National Guidelines for the Operation of International Secondary Student Exchange Programs in Australia

REVISED – 1 January 2022

Preface

In November 2017 the National Coordinating Committee for International Secondary Student Exchange (NCCISSE) recommended that the 2015 version of the *National Guidelines for the Operation of International Secondary Student Exchange Programs in Australia* be revised.

This document is intended to provide general guidelines for:

- the registration of SEOs; and

- procedures for the operation of international secondary student exchange programs in Australian secondary schools.

The guidelines are of a general nature to accommodate state/territory variations and should be read in conjunction with respective state/territory guidelines.

The NCISSE was established in November 1989. The committee meets annually to discuss the reciprocity returns submitted by Student Exchange Organisations (SEOs) and all other matters pertaining to student exchange programs in Australia. The committee also meets to ensure a consistent approach to the following year's exchange programs.

The NCCISSE acts as a forum organisation for state/territory exchange registration authorities. It has responsibility for procedural matters of national interest relating to educational exchange at a secondary school level. It contributes to the flow of information about immigration, health and other issues of general interest.

The NCCISSE consists of representatives of the state/territory registration authorities. The venue for the annual meetings rotates through the states and territories.

Matters of student welfare, promotion and management are the direct responsibility of registered organisations.

Sister school relationships, short-term cultural exchanges, twinning arrangements and Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) between the Australian and state and territory governments, and governments of other countries, do not form part of international secondary student exchange programs in Australia.

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Definitions

AASES form	Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Student form (issued by registration authorities to registered SEOs to enable international secondary exchange students to obtain Australian student visas as per section 5A107 of the Australian Government's *Migration Regulation 1994*)
Base state/territory	For SEOs that operate across more than one jurisdiction, the jurisdiction within which the SEO has its head-office or central location will be considered the SEO's base state/territory.
Child Safe Standards	Child protection legislation and requirements in each state / territory.
CRC	Criminal Record Check - an official police or security agency check of a person's criminal history undertaken in order to verify their suitability to work with children, e.g. Working with Children Check (WWCC). In jurisdictions where there is more than one check available, the relevant state/territory Registration Authority is to determine which available check is best suited to the requirements of a CRC for the purpose of these guidelines.
Department of Home Affairs	(Australian) Department with responsibility for Immigration matters
Exchange student	A student enrolled in a secondary school participating in either an inbound or outbound secondary exchange program provided by an Australian registered SEO
Local SEO coordinator	A representative of an SEO engaged in either a paid or an unpaid capacity to coordinate and provide SEO support to exchange students and host families
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCISSE	National Coordinating Committee for International Secondary Student Exchange (the national body comprising representatives of the Australian state and territory registration

authorities responsible for registering or approving, and quality assuring SEOs and programs)

OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover (mandatory health insurance required by Department of Home Affairs visa regulations for all Australian Student Visas)
Registration authority	The legal entity in an Australian state or territory responsible for registering or approving, and quality assuring SEOs. Details of the registration authorities for each state and territory are provided at Appendix 1.
SEO	Student Exchange Organisation – a registered school or not-for-profit organisation registered or approved by a registration authority to provide secondary student exchange programs to/from a state or territory.
Third party organisations	A person or organisation (including overseas partners or affiliates) engaged directly by the SEO to provide an element of the SEO's exchange program. These include, for example, an overseas affiliate or partner organisation that is responsible for the accommodation and welfare of an outbound student. These do not include companies providing a general service such as an airline, insurance companies or bus services.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale for exchange programs

Australian and state/territory governments recognise that student exchange programs provide cultural and educational benefits to students and school communities. Exchange programs provide a broad educational experience for students and increase international and cultural understanding among young people.

1.2 Objectives of exchange programs

The objectives of exchange programs are:

- to provide educational enrichment for exchange students by developing their linguistic skills and introducing them to a different educational philosophy, environment and curriculum;

- to develop cultural awareness and understanding among students in the school environment; and

- to promote international understanding and cooperation.

1.3 Student exchange programs

A secondary student exchange program is a reciprocal program whereby Australian students attend high school and enrol in a full time school program in another country for a minimum period of three months or one school term, whichever is shorter. Under similar conditions students from other countries undertake study in Australia.

[Note: In Victoria, the minimum period is 28 days due to the requirements for the enrolment of overseas students in Victorian government schools. Inbound exchange students participating in programs of more than 28 days duration in Victoria must obtain a student visa.]

All student exchange programs must be conducted through a registered SEO. SEOs can be not-for-profit organisations or registered schools.

It should be noted that student visas will only be issued to students who are enrolled as full time secondary students in a recognised course of study.

[Note: Subclass 500 (school sector) visas are also issued to full fee paying students who are issued with a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) by their education provider.]

1.4 Principle of reciprocity

Reciprocity of exchange is accepted instead of payment of tuition fees.

Reciprocity within each state/territory is calculated across the entire program run by an SEO over a two-year period. When determining reciprocity the length of exchange is taken into account rather than the number of exchanges.

Both the Australian Government and state/territory governments permit exchange students on subclass 500 (school sector) visas to be enrolled as local students in either government or non-government schools for school funding purposes.

The principle governing the entry of exchange students is that their entry must not result in social or financial cost to the Australian community.

Students seeking entry visas to Australia to undertake a secondary exchange program must present the Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students (AASES) form. State/territory registering authorities issue this form to approved SEOs.

