

An Induction to Boarding for International Schools

Module One – The Boarding Framework

Welcome to your Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) EduCare training.

This programme comprises **four modules** and **four questionnaires**. Once you have read each module, we recommend you move on to the corresponding questionnaire.

You will need to **read all the modules and successfully pass each questionnaire** in order to complete the programme.

The programme will underline and reinforce the crucial underpinning knowledge and skills that are so necessary to any role in boarding schools and the associated pastoral duties. It is aimed at staff working in international boarding schools.

The programme has been designed to complement your school's own induction training. It is not designed to replace or act as a substitute for the essential, school specific, induction programme which schools should include when new staff join or change roles. Further advice on continuing professional development is contained in the '**Resources**' tab when you exit the programme.

The Boarding Framework

In this module we will cover:

- the framework
- best practice guidance on the boarding environment
- key aspects of boarders' safety
- safeguarding and child protection and how they differ
- school policies, procedures and protocols and how they work together to support you in your boarding role.

Working in a boarding school brings many challenges as well as rewards. Being part of the team that provides care and support for children and young people for 24 hours a day, up to seven days a week requires staff to have specific knowledge and a particular set of skills that will enable them to be fully effective.

When the boarding team and individual staff get it right, children flourish. Of course, challenges will arise and it's at these times that boarding staff need to be able to rely on one another and work safely and effectively, even during periods of great stress.

"A child that is secure emotionally, mentally and physically is likely to find his or her years at school both rewarding and challenging."

Every Child Matters, UK Government, 2004

Good boarding schools now have their own 'mission statements' which set out their intentions with regard to boarding and the outcomes for all boarders. Increasingly these are more than just statements about academic excellence or achievement.

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Sample boarding statements:

“Our Boarding School will help our students develop the skills, learning habits, independence and awareness that will enable them to fulfil their potential.”

“Boarding will support the development of a sense of responsibility, a respect for others and a strength of character.”

“We will strive for excellence in all things, and to inspire and challenge our students to reach beyond themselves so they leave proud of their achievements.”

Critically boarding schools now talk about the ‘added value’ of the boarding experience; it is about so much more than academic excellence or achievement. Boarding helps develop the whole child.

Reflective Task: Find your school’s Mission Statement. What does it say about the purpose of boarding and the inherent value of the boarding experience to students? Does this statement fully reflect what your boarding can achieve?

A common framework

For each country there is a varying degree of legislative regulation and government oversight of the boarding school environment, its staff and pupils. In some cases this will be detailed and obvious, whereas other countries have yet to introduce such scrutiny. In this case, it is up to the school itself to set and maintain its own standards.

However, it is critical for each boarding school that the senior leadership or management team set their strategic and operational planning within this framework.

A common theme, whatever the external framework, is the requirement to protect children and to promote their wellbeing through the provision of services and support.

Best practice demands that schools have a duty to:

- safeguard all children, and
- promote the wellbeing of children.

Such a dual duty of care can be a particular challenge since schools, in needing to ensure the protection of children, may well pay less attention to promoting their wellbeing.

For example, schools may decide not to offer contact sports or outdoor activities as they may see the risks associated with them as outweighing the benefits.

Another example would be a school which bans access to the internet in order to protect children, but consequently it will fail to adequately prepare them for the risks in the virtual world. Getting this balance right is often the difference between an average school and a great one.

The **safeguarding** arrangements within a school include:

- safe and effective staff recruitment systems
- effective policies, procedures and protocols to keep students safe.
- good record keeping and information sharing
- competent staff working together
- emergency or crisis management
- trust and openness with students, staff and parents.

Promoting the **wellbeing** of students will involve a wide range of activities, services, and staff within a school, including:

- providing personal, social, health and emotional support for all students
- offering a wide and varied sporting and physical activities programme
- being a 'healthy school' by linking the relevant aspects of education curriculum, catering and physical education together
- providing support for ill and vulnerable students through medical services or counselling.

Reflection: Can you identify an aspect of school life where the need to fully safeguard the students may mean that you are unable to fully promote their wellbeing?

Keeping children safe

A useful definition of 'safeguarding children' would be:

'The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health or development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.'

UK Government, 2004

Reflection: It is useful to review your school's safeguarding policy or boarders' safety statement so that you can reflect on this as you work through this module.

The framework which ensures the safeguarding of students in our schools and colleges is a complex one but it will include:

- identifying the safeguarding duties of each and every adult working in the school
- putting in place a series of policies, procedures and protocols which underpin the responsible behaviour of both staff and students
- an awareness of risk and the need to minimise such risks
- an acceptance that we can best achieve a safe environment by working together.

Safeguarding duties extend to more than protecting children from abuse or neglect.

They include:

- pupil health and safety
- prevention of bullying
- arrangements for meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- school security, transport, safe use of contractors
- drugs/substance abuse
- child protection; procedures, training and support
- attendance and welfare, inclusion, learning support
- safer recruiting and selection
- robust recording and information sharing protocols and systems.

Reflection: You may like to consider which other aspects of your school and boarding role might constitute a safeguarding duty. What is your key role or task in safeguarding the students? Are you fully trained to carry out this role or do you need further knowledge or skills?

