HOMESTAY SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCEDURE

Human Resources and Compliance
Version 4.0
Last Reviewed: 23 April 2021

1 Statement

FSAC Ltd trading as St John's International College and St John's Anglican College (the College) is committed to developing and providing documented procedures for selecting and screening Homestay families. Homestay family arrangements must comply with Queensland legislative requirements for child protection, Federal legislation including the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) and the requirements of the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students* (the National Code).

2 Scope

This procedure applies to the College Council members, employees, potential homestay families and residents, visitors and employees of potential homestay families.

3 Principles

This procedure is based on the following principles:

- The College believes all International 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 based on their status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of their parents or carers, and have their best interests considered.
- Students under the care of the College should be provided with the knowledge and information they require to feel empowered to act in the event of abuse or neglect.
- The College acknowledges that International students are unique and valued individuals and deserve to be treated with care and respect.
- The College recognises that respect for students is the foundation on which all policies and procedures are developed.
- The College is committed to promoting the wellbeing of International students under its protection by protecting their security, safety and wellbeing.

4 Mission

St John's inspires lifelong learning by living faith with the courage to lead self and serve others.

"where learning comes alive"

5 Vision

Every learner is empowered to excel and equipped to embrace the challenge of any future.

"developing people of good character"

6 Values

Faith – We are guided by faith in God, our community and our self.

Hope – We believe in the power of mindset and attitude. We foster a positive, safe, optimistic and empowering environment.

Love – We flourish by demonstrating cooperation, encouragement, compassion and joy.

Courage – We grow by being brave, confident, determined, resilient and putting in the effort.

Community – We are service-led and do so with respect by nurturing and celebrating relationships and traditions.

Justice – We stand for inclusivity, equity, acceptance of diversity and are stewards of the environment.

7 Student Protection

The following Statement of Commitment seeks to provide a foundation to reflect, encourage and support a child safe culture.

The Statement is to be implemented by all persons within an Anglican School or Education and Care Service.

Anglican Schools and Education & Care Services are committed to providing environments where children and young people receive the highest standard of care, where their rights are supported, and they have opportunity to thrive and be fruitful. Such environments nurture and safeguard the intelligence, dignity, safety and wellbeing of each child or young person, by placing them at the centre of thought, values and actions.

As reflected in our Ethos, our vocation is education, driven by a vision of humanity, shaped by the image of God made visible in Jesus, present in every human being.

- Every child: made in the image and likeness of God.
- Every child: loveable and loved, unique and unrepeatable.
- Outstanding education for the flourishing of people and the good of community.

Our faith is lived. We are hospitable and welcoming communities, who embody compassion, kindness, fairness, justice and love, and where exceptional pastoral care is practiced.

Working and serving the best interests of children and young people is in everyone's best interest. This is achieved through sustaining living and learning environments that are safe, supportive and stimulating. Specifically, we:

- place emphasis on genuine engagement with children and young people;
- create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people;
- create conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying harm where it exists; and
- respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

This commitment is sought to be consistently reflected through the decisions and behaviour of all persons within the School or Service, who are guided by effective governance, policies, tools and processes. This fosters a child safe culture, where acting in children and young people's best interests is at the heart of what we do.

8 Selection

The College recognises that risk management for children in Homestay arrangements starts with the selection of the right people to provide appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare to International students; and continues by having consistent procedures in place for all stakeholders to follow. Adequate training and support is also provided to ensure compliance with procedures.

When selecting and screening a potential Homestay provider the college will comply with all relevant legislation and be satisfied that the potential Homestay provider can care for the student in a safe and secure environment. This includes the provision of 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 Homestay program, all prospective Homestay providers (families) must agree to uphold the provisions of the *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy* and associated procedures, the *Code of Conduct* and follow relevant college procedures and guidelines.

