

# Lights Out

Vol. 14 | Issue 3 | Oct 2021

Toto the Wellbeing Dog,  
*10 Years of Boarding*

The Invisibles  
*of Youth  
and Money*



Age and Experience  
*in Boarding*

The Right Way  
*to be Tough*



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## ON THE COVER

St Peters Lutheran College, Brisbane, boarders on the balconies of Ross Roy.

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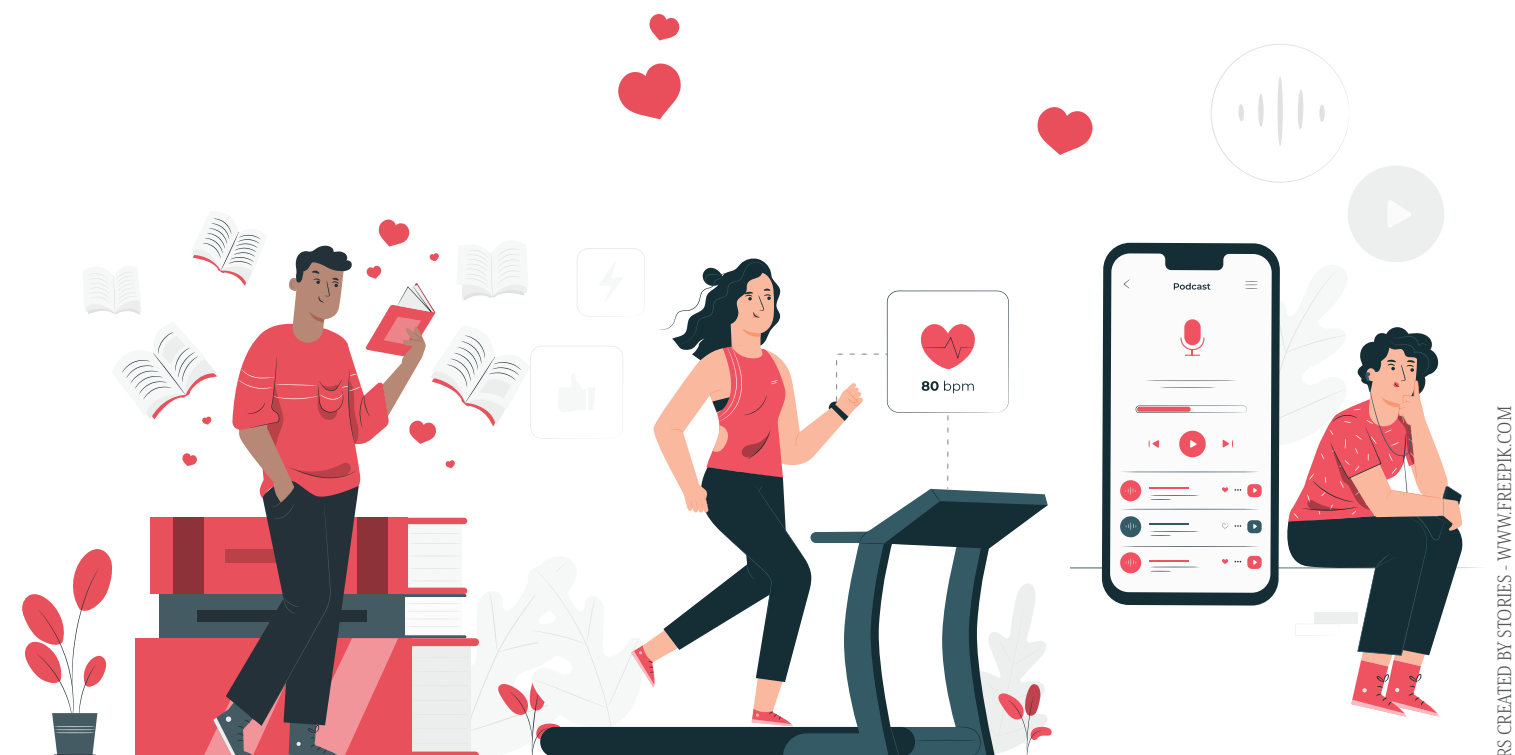
# Do You Look After Yourself?

Over the past few years it has become increasingly clear to me that the role of being leader of the boarding community, or even a staff member in a boarding house, is becoming more and more immense and this has never been more obvious than during 2020 and 2021 with the added pressures of dealing with the impacts of Covid-19 in boarding houses.

## AUTHOR:

Richard Stokes  
Chief Executive Officer  
ABSA

Juggling sudden lockdown, border closures, detailed and challenging regulations written by bureaucrats who have never been in a boarding house, anxious parents and students, vaccination and on-line learning have all impacted on the role a great deal. And guess who is usually pushed to the side - YOU! So, I thought I'd take this opportunity to help you think about a re-set - a chance to look at what you can do for yourself so that you can continue with the huge role of looking after your boarders.



## READING

I know many people find it difficult to make time to read, but I can't encourage you enough to set aside the time to get lost in a book. Many years ago I undertook the 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People', course, and habit number seven, Sharpen the Saw, included one of my great loves - reading. However, Stephen Covey talks of only reading non-fiction books which will improve your knowledge, and I can't object enough to this. Certainly, reading non-fiction is great - my last two non-fiction books were Norman Swan's new book 'So You Think You Know What's Good For You' and Chris Thurber's new book 'The Unlikely Art of Parental Pressure' (and I'd recommend them both to you). However, it is with fiction that you can get lost and enjoy stretching your imagination. Reading books like 'Boy Swallows Universe' and 'All The Shimmering Skies' both by Trent Dalton, 'The Dry' and 'The Survivors' by Jane Harper, and 'The Dictionary of Lost Words' by Pip Williams (can you tell I love Australian authors!) and 'Where the Crawdads Sing' by Delia Owens (one of my all time favourites) just to name a few. Finding time every day to get lost in words is good for the brain, and for the body - so try it!

## EXERCISING

So many boarding staff forget the role exercise plays in a healthy life. We are often so busy looking after other people we forget to look after ourselves, and this was never more evident to me than over the last two years here in the ABSA office. So I took the time to do two things - firstly I left my car at work and walked to and from home - a distance of between 2.5km and 3.5km depending on which path, and have discovered the delight of time to myself with no-one interrupting. It gives me time to plan the day, to let go of the tough issues, and above all, to think about the things I love. I have discovered how beautiful the sunset can be, how amazing it is to watch the full moon rise, how very few days it actually rains first and last thing of the day (I have only been caught twice). Try to find time to walk - it is good for the heart and good for the mind. Secondly, we have brought in a Personal Trainer two afternoons a week (and yes, I walk home after the session too). Mat is one of my ex-students, is qualified and enjoys hearing us complain about how sore he made us from the last session. Yes, sometimes I go back to my desk afterwards to finish off what didn't get done before he arrived, but most often I have enjoyed the full-bore way to end a day.

## LISTENING

I must admit that pre-Covid I had never listened to a podcast, even though my two sons kept telling me about great things to listen to. Therefore, I decided to use the time walking to listen to things for me, speakers who would improve my life in some sort of way. I have laughed and cried through some of the interviews on 'The Howie Games' (his recent chat with Andrew Gaze post the Olympics is priceless) and have loved improving my basketball and business knowledge on 'The Old Man and the Three' by JJ Reddick with interviews of many NBA players as well as hearing from Bob Iger the Executive Chairmen of the Walt Disney Company - as an example. I am hoping many of you subscribe to 'On Duty' and 'Study Time', the ABSA podcasts (I won't mention my favourite interviews, but wow - they have been fun to listen to). So find your thing in podcast world - my wife Karen enjoys 'Conversations' by Richard Fidler, there is a great one called 'You're Wrong About' - you name it, there is a podcast for every interest.

These are just three ways I have discovered to 'Look After Myself'. What can you do for yourself? The first step is to try something, and make time for it - I challenge you to, as you will find you do an even better job of looking after your boarders once you look after yourself. ■



# When Imaginary Lines *Aren't So Fine*



Listen to me. Imagine you are doing the dishes and in the distance you see the trees, but you know that you must never pass the trees, otherwise you are entering forbidden land.

AUTHOR:  
Isabella Hawkins  
Boarder  
Wilderness School

You feel like a prisoner. Despite there being no COVID-19 cases found anywhere near you, you are treated like someone who has it. Even though you do everything past the trees including your shopping and work, you have been given this label. This label that defines you. This label that you don't deserve. This label is known as being Victorian.

You have done nothing wrong. You keep your distance. You follow the guidelines. You don't want to hurt anyone, yet you have somehow committed a crime. When you hear the news that from tomorrow you will be able to pass the trees for essential services you feel a sense of excitement, but as you think about it more and more you get struck by a sense of guilt. Despite you not doing anything wrong, the people who live past the trees, and the ones that are in charge of the trees, have made you feel like an imposter. It is not right that you are experiencing this feeling. It needs to stop. The borders need to be opened.

It's the next day and you are just past the trees. You are stopped and must show

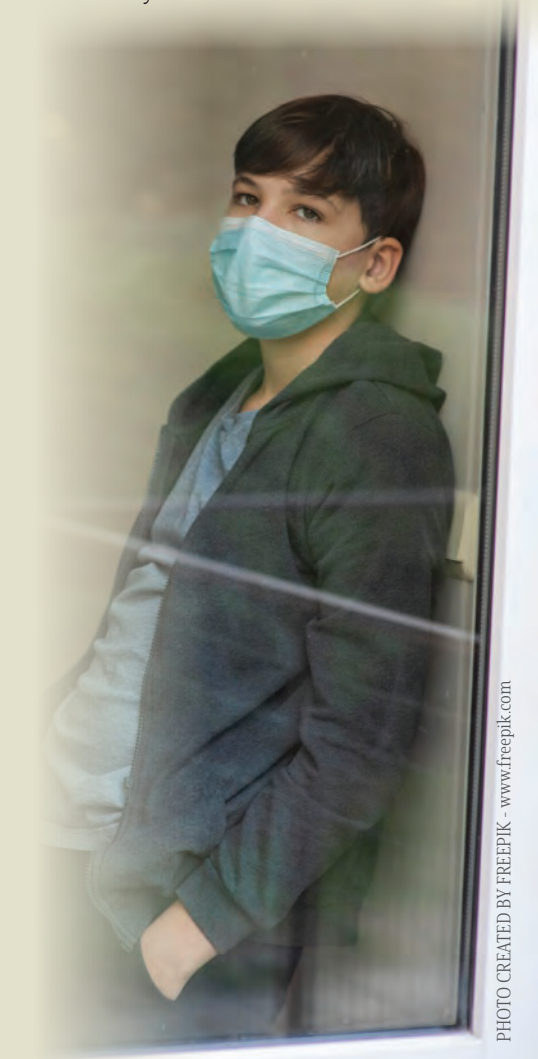
your pass and drivers licence. The Police Officer tells you that when you arrive in town you must go and have a COVID-19 test. Why is this necessary? You can see the trees from your house yet apparently you live in a hotspot.

You are locked away from your family. Your children are at boarding school far past the trees. You miss them. You try to get a pass to see them, but you are only allowed to be 70km past the trees. This meaningless number has made you feel upset for months. You've had 16 tests but apparently this isn't enough.

A few months into the line past the trees being closed an announcement gets made that they will be letting people from New Zealand in. A place that has COVID-19 cases yet there are none near you. You are still treated as a prisoner. It's as if the decision to keep the borders shut is no longer for health reasons, instead it's all about politics.

The next day you send an email asking to see your children, but you receive no response. The leaders past the trees don't care how you are feeling. The Chief Health Officer of the trees Professor Spurrier says "we have to learn to live with this virus" but how is she doing this? This sense of frustration, sadness, and guilt is something one should never have to experience. No one should be separated from their loved ones. So, I ask

you leaders of the trees, stop prioritising your egos over the health and wellbeing of others, especially those who are so called "dirty Victorians". ■



## The Border



The nature of this virus is unpredictable and unforeseeable. Googling "NSW Corona Virus update" has become a part of my daily routine, refreshing the page every few hours and watching with intent as numbers continue to upsurge. I find myself reaching the end of an article and just longing for some kind of reassurance, some kind of hope. So far, I've been bitterly disappointed and as the number of COVID-19 cases increase each day, the days since I've seen my family also increase.

AUTHOR:  
Lara Brown  
Boarder  
Somerville House

American writer H.P. Lovecraft once said that "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown".

Usually, when boarding is tough, I know that in just a few short weeks, Mum and Dad will be waiting out the front, ready to drive me home for holidays. But not this year. I have come to realise that there is a difference between simply not going home for a while and physically not being allowed to go home, or even receiving some indication which may provide some skerrick of hope as to when I will be able to return home.

Living in a small town just off the coast of Northern NSW, a mere four hours' drive from Brisbane, I find it difficult to fathom how my parents and home can be separated from me by just a border on a map. Not being able to share the final events of year 12 with my parents has been what has stuck with me during this. Milestone events, such as my 18th birthday, Mother/Daughter dinners, and Father/Daughter dances are just another day or event that I'd rather not go to if I can't have my parents

by my side. Walking past the girls' rooms in the boarding house and seeing them packing their bags, ready to go home, is what really gets me down. Usually, I'm the first to pack up, I just can't help it as I'm always so excited to head home. I even live out of my suitcase for the last two weeks of school. But this time, I'm just two days away from finishing my final full term of school ever, and I haven't packed a thing.

I'm so grateful for my boarding community who strive to bring comfort to myself and the other girls who have been away from their families for months. But boarders need their families and their families need them. There shouldn't be any borders for boarders. It seems pretty far-fetched right now, but my one wish is that when I walk

across the stage and receive my Certificate of Completion of Year 12, I will be able to look out into the overwhelming sea of families, and spot mine. ■



LARA AND HER FRIENDS



LARA WITH HER DAD



# Is a Communications Crisis Really that Unexpected?

In our last article (June 2021 edition) we looked at the fundamental elements of crisis communications planning, recognising that an effective crisis communications plan needs to be an essential part of day-to-day business for any school.

AUTHOR:  
Julian Brophy,  
Perception Partners

Whilst COVID-19 has meant we are all more aware of the crisis potential, the reality is that even in a post pandemic future (still it seems a very long way ahead), being ready for the unexpected is best approached as a core business activity.

Underpinning effective preparedness for unforeseen events that can quickly escalate into communication issues for a school's stakeholders – or even seep out into the public domain through social media or mainstream media reporting – is proactive planning and preparation.

One of the single biggest misconceptions that many people have is that a communications crisis comes without warning, is somehow unexpected and couldn't be predicted.

Whilst this might be the case in regards an accident or a global pandemic like the one we are enduring now, more often than not the underlying issue that ultimately finds its way into the public domain via the front page of the local news, is not actually a surprise for the organisation involved.

In more than 30 years' experience as a journalist and communications consultant, I can fairly say that the majority of crisis communications issues I have been asked to advise on have their origins in matters that were already well known to

the organisation involved and usually for some time.

## So, does knowing ahead of time make a difference when it comes to crisis communications?

From my perspective – absolutely. Knowing the issues that could come to the fore at any time makes a world of difference and most importantly means you and your organisation have many more options available to you in managing a contentious issue.

Think about how much easier it is to respond either to your internal stakeholders such as parents, students, staff or alumni, or in the event that the issue breaks into the public domain, to the media, if you already have prepared and ready to go your messaging, statements and responses.

If you know about a contentious matter before it becomes a communication issue, that means you critically have the time to prepare what your response is likely to be, whether it is a letter to your school community, a public statement for the website, a media release, or a social media post on one of your channels.

Time means you can also consider what the implications are of the issue and how best you can address those proactively. In considering what the implications are, you can also spend time identifying which of your stakeholders will be most affected by the issue – for example, it might be an issue that only affects staff, or it might only affect parents and guardians or perhaps

only alumni. Identifying which stakeholders are affected means you can then determine what messaging is required to address their concerns as well as the most effective communication tool to reach them.

It may be that the issue also will affect external stakeholders, such as school regulators, local representatives, government agencies, other schools, and associations – by having time on your side that means you can identify who is affected and how to address their concerns on the front foot, this ensuring their confidence in your organisation remains high.

Time also provides you and your school the opportunity to mitigate any reputational damage that a potentially contentious issue might inflict.

In my experience it is often how an organisation responds – and how that response is judged externally – which determines how well an organisation will weather reputational damage even if the issue at hand is damaging in and of itself.

Being transparent, open and accountable can all shape the opinion of both internal and external stakeholders in a positive way, even if sharing bad news.

By having time on your side, you can carefully consider how best to respond without rushing to meet a deadline and it also means you have the opportunity to consider the many different options at your disposal to manage the communications to both your internal and external audiences.

What do I mean by that? Well for example, you hold control over the timing of the release of news which in the event of it being very bad news, can be very useful.

It also means you have time to consider how to frame the messages around the issue, which again is very helpful if the issue is likely to be bad news for your school community and potentially a matter of interest to media.

Knowing ahead of time provides a huge number of options but they are only there for you to use if you take proactive steps to identify issues early and keep a watching brief on potentially new issues that will emerge from time to time.

This is why we recommend to our clients to undertake an 'Issue

Audit' on a regular basis – at least half yearly – as part of their everyday communications planning and reputation management programs.

## So, what's an Issue Audit?

In an issue audit we look at an institution's current operating environment, its planning for the future, the regulatory environment and the potential 'left field events' that could all create a communications event such as an accident involving a student, bullying or a professional issue with a staff member.

Also have a look for the problems that are already there and think about them in a communications' context – are they matters that affect your students, staff, parents, the community – are they matters that could end in the media and public domain?

For example, are you raising boarding fees in the next six months, are you receiving government funding, are your financial reports about to be published showing a decline in revenue or are you making changes to school structure or governance?

Take the time to do an 'Issues Audit' and detail all the known and the potential contentious issues that you can and once you have your issues listed, then you can start thinking about how you might respond.

The aim is not to have answers for everything but rather to understand the landscape of what might or could occur and plan a proactive communications response around that.

By taking the time to do an 'Issue Audit', organisations make sure that they have prepared communication responses for their internal and external stakeholders on contentious issues that could erupt without warning.

The benefit is that you are not trying to do this in the middle of a crisis – which is something you really want to avoid at all costs. ■





# Sleep and Boarding

AUTHOR:  
Alex Reardon  
Boarding Supervisor  
Westminster School

## Why is sleep important?

Students, boarding directors, teachers and parents alike; what is your most important goal for the remainder of the year? Do you want to:

- Improve grades and academic performance?
- Build friendships and social connections?
- Improve mental health and wellbeing?

Sleep is a fundamental pillar of our psychological and physical wellbeing. As individuals, and as members of a boarding community, many of the things we wish to achieve would be aided by attaining greater sleep, or promoting better sleep in our students respectively.

## Why do adolescents struggle to get enough sleep?

Adolescents specifically struggle to attain sufficient sleep for two reasons: Biologically, a teenagers 'body clock', is naturally delayed, and as a result, they have a preference for evenings, while still waking for school in the morning. Socially, adolescence is a time of new academic, extracurricular, activities, and new relationships and employment. These all disrupt and displace sleep. As students enter their final years of schooling, they have commitments before school, activities after, and social engagements after that! Finally, when students are ready for bed, these novel experiences are exciting, stressful, or worrisome... it's too hard to sleep!

Unfortunately, despite teenagers gaining less sleep than their younger counterparts, their actual "sleep need" remains the same. Guidelines from the Australian Sleep Health Foundation suggest 8-10 hours is required for ideal functioning.

## What is different about sleeping in boarding?

We all know that living in boarding is really different to the experiences of typical day students! Students are far-from-home, and surrounded by peers! How do you think boarders sleep at night?

Boarders are actually sleeping really well! We found that boarders were able to attain an average of 40 minutes more sleep than their day student peers!

When we asked boarders about the boarding environment, two key takeaways emerged:

**Routine:** In boarding, there is an abundance of routine. Sport, dinner, study and socialising are all consistently timed. In particular, bed-time and wake-time are highly structured and controlled. This was beneficial to achieving adequate sleep.

**Technology policies:** Students were expected to leave phones on desks or

in kitchens. Students suggested these improved their sleep, and that they supported this policy. Interestingly, they also said that would not voluntarily put their phones down early, suggesting that this is an important area for boarding staff to be aware of.

## So, what does this mean for boarding houses?

Boarding may be the perfect place for sleep! We have good routine, staff promoting good decision making, and expectations around technology use. As boarding staff, we need to leverage these inherent characteristics to promote good sleep practices in our students. What does a good sleeping environment look like?

## Keys to getting good sleep!

1. Aim to have a consistent bed-time and wake-time everyday... including weekends. This helps align your body clocks to be sleepy during the night, and active during the day!
2. Minimise technology before bed, and once in bed—all technology should be away.
3. Exercise during the day. Expending energy is great for health, and also promotes a restful night!

