



## **International Student Program**

### **Policies and Procedures**

**To be read in conjunction with “Terms and Conditions for International Students”**

- Accommodation and Welfare
- Student Support Programs
- Course Progress, Enrolment and Attendance
- Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment
- Student Transfer
- Refunds
- Complaints and Appeals
- College Representatives and Marketing

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations**

**CAAW:** Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation

**DIBP:** Department of Immigration and Border Protection

**ESOS:** Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

**CoE:** Confirmation of Enrolment

**PRISMS:** Provider Registration and International Student Management System

**Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances** can include, but are not limited to:

- illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has impacted on studies
- a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports)

## **Accommodation and Welfare**

1. Mater Christi College accepts responsibility for the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for international students enrolled with the College where a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation/Welfare letter (CAAW) has been issued. A CAAW will only be issued for students once they have turned 13 years of age.
2. All international students must live in a College approved Homestay.
3. Where an eligible relative (DIBP Approved) or legal custodian of the student is providing accommodation, the College must also approve this. The relative or legal custodian must have an appropriate visa or a Student Guardian visa (subclass 590). No CAAW will be issued for this arrangement.
4. The College will not agree to students, irrespective of age, living alone or sharing accommodation with other students
5. The College may approve a person who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident (other than an eligible relative) to care for international students on a CAAW. The College will seek confirmation that the visa holder is at least 21 years old, is of good character and has an appropriate visa to remain in Australia until the overseas student's visa expires.
6. If a student under 18 years moves from a College-approved accommodation, the College will report this change in arrangements to DIBP and advise that it can no longer be responsible for the student's welfare.
7. If a student over 18 years moves from a College-approved accommodation, the College will regard this as a severe breach of College rules which may lead to cancellation of enrolment.

## **Homestay**

The College organises and supports private accommodation with carefully selected families in homes within the Homestay Program.

The Homestay Coordinator visits all prospective Homestays to discuss the Homestay Guidelines and assess the situation against the Homestay Selection Criteria.

All students and hosts are provided with contact details of key staff and the College responds promptly to requests for assistance from Homestay Hosts and students to resolve issues that may arise from time to time.

The International Program Team monitors the welfare of students in Homestay and maintains regular contact with hosts. Homestays are visited with each new student placement and the College will withdraw students from placements that do not meet the expectations of the College as outlined in the Homestay Guidelines and the Homestay Selection Criteria.

The Homestay Coordinator regularly monitors all homes and inspects the properties at least every six months after the student has commenced their stay to confirm that the accommodation still meets the international student's needs.

## **Student Support Programs**

### **1. Orientation Program**

On commencement, a member of the International Program Team welcomes new students to the College. The orientation process includes:

- an introduction to the student's Pastoral Group Teacher and student "Buddy"
- collecting materials eg electronic device (including map and an introduction to College procedures), timetable, calendar, locker, stationary,
- support in the purchase of uniform and with banking and health insurance
- introduction to relevant College staff eg Principal, Deputy Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Careers Counsellor, Psychologists, College Nurses
- information about the ESOS Framework including visa conditions relating to attendance and progress and the complaints and appeals process
- tours of the College and the local area
- advice on safety procedures including contact details for emergencies

### **2. Support Services - Academic**

Further support is provided to students when they enter mainstream classes. In addition to the ongoing attention of the subject teacher, good learning is supported by:

- in-class assistance from specialist ESL teachers
- progress monitoring by the International Student Coordinator
- written academic reports for parents each term
- tutoring during and after school hours from teaching staff
- personal interviews and support for subject selection
- on-line course and assessment guides
- guidance with university selection and application procedures

### **3. Support Services - Welfare**

Mater Christi has well-established student support services to respond to the many issues that arise for young people away from home. The College provides:

- personal attention within the Pastoral Group and House structure
- excellent welfare structures including on-campus Health Centre with Psychologists and Nurses
- arrangements for all student accommodation
- airport reception
- assistance with administrative tasks such as banking, transport, communications, health insurance

### **4. Critical Incident Procedures**

The College maintains comprehensive Emergency Management and Critical Incident and Recovery Plans which are regularly reviewed with the support of authorities. These plans acknowledge particular responsibilities relating to the needs of International Students and their families.

