



Education Queensland International

International Student Programs

# Homestay handbook

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## Welcome

Thank you for becoming an International Student Programs (ISP) homestay provider.

Homestay is a great opportunity for international students to experience Queensland in a safe and supportive home environment.

As a homestay provider you contribute to the positive memories international students have of their time in Queensland. Many homestay providers form long-lasting friendships with students and their families all over the world.

Your primary role as a homestay provider is to accommodate students in a safe, welcoming and friendly home situation that supports their personal and educational needs.

In return, students are expected to show you and your household members respect, courtesy and consideration.

This guide will help you prepare for a successful homestay experience and to anticipate and overcome some of the common issues that may arise.

## How the homestay program works

EQI is responsible for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for international students in the EQI homestay program.

EQI homestay procedures are published on the Department of Education's [Policy and Procedure Register \(PPR\)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services) (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services>). These procedures include the roles and responsibilities of DEi staff, school staff, students, homestay providers and agents and the steps followed to ensure appropriate homestay arrangements are maintained.

EQI schools recruit homestay providers in their local area and manage all the day-to-day aspects of the homestay program.

When students request homestay accommodation our schools take care to match students with compatible homestay providers.

We ask students to share information about allergies, dietary needs, attitude to pets, spiritual requirements, hobbies and interests. It is our goal to place the student where the homestay provider and student will feel comfortable.

EQI and our schools provide support services for homestay providers and international students to help ensure a happy and positive experience for everyone.

## Preparing for homestay

Students in homestay accommodation are living away from their families and home country, sometimes for the first time.

Naturally, this can be challenging for them, particularly if they speak limited English, and may be too shy to tell you if they don't understand how your household operates, or if something is wrong.

With some forward planning you can help your student settle in more quickly, avoid some common misunderstandings, and ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone.

### Communicate with your student before they arrive

If you have the chance, it is good to connect with your student and their family before they arrive. An introduction email may include information about your household members and some details about your local area. School staff will assist you to make contact with the student as doing this removes some of the uncertainty the student might feel about moving to a new 'home' and it will also reassure their family.

### Culture shock

Cultural adjustment or 'culture shock' can occur when an international student becomes overwhelmed by the differences of living in an unfamiliar culture, from eating unfamiliar food, to speaking a different language. The symptoms can be physical (sleep disturbances, eating problems, frequent illnesses), and psychological (severe homesickness, loneliness, boredom, isolation, hostility and withdrawal).

As a homestay host you can help by looking out for these signs and providing an understanding and supportive home environment. For example, you may notice your student is spending a lot of time alone in their room or has stopped talking at mealtimes. Encourage them to take part in household activities and ask them to talk about their day, and if they need help with anything.

During their school orientation program students are given strategies to cope with culture shock. However, if they continue to experience difficulties you should contact the student's host school.



### Prepare your home environment

Homestay providers are not expected to supply resort style accommodation, but you do need to ensure that your student feels welcome and at ease in your home.

**Cleanliness:** A welcoming and regularly cleaned environment will influence how you and your home are perceived. Once your student has settled in, involve them in cleaning their room. Remember to demonstrate and clearly explain each task so they know what to do.

**Comfort:** You must provide a private bedroom for your student's sole use, with suitable storage space for clothes, personal effects and study materials. They must have a desk, chair and adequate light for studying. Please consider the time of year they will be staying with you and equip their room accordingly. For example, with warmer bedding and a form of heating in winter, and lighter bedding and a means of cooling the room in summer.

**Privacy:** You must ensure your student is given privacy in their bedroom and in the bathroom/toilet. For example, ensure that locks and appropriate window coverings are fitted, and people in your home know to knock and seek permission before entering these rooms.

**Safety:** It is vital that you regularly check the safety of your home and fix, secure or replace anything that may be a hazard. For example, electrical sockets and wiring, trip hazards, external door and window locks and security lighting. Add extra smoke alarms if necessary. Home swimming pools and trampolines are more common in Australia than overseas so please provide safety instructions for these and any other equipment with the potential to cause injury.

## Learn about your student's culture

Every culture is unique so it is helpful to learn a little about your student's customs and practices. This way you can prepare for any differences that might cause a misunderstanding.

The following examples highlight some of the cultural misunderstandings that can occur:

- › You may need to show your student how to use the sheets on the bed and where to hang their wet towels as this may not be obvious to them.
- › Homestay students can be shy about someone else washing their underwear so show them where they can wash and dry their own if necessary.
- › Some overseas bathrooms are designed to drain large quantities of water very quickly. Explain to your student how Australian baths and showers work to prevent water damage to your floors and carpets.
- › Water usage differs around the world so tell students about Australia's water saving policy. Some local authorities supply free shower timers that you can give your student to use.
- › In some cultures it is considered disrespectful or rude to make eye contact with the person you are speaking to. If your student does not look at you during a conversation it could be a sign of respectfulness toward you. You should explain to them that the opposite is true in Australia.
- › Pointing with one finger at a person or object is thought to be rude in many countries. Avoid offence by using your whole hand to point out people or things.



## Prepare household members and regular guests

Discussing your student's arrival with household member and regular guests enables them to anticipate changes to their usual routine. It is important that everyone knows the behavior expected of them, their role in making the student feel at home, and what to do if things go wrong. If there are guests that reside in your home on more than 7 days in a calendar year during the student's stay, e.g. friends or relatives, you need to ensure compliance with [EQI's homestay procedures \(https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services\)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services) as these adhere to important Blue Card regulations.



## Plan how to introduce your pets

If you have pets then you may need to adapt their routine too, as many cultures are not used to animals being treated as part of the family or living indoors. It's a good idea to introduce your pets slowly and monitor them while they adjust to the new person in your home.



## Insurance

As a homestay provider you must have and maintain home and contents insurance (for home owners) or contents insurance (for renters) including legal liability insurance of no less than \$20 million. This is to protect homestay providers and students. Please discuss your individual insurance requirements with your insurer to ensure you have the insurance coverage that is right for your circumstances. You should check whether your insurance policy covers you for injury to a homestay student while in your care or accidental damage the student may cause to your property. Some homestay providers take out specific homestay host insurance.

Students are responsible for insuring any valuable items they bring with them or buy in Australia. All international students travelling on a student visa must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay here. When accessing medical treatment the student pays for the service and then applies for a refund for all or part of this expense depending on the service provided.

