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

Report to the Ministry of Education

7 April 2013

Standards and Monitoring Services

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Executive summary

Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) undertook a review of 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 this review is to evaluate the safety systems, programmes and processes in place at Halswell Residential College and to identify what would need to be in place to ensure the safety of girls with an intellectual impairment at the college. The definition of safety in this context is broad, covering the emotional and physical safety of female 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.

We believe Halswell Residential College is doing a good job of meeting the learning and safety needs of boys with behaviour problems and intellectual impairment in a residential setting. In our opinion, with the application of entry criteria that are known to work, the right staff in place, trained in the new policies and procedures and with time to establish them, Halswell Residential College is capable of making the transition to a safe coeducational residential special school.

Regarding factors that we identified as critical to the success of Halswell Residential College as a coeducational residential special school, we find:

Governance of Halswell Residential College has been strong and forward-looking. The Board has taken its responsibility to ensure the safety of students seriously. Trustees have worked proactively in a changing environment to identify and develop policies and procedures for risks inherent in a move to coeducational service provision. They demonstrated their commitment by agreeing to serve a further year on the Board. A challenge for the new Board of Trustees will be to ensure that the college is not put at risk by the admission of children with severe behavioural problems without intellectual impairment.

Staff are highly skilled and experienced and work well as a cohesive team to provide 24/7 learning opportunities for students. There is a strong emphasis on learning how to relate to others that helps to support their transition back to a mainstream environment. Staff share student-centred values and a willingness to reflect on their own practice. Specialist staff are well qualified. We recommend that residential social work staff are encouraged to gain qualifications and registration as part of their professional development. A challenge for the new service will be to ensure that staffing levels are maintained at the existing levels to provide adequate supervision.

Robust policies and procedures already exist and are well understood by staff. Further policies and procedures are being developed by a team of experts to deal with the change to a coeducational environment. Planning is underway to train staff in these new policies and procedures and work with them prior to the proposed entry of girls to the college in 2014. This training will need to be made available to all staff so all are equipped to deal with the changing environment.

HRC has established very strong family/whanau connections through Learning and Behaviour Support (LABS), family support staff, whanau support staff and liaison teachers. This support is seamless, starting at entry and continuing during residence. The college has put in place processes to assist students to stay connected to their natural support systems, such as via phone, Facebook and inviting family/whanau to visit. Students are also supported to make connections in the local community, helping them learn to build relationships that will assist the transition back to the mainstream environment.

The college has a strong commitment to a bicultural approach with Māori students having the option of living at Tauawa villa where they can practice Māori tikanga and learn te reo. Māori staff have connections to iwi throughout Aotearoa. There is a Māori as well as a Pasifika staff caucus which guide the college's cultural commitments. We recommend that the review of the kaupapa of Tauawa begun in 2012 is also completed this year and training provided to ensure it too meets the new goals of the college.

Robust risk assessment and management strategies are in place, with functional behaviour analysis plans in place for all students. We noted some improvements that could be made to safe room records. Behaviour management plans are well monitored and reviewed weekly. They are understood and implemented by residential and day school staff. Staff are concerned that loss of their LABS intake service will make it more difficult for them to screen out students they have found to be unsuitable for HRC, for example those with severe attachment disorders. They are also concerned at the possibility of a move away from the mix of students with intellectual impairment and behaviour problems who have been successful at HRC. They would like to see a three month trial initiated to prevent the need for expulsion of students who don't fit, as this has consequences for the student's further education.

HRC has taken a strong stand on abuse and bullying which has resulted in the establishment of a reflective learning process where students are helped to develop insight into their own behaviour. We were very impressed to see this in action with each student being able to demonstrate an understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour. There is a culture of reporting and dealing with all incidents. We saw one incident that escalated recently when the process was not followed, but generally it seems to work well. Victims are supported and have the opportunity to participate in a restorative process.

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse policies are robust and are currently being revised to include the presence of girls at the college. The current policy is well known to students and staff. The philosophy is to allow for students to learn about relationships and their own sexuality safely without experiencing abuse. Staff have some confidence from their experience of Matatipu and having girls from an earthquake-affected school on campus last year, but most acknowledge they have some learning to do about adolescent girls. They would appreciate access to the Salisbury School curriculum so they gain the benefit of their sister school's expertise of working with girls.

We saw evidence that the college is student-centred and highly responsive to individual need. Students are able to make choices and are treated with dignity and respect. Their information is held securely. They have access to student advocates, but we were disappointed to see very few complaints have been recorded over recent years. While we understand this may relate to complaints being dealt with prior to becoming formalized, we would like to see evidence of a culture that highly welcomes and values complaints, feedback and input from students and their family/whanau as part of continuous quality improvement.

We make the following recommendations to ensure the suitability of Halswell Residential College as a coeducational residential special school:

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

7. The college provides evidence of a culture that highly values complaints, feedback and input from students and their family/whanau as part of a continuous quality improvement process.
8. The college invites the Office of the Children's Commissioner to play a role in monitoring student's human rights.

Background

Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) undertook a review of 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 this review is to evaluate the safety systems, programmes and processes in place at Halswell Residential College and to identify what would need to be in place to ensure the safety of girls with an intellectual impairment at the college. The definition of safety in this context is broad, covering the emotional and physical safety of female 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 within a residential setting for Year Levels 7-10 students who need significant curriculum adaptation due to an underlying intellectual impairment and whose educational, social and emotional needs, including behaviour, cannot be met in their current environment.

HRC also runs Matatipu in partnership with Salisbury Special School. This is a satellite classroom set up at the nearby Hillmorton High School as a transition to mainstream schooling for graduates of Salisbury School and HRC who live in the Christchurch area. There are currently 7 students at Matatipu.

Following the Christchurch earthquake in September 2010 students from HRC went home for a month then returned to college. After the February 2011 earthquake the HRC campus was shared with secondary school students from Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti School and primary school students from Discovery 1, whose buildings had been destroyed. The principals of all three schools adapted to the opportunity of integrating these students on campus. HRC and UPT students participated in joint physical education activities and te reo and tikanga classes. The new girls and boys wore mufti so the HRC boys were also taken out of uniform. Discovery 1 school is still on an adjacent site but Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti moved off campus late last year.

A Learning and Behaviour Support outreach service (LABS) was set up from within existing funding to support the HRC students who had gone home following the February 2011 earthquake. Liaison teachers were already in place, one each in Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington, and the Board already had a strategic direction of more support for transition for students returning home. LABS has

also been used to enable early engagement with family/whanau and students all over New Zealand. The philosophy is of family/whanau as experts, working holistically with them. The focus is on learning support, family/whanau support and community support. Local options are assessed to help identify what might be the best solution for each student, finding ways to make it happen by empowering schools or family/whanau.

A comprehensive assessment process has been used that allows better decision-making regarding options for each applicant. This year the enrolment committee put decisions on hold and diverted more funding to the new Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS). We heard that staff are concerned that IQ testing will not be a standard feature of the new IWS assessment process. The college has developed a high level of expertise in working with people with an intellectual impairment and behaviour problems. Review of incidents at the school has shown that children with severe behaviour problems without intellectual impairment do not do well.

HRC also has a Ministry of Education contract to run a Check and Connect programme of mentors who work in Christchurch mainstream schools supporting young people at risk of disengaging from school.