Students must attend school for the period designated by each state/territory registration authority to be included in any exchange reciprocity calculations. For most states and territories the minimum period is three months, or one full school term, whichever is shorter.

The state/territory registration authorities will compare the total points for inbound and outbound programs without particular concern for the mix of short and long-term programs.

SEOs must send students for an equal number of months from a particular state/territory as they host in that state/territory annually, or at least over a rolling two year basis.

How reciprocity is calculated

Reciprocity is calculated using the number of months students are on exchange and not the number of students that may participate in a program. It is based on the allocation of one point for each calendar month of exchange regardless of when in the month the exchange commences and ends.

For example:

a)   a student arriving on 29 June and departing on 1 September earns 4 reciprocity points;

b)   3 students on exchange for 4 months will accrue the same number of points as 1 student on exchange for 12 months.

An exchange that commences in a month of one year and concludes in the corresponding month in the next year would normally count as 13 points. However, the state/territories registration authorities have agreed to count it as 12 points.

Monitoring of reciprocity

The NCCISSE is responsible for monitoring reciprocity and meets annually to review the reciprocity data. The key dates for the collection and submission of reciprocity data are:

By 1st September

Registration authorities dispatch *National Standard Annual Monitoring Forms* to SEOs.

By 1st October

SEOs complete and submit the *National Standard Annual Monitoring Forms* to the respective registration authority.

In November

The NCCISSE meets for the annual national review.

2.   Policy and legislative requirements

Australian Government policy

Australian Government policy from 1 January 1990 provided for:

- overseas students to enrol in Australian schools through the International Full Fee Paying Students Program; and

- exchange programs to be managed and regulated by each State and Territory with reciprocity of exchange accepted instead of payment.

Visa requirements

Inbound students participating in an International Secondary Student Exchange Program conducted by an SEO enter Australia on a Student Visa. The Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students (AASES) form issued by the State/Territory Registration Authority to an SEO is required to obtain a student visa.

It is a prerequisite to obtain a student visa that students have health insurance. Inbound students must satisfy this requirement by obtaining Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). The OSHC provides medical and hospital insurance. Students on a student visa must not arrive in Australia before the period of health insurance commences and must maintain adequate insurance for the duration of their stay. A student in Australia without adequate health insurance is in breach of visa condition 8501.

3. Areas of responsibility

3.1 The Australian Government

The Australian Government is responsible for:

- advising on immigration, health regulations and overseas travel safety issues; and

- issuing designated student visas for inbound exchange students through the AASES form process.

3.2 State / Territory Registration Authorities

State/Territory Registration Authorities are responsible for:

- issuing guidelines to organisations seeking registration;

- registering SEOs;

- providing guidelines for organisations on student enrolment procedures, advice to schools and a timeline of key dates;

- accounting for the AASES forms issued and providing forms to SEOs;

- monitoring reciprocity and compliance with the National Guidelines for all approved secondary exchange programs in their state/territory;

- maintaining contact with representatives of SEOs;

- maintaining Australia's reputation for the quality and integrity of its education and training services;

- managing instances of non-compliance as appropriate including the suspension and cancellation of a registration, if required;

- providing information, including a published list of all currently registered organisations, for each jurisdiction; and

- investigating complaints from schools, parents and students in relation to the conduct of a registered SEO under these Guidelines.

3.3 National Coordinating Committee for International Secondary Student Exchange (NCCISSE)

National Coordinating Committee for International Secondary Student Exchange (NCCISSE) is responsible for:

- reviewing and amending the NCCISSE National Guidelines, as required;

- maintaining an Operations Protocol Manual to ensure a nationally consistent application of the registration criteria for all organisations;

- leading discussion of national issues relating to the provision of secondary student exchange programs across all states and territories;

- monitoring national reciprocity of SEOs;

- liaising with Australian Government Departments regarding secondary student exchange matters;

- liaising with Department of Home Affairs via the provision of a consolidated list of registered SEOs and state/territory contacts;

- providing SEOs with national reciprocity data on an annual basis; and

- providing an opportunity for SEOs to raise issues relating to the operation of secondary exchange programs in Australia.

3.4 Student Exchange Organisations (SEOs)

SEOs are responsible for:

- maintaining necessary systems to carry out their duty of care requirements in a responsible and effective manner;

- providing orientation and support services for both inbound and outbound students and overseeing students' health and welfare;

- conducting their operations according to the NCCISSE Guidelines and any relevant guidelines of the state/territory registration authorities;

- implementing procedures for arranging the school and host family placements of exchange students and if necessary for changing these placements;

- ensuring that all students have appropriate health insurance, including OSHC for inbound students;

- ensuring that all students' normal day to day living expenses are covered for the duration of the exchange;

- notifying the state/territory registration authorities promptly when there is a fundamental change in the nature of the programs being offered;

- notifying the state/territory registration authority if students do not take up placements, leave the program sooner than expected, or do not depart the destination country when the program is completed;

- ensuring compliance with the child protection legislation of the states/territories and countries in which they operate, including meeting all required reporting obligations;

- ensuring the return of fully completed AASES forms to the relevant state/territory registration authority following the enrolment of exchange students;

- ensuring that a zero or positive reciprocity balance is maintained within each state/territory in which the organisation is registered; and

- ensuring that all staff, both paid and volunteer, are aware of the requirements under the National Guidelines, as per person's role within the SEO.

