

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

VENUE:  
BLACKROCK COLLEGE, DUBLIN, IRELAND

# Irish boarding conference

**19**  
NOVEMBER  
09:00-16:30

Our annual conference brings together schools from across the island of Ireland and aims to share updates on current boarding issues from key members of the BSA team and external expert speakers, as well as giving networking opportunities with other colleagues working in boarding. The conference is suitable for anyone in a boarding role, and traditionally has a good mix of both school leaders and other boarding practitioners.

**Audience**

Head, Deputy Head, Bursar, Registrar, Head of Boarding, Marketing, Admissions, Medical, Head of EAL, DoS, Pastoral staff.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK >](#)



# Irish boarding conference

Thursday, November **19** 2024

09:00 – 09:20 Registration and welcome refreshments

SESSION

1

09:20 – 09:30 **Welcome**

- David Walker, Director, BSA and Executive Director, Boarding, BSA Group
- Yvonne Markey, Principal, Blackrock College

09:30 – 10:00 **Research: results of the BSA boarding sector survey across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland**

- David Walker, Director, BSA and Executive Director, Boarding, BSA Group

*This session will cover the latest trends, issues, and opportunities in Irish boarding.*

SESSION

2

10:00 – 10:45 **A – Global marketing and position of Ireland / Northern Ireland**

- Beth Hudson, Executive Director Specialist Services and Director, BAISIS, BSA Group

*In the current climate, Ireland and Northern Ireland have a good opportunity to showcase the opportunities boarding can afford to the international market, demonstrating close links with Europe, strong academic credentials, English learning and, often, more affordable fees. This session will discuss strategies to boost your school globally, working with agents and differentiating approaches for different markets.*

**B – Financial Stress**

- John Murphie, COO, ISBA

*This session will cover guidance on monitoring your financial performance indicators and external macro-economic trends.*

10:45 – 11:15 **Break**

SESSION

3

11:15 – 12:15 **Supporting the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing of Boarders**

- Dr Colin Gorman, Clinical Psychologist, Ulster University & CEO, Pneuma Healthcare
- Caroline Millar, Assistant Psychologist, Pneuma Healthcare
- Rene Droomer, Associate Research Psychologist, Pneuma Healthcare
- Sophy McFarlane, Associate Psychologist, Pneuma Healthcare

*This session will look at how schools can embed meaningful strategies and processes to promote positive mental health, including teaching emotional skills, low-intensity interventions, considering neurodiversity, and the relationship between digital and mental health.*

SESSION

4

12:15 – 13:00 **A – Blue sky thinking – networking session around Irish and Northern Irish boarding issues**

- David Walker, Director, BSA and Executive Director, Boarding, BSA Group
- Tiernan Mealiffe, Director of Boarding, Blackrock College

*This session will allow the opportunity to discuss current issues in Irish and Northern Irish boarding.*

**B – Boarding bursars' forum**

- John Murphie, COO, ISBA
- Kathleen Sweeney, Scotland and NI & Republic of Ireland Regional Secretary, Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA)

*This forum will discuss the UK VAT decisions have different implications and possible impact across our NI and Irish delegates.*

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch and tour of the school**

SESSION

5

14:30 – 15:15 **Child protection and safeguarding: headlines for 2024-25 practice**

- Dale Wilkins, Executive Director, Scotland/Wales and Accredited/Compliance

*This session will consider the current trends in safeguarding and child protection, including opportunities for colleagues to share their own thoughts about best practice. There will also be essential guidance updates as appropriate.*

15:15 – 15:30 **Break**

SESSION

6

15:30 – 16:00 **BSA and ISBA Q&A**

- David Walker, Director, BSA and Executive Director, Boarding, BSA Group
- John Murphie, COO, ISBA
- Dale Wilkins, Executive Director, Scotland/Wales and Accredited/Compliance

*This session provides delegates with the opportunity to ask current questions about boarding, care standards, leadership, financial management and any other relevant issues to conference representatives from BSA and ISBA.*

16:00 – 16:15 **Closing remarks and conference close**



**David Walker**  
Executive Director  
Boarding and  
Director BSA/TIOB



**Yvonne Markey**  
Principal  
Blackrock College



**Beth Hudson**  
Executive Director Specialist  
Services and Director  
BAISIS, BSA Group



**Kathleen Sweeney**  
Scotland and NI & Republic of  
Ireland Regional Secretary  
Independent Schools' Bursars  
Association (ISBA)



**John Murphie**  
COO  
Independent Schools'  
Bursars Association



**Dr Colin Gorman**  
Clinical Psychologist  
Ulster University & CEO  
Pneuma Healthcare



**Caroline Millar**  
Assistant Psychologist  
Pneuma Healthcare



**Rene Droomer**  
Associate Research  
Psychologist  
Pneuma Healthcare



**Sophy McFarlane**  
Associate Psychologist  
Pneuma Healthcare



**Dale Wilkins**  
Executive Director  
Scotland/Wales and  
Accredited/Compliance

## Upcoming conferences

**November 25, 2024:** Exploring identity and intersectionality (online)

**November 27, 2024:** Annual Safeguarding Conference (online)

**December 03, 2024:** Prep Boarding Conference (Berkshire)

**January 28-29, 2025:** Annual Boarding Conference (Nottingham)

**March 05, 2025:** Supporting international students (online)

**April 29, 2025:** Safeguarding international students (online)

**May 06-07, 2025:** Annual Conference for Heads (York)

**July 07, 2025:** Health and wellbeing conference (online)

View more at [boarding.org.uk/conferences](https://boarding.org.uk/conferences)

**ISBA** | INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS' BURSARS  
ASSOCIATION

167-169 Great Portland Street  
5th Floor  
London, W1W 5PF  
+44 (0)20 7798 1580  
[bsa@boarding.org.uk](mailto:bsa@boarding.org.uk)