## **Course Progress, Enrolment and Attendance**

### **Completion of studies within expected duration**

1. Mater Christi College will monitor, record and assess the course progress for each student for the courses in which they are enrolled.
  2. Part of the assessment of course progress at the end of each semester will include an assessment of whether the student will be able to complete their course within the expected duration as stated on the student visa. This review will be conducted by the International Student Coordinator in liaison with the Heads of School.
  3. Students must complete the course within the expected duration as specified on the student's CoE. Where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist, or the College has implemented its intervention strategies, or study deferment has been approved, an extension may be granted.
  4. Where the College decides to extend the duration of the student's study, the College will report via PRISMS and/or issue a new COE if required.
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### **Course Progress**

1. The course progress of all students will be assessed on a regular basis. Formal Assessments are completed at the end of each semester and Progress Reports are completed at the half-way point of each semester.
2. To demonstrate satisfactory progress, students will need to achieve competency in at least 60% of their studies as determined by the subject course materials. Competency is demonstrated by an attainment of a unit result of "S" for VCE units and a minimum MYP score of "1" at Years 7 to 10.
3. If a student does not achieve competency in at least 60% of units studied in an assessment period, the International Student Coordinator and Year Learning Coordinator will meet with the student to develop an intervention strategy for academic improvement. This may include supervised study periods, extra after school classes or sessions with the College tutors. Students also will be given career and guidance counselling and may be advised to change subject and/or course selection. Services beyond those normally provided within the school's resources may incur additional cost to the family.
4. A copy of the student's individual strategy and progress reports in achieving improvement will be forwarded to parents following discussion with the International Students Coordinator. This report may need to be translated for parents.
5. The student's individual strategy for academic improvement will be monitored by the Year Learning Coordinator over the following semester and records of student response to the strategy will be kept.
6. If the student does not improve sufficiently academically and achieve satisfactory course progress by the end of the next assessment period, the College will advise the student and her parents in writing of its intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202, and she has 20 working days in which to access the school's internal complaints and appeals process.
7. The school will notify DIBP via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory progress as soon as practicable where:

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- the student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days, or
  - withdraws from the complaints and appeals process, or
  - the complaints and appeals process results in decision in favour of the School.
8. *Compelling and compassionate circumstances* will be taken into account before reporting a student.
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### **Attendance Policy**

1. The College will notify DIBP via PRISMS within 5 business days if a student does not commence on the agreed starting date.
2. Students must attend all scheduled course contact hours.
3. Students must attend a minimum of 80% of scheduled course contact hours as a condition of their visa excluding any suspensions, deferment or approved absences from school.
4. Student attendance is recorded daily and for each lesson. Pastoral Group Teachers and Year Learning Coordinators monitor student attendance. Compliance with visa conditions is calculated over each term by the International Student Coordinator.
5. All absences from school should be accompanied by a medical certificate, an explanatory communication from the student's carer or evidence that leave has been granted by a member of the teaching staff.
6. Students at risk of breaching Mater Christi College's attendance requirements will be interviewed by the Year Learning Coordinator or International Student Coordinator. The student will be counselled and offered necessary support when they have absences reaching 10% of classes missed.
7. If a student's absence from classes exceeds 20%, the College will advise the student of its intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202, and she has 20 working days in which to access the school's internal complaints and appeals process.
8. The College will notify DIBP via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course attendance as soon as practicable where:
  - The student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days
  - Withdraws from the complaints and appeals process
  - The complaints and appeals process results in a decision in favour of the School.
9. Students will not be reported for failing to meet the 80% threshold for class attendance where the student produces documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances e.g. medical illness supported by a medical certificate and class attendance is not below 70%.
10. If a student is assessed as having nearly reached the threshold of 70% attendance, the Director of the International Program will assess whether a suspension of studies is in the interests of the student as per Mater Christi College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.

