



Merrimac
State High School
Gold Coast, Australia

Pride in Excellence

International Homestay
Handbook

Principal's greeting



In choosing to study in the International Program at Merrimac State High School you are joining a school community preparing all young people for their roles in an expanding global community.

Imagine studying and graduating on the beautiful Gold Coast from a school within walking distance to the world's most beautiful beaches. This is now your dream realised.

We understand the enormous undertaking you've made to study on the Gold Coast, and we want it to be a happy, safe and successful time for you. The relationships and contacts built through programs such as this provide many opportunities for friendship, tertiary study and business well into the future.

School spirit and traditions are centred on the symbol of the Phoenix. Our aspirational school motto, "Pride in Excellence" serves as a reminder to our students to strive each day in pursuit of realising their outstanding abilities.

School Philosophy and Values

Our school motto "Pride in Excellence" school spirit and traditions are centred on the symbol of the Phoenix, a mythical and majestic bird of hope and endurance.

Philosophy

Merrimac State High School's community strives to build positive relationships, value differences, encourage life-long learning and contribute to the school, family and wider community.

We believe that education is a shared responsibility. We promote a spirit of co-operation and belonging amongst students, staff, parents, carers and the community. We aim to prepare our students for life as literate, informed, skilled, happy, responsible and caring individuals who are encouraged through their endeavours to take "Pride in Excellence".

We are committed to motivate students to continue learning, contribute positively to their families and communities and gain fulfilment in their lives by embracing to all the challenges life presents.

Values

We stand for Respect, Responsibility and Reliability.

There is a strong belief that everyone has the right to be respected and the responsibility to respect themselves, others and property. It is expected that all

members of the Merrimac community are reliable in their commitment to ensuring that their actions have only a positive influence on all.

To ensure students and staff can achieve their best within a safe and caring environment; school values have been developed and are exemplified by all members of our school community. The 3 R's of: Respect, Responsibility and Reliability are embedded in our whole school approach to managing student behaviour.

Welcome to EQI Homestay

Thank you for becoming an International Student Programs (ISP) homestay provider.

Homestay is a great opportunity for international students to experience Queensland in a safe and supportive environment.

As a homestay provider you contribute to the positive memories international students have of their time in Queensland. Many homestay providers form long-lasting friendships with students and their families all over the world.

Your primary role as a homestay provider is to accommodate students in a safe, welcoming, and friendly home situation that supports their personal and educational needs.

In return, students are expected to show you and your household members respect, courtesy and consideration.

This guide will help you prepare for a successful homestay experience and to anticipate and overcome some of the common issues that may arise.

How the homestay program works

EQI is responsible for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for international students in the EQI homestay program.

EQI homestay procedures are published on the Department of Education's Policy and Procedure Register (PPR) (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-supportservices>). These procedures include the roles and responsibilities of DEi staff, school staff, students, homestay providers and agents and the steps followed to ensure appropriate homestay arrangements are maintained.

EQI schools recruit homestay providers in their local area and manage all the day-to-day aspects of the homestay program.

When students request homestay accommodation our schools take care to match students with compatible homestay providers.

We ask students to share information about allergies, dietary needs, attitude to pets, spiritual requirements, hobbies, and interests. It is our goal to place the student where the homestay provider and student will feel comfortable.

EQI and our school provide support services for homestay providers and international students to help ensure a happy and positive experience for everyone.

Preparing for homestay

Students in homestay accommodation are living away from their families and home country, sometimes for the first time.

Naturally, this can be challenging for them, particularly if they speak limited English, and may be too shy to tell you if they don't understand how your household operates, or if something is wrong.

With some forward planning you can orientate your student to your household routine to get them settled in more quickly, avoid some common misunderstandings, and ensure a safe environment for everyone.

Communicate with your student before they arrive

If you have the chance, it is good to connect with your student and their family before they arrive. An introduction email may include information about your household members and some details about your local area. Doing this removes some of the uncertainty the student might feel about moving to a new 'home' and it will also reassure their family.

Culture shock

Cultural adjustment or 'culture shock' can occur when an international student becomes overwhelmed by the differences of living in an unfamiliar culture, from eating unfamiliar food, to speaking a different language. The symptoms can be physical (sleep disturbances, eating problems, frequent illnesses), and psychological (severe homesickness, loneliness, boredom, isolation, hostility and withdrawal).

As a homestay host you can help by looking out for these signs and providing an understanding and supportive home environment. For example, you may notice your student is spending a lot of time alone in their room or has stopped talking at mealtimes. Encourage them to take part in family activities and ask them to talk about their day, and if there is anything they need help with.

During their school orientation program students are given strategies to cope with culture shock. However, if they continue to experience difficulties you should contact the student's host school.

Prepare your home Environment

Homestay hosts are not expected to supply resort style accommodation, but you do need to ensure that your student feels welcome and at ease in your home:

Cleanliness is a very important factor, and a welcoming and regularly cleaned environment will influence how you and your home are perceived. Once your student has settled in, involve them in cleaning their room. Remember to demonstrate and clearly explain each task so they know what to do.

Comfort. You must provide a private bedroom for your student's sole use, with suitable storage space for clothes, personal effects and study materials. They must have a desk, chair and adequate light for studying. Please consider the time of year they will be staying with you and equip their room accordingly. For example, with warmer bedding and a form of heating in winter, and a light quilt or sheets and a means of cooling the room in summer.

Privacy is very important to students so please ensure your student is given privacy in their bedroom and in the bathroom/toilet. For example, ensure that locks and appropriate window coverings are fitted, and people in your home know to knock and seek permission before entering these rooms.

Safety is vital so please do a safety check of your home and fix, secure or replace anything that may be a hazard. For example, electrical sockets and wiring, trip hazards, external door and window locks and security lighting. Add extra smoke alarms if necessary. Home swimming pools and trampolines are more common in Australia than overseas so please provide safety instructions for these and any other equipment with the potential to cause injury.

Learn about your student's culture

Every culture is unique so it is helpful to learn a little about your student's customs and practices to understand if there are any differences that might cause a misunderstanding.

This way you'll know if there's anything you need to explain in more detail when you introduce the student to your home.

The following examples highlight some of the cultural misunderstandings that can occur:

- You may need to show your student how to use the sheets on the bed and where to hang their wet towels as this may not be obvious to them.
- Homestay students can be shy about someone else washing their underwear so show them where they can wash and dry their own if necessary.

- Some overseas bathrooms are designed to drain large quantities of water very quickly. Explain to your student how Australian baths and showers work to prevent water damage to your floors and carpets.
- Water usage differs around the world so tell students about Australia's water saving policy. Some local authorities supply free shower timers that you can give your student to use.
- In some cultures, it is considered disrespectful or rude to make eye contact with the person you are speaking to. If your student does not look at you during a conversation it could be a sign of respectfulness toward you. You should explain to them that the opposite is true in Australia.
- Pointing with one finger at a person or object is thought to be rude in many countries. Avoid offence by using your whole hand to point out people or things.

Prepare your family and household members and regular Guests

Discussing your student's arrival with household member and regular guests enables them to anticipate changes to their usual routine. It is important that everyone knows the behaviour expected of them, their role in making the student feel at home, and what to do if things go wrong. If there are guests that reside in your home on more than 7 days in a calendar year overnight during the student's stay, e.g. friends or relatives, you need to ensure compliance with EQI's homestay procedures (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-studentsupport-services>) as these adhere to important Blue Card regulations.

Plan how to introduce your pets

If you have pets then you may need to adapt their routine too, as many cultures are not used to animals living indoors. It's a good idea to introduce your pets slowly and monitor them while they adjust to the new person in your home.

Insurance

As a homestay provider you must have and maintain home and contents insurance (for home owners) or contents insurance (for renters) including legal liability insurance of no less than \$20 million. This is to protect homestay providers and students. Please discuss your individual insurance requirements with your insurer to ensure you have the insurance coverage that is right for your circumstances. You should check whether your insurance policy covers you for injury to a homestay student while in your care or accidental damage the student may cause to your property. Some homestay providers take out specific homestay host insurance.

Students and their families are responsible for insuring any valuable items they bring with them or buy in Australia. All international students travelling on a student visa must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay here.

When accessing medical treatment the student pays for the service and then applies for a refund for all or part of this expense depending on the service provided.

It is important to note that not all medical expenses are covered by OSHC.

EQI suggests that all international students take out travel and/or additional health insurance for the duration of their stay.

Check with your school about specific homestay host insurance for additional coverage.

