



DJARRAGUN  
COLLEGE



CAPE YORK  
GIRL ACADEMY

2025



# BOARDING HANDBOOK

Gordonvale Campus





# CONTENTS

|                                      |    |                               |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|----|
| 2025 Key Dates                       | 2  | Boarders' Rooms               | 12 |
| Welcome from the Head of Campus      | 3  | Clothing                      | 13 |
| Welcome to the Boarding Community    | 4  | Pocket Money                  | 13 |
| Boarding Philosophy                  | 4  | Television                    | 13 |
| Student Boarding Council             | 4  | Computers                     | 13 |
| Boarding Parent Council              | 5  | Music                         | 13 |
| Important Fundamentals               | 5  | Safety in Sporting Activities | 14 |
| Important Safety Issues              | 6  | Wheeled Equipment             | 14 |
| Fire Safety                          | 6  | Motor Vehicles                | 15 |
| Security                             | 6  | Driving Licences              | 15 |
| Relationships                        | 7  | Damage to Property            | 15 |
| Harassment & Bullying                | 7  | Meals                         | 16 |
| Communication                        | 8  | Laundry                       | 16 |
| Telephones                           | 8  | Chores                        | 16 |
| Additional Communication Information | 9  | Homework                      | 16 |
| Leave                                | 9  | What to do if...              | 17 |
| Signing In & Out                     | 10 | Boarding Contact              | 18 |
| Boarders' Travel                     | 10 | College Contacts              | 18 |
| Medical & Dental                     | 11 |                               |    |



# 2025 KEY DATES

## TERM 1

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Wednesday 22 January</b> | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Wednesday 22 January</b> | Term 1 Commences     |
| <b>12 - 24 March</b>        | NAPLAN               |
| <b>Thursday 20 March</b>    | School Photo Day     |
| <b>Wednesday 2 April</b>    | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Thursday 3 April</b>     | Last Day Term 1      |

## TERM 2

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Tuesday 22 April</b>   | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Wednesday 23 April</b> | Term 2 Commences     |
| <b>Friday 20 June</b>     | Last Day Term 2      |
| <b>Friday 20 June</b>     | Boarders Travel Date |

## TERM 3

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Thursday 10 July</b>      | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Monday 14 July</b>        | Term 3 Commences     |
| <b>Thursday 18 September</b> | Last Day Term 3      |
| <b>Thursday 18 September</b> | Boarders Travel Date |

## TERM 4

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Tuesday 7 October</b>    | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Wednesday 8 October</b>  | Term 4 Commences     |
| <b>Tuesday 2 December</b>   | Boarders Travel Date |
| <b>Wednesday 3 December</b> | Last Day Term 4      |



# WELCOME

## From the Executive Principal

**It is my pleasure to welcome you and your child to the boarding community at Djarragun College. We are a uniquely different boarding school and I trust your experience with us is rewarding and enlightening. Boarding at Djarragun College is available for students in Years 7 to 12.**

Our community is built upon the foundations of respect, responsibility and accountability. All three are pillars to living a successful life and our aim is to equip students with the needs for the 21st century. It is through a partnership between the home, school and boarding house that this is achieved and celebrated.

At Djarragun College, we have always built our boarding program round the individual and we lead the way in modern residential care. In recent years, schools have responded to a new kind of residential care that fosters the needs of the 21st century young adult. Our community is fostered in the belief that young adults need to be equipped with the skills to live a productive life. These skills are not just taught in the classroom, but by living in a community with others. Respect, trust, integrity, academics, sport, friendships, relationships and life skills are all necessary experiences for adulthood. These skills are developed over time and need to be fashioned with care to provide the right opportunities for young adults to negotiate as they journey through their adolescent years.

It is our distinct purpose to keep our student numbers at a realistic level in order to provide the best opportunities to be in community, while not allowing individuality to be lost. Our boarders are given individual attention and they are supported by staff members who share this same vocation. The care of your son or daughter is as important to us as it is to you.

Our facilities are uniquely homely. While it is impossible to replicate a home situation entirely, boarders are provided with their own space and with an opportunity to live and learn alongside their mates, family and friends.

Our boarders are provided with an excellent activities program, taking advantage of our unique location near Cairns and the greater Tablelands area. We are within easy reach of many amazing opportunities and we like to ensure that our activities program balances culture with fun.

Once again, welcome to the boarding community and I look forward to working alongside you and your family as we journey together to provide the best possible care for your child.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the boarding team.

**Dr Michael Barton**  
Executive Principal





# WELCOME TO THE BOARDING COMMUNITY AT DJARRAGUN COLLEGE!

Around 150 young men and women are part of this community and they come to us from both rural and remote areas in QLD and the NT. Many of our students come to our College from Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands.

