



Department of  
Education

**NORTHAM**  
Residential College



# APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES



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For any assistance feel free to call staff on 9622 1383

# Things you may need to consider before deciding to board away from home.

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Please ensure you read each point – if you have any questions then please contact the College for additional information – **96221383**.

## 1. Why are you needing to board your child?

- First of all you will need to consider the reasons why you need to send your child to a Residential College versus your other options. Generally it is as basic as the need to enrol at a senior high school because there are no high schools in your home town, locality or close to where you live or you cannot easily get access to a school. There maybe other reasons, however the main reason is because you need access to affordable, safe student accommodation closer to home.
- The College priority is to select students who are geographically isolated and have no choice but to leave their home to further their education at a high school. Families who have other reasons are welcome and maybe considered, however they will have a lower priority based on the availability of places at the College.

## 2. Is your child prepared to board away from home?

- Not all students are ready, prepared or want to board away from home which is natural. If they are resisting and / or do not want to board, then you will need to work this through with your child and your family and see if this is the best thing to do.
- **A trial boarding experience** of a few days is offered by the College and may give the parent and the student a better understanding of what to expect for those students who are being more resistant. Generally students are resilient and overcome any initial worries or issues if any. Trail boarding is free of charge.
- Most students are aware of and are generally prepared to board away from home knowing that there are little to no other options available and in most instances, after time, take to boarding well. Many also look forward to the boarding experience and fit in well.
- Generally giving boarding a go and slowly working through any issues that may arise such as being homesick, adjusting to the boarding community lifestyle, living within the Residential College rules or just even attending a larger school, usually works.
- Students need to understand that they need to adapt to the boarding community, to abide by the rules and to respect the staff and other students at all times. If they cannot commit to this arrangement, then boarding at the College may not be for them.

## 3. What the College is and is not?

- The College is a secondary student accommodation provider that provides a safe and enjoyable place to live, whilst attending high school. It also provides support care and welfare for all its students with the additional support of the school and its parents or guardians. Students generally want to be here or at least understand the need to be here.

- The College is not a service to manage students who may have been “difficult to manage at home”, or are in need of “discipline” or who will display unresolvable challenging behaviour. The Residential College can cancel a student’s application to be at the College at any time if it is deemed that the student or even the parent / guardian are no longer supporting or abiding by the conditions of their application.

#### 4. As a boarding parent / guardian what is required of me?

- Parents and guardians or carers need to be supportive of their child and supportive of the College and its staff. Staff and the parents work together in attending to the health, wellbeing and education of their child. Even though we may be separated by hundreds of kilometres, parents / guardians work together in delivering the best outcomes for our students.
- Parents / guardians need to be contactable, either by phone and / or email. If making contact is difficult, then we need to have alternative people we can call on your behalf (family, friend, support worker etc.). If contact details change then we need to be informed. Staff need to call parents or guardians for numerous reasons (get your consent, an urgent issue arises, health concern, behavioural concern etc.) so it is important that you can be contacted if needed.
- Parents also need to be able to attend the college if requested (to pick up and drop off their child, the child needs to return home because they are ill, the child is suspended from the school or College etc.). **If this is not possible** then the parent / guardian needs to provide the College with a contact person closer to the College who can assist or ensure alternative arrangements are in place if these situations were to arise.

#### 5. Financial considerations.

Parents / Guardians need to be aware of their financial commitments when boarding their child. The AIC (Assistance for Isolated Children and BAHA portion) subsidy will not cover the entire annual boarding fee. So parents need to be aware that the remaining balance invoiced by the college will need to be paid upfront. Also if you do not qualify for any subsidies, then the full boarding fee will need to be paid over 3 instalments over the year.

Although not compulsory, students also benefit from having access to weekly pocket money and the ability to pay for excursions organised by the college. On some occasions parents will be asked to pay for an excursion or sport that the student has chosen to participate in.

