



POLICY TITLE: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELFARE AND ACCOMMODATION SELECTING, SCREENING AND MONITORING POLICY

DEVELOPED / REVIEWED BY

Policy Committee
Director of Business Services and Advancement
Deputy Principal Wellbeing and Strategy
Head of Admissions
Human Resources Manager
Risk and Compliance Manager

REVIEW SUMMARY

Policy to be presented to the Policy Committee for the first time at the May 2024 meeting. Policy to be reviewed in the first twelve months to ensure accuracy to current legislative components.

DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This document was first developed by Director of Business Services and Advancement and the Head of Admissions in 2024.

RATIONALE

Standard 5.3.7 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 requires that where the College takes on responsibility under the Migration Regulations 1994 (Cth) for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a student under 18 years of age, the College must have documented policies and procedures for selecting, screening and monitoring any third parties engaged by them to organise and assess welfare and accommodation arrangements.

DEFINITIONS

WWCC	Working with Children Check The Working with Children Check is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children
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PRINCIPLES / GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is the College's policy to engage in comprehensive selection, screening and monitoring processes when engaging third parties, such as:

- homestay service providers / agencies / partners
- homestay hosts / providers / families / homes
- student advocate service providers / agencies / partners, and

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student advocates to assist with the delivery of accommodation and welfare support services for our international students, particularly those who are under 18 years of age.

The College recognises its non-delegable responsibility for the care and supervision of international students and at no point in time does the College use the third party providers to verify that the international student's accommodation and welfare is suitable for their age and needs. This remains always with the College.

The College however, acknowledges that third party service providers will have their own internal selection, screening and monitoring procedures that are independent of the College and used by the provider for the purpose of their internal registration procedures. The College does not rely on these third party verification checks but may use these registered users / members as shortlists for further assessment under the College's selection, screening and monitoring procedures.

In providing accommodation and additional support services to international students:

- the homestay service provider is responsible for providing agency screened homestay accommodation 'shortlists', including details of agency-screened homestay options for the College to review, visit and potentially approve
- the homestay host is responsible for providing a home that is welcoming, safe and compliant to the College's requirements and meets the international students age and needs
- the student support service provider is responsible for referring agency screened student advocates for the College to interview, assess and potentially use
- the student advocate is responsible for providing supervision and support to the international student that is additional to, but not in place of, the support and counselling the College would normally provide to all students.

PROCEDURES

SCREENING

The College has screening procedures in place to ensure that third parties engaged by the College are suitably trained, qualified, experienced and have appropriate internal controls and measures in place to assist the College in providing accommodation and welfare support services to international student.

Screening homestay service providers

The College carefully screens homestay service providers (i.e. accommodation agencies) for quality of service, ethical standards and adherence to the child safe standards before entering into a service agreement with the provider. The screening process involves:

- Having an initial meeting with the service provider to gain an understanding of the business and its operations
- Obtaining and verifying the service provider's policies and procedures in relation to screening, selecting and monitoring its homestay hosts and its compliance with the child safe standards
- Informing the service provider of the College's child safe practices and the requirement and expectation of the service provider to comply with these practices
- Reference checking and consulting with network Colleges on the provider's quality of service

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Once screening is completed and approved, a service agreement, prepared by the College's solicitor, is provided to the service provider to execute.

Screening homestay hosts

The College carefully screens homestay hosts (i.e. the property and the people within the home) to ensure that the arrangement is appropriate to the student's age and needs. This is completed prior to placing the student with the homestay host (initial screening) and reviewed every 6 months thereafter (ongoing monitoring).

Screening adult family members

The International Student Coordinator completes the initial screening of the homestay host(s) by meeting with the homestay host and completing the International Student Welfare and Accommodation Assessment Form, identifying and verifying the suitability of all adult family members in the home. This screening process includes:

- sighting and verifying the WWCC status of all adult family members is valid and current against the WWCC Victoria online checking tool
- sighting proof of personal identity (i.e. driver's license / passport)
- gaining an understanding of the homestay host experience / history in providing homestay accommodation / working with children
- reference checking against the College's endorsed and approved homestay service provider partner.