The role of school and college staff

Although keeping children safe is the responsibility of all adults working in schools, best practice suggests that every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead, ie a senior member of staff who will provide support to other staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with external services such as the police, health services, or children's social care.

All staff including head teachers/principals, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

What school and college staff need to know?

All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction.

This includes:

- the school's or college's child protection policy
- the school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a Code of Conduct)
- the designated safeguarding lead.

All staff should also receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

What school and college staff should look out for?

All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. EduCare produce a suitable programme called 'Child Protection in Education' as well as a refresher and follow on programmes, available at www.educare.co.uk

Where safeguarding is concerned, staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the interests of the child.

Schools will have a range of policies, procedures and protocols in place to ensure that safeguarding is effective and responsive to need.

Policies, procedures & protocols

All schools have a wide range of policies, procedures and protocols which underpin the management of boarding provision and provide the essential safeguarding/child protection framework to ensure that all boarders are kept safe at all times whether in or out of school. Many of these will be designed for the whole school and not just focused on boarding matters; others will be specifically developed for the boarding environment, for boarders and boarding staff.

School policies

These will cover aspects such as:

- health and Safety
- staff recruitment and training
- risk assessments for activities, trips and such like
- student behaviour including bullying/cyberbullying, substance abuse and booking in/out of school/boarding
- use of technologies such as the internet, social media, mobile devices.

School procedures

Schools will also have a series of procedures designed to safeguard boarders including:

- fire drills and evacuation including role of duty/resident staff
- intruders – lockdown procedures
- missing students action plan
- staff and Student induction
- allowing boarders to make comments or their views known – Pupil Voice

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School protocols

And finally, schools will have in place **protocols** to ensure the smooth running of the boarding provision/houses, including:

- arrangements for students to access specialist school support or external agencies
- staff supervision around school, in boarding and on trips
- record keeping and information sharing within the school and with external agencies
- medical and dental appointments with local providers
- access to local amenities, eg sports facilities.

Reflection: A number of these policies, procedures and protocols are essential to the safe and effective running of a boarding house. Are you fully aware of the key ones and your role relating to them?

Promoting the wellbeing of learners

Schools are beginning to place a great deal of emphasis on learner wellbeing following wide ranging research that has shown how important this concept is in terms of successful child/adolescent growth and development.

One approach is to consider the key dimensions of wellbeing, which are:

- emotional (including fears, anxiety and mood)
- behavioural (including attention problems, eg a child that finds it hard to sit still, activity problems, eg forgets things, makes careless mistakes, troublesome behaviour, eg plays truant, lies, steals things, awkward behaviour, eg blames others for mistakes, is easily annoyed)
- social (including victimisation, ie being bullied and having positive friendships)
- school (including enjoyment, ie likes school and is engaged and stimulated by school).

DFE (2012)

A recent study found that children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social, and school wellbeing, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school, both concurrently and in later years.

In particular:

- Children with better emotional wellbeing make more progress in primary school and are more engaged in secondary school.
- Children with better attention skills experience greater progress across the key stages of schooling. Those who are engaged in less troublesome behaviour also make more progress and are more engaged in secondary school.
- Children who are bullied are less engaged in primary school, whereas those with positive friendships are more engaged in secondary school.
- As children move through the school system, emotional and behavioural wellbeing become more important in explaining school engagement, while demographic and other characteristics become less important.
- Relationships between emotional, behavioural, social, and school wellbeing and later educational outcomes are generally similar for children and adolescents, regardless of their gender and parents' educational level.

Gutman & Vorhaus (2012)

There are a number of useful models which can help boarding staff plan and manage their pastoral care and boarding provision. This model, used by the Scottish Government, sets out eight wellbeing indicators. This is particularly useful for boarding staff as it shows how all children should be:



<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/well-being>

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In common with other models of wellbeing, this one advocates that the adults working with children do need to pay equal attention to all of these areas in order that children grow/develop and make best progress.

In particular recent “*studies also show that adolescents who are **mindful**, either through their character or through learning, tend to experience greater wellbeing, and that being more mindful tends to accompany more positive emotion, greater popularity and having more friends, and less negative emotion and anxiety.*”

Weare (2012)

Reflection: How does your school/college approach the wellbeing of the students? What is your role in supporting or promoting that wellbeing?

In summary

In this module we have looked at the framework which sets out the key features of any boarding school environment, and we have considered safeguarding and the linked aspect of student wellbeing.

The consequence for boarding staff is that there is a great imperative to focus on the wider aspects of school life than just the academic progress of students. In essence good boarding provision is one which focuses on the **Whole Child**.

Further Learning

Further guidance on the duties and responsibilities of staff in relation to their **Duty of Care**, that is, the safeguarding and wellbeing of students, can be found in the:

- school staff handbook
- boarding handbook
- key school policy documents.

You can find examples of all of these on the BSA website at www.boarding.org.uk

In the next module we will cover the boarders' needs and outcomes and how they link together.

You are now ready to complete the corresponding questionnaire. Click '**Questionnaire 1**' to begin the questions.