

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' (FFPOS) HANDBOOK 2010



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# Introduction

Welcome to St Catherine's School in Melbourne. We hope that all students arriving at the School from overseas will respond positively to the exciting and challenging opportunity of living and studying in Australia. This Handbook is intended to help you as a St Catherine's student. We hope you enjoy living and learning in a cultural setting in Melbourne, Australia.

St Catherine's School recognises the special contribution that can be made to the School by our international students. The St Catherine's School Community is enriched by the cultural experience and perspectives that result when its student body is diverse.

All international students or Full-Fee Paying International Students (FFPOS) at St Catherine's must comply with one of the following accommodation options as outlined in our Accommodation Policy and as required by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the School:

- Board at Illawarra, the School's Boarding House, in Illawarra Crescent off St Georges Road, Toorak;
- Reside in homestay accommodation approved by the School; or
- Reside with a parent or a member of the student's immediate family who is over 25 years of age.

In recognising the importance of integrating international students successfully into our community, the School has established a number of programs that seek to deal with the special needs of our international students, which include:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) as a core subject from Years 9-12
- Additional English Language Support classes at Years 9 and 10
- Intensive English Tuition where required
- The International Students' Club

- Modification of the curriculum where identified by the subject teacher in conjunction with the International Students' Coordinator
- Facilitating language studies beyond the School's Curriculum
- A resource room for International Students in close proximity to the International Students' Coordinator to help oversee transition and welfare.

All FFPOS students who have applied to attend St Catherine's School must, before their enrolment, complete an AEAS (Australian Education Assessment Services) test to help determine their preparedness for an education at the School.

As detailed in the School's Admissions Policy, all students are expected to participate fully in the academic program, align themselves with the School's Values and Policies, comply with compulsory activities and participate in co-curricular opportunities. This is seen as an essential feature of their schooling at St Catherine's and a means by which they can maximise the experience and contribute to the culture of the School itself.

To assist with their integration, international students - as with local students - are advised to familiarise themselves with the expected code of behaviour, rules and daily routines of the School, as outlined in the **Homework Record Book**. For all students new to St Catherine's School, this is a helpful resource that covers general conduct, absence procedures, uniform requirements, illness, offences and other rules. The St Catherine's website also has a **Living In Melbourne** resource available.

For those who have chosen to reside in the School's Boarding House, the **Boarding House Handbook**, available on our website, provides an invaluable guide to virtually every aspect of life as a Boarder including outings, routines, meal and study times and practical matters such as television, pantry, laundry, security and access to computers. It also contains critical information about Guardianship expectations (detailed later in this Handbook).

Students in Years 11 and 12 will find important information contained in the **VCE Handbook**.

Additionally, all new international students are provided with a **Welcome Book** on their arrival at the International Students' Orientation session.

International students are reminded of the importance of compliance with clearly stipulated Government regulations that pertain most essentially to required attendance, accommodation, Visas and academic performance. There are serious consequences if these are not followed. There are sections in this Handbook that deal with the processes required by St Catherine's School to ensure compliance with the Act and a student's responsibilities to DIAC. Please note in particular those rules about early departure from the School Terms. Students wishing to leave School and return home prior to the term break holiday, or to delay their return to School following a break, **must** seek the Principal's approval in writing from their parents in advance. All students are expected to attend School until the last day of the School term. Students not complying with the early departure rules will be deemed as absent from School.

Any of the following key personnel at St Catherine's would be pleased to assist with enquiries in their designated area of responsibility:

Ms Amanda Bennett (Registrar)

Mr Paul Cross (Head of Senior School: Director of Student Services and Activities)

Mrs Patty Wallace-Smith (Director of Curriculum and VCE)

Mrs Lyn Henshall (Director of Student Wellbeing)

Ms Lana Laios (International Students' Coordinator)

Mrs Sue Collister (Director of Boarding Services)

Mrs Connie Giannes (Admissions Officer).

We hope that this Handbook provides an appropriate guide to address the particular needs of our international students and that their stay with us at St Catherine's School will be a happy and memorable experience for them.