Screening the homestay accommodation

The International Student Coordinator completes the initial screening of the homestay home by visiting the proposed accommodation and verifying the suitability of the property to the student's age, needs and expectations. This screening process includes:

- completing an onsite home inspection, filling in the **International Student Welfare and Accommodation Assessment Form** and ensuring that the property is suitable to accommodate international students (unless the property has been verified by a site visit in relation to another student in the previous three months)
- taking photos of the proposed living arrangement including the student's bedroom, bathroom facilities, kitchen and shared areas
- putting in place any corrective actions (if applicable) that must be met prior to the student being placed in the home

Screening student advocate service providers

The College carefully screens student advocate service providers (i.e. student advocate service agencies) for quality of service, ethical standards and adherence to the child safe standards before entering into a service agreement with the provider. The screening process involves:

- Having an initial meeting with the service provider to gain an understanding of the business and its operations

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- Obtaining and verifying the service provider's policies and procedures in relation to screening, selecting and monitoring of its welfare support staff that it refers to the College and its compliance with the child safe standards
- Informing the service provider of the College's child safe practices and the requirement and expectation of the service provider to comply with these practices
- Reference checking and consulting with network Colleges on the provider's quality of service

Once screening is completed and approved, a service agreement, prepared by the College's solicitor, is provided to the service provider to execute.

Screening student advocate

The College carefully screens student advocates directly and indirectly through a number of procedures, by:

- obtaining and verifying the student advocate provider's policies and procedures in relation to screening, selecting and monitoring of its student advocates that it refers to the College
- sighting and verifying the WWCC status of all student advocates that are referred to the College to ensure it is valid and current against the WWCC Victoria online checking tool
- sighting proof of personal identity (i.e. driver's license / passport)
- interviewing and assessing the student advocate's experience and suitability in providing welfare and support services to international students

SELECTION

Third party providers are selected on merit, quality of service and adherence to the child safe standards as per the College's screening process.

Selecting homestay service providers

Homestay service providers are selected on merit, quality of service and adherence to the child safe standards as per the College's screening process.

Selecting homestay hosts

Siena College will select the homestay host to be assigned to the international student by:

- matching homestay hosts with students that share similar interests and expectations
- interviewing and assessing the homestay host's experience and suitability in providing homestay accommodation and working with children
- reference checking the homestay hosts with the College's endorsed and approved homestay service provider partner
- completing the **International Student Welfare and Accommodation Assessment Form** for the particular engagement

Onsite induction of homestay hosts

For new homestay hosts, the International Student Coordinator will visit the home and induct all adult family members on the College's:

- child safe policies and procedures

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- expectations, roles and responsibilities of homestay hosts
- emergency and critical incident management procedures
- emergency contact details

Selecting student advocate providers

Student advocate service providers are selected on merit, quality of service and adherence to the child safe standards as per the College's screening process.

Selecting student advocate

Sienna College will select the student advocate to be assigned to the international student by reviewing the application forms completed by the international student to understand their cultural background, life experiences and interests and assigning a student advocate with the traits that would be most suitable for their age and needs.

Induction of Student Advocates

For new student advocates selected by the College, the International Student Coordinator arranges an onsite/online meeting with the student advocate to induct them on the College's:

- child safe policies and procedures
- expectations, roles and responsibilities of the support person
- emergency and critical incident management procedures
- emergency contact details

MONITORING

The College monitors third party providers for ongoing quality of service, ethical standards and adherence to the child safe standards by conducting regular feedback and performance reviews.

Monitoring homestay service providers

Homestay service providers are monitored for ongoing suitability through an annual feedback and performance review.

- ***Annual Feedback Meeting***

A meeting is held once a year between College representatives and the homestay service provider to review the quality of shortlisted homestay homes referred to the College and ensure that it continues to meet the service agreement between both parties.

- ***Performance reviews***

The International Student Coordinator completes a performance review for the homestay service provider once per year, to ensure that the service provider continues to meet the service requirements and expectations of the College. The completed review form is stored in the homestay service provider's file and discussed in the annual feedback meeting with the service provider.

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Monitoring homestay hosts

The College monitors homestay hosts for ongoing suitability by conducting regular onsite inspections (every 6 months) as well as obtaining regular feedback from international students living in the home.

- ***Ongoing monitoring (every 6 months)***

An onsite inspection of the property is completed every 6 months after the international student is placed in the home. The ongoing suitability of the property to accommodate an international student as well as the ongoing suitability of adult family members in the home to provide homestay accommodation and remain in child connected work (WWCC re-verification checks) is reviewed and assessed using the International Student Welfare and Accommodation Assessment Form.

