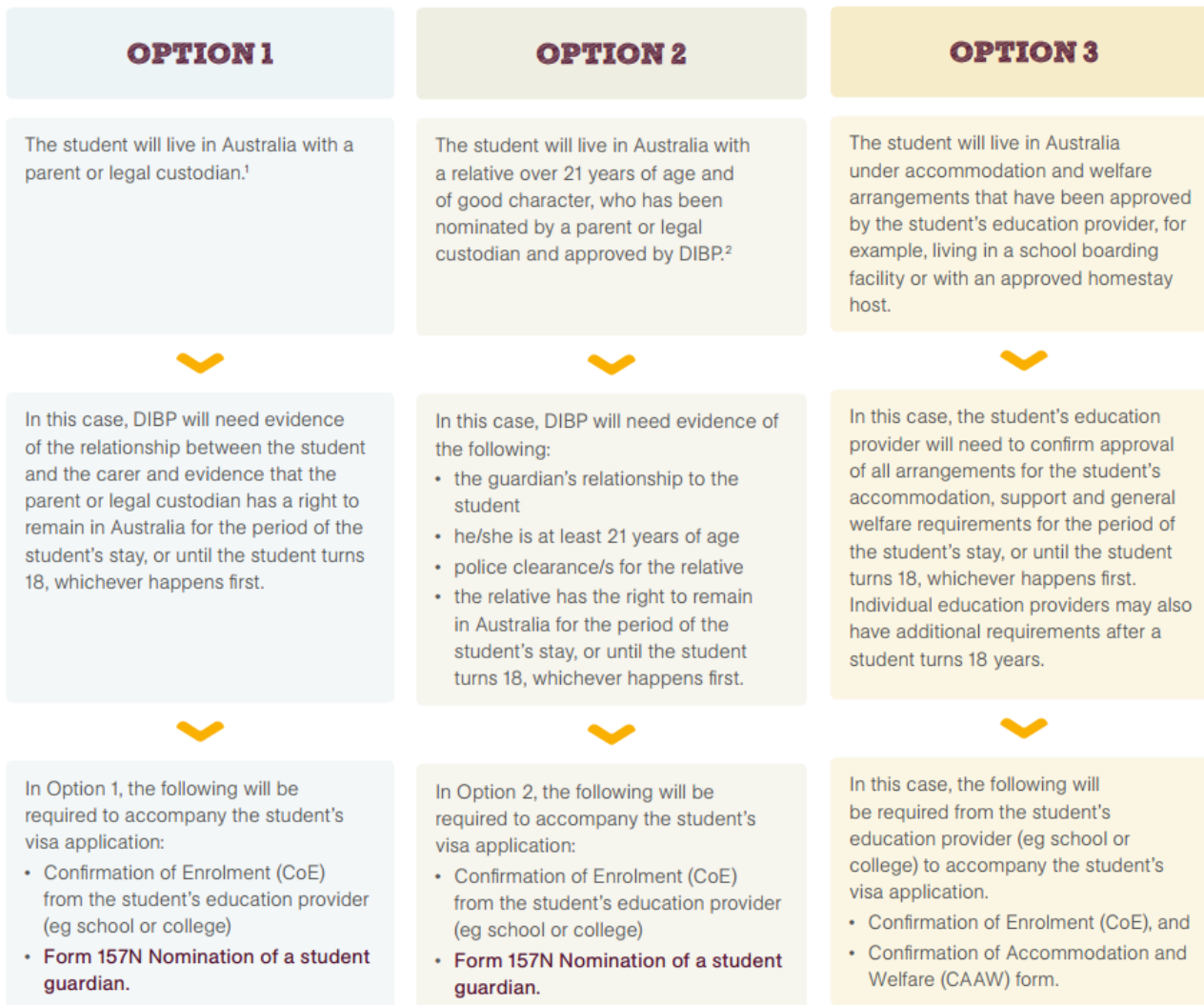




GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

For the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) to approve a student visa application from a student under 18 years of age, the Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection (DIBP) needs to be satisfied that the student will be well looked after while in Australia. One of the visa requirements is that acceptable arrangements must be in place for the student’s accommodation, support and general welfare for the duration of his/her student visa, or until he/she turns 18 (whichever happens first), and that these welfare arrangements must be approved by the DIBP.

