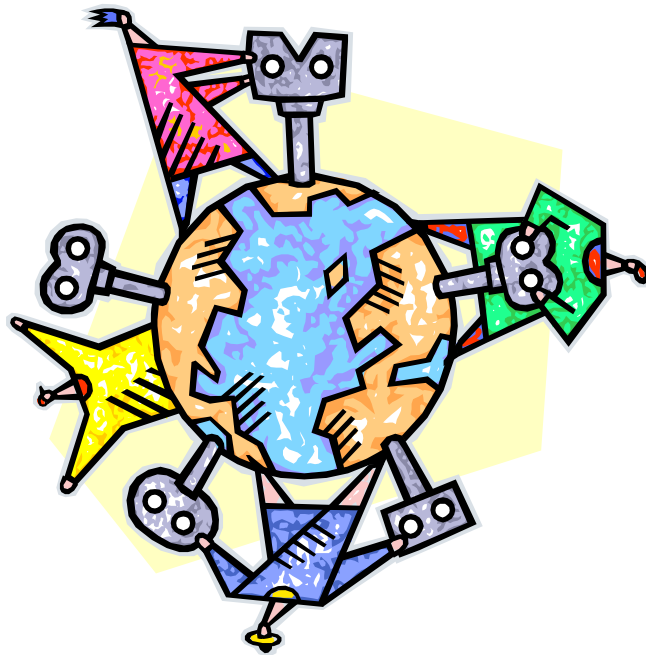




ISCA

International Student Care Australia

***International Homestay Student
Orientation Booklet***



Introduction

International Student Care Australia (ISCA) would like to extend to you a warm welcome to Australia and wish you every happiness and success with your study program. If you have any concerns or problems AT ANY TIME with your homestay or school, please do not hesitate to contact our staff. We are available to help you!

Mission Statement

It is the goal of ISCA to create safe environments for Homestay Students and an environment in which they can successfully pursue their academic careers and personal development.

Statement of Commitment

ISCA believes all Homestay Students have the right to feel safe from harm, be listened to, be involved in decisions that affect them, have their cultural values respected, and have their best interests considered.

Code of Conduct

All our international students must comply with ISCA's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct will form part of your Homestay Application. If you wish to have a copy of this document, you can ring or email the office to request a copy to be sent to you.

Risk Management (Child Protection) Plan

To ensure compliance with Queensland State Government legislation, ISCA has developed a Risk Management (Child Protection) Plan that applies to all international students, homestay host families and staff. To read this document, you can go to our website at www.isca.net.au or ring the office or email and request a hard copy to be forwarded to you.

Contact details

ISCA Office

24 Reginald Ave, Arana Hills Qld 4054
Telephone: 3851 0704
Facsimile: 3851 4047
E-mail: isca@isca.net.au

Postal Address

P.O. Box 134, Arana Hills Qld 4054

Director

John Coade
Email: isca@isca.net.au

Homestay Manager

Robyn Phillips
Email: robyn@isca.net.au

Emergency Contact

3851 0704 (9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday)
Outside business hours:
John: 0427 269 360
Robyn: 0438 424 988

Food

Australian food will probably be different to what you are used to, but try everything that your host family provides. Tell your host family of your food preferences – they also need to know how much food you like and any dietary preferences.

Manners

Australia is a polite society. You should always follow a request with “please” and say “thank you” when someone does something for you. It is also polite to say “good morning” to everybody when you wake up in the morning and “good night” when you go to bed. If you do not understand a question, please say “I beg your pardon” or “I am sorry; I do not understand”.



Remember the rules of your visa! If you break the conditions of your visa, you may be deported to your home country immediately

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

This is compulsory and organised by your Australian school through an approved Health Fund. The school will pay the premium direct to the Health Fund and pass the membership card on to you. If you need to visit a medical practitioner or doctor, you should pay the account at the time of the visit and then claim a refund from the Health Fund using the membership card supplied to you by your school.

Student Identification Card (ID) and Passport

Your Australian school will organise an ID card for you shortly after your arrival. Look after this card as it is required to obtain student concessions on public transport, at cinemas, theme parks and also on domestic airlines in Australia.

Keep your Passport in a safe place at home. Don't take it with you when you are out as a form of identification. Use your Student ID Card as your form of identification.

Your Australian Host Family



Australian families come in many shapes and sizes. Your host family could consist of a mother, father and children. Some families may have step-parents or step-children, while other families may have older children living away from home who are studying at university or working. Some families are single parent families while others may even be extended families that have grandparents living with them.

While there is no typical Australian family, ISCA does provide quality homes in which you will be assured of a wonderful experience. You can be sure that your host family cannot wait to meet you and to show you what life is like in Australia.

Australia is a huge country – many times larger than any European country, but has a population of only 24 million. Most families live in the city or country towns and only a few families live in the remote outback, where you will find our distinctive farming, cattle

stations and extraordinary landscapes that have symbolic meaning and spiritual significance to the traditional Indigenous people of Australia.