We hope that you and your children, like hundreds of families before you, enjoy your time at Djarragun and value forever the wonderful friendships you will make with those with whom you and your children associate. Boarders will also have the opportunity to meet and learn from the many adults who form the staff in the residential community. They give a lot of time and energy to create the conditions where boarders can lead safe, purposeful and happy lives.

This booklet is intended as a guide to living in the residential community and has information that is helpful to both students and their families. It attempts to give details of the way things are done, and you can refer to it from time to time. One thing that boarders will find is that while they will fit into an established routine, every now and then something will come up that is out of the ordinary. That is when students need to try to understand why things are done, as well as what is done. It is a good idea to read the explanations of any routines—this will help students to make their own decisions that are in keeping with the spirit of any guidelines. Above all, students need to be prepared to ask if they are not sure what to do.

## BOARDING PHILOSOPHY

The Djarragun College boarding houses are considered more than just a place to live. Within each house, the College makes an effort to instil both academic and life skills. Boarders are encouraged to create an environment of co-operation and understanding between each other.

Additionally, boarders are taught basic organisational and time management skills, as well as practical domestic skills such as cleaning their own room and washing their casual clothes. Time is allowed for students to develop their social skills as well as their ability to work independently on academic and personal interests. Overall, an emphasis is placed on developing

## STUDENT BOARDING COUNCIL

Once the new boarders have settled into the houses, boarders will elect a representative from each year group to form a Student Boarding Council under the leadership of the Boarding Captain(s). The Heads of Boarding and Executive Principal are members of the Student Boarding Council.

The Student Boarding Council is a representative group providing important advice and feedback to staff about the vision, direction and day-to-day organisation of the boarding houses. The Student Boarding Council is an opportunity for the boarders to develop and harness their leadership skills and provide a residents' forum.

Meetings are held every fortnight once the council is formed.



# BOARDING PARENT COUNCIL

Communication and feedback from parents is warmly invited, and email or mobile phone to the Head of Boarding. Boarding parents also have an opportunity to be members of the Boarding Parent Council to provide an important parent perspective to the Heads of Boarding about important aspects facing the residential community, and to be a parent forum.

All parents of boarders are automatic members of the Boarding Council. Meetings are held by teleconference and Zoom, so it enables parents to remain in their home community and still be involved in the life of the boarding school.



## SOME IMPORTANT FUNDAMENTALS

### ACCEPTANCE OF AUTHORITY

It is essential that boarders wholeheartedly accept the basic authority of the boarding school staff, just as they would that of the day school staff. While we do not anticipate any difficulty in this regard, it must be clearly understood that if a boarder does not accept this authority, then boarding staff will initiate discussions with the Head of Boarding and the Executive Principal as to whether we can accept responsibility for the boarder, and the boarder may put their place in the boarding house at risk.

### LIVING TOGETHER

As a general principle, all boarders are expected to behave with consideration and respect for the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. Since living together is the key to boarding life, we regard harassment and theft as two offences that we take very seriously. We shall not tolerate harassment in any form, and we shall treat harassment of others as a most serious matter.

Similarly, theft is an anti-social act against the whole community, as well as against a particular victim and cannot be tolerated in a close residential community.

### BREAKING OF BOUNDS

It is most important that correct procedures are followed when leaving the College grounds. One case that deserves special mention relates to the evening, after any building is secured. Essentially, once students are settled into the house, and especially once settled to bed, they are expected to remain there. If a student is found to have left his or her room, and let himself or herself out of a building, this would be considered a most serious offence. Contact will be made with families if your child is late returning to, or has left the boarding house. Again, this will be taken up with the Head of

Boarding and the Executive Principal as to whether we can accept responsibility for the boarder, and the boarder may put their place in the boarding house at risk.

### ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

The College has clear sanctions in respect to the use of tobacco, alcohol, or any illicit drugs. If a student is caught smoking tobacco or in the company of a student smoking, whilst at or in the care of the College, they can expect serious consequences. Smoking is a most serious health matter. Repeated breaches will be considered more seriously.

In the case of drinking alcohol, students found to have been drinking will have the matter referred to the Head of Boarding immediately. This includes bringing alcohol on to the campus, or returning to the campus under the influence of alcohol. Cancellation of enrolment from the Boarding House and/or the College is a possible outcome, at the discretion of the Executive Principal.

