4.11 International Education Division

4.11.1 Introduction

The International Education Division (IED) has responsibility for the international activities of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It promotes and manages participation by Victorian Government schools and educators in the international education marketplace and promotes international engagement more generally.

The Division is responsible for research and policy development related to international education. This includes establishing and maintaining relationships with overseas governments and global partners to facilitate mutual knowledge transfer and capacity building and support schools in the internationalising of Victorian education.

The International Education Division manages a number of specific high-quality international education programs and services. The International Student Program (ISP) within the International Education Division promotes and administers the overseas fee-paying student program in Victorian Government schools. The Division also conducts and facilitates student exchanges, study tours and official delegations.

Following is information about:

- International Student Program (fee-paying students in Victorian Government schools)
- Sister School arrangements
- Study Tours

For further information about International Education Division education programs, please contact:
International Education Division
Phone: (03) 9637 2990
E-mail: international@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: http://www.study.vic.gov.au

4.11.2 International Student Program (ISP)

The ISP is administered through the International Education Division and operates within Commonwealth and State legislation, as well as Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) education policy guidelines. This is designed to ensure that international students receive high quality education within a safe learning environment. The responsibility of coordinating the development and implementation of the ISP lies with the International Student Recruitment (ISRU) and Program Planning and School Support (PP&SSU) Units.
The ISP **School Resource Kit** is designed to provide comprehensive and useful information to schools about policies, procedures and guidelines relating to the ISP. Information on the ISP can be found at: www.study.vic.gov.au

Sections 4.11.2.1 – 4.11.2.13 provide a summary of the information contained within each chapter of the School Resource Kit. This information is subject to change. Always check the School Resource Kit for the most up-to-date information. For details go to: http://www.study.vic.gov.au

The **School Resource Kit** for the ISP has been developed by the PP&SSU to support Victorian Government schools participating in the ISP in Victoria.

### 4.11.2.1 The Program in Context

Chapter 1 describes the different government bodies involved in the ISP, as well as the legislation and guidelines that are adhered to. Some of the relevant Commonwealth Legislation includes the:

- Migration Act 1958
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
- National Code 2007

The ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code 2007 set out the legal framework for the delivery of education to overseas students. All approved and registered providers of education services to international students are listed in the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). The Department is the registered provider not individual schools.

It is the responsibility of all DEECD staff involved in the delivery of the ISP to ensure the Department, as the registered provider, fully complies with the ESOS framework. The ISP Quality Assurance Framework, supported by the Schools Resource Kit ensures that the ISP is delivered to a very high standard. The guiding principles of the ISP include: high ethical standards, excellent client services, commitment to accountability, high level of care, building relationships and strengthening capacity.

### 4.11.2.2 School Accreditation

Chapter 2 describes the school accreditation process and the policy and guidelines involved. This includes Tier 1 and Tier 2 accreditation as well as the audit and re-accreditation procedures.

All education services provided to international students in Victorian Government schools are registered to DEECD under one CRICOS registered number (DEECD Provider Code: 00861K). In order to comply with Commonwealth and State legislative regulatory requirements, the International Education Division's Program Planning & School Support Unit is responsible for:
• The accreditation of new schools

• Supporting the capacity building of schools

• The quality assurance of accredited schools

The school accreditation policy applies to all Victorian Government schools wishing to enrol an international standard, dependant or disability student. No accreditation is required to enrol a temporary international student or a student entitled to fee exemption.

To be considered for accreditation, the school needs to be performing at above expected levels, as identified by consultation with the IED’s Program Development Officers (PDOs) and an annual school self-assessment in addition to an audit at least once during the course of the accreditation. Schools are required to apply for re-accreditation three months prior to the expiration of their accreditation.

4.11.2.3 Marketing and Recruitment

Chapter 3 outlines the legislation and policies relating to the marketing of the ISP and the recruitment of international students. Guidelines are given regarding education agents, offshore recruitment activities, marketing materials and marketing protocols for schools.

The International Student Recruitment Unit (ISRU) is responsible for all onshore and offshore recruitment activities while the Operations and Program Development Unit (OPDU) is responsible for the strategic marketing activities and production of marketing collateral. The IED is responsible for ensuring that all marketing and recruitment activity is fully compliant with the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code. Recruitment activities managed by the ISRU include:

• Appointing and training education agents

• Organising information sessions and hosted visits for prospective students, parents and international education agents

• Participating in education fairs, exhibitions and seminars, etc.

