



BOARDING NEWS

2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Our Boarding enrolments continue to remain strong in both full time and weekly boarding, with a mix of local, regional, interstate and overseas boarding students finding a community and home at Saints.

We are very fortunate to be able to offer an inclusive, co-educational Boarding environment that caters for the needs of our boarders and their schooling. I believe our strong Boarding numbers are attributed to:

- exceptional pastoral care provided by our Boarding staff;
- improved academic outcomes for boarders as a direct result of the structured study program and tutor support system; and
- the regulation of electronic devices.

We are rightly proud of our Boarding community, and I hope that your association with Boarding in 2026 will be a most enriching and satisfying one for you and your family. We especially welcome all of our new families to the Saints community and sincerely hope that you will find the years ahead very positive and rewarding.

To ensure a seamless and smooth year, please take careful note of the 2026 Term Dates included with this newsletter. Your support in adhering to these times will ensure a settled and productive environment for your son or daughter.

The College aims to be very consistent with expectations and standards surrounding the arrival and departure of boarders. To assist with this, the 2026 Boarding calendar fridge magnet is included with this newsletter for all Boarding families. Please display this somewhere so it can be easily referred to throughout the year.

The Boarding staff and I look forward to working with your family throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to make contact if you have any questions.

Best wishes for 2026.

MR BRETT TOOMBS
Director of Boarding



BOARDING ARRIVALS - TERM 1

Listed below are important dates for the first week of Term 1. To ensure a smooth transition into Boarding, families must email flight itineraries for returning boarders to sac.boarding@cns.catholic.edu.au so transport from the airport can be coordinated efficiently.

All boarders are expected back in residence on the day before their first school day. If there are exceptions to this, contact must be made with the relevant College Principal.

TUESDAY 27 JANUARY

- Welcome Meeting for all new parents and boarders 11:00am
- SAC & SMC all new boarders in residence unpacking 11:30am-1:00pm
- Lunch for new boarders in Tolle's 1:00pm
- REACH Boarding software Information session for new and returning families 3:30pm
- SMC new students Years 8-11 Orientation Program (1:00pm-3:00pm)
- SAC & SMC Years 8-12 returning boarders in residence 4:00pm-8:00pm

WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY

- SAC & SMC classes commence
- SAC Year 7 Parent Evening 5:30pm-6:30pm

2026 BOARDING HANDBOOK

I encourage families and students to carefully read the 2026 Boarding Handbook as it contains policies and procedures that make Boarding a safe and caring place. Please note the policy on extracurricular activities that are available in Boarding. In 2026, boarders will have the opportunity to participate in one external/community activity per term and a school-based activity. This will enable all boarders to combine their academic priorities with their sport and recreational activities.

BOARDING STAFF UPDATE



Boarding Heads of Residences pictured above from left:
Mr Ross McKeown, Head of Junior Boys Residence
Mr Patrick Connell, Head of Senior Boys Residence
Mrs Desiree Price, Head of Junior Girls Residence
Mrs Amanda Buschmann, Head of Senior Girls Residence

Our four Boarding residences will be led by our very capable Heads of Residences. Mrs Desiree Price and Mr Ross McKeown will once again lead the respective Junior Girls and Boys residences. In our Senior Residences, Mr Patrick Connell will continue to guide and coordinate the Senior Boys, and we welcome to the College, Mrs Amanda Buschmann who will lead the Senior Girls Residence.

In 2026, we have three new GAP Staff who have recently completed their final year of school and are looking forward to joining the Saints Boarding community. Welcome to Ms Ashleigh Ferguson who joins us from our Marist school in Leeton NSW; Mr Kai Dewis, who attended Marist College Canberra for his schooling, and Mr Juandre De Beer who has travelled from South Africa to join us. Ashleigh, Kai and Juandre will join Ms Elizabeth Horn, who will return for her final six months at Saints.

An integral part of the Boarding program is the committed and dedicated staff that assist in the supervision of our students. We are very fortunate to have a very low turnover rate in staff, something that greatly benefits our students.

We are also committed to reaching our Strategic Plan goal of increased academic assistance within the homework program, and to do this we will continue to rely on teaching and non-teaching staff to assist in tutoring roles.

COLLEGE PHOTO DAY

FRIDAY 30 JANUARY 2026

NQ School Photography will be taking the Student ID and Homeroom photos at **St Augustine's College** on **Friday 30 January 2026**. Group photos of all Boarding students are taken prior to the girls departing for school.

Orders can be made online at www.nqsp.com.au using the shoot key **2UZ3FVHT**. Sibling photos can also be ordered online. **The St Monica's College Photo Day** will be held on **Monday 9 February 2026**.

