

Orientation Information for International Students

Alia College

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General Orientation Information

Summary of Information for International Students

Alia College is conveniently located in the Melbourne inner-eastern suburb of Hawthorn East, approximately 7km from the city centre. Public transport is very accessible, with trains and trams within a 10-minute walking distance and buses which stop outside the school. Alia College is located within Zone 1 of the public transport system. There are parks and ovals within a 5-minute walk of the school.

Alia is housed in a rambling two-storey mansion built in 1893. The “Kawarau” mansion boasts 16 classrooms, which accommodate the needs of the school. Alia College has a spacious Art Room, a Science Lab, Music Room, and regular classrooms and general purpose areas. Drama and school meetings are held in the school’s impressive ballroom. Alia College is surrounded by lush gardens with a park opposite and nearby sports facilities, which are enjoyed regularly by the students and teachers.

Alia College’s approach provides for small class sizes. Small numbers allow for many opportunities for individual attention. Staff are readily accessible by students.

Students have free access at all times to the school’s device program, which distributes computers to students, all of which have the internet available. Most library referencing is done through the internet and some is done from our modest library. Students also visit local libraries such as Hawthorn Library, Kew Library, and the State Library of Victoria.

Years 7-10 of secondary school are preparatory years for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) which is studied in Years 11-12. Each student develops his/her own VCE program, selecting subjects for study based on both his/her strengths and the requirements for future career prospects. The staff at Alia College assists with these subject selections.

On completion of VCE, each student obtains an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) score which is a performance ranking of 0 - 99.95 that is recognised Australia-wide for entry into tertiary courses. It is also recognised internationally in a variety of institutions.

For international students, year level entry at Alia College is partly determined by the student’s English ability, previous school reports and an assessment conducted by the school or by an approved agent. To be accepted into Alia College, an enrolling student is expected to have completed studies to an equivalent secondary standard, in addition to this, depending on the student’s English ability, an intensive English language course in Melbourne may be required.

Student Orientation

Upon arrival at the school, the student will be introduced to his or her homeroom teacher and the principal. The homeroom teacher will demonstrate the homeroom system and how the normal school day operates and will give the new student a copy of the timetable.

They will also introduce the student to another student member of the homeroom who will act as guide and buddy for the new student over his or her first days and who will give the student a tour of the campus and show him or her where all facilities are. The homeroom teacher will introduce the student to his or her personal welfare supervisor as soon as practical. On the first day the homeroom teacher will chat with the student to address any questions he or she may have.

Welfare Information

Homestay and Guardianship Procedures

According to Standard 5 of the National Code, if an overseas student is under the age of 18, the student's welfare must be maintained for the duration of their stay in Australia as a student visa condition. To maintain welfare, overseas students can either:

- stay in Australia with a 'nominated guardian' approved by the Department of Immigration of Border Protection (DIBP), who can be the overseas student's parent, person who has legal custody, or an eligible relative who is aged over 21 and is of good character; or
- stay in accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements that have been approved by the overseas student's registered provider. In this case, Alia College will issue a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter, retaining responsibility for approving and assuring welfare arrangements until the student:
 - is outside Australia; or
 - turns 18; or
 - transfers to another provider's CAAW; or
 - enters the care of a nominated guardian approved by DIBP.

In the event that Alia College issues a CAAW, it should be noted that Alia College is not taking over legal responsibility for the student; the parent or guardian is at all times legally responsible for the student. Students not living with a nominated guardian approved by DIBP may elect to stay in a homestay. This can be arranged by the student, their guardian, or through Alia College. All homestay agreements should be between the student's legal guardian in their country of origin and the homestay provider.

Where a student is staying in a homestay, Alia College may elect to conduct a site inspection of the homestay environment to ensure the accommodation is appropriate to the student's age and needs. Alia College may also conduct formal and informal interviews with the student and homestay provider to ensure this. Where they occur, these processes will take place:

- prior to the accommodation being approved; and
- at least every six months thereafter. Any accommodation arrangements made must also be made in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Alia College's policies relating to those standards.

Welfare and Support Procedures

The school maintains a very informal atmosphere and procedures tend also to be informal, relying on the quality of relationships made possible by our small size and relaxed, community style approach to education. Homerooms meet at the start and end of each day. This is an important part of school life and forms the basis of the general welfare program. All students can turn to their homeroom teacher for support or assistance with their academic program and with school life in general. The homeroom teacher will provide general study skills advice when requested by the student and will provide counselling if approached by other teachers and asked to do so or when he or she deems it necessary. Victorian Certificate of Education, or VCE (Years 11 and 12), students will be provided with advice on tertiary study options by the VCE homeroom teacher. This will include information about university open days, Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC) applications and advice on searching education provider websites.

