

# Overseas Students Handbook

Pacific Hills

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Christian School



## Welcome

Pacific Hills Christian School values the contribution that international students make to the School Community. We welcome all our Overseas Students and as a School, we will do all we can to ensure you are able to do your best academically and feel well supported in all areas of your life.

The Pacific Hills Christian School Overseas Student Program is aimed at providing education for students who wish to have the benefits of a Christian education, while gaining entry to Australian universities through the award of the New South Wales Higher School Certificate.

Christian education is committed to academic and moral excellence, and involves learning and practising Christian values and a spiritual relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This relationship is expressed in part, in such things as prayer, Bible reading, attending Church and a sense of confidence and purpose in one's life.

The School has various personnel who have been appointed to assist you:

- The **Overseas Students Liaison Officer (OSLO)** – Mrs Sakoulas: checks you are settling in well and that the information we require is kept up-to-date.
- The **School Counsellors** – Mrs Bingham, Mr Evans and Mrs Graham are available for any counselling needs.
- Your **Pastoral Care Teacher** will care for your welfare on a daily basis.
- Your **Year Advisor** will deal with matters that are of a more serious nature.
- Your **Class Teachers** will support you in your academic studies.
- Where your level of English is of concern, the **EAL/D Teacher**, Mrs Sakoulas, will offer English support.
- The **Director of Enrolments** – Mrs Marie-Louise FitzGerald: checks all the details of your enrolment in school and maintains records of visa, medical and family/guardianship/homestay details.



## General Information

### Location

Pacific Hills Christian School is located in Dural on the North-Western outskirts of Sydney in the state of New South Wales. The School is approximately 35 kilometres from the city centre.

### What We Offer

Pacific Hills Christian School offers many advantages to overseas students. The greatest benefit is Christian Education of a high academic standard. Please consider the following reasons for choosing Pacific Hills:

- Christian education acceptable to all denominations
- High academic standards
- Low student/teacher ratios
- All lessons in English
- Specialist English teachers available to help students
- Fully qualified and dedicated staff
- Pastoral assistance and support for all students

### Homestay

Overseas students who are not living with a parent or close family member are placed with Christian families and are expected to participate in host family activities and at all times to behave in a respectful manner. Homestay includes meals and access to all facilities and some participation in duties in the home. The School will monitor homestay arrangements.

Overseas students with school approved Welfare and Accommodation arrangements, such as Homestay students who are not living with a parent or parent nominated relative or custodian, are not permitted to make any change to their living arrangements without the prior written approval of the school.



## Language Instruction

All instruction is conducted in English. A specialist teacher is on hand to help students with the English language including any language difficulties students may have with other subjects. In Years 7 to 12 all students will study English and most will have additional special English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) support.

All students are assessed prior to being accepted into the School. Students with low English competency will be required to complete an intensive English (ELICOS) program prior to enrolling in the School.

## Entrance into Pacific Hills Christian School

Students who apply to enter Pacific Hills Christian School are usually required to take a written English test. Academic results and reports from previous years at school are carefully considered with the results of the English test, along with other information pertaining to eligibility of entry. Each application is considered as an individual case and students are advised of the Year level which is recommended for their entry to the School.

Enrolment may only proceed conditional on all English language proficiency requirements being met.

## The School Year

The school year commences at the end of January and continues until December. Year 12 students finish in November upon completion of their Higher School Certificate exams. There are four terms in each School year. Term dates are available on the School website and in the School diary issued to students. It is an expectation that students adhere strictly to the term dates and make their travel plans accordingly. Pacific Hills Christian School allows some students to commence studies during the year.

## Uniform

The uniform of Pacific Hills Christian School is compulsory and may be purchased at the School uniform shop, Hannahs. The current uniform price list is available on the school website.



## Textbooks and Stationery

You will be provided with a textbook and stationery list each year. Some books are now available in ebook format.

## iPads/Bring Your Own Device

All students enrolling from Year 4 to Year 10 are expected to purchase an iPad. Year 11 and Year 12 students can choose a device according to their own preference. A list of apps for each year group as well as the specifications for iPads is available on [Pacific Go](#) located on the menu icon of the School website.

## Excursions and Camps

Excursions and camps are an integral part of the curriculum and provide opportunities for research and learning experiences which are vital to the overall academic program. Attendance of students at excursions and camps is compulsory.

## Parent Communication

Parents/guardians will be notified of student progress and mid-year and final examination results by the School. If any serious situation arises parents will be notified immediately and the student will be counselled by teachers and other advisers. Every assistance will be given to students should difficulties arise. Parents/guardians will be provided with access to the school database program, Edumate, and can view relevant student information.



## Course Attendance

Pacific Hills Christian School monitors overseas students' course attendance by regularly checking our attendance register to assess whether our students meet the minimum attendance requirement of 80 per cent of the scheduled contact hours.

Pacific Hills Christian School considers a student at risk of not meeting minimum course attendance if, after the first 6 months:

- The student has not achieved 85% attendance of course hours within the six months.
- Despite intervention and appropriate counselling the student has continued to have absences that are not due to 'compassionate or extenuating circumstances'.
- The student has missed significant amounts of class hours (15%) for one or more subjects during this period, despite being in School at a higher than 85% level on a daily basis. This is calculated from our Edumate records.