In selecting a Homestay family, the College will ensure Homestay families:

- are carefully selected from within the school community, wherever possible;
- have undergone appropriate screening including a 'Working with Children' check as required by Queensland legislation;
- are interviewed and assessed by a trained Homestay Coordinator, International Program;
- receive a comprehensive 'Homestay Information Pack' including the 'Homestay Handbook' to ensure their visiting student has a fulfilling Homestay experience;
- can provide visiting students with suitable accommodation and a stable environment for the duration of their stay;
- are aware of, and can effectively manage potential risks associated with activities undertaken by visiting students;
- agree to provide assistance to access appropriate transport to and from the College and College related activities; and
- agree to the College's 'Code of Conduct' and *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy* and associated procedures.

The Homestay Information pack includes:

- an introductory letter to the Homestay family;
- an application to provide Homestay accommodation;
- terms and conditions;
- a detailed explanation of Blue Card requirements in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000;*
- instructions on how to apply for a Blue Card or link an existing Blue Card to the College;
- *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy*;
- *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Procedures*;
- Student Protection Resource Sheets;
- *Homestay Accommodation and Welfare Procedure*; and
- *Code of Conduct*.

8.1 Interviews

Interviews are a required component of the selection process and are to be conducted in accordance with the principles of equity and the *Privacy Procedure*.

8.1.1 Legitimate questions

Questions that can be legitimately asked include:

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

8.1.2 Student Protection questions

A critical consideration in assessing an applicant for appointment as a Homestay family is their understanding of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to Student Protection. It is important that this area is adequately covered during the interview and adequate information is provided to make a considered determination regarding the applicant's understanding.

The following are some examples of interview questions that may be asked:

- Please describe your understanding of the key aspects of Child Protection in Queensland and how that relates to the responsibilities of a Homestay family?
- 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?
- Tell us about a person with whom you have had difficulty in dealing with. 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, would you have changed your response?
- 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?

Throughout the interview process, interviewers will be attuned to answers that are vague or unrealistic. They will also be aware of answers that: show no or little understanding or appreciation of children's needs or expectations; fail to recognise vulnerabilities of children from various backgrounds; demonstrate inappropriate language about children, unclear boundaries with children or answers that imply adults and children are equal.

8.1.3 Other questions

General interview questions may include:

- Tell us about a time when you acted 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?

9 Screening

As part of the Homestay application and selection process all Homestay families (including parents of the College but excluding those who are relatives of the child staying with them) must have the ability to obtain and maintain a Blue Card in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. Exemptions apply in certain circumstances.

No student will be placed with a Homestay family until they and any other residents, visitors or their employees in certain circumstances hold a Blue Card provided by Blue Card Services.

10 Induction

All new Homestay families are required to participate in a compulsory induction session provided by the college before a student is placed in their home. These sessions are designed to make Homestay families aware 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 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 to or go for help;
- what to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them; and
- reporting and grievance procedures.

These sessions are also important to:

- enhance the skills and knowledge of Homestay families, to enable them to contribute positively to the growth and development of the students in their care;
- reduce exposure risks;
- support friendly environments for children and young people; and
- provide Homestay families with important information.

11 Monitoring

The service provided by Homestay families is monitored by the college by such things as:

- conducting regular surveys of Homestay students including an evaluation of their accommodation and welfare arrangements and taking required action;
- maintaining regular contact with 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 least 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;
- checking the College's complaints register;
- risk self-assessment by Homestay families; and
- conducting exit statements completed by International students and families.

Homestay families are also encouraged to contact the Homestay Coordinator, International Program immediately if they have any concerns.

11.1 Blue Cards

All Homestay families will have current Blue Cards provided by Blue Card Services and recorded on the College's Blue Card Register. Regular audits of the Blue Card Register are conducted as part of the Risk Management Plan.

11.2 Student Protection

On an annual basis, Homestay families are required to sign a register that they have read and understood the *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy* and associated procedures.

