



**FIRBANK GRAMMAR SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR:  
Standard 5-Younger Overseas Students**

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Firbank Grammar School trading as Firbank Grammar enrolls students under 18 years of age. To ensure students have adequate and compliant welfare arrangements Firbank has developed policies and procedures that are provided to parents, agents and advocates prior to formal enrolment.

The National Code Standard 5 requires that prospective students are provided with relevant information about accommodation requirements *prior* to enrolment.

Information is provided on our website. Firbank's International Student Handbook and enrolment pack are provided to students when they are interviewed.

All international students will be provided with a Student Safety Card on commencement during their Orientation Program.

**STUDENTS WHO TURN 18 BEFORE ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA**

Students turning 18 before arriving in Australia will need Firbank's approval of their accommodation before commencing at Firbank.

**STUDENTS UNDER 18 STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA MUST HAVE ONE OF THE OPTIONS BELOW IN PLACE**

1. Live with a parent or relative as permitted by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). In this case the School is not required to provide a welfare letter (CAAW) via PRISMS. The student's family provides proof of the relationship to DHA for the purposes of visa application and the family is fully responsible for the welfare of the child.

**or**

2. Live in a Home Stay that is approved by Firbank. Under 18 international students must be provided with a welfare letter (CAAW) via PRISMS to accompany the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). In this instance Firbank becomes fully responsible for the welfare of the student until another School accepts responsibility or the student returns home/back into their parent/guardian's care.

**or**

3. Live in Firbank's Boarding House. Under 18 international students must be provided with a welfare letter (CAAW) via PRISMS to accompany the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). In this instance Firbank becomes fully responsible for the welfare of the student until another School accepts responsibility or the student returns home/back into their parent/guardian's care.

**STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 13**

In line with VRQA guidelines, Firbank will only accept students under the age of 13 if they are accommodated in the Boarding House or will be living with a parent.

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Students must have welfare arrangements in place until they turn 18, even if this is before the course commences.

Students must not enter Australia before their welfare arrangements start. This is a condition of their visa. A breach of visa conditions could result in cancellation of the visa.

Under the Migration Regulations 1994, student visa applicants under the age of 18 must demonstrate that they will be accompanied by a parent, legal custodian or a suitable relative or the student's education provider makes and takes responsibility for the student's accommodation, support and welfare.

Under Standard 5 of the National Code, education providers who approve welfare arrangements for under 18 year old students must nominate the period for which they will approve the arrangements.

#### *Changes to the Migration Regulations*

1. Public Interest Criteria 4012A will require that where an education provider is approving the welfare arrangements of the student, the minimum period nominated by the provider must be Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) plus seven days at the end of the CoE.

## **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

### **Homestay Assistance**

Homestay arrangements will be facilitated through Firbank. On notification that a student requires homestay accommodation, a member of the International Department will contact either of the following agencies to provide homestay options for the student.

- Family Stay Australia
- Student Accommodation Services

Both these agencies have contracts with Firbank. The contracts outline Firbank's expectations and regulations.

Once accommodation is recommended by the agency, Firbank will send a member of the International Department to visit the homestay to assess the suitability of the provider and the accommodation.

Firbank will follow up suggested homes by:

- Checking at least 2 referees
- Checking the suitability of accommodation (site visits)
- Approving the financial arrangements between the homestay provider and the student
- Ensuring that Homestay Providers speak English to a high standard

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If either the provider, or the accommodation, is deemed unsuitable then Firbank will request alternative accommodation.

If the homestay accommodation is assessed as suitable then an agreement will be signed with the Homestay Provider. All Homestay Providers are required to complete the following module from DET. They are required to provide the certificate when they have finished. <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/external/>. All Homestay Providers are provided with Firbank's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and required to sign that they have read and understood the policies.

Students must not move into Homestay accommodation without the approval of Firbank.

Members of the International Department will visit Homestay accommodation bi-annually.

### **FIRBANK BOARDING HOUSE**

Students under the age of 18 on a CAAW can elect to live in Firbank's Boarding accommodation. Facilities and accommodation at the Boarding House will be assessed and monitored in the same way as homestay accommodation.

After School hours, students in the Boarding House are supervised at all times. There is always minimum of 2 supervisors on overnight and on weekends.

The Boarding House is managed by the:

- Head of Boarding
- Deputy Head of Boarding

Support staff include:

- Health Centre Manager
- School Psychologist
- Supervisors

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIRBANK**

Students for whom the School provides a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare Letter (CAAW) remain the responsibility of the School for the duration of the period on the CAAW letter.

Changes to students' accommodation are managed by Firbank's International Student Co-ordinator. Evidence that the parents are aware of a proposed change is required. If a student does not comply, they are in breach of student visa condition 8532 and their visa may be subject to cancellation

Firbank will ensure that the students are given age and culturally appropriate information on:

- who to contact in an emergency situation, including phone numbers of the nominated staff member for the School
- how to seek assistance and report any incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual, physical or other abuse
- How to contact the School should the student be unhappy with their accommodation arrangements

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All adults involved in or providing accommodation and welfare arrangements to Firbank students must have Working With Children accreditation.

Firbank will ensure that WWC requirements are checked and recorded.

Homestay accommodation will be checked thoroughly prior to the accommodation being approved and at least every 6 months after that.

Firbank will maintain accurate and up to date records of students, their parents and local support person.

Firbank will advise immigration, and the student's parents and local support person of any changes made to the care arrangements for students within 24 hours or sooner.

In the case of a critical incident the responsible adult/s will contact the police and/or other State and Commonwealth agencies as appropriate.