Student arrival

When an international student arrives in Queensland the host school will arrange for a representative to meet them at the airport and take them to their homestay. The school will tell you what time your student will arrive so you can be at home to welcome and settle them in. Don't forget to use the student's name when you meet and when you introduce them to other people.

For arrival, if possible, it would be nice for our host families to collect their student from the airport especially if arriving at Coolangatta. For students arriving in Brisbane, Merrimac will offer a transfer option to your home. However, as in some cases the students have been on their flight for 24 hours and it would be nice to be greeted by their Australian family at the airport as well.

The school will send you written confirmation of flight details to tell you what time your student will arrive so you can make arrangements to collect them, if appropriate. Please make sure you plan to be at home to welcome and settle them in.

When your student first arrives, they will have a few days before school starts this is when you should take them to organise their Australian mobile phone number. Please make sure you get this number as well.

In that first week, please take them on a tour of the area and show them the beautiful Gold Coast coastline, and main sightseeing points. Your student will be excited to see all the magnificent nature that this city has to offer during their first few days.

Please also show them where the school is and the best way for them to walk to and from school. If they are to catch a bus, please show them your local bus stop and your local shopping centre, as they may also wish to buy their school shoes during this time. They will be required to have full leather black shoes.

Home orientation

Give your student some time to rest and freshen up before orientating them to the rest of your home. The orientation is an opportunity to get to know each other and a chance for you and the student to ask questions. Establishing open two-way communication from the start makes it much easier to discuss issues that may arise later.

There are many things to tell your student at the beginning of their stay, such as how things work, your household rules and personal safety. There's a lot to take in, so don't try to tell your student everything at once.

Please remember that your student speaks English as a second language, so when you talk to your student, please do so slowly and clearly, and ask them questions afterwards about what you had explained, so you can verify their understanding. It is also good idea to print out important information, so the student has something to refer back to if needed.

The host family is required to bring the student to school on their first day and make sure they know how they are getting home. Students will be at school for the whole day.

Orientation check list



Introductions and personal needs

- › Discuss preferred names – student and household members
- › Introduction to household members and regular guests
- › Household pets
- › Food preferences, likes and dislikes, breakfast choice, allergies
- › Hobbies and interests
- › Occasions to remember, e.g. student's birthday
- › Other needs, e.g. spiritual, medical, cultural



Household facilities and features

- › Household entry, keys, locks and security
- › Student's bedroom: storage, electrical sockets, fans/heaters/air conditioning, window locks and curtains/blinds, sheets and bedding, keeping things tidy
- › Bathroom: how to use, timings, lock, toilet, water consumption, hygiene, fresh towels
- › Kitchen: utensils, food storage, preparing food, snacks
- › Shared spaces, TV and entertainment
- › Garden and outdoor equipment



Communication

- › Asking questions and discussing issues
- › Household contact numbers
- › Staying in contact
- › School and emergency contact numbers
- › Where to find information
- › Getting a mobile/buying mobile phone credit
- › Home internet and telephone use



Household routines

- › Meal times
- › School schedule
- › Bedtime
- › Laundry
- › Cleaning
- › Helping with chores
- › Shopping
- › Transport



House rules

- › Household etiquette, e.g. using mobile phones at the dinner table
- › Acceptable behaviour
- › Privacy
- › Supervision
- › Friends and overnight visits
- › Curfew and noise
- › Personal items and spaces that are off-limits



Safety outside the home

- › Travel
- › High risk activities
- › Driving
- › Evenings out and curfew
- › Personal safety
- › Sun safety
- › Beach safety
- › Staying in contact and emergencies



Safety at home

- › Smoke alarms
- › Electrical safety
- › Evacuation plan
- › Cybersafety
- › Swimming pool safety
- › Sports and play equipment
- › First aid and emergencies
- › Breakages and damage



Local area orientation

- › Local map, address and directions from home to main points of interest
- › Getting to and from school
- › Shops and currency
- › Bank, post office
- › Chemist and medical facilities
- › Library
- › Public transport, travel cards and timetables
- › Things to do nearby

Daily support

Supervision

You are responsible for providing appropriate supervision for the duration of your student's stay. International students must never be left unsupervised overnight, even if they are aged over 18. If you cannot supervise your student (for example, if you have to travel and they cannot accompany you) please contact the host school (in advance) so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Supervision can only take place by adults who have a current BlueCard and are 25 years old or over.

If you are going away and require someone to have your student, you will be responsible to make sure the host family are paid the nightly rate. If you have not yet been paid the school can arrange payment in this case. Please notify the school regarding payment to the relieving host family so it can be documented.

Please provide all details in writing via email to international@merrimacshs.eq.edu.au please include any arrangements you have made with a relieving host family and copy them into the email as well. All of these changes MUST be in writing to make sure everyone is aware of the arrangements. Please provide two weeks' notice to allow us time to find a new family.

Student Safety

The safety and wellbeing of international students is our primary concern.

It is essential that you tell your student about safety risks, in the same way you would your own children.

Student safety guidelines are provided by EQI for all schools to follow. If you have any questions, or need more information about student safety, please contact EQI or your host school.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT

If your student is going out, they must tell you where they are going, how they are getting there, who they are going with, what they will be doing and the time they will be home. It is advisable that they take with them a fully charged mobile phone programmed with your contact numbers and carry a card that contains the same details. It is a good idea for you to have a phone number for one of the people they are with, or another parent, in case there is a problem with your student's phone, and you need to contact them.

Before they go out, please check that your student understands some basic safety rules:

- No matter what time of day if you're travelling alone be alert to your surroundings. Don't wear headphones as you may not hear what's happening around you.
- Where possible, always travel with a group you know well.
- At night, stay in busy places and avoid dead-ends and poorly lit areas.
- Do not go anywhere with strangers or people you have just met.
- Never give your personal information to strangers or people you have just met.
- Make sure you have enough money or travel credit to get home.
- Plan which bus, train or other public transport you will catch, tell your homestay family what time it arrives and what time you will be home.

You should also tell your student what to do in the event they are stopped by the Police. In many situations, the Police have the right to ask people for their name and address, so please advise your student that it is an offence to refuse to give this information when asked for it.

We have had many students confirm their host family does not enforce the curfew. Please be aware students talk. They will tell other students they can be out until 11pm. Not only is this a breach of EQI's terms and conditions of becoming a host family, it also makes it hard for the host families who are doing the right thing.

If a student is out past curfew and there is an incident EQI and the school will not take responsibility for this (unless 1800 QStudy have been called to say they have

missed curfew) and you open yourself up to legal issues. The natural family could take legal action against you. In this case you will not be supported by EQI or the school.

We are responsible for the welfare of a minor and if we cannot trust our host families to enforce the curfew you will be removed from our data base.

CURFEW and Going Out

Students are on a very strict curfew to protect themselves and the homestay family. All students must follow this curfew;

Students are **NOT** permitted to be in **public parks** on **beaches** at **Surfers Paradise** or at **Tallebudgera** after 6pm. All International students **MUST** be out of these places during the **night-time**. No International student is permitted South of Burleigh after 6pm.

Surfers Paradise, Tallebudgera, Parks, and beaches are very well-known **DANGER** spots for International Students.

Another well-known danger spot is Miami Hill and Burleigh Beach / Surf Club.

During their time in Australia students will be hanging out with friends after dark, we would expect them to be indoors at a restaurant, a shopping centre or a friend's home. There is NO reason for students to be anywhere else.

Curfew for Students in years 7 to 10

NO LATER THAN

Sunday to Thursday 6pm

Friday and Saturday 9:30pm

Students should **NOT** leave the house
before 6:30am

Curfew for Students in years 11 & 12

NO LATER THAN

Sunday to Thursday 7pm

Friday and Saturday 10:30pm

Students should **NOT** leave the house
before 6:30am

A homestay family do NOT have the authority to change these curfew times!

This is simply in place to protect the host family. As host families are NOT the legal guardians the responsibility lies with the school. If you give your student permission to be out past the EQI curfew and something happens to that student, you will be solely responsible. EQI and the School will not support you if this happens.

Host parent: You **must** report any breach of curfew (even 5 minutes late) we will not act on all breaches however we need it recorded to prove a pattern of behaviour. Please email the school or text the coordinator so we can make a record of it.

All Gold Coast Alliance School have the same curfew. We monitor this through the principal's alliance and the school co-ordinators alliance.

If your student is 15 minutes late and you have not heard from them, please phone them if there is no answer we would expect the host family to contact 1800 QStudy at this point.

Life 360 and other location app's

You might already use these types of location apps for your own children. You can ask the student if they would like to join your family account however, we can not enforce them join.

