



**St Martins** Lutheran College  
Grow in Christ | Growing the Future



# HOMESTAY HANDBOOK

## Homestay

Homestay is a term used to provide boarding accommodation offered by a family, couple or single person for a set weekly fee.

Homestay families may be needed from time to time to host students who wish to attend St Martins but who live too far from Mt Gambier to travel to school each day. Becoming a homestay family provides a wonderful opportunity to share your interests with a young person and possibly receive life-long friendships in return. In turn, living in Homestay accommodation in the community can help a student to become independent and learn valuable life skills. It also offers a stable environment for study, in striving for academic success and opportunities for future pathways.

There are three homestay scenarios:

*Domestic:* Students who live within Australia and wish to attend St Martins but live too far for daily commuting. These students may be seeking accommodation 5 (part-time) or 7 (full-time) days a week and most likely spend holiday periods at home

*International:* Students who are not Australian residents who wish to study at St Martins and would be seeking accommodation 7 (full-time) days a week and most holiday periods.

*Respite:* short term accommodation as a break for students and homestay families most likely in the international homestay situation. Respite also broadens the experiences for International students.

St Martins welcomes families, couples or single adults to register for any type of homestay.

Some students have very different expectations about living in Homestay accommodation. It is important for students to remember that in all new living situations, it can take time to feel comfortable or 'normal'. Students may experience some home-sickness and concerns about adjustments. Generally after one to two weeks, life settles into a routine. Some Homestay providers and students make life-long friendships.

### **Homestay Handbook Aim**

The aim of this handbook is to provide people who are interested in offering themselves for homestay with an outline of what is involved. It is also designed to give Homestay providers and the homestay student and their family with a clear guideline to expectations and the many opportunities that can be shared and enjoyed. St Martins is a culturally inclusive school and welcomes international and domestic students and is pleased to provide current families with a very rewarding experience by opening their home to another student.

## Requirements of Homestay Parents/Families

Complete a Homestay Provider Application and make time for an in house Homestay assessment by the Homestay Coordinator.

Homestay families who are successful in hosting a student are people who show a duty of care. They:

- Have a friendly personality.
- Are flexible.
- Are good communicators.
- Portray positive social and moral values.
- Have some experience in dealing with young people.
- Can provide a happy, positive and stable environment.
- Maintain clear and fair expectations around manners and socialisation.
- Have an acceptable Police Criminal Record Check. All members of the household over the age of 18 must also be checked.

When you volunteer to host a homestay student you are encouraged to:

- Welcome the student as a member of the family.
- Provide a clean and safe home environment including a bed and adequate bedding, towels, a place to study, three meals a day, including school lunches and reasonable access to food.
- Attend relevant school events and welcome opportunities for socialisation.
- Support interest and involvement in non-school based activities e.g. sport
- Understand school policies and expect your student to adhere to the policies e.g. attendance, uniform, behaviour and internet access.
- Have a positive and supportive attitude to academic achievement
- In the case of International students; have an interest and understanding of international students and the cultural differences and be happy and willing to provide some Australian experiences and share Australian culture in a positive and respectful manner.
- In the case of domestic students; take an interest in their family and hometown and life experiences and be happy and willing to share the local area.
- Support the students' engagement in casual part-time work if and when applicable.
- Administer care in times of illness, concern, distress or difficulty.
- Talk with the student about likes and dislikes including foods and activities.
- Invite the student to be a part of home duties including cooking and cleaning up.
- Consider the belongings of the Homestay student in established insurance cover.

## Requirements of the Homestay student

In living with another family, a student would be expected to:

- Attend school as required.
- Communicate openly.
- Students are expected to keep their own room tidy and to tidy the bathroom or kitchen/dining area after use but are not expected to clean and vacuum these areas, however they are welcome to assist.
- Engage in incidental household chores as part of building great relationships and a respect for the home environment.
- Be respectful of using shared areas such as the bathroom. Keep showers/water use to a minimum (5 minutes is good)
- Ask to use the home phone and negotiate payment for long distance calls or purchase a phone card.
- Negotiate arrangements to use the home computer if needed.

## Respite Accommodation

Respite is a short term break in accommodation arrangements. Respite gives the homestay student a chance to experience other family situations, holiday experiences and the opportunity to mix with others. It also gives the Homestay family a break from the constant presence of an extra person in the house. Respite is arranged through the Homestay Coordinator and does attract a daily payment of \$25 which will be forwarded on from the College. Respite may also occur in an emergency situation where the Homestay family is called away and unable to care for the student for a short period of time. Respite accommodation does not necessarily require a personal room and will also attract a daily payment. In the Respite situation, family members over the age of 18 must have a National Police Check. (see Legal Issues)

## Household Security and Personal Safety

You will be given a key by your Homestay provider and you will need to be extremely careful not to lose it. You must **NEVER** give it to anyone else.

