



St Catherine's School
Sydney

Boarding at St Catherine's School

Your daughter's Sydney story starts here...



Boarding at St Catherine's offers students a strong supportive home in a vibrant and diverse environment. Your daughter will learn to live away from home and become independent, resourceful and confident in an exceptional environment. We are Australia's oldest independent girls' school and believe this rich heritage, coupled with our vast boarding and educational offering, is key to our success.



Here's to the dancer, the lawyer, the poet,
The doctor, the dentist, the ones who don't know yet.
The chemist, the sculptor, the writer, the thinker,
The engineer who just loves to tinker.
The teacher, the minister, pilot and diver,
The one who gives all the passion that drives her.

Here's to the women who write their own fate;
Here at St Cath's find your own great.



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St Catherine's School acknowledges the Gadigal and Bidjigal people, the traditional owners of the lands on which the school sits, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend this respect to the continuation of the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



St Catherine's boarders have the longest history of any girls at the school. Our first three girls were sisters, and when they began their boarding experience on 5 March 1856, Mrs Barker commented in her diary, "poor things, they were rather tearful when left by their parents, but I doubt not they will soon be happy" (Croft, 1996). And they were. Since that day, St Catherine's has had a flourishing boarding house, where girls from a wide variety of backgrounds come together to continue this strong boarding tradition.

Over the years, the boarding house and the school have changed considerably. Today's boarding students live in a modern, welcoming environment located in the most historic part of the school. From taking care of their rooms, to helping new boarders settle in, to daily life with each other, our boarders

develop skills of independence and self-efficacy, as well as learning how to live well with others. They also form friendships that last a lifetime. The boarding community in turn enhances the school by making it a home, infusing it with vitality, depth and heart.

We welcome girls from Year 7 to Year 12, from Australia and overseas. If you are considering a boarding experience for your daughter, we would be delighted to discuss with you what boarding has to offer.

Our executive staff



MRS JUDITH POOLE, HEADMISTRESS

Mrs Judith Poole is the 13th headmistress of St Catherine's. She joined the school in 2023 to act as Interim Head for two years.

Mrs Poole has a distinguished career with over 35 years of educational experience on 3 continents. Most recently, she served as the Head of Abbotsleigh for 12 years. Her specialty area is girls' education and she leads to promote rich educational experiences that empower young women to develop their passions.

She is committed to embracing diversity and building a community where members flourish as they grow in character. Mrs Poole emphasises the importance of servant leadership as the backbone of trust and the building of strong relationships.



MS KYLIE MCCULLAH, HEAD OF ACADEMICS

An experienced leader for more than 20 years in both independent and systemic schools Kylie began her teaching career as a technology teacher before quickly moving into pastoral and curriculum-based leadership roles. The elements and characteristics of authentic, creative, critical thinking and explicit teaching are embedded into Kylie's leadership practice and style.

Catering to the individual learning needs of the students in her care and using data to inform her practice, Kylie strives to provide opportunities for each student to excel and encourages and supports colleagues to do the same.



MS REBECCA HERBERT DIRECTOR OF DAY SCHOOL

Rebecca has always demonstrated a passion for the development of the whole person in a school setting. Rebecca has been at the school for 18 years and loves the diversity each day brings. She relishes being able to spend time with both day girls and boarding students and enjoys working collaboratively with others to ensure that students find a place to belong in order to thrive.

Rebecca has always had a passion for schools and knew early on that's where her vocation was heading. Rebecca is respected for her down-to-earth, practical, flexible, compassionate, approachable and warm personality by both day and boarding students.

Our boarding staff

Five permanent boarding staff live on-site and are available to assist the girls. The team works collaboratively to ensure each boarding student is well supported and nurtured during her time with us.



MS CHELSEA SLADE **DIRECTOR OF BOARDING**

Chelsea oversees the boarding house and is responsible for all boarders, their welfare and development. She is also our Indigenous Student Coordinator and serves to provide support and guidance to our Indigenous students during their time at St Catherine's.

Chelsea sees communication as the key to education. She strives to develop our boarding and Indigenous student communities, so that these girls leave St Catherine's as confident and optimistic young adults with character and grit.

She firmly believes that relationships, trust and belonging are essential for students to enjoy academic and personal success.



KATE COOPER **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF BOARDING**

Kate assists Chelsea in the day-to-day running of the boarding house. She is a qualified primary school teacher and has been working in boarding schools for five years. Kate has been part of the St Catherine's boarding team since 2019.

She is passionate and loves the diversity of daily life in the boarding house, from going on Sunday outings to attending doctors' appointments with boarders. She lives on-site in the boarding house and is the person the boarders tend to rely on when they need something overnight.

Kate grew up in Mudgee and understands what it is like to be a boarder as she boarded from Year 9. This is where her passion for all things boarding started.

The boarding house

The boarding house is your home away from home. Its layout is designed to provide the comforts of home and freedom to move and enable students to perform school tasks and work individually when required. When you join our boarding family, you will automatically have 65 sisters. Australian girls from the city or country and overseas girls live together in our boarding house. The newly renovated boarding house has comfortable modern living areas with some twin rooms and single rooms with ample desk space, storage, clever shelving and lighting. Each student has privacy for study and rest.