With very best wishes

Patty Wallace-Smith

Director of Curriculum and VCE

Paul Cross

Head of Senior School: Director of Student Services and Activities

# Applying for a Position at St Catherine's School

St Catherine's School welcomes international students and endeavours to assist with the transition of all new students into the School in every possible way. When sending an Application for Enrolment Form to the Admissions Office, international students are asked to include the following information; failure to do so may result in the application process being delayed:

A completed Application for Enrolment Form signed by parents,

AEAS Test Results,

Full details of an English speaking local Guardian (including address, telephone numbers and names),

A copy of the student's Passport,

A copy of the parent's Passport or identification with signature,

A certified copy of the student's most recent School Report,

A certified translation of this same Report if applicable.

Once a student has paid the appropriate fee and is enrolled with the School, we will provide an Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCOE) which enables a student to apply for a Visa. It is the responsibility of the applicant and her family to negotiate with the DIAC.

# Visa Requirements – Student Visa For Studying In Australia

To study in Australia, students are required to have a Student Visa which is issued and administered by DIAC. As part of its ongoing obligations to DIAC in managing its international students, St Catherine's must report the following breaches of a student's Visa conditions:

## **Continued non-attendance, unsatisfactory attendance and unsatisfactory academic performance**

If a student's daily attendance or academic performance is considered unsatisfactory:

Counselling and written warnings will be issued; and

The Guardian and parents will be notified immediately.

Failure to observe the warnings may result in the student being required to report to Immigration to explain the absence, which could result in cancellation of the Visa.

General enquiries about Visa applications and conditions should be addressed to DIAC- <http://www.immi.gov.au/>

International students studying VCE must also be familiar and compliant with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the School's expectations regarding attendance and completion of work and assessment requirements.

## Role of the Guardian

DIAC requires St Catherine's students to have an appointed Guardian if they do not reside with a parent and for the School to keep specific information in relation to its students. This information needs to be accurate and kept up-to-date. Parents must be aware

of all living arrangements. The School has the right to stipulate that a living arrangement is not satisfactory, should the student not reside in the School's Boarding House, Illawarra.

The School requires that all Guardians are over 25 years of age, speak English and reside in Melbourne; they must be easily contactable and prepared to make travel arrangements for and, if required, look after their ward during holiday and exeat periods. All Guardians must have completed a Police Check/ Working with Children Check and be approved by the School.

All the information in relation to the student must be accurate and current; if any changes occur during the year, parents must notify the School within seven days that they are aware of and agree to the changes. **In any emergency, the School must be able to contact its students and their families, and the School must have accurate information.**

The School requires that Guardians, as part of their obligations towards international students, must:

- Take responsibility for the student's welfare, discipline, academic and social progress while in Melbourne
- Ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in her studies
- Attend Oral Report Evenings
- Act as a contact point for the School at all times
- Arrange for the student's leisure activities and travel/accommodation during mid-term Boarding House closure and term holidays, if required. This includes arranging suitable transport to and from the airport as necessary. Boarding staff are generally not available to transport students to and from the airport
- If requested, control the student's allowance and, in agreement with the Guardian, arrange for the purchase of necessary items, such as books and clothing
- Sign documents as necessary. Guardians may be asked to sign medical forms, bank and passport forms

- Ensure in the event of illness that their student receives appropriate medical attention and care. When necessary, Guardians will be required to take the ill student home for the period of recovery
- Communicate regularly with the Boarding House or the School about the welfare of the student. Letters and photographs, as well as telephone calls, are important
- Ensure that their student is home at agreed times and that her whereabouts is known at all times
- If their student resides in the Boarding House during term time, it is appropriate for Guardians to phone on a regular basis and perhaps take the student home for a weekend or out for an afternoon during the week or on the weekend
- Act as the student's representative in relation to Visa, immigration and legal matters in Melbourne
- If the Guardian is absent for an extended period of time, the School asks that a replacement Guardian be nominated.

## Accommodation Requirements

Parents must provide the School with a change of accommodation arrangements prior to relocation and the School must receive notification from parents that they are aware and approve of the new housing arrangements. Ultimately, the School has the authority to decide if the new arrangements are appropriate.

