

ICPA WA Student Accommodation

Portfolio Overview 2026

At the 2025 Federal Conference the WA State delegates sat on a table with people from SA, NSW, QLD and the NT. Conversation kept flowing back to the cost of boarding and how expensive it is getting. We discussed what each state offers as a allowance to help manage the cost. In WA, we are well behind. Our current Boarding away from Home Allowance sits at \$1461 per year. QLD is as high as \$10,891 with additional allowances for travel and disability. As a result of this newfound information, we have met with the Minister for Education to request an increase of the BAHA to **\$5000** to bring us into line with other States offerings. Successful applicants for the BAHA are also dropping, with a reduction of successful applicants by 26%.

BAHA RATES and RECIPIENTS – 6 years of captured data

Year of Schooling	Number of applications	Per year per applicant \$	Total cost of scheme
2026	<i>Yet to open</i>	\$1461	-
2025	936*	\$1424.00	<i>Still open for applicants</i>
2024	1024	\$1,389	\$ 1,422,336.00
2023	1046	\$1,350	\$ 1,412,100.00
2022	1190	\$1,320	\$ 1,570,800.00
2021	1279	\$1,279	\$ 1,635,841.00
2020	1338	\$1,338	\$ 1,790,244.00
2019	1375	\$1,375	\$ 1,890,625.00

A 36 page document has been shared with the Minister outlining our recent conference motions, the true cost of boarding and our recommendations to look at who is boarding and where are they located. The 14 WA Government Residential boarding facilities currently offer 1400 places, and the non-government sector has more than 2,800 placements. The cost range is from \$9,563.00 to \$69,425.00 per year for boarding and tuition. The Non-Government Sector now has a average boarding cost of \$29,538.89 per year in 2026.

ICPA would also like to acknowledge that we have had little movement in the Tertiary education space for accommodation, yet we know that there are many students who need accommodation to access university. We would be pleased to hear from you and your child's journey to fund suitable accommodation for uni, tafe, prac placement and trade qualifications.

List of current boarding facilities in WA

Residential Boarding Facilities In Western Australia 2026	
Aquinas College	Residential College Broome
Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School	Residential College City Beach
CAPS Coolgardie	Residential College Esperance
CAPS Wongutha - Gibson	Residential College Geraldton
Carmel Adventist College	Residential College Merredin
Christ Church Grammar School	Residential College Moora
Clontarf Aboriginal College	Residential College Narrogin
Esperance Anglican Community School	Residential College Northam
Great Southern Grammar	Rotary Residential College
Guildford Grammar School	Santa Maria College
Hale School	Scotch College
Karalundi College - East Murchison	St Brigid's College
La Salle College	St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls
Manjali Studio School - Kimberley	St Mary's Anglican School for Girls
Martyku Jijku Maya - MJM Boarding House Newman	Wesley College
Mazenod College	West Aust College of Agriculture Cunderdin
Methodist Ladies College	West Aust College of Agriculture Denmark
Penrhos College	West Aust College of Agriculture Harvey
Perth College	West Aust College of Agriculture Morowa
Presbyterian Ladies College	West Aust College of Agriculture Narrogin
Residential College Albany	Yiramalay Studio School - Kimberley

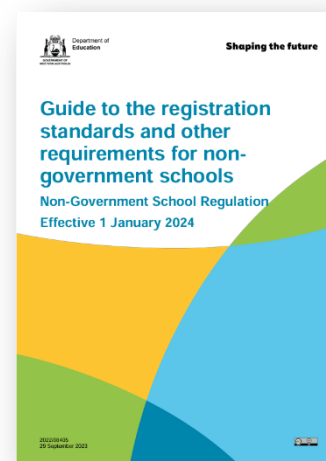
Australian boarding facilities can be guided by AS 5725:2015, *Boarding standard for Australian schools and residences*

The review for boarding standards has been announced, and we have the Federal ICPA President Mrs Louise Martin and Department of Education Staff Member sitting on the review committee. We would be pleased to hear from you on your thoughts around the standards and we hope to offer or be involved in the review into the future to benefit all of our ICPA families and children in their educational journey.

Department of Education WA Standards

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/standards> Guide to registration standards and other requirements for non-government schools effective 1st January 2024 can be found on the Department of Education website.

Extract on section 8, boarding to follow.



Standard 8: Boarding

- 8.1 Supervisory staff employed in school boarding accommodation are competent, fit and proper persons, qualified to manage the care, welfare and needs of all boarding students.
- 8.2 The school maintains open and effective communication with the parents and guardians of boarders.
- 8.3 The boarders receive a well-balanced and nutritious diet.
- 8.4 The boarders are consulted on all matters affecting their accommodation, recreation, support services, code of conduct, safety and wellbeing.