3.5   Exchange students

Exchange students are responsible for:

- fulfilling the conditions of the visa that has been granted;

- attending the appointed school full time;

- behaving in an appropriate manner as agreed under the terms of the relevant exchange program, and complying with school codes of conduct, regulations and conditions of enrolment and abiding by the laws of the destination country;

- leaving the destination country on completion of the exchange program or the expiration of any relevant visa; and

- leaving the destination country earlier if circumstances develop such that the SEO believes that the student's further participation in the program is not appropriate.

4. Application for registration as a SEO

State/territory registration authorities will consider applications for registration against the Standards for Secondary Student Exchange Approval in these guidelines and those developed by the respective state or territory.

In the assessment of the application, the state/territory registration authorities should have regard to the compliance record of the provider in other jurisdictions.

Applications for registration should address all the registration standards in sufficient detail to allow the state/territory registration authority to make a decision. Personal information provided by organisations will be subject to state/territory privacy laws.

SEOs not granted registration or which have their registration cancelled or not renewed may request a review of the decision with the state/territory registration authority, in accordance with relevant state/territory procedures.

States/territories registration authorities will register approved SEOs for a designated period. State/territory registration authorities may undertake reviews during the period of registration. Reviews may occur:

- as part of the registration process;

- when there is concern about unsatisfactory performance;

- when there is significant growth in an SEO's operations;

- when there is a fundamental change in the nature of the programs being offered; or

- regarding any other matter deemed to require a review by the relevant state/territory registration authority.

State/territory registration authorities must maintain a list of organisations registered in their state/territory. The register is to be made publicly available.

Registration is subject to the ongoing compliance with the National Guidelines and any other relevant legislative requirements in each state/territory. Failure to comply may result in conditions, suspension or cancellation of registration

5. Standards for SEO approval

General

5.1 Purpose of exchange programs

SEOs must demonstrate that the principal purpose of their program is to provide a broad educational experience for students, and to further international and intercultural understanding.

5.2 Use of the term 'student exchange'

SEOs must ensure all their inbound students participating in a program advertised as 'student exchange' program enter Australia on a subclass 500 (school sector) visa issued via an AASES form.

SEOs that provide other visits or cultural programs for young people where participants enter Australia on visitor visas must:

- not promote or refer to such programs as 'student exchange' programs in any way; and

- make explicitly clear to participants and parents that these programs are not "student exchange programs provided under the National Guidelines for Student Exchange" and are not quality assured by the relevant state/territory registration authority.

Only programs operating under these guidelines may be identified as 'student exchange' programs in all promotional and marketing material, both print and electronic.

5.3 Reciprocity

SEOs are required to maintain a neutral or positive reciprocity balance within each state/territory in which the organisation is registered.

SEOs must submit to the state/territory registration authority information as requested regarding all incoming and outgoing programs, including the enrolment commencement and

cessation dates for each student. This information must be confirmed annually on the *National Standard Annual Monitoring Form*.

Students must attend school for the period designated by each state/territory registration authority to be included in any exchange reciprocity calculations. In most states and territories the minimum period is three months, or one full school term, whichever is shorter.

The state/territory registration authorities will compare the total points for hosting and sending programs without particular concern for the mix of short and long-term programs.

A negative balance over two consecutive years is considered a breach of the organisation's reciprocity obligation.

If the annual reciprocity return of the SEO shows a significant negative reciprocity balance, the organisation is required to submit a remedial action plan in association with the annual reciprocity return to the relevant registration authority. The plan should apply to any jurisdiction in which the organisation has a significant negative reciprocity balance.

A continuing significant negative reciprocity balance is considered grounds for suspension or cancellation in the relevant jurisdiction.

Governance of SEOs

5.4   Eligibility for SEO registration

SEO registration is open only to:

- a school registered by an Australian state or territory department of education or statutory authority which provides secondary school programs for Australian domestic students; or

- a not-for-profit corporation, association or other legal entity established or registered under either Australian, state or territory legislation.

5.5   Not-for-profit status and financial viability

SEOs are required to provide evidence of not-for-profit status by submitting appropriate documentation to the relevant state/territory registration authorities.

Documentation required by registration authorities may include copies of:

- a certificate of incorporation;

- memorandum and articles of association or constitution;

- certificates of insurance/public liability cover;

- audited annual financial statements;

- compliance with ATO requirements for not-for-profit status;

- registration as a not-for-profit organisation with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC);

- standard invoices that demonstrate that program costs are reasonable and that revenue is expended entirely on the objectives of the exchange program. SEOs must indicate what is included in participation fees and what are optional extras; and / or

- financial health assessment.

The state/territory registration authorities may request ongoing evidence from organisations that they are continuing to be not-for-profit.

Where an SEO's business model includes programs other than secondary student exchange programs, the organisation must be able to demonstrate that the entity is a genuine not-for-profit organisation.

SEOs are required to demonstrate that they remain not-for-profit and financially viable, and have sufficient financial resources to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities for the duration of the approval. The relevant state/territory registration authority may review whether a SEO continues to be not-for-profit and financially viable at any time during the term of approval. The relevant state/territory registration authority will review whether a SEO satisfies the not-for-profit and financially viable requirement if the relevant state/territory registration authority has been notified of changes to the ownership, management, control or operation of the SEO.