There are three options for acceptable welfare arrangements, or ways that the student can be looked after:



If a student is not going to live with a parent, a legal custodian of the student or an approved relative, the education provider (MLC) must approve the student’s accommodation and welfare arrangements. The education provider confirms this by issuing a welfare letter or Confirmation of Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) form for the student.

PURPOSE

Where MLC accepts a student enrolment that requires a homestay arrangement, the College is responsible for provision of accommodation, support and general welfare to the student. These arrangements are required to be in place for the period that the individual is enrolled as a student at MLC. This policy has been developed to meet the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) framework, the 2018 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students and Student Visa Condition 8532 which require that appropriate arrangements have been made for the accommodation, welfare and support of students less than 18 years of age.

Note: These guidelines may also be used as a framework for any 'local' student requiring homestay arrangements.

COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND HOMESTAY

The Student Homestay Consultant (SHC) is responsible for coordinating the homestay process for all international students on a CAAW. This is to ensure that the information held by the College is accurately reflected in the online 'Provider Registration and International Student Management System' (PRISMS) portal.

The International Student Coordinator (ISC) works closely with the Student Homestay Consultant (SHC) and is the Principal's delegate in relation to **guardianship** of international homestay students on a CAAW. The ISC oversees the wellbeing of these students, including attendance and academic progress, and liaises closely with the relevant Head of School.

Note: Any local student homestay arrangement is managed by the relevant Head of School.

MLC HOMESTAY FRAMEWORK

1) Student Welfare

- The minimum age for students in MLC Homestay is 15 years of age. Applicants considering Homestay are confirmed to be over the VRQA minimum age of 13 through completion of both the initial Application Form and the Pre-Enrolment Student Statement (PESS Form). Students younger than 15 years of age who wish to be considered for Homestay are required to be accommodated in the MLC boarding house until the age of 15 years. Students are required to successfully demonstrate their readiness for Homestay both in the Boarding House environment and at MLC Marshmead (Year 9 residential program). A student aged between 13 and 15 may, under exceptional circumstances, be considered for Homestay at the discretion of the Principal.
- The maximum number of MLC international students on a CAAW who are in homestay arrangements is 30.
- The College will organise homestay accommodation of high quality and which provides a safe, comfortable and caring environment.
- The homestay accommodation will be provided by a host which may be a suitable family, couple or single person.
- Working with Children Checks and a Child Safe Induction will be completed and reviewed by the College for all adults (over 18) residing or frequently residing in the homestay prior to the student moving in.
- The preferred number of students per homestay is two at all times. At the discretion of the Admissions Manager, this may increase to a maximum of three students per homestay.
- The International Student Coordinator (ISC) is responsible for approving MLC day excursions for homestay students via the myMLCfamily.net Excursions & Tours Portal.
- Parents are required to give consent for any MLC Tour/Exchange applications made by homestay students. This can be through direct approval using the myMLCfamily.net Excursions & Tours portal or in writing (email) or verbal discussion with the International Student Coordinator (ISC).
- The College will arrange for verification checks on all homestay accommodation for students on a CAAW before placement, and every six months thereafter.

2) Fees and Services

- A weekly fee for Homestay, approved by MLC, will be charged. This covers expenses associated with the provision of the following homestay services:
 - Single bedroom for the student's exclusive use;
 - Three meals per day, seven days per week (cooked evening meal);
 - Facilities including a bed, wardrobe, towels and linen;
 - Gas, electricity, heating and water costs;
 - Cleaning services of common living areas;
 - Use of living areas within residence; and,
 - Study facilities, including a desk, study light and bookcase.
- Telephone and internet expenses will be the student's responsibility unless otherwise agreed on the Homestay Responsibility Agreement.
- The initial payment will include two weeks' fees in advance plus a bond that is the equivalent of two weeks' fees.
- During holidays a holding fee to secure the homestay accommodation fee may be required to cover the student's absence. This is to be negotiated between the homestay, student and MLC. When the room is being held it cannot be rented out to another individual.
- Students and/or parents are required to reimburse homestay providers for any damage to property caused by student, or costs incurred by student during the time of residence.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved by either the homestay provider or the student should be referred in writing to the MLC.