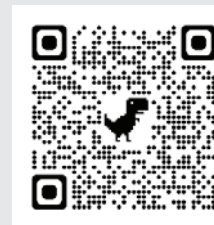
4. Avoid caffeine, soft drinks, and large meals before bed: Don't fire up your metabolism right before bed.
5. Have a dark, quiet, and cool (16-18 degrees) bedroom.

Boarding houses are particularly suited to promoting good sleep habits, which may improve the life-long sleeping routines of boarders even after they leave school. This is a unique opportunity to harness routine to promote wellbeing! ■

## Resources

Creating a sleep-friendly environment is vital to improving adolescents' wellbeing, and may also assist in achieving the other goals we all hope to achieve ourselves and with our boarding community. While we have seen that boarding may be a good place to sleep, below are links to resources which are great for kickstarting a conversation about sleep's importance:

Alex Reardon studies psychology, and in particular adolescent sleep and wellbeing at the University of South Australia. He is also a boarding supervisor at Westminster School, Adelaide. He is passionate about improving adolescent mental health through promoting good sleep environments, and is supervised by Professor Kurt Lushington and Dr Alex Agostini. To contact Alex about his research, or the implications for boarding, email [reaaj005@mymail.unisa.edu.au](mailto:reaaj005@mymail.unisa.edu.au).



Headspace Information Sheet

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Factsheets/HSP225-Sleep-Fact-Sheet-DP3.pdf>



Matt Walker TED Talk:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/matt\\_walker\\_6\\_tips\\_for\\_better\\_sleep?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_walker_6_tips_for_better_sleep?language=en)

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# Boarding Staff Training- *An Essential Risk Control*

A recent School Governance survey discovered that most schools see Professional Development (PD) as a valuable way to provide staff development and better teaching delivery. They conduct PD regularly throughout the year, with slightly more PD conducted in Term 1.

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CompliSpace

The survey also highlighted several other matters including:

- COVID-19 lockdowns have caused a major shift away from face-to-face PD and towards online delivery.
- COVID-19 lockdowns have significantly changed schools’ choices of PD content, with most schools now seeking content about online learning.
- More than half of schools feel only “somewhat prepared” or “not prepared” to deliver PD online/remotely.
- Whether they are ready for it or not, many schools see online PD as a positive opportunity.
- Schools’ PD budgets are either remaining the same or decreasing.
- About half of schools subsidise PD for teacher registration. Most of those that do subsidise it are spending \$400-1000 per staff member per year, and many are spending \$1000+.
- Most (but not all) schools keep track of PD.
- Responsibility for managing PD is often shared and it is not always clear who has primary responsibility.
- There is no single, commonly-used system for recording PD completion

- and managing PD data.
- The most challenging aspects of organising PD are budget and managing staff replacements.

Sadly, anecdotal evidence indicates that the provision of PD for staff in boarding facilities is far less than for teaching staff, yet these supervisors are responsible for the boarders for the other 18 hours of the day.

In today’s boarding communities, and now more than ever, boarding staff need to be well-informed and have a deep understanding of how regulatory requirements and school policies impact on how they manage risks and how they care for the boarders. Boarding facilities continue to become more complex, and the demands of the job continue to increase. Boarding staff need to have increasing skills sets, through training, to respond to these complexities within the boarding environment. These issues include increased complexity in:

- the needs of adolescents, including mental health issues, the impact of social media and technology, increased socio-economic and cultural diversity, and physical health issues such as obesity and allergies
- the needs and expectations of parents, including changes in parent/child relationships, parenting styles, and family structure, and increased or decreased parental involvement and engagement.

If training is going to be impactful,

schools need to better understand what their boarding staff really need to know, and they need to allocate a suitable budget to allow for this training to take place. All boarding schools will tell you that training is an essential part of inducting boarding staff on the requirements of their roles, and for ensuring that these staff continue to grow and develop. But are they regularly presented with the things that the boarding staff need to know, at the right time, and in the right format, to ensure that they can learn and support and engage with the school’s culture?

## POLICY TO CULTURE-WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

You may have heard the phrase ‘policy to culture’ but what exactly does it mean? All schools, not just boarding schools, have policies and procedures in place to manage risk. And for policies and procedures to effectively manage risk, they ultimately must create desired behavioural outcomes or, put another way, affect the culture of the organisation.

Unfortunately, some boarding schools (and many day schools) take the view that all they need to be compliant is to publish a compliant policy. But, of course, just publishing a policy does not achieve compliance. To achieve compliance, a policy needs to create desired behavioural outcomes, to influence the cultural practices and behaviours of the boarding school. To have this effect, much more

is required than simply having a policy.

Policies need to be put into practice by the staff. Policies need to be understood, applied and reviewed, to ensure that they are effective in controlling the associated risks. However, it is often the ‘understood’ component that boarding schools, and many day schools, do not do well.

In order to understand the requirements of a policy, staff must be trained in how to use the policy and the procedures effectively. They must understand the required behaviours that the boarding school requires of its supervisory staff and they must apply these behaviours in their day-to-day duty of care of the boarders.

Basically, to make the words on the page move across to become part of the culture of the boarding school, staff need to be trained in how to implement the policy and know that they are expected to follow the policy in how they act.

## WHAT TRAINING IS REQUIRED AS EFFECTIVE CONTROLS?

So, what is worse – not having a policy or having a policy and not training staff in relation to the policy? It is not always well understood that schools need a wide range of PD to support their policies and meet the requirements for legal and regulatory compliance. Some of the training requirements for school boarding staff are:

- induction of staff including replacement supervisors, casual staff, volunteers and contractors
- legal and regulatory compliance training (including in key areas such as privacy, workplace safety and child protection)
- school values and ethos (including codes of conduct)
- operations training (including boarding facility supervision and excursion management)
- student health, welfare and safety (including anaphylaxis and general first aid training)
- human resources (anti-discrimination, anti-bullying and harassment and internal grievances)
- staff wellbeing and development.

While not all schools may see the need to train their boarding staff in all these areas, it is worth considering the legal liability issues that may arise where a school has a significant policy area such as health and safety but fails to train its boarding staff in relation to it or where a school has specific policies on safe excursion management but fails to train the boarding supervisors in relation to these policies.

If something goes wrong, there is potential for boarder or staff injury or worse, and this could result in serious reputational damage in addition to legal liability. Schools should also consider that many organisations are spending considerable sums of money on staff training in all the areas mentioned in the list above and consider the training essential to maintaining organisational culture, compliance and the overall reduction of risk.

Here’s some more details about some of the key subject areas applicable to

boarding schools.

## Health and Safety Training

This is a requirement under health and safety legislation. Health and safety requirements in every State and Territory require organisations to train staff in how to maintain a safe work environment. There is a duty to protect boarding staff and boarders from workplace hazards. One of the primary methods of protection is training in relation to safe work practices.

## Child Safe/Protection Training

This is a requirement of state and territory education regulatory bodies and a requirement of child protection legislation. In addition, Principle 7 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations states:

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

This includes the following listed indicators as evidence that Principle 7 is being upheld:

- The organisation provides regular opportunities to educate and train staff on child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and evidence-based practice.
- Staff and volunteers receive training in the rights of children and young people in relation to records being created about children and young people and their use.

Clearly Principle 7 envisages ongoing child safe training not once-a-year training, and not just training that provides an overview of ‘our child protection policies’



but something that looks more deeply into issues such as factors that influence the development of a child safe organisational culture.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are mandatory or soon to become mandatory in some jurisdictions with the other jurisdictions likely to follow over the next couple of years. In any event, they represent best practice.

Excursion Safety Training

In a recent CompliSpace Webinar survey, the presenters noted that that 80 per cent of staff in schools receive no excursion management or excursion safety training. Unfortunately, many boarding schools conduct excursions where there is a lack of a policy framework for the supervisors to follow on how to conduct the excursion and activity in a safe manner. If there is no policy, there can be no training in relation to the policy.

Privacy Training

Privacy law compliance does not operate in a vacuum and compliance under the privacy laws requires a lot more than simply publishing a ‘privacy policy’ on your boarding school’s public website or putting a privacy collection notice on a form. As part of its risk management procedures, boarding schools should ensure that all staff receive training about their privacy obligations and the boarding school’s expectations with respect to the management of personal information.

OTHER ISSUES TO CONTEMPLATE

Poor Training Records

A survey of schools in School Governance found that only 50 per cent of schools maintain all staff training records centrally. Of the others, some records are kept centrally, and others are kept by staff. Where the school does keep records of staff training, over 50 per cent used multiple systems within the one school. Poor boarding supervisor training records are a significant risk to a school.

The Need for Online Training Not

Just Face-to-Face

During the recent COVID-19 periods of shutdown, schools have needed to develop their own PD or find quality online PD for their staff. The initial focus was on PD related to the working from home and online learning environments. ABSA has helped to fill the void in this PD space by offering a plethora of quality online learning opportunities for boarding staff including their valuable ‘certificate’ and duty of care courses. Many boarding schools are seeing the benefits of providing online PD both in terms of cost savings as well as receiving a positive response from their boarding supervisors and other staff in respect of the convenience of online learning, particularly where it is self-paced.

Boarding Staff Want PD, Boarding Schools Want PD – Online and Face-to-Face

Surveys indicate that all staff, not just boarding staff, want good quality PD that helps them to do their job better. They see substantial value in the PD that they receive particularly regarding meeting accreditation requirements, improving their own duty of care standards and contributing to their own wellbeing. Good quality PD also has a positive impact on assisting senior boarding supervisors to develop junior supervisors and their decision to ‘stay’ at the school where they currently care for the boarders.

Boarding schools want their boarding staff to be trained in compliance, they want staff to receive training that adds value to the boarding facility, develops expertise, makes the boarding houses safer for everyone and reduces risk.

Both schools and their staff want online as well as face-to-face training. Face-to-face training will continue to be relevant for many reasons including where demonstrations are required and practical skills need to be developed and for the benefits of networking and workshopping with colleagues.

Online training is great for staff convenience, the potential for an increased variety of courses that are available and enabling self-paced learning. Online learning also reduces the substantial costs of having

staff offsite as staff absences often need to be covered by a casual staff member.

So, will boarding schools increase both the offerings of PD for their supervisors and other staff and ensure that their PD budgets allow for valid, good quality and effective training for the people who care for the boarders for 18 hours or more each day? ■

Craig D’cruz Principal Consultant and Sector Lead, Education and Jonathan Oliver Principal Consultant, Risk and Compliance

Jonathan Oliver  
Jonathan is a Principal Consultant working with CompliSpace education clients in the areas of risk and compliance. He has more than 10 years’ experience in the school sector as a teacher, compliance and legal adviser and more recently as a business manager. Jonathan has been a solicitor for nearly 30 years and has worked in both private practice and community legal centres. Jonathan is a regular presenter on behalf of CompliSpace on issues relating to risk, compliance and school governance.

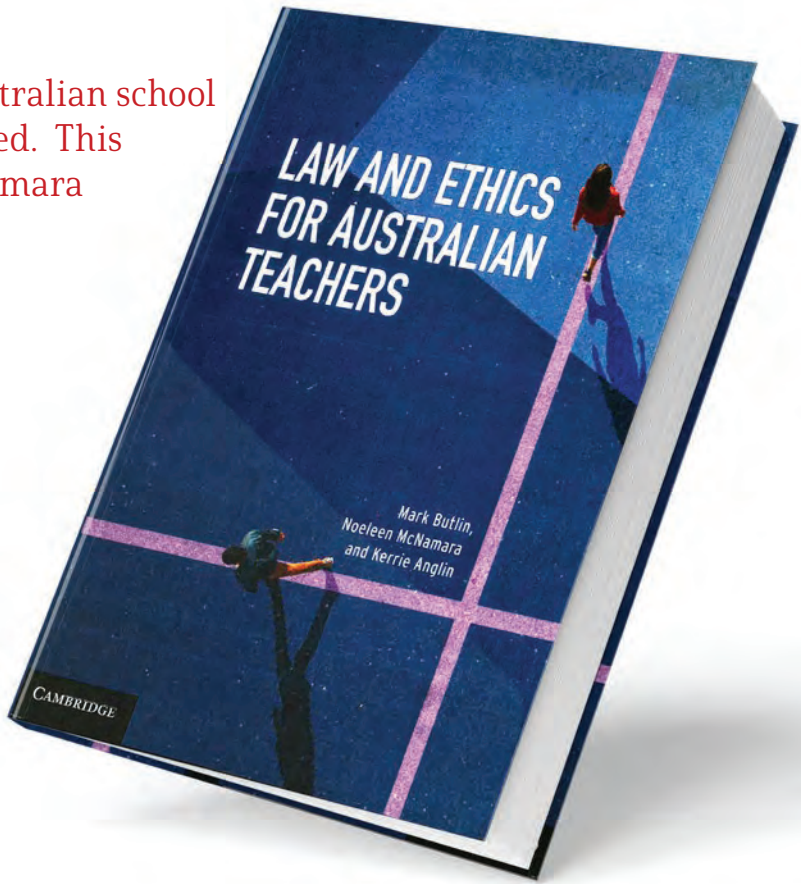
Craig D’cruz  
With 38 years of educational experience, Craig provides direction on education matters including new products, module content and training. Previously Craig held the roles of Industrial Officer at the Association of Independent Schools of WA, was a principal of a K-12 non-government school, deputy principal of a systemic school and has had teaching and leadership experience in both the independent and Catholic school sectors. Craig is a board member of a Uniting Church school and is a regular presenter on behalf of CompliSpace and other educational bodies on issues relating to school governance, school culture and leadership.



Law and Ethics for Australian Teachers

The publication of a new book on Australian school law is usually an event to be celebrated. This work, by Mark Butlin, Noeleen McNamara and Kerrie Anglin, is no exception.

AUTHOR:  
Andrew Knott  
Special Counsel  
Holding Redlich



It meets the back cover description: “Coming to grips with law and policy can be daunting for beginning and established teachers alike. Law and Ethics for Australian Teachers provides an overview of the professional, legal and ethical issues teachers may encounter in the classroom and the broader school environment. This book breaks down the relevant case law, as well as state and territory legislation and policy, through an accessible and reader-friendly approach to help readers navigate these complex issues.”

The book reflects the teaching, as well as legal, expertise of its authors, and the emphasis on ethics, as well as law, will be of assistance to boarding house staff and managers. It is very worthy of publication by Cambridge University Press.

Although not about boarding schools specifically, most of the topics are highly relevant. Indeed, more so, because of the 24/7 responsibilities.

Following a succinct “overview” of the Australian legal system, chapters 1-13 address:

- duty of care
- privacy
- discrimination
- health and safety
- family law

- child protection and mandatory reporting
- suspensions and exclusions
- criminal law
- cyber bullying
- general ethical issues
- teacher registration
- discipline of teachers
- protection of teachers.

Chapters are well organised, with headings, side notes, learning objectives, and scenarios for discussion.

So the book can be used as a “cover-to-cover” text, as a one-topic only consultation, or (once familiar with it) to “zero in” for initial advice on a specific issue.

Although clearly not to be treated as legal advice, it can greatly assist in general

guidance, and identification of when formal legal advice is appropriate.

The book concludes with a substantial list of References (many of which are online-accessible); lists of Cases Cited and Legislation Cited; and then an Index. The Index is detailed, and includes cases and legislation, so navigation is facilitated. These useful features enable readers to focus on their own State or Territory for further detail, or to pursue a topic of particular relevance to them in greater detail.

Conclusion

This book is strongly recommended. It is very reasonably priced (a little over \$70) and can be obtained through a number of online sites. It should be in every boarding school staff library, read and consulted. ■



# Age and Experience in Boarding – *Why Longevity Matters and Should Make a Difference.*

As each boarding year passes many staff working in the demanding role of a Boarding House supervisor in any capacity will ask the question – Can I go on for another year?

AUTHOR:  
Jane Horne  
Head of Kunuwarra House,  
Geelong Grammar School

The constant demands of the role, the school, classroom teaching, sport, co-curricular, the care of the students, the concerns of the parents, the inevitable long hours and the lack of a full weekend off or a quiet uninterrupted night on a couch with the family start to have an impact on why we choose to remain in such a full on job that we all love. This combined with our own personal health and wellbeing needs is something we, who have been here for many years, must consider.

So often we do say “Yes - lets go again for one more year” as we know that our experience and confidence in the role that we perform will be hard to match, and the joy we find in the relationships we share trumps anything else we can think of doing. The end of year hand-written cards and beautifully wrapped gifts are full of gratitude and appreciation and highlight all you have done and how you have made someone's year the best year ever! Little do they realise that we empowered them and they did this themselves in the end. The long holidays then arrive, a warm and quiet destination chosen, the family reunited, and we soon find ourselves refreshed and ready for another year with a new cohort arriving from all over the country and overseas. New and nervous families who need your particular type

of confident, knowledgeable guidance and expertise and suddenly you again have renewed vigour for what may lie ahead. You do this really well. This is now a calling not a job. So, the cycle continues, and the wealth of experience remains. We who work in boarding full time are unique and special people.

The experience we slowly and organically gain over the years, leads to more senior roles and some mentorship of millennials as they try the same job for a while before it becomes a calling for them as it did for us many years before. One thing that always remains at the core of working in a boarding house that cannot be taught or even explained are the relationships we make and the lives we can change by being fully present. Seeing each child, listening through the tears and heart break, suggesting new strategies to growing teens, celebrating milestones and just being involved with young people who are living a long way from home has very special rewards that potentially cannot be measured until the child is an adult. “I know it's hard now, but it will get better and these will be the best days of your life one day. Trust me on this”.

Over my time in boarding there have been so many changes to a boarders' day-to-day life. The advent of computers replaced research in books and libraries and the need for hand written essays and making posters, screens have replaced the joy of reading books and playing board or card games, phones in hand have replaced the one on the wall in the hallway that we used to line up for to call home

and mobiles have replaced pretty much everything else we used to use or do for fun before the 1990s – last century! All the knowledge they think they will need can be sourced from their back pocket. Reach and Boardingware have sadly removed the regular chat to home and have replaced the careful conversations with parents about trust and we no longer tick off lists located in clipboards. Emails – 100s of them each week now dominate our day - have made our landline phone sit quietly in the corner of the desk so we don't chat to families or anyone much any more - it's all done online.

Yet parents still want to meet, see and know the person who will be in charge of their child for up to six years. Does this person know what they are doing? Can I trust them with my child? What if my child gets sad? What if they get sick? How will they nurture my child in times of need? The same way you do - with gentle experience, much care, constant support, mutual respect and admiration for the skills we all bring to any developing relationship. We love what we do, and we do it well as the relationships continue to grow stronger.

Whilst the ever changing cohort we care for seem to get younger, pluckier, more self assured and super tech-savvy on the socials, we continue to age gracefully with wisdom and knowledge at the heart of all our decision making and care and support for all who come into our orbit. Boundaries still need to be set and probably set stronger than ever before to protect us all. This task is becoming more challenging

in the face of all the mental health and social media issues that seem to arise on a weekly, and sometimes daily, basis.

Whilst not wanting to make out that we, born and educated in the last century, as Gen X's and Xennials should be heading for the aged care home just yet, many of us who have been in boarding for some time may feel that our time is coming to an end as being 15 and in the Z or Alpha Generation, seems a long way from being 40 or 50 - let alone 60. At least we recognise the Rubrics Cube as our 70s version of a fidget spinner! Somehow, we all manage to live harmoniously together under the one roof, 24/7 for the school term. The old wise expert and the young brave learner can combine well under the umbrella of the school, under the roof of the boarding house and the care of the boarding team, and with the appreciation and support of the parent.

We Gen X's now work with millennials who have been raised on a computer but this device is not yet our 'go to' device all the time. The current Alphas don't think they have a life if they are not online in some capacity. We still love a good chat with an actual person. We met people in real life, (IRL) we dated and then usu-

ally married them, or they are still our actual friends, not just on Facebook. We sought longevity in our relationships and in our working roles rather than having many different careers. As women many of us did not think we would stay in the workforce for this long, but times changed as we grew up through the 80s and had our own families in the 90s, we adapted and went back to work and now we can all work until we are well into our 60s and possibly our 70s - but should we? Do young boarders in 2021 and beyond, require younger staff to care for them in boarding? They absolutely need us all.

Many of us have changed or built a culture within a boarding house, developed and expanded multiple education and well-being programs, had a positive influence

on hundreds of young people and even 'saved' a few lives along the way. We have certainly changed some, hopefully for the better. We have built relationships that are long lasting in hearts and in memories. We have learnt to look after ourselves first so we function well and grow in our roles and we have found ways to stay in teaching and boarding by being able to balance commitments and combine work, family and leisure and keep our energy levels high. We have also pivoted, shifted and adjusted as new teaching methods have come along, or even disappeared, and still had the full support of our parent cohort plus we have been able to bring a fresh, new perspective to an old regime when required. Our flexibility at staying new and relevant is also to be celebrated.

Our ideas work.

