



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines the obligations of St Catherine's School ('St Catherine's', 'STC' or the 'School') to any student where St Catherine's has taken responsibility, as a CRICOS provider, under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework*, (including the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (Cth) (National Code)) for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a student who is under 18 years of age. For the purpose of this policy, international students (students) are defined as students who hold a subclass 500 Student – Schools visa and for which St Catherine's has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students who have been issued a CAAW letter by St Catherine's through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Local Contact:** Whilst St Catherine's School is responsible for the welfare and accommodation arrangements of students studying at the school on a student visa, all International students not residing with parents are required to nominate a Local Contact. The role of the Local Contact is outlined in 4.9.
- 3.2 **Full Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS)** - A student who is not an Australian citizen and does not have Australian permanent residency status, but holds a Subclass 500 student visa and is required to pay full tuition fees.
- 3.3 **Pastoral Care** – the policies and practices that are fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning and structural organisation of a school to effectively meet the personal, social (wellbeing) and academic needs of students.
- 3.4 **DHA Approved Relative:**
- 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;
 - nominated by a parent of the applicant or a person who has custody of the applicant;
 - 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).



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- 3.5 **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*.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 St Catherine's School is responsible for the pastoral care, welfare and accommodation arrangements of students studying at the School on a student visa. As a condition of the student visa, students under 18 years of age are required to have suitable accommodation and welfare arrangements and these must be approved by the School.

International Students may either:

- Live in Australia with a parent or legal custodian, or
- Live in the Illawarra Boarding House.

- 4.2 The School recognises that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse identified specific groups of students being at heightened risk, including Boarders and International Students. The School is committed to mitigating risks to students' personal safety.
- 4.3 The Policy provides a framework for ensuring that programs to support the wellbeing and welfare of international students are consistent with National standards identified in the National Code 2018.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 Documentary evidence will be sighted to confirm that the student is at least 13 years of age at the commencement of Homestay accommodation (if applicable).
- 4.6 Students under 13 years of age are not able to be accommodated in the School's Boarding House or a Homestay arrangement. Students under the age of 13 years of age can only reside with their parents, until their 13th birthday.
- 4.7 For the duration of the student's enrolment any changes to approved welfare and accommodation arrangements must be approved by the School.
- 4.8 If the student's parents' wish to change the welfare arrangements, the School must be notified by the parents of any proposed changes in writing at least 14 days prior. All accommodation and welfare arrangements must be approved by the School, prior to changes being made. This would also apply when a parent has previously been responsible for the student's welfare and now requests that the School takes



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over that responsibility, or the reverse of this. The Department of Home Affairs would be notified of such changes by the Registrar.

- 4.9 If a student for whom the school has issued a CAAW refuses to maintain approved arrangements, or if a student changes their accommodation or welfare arrangements without School approval, the school will report this to the Department of Home Affairs and advise the student to contact the Department of Home Affairs to ensure visa implications are understood.
- 4.10 Parents remain legally responsible for providing updated medical information and consent for off campus activities. Prior to commencement, the student's parent must create a *Operoo* profile and complete the medical and consent details. Students cannot commence at the School or reside at the Boarding House or in a Homestay until this profile is completed.
- 4.10.1 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.
- 4.10.2 The Local Contact will be subject to Child Safe screening by St Catherine's School and meet the following criteria:
- a. be over 25 years of age.
 - b. have an adequate grasp of written and spoken English.
 - c. be a Permanent Resident of Australia, live in the Melbourne metropolitan area and be easily contactable by telephone. If the Local Contact is away for an extended period of time, a replacement must be nominated by the parent and the School notified of this change.
 - d. obtain a Working with Children Check which will be recorded in Synergetic by the School's Registrar and regularly verified by the Admissions Administrator (at least twice annually) using the Working with Children Check Victoria online validation tool.
 - e. present personal identification (eg Driver's licence).
 - f. supply details of a personal referee who will be contacted by the Admissions Administrator to attest to the person's good character and suitability for child connected work.
 - g. agree to and sign the St Catherine's School Child Safety Code of Conduct.
 - h. Be willing to accommodate the international student for who they are a Local Contact for in an emergency or during term breaks, where the student is unable to return home due to unforeseeable circumstances. For example, long term evacuation from the boarding house/homestay (ie overnight or multiple days) or in the case of illness or injury (until parent arrives from overseas).
 - i. If such a circumstance arises, the International Student Coordinator will complete a homestay inspection at the Local Contacts residence, to determine suitability of the accommodation, prior to any placement of the international student.