It is important to note that not all medical expenses are covered by OSHC.

EQI suggests that all international students take out travel and/or additional health insurance for the duration of their stay.

Check with your school about specific homestay host insurance for additional coverage.



### Claire from Belgium

*"My host family is amazing. They would do anything for me and I really get on well with them."*

## Student welcome and orientation

### Student arrival

When an international student arrives in Queensland, the host school will arrange for a representative to meet them at the airport and take them to their homestay. The school will tell you what time your student will arrive so you can be at home to welcome and settle them in. Don't forget to use the student's name when you meet and when you introduce them to other people.

### Home orientation

Give your student some time to rest and freshen up before orientating them to the rest of your home. Orientation is an opportunity to get to know each other and a chance for you and the student to ask questions. Establishing open two-way communication from the start makes it much easier to discuss issues that may arise later.

There are many things to tell your student at the beginning of their stay, such as how things work, your household rules and personal safety. There's a lot to take in, so don't try to tell your student everything at once.

When you talk to your student speak slowly and clearly, and check that they understand. It's a good idea to print out important information so the student has something to refer back to if needed.



## Orientation checklist

This orientation checklist outlines the range of topics to discuss with your student. Some of these activities do not apply to younger students.



### Introductions and personal needs

- › Discuss preferred names – student and household members
- › Introduction to household members and regular guests
- › Household pets
- › Food preferences, likes and dislikes, breakfast choice, allergies
- › Hobbies and interests
- › Occasions to remember, e.g. student's birthday
- › Other needs, e.g. spiritual, medical, cultural



### Household facilities and features

- › Household entry, keys, locks and security
- › Student's bedroom: storage, electrical sockets, fans/heaters/air conditioning, window locks and curtains/blinds, sheets and bedding, keeping things tidy
- › Bathroom: how to use, timings, lock, toilet, water consumption, hygiene, fresh towels
- › Kitchen: utensils, food storage, preparing food, snacks
- › Shared spaces, TV and entertainment
- › Garden and outdoor equipment



### House rules

- › Household etiquette, e.g. using mobile phones at the dinner table
- › Acceptable behaviour
- › Privacy
- › Supervision
- › Friends and overnight visits
- › Curfew and noise
- › Personal items and spaces that are off-limits



### Safety outside the home

- › Travel
- › High risk activities
- › Driving
- › Evenings out and curfew
- › Personal safety
- › Sun safety
- › Beach safety
- › Staying in contact and emergencies



### Communication

- › Asking questions and discussing issues
- › Household contact numbers
- › Staying in contact
- › School and emergency contact numbers
- › Where to find information
- › Getting a mobile/buying mobile phone credit
- › Home internet and telephone use



### Household routines

- › Meal times
- › School schedule
- › Bedtime
- › Laundry
- › Cleaning
- › Helping with chores
- › Shopping
- › Transport



### Safety at home

- › Smoke alarms
- › Electrical safety
- › Evacuation plan
- › Cybersafety
- › Swimming pool safety
- › Sports and play equipment
- › First aid and emergencies
- › Breakages and damage



### Local area orientation

- › Local map, address and directions from home to main points of interest
- › Getting to and from school
- › Shops and currency
- › Bank, post office
- › Chemist and medical facilities
- › Library
- › Public transport, travel cards and timetables
- › Things to do nearby

# Daily support

## Supervision

You are responsible for providing appropriate supervision for the duration of your student's stay. International students must never be left unsupervised overnight, even if they are aged over 18. If you cannot supervise your student (for example, if you have to travel and they cannot accompany you) please contact the host school (in advance) so appropriate arrangements can be made.

## Student safety

The safety and wellbeing of international students is our primary concern.

It is essential that you tell your student about safety risks, in the same way you would your own children.

If you have any questions, or need more information about student safety, please contact EQI or your host school.

## Student wellbeing outside of school hours

For incidents that occur outside school hours, or during an activity not organised by the school, school staff and homestay providers should refer to the [Department of Education International incident management procedure \(https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/dei-incident-management-procedure\)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/dei-incident-management-procedure). Students and homestay families should contact 1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839), outside of school hours including weekends and school holidays for wellbeing matters and queries.

Where there is a suspicion of harm to students whether it is related to physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect, please refer to the Student protection procedure (because homestay families are obligated to report as per this procedure).

Page 31 of this handbook provides further advice on how to identify if your student is experiencing harm.

All emergencies where a student's safety is in immediate danger should be referred to emergency services in the first instance.

## Emergency contact details

It is important that your student can always reach you or another responsible member of your household. Please give them all your contact details and make sure they have the EQI school's daytime number (for during school hours) and 1800 QSTUDY support number (1800 778 839) for outside school hours.

All these details should also be displayed in a prominent place in your home.

You must also explain to the student what to do and who to call in an emergency situation:

**How to call 000 in an emergency and ask for Police, Ambulance or Fire Rescue.**

<https://www.triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/How-to-Call-000>

## Locks and home security

You should give the student a key to your home and explain that it must be kept safe at all times. Show them how to secure your home and use the locks, passwords and alarms to access the house. If you have young children or pets then emphasise the importance of closing doors, windows and garden gates.





## Meals

Homestay students must be given three nutritious meals a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner – along with some between meal snacks such as fruit or biscuits. Getting used to new foods can be difficult for the student in the first few weeks so try to include something they are familiar with along with the meals you normally prepare.

Taking your student grocery shopping is also helpful as you can show them different foods and ask them to show you what they like to eat. For meals like breakfast and lunch you may need to explain what foods are available in your home and how to prepare them, for example, cereal, toast or sandwiches. Show the student which snacks they can help themselves to and leave these in a clearly marked container so they know where to find them.

If you go out for dinner then you must take your student with you and pay for their meal.

If you offer your student a homestay meal but they choose to eat out then they are responsible for covering the cost themselves.

## The first day of school

You must take your student to school on their first day, and until they are comfortable travelling to and from school on their own.

You should show them the best way of getting there from your home (walking, cycling, bus, ferry or train). Students are required to cover the cost of their transport to and from school each day. The host school may ask you to help your student to complete an enrolment guide to bring with them on their first day.

## School uniform

At most Queensland state schools it is compulsory for students to wear the correct school uniform every day.

You should discuss laundry arrangements with your student to ensure that they have enough clean and pressed uniform items for the school week.

## Absence from school

International students are expected to attend school every school day. You should inform the school if your student cannot attend for all or part of the day.

