



2023

International Student Program Handbook



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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2023

Sunshine College is a multi-campus College currently comprising of two school sites: at West Sunshine and Sunshine North – Catering for Year 7 to Year 12.

College Principal

School's Telephone

Email

Website

Mr. Tim Blunt

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WEST CAMPUS (Year 7 to 12)

25a Lachlan Road, Sunshine West 3020

Assistant Principal **Ms. Mona Raghdo** (Student Engagement, Community & Operations)

Assistant Principal **Ms. Jodie Parsons** (Curriculum Innovation & Excellence)

Assistant Principal **Ms. Yvonne Reilley** (Strategy & Accountability)

NORTH CAMPUS (Year 7 to 11)

Northumberland Road, Sunshine North 3020

Assistant Principal **Mr. Mark Deverall** (Student Engagement, Community & Operations)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEAM

International Student Coordinator

Mr. Preet Sachdeva

International Student Assistants

Mr. Kiet Quach

Mr. Vinh Hien Tran

Ms. Anh Lee

International Students Program Handbook

SUNSHINE College is committed to providing excellent academic, pastoral care, appropriate welfare and cultural education to its International Students. Each International Student has number of staff who assist them with their studies and life in Australia.

- Principal Class Officer
- International Student Coordinator
- Student Welfare Coordinators
- Pastoral Care Teachers

Meeting all Department of Education and Training policies and guidelines in relation to ISP QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL are important aspects of these.

- High Ethical Standards
- Excellent Client Service
- Commitment to accountability
- High Level of Care
- Building Relationships
- Strengthening Capacity

This Handbook provides advice and support to homestay hosts, relatives providing accommodation, international students and their parents. It outlines expectations and responsibilities in relation to the provision of accommodation, welfare arrangements and academic support for international students at Sunshine College.

International Students at Sunshine College

Sunshine College is a multicultural and co-educational college located in the inner west of Melbourne, Victoria. We are a multi-campus college currently with two campuses offering a wide range of courses. All of our campuses are well served by public transport.

Sunshine College has two campuses. West Campus in 25a Lachlan Road, West Sunshine and North Campus in Northumberland Road, North Sunshine.

Our college has strong academic and welfare values. We pride ourselves on our academic achievement and welfare support. Our college community is a diverse one and the range of programs at all levels in great. Our motto is to provide successful pathways for all students. We are well known across Victoria for our programs to develop literacy skills and mathematics. Our senior program in supporting students gain tertiary courses has also won awards. Our International Students are an important part of our college. We have a very experienced team managing the program, with an experienced coordinator supported by three international student assistants; all Vietnamese speakers who work very closely with students and their families.

Courses at Sunshine College and Entry Requirements

After long experience supporting International students, we have found that students need excellent language and mathematical skills in order to succeed in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Students who have a history of poor results in their country of origin are unlikely to be selected. We prefer students to arrive at the beginning of year 10.

Families of applicants need to understand that success in the VCE requires a supportive homestay environment. In our experience, close relatives tend to provide the strongest levels of support and are able to maintain good relations with the family back home. We are more likely to select students who are planning to live with close relatives. All children, no matter what their age, need a lot of support. At Sunshine College, we spend a lot of time working with children who need family support. In order to succeed in the VCE, a student needs to have a strong work ethic, have maturity, motivation and confidence.

In conjunction with the Victorian Certificate of Education, students may include Vocational Education and Training (VET) in their VCE. The VET subject provides students with credit towards their VCE. All programs are delivered within our college. Sunshine College is a Registered Training Provider (RTO) for a wide range of VET courses, most of which are delivered at our Harvester Technical College Campus. We also run one auspiced program at our West Campus.

Support for students

Sunshine College supports students at all stages of their time in the College.

Students are met once they have started at our college or on first attending the English language centre. Families of the students are contacted, both those in Australia supporting students and the families living overseas. Student progress at the English language centre is regularly monitored. The program manager, Mr. Preet Sachdeva, has close relations with teachers at language centres and the International Student Assistants, Mr. Kiet Quach, Mr. Vinh Hien Tran, and Ms. Anh Le, maintain close relations with families and guardians.

Once students start they are supported with an orientation program to settle in to our college. As part of our college all International Students are supported by class teachers, homeroom teachers, student support coordinators and welfare and pathways coordinators. Having two separate campuses students become known to all teachers. We promote our college and see ourselves as a very large family, where all are welcome and respected for their different contributions.