Girls are encouraged to add a personal touch to their rooms – it is their home away from home after all. Delicious, varied and nutritionally balanced meals are prepared by our chef. Polite and considered language is expected and only English is spoken in the boarding house common rooms, dining room, and during prep time.

Boarders have access to Netflix and Smart TVs, and there is Wi-Fi in all areas of the boarding house. Boarders can utilise the school's facilities including the swimming pool, sports centre, music practice rooms and gymnasium. All students, day girls and boarders, can use the library from 7.30am until the start of school at 8.20am, and at recess and lunch. All boarders come to the prep centre after dinner at 7.00pm, with Years 7–9 staying until 8.30pm and Years 10–12 until 9.00pm.

The prep centre is a fantastic resource where the girls have access to teaching staff for after school hours assistance and older current students who can provide support and mentorship.

St Catherine's School Sydney is located in the exclusive eastern suburbs, in the safe residential area of Waverley.

Our students are encouraged to experience everything Sydney has to offer. We encourage the outdoor lifestyle as it encapsulates the Sydney experience.

We are just a kilometre from the magnificent Bronte Beach and three kilometres from the world-renowned Bondi Beach.

Close by is the beautiful Queens Park where boarders have access to exercise facilities. The Sydney CBD and Sydney domestic and international airports are also all just 20 minutes away.

Our local shopping village also provides access to a range of facilities such as chemists, doctors, bakery, cafes, hairdressers, gift shops and a post office. Bondi Junction, a major transport, shopping and entertainment hub is only a 10-minute walk from the school.

A photograph of two young women sitting on a bed in a dormitory. The woman on the right is wearing a school uniform consisting of a blue and white striped shirt, a dark tie, and a dark vest over a dark skirt. She is smiling and looking at the other woman while using a silver laptop. The woman on the left is wearing a white long-sleeved top and dark pants, with her hair in a braid. They are sitting on a bed with a floral patterned duvet cover. In the background, there is a wooden shelf with a framed picture, a potted plant, and a white vase. A dark blue banner with white text is overlaid on the top right of the image.

Students build lifelong friendships whilst immersing themselves into life at St Catherine's.

Why be a boarder?

Our boarders build strong, lifelong friendships with both Australian and overseas students.

Your daughter will learn to live away from home and become independent, resourceful, confident and well-educated. We encourage our boarders to completely immerse themselves into life at St Catherine's. Students flourish both socially and emotionally when they engage in the broad cocurricular activities available to them as boarders.

When you join the boarding community, you will do so with mixed emotions. Remember you are not alone, and it is likely that many others are experiencing similar feelings to you.

We suggest the following:

GIVE IT TIME

Moving schools and deciding to become a boarder is a huge change and allowing yourself to get used to the change is very important. Try to take one day at a time. Life will start to get easier for you once you get familiar with the daily routines and when you start to form new friendships.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR OLD FRIENDS

Stay in touch with family and friends and if they are in the vicinity of the boarding house, invite them to visit you in your new surroundings.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Don't wait for others to come to you. Take the opportunity to invite a person, or two, from your year group to go with you to explore the local shopping village.

MAKE YOUR PRIVATE SPACE SPECIAL

Bring some of your favourite things from home to decorate your room. Posters, photos, your doona, ornaments and even a bedside rug can make your space feel more comfortable and yours!

GET INVOLVED

The school offers many cocurricular activities such as drama, sport, music, debating and dance.

All boarders in Years 7-10 must be involved in at least one cocurricular activity each term. We prefer students to be involved in at least two activities at the school, including one physical activity.

SEEK ASSISTANCE WHEN YOU NEED

There are many staff here to help, both in the boarding house and day school. The best way to get help is to ask.



Academic benefits

In the boarding house, close communication between the class teachers and boarding house staff ensures that the girls' study program meets the expectations of the girls, their parents and our teaching staff. We have strong tracking processes in place, and we know when things are going well or if there are areas requiring improvement.

St Catherine's teaching is intentionally tailored to girls. It is free from gender stereotyping, unconscious bias and social pressure from the opposite sex. Studies have proven that girls who attend an all girls' school have higher self-esteem and confidence. This prepares students for life beyond school.

We have strong educational relationships with independent boys' schools and offer one of the broadest curriculum choices of all Sydney girls' schools.

St Catherine's offers the Higher School Certificate (HSC), with up to 40 courses on offer in Years 11-12.

St Catherine's is an academically non-selective school, and given this, our students' results are consistently outstanding.

In 2022, we ranked 13th in the state, with 57% of our students achieving an ATAR over 90.

Two students also received a top ATAR of 99.9, while our median ATAR was 91.50.

We also had a student come first in the state in English as an Additional Language/Dialect, with a further three students placing within the top ten in this subject.

St Catherine's students also placed second in the state in drama and third place in economics.