## Partner school information and considerations.

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Please ensure you read and follow each point – if you have any questions then please contact the College for additional information – **96221383**.

### 1. Selecting a school partner

- The Residential College is a public school student accommodation provider, therefore we support and prioritise applications for Northam Senior High School. Our primary service is for rural and remote secondary students who need to board away from home to attend NSHS due to not being able to access a state regional school in their local town or locality.
- If the College has available surplus rooms, then the College can consider a placement from an approved private secondary school student. In Northam, St Joseph's School students are welcome to access available rooms. Places are limited on the basis that there is capacity to accommodate St Joseph's School students and that public school students will always have priority.

### 2. Northam Senior High School (NSHS)

- Enrolling at the school and applying for a place at the residential College is relatively easy. Priority will be given to families that need to board their child away from home due to being geographically isolated from another state secondary school. Students from the traditional Northam outlying catchment region (and not serviced by another government Residential College) have priority.
- Parents / guardians need to contact the school to ensure they are able to attend NSHS and then contact the College to see if they qualify for a position at the College and that rooms are available.
- School and boarding applications and fees are both separate arrangements, so parents / guardians need to apply to each separately.

### 3. St Joseph's School, Northam (SJS)

- The Education Department has a formal agreement with the Catholic Education Office to allow students from St Joseph's School to also board at Northam Residential College on the provision that there is capacity to do so and that public school students have priority.

- St Joseph’s School applicants can either enquire at the College first at the same time they are applying to enroll at the school or the school can make enquiries on behalf of a parent / guardian who is considering the boarding option.
- Priority would be given to any St Joseph’s School application (over another St Joseph’s Application) that came from a geographically isolated family and would benefit more from the need to board away from home. All other applicants would be considered accordingly and on available places.
- Although priority will be given to public students at all times, any St Joseph’s student who is approved to board at the College will be able to secure their position for the full time they are enrolled at St Joseph’s School.
- School and boarding applications and fees are both separate. Parents / guardians need to apply to each separately and attend to the schools and Colleges fees separately.

#### **4. School relationships**

- The College will support both schools equally as students will be “Residential College” students first for which all College policies, procedures and rules will apply. There will be no differentiation made between the two schools students. Practical and logistical aspects and some joint internal procedures may differ, however most of the day to day aspects of the Colleges functions will not change.
- Likewise the parent’s relationship will be with the Residential College for all boarding matters and separately with their school, however there will be regular parent, College and school collaboration, support and communication as agreed by each school.
- We will support each school, as any parent would, with school policy and procedures, academic support and with any other school needs in consultation with each school.
- The College will accommodate, to the best of our abilities, each schools calendar of events and school timetables in supporting our schools, parents and students.

# AIC /BAHA Applicants **3**

How to apply for a position at the Residential College and you intend to apply for Assistance for Isolated Children (& BAHA).

Please ensure you read and follow each step – if you have any questions then please contact the College for assistance – **9622 1383**.

## **1. Contact or visit the school you intend to enroll your child.**

- You need to make sure the partner school has a position available and that you are able to enroll at that school. The school will want to know why your child needs to attend their school and what school they are currently attending. The Residential College does not facilitate any aspect of school enrolments.

## **2. Contact or visit the College.**

- If you cannot enroll at the partner state senior high school or approved private school – then you cannot reside at the Residential College.
- Once you have an indication that you can enroll with the school – you can then contact the College to ensure that there is an available place and the College will also need to know why you need to board.
- If a place is available at the College, it is not automatic that you will be able to apply, an interview and a tour of the College will need to be arranged first.

**Who can reside at a Residential College** - Residential Colleges are primarily for secondary students from year 7 to year 12 who are geographically isolated and cannot access a nearby secondary school (either a District High School or Senior High School) in their town or region and therefore have to board away from home. (Distance rules apply – talk to Centrelink to see if you qualify). Regional students who do not qualify for any subsidies are still able to reside at the College, however they will need to pay the full boarding fee.