5.6   'Fit and Proper Person' requirement

The relevant state/territory registration authority may have regard to whether any person involved in the management of, or the national, regional or local coordination of the SEO:

- has a history of non-compliance with these guidelines and any equivalent interstate guidelines;

- has ever had a registration by a state/territory registration authority in Australia suspended or cancelled while under their leadership;

- has ever had conditions imposed on their registration by a state/territory registration authority in Australia while under their leadership;

- has ever been charged or convicted of a indictable offence;

- has ever become bankrupt;

- has ever been disqualified from managing corporations under the Corporations Act;

- has ever been refused a Working with Children Check in any state/territory in which the SEO operates;

- has ever been found not to be a fit and proper person under these guidelines or any equivalent interstate guidelines; or

- has ever provided a state/territory registration authority with false or misleading information or made a false or misleading statement to a state/territory registration body in relation to any matter under these guidelines or equivalent interstate guidelines, or

- was involved in the management of, or provision of exchange programs by, another SEO at the time that any of the above events occurred.

The relevant state/territory registration authority may review whether a SEO satisfies the fit and proper person requirement at any time during the term of approval. The state/territory registration authority will review whether a SEO satisfies the fit and proper person requirement if the state/territory registration authority has been notified of changes to the ownership, management, control or operation of the SEO.

SEOs must notify the relevant registration authority within 20 working days if it becomes aware that a person within their management becomes subject to any of the above.

5.7   Organisational structure

SEOs must show evidence of an organisational structure within each state/territory in which they seek registration.

The organisational structure must:

- have staffing that is effective and appropriate for the size of the operation across all jurisdictions in which they are registered;

- show that the ratio of coordinators, including regional coordinators, to students must be appropriate to the size of the program;

- allow ready access by and communication with parents, schools, students and officers of appropriate agencies; and

- have effective and appropriate structures overseas to facilitate the exchange process for inbound and outbound students.

For inbound students, where an SEO organisational structure includes local SEO coordinators, the SEO must:

- provide registration authorities with the name, residential address, email address and contact telephone numbers for local SEO coordinators in that state or territory as part of the *National Standard Annual Monitoring Form*; and

- provide each exchange student with a local SEO coordinator residing within 200km or 2 hours travel of the student's host family residence.

For SEOs operating across more than one jurisdiction, the jurisdiction within which the organisation has its head-office or central location will be considered as their base registration. Where an SEO's base registration ceases for any reason, other registration authorities may choose to review the registration of that organisation in their jurisdiction.

5.8   Criminal Record Checks / Working with Children Checks

SEOs must ensure that Criminal Record Checks, or relevant Working with Children Checks, are undertaken for all its officers, employees and volunteers in direct personal contact with students or with access to students' personal records or information, in accordance with the relevant state / territory or country requirements.

5.9   Training for SEO staff

SEOs must demonstrate that they provide training for local SEO coordinators and student support staff that specifically includes, as a minimum, instruction in:

- conflict resolution;

- procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations and critical incidents;

- relevant child safety standards and reporting requirements;

- information on regulatory requirements for minors in destination countries;

- procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual misconduct or any other allegations of abuse or neglect;

- the criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercising good judgement in assessing if the host family will be able to provide the appropriate environment and support for an exchange student; and

- the NCCISSE Guidelines and any relevant state/territory requirements, as they relate to the role of the coordinator and student support staff.

5.10   Third party arrangements

SEOs must maintain up-to-date records and provide the relevant state/territory registration authority with information regarding all third party organisations used to support and deliver elements of their exchange program, including:

- the name of the third party organisation;

- the type of arrangement between the parties;

- a copy of the contracts between the SEO and the third party;

- information about the monitoring process the SEO undertakes in relation to the operations of the third party;

- details of whether the third party organisation is registered or licensed as a SEO in its operating country; and

- information about periodic evaluation of service delivery undertaken by the SEO for both inbound and outbound students.

Third party organisations are people or organisations that are not employees of the SEO, but are engaged directly by the SEO to provide any element of an outbound program. These include partner organisations or affiliates of the SEO.

SEOs must ensure that third party organisations undertaking the selection of host families for outbound students have a process to adequately screen and select exchange student host families and as a minimum the third party must:

- conduct an in-person interview with all host family members over 18 residing in the home;

- conduct a home inspection prior to the placement of an exchange student to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing home environment;

- ensure the host family declares all adults and children who live in the home including those who may reside temporarily;

- ensure that the host family understands and agrees to meet the financial obligations of hosting; and

- verify that each member of the host family has undergone a Criminal Record Check in accordance with the relevant national, state or territory requirements, in all countries where such checks are available.

SEOs must ensure that third party organisations supporting outbound students have policies and procedures to respond to critical incidents including natural disasters, terrorism, student illness or injury, and breakdown in the hosting relationship.

Information about third party arrangements must be provided at the time of application.

During the period of approval SEOs must notify the relevant registration authority if there is a change to the organisations that the SEOs have a third party arrangement with.

Where an SEO becomes aware that a third-party organisation has not complied with the requirements under these Guidelines, the SEO must take immediate corrective action.

Administration of student exchange programs

Exchange programs

5.11   Structure of student exchange programs

SEOs must follow the procedures about the placement of overseas students in schools, including attendance and academic pursuits, within each state/territory in which the organisation operates.

