



ABBOTSLEIGH



Boarder-City Family Program

Our Boarder-City Family Program is a vital support for our boarders and their families when settling into boarding at Abbotsleigh. City families provide unmeasurable comfort and support to their boarder, helping them become familiar with living in a big city and in some cases a new country. City families willingly and warmly open their lives and share the everyday family experiences that our boarders may be missing from home. Through this, we hope that lifelong bonds can be made, not only between the girls themselves, but also the families involved.

Katie White, Head of Boarding

Coming to boarding school can be an exciting but daunting prospect. Life as a boarder is quite a different experience from that of a day girl as it means long periods of time spent away from family. Our boarders enrich our community in so many ways and it is important that we support them through this journey.

We have a wonderful program for all new Year 7 boarders. The Boarder-City Family Program is open to existing Abbotsleigh day girl families and we extend an invitation for your family to participate. A city family 'adopts' a boarder to take out at weekends, celebrate birthdays and enjoy a reciprocal bond of friendship with the boarder family.

Rachael Laurie, former boarder parent, cites the positive impact that the program brings:

It was very comforting when we heard from the city families for the first time with their offers to help the girls any time. Sending parcels of goodies to them, taking them out or having the whole family for dinner was very special.

One family even had me to stay at their home numerous times. We have become friends with both city parents and had them come to stay with us too.



What is great about being a City Family?

- You get to know our boarders better and support them as they settle into life away from home.
- Your daughter will form lifelong friendships with girls from the boarding community.
- Your family make connections with the boarding community as described by Sarah and Tim MacLeod:

We had some knowledge of the long-standing success of Boarder-City Family Program and the life-long relationships it has provided others, so when we were offered the opportunity to be involved, we jumped at the chance.

The girls were a huge support to each other in the early days of Year 7 and they quickly developed a very strong, sisterly friendship. Our family has loved bringing Phoebe home with us on weekends and she has certainly become part of our family.

We have also really enjoyed getting to know our boarder family. We have caught up at sport and lunches when they have been in Sydney, and we have also visited them over the holidays and through their warm hospitality, gained some insight into life on a farm.

The Boarder-City Family Program has been a really positive experience for both our families, and we are all looking forward to many years of friendship at Abbotsleigh and beyond!

The connections provided by the program mean the start of friendships between girls and their families that often extend beyond their time at Abbotsleigh. Weekend visits and time spent with their city family really help our new Year 7 boarders settle into their new life at Abbotsleigh. The outings also allow families to appreciate their own city in a way which may not otherwise happen.

What is involved?

- Attend the Boarder-City Family Barbecue on Sunday 12 October 2025 which will be held at the School from 5-7 pm.
- Keep in regular contact with your boarder family.
- Check in with the Boarding Coordinator to see how your boarder is settling in. City families are often a great help with homesickness.
- Take your boarder out for an afternoon, a meal or even a weekend a couple of times each term.

- Help celebrate your boarder's birthday with a cake or special meal.
- Check that your boarder has lifts organised for Saturday sport.
- Check before camp in case they need to go shopping for certain items on the equipment list.

Attend the City Family Afternoon Tea hosted by the Years 7 and 8 House.

What else can City Families do?

- Host lunch for your boarder family and/or meet for coffee when they are in Sydney.
- Assist with transport to appointments such as the orthodontist.
- Provide a friendly ear when times are tough for your boarder or her family. This support can be invaluable.