Our students are supported with:

- A literacy program well known across the state
- A unique and award-winning mathematics program in the junior years
- Experienced staff at all levels
- Senior programs that achieve outstanding results in placing students into tertiary courses
- Three dedicated staff who work very closely with all International students and their families
- An excursion for students can be planned during the year of their schooling
- Dinner at the end of year to celebrate those students who have graduated

To find more about enrolling as an International Student in Victoria go to the following website:
<http://www.study.vic.gov.au/>

The term homestay will be used in a general sense to describe the living arrangements of International Students.

There are four categories of International Students:

Category 1 – The student is living with a parent

Category 2 – The student is staying with an approved (close) relative who acts as the student's guardian.

Category 3 – The student is living with a more distant relative or family friend. The school has responsibilities as the guardian, working with the homestay family.

Category 4 – The student is living with a family that is recommended by the school. The school has more responsibility as the guardian of the student.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Attendance/ Absences

Education is a sequential process, and it is vital that students attend school regularly to avoid missing out on important stages of their development. Students who engage in their learning, take part in extra-curricular activities and develop positive peer relations will make school a successful part of your child's life. Absenteeism contributes to difficulties in learning and disengagement from school. Students need to attend for 100% of their classes. Unapproved absences for less than this may result in recommendation that your child does not progress to the next year level.

Contact the school if your child is to be absent.

Accidents /Illness/First Aid

Students who feel ill should report to their teacher or to the office who will undertake the necessary action. It is essential that families inform the school of allergies or medication of their children. In the case of extreme illnesses parents will be contacted to collect the ill child as soon as possible. NO child will be permitted to make their own way home- all students must be picked up. Many staff are First Aid trained and can administer basic treatment.

Appointments

The school welcomes contact with parents and guardians, but it is essential that an appointment is made to facilitate this, please call the general office to be connected to the relevant staff member.

The School Day

All students are expected to be at school ready to start the school day at **8.50 am**.

Students are dismissed at 3.10pm all days of the week except Thursday when they are dismissed at 3:00pm. Please ensure that if you are picking your child up from the school grounds that this is undertaken safely.

If it is necessary for you to pick up your child before this time a note must be presented to the relevant engagement leader first thing in the morning where an 'Early Leavers' pass will be issued. *NO student will be permitted to leave school early by themselves.* An adult must sign the student out at the office at the organised time.

Bicycles

Students may ride their bicycles to school but **MUST** wear a helmet. Provision for locking up bicycles is provided.

Camps

The college has an extensive camps program. Camps offer a valuable experience and assist with social and emotional development. At Year 7 students will be offered a camp to assist with building peer relationships and settling into secondary school. Camps at other year levels have other goals and emphases.

Communication

We value regular communication with parents and hope to build this relationship with you upon enrolling your child at our college. A **newsletter** is published on a regular basis and is uploaded on to compass for parents and families. Once a term this will be posted.

Parent/Teacher Interviews occur twice a year; at the end of first and third terms.

Reports are written twice a year at the end of each semester.

Excursions/Incursions

Excursions and other activities are conducted as part of the educational program at our college. As far as practicable, parents will be given at least two weeks' notice. Notices will be published on compass and will advise of a due date for money and the permission slips will be signed through compass. All due dates will be adhered to. The principal reserves the right to refuse permission for students to participate under certain circumstances.

Homegroup Teacher

Each year 7 - 10 class is allocated a significant teacher who teaches them for pastoral care (KTS), our middle school curriculum and one other subject. This teacher is your first point of call if there are issues with your child at school. It will be their responsibility to know your child and take care of their learning, personal wellbeing and social development.

Lateness

Students are required to arrive at school before the first bell. In the event of students arriving late they must report to the student engagement office for a Late Pass. If your child is late please ensure they bring a note explaining the lateness. Alternatively, you can ring the school and speak to the attendance coordinator.

Leaving the school

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds under any circumstances during school time. As mentioned earlier if parents require students to leave early they must have a note and an arrangement in place to pick up the child. NO student will be given permission to leave the school, in school time, without an adult to accompany them.

Lockers

Students are allocated lockers and are expected to purchase a combination lock at the time of enrolment. All lockers should be maintained in a tidy and clean fashion.