3) Homestay Arrangements

- If a homestay provider wishes to terminate the homestay agreement, at least two weeks' notice is given to the student and MLC. Any advance payments should be refunded to the student.
- Where a student moves out of a homestay, at least two weeks' notice must be given to the homestay provider and MLC. Giving less than this may result in the bond being forfeited.
- Students, homestay providers and the MLC Student Homestay Consultant will be required to sign a Homestay Responsibility Agreement on commencement of the student's enrolment. This will outline the house rules and requirements as well as homestay costs and methods of payment.
- Students and homestay providers may not change the homestay arrangements without consultation with MLC and through the Homestay Responsibility Agreement.

4) MLC staff and homestay

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) provides Codes of Conduct and Ethics for the teaching profession. These Codes state that teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised; and that they exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with learners. To ensure that appropriate standards are maintained within the teaching profession, MLC's registered teachers cannot provide homestay accommodation to a student enrolled at MLC.

In circumstances where a professional relationship does not exist between the registered teacher and an international student (for example, where a student attends a different school), registered teachers still have an obligation to comply with the Codes in respect of their personal conduct.

A copy of the full VIT Codes of Conduct and Ethics can be accessed at:

<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/conduct-and-ethics>

5) MLC Staff and emergency situations

Schools should have a contingency plan to deal with emergencies that may arise in homestay accommodation arrangements. In exceptional situations, where MLC needs to urgently relocate a student, the Principal or Vice Principal may approve a temporary placement with a school employee who is not a registered teacher. This should only be agreed to on an interim basis until appropriate ongoing homestay accommodation is arranged, and where any financial relationship between the student and the school employee is avoided. An MLC teacher's obligations under the Codes and the law are ongoing, and therefore it is not appropriate for an MLC teacher to provide homestay accommodation in emergency situations for MLC Homestay students.

6) Over 18 Students

It is a condition of enrolment at Methodist Ladies' College that all international students on a CAAW must reside in approved homestay or boarding accommodation (including students who are over 18). No MLC student is permitted to live alone.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The College's approach to providing an environment that best supports International Students on a CAAW includes:

- **MLC Homestay Profile Evaluation**

Ensuring that homestay students reside in quality accommodation with supportive homestay hosts is paramount. The [MLC Homestay Profile Evaluation](#) is used to document individual homestay housing information and determine whether the homestay arrangement will provide suitable, supportive accommodation for a homestay student.

- **MLC Homestay Responsibilities and Guidelines for Homestay Hosts**

It is important that families wishing to register as MLC Homestay hosts understand their responsibilities and how MLC will provide support to both the homestay host and the homestay student. The [MLC Homestay Responsibilities and Guidelines for Homestay Hosts](#) clearly details the responsibilities and guidelines to assist Homestay hosts. It clearly outlines the expectations of Homestay hosts and provides clarity regarding who to contact at MLC.

- **MLC Homestay Guidelines for International Students**

It is important that students wishing to stay with a Homestay host family understand both what to expect in a Homestay environment as well as their individual responsibility toward ensuring a positive homestay experience. The [MLC Homestay Guidelines for International Students](#) clearly details the responsibilities and guidelines to assist students, including who and when to contact at MLC.

- **MLC Homestay Responsibility Agreement**

A successful Homestay arrangement requires all parties to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and those of the other party members. The [MLC Homestay Responsibility Agreement](#) outlines the expectations of the homestay student and homestay host parent. The agreement is signed by the student, homestay parent, student parent and a College representative.

Additional process documents to support MLC homestay students include:

- Boarding students on a CAAW wishing to move from Boarding to Homestay;
- Communication guidelines regarding Homestay students who are ill or injured.

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Title:	MLC Homestay Policy
Author(s):	Vice Principal
Approver:	Vice Principal
Owner (responsible for review):	Manager Admissions
Other staff involved in review:	International Student Coordinator; Student Homestay Consultant; Heads of School; Admissions staff
Created:	May 2018
Review Timeline:	Biennial
Master Document Location:	Principal's Administration

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Description
V1	May 2018	To meet the requirements of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) 2018 National Code associated with International Students, and VRQA requirements
V2	May 2019	Minor updates to include document links

AUDIENCE

PUBLICATION LOCATION

Staff with responsibilities for Homestay students	MLC Staff Hub
International students involved in Homestay	MLS Student Hub
Families of students in Homestay	myMLCfamily