
FOLLOW UP REPORT ON THE SUITABILITY OF
HALSWELL RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE AS A
COEDUCATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Report to the Ministry of Education

28 July 2016

Standards and Monitoring Services

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Executive summary

In 2013 SAMS (Standards and Monitoring Services) provided an evaluation report for Halswell Residential College on behalf of the Ministry of Education. This report was designed to review the suitability of the school as a coeducational residential special school. The Evaluation Team at that time was very positive about the College's ability to provide a coeducational environment and suggested eight recommendations that would assist with the transition. This current review aims to evaluate the effect of the introduction of female students in 2014, to determine the continued suitability of the College for coeducational purposes, the safety of students and the College's response to the 2013 recommendations. Since 2013 Halswell Residential College has made a number of changes that have propelled it further toward coeducational status. These include:

- The provision of a Government appointed Board of Trustees.
- The introduction of the Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS).
- The introduction of girls to the school in 2014.
- The creation of a new school Charter.
- The continued development of Policies and Procedures supporting the introduction of girls to the school.
- The current building of new residential villas focused around a central whare.

Currently the school continues to be gazetted as a single sex residential school for boys. The admission of girls to the school occurred with the approval of the Ministry of Education with the provision that the number of girls enrolled would not exceed 40 percent of the actual number of boys enrolled at the school at any time.

It is the view of the Evaluation Team that Halswell Residential College has successfully introduced girls to the school without incident and provides an environment that is as safe as possible for all its students regardless of gender. We base this view on the following points:

- The Governance of the school is provided by skilled professionals with a particular interest in special education and in cultural diversity.
- The school has a clear vision and drive to provide coeducational opportunities with multiple safeguards for students ranging from continual supervision to the development of a positive coeducational culture in the school.
- The 24/7 educational environment provides consistency in expectations and learning opportunities. The school practices 'learning for life' and uses any opportunity as a platform for incidental learning.
- There are clear and continually evolving Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for each student that highlight goals unique to each person, with multiple opportunities for students to positively review their accomplishments.
- The provision of skilled IEP coordinators in the residential villas has provided a point of communication for all stakeholders involved with an individual student, including IWS psychologists and family/whanau/caregivers.

- The school continues to use reflective learning techniques for all staff directly involved with students. These methods review how situations were handled or any specific observations concerning students both with peers and through professional supervision.
- The school has multiple safety systems in place to track the movement of students and to minimise or prevent escalation in behaviours, including those that affect other students.
- The school utilises restorative practices when reviewing incidents that involved other students or staff with a student; using incidents as a learning device aimed toward improving interpersonal interactions.
- The students have ready access to visiting advocates and most have access to professional psychologists (either through the school or externally), speech language therapists, occupational therapists, the school nurse and other medical specialists.
- Good communication and regular contact with families/whanau or legal guardians provides added security.
- The students at the school are engaged with multiple community groups with appropriate supervision.
- The school has comprehensive policies and procedures concerned with the safety of students, abuse prevention and recognition and handling of disclosures.
- The villas are currently single sex only, although the ‘family’ culture of the school has seen both genders engage in social and recreational activities without incident.
- The school is committed to cultural and spiritual safety and provides multiple opportunities for student engagement in Māori and Pasifika Tikanga.

Many of these safeguards and processes reflect current best practice in terms of safeguarding students in coeducational residential special schools¹ or are unique to this College. The Evaluation Team believe the school provides the multi-level safety measures needed to prevent abuse occurring either between students or due to the actions of staff (internal or external to the school). The literature² is clear that the greatest threat of abuse (regardless of type) is between students. Many students come to Halswell Residential College with significant deficits in interpersonal behaviour and many have behaviour support plans in place. The school has as many safeguards as possible with regard to inter-student incidents and provides appropriate follow-through should an incident occur. However, the greatest success to date is developing a ‘family’ culture in the school where students treat one another like siblings to provide clear boundaries for intimate relationships. This culture has effectively minimised affective interactions between students. The incident reports for the past eighteen months have highlighted some examples of bullying and a few examples of low level (in terms of severity) sexualised behaviour but none have shown examples of sexual abuse or harassment between students. All types of behavioural incidents were dealt with immediately and thoroughly.

¹ Parker, A. and Wilson, C. (2016) Evaluation of the Safety of Children in Coeducational Residential Special Schools: A literature Review. Prepared for the Ministry of Education, New Zealand

² *ibid.*

The Evaluation Team were satisfied with the College's response to the 2013 recommendations and acknowledges that some of the recommendations required the cooperation of both the school and the new Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS). Two recommendations focused on the criteria for admission to the school with a view that the admission of students with significant behavioural issues or attachment disorders, especially those without intellectual impairments, would be disruptive and counterproductive to other students in the school. However, the College is struggling to maintain a viable roll and is under pressure to accept students it may have otherwise refused. The school reports it has taken students without intellectual impairments successfully. The admission process and the transition of students when they graduate from the school should occur in partnership between the IWS, family/whanau/caregivers, local schools or other government departments. Both entrance and exit processes would need to be seamless, well planned and provide consistency in behaviour support and individual/family needs.