Student Support and Wellbeing

Student Support and Engagement leader are appointed to oversee a year level of students. They are responsible for behavior management, student well-being and administrative duties related to their year level. Engagement leaders, International Students Coordinator should be approached if you have concerns with your child and their learning.

Student Welfare

Our Student Welfare Coordinator is concerned with the well-being of the school community. This person is available to assist parents and students with educational, personal and family issues. They are able to refer families and children to a range of community services.

Uniform

Uniform at Sunshine College is compulsory, and we have high expectations that this will be worn correctly. If students are unable to wear a specific piece of uniform parents must write a note with an explanation and duration of the incorrect item.

COURSE PROGRESS POLICY

- Student is required to demonstrate satisfactory course progress during the period of their enrolment as required by Department of Home Affairs. Satisfactory performance is assessed by the school on a term-by-term basis and is consistent with the requirement for domestic students as determined by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority
- Students must satisfactorily complete all subjects/ unit necessary to progress to the next year level or to satisfactorily complete their course of study within their agreed study period.
- Students must complete the course with the expected duration as specified on the students' COE. Where compassionate or compelling circumstances exist or a school has implemented its intervention strategies, or study deferment has been approved an extension may be possible.
- Career advice and program in Year 10, year 11 and year 12
- Individual course counselling interview for each student in Year 10, year 11 and year 12
- VCE Information Evening for Year 10 students and Guardians
- Tertiary course advice and individual support to complete tertiary application for each student

- Individual follow up with each student in their first year of Tertiary study to monitor student progress, the school: Reviews student attendance at weekly coordinators meetings Reviews student course progress and course duration at the end of each term through Interim Reports/ Semester Reports
- Takes appropriate action when student is at risk on not meeting course requirement.
- Provides translated school reports in parents' preferred language each semester
- Keep parents informed of any significant or serious events involving their child.
- Provides periodic feedback on student welfare, achievements, and extracurricular activities

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- If the student is starting to perform unsatisfactorily academic, the student will be counselled, and the Guardian and ISPU will be notified.
- If there is little or no improvement, the student will be placed on a School Performance Contract. A copy of the Contract will be sent to the parents, the Host Homestay and ISPU.
- If the student breaches the school Contract, they will be placed on an ISPU contract. Students breaching ISPU Contract will be reported to the DHA.

SUNSHINE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Sunshine has a 100% Attendance Policy for all International students. Teachers record attendance for each class of the day. If student is absent they must provide a note or medical certificate to their Year Level Coordinator and ISC as soon as they return to the school.
- Students must attend 100% of scheduled course contact hours as a condition of their student visa. Attendance is taken daily by the school and compliance with visa conditions is calculated every fortnight.
- Absences covered by a medical certificate do not contribute to the overall attendance percentage but may be taken into account when determining whether to report a student for non-compliance.
- Guardian should call Assistant Coordinators (Students over 18 years, can call directly) if the student is not coming to school. You will need to provide a medical certificate for an absence.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS

- If attendance is a problem, the student and parents, guardians, and host homestay will be notified, and the student will be given counselling to address attendance problems.
- If attendance falls below 90%, the student will be placed on a School Performance Contract. The student's homestay, their parents and the ISPU will be notified. A copy of the Contract will be sent to the parents and ISPU.
- If attendance falls to 80%, the student will inform the ISPU of the breach of the School Performance Contract. ISPU will organize a meeting with the Principal, the ISC, and the student to discuss attendance. The student will be placed on an ISPU contract for review in 2- 4 weeks, and the parents informed. The school will be updating ISPU each fortnight.

- If attendance falls below 80%, ISPU will report the student to DHA

PAID WORK

Students over the age of 15 years are able to work part-time. A part time job can be an excellent way for a student to improve their English language skills and to learn more about Australian society. However, school and study must be the first priority, and work hours should not interfere with this at any stage.

If work is having a negative effect on their study, the school will advise the student's parents and request that the part-time work be reduced or stopped.

For more information on the rights and responsibilities, see:

<https://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/employment-and-work>

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR POLICY – STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

- Students are required to abide by **Sunshine College code of conduct** including the welfare and accommodation policy or their host school.
- The Student Code of Conduct outlines the College's expectation and rules regarding students' behaviour and attendance.
- Students must comply with all visa conditions, and must not engage in any activity that may endanger the safety of themselves or any other person or that could lead to police charges. These are also grounds for suspension or cancellation.
- The International Student Program Unit may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment for misbehaviour. Misbehaviour includes repeated breaches of the school's code of conduct or repeated disregard of school and /or homestay rules or expected standard of behaviour.
- Student will be advised before they are reported to the Department of Home Affairs and given 20 days to appeal the decision.