HRC's current LABS outreach programme and the Matatipu transition classroom are scheduled to close. HRC staff see the entry process as critical so will strive to work in partnership with IWS. To this end 22 IWS psychologists joined HRC staff for in-service training on 22 to 24 January 2013.

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 includes the perspectives of a range of stakeholders and take into account wider influences within the community and the health and disability sector.

The evaluation tool employed the safety items of the Ministry of Health Developmental Evaluation Tool for community residential services for people with intellectual impairment, the New Zealand Health and Disability Sector Standards and the Irish National Disability Authority key stages of intervention to protect people with disabilities from abuse.

The evaluation included the perspectives of a range of stakeholders. All staff at Halswell Residential College were offered the opportunity to meet with the SAMS team. We met individually with an advisor to the Board of Trustees, the College Principal, the Acting Deputy Principal Day School, the Deputy Principal Learning Support, the Programme Manager, the Student Coordinator, the Confidential to the Ministry of Education & Halswell Residential College, subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Senior Social Worker and one other Social Worker, the Kaitakawaenga Whanau Support, a Student Advocate, the college Nurse, a Villa Manager, the Speech and Language Therapist, the Child and Family Psychologist, the Executive Officer, the Associate Principal of LABS who also has responsibility for the Risk Management programme and the Safe Crisis Management programme, the Kaiwhakahaere and two other staff from Tauawa villa. The school roll is very low, but we met with all students at a powhiri to welcome us and joined them at lunch one day. We also observed them going about the college grounds and engaging in various outdoor activities. We spoke by phone with five family members of children at the Matatipu coeducational day school unit and with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Representatives from a range of stakeholder groups were also given an opportunity to comment on the findings and their comments are included in the report.

Findings

The factors that we have identified as critical to the success of Halswell Residential College as a coeducational residential special school are:

Strong governance with a commitment to providing an excellent service for girls and boys with intellectual impairment and behavioural problems

Sufficient skilled, experienced and well-qualified staff who work as a cohesive team to provide 24/7 learning opportunities for students, including learning how to relate to others, that will support their transition back to a mainstream environment

Robust policies and procedures that meet the needs of a coeducational residential environment and that are understood by all staff through training and practice

Strong family, whanau and community connections to build relationships that will assist the transition back home

Good cultural connections to help students develop or maintain a sense of identity and belonging

Robust risk assessment and management strategies, from assessment through to transition home, to ensure that students are given maximum opportunity for learning in a safe environment

Strong abuse and bullying policies that are known to students and staff and that support the victim and are enforced with reflective learning practices that lead to behaviour change

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse policies that allow for students to learn about relationships and their own sexuality safely, without experiencing abuse

Maintaining a student-centred policy by upholding student rights and welcoming their feedback and complaints

Nurturing student health and wellbeing

We reviewed the college against the developmental evaluation tool and found the following.

Governance

The Board of Trustees members are elected to govern for a three year term by parents of the college. The principal is a member of the Board and staff also elect one member to represent them. There are currently five elected members, but the Board may also co-opt up to four other members. A new Board of Trustees was to have been appointed to govern under the new coeducational model but this was put on hold in 2012 following the Court challenge. The current Board was due to step down but has agreed to continue until the new Board is appointed.

We note that a duty of the Board of Trustees is; 'to take reasonable care to ensure the personal safety of children and young people in onsite and offsite educational environments. There is a duty to provide a safe physical and emotional environment¹'. Sexual abuse, sexual harassment, threatening behaviour and physical and verbal assault of children are seen as particular vulnerabilities for Boards. We saw that national protocols for management of reporting of child abuse had been provided to the Board.

The Board has worked proactively in a changing environment to identify and manage these inherent risks. Following the Review of Residential Special Schools the Board contracted a team of people to assist with developing new policies and procedures for the proposed new coeducational environment. These policies and procedures are being integrated and approved by HRC's senior leadership committee and will then go to the Board for approval by the middle of the year.

¹ National Administration Guidelines, Schools' Charter, section 61 of the Education Act 1989

The new Board of Trustees will also have responsibility for governing Westbridge Residential School, a coeducational Auckland school for children from Year Levels 3-10 with pervasive behavioural-emotional disorders. Halswell Residential College has demonstrated a high level of expertise with young people with intellectual impairment and behaviour problems. Moving to a different mix of children has already been identified by the Board as a risk to students with intellectual impairment. A challenge for the new Board will be to ensure that this special character is not lost.

Staffing

Many staff have had long years of experience working at Hogben then Halswell Residential College. They are dedicated and bring with them a long history but also a strong commitment to the changes of direction the college has taken since those early years. Staff work well as a cohesive team. The principal is relatively new in the job but comes with a background in teaching and corrections. She is a strong leader. The villa manager with special responsibility for sex education demonstrated a good understanding of the context and etiology of sexual abuse and the dynamics of social groups and risk areas.

Residential, teaching and specialist staff work as a cohesive 24-hour 7-day-a-week team to support students in achieving their goals. There is a strong focus on extending the learning curriculum to the villas. Goals are managed in the residential service with a Residential IEP Goals Summary Spreadsheet. Reading skills are extended in the villas with a 'reading mileage' programme. Rather than having homework, each villa has a box of books and students compete to see which villa can read the most. There is an emphasis on authentic purposeful learning, with use of board games, for example. Teachers were described as very good at incidental teaching, taking opportunities that arise as teaching moments. One staff member said; 'there will always be challenges in their lives and these create valuable learning opportunities'.

Specialist staff are well qualified and a broad programme of professional development is available to all staff. The residences code of ethics is based on the NZ Association of Social Workers code of ethics, reflecting the role of residential social work staff. Most of the staff employed in this social work role in the villas do not have social work qualifications. A nine-day professional development programme is run each year which all staff attend. We saw evidence that social work staff had opportunity to attend a variety of other external professional development training courses during 2012. Some attended courses on te reo, working with Māori, behaviour disorders, attachment and emotional communication, interactive story-telling, how to teach children with challenging behaviour, mindfulness and child abuse and neglect. One is involved in formal study of te reo and another is studying counselling, None are registered as social workers. We recommend that social work staff are also encouraged to gain social work qualifications and registration as part of their professional development.

The college is currently overstaffed, having anticipated a greater student roll this year. Staff say this is not good for morale and has created distress in the community of family/whanau who have consequently been unable to access a residential service. There is some concern that uncertainty will also exact a toll on staffing numbers. The principal already feels HRC has lost some good staff, including one who recently received a National Teaching in Excellence Award for outstanding work in the teaching and support of autistic children and those with complex social behavioural and learning needs.

The need for close oversight of students in the new coeducational environment was raised by most staff we spoke to. Current staffing provides for three staff per villa plus one floating staff member on am and pm shifts. Night shifts have one per villa plus one floating staff member. The funding model for the new structure is still uncertain. The college will need to be resourced sufficiently to provide for staff numbers that will provide for adequate supervision, including awake staff overnight. There is ongoing discussion about how coeducational learning may take place in the college. Starting with single-sex classes in some subjects has been considered.

A 2008 ERO report proposed that the Board, principal and senior managers improve the quality of their self-review programme. The self-review programme was modified and used to inform strategic self-review.

Staff supervision is part of a reflective learning model, allowing staff opportunities to reflect on their practice. It will be particularly important for trialing the new policies and procedures and setting them in place. Supervision is largely internal. Social work staff have group clinical supervision with a designated supervisor. We understand that all staff in this supervisory role have formal clinical training in supervision, such as that provided by Weltec.