Education agents play a significant role in recruiting international students on behalf of DEECD in all its source markets. Each education agent undergoes a rigorous and transparent selection process before being appointed as an official agent and is subject to an annual review of their performance before they are considered for reappointment. The ISRU also undertakes regular training of agents. Schools are NOT to contact agents directly regarding recruitment, agent contracts and student application issues. All agent enquiries should be directed to the ISRU. Schools may communicate directly with agents in regard to enrolled students and to request assistance with reporting to parents. School staff can also meet with accredited agents when overseas. The Unit is always eager to receive feedback on the performance of its agents from schools for the benefit of ongoing development and improvement of the ISP.
Education fairs, exhibitions, seminars and interview programs are typically organised by education agents and/or Australian trade support organisations. Schools are not permitted to participate independently in such events. The Division and the schools must ensure that they promote Victoria as a study destination first, the Victorian Government school system second, and then the individual school, as well as adhering to all other marketing guidelines.

4.11.2.4 Application and Enrolment

Chapter 4 describes the application process and guidelines for the different categories of international students: standard, temporary, dependant, exempt and students with disability.

It is a requirement that the enrolment of a standard, study abroad, or temporary international student (dependents are treated as local students for the purposes of being accepted into schools):

- Must not be a financial cost to the school
- Should not affect the school’s provision of its normal education programs
- Should not deny a local student access to educational programs or otherwise prove detrimental to the school.

Before being eligible to commence at a Victorian Government school international students must:

- Submit a complete Application Form
- Receive an offer of a place in a Victorian Government school and
- Have paid the relevant fees.

Before enrolling a student, the school needs to request evidence of the student’s residency status and keep copies of the documents as part of the student’s school record. Schools must ensure that the student is not enrolled beyond their visa expiry date or past the period of enrolment that they have paid for. For more information on student enrolment please see the Guidelines for School Census:


International students enter the country within a variety of different visa subclasses. The student’s welfare arrangements, fee status and eligibility to ESL support are dependant on many things, including the student’s age and category (standard, standard sibling, temporary, dependant, disability, fee exempt).

Due to visa processing delays, international students may arrive in Australia after the confirmed date for the start of their course. The host school or English Language School/Centre must notify the relevant Program Development Officer (PDO) within one week if an international student has not commenced study on the confirmed course start date.
Students cannot commence more than two weeks after the start of the term.

The Division reserves the right to cancel a student’s enrolment no later than one month before the commencement of the course, in which case a full refund of tuition fees paid will be made within 2 weeks. If a student has not paid tuition fees by the specified date on the invoice, the enrolment will automatically be cancelled. DEECD reserves the right to cancel the enrolment of a student whose attendance falls below 80%, or who fails to meet the academic performance standards required by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). In these cases enrolment will be cancelled without refund.

4.11.2.5 Accommodation, Support and General Welfare

Chapter 5 outlines the options, procedures and guidelines for students’ accommodation and welfare arrangements, whether by parents or by DEECD, as well as the ISP Quality Standards relating to accommodation and welfare. DEECD through its schools has a “duty of care” to ensure the health and safety of all students. Students under the age of 18 must have adequate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements in place before DIAC will issue a student visa. These students must either:

- Live with their parent/legal custodian,

- Reside in Australia with an approved relative nominated by the parent/legal custodian, or

- Obtain a written statement from the student’s education provider that accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for the student are appropriate.

Note:

- All primary, dependant and disability students must reside with a parent.

- Secondary students under 15 years of age must be cared for by either a parent or a DIAC approved relative.

- Secondary students aged 15 or over can have their accommodation arranged with their parents or a DIAC approved relative, or the parents can request DEECD to arrange accommodation, support and general welfare. Please see the School Resource Kit for information about school duties relating to welfare responsibility.

4.11.2.6 Homestay Guidelines

Chapter 6 gives information about the different aspects of host family accommodation: recruitment, selection, finances, preparing for the student’s arrival, preparing the student for host family, quality standards and monitoring.