11. If the student does not obtain a suspension of studies, and attendance falls below 70%, the reporting process will commence immediately.

## **Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment**

### **Deferment of commencement of study requested by student**

1. Mater Christi College will only grant a deferment of commencement of studies for *compassionate and compelling circumstances*.
2. The final decision for assessing and granting a deferment of commencement of studies lies with the Director – International Program. Deferment will be recorded on PRISMS depending on the students CoE status.

### **Suspension of study requested by student**

3. Once the student has commenced the course, Mater Christi College will only grant a suspension of study for *compassionate and compelling circumstances*.
4. Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS. The period of suspension will not be included in attendance calculations. The final decision for assessing and granting a suspension of studies lies with the Director – International Program.

### **Assessing requests for deferment or suspension of studies**

5. Applications will be assessed on merit by the Director – International Program.
6. All applications for deferment or suspension will be considered within 5 working days.

### **Exclusion from class (Internal Suspension)**

7. Mater Christi College may exclude a student from class studies on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Exclusion will occur as per the College Student Management Processes as outlined in the Student Guide.  
<https://www.materchristi.edu.au/community/parent-resources/mcc-student-guide/>
8. Excluded students must abide by the conditions of their exclusion from studies as determined by the Deputy Principal or Year Learning Coordinator.
9. Where the student is provided with homework or other studies for the period of the exclusion, the student must continue to meet the academic requirements of the course.
  - Exclusions from class will not be recorded on PRISMS.
  - Periods of exclusion from class will be recorded as absences in attendance calculations for formal College reports.

- Students will be re-admitted to class following a satisfactory interview with the College Deputy Principal.

### **School initiated suspension of studies**

1. Mater Christi College may initiate a suspension of studies for a student on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Suspension will occur as per the College Student Management Processes as outlined in the Student Guide.
2. Suspended students must abide by the conditions of their exclusion from studies as determined by the Deputy Principal.
3. Students who have been suspended for more than 28 days, including internal suspensions are required to return to their home country by DIBP unless special circumstances exist (e.g. the student is medically unfit to travel).
4. If special circumstances exist, the student must abide by the conditions of his or her suspension as determined by the Deputy Principal.
5. Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS. Periods of exclusion from class will be recorded as absences in attendance calculations for formal College reports.

### **Cancellation of enrolment**

1. Mater Christi College will cancel the enrolment of a student under the following conditions:
  - Failure to pay course fees
  - Failure to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements
  - Repeated or severe breach of College rules and expectations as outlined in the College Student Guide.
2. Mater Christi College is required to report failure to maintain satisfactory course progress and failure to maintain satisfactory attendance to DIBP. This can result in the cancellation of student visa.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

1. Student requested deferment and suspension are not subject to Mater Christi College Complaints and Appeals Policy.
2. Exclusion from class is subject to Mater Christi College Complaints and Appeals Policy.
3. School initiated suspension, where the suspension is to be recorded in PRISMS, and cancellation is subject to Mater Christi College Complaints and Appeals Policy.
4. Where Mater Christi College intends to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment, the student and her parents will be informed in writing including the reasons for the decision.
5. The Student or her parents will have 20 working days to appeal the school's decision of intention to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment.

6. For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment and attendance. The Deputy Principal will determine if participation in studies will be in class or under a supervised arrangement outside of classes.
7. If students access Mater Christi College complaints and appeals process regarding a school initiated suspension or cancellation, the suspension or cancellation will not be reported in PRISMS until the complaints and appeals process is finalised, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply. Extenuating circumstances include:
  - the student refuses to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (for students under 18 years of age)
  - the student is missing
  - the student has medical concerns or severe depression or psychological issues which lead the school to fear for the student's wellbeing
  - the student has engaged or threatened to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others
  - is at risk of committing a criminal offence, or
  - the student is the subject of investigation relating to criminal matters
8. The use of extenuating circumstances by Mater Christi College to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment prior to the completion of any complaints and appeals process will be supported by appropriate evidence.
9. The final decision for evaluating extenuating circumstances lies with the Principal.

