

## Homesickness

Homesickness is perfectly normal for students living in completely new surroundings in a routine and supervised environment. This is a natural response due to the loss of security and emotional support that home life represents for most young people. Parents also often experience a degree of emotional upset that can result from the absence of their child.

In the early stages of adjustment keeping busy at study or sport or any of the activities that are available to students can be helpful and students will be encouraged to become involved. Talking with boarding staff and/or other students about their feelings often helps students.

In the early stages of settling in parents are encouraged to limit contact with their daughter. Surprisingly, contact with home can make matters more difficult for some. They need to be reassured of parental love and support but excessive contact with home can be counter-productive.

We therefore encourage the following:

- Expect that homesickness is a passing phase of your daughter's adjustment to boarding life
- Limit contact to what will be the normal pattern of contact during your daughter's stay in boarding
- Be supportive and listen when contact is made but direct your daughter to increased participation in school activities
- Realise that you will hear of or experience, the worst of your daughter's homesickness. Boarders will tend to email or phone when they are feeling at their lowest. They may also tend to exaggerate the features of the Boarding School that they don't like in the hope that they can come home
- Recurrence of the problem is quite common after the first few weeks or term holidays. However, it is usually overcome very quickly on returning to school. We encourage you to let your daughter experience the normal activities of the boarding house, particularly during weekends, and therefore suggest that you do not prolong the break by taking them out too often during 'settling in' times
- Please encourage your daughter to see her Boarding Head of House, the Registered Nurse in the Health Centre, the School Chaplain or Counsellor if the problem seems to be reaching intolerable levels. Often discussing the problem with someone not directly involved is of great assistance. Do not hesitate to make contact with your daughter's Boarding Head of House if you have any concerns.

## Settling In

New boarders may find organisation of personal belongings to be a challenge. Girls need to be able to keep their wardrobe and under-bed drawers in a tidy condition. Knowing how to fold clothes and store belongings in an organised format is a helpful skill. It is also beneficial for girls to be efficient at bed-making and personal laundry.

## **Communication with your daughter**

It is important that you keep the lines of communication open not only with your daughter but also with the staff of the Boarding School. In the days when letter writing was the main means of communication students had time to reflect on matters before contacting parents. Boarding staff are concerned that mobile phones may enable students to eliminate Boarding Heads of House from important matters relating to their welfare. Spontaneous emotional reactions are often natural and boarding staff would like to be supportive of situations like this. Therefore we encourage parents/guardians to maintain regular contact with staff. Although it may be felt that some information is too personal and sensitive to share, it must be remembered that when staff members are unaware of a situation they may not be able to take the action needed to best help the student through a difficult time.

Please make sure that you inform the Boarding Head of House about significant events or issues in your daughter's life. Email is a swift and effective method of communication in most instances.

## **Communication between Day and Boarding Schools**

The Boarding Heads of Houses and Head of Boarding strive to ensure effective communication between the Day and Boarding Schools. At times it is important for the Day School staff to be informed about events, actions and issues in the Boarding School. The passing on of information of this nature will be at the discretion of the senior Boarding Staff.