For the safety of all occupants in the Homestay, it is also important that you know what all the safety requirements of the household are. You must remember to lock all doors and windows when you go out and make sure you know how to operate any alarms that may be in the house.

Students must consider their safety at all times, and the safety of others around them. If students are out and coming home late; for any reason they need to keep in contact with their Homestay parents to avoid unnecessary worry and concern. If the student is home alone for short periods then it is sensible and safe to keep the doors locked.

Ensure that both students and Homestay parents have phone contact details recorded or entered into a mobile phone.

Homestay Families are asked to have an Emergency Evacuation Plan and to ensure that the student is aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency.

For personal health and safety smoking by the student is not permitted.

Under Australian law it is an offence to purchase alcohol if under the age of 18. Within the family home and in some cultural situations the sharing of an alcoholic beverage, in a monitored manner may occur. Homestay Families and students need to develop an understanding about the responsible consumption of alcohol in these incidental moments.

### **Insurance of Student's Personal Effects/Medical Insurance**

Not all Homestay providers have insurance to cover a student's belongings in the home. The students' parents may wish to take out their own insurance to cover expensive equipment and belongings. Students also need to be aware that without insurance, if they lose or damage anything, they will need to pay for replacement themselves.

It is expected that students pay their own medical expenses. Homestay parents are not required to pay these expenses and will not be reimbursed by the College for doing so. International students are required to purchase Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) as a condition of their visa. Students need to keep their OSHC card on them at all times. Students can claim a refund on line at: [www.oshcworldcare.com.au](http://www.oshcworldcare.com.au) and they will receive back approximately 80% of the fee paid.

Homestay students will need to take out Ambulance cover for the duration of their stay in Australia.

### **Setting Boundaries**

A clear approach to house rules and cooperative living is essential. Meal times are clearly established, curfew times, after school visitors and social outings are mutually agreed upon. The homestay family will set clear expectations about the use of lights, heaters, electric blankets, length of showers and use of the telephone. Within the early days of the homestay the Homestay Coordinator is asked to mediate the development of an agreement outlining these clear guidelines particular to the homestay family and student. This is then a guideline for behaviour and conduct.

### **Transportation**

The student's family must communicate what they would expect and who they allow to transport their child. If a student wishes to travel with another student then permission needs to be sought from the parents and approved by the homestay parents. The mode of transport needs to be safe and acceptable and it is hoped that all transportation needs are met through planned and negotiated arrangements. In some situations students may use and pay for public transport or a taxi.

## **Computer, Internet Access and Electronic Devices**

Students may also need internet access for their studies, but it is not essential for Homestay families to have internet access. If your Homestay does have broad band, students will need to negotiate access and payment for the use of data. (\$15 - \$20 per month is suggested to cover additional down loads. This can be factored into the weekly Homestay payment) It is also possible that the student's family provide mobile Wi-Fi internet access for their child. The use of the internet by a homestay student must be monitored to ensure that it is only used for acceptable activities. The College can provide an Internet Users Policy for Homestay families.

It is also important to establish times that television or other equipment, such as electronic games and stereo systems are used. The same should be done in regard to volume and the acceptable content of games, programs or music.

## **Legal Issues**

St Martins Lutheran College requires all homestay families to undertake a National Police Check for all family members over 18 years at their expense with the application form available on line at [www.police.sa.gov.au](http://www.police.sa.gov.au). Police Certificates simply need to be sighted by the Homestay Coordinator. Homestay family members and students are expected to act in accordance with Australian law at all times. A breach of the law needs to be communicated to the Principal immediately.

## **School Attendance**

If the Homestay student is absent from school, the Homestay parents are asked to ring the school in the morning before 9.00am to inform them of the absence. If the absence is for more than 2 days the student must also go to the doctor to get a Medical Certificate. It is important for students to remember that it is part of their visa requirements that they must maintain a rate of 90% attendance at school at all times.

Students are expected to follow school protocols around homework and uniform.

## **Communication**

There needs to be easy and open channels of communication with the homestay students' parents. School reports, health forms, camp information and other significant documentation must be sent via email or fax to the parents and where necessary signed and returned to the school again via email or fax.

