

FSAC Ltd

Board Policy No 15. Homestay Management

Homestay Family Selection and Screening Procedure No. 15.1

2017

Document Approval and Version Control	
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Board Policy No. 15 – Homestay Management

2. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The following procedure outlines the process Homestay Family Selection and Screening Procedure.

This procedure has been developed to meet the requirements of the ESOS National Code 2007 and Student visa (Condition 8532) which require that appropriate arrangements have been made for the accommodation, welfare and support of students less than 18 years of age.

SPECIAL NOTE: This Policy should be read in concert with Policy No. 2 Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures which deals with matters of harm, sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour. The Student Protection Policy and Procedures must be kept at the forefront when considering and implementing the contents of this policy and associated procedures. In the event that reasonable suspicions that harm, and/or sexual abuse has occurred or is likely to occur, the Student Protection Policy and Procedures must be followed.

2.1. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- St John’s Anglican College and St John’s International College staff
- Potential Homestay Families
- Residents of Homestay Families homes
- Regular visitors to Homestay Residences
- Employees of Homestay Families (if they meet a “regular contact” provision)

2.2. PRINCIPLES:

St John’s International College will uphold the following principles under this procedure:

- St John’s believes all Homestay Students have the right to feel safe, be listened to, be involved in decisions that affect them, have their cultural values respected, not be unjustly discriminated against on the basis of their status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of their parents or carers, and have their best interests considered.
- Students under the care of St John’s should be provided with the knowledge and information they require to feel empowered to take action in the event of abuse or neglect.
- St John’s acknowledges that Homestay Students are unique and valued individuals and deserve to be treated with care and respect.
- St John’s recognises that respect for Homestay Students is the foundation upon which all Homestay policies and procedures are developed.
- St John’s is committed to promoting the wellbeing of Homestay Students under its protection by protecting their security, safety and wellbeing.

2.3. Affiliated Authorities

- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*

3. SELECTION:

- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2011*
- *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy 2016*
- Staff Handbook

St John's International College recognises that risk management for children in Homestay arrangements begins with the selection of the right people to provide appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare to Homestay Students, and continues by having consistent procedures in place for all stakeholders to follow, with adequate training and support to ensure that they comply with these procedures.

In choosing a Homestay Family the College will comply with all relevant legislation and be satisfied of the ability of the Homestay Family to care for the student in a safe and secure environment, and to provide age appropriate support and supervision for a child or adolescent attending school and adjusting to living in a new environment.

- To be considered for selection in the College's Homestay programme, all prospective Homestay Families must agree to uphold the provisions of the Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures and the Homestay Code of Conduct, and follow the guidelines and procedures outlined.

In selecting a Homestay Family, the College will ensure (as a minimum) that:

- Homestay Families are carefully selected from within the school community (where possible).
- All Homestay Families have undergone appropriate screening including a police check as required by Queensland law.
- Homestay Families are interviewed and assessed by a trained Homestay Manager.
- Homestay Families receive a comprehensive Homestay information pack, including a Homestay Handbook, to ensure their visiting student has a fulfilling Homestay experience.
- Homestay Families can provide visiting students with suitable accommodation and a stable environment for the duration of their stay.
- Homestay Families are aware of, and can effectively manage potential risks associated with activities undertaken by visiting students.
- Homestay Families agree to provide assistance to access appropriate transport to and from the College and College related activities.
- Homestay Families agree to the College's Homestay Code of Conduct and Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures

St John's International College has established a Homestay Information Pack, which in addition to the Homestay Handbook, includes:

- An Introductory Letter to the Homestay Family
- An Application to provide Homestay Accommodation
- Terms and Conditions
- A detailed explanation of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Instructions on how to apply for a Blue Card
- The Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures
- The College's Homestay Accommodation and Welfare Procedure
- The Homestay Code of Conduct

Interview Questions:

Interviews are a required component of the selection process for Homestay Families. Interviews are to be conducted consistent with the principles of equity and the Colleges' Privacy Procedure.

QUESTIONS WHICH CAN BE LEGITIMATELY ASKED:

- Are there any work or social related activities that may interfere with your ability to be available to support and provide for a homestay student?
- From time to time you may be required to drive a student to a College activity or function. Is there any legal reason you cannot drive a vehicle?

STUDENT PROTECTION QUESTIONS:

A critical consideration in assessing an applicant for appointment as a Homestay Family is their understanding of their responsibilities in regards to Student Protection. It is important therefore that this area is adequately covered during the interview.

The following are some examples of behavioural interview questions which could be used to provide the information to make a considered determination on an applicant's understanding of their obligations and commitment to Student Protection.

Questions probing knowledge of policy and procedures:

- *Please describe your understanding of the key aspects of Child Protection in Queensland and how that relates to the responsibilities of a Homestay Family?*

Questions probing values and ethics:

- *What are your attitudes to child protection? How have these developed over time?*
- *What are your feelings about children who make allegations of child abuse or harm?*

Questions probing emotional maturity and resilience:

Tell us about a person with whom you have had particular difficulty in dealing. What made it difficult? How did you manage the situation? Tell us about a time when you have been working with children and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? With hindsight, how might you have improved your response?

