

# ASCHAM BOARDER PARENT COMMITTEE



Ascham School

## MEETING MINUTES | TERM 2, 2025 |

DATE	23/5/2025	TIME	1PM – 3PM	LOCATION	Glenrock Back Drawing Room, Ascham
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2025 COMMITTEE			
Sonia Broun (Chairperson)	Naomi Stuart (Vice-Chairperson)	Fiona Aveyard (Secretary)	Emily Patton (Year 7 Representative/APA)
Clair Whelan Michael Sobotta (Year 7 Representatives)	Fiona Bassingthwaighte (Year 8 Representative)	Sarrah King (Yr 8 Representative/APA)	Jodie McDonnell (Year 9 Representative/APA)
Caroline Orde (Year 9 Representative)	Merryn Barlow (Yr 10 Representative/APA)	Lucy Kerr (Year 10 Representative)	Sophia Binnie (Year 11 Representative)
Caroline Irwin (Yr 11 Representative/APA)	Angela Chapman (Year 12 Representative)	Niccole Mace (Yr 12 Representative/APA)	Cate Simpson (2025 Yr 12 Head Boarder Mum)

Invited Attendees: Mr Hugh Cooke, Ascham Board Member; Andrew Powell, Head of School; Pascale Drever, Deputy Head of School; Allysia Henness-Pugh, Head of Boarding

In Attendance: Merryn Bowman, Cate Simpson, Emily Patton, Sarrah King, Jodie McDonnell, Fiona Bassingthwaighte, Naomi Stuart

Via Zoom: Clair Whelan, Michael Sobotta, Lucy Kerr

Apologies: see below

ITEM#	POINTS FOR DISCUSSION	OWNER
1.	<b><u>PRE-MEETING CATCH-UP FOR BOARDER PARENTS</u></b> Update of Functions Update of Tennis Day Planning.	ALL BPC
	<b>FORMAL BPC MEETING</b>	ALL BPC
1	Welcome to Country	SB
2	Apologies: Niccole Mace, Angela Chapman, Sophie Binnie, Caz Orde, Hugh Cooke, Andrew Powell, Caroline Irwin	KD/SB
3	Motion to approve Meeting Minutes. MVD Fiona Bassingthwaighte 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cate Simpson	SB
4	<b>Actions arising from the previous meeting:</b> Boarding to share Meriton Reservation Code 10001394 AHP	SB