Day to day matters and weekly diary signing and notes about uniform/homework and excursions may be signed by homestay families if the parents of students agree. This is done by signing consent for incidental matters.

Concerns about academic achievement can be addressed with the Homestay parents with the parents of the student also being informed in the best possible way. More serious concerns from both the student and the Homestay families can be addressed by following the steps set out in the Grievance Policy included in this handbook.

It is advised that the Homestay Coordinator makes contact with the Homestay Parents and student once a term to check how things are going and address any concerns or questions before they may develop into a problem.

The Principal is invited to make contact with the students' parents periodically to check on satisfaction of the Homestay and academic development.

### **Medical Needs**

The homestay family must be provided with any important medical information about the student and give a clear indication in writing of approval for administration of incidental medications such as paracetamol or cold and flu medication. This is the responsibility of the student's parents. Asthma and anaphylaxis plans must also be provided to the homestay family by the parents of the student. Homestay parents must notify the family of any serious medical needs or doctor visits. In the event of an emergency, homestay families have authority to call an ambulance. They are then advised to take the following steps:

1. Contact the students' parents to inform them of what has occurred
2. Contact the Principal or Head of School to inform them of what has occurred
3. Maintain channels of communication for instigating correct action
4. Keep accurate records of occurrence and action.

If a student is feeling unwell at school they are to report to the Office for further help and advice. If the student is unwell at the Homestay and feel they need to see a doctor, they need to talk to the Homestay parents for advice and to help make an appointment.

### **Holidays**

School holidays are a great time to rest and relax, see places or enjoy lots of activities that do not fit into the busyness of the school term. Students are able to remain in Homestay during school holidays but there may be some other things to consider such as:

- Travelling with the Homestay family if they are going away
  - ◇ Students may need to cover the cost of accommodation/travel costs if it is an additional financial burden
  - ◇ Students may need to cover the cost of activities if it is an additional financial burden
- Travelling with friends/staying with friends
  - ◇ Students may need to cover the cost of accommodation/travel costs
  - ◇ Students may need to cover the cost of activities
- Homestay students may head home

Students are not permitted to stay at home by themselves if the Homestay family is away from home. In these situations arrangements need to be made for ongoing duty of care for the student. This may mean staying with a friend, homestay relative or have someone come and stay in the Homestay home. The Homestay Coordinator may also be able to make arrangements through respite accommodation providers registered with the College.

\*International students please see additional conditions for travel in the section; Additional Information for International Students.

\*If any student goes away from the Homestay for greater than 5 days please see conditions around Homestay payments in the section; Respite Payments

## **A Typical Week for a St Martins family**

Whether domestic or international, family life varies from one home to the next. A typical family life may include:

- Both parents working either full time or part time although many parents have flexible time that allows at least one of them to work within school hours of 8:30- 3:15. Couples and single adults would also have similar work commitments.
- The week day would start approximately 7:00 with getting up and getting dressed, having breakfast and then heading to school or work either via car, bus or walk.
- Parents and adults often finish work between 3:15 and 5:30 hopefully allowing for the evening meal between 5:30 and 7:00pm.
- After school activities for students typically happen between 4:00 and 7:00 pm on some nights of the week and may include sport training, dance lessons, swimming, shopping and catching up with friends.
- Time for homework may vary but can be any time between 4 and 9:30 depending on the age of the child and other commitments.
- While younger children in the house may go to bed between 7:00 and 9:00pm older students may not go to bed due to homework and downtime till 10:00 to 10:30 pm.
- Parents who work fulltime may also use the after work time to do grocery shopping, general shopping and house chores.
- Weekends may involve going to sport, socialising, doing household chores such as cleaning and laundering clothes. It is also a time when families spend time together doing various things, travelling, attending church and relaxing together.

## **Getting Along in the Homestay**

A happy homestay experience requires an effort from all parties. The following “C’s” provide a good basis for a positive and successful homestay.

C for Care – developing a caring and positive relationship is essential. This requires all parties to take an interest in the others and spend quality time together whenever possible. Speaking nicely, using appropriate language, sharing thoughts and feelings all build a sense of care.

C for Communication – having open and informative conversations and keeping each other up to date with requests, plans and arrangements makes daily life smoother and happier.

C for Consideration – being considerate of each other can often help to avoid many potential upsets. Being considerate and sharing spaces within the house, equipment in the house as well as chores and tasks promotes strong and happy relationships. Consideration also calls for respect, and while a mutual respect is ideal there are times when the adults need to make the tough calls which may not always suit everyone, this is where respect and trust is very important along with care and communication.

