



## Overseas Student Accommodation Policy

### 1. Introduction

Ruyton seeks to ensure that the accommodation, support and welfare arrangements provided to overseas students comply with Education Services for Overseas Students (ECOS) Act and National Code Standard 5.

### 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all overseas students.

### 3. Key elements of the policy

#### 3.1. Accommodation Options

To maintain the accommodation, welfare and support, overseas students can either:

- Stay in Australia with a 'nominated guardian' approved by the Department of Home Affairs, this can be the overseas student's parent, person who has legal custody, or an eligible relative who is over the age of 21 and is of good character (see <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>)
- Stay in accommodation, support and general welfare homestay arrangements that have been approved by Ruyton where a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter has been completed at the time of completing the Overseas Student Enrolment Agreement.

Students in lower secondary and primary years, who are younger than 13 years, will not be accepted on homestay arrangements and must have a nominated guardian as approved by the Department of Home Affairs.

All overseas students, regardless of age, must have accommodation arrangements approved by the School. Students are not permitted to live alone or only with other students.

Upon confirming enrolment and creating the CAAW letter, the School does not take over legal responsibility for overseas students. The parent or person who has custody of the overseas student is at all times legally responsible for the student.

#### 3.2. Welfare Arrangements approved the Department of Home Affairs

A parent, legal custodian, or an eligible relative can be nominated to take responsibility for an overseas student's accommodation, welfare and support in Australia. The parent, legal custodian or eligible relative must have an appropriate visa or have applied for a Student Guardian visa (subclass 590). In this circumstance Ruyton will not issue a CAAW letter. If Ruyton becomes aware that the overseas student is not being well looked after, the School will contact the Department of Home Affairs and other appropriate local agencies.

#### 3.3. Homestay Arrangements

Ruyton will seek to ensure that all homestay arrangements are safe and adequately meet the needs of students.

### 3.3.1. Assessing Homestay Arrangements

Ruyton can approve a person who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident (including a family friend, or a family member that does not meet the criteria of eligible relative) to care for the student in a homestay arrangement provided that the person is at least 21 years old, of good character and has an appropriate visa to remain in Australia until the overseas student's visa expires. The School cannot approve a student's parent, legal custodian or eligible relative as a student's homestay host.

In assessing suitable homestay hosts, the best practice guidelines developed by [Australian Government Schools International](#) will be used. Ruyton does not rely on the services of third parties to assess accommodation arrangements. The School is ultimately responsible for the welfare of overseas students in all homestay arrangements.

All homestay arrangements will be assessed for appropriateness prior to the accommodation being approved and at least every six months thereafter. A site visit will be conducted to verify the overseas student's accommodation prior to the homestay host being approved. Subsequent verifications will include one or more of:

- a physical site visit;
- a student interview;
- a student survey;
- any other method of confirming that the accommodation still meets the overseas student's needs.

Designated homestay hosts must meet the School's policies in relation to Child Safety and Working with Children Checks.

All overseas students and homestay hosts will be required to sign a Homestay Agreement which outlines the responsibilities of both parties to the homestay arrangement.

### 3.3.2. Monitoring Homestay Arrangements

Ruyton will take all practical steps available to ensure welfare is maintained at all times. These steps include:

- ensuring any adults involved in or providing student accommodation and welfare have a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC);
- regularly verifying that homestay arrangements are appropriate to the student's age and physical needs;
- ensuring homestay hosts are provided with appropriate information on their responsibilities and emergency contact details for the School and the students' parents/legal guardians.
- notifying the police and any other relevant agencies as soon as practicable if unable to contact an overseas student and there are concerns about the students welfare;
- report through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) if the School is no longer able to take responsibility for the overseas student's welfare;
- make all efforts to contact a student's parent or legal custodian immediately if the School can no longer approve the overseas students welfare.

Ruyton will also monitor all homestay arrangements to ensure continued compliance with the School's *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and *Child Safety Code of Conduct*.

### 3.2.3 Changes to Homestay Arrangements

Any changes to homestay arrangements require the approval of the School. Parents/legal guardians or students must contact the Overseas Student Coordinator if they wish to discuss changes to homestay arrangements. Ruyton's *Overseas Student - Student Welfare Policy* covers the management of critical incidents that may cause disruptions to welfare arrangements.

If an overseas student transfers to Ruyton from another registered provider, Ruyton must ensure that there is no gap in welfare arrangements. In accepting the transferred student, Ruyton must liaise with the other provider

to ensure that the overseas student has appropriate welfare in place at all times and issue a CAAW letter covering the transition from one accommodation arrangement to another.

If the School suspends or cancels a student's enrolment, the School will continue to check the suitability of care arrangements until one of the following occurs:

- the overseas student has alternative welfare arrangements approved by another registered provider;
- the overseas student has a nominated guardian approved by the Department of Home Affairs;
- the overseas student leaves Australia;
- the School has notified the Department of Home Affairs through PRISMS that it is no longer able to approve the student's welfare arrangements;
- the School has not been able to contact the overseas student and has taken action under Standard 5.5 of the National Code;
- the student turns 18.

#### **4. Termination of Welfare Arrangements**

The School's responsibility for welfare arrangements can only be ended in two circumstances.

The first is where alternative welfare arrangements have been put in place. The second situation where the School can terminate the CAAW is when it is no longer possible to take responsibility for the overseas student due to events such as:

- the overseas student refusing their accommodation or leaving their accommodation without notice, even after the School has exhausted all possible avenues of assisting the overseas student to maintain appropriate arrangements;
- the accommodation host becomes unable to maintain arrangements;
- the overseas student's enrolment is suspended or cancelled;
- the overseas student goes missing from their accommodation and cannot be found or contacted, even after the School has made reasonable attempts to contact them.

If any of the above situations occur, Ruyton will report the overseas student within 24 hours using the 'Non-Approval of Appropriate Accommodation/Welfare Arrangements' letter through PRISMS. This report is a last resort situation and may lead to the cancellation of the overseas students visa by the Department of Home Affairs for breaching visa condition 8532.

#### **5. Overseas Student turns 18**

A CAAW issued by Ruyton will cease when an overseas student turns 18. In this situation, the overseas student must continue to reside in Ruyton approved homestay accommodation until their enrolment at School ceases.

#### **6. References**

- The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (Commonwealth)
- National Code of Practice 2018
- VRQA Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students Aged Under 18 Years.

## 7. Related Policies/Documents

- Overseas Student – Student Welfare Policy
- Overseas Student – Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policies
- Ruyton Child Protection and Safety Policy & Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Ruyton Overseas Student Homestay Handbook

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