If your student falls ill at school you will be asked to take them home and to the doctor. You must discuss alternative arrangements with the host school if you are unable to collect your student straightaway.

Your student's punctuality and attendance are regularly monitored. If there is a problem, a warning letter will be issued and guidance support offered.

## School holidays

Many international students stay in Australia for the school holidays, although some will return to their home countries during the break. EQI students can apply to join an EQI adventure tour during the holidays to see and experience some of Australia's most iconic landmarks. Students pay extra for these tours.

If you plan to travel away from home during the school holidays please consider the needs of your student. If you can't take your student with you, or if they decide not to go, please give your host school a minimum of four weeks' notice to organise alternative accommodation for them. While you are away, your student's homestay fees will be paid to their temporary homestay provider.



## Academic achievement

International student **subclass 500 visa holders** must maintain satisfactory academic achievement across all areas of their study. The student's school will monitor student achievement and liaise with



teachers and guidance officers to assist students to reach their full potential.

## Helping with study

Living in an Australian home is a great way for international students to practise their English language skills. You should encourage your student to participate in conversations at home. It is also helpful for them to practise outside the home, for example, by going grocery shopping with you, to the movies, or out for a meal.

All students have access to a guidance officer, teachers and tutor support if they need help with their school work. Please monitor your student's study habits at home and discuss any concerns you have with the school.

Homestay providers are not expected to help with homework but your student will appreciate your assistance with any words or questions they don't understand. You can also assist by having a conversation with them about their academic progress or things they find challenging to identify if they need extra support.

As a homestay host you must help the student to participate in the extracurricular activities recommended by the school.

## Safety in and around the home

### Swimming pool safety†

In Queensland, swimming pool owners must comply with pool safety laws and standards.\*

Students must be appropriately supervised when swimming, taking into account their swimming abilities.

Please be aware that despite their age, your student may not be able to swim, so you must exercise extreme caution around pools and swimming areas. EQI requires all students wishing to participate in water activities to complete a basic water skills assessment on arrival. Students are not permitted to engage in water activities (such as swimming in the home pool or local pool) until this has been completed.

\* For further information please see [www.qbcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au) or contact the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

### Sports and play equipment

If you have sports and play equipment you need to check that it meets safety recommendations for its set-up and maintenance. Where appropriate, activities using outdoor play equipment should be supervised.

Trampolines are particularly hazardous for young children, with many injuries recorded in Queensland every year.

For guidance on making your play equipment safe please visit the Kidsafe Queensland website at [www.kidsafeqld.com.au/](http://www.kidsafeqld.com.au/)



## Household chores

It is usual for students to help with light household tasks but you must not ask them to undertake heavy cleaning or handle potentially dangerous chemicals. This includes cleaning swimming pool filters or adding chlorine or other chemicals to the water, cleaning with bleach, mopping and vacuuming large areas of the home, or caring for the family's pets.

Some students may not be familiar with household chores so you should demonstrate and explain each task clearly, for example, how to vacuum their bedroom floor, to ensure they understand what you are asking them to do.

Your student may enjoy helping you in the garden with planting or other light tasks but they are not to use hazardous tools or machinery such as lawn mowers, hedge trimmers or whipper snippers.

Students should not supervise, babysit, or be left in charge of younger children, even for a short time.



## Internet use and cybersafety

You must negotiate the use of your household phone, computer and internet service with your student. Set the usage guidelines and talk to them about cybersafety and what is forbidden by Australian law.

Young people are not always aware of internet costs and download limits so you should be clear about these at the outset. You must also tell them that students under the age of 18 cannot access material that is deemed 'objectionable' or 'unsuitable for minors', and that it's illegal to download pirated content protected by copyright.

Cyberattack poses a real threat to young people who can easily become victims of online bullying, fraud and coercive behaviour, threatening their personal security and potentially that of their homestay family.

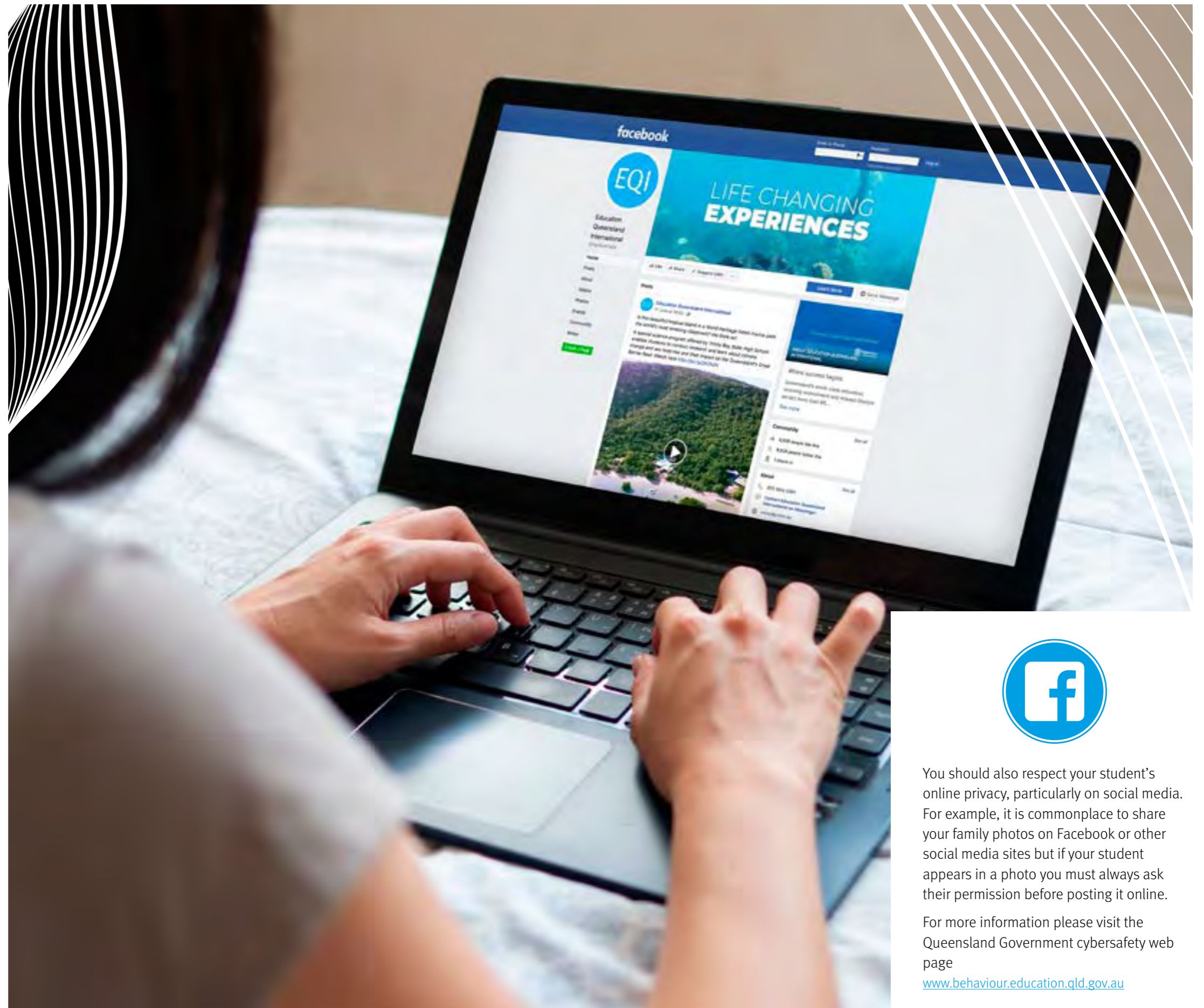
Please tell your student about the 5R's of online safety:

