



# lightsout

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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## SEXUAL IMAGERY EVERYWHERE – WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE THE CHILDREN?

It is almost impossible to drive through the main streets of any major Australian city and not see huge billboards inquiring as to whether the driver would like to "Restore their Sex Life"...

Pg 4

## HAPPINESS IS NOT JUST FEELING GOOD, IT'S DOING GOOD

Being kind and caring and compassionate and generous to and for others is one of the most powerful and effective ways to build positive relationships.

Pg 6

## EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Things to Consider Before Hitting that Send Button - If you have a hotmail address such as "cuteybabe"- don't ever use it for business or for personal purposes where you want the recipient to take you seriously. They won't!

Pg 11

## SECRET PARENTS' BUSINESS

Parenting is not always easy. Contradicted by assertive offspring, confronted by differing standards of parenting, and confused by social and technological changes, many parents are finding themselves under siege when raising children.

Pg 17



## Human Flourishing



To **Flourish** means to **live well**, to grow in every sense, to appreciate the beauty in all things, to establish and nurture quality relationships (make good friends), to be able to manage challenges and be resilient, to be strong.

### To be able to flourish people must be positive about life.

All of us have positive and negative emotions. We feel good and we feel "less good" about things. The positive feelings (emotions) are related to us feeling good about ourselves, our friends and our circumstance. We feel we manage all quite well. The negative feelings (emotions) are related to feeling unable to manage things, to feel angry, upset, unhappy because we cannot explain or manage things in our lives, we feel that things are "just too hard", we are not resilient and feel that we cannot or are not coping and it is either our fault or we blame others for the situation we find difficult and "life determining at that moment". We can also feel "pretty average" and seem to be in a "don't care mood" at times. In this state we are lethargic, don't really care much about things and perhaps do not try too seriously at things. We "just go through the motions".

All of us want to flourish, to feel good about life, to feel strong and able to cope with the challenges and still improve and grow, to thrive. This is in everything we do in our lives for all things in our lives are interrelated and impact on how we manage "it all". The positive emotions are the emotions which enable us to feel confident, to have a go, to make good relationships, do well in all aspects of our learning about life and to deal sensibly and constructively with setbacks.

Barbara Fredrickson, and others, have shown through scientific studies that people who flourish have greater life possibilities than those who are "languishing" (going through the motions) or those who are dominated by negative feelings about life and feel they cannot cope. If you feel positive you see the world better, you appreciate things more (you actually "see"

## CONTENTS

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Human Flourishing                   | 01 |
| From the Chairman                   | 03 |
| Sexual Imagery Everywhere           | 04 |
| Where does that leave the Children? |    |
| Happiness is not just feeling       | 06 |
| Food for Thought                    | 07 |
| Education Law Notes                 | 08 |
| The Southport School                | 10 |
| A Guide to Email Etiquette          | 11 |
| School Sustainability               | 13 |
| Vertical House System               | 14 |
| St Hilda's School                   | 16 |
| Secret Parents' Business            | 17 |
| ABSA Research                       | 18 |
| Coming Events                       | 20 |



John Hendry (Director of Student Welfare, Geelong Grammar School), Prof Martin Seligmann and Ms Debbie Clingeffer Woodford's (Director of Learning, Geelong Grammar School)

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

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

Make sure your content is in by May 15.

For further information, go to page 20 of this newsletter or contact ABSA.

## This Issues Featured Schools

The Southport School and St Hilda's School



You have been sent multiple copies for distribution to your boarding staff.

If you would like extra copies in the future please contact us at, [absa@boarding.org.au](mailto:absa@boarding.org.au) with the number of copies requested.

## Positive psychology has built many strategies to allow us to understand life, to appreciate life, to live life more fully and productively and to "thrive" (flourish)

more that is going on around you), you live better in relationships, you are kinder, you help others more, you understand others better, you "learn more" in every sense, in and out of class, you remember more, you are more likeable, you contribute to others more and you think more about what you do and how it effects others. Barbara has shown that this is the state to strive for. Of course, negative emotions are critical and essential to everyone, however the ratio between positive and negative emotions do define whether you have the possibility of capitalising on flourishing or not. She has found that the ratio of 3 positive emotions to 1 negative emotion is the "tipping point" for people to begin to flourish. Her findings have been confirmed by another researcher (a mathematician, Marcial Losada using complicated mathematical modelling). (The ratio is 2.9 : 1). Some other interesting findings by Barbara are that groups also flourish (or not) depending on the ratio they have between positive and negative emotions.

For people to flourish all must feel "safe and secure" in their lives, this is critical. It

is however important for all of us to have both positive and negative emotions. We must strive to be more positive about life for then we will be able to grow, lead meaningful and purposeful lives, engage (go into "flow") and make our lives and the lives of our friends and our community more fulfilling. We will be liked more by others, will be more content, will manage all challenges better and will make fewer mistakes. Importantly we will see beauty and appreciate life and everyone in our lives more. We will "flourish" and our health will be better. We will be kinder, more forgiving and will lead richer lives.

Positive psychology has built many strategies to allow us to understand life, to appreciate life, to live life more fully and productively and to "thrive" (flourish). The skills associated with understanding more of life, of ourselves and of "being in flow" (engaged totally in what we are doing), and of leading helpful, meaningful and purposeful lives (for others) and to learn more effectively and to "build our life skills" to help others (and ourselves), are essential if we are to flourish. It is hoped that all students will "engage" positively in all activities at School and will be kind to one another and lead meaningful lives for this will mean that each will flourish and the School will flourish.

Written by Mr John Hendry – Director of Student Welfare, Geelong Grammar School, in conjunction with Professor Barbara Frederickson 13 February 2008.



# From the *Chairman*

By Dr Tim Hawkes

## THE SILVER LINING

**The evaluative light must be shone into the dark corners of our lives, for no one should be excused the requirement to audit their character**

**There is an aluminium lining (we can't afford silver these days) to the fiscal clouds that are casting shadows over our employment, retirement, and "let's go to Bali" prospects.** That lining is a growing acceptance of what Barack Obama has called a "new moral code".

The temptation may be to think the morals that need to be recoded are limited to American bankers and hedge-fund managers. Not so, although I was dumfounded to read that John Thain, the recent boss of Merrill Lynch – a Wall Street investment bank that lost a gobsmacking \$15 billion dollars in just the last few months – suggested recently that he deserved a bonus of \$US10 million. He got the sack instead.

Australia has been no virginal innocent in the corporate greed stakes and has played its part in advancing the "wealth without work" mentality. Too many Armani suits in city suites have been paid a cash bonus for ethical loss to allow us to be self-righteous in relation to the current financial melt-down.

Just as we warm to a populist rant against a target so predictable as to be pathetic, it is good to examine whether we need a new moral code for ourselves. Are we really that good? Are we the models of probity our students need?



Then there are the students themselves. Most are delightful, but rather too many are given to theft, bullying, and selfishness. Those not engaged directly in these acts are not immune from censure, for it is within their shadow these deeds are often allowed to take place.

The evaluative light must be shone into the dark corners of our lives, for no one should be excused the requirement to audit their character, for lurking beneath presumed virtue is a potential for delinquency. As it is written:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

Quite apart from the challenge to re-evaluate our corporate and individual morality, there is the challenge to ensure our boarding schools are giving demonstrable returns on the significant financial investment in residential education made by many parents.