Staff communication appears to be effective. Notes from the senior management team meetings are sent to all staff. A night book and day book is kept in the villas. Information is recorded on each student on eTAP and this is emailed to all contact staff and tracked and reviewed at fortnightly specialist meetings. The college has an intranet system accessible to all staff and regular use is made of email communication. Pastoral notes are sent to all staff automatically via eTAP as soon as they are written.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are being completely revised to meet the requirements of a coeducational residential school. A team of experts are working on a charter for the new Board of Trustees, new human resource policies, sexuality and relationships policies and procedures, a health and safety manual and aspects of physical safety and risk in the new environment. These are scheduled to go to the Board for approval by the middle of the year. This will allow six months for staff to be trained in the new policies and procedures and have an opportunity to work with them before the college is scheduled to become coeducational in 2014. Policies will be easily accessible on the college's eTAP computer system with hyperlinks to the procedures.

Training of all staff in the new policies and procedures will be crucial to ensuring that all are fully equipped to meet the challenge of becoming a coeducational school.

Family and community connections

Learning about relationships and developing a sense of connection and belonging is considered a very important goal. One staff member told us; 'most of these students wouldn't be here if they knew how to relate to people'. Another said, 'they're not here because of IQ, they're here because of the way they relate'.

There is direct teaching in the curriculum about relationships. Incidental learning also occurs when behaviour is observed and reflective learning provides an opportunity for teaching awareness and safe practices.

Maintaining a good connection with family/whanau so the student has an opportunity to discuss issues with them is one of the ways safety at the college can be monitored. The college has a number of processes to assist students to stay connected to their natural support systems. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) often contain goals aimed at achieving or maintaining good connections with family, whanau and friends. Family/whanau are welcome to visit the school and are provided with accommodation in a house or in one of four flats on the school campus where their child can also stay while they are visiting.

Students all have internet access, which is monitored and has restrictions. They may have their own phones and a Facebook page to help them keep in touch with family and friends, including students who may have left the college. They are also able and encouraged to make calls home using the college phone system on a regular basis. They cannot use their own phones during school hours and hand them in to staff at night.

Students are encouraged to foster the friendships developed at the college because, we were told, many hadn't made many friends before coming there.

The college has a family support worker and a whanau support worker who maintain contact with family/whanau. Extensive use is made of teleconferencing to involve family/whanau from distant locations in planning and decision-making. We were told family/whanau are contacted by a local liaison teacher for input into an IEP. The family/whanau is then invited to join the teleconference. The programme manager coordinates the group meeting and the liaison teacher is often able to sit with families to support them during teleconferences. They also help family/whanau with behaviour management.

An Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS) assessment is used to provide information to help frame goals in the IEPs. Development of independence skills is seen as critical to students returning to mainstream schooling or work programmes and to their families.

Students are encouraged to get involved with the local community. They use their own GP and other services if they are from the local area. Most students over the age of 15 at Matatipu and the college are involved in work experience at farms and businesses around Christchurch to help them reach their employability goals.

Students also participate in local voluntary and fund-raising activities. They get involved in leisure activities of their own choosing. Students play sports such as rugby league and swim. They play or watch basketball and soccer. They go to the local A & P show, to movies or to church. Students are taught how to catch a bus on their own. All students are given a card to keep in their pockets in case they become lost when they are out. If they have their own phone they are encouraged to take it with them so they can use in emergency. We understand students who don't arrive with phones often buy one from money earned in their behavioural programme or their pocket money.

Students leave with a comprehensive transition plan including a functional behavioural analysis.

Cultural connections

We saw a real commitment to a bicultural approach with Māori students having the option of living at Tauawa villa where they can practice Māori tikanga and learn te reo. Students come from all over New Zealand and current staff have connections with iwi in Te Ika a Maui (the North Island) and contacts with local iwi and marae. Ministry of Education Māori Medium advisors help guide teaching and learning in regard to local iwi and kawa.

In January 2013 more than a third of students at HRC and Matatipu were Māori. One was Pasifika. There is a Māori and also a Pasifika staff caucus which guide the college's cultural commitments.

Māori students are encouraged to become involved with their iwi. They visit local marae, and do a noho marae (overnight stay) for a week every year. Students are taken eeling, collect kai moana and help lay down hangi. Some do waka ama (outrigger canoeing). A group visited Rotorua for a kapa haka festival. Students learn waiata and can learn to use taiaha (long clubs). We observed one student leading karakia (prayers) and heard that one also led a whakatau (welcome). The Māori programme is available to any student if they so choose. All students participated as the college welcomed us with a pōwhiri.

During the development phase over the next few months the kaupapa of Tauawa also needs to be reviewed and training provided that will help meet the new goal of providing a coeducational bicultural environment.

Risk assessment and management

We saw risk assessments in student records showing that risks have been identified and strategies developed using functional behaviour analysis (FBA). The college employs a psychologist one day a week to develop and monitor behaviour support programmes. Since 2012 she has developed a number of training resources for promoting social and emotional competence, designing supportive environments, building positive relationships and training in intensive intervention. She also trains staff in behaviour support. FBA plans are developed for all students on entry, and again at discharge so the transition to a mainstream environment is smoothed. FBA is seen as helping students to gain insight into their own behaviour and is used in conjunction with reflective and restorative practices.

FBA has now replaced the previous antecedent-behaviour-consequence (ABC) model, but work is ongoing to make it more individual without losing the principles. The philosophy as expressed to us is that students need clear rules and guidelines and structure but not so rigid that they can't be changed to fit the individual. It is student-centred. The question asked is 'does what we're doing meet the student's needs'?

A safe room is used for students who need time out. Sometimes they are escorted there by staff, sometimes they go there of their own volition. These are rooms in a villa and at the day school without furniture but with a raised carpeted seat platform. They have windows and pictures of restful scenes. The door cannot be locked and a staff member stays outside the door for the duration. Records in the Safe Room Log could not be reconciled with records in the Physical Interventions Register. For example on 24 September 2012 we saw that two staff had taken a student to a safe room but there was no entry in the Physical Interventions Register. From our observation it appears that none of the entries in the Safe Room Log are recorded in the Physical Interventions Register. The Physical Interventions Register did not appear to be a complete record. We understand that some of this discrepancy may be where a student walks voluntarily to the safe room and this will not be recorded as a physical intervention. Staff were aware that recording in this area could be improved so decided in September 2012 to record physical interventions on eTAP. This has apparently made recording and monitoring easier. Staff acknowledge the safe room logs still need to be tidied up.

Staff are keen to maintain the current mix of learning impairment and behavioural problems for which they have developed a high level of expertise. After reviewing incidents they have identified that students with severe attachment disorders do not do well at the college. They argue that an environment with multiple carers is not a suitable place for students with severe attachment disorders. IWS will be the gateway for future admission.

HRC would like to see a three month trial period instituted to help assess the suitability of students for placement at the college. At present if students proved unsuitable the only avenues are for the parent to remove them or HRC to exclude them. Exclusion has serious consequences for their access to further mainstream education.

The current villas housing 20 students were described by some staff as institutional. The former dormitories have been partitioned to provide some privacy, but the new plans allow for 8 separate bedrooms at each end clustered around their own open living areas. This will reduce the number of students per villa to 16.

Abuse and bullying policies

We saw a policy on bullying with a flowchart for action. All incidents are taken to the weekly behaviour support group meeting².

