



Australian Government
Aboriginal Hostels Limited



Welcome to

AHL'S SECONDARY EDUCATION HOSTELS

Your home away from home while studying

A Guide for Students, Parents and Guardians



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WELCOME

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students

On behalf of the AHL Board, Executive Management and Staff, I offer each of you a very warm welcome into our family of dedicated and passionate employees.

Our commitment to you in each of our Boarding hostels is to ensure that you:

- enjoy a safe and culturally appropriate environment;
- are provided with the highest level of care and protection;
- receive quality meals and accommodation;
- are supported throughout your stay with us with appropriate facilities and amenities;
- are provided with the best possible education journey;
- access opportunities to enjoy social and extra-curricular based activities; and
- enhance your life experiences with AHL.

Our hostel staff are always on hand to help and support students, and work closely with local schools to provide the best learning opportunities available.

We also strive to provide a wealth of social and sporting opportunities for students during their stay with us, to broaden the range of life experiences on offer alongside their school education.

I hope that you find this prospectus useful and informative, and I look forward to hearing about your progress.

Tony Usher

Chief Executive Officer
Aboriginal Hostels Limited



INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) operates hostels Australia-wide to provide accommodation for Indigenous people in a wide range of circumstances.

One of AHL's key priorities is enabling rural and remote Indigenous students to access education.

Our secondary education hostels are for Indigenous students of high school age who need to live away from home to obtain a secondary education. AHL provides affordable accommodation to assist secondary education students to attend school and achieve their educational goals, including their Year 12 certificate.

AHL operates nine Secondary Education Hostels across NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Students will enjoy the opportunity to study in a safe, comfortable, friendly environment that is drug and alcohol free. All meals and healthy snacks are provided each day and students are supervised at all times. Transport to and from school, tutorial and homework support, as well as modern computer technology, are all provided for our students.

As well as ensuring that students are attending school and completing homework, Heads of Boarding, Residential Youth Workers and hostel staff provide around the clock support in a caring environment. Social activities are a regular feature of hostel life and provide an opportunity for students to relax and be rewarded for their hard work.

AHL's Heads of Boarding and Residential Youth Workers encourage positive behaviour at all times through leadership, mentoring, counselling and by creating a nurturing environment to help guide and assist young Indigenous students with their education and development of life skills.

This Guide provides an overview of many of the things parents and students need to know about life in our Secondary Education Hostels. Of course, there's much more to learn and our friendly staff will be able to explain and answer your questions during the induction process for all new students.

“Staff are excellent and very welcoming”

Kardu Darrikardu Numida Hostel Student, Wadeye, NT

AHL REGIONS AND SECONDARY EDUCATION HOSTEL LOCATIONS





OUR DUTY OF CARE

Management and staff welcome secondary education students and anticipate that students will have an enjoyable stay. AHL's role is to provide a home away from home while students are attending school and to provide support and assistance to successfully finish their studies.

Once a parent or guardian has entrusted their child into hostel care, hostel staff engage as your child's carer, with all the obligations and duty of care that involves.

This means that some of the day to day decisions that you, as a parent or guardian, would normally make and give permission for, such as school excursions or visits to the dentist or doctor, will be carried out by the hostel staff.

If the need arises for any major decision to be made about your child, that will or may affect the well-being of your child, hostel staff will immediately contact you as the parent or guardian (unless previously instructed to do otherwise in any emergency).

When you sign the Secondary Education Student Accommodation Application you are giving AHL staff authority and consent to act on your behalf regarding your child while they are living at one of AHL's Secondary Education Hostels.

Please keep hostel staff up-to-date with personal home contact numbers or details of another person who the hostel can contact on your behalf. If you intend to leave your community for a period of time, please provide hostel staff with alternate contact details.

It is important that hostel staff can contact parents and guardians at all times.

“The tutors really help us with our schoolwork”

Canon Boggo Pilot Hostel Student, Thursday Island

STUDENT WELFARE

Our Secondary Education Hostel staff have a duty of care to each other and to those students residing with us to provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live and study.

The rules and responsibilities which parents and students sign as part of the Secondary Education Hostel application process are designed to ensure a safe and respectful environment within the hostel.

A copy of these rules is included at the back of this booklet for your reference. The rules cover:

- Respectful behaviour
- Responsibilities within the hostel
- Visitors
- Clothing and uniforms
- Property and equipment
- Drug-free environment
- Acting within the law
- Leave and absences
- Disciplinary action

During induction, our staff will explain these rules and responsibilities in more detail to make sure there are no misunderstandings about conduct and expectations while students are in our care.

