

Lights Out

Vol. 17 | Issue 1 | April 2024

Attitude
is Everything

Improving Writing
Stamina:
*5 Common
Challenges and
How to Help
Students*

The Connection
Between
*Boarding and
Travelling Abroad*



AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
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Making Boarders' Lives Better



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ON THE COVER

Fairholme College boarders in action

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A Sense of Connection

I often ponder what a wonderful industry we work in - how we develop so many connections with wonderful people, both young and old, and how we are privileged to be able to learn so much from them all.

And with the start of a new year we see over 1,000 new staff join the Australian boarding scene, with nearly a quarter of our boarding places gaining new leadership, with young staff venturing into their first world of work, with older staff taking a turn in their careers - isn't it an exciting journey we are all on.

Our work at ABSA takes us to many places - most recently across the country to Alice Springs, Dubbo, Perth and Quorn to connect with and support the wonderful work of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, the parents of the children who represent over 75% of our boarders. The passion to see their children receive equal access to education never fails to amaze, but also reminds us how important our work can be in the boarding house - being that place away from home which provides support, guidance, understanding, a listening ear, opportunity and stability, to list just a few.

People who work in boarding are a special breed and looking after other people's children is a special responsibility. Too often we don't salute and recognise you all for the amazing



work you do. Just recently we were asked what are the most important characteristics to look for in potential boarding staff and my answer began with 'the need to like working with children'. How amusing, when you look at the myriad of responsibilities upon the shoulders of boarding staff that the most important criteria might be a desire to work with children!

So this Easter, as I sit here finalising this first edition of Lights Out, I hope that all of you working in boarding can celebrate the incredible work you do. Boarding Staff day on Friday May 17, as part of National Boarding Week, is one special day we are hoping to get boarders, their families, and all other school staff to publicly honour your wonderful service. We encourage you to look at the Accredited Boarding Practitioner program we offer to help all boarding staff be recognised for their service and professional standing - the application process is easy and the awarding of this professional recognition most worthwhile.

Enjoy your opportunities to guide and support the young people in your care - they will remember you well in their future. ■





AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
Making Boarders' Lives Better

NATIONAL BOARDING WEEK

12-18 May 2024
www.boarding.org.au



What makes BOARDING tick?

Sunday 12 May



AUTHOR:
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Chief Executive Officer
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Grief *is a Universal Human Experience*



Grief is a natural and normal reaction to the death of someone important to you. It is like the ocean, it comes in waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the psychological waters are calm and sometimes they boil over and it can be overwhelming. It can make you feel fragile, your stomach unsettled, and your mind fizzles with memories. It is a very individual process, and it can be difficult to predict how any one person might react to a loss.

However it manifests, grief is a universal human experience yet workplace culture in Australia is often inhospitable to people suffering loss. All workplaces, including boarding schools need guidance on how to humanely help their students and employees return to work productively.

In Australia although bereavement leave is available to all employees who have lost a family member (if they have been employed for more than 6 months), they are only entitled to just two days 'compassionate' leave. How on earth is someone meant to go back to supervising prep, serve food so soon after losing a partner or parent? This measly amount of allotted

mourning time reflects a society in denial of death.

So what do I want my colleagues in education to know about the grief journey. These are the central messages:

- It is normal and healthy to feel and express intense and painful emotions when grieving a significant loss.
- A bereaved person may experience a wide range of feelings, shock, sadness, anger, guilt, despair, relief, hope and acceptance. Bereaved people do not grieve in stages.
- Grief is not linear, it is chaotic, 'an all over the shop' experience.
- Expressions of grief help the bereaved

learn how to live with loss.

- Painful feelings decrease in intensity over time with compassionate support so the most important help you can offer is a willing ear. William Shakespeare said in Macbeth, "Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o'er wrought heart and bids it break."
- Stay in touch with them, periodically checking in, dropping by, or sending emails, or cards.
- Be willing to sit in silence: Don't press if the grieving person doesn't feel like talking. Often, comfort for them comes from simply being in your company.
- Grief isn't something you get over, it is something you get through and tears shed for another person are not a sign of weakness. They are a sign of a pure heart.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics there were 109,939 deaths in 2022. That's 301 a day. So at any one time, in boarding schools across Australia, there are thousands of parents, staff and students - walking around, newly alert to the brittleness of life.

How would you recognise the bereaved



amongst us? As one such person, having just lost my wife, I am reflecting on the fact that the many cultures have developed the tradition of wearing black following the death of someone and this has been observed in various cultures throughout history and can be traced back to ancient times.

In Western cultures, the tradition of wearing black as a sign of mourning became more prominent during the Victorian era in the 19th century. Queen Victoria set the trend for mourning attire after the death of her husband, Prince Albert. She wore black clothing for an extended period as a display of her grief, and this practice influenced the fashion and customs of the time.

Despite the fact that I live in Melbourne, who's citizens traditionally wear a lot of black, (not just Emos, Architects and people in the arts), my recent experience as a newly bereaved person made me recall an article written a decade or so ago, by a journalist who had just lost her mother who wondered if it wasn't time to restore the tradition of wearing black as a mourning colour to help us griever's indicate our psychological state to the world. I too am now thinking that if I wore black to my local supermarket, might they turn down the music as I browse the aisle and would those smiling checkout people desist from urging me to have a great day?

Having said that, I have come across some people who are dazzlingly good at dealing with we griever's; I suspect that they have had lived experience of bereavement and know just what to say and do. Others don't have a clue. So in the spirit of education, I offer the following suggestions:

Knowing what to say to a bereaved person can be difficult, but there are some things you can say to provide comfort and support. Here are some examples:

- "I'm so sorry for your loss" or "I'm sorry you're going through this".
- "I'm here for you" or "I'm here to listen".
- "I can't imagine what you're going through, but I'm here to support you".
- "I'm thinking of you" or "You're in my thoughts and prayers".
- "I'm here to help in any way I can".
- "Tell me more about your loved one".
- "It's okay to feel however you're feeling".
- "I'm here to sit with you in silence if you need it".
- "I'm here to support you through this difficult time".
- "I'm so grateful to have known your loved one".

Lastly, a big shout out for condolence cards. The idea of someone taking the time and trouble to hand write a message, attach a stamp and walking to a post box is tremendously touching in a time of Instagram and snapchat.

So please remember that grief is not a disorder, a disease, or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity, the price we all pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve, so please equip yourself with the skills, knowledge and strategies to render assistance to people like me. It might be your turn next. ■

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Honorary Psychologist

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.

To be considered, all applicants are expected to demonstrate a commitment to meeting the following core commitments:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Achieving excellent boarding practice and outstanding outcomes for boarders.
- Reflecting on practice and undertaking regular training.
- Working collaboratively with other boarding colleagues.

For more information or to become an Accredited Boarding Practitioner contact ABSA today. check out the website at: www.boarding.org.au/our-community/accredited-boarding-professional



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It Takes a Village

A Personal Journey of Family and Boarding at Toowoomba Anglican School

In my sixth year as a teacher at Toowoomba Anglican School (TAS), my journey into the boarding sphere was not just a professional step, but a deeply personal one. From attending dinners, to joining boarders on weekend hikes, and offering tutorials after school, as a classroom teacher, I had already begun to immerse myself in the boarding community. Little did I know that my path would lead me to a pivotal moment - discovering I was pregnant with our first baby and simultaneously accepting the role as Head of Arnott House, our Year 8-12 girls boarding house.

Initially, the timing seemed less than ideal, but it turned out to be the best decision for my husband, our gorgeous daughter, Florence, and me. Embraced as part of the family, Florence has grown up within the nurturing embrace of the boarding community. Now, as I head into my third year as the Arnott Head of House, I can reflect on this journey with gratitude. Raising my own family while being a pseudo-parent to our boarders has become the greatest privilege of my life and my career in education. At TAS, this unique blend of personal and professional fulfillment is not just an individual experience but a testament to the ethos cultivated by our Head of Boarding, Bianca Lingard, who has paved the way for young families like mine to seamlessly integrate into the boarding model we operate, so creating a genuine sense of family within the larger boarding community.

The idea of defining exactly what is expected in a boarding role is a challenging

one at best. In his 2013 article, O'Brien calls into question the wide gamut of the role a Boarding Supervisor takes on, stating, "[not] only does a boarding community need to maintain high academic achievement, it also needs to fulfil other 'parenting' roles ... [boarding] schools are trusted to play a very large part in the holistic development of a child into a young man or woman." Further, research—such as Cookson's 1982 article on boarding schools—shows us that the concept of these institutions as protective environments fosters a student's identity that can be explored within the framework (and safety) of the school's ethos; this concept resonates profoundly at TAS, where students learn to become their authentic selves.

Boarding schools, by their very nature, serve as microcosms of society. This then offers a structured space (and testing ground) where young individuals can embark on their journey towards self-discovery. Here, the moral fabric of the school community becomes a guiding

beacon. Crucially, within this context, Boarding Supervisors emerge as linchpins, embodying the moral compass and providing essential mentorship. They are more than caretakers; they are the living embodiments of the school's values, offering unwavering support, guidance, and role modelling for students navigating the complexities of their formative years. In essence, Cookson argues these supervisors serve as the tangible manifestation of the school's moral perspective, helping boarders reconcile their identity struggles within the framework of shared values. Ultimately, this structure is what shapes students into responsible, empathetic, and principled individuals.

The two definitions provided by O'Brien and Cookson assist us in understanding the weight of responsibility that anyone involved in a boarding community typically shoulders; but rarely in academia is the concept of who, or more importantly, how these individuals are able to cope with this immense, delicate, and magnificent responsibility. The answer, I have found, is woven through the simple yet timeless adage: it is not one person at all, but a village.

I have observed that, here at TAS, the family-centric approach in our three boarding houses is evident in every facet. Our three heads of house have between us four children under four, and whether it's weekend activities in the vegetable patch, spirited basketball games with families, or the warmth of a Sunday BBQ, the bonds formed transcend the ordinary colleague-boarder-teacher-supervisor

relationship. In the midst of Heads of House meetings, where 'Bluey' plays in the background and snack packs are shared, the daily operations embody a family-friendly atmosphere. For example, boarders have played an active role in shaping my daughter's early years, teaching her to clap, crawl, and climb, and we have all celebrated each milestone as a shared accomplishment.

For me, in the beginning, there was a slight feeling of 'Imposter Syndrome', as I stepped into the role of House Parent. I felt it was important to convince the mums and dads, who dropped their daughters to the front door of the boarding house, that they were leaving their children in safe hands. I am proud to say this role is now the focus of my career, not just the 'other half' of my (teaching) position at the school. While boarding presents its challenges, the realisation that my family is an integral part of this larger, supportive family within the boarding community has transformed those challenges into meaningful experiences. As I continue my role as Head of House, I carry forward the understanding that it truly takes a village—a village that not only supports but enriches the lives of both boarders and those who guide them on this remarkable journey. ■

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AUTHOR:

Roxanne
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Arnott House Parent
Toowoomba
Anglican School



Above, Front row; Mr Dan Biscoe, Head of Stoneleigh House and daughter Isla, Ms Chelsey Holman, Head of Bligh House and daughter Halle, Mrs Roxanne Piers-Blundell, Head of Arnott House. Back row; Mrs Bianca Lingard, Director of Boarding, Mrs Hollie Biscoe and son Archie, Mr Noral Piers-Blundell and daughter Florence.





The Connection Between *Boarding and Travelling Abroad*

Highlighting the benefits of travelling with boarders and boarding staff on your schools next overseas tour, and how they can enhance the experience for all.

BOARDERS

Living away from home with peers, balancing the strict rules and structure of a boarding house, with the social and emotional side of life that everyone needs - makes for an independent young person with grit, resilience and understanding.

It is obvious when on school camps, excursions, and overseas trips, exactly

who the boarders are. Here are some of the ways Student Horizons staff have seen their skills and attributes on tour.

Evident before we even take off on a flight, boarders will share their tips and tricks for surviving long distance travel, to their tour mates who may live just around the corner from the school campus.

Boarders travel long distances from their

home in faraway rural areas, and this can be by bus, train, car - and plane. They understand the importance of leaving on time, of going to the toilet before you're off on a road trip, being organised with their belongings and being polite to transport staff. A 'thankyou' to the bus driver, assisting someone with a heavy bag, and simply calculating times or distance there is to travel in a day, are all ways you will see a boarder help.

There is also a strong sense of responsibility with their personal belongings. Boarders will pack well and take care of their possessions - both in transit and on the ground. When you live in a boarding house, naturally you lock away valuable items such as jewellery and cash. On our tours we also encourage teachers to utilise the safe in a hotel to secure everyone's passports, and boarders will understand this is an easy step to ensuring nothing is lost, stolen or misplaced.

An area politeness is evident, is in a restaurant, or at mealtimes in general. Knowing their way around a dining hall, and showing real etiquette, can be the difference between a pleasant dinner vs a chaotic mess of hangry humans. Often, we will see boarders are the first ones to start stacking plates, they scrape food waste in correct bins, and are familiar with wiping a table and tucking a chair back in when the meal is done. On tour, an evening meal can be hard for those who normally live at home, missing home cooking, missing mums asking what their day was





like, even missing dad jokes. Boarders will understand while this is normal and hard, it's still a great time to debrief and wind down from the busy day with gratitude and good conversation.

When it comes to homesickness, although an overseas tour is super exciting, it will still affect our touring participants - both young and old. Boarders will tell tales and give strategies of how they cope being away from home and their comfort zone, with one of the best methods being to simply get involved! Keeping busy, being present, and fully immersing yourself on tour goes a long way to keep the homesick bug at bay.

The leadership and independent living skills of boarders come to life on tour, and the experiences they have abroad, both in teachings and learnings, are just another feather in their cap.

BOARDING STAFF

Whether they're called matrons, supervisors, houseparents or just called by their first name, boarding house staff are another way we see the similarities of touring abroad and living in a boarding house.