CHILD SAFETY AND CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Sunshine College has a Child Safety and Critical Incident Policy which applies to all students enrolled. These policies apply to all government schools in the state of Victoria. **There is zero tolerance to any form of child abuse to any child.** There is a wide definition of what it means by child abuse that applies in Victoria. This includes any form of bullying and it designed to ensure all student feel safe while at school.

A critical incident is defined as any incident where a student is experiencing severe physical or emotional stress. Examples of critical incidents are when a student is involved in an accident resulting in hospitalisation or the death of a close family member. All students are encouraged to communicate any concerns they may have about their school or personal lives to any member of the International student support staff or any other staff member they have developed a trusting relationship with. All staff at Sunshine College have been trained in how to deal with Critical Incidents.

These policies are made available to students and homestay providers.

WELFARE POLICY –SUPPORTING THE STUDENT'S ACCADEMIC AND SOCIAL WELBEING

It is expected that parents, guardians, the homestay and the College work together to support and monitor the student's academic and social development. Life as an International student is not easy. Students are a long way from home. It takes a team effort to support every single International Student.

Parents / Guardians and homestay hosts can assist by:

- Paying all living expenses and return airfares.
- Paying application and tuition fee.
- Paying Health Insurance for International student during the time they study in Australia.

- Support the student to adjust to a different education system.
- Ensure that the student attends school, follows the school rules, and completes all required work on time.
- Attend Parent-Teacher interviews to hear about how the student is progressing. Dates & booking sheets for the interviews are in the front of the StudentDiary
- Advise the Year Level Coordinator and International Student Coordinator as soon as possible if the student is absent from school for any reason or any concern about the student

STUDENT ILLNESS

Students are covered by Medibank Private for health insurance and by the Ambulance Subscribers' Scheme.

- Host family should record the students' membership numbers and details.
- Any medical cost not covered by Medibank Private, and any other services such as dental or optical must be paid for by the student
- Host family should contact the student's family and the school representative immediately in the case of a serious illness or emergency.

SUNSHINE COLLEGE SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY:

- Providing the International Education Division with two school mobile numbers dedicated to the ISP for the International Education Division, homestay host and student to contact as required
- Notifying the IED of any changes in PCO, ISC and other school staff relevant to the ISP
- Closely monitoring the student attendance and academic progress and reporting to parents, guardians, homestay hosts in writing each term, at Parents-Teacher interviews and at other times as required.
- Arranging welfare support for each student
- Arranging parents/ guardians/ relatives/ homestay family contact and reports
- Making any changes to study and welfare support
- Liaising with the homestay parent to ensure the student's welfare
- Meeting with the student regularly to assist with study and to ensure homestay quality.
- Assisting the student in the case of illness or injury
- Social contact
- Translating the report if necessary
- Providing an Orientation Program for students
- Visiting Category 3 students at their homestay each semester
- Providing professional counselling and support services for students who require it
- Maintaining regular contact with the student, their teacher, whilst he/she is studying at the English Language Centre
- Supporting student in Year 10- 12 to choose appropriate VCE subjects and tertiary course through the school Managed Individual Pathways Program.

- Whilst International Students are IN VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ELS/C/ Or Private English Centre staff from Sunshine College will regularly contact the ESL/C to ascertain the students' academic progress and personal acclimatisation.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

All members of the homestay family who are **over 18 years of age** are **required** to provide to the school a current Working with Children Check.

HOMESTAY RULES

The International Student Unit expects that there will be clear rules operating in a homestay. Examples of rules are:

- Regularly time for meals
- Time limit to use of TV- the time to be negotiated with homestayparents
- No guests in rooms after a set time at night- unless approval is given by the homestay parents
- No overnight guests in rooms- unless approved is given by the homestayparents
- No staying out overnight without approval of the homestayparents
- Set times to be in rooms at night- usually after 11pm
- No smoking or cooking in rooms

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure the Host is aware of their health and well being
- Ensure that they are contactable 24/7 by either the school, their welfare supporter or their Host
- To be responsible for their personal hygiene
- To respect the personal space of other members of the home
- To respect the privacy of other members of their home
- To ensure that they become a part of family life and participate in the day activities of the family

CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS

HOMESTAY

- Student will need to be able to contact their homestay family to notify them of a change of plans, or in case of an emergency
- Host Homestay should make sure that the student has all relevant contact details, including home, work and mobile phone numbers, as well as contact details for a relative or close family friends.

