



Merrimac
State High School
Gold Coast, Australia

Pride in Excellence

International Homestay
Handbook

Welcome to EQI homestay

Thank you for becoming an Education Queensland International (EQI) homestay host.

Homestay is a valuable opportunity for international students to experience the Australian lifestyle and practise their English language skills in a real home setting. As a homestay host you contribute to the positive memories international students have of their studies in Queensland. Our most successful hosts form cultural links and friendships with students and their families all over the world.

We understand that the student and host must work at this relationship to make it successful. This guide is designed to help you anticipate and overcome some of the common issues that can arise, and give you the tools to ensure that you and your student enjoy a safe and mutually beneficial homestay experience.

Principal's greeting

In choosing to study in the International Program at Merrimac State High School you are joining a school community which has a positive view towards preparing all young people for their roles in an expanding global community. Our school celebrates with many international students every year who graduate or complete their enrolment with us. 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 and business well into the future.

School spirit and traditions are centred on the symbol of the Phoenix, a mythical and majestic bird of hope and endurance. The word "Phoenix" describes the tradition in this school of supporting students as they strive towards our philosophy: Build Positive Relationships, Value Differences, Encourage Life-long Learning and Contribute to the school, family and wider community. These sentiments link then to our aspirational school motto, "Pride in Excellence".

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.

Homestay hosts

Your primary responsibility is to provide students with a safe, welcoming and friendly home. It is particularly important that you treat students as valued members of your household. In return, they are expected to show you and your family respect, courtesy and consideration.

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 you and your family and some details about your local area. Doing this removes some of the uncertainty the student might feel about moving to a new 'home.'

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

Discussing your student's arrival with your family 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 you plan to have additional adults stay in your home overnight during the student's stay, e.g. friends or relatives, you need to ensure compliance with the EQI Homestay Risk Management Strategy.

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.

Some young pets can playfully nibble so please be mindful and monitor this behaviour as it may cause an issue with your student.

Insurance

Your home and contents insurance policy may not cover international students staying in your home, so please check this with your insurance provider. Some providers offer homestay host insurance as an additional option to your cover.

You must have public liability insurance for \$20 Million on your Insurance Policy.

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.

Student arrival

When an international student arrives for the start of their study program we would like you to pick them up from the airport in they arrive 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 tell you what time your student will arrive so you can make arrangements to collect them, if appropriate.

Please make sure you make arrangements to 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.

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 such as the broadwater and the marina. 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 shoes.

Home orientation

There are many things to tell your student at the beginning of their stay, for example, how things work, your household rules, and safety in and outside of the home.

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.

Homestay families will also receive an itinerary and in-school orientation for Week 1. It is recommended that families sit down with their student and go through this list, as it helps the student understand the school's expectations and do not feel lost on their first day at school.

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 Blue card and are 25 years old or over.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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, unscreened windows and garden gates.

As Study Tour students must not be left on their own they do not require a key to your home.

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.

1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839)

In the event that you need to contact the 1800QSTUDY (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 are in 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.

Emergency contact details

It is a priority 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 host 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:

**Dial 000 in an emergency
and ask for Police,
Ambulance or Fire Rescue**

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. Study Tour students will usually wear the uniform of their home school.

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

MSHS is no longer buying uniforms from international students. The students have the option to keep them as mementos, sell them independently, or give them to their homestay family.

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.

Academic achievement

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

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.

Please discuss acceptable behaviours with your student, and explain that they must also abide by Australian laws.

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 EQI policy, 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.

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.

Internet use and cyber safety

EQI and Merrimac State High School are in the process of change. Students will be asked to supply their own internet and we will be encouraging Homestay families not to encourage students to use the house hold internet.

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.

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.

Curfew times and going out

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

All students;

Sunday to Thursday:

- no later than 6.00 pm, unless for a school-approved extra-curricular activity (Years 7 to 10);
- no later than 7.00 pm, unless for a school-approved extra-curricular activity (Years 11 and 12)

Friday/Saturday:

- no later than 9.30 pm, unless for a school approved extra-curricular activity (Years 7 to 10);
- no later than 10.30 pm, unless for a school-approved extra-curricular activity (Years 11 and 12)

Please notify the International office immediately if students are late for any reason.
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.