If things are not working in the homestay environment and either party needs advice then the Homestay Coordinator is a point of contact as well as the grievance policies included in this handbook.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the various personnel involved in homestay at St Martins:**

Agency Representative (International students only):

- promotes St Martins to an international market
- coordinates student VISA, travel arrangements
- liaises with the College regarding new students and term of enrolment
- ensures understanding of requirements and financial commitments.

Homestay Coordinator:

- Employed by St Martins to process Homestay family applications and ensure appropriateness of the family home and general home life. Generate a report and recommendation.
- Complete a *Room Condition Report* and an *Agreement of Understanding* the commencement of the Homestay for referencing of any damage or deterioration and establishing ground rules and setting boundaries.
- Be a point of contact for the student or homestay family in event of a concern or grievance.
- Make termly contact with the student, homestay family and student's family via the best possible means to ensure smooth running of the program.
- Be involved in coordination of respite when necessary.

Homestay Parent/s and/or Family:

- Provide a safe, healthy and secure home environment where their own children (where applicable) feel happy with the addition of a homestay student.
- Give care and concern for the student with consideration to being away from home; embracing them as part of their family.
- Support the student when starting a new school.
- Support students doing homework and take interest in academic achievements and seek advice from school staff if needed to help with academics.
- Make relevant school staff aware of social or academic concerns.
- Use homestay payments to cover the cost of food and services

- Ensure that the student is comfortable with heating and cooling
- Discretely talk with female students about how they are to manage the disposal of feminine hygiene products
- Clarify with international students the appropriate use of the toilet in Australia
- Establish clear boundaries and open channels of communication
- Where possible support the student in accessing sporting, social and potential part time work or assist in making alternative arrangements.
- Contact the Homestay Coordinator if there are any concerns.

#### St Martins Administration and Staff:

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- Provide support as required around academics or language/cultural barriers
- Provide support for establishing friendships through peer support
- Provide effective feedback on academic efforts and achievement
- Ensure compliance with school policies and procedures around homework, uniform, behaviour code of conduct.
- Establish clear channels of communication with Homestay families and parents
- Ensure that all staff are aware of options for addressing academic concern
- The Principal is the official guardian of all students under the age of 18 and is the point of contact with the students' parents if and when needed.

#### Homestay Student:

- Work in a cooperative manner with Homestay parents/families
- Embrace opportunities
- Work to the best of their abilities at school and home
- Abide by school policies and expectations around uniform, code of conduct, behaviour
- International students are encouraged to attend homework club on Wednesday nights after school till 4:30 if possible at St Martins.
- Respect the privacy of the Homestay family by keeping confidential any information about their health, finances and personal matters.
- Contact the Homestay Coordinator if there are any concerns.

#### Homestay Students Parents:

- Inform the school and Homestay parents of any medical issues
- Keep regular contact with the student, homestay parents and school.
- Get to know the Homestay family as much as possible.
- Ensure payments are maintained in accordance with payment plan.
- Contact the Homestay Agent if there are any concerns.



## **Food**

It is important for students to stay healthy and eat properly – health guidelines suggest that a well-balanced diet should include at least one item from each of the following food groups every day:

- bread, rice, pasta or cereals
- milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter or margarine
- fresh fruit and vegetables
- meat, fish, eggs, lentils or nuts and beans

Please inform the school and the Homestay parents if you have any special food requirements.

## **Making Friends and being Social**

Moving into a new and unfamiliar home/school/environment can be both exciting and challenging. St Martins endeavours to source Homestay families that are open, friendly and proactive in welcoming a new comer to the family home. Students at the same time can do a number of things to make fitting into this new environment easier and happy:

- Be open and friendly, sharing family background and life experiences
- Talking to and listening to all family members and new school friends
- Being open to going to the movies, sport events, shopping, visiting friends at their home
- Talking with the Homestay parents about having friends over
- Getting involved in suitable activities and activities of interest such as sport, dancing, art, debating, computer games, outdoor lifestyle activities and sleepovers at a friend's house.

When getting involved in activities it is polite to:

- Talk with the Homestay parents about your interest and express your interest in being involved
- Check that it does not clash with other family activities
- Ask if transportation is possible
- Make a commitment to reasonable time frames
- Show appreciation of support and understanding if things don't work out.