Each international student will have access to another member of staff, his or her personal welfare supervisor or student contact officer. This person will act as first point of contact for the student over any matters arising from cultural, language or other issues related to being in a foreign country. If the parent or student requests assistance in finding accommodation this person will provide the names and contact details of relevant agencies, or alternatively the school will begin its process of obtaining accommodation.

The student contact officer is to specifically discuss with the student:

- the student support services available at the school in the form of the homeroom teacher, welfare co-ordinator and the student contact officer themselves.
- community legal services available
- community emergency and health services
- school and community facilities and resources
- schools complaints and appeals process in terms of homeroom meetings
- the effect that poor progress and/or attendance can potentially have on the status of the student visa and the schools obligation to report this.

International Students may also seek support and Welfare services external to those of Alia College. Such services may include those of:

- Boroondara Youth Services,
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn, Ph: 9835 7824

- Headspace,
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn, Ph: 9006 6500

Alternatively, the student can speak to their personal welfare supervisor if they wish to discuss other services.

Grievances

The resolution of student grievances relating to any perceived problems or person will be that first an attempt is made to resolve the matter with the person or persons most immediately involved.

If the grievance is not resolved it would then be referred to the student's personal welfare supervisor.

If the grievance remains unresolved the homeroom teacher will address the matter.

If the grievance still remains unresolved it will be referred to the Principal. If the grievance is still unresolved the school will engage an external mediator.

Complaints and Appeals Process

If a matter cannot be resolved informally through the system of homeroom and whole school meetings the following formal complaint and appeal process can be followed:

- 1) The student informs the school in writing of the complaint or the appeal, detailing the basis of the complaint and all relevant information associated with the complaint. Within 10 working days of the school receiving this written complaint or appeal the school will begin the following process:
 - a. A preliminary review of the written complaint will be conducted by the principal, the relevant student contact officer and/or the homeroom teacher to determine whether further information is required. If further information is required this will be requested in writing by the school.
 - b. Once the further information is received in writing (if applicable) the principal, the relevant student contact officer, the homeroom teacher and/or other relevant staff members will hold a discussion regarding the complaint or appeal.

- c. A meeting will then be organised with the student who initiated the complaint or appeal, other relevant parties to the complaint or appeal will also be invited. If the student would like to be accompanied and assisted by a support person they are most welcome to. At this meeting the complaint or appeal and possible solutions will be discussed.
 - d. Following this meeting with the student and relevant parties involved, the staff will separately have a meeting to discuss the previous meeting and to collaboratively decide and confirm the solution to the complaint or appeal. The student will initially be notified verbally of the outcome and then later informed in writing. Where appropriate reasons will be given for the outcome.
- 2) If the complaint or appeal is still unresolved through this process, the school will engage an external mediator or refer the complaint or appeal to an existing external body that is appropriate for the complaint or appeal.

If the student is not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling and appeals process, the student has the right to access an external appeals process at minimal or no cost.

If the student chooses to access the school's complaints and appeals processes, the school will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, the school will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome.

International Student Critical Incident Plan

Introduction

This guide outlines procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident involving an international student and is in accordance with the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* as amended [*ESOS Act*] and the National Code 2018.

Definition

A critical incident, for the purpose of this protocol, is a tragic or traumatic event or situation within or outside Australia, or the threat of such, which affects, or has the potential to affect students, their family members and other persons including staff and

friends, in a traumatic way, which includes causing extreme stress, fear or injury. Critical incidents can include the following:

- death, serious injury or serious threat of these
- death of another student
- missing student
- attempted suicide
- serious injury or health problem which prevents the student continuing with or completing the course
- mental health episode requiring admission to hospital
- natural disaster
- arrest or detention of the student
- assault, including domestic violence or robbery
- sexual assault
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- drug or alcohol abuse
- other serious events

The Plan for dealing with critical incidents is made up of two phases, the first being immediate action to be taken, and the second consisting of any necessary secondary action.

An international student, for the purpose of this protocol, is a person, whether within or outside Australia, who holds a student visa as defined by the *ESOS Act*.

Immediate Action – First Phase

With respect to critical incidents involving international students, the staff member receiving the notification will immediately notify the principal who will:

1. determine whether to appoint a case manager, most likely the student's personal welfare supervisor, who will proceed with the following steps, or the principal may proceed with the following steps himself
2. assess the risk to the student, to others and to themselves and take action to make the student safe from further harm
3. request assistance from emergency services, where there is risk to life, life of others or property
4. arrange medical treatment as soon as possible, if necessary, and provide immediate appropriate personal support, and other assistance reasonably required
5. identify the full name of the international student involved in the critical incident
6. make notes of key facts of the incident at the first available opportunity
7. advise appropriate persons from the list below:

- International Student's Homeroom Teacher

- International Student's Personal Welfare Supervisor
- PRISIMS Administrator

This phase is completed when the student is safe from further harm, in receipt of necessary immediate support and services, and in a stable care environment.