In 2010 the college began to undertake a weekly survey on bullying. We heard that at that time the whanau unit was using a marae style of debriefing after incidents. The college adopted this restorative process of asking 'what happened' and 'what did you feel about it' to help students understand the consequences of their behaviour. This process was initially used only for serious incidents but now every opportunity is taken to reflect on even quite minor events.

The college has moved further towards becoming a restorative community with constant reflection and a continual process of self-reflection. We saw this in action when we joined the students during a 'points' session. Each boy in turn was asked to reflect on their behaviour over the previous marking session and award themselves points out of six, with an explanation as to why those points were deserved. We were very impressed with the level of insight students were able to demonstrate during this exercise.

Incident reports are all entered into the college information system eTAP and are monitored according to a defined level of severity. Incident reports are completed when there is an assault, property damage, sexual incident, absconding or any other incident involving a student that all staff need to be aware of. We read all incidents reported during 2012 and saw evidence of rigorous reporting, recording and follow-up of incidents of abuse. Last year 311 incidents were recorded at Halswell Residential College and Matatipu, the transitional day school. The actual number is considerably lower as an incident is logged for people rather than events, so that if there were two or three students involved in an incident it would be recorded two or three times. Incidents included minor events such as a student logging on to the Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti School wifi.

² Halswell Residential College Residences Code of Ethics, p 41

Very few events involved inappropriate sexual behaviour. Seventy-nine incidents were recorded of various levels of physical harm to another student and 58 involved physical harm to a staff member. Five incidents involved inappropriate sexual activity. Fifty-six of the incidents were resolved by a restorative justice conference between the parties. Six children were stood down from the school as a result of these incidents and three were excluded. Police were called when a student set a fire at the school in October 2012.

We saw evidence that staff work with students who have been abusive to help prevent recurrence of abuse. We also saw a policy on reporting external child abuse and neglect allegations which helps to ensure students do not go back to unsafe home environments.

We heard that students who have been abused are supported and offered the restorative conference to help with recovery. One IEP we saw showed that a victim was reviewed daily after an event and offered a range of different programmes for support.

The Non-Violent Safety Intervention programme was investigated by staff and rejected as not suitable. The Safe Crisis Management process is now in place. Training in this takes place twice a year, but a recent incident occurred when the policy was not followed. We understand each physical intervention is checked to ensure that the intervention was justified and done appropriately and a debriefing is held to ensure staff are reflective and continually improve their practice.

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse policies

The HRC 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 others³'. All student disclosures of a sexual nature must be reported through an incident form⁴. Students who have a history of sexualised behaviours or overt violence that may compromise the safety of others are not eligible to 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

³ Halswell Residential College Residences Code of Ethics, p 19

⁴ Halswell Residential College Residences Code of Ethics, p 33

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

This policy is intended to cover extremes from rape to persistent sexual jibes or innuendo⁵.

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 2012 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 2012.
3. 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. We heard that 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 2012.

The college has installed sensors for detecting movement outside of cubicles in the dormitories. These are seen as an aid in vigilance to ensure safety of students at night. Each bed-space has ceiling mounted sensors with a control panel at the dormitory door armed and disarmed with personalised swipe cards. The night attendant wears a pager, which activates on movement, indicating a dormitory movement. The duty room light has two light alarm indicators and an audible alarm. Records of movement are maintained by a security firm via Telecom. This provides the school with a record of all movements, which should match to the night attendant's record keeping and the night book. These records are regularly cross checked by a senior manager.

⁵ Halswell Residential College draft policy, Inappropriate sexual behaviour - Students

The six-week Family Planning Association's educational programme, *Everybody Needs to Know*, is currently presented twice a year. This includes rules about touching and self-protection to help prevent abuse and to 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. The curriculum will be redesigned to make it more applicable to a coeducational environment. Many staff have had experience of girls at Matatipu but feel they need to learn more about girl's behaviour. We were told the plan is to promote a culture of safety, prepare for the possibility of transgressions happening, provide good education and clear guidelines and design policy to cover the rest.

We saw draft Relationship Guidelines developed in January 2013. They allow for hugging if agreed by both parties and/or if culturally appropriate. They provide for support for friendships and for students to express themselves sexually safely. Claire Ryan's resource *Let's talk About Sex – Or Maybe Not* was used in the staff training session.

Many staff commented on the positive experience of having girls on the campus after the 2011 earthquake. Some boys were initially awkward but several students were noted to have grown in confidence from the coeducational experience. The social skills learned were seen as helpful in their transition back to their coeducational mainstream schools.

Student rights and complaints

We saw evidence that the college is student-centred and highly responsive to individual need. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed by the student and teacher then discussed at a group meeting. IEPs include measureable and achievable goals that are time-framed, well-documented and reviewed regularly. New goals are set once old ones have been achieved.

We observed students being treated with dignity and respect. They are involved in decisions affecting their lives including planning IEPs. They have some choice in their daily meals and every Tuesday and Sunday night students choose the menu. We heard that recent choices have included barbeques, boil-ups and pizzas.

Students and their family can exercise some choice about where a student lives. They can choose to be in the same villa as their friends or to live in the bicultural villa, Tauawa. Their culture and spirituality is respected. Māori tikanga and te reo are woven throughout the college.

Students are currently housed in dormitories which have been divided into cubicles. We were pleased to see the new plans for the villas provides for separate bedrooms which will give greater privacy. The upgrade is intended to provide a more homely atmosphere, with lower numbers and more privacy. There will be another smaller more independent unit for boys, and there are plans to provide a similar one for girls.

Most students have their own phones so can make telephone calls in private. There is space for them to meet with visitors. The principal's house and four flats on site are used for visiting family members, and the student can also stay with them when they visit.

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

The residences code of ethics requires residential workers to fully inform students of their right and of avenues for complaints. A document entitled Get Safe is prominently displayed and advises students to tell someone they trust when they have been bullied or abused. A Help Chart is also displayed, telling students where they can find help outside the college (e.g. police or shop keepers known to them) or inside (e.g. student advocates or staff).

The college has two student advocates. These are non-staff volunteers who gain the trust of the boys by visiting them in their villas. They have a meal with the students and talk, play cards, watch movies or play pool with them. Students talk about issues in their lives and understand that they are there to discuss topics they don't want to talk about with staff. Advocates will then support them if they have issues with staff. The advocates report directly to the principal and meet with her every month. We met with one advocate who has been in the position for seven years, during which time he says he has received only four complaints.

We reviewed complaints recorded in the complaints register since the year 2000.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Complaints	10	14	11	7	6	0	4	2	2	0	1	1

We could find no complaints for 2012. The decrease in complaints since 2004 is quite marked. We understand this may be partly due to a drop in the school roll from 90 in the early 2000s to 31 in 2012. We also understand it may relate to quicker resolution of issues before they become formal complaints. We ask that the college in reviewing the policy on complaints makes it clear to students and family/whanau that their complaints, feedback and other input are highly valued as they provide important information for continuous quality improvement.

Students' rights are described in their code of conduct which is displayed in prominent places around the campus. It explains how to behave at the college, 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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The college is not governed by the Health and Disability Commissioner Act. Following discussion with the stakeholder group we believe it would be of value to formally incorporate the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights into the HRC code of conduct and codes of ethics to help address concerns about the vulnerability of this group of students. We would also like to see the college take the opportunity to strengthen safeguards during this critical time of change by inviting the Office of the Children's Commissioner or the Human Rights Commission to take a role in monitoring students' rights at the college.