All FFPOS students planning to study at St Catherine's School are required to have Guardians who are agreed to between the School and parents.

## Boarding at St Catherine's School: Illawarra

All international students who board at Illawarra, St Catherine's Boarding House, will find a happy environment in which to make lasting friends and be supported during their time in Australia.

Years 10-12 FFPOS students are expected to live at the School's Boarding House but can choose to live with homestay families approved by St Catherine's School. All Years 7-9 FFPOS students must live at Illawarra, the School's Boarding House. FFPOS students in Prep to Year 6 must live with their parents as their homestay arrangement.

The Director of Boarding Services (assisted by a Deputy and a number of Senior and Junior Boarding House Mistresses) monitors the health and welfare of the students in her charge with diligence and care. The School values and respects the trust placed in it as a provider for international students and seeks to carry out its responsibilities in this regard with sensitivity and close attention.

Twice a year, Boarding House Reports are sent home. A copy is also issued to the Guardian where applicable. These are included as part of the academic reporting structure of the School. Boarders'

Oral Report opportunities occur twice a year on the final school day of Terms 1 and 3. Guardians are encouraged to attend these interviews.

Please note: The St Catherine's **Boarding House Handbook** gives a detailed account of advice and guidelines relating to Boarding students and is available on our website.

## Homestay: St Catherine's School's Expectations

The homestay needs to be with a registered homestay provider; should this not be the case, a written agreement must be signed with the School outlining the homestay's duty and responsibility to the student and the student's duty and responsibility to the homestay family.

All homestay arrangements must meet the School's expectations regarding location and facilities, and also meet government expectations regarding the sighting of **Police Checks** and **Working with Children Checks**. All persons 18 years of age and over who are residing at the homestay premises will be subject to a Police Check.

All homestay arrangements are reviewed and approved by the School on the basis of the provision of evidence regarding FFPOS status.

When approving a homestay, the School's representative checks:

- Cleanliness and laundry facilities
- Security
- School holiday arrangements
- Evidence of occupants at address
- Facilities such as furniture, internet access, telephone, study spaces
- Appropriate space and privacy

- Proximity to appropriate transport
- Evidence of a supportive environment.

Students are not permitted to live alone or to share accommodation with anyone under 25 years of age.

Prior to commencement at St Catherine's the Registrar will contact the parents or Guardian to relay the suitability of the prospective homestay.

## Monitoring Homestay

In line with its duty of care, St Catherine's School monitors each student's homestay:

- Following the initial approval, each homestay is visited to ensure that the student is happy and that the homestay provides appropriate facilities
- The Registrar will meet with the student regularly to monitor the homestay and discuss general issues, such as, but not limited to, the provision of food, weekend supervision, activities and heating
- The Registrar will meet the student to discuss holiday arrangements
- The Registrar will ring each homestay at least once a term and visit each homestay at least once a year in order to check that the conditions remain satisfactory
- In the event that the School's representative, the student or the student's parents or Guardian is dissatisfied with a homestay, the School will source an alternative homestay as quickly as possible. In this event, at least two weeks' notice of withdrawal will be given to the homestay
- In the event that the homestay fails to provide appropriate support or facilities, it may be necessary to relocate the student to the School's Boarding House as an interim but

immediate measure until a more suitable homestay is found

- In line with the St Catherine's School's Grievance Policy, in case of a dispute or disagreement between the student and homestay provider, the Registrar will liaise with both parties to ensure the issue is resolved.

The homestay family is expected to:

- Liaise with the Guardian in relation to travel and holiday arrangements
- Contact the Guardian and Registrar if there are any issues of concern regarding the student's welfare
- Care for the student in case of illness or injury, consult accordingly with the Guardian and inform the School as to the nature of the illness and the wellbeing of the student.

## Conditions of Continuing Enrolment at St Catherine's School

On acceptance of a student enrolment offer at St Catherine's School, parents, Guardians and students agree to abide by the conditions outlined in the School Business Practices and School Policies and guidelines. This includes the full and timely payment of fees and charges, adherence to behavioural, attendance and accommodation requirements. These requirements are outlined in appropriate sections of this document and relevant School policy documents.