The Evaluation Team believes Halswell Residential College provides an environment that minimizes risk for all of its students regardless of gender and on this basis believes the College would successfully support a coeducational roll. The Evaluation Team does not have any further recommendations regarding the safety and security of students while in tenure at Halswell Residential College.

Background

In 2013 Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) was asked by the Ministry of Education to review the suitability of Halswell Residential College (HRC) as a coeducational residential special school. This followed the judgment of Dobson J which found that the Minister of Education failed to take into account the vulnerability of Salisbury School's students if they were to be placed in a co-educational setting, and in particular at Halswell Residential College.

The purpose of the current review is to provide a follow up to the 2013 SAMS report to determine the continued suitability of the College for coeducational purposes, the safety of students and the College's response to the 2013 recommendations.

The definition of safety in this context is broad, with a focus on the emotional and physical safety of all students, with a particular focus on measures in place to prevent the risk of sexual or physical abuse of them in a coeducational residential setting.

Halswell Residential College's stated purpose is "to provide special education in a residential setting for students requiring curriculum adaptation, due to their complex needs. HRC partners with the Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) who refer students for residential intervention where it is in the best interest of the student"³. There is currently a roll of 14 students, including four girls. The school reports that all students have an individual educational plan (IEP) and tend to stay between one term and 18 months. The Intensive Wraparound Services (IWS) provides referrals to the school and has the intended purpose of assisting students when they return home (either once they have completed their tenure at the school or during holidays) or when they move onto other schools and/or residential options; ideally providing consistency in the support plans and goals instigated by the school. This multi-level approach aims to provide a seamless approach to ongoing support.

HRC has a maximum roll allowance of 32 students. The total number of students attending the school over the course of the year in 2014 was 29 and 32 in 2013. The school Charter states there are 65 full and part-time staff. Obviously the cost of running a school of this type is high and the 2014 ERO report expressed concern about the ongoing viability of the College in stating the "school has a substantial budget deficit which means it would not be able to sustain its operations beyond 2014". Clearly, the school has survived this crisis and the Chairman reports the Board is committed to investing in the future of the school. The current Board reports it is in continual negotiation with the Ministry of Education regarding funding. For their part the Ministry of Education has invested in the infrastructure of the school in terms of the current building project to provide new residential villas. The four new villas will be set around a whare designed for mihi and other meetings. This building project is concurrent with repair work undertaken in the day school following the Christchurch earthquakes.

³ The Halswell Residential College Charter 2016, pp 5

Developmental evaluation methodology

Developmental evaluation aims to provide information about service practices and the quality of life of people using services. It identifies positive and innovative approaches occurring within the service, and provides a catalyst for ongoing learning and continuous improvement. This evaluative approach will include the perspectives of a range of stakeholders and take into account wider influences within the community and the health and disability sector.

The current evaluation followed the format of the 2013 report and is informed by a number of developmental tools used by SAMS. These tools take into account multiple perspectives from a range of stakeholders; school/service, individual, family, staff, community.

The people involved in this evaluation included;

The school principal, the associate principal – residential, the associate principal – day school, the executive officer, the acting chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the managers of all three villas, two teachers and a teacher assistant, three IEP coordinators, the residential curriculum coordinator, the expert brought in to review policies and procedures, three student representatives from the student council, two current and one previous student advocates, two family representatives or caregivers of female students and one of a male student), two IWS psychologists, the speech language therapist, the school nurse and the school psychologist. The team also shared lunch with the students from one villa and spoke informally with both students and residential staff.

Findings

As noted in the executive summary, “the Evaluation Team believes Halswell Residential College provides an environment that minimizes risk for all of its students regardless of gender and on this basis believes the College would successfully support a coeducational roll”. It bases this view on the following observations:

1. All stakeholders (students, family/whanau/caregivers, school and residential staff, professional staff, advocates, independent advocates and professionals and IWS personnel), including some people who previously held reservations about the move, have wholeheartedly viewed the integration of girls into the school as a success both in terms of their safety and security and in terms of their achievements.
2. The school has put in place multi-layered safety Policies and Procedures that are continuously reviewed.
3. All staff in the school are engaged in reflective practices that focus on all incidents involving students, 24/7 learning processes, behaviour support issues, cultural considerations and observations. This process allows staff to constructively review their own and each-others practice and provides a venue for monitoring safety issues.
4. All staff have supervision sessions and are able to have private supervision as required.
5. There is an understanding that all students will be under constant supervision. This is practiced consistently.
6. The school has developed a ‘family’ culture within the College where having a boy and girl friend is actively discouraged.
7. There are multiple avenues for students to access external supports such as family/whanau/caregivers, the school advocates, psychologists, medical staff, speech language and occupational therapists, community groups and organisations (rangers, scouts and rangers, special Olympics, marae visits, sports groups etc) should an issue arise in the school.
8. There are active anti-bullying rules in the school and continuous learning opportunities (both formal and informal) with regard appropriate interpersonal relationships and anti-bullying.
9. The 24/7 learning model focuses on essential aspects of adaptive behaviour, including building healthy relationships.
10. The school encourages the use of incidental learning whereby individual students can reflect on their actions and how their actions can impact on others. Incidental learning is also a valuable tool in developing specific curriculum skills.
11. Where there have been issues between students the school uses ‘restorative practice’ sessions to reflect on the incident and rebuild positive relationships.
12. The school utilises positive behaviour support methods and consistently applies behaviour support goals across the residential and day-school.