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- j. Alternatively alternate Homestay accommodation may be arranged by the School as per the School's International Student Homestay Policy.
- k. In the event the School is no longer able to provide appropriate welfare and accommodation, the School will contact the parent or legal guardian.
- 4.11 For school holiday periods, accommodation options available to International Students, for whom the school has issued a CAAW, will be managed as per the Student Accommodation Policy and the International Student Homestay Policy.
- 4.12 Orientation programs are an important part of the welfare support that St Catherine's offers to international students.
- 4.13 The School acknowledges that the orientation process should prepare new international students to fully participate in the academic and co-curricular programs offered by the School. It should also provide the students with the necessary information to be a part of the community in which they are living.
- 4.14 International Students are specifically orientated to the Boarding House as per the Boarding House Students Induction Policy.
- 4.15 In addition, the School acknowledges that International Students need more intensive and individualised programs to cover many of the aspects of studying not only in a new school, but also a new education system and country. International Students, as part of their orientation also:
- Receive the International Student Handbook and a 24-hour emergency contact card (Student Safety Card);
 - Are provided with a School Tour to show them the facilities and location of their classrooms;
 - Are provided with an explanation of the support services available to them as outlined in the International Student Handbook. and also meet key support people including the Deputy Principals, Director of Senior Years and Middle Years, the relevant Head of Year, the School Nurses, and the School Counsellors;
 - Are made aware of the academic and general procedures of the School and that the International Student Coordinator will be available at all times to assist with their orientation;
 - Are provided with information regarding how to seek assistance and report on incidents of sexual, physical or other abuse.
- 4.16 International Students support services are outlined in the International Student Handbook. Support services available include the Principal, Deputy Principals, the



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Director of Senior Years, the Director of Middle Years, the Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator, the School Nurses, and the School Counsellors.

- 4.17 Study Skills advice is also provided through the School's Academic Advisory program, administered by the Heads of Year and House Tutors.
- 4.18 Please refer to the International Student and EAL Policy regarding EAL support available at the School.
- 4.19 Should a student require additional assistance with academic matters, either the student or the Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator can arrange assistance from class teachers either at lunchtime, or in study periods. Additional support in academic areas is available at the School, if needed.
- 4.20 Staff involved in supporting International Students such as the International Student Coordinator, Boarding Assistants and Teaching Staff receive training in Child Safe Standards, School's emergency management plans and critical incidents, the ESOS Act, National Code of Practice, VRQA Guidelines for Students under 18 Years, VRQA minimum standard guidelines. The International Student Coordinator/Head of Boarding also receives training in how to verify accommodation is suitable, and minimum standards and requirements for Boarding Premises.
- 4.21 Staffing and support requirements for International Students are monitored by the Principal and Senior Leadership Team through the School's Staffing and Finance Sub-Committee.
- 4.22 Parents are responsible for assisting students make medical and health related appointments. If applicable, the Local Contact, the School Nurse or the Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator may assist parents and students in making appointments and using medical services. Further information is available in the Boarders Health and Medication Policy.
- 4.23 The School's First Aid Room is staffed by a qualified Registered Nurse during the school day. The School Nurse is available to assist International Students with minor illness during the school day and can assist with referral onto further external medical treatment if required. Further information is available in the School's First Aid Policy.
- 4.24 Where an International Student is unwell during the School day and unable to attend classes, the student will be monitored in the School's First Aid room. Further information is available in the Boarders Health and Medication Policy.
- 4.25 Critical Incidents relating to International Students will be managed as per the International Student Critical Incident Policy.



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- 4.26 The School will arrange for translation and interpreting for a student at either staff or student request. For general matters, several of the staff are Mandarin speakers and will assist students, staff, and families.
- 4.27 The School will arrange for an interpreter, at the School's expense, to assist in matters of a more serious or personal matter requiring an independent person.
- 4.28 Local Contacts may also assist with interpreting from time to time, depending on the nature of the matter being discussed.

5. Responsibility

- 5.1 Administration of this Policy applies most pertinently to the Principal, Deputy Principal School Operations, Director of Middle Years, Director of Senior Years, Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator and Admissions Office.
- 5.2 The Deputy Principal: School Operations, and the Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator 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.
- 5.3 The Head of Boarding/International Student Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day care and welfare of all students residing in the Boarding House.

6. Communication of Policy

- 6.1 This policy is accessible to all staff, students, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, visitors, external stakeholders and other members of the School community via the Portal Policies page and the website. The School also communicates this policy through newsletters and inductions, and is available at sign in locations at the School.

7. Policy Review

7.1 This policy will be reviewed for effectiveness:

- As part of St Catherine's School policy review schedule (every 2 years);
- As required, with changes to current legislation, research, policy and best practice;
- Following issues raised through the Complaints and Grievances Policy;
- After any significant child safety incident; and
- Upon receipt of staff, student, or parent/guardian feedback.



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8. Compliance Requirements

- 8.1 Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
- 8.2 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)
- 8.3 Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- 8.4 VRQA School Guidelines for International Students
<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/guidelines-for-international-education.aspx>
- 8.5 Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

9. Associated Documents

- 9.1 Enrolment Policy
- 9.2 Business Practices – International Students
- 9.3 Enrolment Contract - International
- 9.4 International Student and EAL Policy
- 9.5 Student Accommodation Policy
- 9.6 International Student Homestay Policy
- 9.7 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- 9.8 Child Safe Code of Conduct
- 9.9 International Student Handbook
- 9.10 Boarding House Student Induction Policy
- 9.11 Boarders Health and Medication Policy