Student safety

The safety and wellbeing of international students enrolled in Queensland Government schools is our primary concern.

EQI has documented procedures to ensure international students enjoy a safe, secure and supportive environment at home and at school.

It is essential that you tell your student about safety risks in and outside of the home, in the same way you would your own children.

If you have any questions, or need more information about student safety, please contact EQI or your host school.

Student wellbeing outside of school hours

For incidents that occur outside school hours, or during an activity not organised by the school, school staff and homestay providers should refer to the EQI Incident Management Procedure. Students and homestay families should contact 1800 QSTUDY (**1800 778 839**), outside of school hours including weekends and school holidays for wellbeing matters and queries.

Where there is a suspicion of harm to students whether it is related to physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect, please refer to the homestay risk management strategy. All emergencies where a student's safety is in immediate danger should be referred to emergency services in the first instance.

[ISP Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

[Student Protection Procedure](#)

Emergency contact details

It is important that your student can always reach you or another responsible member of your household. Please give them all your contact details and make sure they have the EQI school's daytime number (for during school hours) and 1800 QSTUDY support number (1800 778 839) for outside school hours.

All these details should also be displayed in a prominent place in your home.

You must also explain to the student what to do and who to call in an emergency situation:

How to call 000 in an emergency and ask for Police, Ambulance or Fire Rescue.

<https://www.triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/How-to-Call-000>

Homestay host should **NEVER** contact the parent directly themselves. Host families must contact 1800 QStudy and they will follow the correct procedures.

Locks and home security

You should give the student a key to your home and explain that it must be kept safe at all times. Show them how to secure your home and use the locks, passwords and alarms to access the house. If you have young children or pets then emphasise the importance of closing doors, windows and garden gates.

Accommodating More Than One International Student

The school should ensure that no more than two international students are living in the same homestay accommodation. This includes any students you may have from other providers both high school and tertiary. Short term study-tour students are also included in this count. In the event that you are hosting one student from MSHS and a student from another school simultaneously, both students should be of the same gender.

You should **not accept** students from another school or provider without speaking to the international department. You may find yourself having to declare your income when lodging a tax return.

Additionally, the same homestay accommodation should not be offered simultaneously to two students speaking the same language without the consent of the International Student Coordinator and Principal. **It is a condition of hosting with Merrimac SHS that you inform the school of any change in the people living in your household, including any additional students.**

Please note that it is a school standard policy that only two students of the same gender can be allocated together in the same household. This rule extends to any other students you may be hosting from other schools at the time of placement. Therefore, as a homestay you are required to disclose this information to our department before we place a student in your care.

Meals

Homestay students **must** be given three nutritious meals a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner – along with some between meal snacks such as fruit or biscuits. Getting used to new foods can be difficult for the student in the first few weeks so try to include something they are familiar with along with the meals you normally prepare.

Taking your student grocery shopping is also helpful as you can show them different foods and ask them to show you what they like to eat. For meals like breakfast and lunch you may need to explain what foods are available in your home and how to prepare them, for example, cereal, toast or sandwiches.

Show the student which snacks they can help themselves to and leave these in a clearly marked container, so they know where to find them.

If you go out for dinner, then you must take your student with you and pay for their meal. If you offer your student a homestay meal but they choose to eat out, then they are responsible for covering the cost themselves.

Homestay family behaviour

The best way to maintain appropriate behaviour is to abide by Australian law and exercise common sense and caution with regard to the homestay student in your care. As a host, you must remember there may be a significant difference in what you and your student consider to be appropriate behaviour. Hosts are reminded that the behaviour of family members towards the homestay student is judged by the student's reasonable perception and interpretation of that behaviour, and not by the intention of the family member.

Sometimes incidents can occur from a lack of understanding about what is acceptable. For example, different interpretations of 'personal space' and shows of affection. You should therefore exercise all appropriate care and consideration towards your student(s). Should an incident be alleged to occur during a homestay placement, EQI and/or the host school may be obliged to notify the police.

1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839)

In the event that you need to contact the 1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839) number during school holidays or after hours, you must advise the officer who responds to your call that you are a current homestay provider and need to escalate the situation to a homestay responder.

Once you have done this, you will be put in contact with the person who will offer assistance in relation to homestay emergencies.

This is emergency only. They can not deal with any other issues, e.g. travel forms approval, general enquiries must go to EQI not the 1800 QStudy group.

The first day of school

You must take your student to school on their first day, and until they are comfortable travelling to and from school on their own.

You should show them the best way of getting there from your home (walking, cycling, bus, ferry or train). Students are required to cover the cost of their transport to and from school each day. Your host school may ask you to help your student to complete an enrolment guide to bring with them on their first day.

School uniform

It is compulsory for students to wear the correct school uniform every day.

You should discuss laundry arrangements with your student to ensure that they have enough clean and pressed uniform items for the school week.

The school uniform policy is enforced, and students will receive a uniform detention if they are out of uniform.

Please visit the school website for [Dress Standards Policy](#)

Absence from school

International students are expected to attend school every school day. It is the homestay's responsibility to contact the school if your student cannot attend for all or part of the day.

If your student falls ill at school, you will be asked to take them home and to the doctor. You must discuss alternative arrangements with the host school if you are unable to collect your student straightaway.

Your student's punctuality and attendance are regularly monitored. If there is a problem, a warning notification will be issued, and guidance support offered.

You can notify the school attendance line on 5595 8626 or 5595 8666 (option 1). If your student is sick and, on that day, there is an excursion planned please SMS International Staff and make them aware. As the attendance line won't be cleared until 10am. If we don't know we will be holding the bus waiting for the student.

Academic achievement

International student subclass 500 visa holders must maintain satisfactory academic achievement across all areas of their study. The student's school will monitor student achievement and liaise with teachers and guidance officers to assist students to reach their full potential.

Helping with Study

Living in an Australian home is a great way for international students to practise their English language skills. You should encourage your student to participate in conversations at home. It is also helpful for them to practise outside the home, for example, by going grocery shopping with you, to the movies, or out for a meal.

All students have access to a guidance officer, teachers, and tutor support if they need help with their schoolwork. Please monitor your student's study habits at home and discuss any concerns you have with the school.

Homestay providers are not expected to help with homework, but your student will appreciate your assistance with any words or questions they don't understand. You can also assist by having a conversation with them about their academic progress or things they find challenging to identify if they need extra support.

As a homestay host you must help the student to participate in the extracurricular activities recommended by the school.

Internet use and cyber safety

You must negotiate the use of your household phone, computer and internet service with your student. Set the usage guidelines and talk to them about cybersafety and what is forbidden by Australian law.

Young people are not always aware of internet costs and download limits so you should be clear about these at the outset. You must also tell them that students under the age of 18 cannot access material that is deemed 'objectionable' or 'unsuitable for minors', and that it's illegal to download pirated content protected by copyright.

Cyberattack poses a real threat to young people who can easily become victims of online bullying, fraud and coercive behaviour, threatening their personal security and potentially that of their homestay family.

Please tell your student about the 5R's of online safety:

1. **Realise** the people you chat with may not be who they say they are.
2. **Refuse** any requests for personal information – never give out your full name, address, phone number or school name – and ensure your internet profile is private.
3. **Review** your contacts - it's not a good idea to have contacts you don't know.
4. **Respond** quickly if you ever feel uncomfortable online. Close the program then

- tell your homestay parent(s), teacher or a trusted friend.
5. **Report** (through your homestay family or school) any suspicious or dangerous online activities to the police.

The Queensland Government offers important information on cybersafety in Queensland schools that you may find useful.

Cybersafety in Queensland schools:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety>

You should also respect your student's online privacy, particularly on social media. For example, it is commonplace to share your family photos on Facebook or other social media sites but if your student appears in a photo you must always ask their permission before posting it online.

For more information please visit the Queensland Government cybersafety web Page www.behaviour.education.qld.gov.au

Homestay host and student behaviour

Blue card legislation

Homestay providers require a blue card or an exemption card. All adults who live or regularly reside in your home will also require a blue card or exemption card.

The legislation governing blue cards requires that the Department of Education has a risk management strategy <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf> which applies to all people interacting with children in a homestay (for example, homestay providers, residents of the home, visitors and the student). <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf>

Please contact Blue Card Services on 1800 113 611, or at www.bluecard.qld.gov.au for further information on how to apply and renew your Blue Card.

Blue card legislation

The best way to maintain appropriate behaviour is to abide by Australian law with regard to the homestay student in your care. Homestay hosts are bound by the Code of Conduct for the Queensland public service. <https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/working-with-us/induction/department/induction-programs-and-resources/code-of-conduct>

The department's Standards of Practice provides practical guidance of the application of this code (<https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/working-with-us/induction/department/induction-programs-and-resources/code-of-conduct>).