SCHOOL

- The College Principal, Mr. Tim Blunt, is responsible for the welfare of International Students living in Third Party or School Arranged homestay and ensure care arrangements are ongoing for students who stay in Victoria during school holidays.
- School appoints a principal class officer as the person responsible for major welfare related issues and also the management of critical incidents and student emergencies and provide relevant details of the IED and school community.
- Sunshine College International Student Coordinator (ISC), and the Principal Class Officer (PCO) are the school's contact people after hours, on weekends, and during the holidays.
- ISC and PCO contact details will be provided to the homestay family, and to the student on their arrival at the school. Students will be given an Emergency Card with all relevant contact details.
- Access to careers counselling.
- Year 10, 11 and 12 students with advice on VCE course selection.
- Year 12 students with advice on tertiary and other education pathways.
- Counselling – Legal rights and responsibilities.
- Health related issues – Personal safety.
- The school arranges Interpreters for all languages if necessary.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LEAVE POLICY

- Students are expected to attend school during the school year.
- Any student who wishes to travel home during school holiday periods must notify the school. Evidence must be **provided of a ticket** home, includes dates of travel.
- A student can apply for leave during the school year **only** in compelling or compassionate circumstances. Examples are severe illness or a death in the family, where a student is expected by the family to return home. The International Student Coordinator will assess any leave application. This may involve contacting family overseas to confirm the circumstances of the application. A student record of attendance or academic performance will be considered in granting leave.
- If a student **returns late** to school after a school holiday period, this **counts as an absence**. The International Education Division of the Department of Education and Training will be notified if students return to school once the new term has started.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRAVEL POLICY

1. This travel policy only applies to students who have been issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter. The policy does not apply to students residing with a parent or a Department of Home Affairs approved relative.
2. Any trip taken within Victoria or interstate must be done so with the written approval of the student's parent and be endorsed by the school Principal or Assistant Principal. In the case where a student is living in a homestay, the homestay provider should be advised of the arrangements and be provided with details of the student's travel plan
3. Students will be able to travel, subject to the above approvals, in the following circumstances:
 - 1- The student is travelling with his/ her homestay family on a holiday
 - i. The student is travelling on a school camp or excursion supervised by school staff
 - ii. The student is travelling with a person(s) approved by the student's school principal holding police and working with children checked.
 - iii. The student is travelling on a commercial interstate package tour which is provided by a registered company, is specially designed for students and

includes appropriate supervision or chaperone arrangements, and involves no independent travel, i.e. pick up and drop off is at the homestay, the school, or an assembly point designated by the school

- iv. The student is travelling in the company of a direct family member over 18 years of age (parent, sibling, aunt/ uncle, etc.) who will accept responsibility for the student during the travel
- v. The student is travelling to a sporting or club event as part of a local team or group and will be under the care and supervision of at the club of association during the trip. In these circumstances, it is expected that student will be supervised at all time by adults who hold the required Working with Children checks.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

All Students receive formal advice on school policies through homerooms and informal advice through various assemblies. International students receive specific advice relevant to their needs through International Coordinators

Students can seek confidential advice from a range of sources. Every teacher at Sunshine College has welfare responsibilities. When problems arise with any student, the college has policies and guidelines designed to find ways to resolve these problems. The college has formal processes in place to resolve Serious problems that may affect a student's chances of passing a unit, such as poor attendance or cheating.

International Student Coordinators aim to work closely with students on a daily basis. Where there is concern about the progress of any student local homestay families will be contacted, as well as families overseas. All serious welfare concerns are documented. With any serious or 'critical' incident occurs contact is made with a representative of the International Student Unit (ISU) and advice is sought.

It is the responsibility of the International Student Coordinator to work with senior school staff on all issues of student welfare. When serious problems arise, various senior staff can be involved. All meetings are documented. Students will have the right to be supported at any meetings that have a formal purpose and agenda. If a problem cannot be resolved at the campus level the college principal will be informed.

Any student and or family with concerns about how the school has dealt with any problem will be informed that they have the right of appeal to the ISU. Appropriate contact details will be provided to the family.