SEOs should ensure that changes to a student exchange program including changes to the start date, duration, departure date, host school, or host family is minimised.

Where an SEO's program will include, or is likely to include placement with more than one host family during the student's program, the SEO must make this clear in its marketing material, enrolment process and obtain the student and the student's parents' consent to this prior to the student's first placement.

A student exchange program should not include a change of host school unless the original host school placement is not satisfactory. If the host school is the SEO, an unsuccessful placement would normally be resolved by the student returning home early.

SEOs may transfer students interstate only in exceptional circumstances and only with

> a) written parental support for the transfer; and

> b) the approval of both the current and relevant interstate registration authority prior to any changes being made.

(Note: for an interstate transfer a new AASES form from the relevant interstate registration authority is required. Reciprocity will be calculated by allocating the time the student spent in each state/territory and included in the relevant state/territory's annual reciprocity report.)

Students

5.12   Selection of students

SEOs must demonstrate that they have a screening process for selecting incoming and outgoing students and that they select only students of appropriate maturity levels, who have

the appropriate language proficiency or demonstrated willingness to acquire a language to benefit from the experience. State/territory registration authorities will determine the appropriate age for secondary exchange students in their state/territory.

SEOs must provide comprehensive, current and plain English information to potential exchange students on:

- school terms and holiday breaks;

- the grounds on which the student's exchange may be suspended or cancelled;

- the policy and process the SEO has in place for approving the host family, support and general welfare arrangements.

5.13   Health insurance

SEOs must ensure that appropriate insurance is obtained and maintained for inbound and outbound exchange students.

The insurance must provide for:

- Cover while travelling to and from Australia

- Personal/public liability

- Accident and specialist care

- Cover for natural parents to visit for a medical emergency

- Medical repatriation

- Repatriation of remains

- Luggage/baggage

Incoming students must hold Overseas Students Health Cover in accordance with Student Visa requirements.

The cover obtained for outbound students may be adjusted to take into account any reciprocal health care agreements Australia has with the relevant destination country.

Host families

5.14   Screening of host families

Selection of host families must not involve payment of board or a subsidy to the host family, or to any other party, as a condition of the student's placement. (For some special needs programs, some organisations may provide a subsidy to host families with the approval of the state/territory registration authority.)

For inbound students

SEOs must adequately screen and select host families and as a minimum must:

- conduct an in-person interview with all host family members over 18 residing in the home;

- conduct a home inspection prior to the placement of an exchange student to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing home environment;

- ensure that the host family understands and agrees to meet the financial obligations of hosting; and

- verify that every person 18 years and over residing in the home has undergone a Criminal Record Check in accordance with the relevant national, state or territory requirements.

For outbound students

SEOs must ensure there are appropriate processes in place for the screening and selection of exchange student host families for outbound students. At a minimum the screening and selection process must include:

- an in-person interview with all host family members aged 18 years and over residing in the home;

- ensuring that the host family is capable of providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing home environment;

- ensuring that the host family understands and agrees to meet the financial obligations of hosting; and

- verifying that every person 18 years and over residing in the home has undergone a Criminal Record Check.

Relevant state/territory registration authorities may consider Criminal Record Checks are not available in specific countries where:

- the relevant government authorities do not issue Criminal Record Checks; or

- the processes for prospective host families to obtain Criminal Record Checks are unreasonably burdensome and significantly more onerous than for Australian Criminal Record Checks.

In such circumstances, the SEO must:

- apply to the relevant registration authority in the SEO's base state for approval to implement an alternative screening process;

- if approved, implement alternative screening procedures approved by the SEO's base state and NCCISSE, and

- advise parents/ guardians and students that Criminal Record Checks are not available and the process the SEO is adopting to verify the suitability of the host family to host an exchange student.

Placement of more than one student with a host family

Where an SEO intends to place more than one student simultaneously with the same host family, the SEO must ensure all parties agree to the double placement prior to the second student being accommodated with that host family.

If requested, the SEO must provide documentation supporting that all parties agree to the double placements.

Placement with single adult host parents without children

SEOs must ensure that a potential single adult host parent without a child in the home undergoes a secondary level review by a SEO representative other than the individual who recruited or screened the applicant. Such a secondary review should include demonstrated evidence of the individual's friends or family who can provide an additional support network

for the exchange student and evidence of the individual's ties to his/her community. Both the exchange student and his or her parents/legal guardians must agree in writing in advance of the student's placement with a single adult host parent without another child in the home.

5.15   Prevention of conflict of interest

SEOs must ensure that no SEO representative act both as a host family and as a SEO representative, coordinator or supervisor for an exchange student except in emergencies and with the approval of the registering authority.

Support and Supervision

5.16   Orientation for students and host families

SEOs must demonstrate that they provide both pre-departure preparation and host country orientation programs, for both inbound and outbound students.

The orientation program for students and host families must include:

- information on the organisation's program rules and expectations;

- information on the roles and responsibilities of students and host families;

- information on seeking assistance and reporting any incidence or allegations involving actual or alleged sexual, physical or other abuse;

- information on the relevant child protection laws governing minors in the student's destination country;

- who to contact in emergency situations, including:

    o   for inbound students, contact numbers of a nominated staff member within Australia; and

    o   for outbound students, contact details of a coordinator in the destination country;

- information about the SEO's complaints process;

- contact details for the relevant state/territory registration authorities; and

- for host families, information on handling critical incidents and issues relating to student well-being.