As a homestay provider, you must remember there may be a significant difference in what you and your student consider to be appropriate behaviour.

Homestay providers are reminded that the behaviour of family members towards the homestay student is judged by the student's reasonable perception and interpretation of that behaviour, and not by the intention of the household member.

As a guide, ask yourself the following questions.

- Is the behaviour likely to be unwelcome or is it encouraged or accepted by the student?
- Is it possible that the student finds the conduct embarrassing, humiliating or intimidating?

All people in the home (including the student) should act in a way that would be considered appropriate when viewed by a third party (i.e. people should not put themselves in a position where they are vulnerable to accusations of wrongdoing), for example:

- residents of your home and visitors should not be alone with the student in a bedroom or bathroom with the door closed
- the student should not be alone with another person (for example, a younger child) in a bedroom or bathroom with the door closed.

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour:

- acting towards, or speaking to a person in a manner that threatens or vilifies that person
- making jokes, suggestive comments or offensive gestures related to a person's race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, gender or sexual characteristics
- distribution or display of material (including through e-mail) which may be offensive, such as sexually explicit posters or pictures, racist or sexist jokes or cartoons
- persistent questions about a person's private life
- personal comments about appearance, size, clothing
- demands for sexual favours, either directly or by implication
- unwanted and deliberate physical contact (hugging can be unwanted)
- indecent assault and other criminal offences.

Sometimes incidents can occur from a lack of understanding about what is acceptable. For example, different interpretations of 'personal space' and shows of affection.

You should therefore exercise all appropriate care and consideration towards your student(s).

Should an incident be alleged to occur during a homestay placement, EQI and/or the host school may be obliged to notify the police.

School holidays

Many international students stay in Australia for the school holidays, although some will return to their home countries during the break.

EQI students can join an organised adventure tour during the holidays, enabling them to see and experience some of Australia's most iconic landmarks. Students pay extra for these tours.

If you plan to travel away from home during the school holidays, please consider the needs of your student. If you can't take your student with you, or if they decide not to go, please give us a **minimum of four weeks' notice** to organise alternative accommodation for them. While you are away, your student's homestay fees will be paid to their temporary homestay provider.

If you are going away in the middle of the term, please be mindful that it could take us a while to find an available homestay, so please let us know well in advance if you will be away. Four weeks minimum notice should be given to us so we can have plenty of time to organise a suitable replacement.

Please also note that you should include the date you are planning to drop the student off at their temporary allocation when giving us notice, and not the date of your departure. Similarly, upon your return please advise the date you are planning to pick up the student. This is particularly important as sometimes available families are temporary hosting students back-to-back and this allows us time to check on their availability.

If you are going away over the school holidays and decide to invite your student/s to come along, please note that your student must still submit a travel form if you are travelling further from Brisbane (to the north), and Coolangatta (to the south). This form needs to be sent to the student's natural parents for signing, so it takes time to be processed. This form needs to be handed in two weeks in advance of your planned holiday.

Change of placement

If you, the school, or the student requires a change of placement, the host school will arrange this in accordance with the EQI student homestay placement procedure <https://ppr.ged.qld.gov.au/attachment/dei-student-homestay-placementprocedure> and inform the student's parents or legal custodian of the details.

If a student wants to move from a homestay residence the school will investigate and arrange mediation or counselling if appropriate. The final decision on any move is made by the school principal in liaison with EQI.

If you have a student staying with you, you may withdraw as an EQI homestay host by giving the host school at least four weeks written notice. This gives us time to make alternative arrangements.

The school or EQI may revoke your status as a homestay provider in the following circumstances:

- If there is a serious incident, complaint or emergency involving the student, we may give you notice that the student will leave your home with immediate effect, and you are liable for any remaining fees that the school may have overpaid.
- In all other cases, EQI or the school may give you two weeks' notice, or within a timeframe agreed with you, before reallocating your student/s.

Swimming pool safety

In Queensland, swimming pool owners must comply with pool safety laws and standards.*

Drowning and pool related accidents can happen very quickly, but most are preventable. Students must be appropriately supervised when swimming, taking into account their swimming abilities.

Please be aware that despite their age, your student may not be able to swim, so you must exercise extreme caution around pools and swimming areas.

**For further information please see www.qbcc.qld.gov.au or contact the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.*

Please note that no international student is allowed to use your pool until they have completed a Water Safety test at the school, regardless of their ability in their home country. They should also complete a travel form for any water activities they are involved in, such as the homestay pool, or the beach.

Sports and play equipment

If you have sports and play equipment you need to check that it meets safety recommendations for its set-up and maintenance. Where appropriate, activities using outdoor play equipment should be supervised.

Trampolines are particularly hazardous for young children, with many injuries recorded in Queensland every year.

For guidance on making your play equipment safe please visit the Kidsafe Queensland website at www.kidsafeqld.com.au/

Household chores

It is usual for students to help with light household tasks, but you must not ask them to undertake heavy cleaning or handle potentially dangerous chemicals. This includes cleaning swimming pool filters or adding chlorine or other chemicals to the water, cleaning with bleach, mopping and vacuuming large areas of the home, or caring for the family's pets.

Some students may not be familiar with household chores so you should demonstrate and explain each task clearly, for example, how to vacuum their bedroom floor, to ensure they understand what you are asking them to do.

Your student may enjoy helping you in the garden with planting or other light tasks, but they are not to use hazardous tools or machinery such as lawn mowers, hedge trimmers or whipper snippers.

Students should not supervise, babysit, or be left in charge of younger children, even for a short time.

Placement with Homestay Family

The Homestay Family must understand that the school will try to find the most appropriate individual for placement with the homestay but cannot guarantee that all the requirements of the homestay will be met. EQI cannot guarantee that the homestay will be provided with a student continuously when required. The English level of prospective homestay families must be of a satisfactory standard so that it can be understood by students who come from a non-English speaking background.

In the event that your first language is not English, or if you speak a second language proficiently, you must disclose this information as you are not allowed to host students who speak that same language. This policy is in place so students can maximise their opportunity to speak English in the home.

Use of Homestay Details

In order to enable effective communication between homestay family / school / Education Queensland International (EQI) and student; the homestay family is required to give permission to the school/EQI to provide prospective student/s, their families, and their agents with their contact details, homestay profile (including relevant details) banking details (where applicable) and Blue Card information.

The school is required to provide homestay families with the contact details of relevant staff and a copy of emergency procedures.

Exam Shut Down

All students in years 11 and 12 will be involved in a week shut down in Term 1 – 3 and including year 10 in Term 4. A note will be sent home and needs to be signed by the homestay and returned to school. Students who fail to return a sign note will be required to be at school during this time.

Exam shut down is used for the students to study for their yearly exams. This is not a social time to do whatever they want. Full curfew is still in place during this time.

Program of Excellence

The International Student program is a program of Excellence and students are required to act accordingly.

All assessments must be completed and handed in on time. Students are required to uphold the school and EQI values at all times. Students sign a document knowing what the expectations are of them.

Travel and activities

ISP's travel and activities policy (contained in the student's enrolment agreement) is there to safeguard their personal safety and wellbeing, to manage risks, and to protect homestay providers.

The policy requires students to get approval from the school for all non-routine travel and activities (including overnight stays and non-routine travel taken with their homestay family). This process is outlined in the [non-routine travel and activities for homestay students - Subclass 500 \(schools\) visa procedure](#).

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/non-routine-travel-and-activities-for-homestay-students-subclass-500-schools-visa-procedure>

EQI is responsible for approving and monitoring the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for students in the homestay program. This means EQI must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to protect students' safety. For this reason, EQI has adopted the policy position that high risk activities cannot be approved.

High risk activities include any activity which poses an increased risk of harm, illness or injury. There are many high-risk activities available in Queensland and this is why

students must get approval from the school before undertaking non-routine travel and activities.

EQI takes student safety seriously and may cancel the enrolment of a student who breaches the travel and activities policy.

EQI has developed a Sports, Leisure and Recreation providers' register of approved activities for international students - please ask your host school for further details. For more information about student travel please contact EQI or your host school.

Any water activity is defined by EQI as a high-risk activity for all students.

For more information about student travel please contact EQI or your host school.

Students will need you to sign a travel form issued by the school. Once the school approved the travel you will be contacted by email or text message.

Students are permitted to travel by;

- Bus, Train, Tram, Ferry, Taxi, Uber, Plane

Students are responsible for their own fares on all public transport.

