

## ACCOMMODATION & WELFARE POLICY FOR UNDER 18 YEAR OLD STUDENTS

### Rationale and Scope

The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (the National Code 2007) requires that international students under the age of 18 to have approved accommodation and welfare arrangements while they undertake study in Australia, before a visa is granted. This Policy provides the guidelines for accommodation, support, monitoring and risk prevention for underage students.

All international students who are underage must have appropriate accommodation arrangements in place that meet Australian Pacific College's (the College's) criteria for approval and/or is deemed appropriate according to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (Immigration). Private rental accommodation without care arrangements in place is not permitted.

In order to be granted a student visa students under 18 years of age must demonstrate to Immigration that they have parent or legal custodian approval to reside in Australia for the duration of the program in which they are enrolled, or until they become 18 years of age, this may be:

- Living with a parent, legal custodian (person who has legal custody of); or a relative (a brother, sister, step-parent, step-brother, step-sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew, step-grandparent, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-niece or step-nephew who is of good character) who is over 21 years nominated by parents and approved by Immigration;
- Living in Homestay accommodation arranged or approved by the College;
- Having a local carer nominated by parents and approved by the College. A 'suitable local carer' is someone who is deemed suitable by the college, in most cases: over 21 years of age, of good character and responsible.

For students with 'package offers' with other providers (e.g. NSW Department of Education and Community International Students Centre), the College responsibility for underage students commences one week prior to orientation and ceases when the student withdraws from the course, transfers to another provider or where the College withdraws its Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare arrangements (CAAW).

This policy applies to all prospective and current students if under the age of 18 whilst studying at the College.

### Policy and procedure

The College has in place procedures to:

1. Ensure the college is compliant with Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislation and the National Code 2007;
2. Monitor and report underage international students where they are deemed to be in breach of their visa conditions;
3. Place students in appropriate accommodation and care arrangements;
4. Provide welfare support for underage students
5. Ensure employees working with underage students have current Working With Children Clearance. (Refer to *Child Protection Policy* for more information)

**Procedure for new students**

Parents (or legal custodians) once they have paid fees (and in doing so have entered into a written agreement) to the College need to take the following steps to confirm accommodation arrangements for their child:

1. An Under 18 Accommodation & Welfare Arrangements Form must be submitted to declare their intended accommodation and welfare arrangements.
2. Students will be invoiced according to the selection chosen
3. College either:
  - a. Arranges accommodation inspections as needed and verifies Working With Children Clearance
  - b. Assigns a college-approved homestay and/or guardian and verifies Working With Children Clearance
4. Using PRISMS (Provider Registration and International Students Management System) a Confirmation of Enrolment (COE) will be issued for the student indicating whether the college is accepting responsibility for the student’s accommodation and welfare arrangements.
5. Where the college accepts responsibility a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare arrangements (CAAW) is issued as well.
6. Details of the student’s parent or guardian will be recorded against the student’s COEs.
7. The Accommodation Officer will monitor the suitability of the accommodation placement for college placed homestays and guardianship arrangements
8. Issues relating to underage students will be discussed at the regular welfare meeting.

Arrangement	Additional fees due	Accommodation inspection needed	Host working with children clearance needed	Guardian Working with Children Clearance needed	CAAW needed
Underage student living with parents or legal custodian	n/a (unless student and parent requests the college to arrange accommodation)	No	No	No	No*
Living with relative who is over 21 years nominated by parents and approved by Immigration	n/a (unless student and parent requests the college to arrange accommodation)	No	No	No	No*
College arranged accommodation/guardian	Homestay placement fee Weekly homestay fee Guardian placement fee Weekly guardianship fee	N/a**	N/a**	N/a**	Yes
Living with a local carer nominated by parents (to be approved by the College)	Accommodation inspection fee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* Student/parent must demonstrate to Immigration that requirements have been met

\*\* All College homestay hosts are required to have an inspection and maintain current working with children checks, all guardians are required to have a current working with children check

**Changes to living arrangements**

Homestay And Welfare Policy V1.8

Underage students must keep the College informed with respect to changes to their accommodation arrangements. Students should discuss any proposed changes with the Accommodation Officer and steps 1-3 and 5 of the procedure for new students should be followed before allowing the change to be enacted. The College will advise Immigration as soon as possible in the event that the under 18 year old student has changed his or her living arrangements, or that the College no longer approves of the arrangements for the student, using the Immigration pro-forma letter available through PRISMS.

### Homestay Provider Responsibilities

- Homestay providers are informed of their responsibilities with regard to placement of underage students.
- All adult house-members are required to complete a working with children background check. The host who is receiving payment from the college is required to have a paid working with children check clearance and all other adult household members are required to have the voluntary (unpaid) working with children check clearance.
- Monitoring of the service provided by host families is conducted formally, during follow-up interviews with hosts and from surveys completed by our students upon departure from their homestay. Informally, our staff inspect the homes when they drop off students at the homestays upon their arrival.
- The accommodation officer follows up any grievances made by students about their hosts.

### Guardian/Carer Responsibilities

- Guardian/Carers are informed of their responsibilities with regard to placement of underage students.
- All guardians are required to complete a working with children background check. A guardian who is receiving payment from the college is required to have a paid working with children check clearance and guardians who are not being paid are required to have the voluntary (unpaid) working with children check clearance.
- Guardians must sign and return the relevant section of the Under 18 Accommodation & Welfare Arrangements Form which outlines all responsibilities and requirements for Guardians and carers.
- Parents and guardian carers are responsible for the students' welfare and supervision outside school hours.

### Period of Responsibility of the College for Accommodation and Welfare Arrangements

For international students only studying at the College, who will stay with a local carer either nominated or approved by parents, a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation/Welfare Arrangements letter will be issued for which the nominated period of responsibility will be at least 7 days beyond the CoE date.

For students with 'package offers' which involve multiple courses at the College or other providers responsibility for underage students commences one week prior to orientation and ceases when the student withdraws from the course, transfers to another provider or where the CAAW is withdrawn by the College.

Where the College suspends or cancels the enrolment of a student, the College will continue to check suitability of arrangements for the student until the student is accepted by another provider, the student leaves Australia, other suitable arrangements are made or the College withdraws the CAAW.

### Students who turn 18 during the course of study at the College

Once the under age students turn 18 the parents must nominate the details of a contact person in Australia. We strongly recommended that school students over 18 years remain in homestay accommodation or continue to reside with their relatives until they complete high school. Parents may be contacted to approve changes to student's living arrangements

### Reporting Students who fail to maintain approved accommodation arrangements

Where the College can no longer approve the accommodation and welfare arrangements for an underage student and all other attempts to assist the student to maintain appropriate arrangements have been exhausted, the student may be reported to Immigration using the 'Non-approval of Appropriate Accommodation/Welfare

Arrangements' form on PRISMS. Prior to reporting, the student will be sent an Intention to Report to Immigration letter.

If a student has gone missing from the approved accommodation and cannot be contacted, this will result in the provider implementing its documented critical incident policy. Actions may include contacting the student's parents and Immigration and filing a missing persons report with the police and/or children's services agencies. If, after a reasonable period, the student has not been found, the College will report the student's breach of visa condition 8532 by submitting the 'Non-Approval of Appropriate Accommodation/Welfare Arrangements' letter.

## Communication

This policy will be communicated to

- staff through orientation manuals, College staff intranet and staff meetings
- students and agents through orientation manuals and the College web page.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the three year review process