Secondary Action – Second Phase

The Case Manager will ensure appropriate liaison with those relevant staff members and will be responsible for the implementation of the follow up to the immediate and ongoing response strategies. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the principal to act as the case manager.

The Case Manager will:

1. establish a clear understanding of the known facts before any contact occurs with next of kin/family, including confirming the student's identity and determining whether a third party may be involved
2. plan ongoing strategies in consultation with the principal

Depending on the incident the case manager's response will include:

1. coordinating, monitoring and recording the ongoing management of the critical incident response strategies
2. liaising with relevant Alia College staff where appropriate
3. managing the cooperation of the various instrumentalities involved, such as police, hospital and other emergency services
4. contacting family/next of kin when appropriate
5. contacting third parties, where necessary, via responsible PRISIMS administrator
6. liaising with embassies and consulates to ensure contact with, and support for, the family in the student's home country
7. in consultation with the Principal and staff providing guidance to staff about what information to give to students and other staff
8. arranging to inform relevant staff and students
9. identifying students and staff members most closely involved and, therefore, most at risk
10. arranging counsellor contact with the student involved in critical incident, where appropriate

11. arranging group/individual debriefing session with counsellor for students and staff affected by critical incident, where appropriate
12. following up with external agencies, such as police, hospital, emergency services, if involved
13. engaging relevant support services, on and off campus, where appropriate
14. providing accurate and up-to-date information to relevant persons
15. documenting the incident and the action taken on the critical incident, including recording outcomes of the incident or evidence of sending to external agencies, all of which will be kept in the student's file

In Australia all emergency services can be reached by dialing 000, or using the international emergency number, 112.

Course Information

Course Structure

The school may allow the student to undertake no more than 25 per cent of the student's total course by distance and/or online learning. However, the school will not enrol the student exclusively in distance or online learning units in any compulsory study period.

If the student is undertaking distance or online learning courses, the student will have a teacher assigned to them that will generally assist with this course and monitor the attendance and progress as though it was a regular on campus subject.

If there are course variations to the student enrolment, these variations will be recorded in writing and kept in the student's file. In the situation of course variations at a VCE level the student is to complete a *VCE Enrolment Changes and Amendments Form* and this will be kept in the student's VASS file.

The teacher of each course determines the course and the relevant assessment and outlines this expectation to the students. Students receive assessment during and at the end of every term, with more extensive assessments at the end of semesters. Students can expect appropriate assessment in the form of assignments, tests, writing projects and performances.

Course Duration

Alia College will only extend the duration of the student's study where it is clear that the student will not complete the course within the expected duration, as specified on the student's CoE, as the result of:

- compassionate or compelling circumstances (e.g. illness where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes or where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit)
- the school implementing its intervention strategy for students who were at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress, or
- an approved deferment or suspension of study has been granted under Standard 9 of the National Code 2018.

Except in the circumstances specified above, the expected duration of study specified in the student's CoE must not exceed the CRICOS registered course duration.

Course Progress

Students and families can expect a written report at the conclusion of every term based on the assessments conducted by each course teacher. These reports outline the student's progress and will indicate satisfactory completion of the course. Semester assessment may include a standard grade as well as narrative. The school also makes available to parents parent-teacher interview sessions. These interviews are held one night the school week in each Term 2, 3 and 4. In addition to these two formal avenues of communication, written reports and interview sessions, the teachers are generally available for consultation and referral with students and families.

Course Attendance

International students are required to attend at least 80 per cent of the scheduled course contact hours to achieve satisfactory attendance. In consideration of certain circumstances this attendance requirement may be waived.

If a student is absent for more than five consecutive days without having indicated to the school the reason for their absence at the homeroom teacher's discretion they will initiate enquiries as to the situation of the student.

Monitoring Attendance and Progress

The student's attendance and progress are monitored by the relevant subject teachers and homeroom teacher. These teachers will generally monitor the student to ensure that they are in a position to satisfactorily complete the course, in terms of attendance and progress, and do so within the expected duration as specified on the student's CoE. If a teacher detects that the student is not in a position to complete the course satisfactorily or within the expected duration or that their attendance is unsatisfactory, intervention will take place.

Intervention

Intervention will be activated when the concern for the student's progress and/or attendance is brought up in a staff meeting. Following this initial concern other teachers will be asked to closely monitor the student. At a subsequent staff meeting, once a number of teachers have monitored the student and shared their observations, a collective review of the student's situation will take place. If the student's progress

and/or attendance still remains unsatisfactory teachers will be encouraged to individually discuss their concerns with the student. At another subsequent staff meeting a review of this one-on-one approach will take place and if progress and/or attendance still remains unsatisfactory a meeting may be arranged with the student, their family or representative and the staff. At this open meeting the student's progress and/or attendance and appropriate strategies to correct their progress and/or attendance will be discussed.