A condition of continued enrolment at St Catherine's School is that parents agree to adhere to the values and rules of the School and work in partnership to ensure the interests of the student, family and School are well served. This applies to all matters of School management and discipline. The School reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend or defer a student enrolment on behavioural, financial, compassionate or other compelling grounds.

The Principal, at her discretion, has the right to dismiss or suspend any student from St Catherine's School on the grounds of unsatisfactory conduct or the parents' inability to meet the School's terms and conditions. International students have extra obligations under their Visa arrangements to ensure they comply with regard to attendance, school performance and accommodation requirements.

Note the cancellation or suspension of a student enrolment will have implications regarding the Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student's Visa status. In accordance with Government legislation the School will be required to inform the relevant external bodies in the event of a student enrolment being withdrawn, suspended or cancelled.

## General Information

### **DEPARTURE FROM TERM DATES**

Students wishing to leave School and return home prior to the term break holiday, or return late to School following a term break, must seek the Principal's approval with appropriate notice in writing from their parents in advance. All students will be expected to attend School until the last day of the School term.

Students not complying with the early departure/late arrival rules will be considered absent from School.

The School is obligated to monitor closely each international student for adherence to the above regulations. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the regulations pertaining to the conditions of their stay while they are resident in Australia.

Should students have any questions regarding their student Visa, they should contact the International Students' Coordinator.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PREPARATION**

All instruction at St Catherine's takes place in English; therefore, students must possess an adequate level of proficiency in the language to enable them to participate meaningfully in class and to meet written and oral class requirements. English language competence must be demonstrated prior to enrolment.

## **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) STATUS**

ESL teachers are employed by the School to assist students in their development of English proficiency. ESL students who meet the necessary Government or VCAA criteria are expected to attend ESL classes. A student is eligible for ESL status depending on the length of time she has been a resident in Australia and the length of time that English has been her main language of instruction.

ESL classes are offered at VCE level Units 1-4.

## **COUNSELLING AND INTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

St Catherine's has a well-developed, extensive and cohesive program of pastoral care, curriculum and administrative support for all its students, including those of particular application for our international students. Internal support services include the following at no additional cost:

- Subject Selection
- Tertiary Course Selection Advice
- Study Skills
- Medical Support
- Counselling Services.

If a student requires further support services, a referral will be arranged by the School at no additional cost.

Students who require assistance or advice are invited to seek the help of any one of the following staff:

- International Students' Coordinator
- Director of Boarding Services and the Boarding Staff
- Director of Student Wellbeing
- Head of Senior School: Director of Student Services and Activities
- Director of Curriculum and VCE
- Year Level Dean
- Registrar and Admissions Officer
- Careers Counsellor
- School Nurse/s
- Subject Teachers
- Form Teacher.

The International Students' Coordinator meets regularly with the international students during the School year and, in addition, convenes the International Students' Club, which provides a forum for international students to be supported in a nurturing and positive smaller environment. Students may discuss any concern they may have with the International Students' Coordinator, whether it is personal, academic, social or financial. It is vital that each student seeks the Coordinator's advice and support, so that language and social differences do not become a barrier to academic progress and integration into School life.

Students are warmly encouraged to become involved in the general and co-curricular life of the School as a way of enjoying their stay at St Catherine's and developing friendships.

## CONSUMER RIGHTS AND LEGAL SERVICES

As a Full-Fee Paying Student studying in Victoria, students are entitled to protection and support as outlined by Consumer Protection Legislation. Consumer advice can be obtained by either visiting the Consumer and Business Centre, or by contacting the Consumer Affairs Helpline or website.

### **Victorian Consumer & Business Centre**

113 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne 3000

Hours of operation, Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 5.00pm, except Public Holidays

Consumer Affairs Helpline: 1300 55 81 81

Interpreter Service: 131 450

### **Website**

[www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

Should students require legal advice, the Victorian Government Department of Justice provides legal services through Victoria Legal Aid.

Victoria Legal Aid

(03) 9269 0234

## RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES (HANDLING COMPLAINTS)

St Catherine's is a community where the individual is respected and all its members are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with our Community Code of Conduct and School Values.

