



STUDENT ACCOMMODATION POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy exists to provide guidelines to the School's provision of accommodation for St Catherine's students and to ensure compliance with regulations mandated by Government authorities and to meet the School's obligations with regard to Duty of Care. While this policy has pertinence to a variety of situations involving student accommodation arrangements, its primary purpose is to cover Boarding House and Homestay arrangements.
- 1.2 All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability sexual orientation, or family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse. St Catherine's School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 1.3 St Catherine's School recognises that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's Final Report identified specific groups of students being at heightened risk, including Boarders and International Students. Consistent with the requirements of the National Code 2018, VRQA Guidelines, and their intersection with the Child Safe Standards, the School is committed to mitigating risk for all students, with specific policy addressing the needs of these students.
- 1.4 St Catherine's School acknowledges its obligations to meet the provisions of Federal and State legislation; including the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) and the VRQA Guidelines for Enrolment of Overseas Students aged under 18 years.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies all to student accommodation arrangements at St Catherine's School with particular emphasis on Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) and situations where the School is involved in the provision of accommodation in the Boarding House or where students have been granted permission to live in a Homestay arrangement. The policy applies to all Third Party Homestay Service providers engaged by the School and to Homestay Providers.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Boarding House:** The School Boarding House, Illawarra, provides accommodation for boarding students during term. The Boarding House provides Full Board Accommodation and also takes on Duty of Care responsibilities.
- 3.2 **Homestay:** residential accommodation provided to domestic or international school students by local families, either on a paid or voluntary basis.
- 3.3 **Short Term Homestay:** Homestay accommodation may be arranged for Boarders who are not in the care of their parents when the Boarding House closes during the school holidays



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3.3 **Operoo:** a parent controlled electronic medical profile and consent form to manage emergency and medical contacts, medical checklists, action plans and health insurance details. Parents will receive an invitation by email prior to commencement to create a medical profile and consent details in *Operoo*.

3.4 **DHA approved Relative:**

- a. a parent, spouse, de facto partner, brother, sister, step-parent, step-brother, step-sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew, or a step-grandparent, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-niece or step-nephew;
- b. nominated by a parent of the applicant or a person who has custody of the applicant;
- c. aged at least 21 and of good character, an Australian citizen, permanent resident or be eligible to remain in Australia until the overseas student's visa expires or the overseas student turns 18 years of age (whichever happens first).

3.5 **PRISMS:** Provider Registration and International Student Management System

3.6 **Local Contact:** To facilitate communication and navigate language barriers, all Full Fee Paying students under a CAAW letter are required to nominate a Local Contact. The role of the Local Contact is outlined in the International Student Welfare Policy and the Homestay Policy.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 All student accommodation arrangements will meet the School's obligations in terms of Duty of Care and other regulations required under the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)
- 4.2 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in the **Boarding House** and to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the Boarding House. (These procedures are documented in the Boarding House Risk Assessment)
- 4.3 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in the **Homestay Accommodation** and conducts stringent child safety screening of homestay families as outlined in the Homestay Policy. (These procedures are documented in the Homestay Checklist and recorded on the Homestay Approval and Monitoring form which is scanned into Doc Man on Synergetic)
- 4.4 The School ensures that the Boarding House provides appropriate accommodation for younger overseas students. To ensure the ongoing suitability of the accommodation for students' ages and needs and that the Boarding House continues to meet the Australian Boarding Standard for Australian Schools and Residences AS 5725:2015,



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the School ensures a rigorous process is in place with site visits every six months.

- 4.5 The School will not delegate, outsource or contract out the responsibility for approving the accommodation and providing support and general welfare arrangements for a student who is under the age of 18. As a condition of the student visa, students under 18 years of age are required to have suitable accommodation and welfare arrangements, which must be approved by the School.
- 4.6 St Catherine's School will sight documentation to verify that the student is at least 13 years of age before entering into an agreement or arrangement for the provision of homestay accommodation to an overseas student, or issuing a CAAW letter to the DHA in circumstances where homestay accommodation will be provided.
- 4.7 Students under 13 years of age are not able to be accommodated in the School's Boarding House or Homestay arrangement
- 4.8 While St Catherine's School is responsible for the welfare and accommodation arrangements of students studying at the School, all students residing in the Boarding House/Homestay are required to nominate a Local Contact in the Enrolment Contract.
- a) Local Contacts and will be subject to Child Safe screening by St Catherine's School
 - b) Where the student is not residing with their parents, a local contact must be appointed by the parents. The local contact is not responsible for the student's welfare however will act, as necessary, as a contact between the School and parents should assistance with translation be required.
- 4.9 Prior to commencement, parents of students residing in the Boarding House/Homestay must create a Operoo profile and complete the medical and consent details. Students cannot commence at the School, or reside at the Boarding House until this profile is completed.
- 4.10 The School reserves the right to interview prospective Boarding House students to assess the appropriateness of their situation to Boarding House accommodation.
- 4.11 Should a student's situation change, which results in their accommodation arrangements in the Boarding House being of concern, or no longer tenable, the School reserves the right to review their place in the Boarding House. The interests of the individual and the Boarding House as a whole are considered in this process. A possible outcome of this review can involve, but is not limited to the student's withdrawal from the Boarding House.
- 4.12 In the event that the School cancels, defers or suspends a FFPOS enrolment, the



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School will review and monitor the ongoing suitability of the student's accommodation arrangements to ensure that the welfare of the student is maintained and, if necessary, implement alternative arrangements.