The homestay experience is an excellent way for a student to improve their English, learn more about Australian culture and make the most of
their international education experience. It is essential that the homestay accommodation arranged by the school is of high quality and provides a safe, comfortable and caring environment.

**Note:**

• Homestay is full board accommodation (however, telephone and internet expenses should be the student’s responsibility).

• A weekly fee is charged to cover the expenses, but is not intended as a source of income.

• Every effort should be made to ensure that homestay accommodation payment methods avoid the student being involved in the transaction.

• A maximum of three international students per family, provided all quality standards are met.

• The ideal homestay is where students are compatible with the family, not from the same background and with a family that has ties to the school community.

• No student is to be placed in a homestay without the school undertaking its own approval process including a site visit and verification of working with children checks for all adults aged over 18 years of age residing or frequently residing in the household.

• The Homestay Responsibility Agreement is to be signed by the host, the school and the student.

In accordance with the ISP Quality Standards, schools are required to monitor the students in host family accommodation and maintain regular contact with the host families to ensure the student’s successful adjustment to life and study in Victoria. Schools must, for example, conduct a review within the first 6 – 8 weeks and inspect the homestay at least once each semester as a minimum requirement. Schools are also expected to keep thorough records of host family arrangements and resolve any disagreements or disputes that may occur.

If an international student is unhappy with the host family accommodation that has been arranged, they can request that a more suitable homestay be found. Students will have to give the school and homestay provider reasons for requesting the change and at least two weeks’ notice.

**4.11.2.7 Pre-arrival and Arrival**

Chapter 7 describes the guidelines and procedures to make sure the student is well informed about what to expect before arriving and that they feel safe and secure when arriving in Melbourne. There are also guidelines for the student orientation program to be conducted in the first few weeks after the student’s arrival.
4.11.2.7.1 Pre-departure information

A Pre-Departure and Arrival Guide and information about the course is provided by the International Student Recruitment Unit.

- Schools need to provide the student with some specific information about the school and the local environment, costs and arrangements for uniforms and books, as well as contact details of the International Student Coordinator (ISC) (if accommodation is arranged by the school, they should also include information about the homestay family).

4.11.2.7.2 Airport reception

- International students who are not living with a relative or a DIAC approved relative will be met at Melbourne Airport and taken to their accommodation by a school representative.

- The school needs to send an official representative, preferably the ISC or Assistant Principal, to pick the student up. They should have a mobile phone and all relevant contact numbers, the student’s details, a sign with the student’s name on it, and some identification to present to the student as confirmation that they are the person nominated to pick them up.

- The school representative needs to make sure that students call their parents from the airport to confirm their safe arrival.

- Within 48 hours of the student’s arrival schools should email their PDO to notify them of the safe arrival of the international student. Further details, such as visa subclass and number, must be entered into CASES21 within 5 working days.

4.11.2.7.3 Orientation

- Schools should take responsibility for delivering an orientation program that provides students with information to help them adjust to living and studying in Victoria.

- Please refer to the School Resource Kit for detailed information about what to include in the student orientation program.

- Student agreement shall be signed by the student and the school. The agreements should be translated and should outline the visa requirements and school rules.

4.11.2.8 Program Administration

Chapter 8 outlines the administrative procedures associated with the ISP. These include English Language School/Centre support, host school support and reporting to parents, managing student records and visa conditions, Permission to Work applications, attendance and academic performance, management of critical incidents, deferral or suspension of studies, students transferring and exiting the program.
Administration of the ISP involves many different areas and requires knowledge of many procedures. Chapter 8 gives detailed instructions for the following:

4.11.2.8.1 Education and Academic Support

This passage includes information about how to support and keep in touch with international students while they are in the English Language School as well as what to do when they return to the host school.

Students should be made aware of the Student Code of Conduct and their behaviour monitored throughout their enrolment. The host school must provide regular and appropriate reporting of student attendance, progress and welfare to parents (translated school reports at least twice per year, translated letters, teleconferences using an interpreting service, photos etc).

4.11.2.8.2 Case management & Program Administration

The school is required to keep confidential records of the student's academic performance, attendance and residential address. These records need to be retained for at least two years after the student has exited the school. The School Resource Kit includes a student file checklist to help schools keep adequate records of international students.

