarders are aware of legal and psychological implications of bullying.• Boarders can recall the four C's.• Boarders have a working knowledge behind the principles involved in Restorative Justice.

LIFE SKILL DIMENSION – RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENCES

Element – Bullying // Delivery - Informal

BOARDERS EVALUATE & REFLECT ON:	BOARDERS CONSCIOUSLY	DESIRED OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their interpersonal actions towards others throughout their daily routine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display empathy towards another boarder who is being bullied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boarders show mutual respect, care, tolerance and acceptance of all members of the boarding community.

This programme is by no means the definitive answer in addressing the pastoral care needs of boarders in the 21st Century. It has been designed with transition in mind and regular reviews and updates will be carried out. However, I am hopeful that this programme will assist the residential staff in their duties and assist the 'whole' development of each boarder to achieve the academic and personal potential.

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The Role Of *Personality* In A Successful Boarding Experience

By Paul Ginns (University of Sydney),

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



Many factors can contribute to a successful and engaging time at boarding school. Broadly, we can distinguish between *student* factors, such as personality, and *contextual* factors, e.g. peers, the school climate/ethos, and boarding house leadership. In last month's *Lights Out*, we introduced a proposed collaborative project between ABSA and the University of Sydney. This project seeks to understand the effects of boarding school on academic (e.g. motivation, engagement, achievement, academic resilience) and non-academic outcomes (e.g. life satisfaction, positive and negative emotion, self-concept).

In our series of articles we consider the student and contextual factors which form part of the boarding experience. In this article we begin with students themselves, raising the somewhat provocative questions: Does attending boarding school suit the

personality of some young people more than others? Do some personality factors act as buffers against some of the challenges of boarding? What aspects of personality can we emphasise and foster to facilitate the boarding experience?

The 'Big Five' Personality Dimensions

There's now considerable consensus among researchers about the broad structure of personality, with 5 broad, relatively stable dimensions being linked to a variety of academic and non-academic outcomes. These five broad factors are:

Extraversion/Introversion.

Extraverts tend to be outgoing, confident, and interested in people and events in the external world. In contrast, introverts are often focused on their own "inner life", and often prefer their own company. The dimension is captured in descriptors of extraverts as "talkative", "outgoing", and "energetic"

compared to introverts as "quiet", "shy" and "reserved".

Agreeableness.

This dimension has a strong focus on interpersonal relationships, and the extent to which a person feels a need for to be part of a larger community. The dimension is captured in descriptors such as "cooperative", "warm", and "sympathetic" versus "rude", "harsh" and "inconsiderate".

Conscientiousness.

This dimension captures the drive to accomplish goals, and is characterised by the degree of self-discipline, forethought, and carefulness. It is captured in descriptors such as "organised", "systematic", and "neat", versus "disorganised", "inefficient", and "untidy".

Emotional Stability/Neuroticism.

This dimension captures the nature of commonly felt emotions in people's lives. Emotionally stable people are often described as "calm", "poised", and "unenviuous", compared to being "anxious", "tense", and "moody".

Intellect/Openness to Experience.

This dimension focuses on a preference for conventionality versus novelty and complexity in one's intellectual life. It is captured in descriptors such as "creative", "intellectual", and "complex", versus "direct", "practical", and "pragmatic".

How Do The Big Five Dimensions Relate to Education?

The relations of the above personality dimensions to educational outcomes have been investigated in a very broad range of settings. Griffith University academic Arthur Poropat has recently published a major review of the research linking Big Five dimensions and general intelligence to academic performance. Aggregating results



from 80 research reports with over 70,000 participants, his major conclusions were as follows:

1. Overall, academic performance was significantly correlated with Conscientiousness (medium correlation), Agreeableness (small correlation), and Openness to Experience (small correlation).
2. Correlations between Conscientiousness and academic performance appear to be largely independent of general intelligence. That is, across a range of ability levels, more conscientious students learn more effectively than less conscientious students.
3. The pattern of the above correlations changes with age. Correlations of Agreeableness and Openness to Experience with academic performance were substantially higher in Primary school than in Secondary or University/College settings. In contrast, the correlation between Conscientiousness and academic performance was relatively similar across age groups.

In general, then, personality factors are associated with academic outcomes in a variety of ways, across a range of educational contexts. However, at present we know little about how personality factors play out in an important but under-researched context – boarding school.

How Do We Assess Young People's Personality?

There are a wide range of surveys for measuring the Big Five traits, either through self-reports, or through ratings given by someone who knows the person well. The majority of these surveys have been developed for use with adults, raising

questions about their suitability with young people. Recent work by US educational psychologist John Lounsbury and colleagues has provided a comprehensive Big Five personality inventory for adolescents - and which the proposed ABSA/University of Sydney project has been given permission to use. Across eight carefully designed studies, Lounsbury and his team refined the survey to ensure individual personality dimensions were measured validly and correlated Big Five scores against a range of educational outcomes (e.g. grade point average, absences, and behaviour problems).

