

GISS Support Services and Procedures by the Overseas Student Counsellor for Overseas Students, their Families and Homestay Families

A Initial contact:

- Once the enrolment form has been send back and the enrolment fee has been paid, the Overseas Student Counsellor will email relevant Overseas Student Details and Homestay Guidelines for Overseas Students in order to find an appropriate host family for the overseas student.
- In parallel, introduction and explanation of the Overseas Student Counsellor's role usually vial email, our process of engaging homestay families and the involved procedures and costs, important contacts within the school as well as other helpful information regarding health insurance, guardianship, bank account, public transport and assisting with further questions from the overseas students and their families.
- Once the Overseas Student Details are back, the Overseas Student Counsellor will get in touch with suitable families. The Homestay Agreement needs to be finalised now and the host family will receive the Overseas Student Details, including attached pictures.
- As soon as an appropriate host family has been chosen by the Overseas Student Counsellor, the Homestay Agreement and the Guardianship Consent Form will be emailed to the student overseas to be signed by the student and parent/guardian to be mailed back to our school. The family overseas keeps a copy of the Homestay Agreement and the Guardianship Consent Form, one copy is for the homestay family and the originals will be filed at school.
- Ideally the host family and student are in touch via email or Skype before the arrival of the student in Australia.
- Regular updates by the Overseas Student Counsellor about how the host family's first contact to the student is working out and vice versa.
- All students arrive in the school holidays to have time to settle in and to adjust accordingly into their new environment. The students will be picked up from the airport by their host families, if not otherwise arranged.

B Orientation and Counselling:

Orientation Overseas Students:

Welcome Day: Last Friday before new school term/year starts. Handing out of important information (including Guide to New South Wales Services for International Students, Consumer Guide for International Students, Public Transport Information, reference to detailed youth websites: www.youth.nsw.gov.au and www.lawstuff.org.au)and the First Night Questions for the students and their homestay families, our school contact details, the Overseas Student Counsellor's mobile and telephone numbers, other emergency and contact numbers. Meeting of administration staff and coordinators.

- Welcome breakfast on first school day: organised by respective classes and 'student buddies' to introduce new students, subject teachers, class teachers and coordinators.
- During first week of school intensive school internal orientation:

- Facilities and resources
 - School internal procedures, policies and services(including student visa requirements and regulations)
 - Course/Class material (Handbook for IB students etc.)
 - Timetable information
 - Textbooks
 - Parents and teachers info night
- Local orientation through homestay family(see homestay family guidelines)
 - Currently 3 further orientation outings organised by the school (2 days during the week and one on the week end):
 - Manly
 - City/CBD
 - Blue Mountains
 - Future International Cultural Immersion Program(3 days, starting end of July 2011) as an in-country orientation to:
 - Welcome the students to their host country and to introduce the students to the other students
 - Help the students to adjust to the academic, legal and cultural differences and to learn more about culture, health, safety and the Australian lifestyle
 - To inform about available student services, legal services, emergency and health services, complaints and appeal processes, student visa requirements and regulations relating to academic performance and attendance
 - To give a deeper insight to the course program

Counselling:

- Overseas Student Counsellor is available 3 days/week at GISS. Out of hours care in emergency cases by the Overseas Student Counsellor.
- Counselling and assisting how to deal with culture shock, homesickness, different lifestyle, the adjustment within the school, language barriers etc.
- Regular meetings with individual students or in group sessions during contact hours or in our tutorial lesson with the Overseas Student Counsellor, the class teacher/IB coordinator to ensure prompt resolutions: Counselling if any school related issues arise, dispute resolution and crisis intervention.
- If necessary, referring to external student support services.
- Fortnightly updates between host family and Overseas Student Counsellor about the settling in of the student. Monitoring of the agreed homestay regulations.
- Counselling and assisting how to cope with arising problems, misunderstandings and cultural differences within the home stay family and the identification of possible ways of reconciliation: Crisis intervention, dispute resolution and host family conferences.

- Regular homestay visits.
- Preparing of necessary change into a new homestay family.
- Recording of any counselling and home visits.
- Assistance with practical information (regarding outings, sport clubs etc.).
- Regular contact and updates to the family overseas via email or phone.
Parents/guardians have private phone, mobile number and email address of the Overseas Student Counsellor.

C Monitoring and Recording at school:

- Class meetings once a term, if necessary additional meetings.
- Regular reporting to IB-Coordinator, class teachers and all involved staff members.
- Monthly IB-team meetings, if necessary additional meetings.
- Accurate and up to date monitoring and recording of attendance and academic progress of the student through the class teachers, subject teachers and coordinators.

D Inspection and recruitment of suitable host families:

The recruiting of home stay families:

- Advertising in the weekly school's newsletter within the school community.
- Advertising in the local newspaper.
- Word of mouth through circle of friends, members of the school community, sports clubs.
- If necessary, activating of home stay agencies (Placement of the students according to the terms and conditions of the homestay agency. Overseas Student Counsellor acts as a go-between).
- Initial and private inquiries by homestay families.

Inspection/Interview of prospective homestay families:

Homestay Inspection Checklist:

- The home must be clean and comfortable and hosts/guardians must reside at the homestay premises.
- The homestay family is friendly and shows a duty of care.
- Homestay is experienced with young people.
- Hosts live near the school their student will attend (if possible not longer than 40 mins. by public transport door to door).
- Each student will have its own fully furnished room with bed, desk, wardrobe, lamp and mirror (optional).
- Student won't share a room with host family members and sharing arrangements will only be provided if the parents of the student(s) request it.
- There are to be no more than 2 overseas students residing in the home, but not from the same country.

- Students are to be given a key to the home or arrangements made so that the student can gain access to the home at any time.
- There must be adequate lighting for study purposes.
- There must be heating in winter and some means of cooling in summer.
- There must be access to shared bathroom, with reasonable time allowed for showers (10 minutes).
- There must be access to kitchen and laundry facilities and use of shared living areas of home.
- The homestay family is to provide 2 healthy meals a day and packed lunch on weekdays and 3 meals on weekends and, in providing meals, the homestay family must be aware of and take account of cultural differences.
- House rules are to be discussed and explained to the Student, (including friends visiting, use of phone and incoming calls, cleaning of room or other household tasks, meal times and rules for behaviour such as going out and times for arriving home, manners and courtesy).
- Student should only cover the actual cost of phone or internet usage. Use of homestay internet will be restricted including restrictions on downloads.
- A student's bedroom is their own personal sanctuary whilst in Australia – it is here that they can be completely comfortable in their own space. It is extremely important that host families respect the student's privacy and space. The Department of Education regulations state that host families must NOT store any of their own belongings in the student's bedroom.
- Is the hostfamily prepared to become the guardian for a student under 18?

Initial contact and homestay family inspection:

- Email the Homestay Family Profile and the Homestay Family Guidelines to interested homestay families. After the Homestay Family Profile has been returned, evaluation of suitability of the homestay family will be determined.
- Homestay Family Inspection/Interview: Handing out of general information about the school. Explaining of school procedures, the Homestay Agreement, Homestay Family Guidelines, Guardianship and Working With Children Check Form.
- Regular recording of any inspection and home visit.
- Confirmation by the Homestay family of interest in working with GISS via phone or email. Working with Children Check Form and signed Homestay Agreement will be sent back to school.
- Overseas Student Details will be sent out to the suitable homestay family.
- Homestay family will get in touch with the student as soon as possible.
- Creating of a homestay family pool for necessary changes and future students.