13. There are crisis management procedures that are known and understood by both staff and students. This can involve the use of a safe room if behavioural situations become elevated.
14. All stakeholders understand the complaints processes in the school.
15. The environmental safety equipment in the residential villas assists the continuous observation of all students 24/7.
16. Staff safety is focus for all employees, the management and the Board. Having other staff nearby, especially during incidents has been an important consideration both in terms of physical safety but also in terms of potential allegations.
17. The school has employed highly skilled professional and support staff who work as a cohesive team.

Governance

There is now a Government appointed Board of Trustees that has joint responsibility for both Halswell Residential College (Christchurch) and Westbridge Residential School (Auckland). The new Board was appointed in 2014. The Board consists of six highly skilled professionals and advisors that are more than capable of providing the expertise needed to govern two complex schools. The Board is also represented by both principals and has one elected staff position. There is a very necessary cultural representation and expertise on the Board, and a number of experts in special education.

The Board Acting-Chairperson reports that the transition to the new Board has been successful and they have been able to preserve the unique character of each school in their deliberations. He also reports there are on-going discussions with the Ministry of Education to maintain appropriate funding for the schools to provide for their various strands of support. At Halswell Residential College this specifically refers to the provision of the Kaupapa Māori villa, providing a 24/7 learning environment (both residential and day school), supporting the IEP coordinators, developing a co-educational environment, providing specialist support services and so on.

The Board continues to focus attention on the safety of the students and staff at Halswell Residential College and has enlisted professional support in the ongoing review of the Policies and Procedures documents. The Policies and Procedures clearly state that any allegations of abuse (including sexual abuse) and disclosures must first be reported to the principal of the College and then the Board of Trustees. The Policies and Procedures take into account allegations or disclosures that may involve the principal or members of the Board. Procedures indicate when outside authorities should be notified and/or involved.

The Board is also notified in cases where formal complaints have been filed and where serious incidents have occurred in the school. Serious incidents are defined as assaults on others (i.e. staff, other students etc), absconding, significant damage to property, other unlawful events (e.g. theft, illegal entry) and use of manual restraint. Oversight of such incidents is essential to keep the Board informed, reflect on procedures and monitor trends.

The Acting Board Chair reports the introduction of girls in the College has been “very positive” and without incident. The current gazetted single-sex boys' school status has limited the number of girls able to enroll to 40 percent of the male roll. This has meant the school has needed to reject perfectly acceptable candidates from entry to the school. The Board, and the rest of the school, is eager for the Government to officially gazette a co-educational status at Halswell Residential College.

Staffing

The College employs a large number of staff associated with the day school, residential villas, administration, food and grounds support and professional expertise. The residential villas provide eight Individual Education Plan (IEP) Co-Ordinators who focus on adaptive learning goals (social, personal, living skills, positive behaviour etc.) for each student and provide a point of contact with families/whanau/caregivers, IWS psychologists, professional and teaching staff. The 24/7 learning approach undertaken at the College has been essential in providing the consistency needed to assist individuals to maintain and manage their behaviour and to provide living skills necessary for reintegration into mainstreams schools, work placements, social and family/whanau networks.

The residential staff also include Youth Workers who work in the villas and who accompany students when they access community groups and events. There are also residential assistants, night supervisors and night assistants who provide for day-to-day support in the villas. The 2013 report indicated that residential staff were all referred to as 'social workers' although none had formal social work qualifications. The new job titles eliminate that confusion and there now appear to be very well qualified staff in the teams. For example, qualifications include a Master's in Educational Psychology, trained teachers, a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Science, a National Certificate in Mental Health and Addiction, a Postgraduate Diploma of Professional Counselling, Youth Workers Collective, and a Degree in Te Reo. The Board assisted with funding many of these qualifications, as well as two teachers undertaking Master's in Special Education and continues to support Professional Development (PD) through an annual week long PD training event and PD days four times a year. The staff are able to identify their own training needs at their annual performance reviews. Informal training ideas can be incorporated into the PD training events.

The foundation principle for the safety of students at the College is a cohesive team that is kept fully informed. The school provides regular eTAP intranet pastoral notes that inform not just school staff but also family, whanau and IWS psychologists of any issues or observations involving specific students.

As well as pastoral notes staff provide detailed incident reports (also placed in pastoral notes) that include a section on 'staff reflection and debriefing outcomes'. The 2013 report indicated that "staff supervision is part of the reflective learning model, allowing staff to reflect on their practice". This model continues to be an important function for staff at the College. Group supervision for villa staff is provided on a three weekly rotation by a psychologist employed by the school, and reflective practice is evident in weekly team meeting minutes. There is also provision for one-to-one professional supervision as required.