- If the College interview and initial consultation is successful, then the application process can be started.
- The application process will include a College Application Form and supporting information.

### 3. Applying for AIC.

- If you have not already made contact with Centrelink / AIC section, then you must do this as soon as possible. Contact them directly and state that you have been offered a place at the school and the Residential College. This should be done well before the school year starts.

**Centrelink AIC section** – For assistance to claim Assistance for Isolated Children, call **132 318**.

Or visit their Website [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-isolated-children-scheme](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-isolated-children-scheme) and download the forms.

Please note – The College does NOT apply for AIC on your behalf and cannot offer any assistance unless it is a question relating to College information. This is your responsibility.

### 4. An Approved or Not Approved AIC Claim.

- Once you have lodged a claim for AIC assistance they will decide if you qualify or not. This could take some time to process and to get a formal answer.
- AIC will then provide you and the College with an approved or not approved response letter to your claim – if declined, it may be for a number of reasons or they may need more information from you to arrive at a decision.
- If declined – then the College boarding fee will need to be paid in full in three payments over the year (see Fees information).
- If successful – then AIC will automatically qualify you for the states Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA) portion. Both components will cover most of the full fee and will be paid directly to the college with the reduced balance owing from the parent / guardian / carer.

**Arriving at the College** - Students cannot attend the Residential College until we have received written notification that AIC has been approved. **However**, if the parent / guardian is prepared to pay the full boarding fees without AIC assistance then the student can attend the College and the College will invoice the parent / guardian the full fee over three installments. This will be required prior to arriving at the College as normal. If later approved, we will refund any monies owed to you.

### 5. Prior to arriving at the College

- It is important to ensure you have all the College paper work completed before arriving. A checklist will be provided to you in the Application Pack.



## How to apply for a position at the Residential College and you intend to apply for Abstudy.

Please ensure you read and follow each step – if you have any questions then please contact the College for assistance – **96221383**.

### **1. Contact or visit the school you intend to enroll your child.**

- You need to make sure the partner school has a position available and that you are able to enroll at that school. The school will want to know why your child needs to attend their school and what school they are currently attending. The Residential College will not do this for you.

### **2. Contact or visit the College.**

- If you cannot enroll at the partner state senior high school or approved private school – then you cannot reside at the Residential College.
- Once the school has stated that you can enroll with the school, we will also need to know why you need to board at the College and let you know if we have rooms available.
- If a place is available at the College, it is not automatic that you will be able to apply, an interview and a tour of the college will need to be arranged first.

**Who can reside at a Residential College** - Residential Colleges are primarily for secondary students from year 7 to year 12 who are geographically isolated and cannot access a nearby secondary school (either a District High School or Senior High School) in their town or region and therefore have to live away from home. (Distance rules apply – talk to Abstudy to see if you qualify). If room is available at the College, then there may be Abstudy funding for “other reasons” other than about the qualifying distance rules.

- If the interview and initial consultation is successful then the application process can be started.
- The application process will include a College Application Form and supporting information.

### 3. Applying for Abstudy – Boarding Away from Home assistance.

- If you have not already made contact with Centrelink / Abstudy, then **you must do this as soon as possible**. Contact them directly and state that you have been offered a place at the school and the Residential College.
- Also complete and sign an “**Authorising a person or organization to enquire or act on your behalf**” Form (form number SS313) from Abstudy. This will enable the College to contact Abstudy to see how your application is progressing. Just tick the “Person permitted to enquire” or PPE level box and give our details. **The College also has these forms.**

**Abstudy – 1800 132 317.** They can complete an application over the phone and assist with any needs. Please note – The College does NOT apply for Abstudy on your behalf and cannot offer any assistance other than for questions relating to College information. The Abstudy application is your responsibility.