Halswell Residential College is subject to the Ministry of Education Hostel Regulations⁶. Minimum standards for boarding hostels require provision of spaces for sleeping, dining, recreation, quiet activities such as studying or computer use, facilities for making drinks or snacks and meeting places. It also requires that privacy is met and that the college has a complaints procedure.

Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of students is well assured. The college nurse is available to staff 24/7 for consultation. She monitors medication and has arranged for it to be blister packed for each student to help with recording. She prepares daily health notes for all students currently under her care and emails them to all staff. The nurse reports that staff are very good at recording injury and other incidents so she is able to follow up on even quite minor bumps and bruises.

The nurse told us she was able to make an early diagnosis of the presence of lymphoma in a student who was then able to seek timely treatment. She takes a liaison role if students require hospital admission. Students have arrived with a range of conditions over time, including epilepsy, Prader Willi syndrome, diabetes, enuresis and encopresis. We saw medical policies and procedures she has developed for conditions such as enuresis and epilepsy to help staff manage these conditions.

A lot of work has been done to identify risks in the physical environment. 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.

⁶ Ministry of Education (2006) Guidelines to the Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005, Wellington: Ministry of Education

Staff and family/whanau perceptions of risks of moving to a coeducational environment

We asked all the people we interviewed what they perceived as the risks of Halswell Residential College becoming a coeducational residential special school. Family/whanau of former pupils of Salisbury School and Halswell Residential College who are attending the Matatipu coeducational transition class in Christchurch have all had experience of single-sex residential special schools. They also have experienced a coeducational class run by HRC with the same principles and philosophy the college uses. They told us:

The attendance of girls doesn't make any difference to me. They do it at 'normal schools'. Just so long as they are supervised well. Matatipu staff do supervise them well and I've got every confidence that they would continue to do so if the college takes girls in

I think inviting girls to the college will be okay. It's good for the girls as it is more normal

HRC has been brilliant. They can do the same for the girls as they have for boys. They will just have to build up the confidence and trust with them the same way they have with the boy's families

I don't have any problems with girls coming to the college. It may make it harder to supervise. I believe it needs to be on a case-by-case decision. It may not suit everyone

I wouldn't mind if girls and boys were together, I would feel comfortable

I'm not going to judge. Will girls living at the college work? Who knows, but we have to try and see what happens.

We include below comments made by staff because we think they are also well placed to understand the risks and appreciate the benefits of a coeducational environment. We were impressed with their openness in talking about what would make HRC safe as a coeducational residential college. They made thoughtful observations based on long experience and a high level of expertise in this area. None appeared complacent about the prospect. All were able to identify concerns and challenges for HRC in meeting this new role. Staff told us:

I don't see it as a problem. I've worked in coed schools and it helps to foster male-female friendships. The boys will be more vulnerable than the girls but they all have a right to learn about relationships, including sexual relationships.

Coed is more normal. When the girls at Matatipu had some education about relationships it was about things like 'how do you know when someone likes someone'. We focused on family-whanau development.

Going coed this year was an impossible timeline. Now we've got time for some reasonable planning it should be fine.

The media spotlight will be a risk for the college and for the students.

The bedrooms are all monitored so the girls will be safe. From what I've seen at Allendale and Matatipu it is the boys who will be at risk. But it will be a more normal environment for all of them.

I'm in two minds about it. I see coed as normal, the students are sexual beings as well. My worry is 14 year old hormones in a five year old mind. We need the whanau mindset to discourage sexual relationships and we need good supervision.

I was really worried about whether it would be safe. Now I'm more confident because of the changes we're looking at. We've got six months of learning to work with IWS and will be able to focus on the residential school without the distraction of Matatipu and LABS.

Most other kids their age haven't been in single sex schools.

This is new to us and will be challenging. It is hard enough now but if we have the boundaries and the systems and the training in place it will work. It will help to normalize the boys and the girls.

Staying as a single-sex school brings a whole lot more problems afterwards. We just need good staff and lots of planning to stop them getting bored in the coed school.

I've worked in coed schools and I don't see that it will be any different. We can be flexible and adaptable. Maybe we could have some separate classes to start with and have them mix for assembly and some activities.

I'd like to see it happen. There is a lot to be gained from the move. We need to make it safe but we can't make prisons.

Staffing is the key issue. Getting the right people, whether it is to be a coeducational or single-sex school.

Everybody needs to be made redundant and asked to re-apply for the jobs so we can be sure the highest quality staff are in place.

Girls will come here and we will use the same criteria of being student-centred and reflective and it will work.

Not sure about coed classes, it may not work for some but it would be good for developing social skills

Summary of significant findings

We were asked to address the following aspects of Halswell Residential College's proposed coeducational residential processes:

1. Best practice for coeducational residential processes, systems and programmes to ensure the safety of girls with an intellectual impairment. A literature review examining best practice has been prepared as a separate document. Aspects of this review have informed the current report.
2. A risk assessment of coeducational education for girls with an intellectual impairment at Halswell Residential College in the context of best practice, and the mitigation of any risks to the safety of girls. Specific areas identified as risks are described in detail in the recommendations that follow. We believe the Board of Trustees has taken its responsibility to ensure the safety of students seriously. They have worked proactively in a changing environment to identify and develop policies and procedures for risks inherent in a move to coeducational service provision. HRC has taken a strong stand on abuse and bullying which has resulted in the establishment of a reflective learning process where students are helped to develop insight into their own behaviour. We were very impressed to see this in action with each student being able to demonstrate an understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour. There is a strong culture of reporting and dealing with all incidents. Victims are well-supported and can participate in a restorative process. Sexual harassment and sexual abuse policies are robust and are currently being revised to include the presence of girls at the college. The current policy is well known to students and staff. The philosophy is to allow for students to learn about relationships and their own sexuality safely without experiencing abuse. Staff have some confidence from their experience of Matatipu and having had girls on campus last year, but most acknowledge they have some learning to do about adolescent girls.
3. The delivery of specific education programmes or aspects of the curriculum which would support the safety of girls with an intellectual impairment at the college. HRC Board of Trustees has contracted a team of experts to develop an extensive range of new policies and procedures. These include new human resource policies, sexuality and relationships policies and procedures, a health and safety manual and aspects of physical safety and risk in the new environment. These are scheduled to go to the Board for approval by the middle of the year. All staff will then be trained in the new policies and procedures so they will have the chance to work with them for six months prior to 2014 when the college may become coeducational. Staff would also like access to the Salisbury School curriculum so they gain the benefit of their sister school's expertise of working with girls.
4. Induction processes. Until recently entry to the service was through an enrolment committee. The Learning and Behaviour Support service was able to engage early with family/whanau, students and schools to help identify the best option for each student. HRC liaison teachers in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland were in place to support those decisions. LABS appears

to have been successful in this role and to have the skills and experience to handle the transition to a coeducational environment. The new Intensive Wraparound Service will now be the gateway for admission to the service. Staff are concerned that loss of their LABS intake service will make it more difficult for them to screen out students they have found to be unsuitable for HRC, for example those with severe attachment disorders. They are also concerned at the possibility of a move away from the mix of students with intellectual impairment and behaviour problems which has proven to be successful at HRC. They would like to see a three month trial initiated to prevent the need for expulsion of students who don't fit, as this has consequences for the student's further education.

