

International Student Program – Key Policies

Accommodation and Welfare Policy

- Primary school students must live with a parent/legal custodian for the duration of their study at a Victorian Government Primary School. Failure to adhere to this condition will result in cancellation of the student's enrolments.
- Secondary school students under 15 years of age must live with and be cared for by a parent or a relative approved by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship;
- Students over 15 years of age have three options for accommodation and welfare:
 1. They may live with their parents or a relative approved by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
 2. The student's parents/legal custodian may nominate a family friend to reside with. The nominated person will be required to be approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; or
 3. The student may request that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development arrange homestay accommodation.
- Students issued with a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) will have the period of welfare provision specified on the CAAW. This period will allow for seven days prior to the student's course commencement and up to seven days after the course completion or cessation, or until the student's 18th birthday, whichever is sooner.
- It is a requirement of the student visa that the student have health insurance while in Australia. On request, the Department can arrange Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC).
- Changing welfare/accommodation arrangements without the prior approval of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development may result in a student's visa being cancelled.
- The welfare of students under the age of 18, who have been issued a CAAW, is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, delegated to the Principal or Assistant Principal of the host school.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development takes no responsibility for any additional counselling or support arrangements parents enter into with private agencies or persons. Persons appointed for additional arrangements will not be able to access information directly from a Victorian Government School or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development under the Victorian Government Privacy Act.
- Homestay accommodation is provided by a host family. This is arranged by the student's host school. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is not a provider of homestay accommodation.
- Schools may require students over the age of 18 to remain in their approved accommodation for the duration of their study as a condition of their enrolment at the school.
- If a homestay provider wishes to terminate the homestay agreement, at least two weeks' notice is given to the student and host school. Where a student moves out of a homestay they must give at least two weeks' notice to the homestay provider and host school. Giving less than two weeks' notice may result in the bond being forfeited.
- During holidays a holding fee to secure the homestay accommodation may be required to cover the student's absence.
- Students in homestay accommodation will be asked to sign a homestay responsibility agreement on commencement of their enrolment. The agreement will outline the house rules and requirements as well as homestay costs and methods of payment.
- Students and/or their parents are required to reimburse homestay providers for any damage to property caused by the student, or costs incurred by the student during the student's time of residence.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved by either the homestay provider or the student should be referred in writing to the host school.

Course Progress Policy

- Students are required to demonstrate satisfactory course progress during the period of their enrolment as required by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Satisfactory performance is assessed by the school on a term by term basis and is consistent with the requirements for domestic students as determined by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Students must satisfactorily complete all subjects/units necessary to progress to the next year level or to complete satisfactorily their course of study within their agreed study period as per their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).
- Students must complete the course within the expected duration as specified on the student's CoE. Where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, or a school has implemented its intervention strategies, or study deferral has been approved, an extension may be granted.

Intervention Strategy:

- Students failing to perform satisfactorily will be counselled (in the first instance) in an attempt to resolve issues affecting performance. Students may be provided with English language or subject specific tutoring or counselling to

address personal issues. Services beyond those normally provided within the school's resources may incur additional cost to the family. Students will be given career and guidance counselling and may be advised to change subject and/or course selection.

- Continued poor performance will result in the student being placed on a performance contract with the school for a specified period. Parents will be informed of this and of any further action to be taken.
- If performance requirements are not met during the specified period, students will be referred to the International Education Division (IED), where a new performance agreement and review period will be negotiated.
- If IED performance requirements are not met, the student will be reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for non-compliance with visa conditions.
- Students are advised before they are reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and given 20 days to appeal the decision.
- Compelling and compassionate circumstances will be taken into account before reporting a student.

Attendance Policy

- Students must attend all scheduled course contact hours.
- Students must attend a minimum 80% of scheduled course contact hours as a condition of their student visa.
- Attendance is taken daily by the school and compliance with visa conditions is calculated every fortnight.
- Absences covered by a medical certificate do not contribute to the overall attendance percentage but may be taken into account when determining whether to report a student for non-compliance.