A NOTE ABOUT BULLYING

Students staying at AHL hostels are expected to follow the example set by hostel staff by consistently displaying positive behaviour such as respect for themselves and others.

Bullying is strictly unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever in AHL hostels.

If a student is being bullied, it's important to remember that they are not to blame, and that there is help available within the hostel and at school to stop it.

Bullying is a serious matter and no one has to put up with being bullied.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH OUR LEVEL OF SERVICE

AHL will take all care and responsibility of your child within the limits of AHL corporate ability and scope of any agreement. AHL will exercise a duty of care at all times while your child is living at the hostel. AHL does not accept any liability, right or obligation whatsoever outside of any AHL agreement except as required by law.

AHL values your opinion and welcomes any feedback. If you have any enquiries or complaints, please contact senior hostel staff or call our National Office Complaints Hotline in Canberra (Freecall) 1800 640 836.



LIFE AT OUR SECONDARY EDUCATION HOSTELS

Students are supervised by professional staff 24 hours a day and are provided with three nutritious meals a day and healthy snacks.

Students will be transported to and from school by hostel staff, unless other transport is available or schools are within a short walking distance. At the hostel they are provided with designated homework times with hostel mentor support.

It is important to be on time for meals, the school bus to and from school, shopping time, study time, rostered dining room times and any other meeting times requested by hostel staff.

Student bedrooms consist of 1 to 4 beds per room and are either single or king single sized. All rooms are air-conditioned, and in most hostels there are:

- stand-alone or built-in wardrobes
- a desk
- a laundry basket
- a bedside table

Students will be woken each school morning between the hours of 6.00 – 6.30am Monday to Friday on school days.

Showers are taken first thing each morning and before bed time.

It is each student's responsibility to make their bed and keep their room tidy, bins emptied, and too ensure that lights, fans and air conditioners are turned off before leaving for school.

From Sunday to Thursday lights out is at 9.30pm. On Friday and Saturday nights students can go to bed no later than midnight. Students are expected to have settled in their room before lights out.

No mobile phones, music, games, movies or any electronic device are to be used in rooms when lights are out. Students are to hand mobile phones to staff on duty before bed.

Students are provided with all linen, however if they have their own special linen, they are welcome to bring it to use at the hostel. Please ensure all personal items are clearly marked with the student's name.

“Our hostel is very safe and secure”

Kununurra Hostel Student, Kununurra, WA

MEALS AND FOOD

Breakfast and dinner are at set times and students must be punctual. Weekend evening meal times vary, according to the hostel routine. Good table manners are expected at every meal.

Breakfast starts at 7:00 am each day and is compulsory at the hostel. Students enjoy breakfast together before leaving for school. A hot breakfast is served on Sundays.

Healthy nutritious food is provided to take to school and at the hostel on weekends.

A light snack are provided most nights before bedtime and is served around 8pm.

SCHOOL

It is a requirement that all students attend school regularly. Unless students are sick or have a valid reason, there is no excuse to miss out on school. Students must discuss any possible absence from school with hostel staff before the school day commences.

All student absenteeism is recorded by the school and reported to the hostel.

STUDY PERIODS

Having a safe, secure and affordable home to return to is a very important element of focused study.

There are specific days and times for study periods after school for each student. Home study is mandatory, and it is students' responsibility to be prepared and be seated at least 5 minutes before study time begins. Hostel staff will advise each student of their allocated study times.

Developing good study habits is important to successfully complete the school year and it is important not to disturb other students during home study periods.

Depending on the hostel, there are desktop computers available for students' use and at least one of these will have internet access. These computers are to be used during evening study for assignments/research and schoolwork only.

Students who need to use the computer for schoolwork will be given priority during the study period.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

School uniforms are purchased at the beginning of each year and the hostel will have a uniform pool. Students will usually be supplied with two sets of uniforms, 6 pairs of socks, sport shoes and a school bag at the beginning of the school year. This may vary from hostel to hostel so it's best to check with hostel staff.

It is each student's responsibility to keep their uniforms neat and tidy and in good condition.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

All students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities after school. Our Secondary Education Hostel facilities include recreation rooms, in-ground swimming pools, basketball courts, landscaped courtyards and sports ovals. Organised activities include music lessons, youth group and art classes.

Students are encouraged to discuss their interests with hostel staff when they arrive at the hostel to see if there is a group or class available.

If there is a swimming pool at the hostel, safety rules are to be observed at all times. If you do not know how to swim please let the hostel staff know as soon as you arrive at the hostel.