While it's crucial the sports coaches escort the sports tour, and the music teachers lead the choral trip, there are times where boarding house staff prove just how deep their expertise runs.

Overnight residential pastoral care is their bread and butter. Safety, care, and understanding, is at the core of what they do for a living. A supervisor will sleep with one eye open, and they hear both the giggling at night, and the softest anxious knock on their door when someone is feeling down.



They will spot trends in the dining hall or if someone isn't eating. They will notice camaraderie off the field or behind the scenes, can broach delicate topics such as personal hygiene, and can communicate rules and regulations without the sense of a lesson or discipline.

Boarding staff work overnight shifts, have duties as weekend activities coordinators, and are experienced in being 'on call'. The prep never ends, and the pastoral care is integral for the smooth running of a house.

Student Horizons staff have the utmost respect for boarding staff and feel that our aim of providing 'experiences for life' is quite like the role they play in a student's

life, in keeping them safe while they navigate their own way.

If your school has plans to travel abroad in the future, and you're looking for qualified staff to escort students, we would highly recommend reaching out to your own boarding staff. They will add even more value to your specialist teachers on tour. ■

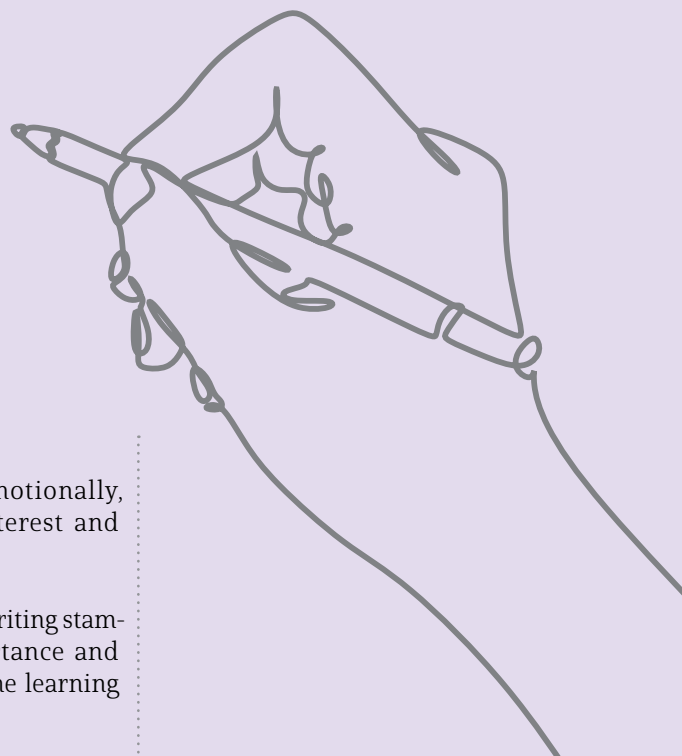
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Improving Writing Stamina:

5 Common Challenges and How to Help Students

Why do certain students possess the ability to write continuously while others find it challenging to put down even a few sentences? What exactly is meant by “writing stamina”? After poor national writing results last year, writing is high on many schools’ priority list. One of the most common challenges that I hear is *“My students lack writing stamina”*.



This is why it’s important to delve into the significance of cultivating this skill and to understand the obstacles that students encounter in maintaining their writing momentum.

What is Writing Stamina?

In basic terms, writing stamina is going to refer to a student’s ability to engage in the writing process for extended periods with sustained focus and productivity. Key words here: sustained focus and productivity. It’s not merely about the amount of time a student spends writing, but also about sustaining both the quality of work and engagement throughout the writing session.

There is a trifecta of elements that must be present if we are going to move a child forward with their endurance and if one of these areas are weak, then you can see why it’s going to become a challenge for stamina to begin taking form.

1. **Physical Strength** ~ Physically, a child must have the requisite hand strength for handwriting.
2. **Cognitive Ability** ~ From a cognitive perspective, that child must maintain sustained thoughts and concentration.

3. **Emotional Aspect** ~ Emotionally, they need to sustain interest and motivation.

Here’s the rationale for why writing stamina holds significant importance and should be a top priority in the learning process.

Academic Success

As your students progress through school, they are expected to write longer pieces and to engage in more complex writing tasks. So it follows that having strong writing stamina is actually crucial for meeting these high academic demands and challenges that students will be facing in their very near future.

Test Performance

Many standardised tests (such as NAPLAN) have timed writing components to them, so students with better writing stamina can perform more effectively under these timed conditions. Without the stamina, the time is spent in worry, and in overwhelm, and in panic, and that’s never going to produce a result, or a test score, that’s going to be representative of what that child probably really knows, but just can’t seem to transfer to paper.

Extended Practice to Develop Writing Skills

The more we can get pupils writing, the better their writing skills become. Writing stamina allows for this extended practice and for that slow build of increased focus over time. We can use the analogy of an athlete - the more their muscles are being strengthened and trained in these short, manageable reps, the stronger they get over time. They can lift heavier weights. They can complete more reps eventually. It is a transition of working up to a period of sitting for 30 minutes in a sustained, focused, concentrated form of writing.

It’s about looking forward to future, professional endeavours for our students – preparing reports, essays, research, grant applications etc.

Challenges that Students May Face and Actionable Strategies that Help

The truth is that students continue to encounter difficulty and stress when attempting to maintain genuine writing efforts. Let's look at various challenges that you can break down and solutions that you can employ:

PHYSICAL FATIGUE

Evident in younger students, the physical act of writing can be tiring. It's going to lead to discomfort and decreased focus. While this starts very young, like prep and grade one, imagine the negative feelings linked to writing that become pervasive as they enter fourth grade and fifth grade, now having longer writing tasks, but never really starting in a place where it was ever enjoyable. Defeat sets in prematurely as they enter upper primary and high school.

Actionable Strategies: *Incorporate short, regular breaks* during extended writing sessions to prevent physical exhaustion. Try setting a timer and suggesting, "Hey, we're going to take a little brain break." or "We're going to take a little stretch break." for a 60 second mental break. Try to decrease the frequency of these breaks over time.

Try *ergonomic tools* such as a pencil gripper or a certain type of pencil. Consider that their wrists and hands may hurt from gripping a pencil too tightly, incorrect grip (I see this all the time!) or their arm/wrist is on the edge of the desk. Finding a remedy for physical discomfort will help the process of sustained writing time.

Mix in different types of writing activities that don't always call on handwriting. Consider the voice to text feature on an iPad or computer.

COGNITIVE OVERWHELM

Writing requires thinking. It requires planning and creativity, which can be mentally draining for students, particularly for those complex tasks. Adding the components of the writing process (punctuation, ordering ideas, grammar etc) on top of this can overwhelm students, leaving their minds exhausted. It becomes

almost impossible for them to perceive writing as enjoyable or engaging, as the mental load becomes too taxing.

Actionable Strategies: Attempt to *divide writing tasks into smaller, manageable steps* to make the process less overwhelming. Checklists are useful here, where students can see where they need to get to. They're only responsible for that next box task to be able to check it off. This helps our learners with that cognitive overload.

Try graphic organisers, which help learners to organise their thoughts prior to writing. Guide them to transfer and expand those thoughts with added detail – possibly the next day. Brainstorming, planning and writing all in one session can be a lot for children with cognitive overload.

LACK OF INTEREST

If students lack interest in the topic or writing style, they're likely to struggle to maintain engagement over extended periods. It's as straightforward as that. This issue isn't related to physical ability or cognitive processing—it's directly tied to emotion. When students lack enthusiasm or passion for the subject matter, they simply don't want to spend 20 to 30 minutes sitting and writing about it respectfully. They're just not invested. Their heart isn't in it.

Actionable Strategies: A tricky issue for teachers as we can't develop individual writing tasks to cater to 25 interests in the classroom! However, try some of these ideas. *Offer choice* where possible as this automatically increases engagement. *Linking a writing task to something that's happening in the real world* (particularly their world) means that they have context and connection, and encourages them to be more interested and willing to share their writing ideas.

FEAR AND ANXIETY ABOUT WRITING

Each teacher will know this student ~ these students worry about making a mistake or not writing well. This can be seen in the students who are perfectionists. This challenge also encompasses learners who are a grade level or two behind, as

well as those who have high expectations placed on them. They're reluctant to disappoint their teachers, parents or themselves. These learners can feel paralysed when these fears are present.

Actionable Strategies: *Positive reinforcement* is key to building confidence. Words of affirmation, celebrating success and offering encouragement are important. I've found that a checklist and ticking off student names is a great way to ensure that there is an even spread of reinforcement (or sharing of writing ideas) across the whole class. A classroom atmosphere where *mistakes are seen as learning opportunities* will help these learners to move past the fear of writing failure and attempting tasks. *Peer support* goes a long way to helping students understand that their peers experience similar writing challenges too.

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

Due to the prevalence of digital media, certain students might experience shorter attention spans, which can pose challenges in maintaining focus on writing tasks for extended durations. This is particularly relevant to students with ADHD.

Actionable Strategies: For learners with a limited attention span, we suggest using *short, timed writing exercises* to gradually increase a student's focus over time. Their brains and their bodies are just active. Please email us for a copy of our image-rich stimulus pictures that are ideal for these learners.

SUMMING UP

Pupils that are lacking in 'writing stamina' can be attributed to an array of problematic causes. If we don't decipher the underlying issues, then we can't find solutions for students' struggles. There are no quick fixes for these challenges, but a better understanding and creating next steps can be a useful starting point. ■

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Literacy for Kids



The Directors Cut:

A year as a Head of Boarding

As with all new roles my initial thoughts surrounding taking on a Director of Boarding role were complex. There was an equal measure of excitement and apprehension. Yet, having lived and worked in boarding for the better part of a decade I felt I had a good grasp on what was needed to be a 'good' Head of Boarding.

- Willingness to engage with the boarders, families and communities? Check.
- Healthy understanding of the on call commitments and impacts on my family. Check
- Willingness to advocate for my boarders across the broad demands of the day school. Check.
- Ability to advocate for my staff and their needs. Check.

Whilst inwardly I felt all the big ticket items, the things you read in position descriptions and job advertisements were there, there was still a steep learning curve ahead.

I dove head first into Term One. Working in a bigger boarding school, with an excellent team, we hit the ground running. Welcoming 140+ boarding students back was exhilarating. We were on the move and rolling. I was meeting parents, welcoming boarders and starting the year off well. In that first term I attended almost every meal, organised outings, ran prep, opened the gym in the mornings, attended pastoral, marketing and academic meetings, as well as my teaching load. By the end of Term One I was elated and exhausted.

As someone who thrives off working hard and prides myself on coping well with

challenging situations, finding my energy levels low wasn't something I was expecting, or something I was very well prepared to deal with. It wasn't until I was sitting in the ABSA conference on the Gold Coast listening to the life experiences of Heads of Boarding like Sue Collister, Phil Noble, Mika Browning and Matt Weston that I realised I had missed a few key concepts required to ensure some longevity in the role of Head of Boarding. Things like:

The ability to say no to additional demands on your time; It seemed the more I did the more demands it raised. Suddenly there were departments of the school asking for meetings about things I hadn't even considered. My daily timetable began to represent something out of a Jackson Pollock painting and the time I had pencilled in for family was being eaten up by phone calls and urgent meetings.

A healthy approach to self care; with my well planned out weeks fast dissolving in a sea of unplanned meetings, emails

and rostering, I found myself missing the elements of time I used to carve out for myself. It wasn't until I prioritised some time each day that I began to restabilise and find my feet again (admittedly the time I found was a 5:45AM gym session but it was a saviour).

An understanding of the impacts of staff turnover; Training and leading staff was an area in which I felt quite confident. Overly so, it turns out. I wasn't prepared for my dependable and solid staff exiting boarding and having to hire new staff with limited experience taking their place. This meant I had to become far more process driven in how I wanted my boarding houses to run. By creating tighter processes we found we could harness the enthusiasm of new staff whilst maintaining the standards we wanted in our houses.

Impact of critical incidents on staff and self; I think anyone who works in boarding has an intense level of understanding of the impact of critical incidents. A colleague of mine once shared that one year in boarding is equal to three years

pastorally in the day school system. However, as a Head of Boarding I was now not only responsible for how I handled critical incidents and the impact on the boarders, but also the impact on my staff. Having a strong Head of Senior School to fall back on for advice was a saviour here. Having someone on the Administration Team you can seek guidance and advice from is invaluable.

Taking on a Head of Boarding role has led to one of the most fulfilling years of my career. Initially, it was challenging stepping back from the coal face of being a Year Coordinator and losing some of the incidental day to day interactions with the boarders and looking at a lot more of the bigger picture aspects of boarding. I have found I have become less intensely focused on one year group/aspect/area of boarding and more aware of the much wider view across all three of my boarding houses, my boarders, staff and the boarding community.

I have received lots of advice, some solicited and some not, from mentors and colleagues who have gone through this

process themselves. The single best pieces of advice was to take my time in making changes. Yet not be static in the waiting, write down everything you notice in your first week, month or term and then prioritise. Once you've been there a while and got the lay of the land, re-evaluate your list. If it still needs changing, change it.

I can tell you my notebook which had my initial ideas for change in it has seen more ink than a master's thesis. The ideas have changed, evolved and changed again, always being refined, redesigned and rediscussed with my boarding senior leadership team. I'm still learning and growing, sometimes slowly, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. ■

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Head of Boarding
Scots All Saints College

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Overwhelmed or not...



Aaargh, this is such an over-used word at the moment! The world has always been complicated, there have always been difficult problems – so I’d like to suggest three types of overwhelm, and maybe a different, less ambiguous, word for each one:

1 - Awe

“The sight of the Niagara Falls was overwhelming, they were so huge”. Or the sky scrapers of New York City. Yes, I’ll allow that, and in fact it’s GOOD to go into nature and be overwhelmed by the stars in the desert or the ancient trees in a forest, or the size of a whale, or the mountains in Norway or Nepal.

