

As a Director of Residence or Head of Boarding it is essential to have a good working relationship with your manager. This is often the School Principal but can also be the Head of Pastoral Care depending upon the structure of your school.

The relationships that you form will be critical for your work success as well as your career progression and happiness in the workplace

However its direction is in your hands... you can decide how to manage this relationship and how to make it mutually beneficial and positive.

Here are some key points to assist you...



What to do when things go wrong

Remain professional and remove the emotion from the relationship but remember that some decisions are theirs to take. Learn to manage the differences but if things become problematic seek assistance. Use good and bad experiences to your advantage.

Remember that YOU are in charge of the relationships with your boss

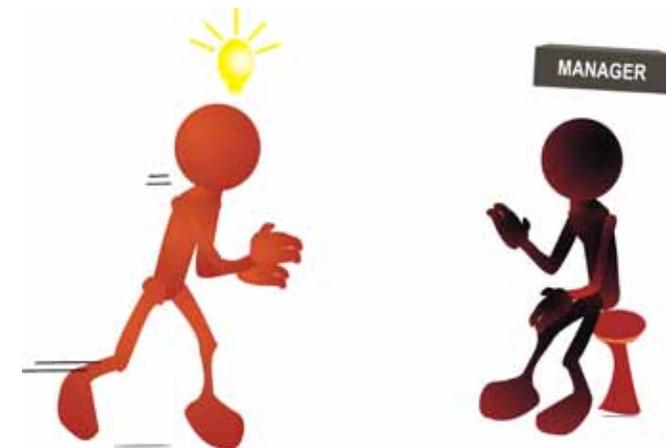
Disagreement is fine, discord is not

Are you a good manager?

And just as you are learning to work with a new manager so others are learning to work with you. Use your manager as a guide to help support your managerial style Learn from the positives and change the negatives so that your team have the benefits of your knowledge and wisdom in being a great boss. Accept that you won't always get it right however and be prepared to make things right if they go wrong ... talk things through.

working with your MANAGER

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Your values should marry with the values of your own particular school

As you start in your role, listen carefully to the main players that make up your school and make sure you work alongside each of them to earn their respect. Model the school values in your behaviour and the initiatives you drive within the boarding domain and look to consolidate these through creating a boarding house set of values or honour code that links into these so that boarding values replicate those that are being focused on within the school.

Meet regularly with your line manager

Try to book these in at the start of the year so that you can see them to discuss both your successes as well as the areas that you might need their support or advice on. Plan effectively for these meetings and be implicit about what you need from them to help you in your role. Your manager may not be aware of what you need from them, so try to use this time to discuss how they can help and support you. Value their time with you and maintain confidentiality at all times and in all matters.

Take them on a boarding journey

Get them to understand what is happening within the boarding house. Some managers will have a very clear insight into boarding houses however others will be expecting you to be the expert and inform them of all boarding events. Managers come in all shapes and sizes and with all possible levels

of skills and effectiveness as well as a diverse array of knowledge (or lack of it) about boarding ... some will have been Heads of Boarding and some may have never worked in a boarding environment before. Know your manager. What experience do they have? What do they expect from you as a Head of Boarding? Make sure that they grow to know, understand and love boarding as much as you do and invite them to a dinner or a boarding activity or event so that they can see boarding first-hand and validate them with the boarding community.

Get to know your manager as a person ... yes they are one!

Try and help to support your boss – understand their goals and priorities so that you can become a part of a whole school team not merely a boarding one. Focus on their good points and get to understand their work style and needs. The better you understand their preferences the better your working relationship will become with them. Also look to learn from your manager ... They will have a lot to teach you. Take time to build this positive relationship. Remember that relationships are based on trust so do what you say you'll do and be honest and open in your relationship with them. Keep to your timeline commitments, be organised in your approach to meetings with them, and plan your time with them carefully. Be dependable. Let them know when things have gone wrong, don't let them deal with any surprises and bring solutions when things do go wrong so that you are helping to resolve any issues that you might face. Let them know you and what is important to you too.

Keep them informed of boarding

Invite them to dinner, invite them to events, involve them in the life of the boarding house, communicate with them daily or weekly and build a relationship based on trust. Know where and when to have discussions about boarding matters or to introduce new ideas or initiatives. Timing is often everything when having these discussions with your manager.

Understand what the 'negotiables' are

Know what they are negotiable on and what they are not. Respect their position of authority since on some issues they may have the final say and you will need to respect this. You may not have the full picture or there may be other reasons behind a decision ... trust your manager and support them in all of their decisions.

Plan together

Ask questions of them too Where do they want boarding to head at the school and then encompass this in your development plan and focus. Have a development plan and discuss this with them Where and what are your plans for boarding in the short/long term. As a new Head of Boarding they may have a specific role for you to undertake, find out what it is, ask them about the strengths and weaknesses of the Boarding Community that you are taking on and undertake your own SWOT analysis to discuss with them. In your planning however make your objectives quantifiable so that you have goals that can be measured and evaluated to help make your success achievable. Tell them and show them what you do.