

Person Nominated: Annamaria Cream

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School: St Brigids College

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Annamaria Cream wears several hats as a very valuable and much cherished employee at St Brigids College. Her extensive roles include Director of Boarding, Public Relations Officer as a part of the Community Relations Team and Year 12 Team Leader.

For many years in each of these roles, Annamaria has made individuals feel warmly welcomed, reassured and empowered: especially parents of boarding girls, from 100s of kilometres away across WA, including Aboriginal parents in remote communities in the Kimberley literally 1000s of kms from ST Brigids. Annamaria outreaches to rural and remote parents by regularly participating in numerous field days across WA, her presence powerful for families during good times and bad.

In more recent times, Annamaria has embraced networking opportunities to help promote the school, support families and to build relationships within the school community. She is responsible for developing the College's internet presence, (website, Facebook, Instagram, Reach) to enhance home-school communications and ensure that all parents can be actively involved in the education of their children irrespective of their current location.

My first affiliation with Annamaria was at the end of 2014, when I attended an orientation program with my eldest daughter commencing as a boarder in 2015. From the very beginning, Annamaria has always treated me with upmost respect and care and taken time to listen to my perspective as a boarding parent. As a new comer to a boarding community, I was very apprehensive when my daughter first started at St Brigids. Annamaria however was very reassuring always available to answer any questions or to listen to any concerns and always ready to greet a teary mum with a comforting hug.

At any time Annamaria is available to parents in the boarding community via text messaging, email and more recently Face Book and Instagram. A recent

example of this was last October holidays, when I contacted her to explain that my husband had been in a very serious farming accident. Annamaria replied to me via email immediately, even though she was in Italy at the time and personally contacted me on her return to Australia. During our time of need, Annamaria was a great support to my daughter, regularly touching base with her to see how she was travelling and putting support networks at school in place for her. She continues to ensure she is coping and asks me about my husband whenever I see her.

Annamaria listens to parents. At the beginning of this year, Annamaria took on board the request of a parent and organised for a pet rabbit to become a part of the boarding community. 'Potatoes' as the bunny is affectionately known has not only helped ease the stress and anxiety of this parent's daughters but many other girls experiencing severe home sickness.

In her role as Director of Boarding Annamaria works collaboratively with her team of House Mothers to ensure that the Boarding Community runs smoothly and that the needs of the boarders are met. She is always available to give advice to her staff via email and telephone and is on call for emergencies.

Annamaria has strong relationships with the girls at the school, offering advice to and supporting the girls in Year 12 and the boarding community. The Year 12 girls enjoy and appreciate her involvement in organising special end of school events such as the school ball, and end of Year 12 celebrations. Annamaria regularly meets with the Year 12 leadership team.

Annamaria fosters relationships with all new boarders and their parents, especially the younger girls. Although she could not be present for the Year 7 girls first 'Night In' this year Annamaria made the girls feel very special leaving a boxful of treats for the girls to share and a note wishing them a wonderful night. At the beginning of each year a note welcoming the girls and giving them Annamaria's contact details is left on each girl's bed.

In her role as Public Relations Officer for the Community Relations Team, Annamaria is responsible for promoting the school. This includes actively engaging with and supporting P&F initiatives. She is heavily involved in the coordination and organisation of the biannual school fair to raise funds for the school.

Annamaria is responsible for the school's Face Book and Instagram pages. She regularly promotes and affirms the work of the school's P&F through these mediums.

At all times Annamaria lives out the school's values of respect, justice, compassion, courage, service and hospitality and supports the school's mission statement by "being committed to providing excellence in international education within a Christ-centred environment" and by "supporting students in their growth as contributing members of the community whilst living the ethos of the Catholic faith within the spirit of Mercy".

As a parent I feel very blessed to being in a parent/carer relationship with Annamaria in ensuring that my girls have a positive boarding experience. I feel very honoured to nominate such a worthy recipient for this award.