We, those of age with experience, now need to find ways to share our infinite wisdom with the new teaching millennials. We need to mentor and empower our young colleagues to help us to step back. The millennials need to be ready to take over the long hours and also keep the student 'Gen Zs and Alphas' busy at school and off their phones and computer games so boarding will always be full of real relationships, social connection, heartfelt belonging, fabulous friendships and many happy days and nights, fun times and events to be celebrated every year. They need to be 'on duty' rather than on a timed shift as 'on duty' can happen at any time and you may be needed. Community living, learning and relationships are the keys to building and shaping a better boarding world – I hope I will always have a role to play for young people who are moving into this constantly changing world. Even if I feel older, which I often don't, I know I am wiser and for that I am forever thankful.

Yes, I am wise, but its wisdom born of pain, yes, I've paid the price, but look how much I've gained. If I have to, I can do anything – Helen Reddy, 1971. ■

*“Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.” – Mark Twain.*

ally married them, or they are still our actual friends, not just on Facebook. We sought longevity in our relationships and in our working roles rather than having many different careers. As women many of us did not think we would stay in the workforce for this long, but times changed as we grew up through the 80s and had our own families in the 90s, we adapted and went back to work and now we can all work until we are well into our 60s and possibly our 70s - but should we? Do young boarders in 2021 and beyond, require younger staff to care for them in boarding? They absolutely need us all.

For school boards and Principals, longevity in boarding indicates a commitment and dedication to young people that





# For Success (and Happiness) in a Corporate Career, *it's Best to be Pear-shaped:*

...and here's why:

AUTHOR  
Chris Croft  
Chris Croft Training  
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**P**ositive - there are no successful pessimists. From Elon Musk and Richard Branson to, er, anyone you can think of, they are all optimists. Because pessimists don't even START! And by the way introverts can absolutely be optimists, just as much as extraverts can be, but may not be. And: other people respond best to bosses who are positive and focus on the good behaviour rather than the mistakes. So start with a belief you can do it, and that other people can do it - then thank people, admire people's skill, compliment them on their victories however small, ... be the nicest person ever.

**E**asy to work with, including being low maintenance (there's probably a need for a whole blog post on this! Keep your emails short, don't ask for loads of information up front, don't talk too much, etc) and always get back to people when you said you would.

**A**ppear in control - you get judged on appearances, a tidy desk and being on time to meetings give an impression of being ahead of the game. You're more likely to be given that exciting important project, and you're more likely to be promoted, if you are knocking your current job out of the park.

**R**eliable - always keeping your promises, always doing everything you say

you will - and this requires organisation. Don't try to keep everything in your head! You need lists and systems, probably a master list, a daily list, and everything written in your diary. Write everything down!

**S**ow: you reap what you sow, so help others at every opportunity, and be nice to everyone. Don't make any enemies, this will only cost you in the end. Abundance mentality - there is enough for everyone, and if you give ideas and help away, you'll end up doing better than if you keep it all to yourself.

**H**ard - work hard is important - though not a problem if you love your work. (And if you don't love most of it most of the time it's time to start looking). Get used to working hard and build a mindset that says it's normal, and good for you. But not TOO hard - you can burn yourself out if you go above about seven on the stressometer.

**A**s if self-employed. Learn and develop yourself, your brain is all you've got. It's YOUR job to develop yourself, not your employer's - though if they DO offer training, either it's courses or online learning, take it!! Take all of it, as much as you can get. Treat everyone as a customer, including your colleagues - it's the opinions of others that keeps you employed. Make sure you always deliver on the basics (reliability, good quality work) and also some delight factor - going the extra mile, surprising people with a better job than they were expecting, including some extras where possible.

**P**ush yourself out of your comfort zone: this is where most of your learning will come from, as well as getting the satisfaction of success, which then leads to longer term happiness. Don't be tempted to stay safe, or be lazy, and turn down challenges - you'll pay a longer term price for that in the end if you do.

**E**volve your job towards where you want it to be - by asking your boss if it's OK for you to do more of some things and less of other things. This could be at your appraisal or just generally during the year - or both. Maybe you can slowly move your job towards your goals, and even towards your Ikigai if you know what yours is. If you can get rid of 10% of your job that you don't enjoy, or excel at, and if you can add 10% to your job of the things that you want to do and are good at, you can change your job by 100% in five years!

**D**o -> Get -> Feel: get yourself in the good circle (where you do things you like, get thanks and results, and feel good about yourself and your work, so you do more...) rather than the bad one, where you do the minimum work and get poor results, then you get negative feedback from your boss and your colleagues and customers, and so you feel bad about your work and yourself, which leads to...). Even if you think the way you are currently treated is unfair, don't react and end up in the bad circle, but take control, and start the good circle. Nobody else is going to change what THEY are doing, but YOU can.

Onwards and upwards!

Chris ■

## A Confused Mind *Says No.*



As I watch yet another Covid media conference, I'm reminded of the importance of CLEAR communication.

AUTHOR:  
Mel Kettle  
Strategic Communication Expert  
Speaker, Author, Mentor,  
Facilitator, Trainer

I feel like a lot of people forget this. Especially those who rely on email to communicate.

I know I've said this before, but email is for information NOT communication.

When you are communicating with your staff, suppliers and customers, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the main thing you want people to know?
- How are you communicating the message and what communication channels are you using?
- What do you want people to do?
- What language are you using?
- Where can they go to get more information if they need it?

With so many of us struggling with Covid overwhelm right now, it is more important than ever that our communication is clear.

I tweeted recently about how a couple of - what I considered to be non-essential - retailers were open during our latest lockdown.

One of the responses I had said "Retail is not on the list of businesses that must close so it's open for individual interpretation by retailers if they open or not. Until there's a more definitive list issued by the state govt of essential or non-essential businesses, this will continue."

"Individual interpretation".

What messages do you send out that are open for individual interpretation?

Perhaps it's a good time to revisit how clear your communication actually is. ■



# Student Concierge Services: *Embracing the New COVID-19 World*

Danielle Pringle, Student Concierge Services' Founder, knows all too well how valuable peace of mind is to boarder parents - the comfort in knowing their children are safe, secure and well looked after in their school boarding house. 'Having been a parent of boarding school children, I depended on the boarding house as a substitute parent for our children - taking care of them as if they were at home.'

AUTHOR:  
Danielle Pringle  
Director  
Student Concierge Services

COVID-19 has changed how we see the world, and we, too, have been reviewing our business operations and seeing where support is needed in schools and, most importantly, for FAMILIES.

Student Concierge Services (SCS) is an Australian-based boarding support service assisting educational institutions and their boarding students; both domestic, expatriate and international. SCS provides a vast range of services designed to aid schools in ensuring their boarding facilities are offering a first-class experience and supporting the families on their journey.

SCS works with schools and universities across Australia, supporting their boarding offering. Boarding students and their families give prioritisation and consideration to educational institutions offering SCS support services, enabling schools to value-add and attract students based on their comprehensive boarding offering.

Since March 2020, we have been working with schools and families, supporting them through COVID-19 lockdowns, ensuring children are home safely and have the support they need over this time.

SCS services have had an overhaul, and, after surveying families, it is clear our services will be even more important for both schools and families going forward into 2022. Secure storage gives schools the ability to let their COVID-cleaned and clutter-free boarding houses over the holiday periods and offer assurance belongings are safe. Laundry management and transport, travel and labelling services ensure a superior product is extended to prospective and existing students.

## Social Media

The Boarding School Parents (Australia) Facebook page is growing, with nearly 1000 members in this closed group. The pandemic has proved there is definitely a need for a parent platform in this community where families can gain support, ask questions and source information on boarding schools and life as a boarder. SCS encourages you to share this link with your families. Boarding School Parents Australia: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1731447680464992>

If your boarding school has an article or an event to share with this community, please let us know, and we would be more than happy to support your school.

## Student Concierge Connect/ Educational Consultancy

Educating families on boarding school options is our priority - the benefits both long and short term. There is always a

demand for both local and overseas students in Australian boarding schools. With the world opening up and countries forging ahead with high levels of COVID-19 vaccination, the demand for schools will start to open too. Our network is devoted to providing boarding school solutions for students and their families. Working closely with schools, agencies, students and families, SCC specialises in supporting, recruiting and retaining students at Australian boarding schools. Offering a full 360-degree service, SCC utilises its extensive education agency network to market and promote Australian boarding schools to international target markets.

In 2022, we will be proceeding with a variety of events, giving schools opportunities to showcase their boarding school offering in a varied environment. Due to COVID-19, events we were due to host with the NSW Positive Rugby Foundation were cancelled but watch this space in 2022!

Education Engine Room is the podcast we are launching in October 2021, focusing on education, the stories behind the choices and opportunities in and around education. There will be a focus on boarding schools and other relevant information. Watch this space and the link to our podcast will be shared on release and added to our website.

## COVID-clean and Avoiding Risk Exposure

SCS stores student belongings safely and securely offsite. This gives much-needed

space back to schools, alleviating the need to allocate rooms for belongings on the premises and for a storage management system. It also allows schools to give their boarding houses a deep COVID-clean before holiday lets and avoids exposing schools to the risk and insurance issues in leaving student belongings onsite.

Items are housed in collapsible crates and cartons and are collected at the end of term and returned ready for the start of the next. SCS storage management is a seamless process that is greatly valued by parents, as it ensures boarding life is made easier for everyone.

## Laundry and Dry Cleaning

This fast-growing SCS service is in high demand and has assisted hundreds of students across Australia, saving time, money, and worry. Regional dry cleaners are slowly closing their businesses, giving families little option for cleaning uniforms. SCS offers a helping hand and peace of mind that uniforms will be spotless and fresh on day one of term.

Dry cleaning, washing and ironing services are taken offsite by SCS, alleviating the need for laundry facilities and processes in the school and freeing up student time for study. Items are collected and delivered back to school promptly, ensuring students are always neat, clean and presentable.

## Uniform Labelling

As labelling is an essential boarding school requirement, SCS ensures all student uniforms are named, using their labels which are ordered online. Schools no longer need to allocate rooms for lost property storage, allowing them to be able to put this space to better use.

## High School to University Transition

SCS can step in and bridge the gap between the end of Year 12 and the onset of university. Alleviating the cumbersome need to transport all possessions home, SCS can securely store belongings during the transitional period and deliver to the new student residence. This service has proved extremely popular with overseas and expat students. SCS can also assist with navigating border and quarantine requirements due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## Contact and Testimonials

Our clients love to say great things about us! Should your school require a testimonial commending SCS services and the support offered to boarding families, please don't hesitate to contact us. [info@studentconciergeservices.com.au](mailto:info@studentconciergeservices.com.au) +61 425 323 500 ■



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# THE RIGHT WAY TO BE TOUGH

## *How to Effectively Criticise and Impose Consequences*

Like effective praise, effective criticism requires an awareness of your intent as a boarding staff member. Are you criticising to berate or benefit your students? If your goal is to benefit them by helping them see where they can improve, then you must pay attention to what you are criticising. Are you aiming at the person, the process, or the product? Let's explore.

AUTHOR:  
Dr. Christopher Thurber  
Clinical Psychologist  
and Faculty Member  
Phillips Exeter Academy

Compare these two staff critiques of a teenager who returns to the boarding house one hour late after being out with friends.

1. "What the hell? Where have you been? Do you realise how late it is? Who doesn't reply to texts or answer calls from the House Master or House Mistress...on the very phone that staff member charged for you when you

couldn't find your charger?! I'm furious!"

2. "I'm guessing your phone died, but I'm unhappy you're coming back to the boarding house an hour past curfew. We agreed that you'd call in to the staff member on duty if you were going to be more than fifteen minutes late, right?"

In both examples, the staff member is upset, as most adult caregivers would be. Indeed, raw emotion is an innate, healthy part of our humanity, and expressing it communicates essential information to the people around us. At the same time, regulating emotions and refining how we express ourselves are learned skills that enhance or erode the effectiveness of our communication.

Think of raw, negative emotions like a freshly unearthed potato—not particularly appetizing. In fact, it does not look or feel much different from the stones you had to dig up to get to it. Yet if you take that potato and wash it, peel it, slice it thinly, deep-fry it, and add seasoning, it becomes irresistible. The point is, you can deliver your raw emotions to someone, but they might find it so unappetizing that they reject it...or reject you. Prepare it properly, however, and the other person is likely to listen and understand. That preparation, that regulation and refinement of emotions, is what many people call tone.

In example one above, the adult begins with a hostile tone ("What the hell?"),

labels the student ("Who doesn't reply..."), and impugns the student's character, indirectly accusing them of being a spoiled brat.

In example two, the adult begins by offering an out ("I'm guessing your phone died"), describes their feeling ("I'm unhappy..."), references the staff-student relationship ("We agreed..."), and attempts to establish some common ground ("...right?").

Regarding intent, consider whether the adult's manifest goal in this scenario is to berate or benefit the student. (Perhaps it is both. The student deserves a reprimand, and the student's behavior must change.)

Sometimes, a single piece of effective criticism can deliver two or more messages, but single statements also have a main thrust. The thrust of example one is to berate; the thrust of example two is to benefit. Consequently, the student's reaction to the different approaches, and therefore the two criticisms' effectiveness, will be markedly different.

In response to adults' berating them, most students feel attacked and get defensive. They may clam up or snap back—either way, they are likely to reject, not internalise, your underlying concerns. An unproductive period of silence or an angry argument may follow, keeping the level of communication shallow. Berating sometimes seems effective when student do change their behavior, even temporarily. Yet this is a classic application of harmful pressure—the threat of punishment coerces compliance. The teen in the previous scenario might return to the boarding

house before curfew next time, but it will be to avoid another berating (or worse), not because they have understood and internalised your perspective.

At this point, some boarding staff might ask, Who cares why my students follow the rules? As long as they're back in the boarding house on time, I couldn't care less what they think about having a curfew. Indeed, coerced compliance is seductive. It can make adults coerce compliance in other areas, such as academic, athletic, or artistic pursuits. However, what your students think does matter because durable behavior change is only possible when they have understood and internalised the concept.

Conversely, if the student is behaving only to avoid punishment, they are unlikely to comply when the threat disappears. In this case, if you are away for a night and a much more permissive (or much less attentive) staff member is on duty, the student is likely to ignore their curfew altogether. When there is no chance of getting caught, why not stay out all night? If you want your students to behave well even when no one is looking, then you will have to move beyond berating.

Example two is likely to be effective because it references your emotions and establishes some common ground. The student is more likely to hear your concerns and might even engage in conversation—if not now, then perhaps the following day. If the student changes their behavior and abides by the curfew in the future, it will be because they understood your perspective and felt an increased, internal sense of responsibility.

Example two might now seem sensible, but an approach that references emotions and establishes common ground still leaves many boarding staff asking, Why can't I just say, "Because I said so!" and get better behavior in the future? The answer is: Sometimes you can, but durable behavior change is fueled by mutual empathy, not harmful pressure. In this curfew example, the staff member needs to understand that most adolescents strive for independence, love hanging out with their friends, and usually lose track of time when they are immersed in fun activities. For their part, the student needs to understand that most boarding staff feel an enormous responsibility for their students' welfare, crave respect from their students, and take it personally when boarding house rules are ignored.

Achieving mutual understanding is not always easy or straightforward, but when both staff member and student see life from the other's perspective—when there is mutual empathy—then positive behavior change happens faster and lasts longer. Even if your students disagree with you, or you disagree with your students, they will respond better to your criticism when they understand the thoughts and feelings and relationship components that form the basis for your criticism. OK, but what about consequences for this transgression?

Consequence is a popular euphemism for punishment. Maybe you should ground the student who missed curfew, take away some privilege, or give them some extra work duty. Indeed, psychologists and other parenting pundits have written entire books about applying age-appropriate



consequences as a way to shape behaviour. Most of them say the same thing: Consequences—like criticisms—are effective when they promote understanding and give kids a chance to improve.

Too often, adults punish impulsively, out of anger, without thoughtfully considering whether the consequence they have shouted is instructive or simply unpleasant. In this case, an instructive consequence might be requiring the student to return to the boarding house one hour before curfew for a month. If they can do that reliably, then you could reinstate the regular curfew time. That consequence is likely to work because it logically relates to the misbehaviour and it includes a chance to improve.

By contrast, a punishment such as cleaning up the common room every night for a month has no thematic connection to the original rule violation and provides no opportunity for the student to demonstrate that they can improve their behavior.

For younger students, I recommend that parents add an epilogue to every consequence. After imposing a time-out or after a logically related punishment, ask the student, “Do you know why you got a time-out?” or “Do you know why I took away screen time for a week?” You might think this kind of post-punishment comprehension question is something only nerdy psychologists ask their kids. However, when you realise how often kids misunderstand why adults are upset or why adults doled out a punishment, you will ask a comprehension question every single time.

As a father, I was sometimes stunned at how frequently my own children misunderstood consequences when they were little. But it is normal. Sometimes, consequences do not

make sense to kids because they see the world so differently from how adults do. Other times, kids hear the emotion in adults’ voices, become upset themselves, and are unable to follow the adults’ initial explanation of why the behaviour under scrutiny was wrong. Heck, sometimes kids just forget during the minutes they are in a time-out how they got there in the first place.

Again, the importance of understanding a consequence as a prerequisite to internalising some behaviour change cannot be overstated.

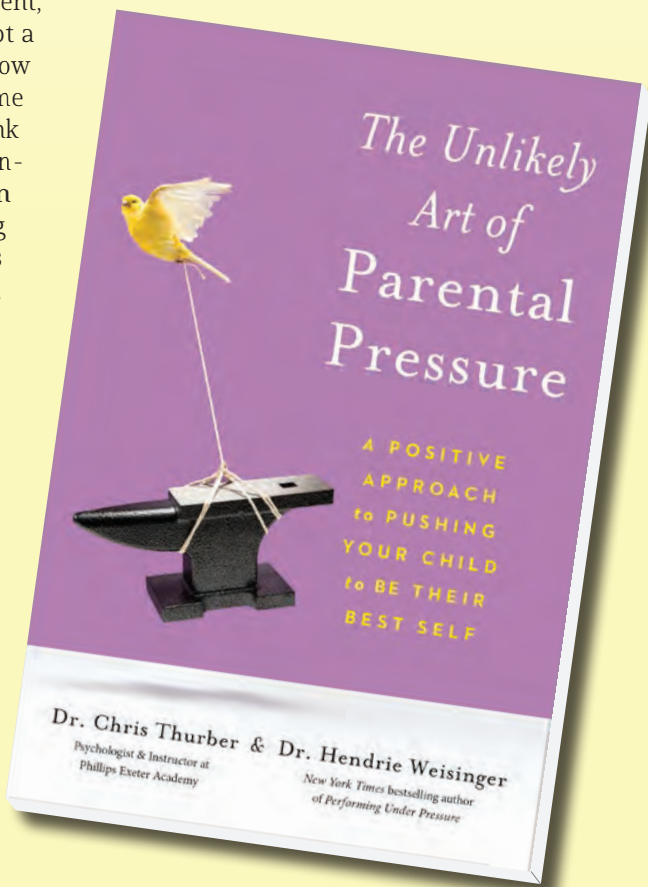
A final word about consequences: Their usefulness is limited. Most misbehaviour is evidence of a skills deficit, not malice. Children and adolescents are still learning how to behave, and the only thing that punishments teach a person is what not to do.

For example, if you slap someone’s hand as they reach for the plate of cookies you told them not to touch, what have you taught them? Well, you have taught them not to reach for cookies, at least not when you are watching. That is a very specific prohibition under a very narrow condition. Not

much of a life lesson. Plus, do you really want to spend all your on-duty hours teaching your students’ what not to do?

Our real goal—as boarding staff, as teachers, as mentors, as leaders—is to teach our students what to do. We want our students to learn impulse control, emotion regulation, and the virtue of unselfishness. We want them to think more clearly about the consequences of their actions and to respect others. We want them to become creative problem-solvers, to show some humility and self-deprecatory humor, and to persevere after stumbling. These are long-term goals, of course, and we achieve them one staff-student interaction at a time.

Although this is not a behaviour management article, I can recommend the work of psychologist Ross Greene for boarding staff who want to rely less on consequences and more on cultivating their child’s social, emotional, and behavioral skill set. As Dr. Greene puts it, “So long as caregivers are solely focused on modifying a child’s behaviour, the problems that are causing that behaviour will remain unsolved. But when caregivers focus instead on solving the problems—collaboratively and proactively—not only do the problems get solved, the challenging behaviours that are associated with those problems subside.” ■





Dr. Chris Thurber is the co-author of the new book, *The Unlikely Art of Parental Pressure*, available on Amazon Australia here. He is also the creator of Prep4School, a collection of multilingual, animated videos designed to teach new and returning boarders the fundamentals of being a happy, successful student. Your school can become a Prep4School member by visiting <https://www.boarding.org.au/our-community/prep4school>. Dr. Thurber lives in Exeter, New Hampshire, and serves as a teacher and clinical psychologist at Phillips Exeter Academy, a co-educational boarding and day school in the northeast United States.