Intervention Strategy:

- If attendance falls to 90%, the student and parents will be notified.
- If attendance falls below 90%, the student will be interviewed by the school principal (or nominee), parents and homestay hosts will be advised and the student will be required to enter into a contract with the school aimed at improving attendance.
- If attendance falls to 85%, the student will be referred to the International Education Division (IED) and placed on a contract aimed at improving attendance.
- If attendance falls below 80%, the student will be reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for non-compliance with visa conditions.
- Students are advised before they are reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and given 20 days to appeal the decision.
- Compelling and compassionate circumstances will be taken into account before reporting a student.

Student Behaviour Policy

- Students are required to abide by their school's Code of Conduct including the welfare and accommodation policy of their host school.
- Students must comply with all visa conditions and must not engage in any activity that may endanger their own safety or the safety of others or that could lead to police charges. Engagement in any such activity is grounds for suspension or cancellation of enrolment.
- The International Education Division (IED) may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment for misbehaviour. Misbehaviour includes repeated breaches of the school's Code of Conduct or repeated disregard of school and/or homestay rules or expected standards of behaviour.
- Students will be advised before they are reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and given 20 days to appeal the decision.
- Compelling and compassionate circumstances will be taken into account before reporting a student.

Student Deferral Policy

- The International Education Division (IED) can defer the enrolment of a student on the grounds of compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the control of the student and which have an impact on the student's capacity and/or ability to progress through a course. These could include serious illness, injury or trauma, bereavement of close family members, major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country.
- Evidence of compassionate and compelling circumstances will be required.
- Deferral of studies is for a maximum of six months and cannot be issued retrospectively.

Transfer Policy

Transfer to a different Victorian Government School

- Requests to transfer between Victorian Government Schools post payment and prior to commencement will only be considered in exceptional, compassionate and compelling circumstances and on a case by case basis and may incur the Transfer Fee.
- Students may apply to transfer to another Victorian Government School after six months (two terms) of enrolment.
- Transfers in the middle of a school term will not be considered.

- Transfer applications must be submitted to the International Education Division (IED) two weeks prior to the end of the six month (two terms) study period. A fee waiver may be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Transfers will not be considered where a student has been placed on an IED or school based contract for behavioural, attendance or academic performance.
- Applications to transfer to another Victorian Government School will be assessed by the IED on a case by case basis and will require documentation and investigation. Reasons for transfer may include but are not limited to subject availability, unexpected change in accommodation/welfare arrangements, unresolvable issues between the student and the host school, or a traumatic incident.
- A transfer to another Victorian Government School is subject to the availability of places.
- All requests to transfer to another Victorian Government School, unless for compelling and compassionate reasons, incur an upfront non-refundable \$515 fee, regardless of whether the transfer is successful.

Transfer to another registered provider

- Requests to transfer to another provider post payment and prior to commencement will only be considered in exceptional, compassionate and compelling circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.
- A letter of release will only be provided for a student who has been enrolled for less than six months in exceptional, compassionate and compelling circumstances and on a case by case basis.
- Transfers to another registered provider prior to six months (two terms) enrolment will be refused.
- Students may apply to transfer to another registered provider after six months (two terms) of enrolment.
- A letter of release will only be granted where the student has provided a letter from the other registered provider confirming that a valid enrolment offer has been made.
- If the student is under 18 years of age, the parent or legal guardian must provide written support for the transfer.
- If the student is under 18 years of age and is not cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated relative, the valid enrolment offer must confirm that the provider accepts responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements.
- A letter of release will not be granted where tuition or other fees are in arrears or the student has been or is likely to be reported for breach of visa conditions.
- Transfer applications will be processed within ten working days from the receipt of a complete application and application fee.
- If the request to transfer is refused, students will be given 20 days to appeal the decision.