Even in times of financial stringency, people will still buy quality products. But there is the challenge – the product must have undeniable merit, and even more so when

disposable income is evaporating and the pain of paying boarding fees is increasing. There is an even greater compulsion within our various boarding communities to provide:

- a safe and comfortable environment,
- a happy and enjoyable environment,
- for the individual pastoral needs of boarders,
- added value to the academic advancement of boarders.

Some boarding schools will still lose enrolments. However, giving a clear and unambiguous demonstration of the value of boarding, may slow or even stem the loss of boarders.

If the Australian boarding industry rises to this challenge, then there might even be a silver lining to the fiscal clouds that overshadow our industry.

Dr T F Hawkes, Chairman  
Australian Boarding Schools Association  
February 2009



## Sexual Imagery *Everywhere* – Where does that leave the Children?

By Michael Carr-Gregg

It is almost impossible to drive through the main streets of any major Australian city and not see huge billboards inquiring as to whether the driver would like to “Restore their Sex Life”, or asking them if they want “longer lasting sex?”. Whether it’s advertisements for brothels “Flowers and Chocolates not required” or ads for a bubbly wine featuring 2006 Miss Australia Erin McNaught telling us that “... she loves a cockatoo” sexual imagery seems to be almost everywhere.



Add to the mix, dolls that are dressed like prostitutes, sexy lingerie for 8 year olds, push up bras for 6 year olds, children's T shirts emblazoned with “All Daddy wanted was a blow job” and video clips that resemble soft core porn, one could be forgiven for wondering where it will all end?

The debate about the early sexualisation of young people has once again taken centre stage, in the wake of Bill Henson's photos and the activities of the Age Newspaper's art critic Robert Nelson who allowed naked photos of his 6 year old daughter to appear in the pages of Art Australia Monthly magazine.

Certainly the former President of the Australian Psychological Society, Dr Amanda Gordon, has expressed concern that advertisers, marketers, the media and clothing manufacturers may be doing huge damage to the minds of young children. She argues that children who are over-sexualised are likely to be involved with sexual activity at a much younger age, maintaining that if the message is, ‘you should be sexy and grown up instead of being a kid’, then we are depriving children of the opportunity to practice and learn how to be whole human beings, that will actually make them into great adults. Instead they are only imitating adult behaviour without

understanding it and that's very dangerous for their development.

As professionals who are interested in the welfare of young people, it is appropriate for psychologists and medical practitioners to ask whether these ads, the toys, the clothing and the video clips are actually harmful to our young people? While there is no doubt that the way some marketers are packaging girlhood is making cash registers go ‘ka-ching’, is there an evidence base to suggest it is making their psyches go ‘ka-boom’? In other words, where's the proof that this constant barrage of erotic imagery is destroying a child's innocence, and that it



is leading girls to believe they must act in a sexual way, long before their time?

People working with young people in health, education and welfare, wondering what the answer to this question might be, will be interested in a report published last year by the American Psychological Association who have evaluated the research and concluded that the sexualisation of young children is leading to real mental health problems in adolescents. Research evidence shows that the sexualization of girls negatively affects girls and young women across a variety of health domains:

**Cognitive and Emotional Consequences:** sexualization and objectification undermine a person's confidence in, and comfort with, her own body, leading to emotional and self-image problems such as shame and anxiety.

**Mental and Physical Health:** research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women—eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood.

**Sexual Development:** research suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences on girls' ability to develop a healthy sexual self-image.

The American Psychological Association report called on parents, school officials, and all health professionals to be alert for the potential impact of sexualization on girls and young women. Schools should teach media literacy skills to all students and should include information on the negative effects of the sexualization of girls in media literacy and sex education programs.

The APA task force was chaired by Dr. Zurbriggen Associate Professor of Psychology, Psychology Department, University of California, Santa Cruz who said that "As a society, we need to replace all of these sexualized images with ones showing girls in positive settings—ones that show the uniqueness and competence of girls. The goal should be to deliver messages to all adolescents—boys and girls—that lead to healthy sexual development."

## So Australian society has to make a choice.

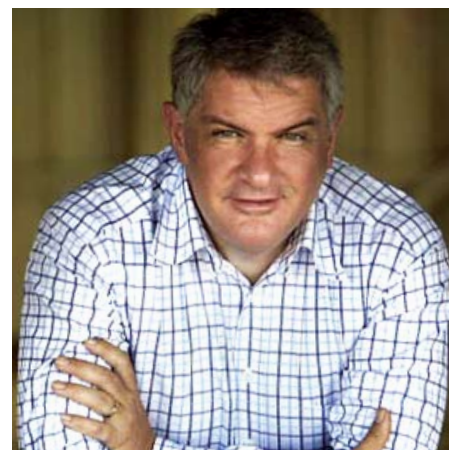
Many young women are being raised in an environment of unprecedented social change, world economic turmoil, high levels of family breakdown, and in secular, disconnected communities with worrying levels of depression, anxiety, self harm, eating disorders, binge drinking and drug abuse. Are we really helping matters by allowing girls to become prepubescent eye-candy before they hit the double-digits? Should we stand by and allow some of the world's mightiest multinationals to mine our children's souls and sexuality for profit?

Due to a mixture of public apathy and government inertia, already the boundaries have been pushed back so far that the world of adults and teenagers has become overloaded with erotic imagery to the point where the marketing culture has had to seek fresh pastures, finding them in children's untapped sexual possibilities.

Activists like Julie Gale are derided as being guilty of moral atavism or bourgeoisie sensibility, ironically the same put down used by the porn industry, when they talk about the puritanical repression of healthy sexuality. When psychologists criticise Bill Henson's photos of naked pubescent girls, the arts community claim that our moral sensibility is rooted in aesthetic ignorance.

Julie Gale has taken her "Kids Free to be Kids" campaign all the way to Canberra, demanding the establishment of a single, independent regulatory body to oversee all media directed at kids. She wants all direct advertising to children aged under 12 banned, the creation of a complaints system for concerned parents, and for advertisers and marketing companies to display more creativity in their work, with a move away from the "sex sells" approach.

A research paper from the Australia Institute, entitled "Corporate Paedophilia", supported Julie's move. The paper said: "Children are only likely to develop freely if government assists parents by limiting sexualizing pressure at its source - advertisers and marketers. Current regulation mechanisms are failing in this task."



There is no doubt that many parents feel helpless to stem the tide of sexual images bombarding their children and despite the Senate inquiry, our culture still seems as awash with sexual imagery and sex talk as ever.

Perhaps Philip Adams is right when he argues that the true enemies of our culture are not to found in the brick veneers of the suburbs, but in the creative department of advertising companies. It's time they were held accountable. There is a legal age of consent that makes having sexual relations with a child a criminal offence. But there's no age of consent when it comes to turning children into greedy little consumers or attempting to brutalise or sexualise them. Perhaps there should be. I believe schools can play an important role in educating parents about how to raise a child with sexual integrity despite a mass media blatantly pushing them in the opposite direction.

--

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

## Happiness is not just feeling good, *it's doing good*

By Dr Tim Hawkes

I had lunch recently with a good friend with whom I catch up about once every two months or so. In most respects, our lives are quite different and under normal circumstances we'd probably not spend much, if any time together. But we met a few years ago and for one reason or other we've kept in touch; to be honest I'm not quite sure why we continue to meet with each other except that we both thoroughly enjoy these occasional lunches and in different ways, respect each others (often quite different) perspectives on all sorts of matters.