# The Next Piece of the Puzzle...

Educational gaps are an issue we all deal with when new; rural and remote, international and students from other schools arrive in your boarding house. At St Peters, we continue to fine tune the what and how of our prep/study program for all age groups.

AUTHOR:  
Stuart Delaney  
Head of Boys Boarding  
St Peters Lutheran College

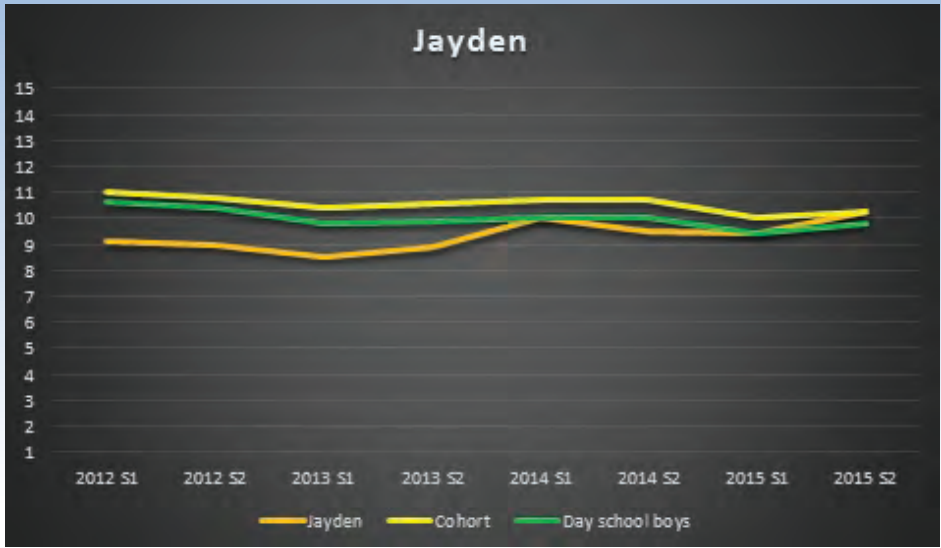
Several years ago, Mr Wes Meurant, Senior Resident and I sat down to reimagine study in boarding, with the goal of improving results, day to day, term to term and finally year on year, to help our boarders flourish.

We started with the knowledge that we have approximately 160 children from every continent in the world, with representation from 30 plus different nationalities. We knew we needed to; be more proactive, connect directly with the teachers, track results and use data to assist with our future direction.

Next, we analysed individual results from the previous year, reading every subject comment, tracking all marks and results and looking for strengths and areas of growth. We saw the same problems over and over; gaps in learning, not taking the right equipment to the class and not completing the set homework.

We had to change the boys’ attitude and approach study. We had to be proactive and have KPI’s for all boarders.

We worked with our Information Systems Department to extract data from Synergetic (Data Management System) to create

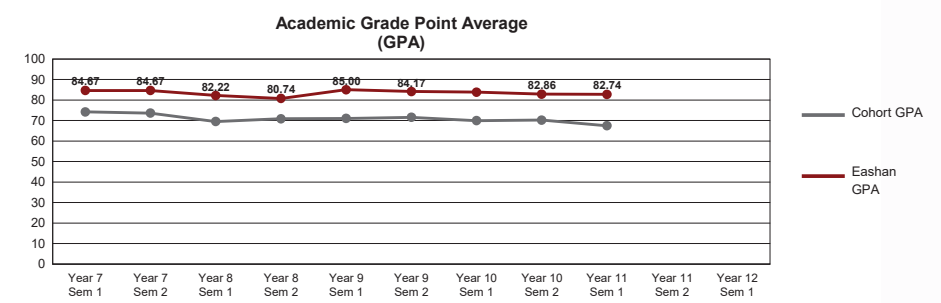


meaningful reports. The reports included; subject results, GPA and comparison GPA graphing. The below graph shows student GPA results from 2012-2015, Semesters One and Two, with a comparison between the individual and the cohort as well as the other boys in the cohort.

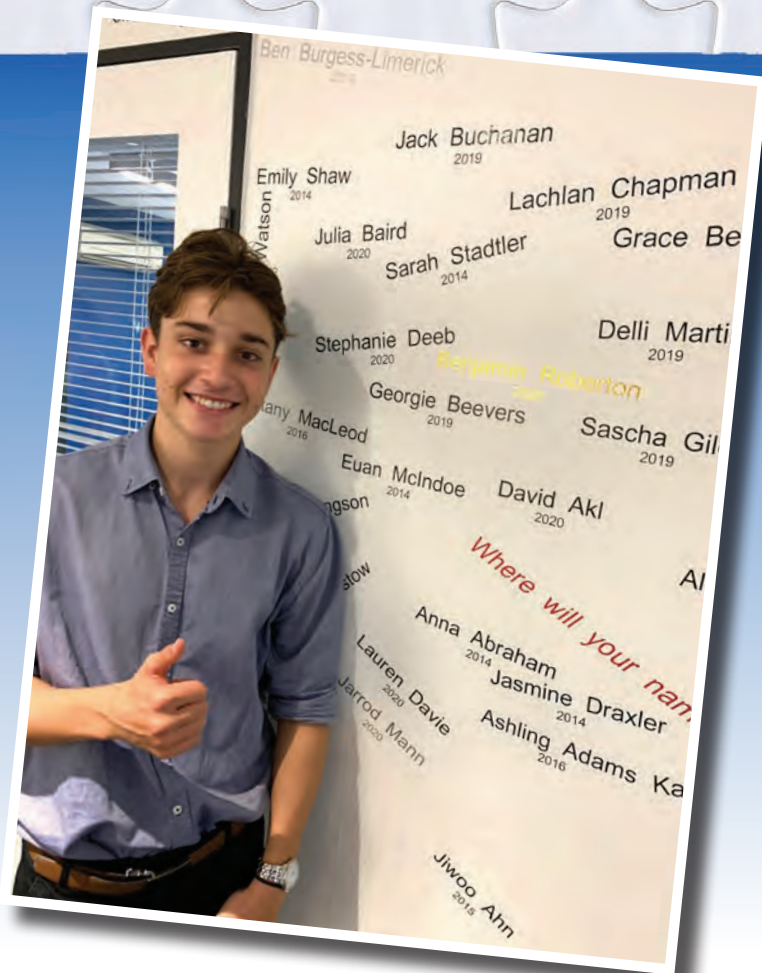
As a result of this work, the College now uses these graphs, for the purpose of

reporting for all students Year 7-12. Example of College reporting system below.

Whilst having and using data was very important to addressing our problem, we knew that communication with the day school was also a concern. We decided that a regular relationship with the relevant year level coordinators was going to be essential if we were to see improvements.







Regular weekly meetings with year level coordinators were organised. In this time, we would talk about each boarder in their year level, focusing on school work and any behavioural, social or emotional concerns. We were now on top of information from teachers which we were not aware of before. We could pass on both positive and constructive feedback to parents weekly thus, helping the boarding parents to not feel so distant. Information was also fed back to the Study Mentors and Junior Residents at study each night.

The Study Mentors are employed by the College to assist boarders with their study, under the guidance of the Academic Coordinator, Mr Wes Meurant. Study Mentors primarily work with the Senior School boarding students (years 10-12), in small groups or subject specific one on one tutoring sessions. We find that generally our Study Mentors are old scholars who have achieved an OPI or 2 or ATAR equivalent and are keen to give back to their Alma Mater.

Study is divided into three sessions. Junior Boarders (Years 6-9) study from 4.30pm to 6pm. During this time we also run, one on one subject specific tutoring for senior boarders. After dinner from 6.30pm-8.30pm, Senior boarders study with our Junior Residents and Study Mentors, in both group and individual

**Academic Focus Report - Will**

**St. Peter's**  
LUThERIAN COLLEGE

Date

Will's signature

Mr Meurant's signature

**2017 Semester 1**

**Will's Reflection on last term**

I picked up my efforts slightly towards the end of the year, which resulted in my improved results. I looked for help with my maths assignments when I needed guidance. I didn't use study time well enough overall, I also didn't seek enough help with other subjects. I wasted a lot of time last year being distracted mainly by the internet and social media. I would definitely change the way I spent

**The story so far**

Will experienced a good year of study last year. His overall trend shows an improved GPA as the year progressed however there are areas for Will to concentrate on if he is to continue this upwards trend. Dropping Economics enabled Will to spend more time on other subjects in Semester Two. However despite dropping Economics he was unable to improve on his Accounting result, declining

**Will**

2016 S1 2017 S2

Will Cohort Day school boys

**The plan from here**

I want an OP8 this year so I need to improve the way I do things. I will seek help quicker with assessment and use my study time more productively. During study time I will stop using social media so I can concentrate on my work. I believe this will help me achieve my goals.

**How we will assist Will in achieving his goals**

The boarding community now offers multiple tutoring possibilities for all boarder boys to attend. Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday there are afternoon tutorials that run out of Theile 9 classroom in the subject areas of English, Maths, Chemistry, Physics, History and other humanities. These sessions run from 3.30-5.30pm. In addition, normal study runs from

Will's GPA goal by year end

Will's OP prediction goal by year end

Will's school attitude score goal by year end



sessions. Between 8.30pm and 9.30pm, our years 11 and 12 students can have individual subject specific tutoring with our Study Mentors. This program runs from Monday to Thursday. On Sunday we run study session for all boarders from 3pm-5pm with Study Mentors and Residential Staff.

At the end of each term we review the report card and GPA for each boarder. If a boarder receives a GPA 8.5 or less, we work with them, and their parents, to focus on the areas for improvement as reported. Any Boarder with a GPA of 11 or higher are placed in the Advance Group; this group has three one hour sessions a week where the boarder works with the study mentor to focus in on areas for continued growth. We have found that working proactively with the boarders results in a positive mind shift, they want to get better results, they work harder and are asking for assistance to improve.

Boarders complete the example form (p24) each term which is then sent home to parents so conversations at home could focus on positive improvements and educational goals.

In this way both boarders and their parents have a single focus, with boarders setting realistic goals themselves.

The increase in communication between families, teachers and boarding has resulted in positive improvements in academic results for the boys, from the start of their St Peters journey through to graduation. The boys may experience times of negative fluctuation with their grade, however we have found this helps with building resilience and refocusing on work ethic and study processes.

All this has led to many successes, most notable last year College Captain Ben Robertson. When Ben arrived into boarding he was a wide-eyed young man wanting to achieve in everything he could. Ben was at that point a B student, but wanted to improve. He took full advantage of the additional study sessions and Study Mentors. By the end of his first term things had started to improve. What was unique about Ben was that he; was in the 1st XV Rugby team, played cricket and basketball and he was involved in athletics. Then to top it off as College Captain who led St Peters with pride whilst continuing to study hard and achieve amazing academic results. At the completion of his final year in his graduation speech, Ben spoke of the assistance boarding had given to him academically. In December when the results arrived from QCA, Ben had received a 99.6 and was Dux of St Peters.

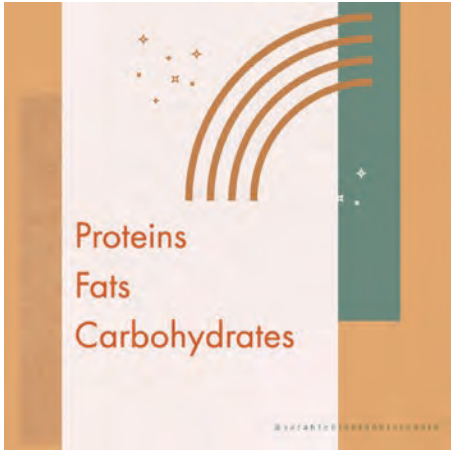
What is the next piece in the puzzle? How do we improve and continue to refine our processes? Wes and I sit down at the end of each year with the goal of reviewing our Study Program. Did it work well? How can we improve areas we felt let us down? We are brutal and sometimes overly critical about what we have achieved, always looking to improve results, but not to the detriment of our boarders and the enjoyment they get from improving their own personal goals.

2021 has seen the next piece in the puzzle fall into place, Junior Study Program! In this area, the educational gaps are the biggest and most challenging, we knew we needed external assistance. So, conversations with Richard, Thomas and Jared from ABSA, were held. Together with ABSA we then sat down with Hayden McEvoy, CEO and Founder A-Team Tuition, to examine further our junior study challenges, he knew he could help. After conversations with the Head of College and the Head of Girls Boarding, the decision was made to engage A Team Tuition from the start of 2021. The last piece of the puzzle is now in place and the response from the boarders and their parents is beyond our expectations. We cannot wait for the end of term results to see how the boarders are achieving. ■



# Whole Food Nutrition

## for your Mind and Brain Power!



AUTHOR:  
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Personal Trainer  
[www.sarahfehlberg.com.au](http://www.sarahfehlberg.com.au)

### MACRONUTRIENTS

You've all heard of them, right?

They are your big players in nutrition.

PROTEIN (amino acids)

FATS (think omegas, good fats, lipids).

CARBOHYDRATES (our body turns this into glucose for brain and muscle fuel).

Then there are the;  
MICRONUTRIENTS = VITAMINS and MINERALS

SO what does this have to do with your your Mental Health right now?

How about absolutely - EVERYTHING.

Nutrients - MACRO & MICRO - have an important role on your mental health in terms of your Mood, Energy and Function.

For example - Ever felt post-lunch fatigue? How about late night alertness?

Ever thought that this may be a direct result of what you ate that makes you feel this way?

### LET'S TALK ABOUT GOOD FATS FIRST AND FOREMOST

Good fats are SUPERSTARS for-your-brain and cannot be made by the body, you must get them from your diet!

Think; nuts, seeds, fatty fish and plant oils

Chia, hemp, flaxseed - these are crucial little critters for the health and maintenance of our brain health and in turn our mental health!

Good fats allow our body to feel "safe" - they have a sustained release in our body when we eat them, meaning our blood sugars remain balanced and do not spike up or down.

If our body feels "safe", we stay in a state of calm and balance. When your brain and body know its fed with adequate good fat, you will feel sustained, happy, balanced. When you look over this in your diet your blood sugar could wane - meaning go up and down - and much research has suggested that changes in blood sugar can also feel like anxiety and vice versa. So get those good fats into every meal, they will help right now!

It's when we eat saturated fats which compromise brain health over a long period of time that they can play with our mood and feelings.

Saturated fat is obtained in our diet from excess animal sources and overconsumption of packaged foods.

### PROTEIN

Protein is broken down into amino acids by our body and is needed for growth, development, synthesis and repair.

Inadequate protein in your diet will directly affect how you feel and behave.

The building blocks of protein (amino acids) contain the pre-cursors to our neurotransmitters. Our happy hormones! - think - serotonin, dopamine, etc.

Amino acids help carry chemical messengers between neurons - thus effecting our;

- MOOD
- SLEEP
- ALERTNESS and
- WEIGHT

Adequate protein is key - and read that word again - Adequate, not an over-in-take of powders and shakes. When a nutritionist says adequate - know I'm talking about WHOLE FOOD, not packed or powdered crap.

### CARBOHYDRATES

Different carbohydrates = Different symptoms.

High Glycemic Index carbohydrates such as white bread cause a rapid release of glucose into the blood and shortly after comes a dip in our blood sugar - and with it so does our attention, mood and energy. You may crave sugar after this because your body feels like it needs it to feel energised again after such a big slump, and so the vicious cycle CAN continue!

On the other hand, oats, grains, legumes and nuts/seeds have a slower glucose release, which provides us with level

mood, attentiveness and energy for longer periods of time, without the so called "dip".

Next time you are reaching for a quick sugar or processed white carbohydrate, see if you can simply CHANGE the option - note I didn't say "remove", I said change.. Can you have brown versions of your white high GI (glycemic index) friends?

Brown rice instead of white, wholegrain seedy bread instead of white for example, oats mixed with nuts and seeds instead of packaged cereals.

My point here is we should come back to basics before trying to play with our Macros and removing a complete portion of what is MEANT to be in our diets and start honing in on how we can make our food choices WHOLE. That starts with making a complete meal with whole food, every meal!

A balanced diet will help your brain from going from one direction to another, so to speak, eg fatigue to awake, moody to down. Our brains benefit from a steady supply of Macro and Micronutrients (more on Micronutrients later).

The antioxidants found in an abundance of fruit and vegetables fight off free radicals that can destroy brain cells - enabling the brain to work well for longer periods.

In order for the brain to function optimally - it needs FUEL and LOTS of it!

20% of our energy resources are used by the brain...predominately in the form of CARBOHYDRATES - which our body digests and changes into glucose (or you may have heard of this as blood sugar).

The frontal lobe of the brain is so sensitive to sudden drops in glucose that a change in mental function is one of the most common signals of nutrient deficiency - yet we still read an article that says remove a food group to get to our "goal" without seeking proper, informed, professional nutritional advice and here I am giving it to you for free!

### SO WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

Food - combine your Macronutrients into EVERY, SINGLE, MEAL.

Remember Protein doesn't come from a packet.

Good fats are GOOD for you.

Carbohydrates are necessary for healthy brain function, hormones and mood - swap your whites for whole-food brown versions. Think COMPLEX (slower release) over HIGH GI packaged foods.

Leave with the notion of adding nutrients back into your diet instead of removing. Removing doesn't equal health and wellness, it means nutrient deficiencies and fatigue in the long run as well as failure to adapt to exercise and stress.



Keep an eye out for my MASTERCLASS SERIES - NUTRIENTS - CLASS 1- the first one being about MACRONUTRIENTS - please reach out if you'd like to be the first to know when this is going to land! [sarahjanefehlberg@gmail.com](mailto:sarahjanefehlberg@gmail.com) ■



# Every Teacher's Dream: *Online Literacy Program Makes It Fun For Kids To Hit The Books*

Australian children are being hooked on reading and writing through an interactive program that delivers kid-centric literacy topics to keep them coming back for more.



AUTHOR:  
Tanya Grambower  
Founder  
Literacy for Kids

Literacy for Kids has launched its new website that delivers a unique learning platform combining literacy with engaging topics including Extreme Sports, Animals, Rollercoasters, Adventure Stories and Science.

Each module is built with striking video, music and imagery to capture interest and support the way kids learn the content.

Former teacher, tutor and program founder, Tanya Grambower, said Literacy for Kids was the ideal classroom tool designed to lift literacy standards for all Australian children.

"I want Australian boys and girls to be the smartest in the world," Mrs Grambower said.

"Improved literacy not only makes the whole classroom experience more enjoyable for students, but it boosts employment opportunities and has a positive impact on life far beyond school.

Literacy is fundamental to success in life. It is important for an individual to not only read the words on a page, but also to engage successfully with the text.

Literacy for Kids has been built from the ground up to improve the way Australian

kids learn to read, spell and write.

The program is also lockdown-proof and helps teachers to teach literacy remotely.

With informational and attention-grabbing videos, articles and resources, Literacy for Kids is linked to the Australian National Curriculum to help teach literacy anytime, anywhere."

The program has evolved from the successful Queensland Government-backed Literacy For Boys, which currently operates Australia-wide in 27 schools with more than 3000 users.

An 18-week study analysing the impact of Literacy for Boys on year six students showed outcomes in spelling, reading and comprehension improved by an equivalent of 12 months.

The new Literacy for Kids has partnered with world-leading data analytics provider IntelliBoard to provide powerful analytics for teachers.

"Teachers are empowered with comprehensive data insights into the progress

of a class or group," Mrs Grambower said.

"It allows teachers to track and analyse responses of students, identify students at risk of falling behind and also pin-point learning gaps.

Literacy for Kids is every teacher's dream because the content is aligned with the Australian curriculum and covers reading comprehension, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Teachers want every student to succeed in school and also enjoy the learning experience.

Literacy for Kids is a tool schools can embrace to ensure their students get ahead in literacy."

The program includes more than 1400 activities designed by professional educators that align with the Australian curriculum. A Learner Dashboard also motivates students to consume the content and apply themselves.

"The program delivers outstanding learning outcomes by switching on kids to

reading and literacy with topics that grab their interest," Mrs Grambower said.

We make learning literacy fun for kids so that they race onto the next topic.

Literacy for Kids is all about securing our children's future by ensuring they develop a foundation skill for life.

Deputy Principal at Eatons Hill State School, Ed Gordon said the school was "delighted" about the results from using Literacy for Boys.

"Most important was the anecdotal feedback from our students who were engaged and enjoying using the program," he said.

"The program allows for differentiated delivery of content in an enticing platform that has captured not only the interest of our boys, but equally our girls who enjoy the program just as much."

Visit [www.literacyforkids.com.au](http://www.literacyforkids.com.au) ■

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# Realistic Solutions for Healthy Sleep in Boarding:

## *What Does the Research Tell Us?*

### AUTHOR:

Tessa Benveniste, Gabrielle Rigney, David Mander & Madeline Sprajcer  
CQUniversity, Appleton Institute & The University of Western Australia

### WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT SLEEP?

Boarding schools, by definition, house students in residence either on campus or close by in residential facilities. This sleep environment is likely to be very different from their home environment – because of boarding house routines, less family support, and shared sleeping arrangements. For boarders, this occurs alongside

a variety of factors likely to impact sleep, such as developmental sleep changes, early school start times, digital media use, and social activities.