### **Student Advice**

Deferment, suspension and cancellation of enrolment can have an effect on a student's visa as a result of changes to enrolment status. The College will inform students to contact DIBP for advice.

## Student Transfer Policy

1. International students are restricted from transferring from their principal course of study for a period of six months.
2. Mater Christi will not knowingly facilitate the transfer of a student from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of her principal course of study except where:
  - the original registered provider has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered
  - the original registered provider has provided a release
  - the original registered provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian Government or state or territory government that prevents the student from continuing her principal course
  - any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for that change.
3. A release will only be provided for a student who has been enrolled for less than six months on a case by case basis.  
Circumstances where a release will be considered include but are not limited to:
  - The International student will be reported because they are unable to achieve satisfactory course progress at the level they are studying, even after engaging with Mater Christi's intervention strategies
  - There is evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances
  - The provider does not deliver the course as outlined in the written agreement
  - There is evidence that the international student's reasonable expectations about their current course are not being met
  - There is evidence that the international student was misled by the registered provider or an education or migration agent regarding the registered provider or its course and the course is, therefore, unsuitable to their needs and/or study objectives
  - An appeal (internal or external) on another matter results in a decision or recommendation to release the international student
4. Students may apply for a transfer after 6 months of enrolment. In order to apply for a release, students must have a letter from the receiving provider that a valid offer of enrolment has been made.
5. If a student transfers from Mater Christi College before completion of Year 12, written notice must be given to the Director of the International Program at least 12 weeks in advance or by the last day of term preceding departure, whichever is greater. If this written notice is not given, a full term's tuition will be payable.
6. Students under 18 years of age must also have;
  - Written evidence that the student's parent(s)/legal guardian supports the transfer
  - Written confirmation that the new provider will accept responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support, and general welfare arrangements where the student is not living with a parent(s)/legal guardian or a suitable nominated relative
  - Evidence that the student is always in DIBP approved welfare and accommodation arrangements
7. The College undertakes to reply to a request for transfer within 2 weeks from when the request is received during term time and within 4 weeks if received in

a vacation period. If a release is granted, students will be advised to seek advice from DIBP regarding their visa.

8. Students whose request for transfer has been refused will be informed in writing with reasons for the decision. Students may appeal the decision in accordance with the College complaints and appeals policy. The complaints and appeals policy is available on the College web-site.

## Refund Policy

A student may be entitled to a refund of some or all of fees paid under the following circumstances.

1. If a student is not granted a visa, the College will refund all fees paid less an administration charge of \$200.
2. If a student withdraws after a visa is issued and before commencement, the College will refund all fees less 30% of annual tuition.
3. If a student withdraws after a visa is issued and after commencement, (or fails to commence on the first day of term for any reason) the College will refund fees paid less tuition and Homestay fees for the current term and 30% of annual tuition.
4. If a student's visa status changes to a fee exempt sub-class, the College will adjust fees to the local rate from the date the new (fee exempt) visa status is granted and refund tuition fees for weeks paid (but unused).
5. There is no refund of any fees if a student breaches visa conditions, including:
  - a. failing to pay tuition fees by the date specified on the invoice
  - b. attendance falls below 80%
  - c. academic performance falls below the requirements of DIBP
  - d. failing to adhere to student disciplinary regulations.
6. In the unlikely event that Mater Christi College cannot deliver the program in which the student has enrolled, the College will provide a full refund of tuition and Homestay fees paid in advance. In this instance of Provider Default, the refund will be made within two weeks of the cessation of the course and the College will report all details to the Director of TPS.  
<https://tps.gov.au/Home/NotLoggedIn>
7. If Mater Christi College cancels the student enrolment less than one month before the student commences, the College will provide a full refund of tuition and Homestay fees paid in advance. In this instance the refund will be made within two weeks of the cancellation of enrolment.
8. This policy, and the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws.
9. Requests for refunds must be made in writing within six months of the date of cancellation of enrolment or change of visa status and submitted to the Director of the International Program.
10. Refunds will be paid in Australian dollars within four weeks to an account nominated by the parents.
11. In the instance of refunds due to student default, the College will provide notice to the Director of TPS of actions taken.