5.17   Support for students and host families

SEOs must demonstrate that inbound and outbound students and host families have adequate local assistance and support. Such support will cover appropriate reception, orientation, accommodation, transport and emergency arrangements as well as providing ongoing support networks for exchange students in their destination country.

5.18   Minimum scheduled SEO contact with students and host families

SEOs must maintain, as a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact, face-to-face, Skype or by telephone, with all inbound and outbound exchange students and host families.

For outbound students, a SEO may satisfy this requirement by ensuring a monthly schedule of personal contact from a third party organisation in the destination country.

5.19   Program discounts for hosting students

SEOs may provide a program discount to the family of an outbound exchange student if they undertake to host an inbound student, provided that:

- family members of the outbound student meet National Guidelines and the SEO's requirements for host families;

- the discount is a maximum of 10% of the cost of an outbound student program; and

- the discount is paid as a rebate at the end of the inbound student's exchange program.

Host schools

5.20 School liaison

SEOs must follow each state/territory requirements for the placement of overseas students in schools, including attendance and academic pursuits and the recruitment of Australian students for overseas exchange.

It is an expectation that students will commence their enrolment at the host school in line with the commencement dates of the relevant school term.

SEOs must demonstrate that they can provide effective liaison with schools through an identified liaison officer.

For inbound exchange students, SEOs must provide the host school with:

- host family and SEO contact details; and

- information about the student, including copies of school and other reports as requested.

SEOs must maintain procedures for ensuring that students are fulfilling all relevant school requirements (e.g. abiding by the school's code of conduct, the school rules and policies about uniform and attendance) and meeting the student visa conditions.

Requirements to notify

5.21 Changes to SEO governance

SEOs must give notice to any relevant state/territory registration authority that has registered the SEO, or has an application for registration from the SEO, of any change in ownership, control, executive management or operations of the SEO as soon as practical, and in any event within 10 working days.

Registration is not transferable. Substantial changes in the structure and/or ownership of the SEO may result in the SEO having to apply for a new registration in each jurisdiction in which it is approved to operate.

5.22   Changes to student exchange programs – inbound and outbound

SEOs should take all appropriate steps to minimise changes to the student's agreed program.

SEOs must notify the relevant state/territory registration authority prior to any changes to a student's program unless there are exceptional circumstances that require an immediate change (e.g. a risk to the student's safety).

If an immediate change is made to a student's program the SEO must notify the relevant state/territory registration authority as soon as practical but within 5 working days of the change.

Changes to a student's program may include, a change to:

- Host school

- Host family

- Start date

- Duration

- Departure date

Where the student's program involves the student changing host school as part of the scheduled program, approval must be sought from the relevant state/territory registration authority for each host school prior to the commencement of the student's exchange.

If a change is made to a student's program, SEOs must ensure that students and parents/ guardians are informed of the change.

5.23   Changes to third party arrangements

The SEO must notify the relevant state/territory registration authority of any changes to the people or organisations that the SEO has a third party arrangement with within 10 working days of the change.

If the SEO enters into a new third party agreement, the relevant state/territory registration authority must be advised of this new arrangement, and details of the new arrangements including the contract and any supporting documents must be provided.

Confidentiality and information sharing

5.24   Release of information by relevant state/territory registration authorities

SEOs and applicants for SEO registration acknowledge, and consent to the relevant state/territory registration authority releasing to a department of the Australian Government (or to another relevant state/territory registration authority responsible for SEOs), information it has about or arising from:

- an application for SEO registration or re-registration;

- the registration or re-registration of an SEO;

- a compliance audit or review of an SEO undertaken by a relevant state/territory registration authority; or

- action taken by a relevant state/territory registration authority in relation to an SEO.

In the event that the base registration of an SEO ceases, the relevant registration authority will notify other relevant state / territory registration authorities.

5.25   Marketing and recruitment documentation

SEOs must provide the state/territory registration authorities with all current documentation used in promoting their programs on request.

Protection measures for exchange students

5.26   Response to critical incidents

SEOs must have policies and procedures that apply to inbound and outbound students to address critical incidents and serious issues impacting on student well-being. At a minimum these must include procedural information on how the organisation will manage incidences arising from:

- natural disasters;

- terrorism;

- student well-being, illness or injury;

- break-down in the host family arrangements.

The policies and procedures must provide that appropriate contact is maintained with the student and that the student's parents are kept informed.

A written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by the SEO must be maintained for at least two years after the exchange student ceases to be an accepted exchange student.