These results are quite exciting for educational researchers, now allowing them to ask and answer important questions in the educational context that previously were difficult to address. Of particular relevance to our work, it enables us to ask and answer questions in the boarding setting, including questions around the role of personality in shaping students' boarding school experience.

Personality and the Boarding School Setting

While there is a large body of research examining the relations of personality to learning and performance, there have been no systematic investigations of these relations in the boarding context. A student's experience of boarding may depend to a considerable extent on stable personality factors. Based on previous research, some possible scenarios are as follows:

More conscientious boarders may cope with both scholastic and social challenges, as this aspect of their personality gives them the drive to focus on achieving goals regardless of the setting.

All other things being equal, more extraverted and agreeable students may thrive in the boarding context, while more

introverted students may find the context more challenging initially.

These effects may be influenced by the climate of the boarding house, with more supportive and nurturing environments acting as a buffer for more introverted students.

The effect of personality on academic outcomes may depend on the "fit" between the academic culture of the school (or house) and the student. For instance, boarders who are open to experience may be more challenged in boarding settings which are relatively controlling and do not focus on intellectual or personal discovery.

As the above scenarios suggest, the impacts of personality and the boarding setting on educational processes and outcomes are vital to understand if we are to optimise students' boarding experience. The proposed study will thus allow us to "tease out" how the personality of the student relates to academic and non-academic outcomes, in boarding and non-boarding settings. This will provide educators in both settings with valuable knowledge for supporting the broad range of students in their charge.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest are still being sought from schools (comprising boarding students) who wish to be part of this research project. Please contact Brad Papworth for further details: b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au or (02) 9683 8490.

Conference Registration



International Boys' Schools Coalition and Shore School **BOYS AT RISK CONFERENCE**

Sunday 25th October & Monday 26th October, 2009

At: Shore School, 1 Blue Street, North Sydney

TO REGISTER AS A DELEGATE TO THE IBSC/SHORE BOYS AT RISK CONFERENCE

PLEASE APPLY THROUGH THE TRYBOOKING WEBSITE :

<http://www.trybooking.com/YN>

If you are unable to register your attendance by this method please contact

David Anderson danderso@shore.nsw.edu.au

Registration at Shore School - 1.00 pm on 25th October, 2009

The Conference will be opened by Professor Gordon Parker. Gordon Parker is a Professor of Psychiatry at the University of New South Wales and was instrumental in establishing the Black Dog Institute which leads research into mood disorders in Australia. Other presentations include:

- Managing suicidal behaviour in schools
- School management of self harm and suicidal behaviour
- Strategic classroom management of boys with mental health problems
- Mind Matters - The Commonwealth Government's response to mental health in schools
- Mental health in primary aged boys
- The unique mental health challenges of boys in rural and regional areas



Towards the Light

by Daniel Kuhn



As a boy reading Roald Dahl's *Boy*, I took great pleasure in Dahl's daily beatings and frosty bog-warming sessions; indeed, whilst enjoying another's pain is certainly no claim to fame, his boarding hell was my hobby. Surely, I thought, boarding could not have been that bad, even in the dark ages of the early twentieth century. My conversations, though, with parents, students and staff who have experienced boarding in the last fifty years have served to highlight the reality of Dahl's pain. Our boarding journey has taken us from corporal punishment to pastoral care concerns; from fagging to anti-bullying policies and from once-a-week letters home to instant connection. I often ask, where to from here?

Boarding's somewhat dark and draconian past, whilst providing many 'when I was a boy' tales, is being replaced by ideals such as national standards, duty of care courses and, dare I say it, this magazine. I read the previous edition with interest, wishing for a Dr Who experience to gauge Dahl's supervisors' reactions as they read such articles as human flourishing, positive psychology and the law and your school.

Are you new to boarding and still getting used to the phone ringing off the hook? Have you been in boarding long enough to have blurred vision when trying to recall the last public

holiday that was actually a holiday? If you answered yes to either of these questions then read on - this column is for you!

As a boy, to me, Dahl was as prehistoric as dinosaurs and, although Mr Pterodactyl and his mates have since vacated planet Earth, some Jurassic boarding traditions have lingered a little longer than old T-Rex: I cringe when I hear the 'ad break activist' espousing the theory that boarding supervision can be done during the ad breaks on TV; I weep for the welfare of the boy whose mentor champions physicality over discussion. As an idealist this column is my contribution to help ABSA fast track the extinction of prehistoric boarding traditions, still struggling to survive. The genesis of this column was a 95km hike on Fraser Island over the holidays; whilst hiking and pondering the valuable information gleaned from the small group discussions at the ABSA Conference last September the regular column in *Lights Out* was formed. Voila! Here it is!