- ***Ongoing training of homestay hosts***

For existing homestay hosts, the International Student Coordinator as part of the 6 monthly home inspection, will remind all adult family members of the College's:

- child safe policies and procedures
- expectations, roles and responsibilities of homestay hosts
- emergency and critical incident management procedures
- emergency contact details

and provide an update to any legislative or policy changes that may affect the homestay host.

- ***Feedback Forms***

The International Student Coordinator seeks feedback from international students on their experience in living with the homestay hosts.

The Feedback Form is completed by the international student in a meeting with the International Student Coordinator 3 months after moving into their homestay home and every 12 months thereafter.

Monitoring student advocate providers

Student advocate service providers are monitored for ongoing suitability through an annual feedback and performance review.

- ***Annual Feedback Meeting***

A meeting is held once a year between College representatives and the student advocate service provider to review the quality of support persons referred to the College and ensure that it continues to meet the service agreement between both parties.

- ***Performance reviews***

The International Student Coordinator completes a performance review for the student advocate service provider once per year, to ensure that the service provider continues to meet the service requirements and expectations of the College. The completed review form is stored in the student advocate service provider's file and discussed in the annual feedback meeting with the service provider.

Monitoring student advocates

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The College monitors student advocates for ongoing quality of service, ethical standards, adherence to the child safe standards and suitability to meet the age and needs of their assigned international student by:

- conducting regular student feedback reviews
- providing ongoing training of support persons
- ensuring that Working With Children Check for the support person remains valid and current against the WWCC Victoria online checking tool (WWCC re-verification checks)

- **Feedback Forms**

The International Student Coordinator seeks feedback from international students on their experience with the support person.

The Feedback Form is completed by the international student in a meeting with the International Student Coordinator 3 months after being assigned with their student advocate and every 12 months thereafter.

- **Ongoing training of student advocates**

For existing student advocates, the International Student Coordinator, on an annual basis, arranges an onsite / online information and awareness session with the student advocate to go over the College's:

- child safe policies and procedures
- expectations, roles and responsibilities of the support person
- emergency and critical incident management procedures
- emergency contact details

and provide an update to any legislative or policy changes that may affect their work and role as a student advocate engaged by the College.

- **WWCC Re-verification Checks**

This is checked monthly against the Victorian WWCC database using the WWCC Status Checker tool and sighted and verified annually as part of the information and awareness session between the International Student Coordinator and the student advocate.

RECORD KEEPING

The College maintains evidence of compliance with this policy by maintaining records of selection, screening and monitoring activities undertaken by the College in accordance with this policy and keep any written agreements entered into by the College. Records will be maintained in accordance with our **International Student Records Management and Retention Policy**.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Principal
- International Student Coordinator
- Deputy Principal Wellbeing and Strategy
- Head of Admissions

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RELATED LEGISLATION

- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001 (Cth)
- Migration Act 1958 (Cth)

RELATED SIENA COLLEGE POLICIES

- International Student Records Management and Retention Policy

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- International Student Welfare and Accommodation Assessment Form

RISK

In the Committee's deliberations it is important to consider the College's main strategic processes and the identification of associated risks. Some sample questions are included for referral.

Answers are to be documented as part of the policy.

1. **Faith and Catholic Identity.** Identify any risks to Catholic Identity or Dominican charism of the College. How will this policy harm or enhance either?
2. **Reputation.** Identify if there are any reputational risks to the College. How will this policy impact Siena and wider communities?
3. **Financial.** Identify any financial risks to the College. How will this policy impact the financial stability of the College?
4. **Contemporary Learning and Teaching.** Identify any risks to learning and teaching. How will this policy impact the academic performance of the College?
5. **Wellbeing.** Identify any risks to safety and wellbeing. How will this policy impact the mental and physical wellbeing of the College community?
6. **Community Engagement.** Identify any risks to building community engagement. How will this policy impact community relationships?
7. **Governance and Leadership.** Identify any risks to governance and leadership in the College. How will this policy affect the strategic direction of the College?

Do any risks identified above warrant changes to the proposed policy? If so the policy should be referred back to the developer/s.

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NEXT REVIEW

May 2025

POLICY LOCATION

<https://sienacentral.siena.vic.edu.au/homepage/3452>

www.siena.vic.edu.au

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