When asked, all staff stated that the key for on-going safety is constant supervision. Someone has eyes on every student at all times during the day. The supervision is frequently unobtrusive but always present. Staff will tag in and tag out in the supervision of students and staff members are rarely alone, especially when an individual appears elevated. The night time supervision works in conjunction with sensor alarms on individual bedroom doors. The night staff are therefore alerted should any student exit their bedroom after they have settled for the night. They also conduct half-hourly checks on all students and note any nocturnal activities

in the night books; such as a student appearing restless and/or getting up frequently. The 2014 ERO report notes that “specific supervision during night time hours strongly supports the safety and security of all students”. The Evaluation Team supports this view.

Policies and procedures

The current Policies and Procedures documents include the NAGs and the procedures listed under the special character of the school. The 2013 SAMS report indicated the Policies and Procedures were being “revised to meet the requirements of a coeducational residential school”. At that time the school had employed a team of experts to focus on the school charter for the new Board of Trustees, human resources, sexuality and relationships policies and procedures, health and safety, and risk. This work was completed and Policies and Procedures continue to be reviewed (as is good practice) by an external expert. He describes the current school policies as the “most comprehensive [he’s] ever seen”, noting that none of the current policies will need major alteration. The procedures under the special character list procedures such as, outings, absconding, police involvement with students, relationships between students, haircuts, student birthdays, complaints and so on. The Evaluation Team agree that there appears to be a well thought-out procedure for almost any situation.

Policies and Procedures documents (including the NAGs and special character procedures) are available on eTAP, the intranet system which is accessible to all staff. Training in Policies and Procedures occurs as part of the induction of new staff⁴, through PD events and are available for discussion during staff meetings and supervision.

The Policies and Procedures relating to the bid for co-educational status mirror the practice in the school of discouraging intimate relationships between students⁵ and include safeguards relating to abuse (including sexual abuse) and disclosures⁶.

⁴ Induction Procedure Checklist (NAG 3)

⁵ Special Character Procedures - relationships between students, Student Code of Conduct.

⁶ Current Policies (document) - allegations of sexual abuse (staff), Policies and Procedures - allegations of sexual abuse, protected disclosures (under review), child protection policy and child protection guidelines, NAG 1 – child abuse, suspected or disclosed, NAG 3 – staff safety procedures, Special Character – student rights procedure, relationships between students procedures.

Family/whanau/caregiver and community connections

The 2013 SAMS report indicated that the College was practiced in maintaining good connections with both family/whanau and the community generally. The IEP coordinators are responsible for maintaining a good flow of communication with family/whanau/caregivers and IWS psychologists. These were maintained through direct conversations (telephone, teleconferencing, face-to-face meetings and Skype) and through email and written reports. The children and young people in the College are encouraged to maintain contact with their families on a regular basis. Some students ring their parents every day. The IEP coordinators will arrange family contacts where needed or provide supervision if required.

Maintaining good contact with families/whanau is important both for the young person's sense of belonging and to provide independent oversight. The SAMS Team spoke with only two family representatives of female students during this follow-up review and one parent of a male student, but all were very happy with the level of communication provided by the College and the contact they had with their young person. For their part the College will inform family members (or guardians) of any significant event (positive or otherwise) involving their young person and keep them up-to-date on progress.

All family representatives spoken to believe the College is a safe place for their children.

Family/whanau/caregivers are encouraged to stay in the accommodation provided on-site when visiting their young person. This is particularly important when the person first comes to stay at the College, but the accommodation is available for multiple visits. The young person is able to stay with family members in the accommodation provided. The Intensive Wraparound Service arranges funding for travel for these family visits.

The youth workers in the villas are responsible for assisting young people to access the wider community. Several people belong to guides/rangers or scouts, some people go to youth group once a week, some have work experience at local businesses, some people are in local sports teams, some participate in Special Olympics and Riding for the Disabled, and others have been involved in karate and athletics events involving other schools. As well as these activities the day school or villas had trips or events such as a visit to Quail Island, annual participation in Get2go (organised by Hillary Outdoors), participating in community markets, fishing trips, surfing, canoeing, sailing and skiing. One of the aims of the youth workers is to connect individuals to organisations or groups that also exist in their home towns, so joining rangers or scouts or getting involved in sports is actively encouraged in the school.

Cultural connections

Looking through the College magazines over the last two years it becomes immediately apparent that the College attempts to immerse students in Māori art, Tikanga and Te Reo whenever possible or desired. Matariki and Māori language week is celebrated each year, with stories, art, waiata and Te Reo. Last year Te Puna Wai o Te Reo (the Māori language class) made a special trip to Timaru to the Māori Rock Art Centre and were able to visit some rock art sites during Matariki. They also made pakau (kites) and learned about the constellation.