12 Training

Training in relation to Student Protection will be provided on a regular basis by the College. In addition, Homestay families are provided with regular updates regarding legislative compliance with respect to child safety and risk management, to address any issues regarding Homestay arrangements.

13 Communication and support strategies

Policies and procedures have been developed and implemented for the education of all students in the 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 associated procedures are made available to Homestay students and parents via Student Diaries, Homestay Handbooks and the college website.

The policy is also available in College Libraries and parents and students are made aware of the policy at least twice a year via school newsletters.

Copies of the *Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy*, associated procedures and resource sheets are also available from the College's Student Protection Officers.

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 to whom to report if they are concerned about their safety.

To ensure that all Homestay families, adults who live with the Homestay family, visitors to the Homestay residence and paid employees of the Homestay family in certain circumstances, understand what is expected of them with regard to providing a safe and secure environment for students in Homestay arrangements. The 'Homestay Risk Management' form is provided to Homestay families through the 'Homestay Handbook'.

14 Privacy

Personal information of any potential Homestay family is obtained, stored and released in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. For further information please refer to the College's *Privacy Procedure*.

15 Accountabilities and Responsibilities

The table below outlines the accountabilities and responsibilities for governing and managing the College.	
College Council:	Is responsible for ensuring the proper and effective management and operation of the College. This includes defining and monitoring the strategic direction, developing and monitoring policies, monitoring the effectiveness of the College Council and College, and establishing control and accountability systems.
Principal:	Is responsible for the administration and implementation of the College's strategic direction, policies and procedures and control and accountability systems developed by the College Council. The Principal works closely with and is accountable to the College Council for leading the College to deliver high quality curriculum and educational outcomes, excellence in teaching and learning, a strong College community and driving market growth.
Manager Human Resources and Compliance:	Is responsible for ensuring the achievement of College strategic objectives through the development and application of best practice Human Resource Management principles and practices that comply with legislative requirements. The Manager Human Resources and Compliance works closely with and is accountable to the Principal for developing, implementing and evaluating an appropriate policy framework compliant with all statutory requirements.
Employees:	Are expected to abide by all College policies and procedures.

16 Related policies, procedures and other documents

16.1 Policies

International College Homestay Management Policy

Risk Management Policy

Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy

Working with Children Policy

16.2 Procedures

Behaviour Management Procedure

Critical Incident Management Procedure

Homestay Accommodation and Welfare Procedure

Homestay Training Procedure

Code of Conduct

Privacy Procedure

Student Protection in Anglican Schools Procedure

Working with Children in Anglican Education Procedures and Guidelines

16.3 Other documents

Australian Privacy Principles

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

College Vision, Mission and Values Statement

Homestay Audit Tool

Homestay Handbook

Homestay Risk Management form

Induction Overview Schools New Volunteers and Staff

Risk Management Plan

Student Code of Conduct

Student Protection Resource Sheets

16.4 Legislation

Child Protection Act 1999

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001

Information Privacy Act 2009

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students

Privacy Act 1988

Right to Information Act 2009

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020

17 Approval

This procedure was issued on 23 April 2021 under the authority of the Principal. This document represents the current policy of the College until it is revised or rescinded.

18 Managing this policy

18.1 Review

This procedure is to be reviewed every two years or earlier if necessary. The Manager Human Resources and Compliance is responsible for reviewing or making approved modifications to the procedure and distributing.

18.2 Breach of Policy

Failure to take reasonable steps to appropriately select, screen and monitor Homestay providers (families) in the provision of the Homestay service is considered a breach of this procedure. All employees are expected to abide by College policies and procedures, failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action ranging from counselling to dismissal.

19 Document information

Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Author
3.0	23/03/2018	Procedure review and alignment with new legislation	Manager HR and Compliance
3.1	25/02/2019	Updated due to operational changes	Manager HR and Compliance
4.0	23/04/2021	Procedure review and alignment with legislation and policy changes	Manager HR and Compliance

20 Authorisation

Maria McIvor
Principal
Date: 23 April 2021