1. **Realise** the people you chat with may not be who they say they are.
2. **Refuse** any requests for personal information – never give out your full name, address, phone number or school name – and ensure your internet profile is private.
3. **Review** your contacts - it's not a good idea to have contacts you don't know.
4. **Respond** quickly if you ever feel uncomfortable online. Close the program then tell your homestay parent(s), teacher or a trusted friend.
5. **Report** (through your homestay family or school) any suspicious or dangerous online activities to the police.

The Queensland Government offers important information on cybersafety in Queensland schools that you may find useful.

Cybersafety in Queensland schools:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety>



You should also respect your student's online privacy, particularly on social media. For example, it is commonplace to share your family photos on Facebook or other social media sites but if your student appears in a photo you must always ask their permission before posting it online.

For more information please visit the Queensland Government cybersafety web page

[www.behaviour.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.behaviour.education.qld.gov.au)

# Safety outside the home

## Curfew times and going out

Homestay providers can use the following guidelines when developing appropriate curfews for their students. Curfews should consider the individual needs of the student and fit with homestay family routines.

### Sunday to Thursday

- › Junior High School (Years 7 to 10) - no later than 6pm, unless for a school-approved extracurricular activity.
- › Senior High School (Years 11 to 12) - no later than 7pm, unless for a school-approved extracurricular activity.

### Friday/Saturday and school holidays

- › Junior High School (Years 7 to 10) - no later than 9:30pm, unless for a school-approved extracurricular activity.
- › Senior High School (Years 11 to 12) - no later than 10:30pm, unless for a school-approved extracurricular activity.

Please contact your school for further clarification.

If your student is going out they must tell you where they are going, how they are getting there, who they are going with, what they will be doing and the time they will be home. It is advisable that they take with them a fully charged mobile phone programmed with your contact numbers, and carry a card that contains the same details. It is a good idea for you to have a phone number for one of the people they are with, or another parent, in case there is a problem with your student's phone and you need to contact them.

Before they go out, please check that your student understands some basic safety rules:

- › No matter what time of day, if you're travelling alone be alert to your surroundings. Don't wear headphones as you may not hear what's happening around you.
- › Where possible, always travel with a group you know well.
- › At night, stay in busy places and avoid dead-ends and poorly lit areas.
- › Do not go anywhere with strangers or people you have just met.
- › Never give your personal information to strangers or people you have just met.
- › Make sure you have enough money or travel credit to get home.
- › Plan which bus, train or other public transport you will catch, tell your homestay family what time it arrives and what time you will be home
- › Remember the help line 1800 QSTUDY.

You should also tell your student what to do in the event they are stopped by the Police. In many situations, the Police have the right to ask people for their name and address, so please advise your student that it is an offence to refuse to give this information when asked for it.

## Money and valuables

Tell your student to keep their money, wallet and valuables in a safe location, e.g. a zipped bag or backpack.

Advise them to avoid carrying, wearing or showing off expensive items, such as mobile phones, cameras and jewellery.

Visit <https://www.studyqueensland.qld.gov.au/live-in-queensland/safety-in-australia> for resources to support your conversations about safety, including Crime Prevention and Community Safety videos created specifically for international students.

## Travel and activities

ISP's travel and activities policy (contained in the student's enrolment agreement) is there to safeguard their personal safety and wellbeing, to manage risks, and to protect homestay providers.

The policy requires students to get approval from the school for all non-routine travel and activities (including overnight stays and non-routine travel taken with their homestay providers). This process is outlined in the [Non-routine travel and activities for homestay students - Subclass 500 \(schools\) visa procedure](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/non-routine-travel-and-activities-for-homestay-students-subclass-500-schools-visa-procedure).

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/non-routine-travel-and-activities-for-homestay-students-subclass-500-schools-visa-procedure>

EQI is responsible for approving and monitoring the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for students in the homestay program. This means EQI must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to protect students' safety. For this reason, EQI has adopted the policy position that high risk activities must be approved by the school.

High risk activities include any that pose an increased risk of harm, illness or injury. There are many high risk activities available in Queensland and this is why students must get approval from the school before undertaking non-routine travel and activities.

EQI takes student safety seriously and may cancel the enrolment of a student who breaches the travel and activities policy.

EQI has developed a Sports, Leisure and Recreation providers' register of approved activities for international students - please ask your host school for further details. For more information about student travel please contact EQI or your host school.

Any water activity is defined by EQI as a high risk activity for all students.



## Bush safety

In Queensland, you are never really very far from bushland - whether it's a park, forest, national park or nature reserve. EQI has determined some bush walking activities are high risk. It is important that you discuss potential bush walking activities with your host school as your student may require approval as a non-routine activity.

You should tell your student to take particular precautions, including those relating to bushfire, if they are walking or exploring in Australia:

- › don't travel alone
- › make sure you tell someone exactly where you are going, the route you will take and the time you will be back
- › prior to travelling in an area of high bushfire risk, check the Fire Danger Rating (FDR)
- › adhere to fire bans and bush fire safety procedure
- › take sun safe precautions and pack drinking water
- › stick to a walking track or road
- › read warning signs and be cautious about swimming in rivers and lakes. If it is safe to swim, enter the water gradually
- › never swim in an area inhabited by crocodiles or other dangerous marine animals
- › keep your distance from, and do not feed, wild animals.