The Kaupapa Māori unit, Te Whare a Tauawa, practices Tikanga Māori under the guidance of a Kaiwhakahaere (Villa manager). The 2014 school magazine described the villa as, “incorporating Whai Korero, Tauparapara and basic Te Reo including karakia and Pepeha into our daily Kaupapa”⁷ The young men in this villa are responsible for laying a hangi at key celebrations (e.g. Matariki and Māori Language week) and there is a goal to achieve tuakana (older brother) status within the villa. Encouraging young men to take a speaking or lead role in mihi, on the marae or at social gatherings is an important aspect of developing cultural identity and self-esteem. Young women have also been supported to take the role of Karanga, calling people on to the paepae.

As well as the immersion experience of Te Whare a Tauawa the school provides Te Reo classes and art is often focused on Māori carving and design. The school magazines publishes photos of many of the carvings produced and some were on display when the Evaluation Team visited McRae Villa.

The Pasifika caucus is supported by an IEP coordinator. There are three Pacific island staff members at the College and all assist students to access the Pasifika Trust (where they can go to barbeques and other social events), a local youth group (to assist their spiritual needs) and to learn umu (the traditional way to cook food). Pasifika students are involved in a language week and will learn a word a day for the week.

The 2014 ERO report is highly supportive of the attempts the College has made to support both Māori and Pasifika students and notes “Māori and Pacific culture, language and identity are valued by staff”. The Board of Trustees is well represented culturally and has included a commitment to celebrating Māori and Pasifika cultures in its strategic planning⁸.

⁷ Whakarangatihia: Be the best you be. Halswell Residential College 2014, pp 7

⁸ Strategic Plan 2016-2018, goal 5 “Safe and Inclusive Culture”, point 3

Risk and behavior management

There are detailed Policies and Procedures concerning behaviour support strategies, functional behaviour analysis and safe crisis management. The 'behaviour management procedure' begins by recognising:

Many of the young people referred to Halswell Residential College (HRC) have significant histories of negative behaviours. These young people have been enrolled at the College because their needs cannot be catered for in the mainstream setting.

This is an important factor that needs to be considered with reference to the student body at Halswell Residential College regardless of gender. The procedures go on to state the key principles of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) which has been adapted by Ministry of Education and the College together, and underpin its behaviour management programme. Central to PB4L is a focus on learning positive behaviours and 'unlearning' disruptive or negative behaviours. The school teaches positive behaviours in helping students relate to others and in the individual goals students set for themselves with the assistance of the IEP Coordinators.

Since the girls have arrived in the school there have been new relationship expectations specified in the 'student code of conduct'. These state that students will not have boy or girl friends at the school. When talking with students they clearly indicated to the Evaluation Team that they were not allowed boy or girlfriends and their male or female counterparts were like brothers or sisters or friends. This view is widespread in the school and reinforces the sense of 'family' the school attempts to foster. This view was also endorsed in the 2014 ERO report. The school reports no particular relationship issues with regard to the inclusion of girls in the school.

PB4L specifies that part of positive learning is developing positive relationships with others and where there are breaches restorative practices allows students to consider the implications of their behaviour on others and to seek restoration if relationships have been damaged. There were many examples of restorative discussions with student in incident reports.

For students with complex behaviour management the College will provide a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) which involves a multidisciplinary team. The resulting plan is then applied consistently in both the residences and the day school and will be discussed weekly at villa and teacher meetings, and reviewed monthly.

The procedures concerning behaviour management specify that all permanent staff must complete Safe Crisis Management (SCM) training⁹. This training reinforces the PB4L with regard to positive behaviour support and restorative practices. It also includes

⁹ NAG 1 – Behaviour management procedures.

training in two-person restraint holds, which the school states is used only as a last resort. The Evaluation Team noted instances of restraint used in incident reports and were satisfied that the situations described warranted the use of restraint, restraint was used appropriately, the staff and students concerned engaged in reflective debriefing after the incidents (or restorative practices), the incidents were discussed at relevant meetings and posted on eTAP to inform all staff and relevant parties (e.g. family/whanau/caregivers or IWS psychologists) of the incident(s).

The College has two safe rooms that are used in cases where students need some time away from other students in order to manage behaviour. There are clear guidelines that the safe rooms are not to be used as punishment. A staff member will remain outside a safe room at all times; the door physically cannot be locked. In some instances students will take themselves to the safe room but in others students are escorted by staff. Incident reports are completed when there are significant incidents that result in students being escorted to the safe room. The school reports that the safe room log is completed on eTAP every time the room is used¹⁰.

As well as the two safe rooms the school has Te Whare Whakata which is a calming room used voluntarily by students as a tool for self-regulating their own behaviour. The room has the same supervision requirements as the safe rooms but is considered a tool to circumvent the need for higher level interventions¹¹.

The school has sufficient expertise in supporting people with complex behaviour support issues and has the additional expertise of IWS psychologists.

¹⁰ Special Character – safe room procedures, incident reports, staff interviews.

¹¹ Special Character – Te Whare Whakata procedure.