5.27 Outbound students

SEOs will protect outbound exchange students through ensuring that they:

- submit an SEO Outbound Student Form* to the relevant Registration Authority for each outbound student at least 14 days prior to their departure from Australia, confirming that the SEO has accepted responsibility for the accommodation, support and general welfare of the student for the duration of the exchange program;

- confirm to the Registration Authority that the parent/s or legal guardian/s of the student have signed a written agreement or student exchange contract with the SEO giving consent to:

  - the SEO having responsibility for the student's accommodation, support and general welfare for the duration of the exchange program, and;
  - the SEO having the authority to cancel the student's exchange program and arrange the prompt safe return of the student to Australia, where:

    – global, national or regional emergency circumstances;
    – Australian national, state or territory government directives;
    – the student's physical or mental health circumstances, and/or;
    – the student's serious breaches of the SEO code of conduct

    require the SEO exercising its responsibilities for student's welfare;

- provide the Registration Authority with details of the student's exchange program including:

    – the student's full name and passport number
    – home and email address
    – date of birth
    – home school
    – destination country

- destination school
- destination host family address
- departure and return dates, and flight details
- school commencement and school cessation dates
- name and contact details of SEO's overseas partner organisation that will be supporting the student in their destination country; and

- provide parents of students with information about child protection laws and services;

- ensure parents have provided students with access to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) Smart Traveler website for the destination country prior to departure;

- require outbound exchange students transiting en-route to the destination country to only travel with international airlines that provide full transfer facilities and have appropriate procedures in the event of flight delays or interruptions;

- require outbound exchange students to be met on arrival in the destination country and assisted in their journey to the host families;

- have up to date emergency contact information for airlines, Australian Embassies or High Commissions and other relevant agencies for their destination and transit countries;

- arrange for parents of all outbound exchange students to receive confirmation of the student's safe arrival at the host family as soon as practicable; and

- advise the relevant state/territory registration authority of any changes to the student's program, as per the requirements of 5.22.

Registration Authorities may require SEOs to submit individual Outbound Register forms for each student, or may accept a single Outbound Register form for a group of outbound students

5.28 Exchange student safety Information

Inbound Students

SEOs must ensure that all inbound exchange students and their parents are provided with the following information electronically prior to the departure of the student, which includes:

- the host family's address, home telephone number and relevant mobile numbers;

- emergency contact details for the relevant SEO coordinator or SEO office; and

- the relevant state/territory registration authority's name and email address, with a statement:

  "(name of SEO) is a SEO registered and quality assured in (State or Territory) by the (name of relevant state/territory registration authority). Students can contact the (name of relevant state/territory registration authority) at (email address)."

  For example: "ABC is a SEO registered and quality assured in Victoria by the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA). Students can contact the VRQA at vrqa.student.exchange@vrqa.vic.gov.au".

Such information must be provided in advance of the home country departure or immediately upon entry to Australia.

Outbound Students

SEOs must ensure that all outbound students are provided with the following information electronically prior to the departure of the student, which includes:

- the host family's address, home telephone number and relevant mobile numbers that the organisation providing the exchange program is a registered SEO;

- the name of the third-party organisation that will be providing for the student while the student is overseas;

- emergency contact details for the relevant SEO coordinator or SEO office in the student's destination country;

- emergency contact details for the relevant SEO in Australia;

- the name of the relevant registering authority for the relevant state or territory that registered the SEO; and

- that students, or their parents or legal guardians, can contact the relevant registering authority regarding the SEO at the relevant email address for that authority.

  for example: "ABC is a SEO registered in NSW by the NSW Department of Education. Students or their parents or legal guardians can contact DoE at

studentexchange@det.nsw.edu.au".

5.29 Reporting incidents or allegations of abuse

SEOs must immediately report any incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of an inbound or outbound exchange student to both the relevant law enforcement agency and the relevant state/territory registration authority. Failure to report such incidents to both the law enforcement agency and the relevant state/territory registration authority shall be grounds for suspension or cancellation of a SEO's registration to provide student exchange programs.

5.30 Resolution of problems, including complaint management

The SEO must have and implement a documented internal complaints handling and appeals process and policy, and provide the exchange student with comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about that process and policy.

The SEO's internal complaints handling and appeals process must:

- include a process for the exchange student to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally;

- include that the SEO will respond to any complaint or appeal the exchange student makes regarding his or her dealings with the SEO, or any related party the SEO has an arrangement with to deliver the exchange program or related services;

- commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable;

- ensure the exchange student is given an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;

- ensure the assessment of the complaint or appeal is conducted in a professional, fair and transparent manner;

- ensure the exchange student is given a written statement of the outcome of the internal appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome; and

- keep a written record of the complaint or appeal, including a statement of the outcome

and reasons for the outcome.

The policy must further state in a prominent way:

- that an exchange student may contact the relevant state/territory registration authority if the exchange student or parent/guardian is concerned about the conduct of the SEO with the requirements under these Guidelines; and

- the complaints handling and appeals process described in the policy does not hinder an exchange student from exercising the student's rights to other legal remedies.

The SEO must give the complainant the contact details for the appropriate Registration Authority.

If the concern is about a school registered as a SEO, then the school principal should not investigate a formal complaint against his/her own school, and an independent point of contact should be provided.

5.31   Privacy of student information

SEOs must protect the personal information, including photographs, of exchange students and, as a minimum, ensure that the organisation:

- obtains appropriate written consent for the publication or use of student images or information in any advertising or promotional material and clearly outlines the intended use of the material;

- in the recruitment of host families and in any other circumstances, does not provide personal information or photographs or images including likenesses of individual exchange students in any public or 'open' recruitment through advertising, websites, publications or displays accessible to the general public that would allow the student to be identified via social media;

- only provides a photograph, first name and basic information about student interests (i.e. no surname, address or contact details) to prospective host families who have registered with the SEO and who have commenced the relevant screening process, including verifying identity with photo identification;

- appropriately safeguards the access, use, storage and archiving of electronic and hard copies of all exchange student applications, files and documents containing student personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Act 1988 and the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (the GDPR);

- retains and securely stores details of host families and student placements; and

- has and implements a social media policy, which includes record management and monitoring process.