Student Travel Policy

This policy applies to students who have been issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare Arrangements (CAAW). The policy does not apply to students residing with a parent or a Department of Immigration and Citizenship approved relative.

- Any trip taken within Victoria or interstate must be done with the written approval of the student's parents and be endorsed by the school Principal or Assistant Principal. In the case where a student is living in a homestay, the homestay provider should be advised of the arrangements and be provided with details of the student's travel plan.
- Students will be able to travel, subject to the above approvals, in the following circumstances:
 - the student is travelling with his or her homestay family on a holiday.
 - the student is travelling on a school camp or excursion supervised by school staff.
 - the student is travelling with a person(s) approved by the student's school principal and holding a Working with Children check.
 - the student is travelling on a commercial interstate package tour which is provided by a registered company, is specifically designed for students and includes appropriate supervision or chaperone arrangement, and involves no independent travel, i.e. pick up and drop off is at the homestay, the school or an assembly point designated by the school.
 - the student is travelling in the company of a direct family member over 18 years of age (parent, sibling, aunt/uncle, etc) who will accept responsibility for the student during the travel.
 - the student is travelling to a sporting or club event as part of a local team or group and will be under the care and supervision of the club or association during the trip. In these circumstances it is expected that students will be supervised at all times by adults who hold the required Working with Children check.

Complaints and Appeals Policy

- The International Education Division is committed to having mechanisms to deal with complaints impartially, promptly and confidentially.
- The formal investigation of a complaint will require that details of the complaint be lodged in writing.

- The handling of the complaint will commence within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- There is no cost associated with lodging a complaint with the IED.
- The identity of the complainant will be protected unless permission for disclosure is given.
- The IED will maintain a student's enrolment and accommodation/welfare arrangement while the internal complaints process is ongoing unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply. This does not necessarily mean that a student must remain in class.
- Complainants will be provided with a written statement of the outcome, including details and reasons for the decision.
- Complainants have the right of appeal and will be advised of further avenues of review.
- The IED has arrangements in place for an independent external body to hear the complaints or appeal if the internal complaints process has been completed and the student remains dissatisfied.
- If the outcome of a complaint, either external or internal, is favourable to the student, the IED will immediately advise the student of this and implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.
- This agreement, and the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

Privacy Policy

- The enrolment form asks for personal information about the applicant as well as the applicant's family members and other carers. The purpose of collecting this information is to allow the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victorian Government Schools, and other contracted organisations to register the applicant and allocate staff and resources to ensure their educational and welfare needs are met. The information collected may be shared with other Government departments and contracted organisations concerned with the administration of the International Student Program (ISP).

Student details

- Includes information about a person's country of birth, English language level and current level of study. This is used by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to determine the appropriate type and level of schooling for the applicant. All of this information is kept strictly confidential and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will not disclose it without consent, unless required by law.

Emergency contacts

- These are people whom the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development may need to contact in an emergency. Please ensure the people named are aware that they have been nominated and agree to their details being provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Family details

- This information is collected to enable information about student enrolment and progress to be supplied to the applicant's parents. The International Education Division should be informed as soon as possible about any changes to family arrangements. Information will only be given to those nominated on the application form.

Health information

- Health information helps the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff to care properly for the applicant. Please include information about any medical condition or disability. Information regarding the applicant's name, date of birth, gender and health cover status is required by the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) provider for the provision of medical insurance.

Visa status

- This information enables the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to process the applicant's enrolment and comply with Department of Immigration and Citizenship regulations.
- The Department may use this information at any time during the enrolment period to confirm the validity of the visa.

Welfare and arrival

- This information will ensure the applicant's safety and welfare on arrival and their appropriate living arrangements.

School placement

- This information enables the applicant to express a preference for a particular school.

Dependant students

- This information is collected to ensure the appropriate fee is charged to the applicant and to ensure compliance with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship regulations.

Information

- Information on the privacy policy can be obtained from the Department's Privacy Manager on +613 9637 3601.