2 - Stressed by something being too complicated to fully figure out immediately

This is normal in most work, and is part of life – if you’re not pushing the limits of your comfort zone occasionally then you’re not developing, and not attempting/achieving challenges.

It’s a form of project management - or lack of!

So instead of being “overwhelmed” by driving in Sydney, or the complexities of a new job, you could try the following:

- Get more information before you start the drive, or as soon as you start the new job. The more information the better.
- Prepare as much as you can – maps, names of people, plans and back-up plans, maybe even a Gantt chart!
- Yes, plan the whole thing out, like a

project, so you know where you’ll start and you know how long the whole thing will take, and that if you just follow your plan you’ll be OK.

- Talk with others – set up a master-mind group, see if others feel the same, help each other plan and support each other – you’re not alone!
- “I can only do my best” – should be your mantra in any difficult situation. Do your best, (work really hard and take total ownership of customers needs and quality) and then if that’s not enough you can be satisfied that you could do no more.
- Take your time – don’t let other people make you panic. If something is new and complicated you might want to do it in several parts, or plan before starting, and you have a right to do that.
- Tackle one part to start with, and then, once you have nailed that, move on to the next part. Everything new can be broken down into steps to learn.

3 - Stressed because too many things are calling for your attention at once and you don’t know where to start, and you feel (probably rightly) that you can’t do it all.

This is time management rather than project management – lots of small things that aren’t connected, so you have too

much choice as to what you do when.

There are your options when you are too busy, when you have too much to do:

- Say no to some of it.
- Delegate some of it.
- Find more efficient ways to do some of it.
- Consider being less fussy about how you do the less important stuff – perfectionists are easily overwhelmed.
- Make a list of everything so at least you know the size of the problem (and if it’s too big then it’s back to saying no and delegating) - and then you can...
- Prioritise – depending on what’s most urgent, and also what’s most important, you can do a mixture of these two in order to keep everyone else happy (the urgent stuff) and make yourself happy (progress on things that are important).
- Agree the order with your boss – if you can’t do everything right now (who can??) you can make this point to your boss in a constructive, non-wingey way, by saying “This is my plan, this is the order I’ll get these things done, and approximately when I think they’ll be done, are you OK with this?”.

So there we are, no more “overwhelm” except for the awe of the natural world! ■

AUTHOR

Chris Croft

Chris Croft Training

chris@chriscrofttraining.co.uk

FOOD FOR LIFE

Our Chartwells commitment to serving fresh and creative meals extends well beyond the kitchens of our schools and colleges. A key force behind this is our Culinary Ambassador, Nic Griffiths, who is both dedicated to our market segment as well as ensuring that we constantly evolve and offer new and creative dishes and presentation ideas that keep students engaged and satisfied.

We understand the importance of a wellbeing-focused diet, where nutrition is key, and that when combined with a fun and educational approach, it can also set students up for life. Similarly, our Masterclass Cooking sessions that Nic runs are a fantastic opportunity for students to learn some first-hand life skills. We love the opportunity to break bread with each other, and to help students develop a hands-on repertoire of recipes they are confident to reproduce in their own homes and kitchens.

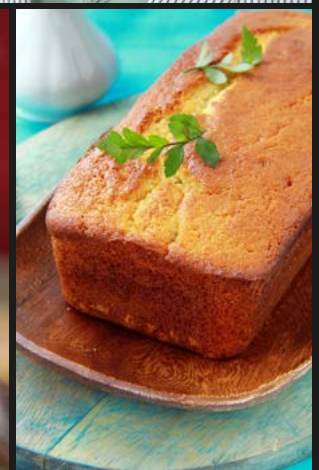
Nic also oversees our menu design and adherence to our independently endorsed Smart Food program which is also supported by our dedicated Chartwells Dietician.

For further details on how we can help you, or a for a review of your current services, please contact:

Chartwells

George Michaelides
Director, Development & Partnerships
0404 000 931
GeorgeMichaelides@compass-group.com.au

Tom Dey
Manager, Business Development
0437 600 133
TomDey@compass-group.com.au



Financial Life Skills: 2024

The Wealth Academy



In 2017, The Wealth Academy's first article was published in *Lights Out*. It was titled '*Financial Life Skills Have Never Been More Important*'.

Unfortunately, the financial landscape has become increasingly different with dangers lurking everywhere. It is now even more important!

Back then, there were no cryptocurrencies attracting the financially uneducated into their systems.

Back then, there were very few online payment apps that could place the financially uneducated into considerable debt so quickly and easily.

Back then, there were no online gambling apps enticing the young to subscribe.

Back then, there was still cash in a wallet and a cheque book in the drawer.

Back then, there was not a scam every time you opened your email account or checked your text messages.

Not so long ago, we also had a royal commission into banking and financial services, which reminded us all of the importance of financial learning. It is too easy to be compromised and disadvantaged when a person has no financial education.

Back then, the world was different.

Can you imagine what it will be like in another five years, when the current year seven boarders are in year twelve, about to enter tertiary or vocational education, or return to the family farm.

The fact is, financial education was imperative in 2017 because we were all aware then that the financial world was rapidly changing.

In 2024, financial education is still an imperative. Equally imperative is the fact that financial education should no longer be treated in an ad hoc and incidental manner.

Financial life skills education in a boarding house should be formalised. It should be planned. It should be regular and consistent. It should be seen as important.

Senior boarders and perhaps past boarders can of course be included in that planning.



A way forward

Back in 2017, the *Lights Out* article identified four strategies for moving forward.

- Access unbiased financial life skill resources.
- Include parents (and senior boarders) in your planning.
- Identify local partners who can provide expert knowledge as needed.
- Start small and develop incrementally.

These strategies still work.

Supervision of Learning

There has been a view shared by several boarding house managers that they want resources that boarders can just do by themselves, without supervision.

This is not a view supported by The Wealth Academy. While TWA provides ezines that boarders can read independently, our courses require facilitation.

Financial education needs a facilitator. Someone to push the conversation along. Someone to establish the learning program, monitor its implementation and then either lead or supervise the financial education lessons given to boarders.

Facilitators do not need to be financial education experts. They do not have to be mathematicians. Facilitators should be prepared to promote the program to boarders, celebrate aspects of the program delivery with the boarding house

Boarders have different ecosystems and needs to the everyday school student. They need their own financial education program!

community and continue to re-assess its implementation to ensure its longevity and currency.

Additionally, it is both inappropriate and illegal to ask boarders under 18 to subscribe to online course websites, such as that of The Wealth Academy. It is a better and more responsible option for boarding staff to subscribe and then facilitate the courses and other information that may be available online.

Boarder Bravado

In every boarding house there will be a few boarders who indicate that they do not need a financial education. Their reasons may include:

- I have access to lots of money so will not really need a financial education.
- I am very smart so I can just figure it out.
- My parents will always be there!
- I live overseas where financial education is not needed.
- It's too boring, I'm not interested.

Yes, the reasons given can be varied, humorous, naive, and misinformed. Most of us would agree, that:

- regardless of how much money a person has, a financial education will assist that person to manage that wealth.
- even the smartest people get into financial difficulty

- parents will not always be there
- the OECD confirms that financial education is a requirement everywhere, and
- if prior financial education was boring, then the facilitator needs to make it more youth-oriented and fun.

Sometimes however, those reasons may be a reflection of home beliefs. If so, then facilitators need the skills to discuss the many advantages of financial education with parents, especially with regard preparing boarders for their financial future.

Commitment

ABSA and The Wealth Academy have been collaborating for seven years, trying to turn the dial up in boarding houses with regard financial education. We share an unbending commitment to helping boarding house managers to support the financial learning of boarders.

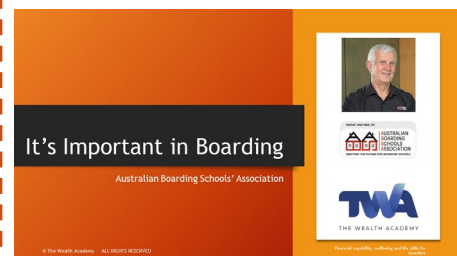
If you also want to embed a financial life skills program into your boarding house, talk to us. We are here to help.

AUTHOR:

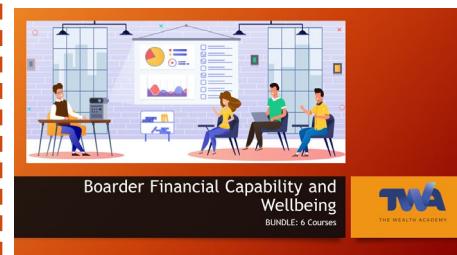
Ken Swan
Wealth Academy

HOW TO GET STARTED?

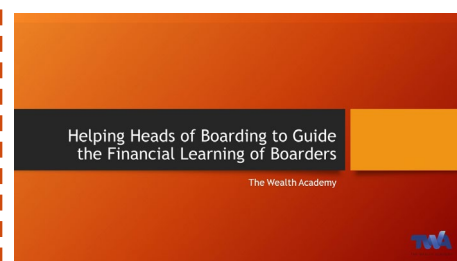
1. Contact The Wealth Academy to arrange for a video meeting to discuss the boarding house financial life skill program options.
2. Peruse TWA's course website which also includes access to free downloads and promotional videos from the ABSA CEO and past boarding house students.



3. Browse TWA's range of courses, including specific bundles for boarding houses.



4. TWA can provide a video-conference professional development program via Teams for your designated staff.



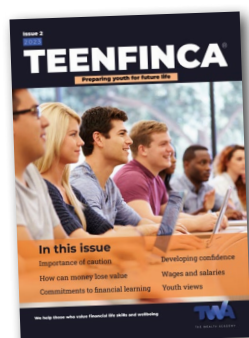
WHERE TO NEXT?

All boarders will need help to navigate and interrogate their financial world. Financial capability comes from education, practice, and repeated exposure to safe financial learning.

The Wealth Academy is here to help you provide that safe learning.

Financial education needs to start in the boarding school somewhere, by someone!

Take the first step: Contact
admin@thewealthacademy.com.au
www.courses.thewealthacademy.com.au ■



FREEBIES

Have you downloaded our free 2023 ezines for boarders interested in financial learning and entrepreneurship. They are still available.

< This issue includes:

- Commitments to financial learning
- Opinions: Wealth
- Youth: I recently learned
- How can money lose value?
- Wages & salaries: The difference
- The importance of 'caution'

< This issue includes:

- Leaps of faith
- Following others' efforts
- Inspirational youth (Australia and the USA)
- Sharing ideas
- Resilience





Attitude *is Everything*

Attitude is the way we see and react to the world. It's our mindset, made up of our beliefs and feelings, guiding how we think and behave. It's personal and shaped by our experiences and values. Attitude isn't just about being positive or negative; it influences how we handle challenges, connect with others and navigate life.

For students, attitude plays a pivotal role in determining their response to challenges, capacity for growth and learning, ability to overcome obstacles, and the formation of connections with others. A positive attitude is characterised by an optimistic perspective on life and learning. It goes beyond mere

happiness or cheerfulness, emphasising the importance of concentrating on what can be controlled and striving to achieve success through one's best efforts. Attitude can significantly influence a student's trajectory: not only their performance in academics and co-curricular, but also on a deeper personal level.

Students extend beyond mere data points, and effort and attitude can often surpass IQ as predictors of success, with a Stanford University study finding that "a positive attitude influences learning and academic achievement". Students may possess impressive baseline measures, but without the right attitude, predicted grades cannot be guaranteed. Conversely, students with lower predictions can quickly surpass expectations with the right mindset. We've all encountered that highly capable student who, unfortunately, tends to abandon tasks quickly due to a fear of failure. Conversely, there's the student whose dogged determination leads them to success, defying all predictions.

Students develop attitudes within a learning ecosystem – formally and informally. They learn through the curriculum, but also through others that they interact with. And this is where boarding schools play a crucial role. By their very nature, boarding schools foster more positive attitudes through the unique environments they offer. Living on campus creates a close-knit community, promoting camaraderie and lasting friendships. The attitude to persist, consider others, choose kindness, and work collaboratively is essential in any boarding setting, and the shared experiences of daily routines, academic challenges and accessibility to extracurricular activities encourage a sense of belonging and mutual support.

Boarders develop a greater sense of responsibility and independence as they manage their daily lives away from home, and the structured environment also provides a framework for personal growth, fostering resilience and adaptability in the face of new experiences. With a diverse group of peers in close proximity, students learn to appreciate different

perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and open-minded outlook to life.

Boarding presents its share of difficulties, and our students inevitably encounter challenges. It's during these times that resilience and a steadfast positive belief in eventual success become crucial. As boarding staff, we actively cultivate mindsets that emphasise both individual growth and collaborative support for others. This approach not only nurtures students to develop autonomy but also fosters a sense of unity so deep that boarding communities are often better referred to as families.

Ways boarding schools can foster positive attitudes.

- Create a strong sense of community through recreational activities, clubs, and collaborative projects, fostering lasting connections and a sense of belonging.
- Establish an environment of open communication for students to freely express thoughts and feelings.

- Celebrate both small and significant accomplishments to reinforce a positive outlook.
- Promote regular exercise, balanced diets and sufficient sleep.
- Teach mindfulness practices such as journaling and meditation.
- Create a positive academic atmosphere focusing on effort and a growth mindset.
- Implement a responsive monitoring system to address issues such as homesickness promptly.
- Encourage personal growth through goal setting and students being able to engage in their own hobbies. ■

AUTHOR:

Dr Gemma Dale
Teacher and Boarding Supervisor
Somerville House

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Investigation Transformation: *The Case for Improved Investigation Capabilities in Boarding Schools*

'I felt like a detective more than a Head of School!'
I read this comment recently from a leader departing a New Zealand boarding school. He was referring to the increased demands placed on him to investigate serious incidents within his school. I know his experience will resonate with many because he highlights an emerging risk in boarding schools around the world.

