HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE - HOMESTAY POLICY

CRICOS Provider Code: 00861K

Rationale

Where parents opt for the Department of Education (DE) to arrange accommodation, the Department through the school, is responsible for provision of accommodation, support and general welfare to the student. These arrangements shall be in place for the period that the student will be under 18 years of age while in Australia. Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth), the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 (Cth), the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth), and Student visa Condition 8532, which require that appropriate arrangements be made for the accommodation, welfare and support of students less than 18 years of age.

This policy is consistent with the Department of Education's International Student Program (ISP) policy and guidance and with the ISP School Toolkit, and with the College's obligations under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), and the Child Safe Standards as given effect by Ministerial Order 1359. It is a requirement of the College's ESOS accreditation that a homestay policy is in place.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Principal (welfare manager)** — accountable for accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements; approves and terminates placements; approves any exception under this policy.
- **International Student Coordinator** — day-to-day management of placements, screening, WWCC verification, monitoring visits, records, and the student's first point of contact.
- **Homestay provider** — provides the accommodation and services set out in this policy and the Homestay Responsibility Agreement; holds a current WWCC; participates in induction and annual training.
- **Student** — observes the house rules and the Homestay Responsibility Agreement and informs the College of any concern about their accommodation.

Eligibility for Homestay

International students aged under 15 must reside with a parent, legal guardian, or a relative approved by the Department of Home Affairs and are not eligible for College-arranged homestay.

International students with additional needs must reside with a parent or legal guardian.
All other international students, including students aged 18 and over, must reside in accommodation approved by the College unless DE approves an alternative arrangement in special circumstances.

Welfare

The College will organise homestay accommodation of high quality and which provides a safe, comfortable, and caring environment.

The homestay accommodation will be provided by a host which may be a suitable family, couple, or single person. The homestay provider must be aged at least 21 years.

A current Working with Children Check must be held by every person aged 18 years or over who resides or frequently resides in the homestay. The College will verify each WWCC before the student moves in and will re-check the status of every WWCC once each term using the Victorian WWCC status checker. Each verification is recorded. Where a WWCC has expired, been revoked, or is otherwise invalid, the student will be moved to emergency accommodation immediately, unless compassionate and compelling circumstances apply and the Principal approves an alternative arrangement.

Before a homestay is approved, the College will complete and retain evidence of an initial homestay check of the premises, a referee check confirming the provider's suitability for child-related work, and an identification check. This evidence is retained for audit.

Homestay placements will be verified between six months and six weeks before the student's commencement date.
The maximum number of students per homestay is 3 at all times, regardless of provider. No student will share a bedroom.
Students must provide written permission from their parents to the College and have the College's endorsement if they wish to stay away from their homestay overnight. The College also must hold relevant contact details and inform the homestay of the arrangement prior to the student being allowed to stay away. The College will record each approval in the student's file, including the name and contact details of the responsible adult at the destination, and the student's expected date and time of return.

The College will monitor progress of homestay arrangements, including twice yearly visits. The College will give the homestay provider at least two weeks' written notice before a monitoring visit. Visits are conducted by the International Student Coordinator or the Principal's delegate, and a record of each visit is retained.

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Minimum Accommodation Standards

Each homestay must, at a minimum, provide:

- a separate bedroom for the student's sole use;
- a clean and tidy household meeting minimum government housing standards, with access to shared living areas;
- working smoke alarms throughout the residence;
- three nutritious meals a day, seven days a week, reasonable access to snacks, and meals that meet the student's dietary and medical requirements;
- access to kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities; and
- a reasonable and safe travel route to the College.

Homestay Provider Induction and Training

Homestay providers will complete an induction before a student is placed, and annual training, thereafter, covering the Child Safe Standards, the Reportable Conduct Scheme, mandatory reporting expectations, critical incident procedures, and their obligations under the Homestay Responsibility Agreement. Attendance is recorded.

Student Safety and Emergency Contact

Each international student is issued with a Student Safety Card carrying 24/7 contact details for the College's student contact officer and is briefed at orientation on how to raise a safety or welfare concern.

Critical incidents are escalated immediately to the Principal and reported to the Incident Support and Operations Centre on 1800 126 126. Where a student cannot be located, the College will follow the ISP Initial Action Potential Missing Student Checklist.

Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare

Where DE arranges accommodation, the College accepts responsibility for the student's accommodation and welfare and a CAAW is issued for the period the student is under 18. A CAAW ceases seven days after course completion, or when the student turns 18. The College will confirm the student's ongoing accommodation arrangements before the CAAW ceases.