With regard to illicit drugs such as cannabis, narcotics, amphetamines, cocaine and hallucinogens, boarders who consume any illicit drug while under the care of the College, or bring the substance anywhere on campus, or are in possession of the substance, or return to the College under the influence of any such substance, will have the matter referred immediately to the Head of Boarding, and quite likely the police. Cancellation of enrolment from the Boarding House and/or College is a possible outcome, at the discretion of the Executive Principal.

Students who engage in smoking, alcohol consumption, or drug use place their enrolment in the Boarding House and the College in serious jeopardy. The cancellation of



## OTHER IMPORTANT SAFETY ISSUES

- Ceiling cavities, roofs of buildings and scaffolding are strictly out of bounds.
- The possession of dangerous items (for example: knives, fireworks, ammunition, etc.) is strictly forbidden.
- Tampering with safety equipment (fire alarms and extinguishers) is strictly forbidden. Any student who discharges or damages such equipment will have to pay for its repair or recharging, in addition to consequences determined by the College. This includes unintentional damage.
- No boarder may have use of a motor vehicle or motorbike during term without the express permission of the Executive Principal.
- No student may be a passenger in a motor vehicle driven by another student without specific permission from the Head of Boarding and written permission to the College from the parents of both students.
- No ball games are permitted inside buildings.
- The College has a Sunsmart policy. Students are strongly encouraged to wear a hat outdoors. Students must wear appropriate clothing while outdoors.

## FIRE SAFETY

The use of any flammable materials indoors is strictly forbidden. Any boarder lighting anything indoors or adjacent to a building, will be referred to the Head of Boarding.

If the fire alarm bell starts ringing, the building must be evacuated. To do this, boarders simply leave immediately by the nearest available safe exit; move briskly without running; and assemble wherever directed by a staff member.

Each residence has a map of all exits and assembly points.

## SECURITY

During the day, boarders are expected to go to school and remain there. They are not allowed back to the boarding houses without the permission of the leaders in day school.

The security of boarders' belongings is extremely important to us. The unfortunate reality is that thefts sometimes occur. It is most important, therefore, that everybody takes care to look after his or her own property, and lock their door when they leave their room or purchase a safe to keep valuables. There is also a safe in the boarding office where students may store valuables.

Students should not keep large sums of money around the residential community—even locked in their wardrobe. If students have an unusually large sum of money for a particular purpose, it should be left with boarding staff for placement in the safe.

It is most important that students report any theft immediately. It is also particularly important that boarders are prepared to tell staff if they have a reasonable suspicion that another boarder has stolen things.

It is important that boarders' belongings are properly named. Names must be clearly marked on all clothes, sporting gear, shoes, books and any other belongings.

Buying and selling of any items from other boarders is not allowed without the specific approval of boarding staff.

### The 'Borrowing Culture':

Boarders lend things to each other and, occasionally, boarders borrow things from each other without having specific permission— or they resurrect a former permission. Sometimes they say "he's my mate" or "she's my friend" and so on. We discourage borrowing. There are health reasons why boarders should not wear each other's shoes, share lipsticks or borrow another boarder's sports gear. Primarily though, the problem occurs when something goes missing. The first reaction is often "it's been stolen", whereas in fact, the item may have been lent, borrowed, or simply misplaced.



# RELATIONSHIPS

Girl/boy friendships may develop in the boarding environment. This can potentially be healthy and rewarding. However, we also are very much aware of some issues that can make such relationships inappropriate. Our responses to such situations are guided both by the College's ethos and by our understanding of what is appropriate for young people still at school.

In particular, we are alert to:

- Age-inappropriate relationships
- Excessive displays of affection
- The degree of exclusivity– whether the couple have friends, and spend an appropriate amount of time with their other friends.
- Furtive behaviour– being alone in areas which are out of bounds, or where supervision is made difficult
- Relationships which become too intense and begin to colour every facet of the child's life– and compromise routines and work commitments
- Inappropriate weekend leave arrangements, where the College may need to discuss potential issues with the parents concerned.

We recognise that the individual boarders concerned may not always see the adult point of view in these matters, and they may regard our vigilance as being interfering or excessively zealous. Nonetheless, we have a responsibility to you as parents; to the children concerned; to other younger students who may regard the relationship as a model for their own experiments; and to the tone of the College in general. Young people in exclusive relationships sometimes fail to realise that they are making others in the community uncomfortable.

We would hope that your sons and daughters will advise you if they have formed a friendship with another student. If we feel that the attachment is a strong one, then we shall advise you of it ourselves.

The College reserves the absolute right to judge the appropriateness of any relationship carried on within the College, as well as any actions or activities which result from such a relationship. The College will measure its response alongside its ethos, as well as its professional judgement about the appropriateness of such relationships or actions for young people in a co-educational boarding setting.