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

EQI'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).

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.

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.

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 cannot find their own way there. Walking is definitely not allowed in these situations.

Travel Forms

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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. If your family speaks a language other than English at home, please communicate amongst yourselves in English while the student is present, so they feel part of the conversation.

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 requested by the school, the homestay family may be required to collect the student from the airport upon arrival. They may be requested to take the student to the airport on departure (if required).
- 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.
- Some record of rent paid should be kept and we recommend that a receipt be issued to avoid misunderstandings.
- 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.

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.

Homestay procedure for critical incidents

Call triple zero (000) to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance in life threatening or emergency situations, and follow the instructions of the emergency services.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS 1800 QStudy (1800 778 839)

For **ALL** emergencies out of school hours including 24 hours during holiday's homestays **MUST** call 1800 QStudy – 1800 778 839

Please put this number in your phone immediately.

For issues during school time please see the following staff:

<u>Ms Joanna Filmer</u>	<u>Ms Tammie Moss</u>	<u>Mrs Jade Kolc</u>
Head of Department	International Student Coordinator	Homestay Coordinator
Ph: 5595 8614	Ph: 5595 8609	Ph: 5595 8612
Mb: 0412 556 586	Mb: 0475 806 650	Mb: 0477 742 836
E: jvfil0@eq.edu.au	E: tmoss65@eq.edu.au	E: jkolc0@eq.edu.au

International staff are no longer available 24/7 like previous years.
International staff are available between 8:30 and 3:00 weekdays.

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 school principal. **Under no circumstances must you discuss or reveal personal information about your international student to anyone else.**

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

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.
- When students depart it is up to the host family to take them to the airport. While we appreciate this is not always possible it is up to the homestay to book and pay for Door to Door service. You must notify the school on how your student is 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.

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 EQI Homestay Risk Management Strategy.

This document will be updated annually.

Changes to your situation

If there are any significant changes to your family and home situation 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 police information, or that of any adults who live in your home.

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 connection. This is not up to the student or Merrimac High School to arrange.

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 connection.

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

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. Please note these are new forms and 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 week Schoolies celebration. This will be in the final two weeks of Term 4.

CURFEW / SUNRISE

It has been explained earlier in the book what the curfews are. However it has no regulation on the early hours of the morning.

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 6am, 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.

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.

Homestay Holidays

We understand at times students homestay families will need to go away on holidays or weekends and cannot take their student with them.

You **must** notify the school 2 weeks prior to leaving in writing. Please email this confirmation to international staff.

If you have made alternative arrangements please include them in the email.

If your student is to be homed with another host family you will need to pay a nightly rate.

If you are planning to take holidays in the middle of the term for longer than two weeks, please advise us of such at least once term in advance, so we can take this into account at the time of student placements. In this case, the school may suggest that a whole term of placement is skipped in order to maximise student satisfaction in their new homestay.

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 ever semester. We do our best to keep everyone happy however this is never 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.

Student relationships

While you are in Australia you may find yourself in love. There a few expectations in this department. First and foremost you need to be respectful to each other and your 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
-

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 cause 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.

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 6am.

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

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
- Currumbin Creek
- The Beach
- Wandering streets
- Underage Concerts
- Licenced Venues
- Skate Boarding / Bike Riding after dark

Please stress to your student they are required to have full leather shoes for school.

Students are allowed one pair of earrings and a watch. This is the only jewellery to be worn to school.

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 skate boards to school under any circumstances.

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

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)

International Staff



Chris Tobin
Principal
the.principal@merrimacshs.eq.edu.au



Joanna Filmer
HOD LOTE/International
0412 556 586
jvfil0@eq.edu.au



Tammie Moss
International Student Coordinator
0475 806 650
tmoss65@eq.edu.au

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
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Telephone +61 7 3034 4583

Fax +61 7 3513 5783

Email EQInternational@det.qld.gov.au

Website eqi.com.au

CRICOS Provider Code 00608A

CRICOS Provider Name Education Queensland International

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