Fees and Services

The weekly homestay fee is set annually by the College, within the range published by the Department of Education for homestay accommodation and is published in the College's International Student Fee Schedule. The fee covers the expenses associated with the provision of the following homestay services:

- Single bedroom for the student's exclusive use
- Three meals per day, seven days per week (cooked evening meal), reasonable access to snacks, and meals meeting the student's dietary and medical requirements
- Facilities including a bed, wardrobe, towels, and linen
- Gas, electricity, heating, and water costs
- Cleaning services of common living areas
- Use of living areas within residence
- Study facilities, including a desk, study light and bookcase
- Working smoke alarms throughout the residence

Telephone and internet expenses will be the student's responsibility unless otherwise agreed on the Homestay Responsibility Agreement.

The initial payment will include one term's fees advance plus a bond that is the equivalent of two weeks' fees. This will be held by the College. The bond is held in the College's official account and refunded within four weeks of the student's departure, less any deductions agreed in writing.

During holidays, a holding fee of 50% of the weekly fee to secure the homestay accommodation will be required to cover the student's absence. A holding fee applies only where the student's belongings remain in the homestay, and the room is held for their return and must be agreed in writing in advance.

Students and/ or parents are required to reimburse homestay providers for any damage to property caused by student, or costs incurred by student during the time of residence, fair wear and tear excepted. The College will notify the student and their parents in writing of any proposed deduction from the bond and the basis for it.

Complaints that cannot be resolved by either the homestay provider or the student should be referred in writing to the College. Such complaints are handled under the College's International Student Complaints and Appeals Process, which is provided to students at orientation and includes access to external complaints avenues.

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Homestay Arrangements

If a homestay provider wishes to terminate the homestay agreement, at least two weeks' notice is given to the student and College. Fees paid in advance for the unused period will be refunded to the student by the College on a pro-rata basis.

Where a student moves out of a homestay at least two weeks' notice must be given to the homestay provider and College. Giving less than this may result in the bond being forfeited.

Students, homestay providers and the college welfare manager (Principal class officer) will be asked to sign a Homestay Responsibility Agreement on commencement of the student's enrolment. This will outline the house rules and requirements as well as homestay costs and methods of payment. The Agreement will also set out critical incident procedures, emergency contact details, and expectations in relation to reporting child abuse.

Students and homestay providers may not change the homestay arrangements without consultation with the College and through the Homestay Responsibility Agreement.

The Principal or their delegate will monitor the College approved homestay arrangements on a six monthly basis. Should concerns arise over the homestay facilities, monitoring and visitation may be carried out on a more frequent basis.

Responding to concerns about a Homestay arrangement

Where a concern arises, the College will respond as follows:

(a) Immediately — where the concern relates to a student's safety or wellbeing, the student will be relocated to emergency accommodation, the matter escalated to the Principal, and the College's child safety, mandatory reporting and Reportable Conduct Scheme obligations discharged. Critical incidents are reported to the Incident Support and Operations Centre on 1800 126 126.

(b) Within 10 school days — where the concern relates to accommodation standards and does not affect the student's safety, the College will give the provider written notice of what must be rectified and by when.

(c) At four weeks — if rectification is incomplete, the Principal will review the placement and may terminate the arrangement, and the College will assist the student to move to alternative approved accommodation.

Each student is provided with a bedroom for their sole use. Where more than one student is placed in a homestay, the College makes the placement on a documented case-by-case risk assessment considering the students' ages, the sleeping and bathroom arrangements, the composition of the household, and the preferences of the students and their parents.

Over 18 Students

Students aged 18 and over must reside in accommodation approved by the College. The College may approve an alternative arrangement only where DE permits it in special circumstances. A student's CAAW ceases when the student turns 18; the College will confirm the student's ongoing accommodation arrangements before that date.

Records and Privacy

Records created under this policy — screening evidence, WWCC verifications, monitoring visit reports, signed Agreements, approvals for overnight absences, and complaints — are retained in accordance with the College's records management obligations and are available for ESOS audit. Personal and health information about students and homestay providers is handled in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

Related Policies

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Critical Incident Policy
International Student Complaints and Appeals Process	Enrolment Policy
International Student Fee Schedule and Refund Policy	Privacy Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, and earlier where there is a change to ISP requirements, the National Code, or the College's circumstances.

Date Reviewed	To Be Reviewed	Endorsed at College Council
September 2026	**Every 2 years**	**29th October 2026**

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