



Boarders' Assembly Morning Comment 2026

Friday 7 August 2026

William Paton (Year 13)



Morning all, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Will Paton and for those of you who do know me, G'day.

When I first came to boarding five years ago, I thought confidence was something you either had or you didn't. I would look around at the Senior boarders who seemed comfortable talking to everyone, getting involved, and acting like they belonged. I assumed they were just naturally confident. I was completely wrong. After five years of boarding, I've realised confidence isn't something you're born with. It's something you build over time without even noticing.

When you first arrive to the boarding house, everything is very unfamiliar. You're sleeping in a room that isn't your own, a bed that's not your bed, living with people you've never met, following a completely different routine and trying to fit in, while also being away from your family. For a lot of people, this is one of the biggest changes that they have ever experienced. It takes a lot of confidence just to get through those first few weeks or even days.

But an interesting thing about confidence is that nobody wakes up one morning suddenly confident. Confidence grows every time you do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Everyone here is constantly presented with opportunities. Confidence can either make or break these opportunities. You can stand there humming and harrang about what will happen if you don't succeed. Or you can have the confidence to realise that whatever happens, you will at least come out knowing something new.

Confidence is introducing yourself to someone new, it's putting your hand up in class, it's joining a sports team – even if you're worried you're not good enough. Boarding gives us those opportunities every single day. Living together means you can't just go to your room and have your own space. You're constantly talking to different people, learning how to get along with others, solving disagreements and becoming part of a community. At the time, those moments might seem small, but they slowly shape who you become. Looking back, I can honestly say boarding has made me more confident than I ever expected.

As boarders, we're lucky because we're surrounded by people who push us to grow. Whether it's your friends encouraging you to play a new sport, the boarding house tutors helping you through a tough subject, or the staff who support us every day. We're constantly being challenged to become better versions of ourselves. If I had have stayed inside my comfort zone for the last five years, I would not be standing up here today.



To all of the younger people in here, especially those who are new, I'd like to say this. Don't worry if you don't feel confident yet. Nobody expects you to have everything figured out. Talk to people. Get involved. Say yes to opportunities. Make mistakes. Because one day you'll look back and realise those small moments were the ones that built your confidence all along. And to everyone else, remember that confidence isn't about pretending to be perfect. It's all about believing you're capable of learning, improving, and getting back up when things don't go to plan.

Five years ago I arrived at boarding as someone who wasn't sure where I fit in. Today, I leave knowing that boarding hasn't just given me friendships and memories – it has given me confidence. Not the kind that makes you think you're better than everyone else, because there is a fine line between confidence and arrogance. The kind of confidence that reminds you that whatever challenge comes next, you've already proved you can face it.