



Code of Conduct Guidelines for Homestay Programs

All stakeholders have, in some way, power and influence in the homestay process and therefore each stakeholder has a responsibility to be aware and to meet some standard of ethical conduct.

This document on the 'Code of Conduct for International Students in Homestay Program' is used as a guideline to meet standard requirements for providing pastoral care to international students studying at Saint Stephen's College. It promotes and enhances the conduct of International Student Support and Homestay Program staff in performing their duties in the collegial environment of the College.

Acknowledgement is given to the New Zealand Department of Education, Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology whose ideas were used to produce this Code.

Accommodation for international students is managed by AHN (Australian Homestay Network), however staff of Saint Stephen's College oversee the Pastoral Care of International Students.

This document contains a checklist for each key stakeholder to follow to ensure that they comply with the Homestay Program Guidelines. Because of the diversity of stakeholders involved in homestay study programs at Saint Stephen's College, the code is presented across four general stakeholder areas:

1. Assistant to the Headmaster – International Education / AHN / Professionals
2. Homestay students
3. Homestay providers
4. Students under 18 years of age

1. Assistant to Headmaster – International Education / AHN / Professionals

Saint Stephen's College and AHN recognise that the Homestay providers may come from a variety of family compositions, cultural backgrounds and that these will not be the basis for acceptance or rejection in the homestay provider group.



Code of Ethics

In arranging homestay accommodation for international students attending Saint Stephen's College, AHN will:

- Familiarise providers with the culture and education philosophy of the homestay programs /students through in-service support and individual awareness.
- Be aware of the needs of the international students and have processes in place to support and assist them.
- Identify any personal prejudices and biases and promote awareness and an adherence to ethical standards.
- Accept flexibility of regulations and communication practices that may be necessary to meet the diverse and variable needs of international students.
- Adhere to non-discriminatory practices set out by the College based on race, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic and sexual preference or religion.
- Keep all possible communications open, honest and appropriate to the situation.
- Information should be translated where possible, commensurate with students' communication needs and their level of understanding.
- Put the best learning interests of individual students above all other financial and organizational needs as without this focus the impact on the homestay experience can be extremely negative.
- Act with sensitivity and discretion and enact a process of crisis management, in time of grief and trauma.
- Have access to opportunities for professional development with regard to the provision of homestay care and meeting the needs of international students.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Homestay providers and international students' right to privacy under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.
- Encourage respect for the law and system of University Governance.
- Arrange documentation for Suitability card to be issued by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.



Good Conduct Guidelines

- Assistant to the Headmaster – International Education / AHN must provide ongoing support to homestay providers and students as necessary.
- Advise homestay providers and homestay students of the expectations of homestay by means of orientation, written documents and information, orientation sessions as well as email information.
- Inspect all providers and homes registered in the HP and provide an orientation of the expectations / requirements of the program.
- Visit each homestay provider and place each student in a home, which is, to the best knowledge and belief, a safe and suitable home for the students.
- Ensure all students under the age of 18 years are placed in appropriate families with guardianship arrangements in place.
- Encourage networking contacts to ensure the quality of all providers enlisted in the program is maintained.
- Monitor the number of household members, family members to guest ratio.
- Maintain adequate payment records.
- Follow up any complaint made by homestay students / providers within 24 hours.
- Respect and be responsive to the beliefs and diversity of cultural requirements of homestay providers and homestay students by providing alternative accommodation immediately if it is believed that the welfare of the student, or host, may be at risk.
- Provide on-going support for homestay providers and students as necessary and ensure that all parties are aware of the wide range of support services available within the College and provided through International Student Support Services, Health Services, Counselling Services, Sexual Harassment Contact Network and Grievance Resolution procedures.
- Issues in relation to taxation, insurance and legislation including legislation changes must be advised to stakeholders.
- Interact effectively and cooperatively with other departments within and outside the institution.
- Act openly and professionally in all dealings with other homestay providers and institutions.
- Ensure that the confidentiality of homestay providers and students is preserved under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.
- Undertake process and impact evaluations, i.e. conduct surveys periodically (6-12 monthly) with homestay providers and students to ensure that standards and requirements of student placement are met under the basic ethical guidelines.
- Ensure that AHN has specific training, skills and experience to provide homestay management services appropriate to the role and level of service they are providing (including demonstrable ability in meeting the specific needs of international students) whether employed or contracted by the institution.



2. International Homestay Students

Code of Ethics

- Students need to be made aware of the accepted code of behaviour within the homestay.
- Students need to be encouraged to communicate in an honest and respectful way thus developing positive relationships with providers that are based on mutual trust and communication. Disguising a problem to 'save face' may not, in fact, be dealing the best way with the problem.
- Students should be advised on acceptable levels of hospitality and not take advantage of the generosity offered by families.
- Students should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Students should be enabled to take responsibility for their own practices and needs.