NEW SOCIAL MEDIA LEGISLATION

From 10 December 2025, new Australian social media legislation came into effect that will directly impact students under 16 years of age. Under this law, major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, X (Twitter), Reddit and others will be required to prevent anyone under the age of 16 from holding an account. This means that boarders who are under 16 will no longer be able to access or use their existing accounts on these platforms.

This legislation has been introduced to reduce young people's exposure to harmful online content, age-inappropriate material, addictive platform features, and pressures linked to social media use. It aims to support the wellbeing of children by delaying access until they are more developmentally ready to engage in online social environments.

Students under 16 will still be able to view publicly available online content that does not require logging in, and they may continue to use messaging apps, gaming platforms and education-based tools that are not classified as social media.

Included with this newsletter, we have provided information to assist parents in understanding the new laws, the platforms affected, and practical steps you can take to support your child with these changes.

BOARDING SOCIAL MEDIA

A reminder that photos and Boarding news can be accessed through our Boarding Facebook page.

For new families who use Facebook, follow the link below to join our page:

[St Augustine's College Cairns Boarding Community](#)

COUNTRY DINNERS 2026

Boarding families are encouraged to come along to the Saints Country Dinner in their area during the year to meet staff and other parents. Proposed visits/dinners for 2026 are as follows:

Term 1	Groote Eylandt & Gove Visit Thursday 5 March - Saturday 7 March
	Tablelands Visit & Country Dinner Friday 20 March
Term 2	Weipa Visit & Country Dinner Thursday 28 May & Friday 29 May
Term 3	Katherine, Northern Territory Visit Thursday 16 July – Sunday 19 July
	Thursday Island Country Dinner Thursday 23 July – Friday 24 July
Term 4	Port Douglas & Mossman Country Dinner Friday 16 October

OUR BOARDING GP

Dr Katherine Holzhauser is a North Queensland local, and an owner and principal Specialist GP at Upward Life Family Practice. With a passion for wholistic health care, and education of medical students and GP Registrars, she has a special interest in excellence in generalist health care, mental health and complex chronic disease management.



Dr Kat makes herself available in the Health & Wellbeing Centre each Wednesday morning during Term time to provide the Saints Boarding community with access to GP care.

If students need to attend the GP clinic in person, it is conveniently located 1km from the school, with a team of 8 GPs, pathology and allied health onsite.

STUDENT MEDICAL HISTORY

At the start of the new school year, a parent slip will be forwarded to all Boarding families requesting updated medical history for all Boarding students. We ask families to use this platform to disclose medical information that will be collated by our College Nurse, Sr Sacha Donaldson.

Students with specialised health needs or complex medical conditions may also require a Health Action and/or Management Plan (eg. anaphylaxis, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes). Please ensure these documents are provided to the College to ensure accurate and appropriate management of any health conditions while in the care of Boarding. Any queries about providing this information should be directed to Sr Sacha Donaldson on 4052 9111 or sac.nurses@cns.catholic.edu.au

STUDENT MEDICATION

The College has a very consistent policy that ensures boarders who are on medication will be administered this through the Health and Wellbeing Centre (HWBC).

The College Nurse is responsible for the administration of medication in the morning, and the HWBC also opens at night for student medication.

The *Permission to Administer Medication* form can be found on the Parent Portal or by contacting the College Office. For your convenience, a copy has been included with this newsletter for all Boarding families. Parents need to ensure the form is completed and returned along with current medication when students return to Boarding in 2026. This form also includes consent for any Over the Counter (OTC) medications that may be required for your child whilst boarding. If these forms are not completed the nurse is unable to provide the required medications until authorisation is given.

Boarders are not permitted to keep medication in their residences and/or personally administer medication.

IMMUNISATION PAPERWORK

St Augustine's College participates in Queensland Health's School Based Immunisation Program for all students in Years 7 and 10.

The vaccination team will be visiting the College to give free vaccinations against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine (dTpa) to Year 7 students. Year 10 students will receive the Meningococcal B and ACWY vaccines.

Vaccination dates for boys are listed below:

Year 10 - Tuesday 24 February

Year 10 - Tuesday 12 May

Year 7 - Tuesday 13 October

An information sheet and vaccination consent card has been included with this newsletter for parents/carers of Year 10 boarders. Year 10 parents/carers must complete, sign and return to the College Office so that their son can be immunised.

Information for Year 7 boarders will be distributed at the end of Term 3. **Information regarding the immunisation program for girls is available from St Monica's College.**

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

There will be an opportunity for boarders to participate in an influenza immunisation program coordinated by the Health & Wellbeing Centre. Details will be sent to parents early in Term 2.