A boarder's routine

6.45am – 7.45am

Breakfast

Until 8.15am

Girls prepare for school,
tidy rooms and complete duties

8.15am

Girls leave boarding house

8.20am

School starts

8.20am – 10.30am

Lesson 1 and Lesson 2

10.30am – 11am

Recess (morning tea)

11am – 11.20am

Academic Care (3 times per week)
or school assembly
or chapel

11.20am – 1.30pm

Lesson 3 and Lesson 4

1.30pm – 2.15pm

Lunch

2.15pm – 3.20pm

Lesson 5

3.20pm – 5.30pm

After school classes, sport,
cocurricular activities.
Boarders return
to the boarding house





Weekends

9am – 10am

Breakfast

10am – 1pm

Sport, cocurricular activities,
day or weekend leave

1pm

Lunch

1.30pm – 5.30pm

Years 7–9 Sunday activity
(each fortnight)

6pm

Dinner

7pm

Quiet time in lieu of prep time

Evenings

6pm

Dinner

7pm – 8.30pm

Years 7–9 prep time

9.15pm

Years 7–9 devices collected for the night

9.45pm

Year 10 devices collected for the night

10.30pm

Year 11 devices collected for the night,
with students allowed to continue
studying offline until 11pm



Testimonials

IMOGEN HICKS, CANBERRA BOARDER HSC 2020

I became a St Catherine's boarder in Year 10, 2018. I enjoyed it from the start as it was a relatively small boarding community with around 66 girls from all over Australia and overseas. That meant there was always someone to chat with, study with or exercise with, but it was also possible to still find quiet time. Living with girls from a variety of backgrounds broadened my understanding of others and helped develop my social and life skills.

The boarding house had just been renovated so the facilities were brand new and really impressive. The long, hot showers were the best! Yes, there were plenty of rules but it still felt like my home away from home and I always felt supported and cared for.

Living on site was a huge positive as it meant I could enjoy additional access to certain school facilities after hours and on weekends such as the research centre, the gym and the pool. It was so convenient to just walk out of the boarding house door and be at class, team trainings or tutoring in two minutes.

For me, it was a privilege to attend St Catherine's School. I was provided with incredible opportunities through academic mentorship and through the Elite Athlete Program. When I reflect on my time at St Cath's I recall a fun time, forging lifelong friendships that I will always cherish. I am grateful for the opportunity to develop values, skills and knowledge that will guide me in life.

LEE YIU (CHRISTINA) YIP THAI BOARDER HSC 2022

I began my boarding life at St Catherine's in 2020, just as the pandemic started. I spent the next two years unable to see my parents or return home to Hong Kong, feeling extremely lost and uncertain. Fortunately, I had such a supportive family in the boarding house who constantly provided me with comfort. Thanks to the many activities organised by the boarding house, I got to know the other boarders easily and made friends quickly. Going to Jamberoo Water Park with the whole boarding house remains one of the best memories I have of my time in high school. I also enjoyed daily prep time in the research centre, where I was able to study one-on-one with my teachers. The boarding house provided a warm-hearted environment where I had the opportunity to grow and learn to be independent. I am extremely grateful to be a part of this huge family and leave school with countless new skills to guide me into the future.

SIMON AND TANYA BURKE, TAMWORTH Parents of Willamina Burke HSC 2020

Sending Willamina to St Catherine's as a boarder has been one of the greatest experiences that our family could possibly have. We have watched her grow into a confident young lady who has excelled in everything she has achieved with amazing guidance from St Catherine's and the boarding community. As parents from the country, we were amazed and extremely appreciative of the care shown to our daughter in her time in Sydney. Her time as a boarder at St Cath's has guided her and prepared her for her future beyond school and her experience is one that she will never forget.

A photograph of three young women in school uniforms, smiling and posing for a photo. They are wearing dark blue blazers with a red and yellow plaid pattern over blue and white striped shirts and dark blue ties. The woman on the left is laughing, the woman in the middle is smiling, and the woman on the right is also smiling. They are standing outdoors under a blue canopy. The background shows green foliage and a brick wall.

Boarder Nikki Walker (left) with friends during the Prefect Induction Assembly

**NIKKI WALKER,
SYDNEY BOARDER,
HSC 2019**

Past boarder and current boarding house team member.

I started at St Catherine's as a day girl in Year 7 in 2014. After a year of getting involved in the community, I thought there was no better way to be fully immersed than to join boarding in Year 8. Being a boarder at St Catherine's taught me independence from a young age which carried me through to post-school, as well as learning about the diverse cultures within the community. The best thing about boarding was being able to live with and meet lifelong friends, whilst still living near home to travel on the weekends. As a weekly boarder, living at school Monday-Friday meant that I was able to be fully involved in the community with the accessibility of playing sport, contributing to community service and having the library only a few steps away. After graduating in 2019, I returned to St Catherine's a few months later to work as a staff member in the boarding house. Whilst it was something to adjust to, being on the other end of the line, it has been a pleasure reconnecting with friends as students and meeting other staff who all have the same goal. Now working in the boarding house, I aim to enhance the lives of students from all over the world to enable them to have a similar life-changing experience as I did.


 StCatherinesSchool

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 www.linkedin.com/school/st-catherine's-school_2/

 StCSchoolWaverley

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Should you be interested in a boarding position at
St Catherine's School, please contact the enrolments
team on the following

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