At no time are boys or girls allowed in each other's rooms for any reason, ever.

# HARRASSMENT & BULLYING

The boarding community is largely free of harassment or bullying, but it would be naïve to think that it does not occur occasionally. Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and would usually attract a serious consequence. Younger boarders are advised that harassment is not just a 'top down' phenomenon– younger boarders should not assume that they can harass older boarders.

## **Bullying and the Code of Silence:**

There is a mistaken view, fortunately it is fading with time, that boarders must not speak up about bullying. If your child tells you that they are being harassed or bullied, then it may be true. It is important that you raise the matter with us– despite what your child might advise.





## COMMUNICATION

Boarders are given information and instructions in a variety of ways:

- Announcements at meal times
- At residence meetings
- At occasional full residential community meetings
- Notices placed on residences' notice boards.

Information will come to parents from a variety of sources:

- Facebook notices and messages
- Letters and emails from various members of the College teaching, boarding and administration staff

Each boarder will have a College report at the end of each term with a comment from residential staff included on the report, reflecting your child's progress in the residential community. New students who commence during the school year, or students of concern, may generate an interim report when required. In addition, regular academic reviews are prepared, to monitor the progress of all boarders.

Each boarding student is appointed a mentor who is a member of the boarding staff. The role of a mentor is to be an informal link between the student, family and day school. This mentor will call you as parents throughout the year to check on your son or daughter and may make contact with you at the beginning of each term. This is a way for you to ensure that you can speak directly to a member of our boarding team and for your son or daughter to build a long-term relationship with a member of our staff. Where possible, these mentors may also fly into communities and escort students to and from the College when returning home for holidays.

All parents are welcome to contact their child's teachers at any time, and this applies especially to parents of boarders. If you are unable to attend a Parent/Teacher day, there may be another occasion when you are in Cairns and you may be able to meet with some of your child's teachers then. If you contact your child's mentor or the Head of Boarding, then they will be happy to advise what might be possible at any given time.

## TELEPHONES

There are limited landlines in the residential community. Over time, other modern forms of communication have made such resources obsolete. The College prefers students to have access to a mobile telephone while at the College in order to maintain contact with their parents. However, the use of such phones is limited to reasonable conditions that do not impose on the rights of other residents and that do not impede boarders participating in the life of the boarding community and its associated rules.

Year 7 to Year 10 students must hand their mobile phones in to the boarding staff before bed at night and can collect them in the morning. Year 11 and 12 students are permitted to keep their phones overnight, but misusing the phone overnight will result in losing that right.

Members of staff may be contacted (see details later in this handbook) and are always happy to pass on any messages to students, including a request to phone home.

Telephones are useful tools, but have bad masters. Remember that any incident, remark or issue is likely to become misquoted, corrupted or distorted after it happens. Your child's interpretation of an event when on the telephone to home might sometimes be a little distorted (or very distorted). Stay calm and if you feel that you need to know more, contact boarding staff or the Head of Boarding.

Boarders are permitted to manager their own use of their personal communication devices including mobile phones. If a boarder is abusing the right of use expectation, the device may be confiscated for a period of time. The College promotes a responsible use of such technologies.





## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Internet Use on Campus

Wireless internet is available for boarders from 6.00am to 9.00pm, seven days per week. The internet is intentionally switched off from 9.00pm to 6.00am to discourage boarders from disrupting important regular sleep during those hours. Senior students wishing to study late should take this into consideration when planning their own work requirements.

### Facebook (and similar sites)

We recognise the need for families to communicate, and social networking sites such as Facebook are popular methods of doing this. For this reason, boarding students have access to Facebook at the following times:

- Mon-Fri, 6.00am—8.00pm and 3.30pm—9.00pm
- Sat-Sun, 6.00am—9.00pm

### YouTube (and similar sites)

YouTube, as with other developments in technology, can have beneficial and detrimental effects on young people and their learning. For this reason, we have made these sites available during certain hours only, so as to provide educational access but limit social/entertainment access, in order that excessive time is not spent on these sites.

## LEAVE

It is important for boarders to be given the opportunity to interact with the wider community. Going on leave with friends or family other than their own is often a rewarding experience for students and it is important for boarders to develop relationships with people within the local community.

Boarders apply for leave directly to the Head of Boarding. Parents are required to consent to leave which the Head of Boarding considers to be beyond the simple example of 'Town Leave'. Telephone is the best method of communication; alternatively, email can be made with the Head of Boarding to authorise leave. Students will also complete a form to indicate their intention to go on leave.

It is always best for parents to make contact with host families and to discuss the arrangements for leave. While your child may find this rather intrusive, it is important that you are comfortable with the arrangements in place and it provides you with an adult emergency contact should you need to reach your child while they are in the care of the host.