In our most recent catch up my good friend mentioned that a friend of his, one of the other fathers at his son's school, was informally chatting about some problems at home and seemed at a loss to know what to do. When the issues were relayed to me it seemed like a perfect opportunity for one of the classic marital therapy strategies. As I explained the approach to my friend, however, his eyes lit up as he noted that he too could probably benefit from this; and that's when I was reminded of something I'm constantly preaching but sometimes forget to actively apply. That is, we don't need to wait until we're in trouble to benefit from the powerful and proven strategies typically included in marital or other therapies; rather, we can use them to prevent the onset of problems or even better, to boost our relationships and our lives more generally from "okayness" to flourishing, fantastic and fabulous!

So this column has two separate but related suggestions – first, don't wait until you're in trouble to do something constructive; and try the following approach to improve the quality of one or more of your relationships (and note: this is not just relevant to your personal relationships but also, to those in the workplace or anywhere else for that matter).

First, set aside some time to talk to your partner (or colleague) explaining that you'd

like to talk about a few ideas for improving the quality of your relationship. Make sure the time you schedule is a time when you won't be too tired or likely to be interrupted or disturbed.

Second, set up the experiment or activity in a positive way; that is, explain that what you're suggesting is not because you think there are significant problems but rather, because you're keen to do what ever you can to ensure your relationship is as good as it can possibly be.

Third, both of you spend at least 15-20 minutes writing down a list of the top ten things you'd like the other person to do differently; and note, try as best you can to ensure that the things on your list are as specific as possible and that they're phrased in a positive way. That is, try to note the positive things you'd like the other person to do more of rather than the negative things you'd like them to do less of.

Finally, swap lists and try to find at least three things each that you can agree to do for the other person over the course of the next week; and then do them; and then reinforce or reward each other for your efforts and then get together again and review how you've fared.

Remember, good quality relationships are not just about having your own needs met but also, about meeting the needs of the other person. Being kind and caring and compassionate and generous to and for others is one of the most powerful and effective ways to build positive relationships. Don't do unto others as you'd have them do unto you but rather, do unto others as they'd have you do unto them!

previously published in 'The Kings Herald'  
and written by  
Dr Tim Hawkes  
Headmaster, The Kings School



**Don't do unto others  
as you'd have them  
do unto you but  
rather, do unto  
others as they'd have  
you do unto them!**



# Food for *Thought*

**A proper diet can have a huge impact on academic performance, so if we want to do well, we have to eat well. Here are ten tips on how diet can improve school grades:**

**Drink lots of water.**...about 8 glasses (about 2 litres) a day is required or else our brain will not function properly. Water gets rid of the toxins in the body and delivers nutrients to the brain. Herbal teas are a good option as are natural fruit and vegetable juices.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat breakfast.** Brain function can be reduced by up to 30% if we do not have a good breakfast. Quite simply, memory and mental performance will decline if we go to school without having "broken our fast".  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat little and often.** A big meal will hi-jack much of our body's oxygen from being used in the brain and send it to be used in the stomach. This is why we can feel sleepy after a big meal. Avoid huge meals at lunch-time when at school.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat carbohydrates like grains, vegetables and fruit.** "Carbs" provide energy for the brain in the form of glucose. Without this fuel, the brain will not work. Low blood sugar levels lead to light-headedness, tiredness and an inability to concentrate.  
*SCORE.../10*

**Eat low "glycaemic index" (GI) foods.** A great advantage of low GI foods is that they can prevent us from getting hungry and losing concentration because low GI foods release their energy slowly and for a longer period. Low GI foods include

wholemeal cereals and bread, pasta, corn, sweet potato and several of the fruits and vegetables.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat omega 3 fats.** Instead of the fats in deep fried foods, we need to eat the omega 3 fats found in fish like tuna, salmon and sardines. Omega 3 fats are excellent "brain food" and will help with memory, developing the immune system, and have also has been known to reduce depression.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat protein which is found in milk, cheese, fish, nuts and lean meat.** Protein not only provides amino acids which influence the efficiency with which the brain functions, it provides the raw ingredients used to build many of the organs in the body including the heart and brain.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat iron.** This does not require you to chew on lumps of metal! It does require you to eat lean meat and vegetables such as spinach (remember Popeye). A lack of iron in the diet can lead to tiredness, sluggish thinking and irritability.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Eat fruit and vegetables** because they contain vitamin C and antioxidants, which are essential to neutralising the "free radicals" in your body. These free radicals are nasty molecules that can damage the brain and many other parts of the body.  
*SCORE .../10*

**Don't eat too much or too little.** Your body mass index (BMI) should be somewhere between about 18.5 and 25. BMI is calculated by your weight in kilograms divided by your height (in metres) squared. Look up the details on the Web. If in doubt, check your BMI with your doctor.  
*SCORE .../10*

## TEST YOURSELF

Give yourself a score out of 10 against each of the points listed above with 10 indicating you think yourself eating perfectly in this area and 1 indicating you are eating very badly in this area.

If your total score is near 100, you are doing well and your brain is being well nourished with the result that it is probably operating well. If your score is lower, you may be stopping your brain from working properly and you may need to improve your diet if you hope to enjoy good health and good grades.

## BE CAREFUL

The guidelines above are generalised and will not necessarily be appropriate for all students who may have medical or other conditions which influence what they can eat. For this reason, proper medical advice should be sought to ensure a diet is appropriate. What might be the correct diet for one may not necessarily be the correct diet for another.

## Education Law Notes:

### **Your School** *and the Law*

*Reprinted with permission from the Term 2 2008 Newsletter published*

by Emil Ford Lawyers



#### **Must schools enforce Family Court Orders?**

Dr Hudson and his wife had separated before their child began attending a South Australian state school. It was not a happy family, having been before the Federal Magistrates Court and the Family Court 44 times before Dr Hudson brought a claim of sex discrimination against the school!

One of the Family Court orders said that the mother had to enter the father's name

and contact details as the second person to be contacted in case of emergency on any school enrolment form. The school knew of the orders. Dr Hudson complained that his telephone number was incorrectly noted on the enrolment form. The Tribunal said that the order was directed to the mother and did not impose an obligation on the school to ensure that the mother complied with the order. Schools are not enforcement agencies for the Family Court.

#### **A school's duty of care clearly extends to taking reasonable steps to protect its students**

Family Court orders often refer to information that should be provided to a child's school and to information that both parents have a right to be given by the child's school. Such orders are binding on the parties to the dispute. It is important that others persons, particularly a child's school, be made aware of the court orders. Schools should not put obstacles in the way of compliance by the parties with the orders. Indeed, schools should wherever possible facilitate a parent's access to information and material concerning the child.

However, even though schools ought to facilitate the rights of parents under Family Court orders, it is not a school's role to oversee compliance with such orders by the parents concerned. A school principal has no authority from the Court either to oversee a parent's compliance with the orders or to enforce the orders.

While it is expected that schools will respect court orders, it does not mean that wherever there has been a failure to comply with the orders by one of the parties to whom the orders are directed, resulting in a detriment or possible detriment to the other party, the school is guilty of discrimination on the ground of sex, against one of the parties.

