



Code of Conduct for International Students in Saint Stephen's College Homestay Program

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 Saint Stephen's College 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 Saint Stephen's College and Australian Student Accommodation (ASA) staff in performing their duties in a collegial environment.

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 ASA. Saint Stephen's College and ASA work together to provide supportive homestay experiences for 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. Saint Stephen's College staff
2. Australian Student Accommodation (ASA)
3. International students in homestay
4. Homestay providers/host families

1. Saint Stephen's College staff

Saint Stephen's College recognises 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.

- Executive Director of International Education will provide ongoing support to homestay providers and students as necessary.
- Work with ASA to 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.
- Ensure all students are placed in appropriate families.
- Encourage networking contacts to ensure the quality of all providers enlisted in the program is maintained.
- Maintain adequate payment records.
- Follow up any complaint made by homestay students / providers as soon as possible.
- 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 the International Centre, 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 with homestay providers and students to ensure that standards and requirements of student placement are met under the basic ethical guidelines.
- Ensure that ASA 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).

All International students at Saint Stephen's College are treated **as 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 counselling services in the following areas: orientation, academic progress, further study and accommodation and welfare arrangement for students.

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 counselling 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 students' 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 Executive Director of International Education, ASA.

2. Australian Student Accommodation (ASA)

Code of Ethics

In arranging homestay accommodation for international students, the Homestay Manager and ASA staff guarantee to:

- Familiarise providers with the culture and education philosophy of the homestay program and homestay students through in-service support and individual awareness.
- Be aware of the needs of the homestay 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 homestay students.
- Adhere to non-discriminatory practices set out by the institution 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.
- Translate, where possible, information appropriate to the homestay students' communication needs and their level of understanding.
- Put the best learning interests of individual homestay students above all other financial and organisational 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 homestay students.
- Maintain the confidentiality of homestay hosts and homestay students' right to privacy under the terms of privacy and anti-discrimination acts.

Good Conduct Guidelines

In arranging Homestay accommodation for international students, the Homestay Manager and staff guarantee to:

- Provide ongoing support to homestay hosts and international students as necessary.
- Advise homestay host and international students of the expectations of homestay by means of orientation, written documents and information, orientation sessions if needed, as well as web-based information.
- Inspect all providers and homes registered in the homestay program 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 international students.
- Arrange documentation for Blue Cards to be issued for all members of the host family over the age of 18 by the *Working with Children Check – Blue Card Services, Public Safety Business Agency* and monitor expiry dates.
- Ensure all international students under the age of 18 years are placed in appropriate families that meet all legal requirements including possession of blue cards.
- Encourage networking contacts to ensure the quality of all providers enlisted in the program is maintained.
- Monitor the number of household members to homestay student ratio.
- Ensure payment arrangements are confirmed with the homestay hosts.

- Follow up any complaint made by homestay students/providers within two business days, earlier if the problem is urgent.
- Respect and be responsive to the beliefs and diversity of cultural requirements of homestay hosts 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 homestay students as necessary and ensure that all parties are aware of the wide range of support services available within the College through the International Centre, health services, counselling services, sexual harassment contact network and grievance resolution procedures.
- Maintain clear communication with the education provider/agent on all homestay matters.
- Advise stakeholders about issues in relation to taxation, insurance and legislation including legislation changes.
- Act openly and professionally in all dealings with other homestay providers and institutions.
- Ensure that the confidentiality of homestay hosts and homestay 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 hosts and international students to ensure that standards and requirements of homestay student placement are met under the basic ethical guidelines.

Homestay Provider Privacy Policy

ASA collects large amounts of personal information from stakeholders during the course of administration. The privacy of personal information supplied by stakeholders must be respected. Personal information is information not in the public sphere which identifies an individual and which can be associated with a specific individual. Examples of personal information that may be collected by ASA include: home addresses, home telephone numbers, dates of birth, next of kin, etc.

The Commonwealth Privacy Act 2001 details provisions made to protect the privacy of individuals. The act can be viewed online at www.privacy.gov.au/privacy/

Homestay Provider Quality Policy

Along with day to day operations, Australian Student Accommodation undertakes activities that ensure the provision of a quality service. Quality for our Homestay program encompasses the quality of host families, host homes and the service provided by staff.

Activities to maintain quality include monitoring, evaluation and follow-up actions. Constantly monitoring, evaluating and improving our Homestay program leads to a better experience for Homestay students and hosts and an improved reputation for our Homestay service.

The code of conduct includes all activities associated with maintaining quality so stakeholders are aware of activities and the high standards of the Homestay program.

3. Homestay Students

Code of Ethics

- Students need to be encouraged to communicate in an honest and respectful way thus developing positive relationships with providers which 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 which 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. 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 include conditions such as no smoking, no alcohol, spend no longer than 5 minutes in the shower and leaving the bathroom tidy.
- Smoking, gambling, consumption of alcohol and/or any illegal behaviour are prohibited for all Saint Stephen's College students, regardless of age.
- 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 if they will miss meals.
- 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.
- Maintain clear communication with Saint Stephen's College on all homestay matters.
- 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.
- Advise the Saint Stephen's College 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.

4. Homestay Providers/Host Families

Code of Ethics

Homestay hosts are expected to:

- Develop positive relationships with homestay students which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Make students aware of the accepted code of behaviour within the homestay and house rules.
- Maintain open communication with International Centre Staff at Saint Stephen's College. This may include academic, behavioural or health issues. All breaches of homestay expectations must be advised to the Executive Director of International Education and ASA.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each homestay student and the levels of each homestay student's strength and weakness.
- Support and assist homestay students to live comfortably within a foreign environment.
- Respect the homestay student's right to privacy while realising that privacy does not equate to isolation.
- Acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their Homestay 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 homestay student.
- Maintain current status of Blue Cards issued by the *Working with Children Check – Blue Card Services, Public Safety Business Agency*.
- In the case of sleepovers, meet the parents responsible for care during the event and obtain their address and contact numbers.

Good Conduct Guidelines

To achieve this desired outcome the homestay provider will be expected to:

- Provide a safe environment which will offer the homestay student positive experiences while living as a member of an Australian family and engaging in positive study habits.
- Provide the homestay student with a private, clean and warm bedroom including a study desk and chair, good quality, fresh healthy food, laundry facilities, transport arrangements to and from the College and a supportive environment.
- Provide breakfast, lunch and dinner (unless otherwise required).
- 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 homestay 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 e.g. what time dinner is, telephone protocols, no smoking and no alcohol, guests visiting, curfews, household tasks and bathroom conduct.
- Offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the homestay student.
- Respect the homestay student's need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Have a duty of care towards the homestay student.
- Only provide single room accommodation. A homestay student is not to share a room with another Homestay student or with a member of the family, unless specifically requested.
- Liaise with the Homestay Manager regarding any concerns or difficulties.
- Notify the Homestay Manager of any change of circumstances in the household.
- Be responsive to the cultural differences and beliefs of the Homestay student by allowing the homestay student to continue familiar cultural practices without criticism.

- Adhere to guidelines set down by Saint Stephen's College and ASA and attendance at the homestay providers' information sessions and parent/teacher conferences if required.
- No additional payment arrangements are to be made with the student/parent and homestay family without prior approval by the College.