Parents are free to visit their children at any time, provided it does not clash with a school function. Likewise, they are welcome to take their children out on any day or overnight or for weekend leave. Courtesy and good management suggest that the residential staff should be informed of this beforehand. A call or email to the Head of Boarding is appreciated. Parents should be aware of bedtimes for students, and late visits should be avoided. Movement after hours in residences is unsettling.

Parents and boarders must be aware that permission to leave the College with anyone other than the student's parents is something which the Executive Principal reserves an absolute right to approve or decline. The Executive Principal is responsible by law for student welfare. Whilst we do not anticipate any difficulty with this, there may arise a situation whereby the Head of Boarding declines permission for a boarder to leave the College with someone other than his or her parents, despite permission from the boarder's parents. Often, the College is in a good position to determine the appropriateness of leave, particularly when local.

The Head of Boarding is responsible for the student unless they are specifically with their parents or when parents have assigned their responsibility to other parents or family members and will always require complete details of where the boarder is, how they are getting there and getting back, and what activities the boarder may be involved in (or exposed to) whilst absent from College. (Please see the section on Motor Vehicles).

There are no set rules about how much leave a boarder may have. There are variables which alter circumstances in different cases, and the discretion of the Head of Boarding is the deciding factor.

With leave, as with everything else, we need to trust boarders, and they need to maintain that trust.



## SIGNING IN & OUT

It is important for us to know where a boarder is when they are in our care. In the boarding house there is a sign-in and sign-out procedure in place. This requires students to indicate when they are leaving, where they are going and when they intend to return. It is important that they first make an approach to a staff member to ensure they are allowed to leave the College grounds and to ensure that the adult is comfortable with their arrangements.

Older boarders are treated differently— they may be granted longer periods of leave. However, as a matter of courtesy, they still need to ask permission before signing out.

It is important for parents and boarders to know that the College holds a duty of care for students when they are not in the care of their parents.

## BOARDERS' TRAVEL

Permission for early departures from College at term breaks, or during term, must be obtained from the Head of Boarding. The College has a full program each term, and it is essential that students and families do not make unilateral decisions about absences without going through the correct channels.

Parents are advised that the College cannot move or relocate examinations for students to depart early for holidays. In exceptional cases, students can apply through the School Assessment Policy for consideration, provided adequate documentation is provided. An application form is available on the school website.

Please refer to the School Assessment Schedule when planning travel arrangements.

All Abstudy travel is arranged by the College. The College is required to submit these details in Week 3 of each term. The rules of Abstudy are that they will fly boarders to and from their registered address, that is, the address that is given to Centrelink. Please ensure your details with Centrelink are up to date.





## MEDICAL & DENTAL

The College has a productive relationship with the Doctors on Demand, the local medical practitioners and with our own medical facility, Ngak Min Health. Students are afforded a high level of health care while a boarder at the College.

Students who feel unwell in the morning should notify their supervisor, who will make a referral to our onsite medical service, who in turn will make an assessment of the boarder.

After an assessment has occurred an appropriate response will be made. This may include:

- The boarder may spend a day, or part of the day, resting in sick bay if that is what is indicated.
- An appointment may be made for the student to see a doctor.
- If the student has a condition which will require several days of bed rest, or which might prove contagious or infectious in a community living situation, then arrangements will generally be made for the boarder to be isolated from the other boarding students
- Parents will be notified of their child's condition.

If a boarder is unwell at any other time (that is, at night) then he or she should approach their supervisor in the first instance. The supervisor will then take an appropriate response.

Boarders are generally not permitted to keep medication in their possession in their rooms. However, there are instances where this does not pose a problem and, with the knowledge and consent of the Head of Boarding, this may be allowed. Boarders who take regular medication will be required to keep the medication in the boarding office.

Parents should beware of diagnosing over the telephone. If your child has a toothache or some other problem, do not advise them to take something for it. Refer your child to their supervisor or the Head of Boarding. If you have concerns about whether your child is ill, then contact the residential staff on the boarding house telephone or the Head of Boarding. Children have been known to exaggerate or understate situations over the telephone for all sorts of reasons.

There will be times when a student is required to attend a medical appointment. The College will arrange transport to medical appointments.

Boarders' medical forms must be updated annually and parents are requested to expedite their return to the school at the start of the year.





## BOARDERS' ROOMS

All boarders are expected to keep their rooms neat and tidy at all times. Students belongings/personal items need to fit into the available space. This means, for example, that students may need to consider carefully what they bring to College.