Questions probing motivation for working with children:

- *What do you feel are the main reasons that have led you to want to work with children/become a Homestay Family?*
- *What has working with young people/children taught you about yourself?*

Not only when asking questions about Child Protection, but throughout the interview process, interviewers should be attuned to answers that are vague or unrealistic. In particular, interviewers should look out for answers that show no or little understanding or appreciation of children's needs or expectations; that fail to recognise the particular vulnerabilities of children from various backgrounds; inappropriate language about children; unclear boundaries with children; and answers that imply adults and children are equal.

Some further questions which could be considered:

- *Tell us about a time when you took action to help protect a child?*
- *Describe the procedures a Homestay Family should have in place to protect children?*
- *How have you tried to ensure that children are protected?*
- *What do you think makes a Homestay Family safe and supportive?*

4. Screening:

As part of the Homestay application and selection process all Homestay Families (including parents of the school, but excluding those who are relatives of the child staying with them) must have positive prescribed notices (Blue Cards) issued by the Public Safety Business Agency under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* **except** when an exemption applies under the Act.

NOTE: No student will be placed with a Homestay Family until they and all appropriate people in the home have a Positive Notice Blue Card.

5. Induction:

All new Homestay Families are required to attend a compulsory induction session, conducted by the St John's International College Homestay Manager before a student is placed in their home. These induction programs are designed to make Homestay Families aware (as a minimum) of the following:

- The College's commitment to providing environments which are safe, caring and supportive to children and young people.
- The College's policies and procedures relating to the protection from harm of students in Homestay arrangements.
- Procedures to follow when harm is disclosed or suspected

- Their rights and responsibilities
- What is expected of them
- What they can and can't do – the boundaries of their roles
- The roles of the key people in the College and to whom the Homestay Family should report or go for help
- What to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them
- Reporting and grievance procedures

These induction sessions are run periodically throughout each year and are designed to:

- Enhance the skills and knowledge of Homestay Families, enabling them to contribute positively to the growth and development of the students in their care
- Reduce exposure to risks
- Support friendly environments for children and young people
- All Homestay Families, and prospective families, are also provided with a copy of the School's Homestay Handbook as part of the induction process.

6. Monitoring:

Monitoring of the service provided by all Homestay Families is conducted by the College through the Homestay Manager and includes (but is not limited to):

- Conducting periodic surveys of Homestay Students, which includes an evaluation of their accommodation and welfare arrangements and taking action as required
- Regular contact with the Homestay Families by phone and/or email to discuss and review the arrangement
- Conducting informal meetings with Homestay Students and pastoral care meetings to monitor adjustment; at a minimum once per study period
- Where appropriate liaise with teachers of Homestay Students
- Undertake visits to the Homestay Residence to check on the wellbeing and safety of students on a yearly basis
- College's Complaints Register
- Risk self-assessment by Homestay Families
- Exit statements by Homestay Students and Families

Homestay Families are also encouraged to contact the College's Homestay Manager immediately if they have any concerns.

BLUECARD MONITORING

- All Homestay Families have current Blue Cards.
- All Blue Cards are recorded in the Blue Card Register.
- Audits of the Blue Card Registers will be conducted as part of the College's Risk Management Program, twice annually.
- All Homestay Families are required, on an annual basis, to sign a register that they have read and understood the Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedure

7. Professional Development:

Professional development opportunities in relation to student protection will be provided on a regular basis by the College's Homestay Manager.

In addition, Homestay Families are provided with regular updates regarding legal compliance with respect to child safety and risk management, to address any issues regarding Homestay arrangements.

8. Communication and Support Strategies:

Policies and procedures have been developed for the education of all students in St John's International College regarding the prevention of harm, and the process for disclosure of, or the suspicion of harm, including self-harm.

The Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures are made available to Homestay Students and parents via Student Diaries, Homestay Handbooks and the St John's Anglican College website.

The Policy is also displayed on at least one noticeboard within the College and the attention of parents and students drawn to the Policy at least twice a year via school newsletters.

Copies of the Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures are also available from the College's Student Protection Officers.

This Homestay Risk Management Strategy is also provided to Homestay Families by the College.

A Student Guide for Protection from Abuse or Harm is included in all student handbooks and students are informed at assembly and regular classroom meetings about how to protect themselves, and whom to report if they are concerned about their safety.

To ensure that all Homestay Families, adults who permanently live with the Homestay Family, visitors to the Homestay residence and paid employees of the Homestay Family understand what is expected of them with regard to providing a safe and secure environment for students in Homestay arrangements, this Homestay Risk Management Strategy is directed, by each school, to the attention of all Homestay Families through the Homestay Handbook, and in particular, during the induction process for all new Homestay Family.

9. PROCEDURE ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with procedure development and review protocol this procedure will be recorded as an authorised procedure approved by the Senior Leadership Team at its meeting of the date shown on the front of this procedure document.

The procedure will be reviewed twelve months from the date of the approval shown herein.

Notwithstanding the scheduled review, should any circumstance change materially before the 12 month review period, the procedure

| will be immediately reviewed in order to maintain appropriate accuracy, relevance and authority.