All information stored in CASES21 should be current as it is the official data source for all students for the duration of their enrolment and is linked to the ISP database. Please refer to the School Resource Kit for information about student visa conditions.

4.11.2.8.3 Permission to Work

International students in Victorian Government schools are here primarily for the purpose of study and their welfare is provided for by the host family or by relatives. Therefore, they should not need to work.

A student visa will have one of two work-related visa conditions: No Work condition (8101) or work limitation condition (8105). From 26 April 2008, all student visas are granted with condition 8105. Condition 8105 permits the student to work up to 20 hours per week when school is in session. There are no work limits during school holidays.

The student visa will be cancelled if students work in excess of their entitlements. This condition is monitored by DIAC and should also be monitored by the school. Schools should be aware that any volunteer or unpaid work (including work experience) will also count towards the limit of 20 hours per week and a Permission to Work must be attained before taking part in any such work, whether paid or unpaid. Work experience undertaken as part of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) approved curriculum does not count towards the 20 hrs per week per condition.

Further policy, guidelines and the procedure relating to international students’ Permission to Work can be found in the School Resource Kit.
4.11.2.8.4 Compliance

If international students breach any of the visa conditions, they may have their visas cancelled. Cancellation of a student visa is a very serious matter having potentially lifelong consequences for the international student. Please refer to the School Resource Kit for more detailed information on student visa conditions.

4.11.2.8.5 Reporting students to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship

When a student is reported as non-compliant, their original visa conditions remain in place until a decision is made by DIAC; the student needs to attend school and comply with all their other student visa conditions. Schools are still responsible for monitoring the student's attendance and academic performance. These responsibilities continue until either the student leaves Australia, transfers to another provider or other arrangements are put in place.

4.11.2.8.6 Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an occurrence where an international student’s health or wellbeing is or has been placed at risk, such as abuse, neglect, serious injury, self harm, fatalities or crime. Schools must follow Emergency Management Plans and are required to notify PP&SSU immediately about any incident, emergency or criminal activity, even if they feel that the incident is under control.

4.11.2.8.7 Deferral or Suspension of Studies

DIAC allows students to defer their studies for a maximum of six months. Students are only allowed to defer or suspend their studies on the grounds of illness (evidenced by a medical certificate) or other exceptional compassionate circumstances beyond the control of the student, such as bereavement. Deferral of studies must be requested in writing by the student or parent. Reasons for the request and evidence of the circumstances must be submitted with the letter. Students must leave Australia during deferral of studies and must return within 6 months or their visa may be cancelled by DIAC.

4.11.2.8.8 Transfers

International students are not permitted to change schools for the first 6 months following the commencement of enrolment. Transfer within 6 months are only permitted in exceptional circumstances and with approval from the manager, Program Policy and School Support Unit (PP&SSU). Requests to transfer schools mid-term will not be approved. Nor is it recommended that students undertaking Year 12 VCE apply to transfer schools during the academic year.

If a student is eligible to transfer, they will be required to fill in the Application to Transfer form accompanied by the non-refundable transfer
fee, letter from parents, any documentary evidence and the most recent academic reports and attendance records.

4.11.2.8.9 Students Exiting the Program

Students who request to exit the program for the purpose of returning to their home country for personal or financial reasons are able to do so with a written notification to the PP&SSU from the parents.

Visa condition 8206 permits students to change education providers after the first 6 months of their course. The request must be made in writing to the PP&SSU and must be accompanied by proof of offer (or CoE) from the new provider. Changing from a school sector visa (subclass 571) to another sector will require a new visa to be issued by DIAC.

International students enrolled in primary schools are permitted to enrol in a secondary school of their choice providing the secondary school has a place available for them in Year 7. Primary schools are requested to advise the parents of their Grade 6 international students that a new application for enrolment must be submitted to the International Student Recruitment Unit (ISRU) if they intend to enrol in Year 7 in a Victorian Government school.

International students will be exited from the ISP at the end of their expected program end date. Most students who have completed studies either return to their home country or apply for further study in Australia. Students who wish to apply for tertiary study will require a new visa and should liaise with DIAC.

4.11.2.9 Finance

Chapter 9 gives information about the fees and charges associated with the ISP, as well as the disbursement of fees to schools and the refund of fees to students exiting the program.

