

Pakenham Secondary College

International Student Program – Homestay Policy



Rationale

Where parents opt for the Department of Education and Training (DET) to arrange accommodation, the Department through the school, is responsible for provision of homestay accommodation, support and general welfare to the student. These arrangements shall be in place for the period that the student will be under 18 years of age while in Australia. This policy has been developed to meet the requirements of the ESOS National Code 2018, the Student visa (Condition 8532) and the VRQA *Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students Aged Under 18 Years* which require that appropriate arrangements have been made for the accommodation, welfare and support of students less than 18 years of age.

This policy is designed to be consistent with the International Education Division (IED) guidelines. It is an International Student Program Quality Standards requirement that all schools have a homestay policy in place.

DET Compulsory Homestay Policy Requirements for All Schools

Where the school arranges approved homestay accommodation the school manages the day-to-day coordination of student support, accommodation, and welfare through the school's International Student Coordinator. The broader oversight of the student welfare role is undertaken by the Principal.

Homestay arrangements

- The school will arrange homestay accommodations of high quality, ensuring a child-safe, comfortable, and nurturing environment as appropriate.
- Homestay accommodations will be provided by suitable families, couples, or single individuals, all of whom must be at least 21 years old.
- All adults residing or frequently residing in Option 3 or Option 4 homestay arrangements must supply current Working with Children Checks before the student moves in and must maintain these checks throughout the student's stay or until they reach 18 years of age.
- The maximum number of international students per homestay is capped at 3 at all times, regardless of the provider.
- Students of opposite sex are not permitted to live in the same homestay unless they are children of the homestay family.
- The school will regularly monitor homestay arrangements, conducting biannual visits to ensure that the accommodation continues to meet all requirements.
- Before any additional adults commence residence at the location, the Homestay host must inform the school and provide Working with Children Checks.
- The school will conduct annual training sessions for all homestay providers, covering the School's Child Safe and CCYP Reportable Conduct Scheme policy and procedures.

Fees and Services

- The student is required to pay a weekly fee of **\$350.00** to the homestay provider, preferably through electronic means to ensure a verifiable payment record. The fee will be reviewed each year. This fee encompasses the provision of the following homestay services:
 - Exclusive use of a single bedroom for the student.
 - Three meals per day, cooked evening meal included, provided seven days a week and reasonable access to snacks.
 - Furnished facilities including a bed, wardrobe, towels, and linen.
 - Coverage of gas, electricity, heating, and water expenses.
 - Regular cleaning services for common living areas.
 - Access to and use of living areas within the residence.
 - Study amenities, such as a desk, study light, and bookcase.
 - Internet cost.
- The student is responsible for their telephone expenses.
- The initial payment will consist of two weeks' fees paid in advance.
- The student requires to pay a homestay bond which is equivalent of 2 weeks' fees to the school within 2 weeks of arrival. The bond is held by the school to cover the host family for any damage to property. It is fully refundable if there are no claims by host family within 2 weeks of the student exiting the homestay.
- During holiday periods, a holding fee is required to secure the homestay accommodation during the student's absence for a week or more. The holding fee is \$100 per week and should be made before the student departs.
- All homestay students are required to return to their home countries for the December summer holidays, marking the end of Term 4.

Students and/or parents must reimburse homestay providers for any property damage caused by students or for costs incurred during their residence.

Travelling

- Where a student's travel in Victoria or interstate includes overnight stays, written approval from the student's parents/legal custodian and the school is required. The student must provide details of travel arrangements to the school and the homestay provider.
- With approval from parents/legal custodian and the school, students can travel in the following conditions:
 - With the homestay family on a holiday or excursion
 - On a school camp or excursion supervised by school staff
 - On a commercial package tour within Australia which is provided by a registered company, is specifically designed for school students and includes appropriate supervision or chaperone arrangement, and involves no independent travel, i.e. pick up and drop off is at the homestay, the school or an assembly point designated by the school.
 - In the company of a direct family member over 21 years of age (parent or DIBP approved relative) who will accept responsibility for the student during the travel
 - To a sporting or club event as part of a local team or group and will be under the care and supervision of the club or association during the trip.

Changing Homestay Arrangements

- Upon the student's enrolment, students, homestay providers, and the school welfare manager (Principal class officer) will be required to sign a Homestay Responsibility Agreement. This agreement will detail the house rules, requirements, homestay costs, and payment methods.
- Changes to homestay arrangements cannot be made by students or homestay providers without consultation with the school and formal agreement through the Homestay Responsibility Agreement.

- If a homestay provider wishes to terminate the homestay agreement, they must provide at least two weeks' notice to the student and the school. Any advance payments made should be refunded to the student.
- When a student decides to move out of a homestay, they must give at least two weeks' notice to the homestay provider and the school. Failure to provide sufficient notice may result in forfeiture of the bond.

Behaviour Issues, student non-compliance

- In the event of a breach of the Homestay Agreement by the student, the homestay provider should promptly contact the school's ISC for mediation and support.
- Similarly, if a student is experiencing dissatisfaction with their homestay, the school's ISC will facilitate mediation and assist both parties in finding a resolution.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved between the homestay provider and the student should be formally submitted in writing to the International Student Coordinator, who will collaborate with the Principal to find a mutually beneficial solution.
- Complaints that remain unresolved by the school should be documented in writing and forwarded to the International Education Division of the Department of Education and Training.

Students over the age of 18

- Students aged 18 and over may be granted permission to relocate from approved accommodation with written parental consent, provided the chosen accommodation is deemed appropriate by the school.
- Students classified under welfare statuses Option 3 or 4 remain under the care of the school until the end date of their yearly enrollment. Therefore, the school will conduct an Independent Living Assessment and submit the findings to the IED in accordance with the Accommodation and Welfare Policy.

By signing this agreement, the Homestay provider, International Student Coordinator and the International Student agree to the terms of this policy

X

Signature of Homestay provider

X

Signature of Student

X

Signature of International Student Coordinator

Details

Ratified by College Council	8 th November 2024
Consultation	Principal & School Council
Approved by	Principal
Review Date	November 2026 (mandatory 2 year cycle)