Young people who regularly obtain less than the recommended hours of sleep (9-11h/night for children aged 5-13 years, and 8-10h/night for adolescents aged 14-17 years) are more likely to be late for or absent from school and require more time for homework. Poor sleep is also linked with poorer general mental and physical health in adolescents, including higher rates of anxiety, mood disturbances, substance use and suicidality.

*What does this mean for boarding schools and students that live, learn and sleep on campus for 40 weeks each year?*

### What does the research tell us?

Unfortunately, not too much! While we know a lot about adolescent sleep generally, not a lot of research has been done on sleep in Australian boarding schools. One study on 603 students in a South Australian school found that boarders actually had 21 minutes more sleep per week on average than day students, and similar levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Reardon et al. 2021). However, for boarders, low total weekly sleep time, sleep disruption, and homesickness predicted higher psychological distress. This study identified routine, adaption to boarding, social connection, technology, and academic and extracurricular commitments as both facilitators and barriers to a good night's sleep.

It is important to recognise that having enough sleep is not enough – the quality of sleep is critical to support daytime alertness and health. A study including 168 boarding students at a school in Western Australia found that only a small proportion were satisfied with their sleep each night, with the majority reporting feeling tired or sleepy during the day (Mander et al 2021). These students also reported difficulties getting to sleep in the evening and awaking too early in the morning. This suggests that even when boarders get enough sleep, the quality of this sleep may be poor.

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT GOOD SLEEP IN BOARDING SCHOOLS?

1. **Staff training and sleep knowledge**  
Anecdotally, boarding staff are

generally aware of the importance of sleep from a personal, health, and developmental perspective. However, many report not having the training or skills to support their students in obtaining more sleep or better-quality sleep. Staff should thus be provided with;

- Detailed sleep education, including training on sleep hygiene
- Tailored sleep education and strategies that fit within their school/residential context.

2. **Daily routines**

In most boarding environments, school days are highly scheduled, including before-school, during school, after-school activities, dinner, study time, and lights out routines. Our current scientific understanding of the effects of scheduling on boarders is limited. However, evidence suggests that highly scheduled time can result in stress for adolescents – which may have unintended consequences for sleep. We therefore suggest;

- Students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on their daily routines
- Sufficient time be allocated for pre-bed wind down
- Different routines may be appropriate for different age groups, including higher levels of flexibility for older students.

3. **Sleep arrangements**

Whether coming from a home with their own room or one where they have been co-sleeping, almost all boarders will face a new sleeping arrangement when they attend boarding school. As evidence suggests that sleeping in a new environment results in poorer sleep, regardless of the specific sleeping arrangements, it is likely that boarders' sleep will be affected by this change. Some strategies schools could adopt to mitigate this are:

- Talk to students and families about their home sleeping arrangements and consider this while assisting students to transition into boarding.
- Allowing reasonable changes to students' sleeping environments to mimic home sleeping arrangements.

- Promoting a quiet and considerate sleep environment, ensuring that students share rooms/facilities with others on the same sleep schedule.

4. **Mental health and wellbeing**

We know that a bi-directional relationship exists between sleep and common mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. Yet, mental health and wellbeing in Australian boarding students is a complex and under-researched area. Some studies have suggested that feelings of anxiety and stress in boarders may be associated with a range of causes, including homesickness, peer relationships (particularly during transition to boarding), emotional instability, being in an unfamiliar environment, or not having personal/cultural needs met. However, without further attention and research these links are not conclusive. In the interim, schools could adopt the following preventative strategies;

- Formal and/or informal screening for sleep difficulties and for mental health indicators (with the support

- and advice of sleep and mental health experts)
- Providing a range of culturally relevant support services to students that are identified as having mental health or sleep concerns. ■

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Resources and Support  
<https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au>  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/healthy-lifestyle/sleep/sleep-teens>  
<https://headspace.org.au/>

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# Toto the Wellbeing Dog, *10 Years of Boarding*

Over the last two years we have all experienced the ups and downs of Covid-19 and the lockdowns. One thing is certain we need to continue to care for the students the best we can and that might mean having a pet in the boarding house. This could definitely bring a homely feeling to your boarding house.



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Michael Webb  
Year 8 Head of Division  
St Ignatius' College, Riverview

It is coming up to Toto's tenth birthday and ten years of Toto living in a boarding school. Toto's story started in the St Johns house living with 70 Year Ten boys. Her life would be different to most dogs but she quickly found out there was always a lot of other people around all

the time. Toto was a hit amongst the boys and she definitely brought a positive fun vibe to the boarding house. Wherever I was she would follow, wandering into someone's room seeking a friendly pat or kind word and probably some food!! She would frequent the rec room and play outside with the boys. Toto, each year has played a huge part in the boarder's life and can be seen in the mornings, before school and when the boys arrive back in the boarding house after school and when the boys are going to bed.

## THESE ARE THE REASON FOR A BOARDING HOUSE DOG

**Home:** A number of families have pets and dogs. Boarders may settle in more quickly and are more comfortable within themselves because a pet is around and it reminds the boarders of home.

**Comfort:** Over the years, when the boys are upset, Toto comes by for a pat, or she will jump on a chair with the boys and straight away the boy's mood changes and they feel happier and a sense of comfort and wellbeing. Dogs are great at doing that!

**Meetings:** There have been many times over the years when boarding meetings can be intense and Toto will stroll in and often go straight up to the boarders or take an empty "Up and Go" out of the bin and the boys will laugh, offering a well needed distraction. Often then the whole meeting turns into a funny situation

where the boys and I can relax, having a much needed smile and laugh. You can't be too serious all the time.

**Walks:** When the boarders need time out, they can take the dog for a walk. You will be surprised how happy the boys are when they come back from a walk and talk with Toto.

**Companionship:** Each year a few boarders will seek that companionship. They will feel comfortable and safe and build a connection with Toto.

**Staff:** If you are not a pet person try and change that mindset because our job is all about the boarders in our care. They will definitely benefit from a dog in the long run.

**Parents/Guardians:** Parents and Guardians want to see a home away from home experience. This could provide a peace of mind to all parties involved.

## HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT DOG

- Choose the right breed of dog. Toto is a Spoodle and she is great with kids. Spoodles are a hybrid of a Cocker Spaniel and Poodle. They are intelligent, friendly and active dogs which want to be part of all family activities.
- Choose a dog with a lot of energy
- Do your research, or ask me!

I hope, I may have convinced you all that a dog would be an asset to your boarding house and it will provide laughter, companionship and many funny stories amongst the boarders. ■



TOTO WITH MICHAEL WEBB



## THE SHOW WILL GO ON.

As we continue to operate through the pandemic, our Chartwells Team has remained diligent in providing quality, creative and tailored catering solutions to our partnerships and boarding communities.

Underpinned by our strength and stability, we have been investing in our culture and growing the strength of our people. We have combined our collective expertise to develop innovative solutions, not only to adapt to our current climate, but to prepare initiatives for the future.

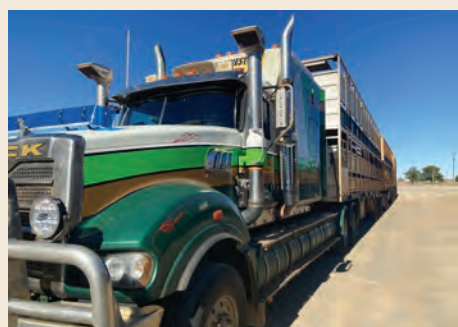
While we may not always be able to meet face to face, during these times, we are always available to offer support.

## Chartwells



GEORGE MICHAELIDES  
Director, Business Development  
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# Travelling to the Home Front

Although a cliché, boarding certainly should feel like a home away from home, however, the connection to the special place called home will never be too far from a boarder's mind. Home - the place where loved ones still belong, where the family pets await a pat, where adventures with past school friends will resume, or perhaps the dirt bike yearning to be kicked started once again – it's this and more that boarding students hold onto during their time at school and in their boarding houses.

AUTHOR:  
Jaye Beutel  
Director of Boarding  
Townsville Grammar School

A little on twenty years ago, I entered a boarding house for the first time as a bright-eyed 19-year-old undergrad, taking on a position as resident dorm master. I had little reference to the journey of a boarder, nor an understanding of what leaving home must have felt like for them. However, what I soon realised was that the most intriguing and passionate conversations with boarders were always about home.

At around the same time, in the early days of what has now become a wonderful career in boarding, a mentor and close friend told tales of travelling throughout Western Queensland visiting boarders and their families. It was these two experiences, listening to boarders and boarding mentors, which formed my understanding and appreciation of how special the bond is between boarding school, boarders, and home. This is a partnership founded on an unconditional connection between the parties, through appreciating and accepting that being a boarder was not a choice for many, and that being a boarder parent was fraught with many challenges – seen

and unseen. This certainly heightened the importance I have placed on relationships between families and school.

Fast forward 15 years, these formative experiences are at the epicentre of what I love about boarding, and being able to enjoy the boarding lifestyle as an educational and pastoral leader of an amazing boarding community here at Townsville Grammar School. While we have one of the most dynamic boarding programs in Queensland, it is the relationships which we encircle that truly make the boarding experience what it is.

Over the past few years, my wife Katie and my three young sons (all under eight), have packed up the camper trailer and hit the road during our school vacations, in a bid to visit our boarding families at their home front. The past June-July holidays saw us take our most recent trip, which didn't disappoint in the slightest. We meandered throughout Central and North Western Queensland, travelling a little more than 3700 kilometres over 15 glorious days, visiting towns and properties near Clermont, Alpha, Jericho, Barcaldine, Aramac, Longreach, Muttaborra, Winton, Cloncurry, Mount Isa, Julia Creek, Richmond and Charters Towers.

I must admit, the trip did look a lot smaller and achievable on my Google

Maps itinerary than I realised, however, once we reached the outskirts of our city limits, hammer down and the Spotify list blaring, the world opened up and the adventure took over. Time didn't seem to matter anymore, which was a wonderful feeling of "freedom" for a Director of Boarding, I must admit.

Our two-week journey was littered with amazing experiences, great conversations and wonderful moments where our proud boarders and families showcased their patch of paradise and all that their home place had to offer. These moments are so special to me, being able to experience, even if only briefly, a boarder's home-life. To that end, what is extraordinarily awesome about these types of tours, was that my boys also got the opportunity to learn more about the boarders they have so much to do with back at school. A very special experience for not just my own children, but the connections made between my family and that of our boarding families, in my opinion, is strengthened through these shared experiences - something for which I am truly grateful.

It is easy, as a teaching and/or boarding professional, to excuse yourself from work during the school holidays. No doubt it is a great time to regroup and recharge after a hard term of supporting students both in and outside of the classroom to achieve their personal best. However, there is something so enriching about dedicating a small piece of time to get out and see parts of the country where our boarders roam. While travel has been a luxury for many in recent times, taking the moment when it presents itself is even more rewarding.

At TGS we often use the term "Grammar Family", not as a throwaway line, but one that has more than 130 years of connections which have built a real sense of belonging and understanding as to what it means to be a Grammarian. North Queensland is home for many of our boarders and their families, and to that end, it is country that we identify with as "Grammar Country". It is our home away from home. Where we meet current, past, and future Grammarian families. A landscape and way of life that we identify with through the generations of boarders and day scholars who now proudly call themselves Grammarians. ■







# Down The Track Youth Enterprises

## *Engaging Young People Differently in the Red Dust Classroom*

Located in the small remote community of Lake Cargelligo in the Central West of New South Wales, Down The Track Youth Enterprises is changing and in some cases saving the lives of disengaged young people.

AUTHOR:  
Lana Masterton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Down The Track

Since its inception in 2016, Down The Track has been helping change the way youth work is delivered to our most vulnerable kids who have the odds stacked against them. Based on the tried and tested methodology of Back-Track Youth Works in Armidale, Down The Track is a founding member of the Tracker Network, a network of like-minded, values aligned initiatives working with young people falling through the cracks.

Lake Cargelligo is isolated from many basic services and is ranked in the most

disadvantaged postcodes by the Dropping Off The Edge Report. Many young people here face family violence, generational unemployment, unsafe home environments including overcrowding, homelessness and poor mental health and are likely to turn to drugs, alcohol and crime. For the first time in around five years the area is experiencing decent rain, slowly breaking the devastating drought which has created very trying times for the whole community.

Down The Track works with some of the most marginalised young people doing what is deemed the impossible – engaging the disengaged – by providing diversionary activities, training, education, employment opportunities, and connection to country and community. Down The Track is the only organisation in the area seeking to provide

additional pathways for young people through tailored education and vocational training programs. When Down The Track first started five years ago, each week several young people were being driven out to Wagga Wagga to go into remand on charges, at high cost. In contrast, there have been only two local youth lock ups in the past five years. The Registrar of Lake Cargelligo Local Court and the Officer in Charge of Lake Cargelligo Police Station attribute this to the success of Down The Track.

The aim of each day is simple: keep our kids alive, out of jail and thriving. We do this through mentoring and support and providing opportunities that allow our young people to reach their greatest potential.

The kids that Down The Track work with are aged from 10 to 20 years old. Down



The Track receives referrals from juvenile justice, police, local schools, NSW Department of Family and Community Services, as well as family and self-referrals. Each participant is brought in based on a needs assessment, looking at multiple and intersecting risk factors, with disengagement from any form of education, training or employment being a key selection criteria. There are currently 40 young people enrolled with around another 20 on the waiting list.

The key to the success of Down The Track over the past five years has been the ability to engage and develop connection.

Down The Track works with young people holistically. We know that a young person will struggle to engage with school or training when their basic needs aren't being met, which is why we have hygiene packs and blankets available, no questions asked, as well as providing six meals per week, clothing, school supplies, driving lessons, and just being a safe place for them to go.

The organisation also takes a long-term and flexible approach – rather than a short-term program - Down The Track understands that keeping kids engaged requires ongoing support and nurturing, consistently showing up and meeting young people where they are. As such, Down The Track works with young people as long as they need, guiding them to define and achieve their goals.



One of the ways Down The Track does this is through a core program called Trackin' Good. Trackin' Good is Down The Track's social enterprise that allows young people to gain skills, experience and employment in a supported and nurturing environment. The social enterprise has two streams – catering and agriculture. Through this program Down The Track has been able to work with young people to re-enroll in school or education of their choice, create tools that allow the young person to take control of their own futures, all while significantly decreasing youth crime and incarceration.

During the last 12 months Covid restrictions have made it extremely difficult to live a normal life. The isolation that is normal for the people of the community has been amplified and there are not many services left standing. Down the Track hasn't let these devastating times get in the way of crusading for young people. The team show up every day with passion and purpose to ensure no kid gets left behind and no kid falls through the cracks.

In 2020 Down The Track was awarded NSW Youth Service of the Year for its outstanding efforts at the Annual Youth Action Awards. This was a momentous achievement for Down The Track as other contenders included some well-funded and better known youth services from all over the state. Although this was a welcome recognition, awards are not

how Down The Track measures success. Rather, we measure success by how well our young people are tracking; by how well we are keeping kids alive, out of jail and thriving.

### Case study...

Success is about this young person who is 16. He's dropped out of school and is couch surfing between three towns. Every second day he's legging it from the local coppers. His drug use, driving unlicensed and illegal hunting have brought this kid under notice. He's looking down the barrel of lock up...

Unexpectedly one afternoon, this young fella, we'll call him Joe, strolls into my office with a fist full of tickets, a court attendance notice and a truck load of attitude.

Joe says – "I hear you help kids that get into trouble and I'm in a bit myself".

I had no idea the impact on my life this kid would have. It's a special thing to watch someone turn their life around and know you had some influence.

I knew we had to do something drastic and quickly to keep this kid out of lock up.

The next day we headed out for two full on weeks of mustering and lamb marking.

Now you learn a lot about yourself when you're mustering...





Firstly, you learn how patient you are.

Secondly, you learn what levels of tolerance you have.

And third, you learn that your actions influence the behaviour and direction of the mob.

Now the same rules apply in real life not just in the paddock!

By the third day this young fella had completely changed his approach and we penned up around 20 minutes quicker. Without even realising it this kid had just added to his self-regulation toolkit.

This was a moment of impact! Changing the approach to change the outcome.

After mustering came lamb marking. I was on throwing and needling duties and the young person was on tagging and marking.

The lambs were bloody massive, it was physical work and every mob seemed bigger then the last!

We'd yarn about the tough issues and always find time for a laugh.

By the end of the two weeks we'd learnt so much not only about marking lambs but about ourselves....

We were both pushed outside our comfort zones, but this is the beauty of this work, it challenges you to find that extra something you have deep down.

On Friday afternoon we were driving back home. Joe turned down a Johnny Cash song he'd put on the stereo – completely unexpected song selection for a 16 year old! – and said “That was awesome, huh!” The look on his face was priceless. As smelly, dirty, tired and sore as I was sitting next to him it was one of those moments where I wouldn't change a thing.


There have been days driving back in from these trips that I have been so sore it hurt to change gears; that same soreness puts everything into perspective.


Over the next four years Joe fully emersed himself in Down The Track. He re-enrolled in school, stayed out of trouble, obtained his licence and even completed a police leadership program! This young fella is now a role model to our younger kids and is currently working as a jackeroo in far north Queensland.

This is just one story. Unfortunately for our young people most share a similar start. Down The Track is critical in creating change for our community, that's why we show up and roll up our sleeves and tirelessly work towards a better tomorrow for our young people. ■

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## The Importance of Colour *in the Boarding House*

In architectural paint coatings, Light Reflectance Value (LRV) is a measure of visible and usable light that is reflected from a surface when illuminated by a light source. The measurement is most commonly used by design professionals, such as colour consultants, architects and interior designers.

AUTHOR:  
Chris Suter  
Business Development Manager  
Architectural Coatings – Taubmans  
[csuter@ppg.com](mailto:csuter@ppg.com)

### Every Colour has an LRV.

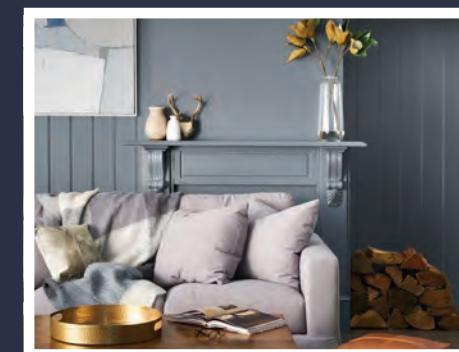
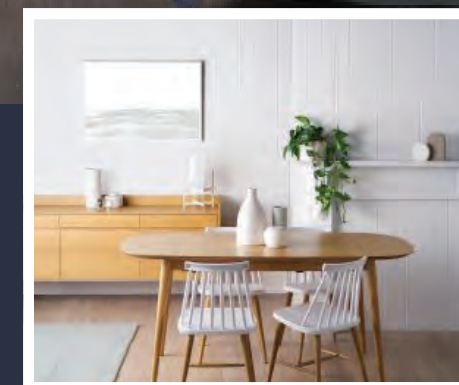
The Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of a colour indicates the amount of visible light that a colour will reflect. Black has a light reflectance value of 0% and absorbs all light. These painted surfaces are consequently very dark and can get very hot when used externally. In contrast, white has a light reflectance value of 100% and keeps a building light and cool. All colours fit within these two extremes.

Mid strength to dark colours are not suitable for some exterior surfaces and if used may cause damage to the substrate, such as warping, checking and premature failure. Painters should always check with the substrate supplier prior to commencing any work to ensure colour selections fit within their guidelines. Hume doors and JH Cladding systems will be common suppliers. The



use of these colours may void any warranties provided by substrate manufacturers.

Another consideration is “LRV and Visual Contrast” within a living area. It is important to provide a colour contrast between different surfaces for people with a visual impairment. There is now legislation in place to ensure this. A contrast of 30 points is needed on many new and repaint projects, including Government, Health and Education projects. Contrasting elements may include obstructions in corridors such as columns, handrails & doors and frames where the colour should be sufficiently different from the background wall colour. ■







# How do we Achieve a High Standard of Cleaning Within a Reasonable Budget?

During COVID-19 most schools have increased their frequency of cleaning, especially the cleaning of high touch surfaces. In large facilities such as boarding schools, these extra costs have significantly increased the expenditure in the Facilities and Maintenance departments. If you haven't reviewed your cleaning scope and costs for some time, this may serve as a timely reminder to review and ensure you have a sustainable plan and budget for 2022, as you could find some significant improvement without impeding on quality with the right approach.

AUTHOR:  
Troy Stahlhut  
General Manager  
Cleanworks

## TIME FOR REVIEW? – FIVE AREAS TO FOCUS

Here are the top five areas for Business Managers and Facilities Managers to review:

### SCOPE OF WORKS

What is a cleaning scope of works? A clear and defined set of areas to be cleaned, tasks and frequency of these tasks for your site.