Good Conduct Guidelines

The student will be expected to:

- Be financially independent; pay the homestay fee to Saint Stephen's College and any extra mid year vacation homestay fees or holding fees. He / she must meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, telephone calls, medical expenses and other personal, incidental costs.
- Respect and adhere to guidelines / rules for living in the household as given by the homestay family which may include conditions such as no smoking, no alcohol, spend no longer than 10 minutes in the shower and leaving the bathroom tidy.
- Offer to help with minor household chores such as occasional washing up and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy.
- Be considerate and keep noise to a minimum after 8.30pm.
- Ask the family before inviting friends over.
- Ask their own parents or guardian to contact the homestay family and give permission for any late nights or overnight stays.
- Advise the homestay family about social activities and when they will be home for meals on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Pay for any damage to family property (if the student is responsible for the damage).
- Keep all valuables, money, passport and airline tickets in a safe place.
- Attend an orientation with Saint Stephen's College.
- Behave appropriately and be prepared to participate in reasonable family activities.
- Respect and be aware that cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay provider may differ from their own.
- Communicate with the homestay provider on a day to day basis. Students should be open about their needs / wants. For example, need to make a phone call late in the night (after 10pm).



- Advise the homestay provider immediately of any concerns of their health or welfare which may arise in the homestay environment.
- Adhere to the guidelines set down in the International Student Guide, or fact flyers / sheets, orientation for students and other advice given about the homestay program.
- Be aware and abide by the laws of Australia, for example, wear bicycle helmets, respect legal age of drinking, no unlicensed driving etc.

3. Homestay Providers

Code of Ethics

Homestay providers are expected to:

- Develop positive relationships with students which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Maintain open communication with the Support Staff at Saint Stephen's College. This may include academic, behavioural or health issues. All breaches of homestay expectations must be advised to the Assistant to the Headmaster – International Education.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each student and the levels of each students' strength and weakness.
- Support and assist students to live comfortably within a foreign environment.
- Respect the students' right to privacy whilst realising that privacy does not equate to isolation.
- Acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their student and accommodate appropriately for these within the family's life.
- Assist, support and nurture where needed or requested, but keeping in mind that a desire to please may be interpreted as interfering by the student.
- Maintain current status of the Suitability Card issued by the Commission for Children and Young People (and Child Guardian).

Good Conduct Guidelines

The homestay provider will be expected to:

- Provide a safe environment that will offer the student a total experience of living as a member of an Australian family and which encourages positive study habits.
- Provide the student with a private, clean and warm bedroom, good healthy food, laundry facilities and a supportive environment. The meals that are provided should be breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. At least one meal per day should consist of meat / protein, vegetables and rice / noodles. Morning and afternoon tea must also be provided.
- Offer help, guidance, support and encouragement with language practice, studies, planning leisure activities and adapting to living in Australia (this may require patience and empathy and a willingness to show the student more than once).



- Provide an orientation within the family home e.g. use of pool area and house facilities and security. Applicable house rules should be explained i.e. what time dinner is, telephone protocols, rules regarding smoking, alcohol, guests visiting, curfews, household tasks and bathroom conduct.
- Offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the student.
- Respect the students' need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Adapt a duty of care towards their homestay student.
- Only provide single room accommodation. A student is not to share a room with another student nor with a member of the family, unless specifically requested.
- Liaise with AHN regarding any concerns or difficulties.
- Notify the AHN of any change of circumstances in the household.
- Be responsive to the cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay student by allowing the student to continue familiar cultural practices without criticism.
- To adhere to guidelines set down by the Homestay Program and attendance at the homestay providers' information sessions.

4. Students under 18 years of age

Under the ESOS Act 2000, *the National Code of Ethics for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students*, must ensure that upon arrival, international students have access to information or counseling services in the following areas: orientation, academic progress, further study and accommodation / welfare arrangement for students under 18 years of age for those students who do not have a guardian approved by DIAC.

General Welfare

- Saint Stephen's College should be aware of the international students' needs and have processes in place to support and assist them.
- Saint Stephen's College must support the social and psychological needs of international students that include:
 - (1) Access to appropriate counseling services
 - (2) Training and support of homestay providers
 - (3) Sensitive management of internal and external grievance processes
- Saint Stephen's College is responsible for all aspects of pastoral care for their international students from the point of landing in Australia or the agreed date of transfer from another signatory, to the end of the contract for enrolment.
- Saint Stephen's College needs to be aware of cultural and religious differences of students group. For example, Muslim students will have practices relating to food, food



preparation, and storage, drink, religious observance and dress that need to be respected and accommodated.

- Saint Stephen's College should ascertain if an international student has any health condition that may affect their study or require treatment. Homestay providers need to be advised of any relevant health problems of students in their care.

Privacy of International Student Information

- Personal information of any student is subject to the Privacy Act, the provision of which prohibits the disclosure of any personal information or details. Saint Stephen's College must ensure that all personal information, as defined in the Privacy Act, is obtained, stored and released in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Communication Arrangements

Saint Stephen's College is required to establish communication arrangements with the parents / guardian of international students. 'Establishing communication arrangements' means Saint Stephen's College must arrange a way to contact parents / guardian in case of an emergency, and for ongoing liaison concerning the student's welfare. It is vital that there is a way of contacting the parents / guardian at short notice.

Accommodation

- Saint Stephen's College is required to advise international students of the accommodation options available to them.
- Saint Stephen's College must document which category of accommodation each student is living in and ensure that the applicable monitoring and follow-up takes place.
- Saint Stephen's College must ensure that their homestay providers have a full understanding of their obligations to the signatory and any accommodation agent. This means Saint Stephen's College must clearly set out the different responsibilities of providers and agents and advise each what their responsibilities are.
- Saint Stephen's College must have stringent processes (robust procedures) for all aspects / areas of the homestay program such as a process for assessing, selecting and approving prospective homestay providers and processes for the on-going monitoring of the providers. These procedures form the basis (guidelines) for the Assistant to the Headmaster – International Education and AHN.