Bush walking information, maps and safety guidelines are provided on the Queensland Department of Environment and Science website [www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking](http://www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking)

For more information about staying safe around wildlife visit

[www.environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/index](http://www.environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/index)

To find out about fire safety at home and in the bush visit

[www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire)

## Sun safety

Most people outside Australia don't realise the extreme dangers posed by the Queensland sun, including skin cancer, sunburn, dehydration and heat-related illnesses. Help your student to be sun safe by telling them to:

- › avoid direct sun when possible
- › seek shade when possible
- › drink plenty of water
- › wear a long-sleeve shirt, wide brim hat and sunglasses
- › regularly apply an SPF 30+ high protection sunscreen.

For more information visit [www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart](http://www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart)

## Beach safety

It is very likely your international student will want to go to the beach. Whether they go with you, on a school visit or with friends, please talk to your student about beach safety:

- › always read and follow the beach warning signs
- › always swim between the red and yellow flags (please see the guide below)
- › only swim in areas compatible with your swimming ability
- › never swim alone
- › don't run, jump or dive into shallow water
- › be aware of creatures that bite or sting, particularly jellyfish
- › practise sun safety.

Warning signs (diamond shape, yellow and black) are used to warn you about hazards at the beach.



## Flags and signs

### Swim between the flags

It is important to swim between the red and yellow flags – this is the part of the beach supervised by lifesavers or lifeguards who can provide assistance if needed.



### Rips

A rip is a strong current that starts near the shore and flows away from the beach. It may feel like you are being pulled out to sea and unable to get back to the beach. Not all rip currents flow directly out to sea. Some may run parallel to the beach before heading out to sea.

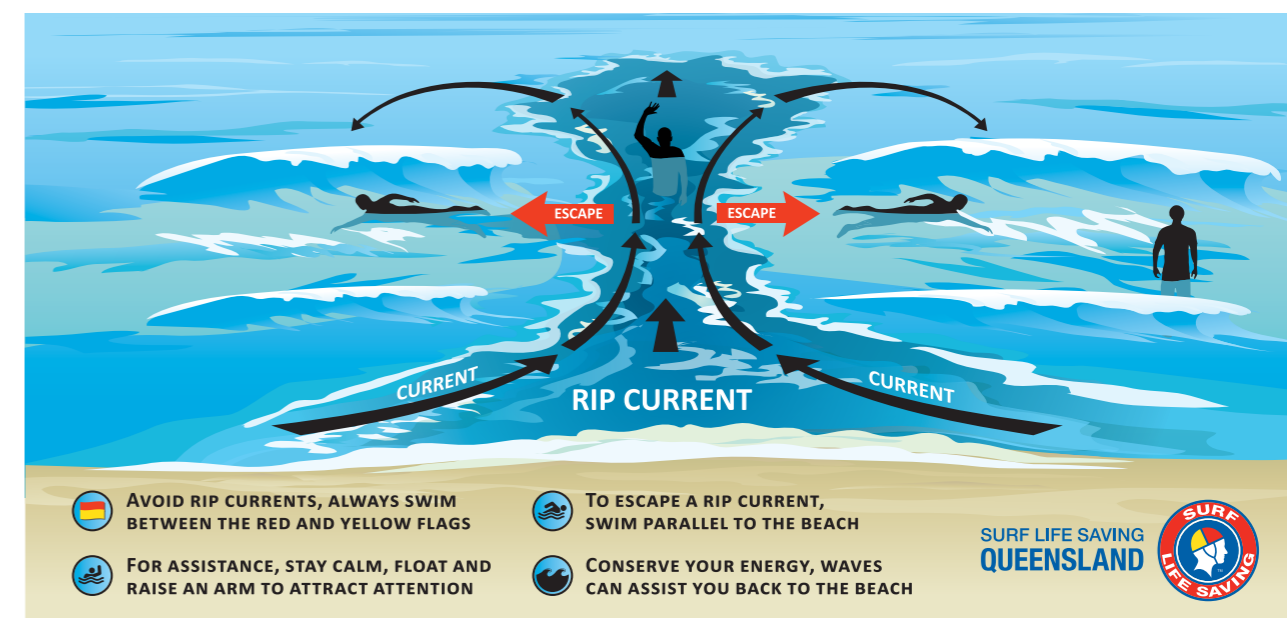


Image published with kind permission of Surf Life Saving Australia

### What do rips look like?

Not all rips look the same. However, rips will have one or more of the following features:

- › darker, deeper water
- › murky brown water caused by sand stirred up by fast-moving water
- › a choppy or rippled look, when the water around is generally calm
- › in large surf, a smoother surface with much smaller waves
- › an area where waves aren't breaking (compared to surf at other parts of the beach)
- › foam or debris floating out to sea.

### If you are caught in a rip

Stay calm, conserve your energy and consider these options:

- › for assistance, float and raise your arm to attract attention
- › float with the rip current, it may flow in a circular pattern and return you to a nearby sandbar
- › swim parallel to the shore, you may escape the rip current and return to shore
- › reassess the situation – if what you're doing isn't working, try another option until you return to shore.

Read more about beach safety on the Surf Life Saving Queensland website [www.lifesaving.com.au](http://www.lifesaving.com.au)

## Roads and driving

It is important to familiarise your student with Australian road rules, particularly if they come from a country that drives on the right side of the road. Show them which way to look when crossing the road and explain how pedestrian crossings, signals and shared walking/cycling paths work.

Students may travel in a car driven by a Learner or P-plate driver, provided the student has written permission from their parents/legal custodian and EQI.

If students wish to learn to drive, they must have lessons with a professional instructor and permission from their parents/legal custodian. Students must have a Queensland drivers' licence and the agreement of their parents/legal custodian to drive a vehicle.

### Students may only drive a vehicle:

- › while using a Queensland driver's licence
- › if the vehicle is registered under the student, parent or legal custodian's name
- › the vehicle is subject to full comprehensive insurance that has coverage for an at-fault driver, and
- › with approval from the student's parent or legal custodian.



