HOW TO USE ME

Use it. Copy it. Write on it. Share it.

The BTA Boarding Almanac is designed to be a working resource — not something that sits neatly on a shelf.
Throughout the Almanac you will find practical black-line masters designed to be copied, printed, written on and shared with your boarding team. Use a page in a staff meeting. Put a checklist in the duty folder. Take a discussion prompt into supervision. Complete a reflection as a team. Adapt a tool to suit your boarding context.
There is no need to work through the Almanac from beginning to end. Find what you need, when you need it, and put it to work.

01 | ON SHIFT
Tools for the everyday operation of a boarding house.
Practical resources for the moments when boarding is happening — handover
duty, activities, incidents and the everyday decisions staff make while on

02 | STUDENT EXPERIENCE
Tools for understanding, supporting and involving board
Resources that help teams listen to students, l ationships, support wellbeing and better understand the experien e in their care.

03 | PEOPLE & PRACTICE
Tools for developing individ
Use these resources f versations, reflection, feedback, coaching and identifying oppor arning.

04 | LE
T nication and team practice.
Boarding and boarding leaders to facilitate conversations, strengthen amilies and intentionally shape the culture of their residential community

0 NING & ASSURANCE
Too for systems, governance, compliance and continuous improvement.
Resources that help boarding leaders prepare, review, document, identify patterns, test practice against policy and turn what they learn into ongoing improvement.

Every boarding community is different.

Write on these pages. Highlight them. Print and post to the staffroom walls. Use them as starting points for team conversations. Incorporate them into induction and professional learning. Where appropriate, adapt them to align with your school's policies, procedures and local requirements.

Use it. Copy it. Write on it. Share it.
MAKE IT YOURS

PREVIEW

NEW BOARDER | 30-DAY CHECK-IN

Use the second page to move from reflection to practical support.

SOMETHING I AM STILL GETTING USED TO IS…

ONE THING THAT WOULD MAKE BOARDING BETTER FOR ME IS…

PEOPLE / PLACES THAT

Who or what is

PREVIEW

OUR NEXT STEP

One thing we will do following this conversation.

PRACTICE OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK

A developmental observation tool for everyday boarding practice. Agree the focus before observing.

Staff member: _____ **Observer:** _____ **Date:** _____

Context / shift / activity: _____

AGREED FOCUS

What would the staff member like feedback on?

_____

_____

_____

Observe for…	Evidence / notes
Student engagement	
Active supervision	
Communication / tone	
Professional boun	
…on / belonging	
Team communication	

PREVIEW

RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

EVIDENCE. INSIGHT. ACTION.

BOARDING TRAINING AUSTRALIA

BONUS EPISODE

Difficult Phone Calls Home

A Staff Protocol for Clear, Calm and Confident Communication in Boarding

Difficult phone calls become harder when staff improvise them. In boarding, families need communication that is respectful, factual, collaborative and clear. A simple protocol helps staff communicate consistently, protect relationships and know when to escalate concerns.

THE 7-STEP PROTOCOL

1. PREPARE

Know why you are calling. Check the facts, the policy, previous communication and what the student has said. Be clear about the outcome you need and whether you are the right person to make the call.

2. CONNECT

Begin with the relationship and the shared purpose. Be di… warm and respectful. Do not hide serious news behi… long pleasantries.

3. DESCRIBE

Use observable facts, not labels. S… from what you suspect. Fact… temperature and build…

4. LISTEN

Give the fa… …on.
Ask wh… …y have

…larify what staff will do, what …ther the family needs to do anything, …happen again.

…factual note in the school's approved system: date, time, …rticipants, key information, decisions, actions and follow-up. Avoid emotional or speculative commentary.

7. ELEVATE

Escalate when the issue exceeds your authority or expertise, especially for significant safety concerns, allegations, serious complaints or child-protection matters.

Routine difficulty: communicate early. Child-safety uncertainty: escalate early.

PREVIEW

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Reduces reactive or inconsistent communication
- Builds trust with families through clarity and follow-through
- Helps staff know when communication should give way to escalation

USE TOMORROW

- Practise the seven steps in team scenario training
- Use factual language and clear next steps
- Never improvise child-safety decisions

LISTEN TO THE BONUS EPISODE

Difficult Phone Calls Home: A Staff Protocol for Clear, Calm and Confident Communication in Boarding

Search Boarding Bites on your favourite podcast platform.

RELATED BTA LEARNING

- Boarding Connections 2 – Communication
- Boarding Fundamentals 5 – Understanding and Working with Young People
- Certificate IV in Community Services (Boarding Practice)

Strong communication protects trust, supports partnership and strengthens boarding communities.

btau.com.au
The home of boarding professional learning.

DIFFICULT PHONE CALL HOME | PREPARATION SHEET

PREPARE → CONNECT → DESCRIBE → LISTEN → AGREE → RECORD → ELEVATE

A SIMPLE SEQUENCE FOR THE CALL

CONNECT → DESCRIBE → LISTEN → AGREE

CONNECT

Begin with the relationship and shared purpose. Be direct, warm and respectful.

DESCRIBE

Use observable facts, not labels. What does the family need to und

LISTEN

What i e happening at home? What have they noticed?

PREVIEW

AGREE

What will staff do? What will the student do? Does the family need to do anything? When will contact happen again?