

Boarding House Supervisor interview questions

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What to expect

Boarding House Supervisor interviews focus on your ability to manage student welfare, handle incidents calmly, and work within a school's policies and values. You will likely meet with the Head of Boarding, a senior school leader, and possibly current boarding staff.

- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask you to describe past experiences in pastoral care, behaviour management, or conflict resolution.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations that test your judgement under pressure, especially around student safety and emergencies.
- **Process:** Questions about how you plan and run daily routines, activities, and rostering in a boarding house.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions that check your understanding of child safety standards, mandatory reporting, and duty of care.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about communicating with parents, handling complaints, and maintaining positive relationships with families.
- **Technical:** Questions about your experience with school management systems such as SEQTA, TASS, or Synergetic.

The interview usually starts with an introduction and a tour of the boarding house, followed by a panel interview with the Head of Boarding and a senior staff member. You may be asked to complete a written scenario or a brief role-play. The process often includes a follow-up meeting with the Principal or a member of the executive team, and reference checks focusing on child safety.

1. Tell me about a time when you had to manage a student's challenging behaviour in a boarding house setting. How did you handle it?

Why they ask

Assesses your pastoral care approach, behaviour management skills, and ability to stay calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation and task, then the actions you took, and finally the result.

Example answer

"A student was repeatedly breaking curfew and being disruptive at night. I sat down with them privately to understand what was going on, and discovered they were struggling with anxiety about exams. I worked with them to set a realistic evening routine and arranged for them to see the school counsellor. I also kept in regular contact with their parents. Over the next few weeks, their behaviour improved and they started engaging more positively with other students."

2. A student comes to you late at night saying they feel unsafe because of another student's threats. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests your ability to follow safety policies, prioritise immediate welfare, and handle a sensitive incident.

How to structure your answer

Describe your immediate actions, then how you would follow up and involve others.

Example answer

"First, I would ensure the student's immediate safety by moving them to a secure area and staying with them. I would listen to their concerns without judgement. Then I would follow the school's critical incident policy, which means notifying the Head of Boarding immediately, even at night. I would document everything, and then in the morning, I would work with the wellbeing team to address the situation, possibly involving mediation or external support. I would also check in with the student regularly to make sure they felt safe."

3. Walk me through how you would plan and run a typical evening in the boarding house.

Why they ask

Assesses your organisational skills, understanding of routines, and ability to balance supervision with student wellbeing.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the steps in chronological order, explaining what you do and why.

Example answer

"I start by reviewing the roster and any notes from the day staff. When students arrive back from school, I supervise afternoon tea and check in with each year group. Then I oversee study time, making sure the environment is quiet and that students have what they need. After dinner, I coordinate recreational activities or free time. Throughout, I keep an eye on student wellbeing and behaviour, and I use SEQTA to log any incidents or notes. Before curfew, I do a roll call and settle students for the night. Finally, I write a handover report for the morning staff."

4. What are your responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards, and how do you apply them in a boarding house?

Why they ask

Essential for child safety roles; checks your knowledge of legal obligations and practical application.

How to structure your answer

Outline the key standards and give a concrete example of how you apply them.

Example answer

"Under the Child Safe Standards, I have a duty to ensure students are safe from abuse and neglect. In practice, this means I follow the school's code of conduct, maintain appropriate boundaries, and report any concerns to the Head of Boarding or the designated child safety officer immediately. I also make sure I have a current Working with Children Check and that I complete mandatory reporting training. In the boarding house, I create a culture where students feel comfortable speaking up, and I take every concern seriously."

5. How would you handle a parent who is upset about their child's experience in the boarding house?

Why they ask

Assesses your communication skills, empathy, and ability to resolve conflict while keeping the student's best interests at heart.

How to structure your answer

Start with empathy, then gather information, explain your plan, and commit to follow-up.

Example answer

"I would start by listening to the parent's concerns without becoming defensive, and thank them for bringing it to my attention. I would ask questions to understand exactly what happened, and then explain what steps I can take to address it. If it's something I can fix immediately, I would do so. If not, I would outline a plan and a timeline. I would follow up with the parent within a few days to make sure they are satisfied. Throughout, I would keep the student's wellbeing as the top priority."

6. What experience do you have with school management systems like SEQTA, TASS, or Synergetic, and how do you use them in a boarding context?

Why they ask

Checks your technical proficiency with tools that are central to record-keeping and communication in boarding houses.

How to structure your answer

Describe your experience with specific systems and give an example of how you use them.

Example answer

"I have used SEQTA on a daily basis to record student attendance, log incidents, and communicate with teaching staff about student progress. I have also used TASS for maintaining boarding house records and Synergetic for managing student details. I find these systems essential for keeping accurate records and ensuring that all staff have the information they need to support students. I am comfortable learning new systems and I use Microsoft Teams to coordinate with colleagues."