Abuse, harassment and bullying policies

The school is proactive in addressing abuse and bullying incidents among the students. It was noted in the May 2016 School Newsletter that a unit in anti-bullying had begun for term 2 and the school continued to highlight the need to show each other respect¹². Being safe and respectful is noted on posters throughout the school and is a focus of restorative conferences after particular behavioural incidents. The school also focuses on using practical examples as incidental learning opportunities through use of questions such as ‘how could you have done that differently?’ The school staff highlights positive examples of respectful behaviour in ‘catching people doing something right’, using praise and accumulated points for individuals and groups. In one example it was noted that not only were respectful behaviours rewarded with a point on the residential whiteboard for particular students, but inappropriate behaviour resulted in points being awarded to everyone else (except the person concerned). This positive approach toward interpersonal relationships is a practical method of guarding against bullying and harassment in the school and teaching students to develop positive relationships with others. Students can also earn pocket money for doing chores at weekends.

The 24/7 learning model is a core tool in assisting students to focus on positive interpersonal relationships across the teaching and residential environments. This is in line with the holistic policy of “learning for school and learning for life.” The IEP coordinators are able to observe areas where goals can be developed with individual students and incorporated these into their IEPs. Students who complete personal goals work toward coloured wrist bands (modelled on Marital Arts belts). Students with 55 completed goals will achieve a black wrist band. A rewards system is built into the achievement of each wrist band.

There are specific Policies and Procedures developed around harassment and bullying¹³. Bearing in mind that altercations between children and young people are common in any environment, actual reference to the term “bully” or “bullying” occurs in 34 separate incidents over the past 18 months¹⁴. The reports indicate that staff will respond immediately when examples of bullying are witnessed and will engage in restorative interventions either during or after an event, and will record serious breaches immediately. Abusive behaviour (without being referred to as bullying) was also recorded in incident reports. It is possible that some of these incidents could be regarded as bullying and one staff member suggested (as a reflection following an incident) a separate category be created for specific instances of bullying behaviour.

There were no recorded incidents of sexual harassment or abuse between students in the same time period. There were ten records of sexualised behaviour in the eighteen months with half of these directed toward staff members and four being generalised behaviours (not toward a specific person). There was one incident of one student attempting to kiss another.

¹² Term Plan – Show Respect weeks 5-8.

¹³ Current Procedures - Harassment Complaints, bullying and defamation

¹⁴ Incident reports 1 January 2015 – 27 June 2016.

The 2013 SAMS report made the following observations regarding school policies relating to sexual abuse and harassment:

The code of ethics says, among other things, that workers must not condone sexual harassment by others, and must 'ensure protection from physical, emotional and sexual harassment or abuse by peer and others'¹⁵. All student disclosures of a sexual nature must be reported through an incident form¹⁶. Students who have a history of sexualised behaviours compromising the safety of others cannot enrol at the College.

The College sexuality policy is included in the Code of Conduct for students and also the Code of Conduct for staff. Staff have had regular training in sexuality. Claire Ryan provided staff training that included policies and procedures more suited to a coeducational residential environment in December 2012.

Sexual harassment is defined in the residences code of ethics as 'verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is

- (a) unwelcome or offensive to the victim
- (b) serious in nature or persistent to the extent that it is detrimental

The policy is intended to cover extremes from rape to persistent sexual jibes or innuendo¹⁷.

We saw the HRC policy on inappropriate sexual behaviour. Appropriate sexual behaviour is defined as 'solo sexual activity that does not attract attention and is done in privacy'. Students are informed on admission what is and is not appropriate. Inappropriate sexual activity is described as occurring at three different levels:

1. Inappropriate solo behaviour, which may mean masturbation that is apparent to others, accessing pornography or unsanctioned exposure of body parts. Parents are notified of these incidents as part of the regular reporting at the end of term. Recorded behaviours of this type during 2015 include pulling pants down in front of other students and of looking at other boys while they were on the toilet.
2. Non-coercive mutual behaviour, where consent may have occurred. Parents and the College Principal are notified immediately. We found no records of this type of behaviour during 2015.

Coercive non-consenting abuse, defined as any sexual contact where compliance is due to intimidation or exploitation. Police are notified immediately and parents are notified as soon as possible. All formal interviewing is left to the Police. Sex offences at level 3 might occur once a year and are treated with zero tolerance, resulting in immediate expulsion. No incidents of this nature appear to have occurred in 2015.

¹⁵ Halswell Residential College Residences Code of Ethics, p 19

¹⁶ Halswell Residential College Residences Code of Ethics, p 33

¹⁷ Halswell Residential College draft policy, Inappropriate sexual behaviour - Students

The school health teacher provides a relationship-based educational programme that focusses on what a healthy relationship looks like and provides a platform for discussing the no boy/girlfriend rule in the school. Also, (as noted in the previous SAMS report) the Family Planning Association visits twice a year to deliver a programme that includes rules about touching and self-protection to help prevent abuse and teach students how to deal with abuse. The programme also covers information about bodies, privacy, puberty, masturbation, fertility and pregnancy, friendships, relationships, contraception and sexually transmitted illnesses. There is provision for teaching female and male students separately in particular areas of sexual health.