## Working in Queensland

The student's visa restricts their ability to work while they are in Australia. They are also subject to Queensland law which:

- › limits the hours of work of school-aged children to ensure that their studies are not adversely affected
- › protects children from performing work that may be harmful to their health and safety, or compromises their mental, moral or social welfare.

If you are concerned that your student's job is affecting their school attendance, study or personal wellbeing, please contact the host school.

For further information please see

[www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0137](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0137)



# Homestay host and student behaviour

## Blue card legislation

Homestay providers require a blue card or an exemption card. All adults who live or regularly reside in your home will also require a blue card or exemption card.

The legislation governing blue cards requires that the Department of Education has a [risk management strategy](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf) which applies to all people interacting with children in a homestay (for example, homestay providers, residents of the home, visitors and the student). <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf>

Please contact Blue Card Services on 1800 113 611, or at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) for further information on how to apply and renew your Blue Card.



## Homestay provider behaviour

The best way to maintain appropriate behaviour is to abide by Australian law with regard to the homestay student in your care. Homestay hosts are bound by the [Code of Conduct for the Queensland public service](#). The department's [Standards of Practice](#) provides practical guidance of the application of this code (<https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/working-with-us/induction/department/induction-programs-and-resources/code-of-conduct>).

As a homestay provider, you must remember there may be a significant difference in what you and your student consider to be appropriate behaviour.

Homestay providers are reminded that the behaviour of family members towards the homestay student is judged by the student's reasonable perception and interpretation of that behaviour, and not by the intention of the household member. As a guide, ask yourself the following questions.

- › Is the behaviour likely to be unwelcome or is it encouraged or accepted by the student?
- › Is it possible that the student finds the conduct embarrassing, humiliating or intimidating?

All people in the home (including the student) should act in a way that would be considered appropriate when viewed by a third party (i.e. people should not put themselves in a position where they are vulnerable to accusations of wrongdoing), for example:

- › residents of your home and visitors should not be alone with the student in a bedroom or bathroom with the door closed
- › the student should not be alone with another person (for example, a younger child) in a bedroom or bathroom with the door closed.

### The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour:

- › acting towards, or speaking to a person in a manner that threatens or vilifies that person
- › making jokes, suggestive comments or offensive gestures related to a person's race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, gender or sexual characteristics
- › distribution or display of material (including through e-mail) which may be offensive, such as sexually explicit posters or pictures, racist or sexist jokes or cartoons
- › persistent questions about a person's private life
- › personal comments about appearance, size, clothing
- › demands for sexual favours, either directly or by implication
- › unwanted and deliberate physical contact (hugging can be unwanted)
- › indecent assault and other criminal offences.

Sometimes incidents can occur from a lack of understanding about what is acceptable. For example, different interpretations of 'personal space' and shows of affection.

You should therefore exercise all appropriate care and consideration towards your student(s).

Should an incident be alleged to occur during a homestay placement, EQI and/or the host school may be obliged to notify the police.



### Student behaviour

Students must respect the homestay household's rules and property, show consideration, courtesy, comply with curfews and the terms of outings and visits. It is essential that the student informs you of their whereabouts, and remains contactable by you, at all times.

If they fail to meet these standards, EQI could consider their conduct to be unsatisfactory and may cancel their enrolment or remove them from the homestay program.

At all times, students must:

- › comply with Australian laws and the conditions of their student visa
- › not drink alcohol, smoke, misuse prescription medication or use illegal drugs
- › not do anything that endangers their safety or the safety of other people
- › not do anything that may bring their school or the EQI international student program into disrepute.

Please discuss acceptable behaviours with your student, and explain that they must also abide by Australian laws.

School staff will provide advice about student protection matters, including student sexualised behaviour, unlawful sexual relationships between children under 16 years of age, harm caused by another student and student self-harm.

If you have any concerns about sexual behaviours, unlawful sexual relations or student harm (including self-harm), please contact your school principal\* immediately.

Please also refer to the following section 'Issues and Incidents'.

### Discipline

You must not subject your international student to any form of physical or aggressive verbal punishment. Student discipline will be decided by the host school and the student's parents/legal custodian.

If you are concerned about your student's behaviour please contact the host school for assistance.

# Issues and incidents

## What is an 'incident'

An incident may occur at or away from school. EQI defines an incident as any serious injury or illness suffered by an overseas student enrolled in an EQI student program; including any serious threat to a student's physical and emotional health, safety or wellbeing.

The school will contact you if there is an incident relating to your student during school hours.

Before your student arrives you will be given a copy of the [DEi incident management procedure \(https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/dei-incident-management-procedure\)](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/dei-incident-management-procedure) outlining what to do if there is an incident. This includes the number for 1800 QSTUDY. (1800 778 839), EQI's 24-hour support service for international students, parents, legal custodians, tour chaperones, education agents and homestay providers.



## What to do in the event of an incident

In the event of a life threatening or emergency situation, Australia's primary emergency call service number is Triple Zero (000), which can be dialled from any fixed or mobile phone, pay phones and certain Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services free-of-charge to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance and follow the instructions of emergency services.. <https://www.triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/other-emergency-numbers>

If the incident is not an emergency and occurs outside school hours and the activity is not organised by the school, you must:

- › notify EQI about the incident as soon as possible by calling 1800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839)
- › assist your student to access the medical services they need by making appointments and accompanying them to these appointments
- › let the school know about the student's medical treatment and results
- › where necessary, arrange for any medical invoices to be sent directly to the host school to arrange payment by the student's parent or legal custodian.

Always notify your host school of an incident or injury, even if it appears to be minor. It is important that ALL incidents involving international students are documented, particularly if a more serious condition develops as a result of the incident.

## 1800QSTUDY feedback

EQI is always looking to improve our services. We invite you to provide us with feedback regarding your 1800QSTUDY experience and encourage you to contact us at [1800QSTUDY@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:1800QSTUDY@qed.qld.gov.au). EQI would like to use your feedback to improve service development and training.

If you experiencing problems to access the 1800QSTUDY phone line, please send an email to [1800QSTUDY@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:1800QSTUDY@qed.qld.gov.au).

## Identifying if your student is experiencing harm

It is essential that EQI, host schools and homestay providers work together to protect and ensure the safety of our international students. As the homestay host you are in a position to observe behavioural, emotional or physical signs that may indicate that your student has, or is experiencing any kind of abuse.

The Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women publishes information that will help you to understand the nature of abuse, the signs to look for, and how to report any concerns you have.