Australia is a modern multi-cultural society. Some members of your host family may have come to live in Australia from another country e.g. Italy, New Zealand, Philippines, Greece or India. Some families will be very busy and organised with both parents working outside the home, while in other families only one parent may be working.

Members of Australian families like spending time with each other. They may go on outings to the beach or bush walking. They may play sport, or watch other family members playing sport or they may participate in social activities. Weekends and evenings are generally spent together, working around the house, playing sport, watching television or participating in social outings.

Household Rules

Homestay families are likely to treat their international student as they would treat their own child. This includes abiding by the house rules, which visitors should abide by and respect. If you are meeting friends somewhere, make sure that your homestay family knows exactly where you are going and what time you will be back. If this time changes, then telephone/text your homestay family and advise them of the change of plans. It is respectful, courteous and good manners to do so. If you change your plans and don't require a meal, you should phone/text your host family and talk about it as early as possible.

Helping Around the House

It is not usual for Australian families to have home help. All members of the family are expected to help with housework. Every morning make your bed neatly, hang up your clothes and put out your laundry/dirty clothes for washing. Each week, clean and tidy your room, take out your rubbish to the bin. Take your turn in setting the table at night for the evening meal, washing and drying dishes and feeding the family pets. Offer to help with cooking meals at night and preparing your own school lunch and breakfast, if this is the normal routine for other family members. Speak with your homestay family to confirm their household routine.



Personal Hygiene

Every culture has different standards of "cleanliness." For example, bathing once a week may be considered socially acceptable in one country, but in Australia it would be considered unhealthy because of the temperate climate. People normally shower daily. Showering, in addition to shampooing hair and washing clothes frequently, allows people to remain free from body odour. While you are in Australia, you should shower every day and use hygiene products, such as personal deodorant. Ask your host family how long you may spend in the shower - four minutes is usual.

Australia is a very dry country and water is scarce and it is expected that people will not spend a lot of time in the shower. Until recently Australia has been in severe drought. Although we have had recent rain, Australians are expected by the government to still conserve water, such as by taking short showers and turning off the tap while cleaning teeth.

Washing Your Clothes

Discuss with your homestay mother the days of the week she usually does the family washing/laundry. It is recommended that you purchase three sets of school uniforms, as a minimum. If you prefer to do your own washing, please discuss this and your host family will show you how, when and where to do so. It is advisable for a student to do their own ironing.

What to Do If You Are Sick



If you become unwell, let your host family know immediately. The host parents will make an appointment with a doctor, if required, who may prescribe medication. If you have to visit a doctor, you will be expected to pay for the consultation at the time of appointment and claim back later from your medical insurance by completing a Claim Form issued by the Health Fund. You will need to show them your Health Fund card (OSHC). Every day you are unwell, your host parent should telephone your school in the morning if you are unwell and cannot go to school. You cannot phone the school yourself to let them know you are absent.

If you are continually unwell, it is important that you ask your homestay hosts to take you to the doctor. You should ask your doctor for a Certificate to take to your school when you return.

If you need any emergency procedure, your homestay host should take you to the Hospital and then contact ISCA who will contact your agent and/or your parents.

Saving Electricity

Australians are very energy conscious and considerate of the environment. They do not leave lights on when they are not in the room. Ideas to help save electricity are:

- ❖ Turning off the light in your room when you leave the room.
- ❖ Turning off any heater, fan or air-conditioning that is in your room when you leave the room. Your homestay family will explain the use of these electrical items to you.
- ❖ Turning off the television or stereo if you are the last one to leave the room.

Security

Some homes have a security system and your host family will teach you how to operate the system. If you are the last person to leave the home in the morning, remember to close windows and lock all doors.

Using the Internet

If you are accessing internet on the host family's wireless system (Wi-Fi), you need to follow some rules and protocols for the usage of Internet. Please obey house rules regarding Internet use. Students will negotiate the use of telephone, computer and

internet facilities with the homestay family and abide by the homestay family decision in relation to this usage. Students should not download large files (5MB or more, including movies, games and music) at the homestay family's internet expense. You should predominately be using the family's internet for school related work and keeping in contact with your natural parents.

It is illegal for students to access material that is deemed "objectionable" or "unsuitable for minors" and/or for downloading content, that is illegal to possess.

Your Mobile Phone

- ❖ Please give your mobile phone number to your homestay family, International Coordinator in your school and to ISCA so they are able to contact you in an emergency.
- ❖ Please ensure your phone does not run out of credit, or out of battery when you are out.
- ❖ Please keep your phone turned on when you are out in the evening or during weekends.



If you don't understand something, please ask!

Contact Details

Students must advise ISCA and the Homestay family immediately if current personal contact details change. This includes a new mobile phone number or change of email address.

Students must obtain permission from ISCA and the school before changing accommodation.

Interaction with the Family

It is important for you to become part of your host family and a great way of doing this is by being involved in their daily activities and sitting down for meals together. Helping with family chores, e.g. setting the table; clearing the table; washing or drying the dishes are all great ways to become involved with the family life and chat with the family members. Other ways of building relationships within the family are being involved in social activities, for example shopping, visiting relatives or trips away. You will be expected to pay for activities such as excursions, Theme Parks, movies and other forms of entertainment.