#### **Building Projects**

We have been able to assist clients with complex building projects. Our experience is that, before taking any significant steps in the project, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the factors driving the development. What exactly do you want from the project? What is your budget?





Schools, already aware of the challenges of enrolling students with disabilities, must also take care when contemplating the employment of staff with disabilities.

### Public displays of affection

A school's duty of care clearly extends to taking reasonable steps to protect its students from sexual harassment from their peers. This is after all simply a form of bullying. However, the position becomes more difficult when the alleged behaviour is not clearly improper. If a school punishes a student for what parents say is a minor offence, it faces scrutiny. But if a school doesn't take a complaint seriously, it could be held responsible if some harm occurs. For example, in one case, a school was found wanting when it didn't respond in a timely manner to a Year 1 girl's complaints that a group of boys, ages 6 to 9, were harassing her on the school bus. On the other hand, in a US school, a boy who told a girl to fix her bra strap during gym class was accused of sexual harassment, suspended for two days, and temporarily assigned to an alternative school. The school changed the offence to "bullying" after his parents complained that the sex-related charge was inaccurate and severe.

Schools need to develop policies dealing with public displays of affection. Do you ban all hugging and hand-holding? If not, where do you draw the line? Fossil Hill Middle School in the US has a ban on hugging and hand-holding. Is this unreasonable?

The school made national headlines recently after a teacher chided a Year 8 girl for holding hands with a male friend. In response, she started a petition to force the school to change its rules. "I can understand how a 25 minute hug or making out in the hallway would be PDA, but I don't see how holding hands is," she said.

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What is the timing? What is the impact on your existing operations? What could you do without?

Answering these questions is often the most difficult part of the whole project. However, doing so early is rewarded in the saving of time and cost.

Our view is that you should retain an experienced project manager before you take on any other contractors. A good project manager will work with you in the early stages of your project to:

- understand and articulate your project requirements,
- have the project cost checked by a quantity surveyor where necessary, and
- develop and refine your brief to the architect and other contractors.

### Privacy Commissioner Case Note

The Federal Privacy Commissioner issued a case note in May 2008. A student was asked to leave a non-government school as a result of an investigation carried out by the school. After the student left, he sought access to his personal information held by the school including details of the investigation which led to him being asked to leave. The school indicated that it held a number of categories of documents in relation to the student which included reports, correspondence relating to his withdrawal from the school, and details of the investigation that led to this. At the time the complaint was made to the Privacy Commissioner, the school had given the student access to the reports and correspondence relating to the withdrawal, but had refused the student access to other records.

National Privacy Principle 6.1(c) states: If an organisation holds personal information about an individual, it must provide the individual with access to the information on request by the individual, except to the extent that providing access would have an unreasonable impact upon the privacy of other individuals.

The school claimed that providing access to the documents relating to the investigation which led to the withdrawal of the student from the school would have an unreasonable impact upon the privacy of other individuals as those individuals had provided that information on the understanding that their details would not be revealed to the student for fear of reprisal. The Commissioner inspected the documents and agreed.

### Discrimination against obese man

The ATO withdrew its offer of employment to an obese man when it found that he had hypertension.

The man said he had been discriminated against because of a disability. The ATO argued that the offer was subject to him being well enough to do the job and that medical tests showed that he couldn't drive which was an inherent requirement of the job. The Federal Court said very high blood pressure was a disability. The Court said that the ATO hadn't proved that the man couldn't be accommodated even if he wasn't able to drive.

Hence, the ATO had treated him less favourably than another person without the blood pressure. The Court awarded significant damages.

A PROGRAMME OF SUPERVISED STUDY FOR *JUNIOR BOARDERS*

## The Southport School Queensland



### BACKGROUND

#### **The Southport School, a day and Boarding School, has 280 Boarders Years 5-12.**

Twenty Prep School Boarders are supervised intensively with a House staff of six including four teachers. The senior Houses comprise 65-70 boarders Years 8-12 with six staff members comprising teachers and adult supervisors. Before Supervised Prep was introduced in 2007 All boarders did Prep in their dormitories or single room Mon-Fri 7pm – 9pm with a Master on Duty supervising the study period. The majority of junior boarders Years 8-10 were unable to sustain good work practice for the 2 hrs and many were discipline problems hindering the study of the senior students. Many boarders were also attaining poor academic grades and unsatisfactory diligence levels. Something needed to be done to enhance the academic ethos of the Boarding population.

### INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAMME

The Director of Boarding with the support of senior management introduced supervised homework periods in classrooms for boys in Years 8-10 to improve the academic standards and personal organization of the boys. Supervised Prep is compulsory for all Year 8 boys for all of the year. For Year 9 boys it is compulsory until the end of Semester 1. Those Year 9 boys who attain a diligence of 2.5 or under (in a 6 point scale) may return

to the Boarding House if they wish. Year 10 boys doing Supervised Prep are those boys who are poorly organized, ill-disciplined and in need of constant supervision. As with the Year 9 boys they can be promoted back to the Boarding House if their diligence average is 2.5 or better.

The programme is run by the Director of Boarding with the support of the 4 senior Boarding Housemasters and senior management. A Budget is allocated for the programme to work. Academic staff who supervise are paid plus eat their evening meal in the staff dining room. Payment rates are equivalent to individual tuition rates. The Years 8-9 Boarders (50 in all) have three paid academic staff to assist with bookwork and computer homework tasks. The Year 10 boys (15-20) have two staff one being a paid academic staff member and a senior Boarding House staff member. All supervisors are school academic staff members in the Language, English, Humanities and Math Science faculties. The Dean of Studies also is part of the academic team of supervisors.

### EVENING STRUCTURE

*7pm - ABC News on Data Show Screen*

*7.30pm - Discussion on the major news events.*

*7.40pm - ½ Hour Intensive Bookwork*

*8.10pm - Supper (Sandwiches, Hot food and Milk. No cordial or high level sugar foods)*

*8.20pm - Bookwork study continued or computer room assignment work & Athletics.*

*9pm - Return to Boarding Houses*

Boys may attain a library pass from the library during the day for academic work in the library during supervised prep time. This is shown to the supervising teachers on the evening.

### TWO YEAR'S ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME

- A strong marketing tool for the school
- Increased academic performances in all year levels including senior boys back in the Houses. 13 Boarders end of Semester 1 on the Academic Dean's list.
- 50% increase in Borrowing from the library both fictional and non-fictional materials.
- Marked decrease in negative comments for incomplete homework in Record Books.
- Little / No discipline problems in Boarding houses during Prep times.
- More computer time for senior boys back in their Houses as younger boys have access to classrooms and the school library with computers.
- Greater general knowledge with compulsory ABC News viewing.
- Boys gain help from experienced and talented TSS staff members. The programme puts many parents of new boarders at ease in regards to correct homework practice.

John Wallace, Director of Boarding  
The Southport School  
Queensland





# A Guide to Email *Etiquette*

By Darren Bourke

Use a generic email address format throughout business. If you have a hotmail address such as "cuteybaby" - don't ever use it for business or for personal purposes where you want the recipient to take you seriously. They won't!



- Use a 'Disclaimer' at very bottom of email. This advises recipient of confidentiality and instruct them what to do if they receive an email from you in error.
- Set up your email so that your e-signature automatically appears at the bottom of all "new" emails sent and all "reply" emails sent. This will create a standard and consistent format for your emails.