Protecting children at risk of harm requires immediate and serious attention. Effective protection of children relies on members of the community reporting their concerns. This needs to occur in a timely way to prevent concerns becoming more serious.

Some general indicators of child abuse include:

- › showing wariness and distrust of adults
- › bedwetting or soiling
- › demanding or aggressive behaviour
- › sleeping difficulties, often being tired and falling asleep
- › low self-esteem
- › difficulty relating to adults and peers
- › being seemingly accident prone
- › having broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing
- › being unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent, vague or unbelievable
- › feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- › having difficulty concentrating
- › being withdrawn or overly obedient
- › being reluctant to go home
- › creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

For more information visit

[www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children)



Suspicion or report of harm

Police/Child Safety Services

School Principal

The school will follow Queensland Department of Education policies, procedures and guidelines.



## Disclosure and suspicion of harm

If you or a member of your household has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has been harmed, you must immediately inform your host school to enable them to report this to the appropriate authorities.

There are reasonable grounds to suspect harm if:

- › the student tells you that they have been harmed
- › another person e.g. a student, parent or staff member tells you that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- › the student tells you that they know someone who has been harmed (they may be referring to themselves)
- › you are concerned at a significant change in the behaviour of the student, or the presence of new unexplained or suspicious injuries
- › you see harm happening.

## Communication with media and Queensland authorities

In the event that your student is involved in an incident in which Australian/Queensland authorities or the media become involved, please direct all enquiries to EQI or the host school Principal. Under no circumstances should you discuss or reveal personal information about your international student to anyone else.

Your obligation to contribute appropriately to public discussion and comply with the appropriate laws of privacy, confidentiality and information management is outlined in the [Code of Conduct for Queensland Public Service](#).

## Complaints and appeals

If you have a complaint about EQI, the school or your international student, or disagree with a decision made by EQI or the school, please follow the Department of Education complaints procedure, available at [www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/contact/complaint](http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/contact/complaint)

## Saying goodbye

### Create positive memories

As they approach the end of their stay, some students, particularly those who have been in Australia for a long time, can become withdrawn and apprehensive about saying goodbye to their friends, teachers and 'second family'.

There are lots of ways to make this transition easier for them to ensure their last memories of Australia are happy and positive. Some host families create memory books containing mementos, photos and messages, and many give their student a small going-away party.

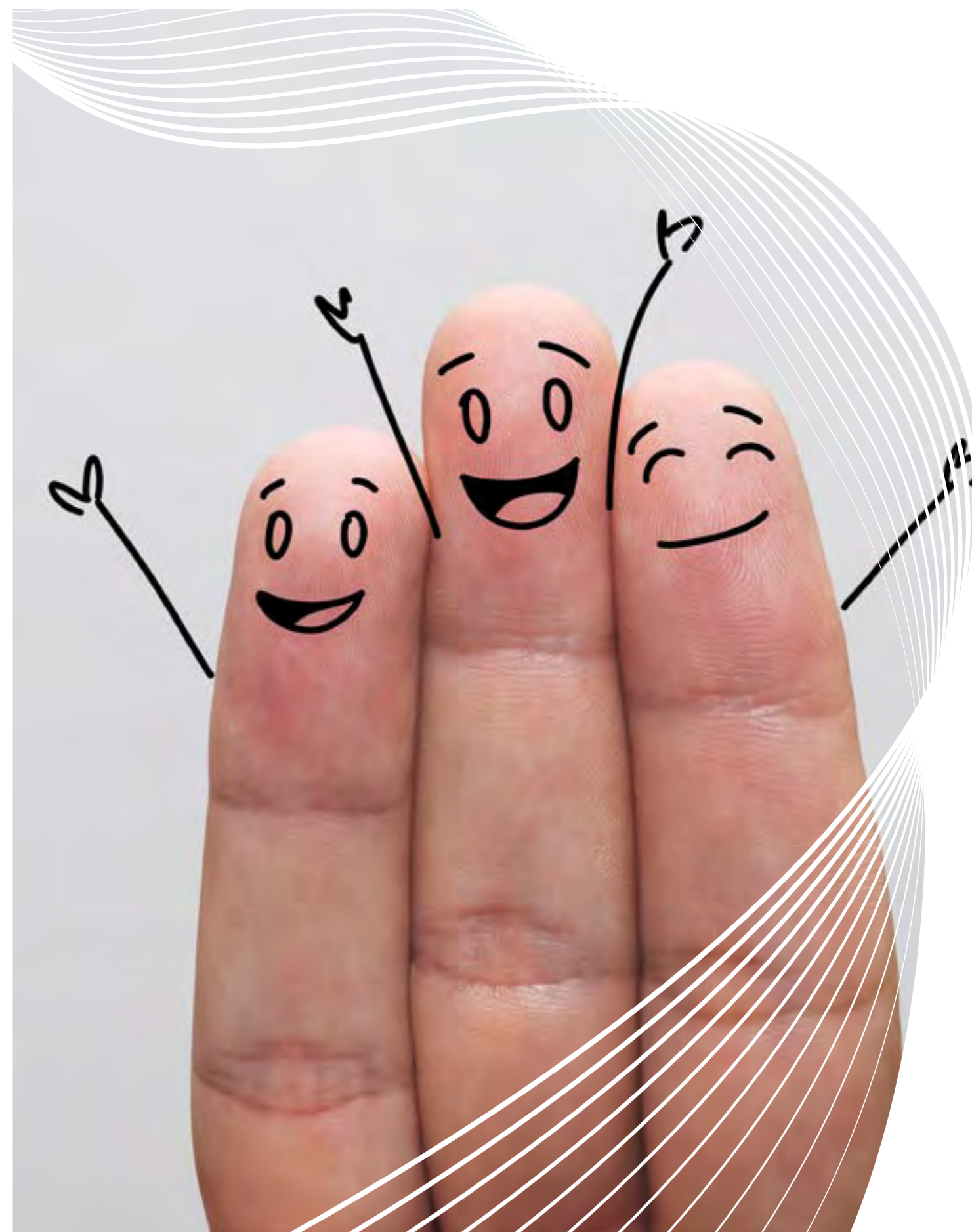
However, there are also a number of practical tasks your student will appreciate your help with:

- › when it's time to pack, explain the maximum luggage allowance and any restrictions on items to be carried in the student's hand luggage
- › assist them to pack and ship any large items via post or courier
- › help with any final arrangements they need to make, for example, closing bank accounts, exchanging leftover currency, or shopping for gifts to take home
- › check you have your student's correct home address and contact details to enable you to forward any belongings and future mail
- › on the day of departure, take them to the airport and stay with them until they have checked in and are safely through to the departure area.