We encourage students to decorate their area with appropriate posters as allowed in each individual residence. Circumstances differ according to the surfaces available. There are no specific rules about the number and type of posters, but decoration must be in good taste and if the Head of Boarding or members of the staff believe that posters are unsuitable, then boarders will be asked to remove them. Similarly, items of clothing such as t-shirts should not have offensive wording or graphics.

Blu-tack is to be used to stick posters onto walls. Boarders are not to use sticky tape, pins or nails of any kind.

It is important that everybody is prepared to respect the privacy of each boarder's room. It is important that everyone has a space that they can call his or her own. However, there is also the matter of security. If a boarder goes into another person's room, boarders leave themselves vulnerable to accusations of theft, should something go missing.

It is important that boarders are clear about the inappropriateness of entering the room of somebody from the other sex. At no point is it ever acceptable for a student to enter the room of another person from the opposite sex. This is important in maintaining the integrity of the boarding house and to ensure there is no opportunity for someone to rightfully or wrongfully conclude misconduct against another student. A breach of this expectation is serious, and a student will find their position in the residential community at risk.

Any member of the boarding community (student or staff) who is entitled to, and wishes to, enter another person's room, is expected to knock and wait for an invited response before entering. A further knock may be required. If there is no response, a student should not attempt to enter the room and should re-visit at a later time. A staff member requiring to enter a room (i.e. to wake up someone or for some other reason) will only do so after first knocking. Privacy is to be respected at all times, as is appropriate. Please note that, on occasion, a room might be shown to prospective new boarding families during school hours without notice.



## CLOTHING

School uniform is obviously worn at school, at school functions, and occasionally at non-school functions. After school, boarders are expected to change into casual clothing. Footwear must be worn in the dining room and outdoors. In addition to the College uniform, boarders need normal casual clothing for wearing around the College after school, and when trips are made outside the College. It is important to have a set of smart-casual clothes for semi-formal occasions. This would include a collared shirt with good pants for boys and an appropriate length dress for girls.

Students will be provided with linen— that is, sheets, pillowslips, blankets or doonas. Boarders should bring their own pillow. Common sense will dictate what is required— however, if in doubt, check with boarding staff or the Head of Boarding.

With a co-educational boarding environment, it is important that both boys and girls dress modestly when in common areas or in view of others. This is as much about the respect of oneself as it is about maintaining community standards of living. Again, it would be unrealistic to define a set dress policy; however, boarders will be directed by boarding staff, and in particular the Head of Boarding, about what the accepted level of dress will be.

## POCKET MONEY

Students are encouraged to use an ATM system for managing their money. Parents should beware of giving their children, especially younger children, too much disposable cash. If you are in doubt about anything relating to money for your child, please contact residential staff.

Students are actively discouraged from borrowing money from each other. If a student has difficulty with money for something (especially an excursion), then he or she should see the boarding staff.

## TELEVISION

We provide television and DVD facilities in common rooms. For weekend use there is a data projector and screen available for movie or games nights.

## COMPUTERS

The College provides several suites of computers for student use. Boarding students may have their own computer; however, the College accepts no responsibility for the security of such items and boarders will need their own insurance. The College reserves the right to confiscate computers when they are used inappropriately and to request a boarder to limit their use of the computer. Boarders are able to have their computers configured for access to the College network, giving them access to the internet and College files. This is arranged through the IT staff. (See also 'Communication').

Boarders and parents must be aware that the Head of Boarding reserves the right to search computers when reasonable grounds have been established in connection to inappropriate material or illegal activity with a computer. Boarders must comply with the College Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy for personal devices. Temporary confiscation may be the result if the items are used inappropriately.

## MUSIC

Large sound systems that have the potential to interfere with the peace and quiet of other students are strongly discouraged. If a system generates too much noise and/or is used inappropriately, it will be removed from the residence by the Head of Boarding.





# SAFETY IN SPORTING ACTIVITIES

As with all activities, the safety of boarders is paramount to how activities are planned and implemented. It is impossible and unrealistic to create a complete guide as to how each activity will be conducted in this booklet, but there are several overarching practices used that will provide a guide to how the staff in the boarding house determine the safety or otherwise of an activity.

The first is the use of common sense. An activity that looks or feels dangerous or displays dangerous risks will be evaluated using the industry-approved risk management process. This is a comprehensive matrix that outlines the associated risk of an activity and interventions that may be offered to lower the potential risk and harm to boarders. If acceptable, the activity will be permitted to take place.

Preparing boarders for the activity is important. Where possible, boarders will be advised of the activity and any necessary briefings will take place to ensure boarders are familiar and comfortable with the arrangements. As with any activity, the appropriate safety equipment will be used to limit the possibility of harm to a boarder. Wherever possible, boarders will be made aware before the activity of any specialised safety equipment needed in order to participate in the activity.