5. Regular and ongoing communication processes between family/whanau and school staff. HRC has established very strong family/whanau connections through LABS, the family support and whanau support staff and liaison teachers. This support is seamless, starting at entry and continuing during residence. The college has a strong commitment to a bicultural approach with Māori students having the option of living at Tauawa villa where they can practice Māori tikanga and learn te reo. Māori staff have connections to iwi throughout Aotearoa. There is a Māori as well as a Pasifika staff caucus which guide the college's cultural commitments. The college has put in place processes to assist students to stay connected to their natural support systems, such as via phone, Facebook and inviting family/whanau to visit. Students are also supported to make connections in the local community, helping them learn to build relationships that will assist the transition back to the mainstream environment. Family/whanau are involved in IEPs and support is provided for transition back home. Some of this function will now fall to the IWS.
6. Systems of pastoral care support. Students have access to advocates who are known to them. The college employs a child and family psychologist for eight hours a week, and several staff have training and qualifications in pastoral care. Information about students is entered in to the eTAP intranet and is easily accessible by residential, specialist and teaching staff. Staff are highly skilled and experienced and work well as a cohesive team to provide 24/7 learning opportunities for students. There is a strong emphasis on learning how to relate to others that helps to support the student's transition back to a mainstream environment. Staff share student-centred values and a willingness to reflect on their own practice.
7. Reporting and monitoring. The frequency of incident reporting and detailed documentation of consequences for acts such as bullying or inappropriate sexual behaviour suggest that events such as these are observed, reported and taken seriously. Robust risk assessment and management strategies are in place, with functional behaviour analysis plans in place for all students. Behaviour management plans are well monitored and reviewed weekly. They are understood and implemented by residential and day school staff.
8. Audit and review. HRC has adopted a philosophy of reflective learning and self-review. Staff use a restorative process, including a team debriefing session as each team finishes a roster. They look at what worked well and how they could make it work well

again, and vice-versa for what didn't work. Debriefing is set up in response to events or incidents and snap-shot reviews are undertaken of specific areas. Information from reviews is recorded on eTAP and this is emailed to all contact staff and tracked and reviewed at fortnightly specialist meetings, or more often if required. There are half-yearly self-reviews and reviews of each of the villas. Regular team meetings are held to discuss students and ensure all staff are working to common objectives. Students have access to independent advocates. We would like to see the college take the opportunity to strengthen safeguards during this critical time of change by inviting the Office of the Children's Commissioner to take a role in monitoring students' rights.

9. The benefits of coeducational residential schooling. A major benefit of coeducational residential schooling is the opportunity it offers to young adolescents of both sexes to learn how to relate to the opposite sex in a well-managed environment. Most of the students have come from a coeducational mainstream school and will return to a coeducational environment. Relating to others has been identified as a core deficit for many students. The college has already demonstrated it can successfully apply a 24/7 seamless approach to learning and behaviour management. The restorative and reflective learning approaches are particularly valuable for helping students to develop insight into their own behaviour. It also provides incidental opportunities for teaching safe practices around boundaries, self-respect and respect for others.

We believe Halswell Residential College is doing a good job of meeting the learning and safety needs of boys with behaviour problems and intellectual impairment in a residential setting. In our opinion, with the application of entry criteria that are known to work, the right staff in place, trained in the new policies and procedures and with time to establish them, Halswell Residential College is capable of making the transition to a safe coeducational residential special school.

Recommendations

We have no immediate concern about Halswell Residential College and believe developments are already under way towards meeting the requirements of a coeducational residential special school. To ensure the safety of both boys and girls in a new coeducational environment we recommend:

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 their further education.

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.
5. Residential social work staff are encouraged to gain qualifications and registration as part of their professional development.
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
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.
8. The college invites the Office of the Children's Commissioner to play a role in monitoring student's human rights.

Documents reviewed

Halswell Residential College Newsletters

Communication books – night book, day book and villa diaries

Incident reports for 2012

Residences Code of Ethics (based on the NZ Association of Social Workers code of ethics)

Staff code of conduct

Students' code of conduct

Get safe

Help chart for students

Students' complaints and grievances policy

Complaints register 2000 to 2011

Reporting external child abuse and neglect allegations policy

Maori – Pasifika cultures policy

Medications policy and procedure

Epilepsy policy and procedure

Enuresis policy and procedure

Inventory of practices for promoting social and emotional competence training resource

Building positive relationships training resource

Designing supportive environments training resource

Social emotional teaching strategies training resource

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Intensive interventions training resource

Minutes of Board of Trustees meetings

Draft relationship guidelines

Intimate support

Relationships

Sexual expression and wellbeing

Claire Ryan's programme, Let's talk about sex – or maybe not

Breaking the cycle: an interagency guide to child abuse, CYFS, 1995

Breaking the cycle: interagency protocols for child abuse management, developed by CYFS, MoE & STA, 1996

Education Review article by Brenda Ellis, 'The Salisbury story',

Fairfax News article by Deidre Mussen, 'School denies sex risk to pupils', 13 Dec 2012

2012 Professional development courses attended by HRC staff

Email to all staff from Associate Principal LABS, 9 September 2012, advising of changes to physical intervention reporting

Responses to the draft evaluation report

Response from Halswell Residential College

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

You have provided Halswell Residential College (HRC) with a copy of the Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) report, *Report on the Suitability of Halswell Residential College as a Coeducational Residential Special School*, dated 22 March 2013. The College has been invited to provide comment on the draft report.

The report was tabled and discussed at the HRC Board of Trustees meeting, 26 March 2013. Given the thoroughness of the report, our comments are focused primarily on the recommendations and the overall finding of the report.

As chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and on behalf of the Board, Principal and staff, I am pleased to make the following comments.

1. I would like to acknowledge the work of the SAMS team in undertaking this review. The thoroughness of the SAMS process and the detail and rigor of the report is to be commended. I thank the SAMS team for engaging with all staff and am pleased that every staff member was invited to speak privately with them. The Board, management team and staff at Halswell Residential College are indeed reflective, as highlighted in the report, and consequently we welcome the report and recommendations. The observations of an external and independent group provide yet another opportunity for the College to continue to develop as a centre of teaching excellence for intellectually disabled students.
2. The College is committed to the safety of its students. We are pleased the SAMS team did not identify any obvious or immediate risks to student safety. This observation is consistent with our own view that HRC can provide a safe environment for girls. Provision of a safe environment, for both girls and boys, is an underpinning factor in the College seeking to become coeducational.
3. The College will look to implement all seven recommendations made in the SAMS report. I note, however, that two recommendations in particular are in part dependent on support from the Ministry of Education for successful implementation. Of specific relevance is Recommendation 3, regarding the maintenance of staffing levels to provide adequate supervision. The current funding model needs to be reviewed by the Ministry to ensure that it is fit for

purpose and takes account of the unique cohort of children who attend residential special schools, and supports their special needs. There needs to be greater certainty over the level of funding for non-teaching staff in particular before we can be confident in this area. Suffice to say, the Board is acutely aware that an appropriate level of funding is essential for HRC to maintain supervision levels that will ensure student safety.