It is my aim to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the nineteen-year-old, i-phone addicted, generation Y supervisor and the decrepit dinosaur in the boarding community. As a fully paid member of Generation X (I made it by a matter of months!) I feel well qualified to provide the portal between the generations. This quarterly feature will promote the positive boarding practices in which we engage on a daily basis. As such, this column will be an extension of the small group sessions that many enjoyed in Canberra. Fresh perspectives are the goal, ultimately helping us to provide better experiences for those in our care as we move boarding into the 21st Century.

In this column we will discuss, debate and deliberate those ground breaking questions such as:

- **How to tempt the teenage palate? How have you made boarding food attractive in your school?**
- **Is vertical better than horizontal?**
- **How can we attract, and even better, keep, good residential staff?**

- **Must we embrace mobiles and other technologies?**

You, my friends, have the answers to these questions and more, as, tied up in your collective experiences, you have knowledge and wisdom that can unlock the mysteries of boarding for all. My proposal is thus: I will present a question in each issue of *Lights Out* for your consideration and ask that you submit your response via email. Your insights will be presented in the next edition. Controversial they may be but all views are welcome; please email any thoughts, experiences or suggestions to drdrkuhn@gmail.com

I am excited to see boarding progress and prosper in the 21st century. If this column can help to enlighten and inform then I will feel content at the mission accomplished.

September Question

Boarding Families: Friend or Foe? What does your school do well to promote a family-friendly environment within your boarding community?

Share your experiences which have been a success in bringing families from both boarding staff and boarding students together. Often spouses, children and pets are overlooked for the valuable assets that they are in boarding communities. Tell the world what has worked for you!

It may be the fact that families of staff eat in the dining hall on a regular basis or that a weekly BBQ is shared by one and all. Do you have sporting or cultural activities to which all are invited? Perhaps families stay in the boarding house with their child prior to the New Year beginning? You are living these experiences; please share them with others. Email all responses to drdrkuhn@gmail.com prior to July 20.

Daniel Kuhn is Head of Luck House at The Rockhampton Grammar School in Queensland

Coming Events

Australia

Various Dates through 2009

(dates to be advised)

ABSA State based workshops run by

Michael Carr-Gregg

Melbourne – Sunday August 16 and

Monday August 17

ABSA Leadership Program for Leaders of Residential Schools details to be released shortly

UK

13 – 15 July 2009

Annual conference for Matrons and Medical Staff

University of Leicester

USA

28 – 30 June 2009

TABS Risk Management Seminar
Wilmington, Delaware

20 - 23 July 2009

TABS 2009 Residential Life Workshop
Location: Boston University,
Boston, Massachusetts

20 - 23 July 2009

TABS 2009 Admission Academy
Location: Boston University,
Boston, Massachusetts

2 – 5 December 2009

TABS Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois

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 500 words) and send us some high resolution photos.

Send all files to; lightsout@boarding.org.au by the first week in May.

... From page 3

I can understand a student's fascination with pornography. Students should be great admirers of God's creation, particularly when it is displayed attractively in human form. To appreciate beauty in its many guises is one of the great privileges of life.

It needs to be noted that girls as well as boys are maturing earlier and marrying later. Most boys develop the ability to father children in their early teens, yet the average age of marriage for an Australian man in 2008 was 31 years. The period between represents the need for a lot of cold showers for both sexes.

To understand a fascination with pornography is one thing; to condone it is another. Viewing pornography is wrong. Making pornography available to peers is very wrong. Providing pornography to those who are much younger is appalling.

Peculiar cultures can develop in a boarding school. Secret rituals and ancient practices can evolve that include the handing on by one generation of students their illicit contraband and questionable behaviours to the next generation. This is often excused as part of the essential education process and induction into the world. It should not be excused for it is corruption.

It is important to warn students that such behaviour, including having pornography should not be tolerated in our boarding institutions because:

- Some pornography is exploitative and demeaning.
- Pornography can encourage unhealthy fantasies associated with predatory power and dominance.
- Boys and girls suffer enough sexual tension in their lives without this being added to in an irresponsible manner.
- An unhealthy preoccupation with lust may hinder a healthy appreciation of love.
- Pornography can encourage promiscuity in some, which results in a growth in physical intimacy not matched by a growth in social maturity.
- Unrealistic expectations may develop as to what is expected in lovemaking which may leave students of either sex frightened and feeling inadequate.

It is also important to be aware of just how easy pornography is to access and just how strong the trade is in pornography. The CD disc you see on the desk marked "music" may contain hard-core porn. Boarding staff need to discuss this matter with their students and to work through their own codes of behaviour in conjunction with the home.

Running a boarding house is not getting any easier, but the rewards in nurturing the next generation are significant – and it is a generation who are "digital natives" who are all too prone to digital crime.

Dr Tim Hawkes
ABSA Chairman

Our apologies to Dr Tim Sharp for incorrectly attributing his article entitled 'Happiness Is Not Just Feeling Good, Its Doing Good' to our chairman, Dr Tim Hawkes. This error occurred in the production process.



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