Please DO NOT sign a blank form. It MUST be completely filled out correctly or we will not accept it.

When your student wishes to have a sleepover at a friend's house, or participate in an excursion, they will ask if you can sign a travel form for them.

Please note that, in that instance, you only need to complete **SECTION G** for Homestay Acknowledgement.

You will never be required to sign the Section H as that is for the student's natural parents to complete if required. If Homestay families sign this section instead, the form becomes void and the student will need to submit a new form.

When do I use the travel form?

Any activity that is considered non-routine, even if participating in the supervision of the host family. If you want to take your student to Byron Bay or the Sunny Coast for the day a form should be filled out as this is not something the student does everyday. This will also need to be signed by their natural parents.

If you are going out to dinner and taking your student with you, you do not need a form. As it is routine for you to feed them everyday.

The Process of lodging a non-routine travel and activities form

Scenario 1

Your student wants to stay at a friend's house (another international at our school).

1. The student collects a form from school or there is one on the homestay families USB
2. The student fills out the form with all the information
3. The student can select if it is a one-off sleep over or a regular sleep over
4. The student signs section F:
5. The host family must sign **Section G: ONLY** you are not the natural parent or Principal
6. The student brings the form to school **no later** than the Tuesday of that week. Any forms handed in after Tuesday will not be approved in time.
7. The school have to contact the host family of where the student wants to visit and make sure it is ok with them
8. The international coordinator will sign their section
9. It then needs to go to the principal for final approval and for her to sign
10. Once signed it is back to the international office where one of us will notify you of the outcome

Scenario 2

Your student wants to travel with you for the weekend or go camping with you or travel out of the Gold Coast area with the host family or their friends

1. The student collects a form from school or there is one on the homestay families USB
2. The student fills out the form with **all** the information
3. The student should discuss this with their host family
4. The student signs section F:
5. The host family must sign **Section G: ONLY** you are not the natural parent or Principal
6. The student brings the form to school giving the school **two weeks'** notice
7. The school than have to seek approval from the family of where the student is visiting or approve the travel with the host family
8. If the form is filled out correctly, we will proceed in gaining approval
9. If staying with a student from another school we have to contact that school and make them aware of it and seek approval from them
10. We have to contact the host family to make sure it is ok with them and they know about it
11. The form must be sent to the agent
12. The agent will seek a signature from the natural parents
13. It will be returned to the agent by the parents
14. The agent will email it back to us
15. Once that is sorted the international coordinator will sign their section

16. It then needs to go to the principal for final approval and for her to sign
17. A formal letter will be written, and the Student, Host Parents and Agent will all be sent the approval or denied letter so you know it is approved

As you can see there are a lot of steps involved in this procedure. **Two weeks' notice must be given** to allow time for all of this to take place. If there is a public holiday or staff are away there is not enough time to process the form, there for it will be denied immediately.

Student safety is always our priority and these procedures must be followed.

Student Sleepovers

Students will often ask for their friends to sleep over. All students are required to fill out the travel form and have their homestay sign it. You **MUST** sign in the homestay section. You are not the parent or legal guardian. Please make sure you sign the correct part as this is a legal document. If the form is not signed in the correct place travel will be denied.

If students are just having a general sleep over because they wish to spend time together you do not need to pay the nightly rate. This is only if you (host family) are going to be away.

Moreover, students are not allowed to invite friends from overseas to stay over with their homestay. If friends from the student's native country are visiting, they must arrange and pay for their own accommodation separately.

Students enjoy having friends over at their homestay, just like any other teenager. Although the final decision to have their international friends over remains at the homestay's discretion, refusing without a cause may result in your student having reasonable grounds to request a change of homestay.

Please note: There will be **NO** approved sleepovers during the 2-weeks of schoolies celebration. This will be in the final two weeks of Term 4.

CURFEW / SUNRISE

Gold Coast schools have spoken about this situation as students are leaving at 3am to watch the sunrise. During summer it becomes daylight very early and in winter it takes a little longer.

For the summer months students cannot leave the house before **6:00am**, and **6:30am** in winter. Students are made aware of this. We do not allow students to be out viewing the sunrise unless they are with their homestay. As this is not a routine activity a travel form needs to be filled out.

Students are **NOT** permitted to attend any Concerts.

Swimming at **Currumbin Rock pools** or any rock pools or **waterfalls** is not permitted in any circumstances.

A travel form must be filled out and signed by the host family prior to putting in the request in at School. Please make sure you sign the Homestay section and **NOT** the legal guardian section.

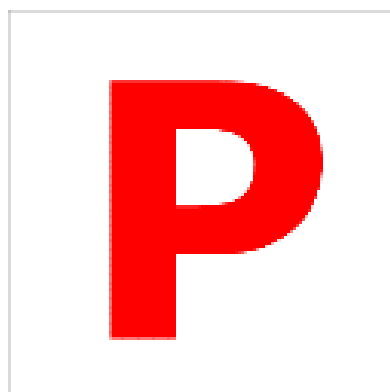
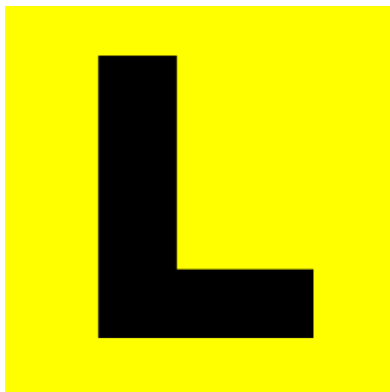
After dark students are **NOT** to be at

- Tallebudgera Creek
- Any Parks – Burleigh Hill, Palm Beach Parklands, Flat Rock
- Currumbin Creek / Currumbin Rock Pools
- The Beach
- Wandering streets
- Underage Concerts
- Licenced Venues
- Skate Boarding / Bike Riding after dark
- Surfers Paradise

When riding a bike or skateboard on the road students must always go in the same direction as the traffic and always wear a helmet.

Students must **NOT** bring surfboards or skateboards / scooters to school under any circumstances.

Students are **NOT** Permitted to drive in a car with a P Plater at any time.



School Excursions

Please be aware there may be some school trips which require the student to be at school extremely early or later than school hours. The homestay is required to pick up students or drop them off. Student's cannot find their own way there. Walking is definitely not allowed in these situations.

Bush safety

In Queensland, you are never really very far from bushland - whether it's a park, forest, national park or nature reserve. EQI has determined some bush walking

activities are high risk. It is important that you discuss potential bush walking activities with your host school as your student may require approval as a non-routine activity.

You should tell your student to take particular precautions, including those relating to bushfire, if they are walking or exploring in Australia:

- don't travel alone
- make sure you tell someone exactly where you are going, the route you will take and the time you will be back
- prior to travelling in an area of high bushfire risk,
- check the Fire Danger Rating (FDR)
- adhere to fire bans and bush fire safety procedure
- take sun safe precautions and pack drinking water
- stick to a walking track or road
- read warning signs and be cautious about swimming in rivers and lakes. If it is safe to swim, enter the water gradually
- never swim in an area inhabited by crocodiles or other dangerous marine animals
- keep your distance from, and do not feed, wild animals.

Bush walking information, maps and safety guidelines are provided on the Queensland Department of Environment and Science website
<http://www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking>

For more information about staying safe around wildlife visit
<http://www.environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/index>

To find out about fire safety at home and in the bush visit
<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire>

Sun safety

Most people outside Australia don't realise the extreme dangers posed by the Queensland sun, including skin cancer, sunburn, dehydration and heat-related illnesses. You must teach your student to be sun safe by telling them to:

- avoid direct sun when possible
- drink plenty of water
- wear a long-sleeve shirt, wide brim hat and sunglasses
- regularly apply an SPF 30+ high protection sunscreen.

For more information visit www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart

Beach safety

It is very likely your international student will want to go to the beach. Whether they go with you, on a school visit or with friends, please talk to your student about beach safety:

- always read and follow the beach warning signs
- always swim between the red and yellow flags
- only swim in areas compatible with your swimming ability
- never swim alone
- don't run, jump or dive into shallow water
- be aware of creatures that bite or sting, particularly jellyfish
- practise sun safety

Warning signs (diamond shape, yellow and black) are used to warn you about hazards at the beach.



Flags and signs

Swim between the flags

It is important to swim between the red and yellow flags – this is the part of the beach supervised by lifesavers or lifeguards who can provide assistance if needed.

Rips

A rip is a strong current that starts near the shore and flows away from the beach. It may feel like you are being pulled out to sea and unable to get back to the beach. Not all rip currents flow directly out to sea. Some may run parallel to the beach before heading out to sea.