Student rights and complaints

The College has a clearly student-centred approach through the development of person focused IEP goals and behavior support plans (including Functional Analysis Plans). The IEP Coordinators act very like case managers and will be a pivot point in all communications with and about a specific student. Individual IEP meetings are described in a plain language resource for students which describes the purpose, venue, people involved and announces that chocolate and orange juice are provided during the meeting.

The current three villas at the College are aging and bedrooms have been converted from multi-bed dormitories. The new villas, currently being built, will have purpose built individual bedrooms with bathroom facilities for every two students. Like the current villas the new buildings will have a communal living and dining area and there will be a separate lounge/reading room in each villa. There are plans to build modern alarm systems into the doors for each bedroom to detect student movement at night and video monitors are planned for hallway areas (these are still in the planning stages and need to take into account potential rights concerning privacy and safety issues).

The students have access to two advocates who visit the College regularly and spend time with the students in each villa. They report they have freedom to build a rapport with students and talk with people privately if they desire (but within visual range of another adult). Advocates will support students if they have issues with staff. The advocates report directly to the principal and meet with her every month. As well as their informal meetings with the advocates most students have personal counselling through the school or external psychologists. Other outside agencies involved with students in the school include Nurse Maude who provide the school nurse, speech language specialists who also run a community based social language group, occupational therapists and general practitioners.

Student records meet the requirements for privacy of personal information. Records are kept on the Ministry-approved eTAP software package which has multiple levels of access for teaching, pastoral staff and confidential areas.

The group of student representatives the Evaluation Team met with were relaxed and open in their communication. They understood how to make a formal complaint if they desired and we saw evidence where a student had made a complaint and the processes that were followed. There have been eight formal complaints since August 2014, two involved a student complaining about staff (both were investigated thoroughly and were unsubstantiated), one involved an issue between staff and one involved a complaint from a member of the public about alleged unsafe driving.

Students' rights are also described in their code of conduct which is displayed in prominent places around the campus. It explains in plain positive language how to behave at the College, emphasizing values of kindness and respect and advising that hurting others, swearing, verbal abuse and bullying are not acceptable. It also says, 'sexual behaviour will not affect or involve any other student'. Students are advised they can only visit websites acceptable to staff.

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A lot of work has been done to identify risks in the physical environment. In 2013 a security consultant with national and international experience in female student safety on campuses was contracted to provide a report and identified risks relevant to a coeducational environment. According to senior managers, any identified risks were managed by the recommendations implemented.

Current perceptions of risks of moving to a coeducational environment

During the 2013 evaluation the SAMS Team asked all the people they interviewed what they perceived as the risks of Halswell Residential College becoming a coeducational residential special school. Most people could not perceive any major issues, although a number were concerned about interpersonal relationships. The current Evaluation Team also asked many of the people involved in the interviews what they felt about a coeducational environment now that the school has had girls since 2014. Without exception people believed the inclusion of girls was a resounding success and believe the girls have been a moderating influence on the boys. Here are some of the comments on the school and the inclusion of girls:

Personally I think it's been brilliant... it is also teaching them what is normal. (Advocate)

I'm quite delighted. In my eyes it's been a total success. (Advocate)

It [the school] provides a complete rounded social picture they won't get any other way. (Advocate)

Together we can train appropriate social interaction... it can be a lifetime impediment if we don't address it at this stage. (IEP staff)

[talking about one student] she absolutely loves it there... it's a very loving warm and supportive environment... It's a very good tool for preparing them for life outside Halswell. (IWS psychologist)

I haven't had any difficulties... the boys and girls have understood it's like a big family... brothers and sisters. (IWS psychologist)

It's been life changing for X. Safety is number one for me, I don't have any issues at all... we chose coed for X... I think 50% of the population is male and female anyway... you need to learn to be appropriate. We've never had any issues... they are never left alone. (Parent)

Just before the SAMS visit (and before the school knew the SAMS Team was to visit) the school conducted a survey of all current students (plus one past student), parents/whanau/caregivers, staff, IWS psychologists and specialist school staff and professionals associated with the school. Of the 98 people who returned the survey 100 percent believed the school had successfully managed the safety of girls since they arrived at the College and is capable of continuing to manage the safety of girls even if the numbers increased. All but one supported the application to become coeducational ("only because I prefer single-sex schools") and none of the parents/whanau or caregivers of the girls had any concerns about their safety around boys at the College. The comments from the students focused on these areas:

- The staff watch them constantly

- The safe room provides a good space if they become elevated or angry
- The school teaches 'no bullying'
- No boyfriends or girlfriends
- There are rules about not having visitors in bedrooms
- There are good staff, they are well trained and treat them well

College responses to the 2013 SAMS recommendations

The school has made the following responses/changes following the 2013 SAMS recommendations.

Recommendation:

1. The College is not put at risk by admission of children with severe behavioural problems without intellectual impairment or children with severe attachment disorders.
2. Consideration is given to the implementation of a three month trial to prevent the need for expulsion of students who don't fit, as this has consequences for further education.

