

International Student Travel / Activities Policy (effective from 6 June 2008)

This policy applies to all international students enrolled in EQI programs who do not live with a parent or another person approved under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure EQI (which includes school staff) has in place arrangements to protect the personal safety and wellbeing of international students enrolled in Queensland Government schools and in doing so we meet the requirements of Queensland's child protection policy, Migration Act and Regulations and the standards of the ESOS Act regulatory framework outlined in the National Code (established under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*);
- provide guidelines to manage potential risk associated with travel undertaken by international students enrolled in Queensland Government schools; and
- recognise the responsibilities of international students, natural parents, homestay parents and school staff in this matter.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The safety and well being of international students enrolled in Queensland Government schools is at all times paramount.
- The Principal has documented school procedures including delegations, if any, to assess student travel requests. Perceived risks are appropriately managed in terms of access, effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and safety. All travel approvals or non-approvals are documented.
- In assessing a student's request for travel Principals may consider the age and level of maturity of the student. Therefore, supervision and approval requirements for students over 18 years of age may vary from the requirements for younger students. In these cases, Principals will exercise their discretion in seeking parent/homestay approval.
- EQI, through the school Principal, retains the final right of approval for all overnight student activities/travel.
- Students should not book travel, accommodation and/or activities until the relevant approval has been provided.
- A student breaching this policy may have their enrolment cancelled and be reported to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on the basis that the student's welfare arrangements are unable to be guaranteed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EQI provides support and general welfare for the student for the period stated in the Welfare Letter. Together EQI, schools and homestay providers share responsibility for the general welfare of all international students enrolled in Queensland Government schools. EQI places students with a homestay provider who has an obligation to provide accommodation and meals and exercises general supervision over the student. Parents/guardians of students also have responsibility for students while they are studying in Australia.

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OPERATING GUIDELINES

Travel can form one of the following 'types' of travel:

Type 1 Daily Routine Travel

Type 2 Local Overnight Travel

Type 3 Outside Local Area Travel / Holiday Requirements

Type 1: Daily Routine Travel Requirements

The ***Daily Travel and Activities Consent Form*** should ideally be completed by the student, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the homestay provider before the commencement of the homestay or within one week of the student's arrival in Queensland. **Routine** travel arrangements for the student during the homestay period, including travel with the homestay family and travel on public transport includes:

- to and from school;
- on school excursions;
- daytrips;
- to and from medical and other appointments;
- to and from routine non-risky social and recreational activities; and
- to other places and destinations in the ordinary/routine course of domestic arrangements (for example to travel to the shops, the cinema, a friend's house, etc).

As delegated by the school Principal, the International Student Coordinator or other member of the school administration is responsible to ensure this form is completed, signed and filed.

Type 2: Local Overnight Travel Requirements

Students must complete the ***Local Overnight Stay Request Form*** for travel and activities that may be of short term / overnight duration. If the student intends to use these arrangements on a regular basis, additional approval is not required. However it is important the homestay family is aware of the arrangements.

Overnight stays with other families can be authorised by the Principal, or delegate, after appropriate checks to confirm the arrangements have been undertaken by school staff with the family concerned. Overnight travel requests will only be approved for travel occurring during weekends or school vacation periods with appropriate supervision (as outlined below) and travel comprising low to moderate risk activities which aligns with Departmental risk management strategies (see list of high risk activities below).

Type 3: Outside Local Area Travel/Holiday Requirements

Students must complete the ***Outside Local Area Travel /Holiday Travel and Activities Consent Form*** for travel and activities outside the local area, holiday journeys to tourist destinations, and participation in activities considered to be **non-routine**. This form is to be lodged with the International Student Coordinator within a given timeframe nominated by the school (seven working days prior is a suggestion). Requests for travel outside the local area will only be approved for travel occurring during weekends or school vacation periods with appropriate supervision (as outlined below) and travel comprising low to moderate risk activities which aligns with Departmental risk management strategies (outlined below). If the student intends to use these arrangements on a regular basis, additional approval is not required. However it is important the homestay family is aware of the arrangements.

