

Younger Overseas Students Accommodation Arrangements Policy

Source of Obligation

Standard 5.3.3 of the National Code requires the College to take responsibility under the Migration Regulations 1994 (Cth) for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for an overseas student who is under 18 years of age.

The College must have and implement documented processes for verifying that the student's accommodation is appropriate for the student's age and needs:

- prior to the accommodation being approved; and
- at least every six months thereafter.

Thomas Carr College's Policy

It is the College's policy to assess younger overseas students' accommodation arrangements through and in accordance with the Younger Overseas Students Policy through:

- physical site visits
- student interviews
- student surveys
- maintenance and facilities review
- any other ways the College deems necessary to confirm that the accommodation still meets the overseas student's needs.

Approval of Accommodation

A younger overseas student's accommodation must be approved by the College prior to the student residing at the accommodation.

The student's accommodation must be:

- suitable to reside in
- a safe, supportive and welcoming environment
- kept clean and tidy
- able to access a shared bathroom or private bathroom
- able to access a form of heating in the winter and a form of cooling in summer.

For homestay accommodation to be approved as suitable accommodation for our younger overseas students to reside in, the College completes a Homestay Appraisal Form.

It is the College's policy that to be eligible for a homestay arrangement, the overseas student must be at least 13 years of age at the time of commencing the homestay accommodation.

The College conducts a site visit to inspect the premises where an overseas student is residing prior to the student's placement, and at least every six months, to verify that it is appropriate for the overseas student's age and needs. This process also includes consultation with the student about their experience in the accommodation to date.

Homestay Requirements

For homestays to be approved by the College, the homestay must:

- sign a written agreement with the College
- have a safe, secure, private bedroom for the student's sole use that is appropriate to the age and needs of the student with suitable storage space for clothes, personal effects and study materials, and suitable facilities including a desk, a chair and adequate lighting for study purposes
- be clean and have appropriate furnishings suitable for a family and students
- include access to a shared or private bathroom, with reasonable time allowed for showers
- include access to kitchen, living areas, laundry facilities and shared areas of the home
- have some form of heating in winter, if required, and some means of cooling in summer
- provide students with any keys, alarms or passwords required to have free access to the homestay residence.

Additionally, the College must:

- have appropriate processes for recruitment and screening homestay families
- ensure that all adults residing at any homestay premises have current Working with Children Checks as required by the appropriate state/territory regulatory body
- provide the homestay provider with appropriate information regarding their responsibilities and emergency contact details for both the College and the parents of the student
- have processes to verify that the accommodation is appropriate to the student's age and needs prior to the placement, and at least every six months
- verify the suitability of the homestay accommodation through a site visit (unless the particular homestay has been verified by a site visit in relation to another student in the previous three months)
- conduct assessments of the homestay with access to all areas of the homestay premises for the purposes of checking compliance with the homestay standards required by the College
- ensure that host families have appropriate insurance policy cover for students residing in their home
- ensure that there is regular training of host families
- ensure that there is a 24-hour emergency number that all stakeholders can contact in the event of an emergency
- maintain regular contact with host families, students and College staff as required.

Host Family Requirements

The College requires each host family to agree to a number of requirements prior to hosting a younger overseas student. Host families are required to:

- provide a safe and welcoming homestay family environment that will encourage students to experience life as a member of the family and, where suitable, include students in family-related activities
- provide an orientation within the family home, the use of facilities and security. This should include household protocols and safety rules about access and the use of shared areas or facilities such as swimming pools, internet, telephone, mealtimes, visitors and appropriate times to return home during the week and on weekends
- orientate students to the local area including public transport and getting to and from the College, the location of the shops, doctors or medical facilities and recreation areas
- ensure that the student is aware of emergency numbers including 000, the location of police stations and Australian laws pertaining to under 18 year olds
- ensure that the student is appropriately supervised at all times throughout the duration of residing in the homestay including:
 - maintaining suitable supervision of students outside of college hours
 - monitoring the student's general welfare including the student's social activities
- attend interviews with College staff at enrolment, parent meetings and as required by the College
- contact the College regarding any student welfare, academic progress and attendance issues
- assist and support the student's attendance at the College and support the completion of homework assignments where required
- assist the student to access any necessary medical, dental, hospital or other health-related services, including making appointments and, where necessary, accompany the student to those appointments and if required advise the College of any medical issues.

Host Family to Notify the College

A host family must notify the College at least two weeks in advance, or as soon as practicable, of any change of circumstances, including:

- if the host family proposes to materially change the homestay residence in a way that will affect their ability to meet the homestay residence requirements
- if the host family is temporarily unable to provide accommodation or suitable supervision for periods of holidays or other periods
- if the host family intends to change address or contact details
- if the student fails to reside in their approved address at all times or intends to move.

If an Overseas Student Turns 18

If an overseas student turns 18 while enrolled at the College, the College's Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) responsibility will cease.

Additionally, the requirements under Standard 5 of the National Code and this policy will no longer apply.

If an overseas student turns 18 while enrolled in the final period of their course, the College may decide to apply a condition on their enrolment in the course, requiring the overseas student to continue to reside in the approved accommodation until the completion of the course. This will be made clear in an amended and signed written agreement or enrolment contract.

VRQA Guidelines on Homestay Accommodation for Overseas Students

The requirements outlined in this policy comply with the VRQA Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students Aged Under 18 Years that include guidelines relating to the “Minimum age of 13 for enrolment of an overseas student in homestay accommodation” and “Student accommodation minimum standards”.

Record Keeping

The College maintains evidence of compliance with this policy by maintaining records of activities undertaken by the College in accordance with this policy, any written agreements entered into by the College and copies of all CAAW letters. Records will be maintained in accordance with our Overseas Students Records Management and Retention Policy.

Policy status: New

Key Stakeholders: College staff, students and parents

Endorsement Body: College Executive

Ratification Body: College Board Policy

Author: Director of International Programs

Date of Approval: 2018

Date of Scheduled Review: 2021

The content of this policy can be changed at the College Board's discretion at any time without notification.