School sports and extra-curricular sports are encouraged. There are a range of sports offered by your school. Sports activities however require from you a personal commitment to after school training and playing games on the weekends. Check with the hostel to see what sports facilities it offers.

WEEKENDS

Weekends provide time for everyone at the hostel with an opportunity to relax. Students are allowed to sleep in until 9am most weekend mornings.

Weekends are also the time to wash clothes as well as clean and tidy up rooms. A room and wardrobe inspection is carried out each weekend.

On Sunday hostel staff will usually plan an outing day. Depending on the hostel location, trips to the river or beach, fishing, sightseeing, football, picnics and barbeques are planned.

Free weekends are available for students to take during the school term while staying at the hostel. Parents or guardians must give written approval for their child's free weekend leave.

Free weekend leave starts from Friday afternoon after 4pm and ends 5pm Sunday evening. Students must be picked up and taken back to the hostel by the person nominated on the weekend leave form.

SHOPPING

Usually on Saturday, students are driven to the local shopping centre where they can browse, buy their lunch and meet up with friends and family. Times to visit shops will vary at each hostel, so make sure you check the roster.

SCHOOL DANCES

School dances and discos happen throughout the term. The cost is minimal, and our students are usually taken to the event by hostel staff.

These activities give students the opportunity to meet up with family, friends and other students from nearby schools.

TELEVISION

Television viewing in the hostel is limited. As a general rule TV is on for 1 ½ hours after school and 1 hour before bedtime during the week. Weekend TV is generally 2 hours in the morning and 3 hours in the evening, enough time to watch 2 movies. The television remains switched off during school mornings.

Television sets are generally in the recreation or lounge rooms and are normally connected to a DVD player so you can watch movies. Hostel staff will review all movies brought into the hostel.

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY

Parents can send personal letters and parcels to students at the hostel. The address for each hostel can be found at the back of this booklet.

Every hostel has a phone, fax and mobile number. Keep these contact numbers in a safe place so that you are able to contact your child or the hostel. Parents or guardians may contact hostel staff at any reasonable time.

Please note that students are not permitted to use the hostel office phone other than in the case of emergency.

There is a student phone located at each hostel which is for receiving calls only. Parents and friends may call at prearranged times to speak to a student.

Calls are not accepted during mealtimes, study time or after bed time, which is 9pm during the school week.

Please ask the hostel staff for the phone number and the meal time schedule.

VISITORS

Family and friends are welcome to visit the hostel at any reasonable time. All visitors must first report to the AHL hostel office, tell the staff who they are and who they are here to visit. Visitors must sign in and out of the hostel for safety reasons and abide by all the rules of the hostel.



BEFORE ARRIVING AT THE HOSTEL

PAYMENT OF BOARDING FEES

If your child is approved by Centrelink for the ABSTUDY entitlement for boarding away from home to access education, then Centrelink will make payments directly to AHL.

If your child is not approved for ABSTUDY a tax invoice will be sent to you each fortnight for payment of your child's stay at the hostel. Details on how to pay will be on each invoice. Please ensure your hostel payments are made on time.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents and students will need to organise casual clothes and other personal belongings before arriving at the hostel and all clothes should be clearly marked with the student's name.

Suggested clothing includes:

- smart casual clothes for special outings
- swim shorts, swim costumes
- school shoes, sports shoes, thongs and casual shoes
- an extra bath towel and 1 beach towel

Students are also welcome to bring their favourite items from home such as pillows, doona or photos of family and friends. Students can bring music playing devices to the hostel, however music brought to the hostel or bought whilst living at the hostel must be appropriate for communal residential living.

Students are also welcome to bring their age appropriate computer games and laptop computer to the hostel, however these items are not to be used during study times, meal times, after lights out or taken to school.

Do not bring expensive jewellery to the hostel. Please note that AHL cannot accept responsibility for loss or theft of any personal items.

Students will need to supply their own personal toiletries items such as:

- deodorant (roll-on or pump spray)
- toothpaste and toothbrush
- soap
- shampoo and conditioner
- feminine needs
- hair brush or comb
- toiletry bag

Further purchase of items will be made by the hostel as needed.



USEFUL INFORMATION

A TO Z OF HOSTEL LIFE

Alcohol and other drugs

Alcohol or other drug use or possession is at all times strictly prohibited on or off the AHL hostel grounds.

Church

For students wishing to attend religious activities or events, please discuss arrangements with hostel staff .