4. As professionals and parents dedicated to the needs of intellectually disabled students, we must accentuate the importance of ring fencing funding for this vulnerable cohort of students. The Ministry's residential and Intensive Wrap Around (IWS) services for special needs students cater for both intellectually disabled and behavioural students. Delivering effective outcomes should be easier to achieve and demonstrate for behavioural over intellectually disabled students. The potential exists, therefore, for the already limited resources to be diverted to behavioural students (from an apparent value for money and effectiveness perspective). It is essential that the Ministry ring-fence and keep the resources for the intellectually disabled strand separate from the behavioural strand of students so that they may receive the funding required to support their educational journey and reach their full potential.
5. Recommendation 1 can be achieved through robust entry criteria and continual adherence to those criteria. HRC acknowledge the need for such criteria to ensure only students with an underlying intellectual disability (with or without any associated secondary behavioural issues) are enrolled. The development of entry criteria is, however, the domain of the Ministry and the IWS. We will continue to work with them to affect this.
6. We note the SAMS comments on the recording of complaints and will address this. However, it is important that this be considered in the context of our high level of incident reporting (noting that we do not sweep issues under the carpet) and the low number of complaints the Student Advocates have received in 7 years (noted as four). We believe that the College processes ensure issues are addressed at the earliest opportunity before they progress to complaints. HRC staff record many low level incidences in 'incident reports' and this has assisted our national Board of Trustees to monitor all behavioural issues at the College.
7. HRC welcome the overall finding in the SAMS report and the confidence SAMS have expressed that:

"We believe Halswell Residential College is doing a good job of meeting the learning and safety needs of boys with behaviour problems and intellectual impairment in a residential setting. In our opinion, with the application of entry criteria that are known to work, the right staff in place, trained in the new policies and procedures and with time to establish them, Halswell Residential College is capable of making the transition to a safe coeducational residential special school."

As a result of your report, we will continue to prepare for HRC to become a co-educational college, which will assist intellectually disabled students to live in a co-educational world once their schooling is complete. This means that the College will continue to develop policies, train its staff and draw on experts who can support and assist us in our transition. The Board,

Principal and staff at HRC fully understand the significance of moving to a co-educational facility and as such we take the matter seriously and are preparing thoroughly.

Thank you again for your review of HRC and the opportunity to comment on your report.

Simon Buckland
1 April 2013

Response from other stakeholders

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

GRAEME DANIEL, PRINCIPAL ALLENVALE SCHOOL & FORMERLY OF HOGBEN COLLEGE, PRESIDENT SEPANZ

It may be of note that Tauawa was developed in recognition of the cultural and spiritual needs of Maori students in a setting that was culturally responsive to whanau - Maori parents find sending their child away from the whanau a great challenge. Tauawa goes some way in meeting the anxiety of parents.

I wonder if more emphasis could be given to the role of independent advocates.

In terms of the criteria for enrolment I believe it is important to state this quite clearly to ensure that these students are those who have social, behavioural and learning needs with an underlying intellectual impairment. The original criteria for enrolment still stand. It is important that these are the young persons who can access this intensive service. I suspect that over time the criteria may have been less strictly adhered to by both HRC & Salisbury Schools.

My understanding is that students will be referred through IWS. I believe that the decision to enrol a student at HRC should not be left too late. Following enrolment the same IWS team should be responsible for transitioning the student and monitoring progress.

Graeme H Daniel
15 March 2013

The critical issue for me is that the original intent of each school is not lost. The default I guess is that as the IWS refers the most difficult students for intensive intervention, the students who meet the criteria will have the right of access.

Graeme H Daniel

16 March 2013

SAMUEL MURRAY, POLICY RESEARCH & INFORMATION ASSISTANT, CCS DISABILITY ACTION

Because residential schools only provide a one to two year placement, I suspect most students will come from and return to co-educational schools. Co-education may be new for the school and some staff, but I doubt it is new for most of the students. Perhaps some minor changes can be made to point 5 to emphasis this.

Along with this, it would be good to emphasise that Halswell has an enrolment policy around students that pose a risk to others. Students who have a history of sexualised behaviours or overt violence are not eligible for enrolment.

Samuel Murray
18 March 2013

Following the meeting of 26 March to discuss the draft report, and to add to our comments already, we back Trish Grant's point about the importance of protecting the student's human rights. With the move to co-educational facilities, it is important Halswell Residential College takes the opportunity to strengthen its human right safeguards. Disabled children are especially vulnerable to having their human rights abused.

We acknowledge the work Halswell Residential College already does to ensure students' rights through the advocates and the Code of Ethics. It would be good, however, to know how aware students, advocates, staff and governance are of the students' rights under the two conventions; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The rights in the two conventions provide an importance safeguard for students. We also support any involvement of the Human Rights Commission and/or the Children's Commissioner in monitoring the College.

As mentioned in the meeting, even though Halswell Residential College is not covered by the Health and Disability Commissioner Act, we feel it would be of value for the College to use the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. This would help ensure the quality of the residential service provided and help address any concerns about the low number of complaints.

Samuel Murray
2 April 2013

HELEN MCDONNELL, CHAIRPERSON, SALISBURY SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Considering the issue of the safety of the girls in a co-educational setting Judge Dobson recommended that a more robust approach was needed. In light of this the terms of reference for SAMS to provide research and evidence should be wider to include:

- Visit Salisbury to evaluate the profile of the female students that would potentially be referred to a co-education setting and determine if that would be a good match, and meet their needs.
- Talk to Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti School principal and staff who recently shared site with Halswell Residential College.
- Look at enrolment criteria for both schools to understand student profiles.
- Look at IWS enrolment criteria to understand how students fit in the spectrum of service provision.

Request that literature review to be sent to reference group members.

Recommend that the NZ Commissioner for Children has input to the draft evaluation report re Halswell Residential College becoming co-educational. (Could have been included in reference group)

Recommend that the Commissioner makes regular visits to residential schools as external moderator.

Enrolment Criteria- more clarification required re eligibility criteria for enrolment into IWS and Residential schools.

Suggest Ministry arrange to meet with Residential school reps and IWS referrers to clarify eligibility criteria so all can work together to provide effective spectrum of service delivery.

Helen McDonnell
2 April 2013

PETER CAMPBELL, CEO, BRACKENRIDGE & TRUSTEE, SALISBURY SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thank you for forwarding your interim report on the suitability of Halswell Residential College as a co-educational residential school for young people with intellectual disability.

In making my response I need to say I was not clear as to what brief SAMS had been given and maybe I have been a little naïve, but had it in my mind SAMS had been asked to review the literature relating to the schooling of students with intellectual disabilities from around the world, both in single sex and co-educational residential settings. I had no idea that

you had a much narrower brief and that it solely related to the suitability of Halswell Residential College to operate as a co-educational residential school for young people with an intellectual disability.

From my position as a Salisbury Board member it is now much more difficult for me to comment objectively on your evaluation, as fundamentally the task you have been given omits a very key element and that is the position of Salisbury. Essentially your brief is to comment on the work Halswell have obviously done in preparation for them to become a co-educational facility in 2014 and your initial findings show they are making some progress towards achieving that goal.

In a recent letter to Salisbury School Board the Minister Hon Hekia Parata said "I have requested officials to provide research and evidence about issues raised in the judgement". When we were advised SAMS had been engaged we presumed it was to provide the research and evidence raised in the judgement and we strongly feel for any change to current service provision a new service needs to be evidence based and question where is the wider research evidence.

From my analysis of your work, your evaluation within the brief you were given was thorough and all key stakeholders were spoken to. However, should you have been asked to include Salisbury in your brief as well, I am sure you would have found Salisbury was performing equally well if not better in some areas you observed. Salisbury equally is doing a great job in meeting the needs of students in a residential setting and we have a long established bicultural approach with Maori students. Indeed Salisbury has been a participating partner in the Ministry of Education funded He Kakano Project for the past 2 ½ years. This project has the exclusive goal of raising Maori achievement through robust and courageous leadership with the capability of changing workplace culture and Salisbury has excelled in this aspect, earning endorsement from the University of Waikato in the process.