5.32 Privacy information for students and host families

SEOs must have a policy and procedure in place that is provided to all exchange students and host families with information about the need for students to protect their personal privacy, and the privacy of members of their host family, while participating in an exchange program. This includes advice regarding the appropriate use and risks of the internet, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, internet chat rooms, YouTube diaries and weblogs.

Program evaluation

5.33 Program evaluation

SEOs must demonstrate that they have a system or process for:

- annual or ongoing program evaluation;

- seeking post-program feedback on their services from students, parents, host families and schools; and

- implementing improvements in response to the evaluation outcomes. The

program evaluation should include a review of any third-party arrangements.

6.   Outbound exchange students

School principals should deal only with registered SEOs.

Any arrangement for students to join an overseas program is strictly between each student, his or her parents/guardian and the SEO. Neither the schools nor the state/territory registration authorities accept any responsibility for students while overseas on exchange.

7.   Inbound exchange students

School principals should deal only with registered SEOs.

Any arrangements for students to be enrolled are a matter strictly between the school, each student, his or her parents/guardian and the SEO. The state/territory registration authorities do not accept any responsibility for overseas students enrolled in schools.

8.   Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students (AASES) forms

To obtain a student visa for Australia, overseas exchange students require an Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Students (AASES) form. SEOs need to apply to the relevant state/territory registration authority for AASES forms using an official AASES request form. AASES forms will be issued on consideration of the organisation's reciprocity balance, and will not be issued to organisations that have not provided a *National Standard Annual Monitoring Form*.

The organisation must ensure that the host family nominated on the AASES request represents a confirmed placement for the duration of the program. Where the student's program is to include more than one host family during the student's placement, the organisation must advise the registration authority at the time of the AASES request.

9.   Information for participating schools

Schools are not expected to provide support and pastoral care for exchange students more than that normally provided to Australian students. They are not expected to provide crisis or emergency management networks for exchange students except where they are the registered SEO for the student.

The state/territory registration authorities would require principals to notify them if there is a concern with a SEO about any of the above, either before a student commences or during the placement.

If the concern is about a school registered as a SEO, then the school principal should not investigate a formal complaint against his/her own school, and an independent point of contact should be provided.

10. Conditions for the placement of secondary exchange students in schools

The procedures for the placement of secondary exchange students in schools are:

- the student must be enrolled as a full time student at the school;

- the student must commence school in line with the agreed commencement date on the AASES form; and

- the student must participate in the school's academic program.

Appendix 1 – Registration Authorities for Secondary Student Exchange Programs in Australia

The state and territory registration authorities listed below have the responsibility for the registration or approval, and quality assurance, of schools and organisations providing secondary student exchange programs in the respective state or territory.

Australian Capital Territory

Education Directorate, ACT Government International Education Unit

51 Freemantle Drive, Stirling (GPO Box 158) CANBERRA ACT 2601

Ph: (02) 6205 9176   Fax: (02) 6205 9239

W: www.education.act.gov.au

E: ieu@act.gov.au

New South Wales

Department of Education, NSW Registration Committee for International Secondary Student Exchange, DE International

Level 8, 259 George Street, Sydney 2000

PO Box R1468, Royal Exchange NSW 1225 Australia

Ph: 1300 300 229 (option 4)

    +61 2 9244 5555 (option 4)

W: https://www.deinternational.nsw.edu.au/study-options/study-programs/secondary-student-exchange

E: studentexchange@det.nsw.edu.au

Northern Territory

Department of Education, International Services Unit

Level 14, 55 Mitchell Street (GPO Box 4821), DARWIN NT 0801

Ph: (08) 8901 4902

W: https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/overseas-exchange-programs-for-nt-students

E: internationalservice@education.nt.gov.au

Queensland

Department of Education, International Quality (Schools) Unit

Level 8, 30 Mary Street (PO Box 15033), BRISBANE QLD 4002

Ph: (07) 3513 6748

W: www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/programs/exchange/pages/long

E: InternationalRegistration@qed.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Education Standards Board (ESB)

Level 6, The Conservatory, 131-139 Grenfell Street (GPO Box 1811), ADELAIDE SA 5001

Ph: (08) 8226 0077 or 1800 882 413

W: https://esb.sa.gov.au/schools/student-exchange

E: esb.seo@sa.gov.au

Tasmania

Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification (TASC)

Level 6, 39 Murray Street (GPO Box 333), HOBART TAS 7001

Ph: (03) 6165 6000

W: Student exchange - TASC

E: enquiries@tasc.tas.gov.au

Victoria

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), International Education Unit

Level 2, 2 Lonsdale Street (GPO Box 2317) MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Ph: (03) 9637 2806

W: Secondary student exchange programs (vrqa.vic.gov.au)

E: vrqa.student.exchange@edumail.vic.gov.au

Western Australia

Department of Education

c/o TAFE International Western Australia 140 Royal Street, EAST PERTH WA 6004

Locked Bag 16 OSBORNE PARK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Ph: (08) 9218 2100   Fax: (08) 9218 2160

W: www.tafeinternational.wa.edu.au

E: secondaryexchange.eti@dtwd.wa.gov.au