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5	<p><b><u>Update from Head of Boarding</u></b></p> <p>See the report in full, located below, plus the link. <a href="#">HoB Report 23/5/25</a></p> <p><b><u>Allysia Heness-Pugh, Head of Boarding</u></b></p> <p>It seems like we were only meeting yesterday for our first meeting of the year. Time definitely flies at Ascham.</p> <p>Today also marks the last official meeting for Hugh Cooke, and I want to acknowledge, in this forum the amazing contribution he has given to Boarding at Ascham in his role as boarder parent and later as Governor on our school council. Our Governors all act in a voluntary capacity and I thank him for his time and dedication over the years. I also personally thank him for the support he has given me since starting in this role in 2021.</p> <p>As you know, our Prep trial is continuing this term where the Year 7 – 10 boarders select eight sessions across the week, including Sunday to complete their assignments, with the earlier starting time of 4pm instead of 4:30pm. The girls are enjoying the flexibility of this and the opportunity to 'stack' sessions so they can have a night off Prep. From our attendance data, we can see girls are attending more Prep sessions than they were previously due to sport commitments. With the Sunday Prep now being optional, we've seen in the last four weeks, some girls struggling to find the balance and take personal responsibility for their work particularly at the end of the week (those Sunday and Monday nights). We'll continue on this trial for the rest of term, but its possible that we will likely prioritise Sunday as a compulsory Prep session again, especially for our younger year groups as they build good habits with the structure. We'll see what happens this term and report back to parents and this committee. The current Prep and dinner schedule is up to date on the Hub and we can get Sarah to send a reminder notice to parents with the correct times of Prep if they are unsure.</p> <p>As I flagged last term, with the earlier Prep sessions, we are finding the girls have longer time on devices in the house. I thank this committee for raising this issue as well as the parents who discussed it in Virtual House meetings last week. As a boarding staff team we have been discussing possible changes to hand-in times in the boarding houses for junior year groups, which will allow girls more time to spend with each other and settle before bedtime. No definite decision has been made at this stage and I welcome this committee's feedback on the idea. Your daughter's may also have mentioned the Heads up campaign that is the focus of this year's School Committee. They are doing great work with students across the whole school in regards to connection, conversation and 'looking up from the screen'. I'm looking forward to working with Skye, the Boarding Committee and the SRC on ideas for how this could be utilised and supported in the houses. There is balance needed between removal and enabling good habits to be built.</p> <p>This week at School is Health Week and there has been some great activities across the school. The Biting Truth, a pair of young female nutritionists spoke to the girls this week about sensible food choices, brain food, understanding food labels and challenging some media myths. Education around choices is important and we will continue to provide opportunities for this in Boarding and the wider school environment. Earlier this term, Brendan Hunt, Head of Catering and Sustainability, Pascale and I met to discuss menu options, particularly looking at the arrangement of sweets across the week. Brendan has focused on adding more protein to morning tea options and reduced the number of desserts over the week. Boarders are receiving more yogurt and fruit and cheeseboards for dessert. Our menus are examined annually by nutritionists and Brendan works closely with an external consulting company who provides feedback and guidance. This is the same company that releases the boarders' food survey each term to the boarders and compiles the information to inform the menu options across the next term. This is invaluable and student feedback is at the front of this.</p>	AHP