The demands schools place on their own staff to lead investigations is an area of concern. Having untrained staff carry out investigations is risking unjust outcomes for staff and students, jeopardising student safety, and increasingly resulting in litigation and reputational loss.

Some of the events demanding investigation are obvious. Every time there's an incident of bullying, harassment, or violence, there's an expectation that you'll do everything you

can to find the facts and take disciplinary measures that are just. If you suspect drug or alcohol abuse, you must accurately assess the extent of the problem so that you can respond appropriately. Theft and vandalism call for an investigation to hold those responsible accountable and implement prevention measures.

Perhaps the most serious of all are allegations of sexual misconduct. The recent Commissions in Australia and New Zealand have made it clear that educational institutions will be held far more accountable for their responses to allegations of this nature. The Australian Commission directed that 'Institutions should make every effort to investigate complaints of child sexual abuse' with the investigation being carried out by an 'impartial, objective and trained investigator'.

So, what does a good investigation actually look like? A high-quality investigation is thoroughly documented - from the initial investigation plan to the final investigation report. An investigator needs to be able to make snap risk assessments, quickly deciding whether an allegation can be sidelined or needs to be escalated, whether it can be handled in-house or requires an independent investigator. You must be able to

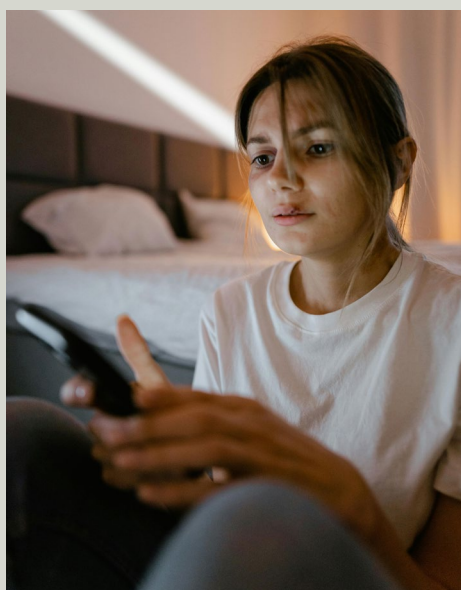
correctly handle confidential disclosures in sensitive matters. You need to be aware of all the forms of cognitive bias that inevitably seep into every investigation and how to minimise their effects.

Crucially, you need to know how to interview in a way that will maximise the chances of getting to the truth. Real interviewing is not what you see on Netflix where the interviewer asks half a dozen direct questions and elicits an account in under two minutes. Best practice places the interviewee at the centre of the process and involves time, patience, and an awareness of how the human brain operates. An effective interviewer understands the fragility of memory and how easily it's contaminated during retrieval. You need to be proficient in the art of actively listening while simultaneously formulating a line of questioning that will elicit a reliable account. In some cases, you need to know how to detect dishonesty and challenge it effectively, but with empathy.

Here's the problem.

Boarding school staff are generally given no specific investigation training, despite the fact many are being asked to deal with major incidents in the lives of the students in their care. Sometimes investigations into student behaviour morph into allegations against staff, further complicating matters. All these investigations are subject to intense scrutiny.

Boarding schools will keep appearing in mainstream and social media. There's no better story than one about a school ignoring a culture of bullying or botching an investigation. In the words of Will



Rogers, 'It takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but you can lose it in a minute'.

Schools will continue to face litigation over the way in which they have handled disciplinary investigations. Or over allegations that they have failed to investigate at all. In recent years the costs sought are of eye-watering proportions, a trend unlikely to be reversed.

Parents understandably demand high standards from investigations. They entrust their children to your care. They expect you to keep their children safe and secure in every way.

So, how do we ensure our investigations can survive being placed under the microscope? I believe it requires a rethink of how we approach investigations. It requires transformation. We need to enhance the investigation process, from start to finish.

Let's start with developing you. There is a whole world of investigative best practice which is not utilised in the school

setting. There are skills and techniques that are proven to be effective which have never been used. Let's teach you and your team how to accurately assess risk, plan, maintain objectivity, interview, analyse evidence and report findings.

I think the transformation also needs to extend to external investigators. Many situations cannot be handled in-house and require an independent investigator. But investigating an incident within the context of a school has its unique challenges. The interviewing phase is often complicated, requiring the interviewing of children and young people and often reluctant staff members. A sound understanding is required not only of legislation, but also of each school's internal rules, policies and codes. Investigations in the education sector require specialisation.

This is part of the mission of Basalt Solutions, the boutique consultancy firm I've just launched. We're utilising our unique combination of experience in education and investigation leadership to provide a service tailored to the education sector.

We're lifting the internal capabilities of schools through professional development as well as providing a specialist independent investigation service.

Equipping your school to handle every situation with professionalism and in a manner that adheres to legal principles goes a long way to minimising reputational risk and increasing public trust in your institution. Empowering your team with advanced investigation skills is a tangible demonstration of your commitment to student safety. It's time to redefine what investigation looks like in boarding schools. It's time for investigation transformation. ■

Tim is the Founding Director of Basalt Solutions Ltd, a boutique consultancy firm. He has experience serving as a Detective Sergeant in New Zealand Police and a background in education. His wife and business partner, Natalie, is a teacher and school trustee. Tim and Natalie have three children and have been involved in foster care for more than a decade. To find out more, visit basaltsolutions.com.



AUTHOR:
Tim Sterne
Founding Director
Basalt Solutions Ltd



Why is it *that if you write your goals down you tend to achieve them?*

You may be sceptical about this, but I know it's true because I've tested it personally more than once, and many other people have told me the same. But why? If there's a God he probably doesn't give out Ferraris, or whatever people write on their lists – it's up to us to make things happen.

Two mechanisms that would explain it

1. That the goals are in your subconscious, like a kind of autopilot, so you are slightly more sensitive to any possible contacts and leads that crop up. All the tiny decisions that you make every day all add up and you end up taking a different course – a better one – to where you would have gone. Having a clear destination stops you drifting through your life.
2. That having clear goals makes you more self disciplined (you are less likely to waste time if you are determined to achieve something – on training courses I use Olympic rowing god Steve Redgrave's training regime to illustrate this. How could he have maintained his focus without the Olympics coming up?)

and also it makes you more assertive (you are less likely to let other people drag you of course if you have a clear goal you want to achieve).

These two key skills of self discipline and assertiveness make you much more likely to do the right things in terms of using systems (jobs to do list, master list, write everything down, promises from other people logged in your diary and followed up, etc) and also in terms of using skills like saying No, Negotiating, Delegating, Prioritising (when you do things and how long you spend on them) and overcoming your urges to do things perfectly or to please other people.

And if you have systems and you use skills: you are much more likely to achieve your goals.



So it goes:
Goals lead to...
Self discipline and...
Assertiveness which lead to...
Systems and...
Use of Skills which lead to...
Achievement of goals
Goals are the beginning and the end. ■

AUTHOR

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Scots All Saints College

A Time of Change

During the past five years, our school has undergone incredible change, as two well respected and historic boarding schools in Bathurst, The Scots School and All Saints College, merged in 2019 to become Scots All Saints College. It was a time of enormous transformation for the whole College community, but particularly for the boarding families, as all that they had known, changed.

Fast forward to 2023 and our boarding community of 140, is thriving as enrolments continue to grow. We have three boarding houses—Thompson for years 7-12 boys, Galloway for years 7-10 girls and Ives for years 11-12 girls. After the first year of vertical boarding in all houses, the decision was made to utilise horizontal boarding for the girls' houses. Ives, as a senior girls' house works perfectly, as it allows the students to have an academic and social

focus aimed specifically at their age-appropriate needs and interests. Driving lessons, choosing partners for the Deb Ball, GAP year decisions to be made, getting their first car and uni courses to be explored are all key conversation points.

Ives House has 41 girls, most of who are from country NSW. Their shared rural backgrounds help to build collegiality amongst them. Whether it's drought, floods or mouse plagues, we listen to each

other's stories, and celebrate with them when their harvest has gone well. Our girls are incredibly active in the College's co-curricular programs, particularly in the very successful cattle and equestrian teams, sports and music ensembles.

This year we decided to combine our artistic talents and create a new feature. In a collaborative house effort between students and staff, we painted a magnificent mural on our outdoor courtyard wall, which happened to be the perfect canvas. The plan is to complete it over a series of stages, which will start again next year with our new intake of Year Eleven girls. During the few weeks it took to complete, it was a joy to watch the girls head outside into the sunshine, after a particularly cold winter, crank up the music, paint and chat. One of our quieter girls emerged as the unofficial leader of the task, and this was enormously satisfying to her as her peers





sought advice about colours and form.

Inspired by the outdoor mural, the Year Twelves, who were heading towards their final weeks in boarding, decided to create an indoor mural as part of their ongoing legacy. A new tradition was started, when each person put their painted handprint on the wall, and decorated it with their names, years in boarding and the name of their home town. Each year the outgoing Year Twelves will do the same, as a way of commemorating their presence and the impact they've each made in Ives House. This was such an emotionally constructive task, while the girls were excited to finish school, many were also grappling with the 'what next?' It was a time of bonding for a group of girls who, as all boarders know, have the deepest of connections, particularly those who had arrived in Year Seven as wide-eyed and nervous young girls.

Life in Ives House is all about steering the girls in the right direction, so that when they leave school they are confident and proactive young women, who are capable of putting their stamp on society. Our boarders are all aware that their parents have blessed them with access to a fine education and the opportunities that come with that and with this awareness comes an academic desire to work to the best of their ability. As new year groups

come into Ives, they have an understanding that there are rules, as all boarding houses have, but more importantly, there are expectations that come with living in a community. The girls understand that we expect them to be respectful and kind young people. And they certainly deliver.

We have a well-known quote on the Common Room wall in Ives House:

Here's to strong women.
May we know them.
May we raise them.
May we be them. ■



AUTHOR:

Lynne Woodlock
Head of Ives House
Scots All Saints College

Prince Alfred College

Serving their Community



Relay for Life 2023

"We reap a reward merely in the act of helping others. We never know how, or if, that reward will come back to us. Helping is the reward; none other is needed nor better." Terry Goodkind

Like all boarding houses across the country, service and community engagement is nothing new. In fact, throughout our school history, the boarders are often the first to volunteer or help out no matter what the cause.

Throughout 2023, our boarders continued to do an outstanding job when it came to serving their community. We once again saw a contingent of boys supporting the Schultz family at Gurra Gurra, pulling down the wall that saved their family home during the 2022 floods. Boarders supported the Children Cancer Association (CCA) and The Light Up Timor campaigns with various activities throughout the year including the Greatest Shave, Project 160, fundraising car wash, Crazy Socks Day and lunchtime BBQs. We continued our support for Ronald McDonald House, Forktree, Relay for Life, Cancer Council, Red Shield Appeal, Push up Challenge and Movember. These big events are supplemented each day with positive interactions with peers and

staff, weekend activities, and general care and respect within our boarding house living environment.

Seeing our boarders engage in community events and supporting causes close to many of our hearts, makes me confident that we are meeting our school motto to work hard and be kind. "Kindness keeps us grounded and relatable to all people as we soar to the heights we are reaching for professionally and personally." - Adrienne Bankert

In 2023 we wanted to formally launch our service program including the acknowledgement of student progress throughout their boarding journey. The Rushton Ripple was born.

Cyril Edward Rushton, born on the 28th of April 1896, was enrolled at Prince Alfred College shortly after his 14th birthday. After his time at Prince Alfred College, Cyril worked as a skilled worker for the Glenelg Railway Company until war broke out in



Photo of Cyril Edward Rushton in uniform

Europe in 1914. By 1917, Cyril had enlisted, giving up his job and life in Adelaide to serve his country aged 21. He left the country in August and served as a sapper in both England and France, whose responsibility it was to build temporary bridges, tunnels and trenches for his comrades.

Tragically, on the 31st of August, Cyril paid the highest price for his service. He met his end while aiding his comrades, a mere three months before the war's conclusion. At the age of 22, Cyril Edward Rushton exemplified what it means to serve. He prioritised the well-being of those around him over his own and continued to assist others until his life's very end. The school recognised his service and sacrifice by naming one of six pastoral houses, Rushton House. This boarding house saw boarders represent and serve Rushton from 1981 through to 2004.

Giving service means selflessly offering your time, effort, and skills to benefit others or a greater cause. It involves putting the needs and well-being of others before your own, contributing positively to the community, and making sacrifices to help those in need. Cyril Edward Rushton exemplified the spirit of service through his actions during World War I and just as Cyril's actions helped shape history, the 'Rushton Ripple' program aims to empower individuals to make positive contributions to their communities and the world at large, one action or ripple at a time.

Service, whether in the boarding house or out helping within your community, is an important value that can help build a sense of responsibility, empathy, and connectedness within individuals and communities. By contributing to the well-being of others and the environment, we can create a better world for all.



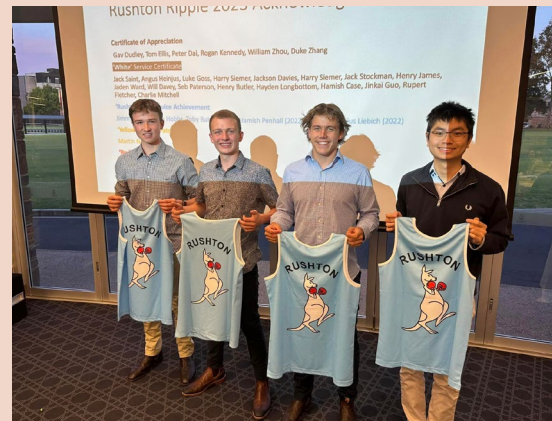
Boys at Gurra Gurra – 1st year



Ronald McDonald House gift baskets



Rushton Certificate presentation



One thing that has helped us track this data in an easier format is the events and pastoral points modules within REACH. Staff can process both school-organised and community engagement events in a timely fashion. The pastoral points calculator does the rest and at the end of each term we can acknowledge boarders who have reached one of our five levels of service.