## **Part time Work – Domestic Students**

Considerations for work:

- Talk the idea through with parents and homestay parents
- Look for suitable work that does not impact on school achievement
- Ask the homestay parents/school to assist in the job selection and that someone be present when preparing for an interview and negotiating terms and conditions.
- Ensure that you are aware of all the Work Health and Safety Conditions, Equal Opportunity conditions and personal safety. Know who to talk to if there is a problem or concern.
- Get a trusted adult to check pays
- Ensure the homestay parents are able to get you to and from work.
- Look for something that suits you and at which you can be successful.

It is expected that payments will be made via direct debit to St Martins on a monthly (4 weeks) or fortnightly (2 week) basis from the student/students family. St Martins will then forward the homestay payment via direct debit to the Homestay family within 2 working days. Direct Debit details can be discussed with the Finance Manager at St Martins.

To ensure finances are available at the onset of the homestay, payments will need to be made in advance along with the homestay bond.

Student families will have the choice of 2 options for scheduled payments

Option 1	Monthly (4 weeks)	\$960*	4 weeks in advance of the commencement date**
Option 2	Fortnightly (2 weeks)	\$480*	2 weeks in advance of the commencement date**
Bond	one off payment	\$960*	4 weeks in advance of the commencement date**

\*Fee Payment as at 14/10/2013

\*\*Advance payments will only be established once student VISA's have been finalised

### What is to be covered by the Homestay payment?

Homestay Coordinator Fee \$20 per week

- Administration time, phone calls, filing, respite management
- Home visits, inspections
- Termly catch up with the student and Homestay family

Homestay Payment to Homestay Parents \$220 per week

- Room rent and laundering
- Amenities – power and water
- 3 meals a day/7 Days a week
- Fuel for additional transportation
- Personal toiletries (regular family purchase of toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, feminine hygiene products)
- Family outings – food and travel

### What costs might the student need to pay out of their own spending money?

- Personal social outings
- Incidental costs of own choice
- Personal toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, feminine hygiene products if additional to regular family products)
- Involvement in sporting clubs and interest activities
- Family outings – incidentals and activities
- Holidays – travel, accommodation, activities

Students are strongly encouraged to have an Access Card or Debit Card for ease of incidental payments.

## **Respite Payments**

While respite is a valuable time it is also important to maintain the constant support of the Homestay family both personally and financially. In turn the generosity of respite needs to be rewarded.

- All respite needs to be coordinated through the Homestay Coordinator
- A fee of \$25 per day will be forwarded to the Respite Family from the College, this payment comes from the regular fees paid by the student.
- The Homestay Coordinator (preferably) or Homestay parent needs to inform the Business Manager of the pending payment, which may come after the respite has occurred.

A payment does not apply to incidental social sleepovers with friends.

## **Change of Homestay Placement**

If for whatever reason there needs to be a change in the homestay placement then whichever party needs to contact the Homestay Coordinator. The Homestay Coordinator, with the help of Admin personnel and Principal will assess the situation and implement the most appropriate course of action. This action may include:

- Clarification
- Mediation to resolve a conflict
- Arrange for respite accommodation
- Make arrangements for a change in Homestay accommodation

A change in Homestay placement will not happen lightly, there needs to be good reason but in saying that the safety and happiness of all parties needs to be taken into consideration.

## **Termination of a Homestay Placement**

Homestay students need to remember that they are living in someone else's home and disrespectful behaviour in the Homestay will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviour of any kind may result in removal from Homestay, or refusal of another Homestay placement, and may even jeopardise enrolment at St Martins Lutheran College.

## **Contact Persons**

You are encouraged to contact St Martins Lutheran College if you have any questions or difficulties in regard to homestay. The following people will be happy to assist you:

- Homestay Coordinator – Rhonda Earl
- Administration - Caroll Cailler
- Curriculum – Damian Bradley
- Finance and Payments – Trudi Hepburn
- Principal - Dianne Eckermann



St Martins is privileged to be able to open its doors to students, both domestic and international through the Homestay program. St Martins also loves to celebrate so we invite homestay families to send in wonderful things that are happening in the homestay, for us all to enjoy and share.

### **Additional Information for International Students and their Families Travelling to Australia**

Students will fly in to either Adelaide or Melbourne airport. Homestay Parents may arrange to meet students in either location or students will need to take another flight via Regional Express to fly to Mt Gambier. When they arrive in Mt Gambier they will be met by the Homestay Coordinator who will take them to their homestay or the Homestay family will meet them at the airport also.