## Email Etiquette - Things to Consider Before Hitting that Send Button

- Avoid using large/small font size or unconventional font type. This can drive the reader mad and may reflect poorly on your professionalism. Wings Dings as a font type is a no no!
- Don't ever write an email in anger as research has proven that the written word has much more power (and is generally perceived as more offensive) than speaking. A good rule is to "sleep on your response" and send the email the next day when you are calmer.
- When in doubt regarding replying to an email, consider picking up the phone. A phone call has many elements - volume & tone, pace & inflection and words. Email has just one element - words. And words without tone and inflection can be dangerous.
- DON'T WRITE IN CAPITALS AS PEOPLE THINK THAT YOU ARE SHOUTING AT THEM!
- Avoid using slang, jargon or abbreviations if possible as it can polarize people. Of course, industry language used in communicating between industry players is OK.
- Don't swear or make overtly political or race based comments. There is no upside.
- Remember that statements made in emails have been found to be

- Use "blind cc" when sending to multiple recipients that don't know each other. Recipients may not wish their email address disclosed to third parties.
- Use "Subject" to help the recipient understand what the email is about. General subject lines like "Business" or "Design Work" may be unhelpful for the recipient in understanding the topic and importance of your email.
- Set up standard e-signatures for all

staff. Use generic format including person's name, title, company name and relevant contact details.

- Think before using a html footer (that is the graphical banner that appears under some emails) to show your logo as some people's browsers can block it coming through or the graphic won't appear. If you are keen to use, fully test through sending to external "test" users before going mainstream.





binding contractually. So don't email any commitments you are either unauthorised to make or unwilling to deliver on.

- Don't "cc" every person in the entire loop. It drives people mad and can make you look like you lack awareness and confidence.
- Remember also that Microsoft and other email browsers limit the number of recipients you can send one email to. Be aware of block limits.
- Don't "cc" individuals to leverage them doing something or to "dob them in" on a failed promise or deadline. They will resent it and won't forget it.
- Have a standard greeting. I recommend "Hi John" or "Hello John"- something friendly and understated. By having a standard greeting used through the office, it creates consistency and strengthens communication. I have received emails with "Yo man" as the greeting.
- Have a standard "close" to finish your email. Avoid writing the unutterable - that is, things that you would generally never say. 'Regards' is a good standard close while "Cheers" is OK for people you know on a more personal basis.
- Use headings, sub-headings and bullet points to separate topics and break up your message. Avoid long sentences and massive block paragraphs as it makes it so much harder for the reader to comprehend your point and respond.
- Use attachments where the message or content you are sending is detailed or lengthy. This can allow you to make

summary points or direct the recipient to key points.

- Remember not to gossip or slander people as email is the most easily accessible permanent documented record in existence. If forwarded as a chain email, the six degrees of separation kicks in and is treated as fact. No further questions your Honour!

## Take great care in providing explicit personal facts about yourself. An email is not truly "in confidence" is it?

- Avoid arguing through email as it can escalate very quickly and has and will continue to start World War 3 between combatants. Meet with someone in person or speak with them by phone before things get messy. You can't "un-send" an email after it's landed.
- Anyone can view your emails with or without the help of IT technicians. Some businesses periodically review outbound email to check up on business communication. It's long been a debate whether this is in breach of privacy but emails sent "at work" are often argued by management to be

"fair game" within the work domain. Assume that others are reading your emails (even though they're probably not) as that will help provide a filter for you in authoring your emails.

### A FINAL WORD ON EMAIL

- Write in a tone and style that reflects how you would appreciate being written (spoken) to. If you think of this regularly, you shouldn't fall foul of the email monster and should get treated comparatively well in your inbox while maximising the intended and real benefits email provides us.

Darren Bourke, Business Influence, 2008.

Darren Bourke is a Consultant, Business Coach & Mentor who helps small & medium businesses struggling to maximise profitability, productivity, people and performance.

His Free Report titled What Successful Owners of Growth Businesses Do That You Don't, newsletter and updates are full of strategies and tips to make your business boom.

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## 2009 School Marketing



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Ph/Fax 08 8260 7077 [www.marketingschools.net](http://www.marketingschools.net)



# School *Sustainability* in a Weak Economy

With tears in her eyes, a mother sat in the registrar's office at a boarding school in Adelaide last term and said she could no longer afford to send her daughter there next year. "The school fees are crippling us as our business struggles," she said.

This sad scene is being played out across fee-paying schools everywhere as parents begin to buckle under the weight of a decelerating economy, investment downturn, business collapse and job losses. It's a myth that rich families populate private schools. In many homes both parents work to enable their child to attend the school of their choice.

Parents do not rush into choosing a school for their child, and neither do they rush out of private school education, instead they

This includes the postponement of building programs, a limit on salaries, a reduction in staff, the commercialisation of facilities and the cancellation of extra curricula activities.

Subsidised services, such as a bus run, may need to be reviewed. Then there is the unsavoury issue of litigation to recover unpaid fees.

Speaking at the School Marketing Conference last year, Lynne Thomson,



philanthropy and developing the business side of the school, including the commercial

**Progressive schools are becoming more commercially oriented, forming business partnerships and setting up systems to earn revenue from the hire of their facilities.**

make sacrifices; they re-mortgage their house, sell off assets and skip holidays in order to pay fees. You can be sure that a family who decides to quit a private school is suffering a high degree of financial anxiety.

Whereas grandparents may have once assisted with school fees, their financial capacity has also been eroded. After a boom period in independent education, the sector is facing the prospect of declining enrolments.

There will be a delay in the impact because parents pay fees in advance, however, this year will be a telling time, and private schools are bracing for an enrolment downturn.

All schools will find it hard to maintain enrolments if the crisis is as deep and prolonged as predicted.

While well-established independent schools may have the accumulated resources to maintain enrolments by assisting struggling families with fee-relief subsidies for a limited period, newer schools with a lower fee base may not.

A decline in income from fees has led schools to discuss measures to contain costs and cope with the financial crisis.

principal of St Mary's Anglican Girls' School, a boarding school in Perth, said that her school was ramping up its development (fundraising) office. "Schools will have to be far more creative in their fundraising efforts," she said. "In times of financial uncertainty we need to seek greater support from our alumni, friends of the school, business partners and benefactors."

Survival of boarding schools largely depends on maintaining fee-paying students. As numbers come under threat, schools are looking for new sources of students and income. An increase in school marketing and some good educational offers, such as scholarships, are likely responses.

Boarding schools are bracing for a hit as country families, already depleted by drought, face uncertain financial markets. Recruitment of overseas students may be a saviour here.

Progressive schools are becoming more commercially oriented, forming business partnerships and setting up systems to earn revenue from the hire of their facilities. In 2009 Cornerstone College in Adelaide created a new position for a Business Development Manager. Sue Lear who was appointed to the role says it involves marketing,

use of school facilities. "In tough economic times we need to change the way we do things to ensure sustainability," she said. Similarly Westminster School in Adelaide has an events manager who handles the use of its handsome facilities at commercial rates.

Schools are also responding to the changed circumstances by paying greater attention to retention rates. They are investing in customer relations training for both their teaching and non-teaching staff. Maintaining the loyalty of existing families is paramount in a shrinking marketplace.