Whether a border joins us in Year Seven

or Year Eleven they will have an opportunity to serve others, build community, support those in need with kindness and learn skills that will make them lifelong positive members of their communities, wherever they end up in the world.

We want our boarders to engage in a range of experiences that allow them to develop their sense of self-worth and personal identity while understanding the positive impact they can have on others. In

this way, we aim to develop young men of character who will go beyond Prince Alfred College to make meaningful contributions to their communities. ■

AUTHOR:

Phil Noble
Director of Boarding
Prince Alfred College

Collaborative Transformation:

The King's School and A Team Tuition



In the ever-evolving landscape of education, boarding schools across Australia strive to provide comprehensive support to their students. The King's School, renowned for its commitment to excellence, underwent a transformational journey to refine prep time for its Year Seven boarders. This article dives into the A Team Tuition Program at The King's School, exploring the transformation of prep time and its significant impacts on both students and staff.

Before A Team Tuition: The Dynamic of Prep

In 2019, The King's School recognised the growing need to bolster support for its Year Seven boarders and address the diverse academic needs of this cohort by ensuring each student had the necessary tools to thrive. Inspired by insights gained at an ABSA Conference, Housemaster Grant Gerber was captivated by A Team Tuition's innovative approach to tutoring and mentoring students.

His desire was to deliver a program yielding impressive results and providing valuable data and insights. Prior to embracing A Team Tuition's program, Year Seven prep at The King's School comprised structured sessions, supplemented by staff support. Gerber reflected on this period, stating,

"Despite our sincere efforts, challenges persisted, particularly in supporting students transitioning to boarding life and navigating different academic levels."

Even with staff support, the demand for tailored academic assistance became clear, prompting The King's School to explore

solutions outside of their staff. Gerber realised "...our Year Seven boarders would benefit from some extra assistance with organisation, planning, assessment and study skills. We were looking for an ability to bridge the gap and provide the confidence and skill-set to prepare them as best we could for Year 8 and beyond."

Transformation with A Team Tuition:

Gerber described the introduction of A Team Tuition's program as a transformative moment in the school's approach to their prep time. Year Seven boarders are now actively engaged in intimate, small-group sessions guided by Academic Personal Trainers (APT's) that work on not only building study skills but also their confidence and motivation. This personalised format reinforces core academics but also helps the student develop essential study techniques and exam preparation strategies, tailored to each student's individual needs. The holistic nature of this program creates an encouraging environment where students feel supported and empowered to excel academically and beyond.

"Using A Team Tuition has provided even more assistance for our boarders to feel confident in study skills and exam preparation, plus the completion of their homework. I have seen a big shift in their confidence and self-esteem."

Benefits for Staff and Boarding Students:

The A Team Tuition Program has resulted in substantial benefits for boarding staff, allowing them to remain more focused on the overall development of their students. This shift in attention from academic support to student well-being has created a more nurturing environment within the boarding community at The King's School. The result is that students end up feeling supported, not only academically but also emotionally and socially.

In addition to the staff's appreciation, students have experienced a myriad of benefits from the collaboration with A Team Tuition. Due to this, students feel empowered to excel academically while also developing essential study skills and techniques that extend beyond the classroom, which contributes to a positive and enriching academic experience. Gerber explained that the program "has also allowed us to put our boarders' parents at ease, knowing that we are working with their sons to prepare them and assist them in their academics in their formative and impressionable years."

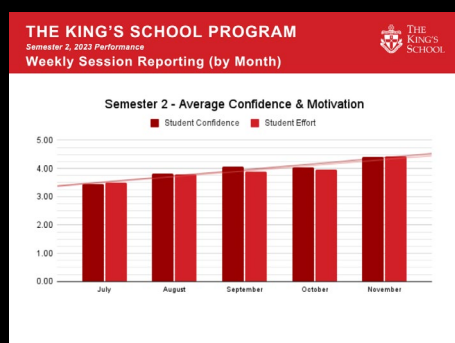
Results & Impact:

Effort, Confidence, & Motivation

The program has yielded remarkable outcomes among Year 7 boarders, which was seen in The King's School 2023 End of Year Report. They saw that academic

performance of boarders has significantly improved, “with four of the top 10 effort ratings being awarded to boarding students. This included the first-ever top effort rating for a boarder.” Gerber explained.

Additionally, there has been a notable shift in The King’s School’s students’ attitudes towards learning, shown by their increased enthusiasm and overall improved perseverance. Gerber highlighted instances of students experiencing breakthroughs in understanding challenging concepts, thanks to the guidance of A Team Tuition’s team of APTs. The positive impact of A Team Tuition’s program extends beyond academics, with students forming strong bonds with their Academic Personal Trainers and looking for more opportunities for growth and development, Gerber explained, “when I ask them their thoughts, they tell me how much they get out of each session, and the boys now ask when their next session is going to be.”

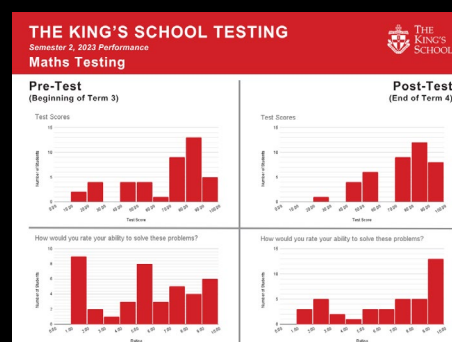
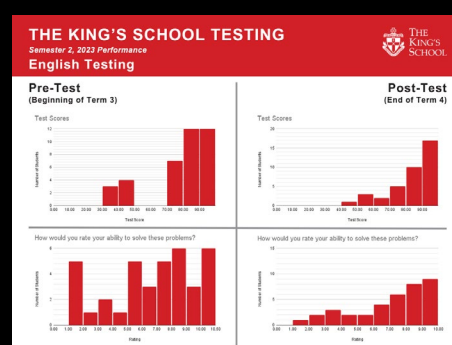


The boarders new sense of confidence and effort that can be seen in the data from Semester Two not only drives academic success but also cultivates essential life skills such as resilience and perseverance. Students have not only seen academic improvement but also reported feeling more supported and confident in their studies. This increase in confidence can be attributed to the personalised attention and tailored support provided by A Team Tuition APTs, resulting in greater motivation and better engagement with their learning. As The King’s School and A Team Tuition continue their collaborative efforts, they remain committed to empowering students and shaping their academic journey for years to come.

“The collaborative spirit between The King’s School and A Team Tuition reflects a shared commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals.”

Academic Performance

In order to track the progress of The King’s School boarders and ensure their continued growth, A Team Tuition worked with The King’s School to devise and proctor a test for the boarders at the beginning of Semester Two and the end of Semester Two. This test was crafted in tandem with the King’s School Year Seven curriculum to ensure it aligned with what the boarders were currently learning in the classroom.



The results were overwhelmingly positive, displaying a shift from students with low to medium performance levels to those with medium to high performance levels. There was also a shift in the student’s self-belief when asked how they would rate their own abilities. The testing demonstrated not only a net improvement in the boarders grades, but a boost in confidence and motivation across the board.

Closing Statement:

The King’s School’s program with A Team Tuition exemplifies the effectiveness of tailored academic support for student growth and boarding experience enrichment, reflecting a commitment to innovation and student welfare that aligns with the school’s legacy of excellence.

As The King’s School and A Team Tuition continue to offer programs for boarders, the journey towards academic excellence and student well-being remains. Through ongoing communication and dedication to student success, this collaboration is an example of the transformative potential of educational innovation. ■

AUTHOR:
Kiah Heron
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator
A Team Tuition

Boarders Apparel Co

Making the Boarding Experience Feel More Like Home

Meet Andrea and Jill, two passionate boarding house staff members hailing from South Australia. They share a common goal, to make the boarding experience feel more like home. Andrea brings fresh eyes to the table, while Jill's years of experience in the boarding world provide valuable insight. Together, they founded Boarders Apparel Co, a venture dedicated to enhancing the boarding experience.

At Boarders Apparel Co, they understand the importance of personalisation. From year 12 jumpers to staff uniforms, laundry solutions, crates, linen, and mugs, every item is tailored to reflect the individual needs within the boarding community.

One of their standout offerings is their welcome packs for new boarders. These packs are not just generic bundles but are carefully curated to include essentials that cater to the specific needs of each boarding house. What's more, they can be customised to match the school's colours, adding an extra touch of school spirit.

Boarders Apparel Co isn't just about business; they also have a heart for giving back. This year, they've already made a difference by donating 20 wheat bags, providing warmth and comfort. Additionally, they've sponsored a boarder in her journey through the SANFLW, showing their commitment to supporting individuals within the boarding community.

If you're a boarding house looking to add a personal touch to your environment, Boarders Apparel Co is here to help. Whether you need uniforms, laundry solutions, or welcome packs, they've got you covered. Reach out to them to discuss your requirements, and they'll work with you to create tailor-made solutions that fit your needs.

To stay updated on their latest initiatives and offerings, be sure to follow Boarders Apparel Co on social media platforms like Instagram (@boardersapparelco). Join their online community and be a part of the conversation surrounding the boarding experience and their efforts to give back. ■

Contact us at:
hello@boardersapparelco.com.au





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Welcome: New Principals



Paul Finneran
Principal
Assumption College
Kilmore, VIC

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE - VIC

I am Paul Finneran, the new College Principal at Assumption College, Kilmore. Having worked in Catholic education for over thirty years across regional and suburban NSW and Victoria, I feel most privileged and humbled to have been entrusted to lead this wonderful community. I have been in senior leadership for over a dozen years and this is my second principalship after my last role as Principal at St Paul's Catholic College Greystanes in western Sydney, NSW.

This appointment presents the first opportunity to lead a community that includes boarding students. I am excited to be working alongside our boarding staff and the families from whom our students come on ensuring that our young men and women are provided with the necessary

support so that they can thrive and flourish. This added dimension to the school community brings with it certain complexities, but I am passionate about ensuring that our boarding students feel valued and supported in their own endeavours. I am committed to cultivating an environment in which these students feel like they are part of a family who will challenge and affirm them in their own personal, educational, social, and spiritual development.

I look forward to working with the Assumption College community, building upon the strong foundations already laid in ensuring its continued success. ■



Jen Bourke
Principal
Ballarat Clarendon College
Ballarat, VIC

BALLARAT CLARENDON COLLEGE - VIC

Jen Bourke commenced as Principal of Ballarat Clarendon College in January 2024. Having started at Clarendon in 2005, Jen has grown her career at the school and possesses a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience across a range of positions. Jen has most recently served as Deputy Principal and has fulfilled responsibilities as Head of Innovation, Head of Science, Co-Head of the Middle School and VCE Coordinator. A well-respected and admired member of the Clarendon community, she is regarded as progressive and an innovator, is pragmatic and goal-oriented, collaborative and compassionate, and is unquestionably committed to students' learning and progress. "I am exceptionally proud to lead Clarendon. As a day and boarding school in regional Victoria,

we are committed to serving the needs of our local and rural communities and ensuring that students are always at the centre of our work. We believe that students can only make optimum progress in an environment in which they are encouraged and supported by those around them." ■



Mathew Irving
Principal
Great Southern Grammar
Albany, WA

GREAT SOUTHERN GRAMMAR - WA

Great Southern Grammar is a Christian Co-education Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 day and boarding school located in Albany, Western Australia. Mr Mathew Irving has been appointed as the fifth Principal of Great Southern Grammar commencing 2024.

Mathew is an experienced school leader, strategist, facilitator, and coach who has held various leadership positions, including Deputy Head: Academics & Strategy, Director of Strategy, Director of Studies, and Director of Music across schools in Perth, Canberra and London.

Mathew believes the inherent purpose of education is to shape supportive and challenging

learning experiences that develop holistic knowledge and skills, leading students understand themselves and their place in the world. This approach nurtures personal success and the promotion of active participation in civic life. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Dr Sandra Hastie
Principal
Somerville House
Brisbane, QLD

SOMERVILLE HOUSE - QLD

The morning commute around Somerville House has looked a little different lately with the addition of a bright green helmet aboard a fresh new scooter whooshing along the bike path and into the gates of the School. The scooter, 'affectionately named 'The Hastie' by the students, is the transport of choice for Dr Sandra Hastie, the newly appointed and 13th Principal of Somerville House.

The former Principal of Rangi Ruru Girls' School, an independent Presbyterian boarding and day girls' school in New Zealand, Dr Hastie is the first New Zealand-born female Principal to be appointed in Australia. A Doctor of Education, a Master of Educational Administration (Hons), with a Bachelor of Education and a Diploma of Teaching, Dr Hastie promotes a future-focused approach to leading and educating the young

women of the future and is a strong advocate not only for independent but also single-sex education.

Dr Hastie's appointment comes during a significant year for Somerville House as it celebrates 125 years of empowering young women.

"I can confidently say that I made the right decision to pursue this opportunity and I already feel very much part of the Somerville House community. I am excited and honoured to lead this outstanding school." - Dr Sandra Hastie. ■



Tonetta Iannelli
Principal
St Francis De Sales Regional
College
Leeton, NSW

ST FRANCIS DE SALES REGIONAL COLLEGE - NSW

Tonetta, an alumnus and former parent at St. Francis de Sales Regional College, Leeton, served as its Assistant Principal between 2019 and 2022, following a similar role at Marian Catholic College in Griffith. She has amassed extensive leadership experience in education across various capacities, such as Leader of Learning and Teaching, Curriculum Leader, Religious Education Coordinator, and Leader of Mission and Faith Formation within the Diocese of Wagga Wagga's schools.

With an impressive educational background, Tonetta has earned a Master of Educational Leadership, a Bachelor of Teaching, a Bachelor of Business, and a Graduate Certificate in Theology of Religious Education, alongside completing the QUELi Emerging Principals Program.