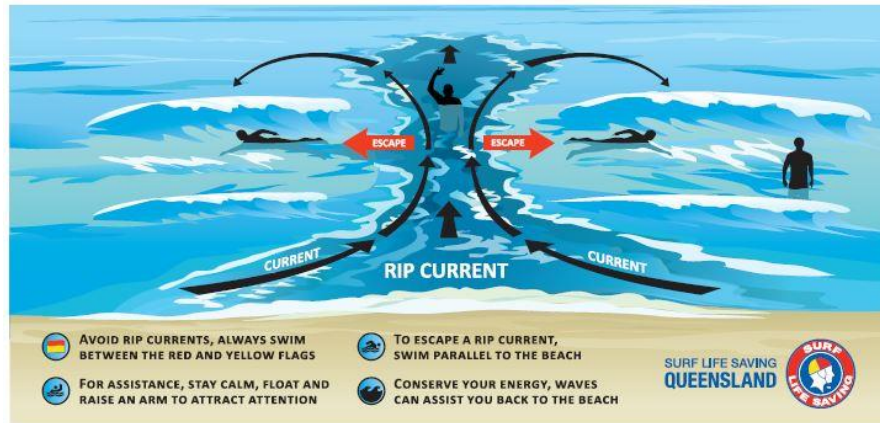


Image published with kind permission of Surf Life Saving Australia

What do rips look like?

Not all rips look the same. However, rips will have one or more of the following features:

- darker, deeper water
- murky brown water caused by sand stirred up by fastmoving water
- a choppy or rippled look, when the water around is generally calm
- in large surf, a smoother surface with much smaller waves
- an area where waves aren't breaking (compared to surf at other parts of the beach)
- foam or debris floating out to sea.

If you are caught in a rip

- Stay calm, conserve your energy and consider these options:
- for assistance, float and raise your arm to attract attention
- float with the rip current, it may flow in a circular pattern and return you to a nearby sandbar
- swim parallel to the shore, you may escape the rip current and return to shore
- reassess the situation – if what you're doing isn't working, try another option until you return to shore.

Read more about beach safety on the Surf Life Saving Queensland website www.lifesaving.com.au

Working in Queensland

The student's visa may restrict their ability to work while they are in Australia.

They are also subject to Queensland law which:

- limits the hours of work of school-aged children to ensure that their studies are not adversely affected

- protects children from performing work that may be harmful to their health and safety, or compromises their mental, moral or social welfare.

If you are concerned that your student's job is affecting their school attendance, study or personal wellbeing, please contact the host school.

For further information please see

www.treasury.qld.gov.au/publications-resources/industrial-relations/ir-child-employment-guide.pdf

The homestay family is required to supply

- Full board in a clean, tidy household that is relatively close to the school and located adjacent to suitable public transport routes.
- A safe, secure, private bedroom with suitable storage space for clothes, personal effects and study materials.
- Suitable facilities for study including a desk, a chair, and adequate lighting.
- Three meals daily ensuring adequate nutritious food and access to other foods and snacks as required. The homestay family may allow the student to prepare his/her own meals as mutually agreed.
- Access to bathroom and laundry facilities. Encourage the student to maintain personal hygiene.
- Laundry services as negotiated between the homestay, student, and where relevant, the school.
- Access to household items, such as towels, sheets, blankets and eating/cooking utensils; as well as to facilitate access to daily use items such as hairdryers.
- Provide a key/alarm passwords to the house for the student to allow them free access.
- Provide a general orientation to the local area and community facilities available. The homestay family should undertake to accompany the student on or before his/her first day at school and familiarise the student with the public transport system (if applicable) and routes to and from the homestay.
- The homestay family is expected to maintain suitable supervision of the student(s) in their care, as if the student(s) were their own children. Should the homestay family be planning to be away overnight, the homestay family is to notify school so that suitable arrangements can be made for the student.
- Make student aware of evacuation procedures in the event of fire or other issue.
- Should the homestay family's circumstances change (home alterations, moving/selling, other boarders etc.) the homestay family is required to notify School in advance.

Additional requirements/ expectations:

The homestay family should:

- Treat the student as part of the family unit.
- If the student arrives at Coolangatta airport we may request the homestay family to collect the student from the airport upon arrival. They will also be required to take the student to the airport on departure or book a door to door service at the homestay's cost.
- Receive a copy of all school reports if requested by students' parents. If requested, attend a school interview on the parents' behalf.
- Assist and support the student's good attendance at school.
- Support the completion of homework assignments and assist where required.
- Communicate with the student in English only except for situations where communication in the student's native language is necessary for the student's safety or emotional well-being.
- Initiate immediate discussion with the International Student Coordinator if there are concerns regarding the student's academic progress or welfare. Notify the International Student Coordinator and Principal promptly in the event of any serious problem occurring or in the event of an accident or medical emergency. Communicate to the International Student Coordinator and Principal any concerns regarding the general personal wellbeing of the student.
- Assist the student to access any necessary medical, dental, hospital or other health-related services by making appointments and, where necessary, accompany the student to those appointments. Where appropriate, notify the student's parents, through the school, of the results of any medical treatment or tests.
- Assist the student to understand the school and house rules and requirements and help ensure that the student abides by them. Be aware of and remind the student to observe the EQI Code of Conduct for International Students.
- Ensure a suitable bedtime is negotiated.
- Arrange for suitable out of hours supervision during school terms to ensure that the student is not left unsupervised for extended periods of time.
- Assist the student to participate in extracurricular activities arranged or recommended by the school.
- Ensure that safe and appropriate transport arrangements are in place, where the student engages in out of school hours sporting, social or recreational activities. Be aware of activities and company kept outside school hours by the student. Converse with the student regularly.
- Ensure the student has access to adequate bedding, towels, basic toiletries, as well as access to electricity to charge laptops, mobile phones, and some necessity items such as hairdryers.
- Consult with the school at least one month in advance to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for the care and supervision of the student in cases where the homestay family is not going to be available.

- The homestay family acknowledges that the school can in no way be held responsible for damage to property caused by the student. If the homestay family wishes to seek school assistance in obtaining compensation for damages caused by the student, they must approach school before the student leaves the homestay.
- The contractual relationship is exclusively between the homestay family and student/student's parent and is facilitated by the school.
- The homestay family may terminate this agreement with two weeks' notice in writing to the school.
- Any person(s) within the homestay family or any household members over the age of 18 agree to obtain a 'Blue Card' in compliance with the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*.
- Education Queensland reserves the right to carry out periodic inspections of homestay family premises to ensure that standards are maintained.

Training and Induction for Homestay Family

Appropriate training and induction for the homestay family must be provided by the school to ensure that legislative requirements are met. This includes both formal and informal sessions / workshops / meetings / homestay visits and phone calls.

Student behaviour

Students must respect the homestay household's rules and property, show consideration and courtesy to their hosts and comply with curfews and the terms of outings and visits. It is essential that the student informs you of their whereabouts, and remains contactable by you, at all times.

If they fail to meet these standards, EQI could consider their conduct to be unsatisfactory and may cancel their enrolment or remove them from the homestay program.

At all times, students must:

- comply with Australian laws and the conditions of their student visa
- not drink alcohol, smoke, misuse prescription medication or use illegal drugs
- not do anything that endangers their safety or the safety of other people
- not do anything that may bring their school or the EQI international student program into disrepute.

It is essential that you discuss acceptable behaviours with your student and explain that they must also abide by Australian laws.

However rare it may be, homestay hosts should always be alert to any unsocial or improper behaviour by a homestay student.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) Student Protection Guidelines, available on the department's website provide advice about student protection matters, including student sexualised behaviour, unlawful sexual relationships between children under 16 years of age, harm caused by another student and student self-harm. (ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/community/Pages/Student-Protection.aspx)

If you have any concerns about sexual behaviours, unlawful sexual relations or student harm (including self-harm), please contact the international student coordinator or the school principal immediately.

Reporting student issues

We rely on our homestay families to keep us informed of the student's behaviour. One of our biggest issues is host families do different things and students talk. If your student returns home late, we need to know immediately. Please send us an email. We will not necessarily act on this, but we need to have a record for future issues.

It is no good saying to us we had so many issues with the student being late when they have left. It is not up to you to change curfew times or implement discipline that is our job.

We have some students who arrive home 20 minutes late every time and are never reported this create many issues amongst the students because some never get reported and some are reported all the time.

Consistency needs to be across all families to create harmony. If we cannot rely on you to report to us and be on board with the rules, we will consider if the international program is for you and review your application.