Fire Hazards

The following items are considered to be fire hazards and are not to be brought onto the hostel grounds:

- Matches
- Lighters
- Candles
- Incense

Hygiene

Students are expected to arrive at the Hostel with a good sense of personal hygiene.

- Showering and brushing your teeth should be a part of your daily routine
- Whilst at the hostel you are expected to shower before bedtime and after waking each morning
- Pump or roll on deodorant is also a recommended necessity as well as your own choice of shampoo and conditioner

Female students should bring their own supply of feminine products. Hostel staff can provide advice and assist in purchasing more products when needed.

Laundry

Bed Linen is changed once a week. Students will be given a designated day to be responsible for stripping your bed and take used sheets, pillow cases and towel to the laundry ready for hostel staff to wash.

It is each student's responsibility to wash their own clothes. Washing day rosters are in place for each student. Washing powder is supplied, however if you choose to purchase your own washing powder you may do so and keep it in a sealed container as directed by your Hostel staff. Individual washing baskets are supplied.

Medical conditions

Your completed application forms include all the medical information hostel staff need to be aware of.

If the need to take medication arises after a student commences their stay, please notify the hostel immediately and provide a doctor's letter with the medication. Hostel staff are not allowed to administer any medication to students in the hostels.

In the event of a student becoming sick, they will be taken either to the local Medical Centre or General Public Hospital and parents/guardians will be informed immediately of any serious illness or medical condition.

Mobile Phones

Students are welcome to bring mobile phones to the hostel, however you must:

- give your mobile phone number to the hostel staff hand in your mobile phone each school night before bedtime
- be responsible for the care and use of your mobile
- set mobile phone ring tone volume to low
- not bring mobiles to the dinner table, to home study, after lights out or have it with you during in-house meetings

Phones may be confiscated by AHL staff if the above rules are not followed.

Money for students

Large amounts of cash should not be given to students. If parents do give their child cash, it must be handed to the Hostel staff for safe-keeping. The money will be given to your child when they need it.

Prohibited behaviour

- swearing
- name calling
- bullying and fighting is not tolerated on or off the grounds of the hostel
- abusive tone and/or language toward others will not be tolerated on or off the grounds of the hostel
- aggressive and/or violent behaviour toward others is not tolerated on or off the grounds of the hostel
- stealing is prohibited by any student on or off the grounds of the hostel

Property damage

If a student deliberately injures another person or damages property (either hostel property, staff property or another student's property) there will be consequences. Hostel staff may contact parents if this situation arises, dependant on the severity. Parents or guardians may be expected to pay the full cost of deliberate damage.

Security

Depending on the hostel, a Night Attendant is on duty every night for security purposes. Some hostels have central alarms with closed circuit TV. Some hostels are surrounded by a high fence with lockable gates. Senior staff live on site at all times.

Smoking

AHL hostels have a strict no smoking policy. Smoking of cigarettes is prohibited by any student on or off the grounds of the hostel.

Travel

AHL will liaise with Centrelink at the end of each term to discuss travel arrangements.

ABSTUDY entitles students to travel between home and the hostel, however it does not cover travel to other locations. Please contact Centrelink directly if you have any questions about student travel entitlements.

If families require their child to travel home at other times during the school term, they will have to pay the fare, with the exception of compassionate travel. Please notify hostel staff if there has been a death in the family and your child needs to travel home at short notice.



HOSTEL AIMS AND RULES

On commencement of hostel life, students undergo an induction, introducing them to the hostel and providing detailed information about the rules by which the Hostel operates. The rules have been created to ensure the hostel is a place where students can live and study in safety and comfort, and in harmony with other young people and staff.

If at any time a student has a problem or feels troubled, they are encouraged to talk with the Head of Boarding/Residential Youth Worker.

If the problem involves a member of staff and the student does not feel comfortable raising it directly with them, students should contact another staff member they feel comfortable with, or the school counsellor or another trusted adult.

All students will have their photograph taken on arrival at the hostel and updated yearly on their birthday.

HOSTEL RULES

The following rules apply to all students and visitors while residing at or visiting the hostel:

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

1. Students must follow the directions of staff at all times.
2. Violence, harassment or bullying will not be tolerated.
3. Students are not allowed to swear, to use offensive or abusive language or behave in an indecent manner at any time.
4. Students will be expected to be well mannered and courteous at all times to staff, fellow students, visitors and the broader community.

RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE HOSTEL

5. Students must observe and follow the hostel timetable, unless prevented by illness.
6. Students must carry out their rostered duties under the supervision of Hostel staff or authorised staff.
7. Students are to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy at all times, as well as contribute to the cleanliness and good presentation of all other areas of the hostel.
8. Students must attend any homework sessions provided at the school and/or the hostel and avoid disturbing other students. Study periods must be observed at all times.
9. Meals are available only at meal times set down by the staff unless previous arrangements have been made.
10. Intimate relationships between students are not permitted.

VISITORS

11. Visitors are not permitted in student bedrooms. Parents or guardians will be shown their child's bedroom on their initial visit, and on subsequent visits if requested.

CLOTHING AND UNIFORMS

12. Students must wear full uniform to school.
13. Students must be fully dressed before coming to the dining room to have meals. During the week students must be dressed for school and on weekends dressing in suitable clothing for the day's activities.
14. Shoes must be worn at all times in the Dining Room and Kitchen.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

15. Students must look after their own property and respect the property of others. Hostel equipment must not be misused or abused. If students damage equipment or furniture, other than through fair wear and tear, the cost of replacement or repair will be the responsibility of the parent or student.
16. The hostel will not take responsibility for loss, damage or theft of student's personal property or valuables.
17. Use of any other electrical appliance in the students' bedrooms or the bathrooms, other than those appliances supplied, is not permitted unless approved by hostel staff.
18. Any damage caused (on purpose) to hostel property or buildings will be recovered from the student's parent/caregiver or the student's allowance. The student will be asked to leave if this occurs on more than two occasions.

DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT

19. Drinking of alcohol or the use of illegal drugs is not permitted. Any students found in the possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol or illegal drugs, will be removed from the hostel.
20. Misuse of prescription drugs, or other substance abuse, is not permitted. Aerosol cans are not permitted (non-aerosol spray cans of deodorant etc. are permissible).
21. AHL secondary education hostels are smoke free zones both on the grounds and inside the hostel. Students are not permitted to smoke while participating in activities or excursions organised by AHL, or in AHL vehicles.

ACTING WITHIN THE LAW

22. If a student becomes involved with the Police, the Education Manager will be informed immediately. The Manager and Head of Boarding/Residential Youth Workers will decide on the action to be taken – this may result in the student being sent home.
23. Stealing within or outside the hostel, including shoplifting, is not tolerated.
24. No students are allowed to operate a vehicle while in the care of AHL even if they have obtained their Provisional Licence.

LEAVE AND ABSENCES

25. Unauthorised leave will not be permitted and will immediately incur a formal warning to the student.
26. Students must report to the Head of Boarding/Residential Youth Worker on duty when leaving the Hostel and return by the specified time agreed. The student must fill in the hostel sign out book on departing the hostel and sign in on their return.
27. Written consent must be obtained from the parents/guardians prior to the students being allowed to spend weekends away from the hostel.
28. The Parent/Guardian must submit a request for weekend leave to the Head of Boarding/Residential Youth Worker before 9.30pm on the Wednesday prior to the weekend involved. The request must include the name of the adult/person collecting the student and their contact details. The adult must come to the hostel and sign out the student after 4pm on Friday and return the student to the hostel by 5pm on Sunday.
29. If a student leaves the hostel without authorisation and is away for more than 24 hours, they will only be allowed to return to the hostel at the discretion of the Education Manager and will be placed on a probationary period.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

30. If a student is suspended from school for bad behaviour more than twice in one year they will be evaluated and may be asked to leave if the Education Manager and Head of Boarding/ Residential Youth Worker feels they are not trying to improve their behaviour.
31. Students can be sent home for bad behaviour at the school or hostel at the discretion of the Education Manager and Head of Boarding/Residential Youth Worker. In the first instance, the student will be questioned with their parent/caregiver on the phone, and be given an official warning, which will also be sent in letter form to the parent/caregiver.
32. Parents or guardians will be responsible for all travel costs associated with students who are sent home for any reason as part of disciplinary action.



AHL SECONDARY EDUCATION HOSTELS

NSW

Sydney	Biala Hostel for girls	02 9905 2200
	Kirinari Hostel for boys	02 9522 8958
Dubbo	Grey St. Hostel	02 6884 1624
Newcastle	Kirinari Hostel for boys	02 4943 4362

Northern Territory

Katherine	Fordimail Hostel	08 8971 1404
Tennant Creek	Student Accommodation Centre	08 8962 2577
Wadeye	Kardu Darrikardu Numida Hostel	08 8978 1245

Queensland

Thursday Island	Canon Boggo Pilot Hostel	07 4090 3246
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Western Australia

Kununurra	Kununurra Student Hostel	08 9169 3598
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