Finally, boarders will be supervised by competent and/or trained professionals in the activity being proposed. The College has a range of staff with experience and expertise, and will contract the services of suitably qualified staff for those activities requiring a technical knowledge or qualification to undertake the activity.

Weekend activities are an important component of our program and our boarders are often involved in activities such as swimming, riding, walking and paddling. All of these activities have a comprehensive risk management form completed and boarders are advised of specific requirements and practices beforehand.

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## BICYCLES, ROLLER BLADES, SCOOTERS & SKATEBOARDS

Boarders may bring a bicycle, rollerblades, scooter, or a skateboard to College. However, there are some non-negotiable ground rules.

- The College takes no responsibility for bikes or other equipment. There is a bike room/storage room that can be used by boarders, but it is not secure and there is no insurance cover provided by the College. Individual locks/chains are therefore recommended.
- Boarders must wear a helmet whenever they use such equipment.
- They must not ride the equipment in a reckless or dangerous fashion. There are local rules for use around the College– they need to get to know them quickly.
- Boarders need specific permission to take any wheeled equipment off the property.

Boarders should understand that any breach of these rules will see the bike or other equipment impounded and sent home at the first opportunity.

Skateboards, scooters, bikes and roller blades must never be used inside a building or adjacent to any building– this especially applies to verandas.





## MOTOR VEHICLES

No boarding student is permitted to have the use of a car or motorbike during term time without the express permission of the Executive Principal. This permission will not be granted without the knowledge of the student's parents.

Also, no boarding student is permitted to be a passenger in a motor vehicle or on a motorbike, driven by a student or any other person on a restricted (L, P1 or P2) licence without the express knowledge of the Head of Boarding. This permission will only be granted with the knowledge of the parents involved. A breach of this rule will result in leave being revoked for a period of time.

Boarders who wish to travel with a provisional licence holder will require the consent of the Head of Boarding and their parents.

## DRIVING LICENCES

Boarding staff will assist students, within reason, to attend the regulating authority in Cairns and sit for the various tests (often more than once). However, no boarder may take time off from school in order to attend driving lessons. This is a College rule. These matters should be attended to after or before school, or at home during the holidays.

## DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Your child is responsible for his or her own room. Your child is also responsible for his or her actions. We can naturally expect a certain amount of wear and tear, but your child will be required to pay for damage that could have been reasonably anticipated and prevented; this includes damage caused by 'horseplay'. It is most important that damage be reported as soon as it occurs or is noticed.

Damage may be as trivial as a blown light bulb, a missing screw or a loose door handle; or it may be more serious, such as a broken window. Whatever the case, it must be reported immediately by writing out the details on an incident form which is kept by your child's supervisors. If your child breaks something substantial, then it is a good idea to present themselves to boarding staff and explain the matter to her or him in person (before they hear about it elsewhere).



## MEALS

Boarders are provided with a vast variety of meals over the course of the menu cycle and while every attempt is made to ensure the meals reflect the taste and wants of the boarders, it would be impossible to cater for the individual tastes of every boarder. With this in mind, each meal is nutritionally balanced and students are given a choice in how much they wish to eat.

Boarders who have special dietary requirements will need to provide information to the Head of Boarding at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that appropriate meals can be arranged with the kitchen staff.

Just like home, snacks may be supplemented by the boarder if they wish, but unnecessarily high portions should be avoided in order to maintain a healthy appetite and to ensure a balanced and nutritional approach to meals.

## CHORES

Students are required to carry out daily duties and are placed on a roster compiled by the boarding staff. Duties may include: cleaning, washing and drying of dishes, table and kitchen benches wiped down; and bins emptied and vacuuming of floor. In the evening before the boarders go to bed the kitchen must be thoroughly tidied.

## LAUNDRY

The College provides a well-equipped laundry in each boarding house. School uniforms and bedding are washed by our boarding staff on specific days each week. Your child's clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name.

Each boarder will manage his or her laundry differently. The overarching policy is that the boarder should use the laundry to wash the bulk of their laundry on a regular basis. At times the boarding supervisors may assist a boarder becoming more organised in their laundry habits, even completing loads if necessary. Learning these skills is part of the journey to becoming an independent young person.

## HOMEWORK

Students are required to study during the week. The boarding house provides a quiet period for students to work on their studies. Boarding staff supervise this time with the students in one of the classrooms in the school.