Does each cleaner have a defined scope of works with time allocated to each task? How

are the Boarding Houses being managed?

A good reason to review the cleaning scope is that tasks and frequencies can change and creep in over time – this is what in the cleaning industry we refer to as scope creep. Often long-term cleaners create relationships with teachers and heads of departments and without you knowing additional requests are made directly to the cleaners. Sometimes cleaners are doing tasks that they should not even be doing.

Ask each cleaner to detail the following for their shifts:

- Buildings and rooms
- Tasks
- Task frequency: (daily, weekly, monthly, holiday cleaning)
- Time allocated to each room and task
- Travel time to sign in and out (if applicable)
- Travel time to and from cleaning room

- Travel time in between buildings
- Include an additional section "extra task", you'll be surprised to find out what additional tasks have crept in.

### SCHOOL SURVEY

How often do you inspect the cleaning to get an overview of what is really happening?

Sending a survey to Teachers or Heads of Boarding to get their feedback on standards and what they think is being completed and not completed. As cleaning is very subjective and sometimes the college staff don't understand the scope of works, be prepared to field some of the comments. This will give you a current overview of the cleaning and perhaps some common denominators of areas that need to be improved or addressed as part of your scope review.

### PRODUCTIVITY

Once you have gathered the scope of works and survey from the staff, review the information and analyse the productivity. You will find you have slight differences for rooms and tasks per cleaner but there should be some average times.

- Is there someone doing more or less?
- Are there opportunities for someone being more productive to teach someone less productive a different method of doing the task?
- Do you need to move the cleaners around, a change is as good as a holiday and sometimes a fresh set of eyes in an area can help improve your standards?
- Do some tasks need to be removed from the scope?
- Does the frequency of some tasks need to be increased or decreased?

### EQUIPMENT

The right type of equipment can improve the productivity rates. This is important as often allow more work to be undertaken without addition cost creep.

- How do cleaners move and collect the rubbish between buildings?
- How do the cleaners move between buildings?
- Do you upgrade equipment regularly so that it's working efficiently?
- Do the cleaners need more equipment so that they are not moving large items between buildings?
- Is there are piece of equipment that can assist with doing the task more efficiently? E.g., Push vacuum for halls or theatres, or battery-operated devices that minimise time finding power points. It all adds up.
- Is there an opportunity for robotic scrubbers or vacuums in the basketball courts?

### ROSTER

Look at the site with a fresh set of eyes? Once you have a new scope of works and times against this scope, pretend you have a new team and create a new roster and assign the staff to this roster. You may find some opportunities here:

- Group buildings so that cleaners travel is minimised
- Do certain cleaners suit different buildings or tasks better?
- Are there opportunities to change tasks from night to day, day time work

is often at a lower cost

- Are there opportunities to change engagement – to full time, split shift, take into account meal breaks etc

### SCHOOL CLEANING EXPERTS

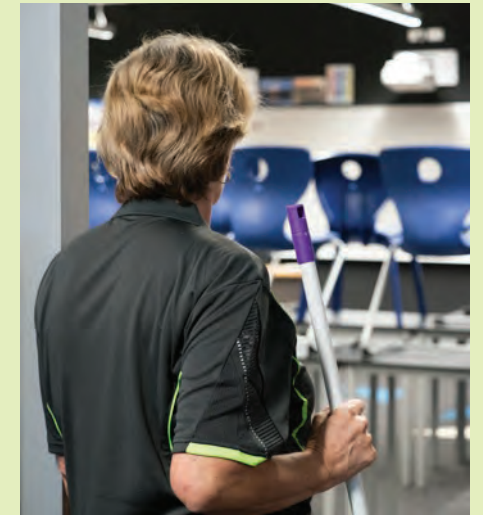
If it has been a while since you have reviewed your cleaning its safe to say you will probably find a minimum five per cent of savings on what you are spending currently.

If you need assistance in conducting a full review of your cleaning, Cleanworks can take the process out of your hands and do it for you.

As a platinum supporter of ABSA we are happy to support you with any questions that you may have such as:

- quality and business improvements,
- industry trends around covid clean and
- any other specialist questions you may have

Please feel free to contact me, Troy Stahlhut phone:0421 752 273 or gm@cleanworks.com.au ■





# A Conversation *We Should All Be Having*

AUTHOR:  
Antonia Anderson Black  
Boarder  
St Michael's Collegiate

## GARLIC BREAD...

Soft dough seeped with butter.  
Heavenly flavours oozed from those  
pungent cloves.  
Just a sprinkle of herbs, lightly dusting  
the top...  
An aromatic reminder of love from the  
chef's tender hand.  
Perhaps a touch of Italy's Renaissance  
magic, still alive in an edible form?  
Warm sunlight streams through the  
windows. The roses might be relishing  
the startling heat of these last days of  
summer...  
but I'm a tender soul.  
A soul more suited to a cosy attic and a  
cup of tea...  
But I don't mind the rays of warmth  
upon me, because I'm in a special  
space...  
a space that brings people together...  
A dining room.  
Whether it be a pair of lonely artists...  
musing about their day's work over a  
cold bowl of mushroom soup...  
or  
...a university college dining hall filled  
with 500 young people each with their  
own progressive prerogative.  
Dining rooms are...  
forgotten heroes,  
of societal change.  
Food relaxes people and tongues wag.  
But as the sun sets,  
hearts and minds turn to the deeper

truths of the world.  
Conversation is the beginning of all  
change.  
That night in my boarding house dinner  
was spaghetti bolognese and garlic  
bread.  
An absolute favourite of mine.  
It started with a simple word of praise  
to the chef.  
An idle comment on her behalf.  
The door had opened to a conversation  
we should all be having.  
Discussing the problems with the  
paediatric mental health system in  
Australia.  
The system tries to hide its faults. Lies  
and guilty coverups abound.  
But there is a brutal reality for Australia  
soon to face.  
Our teens and children are suffering.  
Saying that you care is not enough  
anymore.  
Politicians signing useless healthcare  
reforms like you'd sign a cast,  
It's not a broken ankle,  
Society certainly won't be giving you  
crutches.  
I personally know all too well the  
suffering.  
Psychologists with waiting lists, miles  
long.  
Other who currently aren't taking new  
patients.  
That 'new patient' quickly will become,  
a far more serious case  
Left untreated...  
it will end...  
in the worst of places...  
Doctors don't leave cancer patients to  
die,  
But mental health?  
"We're underfunded" they say.  
Well, time is up and that's not good  
enough anymore.

If only youth in crisis had another place  
to turn...  
An adult whom they trusted, perhaps?  
Parents are exhausted and overworked  
already.  
It's time our education system...  
...took these youth seriously  
If something goes wrong...  
Don't make it number one to blame the  
child for what has occurred  
Instead consider...  
"What could I do to help this child?"  
Too often teachers victimise the sufferer,  
...as if acting out is a crime.  
How can a small child know what else  
to do when they are hurting inside?  
All I can do is offer words of comfort to  
our lovely boarding house chef.  
"One day the system will be improved,"  
I say...  
...but my voice falters.  
Sitting there in the dining room...  
Talking to our chef,  
My heart can't help but shed a tear.  
I always knew that others had suffered  
in this broken system, but to hear from  
another...  
it was the same for her son.  
Was it a voice of comfort?  
Almost.  
It was proof I was not alone.  
No one should ever feel alone.  
But more than comfort...  
...it stirred me up with newfound anger!  
How can our government be so unin-  
vested in looking after the mental  
health of our youth?  
They are our country's future after all.  
As I bite into the warm buttery garlic  
bread,  
It's aromatic flavour filling my mouth,  
I ask myself...  
"What matters?"  
This conversation comes to mind. ■



# Welcome *Ken James*

Letz Live is delighted to  
announce that Ken James  
has joined the team as  
General Manager. Based  
in the UK, he has 27 years  
of teaching and school  
leadership experience in  
the UK and Australia.

AUTHOR:  
Nick Hare  
CEO and Founder  
Letz Live



After graduating from the uni-  
versity of Leeds with a first with  
honours in Law, Ken spent a gap  
year working at St Patrick's Col-  
lege, Goulburn before returning to the  
university of Cambridge to study Maths  
and Education. He was appointed Head  
of Academic Administration at Cran-  
leigh School, before being appointed  
as a Housemaster at Downside School.  
He then went on to be the inaugural  
Director of Co-curricular at St John's  
School, Leatherhead, before taking on  
the headship of Fyling Hall School, in  
North Yorkshire.

It was here he was first introduced to  
Letz Live when Fyling Hall accepted a gap

placement via the company, a partnership  
which continues to this day.

After leading Fyling Hall for five years, he  
moved to Australia, initially as the Assis-  
tant Director of Glengarry in Kangaroo  
Valley, the outdoor education setting of  
the Scots College, Sydney. Ken was then  
appointed Head of Senior School and Dep-  
uty Headmaster of Cranbrook, a leading  
independent day and boarding school  
in Sydney.

On his return to the UK Ken spent five  
years as Headmaster of Red House, a lead-  
ing independent school in the North East of  
England. It is from here he joins Letz Live.

Ken has taken responsibility for gap stu-  
dents in a number of boarding schools. He  
has a deep understanding of boarding and  
is excited by the prospect of working with  
hundreds of gap students across the globe.  
His experience as a senior leader, school  
inspector and governor of two independent  
schools will ensure gap assistants from  
Letz Live fulfil their roles in schools with  
distinction, whilst developing personally  
during their time overseas. ■

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# Parental Influence on Motivation and Engagement at Boarding School

Research on parameters of motivation and engagement and their impact on academic and non-academic outcomes as well as the well-being of students learning and living at their school has been a prominent area of research within the past decade. Amongst the factors influencing motivation and engagement, the trilogy of parents, teachers and peers has been highlighted in the extant literature. This article aims to offer a more nuanced insight into the specific influence of parents on such parameters at boarding school.

AUTHOR:  
Martin Rein  
Doctoral Candidate, Faculty of Arts,  
Social Sciences and Humanities,  
University of Wollongong

## RATIONALE

Asserting that families are the most immediate nucleus of microsystems for development, Lam et al. (2012) supported by McCarthy's (2013) study on parental choices for boarding school, advance the claim that parents are the first and most influential role models for their children. In their capacity as adult models of engagement (Lawson et al., 2013), they can condense the risk for disengagement by augmenting school satisfaction, engagement and academic functioning. This is grounded on a quality relationship that is underpinned by tangible values on learning. In doing so, parents support belonging (Allen et al., 2018), independence and encourage social competence (Wolters & Taylor, 2012). Moreover, in their study on social relationships and support in boarding students, Pfeiffer et al., (2016) found that schools can influence parents' behaviour and so can parents influence the climate of the school. This is largely enhanced by Pianta et al. (2012), Raftery et al. (2012) and McCarthy (2013) who argue that parents and families can have a powerful influence on the climate of the institution through active participation.

## The importance of parental involvement

The body literature concedes that parental support enhancing motivation and engagement is of fundamental nature. Facilitating a positive student-teacher interaction through participation, parents may display higher or lower dimensions of involvement. Moreover, investigating aspects of efficacy, Bandura (1998) asserts that a high level of parental efficacy actively supports competencies in their children. This is opposed to some degree by Bempechat et al. (2012) who state that not all parental involvement enhances learning. Their study on parental influences surfaced that parental involvement is sustain through parenting styles, relationships and support. Further, the transmission of educational values and the building of social capital mediates resiliency. A reaffirming, positive and caring family environment can therefore shield against adversity (Bempechat et al., 2012). It is important to note that, through their support, parents (and peers) may compensate for a poor teacher-student relationship (Samuelsen, 2012). More broadly, Raftery et al. (2012) state that a family-school partnership is characterised by (a) the basic responsibility to focus on the child, (b) a shared responsibility, (c) an emphasis on working together and (d) a solution-focused approach. This is articulated through an understanding of what parental involvement entails and how to build a culture of engagement in the context of the school environment. These authors as well as Wentzel (2012) highlight a family-home partnership that could be

achieved by dedicating staff and resources to activities, providing training for staff as well as reaching out into the life and work of those parents who are disengaged and appear hard to approach.

## The impact of parental involvement

In recognition of the interrelationship between engagement and well-being influenced by parents, teachers, peers and the environment, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) restate that vigorous academic progress will not materialise in a climate of conflict and alienation from school. This has more intense effects on the well-being of students who reside a significant proportion of the year at their school. Petriwskyi's (2010) and Christenson and Reschly's (2012) research on these topics established that parents may become less involved, more assertive, and even coercive, causing their children to progress at a slower pace. Thus, different modes of parental involvement have a direct impact on a child's motivation, whether by means of teaching academic skills, perceptions of competence or enhancing attitudes and values to engage (Raftery et al., 2012; Wentzel, 2012). With the intention to support their child's residential education, this incorporates behavioural, intellectual and personal dimensions. It may, for example, involve reinforcing learning through advocacy and collaboration with community stakeholders (Anderman et al., 2012). Equally relevant to boarding, support may include a recognition of disengaged parents who fail to contribute in meaningful ways to their

children's education, or of parents who face barriers to do so.

## Discussion

Although students can successfully strive in the diverse environment of boarding by forming strong relationships, they may prove not to be productive in all their facets (Pfeiffer et al., 2016; White, 2004). Resulting from motivational practices, disengagement can be amplified by disaffection which is generated by unsupportive interpersonal interactions (Bass, 2014; Hopkins, 2012), acceptance of failure, feelings of helplessness (Green, Martin, Marsh, 2005) as well as unproductive self-perceptions, triggered by adult expectations. In boarding, motivational needs can be met by an environment that is homely, supportive, cultural and stable. Such an environment demands parental participation whose behaviour is closely associated with that of their child. Parents need to display maturity, for example, in coping with their own problems (Weber, 1972). Thus, the reciprocal and bidirectional nature of parent-child interactions is delineated into positive child management skills and coercive parental practices (Hart & Risley, 1995, as cited in Sanders, 1999). Practices include, physical distance, reflection on efforts (often perceived as granted) and a desire for support from family members (Mander, 2012). Furthermore, boarders who grew up in an unstructured, unsupportive environment are more likely to prosper in a home away from home that provides structure, support, social and cultural values (Bass, 2014). Hereby, Downs (2001) found that the boarding staff member becomes the most influential adult outside the family who may decrease anxiety and tension over time (Anderson, 2005).

## SUMMARY

This article has discussed parental influences on motivation and engagement. It highlighted that the home environment, including parenting styles, appear to be the most influential factor in determining success with strong relevance to residential education and staff who act in 'loco parentis' (Bass, 2014). By setting limits and invoking appropriate boundaries, an authoritative style of parenting will likely result in relationships characterised by care, independence, and the social competence to express one's own viewpoint. This style of authority includes students into decision-making and explains

reasons. Further, affection, involvement and permission also contribute to relationships (Bempechat et al., 2012). With view on outcomes of goal setting, Anderman et al. (2012) support this notion of authority by adding improved self-identity, reduced psychological stress and delinquency. Further outcomes include self-management of unsupervised time and direction of pursuits. In sum, it is widely accepted that parental influence is crucial for the well-being of boarding students with focus on academic and non-academic outcomes. In broader terms, Sanders (1995) and, specific to relationships in boarding, Pfeiffer et al. (2016) suggest that parents influence their child's motivation and engagement through motivational practices. These include, nurturing intrinsic motivation, preferences, enthusiasm, enjoyment, and interest in schoolwork. ■

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# Reaching for the Stars

With the introduction of the new QCE system in 2019 and 2020 - what is now just the QCE system - it was abundantly clear that the rigour and challenge that Queensland students were about to encounter was a significant increase from what had previously been the norm. At St Joseph's Nudgee College we were already well positioned to be responsive to this need with our Reach for the Stars boarding academic support program.



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St Joseph's Nudgee College

As it was, Reach for the Stars was a way for boarding students who are far away from their homes and parents or guardians to access academic support from experienced and leading teachers.

By being in boarding, a student has the opportunity to gain an academic advantage. Not only is there a consistent study routine that provides a sense of predictability and organisation, but there is a plethora of academic support - namely, expert staff.

Before Covid hit our shores, subject masterclasses were already occurring within the boarding village, and particularly within the English and Languages faculty. These masterclasses provide an opportunity for an expert teacher to facilitate a workshop to support students in their

assessment. A typical session might look something like:

- recapping the assessment task
- clarifying the marking guide, so that students have clarity about the key elements of their response
- discussing model responses, and
- providing opportunities for collaboration.

Now, all of these things constitute effective teaching practice in the classroom. But being not just a school with boarding, but a boarding school, we know that we need to support students whose parents are both near and far. This is where the current model has taken off, as since Covid and the rise of GoogleMeet, Zoom, or whatever your teleconference tool of choice is, the opportunity to allow day boys a window into the experience of boarding at Nudgee has been possible. As a result, all have been able to see the benefits.

Across Semester One, we have had masterclasses across every faculty in the school. For example, a recent masterclass in preparation for a Year 8 Humanities Source Analysis assessment amassed a

packed room on-campus at Nudgee, and more than 80 day students signed in via GoogleMeet.

By participating in these masterclass sessions, whether you are a boarder in the room, or a day boy on a GoogleMeet, or even someone who finds they need to listen to things more than once for you to really take it in, students are able to extend their knowledge and understanding. Our model better replicates study in tertiary settings, and the resources that are created as a result allows students to extend themselves, and students who need support are able to gain additional assistance - often, simply by rewatching the masterclass, a luxury that is not available with in-class lessons.

By controlling the pace of learning, students develop greater academic independence. This valuable skill feeds into one of the strategic goals of our school: to champion a lifelong learning culture. We are not just supporting those who need support, and allowing those with confidence to extend and challenge themselves; we are making it clear to

all students the benefits and importance of taking every opportunity to seek both feedback and improvement.

The Reach for the Stars program is but one arrow in the quiver of the Boarding Academic Program. Nightly study is structured by empowering students to make choices that will benefit their learning. The use of our amazing DJ. Hanly Learning Centre and Treacy precinct allows students to study within their cohorts, in a variety of rooms. Students have the capacity to work in a quiet workspace, or be in a collaborative room where peers can work together to support each other. All of these spaces are supervised by our boarding staff, as well as having access to our 'Reach for the Stars' teaching staff on the ground floor of the library for subject specific assistance.

Complimenting the nightly homework or revision help are sessions targeted at life beyond school. A recent example is a workshop on creating a LinkedIn profile. This included having professional headshots taken by the school photographer, and designated support in navigating

the LinkedIn platform for the first time. There have also been guest speakers - often Nudgee College Old Boys - to give students insight into what life in different industries and professions look like.

With all this said, it is important to remember that learning goes beyond the Learning Centre of a night time. We are fortunate to have a number of staff members from Nudgee's Connors Centre for Skills and Training with us, so that students who study subjects like Industrial Technology Skills or Engineering (Metal Fabrication) can continue working on their projects as well. Additionally, it has been pleasing to see many Year 10 and 11 students become involved in a series of Community Projects which has begun with building props for the College musical.

Nudgee Boarding is a place where boys only need to put their hand up to seek help and challenge themselves; with the excellent support in place, students have every opportunity to attain a real 'academic advantage'.





# Ballarat Grammar

## Post-COVID Cure

This article reflects my values as a House Master and my willingness to increase student capacity and build culture.

AUTHOR:  
Brendon Gilbert  
Head of Wigan House  
Ballarat Grammar

It was a relief to put a full stop to 2020. Most educators would concur that the Zoom classes and meetings were mentally draining, keeping students connected and providing the necessary support from afar was challenging, then managing one's own personal circumstances was similar to a war zone at times. Furthermore, being part of a Boarding Community added another layer to a highly-strung environment. Trying to maintain a sense of connection between the Boarding House members was challenging. The last thing that most students wanted to do of an evening was catch up via a screen. However, online cooking challenges, parent

and child events and online trivia captured parts of the Boarding Community. It wasn't the same as face to face connection, and we longed for our liberties to return.

The 2021 school year commenced with great excitement as our Boarding Community finally reunited after a disconnected 2020. The students were joyous with the prospects of being afforded the pre-COVID opportunities such as co-curricular activities, inter-house competitions and weekend community activities. Despite the enthusiasm from the Boarding Community, there appeared to be a COVID shadow. Some unwanted behaviours had formed into habits during the learning from the home period. Post-COVID symptoms included students being unorganised, disengaged, apathetic and thoughtless.

Three weeks into the school year and the vibe in the Boarding House was off; it was

not what I had come to expect over the past four years. Generally, the students were falling short of expectations on most fronts. In addition, some of our most senior students and leaders of the House had made startling choices that significantly let themselves and their peers down. What was transpiring was uncharacteristic of our House; the choices and actions of many students were starting to shift our proud character.