### 4. An Approved or Not Approved Abstudy Claim.

- Once you have lodged a claim for Abstudy assistance they will decide if you qualify for Abstudy Educational allowances and the additional Boarding (living) away from home allowance.
- Abstudy will then provide you and the College with a successful or declined response letter to your claim – if declined, it may be for a number of reasons or they may need more information from you to arrive at a decision.
- If declined – then the full College boarding fee will need to be paid.
- If successful – then the Abstudy living away from home assistance will cover the FULL boarding fee and will need to be paid directly to the College. The education assistance portion will be paid directly to the school.

**Arriving at the College - Students cannot attend the Residential College until we have received written notification from Abstudy that they will cover the College accommodation fees. Once we have received this written notification, the student can then attend the College. **However**, if the parent / guardian is prepared to pay the term boarding fees without Abstudy assistance, then the College can make this arrangement whilst waiting for the Abstudy claim to be approved and then a refund can then be provided. Fees need to be paid in advance.**

- It is important to ensure you have all the College paper work completed before arriving. A checklist will be provided to you in the Application Pack.

## Short term accommodation needs and options information.

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Please ensure you read and follow each point – if you have any questions then please contact the College for additional information – **96221383**.

### 1. Needing short term student accommodation

- The Residential College main purpose is to accommodate full-time secondary school students who attend Northam Senior High School or St Joseph's School. Students are selected on their need to access and further their secondary school education. Priority is given to students who are geographically isolated and generally have no other accommodation options.
- The residential college recognizes and supports the importance of maintaining school attendance and hence has made provisions for parents/ carers to take advantage of short-term accommodation for partner school day students.
- If places are available, the College will consider accommodating currently enrolled students from Northam Senior High School or St Joseph's who need short term accommodation so that they can continue with attending school.
- Students are accommodated under the same policies, procedures and conditions as any other student residing at the College.
- No long-term part-time, customised or casual boarding arrangements can be made.

### 2. Reason to seek short term accommodation

- Parents who work away from home for an extended period of time and they need accommodation for their child in the interim.
- Parents who want to take a holiday / travel during the school term and do not wish to take their children with them due to schooling commitments.
- Parents moving house or jobs and transitional living arrangements are inadequate or will be too disruptive.
- Other reasons as discussed with the College Manager.

### 3. Fees

- Stays will need to be a minimum of at least 5 school days and a minimum of 1 week will be charged which includes the weekend. I.e. a student can stay at the college for up to 7 days before being charged additional weeks.
- Parents will be charged the regular full public school boarding fee pro-rata by the week.
- Stays shorter than 1 week will need to be discussed with and approved by the College Manager.
- The fee includes all meals, accommodation, student supervision, in-house activities and care and attendance to all agreed parental arrangements and assist with school support.
- A SHORT STAY APPLICATION FORM will need to be completed.

## Step by step process for applying to the College

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Please ensure you read and follow each point – if you have any questions then please contact the College for assistance – **96221383**.

- Step 1.       **Enquire with the School** - Ensure you have made initial enquiries and confirmed a placement is available at your intended school. Do not assume the school will know you are intending to enrol with them. There may be reasons that you cannot attend Northam SHS as you may already have access to a school closer to you. This will need to be discussed with the school.
- Step 2.       **Enquire with the College.** You can make initial enquiries first to see if there is a place available for your child before talking with a school, however before actually applying, we will need to interview you and your child first and also get confirmation that you have been accepted by the school. If accepted, then you can apply.
- Step 3.       **Initial Application** – This will secure a place at the College.
1. **Application Form**
  2. **Interview at the College / College tour**
  3. **On receiving your Application form and you have been interviewed – we will then ask for a non-refundable \$300 application fee soon after the interview. ( we will contact you for the deposit)**
- Step 4.       **Forms Folder** – On receiving your initial application and deposit we will then follow this up with a Forms Folder that will have the Medical Form, Host Travel List, Policy documents etc. These will need to be completed and signed prior to arrival. We will also need copies of your Medicare Card and any Concession cards. We will also provide additional welcoming information and arrival details closer to the start of Term 1 or when you are due to arrive.
- Step 5.       **Fees** – The College will also communicate with you regarding the payment of your fees to the College. This will be based on formal confirmation that you will receive either AIC (& BAHA) or Abstudy subsidies, or paying the non-subsidised full fee i.e. you do not qualify for a subsidy.
- If you are attending the College due to geographic isolation or other reasons accepted by Centrelink (AIC or Abstudy) then make contact first to ensure you qualify for the available subsidies.**

## Some common questions asked about boarding at the College.

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If you have any additional questions then please contact the College on **96221383**.