Dr Linda Vining is the convener of the School Marketing Aforia which will be held this year in August in Adelaide.

Westminster School will be a host school. SEE <http://www.marketingschools.net>;

## Vertical House System

David Anderson, *Senior Boarding Housemaster Shore School*

At the first National Conference of the Australian Boarding Schools' Association in Canberra I was speaking to a conference delegate about a proposed new boarding facility being designed to accommodate 150 boarders. The planning sounded most impressive providing students with accommodation in single or double dormitories. It had been decided that the facility would meet the needs of the entire boarding community under the one roof.

**I asked the delegate if the pastoral care of the boarders in such a large spacious boarding house would be a vertical or horizontal system?**

The response indicated that the immediate planning concern was the location of a site on campus, the architectural design and the building program throughout the coming year. The unanswered question caused me to consider that the planning for a pastoral care structure for boarders should probably be finalised long before the consideration of the design of the building.

The pastoral groupings for any boarding community is vital for the harmony and care of the boarders. I would also recommend vertically arranged boarding systems produce a high calibre pastoral care for students. Students in schools, in a similar way to siblings in a family or the interaction of children in the playground, should be flanked by older and younger students to support each other and to learn from one another. Even experienced boarding staff forget the powerful influence that the recognition and support from senior students can have on a younger boarders. A single conversation about a worthwhile activity can point a junior boarder in the right direction and provide an understanding of the opportunities available in the future.

The vertical system of caring for boarders is most probably the most traditional structure that boarding houses have been arranged since residential houses for students originated in Europe over six hundred years ago. The vertical system has proved very successful, however recently further improvements have been experienced in the structure as senior students have become friends and mentors to younger students. Up until twenty years ago boarding schools did allow senior boarders to have a high level of disciplinary powers which caused bullying to be a close ally to student leadership.

Today (I hope) all disciplinary powers in boarding houses are in the hands of well trained boarding staff and no longer are boarders forced to follow student leaders through fear. In today's boarding environment respect for the older members of the boarding community should be earned through their good behaviour and close care of the other boarders, constantly helping junior boarders and providing worthy role models at all times.

Given that schools have a harmonious boarding community with both staff and students sympathetic to the needs of each other, and respecting that all students have different God given talents, the vertical system of boarding provides a wonderful way for boarders to grow and develop through their school years.

**It provides boarders with an escape from their immediate peer group who are making constant comparison between each other producing parallel pressure in their lives.**

The size of spaces the boarding group under a vertical system of management is vital. Supervision and care of boarders in a vertical structure that is too large may diminish the effectiveness of the pastoral care system. Each age group should be equally represented, equally respected and given

small privileges balanced with increased responsibilities as they progress through the House. The boarding house population needs to be large enough to have a healthy representation of children of all ages but not so large that each age group of students will not need to move out of their group to seek the experiences and friendship of older and younger students.

A population of boarders moving each year from different places of residence on campus organised in a horizontal pastoral care system may not allow students to move away from the strong peer pressures of the age group and increases the opportunity for peer harassment to occur. It also does not allow boarders to treat one environment at the schools as their own. It is difficult to establish the continuity of care through the ongoing relationship with house staff. Moving to a new house each year means spaces the boarder must establish relationships with new staff and new routines. Much of the previous knowledge and understanding of the individual may be lost by staff of the school. It is not always easy for a student suffering from peer pressure in a horizontally structured classroom to return to live with the same age group in a boarding house seven days a week. I believe horizontally planned boarding houses have the likelihood for greater pressure and stress between boarders than a vertical care system.

Constant comparison of performance between students of the same age group can produce a demanding environment for residential staff to control in a horizontal based boarding arrangement, especially if numbers are large. It can also cause students to be withdrawn, not wanting to attract negative reactions from their peers.

For the teachers and house supervisors, the progression of a student's education and development in a vertical house system is advantageous for the general progress of the student. Staff can also closely monitor growth and development, academic performance and the participation of the boarder in co-curricular activities as the student moves through different levels of the school.





Changes in attitude and personality of the students can also be monitored year by year as the student moves through adolescence.

The house staff who support the students should continually be vigilant that each boarder find a special place in the boarding community. Sometimes recognition for gifted academic students or sportsmen comes quickly however, other boarders need constant guidance to find their rightful and meaningful place in the school. If boarding staff are familiar with the needs of a student over a long period of time and have a close understanding of the student's history there will be more chance of providing opportunities to assist the student connect with the school and feel an integral member of the campus community.

In my experience a vertical pastoral care system in boarding will produce a boarding environment which far quicker accepts and respects other boarders than other forms, of boarding structures. The vertical systems if supervised and cared for as parents, recognise the needs of children of a different age in a family structure. The boarding system will produce a sensitive, sympathetic and loyal group of boarders. Role models and experiences will be displayed daily by older boarders to younger members in a vertical house system, engendering examples of future levels of mature behaviour for younger members to emulate.

There are schools which choose to separate the junior (Year 7) boarders, believing that

keeping them away from older boarders may be helpful. This horizontal model has benefits but also underlines the pitfalls of having a young mindset all in together. There are definite benefits of having the junior boarders together in their first years away from home but perhaps a model of keeping them together in one House along with the full complement of older boarders in Years 8 to 12 should be considered. This way, the junior boarders have a designated introductory programme as well as getting to know each other, yet at the same time have the positive role models of the older boarders across all age groups.

As a result of numerous conferences focussed on boarding within Australia and overseas, many horizontal boarding models have been changed to vertical. Transformation of boarding house arrangements have been most common in South Africa. Although this can be an expensive exercise due to considerable changes to boarding accommodation, it has been an enormous improvement in the needs of boarders. Mr Stuart West, former Deputy Headmaster of Bishops School in Cape Town, attended many workshops about boarding conducted at International Boys' School Coalition Conferences. After some years of discussion with staff from other boarding schools who were familiar with vertical boarding models he decided to convince the Headmaster and School Governors to change the boarding model from horizontal to vertical. It is interesting to read a section of the Bishop's web-site today regarding the

pastoral care model at Bishops.

The backbone of Pastoral Care - the House and Tutor System

Within a demanding school environment of over 700 boys it is difficult to imagine this all happening and so each boy needs to belong to a smaller community where he feels comfortable to be himself and where he learns to live with others in order to grow in knowledge, thoughtfulness and confidence. We believe that all boys will do well if they live, work and socialise in an environment in which they are recognised, appreciated, encouraged and challenged. The vertically structured House and Tutor group organisation are designed to provide such an environment. They give boys a sense of belonging to something that has meaning and to which their contributions make a difference. A boy belongs to a House that has a physical building and a leadership, pastoral structure and tradition all of its own. Here he has the opportunity to grow, mature and contribute to those traditions.

The vertical house system carefully organised by experienced staff and supported by outstanding young house leaders will continue to be the strongest model for the good care of boarders for many years to come.

David Anderson  
Senior Housemaster  
Shore School

## *Sally Awarded* Team GB October 2008 Olympic Trophy



St Hilda's School boarder, Sally Goddard of Mitchell, has been awarded the prestigious Team Great Britain Olympic trophy for 2008.

The trophy, presented by Olympian and former St Hilda's student Emma Snowsill who won Gold in the triathlon at Beijing, is awarded annually to a sports girl who consistently displays an attitude pertaining to the Olympic ideals.