This process of intervention may be repeated a number of times in order to assist the student in achieving satisfactory progress and/or attendance.

If intervention does not result in improved progress and/or attendance and the school has continued to assess the student as not achieving satisfactory course progress and/or attendance, the school will notify the student in writing of its intention to report the student for not achieving satisfactory course progress and/or attendance. The written notice will inform the student that he or she is able to access the schools complaints and appeals process and that the student has 20 working days in which to do so.

Where the student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the school, the school will notify the Secretary of *DEEWR* through PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course progress and/or attendance as soon as practicable.

Deferring, Suspending and Cancelling

Alia College will only defer or temporarily suspend the enrolment of the student on the grounds of:

- compassionate or compelling circumstances (e.g. illness where a medical certificate states that the student is unable to attend classes), or
- misbehaviour by the student.

The student deferring, suspending and cancelling assessment procedure runs as follows:

- 1) A student wishing to defer, suspend and/or cancel their enrolment must put their request in writing to the school, specifying their reasons for requesting this.
- 2)
 - a. The deferring, suspending and/or cancelling request will then be considered by the Principal, the student contact officer and other relevant staff at the school.

- b. If appropriate, the staff may also discuss with the student and/or their family the request.
- 3) Following consideration amongst the staff and the possible discussion with the student and/or family, the staff members will collaboratively determine whether in the given circumstances the deferring, suspending and/or cancelling is appropriate.
- 4) Once the decision regarding the deferring, suspending and/or cancelling has been made the student will initially be notified verbally of the outcome and then later informed in writing. Where appropriate, reasons will be given for the outcome.
- 5) The student will also be informed that deferring, suspending or cancelling his or her enrolment may affect his or her student visa.
- 6) If the outcome is that the student's enrolment is deferred, temporarily suspended or cancelled, Alia College will notify the Secretary of *DEEWR* via PRISMS as required under section 19 of the ESOS Act.
- 7) Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the transfer request assessment procedure they have the right to appeal the school's decision in accordance with the complaints and appeals process.

Alia College will inform the student of its intention to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment where the suspension or cancellation is not initiated by the student and notify the student that he or she has 20 working days to access the registered provider's internal complaints and appeals process. If the student accesses the school's internal complaints and appeals process, the suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment under this standard can not take effect until the internal process is completed, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply.

Student Transfer

Generally if a transfer is reasonably requested the school will not wish to deny the transfer as this would be equivalent to holding someone against their will. Generally the school has found that this would be detrimental to the education of the student. Alia College is most beneficial for a student when they have the desire and wish to be a part of the school community.

Alia College will grant a letter of release only where the student has:

- provided a letter from another registered provider confirming that a valid enrolment offer has been made, and
- where the student is under 18, the school has written confirmation that the student's parent or legal guardian supports the transfer, and where the student is not being cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated relative, the valid enrolment offer also confirms that the registered provider will accept that responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements as per Standard 5 (Younger students).

A letter of release, if granted, will be issued at no cost to the student and must advise the student of the need to contact DIBP to seek advice on whether a new student visa is required.

Alia College will maintain records of all requests from students for a letter of release and the assessment of, and decision regarding, the request on the student's file.

Alia College will not knowingly enrol a student wishing to transfer from another registered provider's course prior to the student completing six months of his or her principal course of study except where:

- the original registered provider has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered
- the original registered provider has provided a written letter of release
- the original registered provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian Government or state or territory government that prevents the student from continuing his or her principal course, or
- any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for that change.

Student transfer request assessment procedure;

1. A student wishing to transfer must put their request in writing to the school, specifying their reasons for requesting the transfer.
2. The transfer request will then be considered by the Principal, the student contact officer and other relevant staff at the school.

3. If appropriate the staff may also discuss with the student and/or their family the requested transfer.
4. Following consideration amongst themselves and the possible discussion with the student and/or family, the staff members will collaboratively determine whether in the given circumstances the transfer is appropriate.
5. Once the decision regarding the transfer has been made the student will initially be notified verbally of the outcome and then later informed in writing. Where appropriate reasons will be given for the outcome.
6. This process will take approximately three weeks from the time the student transfer request is received in writing.
7. Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the transfer request assessment procedure they have the right to appeal the school's decision in accordance with the complaints and appeals process.

When the school believes that the transfer will be of benefit to the student and/or the school, the school will approve the transfer.

When the school believes that the transfer will be of no benefit and perhaps detrimental to the student and/or school, the school will not approve the transfer.

Glossary

CoE - Confirmation of Enrolment

CRICOS - Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

DEEWR - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

DIBP – Department of Immigration and Border Protection

ESOS - Education Services for Overseas Students

FFPOS - Full Fee Paying Overseas Students

PRISMS - Provider Registration and International Students Management System

VCE - Victorian Certificate of Education

VTAC - Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre

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