Tonetta is renowned for her commitment to faith-filled education and lifelong learning. She is recognised for her dynamic and passionate approach to education, having a distinct vision for the College's future. Her ability to enhance student outcomes and strategically steer a boarding school in regional New South Wales has established her as a dedicated and visionary educational leader. ■



Virginia Warner
Principal
St Hilda's School
Gold Coast, QLD

ST HILDA'S SCHOOL - QLD

St Hilda's School is an all girls Pre-Prep to Year 12 Day and Boarding School located on the Gold Coast.

Mrs Virginia Warner was commissioned as the 12th Principal of St Hilda's School at the beginning of the 2024 school year. With over 25 years experience in Anglican and Independent schools, Virginia brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in education and School governance. Virginia was most recently Principal of St Luke's Anglican School in Bundaberg, and has previously held positions of leadership at All Saints Anglican School and Coomera Anglican

College on the Gold Coast.

Virginia is humbled to serve St Hilda's School's flourishing and diverse school community, and to continue the cultivation of not just academic excellence, but the character of inspiring, compassionate, and strong women that has been central to the school's mission since 1912. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Scott Thomson
Principal
St Joseph's Nudgee College
Boondall, QLD

ST JOSEPH'S NUDGEE COLLEGE – QLD

St Joseph's Nudgee College is excited to announce the appointment of Mr Scott Thomson as Principal. Scott is well known to the Nudgee College community as he commenced as Deputy Principal in 2023, and brought with him a wealth of experience and qualifications in Catholic education. Prior to joining the College, Scott was Principal of St Joseph's College Banora Point from 2017 to 2022. He also served as the Assistant Principal of St Mary's Catholic College, Casino. Scott holds a Master of Theological Studies, Master of Education Leadership and a Bachelor of Education (Secondary). Scott is a dedicated Catholic educational leader and an active member of the St Joseph's Tweed Heads Parish community.

He acknowledges that the student is at the centre of all efforts, and as Principal, he is committed to working tirelessly to know the young men of Nudgee College and foster a place of education that liberates hearts and minds. ■



Dierdre Young
Principal
St Ursula's College
Toowoomba, QLD

ST URSULA'S COLLEGE – QLD

Established in 1931 by the Ursuline Sisters, St Ursula's College Toowoomba is a Catholic Day and Boarding School for girls in Years 7-12. Located on the Darling Downs in the Garden City of Toowoomba, St Ursula's College is proud of its Ursuline heritage while forging a new path as we join the Toowoomba Catholic Schools network of 32 schools across the region.

Mrs Deidre Young 'returns home' to St Ursula's College to take her place as our newest Principal in 2024 after previously serving as a teacher for 10 years in the early 90s. Deidre comes with a wealth of experience, having served as Principal for 16 years and accumulating a total of 24 years in all-girls' educational settings.

Mrs Young leads a team of educators and staff who provide an innovative and caring environment

where girls are challenged to be critical thinkers, curious learners, confident communicators, and leaders. We are proud of the entrepreneurial and personalized approaches used in our boarding school that make our girls feel at home and active in the community. It is at the heart of the reason why we were named the Australian Boarding School of the Year in 2023. ■



Luke Baills
Principal
The Cathedral School of St Anne
& St James
Townsville, QLD

THE CATHEDRAL SCHOOL OF ST ANNE & ST JAMES – QLD

The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James was established in 1917 with just 71 students – in 2024 Cathedral has grown to over 1,100 local and international students. The co-ed campus now encompasses an Early Learning Centre, Junior, Middle, and Senior School, and Boarding (7-12).

This year also marked the appointment of Luke Baills as Principal, following his exceptional ten-year tenure as the Head of Junior School at Cathedral. As only the 8th Principal in the school's proud 106 year history, Luke's appointment has been welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm and anticipation by the entire school community.

Luke's extensive range of educational experience

encompasses various roles, notably serving as a Boarding Supervisor at the Toowoomba Anglican School and teaching in both rural and remote school settings over 23 years. One key focus for Luke in 2024 is to prioritise the School Boarding Program and to ensure Cathedral is the 'boarding school of choice' for North Queensland.

A highlight for Luke in 2024 is welcoming the 2024 State IPCA Conference – Turning the Tide to The Cathedral School. ■



Michael Horne
Principal
The Hamilton and Alexandra
College
Hamilton, VIC

THE HAMILTON AND ALEXANDRA COLLEGE - VIC

Mr Michael Horne commenced as Principal of The Hamilton and Alexandra College in April 2023. Michael has a long understanding of regional life and education, having been raised and educated in Wangaratta and worked in regional Victorian independent schools.

Prior to his appointment at The Hamilton and Alexandra College, Mr Horne was Associate Principal at Braemar College in the Macedon Ranges, and previous to this, held a variety of senior leadership positions in Catholic and independent schools, including Head of Senior School and Deputy Principal.

Michael considers himself first and foremost to be an English teacher, with interests in music, history

and outdoor pursuits and he is passionate about developing the capacity of staff and students to be continual and curious learners and is a strong advocate for pursuing excellence in teaching.

Since joining the College, Michael has been involved in purchasing a new property at Mirranatwa. This acquisition realises a strategic aim of the school to secure a foothold near the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park and together with the school community, Michael is excited to extend the students engagement with this unique landscape on the school's doorstep. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Sarah McCleary
Head of Girls Boarding
Ballarat Clarendon College
Ballarat, VIC

BALLARAT CLARENDON COLLEGE - VIC

Sarah McCleary commenced as Head of Girls Boarding in January 2024. Having previously been the Acting Deputy Head of Boarding at Scotch College in Melbourne, Sarah returns to Clarendon having graduated in 2006. "I'm excited to return to Ballarat with my family and work with our boarding community. Clarendon has a strong commitment to boarding and our boarding houses are very much the heart of our school. I look forward to continuing to nurture the safe and caring culture of the Girls Boarding House, getting to know the students and their families, and contributing to this vibrant and supportive community." Beyond her boarding expertise,

Sarah brings a wealth of classroom experience. Sarah has taught Psychology, English and English Language at Bacchus Marsh Grammar and Scotch College and will teach English and English Language in both the Middle and Senior Schools at Clarendon. ■



Courtney Coe
Head of Boarding
Calrossy Anglican School
Tamworth, NSW

CALROSSY ANGLICAN SCHOOL - NSW

After two years leading our Enrolments team, Courtney Coe has resumed as Head of Boarding at Calrossy Anglican School in 2024. She had worked in Boarding at Calrossy since 1999 and as Head for 17 years, contributing to the development of a healthy culture and lovely home environment for our resident students. During her tenure Courtney was integral in the establishment of Boys Boarding and the improvement of Co-ed Boarding facilities and Master Planning, introducing many innovations. During COVID, her risk assessment and planning work was used by NSW Health to provide guidance across the NSW Boarding sector. Interestingly, she came into the role in the days before social media, smart phones or vapes even existed but remains cognizant of the needs of contemporary students.

With our recent vacancy in 2024 Boarding leadership, Courtney was quick to approach me, asking to return to this important role at Calrossy. Her explanation was, "Whilst I have loved my time in enrolments, my 'heart' is in boarding and that is what I enjoy the most." Our community is delighted to have Courtney back leading the team and we look forward to continued growth and development of our boarding under her leadership, supporting the flourishing of our 180 students who call Calrossy their term-time home. Her warmth, empathy, approachability and understanding of the needs of boarders will be a great asset to our students. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Hilton Hardman
Head of Boarding
Esperance Anglican Community
School
Esperance, WA

ESPERANCE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL - WA

As the Head of Boarding at Esperance Anglican Community School, my primary dedication is to cultivate a nurturing and supportive environment for all students under my care. With a background deeply rooted in education and pastoral care, my passion revolves around guiding students through their boarding experiences, fostering their holistic development along the journey.

Throughout my professional journey, I've embraced the belief in the unique talents and potential of each student. The privilege of witnessing transformative growth in numerous individuals has further fuelled my commitment and enthusiasm for pastoral care within this role. At the heart of my philosophy lies the understanding that a robust sense of community is fundamental to the success of any boarding house. My commitment moving forward is towards shaping

an environment at McVay Boarding House that radiates warmth, inclusivity, and unwavering support, ensuring every student feels valued and empowered.

Drawing from a spectrum of experiences across various boarding environments, including Gibson House at Glenwood High School in Durban, South Africa, and Gibney House at Aquinas College in Perth, WA, I've gained invaluable insights into the essential role of student-centric approaches in shaping thriving boarding communities.

Together with the dedicated team at McVay Boarding House, we will continue the path laid before us, ensuring we maintain our vibrant and supportive community where every student is empowered to flourish and realise their fullest potential. ■



Kylie Wallis
Head of Boarding
Fairholme College
Toowoomba, QLD

FAIRHOLME COLLEGE- QLD

Kylie Wallis has taken up the reins with impressive enthusiasm, as our new Head of Boarding at Fairholme College. Kylie was previously our Head of the Learning Enhancement Centre from 2014 and has enthusiastically undertaken acting stints as Deputy Head of Boarding. She was a boarder herself, worked as a boarding house supervisor at The Rockhampton Grammar School and more recently lived on site at Boyce and Mackintosh House, Toowoomba Grammar, whilst her husband led those Houses, for nearly nine years. Notably, she co-led a significant research project into boarding transitions in 2014 which initiated our Country Visit program, and she has been the driver behind our continued visits, wherever possible, to every incoming boarder 'at home.' Kylie has travelled tens of thousands of kilometres

as part of this program, testimony to her understanding of the importance of establishing and nurturing relationships. Her own professional background includes two masters' qualifications in gifted and talented education, along with guidance and counselling – making her well-placed to understand adolescent girls and to consider their specific needs, within a boarding context. Her interests lie in both the pastoral and academic spheres, and Kylie is excited to work with the boarding team on further strengthening these areas. In the past years she has undertaken significant professional learning associated with the boarding context, indicative of her interest in this highly valued part of Fairholme. ■



Harry Hildebrand
Director of Boarding
Haileybury Rendall School
Darwin, NT

HAILEYBURY RENDALL SCHOOL - NT

My name is Harry Hildebrand, and I am excited to have been appointed the new Director of Boarding at Haileybury Rendall School. These first few weeks have been very special, firstly getting to know the executive team, other teachers, my wonderful boarding staff and most importantly our boarding students.

A little about me. I was born in Victoria, in Wangarratta named by the Bpangerang people, meaning 'the cormorant's resting place'. I worked as a teacher at Wesley College in Melbourne before travelling all over the world and stopping for 26 years to live and work in Peru, South America. At

Markham College in Lima, I developed a holistic teaching programme (called HELIX) which allowed me to work with many, young people in Peru including those from indigenous communities in the Andes and the Amazon jungle. My family and I are very excited to be living in Darwin and working together to help make Haileybury Rendall School a great world educational institution. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Tom Floyd
Director of Boarding
John Paul College
Daisy Hill, QLD

JOHN PAUL COLLEGE - QLD

John Paul College was delighted to welcome Mr Tom Floyd as the Head of Boarding at Fenton Village in Term Two last year after an extensive recruitment process.

Tom has an array of experience having been in boarding for over 35 years, most recently as the Director of Boarding at Mazenod College in Western Australia. Tom describes himself as passionate, enthusiastic, empathetic, sports-minded and family-oriented.

Since being at JPC, Tom has continued applying our high standards and expectations by promoting growth mindsets amongst students and setting expectations of striving for improvement every

day. He looks forward to further developing the identity of JPC's Boarding community at Fenton Village, where its members demonstrate charity and compassion, strive for personal excellence, respect the dignity of all people, display understanding, be people of courage and passion, display leadership through service and be people of action. ■



Elizabeth Hammond
Director of Boarding
KIS Reignwood Park
Bangkok, Thailand

KIS REIGNWOOD PARK - Bangkok, Thailand

Elizabeth was appointed as Director of Boarding to join the Senior Leader Team for KIS Reignwood Park 2023 ready for the opening in August 2024. Prior to this role she has led four boarding houses in the UK and Asia.

Guiding teenagers in all their thoughts and actions is a skill, and Elizabeth has it! Her passion for preparing teenagers for the future is infectious and she brings the whole school with her when projects are implemented.

Alumni students keep in close contact with her whether asking for school updates or inviting her to weddings etc, the boarding Alumni group is strong and an Alumni gathering is full of laughter and "old times talk re. boarding!"

The triangle of communication is one of the most important aspects to the success of her boarding career, Elizabeth quotes "bringing together the school, students and parents under one communications hat, is so important. When comms are flowing and clear from all sides, the triangle will thrive".

Elizabeth is a big part of the community and loves to bring the community together for parent workshops, staff socials, boarding events, and it's true to say that boarding is part of the school, and not a building down the road! ■



Belinda Annan
Director of Boarding
Melbourne Grammar School
Melbourne, VIC

MELBOURNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL - VIC

Belinda Annan commenced as Director of Boarding at Melbourne Grammar School in July 2023, following three years serving as Head of one of the School's three Boarding Houses and ten years teaching at Melbourne Grammar. Belinda brings a wealth of experience, a strong understanding of our school's culture, and a commitment to building relationships across the entire boarding community.

Prior to joining our school, Belinda worked in a number of community-building roles overseas, culminating in the establishment of a not-for-profit organisation supporting communities in Ghana. Having grown up on a Gippsland dairy farm, Belinda understands what it means for a young person to become a boarder.

Belinda firmly believes that genuine connections are the cornerstone of effective boarding life. Whether parents reside just a few hours away or on the other side of the world, she is committed to being someone they can trust and connect with. Melbourne Grammar's boarding houses thrive as a strong and caring community, contributing to the diversity and vibrancy of our esteemed School. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Lia Bartholomew
Head of Boarding and Wellbeing
Melbourne Indigenous Transition
School
Melbourne, VIC

MELBOURNE INDIGENOUS TRANSITION SCHOOL - VIC

Lia Bartholomew is the Head of Boarding and Wellbeing at the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS), providing support and guidance to the MITS Boarding Teams and Wellbeing Team. She has been at MITS since the beginning of 2022, and is a member of the Executive and Leadership Teams.