The International Agency Coordinator will ensure all flight details are forwarded on and that the student is aware of pick up arrangements.

### **Settling In**

The first 48 hours are very important and will have a lasting impression. Here are some ideas that may reduce 'culture shock' and help you to feel comfortable as soon as possible:

- talk to your hosts, show an interest, spend time getting to know them
- use a phone card to phone home, as your family and friends will be anxiously waiting to hear from you
- bring a small gift for your host. It is a nice thing to do and can be a topic of conversation if it is something that is from your home country.

The Homestay Parents will support the student on entry into school on the first day. School staff will match up new students with existing students to help with settling in.

### **Translators**

While St Martins expects that International students will have reasonable spoken and written English we do have a teacher of Chinese and German, both fluent in the respective languages.

### **Living in Australia – Mt Gambier**

St Martins Lutheran College is located in Mt Gambier. Mt Gambier is the largest city in regional South Australia with a population of approximately 30,000 people within the city and surrounding areas. It is a 4.5 hour drive to both Adelaide, the capital of South Australia and Melbourne the capital of Victoria. Daily flights and passenger bus services operate between both Adelaide and Melbourne.

### *Climate and Landscape*

Mt Gambier has a moderate climate with an average summer temperature of 26 degrees Celsius while the average winter temperature is 14 degrees Celsius. Four distinct seasons break up the year with long hot summer days, colourful autumns and cool winters. The landscape is lush and dappled with farmland, horticulture and pine plantations. There are nearby coastal regions supporting recreational activities and amateur and professional fishing. A nearby river system provides a peaceful environment as well as numerous leisure activities.

### *Shopping*

Mt Gambier is well renowned for its excellent shopping facilities. The Main Street offers a wide range of speciality shops, restaurants and cafes. It is a great place to wander and enjoy the tranquillity of natural land features. Other large chain stores and speciality shops are situated nearby including Target and the Centro Plaza. The newly developed Market Place shopping precinct offers over 25 speciality stores and eating outlets.

### *Recreation and Leisure Activities*

Mt Gambier has a strong sporting culture in Australian Rules Football, soccer, hockey, netball, basketball and swimming. Residents also enjoy mountain bike, motorbike, road cycling and BMX riding. Two swim centres provide opportunity for both leisure and competitive swimming. Karate and taekwondo are also strong sports in the region.

With the nearby coast and river system there is also the opportunity for fishing, canoeing, surfing and motor boating.

## **Living in Australia – Cuisine**

Australia has the third largest fishing zone in the world. The clean waters around the country provide abundant seafood. Fishing and aquaculture, which supplements the main ocean species of salmon, lobster, prawns, tuna and many other species of seafood. The iconic image of Australian eating is that of a barbecue under sunny skies, so most homes have a barbecue. The type of food cooked on barbecues has changed with Australian tastes. Traditional choices such as chops or sausages are being replaced with marinated steaks and fresh seafood served with gourmet salads and wine.

### *Australian Mealtimes*

Breakfast tends to be light and is typically made up of cereal, toast, or fruit with tea, coffee or juice. In colder regions a cooked breakfast of porridge, or bacon and eggs is common. Vegemite, a brown spread made from yeast extract, is popular on toast.

Lunch is often fresh salad sandwiches or rolls, bakery delights or multicultural food such as sushi or noodles.

Dinner is the main meal of the day in Australia. Typical choices include roast meat with vegetables, pasta, pizza, a stir fry or barbecued meat. The meal is usually eaten at home.

### *Take Away Food*

Australians are one of the world's biggest consumers of fast-food. As in most western countries, take-away and fast food reflect a wide range of cultures. There are a large number of Chinese, Indian and other Asian restaurants in Australia's major cities offering take-away food. Australian fast food restaurants serve hamburgers, fried chicken, kebabs and fish & chips

## Living in Australia - Lifestyle

A big draw to the lifestyle is the climate and the opportunities for outdoor pursuits. The vast countryside and numerous beaches allow for a wide range of activities from water sports such as fishing, swimming, canoeing and surfing to exploring the outback while climbing or hiking. In the winter months snow skiing and snow activities are also very popular. Sport is important to most Australians, either playing or watching live or on television. Australians also love to eat out and enjoy a multicultural society through food and festivities. They enjoy produce and goods markets, touring, the theatre, movies and live music concerts.