Should a grievance or dispute occur in relation to an international student, the matter would be dealt in line with the School's **Grievance Policy**.

As part of the School's Grievance Policy, students, Guardians or parents are entitled to lodge a formal appeal or complaint to the School regarding decisions made by the School. A student is also entitled to make a formal complaint against any action perceived to be bullying, intimidation or harassment. The School will then follow the processes outlined in the Grievance Policy.

In accordance with the recommendations set out by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), St Catherine's School adopts the following:

- The **Director of Student Wellbeing** is nominated as the Disputes Officer
- If the matter is not resolved informally, a written record will be provided
- Provision of an opportunity to formally present her case (within 10 days); allows the student to be accompanied by a support person of the student's choice
- Written statement of the outcome, including details of the decision.

Should students, parents or Guardians not be satisfied with the grievance process conducted by the School, they are entitled to contact the Department within 20 working days of the grievance procedure outcome.

Students may contact DEST if they are dissatisfied with the School's complaints and appeals processes on:

ESOS Helpline: (02) 6240 5069

ESOS Fax: (02) 6240 7789

ESOS email: [esosmailbox@dest.gov.au](mailto:esosmailbox@dest.gov.au)

## **ESOS COMPLIANCE AND REGULATIONS ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL**

The School is subject to the ESOS Act and the National Code. The ESOS Framework can be downloaded from our website.

### **ESOS Code of Practice Objectives:**

- Support the ESOS framework, including supporting the effective administration of the framework by the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments
- Establish and safeguard Australia's international reputation as a provider of high quality education and training
- Protect the interests of international students
- Support registered providers in monitoring student compliance with student Visa conditions and in reporting any student breaches to the Australian Government.

St Catherine's School acknowledges the following Standards from the 2007 Code of Practice:

### **Care for and services to students**

(Standards 5 to 6)

Before a student Visa can be granted to a student under 18 years of age, the Australian Government must be satisfied that there are appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements in place for the period that the student will be under 18 while in Australia. Where the registered provider agrees to take on responsibility for approving these arrangements, the registered provider must nominate the period for which it takes on the responsibility under Standard 5. The period nominated is to include sufficient time after the enrolment period for the student to arrange to leave Australia, or make other appropriate arrangements (Standard 5).

## Outcome of Standard 5

Where students under the age of 18 are not being cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated relative, registered providers ensure the arrangements made to protect the personal safety and social wellbeing of those students are appropriate.

The support services and orientation programmes provided to all students help them to adjust to study in Australia and improve the quality of their educational experience. Registered providers have important responsibilities to provide access to support services and support staff to meet the needs of the students enrolled in their courses.

Critical incident policies ensure the interests of students and their families are managed appropriately. Such policies also ensure registered providers are prepared for such incidents and have a clear protocol to follow in what can be distressing and upsetting circumstances (Standard 6).

## **Student Support Services**

### Outcome of Standard 6

Registered providers support students to adjust to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory progress towards meeting the learning outcomes of the course.

## **Complaints and Appeals**

### Outcome of Standard 8

Registered providers' complaints and appeals processes are independent, easily and immediately accessible and inexpensive for the parties involved.

The registered provider must have an appropriate internal complaints handling and appeals process that satisfies the following requirements, or can use its existing internal complaints and appeals processes as long as it meets these requirements

## **Monitoring course progress**

### Outcome of Standard 10

Registered providers systematically monitor students' course progress. Registered providers are proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet course progress requirements. Registered providers report students, under section 19 of the ESOS Act, who have breached the course progress requirements.

## **Monitoring attendance**

### Outcome of Standard 11

Registered providers systematically monitor students' compliance with student Visa conditions relating to attendance. Registered providers are proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements. Registered providers report students, under section 19 of the ESOS Act, who have breached the attendance requirements.

## **Staff, educational resources and premises**

### Standard 14

Students are to be given every opportunity to achieve their educational objectives while in Australia. The staff of registered providers need to be suitably qualified or experienced and appropriate educational resources are to be made available. The premises of registered providers, including the nature of the tenure of the registered provider's occupancy of the premises, will also be appropriate for the courses provided to students (Standard 14).



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