4.11.2.9.1 Fees and Charges

Students must be aware of all applicable fees being charged by an education provider at the time of application. The application form details the list of current fees and outlines the policy regarding refunds to ensure student awareness. Schools do not have the authority to waive the application fee, tuition fee or any of the optional service fees. Invoices must be paid by the due date and schools do not have the authority to alter or extend the due date for payment of tuition fees.

The School Resource Kit outlines payment methods, as well as the procedure for the collection of outstanding fees.

4.11.2.9.2 Disbursement of Fees to Schools

• International students are not eligible for recurrent grants (SRP) and cannot be included in the formula for staffing or grant purposes.

• The International Student Finance Team, International Education Division will disburse tuition fees to schools once a term.
4.11.2.9.3 Refund Policy

- Refunds are paid within 4 weeks after receiving a written claim signed by a parent.

- A refund of fees must be requested within 6 months from the date of their withdrawal from the ISP (this condition is waived for all students who applied to the program prior to 2006).

- A refund will not be processed unless a completed Cancellation and Refund Request form is provided by the parent with all required information.

- The student’s enrolment will be cancelled without refund if: tuition fees are not paid by the specified date on the invoice, student’s attendance falls below 80%, student fails to meet the academic performance standards required by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), or student fails to adhere to student disciplinary regulations.

- Refunds will only be paid by bank draft or bank transfer to the parent’s account unless the parent nominates a representative to receive it on their behalf. This must be specified on the refund form and signed by the parent who signed the original application.

4.11.2.10 Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Chapter 10 outlines the complaints procedures for complaints about school programs and for complaints about other aspects of the program. The International Education Division is committed to providing mechanisms whereby complaints will be dealt with impartially, promptly and confidentially.

- The complaints policy aims to ensure each complaint is handled in accordance with DEECD guidelines and the requirements of the National Code.

- In accordance with the ISP Quality Standards, the Program Planning and School Support (PP&SSU) shall have a three-tiered approach to dispute resolution:
  - School level: International Student Coordinator (ISC) and/or Principal
  - International Education Division: PP&SSU Manager and/or General Manager
  - Independent dispute resolution service

4.11.2.11 Frequently Asked Questions

Chapter 11 lists some of the most common questions relating to marketing, student enrolment, student monitoring, homestay, accommodation and welfare arrangements, and finance.
4.11.2.12 Resources

Chapter 12 provides an alphabetical list of documents and links referred to throughout the School Resource Kit. The resources are provided to schools to ensure consistent administration of the ISP and compliance with ESOS. All participating ISP schools are required to use these resources in order to meet the ISP Quality Standards and ESOS. All current resources can be downloaded at: http://www.study.vic.gov.au

4.11.2.13 Acronyms

Chapter 13 lists the acronyms typically used in the School Resource Kit.

4.11.3 Student exchange programs and sister school relationships

4.11.3.1 Student exchange program

A student exchange program is an exchange organised by an approved organisation, group or school, between students from two countries to broaden their educational experiences and intercultural/international understanding.

Student exchange programs range from a minimum of 29 days to a maximum of one year in duration and are operated by registered exchange organisations/schools. Student exchanges must operate within the requirements for registration. Participating schools should ensure that reciprocity of student exchanges is maintained i.e schools must balance the sending and hosting of students on a rolling three year basis.

Programs should also operate on a non-profit basis. The responsibility for student exchange rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). Please contact the VRQA on 9651 3803 for further information.

Student exchange programs that are less than twenty-eight days in duration do not require the school to be a registered exchange organisation.

4.11.3.2 Sister school program

A sister school relationship is the development of a positive association between two countries through the establishment of links between schools and school communities. It is operated on a non-commercial basis.

The opportunity to participate in a sister school relationship is open to any school with a desire to learn more about the language and culture of countries other than their own. Some of the reasons for establishing a sister school relationship include:

• increasing students’ awareness of the global environment
- increasing students' understanding of another culture of teaching and learning
- improving student skills in a language other than English
- fostering professional development of teachers
- developing curriculum links

For further information on sister schools visit the website:


4.11.3.2.1 Establishment of sister school relationships

Guidelines for the establishment of a sister school relationship and expression of interest forms can be obtained from the International Education Division - Telephone 9637 2990.