## Part time work

Whilst living in Australia, International students may be interested in part time casual work. Casual work can be paid or voluntary and many young people get work in the hospitality or retail industry serving food or working in a department store. The College encourages International students not to look for work straight away if that is what they are interested in doing but more so wait until they have settled in, get to know the lifestyle, school commitments, homestay family and explore other interests. However if and when the time comes there are some things to consider:

- Your study visa already has Permission to Work automatically included with your visa.
- You cannot undertake work until you have commenced your course in Australia. When your course has commenced you can work a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight during the term and unlimited hours when your course is **not in session**.
- Work that is a formal registered part of your course is not included in the limit of 40 hours per fortnight.
- If you are doing voluntary, unpaid work, it is not included in the limit of 40 hours per fortnight if it:
  - ◇ is of benefit to the community
  - ◇ is for a non-profit organization
  - ◇ would not otherwise be undertaken in return for wages by an Australian resident (that is, it is a designated volunteer position), and
  - ◇ is genuinely voluntary (that is, no remuneration, either in cash or kind is received—board and lodging acceptable).
- Talk the idea through with parents and homestay parents
- Look for suitable work that does not impact on school achievement
- Ask the homestay parents/school to assist in the job selection and that someone be present when preparing for an interview and negotiating terms and conditions.
- Ensure that you are aware of all the Work Health and Safety Conditions, Equal Opportunity conditions and personal safety. Know who to talk to if there is a problem or concern.
- Get a trusted adult to check pays
- Ensure the homestay parents are able to get you to and from work.
- Look for something that suits you and at which you can be successful.

## **Students' Travel Arrangements**

If a student would like to travel to another destination whilst living with the Homestay provider, and the opportunity arises they are encouraged to first talk with their Homestay parent and then they are required to do the following:

1. Obtain permission from the Principal and provide flight departure and arrival times, travel itineraries and all contact details at the destination.
2. Inform the Homestay Coordinator at St Martins
3. Confirm travel plans with your Homestay provider.

## **Motor Vehicles**

As part of the Overseas Student Agreement, which is signed before a student commences at St Martins Lutheran College, students are not permitted to own a motor vehicle, drive themselves, or drive with other students as passengers without permission. Students need to have the Homestay parent to sign consent to travel with student drivers as per the St Martins Student Drivers Policy.

## **In Conclusion**

St Martins prides itself in being a warm and friendly school community. We welcome new students and the skills, talents and diversity that they bring. We trust that we will learn from them just as they learn from us.

## **Additional Documents:**

### *The College*

Invitation for Homestay Flyer  
[Acceptable Use of Internet](#)

### *Homestay Providers*

Homestay Provider Application  
Homestay Initial Assessment  
Termly Homestay Review  
[Room Condition Assessment](#)

### *Domestic Students*

Student Enrolment at St Martins Lutheran College  
[Homestay Student Application](#)  
[Code of Conduct](#)  
Termly Homestay Review



*International Students*

Brochure to International Students

Overseas Student Enrolment Application

Agency Agreement

Students Visa

Overseas Student Health Care Card/**Ambulance Cover**

Termly Homestay Review

Appendix A: Grievance Policy – Homestay Students

Appendix B: Grievance Policy – Homestay Parents

## Policy Statement

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – HOMESTAY STUDENT

June 2013

### Aim

The aim of the student grievance policy is to establish a means by which serious student grievances may be voiced and addressed.

### Rationale

It is the aim of the College that all homestay students have the opportunity to live and learn in a safe and caring environment where reconciliation and forgiveness are at the centre of resolving conflict. At times, students may have concerns about something within their homestay environment or school which is affecting their wellbeing or ability to learn. For international students there may also be some language and cultural barriers that cause concern. It is helpful to have an established procedure for voicing and addressing such concerns.

N.B. It is highly likely that a student will express their concern to the own parents and it may be that it is the parents who contact the school or homestay parents to make them aware of a concern

### Implementation

A student with a concern is encouraged to:

- a. Talk with their parents
- b. Talk with their homestay parents or a trusted adult/School Counsellor
- c. Establish the point of concern and in a positive and constructive environment, plan for resolution and movement forward
- d. Trusted adult /School Counsellor to keep regular contact with the student to ensure that the problem has been resolved or is moving forward
- e. Trusted adult/School Counsellor informs the Homestay Coordinator of the expressed concern and action taken
- f. Keep the student's parents informed at all times via the Principal or delegate with the language support as needed.

If the concern persists then a meeting with the Principal/Head of School, Homestay parents, student and Homestay coordinator is to be arranged at the earliest convenience with the aim of ensuring the safety and happiness of the student through a negotiated plan for moving forward.