### **1. Is the Residential College a “boarding school”?**

- Not in the traditional sense as the College only provides student accommodation and is not a school, however we operate as a traditional boarding component of a boarding school and all our students mainly attend Northam Senior High School and we are both within the Education Department – so combined, we look like and operate in very similar ways as a traditional boarding school would. In the case of St Joseph’s students who attend a Catholic school, we provide the boarding option for the school and work in partnership to give a “boarding school” service.

### **2. Can boys and girls board at the same College?**

- Yes, the Residential College accommodates both male and female students in separate dormitory areas of the College which provides the convenience of allowing brothers, sisters, relatives and friends to board together.

### **3. Who looks after the students?**

- The College is staffed by full-time Boarding Supervisors, who provide care, welfare and support for all our students. Staff are overseen by the College Manager who acts as a Head of Boarding and Business Manager. The College and staff are also supported by an Administration and Finance Officer. A team of ancillary staff assist with the cleaning, cooking of meals, laundry, maintenance and grounds.

### **4. What are the rooms and food like?**

- Students are accommodated in a dormitory with a shared shower area, TV lounge and their own furnished room with a door. Rooms come with a built in cupboard and desk, bedside table, chair and pin board and personal airconditioning. All meals are provided, with the cook providing a 35 meal rotating menu i.e. 5 weeks of different evening meals before they are repeated. Meals are wholesome, tasty home style fare, with varying deserts, snacks and lunches. Any dietary requirements will be supported as needed.

Our menus are overseen by the Canteens Association of Western Australia.

## 5. Is there a discount on fees for additional children or time spent away from the College?

- Unfortunately there are no discounts for additional children. All student applications are charged the same fee regardless. Students who depart the College for a period of time or depart early prior to the end of term e.g. illness, work experience at home, suspensions, extended holidays or graduation, do not receive a reduction or refund of the boarding fee. The boarding fee is an annual fee.

## 6. Can a payment plan be put in place for fees?

- Payment plans are not a formal arrangement available to parents. Parents are required to pay the due amounts as outlined in the fee payment brochure. Payments are broken down into 3 payments for full-fee paying parents. Parents who have received a subsidised balance to pay, are required to pay the stated amount in full at the start of the year. Parents who are having difficulties in fulfilling this requirement must make contact with the Administration and Finance Officer who will be able to discuss your circumstances and provide possible payment options.

## 7. When are Applications due?

- Applications can be made at any time leading up to the year you intend to come to the College, however applications for accommodation must be completed and provided to the College by the end of term 3 at the latest, and prior to the intended year of enrolment. Late or last minute applications may see you not gaining a place, as certain year groups can fill up at any given time. Ideally parents / guardians should look at securing a place at least 12 months in advance.

## 8. Do I need to enroll at the school separately?

- Yes, the College and school application processes are separate, so you will need to contact the school and attend to their requirements before you can apply for a place at the College.

## 9. What is there to do at the College?

- The College has a number of on campus activities, such as a gym, swimming pool, games room, basketball / netball court, bike track and grassed areas. College staff also organise a number of outings to Perth and other attractions, shopping outings, arts and crafts, sporting options and anything else the students may be interested in.

## 10. Can students have a car at the College?

- Currently year 12's only, who have a valid probationary drivers license, can have a car at the College for taking leave to and from home only and under strict conditions. Students and parents must apply to the College Manager for this privilege. No motor bikes or scooters are permitted.