Sally's contribution to sport and team spirit was recognised at the annual Sports Presentation Evening where she also picked up trophies for athletics, hockey, soccer and softball including the Softball All Star Award and Sports Captain's Award.

"It was inspirational to listen to Emma Snowsill speak about 'living her dream' and she has encouraged me to keep achieving my goals," said Sally, who moved from Bollon State School to board at St Hilda's.

Emma Snowsill addressed more than 200 students, parents and staff, speaking of her connection with sport at St Hilda's and her love-hate relationship with cross country.

Long-time school cross country coach Mr Brian Chapman was instrumental in pushing Emma towards attempting triathlons when she was a national cross country competitor from 1996 to 1999.

The coveted Team Great Britain trophy was presented to the school by the British Olympic Association in appreciation for enabling its swimming team to train at St Hilda's in the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Ms Margie McGregor  
Marketing Manager,

## The St Hilda's Boarding Community



The St Hilda's Boarding Community has sponsored Karen Giselle Accosta since she was 3 years old. The girls fundraise within our community by selling essential items via our Whitby Shop and selling refreshments at our combined dances with The Southport School once a term.

The girls keep a photo of Karen in their reception area. Each year they send her a birthday card and gift. Karen was born on 5 January 2000. She is 8 years old. She speaks Spanish and has two brothers and three sisters. Karen's father works as an agricultural labourer and her mother is as a housewife.

The boarders receive regular updates and drawings from Karen and enjoy living out the School's motto Non Nobis Solum (not for ourselves alone) by supporting World Vision.

In 2008, the girls fundraising was particularly outstanding, they were able to afford to give an apprenticeship for a young woman, which links very much with our own mission here at St Hilda's – to educate young women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There were enough funds to purchase a cow as a Christmas gift for Karen's family. The cow will give them milk for future years. We have been proud to support the Accosta family in the past by purchasing them a drinking well, so that family members can have access to clean drinking water.



# *Secret* Parents' Business

By Dr Tim Hawkes

**Parenting is not always easy. Contradicted by assertive offspring, confronted by differing standards of parenting, and confused by social and technological changes, many parents are finding themselves under siege when raising children.**

**This epistle is designed to encourage parents and to suggest common standards which might be advanced.** The content related to the enclosed thoughts have come from David Bennett's and Leanne Rowe's book *What To Do When Your Children Turn Into Teenagers*.

Someone once said "Democracy does not work with dogs or children". Just how much control should we have over our children? A variety of parenting styles exist including:

High control, high warmth  
= **authoritative parent.**

High control, low warmth  
= **military parent.**

Low control, high warmth  
= **permissive parent.**

Low control, low warmth  
= **delinquent parent.**

Bennett and Rowe (2003:43) suggest that both low control and high punishment when combined with low warmth can produce children who are aggressive, hyperactive, and more susceptible to drug use. They advocate high control with high warmth and an authoritative style of parenting.

Teaching by parental example is important. It is patently absurd to think a teenager is going to be persuaded of the evils of smoking by a parent reeking of Benson and Hedges. Binge drinking (five or more alcoholic drinks in an evening) can lead to the poisoning of a teenager's developing brain, and can encourage addiction and high risk behaviours. We need to teach our children to drink responsibly by our example.

Illegal drug use in teenagers can initially be driven by curiosity, bravado and peer pressure. Later drug use can be related to addiction or to self medication behaviours in order to overcome certain psycho-social problems such as depression or social rejection. Initial drug use might be an issue best handled by parents and teachers, but regular drug use by a teenager will almost certainly need professional help.

Cars can kill. The greatest cause of death in Australian teenagers is injury, the second is cancer, the third is disease. Many of the injuries experienced by our teenagers are related to car accidents. Sensible guidelines about car use need to be shared in relation to speed, power of car, passengers, use of the phone in the car when driving, and so on.

Parents must remain in control of the party scene. If we serve alcohol to those under 18 years of age, we are breaking the law. Parents have the right to know the details related to a party being attended by our children, and have the right to know about security, supervision and the serving of alcohol. Let's agree that contacting each other about these matters should be the norm if we don't know these important details.

Privacy is important for our children, but not secrecy. A large amount of pornography is being watched by teenage males. Sensible options such as putting the computer in a public space within the home can help discourage inappropriate use. Likewise, research has suggested that televisions in bedrooms are not a good idea. Parents need to remain in control of what is influencing their children's attitudes, interests, and values.

Twenty to thirty percent of Australian teenagers are not travelling well. The main causes of distress are psycho-social problems such as depression, low self esteem, and relationship problems. Besides giving love, empathy and support, professional help should be sought by a parent if their child has serious or recurring cases of depression. Research has shown that each child must have at least one caring, interested adult in their lives with whom they can talk freely.

Also being revealed in studies is the importance of the family meal where the family is present and the television is not. Dining together, and conversation around the dinner table, has been shown to reduce instances of depression, drug use and other disruptive behaviours.

Bennett and Rowe also suggest that parents should never underestimate the importance of talking to their children about sex and related topics. Teenagers also need to know how to distinguish between like, lust, and love. Would our children be able to speak to us if they had lost their virginity or suspected that they may have contracted a sexually transmitted disease? Do our children know how to honour and respect their romantic partners? Children need to know that it is quite normal to be a virgin when they leave school, and that rampant promiscuity is not necessarily a sign of maturity or manliness.

There are many resources available to parents on all the topics above. The books by Steve Biddulph are helpful, as is Anne Deveson's book on Resilience, and Lyn Worsleys' book *The Resilient Doughnut*. Anything written by Michael Carr-Gregg is also likely to be helpful. Due to my own manifold inadequacies as a father, I have often been grateful for the advice given by these and other authors.

Dr Tim Hawkes  
Headmaster  
March 2007



## ABSA Research

### Large-scale Evidence-based Approaches to Better Understanding Boarding School and Its Effects on Academic and Non-academic Outcomes.

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



**Although there are 172 independent and government boarding schools in Australia, comprising approximately 23,000 students, yielding an estimated \$30m for the sector annually, there is surprisingly little research assessing the effects of boarding school on academic and non-academic outcomes.** Work conducted thus far has been limited to relatively few boarding schools or limited to relatively narrow outcome measures and so findings and conclusions are susceptible to the idiosyncrasies of those individual schools with relatively limited applicability across the sector.

#### QUESTIONS, EVIDENCE, AND ANSWERS

In conjunction with the University of Sydney, ABSA aims to examine the extent to which attendance at boarding school affects

students' academic and non-academic outcomes. In terms of academic outcomes, we aim to consider the effect of boarding on motivation, engagement, achievement and academic resilience. In terms of non-academic outcomes, we aim to consider the effect of boarding on life effectiveness, satisfaction with life, positive and negative affect, self-concept and quality of life. Although there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that students at boarding school benefit from the experience, little large-scale and longitudinal research has been conducted to support this – nor has there been rigorous qualitative work to follow-up the quantitative methods to better understand the processes and phenomena under investigation.

This research project aims to answer important questions concerning boarding, such as: To what extent does the boarding experience play a role in the development of

academic and non-academic outcomes? Do effects vary as a function of boarding house and boarding school? Are there particular stages of school (junior high, middle high, and senior high school) in which boarding school is particularly influential in shaping academic and non-academic outcomes? What happens over time to academic and non-academic outcomes as students move from year to year in boarding school? What is the role of boarding school in assisting students beginning a new academic year? What is the pattern of findings for Indigenous, rural, and other under-studied groups in boarding? Importantly, how do boarders fare on these academic and non-academic outcomes when juxtaposed with day students in the same school and the same classroom?