# FINALLY, WHAT TO DO IF...

This section is intended to give parents a ready guide as to how to handle difficulties that may arise when parenting at a distance with a child in the residential community. The best approach is one where issues or concerns are dealt with at the lowest possible level. This is not to give the impression that the concern is not a valid one; rather, it allows the most appropriate person to respond to the matter.

## **1. Your daughter or son is suffering badly from homesickness.**

- Phone residential staff involved in the care of your child. If you are really concerned, call the Head of Boarding.
- Be loving, understanding and supportive, but also firm in keeping your contact with your child at a limited level. Remember that their difficulty is in making a break from you and home, and the difficulty cannot be resolved by holding on to the same links as before. Do not allow yourself to be emotionally blackmailed: homesickness is something your daughter or son needs to adjust to with the support of boarding staff.

## **2. You are concerned about academic matters such as poor results, letters from teachers, or your child is finding the work difficult.**

- Phone the individual teacher concerned. There is no best time— schedules vary. However, the Head of Boarding can arrange for the teacher to phone if you wish. Or, the College can provide you with the relevant teacher's email address.
- Contact your child's teacher for teacher-related matters.
- Phone the Head of Campus if you have additional concerns.
- Be supportive of your child as long as they are trying hard. Let your son or daughter know the level of effort you expect from them.
- Consider that the difficulty with schoolwork may be a symptom of something else. Discuss the matter with residential staff and/or the Assistant Head of Boarding.

## **3. Your child tells you stories of things at College that you do not like or do not understand.**

- Contact the residential staff who deal with your child on a regular basis. They are often in the best position to understand the student and to help communicate what the issues are that they may be facing.

- Phone the Head of Boarding. Whether the story is true or not, we want to know about it, and you need to be reassured that things are satisfactory or that action has been taken.

## **4. You are coming to Cairns unexpectedly and you wish to take your child out for a meal or overnight.**

- Ask your child to take it up with the boarding staff member in their boarding house— he or she will readily give permission. You can phone yourself, but it is better training for your child to manage these things for himself or herself.

## **5. Your child wants permission to go out with someone about whom you are not sure.**

- Phone and speak with the Head of Boarding— he or she is often in a good position to know a little about the hosts and can also provide an insight into the reasons why your son/daughter wants to go on leave. He or she can make inquiries about the nature of the proposed enterprise and can advise you accordingly.

## **6. There is a death, a serious illness, or a crisis in the family.**

- Phone the Head of Boarding. It is important that somebody from the College communicates the issue with relevant staff so that we can support your child. There are too many risks in the student accidentally finding out through mobile messaging and social network sites.
- If you wish to tell your child over the phone, then the child should be with an adult in a private environment.
- The same goes for the death of a family pet.



## FINALLY, WHAT TO DO IF... (continued)

If you phone a member of the boarding staff on their mobile phone, please be aware of the level of distraction they may be experiencing. They may be driving in the car (and accordingly will not answer immediately); speaking with someone who is demanding a lot of attention; in the middle of supervising dinner; or some other absorbing activity. If you want a long conversation, then ask them to phone you back. If you have a simple question or need a piece of information, please keep it simple. Alternatively, if you have access, the use of email is effective and efficient.

All mobile phones are turned off during dinner times and whilst in class. They may also be turned off when a private conversation is being undertaken with a student, staff member or parent. Please be patient and leave a message. It will be returned directly.

The main College switchboard is at its busiest between 8.00am and 9.30am. If it can wait, then please call the College after that time. This switchboard only operates Monday to Friday during business hours, and therefore the boarding house phone should be used outside of business hours. However, if the situation is not of that nature, it would be appreciated if calls could be made between the hours of 7.30am and 9.30pm, seven days per week.

Finally, it is hoped that this information has been of assistance to you and your family. Should you have any queries that are not covered in this Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us at the College.

## TO PHONE BOARDING STUDENTS...

### STEP 1

**CALL  
(07) 4043 3777**

### STEP 2

You will hear a voice  
with options with options

**PRESS 3 FOR  
BOARDING**

### STEP 3

You will have the option to  
talk to boys or girls boarding

**PRESS 1 FOR BOYS  
PRESS 2 FOR GIRLS**

## COLLEGE CONTACTS

### **Mr Michael Finau**

#### **Head of Residential Life (Boys)**

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### **Mr Trent Gorrie**

#### **Deputy Head of Campus**

#### **(Boarding Transition and Student Programs)**

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### **Ms Hannah Rosalski**

#### **Head of Girls' Boarding**

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### **Main Reception**

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Fax: (07) 4027 9663

Email: admin@djarragun.qld.edu.au



DJARRAGUN  
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CAPE YORK  
GIRL ACADEMY

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