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	<p>I thank the Year 7 reps, Emily and Clair for their feedback and positive comments placed in the agenda about Year 7. I acknowledge the suggestions made around the wish for more communication from Raine House. As you know, we have two new Heads of Houses this year and I will continue to work with them both so that they understand the culture of Boarding at Ascham and in particular how communication happens in regards to changes in routine with girls and parents.</p> <p>I hope you would have seen on the socials, and in the Weekly our celebrations about National Boarding Week. The engagement, across all boarding schools in Australia gets bigger and bigger each year. Skye and the Boarding Committee did a wonderful job in hosting the assembly last Friday and it was quite a sight to see the baking that took place across the week leading up to the bake sale. We raised over \$700 for Country Education Foundation. Sadly, weather has delayed our annual Boarders vs day girl boarding race but we will run it before the end of term. We hope staff may be involved this time as well, so everyone has to practice their hospital corners.</p> <p>Finally we wish every success to the Boarders Stall on Sunday at Tennis Day. The raffles look amazing and thanks must go to Cate for compiling all of this. Well done everyone!</p>	
6	<p><b><u>Head Boarder Mum Report:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Boarding Activities:</b> The boarders had a full and engaging National Boarding Week. The boarders hosted student leaders from other schools on Thursday afternoon, including a trivia session run by Skye and her team. Students got creative with team names and costumes, making for a lively event. A friendly netball competition was also held, with the boys being strong competitors and winning the game.</li> <li>● <b>Boarding Spirit Week:</b> Friday featured "Country Mufti" dress-up. Awards were given for categories like "Closest Border to School", "Furthest Boarder", "Messiest Room", and a humorous award for a day girl who "may as well be a boarder".</li> <li>● <b>Bake Sale:</b> Successfully raised \$700 for the Country Education Foundation. Students are discussing future charity initiatives, including donating old school texts and forming a themed charity relay team for the end-of-term event.</li> <li>● <b>Tennis Day Preparations:</b> Planning and communication were excellent. Hampers were well-prepared and visually impressive, with strong parent involvement.</li> <li>● <b>Recommendations for Incoming Head Boarder Mum:</b></li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Tennis Day Raffle Coordination:</b> Begin in <b>Term 1</b> with a callout for raffle donations. <b>Year Groups to model the 2025 Year 10 approach:</b> 1 major prize (or max 2) and 1 hamper. Each year group can do as best suits their cohort, but as a suggestion, Parents donate cash, the Year Reps coordinate contents. Reduces admin, avoids item overlap, simplifies APA logistics. APA/Head Boarder Mum to provide baskets, wrap, and display guidance.</li> <li>2. <b>Farm Produce Pledges:</b> Gather pledges during <b>Term 2</b>, leading up to Tennis Day.</li> <li>3. <b>Dining Feedback Loop:</b> Skye (Head Boarder) to regularly update AHP on girls'/Brendan's dining room feedback to stay ahead of issues and ensure clear communication. Items of interest to be included in the HoB report at the BPC Meeting</li> <li>4. <b>Lockers:</b> Solution? Provide lockers in/near Boarding Houses and shelter for bags in inclement weather</li> </ol>	CS
7	<p><b>Agenda Items:</b></p> <p><i>General (Sonia Broun/Fiona Aveyard)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Farewell and thank you to our outgoing Yr 9 Representative, Sarah McDouall and welcome to Jodie McDonnell.</li> </ul>	BPC Year Reps as appropriate