- a. Ongoing monitoring, for as long as is needed to ensure the matter is resolved and all parties have moved forward.

If the matter is unresolvable then under the advisement of the Principal the following action may need to take place:

- Respite accommodation
- Alternative homestay location
- Student opts to return home

## **Confidentiality**

It is very important that grievances are kept confidential, and although at times students may wish to seek support from an advocate other than parents it is very important to do this wisely so that confidentiality is not compromised. Most often matters are resolved with a mutual understanding and consideration. Uncontrolled criticism of the school, teacher or another student can be unnecessarily destructive for all concerned.

## **Definitions**

**Grievance:** A grievance is a strong concern about a person or the way something is being, or has been done. This strong concern may cause distress and/or affect a student's ability to learn effectively in a safe environment.

**Homestay Parents/family** – the parents/family opening their home to a student studying at St Martins needing weekly accommodation or part thereof.

**Homestay Coordinator** – St Martins appointed person to liaise with families, students and school around homestay suitability and concerns.

**Agency Coordinator (International students)** – Person who coordinates with the parents of the student

**International** – students studying at St Martins on a student VISA

**Domestic** – Australian resident student needing accommodation closer to St Martins

## **References**

Student visa

## **Review Date and Specifications**

To be reviewed June 2015

## Policy Statement

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – HOMESTAY PARENTS

June 2013

### Aim

To provide an avenue for Homestay parents/carers to address any concerns that they may have regarding their homestay student (domestic/international), whilst attending St Martins Lutheran College and living in their home.

### Rationale

Issues or concerns that you, as Homestay parents, may have regarding a student in your care are most effectively dealt with if they are raised in the following ways:

### Implementation

All personal matters such as concerns about relationships, attitude and demeanour should be raised directly with the student in an open and supportive manner.

- a. Identify the fact.
- b. Explore why the facts present a problem
- c. Share feelings
- d. Jointly commit to some future action and goals
- e. Inform student's parents in the case of serious concern via the Principal or delegate with language support as needed.
- f. Homestay Coordinator is advised of the concern and action taken
- g. College Counsellor may be involved by request from Homestay parents, student or Homestay Coordinator

If the concern persists then a meeting with the Principal/Head of School, Homestay parents, student and Homestay coordinator is to be arranged at the earliest convenience with the aim of ensuring the safety and happiness of the student through a negotiated plan for moving forward.

If the matter is unresolvable then under the advisement of the Principal the following action may need to take place:

- Respite Accommodation
- Alternative homestay location

All academic concerns or concerns that effect learning should:

- a. first be raised with the student in a supportive and positive manner.
- b. Discuss the concern which may also require some interpretation and explanation for the students' benefit. This may be feedback on an assignment or end of term written report.
- c. Homestay parent may express concerns to the Principal or delegate to develop appropriate strategies of support and improvement; making contact with the students' parents if necessary.
- d. Subject teachers may contact the Principal or delegate to express academic concern and to develop appropriate strategies of support and improvement.
- e. In conjunction with the school, student and homestay parent, plan for future success.
- f. Inform student's parents in the case of serious concern via the Principal or delegate with language support as needed.
- g. Homestay Coordinator is advised of the concern and action taken

All matters are to be talked through with the students ensuring they understand the situation with consideration to language barriers and cultural differences. If the concern persists then a meeting with the Principal/Head of School, Homestay parents, student and Homestay Coordinator is to be arranged at the earliest convenience with the aim of ensuring the success and happiness of the student through a negotiated plan for moving forward.

When the matter is discussed in the student's hearing, it is important that the student understands that all parties have **confidence** that the issue will be resolved **confidentially** at the College level.

Whilst constructive criticism, appropriately shared and in line with this policy is welcomed, denigration or defamation of the College and staff does not support best practice of the child's care in the College as it undermines trust and confidence. St Martins can only deal with issues that are raised in the ways outlined above. If we do not receive information then we assume that all is well.

## **Confidentiality**

It is very important that grievances are kept confidential, and although at times students may wish to seek support from an advocate other than parents it is very important to do this wisely so that confidentiality is not compromised. Most often matters are resolved with a mutual understanding and consideration. Uncontrolled criticism of the school, teacher or another student can be unnecessarily destructive for all concerned.

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Domestic – Australian resident student needing accommodation closer to St Martins

## **References**

Student VISA

## **Review Date and Specifications**

June 2015



**St Martins** Lutheran College  
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