The International Education Division can assist schools to locate a sister school if required.

Once a link has been established, the principal of the school will need to write a letter of introduction to the proposed sister school. The school should include a package of information, such as the school's brochure, magazine, photographs etc.

After initial contact has been made, the two schools should negotiate a mutually agreeable memorandum of understanding which needs to be signed by the principal and school council president.

Schools undertaking student exchanges as part of their sister school relationship should ensure that participating host families undertake a mandatory Working With Children check prior to hosting visiting international students.

Schools should also ensure that reciprocity of exchange is maintained both in terms of numbers of students exchanged and length of visit. Where there is an imbalance in reciprocity the program should be considered a fee paying Study Tour. Refer to section 4.11.4.

Schools are requested to provide the International Education Division with a copy of the agreement so that the school can be recorded on the Sister School Register. This register will be used to assist other schools wishing to establish a sister school relationship in that country and to provide information on activities, visits or promotions that may be of interest to schools.

4.11.3.2.2 Sister school teacher exchanges

The terms of a teacher exchange should be negotiated between the two schools and operate under conditions which have been mutually agreed within Departmental guidelines which can be obtained from your regional office.
Schools wishing to participate in teacher exchanges should contact the International Education Division, on telephone 9637 2990.

4.11.4 Student study tour program

The Department’s International Cooperation and Study Tours Unit (ICSTU), within the International Education Division, is responsible for coordinating short term student study tours in primary and secondary government schools, other than through reciprocal sister school arrangements.

The ICSTU arranges short-term student study tour programs for groups of overseas students wishing to combine a school experience with a cultural tour. The overseas students on a study tour improve their English as well as integrating with local students for a cultural experience. Overseas students are placed in host family accommodation provided by families from the host school or school community.

The ICSTU offers a range of study tour programs. These programs range in duration from one day to 10 weeks and include some or all of the following components: host family accommodation, ESL and school tuition, visiting tourist attractions or one day visits. Details of these programs are advertised on the International Education Division website at http://www.study.vic.gov.au/StudyTours/default.htm. The pricing structure provides financial reimbursement for the schools and host families for the provision of their services.

The ICSTU is contacted by private tour operators or other interested parties both onshore and offshore to arrange programs for their clients.

4.11.4.1 Ministerial Orders

The Secretary to the Department has a discretionary authority to make a determination for or with respect to any matter that relates to the payment of fees by Overseas Students enrolled by group tour operators including but not limited to the amount of the fees payable by the overseas students.

This also includes the process for collecting fees, the apportioning of fees between the Department and schools, and the way in which fees are to be paid. Details of the fees can be obtained from Lyn Moss, Coordinator of Student Study Tours on moss.lyn.m@edumail.vic.gov.au.

4.11.4.2 Host School Agreement

A school needs to be briefed prior to hosting a group of overseas students. Host schools undertaking a study tour are required to sign an Agreement which details the services to be provided by the host school for the funding received.

Step 1
When a school is approached by ICSTU or makes enquiries with ICSTU on hosting an overseas group, an ICSTU staff member conducts a
telephone interview with the principal to ensure the school is aware of its obligations, and an Agreement is sent to the school. The school returns the signed Agreement to ICSTU.

Step 2
Following receipt of the signed Agreement, the school is visited by ICSTU staff and a briefing about the program is provided to the principal and designated school contact person. A copy of the Agreement countersigned by the Department representative is returned to the school.

4.11.4.3 Tour Operators

Tour operators are usually the first point of contact for an overseas school group looking to participate in a study tour, and therefore play an important role in the successful delivery of the program.

The ICSTU has established a database of recognised tour operators. These tour operators have provided details of their business set up and activities, and have been checked with referees in the industry.

It is imperative that schools do not deal directly with tour operators but direct all tour operator enquiries to the ICSTU. This is to ensure that the Department only accepts tours from those tour operators who are appropriately qualified and experienced.

4.11.4.4 Hosting a study tour

A school should not agree to participate in hosting a study tour if it will:

• affect the provision of its normal educational program, deny a local student access to the educational programs or otherwise prove detrimental to the education of local students and/or

• place a burden on the school.