FREE/EXEAT WEEKENDS

TERM 1

Saturday 14 February & Sunday 15 February (Free)

Saturday 28 February - Monday 2 March (Exeat)

Saturday 21 March & Sunday 22 March (Free)

TERM 2

Saturday 2 May - Monday 4 May (Free)

Saturday 23 May - Monday 25 May (Exeat)

Saturday 13 June & Sunday 14 June (Free)

TERM 3

Saturday 1 August - Sunday 2 August (Free)

Friday 14 August - Sunday 16 August (Exeat)

Friday 4 September - Sunday 6 September (Free)

TERM 4

Saturday 17 October & Sunday 18 October (Free)

Saturday 31 October & Sunday 1 November (Exeat)

Saturday 14 November & Sunday 15 November (Free)

REACH BOARDING SYSTEM

The Boarding community uses REACH software for the daily running and organisation of Boarding. REACH provides students and families with the ability to request and approve leave, which is a very important function and process of Boarding life. When a student requires to leave the College, a leave request must be submitted through REACH, and parents and the Head of Residence/ Director of Boarding must approve before the student leaves the campus. **A REACH Information Session will be held at the College on Tuesday 27 January at 3:30pm for new and returning families.** Early in January, families will receive an email on how to access the REACH system including passwords and login details. To access the REACH system go to staugustines.reachboarding.com.au

ABSENCES FROM DAY SCHOOL

Requests for leave that require a student to be away from the College or Boarding for a full day or greater must be made in writing to the Principal prior to leave arrangements being made. **Request for Student Absence** forms are available from the Parent Portal or the relevant College Office. The Director of Boarding or the Heads of Residence cannot approve leave from the day school, and Boarding leave will only be considered once a **Request for Student Absence** form is submitted to the College Principal at the relevant college.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE

Parents are asked to adhere to the College term dates and wherever possible restrict holidays or other periods of leave to the gazetted holiday periods.

Boarding students are granted a 'travel day' on the final day of term that will allow boarders from remote locations to travel home and arrive for the start of the school holidays. Weekly boarders will not be granted early departures for Exeat weekends or the start of school holidays. Please refer to the Boarding Handbook for detailed information regarding this process.

WEEKEND RETURN TIME

On Free and Exeat weekends, students may return by 8:00pm or on the morning of school, on the understanding students are on time and ready for normal commencement. If students elect to return on the morning of school, the Head of Residence must be advised and details reflected in the REACH leave request. Late arrivals will see students forfeit this late return privilege. On all other weekends, students must be in residence for community dinner at 6:00pm.

Boarders' Chapel at 7:00pm on non-Free or Exeat weekends is a condition of enrolment and is non-negotiable. It is compulsory for all students to be in attendance for this celebration.

BOARDING TRANSPORT

The benefits of involvement in extra-curricular activities are well documented and for this reason, boarders' involvement is both encouraged and supported. However, while a driver is available each day to drive boarders to and from activities, transport will only be provided to venues within 15 minutes of the College.

If parents wish to arrange alternative transport with a coach, relative, family friend or team member, this will only be approved (via an *Extra-Curricular Activity Application*) on the provision that the increased travel time does not impact on a boarder's academic commitments (ie. study).

LUGGAGE/PERSONAL ITEMS

As boarders prepare to pack for the year ahead in Boarding, please follow the recommended packing guidelines outlined on pages 14 and 15 of the Boarding Handbook.

We find that some students arrive with excess belongings, which makes storage difficult and can create challenges when transporting items home during the holidays.

To help ensure a smooth and organised start to the year, our Boarding policy states each boarder brings one large suitcase and one medium-sized sports bag for their personal items. Keeping luggage to these limits helps us maintain tidy and manageable living spaces for all students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The first port of call for issues in Boarding is your son or daughter's Head of Residence. Their mobile numbers and email addresses are listed below:

JUNIOR BOYS RESIDENCE (Years 7, 8, 9 Boys)

Mr Ross McKeown
P: 0419 652 916
E: sac.juniorboys@cns.catholic.edu.au

SENIOR BOYS RESIDENCE (Years 10, 11, 12 Boys)

Mr Patrick Connell
P: 0401 323 998
E: sac.seniorboys@cns.catholic.edu.au

JUNIOR GIRLS RESIDENCE (Years 7, 8, 9 Girls)

Mrs Desiree Price
P: 0419 652 108
E: sac.juniorgirls@cns.catholic.edu.au

SENIOR GIRLS RESIDENCE (Years 10, 11, 12 Girls)

Mrs Amanda Buschmann
P: 0419 652 278
E: sac.seniorgirls@cns.catholic.edu.au

DIRECTOR OF BOARDING

Mr Brett Toombs
P: 0417 430 280
E: sac.boarding@cns.catholic.edu.au