

ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT AND WELFARE OF STUDENTS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE



This Policy and Procedure is in compliance with National Code Part D, Standards 7 and 5

Policy

Students under the age of 18 years, and holding a Student Visa (other than AusAID students), are to maintain the approved accommodation and welfare arrangements that were in place at the time the Student Visa was granted. If a student wants to change their accommodation and welfare arrangements, they must first seek approval from their education provider through the International Student Support and Welfare Manager.

A student may not change their accommodation arrangements, without the prior approval of ASC International, until they have officially commenced their next course and the new education provider has formally taken responsibility for the accommodation support and welfare of the student for the period while the student remains under 18 years of age; or the student leaves Australia; or other suitable arrangements are made that satisfy the Migration Regulations.

ASC International will maintain the accommodation, support and welfare arrangements of students under the age of 18 years during any period of suspension or cancellation of enrolment until one of the conditions of the previous paragraph is met.

Students under the age of 18 years may stay with a parent, a suitable relative, or in accommodation approved by AHN.

All students must stay with either an approved guardian or in the ASC International approved homestay accommodation whilst they remain a student within and ASC International program

Acceptable Accommodation and Welfare Arrangements

Students may select from three types of approved accommodation and welfare arrangement, as shown below:

1. Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) approval

Where a student nominates a parent/legal custodian or eligible relative, DIBP is responsible for approving the arrangement.

2. ASC International Homestay Service (provided through the Australian Homestay Network (AHN))

Students register to have AHN find a suitable, approved, Local Carer (Homestay Host) to act as their Local Carer in Australia.

3. 'Non relative' acting as Local Carer

The parents of students may nominate a non-relative, who resides in an acceptable accommodation arrangement, and is over the age of 21 years, to act as the Local Carer of a student. The nominated person is required to become a registered Homestay Host with AHN under the arrangements outlined below.

Procedural Arrangements for a non-relative to act as a Local Carer for St Georges International School Students

The Student Services Office takes on the responsibility (under Migration regulations) to approve the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a student who has not yet turned 18. As part of this responsibility the following procedures must be followed:

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1. Student Services, in conjunction with the Admissions Office, nominates the dates for which the registered provider accepts responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements using the specified PRISMS pro-forma letter.
 2. Student Services advises DIBP in writing of the approval using the specified PRISMS pro- forma letter or through the PRISMS portal.
 3. Student Services utilised the services of the Australian Homestay Network to confirm the suitability of the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements. The following policies are utilised for this:
 - a. RMSPOL0001 AHN Code of Ethics and Best Practice
 - b. RMSPOL004 Risk Analysis and Assessment Policy
 - c. HOSFOR0004 AHN Host Agreement
 - d. RMSPOL0009 Legislation and Compliance under the National Code
 - e. S18POL0001 Regulations and Requirements for Students Under 18 Years
 - f. S18POL0002 Placing Underage Students with Homestay Hosts
 - g. S18POL003 Statement of Commitment to the Safety and Wellbeing of Students Under 18
 - h. S18POL0004 Code of Conduct for International Students Under the age of 18 in Homestay
 - i. S18POL0005 Important Information for students under the age of 18
 - j. SUPPOL0002 AHN Policy for Placing Students with Homestay Hosts
 4. The International Student Support and Welfare Manager advises DIBP as soon as possible, using the specified PRISMS pro forma letter or portal, in the event that an under-18 year-old-student has changed his/her living arrangements, or the registered provider no longer approves of the arrangements for the student.

Monitoring the Arrangements

AHN signs a formal agreement with each approved local Carer and non-relative (private homestay) outlining the minimum requirements and standards of the role. AHN uses the following documents to register new Homestay Hosts.

- Application to Provide Accommodation; and
- Host Family Registration Checklist.

Services to Support Students

ASC International will provide students with access to welfare-related support services within the School to assist with issues that may arise during their study (at no additional cost to student). Information regarding these services is included in the Student Handbook that is provided to students during Orientation.

These support services include:

- Monitoring course progress and providing counselling where necessary;
- Monitoring attendance and providing counselling where necessary;
- Monitoring accommodation arrangements and providing counselling where necessary. This includes dealing with any critical incidents that may occur. Actions to be taken in this event are covered by the "ASC International Critical Incident Policy".

Critical incidents could include, but are not limited to:

- missing students
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- death, serious injury or any threat of these
- natural disaster; and
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.