The identity of Wigan – a Boarding House within Ballarat Grammar, which is home to 50 adolescent males from Years 7 – 12, centres around family, inclusivity, care and giving. For years this has been lived out through the students' actions intrinsically linked to Wigan's core values of being selfless, honest and courageous. As their House Master, I have been in a unique and privileged position to see students grow from boys to outstanding young men of belief, hope, passion and character. Three weeks into the school year, post a five-day snap lockdown by the Victorian Government, and I feared that we would be heading down a slippery slope if nothing changed fast.

For years we have started our nightly meeting with 'positives' and 'areas to focus on'. Students would often recognise each other's achievements during this time of the evening, often celebrating their successes in all school life areas. The beauty of starting our nightly meeting this way is that we regularly celebrate an eclectic mix of achievements. The celebration of these passions and strengths has reinforced the inclusive nature of our House. It has provided an invitation to each young man to fearlessly pursue what they find joy in doing, knowing that acceptance awaits.

The next phase of the nightly meeting has often involved a House staff member challenging students' behaviours. These behaviours centre around punctuality, organisation, academic habits, respecting their environment and being considerate of their peers. I have noticed that this goes in cycles; for weeks, the House appears to be in top shape, the students are actively adding value to the life of the House, and they are doing great things within the school. However, there are patches where our students are exhausted, their decision making is off, they get behind with their schoolwork, and suddenly, they feel anxious. Holding students accountable, along with appropriate support mechanisms, has typically been enough to get students back on track. However, this time it was not the case. Something needed to change.

During our staff days at the beginning of the year, guest speaker Chris Harte from Unstuck Learning Design told a story that resonated with me. While Chris was consulting at a British secondary school, the Headmaster received a phone call about unruly behaviour on the school bus. Chris asked the Headmaster how he was going to manage this situation. The Headmaster immediately called a 'Community Meeting' where the School Community gathered. There were three guiding principles to this meeting: Appreciation, Stand and Apology. In this meeting, community members stated what they were appreciative of, any unacceptable behaviours that negatively contributed to their community, and what they were sorry for doing. In this instance, a student made a stand who witnessed the unruly behaviour on the bus and several students apologised who let themselves down on the bus ride to school.

The telling part of this approach was the student agency calling out inappropriate actions. I have long considered that leading a Boarding House is to be done in partnership with the students, particularly the Year 12s. I see this as a team approach because the senior students hold social capital within the community; their younger counterparts idolise them. Therefore, their actions and words have a profound impact on the culture and direction of the House. Partway into Term One, it was time to shake up how we addressed the actions that were eroding the culture of our House and what it stood for.

I have a proud group of Year 12 students who take their responsibility as leaders very



seriously. They were hurting. Knowing the House's reputation was taking a hit within the community because many of our young men exhibited post-COVID symptoms was disheartening. The first step was for all students to stand in front of their peers and apologise. They owned their choices that had negatively impacted the House. It started with our most senior students recognising their mistakes and quickly filtered through the rest of the House as 35 courageous young men were honest with themselves by accepting responsibility for their choices. We drew a line in the sand.

From that moment, we have started every nightly meeting with an appreciation, stand and apology. The main difference in this approach is that it is student-led and student-centred. We continue to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our students daily; however, the students challenge any areas of concern. There now exists an environment where students

from all year levels have the confidence to respectfully stand up to actions that go against our House values. Furthermore, the most powerful aspect of this process is the apology when the students who have had a stand against them recognise the impact of their choices and take responsibility for them.

I lead a Boarding House that comprises 50 teenage boys. Although we have a system in place that empowers students to have a voice and take the lead in the direction of the House, I accept that our young men will continue to fall short at times on their journey into manhood. It's never smooth sailing for too long. However, there is great learning and culture building in the student group respectfully challenging unacceptable behaviours. The appreciation, stand, and apology approach has gone a long way to curing our COVID shadow, and I am excited to see how this progresses as the year unfolds. ■



# Expand your STEAM Skills and be *Immersed at CASE Ocean School*

CASE Ocean School is a new 12-day Australian study program providing students an all-encompassing STEAM experience focusing on marine biology, ocean ecology, cutting-edge research, and technologies. CASE Ocean School inspires a new generation of STEAM-skilled leaders and is recommended to all students, especially those with a passion for adventure and for those looking to kick-start their career and prepare for life in the 21st century.

AUTHOR:  
Naomi Donohue  
Director, Program Management  
Actura

Stop. Take five deep breaths. During these trying times it's important to step back and breathe. However, have you ever wondered where that oxygen comes from? Surprisingly, three of those five breaths were produced in the ocean. The ocean's marine plants and microorganisms known as phytoplankton

produce up to 70 percent of Earth's oxygen. During this important process of photosynthesis, these ocean dwelling organisms also act as Earth's largest carbon sink, capturing and storing more than a quarter of the carbon dioxide that humans put into the air. Do I have your attention yet?

The ocean is Earth's most valuable asset and our greatest natural resource. Covering 71 percent of Earth's surface, the 'big blue' is our life support system. The ocean plays a central

role in regulating Earth's climate by storing solar radiation and distributing heat and moisture around the globe. Moreover, who likes prawns on the 'barbie' at Christmas? A tasty tradition for many but according to the United Nations Organisation, over three billion people worldwide rely on seafood as their main source of protein

Surprisingly, we know so little about the ocean and it remains the last

unknown frontier. Currently 80 percent of the ocean is unmapped, unobserved, and unexplored. NASA Oceanographer Gene Feldman claims, "with all the technology that we have today -- satellites, buoys, underwater vehicles and ship tracks -- we have better maps of the surface of Mars and the Moon than we do the bottom of the ocean. We know very, very little about most of the ocean. This is especially true for the middle and deeper parts far away from the coasts."

Where do our young people fit into this story? We hear it time and time again, "today's youth are tomorrow's leaders" and this could not be truer in terms of the ocean's future and ultimately the health and wellbeing of mankind. With the population growing rapidly, we are putting unfathomable pressure on the ocean and its resources. Overfishing, climate change, pollution and habitat destruction are serious threats. Even phytoplankton (those carbon capturing, oxygen releasing microorganisms) are feeling the pressure, unable to keep up with the volume of our carbon emissions. Unfortunately, the ocean is facing a grim future. Today's teens will be the ones to step-up and create global change by implementing innovative solutions effecting the way we see, treat, and utilise the ocean. Could this be your students?

Are there actually any jobs in the ocean industry? You will be pleased to know that the ocean economy is dubbed 'the new economic frontier' and is one of the world's fastest growing industries. Long gone are the days of traditional marine biology. Now, the ocean is tied to a group of interconnected industries which is rapidly expanding and changing. These industries offer the most amazing, rewarding, and exciting STEAM careers where improving and preserving ocean health meets long term economic viability. They promise wealth and unquestionable potential for boosting economic growth and innovation. In recent years, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development stated "conservatively, ocean-based industries' gross value added could double in size by 2030, reaching around USD three trillion and are anticipated to employ over 40 million people".

So where to from here? Introducing the newest study program by the California Association of STEAM Education (CASE), in partnership with Actura, CASE Ocean



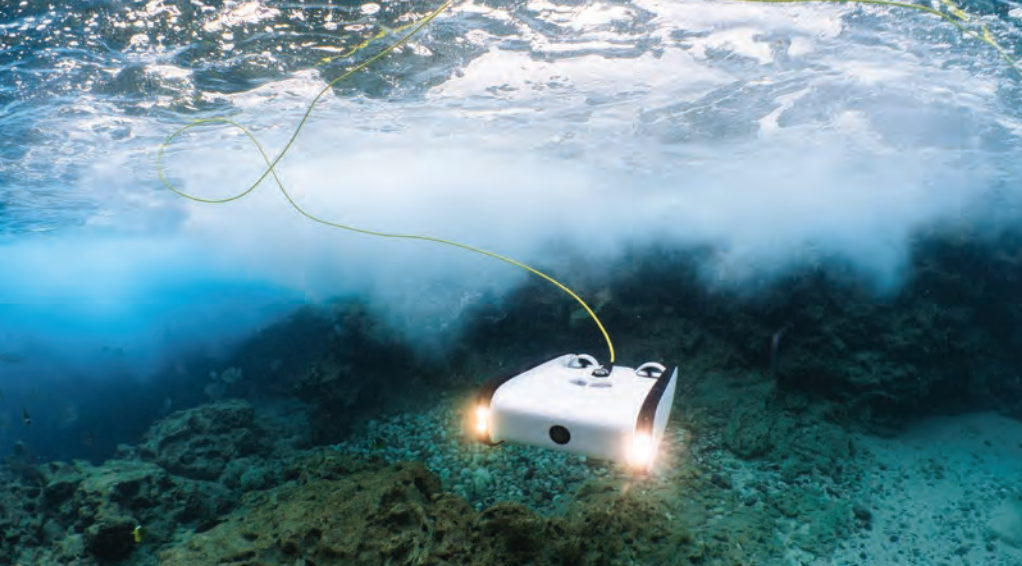
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School. This 12-day experience will give your secondary school students the opportunity to get hands-on, exclusive, and immersive experience in marine science, social entrepreneurship, cutting-edge research, and new technologies. Delivered using real-life content, CASE Ocean School also focuses on building student's personal leadership and development skills by improving higher order and critical thinking skills.

CASE Ocean School is an Australian based study program. Known as a leading nation in ocean exploration and management, Australia is home to some of the world's most valuable and ecologically diverse ocean habitats including of course the largest coral reef system in the world the Great Barrier Reef. It is no surprise that Australia's national science research agency, CSIRO, confidently states "the oceans surrounding Australia and the Australian Antarctic Territories are among the most biologically diverse in the world", there is no better place to learn about the ocean than here.

From expeditions to NASA with CASE Space School, through to classroom robotics, Actura, the exclusive global partner of CASE provides students with highly engaging STEAM-based experiential learning programs. CASE Ocean School will effectively augment Actura's range of STEAM education learning solutions to continue to empower youth to master the critical STEAM related skill sets required for their future success.

CASE Ocean School offers two distinctly unique programs, CASE Junior Ocean School and CASE Senior Ocean School. Both programs are based in Australia and are set to embark on their inaugural expeditions in July and September 2022. Start planning now to be among the

leading schools bringing these extension programs to students in 2022.

CASE Junior Ocean School takes students in their early secondary school years to Brisbane, Cairns and Fitzroy Island. The program is designed to develop a curiosity and interest within the STEAM fields and focuses on training young adventurers. Participants will explore a variety of ecosystems, food chains, adaptations, habitats, and biodiversity. Students gain valuable transferable skills and participate in field research including snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef and lab research, truly experiencing life as a marine scientist. Students will hear from inspirational guest speakers and experts and also be immersed in indigenous and modern-day Australian culture. Your students will walk away passionate, focused, and ready to pursue their goals with a growth mindset and a new outlook on what is possible in their world.

CASE Senior Ocean school takes students in their final years of secondary school to Sydney, Townsville, and Cairns. With a focus on ocean management for young leaders, the program will provide students with the necessary skills and confidence to become successful innovators, future thinkers, leaders, and communicators. The three key pillars of learning include engaging ocean studies, immersive ocean project management and inspiring personal and leadership development. Participants join various citizen science projects including a Great Barrier Reef project and gain an understanding of human impacts and balanced ecosystems. They learn important industry and business management skills by going behind the scenes and learning about aquaculture, fisheries management, renewable energy, underwater drones, and marine pharmacology. Students are encouraged to think

outside the box, participating in the CASE ChallengeX project, solving real-life issues using their design engineering, teamwork, and entrepreneurial skills. A panel of expert judges will give them feedback and a winning team will be announced. CASE Senior Ocean School gives students invaluable experience in STEAM and in the ocean industry. A once in a lifetime experience.

To showcase the high academic standard of CASE Ocean School, the University of California in the United States of America has approved both programs as Honors Level College Preparatory courses and graduates can receive a 5.0GPA academic transcript upon completion of the program. This ensures that CASE Ocean School graduates are identified by leading universities world-wide as high achieving, university-ready students, truly helping them to stand out from the crowd.

To ensure your students don't miss out on another year of extension learning, we invite you to discover more today. Dive deeper into CASE Ocean School by visiting our website [actura.com.au](http://actura.com.au) or simply emailing your questions to [enquiries@actura.com.au](mailto:enquiries@actura.com.au).

Actura are ready to start planning with you for a hands-on experiential adventure for your students in 2022. ■

**CASE Ocean School -- ocean exploration to the unknown frontier -- discover and fulfill your potential.**



**actura**

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# Online Orientation Instead *Experiences from a Distance*

2021 is anything but 'usual', meaning many boarding schools and residential colleges are being faced with the reality of not being able to meet on campus with their new 2022 students and families.

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Boarding School Transition  
Facilitator  
My Parent Connect

alike. Building real connection and relationships between students, families and staff with online orientation experiences is not only possible but easy to implement.

Below are some suggestions when considering moving to an online orientation event for families and/or students alike.

## HOW BEST TO CONNECT WITH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

1. Offer students and families the opportunity to connect over several weeks. This helps to create familiarity and reduce the overwhelm of connecting online. It also allows the possibility to introduce several topics or people with ease.
2. Keep the groups small. A maximum of 12 families/students at a time allows for connection to take place. Offer consecutive sessions if needed for larger groups. This also allows families to have options to pick a time that is best for them.
3. Use the wonderful resources that you already have by engaging staff, past students, or current families to help facilitate and share their experiences and advice.

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

## WAYS TO WIN YOUR AUDIENCE AT YOUR ONLINE ORIENTATION

The best orientation days to organise, run and be a part of are the days that are simple for boarding families and boarding staff

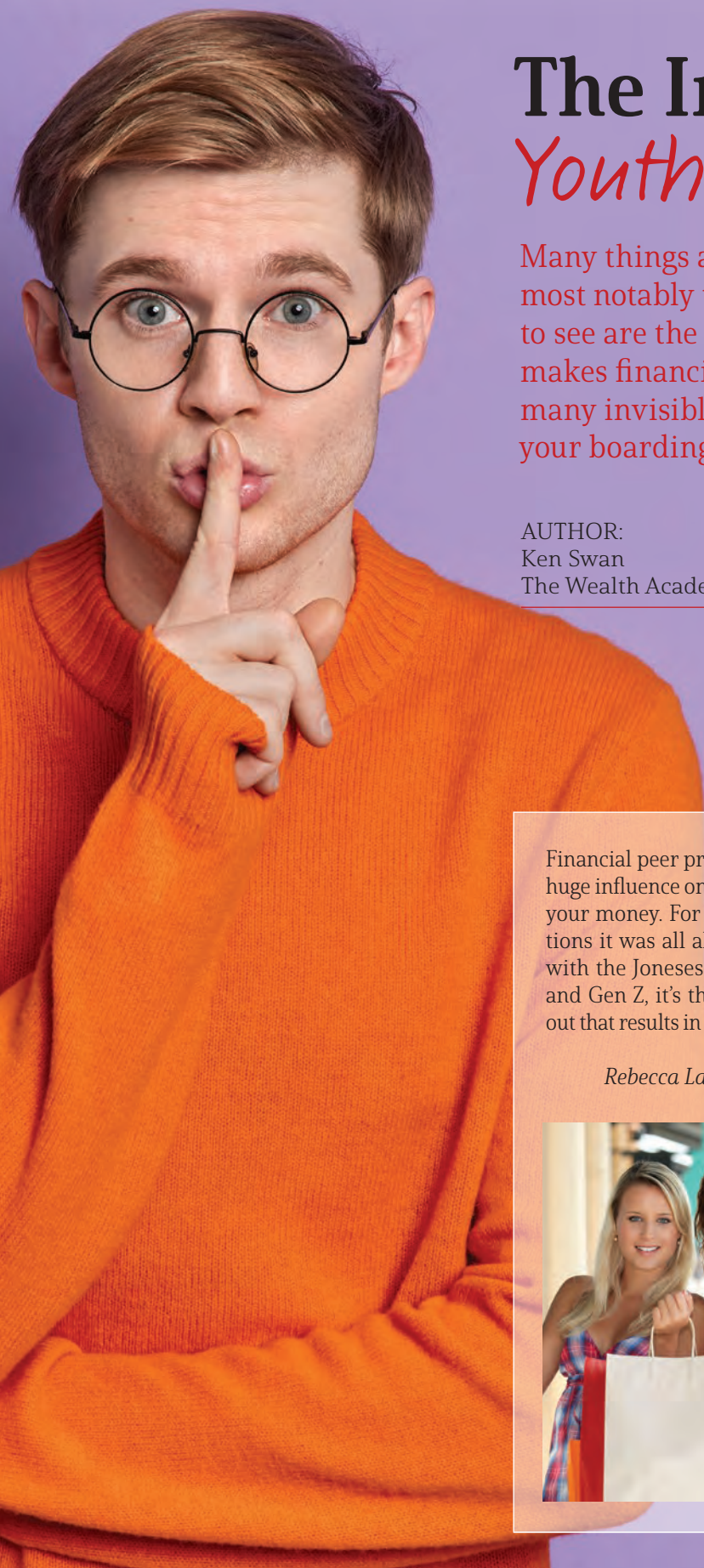
Need help with your next online orientation? My Parent Connect works with boarding schools across Australia and



New Zealand to support the transition journey for new students, parents, and boarding staff. Connect with us at [www.myparentconnect.com.au](http://www.myparentconnect.com.au) or [info@myparentconnect.com.au](mailto:info@myparentconnect.com.au). ■

**parent connect**  
A JOURNEY WORTH TAKING





# The Invisibles of Youth and Money

Many things are visible when it comes to money - most notably the things you buy! What is not easy to see are the invisibles. The invisibles are what makes financial education so important. There are many invisibles. Here are a few to consider. How is your boarding house managing these invisibles?

AUTHOR:  
Ken Swan  
The Wealth Academy

Financial peer pressure can have a huge influence on what you do with your money. For previous generations it was all about “keeping up with the Joneses.” For millennials and Gen Z, it’s the fear of missing out that results in pressure to spend.

*Rebecca Lake, Discover. 2021*



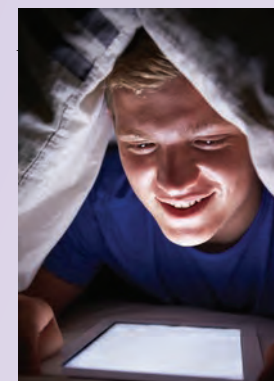
Peer pressure is usually invisible to most of us. But peer pressure to spend is an increasingly significant issue. Twenty years ago, peer pressure, while present, was usually manageable. While a boarder may have wanted the same clothes that a couple of boarding friends had, by the time the money was accessed from home or there was time to go to the bank to withdraw, the influence of peer pressure may have been forgotten. Not these days. The item can be bought, and the money spent almost instantly. There is no fear of missing out in today’s world of financial technology.

While you may not see financial peer pressure in your boarding house because of its invisibility, it doesn’t mean you should not talk about it in your boarding house financial education program.

Gambling and gambling-like experiences are so widespread that children see gambling as a normal part of everyday life, including sport. And gambling advertisements send the message that gambling is fun, exciting and a quick and easy way to get rich.

Teenagers might think of gambling as a good social activity because online gambling activities use chat and messaging to encourage playing with friends, sharing gambling stories and getting others to place bets.

Online gambling is often designed so that players win a lot in ‘practice mode’. Teenagers might believe that this winning streak will keep going when they play with real money. Most problem gamblers had what they thought was a significant ‘win’ early in their gambling history.



Fear of losing wealth is prevalent but seldom conscious. “What would I do if I had to support myself? Make my own way?” There may be a continuing fear of what might happen if the money disappears—the “bag-lady syndrome”. “I would panic if I lost my money. I could never survive. I would die.”

Fear of failure plagues all of us at times. As a result, many inheritors won’t face challenges because they are unsure they have what it takes to surmount them.

This can be especially painful to a young person with an exceptionally successful father [parent], and who has grown up with excessive parental expectations.

*John L. Levy*

Under the covers, out of sight, online gambling is a growing concern among youth generally.

In boarding, stories of youth gambling have increasing volume.

It often starts with the popular gaming programs that are skilled in extracting extra revenue after the initial purchase and then jumps to gambling quite easily.

The only hint of youth gambling for many parents is seeing the recurring online transactions within a child’s bank account. Many parents have told stories of alarm bells ringing loudly when dozens of transactions suddenly appear linked to their credit card.

We know from decades of research into youth behaviour, that risk taking is often associated with teenagers — more often boys! Gambling is an activity that matches a form of ‘risk behaviour’. However, although we may understand that behaviour, it does not mean that we should allow it, or encourage it by being silent in the boarding house.

Bad habits can form during these years, so it is important that boarding supervisors and parents are vigilant in this area.

Even if you cannot see gambling occurring in your boarding house, because of its invisibility, it doesn’t mean you should not be including this topic in your financial education program.

For some boarders, significant wealth is the reality. But wealth isn’t always a blessing. It can bring lots of issues to the children of wealthy families. Most of these issues, most of the time, are invisible.