- 4.13 Overseas Students no younger than 13 years of age, not living with parent/guardian or DHA approved relative, must be accommodated in the School's Boarding House, or a School approved Homestay,
- 4.14 Stringent selection criteria and monitoring apply to the selection of Homestay accommodation and Homestay Service Providers. (as outlined in the Homestay Policy, the Homestay Approval and Monitoring Policy and the Engagement of Third Party Providers Guidelines.
- 4.15 All Full-Fee Paying Overseas students under 13 years of age must reside with their parents or a DHA approved relative.
- 4.16 Boarding House and Homestay arrangements must be indicated at the time of Application and confirmed once the student is issued with a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter.
- 4.17 As the St Catherine's Boarding House closes during school holiday periods, it may be necessary to put in place Short Term Homestay Regulations for some boarders if they are not in the care of their parent.

Short Term Homestay regulations require that:

- a. all members of the household aged over 18 hold a Working with Children Check which will be verified using the *Working with Children Victoria* online validation tool;
 - b. a referee check for suitability for child connected work is undertaken by the School
 - c. personal identification is checked against the WWCC details (eg Driver's licence)
 - d. a home visit has been undertaken by the school to ensure the accommodation is 'appropriate to the student's age and needs and that a separate bedroom has been provided
 - e. the *Homestay Responsibility Agreement* is signed;
 - f. all household members aged over 18 are made aware of the Child Safety Policy, reporting procedures and sign and agree to the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- 4.18 The School will inform the DHA and PRISMS of any Full-Fee Paying Overseas Student accommodation arrangements or any changes to these accommodation arrangements.



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4.19 Homestay Service Providers engaged by the school must undergo Child Safety procedures which will include as a minimum:

- a. obtaining, recording and regularly verifying the Homestay Services Provider Area Co-ordinator's Working With Children's Check using the *Working with Children Checks Victoria* online validation tool on receipt (and at least twice annually)
- b. Checking personal identification (eg Driver's licence)
- c. ensuring that all staff who will be in contact with the homestay student receive the School's Child Safety Policy and sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Senior Leadership team is responsible for authorising the Student Accommodation Policy
- 5.2 The Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing is responsible for approving the criteria, selection and monitoring of homestay accommodation services.
- 5.3 The Principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Student Accommodation policy is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory.
- 5.4 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring an enrolment register [and waiting list] is accurately maintained.
- 5.5 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented in accordance with Commonwealth and State legislation.
- 5.6 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring all documentation is in order, including the provision of CAAW letters accepting responsibility for approving accommodation.
- 5.7 The Head of Boarding Services is responsible for overseeing the day to care and welfare of all students residing in the Boarding House.
- 5.8 The Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing and the Head of Boarding are responsible for the pastoral care of overseas students, including orientation programs, the receipt of an International Student Safety Card/Homestay Safety Card and access to support services to assist with adjusting to life in Australia.



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5.9 The OHS Committee will conduct a risk assessment of the Boarding House every six months and report findings to the Child Safe Standards Sub-Committee and the Risk Committee, which in turn reports to the School Council.

5.10 Boarding House Staff and Visitors to the Boarding House will:

- a. take particular care to respect the privacy and personal space of students
- b. remain in the downstairs common area and not enter the student bedrooms or bathrooms unless accompanied by a Boarding House Staff member
- c. ensure that doors remain open when students are in the lounge areas, study, laundry
- d. remain in the Reception area to sign in visitors

5.11 Tutors

- a) Tutors will undergo Child Safety screening as per the Tutor Checklist
- b) Tutors must sign in with the Working with Children's Check number, which will be regularly verified, and tutor only in the common areas

5.12 Contractors may not enter the building when students are present

5.13 Catering staff can enter the Kitchen and Dining Room only and must avoid being alone with students

5.14 Cleaning staff should not enter a room if a student is present

6 Associated Documents

- a. Child Safe Code of Conduct
- b. Child Safe Policy
- c. Child Safe Strategy
- d. International Student and EAL Policy
- e. International Student Welfare Policy
- f. Enrolment Policy
- g. Community Code of Conduct Policy
- h. Homestay Policy
- i. Homestay Responsibility Agreement
- j. Homestay Approval and Monitoring Policy
- k. Relevant Third Party Homestay Services Provider documentation/agreements
- l. Risk Matrix
- m. Tutor Checklist



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- n. Homestay Checklist
- o. Engagement of Third Party Provider Guidelines