In accordance with the determination by the Secretary (section 4.11.4.1 refers), the Department and the host school negotiate the terms upon which the school will provide a school visit to a tour operator and the overseas students. These terms usually refer to the program requested, number of students and time of visit. Subject to the terms agreed to, the Department will offer a quote to the tour operator.

At the request of the tour operator, the Department may vary the terms of the visit (numbers of students) at any time providing that the fees are adjusted accordingly and the host school is given reasonable time to cater for the changes.

The tour operator is notified when a school agrees to host the overseas group. A deposit from the tour operator is required to secure the host school for their group. As soon as payment has been made, the host school will be expected to provide the study tour program. If the deposit and balance are not paid to the Department at least four weeks (three weeks for groups from China) prior to arrival, the school is not obligated to provide the school visit or study tour.
The Department will inform the host school if the quote has been accepted and when the deposit and balance of fees have been paid.

Liaison between the tour operator, the ICSTU and the host school will continue until the school visit has finished.

4.11.4.5 Responsibilities of the host school

The host school must provide:

• the same standard of service and level of care as the school would provide to any other local or overseas student

• the tour operator and each participating overseas student with a school visit that meets the terms agreed.

The host school must ensure each student undertaking the study tour has the best possible opportunity to:

• meet students and teachers attending the school; and

• experience the culture and tradition of the school.

The school will be responsible for all aspects of the delivery of services for the visit that include:

• appointing a school contact person to manage the visit and act as a contact person to liaise with the ICSTU

• liaising with ICSTU officers on all aspects of the visit

• organising the school integration program

• organising host family accommodation

• organising and coordinating the ESL program

• providing an information package for visiting students

• providing an information package to selected host families

• organising welcome and farewell ceremonies

• managing unexpected issues, including crisis management and providing twenty-four hours emergency contact

• Principal to forward to the ICTSU a signed Receipt of Medical Receipt Form, indicating all student medical release forms have been received and are complete.

4.11.4.6 Responsibilities of the ICSTU

The ICSTU staff will undertake all negotiations with the interested tour operators or overseas parties and will be responsible for allocating the visits to host schools.
The ICSTU will provide advice about the development of the school-based program, homestay arrangements and legal matters.

4.11.4.7 ESL program

Where a program includes an ESL component, a minimum of three hours per day intensive English must be provided.

ESL classes must be conducted by teachers with ESL qualifications, as required by the Department.

Classes may be up to but not exceed twenty (20) students. Host schools are required to provide a suitable classroom/room for ESL classes.

4.11.4.8 School program

Host schools must be willing to allow students to integrate into normal classes, usually accompanying their host or school buddy, where appropriate.

Students will generally have low levels of English. It is important that students join classes where language is not the main focus of the classroom activity.

If the student’s host brother/sister is not of the same age as the student, a school buddy should be allocated to assist the student during school.

While visiting overseas students are participating in school programs, including excursions, schools are responsible for ensuring that appropriate standards are met in the exercise of their duty of care.

Additional programs/activities other than the program agreed to by the Department and the tour operator will be at the school's expense.

4.11.4.9 Host family accommodation

The school must monitor each student placed in host family accommodation. Host families should be selected from the school community.

The school must be able to certify that host families are appropriate, and are of good character.

To further strengthen the safety and security of visiting overseas students whilst with their host families, all schools are now required to ensure all adults over the age of 18 and living in the host home, at the time of the visit, have a Working With Children Check card.

As host families come under the umbrella of “volunteers” these checks will not incur a cost. As it is now the host’s responsibility to apply for the WWCC card, it is imperative a school person be appointed to sight the cards once they have been issued.
Some groups require profiles of host families to assist the families of the study tour students understand the home environment where their child will be staying. This will be forwarded to the tour operator by schools hosting repeat programs or the ICSTU for new programs prior to the students’ arrival.

It is generally expected that the student will be allocated to a host family with a child of a similar age and gender attending the school.

All monies collected for host family accommodation by the ICSTU are distributed to the school one week prior to the school visit, for payment to host family providers.

It is expected that the student will be accompanied to and from school by a member of the host family.

The student’s travel to and from school on public transport and lunches are to be provided by the host family.

Principals must ensure that host parents are aware that they are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of overseas students out of school hours.