This project proposes a large-scale evidence-based scoping of boarding school across representative samples of



schools, large numbers of students, over time, and using appropriate multivariate models to most effectively understand the unique effects of boarding school over and above other factors that might explain student outcomes. In short, the project seeks to address gaps in knowledge and research about the effects of boarding with a view to assisting the sector and its many stakeholders.

## THE RESEARCH PLAN

The project consists of three studies, each an important aspect of the larger

open-ended items on: what they like about the boarding experience, what they find difficult about boarding, what they would change about boarding, and what positive and negative aspects of boarding are relevant to their academic and non-academic lives. This qualitative data will be used to further illuminate the perspectives collected via numerical questionnaires.

### Study 2:

The following year, Study 2 will assess the same students using the same measures at a later stage in their schooling. This study will lay the foundation for addressing two

then educational practice and policy must direct attention and resources at the house level as much as or more than at the whole-school level. Or, if the bulk of variance in academic and non-academic outcomes resides at the student level, irrespective of house and school, then practice and policy must adjust to this. No research has ever attempted to assess these vital issues amongst boarding houses and schools. Hence, through appropriate methodology and modelling we propose to evaluate effects at the student, house and school levels.

## YIELDS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SECTOR

We anticipate that there will be many yields from this research to ABSA, participating schools and the broader boarding sector. Knowing in which areas boarders develop more strongly compared to day students will allow schools to tailor processes to enhance the boarding experience. Identifying what causal factors influence outcomes for boarders will allow schools and staff to develop policy and practices to develop the potential of boarders further. Understanding key issues relevant to transitional stages allows early identification and appropriate intervention to settle in new students and develop existing boarders so each child feels safe, cared for and reaches their potential. For boarding schools, in general, knowing where the bulk of effect lies – at the student, house or school level – will allow resources to be targeted proportionally and in the right areas. As a professional organisation, findings from this project may substantiate anecdotal evidence of the benefits of boarding and allow professional development which strengthens skills of boarding practitioners. For the industry, knowing where the bulk of variance resides will assist educational practice and assist staff and students get the most out of their boarding experience.

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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

## What is the relative contribution of school, boarding house or residence, and student on key academic and non-academic outcomes?

investigation. Study 1 will compare day and boarding students to establish baseline data at the beginning of the project. Study 2 will assess the same students, but a year later to examine whether these students have changed over time. Study 3 will investigate how the boarding environment (characteristics of boarding houses and schools) influence the academic and non-academic outcomes of individual students.

### Study 1:

The first study will entail systemic, large-scale analyses across boarding and day students of whole school populations. A pivotal aspect of the research design is that most day and boarding students will be situated in the same classrooms and taught by the same teachers. As a result, Study 1 will shed light on the reliability and validity of academic and non-academic measures as well as variance across day and boarding students and key demographics. Participants will include students prior to enrolment and boarding and day students in Years 7 to 12 from approximately 20 schools across Australia (ensuring inclusion of Indigenous and rural students). The large sample of participating schools is needed to gain representation of schools from urban and non-urban areas, independent and government, single-sex and co-educational schools from across Australia. To gain additional insights and context about the phenomena under focus, boarding students will also be administered

key issues: transition and causal ordering. In relation to transition, researchers have found a decline in academic outcomes between junior and middle high school. These declines are of concern to educators and are receiving emerging attention in intervention research. However, much of this research derives from cross-sectional designs and to our knowledge involving only day students – hence, to what extent does boarding school and its component processes affect these transitions? Of particular interest in Study 2, then, are the shifts in academic and non-academic outcomes between pre-boarding and boarding school, between junior and middle high, and between middle and senior high school (with the latter two transitions being assessed against comparable transitions for day students).

### Study 3:

The third and final study seeks to investigate how the boarding environment (characteristics of boarding houses and schools) influences the academic and non-academic outcomes of individual students. Specifically, this study asks: What is the relative contribution of school, boarding house or residence, and student on key academic and non-academic outcomes? Answers to these questions hold substantial implications for policy and practice. For example, if there is greater variance in academic and non-academic outcomes between houses than between schools,

## Coming Events

### Australia

Melbourne – Wednesday March 18, 2009

Sydney – Friday March 20, 2009

Positive Psychology Workshop  
with Prof Tim Sharp

Various Dates through 2009

(dates to be advised)

ABSA State based workshops run by  
Michael Carr-Gregg

Melbourne – Sunday August 16 and  
Monday August 17

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

### UK

14 – 16 April 2009

Easter Course (Residential)  
Dauntsey's School

5 – 7 May 2009

BSA Annual Conference for Headteachers  
The Oxford Belfry Hotel

13 – 15 July 2009

Annual conference for Matrons  
and Medical Staff  
University of Leicester

### USA

28 – 30 June 2009

TABS Risk Management Seminar  
Wilmington, Delaware

20 - 23 July 2009

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

20 - 23 July 2009

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

2 – 5 December 2009

TABS Annual Conference  
Chicago, Illinois

### NZ

26 - 29 May 2009

Annual BSA conference  
Location: Queenstown

### Software Marketing

Software Marketing Ltd, Run and owned by Ben Gelton. Ben worked for three years in a boarding school in New Zealand in the mid 1990's. With this background and his experience in the computer industry he saw an opportunity to apply his understanding to improving its operation.

This resulted in LeaveRegister™ASSIST a software system for managing the real-time leave requirements of up to 1000 students simultaneously while also enabling vastly superior flows of information between boarding school decision makers, the catering staff and the students themselves. Visit: [www.softwaremarketing.co.nz](http://www.softwaremarketing.co.nz)

### LetzLive ~ Gap Placement

Letz Live would like to welcome you to explore our new website at [www.letzlive.org](http://www.letzlive.org). We are pleased to confirm that we are now recruiting GAP tutors and residential assistants from Canada and the United Kingdom for boarding schools throughout Australia.

For a copy of our prospectus please email Mr Nicholas Hare on 0404 128 558 or via email [director@letzlive.org](mailto:director@letzlive.org) We look forward to hearing from you.

E: [director@letzlive.org](mailto:director@letzlive.org)

M: +61 (0) 404 128 558

W: [www.letzlive.org](http://www.letzlive.org)

Nicholas Hare B.Bus, Dip.Com  
Founder & Director  
LETZ LIVE PTY LTD

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

We plan to feature two schools each edition. All you need to do, is write a brief article (400 to 500 words) and send us some high resolution photos.

Send all files to; [lightsout@boarding.org.au](mailto:lightsout@boarding.org.au) by the first week in May.

- Do you enjoy reading 'Lights Out'?
- Do you find some things worth trying in your boarding house?
- Do you enjoy sharing your good ideas with others?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions - then you need to consider writing a piece for this newsletter.

We struggle from time to time to get enough information to publish for the next edition of 'Lights Out', so this plea is aimed at YOU! - Spend ten minutes and write about something that is happening at your school, so that we can keep publishing a top quality newsletter!

ARTSPEC



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SCHOOLS  
ASSOCIATION

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