Lia grew up in Brisbane and has ancestral links to the people of Saibai Island in the Torres Strait and Bamaga on Cape York Peninsula.

Lia has over two decades of experience in education and has worked in schools in mainstream and specialist settings in Queensland, Victoria and UK, and has also volunteered in schools whilst living in India. Lia has specialised in autism teaching and learning over the past decade and is now

committed to improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. Gaining inspiration from the MITS young people, their families and communities, Lia is working toward strengthening relationships between First Nations people and the wider Australian community.

I am in complete awe of these wonderful kids, and the dedicated team that is supporting them. How lucky am I to call MITS my work place - Big Ezzo! ("thank you" in Kalaw Kawaw Ya language). ■



Malcolm Fahey
Deputy Principal Residential
Mount St Bernard College
Herberton, QLD

MOUNT ST BERNARD COLLEGE - QLD

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that Mr Malcolm Fahey has been appointed as the Deputy Principal - Residential at Mount St Bernard College, commencing January 2024. This rigorous recruitment process carefully evaluated both internal and external candidates based on criteria important to the ongoing success and performance of the College.

Prior to joining Mount St Bernard College, Malcolm held various positions of leadership in schools, including Head of Department, Deputy Principal, and Principal. Alongside his educational experience, he also holds a Masters of Professional Accounting, Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, Bachelor of Educational Studies, and a Graduate Diploma

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. ■



Doug Fawcett
Head of Boarding
Pembroke School
Kensington Park, SA

PEMBROKE SCHOOL - SA

Originally from the United Kingdom with an extensive teaching background, Doug moved to Australia in 2015 and commenced at Guildford Grammar, a co-educational independent school in Western Australia. While teaching Humanities and English, Doug started working as Boarding Supervisor with the school's junior and senior boy boarders. In 2020, Doug moved to The Armidale School in regional New South Wales to continue his career in boarding as Head of Boys' Boarding House. There, he was responsible for the overall leadership and operational management of the house, the wellbeing of students and the supervision and guidance of staff. Doug is passionate about cultivating a boarding house as a place where boarders feel welcome and enjoy living.

Doug joins the Pembroke community with his wife Grania who is also a teacher, their children Harry and Emilia, and dogs Maverick the St Bernard and Maple the Whippet. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Michele Bond
Assistant Head of Boarding
Pembroke School
Kensington Park, SA

PEMBROKE SCHOOL – SA

Michele commenced at Pembroke in 2007 and held the role of Boarding House Supervisor in Turner House girls' boarding until the co-location of our boarding facility to the Pembroke Boarding House where she has continued in the same role for the past two years. Michele has an exceptional knowledge of boarding operations, strong and supportive relationships with our existing boarding students, and a deep commitment to not only meeting our duty of care to our boarders but also to providing them with a welcoming, caring and respectful environment in which they can thrive.

As a former boarder herself, boarding to Michele centres around connections and relationships. ■



Melissa Kenney
Head of Boarding
Snowy Mountains Grammar
School
Jindabyne, NSW

SNOWY MOUNTAINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL – NSW

Mrs Melissa Kenney was appointed Snowy Mountains Grammar School's new Head of Boarding at the beginning of the 2024 school year. Mrs Kenney brings over thirteen years of expertise to our community. With a background in operations and facility management, including senior boarding supervision, she is dedicated to fostering student growth and cultivating resilience, responsibility and leadership skills.

In joining the SMGS Boarding House, Mrs Melissa Kenney looks forward to contributing to the vibrant boarding environment and embracing the school community. Mrs Kenney's vision includes introducing initiatives prioritising student wellbeing, fostering community cohesion and providing opportunities for personal

growth and skill development. She aims to create a supportive and enriching boarding experience for all students through wellbeing activities and community-building and leadership programs. ■



Kathryn Emtage
Head of Boarding
Somerville House
Brisbane, QLD

SOMERVILLE HOUSE – QLD

I was appointed Head of Boarding at Somerville House upon my return to Brisbane from a year of study, family time and volcano climbing in New Zealand. Perhaps there are many lessons to be learned from walking up a dormant volcano, that can also be applied to leading a boarding community. Most significantly, nothing amazing happens without challenge, and the 'view' is a long term game of which boarding house staff, parents and students must remind themselves when caught in the miniature of everyday boarding life.

Throughout my career I have been privileged to lead across brilliant boarding schools that prioritise the pursuit of excellence in academic and pastoral care. My time at Brisbane Grammar School (Assistant Head of English and Year), Wesley College, Melbourne (Head of House), and Somerville House (Head of Year, Deputy Head of Boarding and Associate Dean of Student Wellbeing),

have been formative in shaping my approach to building on the traditions of boarding, whilst also understanding how our future aspirations shape our present priorities.

On my pinboard, sitting above my desk in the Boarding House, are the words: Curiosity, Connection, Community. This is my alliterative 'North Star' for the year ahead (I am also a passionate teacher of Literature!) and, in moments where the 'busyness' of boarding leadership feel overwhelming (catering, transport, staffing, leave), I realign to the direction of those words. There is infinite joy to be found in working alongside the staff and students who give heart to our boarding house, no two days are the same and, accompanied by the soundtrack of our inner-city setting, we feel part of something that is moving forward, moving together. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Anthony Mathison
Assistant Principal – Residential
St Brendan's College.
Yeppoon, QLD

ST BRENDAN'S COLLEGE – QLD

Anthony, a seasoned professional, joined St Brendan's College in Term 1, 2024 from Marist College Ashgrove, where he served in the dual roles of boarding leader and teacher. With eleven years of experience in boarding schools, Anthony has a proven record managing the complex demands and operations of residential environments.

In addition to his boarding leadership Anthony is a skilled English and Humanities teacher and beyond the classroom was a talented elite-level sports coach and Rugby Union player. With a comprehensive skill set and a passion for holistic education, Anthony is poised to make a significant impact on the SBC boarding community.

His multifaceted background underscores his commitment to nurturing students academically, socially, emotionally, and athletically. ■



Luke Ford
Director of Boarding
St Brigid's College
Lesmurdie, WA

ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE – WA

In Term 4, 2023, I was appointed to the Director of Boarding position at St Brigid's College, Lesmurdie. I also hold the position of Curriculum Team Leader: Health and Physical Education. Holding these two roles, while challenging at times, provides a great opportunity for me to understand and create positive relationships with students and their families.

My previous experience through Catholic Education includes coordinating a College Basketball Program, Head of Sport and Head of Learning Area. I have a firm belief that when students join teams and clubs across a variety of curriculum areas, they create a stronger sense of belonging to the College. This engagement with the College is proven to have a positive impact on a students wellbeing and development.

My aim in boarding is to develop a safe family environment for all boarders and staff. It is the little things that matter, like greeting the girls when they arrive, sitting down with them when they need to chat and recognising when they require space. Central to this is fostering positive relationships between all boarding staff and students. From the moment a student walks into boarding they should feel they have entered a warm and nurturing environment that enables them to succeed in the wider community. ■



Claire van Boxel
Head of Boarding
St Catherine's School
Melbourne, VIC

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL – VIC

Boarding at St Catherine's School in Melbourne provides a strong sense of community for its boarding students. In 2024, the School's new Head of Boarding, Ms Claire van Boxel, is looking forward to further strengthening the boarding program.

"Boarding staff play a crucial role in providing a caring and stable residential environment for the young women in our care.

We get to share in their triumphs and challenges. This is such a privilege and one of the most rewarding aspects of leading a boarding house," shares Claire.

Working in education for more than 17 years, Claire has worked across Australia and New

Zealand in both co-education and single-sex schools as a humanities teacher. Claire has been working in boarding for more than eight years, first as a resident tutor and Deputy Head of House before taking on her new leadership position this year. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Billy Morton
Head of Boarding
St Francis De Sales Regional College
Leeton, NSW

ST FRANCIS DE SALES REGIONAL COLLEGE - NSW

St Francis De Sales Regional College, Leeton, was excited to announce Billy Morton as the new Head of Boarding in Term Four last year. Billy previously held the position of Boarding Supervisor and Assistant Leader of Boarding at the College, before leaving to pursue full-time study at the beginning of 2023. Billy's extensive experience in this area has equipped him with the knowledge and empathy required to lead and inspire both staff and students effectively. As an ex-student of the College, Billy possesses a unique and personal understanding from the perspective of a student - an insight that has proven invaluable in shaping his approach to the role. This firsthand experience has fueled his passion for creating a positive, engaging and supportive boarding experience for all. Billy's journey from student

at the College to a key figure in its community is a testament to his dedication, expertise, and the positive impact he continues to have on the students he serves. Billy values the importance of setting students up for success, by providing them with the tools necessary to take ownership of their own journey and help map out what they want to achieve beyond school. ■



WAYNE STEWART
*Director of Boarding and
Head of O'Brien Boarding House*
St Joseph's Nudgee College
Boondall, QLD

ST JOSEPH'S NUDGEE COLLEGE - QLD

St Joseph's Nudgee College is excited to welcome Mr Wayne Stewart as the new Director of Boarding and Head of O'Brien Boarding House. Formerly Head of Boarding at Whitsunday Anglican School, Wayne has held several leadership positions in education both domestically and internationally. He has served as Director of Cricket at Anglican Church Grammar School, Assistant Head of Boarding at Great Southern Grammar, Senior School Coordinator at Jeddah Prep and Grammar School (Saudi Arabia) and Assistant Housemaster at Kearsney College (South Africa).

As a man of faith, fun and family, Wayne is passionate about sport but most importantly loves

boarding. Wayne and his family are committed to supporting boarders in all of their endeavours - academic, sporting or cultural - and adopt an 'all in' approach. ■



Bridget Anitelea
Director of Boarding
Saint Kentigern College
Auckland, New Zealand

SAINT KENTIGERN COLLEGE - Auckland, New Zealand

Bridget Anitelea was appointed as the Director of Boarding at Saint Kentigern College in Term Four, 2023. Bridget has been at Saint Kentigern for 22 years and in that time has held several significant positions at the College including Head of History, Head of Girls' Boarding, and the Acting Director of Boarding. Subsequently, Bridget has a wealth of experience managing staff and students and has proven to be a highly successful manager across both academic and pastoral domains at the College. Bridget has continued to strive to uphold the Mission Statement of the College by expecting excellence within her respective areas of responsibility and creating highly efficient and well performing departments whose members respect her leadership, skill, and ability.

As Acting Director of Boarding in 2023 and Head of Girls' Boarding six years before that, Bridget has been instrumental in creating a welcoming,

inclusive, warm, and immensely rich culture that has developed at the boarding house at Saint Kentigern College. The welfare and happiness of her boarders is her priority and enabling students to flourish and develop a strong sense of belonging and shared identity is paramount. Developing ideologies of community and connection, coupled with an ethos rooted firmly upon the boarding house pillars of gratitude, humility and contribution and the Saint Kentigern values, are the overarching principles of Bridget's leadership philosophy as Director of Boarding.

Through her Director of Boarding role, it is Bridget's aim to help the boarders who have been entrusted to her care become successful and confident young people who strive for excellence, give service to others, and make meaningful and valuable connections with those around them. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Linda Bonnitcha
Head of Boarding
St. Michaels Collegiate
Hobart, TAS

ST. MICHAELS COLLEGIATE – TAS

The sun had barely risen over St. Michaels Collegiate School when I stepped into my new office as the Head of Boarding. The small changes made seem to hold the promise of a fresh start. Eager and brimming with energy, I, Linda Bonnitcha, am ready to embark on an exciting and challenging journey.

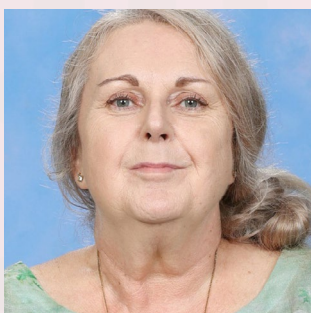
Motivated by a passion for education and a drive to make a difference, I embraced the dual role of Head of Boarding and Educational Counsellor. The challenge excites me, and I have wasted no time immersing myself in the boarding house. The initial days have been a whirlwind of preparations, with the anticipation of meeting the students and their families hanging in the air.

With the boarding team by my side, I am eager to work with them, as we get to know each student and their family personally. Envisioning the upcoming months and the impact our collective efforts will have on fostering a sense of belonging

for our students and their families is exciting, yet knowingly full of challenges.

One of my early initiatives is to build on relationships with all those who call the boarding house home. A safe, happy, and welcoming environment for all our students and staff. Establishing a strong partnership between home and school is crucial. Together, we aim to create an environment that will support the growth and development of every student. The journey has yet to fully unfold, but the vision of an inclusive boarding house will no doubt be welcomed by all.

The excitement of welcoming the students and their families has added a vibrant layer to the beginning of this transformative experience. The tapestry of our community is poised to take shape and I looked forward to the upcoming days, eager to see the impact of our collective efforts as we awaited the arrival of the students under my care. ■



Debra Withnall
Head of Boarding
St Ursulas College
Yeppoon, QLD

ST URSULAS COLLEGE – QLD

St Ursula's College, Yeppoon, congratulates Mrs Debra Withnall on her appointment as Head of Boarding. Debra has been part of the St Ursula's teaching staff since January 2021, and holds a Diploma of Teaching, a Bachelor of Education, and a Master of Educational Leadership.

Having lived and taught in Southwest and Western Queensland, North and Far North Queensland, as well as worked overseas in New Zealand and Timor Leste, Debra has experienced first-hand the challenges faced by rural and remote communities. This understanding, coupled with her extensive experience in education and enthusiasm for girls' education, pairs well with the needs of the St Ursula's College boarding community.