Certificate of Accommodation and Welfare Form (CAAW)

This Certificate covers:

- a. Underage students for whom ASC International has provided a Homestay.
- b. Special requirements applying to students aged 12 years and under.
- c. Underage students to whom DIBP issued a Student Visa on the grounds that the student would live with a relative who met the DIBP requirements to act as that student's approved Local Carer.

1. Homestay Accommodation

a. New Students Holding an ASC International CAAW

- i. When Student Services places an underage student into Homestay accommodation, they send a letter to the student's Agent giving the student the details of the homestay family. Also, they forward a "Carer's Agreement" for the parents to sign at paragraphs 10 and 12.
- ii. The Agent is requested to return the Agreement to the Student Services Office via fax or by email (as a pdf).
- iii. If the signed form is not returned within 2 weeks from the date of dispatch, a second copy is to be sent to the Agent with a note requesting that the form be signed and returned to Student Services Office as soon as possible. (NB. This procedure is to be repeated every 2 weeks until the signed document is received).
- iv. When the signed form is received, a copy of the Agreement is made and sent to the Homestay Host for their signature. The original is kept by the Homestay Administrator, with a note of the date on which it was sent to the Homestay Host, and logged to the DMS.
- v. When the Homestay Host returns the completed document, two copies are made. One is sent to the Agent for the parent's records and the other returned to the Homestay Host for their records.
- vi. All forms are stored in the DMS.

b. Students Transferring Between Homestays

- i. ASC International requires the student to reside with their assigned Homestay Host/Local Carer. The AHN Carer's Agreement ceases if and when the student moves from a Homestay Host's home.
- ii. As part of the transfer process, AHN will process and arrange the transfer of students each time a student moves from one Homestay to another.
- iii. The Student Services Office will forward a letter detailing the new Homestay particulars, and a copy of the variation to Welfare form for the parents to sign.

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- iv. The procedure outlined in points above is repeated.
 - v. On the date that the student moves from the first Homestay to the new Homestay, the Homestay Administrator will inform DIBP of the student's new Homestay Host's address and contact details using DIBP's "Change of Address" form.

2. Students aged 12 years and under residing in Homestay Accommodation

- Students who are aged 12 years and under will usually be accompanied by a parent holding a Guardianship visa.
- Where the parent of a student who is 12 years or under requests for the student to live in Homestay accommodation provided by ASC International's homestay arrangements provided through the Australian Homestay Network (AHN). Once AHN has successfully ensured a place can be confirmed for this student, the Letter of Offer will be issued.
- If there is an inability to guarantee the availability of a Homestay Host who is competent to host a very young student, then ASC International will not issue a Letter of Offer.
- Homestays considered to be competent to host a very young student will meet the following criteria:
 - Have students or children of a similar age living in the home.
 - Have prior experience of successfully hosting students of 12 years or under.
 - Be available to take the student to school and to pick them up from school daily.
 - Be in the home after school hours every day.
 - Ensure that students aged 12 years and under do not go out unless accompanied by their host or with a responsible adult who is approved by their host or a parent.
 - Ensure that students aged 12 years and under do not travel unaccompanied by a responsible adult on public transport. (Parents of students aged 12 years and under will be charged an additional \$100 per week to cover transportation and additional care costs).

3. Students Residing with a Relative

- Students who will be living with a DIBP approved guardian and therefore do not require a CAAW, will be issued with a "Local Carer Form" by the Admissions Officer when the Letter of Offer is issued.
- These forms are to be completed and signed by the student's parents and the Local Carer, and returned to the ASC International Admissions.
- When received, the International Student Support and Welfare Manager should check the details to ensure that the student is living in accommodation in accordance with the ASC International Accommodation Policy.
- The International Student Support and Welfare Manager enters the Local Carer's details, and the student's residential address, into the DMS and the form should be filed in the student's personal file.
- In cases where the student appears to be living apart from their nominated Local Carer, they must be interviewed by the International Student Support and Welfare Manager to explain the details of their accommodation arrangements. If any student is not complying with the ASC International's Accommodation Policy, the International Student Support and Welfare Manager should discuss the situation with the student, their Carer and their parents. If the situation cannot be resolved, then it must be reported to the Director of the ASC International and the School Principal for resolution.

Documentation required for the implementation of the Policy:

- Certificate of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW)
- Local Carer Form
- Welfare Variation Form
- DIBP Change of Address Form

- AHN policies document

Authority: **ASC Director of International Programs**

Reviewed: **ASC International, July 2016**

Approved: **ASC Compliance and Risk Manager**