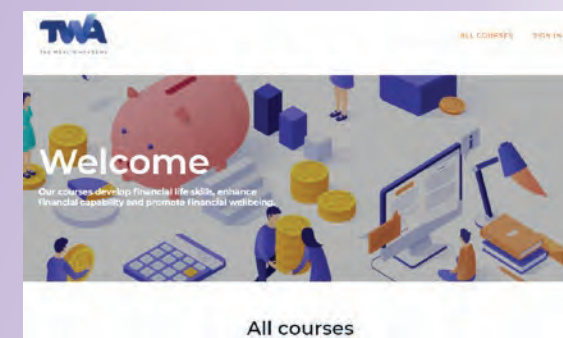
Fear of losing wealth and having to cope is a significant source of anxiety and stress for many children of the ‘rich’.

Parents and boarding supervisors will usually not see that anxiety. In most cases it is invisible.

This is another reason for incorporating wealth concepts into a boarding house financial education program.



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# Mood Food - *Nutrition for Mental Health*

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Mood Food Nutrition for  
Mental Health

## DID YOU KNOW THAT FOOD AFFECTS YOUR MOOD?

Excitingly, research has now shown that food is a powerful tool in both preventing and treating depression. With so much happening in the world that is out of our control, there has been an increase in the number of people suffering from poor mental health. We want to share some good news and let you know that there are things you can control when it comes to improving your mental health, such as the food you eat.

The food choices you make each day have a powerful impact on your mood. So, if you are struggling with depression or you want to maintain strong mental health then assessing your diet is one of the first things you should do. Mood Food is a program that will teach you what, why and how to eat to build and support a solid foundation for strong mental health, and the good news is it's not hard!

Mood Food is not a secret formula, magic pill or fad diet. We are talking about whole foods and going back to the basics. It has been known for a long time that a Mediterranean style diet is important for optimal physical health, and in the last couple of years the research has shown us that this Mediterranean style diet is also really important for our mental health.

Mood Food's first tip is *"Swap white for brown because happy brains need lots of wholegrains!"*

The Modi Med Diet pyramid (opposite) shows us what a Mediterranean style diet looks like, and what food groups we should be eating both daily and weekly to support our mental health. You'll notice that wholegrains form the foundation of this diet and this includes foods like wholegrain bread, wholemeal flour, brown rice and pasta as well as a wide variety of grains such as wholemeal couscous, quinoa, freekeh and bulgur wheat.

Unfortunately, wholegrains or carbohydrates, as they are more commonly known, have received a bad wrap in the media and many people now avoid them fearing they will lead to bloating and weight gain, when in fact the opposite is true. Wholegrains are a vital part of our wellbeing. They are an essential food source for our gut bugs which use this food to fuel the production of our happy hormones, serotonin and dopamine. With 90% of our serotonin produced in the gut, it's pretty important to keep our gut bugs well fed! This is just one of the underground mechanisms going on in our gut that explains how food affects our mood.

## SO WE NEED TO EAT MORE WHOLEGRAINS, SURELY THAT'S EASY?

Sadly, eating more wholegrains is not as easy as it sounds because our everyday environment makes it difficult. Think of Bunnings BBQs where there's certainly

no wholegrain bread in sight. It's the same at most sporting events, at bakeries that sell pre-made rolls, take-away burger stores (even the healthier ones) and school tuckshops. White bread is still the norm, and most people don't realise that when we choose white bread we are starving our gut and gut bugs of the fibre, vitamins and minerals they need to help keep us healthy, both mentally and physically.

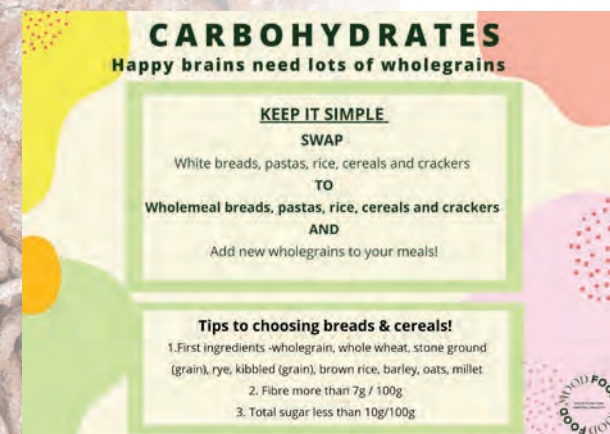
Mood Food wants to challenge you to look at your environment and see what changes you can make to support your mental health and the mental health of those around you.

Our advice is simple.

## SWAP WHITE FOR BROWN BECAUSE HAPPY BRAINS NEED LOTS OF WHOLEGRAINS!

Here are our top three tips for swapping white to brown at work, home and school.

1. **Work /staff rooms** - When catering for staff, ensure all options are wholegrain. Be brave and set the standard for the office by personally choosing wholegrain carbohydrates such as brown bread and crackers for lunch.
2. **Home** - If it's just you, go ahead and try something new. Try brown rice with a stir fry or curry or brown pasta with spaghetti bolognese. If you're feeding others, explain your change and why grains are good for our brains.
3. **Schools** - Educate students about the links between food and mood before encouraging change. Ask students if they would change their bread from white to brown, and consult with your



kitchen or canteen staff to see what changes are possible. Use the poster below in your school dining halls/classrooms or staff rooms to help.

Mental Health week is approaching and is held from 9 - 17 October. Leading up to, and during this week, we would love to hear conversations being started about the importance of food for mood. If you would like Mood Food to help at your school, we are available for presentations both in person and online and we encourage you to print and display the resources provided.

For more information, please contact us at: [info@moodfood-nutrition.com.au](mailto:info@moodfood-nutrition.com.au) ■



## References:

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Malhi, G.S. et al. The 2020 Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Clinical Practice Guidelines for Mood Disorders. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 2021, Vol. 55(1) 7-117

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YEAR 11 BOARDERS MADDIE BELL, ELLA CROWLEY, CAITLIN CROFT

# An Emotional Ride

## NEGS Equestrian

Sir Winston Churchill once said, ‘There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.’

AUTHOR:  
Annyka Overton  
Equestrian Centre Coordinator  
NEGS Armidale

At NEGS Equestrian, we use this to our advantage as boarding can be, and often is for the younger years, an environment where emotions run high. Finding the boundaries, and then the safe spaces within them can be difficult to navigate initially.

Having a horse at school allows students a sense of connection, without judgement or expectation. Sitting in the paddock with, or riding a horse can be one of the quickest ways to release tension and anxiety.

Horses live in the moment and are mirrors to our own sense of security, and self. They are brilliant at just being present. They listen. No hurry to solve, or create problems. They are simply whole and still, and kind.

We can't hide emotions from horses, but we can choose how those emotions will

affect the choices we make. We see this in varying degrees regularly. For example, there are times during riding lessons when a normally calm horse is reacting overly anxious, or spooky. More often than not, it allows for an opportunity to check in with the student asking, ‘How are you tracking today?’ or ‘What’s going on for you at the moment?’ This opens dialogue for the student to express what is happening for them in a safe space, often while the horse is walking. Movement allows the student to slowly process what they are thinking and feeling, to where they can verbalise it. Within minutes, the power of the emotion has dissipated, and the student is able to see things from a new perspective. The horse then relaxes and we can move on with the lesson. The horse has shown us something we may never have noticed, and the student could have carried around that burden of grief, guilt, pain etc for days until it is unmanageable and becomes noticeable to parents/staff/friends. With horses, we are shown early, whilst it is still only a thought, and can help our students process their emotions with ease.



VANESSA BAKER, YEAR 10, WITH MR B



NEGS AT COOMA 2021

With two indoor arenas, outdoor grassed arenas and a cross country course, we also benefit from being able to use the space to create a shift in a student’s wellbeing. If we notice a student is feeling flat, overwhelmed, or pressured, we can go out and ride in open spaces with high energy. This encourages a release of the heaviness, and brings about exhilaration and joy. It gets the students out of their head, and into their bodies. I have seen students start a session nearly in tears with being overwhelmed, and during a big canter around, they cry, and laugh and sometimes both at the same time, but when they finish, everything is lighter. The load has lifted, and they feel ready to take on the world.

If the student has a sense of feeling confused, discouraged or struggling to achieve outcomes on assessments, for example, we can stay in a safe indoor arena and work on specific, focussed exercises with the horse where we know we can achieve a positive outcome and a feeling of completion and success. We become succinct, with awareness of the horse’s body, right down to placement of the feet. By allowing the student to



ALEX MACHLIN, YEAR 9



GRACE MUIRHEAD, YEAR 12

ask questions, pay attention to the subtle moves of the horse and follow their intuition on how to respond, it gives the students small wins which accumulate throughout the session. You can see the confidence in their decisions grow. By the end, they trust their judgement, and become willing to act on it.

Many of our students compete regularly, but not all of them. For some, purely having their horses here and improving their skills in natural horsemanship and horse management, whilst enjoying the company of friends on trail rides, is plenty for them.

Others travel all over the State to compete in a range of disciplines. We find the growth of a student is most significant when skill development or success is not necessarily the reward. It is more so the understanding of one’s ability to change one’s focus from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic. The student gains more control of the outcome, and when she knows the outcome is guaranteed, patience comes easily, and without anxiety.

A common way in which we see this occurring is when a rider, in the beginning, believes the level/height at which she should be competing is based on her peers, her age or judgements from others. She sees it as what is the level I should be competing at, and then hurries or forces the horse to reach that standard, usually with adverse consequences. The big shift is when the rider is able to focus on and train at the level in which the horse is currently confident in competing. To be able to do the right thing by the horse, despite others’ opinions, is a huge step and one that impacts all aspects of life. The best part is, when the rider lets go of expectation and judgement and simply does the work where it is needed, the rewards come swiftly. A rider who is less focussed on the prize and more on the effort and willingness to stay in the uncomfortable zone will, without fail, come out on top.

Our entire NEGS coaching team is focussed on the process and support given to each student during the difficult, uncomfortable moments when a shift in understanding and skill is required. This allows the student to still feel safe,

knowing that we, as a group, understand this is part of growth. We are all aware, the bigger the challenge when we can stay in it until the end, the bigger the positive change and reward. It helps the student lean into the tough stuff, as they know a change is coming: one that will bring gratitude, pride and accomplishment. When they know those feelings are at the end of the hard bits, why wouldn’t they be willing to go there.

As our NEGS Motto states, ‘Whatsoever you do, do it heartily.’

The benefits of having horses at school is vast, and deep, and touches every aspect of school and social life. To see the students grow into self-assured, insightful and enlivened young ladies is joyous to watch. To know that horses were a major part of that journey is simply inspiring. ■



EDEN LOCHHEAD, YEAR 10, WITH DARBY AND NUGGET







# Period-proof Underwear – *Changing Their World by Changing Their Undies*

It's time to talk periods. It's never been more important to consider sustainable alternatives for managing menstruation for the next generation.

AUTHOR:  
Sarah Forde  
Sustainability and Social Impact Lead  
Modibodi

A 2019 UNICEF survey for World Children's Day found that the environment was the number one concern for Australian kids between 10 and 16. By providing students with more sustainable options to manage their periods, such as reusable period-proof underwear, instead of or alongside disposable menstrual products, we're acknowledging their concerns, giving them a choice and helping them take authentic action.

Traditional menstrual education focuses on disposable products such as pads and tampons, yet the statistics on their environmental impact are alarming.

Despite looking and feeling like cotton, most pads and tampons are primarily made of plastic, a single pad takes more than 500 years to break down in landfill, and the average tampon user throws away 11,000 in their menstruating lifetime. Up to 90% of a menstrual pad and 6% of a tampon is plastic.

No wonder our kids are concerned.

The current demand for period underwear from young people aligns with the activism we see from them around social equity, climate change, sexual consent and other issues impacting their lives.

Taking action is at the heart of the Modibodi business, which was created in 2013 by Sydney mum Kristy Chong who was seeking a greener, more comfortable way to manage periods and leaks without needing disposable pads, tampons and liners.

Modibodi RED is the brand's range specifically designed for the younger, growing bodies of tweens and teens to help boost their confidence and comfort in preparing for first periods, and managing periods and irregular cycles. Young menstruators tell us they prefer period-proof underwear to support them participating in sport, excursions, swimming lessons, sleepovers and camps without fear of embarrassing leaks.

*"Life-changing! Bought these for my 13 yr old and I/we cannot recommend them highly enough. She doesn't even think about her period during her day at school, even on a PE day!"* Suzanne F, Customer.

*"These are for my 12 yr old. These have relieved so much stress and anxiety for her. So happy to of discovered these wonder pants for her. They're amazing and do exactly what they are supposed to do"* Sonia, Customer.

According to Kristy, a significant 68% of RED customers say their period underwear gives them the confidence to participate in activities they'd normally feel uncomfortable doing with their period.

"Our business was founded to create limitless positive impact both for people and the planet, and I'm passionate about encouraging and educating the next generation to love their bodies and feel confident about managing their periods, so they can get on with doing the things they love – whatever the time of month, said Kristy.

"We know that grassroots education is key. If we can teach kids pads and tampons aren't the only option at an earlier age, we can help change mindsets about disposable sanitary products and change the narrative. When just 100,000 teens use Modibodi alone from the start of their menstrual cycle, 1.1 billion disposable hygiene products – or 1.5 million garbage bags of waste – are prevented from ending up in landfill.

Beyond the environmental impact, other benefits of reusable underwear are cost-savings, convenience and comfort. Modibodi works with sustainable suppliers, uses premium materials including organic cotton and Merino wool, and is constantly innovating to design better products for people...and the planet.

In a boarding house environment, convenience is key, and having a ready supply

of reusable period underwear means students can rest assured knowing they won't run out of sanitary supplies at the most inconvenient time, get caught out by an irregular cycle, or have to dash to a nearby shop or the school nurse to stock up – they'll always have their own leak-proof underwear ready to go.

## WONDERING HOW IT WORKS?

Modibodi's underpants look and feel like regular underwear because the patented absorbent lining is super slim and built into the stain-repellent lining.

Scientifically proven to absorb fluid and fight odour and bacteria, the top layer of the lining is made from natural Merino wool which wicks moisture to keep the wearer fresh and dry; the middle microfibre layer absorbs fluid and locks it away, while the bottom layer acts as a breathable, waterproof barrier for secure leak-proof protection.

There are a number of absorbencies to cater for different stages of the menstrual cycle, from light flow to the maximum absorbency which is a comfortable alternative to bulky overnight pads and a smart choice for students with extra heavy periods, or at times when they need to wait a long time between bathroom breaks, such as day trips, sports carnivals or when travelling.

"We had feedback that girls weren't participating in sports like swimming because of their periods, so we designed bathers. I am extremely proud of this technology and the feedback we have received on its comfort and performance. Getting kids joining in PE lessons, swimming training or competitive meets, without fear of leaks is why we do what we do" says Kristy.

Caring for period-proof products is simple. Just rinse under the tap or shower after wearing (kids can do this themselves), then throw them into the washing machine on a cold cycle with other garments and line dry.

We suggest a menstruating person needs between 5 – 8 pairs to manage their period, with different absorbencies to cater for different flows, including heavier days and overnight.

"It's time to call for a change of attitude so the next generation will feel empowered by their period, not ashamed. It feels good to know that helping save the planet can be as simple as swapping your underwear – or starting out with the right product," added Kristy.

Modibodi is offering boarding school students 15% off using the code BOARDING15. Visit [www.modibodi.com](http://www.modibodi.com) to explore the range and see how it works. ■



# Welcome: New Principals



**Dr Rachel Horton**  
Principal  
The Armidale School  
NSW

## THE ARMIDALE SCHOOL - NSW

Dr Rachel Horton commenced in July, 2021, as Principal of The Armidale School in northern NSW. Dr Horton brings to TAS experience from a diverse career in Australia and overseas. Formerly Deputy Headmaster/Head of Secondary at Brighton Grammar School in Melbourne, she was previously at Anglican Church Grammar School ('Churchie') in Brisbane where she taught Chemistry and Physics and was a housemaster. Prior to teaching, Dr Horton was a postdoctoral research fellow and lecturer in microbiology and immunology at universities in Canada, Australia and Kenya as well as the UK where she was born.

As a British Army Reservist, Dr Horton interrupted her PhD to undertake a year's service with the Royal Engineers as Squadron

Operations Officer which included a six-month tour of duty in Iraq as Captain in 2003-2004. A rugby enthusiast, she played in England and Canada for more than a decade before retiring to become a referee 11 years ago and has refereed international VII and XV matches as well as Premier Rugby in Queensland.

Dr Horton is committed to encouraging students to take the most of every opportunity, grow from challenge and do amazing things, both inside the classroom and out of it. ■

# Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



**BRETT TOOMBS**  
Director of Boarding  
St Augustine's College  
Cairns, QLD

## ST AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE - QLD

Brett has been a staff member at the College since 2008 and has worked in a variety of roles, including Year 8 and 9 head of year, director of mission, head of sport, and a physical education and religious education teacher. He is committed to student wellbeing and has a passion for the pastoral area of student formation in schools. He works collaboratively with his professional and dedicated boarding team to ensure that boarding at Saints is enjoyable and fulfilling while providing exceptional care for those who call St Augustine's their home away from home.

As a former Marist student and the local coordinator for the Marist Association group, Brett embraces the Marist charism. He brings passion and energy to his role and aims to ensure that the

students under his care approach the daily life of boarding with a strong sense of family spirit.

Brett and his family enjoy the lifestyle that encompasses the role of Head of Boarding here at Saints. ■

# From the Chair Pauline Turner



As I type this message I am mindful that in September 2021 across Australia we are all experiencing this year in different forms of school and work.

Some of us have been locked down for extended periods of time and our schools have been devoid of children as they work online from home and others have had short stints of closures.

We have had boarding houses that were quarantined due to contact issues and on the opposite side of Australia we have seen business as usual. There are International schools experiencing a myriad of tragedies far worse than we can only imagine in Australia. Our world is currently nothing like we have known in our lifetimes and yet for the boarders within our schools these experiences are now written into their memories and will eventually

blend into the story they talk about with their children over their dinner tables.

I am mindful that this time around people are expressing their anger and frustrations, finding themselves short tempered and a little lost. Uncertainty is a curse to unsettled emotional state in us all. Our boarders and our families will remember these years through the Pandemic of 2020-2021+ and we need to consider what memories will come through in the stories they tell.

We never know how much a genuine smile will change another's day, a kind word, a thoughtful note or a phone call to someone from school that you haven't

talked with in a while. We need to turn our focus onto the other, in doing that we lift our focus from what we cannot control into a place of hope and connection. It is through hope and expectation of a better day still to come that we brighten our world again no matter the circumstance we are currently living in.

The Team at the ABSA office have been working tirelessly to assist with the reuniting of boarding families caught in border crossing across the whole country. Providing staff who may not be at work at present or at work needing something to lift their spirits - podcasts, webinars and virtual coffee and a multitude of activities have helped boarding people stay focused and prepared for the day when our boarders once again walk through our school gates and life regains a sense of the normal.

In this, our last edition of Lights Out for 2021, let us celebrate our students about to graduate, having lived and learned through two years of uncertainty and disrupted educational experiences, and still they have soldiered on. They are an amazing cohort of individuals and we congratulate each of these young people for all they have done to keep moving forward with the prize in sight. Well done to all the Year of 2021. ■

## Would you like to become an Accredited Boarding Practitioner?

The ABSA Accredited Boarding Practitioner scheme is an individual recognition of those boarding staff who are making a personal, professional commitment to best boarding practice. Any member of staff who works in boarding can apply once the minimum criteria for the different Accredited Practitioner levels are met.



Find out more here

for more information go to [www.boarding.org.au/our-community/accredited-boarding-professional](http://www.boarding.org.au/our-community/accredited-boarding-professional)



Australian Boarding Schools Association

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# Your School FEATURED

## WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR BOARDING SCHOOL FEATURED IN LIGHTS OUT?

We plan to feature at least two schools each edition. All you need to do, is write a brief article (400 to 1000 words) and send us some high resolution photos (300dpi).

Send all files to: [absa@boarding.org.au](mailto:absa@boarding.org.au)  
by 1st February 2022

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# Boarding Around the World



## AUSTRALIA

### BOARDING WELLBEING AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE:

19 October - Virtual

### DUTY OF CARE WORKSHOP - Book 1:

27 October - Virtual

### FEDERAL ICPA CONFERENCE:

2-4 November - Longreach, QLD

### DUTY OF CARE WORKSHOP - Book 2

15 November - Virtual

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more information:

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## UK

### ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

18 November - Virtual

### BSA BOARDING CONFERENCE

1 February - Virtual

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR HEADS

3 May - Oxford

more information:

[www.boarding.org.uk/media/calendar](http://www.boarding.org.uk/media/calendar)



## USA

### TABS ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

11-13 November, 2021 - Boston and Virtual

more information:

[www.boardingschools.com/for-schools/professional-development.aspx](http://www.boardingschools.com/for-schools/professional-development.aspx)



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