### Staying in touch

One of the most rewarding things about homestay is the connections and friendships that are made between homestay providers and students from all over the world.

Most like to stay in contact after the homestay ends but please ensure that you and other members of your household maintain the same standard of appropriate and respectful communication expected during the homestay. If in doubt, particularly if you plan to communicate with young children, please seek permission from the student's parents or legal custodian.



# Homestay host monitoring and future placements

EQI, schools and homestay providers work together to create a safe environment where international students can pursue academic study and personal development.

Once you become an EQI homestay provider you are expected to maintain the standards set by EQI, and:

- › comply with the [ISP terms and conditions for homestay providers](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/ISP-terms-and-conditions-for-homestay-providers.pdf) (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/ISP-terms-and-conditions-for-homestay-providers.pdf>)
- › attend an orientation meeting prior to the arrival of each student you host, and at least once a year while hosting a student
- › meet with the school's international student/homestay coordinator regarding your student's welfare as required
- › where possible, attend all homestay meetings and information sessions run by EQI or the host school
- › ensure compliance with relevant laws (for example, blue cards, pool safety)
- › know what to do in an emergency or 'critical incident'
- › agree to regular visits by the school international student/homestay coordinator to check the welfare arrangements and facilities you provide to students.

If you fail to comply with EQI ISP homestay program terms and conditions, the school or EQI may revoke your status as an approved homestay provider.

## Change of placement

If you, the school, or the student requires a change of homestay placement, the host school will arrange this in accordance with the EQI student homestay placement procedure <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/dei-student-homestay-placement->

[procedure.pdf](#), and inform the student's parents or legal custodian of the details.

If a student wants to move from a homestay residence the school will investigate and arrange mediation or counselling if appropriate. The final decision on any move is made by the school Principal in liaison with EQI.

If you have a student staying with you, you may withdraw as a homestay provider by giving the host school at least four weeks written notice. This gives us time to make alternative arrangements.

The school or EQI may revoke your status as a homestay provider in the following circumstances:

- › If there is a serious incident, complaint or emergency involving the student, we may give you notice that the student will leave your home with immediate effect.
- › In any other case, EQI or the school may give you two weeks notice, or within a timeframe agreed with you.

## Homestay visits and risk assessments

To ensure compliance with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, homestay hosts are required to comply with and ensure everyone in the home complies with the processes outlined in [EQI's homestay procedures](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services). (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/category/international-students/international-student-support-services>)

## Changes to your situation

If there are any changes to your home environment or household members you must inform your host school.

Please notify your host school four weeks in advance if:

- › you propose to materially change your home (e.g. if you are renovating or relocating)
- › a person is intending to move into your home, even if only temporarily
- › a resident of your house moves out.

You are required to immediately notify your host school if there is a change in your Blue Card information, or that of any adults who live in your home for 7 or more days in a calendar year.



## Sandra Jarrett, Townsville

*"I became a Homestay host because I wanted to enrich our family's experience, especially my three sons, to embrace young people from other countries. I have loved sharing Australian experiences with our students. Several years ago I hosted two girls, Camille from Belgium and Philine from Germany. I will never forget our weekend trip to Magnetic Island and the excitement the girls felt seeing rock wallabies and a Koala with her baby, living in a suburban street. I have stayed in touch with both girls and recently visited Europe for the first time, where I met up with both girls and their families. The friendship we all developed through a shared trust and love for the two girls is the most precious gift."*



# Resources

You may find the following information resources helpful.

## Homestay roles and responsibilities

- › Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy.pdf> Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
- › Code of conduct for Queensland public service <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/working-in-the-public-service/conduct-and-performance/code-of-conduct-for-the-queensland-public-service>
- › EQI Incident Management Procedure <https://eqi.com.au/for-students/policies-procedures/EQI-incident-management-procedure>
- › Fire alarm regulations <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/fire/smoke-alarms>
- › ISP standard terms and conditions for homestay providers <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/ISP-terms-and-conditions-for-homestay-providers.pdf>
- › Requirements for swimming pool owners <https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/buying-owning-home/pool-safety/pool-laws-and-standards/laws>
- › Student protection procedure <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-protection-procedure> Queensland Government Blue Card Services [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au)
- › Working with children authority procedure <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/working-with-children-authority-procedure>

## Insurance

- › RSM [www.homestayhostinsuranceplus.com](http://www.homestayhostinsuranceplus.com)

## Student safety

- › 1800 QSTUDY 24-hour support for international students [eqi.com.au/for-students/1800qstudy](http://eqi.com.au/for-students/1800qstudy)
- › Beach safety [www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/beach-safety](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/beach-safety)
- › Bush walking information, maps and safety guidelines: Queensland Department of Environment and Science [www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking](http://www.parks.des.qld.gov.au/experiences/bushwalking)
- › Child safety [www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/child-safety.html](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/child-safety.html)
- › Cybersafety [www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety](http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety) and [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)
- › Emergencies [www.triplezero.gov.au](http://www.triplezero.gov.au) and [www.qld.gov.au/emergency/emergencies-services/](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/emergencies-services/)
- › Fire safety (at home and bush fires) [www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/fire)
- › Kidsafe Queensland [www.kidsafeqld.com.au](http://www.kidsafeqld.com.au)
- › Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women [www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children) Child employment [www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0137](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0137)
- › Recreational safety [www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/](http://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/safety/recreation/)
- › Staying safe around wildlife <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/>
- › Student protection procedure <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-protection-procedure>
- › Surf Life Saving Queensland website <https://sls.com.au/role/lifesaver/>





## Contact details

For more information about the EQI homestay program please contact your local school or EQI.

### Postal Address

PO Box 15050, City East  
QLD 4002  
Australia

### Street Address

Level 18, Education House  
30 Mary Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
Australia

### Telephone

(Free call within Australia)  
1800 316 540

### Telephone (outside Australia)

+61 7 3513 5301

### Email

[EQInternational@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:EQInternational@qed.qld.gov.au)

### Website

[eqi.com.au](http://eqi.com.au)

### CRICOS Provider Name

Education Queensland  
International

### CRICOS Provider Code

00608A

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Queensland  
Government