Discipline

You must not subject your international student to any form of physical or aggressive verbal punishment. Student discipline will be decided by the host school and the student's parents / legal custodian.

If you are concerned about your student's behaviour please contact the host school for assistance.

Issues and critical incidents

What to do in an emergency

Before your student arrives, you are given a copy of the school's emergency procedure and 24-hour contact details. If an incident occurs you must:

- notify the school about the incident as soon as possible
- assist your student to access the medical services they need by making appointments and accompanying them to these appointments
- let the school know about the student's medical treatment and results
- where necessary, arrange for any medical invoices to be sent directly to the host school to arrange payment by the student's parent or legal custodian.

Critical incidents

A critical incident may occur at or away from school. A 'critical incident,' for the purposes of the EQI critical incident procedure, means any serious injury or illness suffered by an overseas student enrolled in an EQI student program, and any serious threat to a student's health, safety or wellbeing.

The school will contact you if there is an incident relating to your student during school hours.

Before your student arrives, you will be given a copy of the Homestay procedure for critical incidents [DEi incident management procedure](#) outlining what to do if there is an incident. This includes the number for 1800 QSTUDY. (1800 778 839), EQI's 24-hour support service for international students, parents, legal custodians, tour chaperones, education agents and homestay providers.

What to do in the event of an incident

In the event of a life threatening or emergency situation, Australia's primary emergency call service number is Triple Zero (000), which can be dialled from any fixed or mobile phone, pay phones and certain Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services free-of-charge to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance and follow the instructions of emergency services. <https://www.triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/other-emergency-numbers>

If the incident is not an emergency and occurs outside school hours and the activity is not organised by the school, you must:

- notify EQI about the incident as soon as possible by calling 1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839)
- assist your student to access the medical services they need by making appointments and accompanying them to these appointments
- let the school know about the student's medical treatment and results
- where necessary, arrange for any medical invoices to be sent directly to the host school to arrange payment by the student's parent or legal custodian.

Always notify your host school of an incident or injury, even if it appears to be minor. It is important that ALL incidents involving international students are documented, particularly if a more serious condition develops as a result of the incident.

Critical Incident – Follow Up

Following a critical incident, the homestay provider has access to the department's welfare-related support services - Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This is a free, confidential, face-to-face or telephone counselling service provided by *Lifeworks by Morneau Shepell* on **1800 604 640**.

This is a 24/7 telephone number. Urgent after hours counselling requests will be put through to an on-call counsellor. All non-urgent counselling requests received after hours will be booked to occur during business hours.

LifeWorks has counsellors located across the state in all major regional areas for staff wanting a face to face appointment. Telephone counselling is available in smaller regional and more remote areas.

For issues during school time please see the following staff:



Ms Tammie Moss

International Student Coordinator

Ph: 5595 8609

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Ms Paula Crilley

International Homestay Coordinator

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International staff are **no** longer available 24/7 like previous years. International staff are available between **8:30 and 3:00** weekdays. Outside of these hours please phone 1800 QStudy.

The International office is currently located in H Block

Identifying if your student is experiencing harm

It is essential that EQI, host schools and homestay providers work together to protect and ensure the safety of our international students. As the homestay host you are in

a position to observe behavioural, emotional or physical signs that may indicate that your student has, or is experiencing any kind of abuse.

The Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women publishes information that will help you to understand the nature of abuse, the signs to look for, and how to report any concerns you have.

Protecting children at risk of harm requires immediate and serious attention. Effective protection of children relies on members of the community reporting their concerns. This needs to occur in a timely way to prevent concerns becoming more serious.

Some general indicators of child abuse include:

- showing wariness and distrust of adults
- bedwetting or soiling
- demanding or aggressive behaviour
- sleeping difficulties, often being tired and falling asleep
- low self-esteem
- difficulty relating to adults and peers
- being seemingly accident prone
- having broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing
- being unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent, vague or unbelievable
- feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- having difficulty concentrating
- being withdrawn or overly obedient
- being reluctant to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

For more information visit <http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children>



Disclosure and suspicion of harm

If you or a member of your household has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has been harmed, you must immediately inform your host school to enable them to report this to the appropriate authorities.

There are reasonable grounds to suspect harm if:

- the student tells you that they have been harmed
- another person e.g. a student, parent or staff member tells you that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- the student tells you that they know someone who has been harmed (they may be referring to themselves)
- you are concerned at a significant change in the behaviour of the student, or the presence of new unexplained or suspicious injuries
- you see harm happening

Homestay host

Monitoring and future placements

EQI, schools and homestay hosts work together to create a safe environment where international students can pursue academic study and personal development.

Once you become an EQI homestay host you are expected to maintain the standards set by EQI, and:

- comply with the Terms and Conditions for Homestay Providers
- attend an in-service meeting at least once a year while hosting a student
- meet with the school's international student/homestay coordinator regarding your student's welfare as required
- where possible, attend all homestay meetings and information sessions run by EQI or the host school
- ensure compliance with relevant laws (for example, blue cards, pool safety)
- know what to do in an emergency or 'critical incident'
- agree to an inspection visit at least once a year, arranged by the school international student/homestay coordinator to check the welfare arrangements and facilities you provide to students.

If you fail to comply with EQI homestay program terms and conditions, the school or EQI may revoke your status as an approved homestay provider.

Annual Risk Assessment

To ensure compliance with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, homestay hosts are required to comply with and ensure everyone in the home complies with the processes outlined in

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services>

Changes to your situation

If there are any changes to your home environment or household members you must inform your host school.

Please notify your host school four weeks in advance if:

- you propose to materially change your home (e.g. if
- you are renovating or relocating)
- a person is intending to move into your home, even
- if only temporarily
- a resident of your house moves out.

You are required to immediately notify your host school if there is a change in your Blue Card information, or that of any adults who live in your home for 7 or more days in a calendar year.

Communication with media and Queensland authorities

In the event that your student is involved in an incident in which Australian/Queensland authorities, or the media become involved, please direct all enquiries to EQI or the host school Principal. Under no circumstances should you discuss or reveal personal information about your international student to anyone else.

Your obligation to contribute appropriately to public discussion and comply with the appropriate laws of privacy, confidentiality and information management is outlined in the [Code of Conduct for Queensland Public Service](#)

Complaints and appeals

If you have a complaint about EQI, the school or your international student, or disagree with a decision made by EQI or the school and the issue cannot be resolved informally, please follow the Department of Education and Training (DET) complaints procedure, available at www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/contact

Online Shopping

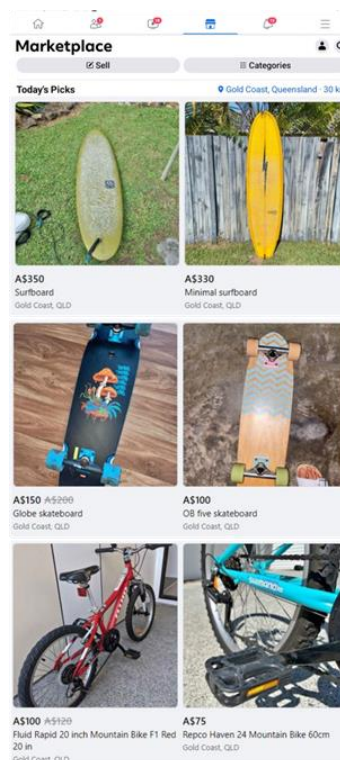
Online Shopping

A lot of the time students want to completely embrace the surfing life of the Gold Coast. Some students when arriving will go straight to the surf shop and buy a board. All surf shops will have 2nd hand boards as well as brand new ones.

Some students may even think it is a good idea to buy off Facebook Marketplace. This is prohibited for child safety reasons. Students should not go to a stranger's home to purchase any products.

Students must take into account how they intend on getting the equipment home, a surfboard will be tricky. They will have excess baggage to pay for and must consider how they are getting to the airport to return home.

Some host families may not have a car big enough for their luggage and a surfboard. Please be mindful of that when purchasing a board.



Selling to international students

Homestay families should **NEVER** take money from a student. This could be misinterpreted as a form of extra payment and host families who are paid by EQI need to protect themselves. Many families will have push bikes, skateboards, scooters, surfboards etc that may have been left there by a previous student. You are not permitted to sell to the student.

You may offer it to your student to use while they are here, but you cannot charge them for that. If this was the case, we would expect you take a photo of the equipment prior to the student arriving and submit it to the school to be recorded on your file. In the event the student damages the equipment please photograph the damage and submit it to school with a quote to repair the item.

The school **MUST** be in charge of recouping any monies from the student for any reason.