Salisbury underpins their positive behaviour support programmes with Restorative Practice and does not use punitive measures or secure facilities in any situation. A functional analysis of individual behaviour is carried out for each student where there is a need, incorporating strategies such as reflective practice which you have commented on. I would not have expected anything different from both schools who in my view both do a very good job with the cohort of students they have.

I note you asked staff members from Halswell the question as to whether they would have concern about having a young female family member with a disability attend Halswell Residential College. Overall their response, while considered, was that the co-educational residential learning environment would provide opportunities for both boys and girls to learn appropriate boundaries and behaviour around the opposite sex. In my view this is a biased question and had you asked me my opinion as a parent of a young woman who has an intellectual disability, I would have replied that, given the choice I would have preferred my daughter attend a single sex residential school, as in adolescence she has enough going on with bodily and emotional changes, along with her disability, that I believe she would learn best and have less distraction in a single sex school. Schools such as Salisbury and Halswell do run very good programmes for our students on sexuality and keeping themselves safe.

Your comparison with Matatipu and the hosting of Unlimited in my view are irrelevant. Unlimited is a mainstream co-educational school and Matatipu is on Hillmorton High School's site, another mainstream co-educational school. These two schools are not residential special schools and their students, bar a small number who attend the Upland Unit for multiple disabilities, are not intellectually impaired. This is a very important point and is the crux of Salisbury's concern. It is the placing together in a residential school setting, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week of two equally vulnerable groups of adolescents, Halswell boys and Salisbury girls, both groups of whom have histories of extraordinarily high substantiated incidences of abuse (Sobsey, 1994; Abel & Harlow, 1991; Briggs & Hawkins, 2006) which causes the greatest concern. As Justice Dobson stated "no great leap in logic is required to recognise the validity of concerns having boys and girls together for the educational aspects of residential special needs education, even if completely effective separation of the residential aspects of schooling in a co-educational setting is achieved".

It is important to note that Salisbury is in fact a full partner in the Matatipu satellite class and we have always felt that as a day satellite class on the campus of a larger high school, our former students would be well supervised and do well. You need to remember that prior to becoming part of the Matatipu programme, the female students have been at Salisbury possibly for a full two years and have grown a lot in that time, making academic gains and social skills gains and learning the skills which will allow them to cope and succeed in inclusive mainstream settings. Because of this, we feel they are well equipped to successfully integrate into a co-educational school setting. Indeed, a great many Salisbury students on leaving Salisbury, return to co-educational schools where previously they struggled, but having been at Salisbury emerge with greater self confidence and the skills needed to cope in large co-educational high schools.

From the brief SAMS have been given, is all very clear indication that the Ministry of Education since receiving the Court ruling last year has engaged in a process whereby they can implement their decision to have only one national residential school for students with intellectual disabilities in New Zealand. However in their engagement with Salisbury this is not the message we have been given, instead we have been told no decisions have been made about our future and this gave us some real hope. As a result we upped our efforts to engage with the Ministry in a positive way. Salisbury is committed to seeing the intensive wrap around service work and on the basis of discussions we have had this year with the Ministry of Education officials we felt we had a place in this service but in reading your interim report and taking into account all the work Halswell are doing in preparation for 2014 it appears we are possibly being mis-led.

Salisbury School firmly believes we provide the best educational and social skills programme for female students with an intellectual disability who need a 24 hour residential school placement and equally we believe Halswell does this for boys. We never wanted to be placed in a competition with our brother school Halswell, about who could best provide such a service. We pitched our submission on remaining as an integral part of the continuum within the Intensive Wraparound Service, as a single sex school. However we did provide a second option which was to operate two entirely separate single sex schools on the Salisbury campus. The layout of our site makes this a very fiscally responsible solution and entirely feasible. We thoroughly costed this proposal and it was much cheaper to establish than the building changes Halswell will have to

undertake to become a co-educational school, particularly as there is 10.2 million needing to be spent on earthquake proofing the Halswell site alone. This is phenomenal expenditure in such a fiscally constrained time. Our proposal remains an option the Ministry could still consider had they a mind to do so. Given fiscal constraints and the fact that we presented a far cheaper option, the real question is why they refuse to consider it.

Halswell pitched their proposal on changing to become a co-educational facility because, as the OIA requests we have received have shown, they had been working on this under their previous Principal, Paul Kennedy, since 2011. Had Salisbury known the Ministry wanted a co-educational school we would have placed a lot more emphasis on our second option of operating two entirely separate single sex schools on our Richmond complex. As I have stated, in our submission we showed how this could be achieved, including much sharing of resource and a common administration and all the while being fiscally responsible. However, when the playing field is only made clear to one party then only they are making a submission based on what the Ministry was actually planning.

In conclusion, from the evaluation you have done we can clearly see Halswell is working hard on preparing themselves to become a co-educational residential special school in 2014 and are doing all they possibly can to make their environment safe for both boys and girls. Salisbury school acknowledges they are very genuine in what they are doing and in their belief they can offer a really good residential placement for both boys and girls. However our position, in terms of what we think is best, has not changed. Through consulting relevant and current research and from our own knowledge relating to the sexual abuse that approximately 40% of our students have suffered prior to coming to Salisbury, it is our firm opinion that a single sex residential school is a better environment in which our students can apply themselves to both the academic, social skills and recreational programmes on offer. We also acknowledge the research shows a similarly high percentage of boys have suffered sexual abuse in their lives and the subsequent impact it has on them. This only strengthens the argument as to why both groups are less at risk and more ably supported in single sex residential school settings.

In attempting to keep our school open it has never been our intention to distress the parents and boys of Halswell Residential College and our legal counsel only brought evidence to the Courts attention that could be supported by internationally recognised research, research identified in fact not by Salisbury, but by the legal team. We have been advised by the Ministry and you have also highlighted, that some things that came out in the Court process did cause distress. We clearly did not seek to have this outcome and we want to have cordial ongoing relationships with our brother school. On the other hand I reserve our right to present quality research which supports our desire to remain as part of the range of services within the Intensive Wraparound Service.

Salisbury believes that the substantial body of literature regarding the high levels of abuse in both male and female adolescents with intellectual impairment in residential school settings needs to be at the heart of the SAMS report.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your initial work and I hope you can appreciate why I have had to make some points outside of simply commenting on your work. I believe that without this explanation, not enough of the context within which I am commenting would have been understood.

Peter Campbell
20 March 2013

Thank you for providing more detail around the briefs you have been given. We were unaware you had been asked by the MOE to evaluate the suitability of Halswell Residential College as a coeducational special school. Knowing this now I understand how you have gone about structuring your report.

Peter Campbell
21 March 2013

Response from evaluators

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

We would like to thank management and staff of Halswell Residential College for their openness during our visit to the college. We were impressed by their willingness to name and confront the many challenges involved in moving to a coeducational residential facility. We also appreciated the input from family/whanau members of children attending the Matatipu unit at Hillmorton High School. And we would like to thank the stakeholder group members for their cooperative and helpful review of the draft report. We have been happy to accept many of the suggestions and changes they recommended.

Aloma Parker
Chair, SAMS Trust Board