Debra has worked in various pastoral leadership

positions, including as Acting Head of Junior at St Ursula's College, and is dedicated to the empowerment of girls through educational experiences. She is committed to nurturing boarding students while ensuring the College's Presentation values of Faith, Respect, Excellence, Simplicity, Hospitality and Compassion are practised in daily boarding life.

"I am passionate about fostering an affirming, empowering environment in the boarding house, working closely with the wellbeing team on campus to create positive memorable experiences. Each person is endowed with individual gifts that deserve recognition and development. At St Ursula's College, we encourage and enable all students to seek success according to personal capabilities and circumstances." ■



Susan Turner
Dean of Boarding
St Vincent's College
Potts Point, NSW

ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE – NSW

My association with St Vincent's College dates back to 2014. I was both honoured and privileged to be offered the role of Dean of Boarding in Term 2, 2023.

My working life has seen many iterations. I commenced my professional life as a registered nurse and midwife. I progressively obtained qualifications in early childhood health, psychology and education (focus on research and educational psychology). I also undertook various complementary medicine courses. My varied educational background has opened many doors and provided some unique work opportunities. I was fortunate to work in a boarding school in England and have found this experience in residential care to still be relevant

today. My last role before entering boarding was as a TAFE College Director where I had the opportunity to work with schools within the juvenile justice system, and youth-at-risk. I am currently the Chair of the Board of a non-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing workplace learning opportunities, developing employability skills and providing young people with an understanding career options.

My desire for our boarding community is to live together in harmony, showing respect and kindness to each other. I aim to take advantage of each teachable moment as we guide our Vinnies girls towards self-sufficiency, build resilience, and ensure they have the capacity to make their way in a world beyond school. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Mark Cutchie
founding Head of Campus
Tanglin Trust School
Singapore/Rawson, VIC.

TANGLIN TRUST SCHOOL – Singapore/Rawson, VIC

Tanglin Trust School (Singapore) recently appointed me as the founding Head of Campus for their new campus in Rawson, Victoria. The campus will primarily be used for the school's Year 9 students to undertake a five-week residential program that focusses on experiential learning and Outdoor Education.

I am excited to be a part of this new initiative as I believe there is no better 'classroom' than the Australian bush to teach kids in, not just from an academic sense, but especially in character formation and relationship building.

At university, I studied primary teaching with a physical education major and then began teaching at Chairo Christian School. After five years,

I made a career change and became a Paramedic with Ambulance Victoria. I held numerous roles during my 22 years with them that were predominantly in regional and remote areas practice, facilitating professional development programs and branch management.

During this time, I continued to be involved in education but in governance roles. This began when I joined the board at my children's school and eventually led to state and national level board positions. I currently sit on the board of Christian Education National and the National Institute for Christian Education. ■



Anthony Philips
Head of Boarding
The King's School, Tudor House
Moss Vale, NSW

THE KING'S SCHOOL, TUDOR HOUSE – NSW

Anthony Philips was appointed as the Head of Boarding at The King's School, Tudor House at the beginning of 2023. Anthony comes to us with a wealth of experience, having spent over 18 years as a primary school educator and nearly a decade as a residential boarding master.

Anthony's desire is to build an inclusive and supportive boarding community where young girls and boys thrive, amidst an environment that promotes adventure and encourages students to develop a healthy risk appetite. Anthony believes that Tudor House is the perfect place for this to happen, stating that "our 169-acre campus in the Southern Highlands provides students with the space and outdoor learning facilities to foster a holistic educational experience that goes far beyond the classroom walls".

Anthony says that "Primary school boarding is a distinctively unique experience, laying the foundation for a transformative experience that shapes young individuals in profound ways. Our young boarders learn to navigate the intricacies of social dynamics, forging friendships that will last a lifetime".

Anthony is looking forward to leading an exceptional team of educators, who are all passionate advocates for the primary school boarding experience. ■



Mr Mike Silcock
Director of Boarding
The Rockhampton Grammar School
Rockhampton, QLD

THE ROCKHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL – QLD

Mr Mike Silcock has been appointed to the position as Director of Boarding at the Rockhampton Grammar School. Mike brings a wealth of experience as an outstanding school leader. Mike joins RGS from Nudgee College where he served as the Director of Boarding. He has previously spent nine years as the Director of Boarding, Director of Students, Indigenous Programme Coordinator and Overseas Coordinator at St Patrick's College, Ballarat. His dedication to boarding education extends to his role as the Australian Boarding School Association (ABSA) National Board Treasurer and Queensland Chair. Mike has served on the ABSA Board since 2014.

Mike has been involved in boarding throughout his life, having grown up as a boarder himself since the age of seven in the United Kingdom. He sees boarding as a call to service and he has a reputation for creating cultures that foster collaboration, inclusivity and innovation. Mike's commitment to students and staff learning will further enhance RGS's educational offerings throughout the entire School. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Dan Fox
Director of Boarding
Townsville Grammar School
Townsville, QLD

TOWNSVILLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL - QLD

Dan assumed the role of Director of Boarding at Townsville Grammar School in July 2023, relocating with his family from The Southport School (TSS) to North Queensland. With more than 26 years' experience in the boarding sector, Dan is no stranger to the intricacies and challenges of residential education.

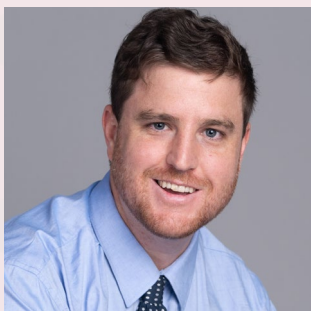
Throughout his career, Dan has held several boarding roles including Housemaster at The Southport School, Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie), St Joseph's Nudgee College, Toowoomba Grammar School and Downlands College. These roles have provided him with invaluable experience in the boarding environment, allowing him to develop a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of boarding students and their families. He also was Director of Sport at St Ursula's College in Toowoomba.

Dan's commitment to boarding education extends beyond the confines of the school campus. He has

worked closely with students from remote areas of Queensland and Northern NSW, as well as those hailing from the Torres Strait, Papua New Guinea, Asia, and Europe. This breadth of experience has afforded him a profound appreciation for the diversity of backgrounds and cultures within the boarding community.

For Dan, boarding is not just a profession, it is a way of life. He values the connections forged with boarding families, whether it's through informal catch-ups during drop-offs, or visits to families' homes and communities. Dan sees boarding as an opportunity to embrace and celebrate the rich tapestry of experiences and backgrounds each student brings to the community.

As Director of Boarding at Townsville Grammar School, Dan is managing a community of 130 boarders from rural, remote and regional areas of Queensland and beyond, as well as international students. ■



Nicholas Heymans
Head of Boarding
Utahloy International School
Zencheng, China

UTAHLOY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - Zencheng, China

With a professional journey in prestigious boarding schools spanning over 12 years, I have been truly fortunate to influence young minds across the globe. From the captivating landscapes of South Africa at St. Andrew's Preparatory School as a Senior Housemaster, ICT Integrator, and MIC of Hockey, to the storied halls of Russia at Letovo School as an Assistant Housemaster, and the vibrant culture of Berlin at Berlin Brandenburg International School as the Deputy Head of Boarding, to my current school Utahloy International School Zengcheng in China as the Head of Boarding, ICT Integrator, and Math Teacher. These experiences have deeply rooted in me a profound appreciation for the significant impact

that education within a boarding setting can wield across diverse communities. I am an accredited BSA Boarding Practitioner - Level 2 and am currently completing my M.Ed., further deepening my knowledge and expertise in the field. As an educator, my passion lies in nurturing minds and fostering growth in tomorrow's leaders. ■



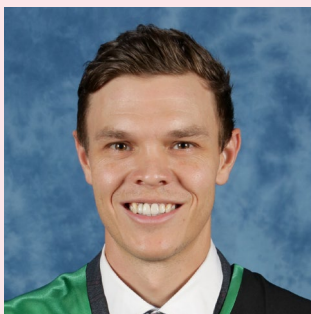
Tom Giles
Head of Boarding
Wesley College
Melbourne, VIC

WESLEY COLLEGE, MELBOURNE - VIC

Tom Giles was appointed Head of Boarding (Learning in Residence) at Wesley College, Glen Waverley for the start of 2024, where he moved to with his wife and two children from Brisbane. Prior to the move, Tom held a number of pastoral leadership roles at Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) where he worked for nine years, after crossing the river from Brisbane Grammar School. Tom brings a wealth of pastoral leadership experience, having worked as Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year, Acting Dean of Students, and Day Housemaster (Biggs House) whilst also being a passionate teacher of History. Most recently, Tom worked as Boarding Housemaster of Gerald House

at Churchie. Tom has been a passionate advocate for boarding and places great emphasis on forging close relationships with families. Tom is looking forward to working in a co-educational environment again, after 15 years in all-boys' schools. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Alexander Kertesz
*Head of Boarding &
Dean of Christian Education*
Whitsunday Anglican School
Mackay, QLD

WHITSUNDAY ANGLICAN SCHOOL - QLD

Alex's passion for boarding stems from over a decade of experience in boarding schools. His journey began at one of Sydney's largest independent day and boarding schools, where he served as Assistant Boarding Housemaster for four years at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore). The last six years have seen Alex's exemplary service at Whitsunday where he has excelled in various leadership roles, including as the Assistant Head of Boarding, Coordinator of Athletic Development and Physical Wellbeing, and Dean of Christian Education.

Alex has fostered strong connections with both students and staff, earning an outstanding rapport with students, families and staff. We are looking forward to witnessing the positive impact his expertise, leadership, stability and dedication will bring to our boarding community. ■



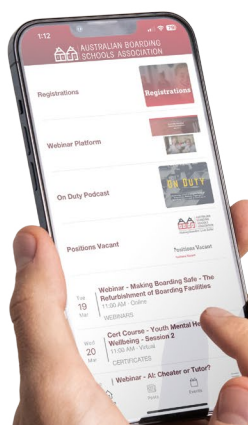
Bronwen Pluck
Acting Head of Boarding
Wilderness School
Medindie, SA

WILDERNESS SCHOOL - SA

Wilderness School Boarding House was pleased to appoint Bronwen Pluck as Acting Head of Boarding at the start of 2024.

Bronwen brings a wealth of experience to the role, including two years' experience working in the Wilderness School Boarding House as well as 7 years' experience at the Immanuel College Boarding House.

Bronwen's deep understanding of boarding life and strong relationships with parents, boarders and the wider school community will be key to her success in ensuring a continuity of exceptional care and service in the boarding house. ■



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From the Chair

Jaye Beutel

I was fortunate enough to have attended the recent Taking the Reins conference in early March, hosted by our good friends at Bond University on the Gold Coast. This conference has long been a favourite addition to my annual professional development calendar, particularly back in my earlier days when forming my approach to lead a boarding community. Whilst my purpose for attending the conference has somewhat changed, and with almost twenty years of boarding school experience, I still found myself taking home some gold nuggets of knowledge and practice to share with the teams I now work with.

Whilst not surprising, the energy and excitement for learning and collaboration over these few days solidified the importance of this gathering for me. Commencing in a new role or career can be exciting, but also an unnerving experience. Leadership in a boarding school context is unique and not for the fainthearted, posing challenges which are not common in other roles within schools or the broader educational scope - particularly given the 24/7 nature of the operations. Understanding the enormity of responsibility is crucial

with respect to the holistic duty of care for boarders, care and development of boarding and support staff, and the engagement of boarding parents and families as they move through the boarding journey with their child. These key components and elements of boarding school leadership are significant as separate entities, combined even more so.

What was remarkable about the commentary and my own observations during the conference was that the many new faces to boarding leadership are not just

accepting that their roles have these challenges, but they are more than willing to pursue these challenges and meet them head on in an effort to make a difference. Which reminded me of a beautiful quote from the American philosopher William James – “Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does!”. Too often we can be overwhelmed with the busyness of the day-to-day operations and pastoral challenges of boarding, we can lose sight of the difference we are making in that very space. The formation to be in a perpetual “response” mode can blindsight us in to not making this important acknowledgement.

I sincerely congratulate all of those who have taken up a leadership role within our boarding communities commencing this year, be that as a Principal, Head of Boarding, head of House or one of the many other leader roles within boarding schools. May the journey be a professionally and personally rewarding one for you, and for those who are fortunate enough to share this with their own families as well. May you have the support and love of the community around you to make a difference each and every day. Rest each night in knowing that even on the hardest day, you have indeed made a difference. ■

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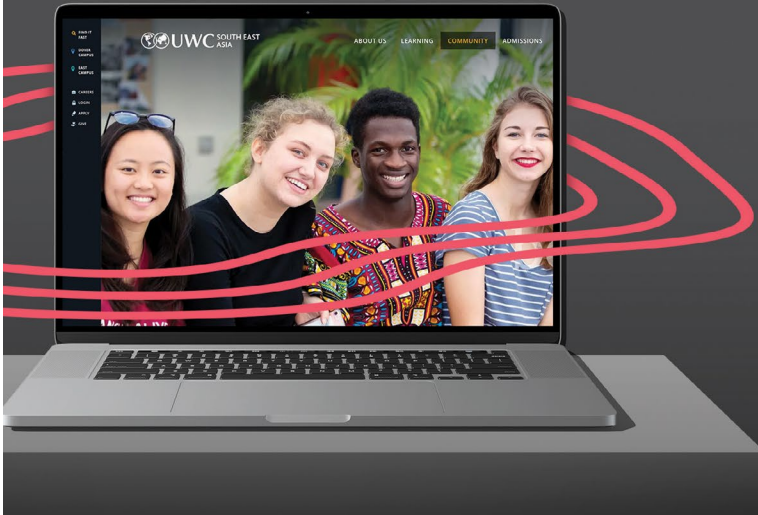
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