Much has changed since the school began working with the IWS. The school roll is small and the IWS is rightfully attempting to keep children with less severe issues in their own homes, school and communities. The College states it "has successfully managed more complex and challenging students than before, [although] regrettably, management of these students has ended on one occasion with exclusion". On the issue of the three-month trial the school indicates it is comfortable with current processes where the College can work in dialogue with IWS. The school states, "this process is not always successful in identification of students who do not fit. [Although], we cannot be certain that a 3-month trial would be any more successful".

At the present time the Evaluation Team believe the College needs to continue to closely monitor the proposed enrolments from IWS with a view to the overall safety requirements of other students in the school and the long term safety of the proposed students in terms of their psychosocial wellbeing and academic record (should exclusion be a possibility).

Recommendation:

3. Staffing levels are maintained at the existing levels to provide adequate supervision.
4. All staff are trained in the new policies and procedures so all are equipped to deal with the changing environment.

There were a number of professional development (PD) events in between 2013 and the present that have highlighted/referred to the new policies and procedures as they relate to coeducational environments. The school states, "regular quality training in policies and procedures is viewed as fundamental". With reference to the staff levels there has been on-going discussion with the Ministry of Education about staffing ratios especially in the residential villas. The College states:

Numerous discussions with the MOE have continued as both parties have recognised that effective supervision is essential for successful management of students in a residential school. We anticipate that the rebuild of our new villas will enhance the level of supervision that we can provide. The MOE are still working with HRC regarding adequate funding.

Recommendation:

5. Residential social work staff are encouraged to gain qualifications and registration as part of their professional development.

There has been a change in the job descriptions and titles of the residential staff with extensive investment in the on-going training of leading staff such as the IEP coordinators and the youth workers. For further discussion see the section labelled 'staffing'.

Recommendation:

6. The review of the Kaupapa of Tauawa villa begun in 2012 is completed and training is provided this year to ensure it too meets the new goals of the College.

Te Tau Kokiri completed their review in November 2013 and it was included in the 2014 Charter. The ERO report of 2014 provided positive feedback of the cultural teaching and tikanga at the College. This view is shared by the current SAMS Evaluation Team. The school states the "the Kaupapa in Tauawa will be reviewed again in Term 3, 2016 as part of the cyclical self-review undertaken regularly by the College". The Kaupapa has been moved from the 2016 Charter to the 24/7 Curriculum.

Recommendation:

7. The College provides evidence of a culture that highly values complaints, feedback and input from students and their family/whanau as part of continuous quality improvement.

The school has reintroduced the Student Council and has three representatives, one from each villa. The student advocates also report directly to the principal and a summary of the minutes of both the Student Council and Advocates meetings are reported to the Board of Trustees. Formal complaints remain low but there are systems of recording observations or concerns expressed by students and staff. The College notes "exit interviews now capture the voice of student and parents/caregivers post leaving HRC. An independent body (usually student advocates) collect this valuable feedback. Details are reported to the Board." As well as these systems the school recently completed a survey of a wide range of individuals associated with the school (including students and family/whanau/caregivers). The results of this survey are referred to in the previous section.

Recommendation:

8. The College invites the Office of the Children's Commissioner to play a role in monitoring students' human rights.

The school has extended numerous invitations to the Children's Commissioner to visit the school. Although they have not yet been successful in securing a visit they will continue to extend invitations, especially to the opening of the new residential houses.

Documents reviewed

Halswell Residential College Newsletters 2015, 2016
Communication books – night book, day book, villa diaries and night movement monitoring sheets
Incident reports for 2015-2016
Residences Code of Ethics (based on the NZ Association of Social Workers code of ethics)
Staff code of conduct
Student code of conduct
Student IEP reports
Plain language resource – What is an IEP Meeting?
Positive behaviour for Learning
Residential curriculum
ABAS pre and post tests
Minutes for Villa Student Council meetings
Get safe
Help chart for students
Students' complaints and grievances policy
Complaints register 2015 to 2016
Policies and Procedures
Current Policies
NAGs 1-6
Halswell Residential College School Charter 2016
Strategic Plan 2016-2018
Annual Plan 2016
2014 ERO Report
2013 SAMS Report
Halswell College Website
HRC year books, 2014 and 2015
HRC quarterly newsletters Feb 2015 – May 2016
Te Kaupapa o te Whare a Tauawa
Complaints Register
HRC Guidance Report
Professional Development Plan 2016
PD Plan January 2016
Self-review action plans

Responses to the draft evaluation report

Response from Halswell Residential College

(Following the draft evaluation report being sent to the College for comment)

We were pleased to welcome the SAMS team to review our College. As a College we are constantly wanting to learn and improve in all areas. We believe that this very positive report is an accurate reflection of HRC. We look forward to the school becoming co-educational and providing the best possible educational and social outcomes for boys and girls.

Response from evaluators

(Following the provider's and stakeholders' comments being received)