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Today marks Hugh Cooke's last official meeting. On behalf of the committee I sincerely want to acknowledge in absentia his our heartfelt appreciation for his commitment to boarding at Ascham. We will particularly miss him at our 1 pm sessions and we wish him all the best.</li> <li>● Save the date for Barder Parent Drinks 16/8/25 will go out asap. Venue is Royal Sydney Golf Club. Invitation will go out 23/6/25 Strict Dress Code, Cocktail (strictly no denim).</li> </ul> <p><i>Year 7: (Emily/Claire/Michael)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Nutrition and Food Choices:</b> Discussion focused on age-appropriate food education. Emphasis on helping younger students understand balance and healthy choices amidst available options like fruit, salad, and pastries. Mixed views from parents noted, ranging from no sweets to a full variety. The catering team remains committed to supporting student independence.</li> <li>● <b>Pocket Money and Dining Room Purchases:</b> Concerns raised over excessive spending on snacks via student accounts. Some parents are unaware of the capability, as many girls do not have a student account. School is addressing with internal conversations and parent education at orientation. Further consideration of bringing in external financial education providers.</li> <li>● <b>Day Girls and Food Sharing:</b> Noted that day girls often seek food from boarders due to high meal quality. Staff reminded to monitor fairness and discourage misuse. Girls are encouraged to exercise boundaries with kindness.</li> <li>● <b>Boarding House Access Post-Sport:</b> Clarified that girls may return to houses before 8:00 am after sport, and be at breakfast by 8:05 am. Year 7s especially benefit from clear communication and consistent expectations. Staff encouraged to issue reminders.</li> <li>● <b>Hygiene and Morning Routines:</b> Sleep-ins prioritised over returning to houses post-breakfast. Girls are encouraged to bring toothbrushes to school.</li> <li>● <b>Health Centre Feedback:</b> Strong positive feedback for health centre staff and communication. Text alerts to parents when girls attend the centre have been well received.</li> <li>● <b>Lockers and Heavy Bags:</b> Concern over heavy bags due to locker locations and poor packing habits. Students are encouraged to carry only the essentials, remembering that textbooks are also online.. Some space constraints limit locker placement. Rain protection and planning around shared storage discussed.</li> <li>● <b>Laundry Processes:</b> Clarification around smalls bags: now laundered but not opened or folded. Shared items discouraged eg socks to prevent losses.</li> <li>● <b>Wake-Up Procedures:</b> Year 7s need support with early wake-ups. Staff conduct second-round wake-ups where needed. Girls encouraged to set alarms. Activities tracked via extracurricular schedule.</li> <li>● <b>Prep Supervision and Structure:</b> Feedback on Year 7 prep sessions: concerns of Minecraft use without supervision. Tutors are assigned to rooms, with rotating support in place. Seating plans intentionally leave Year 7s together for peer comfort. AHP to review supervision consistency.</li> <li>● <b>Mobile Phone Usage:</b> Continued concerns around screen time. Trials with flexible prep sessions have extended evening phone access. School is working on collaborative, student-led solutions such as voluntary screen-free periods. Parent awareness during prep hours is emphasised.</li> <li>● <b>Transport Coordination:</b> Year 7s struggle with transport to sport. Encouraged to connect with day girl peers and use team contact lists. Year reps and parents reminded to be proactive. Boarding staff working with sports department to coordinate lifts earlier in the week.</li> <li>● <b>Flu Shots:</b> Flu vaccines to be offered shortly</li> <li>● <b>Music Camp:</b> Music camp boarding support praised; opening house enabled participation without extra travel. Similar flexibility encouraged for future events.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>General Student Maturity and Support:</b> Acknowledgement of growth in older girls and strong leadership. Year 10 support in Rainhouse praised.</li> </ul> <p>Year 8: (Fiona/Sarrah) General update</p> <p>Year 9: (Caroline/Jodie)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More info requested re Heads Up - very positive idea and well received</li> <li>● Blenders, nutri-bullets in the dining room, requested for breakfast smoothies.</li> </ul> <p>Year 10: (Merryn/Lucy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Questions about private bullets/blenders. Tag and check only but AHP to make some investigation.</li> <li>● Bus - thank you so much for getting the girls a bus to winter sports trials</li> <li>● Tennis Day - swag and hamper, excellent idea, and to be repeated in 2026</li> <li>● Food - slightly inconsistent. Rigour in testing and survey.</li> <li>● Rigour in minutes</li> </ul> <p>Year 11: (Sophia/Caroline) General update AHP - impressed with Yr 11 - showing much growth</p> <p>Year 12: (Niccole/Angela)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ordering Food during trials - not supported. It's good for the girl's mental health and wellbeing to leave their rooms for brief periods to eat and exercise.</li> </ul>	
8.	<b><u>Items without notice</u></b>	BPC Year Reps as appropriate
	Meeting Closed 3:12	
	<p><b><u>Actionable Items</u></b></p> <p><b>Prep &amp; Study:</b> Review Sunday prep – consider making it compulsory again for younger years. Ensure Year 7 prep sessions have consistent supervision. (AHP)</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> Send clear reminders about morning routines and breakfast times. Update parents when routines or trial schedules change. (AHP)</p> <p><b>Food &amp; Nutrition:</b> Continue educating girls on making healthy food choices. Provide healthier snack options (AHP)</p> <p><b>Phone Use:</b> Review hand-in times for younger students. Involve students in setting “screen-free” times or social activities. Remind parents not to call during prep (AHP)</p> <p><b>Transport:</b> Encourage Year 7s to organise lifts for sport earlier in the week. (AHP &amp; BPC Year Reps)</p> <p><b>Laundry:</b> Remind girls to label and sort laundry properly. Clarify that smalls bags are not opened or folded anymore (AHP &amp; BPC Year Reps)</p>	

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	<p><b>Lockers &amp; Bags:</b> Remind students to pack only what they need. (PD &amp; BPC Year Reps) Explore better waterproof storage near classrooms or boarding.</p> <p><b>Health &amp; Routines:</b> Continue wake-up support for Year 7s while encouraging independence. For girls who choose to sleep in over an early breakfast, encourage packing a toothbrush in their school bags. (AHP)</p> <p><b>General:</b> Keep pushing for more locker/storage solutions in long-term planning. Secretary to create shared docs for BPC Calendar, and for Venues for events, which the BPC Committee can update as things change/evolve (FionaA)</p>	