This type of travel includes:

- any trips outside the local area requiring overnight absence from the homestay provider's home and not covered by Type 1 and Type 2 Travel; and
- activities such as organised tours.

SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT

The Principal will ensure that school procedures are documented to assess student requests. In this process, the Principal/school staff can identify various activities within their local area and establish a list of low/high risk activities thereby enabling a timely approval process. Principals will also identify school delegates and their role in the approval process.

If Type 2 or Type 3 travel is occurring with the same family/approved supervisor more than once or on a regular basis, the approval process can identify that only one application is required.

In assessing a student's request for travel, Principals may consider the age and level of maturity of the student. Therefore, supervision and approval requirements for students over 18 years of age may vary from the requirements for younger students. In these cases, Principals will exercise their discretion in seeking parent/homestay approval.

SUPERVISION

Travel requests can only be approved for students under 18 years of age where the student will be supervised by an adult (21 years or older) who holds a "blue card" issued by the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian or equivalent (other than where the student is traveling in the company of a parent or another person approved under the *Migration Regulations 1994* or to or from their home country).

Travel with biological parents and the host family (with biological parents' approval) is considered appropriate and would not require the level of detail in the Type 3 form with regard to the itinerary etc. However, the school Principal is still required to know the student is travelling and is not staying at their designated homestay.

Other categories of supervised travel which are considered appropriate are: travel with a sibling 21 years or older; and travel with an EQI/Agent arranged tour where appropriate supervision and activities for under 18 year olds has been confirmed.

In assessing a student's request for travel, Principals may consider the age and level of maturity of the student. Therefore, supervision and approval requirements for students over 18 years of age may vary from the requirements for younger students. In these cases, Principals will exercise their discretion in seeking parent/homestay approval.

HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

Participation in extreme sports and high risk activities will not be approved. High risk activities include but are not limited to: abseiling, bungee jumping, caving, canyoning, hang gliding, jet skiing, motorcycling, parachuting, parasailing, racing (other than on foot), rock and/or mountain climbing, shark-cage diving, sky diving, white water rafting and ocean yachting.

RISK ASSESSMENT

When undertaking a risk assessment to approve the application, Principals can determine whether to obtain the consent of the student's parent/s / guardian(s) and the homestay provider **in the first** instance or approve the application and then send a courtesy letter to the parent advising that their student will be undertaking this activity with the school's approval.

Principals can exercise discretion in assessing a student's application when considering the student's age and level of maturity, and whether or not parental/homestay approval is required.

Ultimately the decision to approve the travel rests with the Principal. Situations may occur whereby the parent has consented to their student undertaking an activity, however, the activities may be considered by the Principal as high risk or inappropriate and permission is not granted.

CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THIS POLICY

In accordance with Migration Regulations and visa condition 8532, students under 18 years of age are accepted into our program on the condition that EQI, through an approved homestay provider, maintain arrangements for their general welfare, as outlined in the Welfare Letter. Students must uphold their visa conditions while studying and living in Australia or their visa may be cancelled and they may have to leave Australia.

If the Principal denies the travel request, the student must not undertake the activity/travel as their welfare cannot be guaranteed. Therefore if a student breaches the policy, the Principal may report the student to EQI and advise that the school can no longer guarantee the welfare arrangements of the student. EQI will review the case put forward by the Principal with a view to initiating a process to cancel the student's enrolment in the program and report the student to the Department of Education,

Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on the basis that the student's welfare arrangements are unable to be guaranteed.

If a student intends travelling to his or her home country during the holidays, it is their responsibility to check school term and course dates with the International Student Coordinator at the school **prior to** booking flights.

For further information in relation to student travel enquiries please contact Education Queensland International, your nearest International Student Centre or your host school.

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