Guarantee of Students

We can **never** guarantee you a student. This does not mean we do not appreciate your years of loyal service to our program. EQI issue capacity numbers and we

always try to stay at capacity. However, the numbers of incoming students change every semester. We do our best to keep everyone happy however this is not always the case. Please be aware there is **NEVER** a guarantee.

Similarly, we can never guarantee a student of a particular gender. If you have a genuine reason to host one gender and not the other, please let us know. However, please note that placement of students may be affected due to this reason.

Schoolies

International Students are **NOT** permitted to be in Surfers Paradise for the whole two weeks. Due to Schoolies, there will be **NO** travel approved during this time. There will be **NO** sleepovers approved during this time.

This is the same rule across all Gold Coast Schools.

Student relationships

While in Australia students may find themselves in love. There is a few expectations in this department. First and foremost, they need to be respectful to each other and their homestay family. Safe sex is a **MUST** and not up for discussion. If you need advice in this area, please see the student coordinator or the school nurse.

Be mindful of people around you. Having a sexual relationship in your homestay is **NOT** permitted.

Rules around your relationship;

- You cannot be in the homestay alone with your partner
- You must ask your homestay for permission for your partner to visit
- You cannot be in the bedroom together; you must be visible at all times
- Sunday through Thursday you must have left your partner's house by 5pm

Gym Membership

- I am aware that a lot of students want to register and become members of the local Gyms and obtained a membership.
- Host families **SHOULD NOT** sign the student's application form for the Gym. The only person who holds legal guardianship is the principal and her delegate.
- All students who have or are thinking of a gym membership should fill out a travel and activities request form, and their natural parents sign it as well, so they are aware their child is at a gym, and they approve.

- Please be aware of curfew times. Students cannot leave the home prior to 6:00am in the summer and 6:30 am in the winter. Please make sure they visit the Gym within the curfew times.



Sport and Leisure Recreational Activities (SLR)

EQI have implemented a new process for non-school student activities. If your student indicates, they want to go to theme parks or join sporting clubs etc. please ask them to see the international student coordinator as we need to do SLR form.

Students are **NOT** permitted to take part in any high risk activities

- Sky Diving
- Rock Pools
- Horse Riding
- Jet Ski Riding
- Surfers Paradise during Schoolies
- Q1 Climb

Students are not allowed to go Surfing in the dark or be at the beach prior to 6:30am.

Students are **NOT** permitted to go to watch the sunrise unless in the company of their host family.

Saying goodbye

Create positive memories

As they approach the end of their stay, some students, particularly those who have been in Australia for a long time, can become withdrawn and apprehensive about saying goodbye to their friends, teachers and 'second family.'

There are lots of ways to make this transition easier for them to ensure their last memories of Australia are happy and positive. Some host families create memory books containing mementoes, photos and messages, and many give their student a small going-away party.

However, there are also a number of practical tasks your student will appreciate your help with:

- when it's time to pack, explain the maximum luggage allowance and any restrictions on items to be carried in the student's hand luggage
- assist them to pack and ship any large items via post or courier
- help with any final arrangements they need to make, for example, closing bank accounts, exchanging leftover currency, or shopping for gifts to take home
- check you have your student's correct home address and contact details to enable you to forward any belongings and future mail
- on the day of departure, take them to the airport and stay with them until they have checked in and are safely through to the departure area.
- As the school pay for the arrival of the student the **host family is responsible** for the departure. If you can not take your student to the airport it is up to you to organise a door to door service and **you pay** for this. This cost cannot be passed on to the student.
- You **MUST** give the school and your student as least 2 weeks' notice on how they are getting to the airport.

Staying in touch

One of the most rewarding things about homestay is the connections and friendships that are made between host families and students from all over the world.

Most like to stay in contact after the homestay ends but please ensure that you and other members of your household maintain the same standard of appropriate and respectful communication expected during the homestay. If in doubt, particularly if you plan to communicate with young children, please seek permission from the student's parents or legal custodian.

Student Departures

EQI hold welfare for the student up until their course finishes. Students **MUST** leave the country before their student visa expires. Students are NOT permitted to stay on in the homestay family after their welfare expires even if they apply for a tourist visa.

You may be approached by the student's family or the student asking if they can stay on. Please say no. This will never be approved by EQI and the school.

It is **the homestay's responsibility** to accompany the student to the airport or order and pay for airport con-X-ion. This is **not** up to the student or Merrimac High School to arrange. <https://www.con-x-ion.com/services/gold-coast-airport-transfers>

You must give the student 2 weeks' notice as to how they will be leaving. Please advise the school if you are taking them or ordering airport con-X-ion.

This is the only 2 ways a student departs the program.



International Staff



Rachel Cutajar
Principal

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Celia Norling
Deputy Principal

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Tammie Moss
International Student Coordinator
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Paula Crilley
Homestay Coordinator
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GPs In School

Would you like to see the School GP?

You can go to the GP for any physical or mental health concerns, including about your sexual and reproductive health.

Our school's GP clinic will be open every **Monday** during the school term between **8:30am - 3:30pm.**



Scan the QR code for more information and request an appointment.

You can also see the international staff in the international office,
and they will help you.

One of the international staff members will also be available to
attend with you if you need the support.



The best way to book an appointment is via email: GP@merrimacshs.eq.edu.au

You can even just copy and paste the statement below to request your appointment.

'I would like to make a booking with the GP please'

School term dates 2024

Term 1	22/01/2024 to 28/03/2024
Term 2	15/04/2024 to 21/06/2024
Term 3	08/07/2024 to 13/09/2024
Term 4	30/09/2024 to 13/12/2024

Year 12 last day of school is **15 November 2024**

Year 10 & 11 last day of school is **22 November 2024**

School term dates 2025

Term 1	28/01/2025 to 04/04/2025
Term 2	22/04/2025 to 27/06/2025
Term 3	14/07/2025 to 19/09/2025
Term 4	07/10/2025 to 12/12/2024

Contact details

For more information about the EQI homestay program please contact your local school or EQI.

Postal Address

PO Box 15050, City East QLD 4002, Australia

Street Address

Level 18, Education House, 30 Mary Street, Brisbane QLD 4000, Australia

Telephone +61 7 3034 4583

Fax +61 7 3513 5783

Email EQInternational@det.qld.gov.au

Web www.eqi.com.au

Department Education trading as Education Queensland International CRICOS
Provider Code 00608A

MERRIMAC STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Postal Address

PO Box 5610

QSuper Centre

Mermaid Waters Queensland 4218

Street Address

Dunlop Court

Mermaid Waters QLD 4218

Telephone +61 7 5595 8666

Fax +61 7 5595 8600

Email office@merrimacshs.eq.edu.au

Frequently Used Terms

Education Queensland (EQ)

Education Queensland International (EQI)

Merrimac State High School (MSHS/ Merrimac SHS)

Principal

International Student Head of Department (HOD/ International HOD)

Homestay Coordinator

International Student Coordinator (ISC)

International Staff

Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)

Head of Department (HOD)

Resources

Homestay roles and responsibilities

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf>

Code of conduct for Queensland public service

<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/working-in-the-publicservice/conduct-and-performance/code-of-conductfor-the-queensland-public-service>

EQI Incident Management Procedure

<https://eqi.com.au/for-students/policies-procedures/EQI-incident-management-procedure>

Fire alarm regulations

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/ISP-terms-andconditions-for-homestay-providers.pdf>

ISP standard terms and conditions for homestay providers

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/ISP-terms-andconditions-for-homestay-providers.pdf>

Requirements for swimming pool owners

<https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/buying-owning-home/pool-safety/pool-laws-and-standards/laws>

Student protection procedure

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-protectionprocedure>

<http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>

Working with children authority procedure

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/working-with-childrenauthority-procedure>

Insurance

RSM

<http://www.homestayhostinsuranceplus.com/>

Student safety

1800 QSTUDY 24-hour support for international students

<http://www.eqi.com.au/for-students/1800qstudy>

Beach safety

<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/beach-safety>

Bush walking information, maps and safety guidelines: Queensland Department of Environment and Science

<http://www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking>

Child safety

<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/child-safety.html>

Cybersafety

<http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety>

Emergencies

<http://www.triplezero.gov.au/>

<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/emergencies-services/>

Fire safety (at home and bush fires)

<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire>

Kidsafe Queensland

www.kidsafeqld.com.au

Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children

Child employment

www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0137

Recreational safety

<http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/>

Staying safe around wildlife

<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/>

Student protection procedure

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-protectionprocedure>

Surf Life Saving Queensland website

<https://sls.com.au/role/lifesaver/>