Definitions

Supervisory staff

For the purpose of standard 8.1, the supervisory staff are all those whose duties include the supervision of boarders at any time.

Note that boarding supervisors, like teachers and nurses, are now mandatory reporters. A "boarding supervisor" is "a person who holds an office or position at a boarding facility the duties of which include the supervision of children living at the facility" [*Children and Community Services Act 2004*¹⁶, s.124A].

Director General's considerations

Staff

The Director General may check that supervisory staff qualifications, including first aid qualifications, are relevant to the direct care and development of students.

As to whether staff employed to supervise boarders are fit and proper persons, the term 'fit and proper', as with governing body members, is intended to give the widest possible discretion to the decision-maker. It covers both character and competence, enabling the decision-maker to take into account matters which can be fairly seen to be relevant to the role. A person with a history such as the following would not be considered a fit and proper person in this role:

- any conviction as an adult for any offence involving children and/or violence; or
- any criminal conviction for fraud or similar, e.g. stealing as a servant; or
- any finding of negligence or serious incompetence in a similar role.

A school's boarding staff recruitment policy should at least outline the offending history considered relevant to fitness and propriety, other checks to be made, qualifications and other matters considered to be relevant.

Professional learning for all staff within boarding facilities about the school's Code of Conduct and other child-safe policies and procedures is to be conducted annually. Boarding supervisors must also receive professional learning annually in their mandatory reporting obligations.

¹⁶ https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/law_a9243.html

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures must be in place for student boarding facilities which detail how a safe, healthy and supportive boarding environment for all enrolled boarders, including those with disabilities, is being provided and maintained at all times. Students, parents and staff must be given a clear and comprehensive statement of these policies and support their implementation.

The policies and procedures should be benchmarked against contemporary best practice in protecting the safety and wellbeing of students in boarding facilities, as determined by a relevant peak body, such as the *Boarding Standard for Australian schools and residences* [AS 5725:2015] published in July 2015.

Communication with parents or guardians

Mechanisms for regular two-way communication with parents or guardians should be developed and maintained and take account of the different communication channels accessible to parents. The school should facilitate regular, private communication between the boarders and their parents/guardians.

Diet

Catering arrangements for students should be informed by relevant dietary guidelines approved by a peak body such as the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Consultation with boarders

For the purpose of standard 8.4, a satisfactory consultation with boarders will involve:

- informing the boarders about the overall process, including who else will be consulted, and its desired outcome;
- providing information relevant to the issue, which may include the limits of what outcome is possible, in accessible language;
- offering the boarders a choice of methods to communicate their individual and collective views, including where unanimity cannot be achieved; and
- giving due consideration to the opinions expressed.

Models of consultation may vary depending on the issue to be resolved. In some cases it will be appropriate to seek the views of a representative sample of boarders or from a boarders' council, particularly where the council members have been selected by the boarders themselves.

Residential and Agricultural Colleges

We have several motion in recent years around residential colleges, funding of infrastructure and management. At the time of writing this report ICPA WA understands that all 9 Residential Colleges and 5 Agricultural Colleges have been brought under the same leadership team going forward. LINC committees (as per information below) have been introduced for community input for residential colleges. ICPA WA look forward to the evolution of these committees to bring a greater understanding between families, students and community and will follow closely their evolution and purpose to form transparent engagement and greater understanding for families including Terms of Reference and Good Governance Training for members. Functions of Link Committees can be found in the School Education Act 1999, PART 6A, Student Residential Colleges. The School Education Act 1999 can be found on the WA Legislation website.

Part 6A — Student residential colleges

What this Part is about

This Part provides for student residential colleges.

213O. Functions of LINC committees

- (1) A LINC committee for a student residential college has the following functions —
 - (a) to provide advice regarding the operation and management of the college;
 - (b) to promote the interests of the college and to foster community interest in the college;
 - (c) to carry out the functions given by sections 213E(4) and 213J(4);
 - (d) to undertake such other functions prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this section.
- (2) A LINC committee for a student residential college may do any or all of the following —
 - (a) take part in and provide advice on the selection, but not the appointment, of any person employed at the college, if the person comes within a class of employees referred to in section 235(1);
 - (b) provide advice as to the means by which disputes or complaints about the conduct of students at the college may be dealt with;
 - (c) take part in the planning of, and provide advice on, the financial arrangements and priorities for the college.
- (3) A LINC committee cannot —
 - (a) intervene in the operation or management of a student residential college; or
 - (b) exercise authority over any person employed at a student residential college.
- (4) A LINC committee may do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the carrying out of its functions.