## Complaints and Appeals - Resolving Student Grievances

On occasions students may be concerned or disagree with a decision made by the College. In such a situation, students are encouraged to discuss the matter with College staff to resolve the matter at an **informal** level.

Mater Christi will manage all complaints and appeals in a professional, fair and transparent manner.

1. For concerns relating to personal and/or academic matters - students are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Pastoral Group Teacher, Year Learning Coordinator or the International Student Coordinator.
2. For concerns relating to accommodation - students are advised to discuss the matter with the Homestay Coordinator or the International Student Coordinator.
3. For concerns relating to financial or contractual matters - students are advised to seek clarification on these matters with International **Administrator** or the Accounts Department.

Where a student believes the matter has not been fairly resolved, she will be advised of the **formal** procedures for hearing complaints and appeals. Where this process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the school that the school intends to report her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student will be advised that she has 20 days from the date of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.

1. The student should lodge their complaint or appeal in writing to the Deputy Principal clearly stating their concern and/or grounds for complaint or appeal.
2. The Deputy Principal will make an appointment (within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint or appeal) for the student to meet and discuss the matter. The student will be encouraged to bring a support person to the appointment.
3. A written response will be given to the complainant or appellant not later than 5 working days following the initial and/or subsequent appointments. A copy of the response will be kept on the student's file.

There is no cost associated with the above and students are entitled to retain their enrolment through the duration of this process

If the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, she will be informed within 10 working days that further assistance may be sought from the Overseas Students Ombudsman. This service is free and independent and can be contacted through their website <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/overseas-students> or by phone 1300 362 072.

If the matter is still unresolved, students retain the right to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

The College will not report the student through PRISMS for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance until the student has accessed the internal and external complaints handling and appeals process, and the decision or recommendation supports Mater Christi College.

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The College will immediately implement any decision or recommendation in favour of the overseas student either through the internal or external appeals process.

## College Representatives and Marketing

1. The Director of the International Student Program is responsible for:
  - a. maintaining policies and procedures compliant with the ESOS Act and the National Code 2007
  - b. the annual review of all marketing materials, electronic and hard copy to ensure their accuracy and compliance with the National Code 2018.
  - c. distributing updates of materials to College representatives
  - d. monitoring the performance of College representatives
  - e. responding to reports of misleading or inappropriate actions by College representatives
  - f. maintaining current agreements with College representatives
2. The College has signed agreements with representatives in all of our source countries. These representatives are expected to have a good knowledge of Mater Christi College and our programs and to liaise with the College for further information as required. The College will provide families with details of representatives based in their home country.
3. The College will investigate any reports that a College representative provided out-dated or misleading information. All reports will be assessed on the circumstances of the case. Responses could include discussions with agency management through to termination of agreement and reporting the issue to the relevant AEI office.
4. The College may appoint new representatives from time to time and will establish the credentials of same through gathering and assessing the following types of information.
  - Company profile including
    - Details of principal's background and qualifications
    - Number of staff
    - Details of key staff members and/or school consultants
    - Number of years in education industry
    - Services provided by the company
    - Location and details of offshore offices
    - Location and details of any off-shore partners
    - Company registration details
  - Experience with Australian education industry
  - Knowledge of ESOS Act and National Code
  - Completion of the AEI Agent Training Course
  - Names of any professional organisations of which the agent is a member
  - Referees or references (dated and with contact details) from
    - An Australian Government Officer or Agency
    - An Australian or New Zealand school
5. Mater Christi will not knowingly facilitate the transfer of a student from another registered provider prior to the student completing six months of her principal course of study except where:
  - a. the original registered provider has ceased to be registered or the course in which the student is enrolled has ceased to be registered
  - b. the original registered provider has provided a release
  - c. the original registered provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian Government or state or territory government that prevents the student from continuing her principal course
  - d. any government sponsor of the student considers the change to be in the student's best interest and has provided written support for that change.