



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, International Students and Students with disabilities and Indigenous Students. Consistent with the requirements of the Child Safe Standards, National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018), VRQA Guidelines for Enrolment of Overseas Students aged under 18 years, the School acknowledges its obligations, and is committed to mitigating risk for all students, with specific policy addressing the needs of these students.

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 engaged directly by the School or through the engagement of a third party Homestay provider during the term break.

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.

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



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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 (refer to Operational Risk Register).

4.3 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in **Homestay Accommodation** and conducts stringent child safety screening of homestay families as outlined in the Homestay Policy.

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, 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 per the International Student Welfare Policy, it is a condition for students on a subclass 500 visa, under 18 years of age to have suitable accommodation and welfare arrangements, that have been approved by the School.



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4.6 Students under 13 years of age are not able to be accommodated in the School's Boarding House or a Homestay arrangement.

4.7 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 as part of their enrolment conditions.

4.8 Local Contacts will be subject to Child Safe screening by St Catherine's School and further information regarding their role, and screening processes are provided in the International Student Welfare Policy.

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. (Refer to the Enrolment Policy for further information).

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 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. In the case of students under a CAAW, the 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.

4.12 In the event that the School cancels, defers or suspends an international student's enrolment, the 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 (Refer to the Enrolment Policy and International Business Practices for further information).

4.13 Stringent selection criteria and monitoring apply to the selection of Homestay accommodation and Homestay Service Providers as outlined in the Homestay Policy.

4.14 As the St Catherine's Boarding House closes during school holiday periods, it is the School's preference for International Students to travel home and return to the care of their parents or legal guardian during the School holiday periods. If International Students are unable to return home during the term break it may be necessary to put in place Short Term Homestay arrangements.

4.15 International Students may stay in a short-term homestay arrangement provided that all requirements are met to attain school approval prior to the arrangement taking place. Homestay arrangements may be arranged directly by the School, or organised by an external Homestay Services Provider, however the School's duty of care will not be outsourced to the Homestay Services Provider.



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For Homestay arrangements to be approved by the School:

- a. all members of the household aged over 18 must 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 International Student Coordinator to ensure the accommodation is appropriate to the student's age and needs and that a separate bedroom has been provided;
- e. the School's Homestay Responsibility Agreement (*or the Homestay Services Provider Agreement*) is signed;
- f. all household members aged over 18 are made aware of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, reporting procedures, emergency contacts including school and parent contact information, and agree to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

4.16 Refer to the International Student Homestay Policy for further information.

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

- a. Conducting reference checks to ascertain the provider's suitability to work with children.
- b. Obtaining, recording and regularly verifying the Homestay Services Provider's (and their relevant employee's) Working With Children's Check using the Working with Children Checks Victoria online validation tool on receipt (and at least twice annually)
- c. Checking personal identification (eg Driver's licence)
- d. Ensuring that all staff who will be in contact with the International Student receive the School's Child Safety Policy, reporting procedures, emergency contacts including school and parent contact information, and sign and agree to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

4.18 Refer to the International Student Homestay Policy for further information regarding School arranged homestays or the engagement of external Homestay Service Providers.

4.19 The School will inform the DHA through updating PRISMS of any International Student accommodation arrangements or any changes to these accommodation arrangements.

4.20 Critical Incidents involving International Students will be managed as per the International Student Critical Incidents Policy.

4.21 In the event the School is no longer able to provide appropriate welfare and accommodation, the School will contact the parent or legal guardian. (Refer to the Enrolment Policy and International Student Welfare Policy).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Principal is responsible for authorising this policy and ensuring the implementation of the Student Accommodation policy is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory.



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5.2 The Deputy Principal, Student Operations is responsible for approving the criteria, selection, and monitoring of homestay accommodation services.

5.3 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring the enrolment register is accurately maintained.

5.4 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring all documentation is in order, including the provision of CAAW letters accepting responsibility for approving accommodation.

5.5 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.

5.6 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.

5.7 Boarding House Staff and Visitors to the Boarding House will follow the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Staff Boarding House Procedures and the Staff Code of Conduct

5.8 Visitors to the Boarding House will follow the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Community Code of Conduct, and the Visitors Policy.

6. Communication of Policy

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

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.

8. Associated Documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- International Student Critical Incidents Policy



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- International Student and EAL Policy
- International Student Welfare Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Community Code of Conduct Policy
- International Student Homestay Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Operational Risk Register