**Pre-arrival orientation**

Schools should provide a briefing for nominated host families approximately one week prior to arrival. The briefing should cover understanding of relevant cultural, linguistic and religious differences, an understanding of the needs of young people being away from their home environment, and the need for a clear flexible approach to matters of discipline, house rules and cooperative living. It should be made clear to the host family what meals are to be provided to the student. The student’s profile provided by the tour operator will indicate what kind of food the student likes or cannot eat because of religious beliefs.

At the orientation, a copy of the list of host families, with their assigned overseas student, should be distributed to all hosts. The information on this list should also include the contact details of the family hosting the accompanying adult of the group, and the school contact person.

ICSTU will endeavour to provide information for host families on cultural issues relating to the country of origin of the overseas group.

The school should ensure each host family has a copy of the school program, which includes dates and destinations of excursions, appropriate clothing required, and if a cut lunch is required.

The school must advise host families of the school’s complaints procedures.

**4.11.4.10 Excursions**

A half day excursion “Walking Tour of the Local Area” has now become a standard component of most programs. This excursion is to be organised by the host school, and should occur at the beginning of the program.
Where programs last for 1-3 weeks schools will be required to provide one excursion per week.

A staff member and some local students should accompany the visiting group on excursions.

Students should be advised of the appropriate clothing or other requirements prior to the excursion.

**4.11.4.11 Certificates and farewell function**

Most groups request the host school to arrange a farewell party for the visiting group. Farewell parties may involve overseas students, staff, and the host brother/sister and/or school buddy. If the costs cannot be covered due to additional requests by the tour operator, this should be negotiated between the school and the tour operator, e.g. requests for out of school hours activities, all host family members to attend and / or venue hire.

Each student receives a certificate of achievement, usually at the farewell function arranged by the host school. All certificates are supplied by the Department and will be forwarded to the school at the beginning of the visit for signing by the principal.

**4.11.4.12 Medical Insurance**

It is the responsibility of the tour operator to ensure that all overseas students and accompanying adults are covered by adequate medical and travel insurance, and they comply with the terms of such insurance cover.

**4.11.4.12.1 Medical Release Form**

A medical release form for each overseas student and accompanying adult must be provided to the school contact person at least one week prior to arrival by the tour operator.

**4.11.4.13 Guardians**

Overseas students who are under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an accompanying adult who must accept full care and responsibility as the overseas student’s legal guardian during the study tour.

It is expected they will:
- be reasonably proficient in the English language;
- be available to assist students, host families and the School Contact Person at all times;
- attend school each day and take part in the school program, including school activities and / or excursions;
- liaise between host family/visiting overseas student/school contact person pertaining to any issues relating to the operation of the study tour or visiting overseas students; and
- attend medical or emergency rooms if a visiting overseas student is ill or injured, and arrange for payment of any medical bills as a result of medical treatment of any visiting overseas student.
4.11.4.14 Complaint procedure

The school must devise and institute a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaints by the tour operator, student or host family in connection with the school visit.

If a tour operator, overseas student, host family provider, parent or guardian has any complaint about the school visit, the complaint must be made in writing and sent to the principal of the school.

The principal will endeavour to resolve the complaint. However, if the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the tour operator, overseas student, host family provider, parent or guardian, a copy of the written complaint together with the reasons for the dissatisfaction must be forwarded to the manager of the ICSTU.

The written complaint will be reviewed and appropriate action taken.

4.11.4.14.1 Removal of a student

The Department may, at the request of the host school or at its own discretion, arrange for a student to be removed from the school where the student is not complying with their visa requirements or the school’s code of conduct.

4.11.4.15 School accountability and improvement

As part of its School Self-Evaluation, the host school must include a section on the school visit program operating at the school together with any necessary recommendations for improvement.

The Department’s Portfolio Governance and Improvement Division, may conduct an external audit of the school visit program run by the school to determine whether or not the school is complying with its obligations under the memorandum of understanding for overseas student school visits.

The ICSTU distributes an evaluation questionnaire to visiting teachers and students and host schools at the end of each study tour visit. An evaluation report is prepared and any recommendations for improvement are implemented in planning for the following year.

All schools hosting fee-paying student study tours will be expected to complete the relevant School Compliance Checklist item (SL0012).

For further information about International Education Division education programs, please contact:

International Education Division

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