Remember to say "thank you" when your host family does something for you, for example, picks you up or drops you off or serves a delicious meal. A host mum always likes to be shown appreciation. Generally, ISCA advises that the international student should become part of the Australian family. In this way, you will have a happy time and return to your homeland after a most enjoyable cultural experience.

Please respect your host family's privacy. If a door is closed, knock before entering. If you are friendly and respectful to your host family, you can be assured of the same treatment in return. You will have the opportunity to form long-lasting friendships.

Curfew Times

During the school week, you should travel home directly from school (perhaps a quick trip to the shops, if necessary) but basically, students should not be at a shopping centre for

any length of time wearing their school uniform. From Sunday to Thursday nights, you should always be home by 6pm.

On weekends (Friday and Saturday nights), you must be home by 10pm (not leaving the city or activity at 10pm). If a social activity is planned (e.g. a party with school friends) 10pm is the curfew time, and you should make arrangements with your host family to ensure you are safe when returning home e.g. collected by host parent or catching public transport. Prior to the activity, you must give the contact details of the family you are visiting to the host family. The host family should make contact with the person arranging the activity to ensure there will be suitable and adequate supervision, and obtain name/address and contact phone numbers.

Overnight and Weekend Stays

Students can stay overnight with a friend during weekends only if prior permission from both Homestay families and school has been given. Students are required to submit the Travel Request form to gain prior school approval (minimum of 5 days' advance notice). The host family must be involved in the arrangements regarding transport, pick up etc.

Travel

Requests to travel must be made using the Travel Request form available from the school and travel will only be permitted if it has been approved by the school and ISCA.

Travel during term days and school hours is prohibited except for activities organised by the school.

Students are permitted to travel within Australia during weekend or school holidays only with:

- ❖ The host family or,
- ❖ Prior permission from your host family, school and ISCA approval and completion of the school's Travel Request form. (minimum of 7 days' advance notice).

Independent travel overseas (except to go directly home for holidays) is not permitted.

When returning home for school holidays, students must allow sufficient time when booking flights to and from Australia so as not to arrive late for the first day of term or depart earlier than the completion of each school term. All flight itineraries must be submitted and approved in advance by the school prior to booking. All flights must arrive and depart Australia during daylight hours, if at all possible. Students must advise homestay hosts of their flight departure and return dates and provide a copy of the airline ticket/e-ticket.

Car Transport

Students enrolled in an ISCA program must not ride in cars driven by any Provisional License holders (i.e. P plates) including children of the host family.

Students enrolled in an ISCA program may only drive a vehicle in Australia if they have obtained an Australian driving licence. Driving lessons to obtain an Australian driving licence must be undertaken with a professional driving school and instructor. Fees will apply for these lessons.



How to Enjoy the Aussie Culture

Most people who travel to another country experience some impact from the change of culture. Do not be concerned with this feeling, as it is normal. ISCA staff people are always available to assist your transition into our Australian way of life. Also, the Australian homestay family will be fully understanding of these feelings. We are all working together to make your Australian cultural experience unforgettable.

Make sure you rest and if you need to have short sleeps do so, as learning a new language can be very tiring - but great fun! Try to spend time with your homestay family and new friends at school to minimise your homesick feelings.

Australians have a great sense of humour. We love to laugh at ourselves and at the world in general. If you understand these qualities and even join in, this will help you enjoy your time in Australia, even during difficult situations.

Visit by your Natural Parents

Please advise ISCA staff when you know that your natural parents are planning to visit you. There are several people who would like to meet your parents – your host family, ISCA staff, International Student Coordinator and your school Principal. If your parents wish to take you out of school while they are here, it is important that the school and ISCA are advised so that permission can be received for you to be absent from your study program. It is an Australian Government requirement that your visa conditions are not altered without notification, via ISCA, to the correct authorities.

School Life in Australia

Your Australian school will probably be very different from school in your home country.

Australian teachers use analytical skills and students need to learn to motivate themselves for the school tasks and study program they have to undertake. The teaching philosophy is also different from overseas; interaction with the teachers is encouraged and students learn to use many resources within their learning environment.



As an international student, the school staff may introduce you and welcome you during an assembly of the whole school. This will help students and staff to recognise you, remember your name, and greet you. The school staff will often allocate you a “buddy” (friend) in the first week to make introductions and help familiarise you with the school surrounds and rules. It is important to ask questions during this time.

Most importantly, you are in Australia to improve your English as a second language, although you will want to it is not helpful to be talking to another student in your first language. The more you interact with local Australian students it will improve your spoken English.

Australian Law

Students will obey Australian laws and regulations at all times.

Students are not permitted to be served or consume alcohol in licensed premises or public places.

It is illegal to possess and/or use non-prescribed drugs in Australia.

Students will not engage in inappropriate sexually explicit behaviour at any time.

Students must seek permission from their host school to work in accordance with the *Queensland Child Employment Regulation 2006*.