### **Code of Ethics (Homestay Providers)**

Home stay providers are expected to:

- undergo a Working with Children Check (for all residents in the house over 18 years of age)
- participate in the home stay program with the primary motivation of sharing their homes and daily lives with an international student for the purpose of cultural exchange
- uphold the values of safety, respect, fairness, and good communication which are at the heart of the home stay program in all dealings with participants within the program
- develop positive relationships with students which are based on mutual trust and communication
- acknowledge the uniqueness of each student and accept the personal strengths and weakness of each student
- support and assist students to live comfortably within a foreign environment
- respect the student's right to privacy whilst realising that privacy does not equate to isolation
- acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their student and accommodate appropriately for these within the family's life without criticism
- assist, support and nurture the student where needed or requested
- offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the student
- have a duty of care towards their home stay student
- be familiar with and follow the School's critical incident policy when necessary

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### **Expectations and Responsibilities (Homestay Providers)**

The Homestay Provider will be expected to:

- Provide a safe environment which will offer the student a total experience of living as a member of an Australian family and which encourages positive study habits and an opportunity to use their English regularly in communication with the home stay family members.
- To offer effective support and English language practice speak English within the student's presence as much as possible .
- To be available at home on the student's arrival and remain with the student as long as needed on their first day.
- Organize transport, using a Firbank approved official limousine service, to and from the airport.
- Complete any documentation including home stay guidelines sheet with students within the first week and provide a home orientation which includes use of facilities and any rules or schedules of the household which the student will need to understand.
- Establish a system of communication which will ensure that the family and the School can trace any student who may go missing. This may include a designated pad for messages, a list of the contact numbers of the students friends, mobile numbers, and a set time that the student should call if they will return home late.
- Offer help, guidance, support and encouragement with studies, planning leisure activities and adapting to living in Australia (this may require patience and empathy and a willingness to show the student more than once).
- Provide the student with a private, clean and warm bedroom, work desk, internet access, good healthy food (3 meals a day), laundry facilities and a supportive environment.
- Provide a comfortable adult sized bed, study desk or table and chair, adequate lighting for study, and space for the students clothes and personal belongings within each home stay bedroom.
- Provide nourishing breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days per week, including snacks where appropriate. Meals and snacks must be adequate to the appetites of the students which may be considerable in the case of young adults. It is also expected that the host family will adjust some meals to meet the cultural needs and preferences of students.
- Maintain reasonable expectations for household chores, (many cultures do not expect young adults to do chores within the family).
- Respect the students' need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Liaise with staff regarding any concerns or difficulties.

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- Inform the School if you have any concerns about the student's physical or mental safety regardless of whether this situation originates in the home stay situation.
- Contact emergency services, such as police or ambulance, in any emergency situation, and contact the school as soon as practical thereafter.
- Notify school staff of any change of circumstances in the household.
- Inform the school/homestay provider if the student is more than 5 days late paying the home stay fee.
- To adhere to guidelines set down by the school and attend as required at the home stay providers' information sessions/orientation.

## **STUDENTS**

### **Code of Ethics (Students)**

Students are expected to:

- Participate in the home stay program with the primary motivation of sharing their daily lives with a local family for the purpose of cultural exchange.
- Uphold the values of safety, respect, fairness, and good communication which are at the heart of the home stay program in all dealings with participants within the program.
- Follow the accepted code of behaviour within the home stay, including respect for all family members.
- Communicate in an honest and respectful way and develop positive relationships with the home stay family.
- Recognise that families in Australia may offer a different level of "service" than families in their home culture and accept this as a common cultural difference.
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour and needs.
- Provide emergency contact details and agree to reporting requirements within the school critical incident policy.

### **Expectations and Responsibilities (Students)**

The students will be expected to comply with the following:

- Make the best effort to understand and fit into the family's established routine and expectations.
- Ask questions and discuss any part of the rules of routine which cause difficulty for the student.
- Behave appropriately and be prepared to participate in family activities.

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- Respect and be aware that cultural differences and beliefs of the home stay provider may differ from their own.
- Communicate with the home stay provider on a day to day basis. Students should be open about their needs and wants, such as more/less food for lunch or additional blankets in cold weather.
- Use only English in front of the home stay family, even when friends from the students same language background are present.
- Advise the International Student Co-ordinator immediately of any concerns of their health or welfare in the home stay environment.
- Follow rules for living in the family's house by offering to help with minor household chores such as washing up and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy.
- Be considerate and avoid loud noise after 8:30pm.
- Ask the family before inviting friends over.
- Advise the home stay family about social activities and when they will be home for meals.
- Provide the host family with their mobile number, contact details of their friends, and other information which will make it easier to locate the student if she can't be contacted.
- Follow the laws of Australia, for example, wearing bicycle helmets. There is to be no smoking or drinking whilst living in a homestay setting and it is not permissible under Australian law.
- Take care of the family's home and belongings and report any damage to the family as soon as possible.
- Pay for any damage to family property (if the student is responsible for the damage).
- Pay all required home stay fees to the family on time. If the home stay fee is more than 5 days late the home stay family is duty bound to inform the School.
- Keep all valuables, money, passport and airline tickets in a safe place.

## SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF STUDENTS ENROLMENT

If Firbank suspends or cancels the enrolment of an underage student, it must continue to check the suitability of arrangements for that student until:

1. The student is accepted by another registered provider and that provider takes over responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements
2. The student leaves Australia
3. Other suitable arrangements are made that satisfy the Migration Regulations or
4. the Registered provider reports that it can no longer approve of the arrangements for the student.

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Link to DHA Under 18 requirements: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/skilled/documents-for-dependents-under-18.aspx>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud/more/welfare-arrangements-under18>

Consent to grant an Australian visa to a child under the age of 18 years form:

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Forms/Documents/1229.pdf>

#### RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Homestay provider agreement
- Homestay accommodation checklist
- International Student Homestay Feedback on Homestay Provider

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