Pacific Hills Christian School considers a student at risk of not meeting minimum course attendance if, after the first 6 months:

The student has not achieved 85% attendance of course hours within the six months.  
Despite intervention and appropriate counselling the student has continued to have absences that are not due to 'compassionate or extenuating circumstances'.  
The student has missed significant amounts of class hours (15%) for one or more subjects during this period, despite being in School at a higher than 85% level on a daily basis. This is calculated from our Edumate records.



## Course Progress

Pacific Hills Christian School considers a student at risk of not meeting minimum course progress requirements if, after the first 6 months:

### Years K-6

- The student is failing to meet 50% of Course Grade in half of their subjects. The Course Grade will include the results on other marked tasks and student profiles.
- This is decided in consultation with the Class Teacher/Home Room Teacher and Stage Coordinator, as well as the EAL/D teacher.

### Years 7-10

- The student is failing to meet 50% of Course Grade in half of their subjects. The Course Grade will include the Course Assessment Mark, Exam Results and results on other marked tasks.
- This is decided in consultation with the Class Teacher/Home Room Teacher and Stage Coordinator/Faculty Head Teacher, as well as the EAL/D teacher.
- Students are expected to attain 50% (or within 15% of the class average on a particular task) across their courses. Students will be deemed at risk if they are failing to meet these requirements despite appropriate intervention, adjustment to tasks and/or support from the EAL/D teacher.

### Years 11-12

- The student is failing to meet 50% of Course Progress in half of their subjects. The Course Grade will include the Course Assessment Mark, Exam Results and results on other marked tasks.
- This is decided in consultation with the Subject Teacher, Pastoral Care Teacher, Year Advisor and Faculty Head Teacher, as well as the EAL/D teacher.
- The student has not attained 50% (or within 15% of the class average on a particular task) across their courses.
- The student has not submitted an assessment task, or has submitted a task after the due date without a Doctor's Certificate or equivalent.
- Students will be deemed at risk if they are failing to meet these requirements despite appropriate intervention (prior to the first six months), teacher assistance and/or support from the EAL/D teacher.



## Standard of Conduct

Student attitudes, conversation, appearance and behaviour reflect the character of the institutions from which they derive their training. Such institutions include the home, the Church and the School. It is important to appreciate that Pacific Hills Christian School is primarily equipped and commissioned to be an extension of the Christian home reinforcing the values and beliefs of parents.

It is expected that each student will honestly endeavour to:

- Keep all the School's regulations
- Dress neatly and in a modest manner
- Be well groomed
- Use no drugs (tobacco, alcohol)
- Respect authority and be obedient to it
- Live a Christian lifestyle

Students of the School are expected to carry this high standard of behaviour into all parts of their daily lives, whether at home, school or elsewhere. Students who fail to respond to counsel and discipline may be asked to withdraw from the School whenever the administration determines this is necessary.





## Responsibilities of the Overseas Student

As per the visa conditions of each student:

- Provide all information to the School regarding your contact details, including student mobile phone, the address where you live and living arrangements within 7 days of arriving in Australia. Where there are changes to the address where you live, your mobile, your email these must be notified to the school within 7 days of the change occurring.
- Students who are living with a homestay host: Inform the school directly if there are issues of concern regarding family, guardianship, homestay host, safety, medical problems or accommodation.
- Keep the School updated on any changes to accommodation, medical and visa information. Overseas students with welfare and accommodation arrangements approved by the School are only permitted to change those arrangements with the written approval of the School. Speak with the School prior to moving or changing homestay arrangements.
- Maintain a current passport, visa and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC).
- Keep a copy of the written agreement supplied by Pacific Hills and receipts of any payments of tuition fees or non-tuition fees.
- Maintain attendance as required by your Visa conditions (90% attendance is normal).
- Maintain satisfactory progress throughout your courses. This means that work must be completed as required and to a satisfactory standard. The Overseas Students Liaison Officer will monitor your progress.



## Responsibilities of the Overseas Student Continued . . .

Students must abide by all School Policies. Additionally, some School Policies relate specifically to overseas students and these are located on the school website in the International Students section under the Enrolment tab.

- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Default Policy
- Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling Enrolments Policy
- English Language Proficiency and Educational Qualifications Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Recruitment of Overseas Student Policy
- Refund Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Overseas Student Enrolment Policy
- Overseas Student Marketing Policy
- Younger Overseas Student Enrolment Policy



# Outline of Orientation Program

Welcome to Pacific Hills. At our first meeting for Overseas Students you will be given information about the following:

## 1. Ethos of the School

## 2. Potential Issues for Overseas Students

- Accommodation
- Governments and Visas
- Attendance
- Course Progress
- Social Life
- Customs and Culture
- Health and Medical issues
- Fairwork Ombudsman
- Overseas student Ombudsman
- Your rights under Australian Consumer Law
- Responsibilities of the School
- Responsibilities of the Student

## 3. Key Staff to Offer Support:

- Pastoral Care Teacher
- Year Advisor
- Overseas Student Liaison Officer
- Head of School
- Assistant Principal: Admin and Welfare
- EAL/D Teacher (if appropriate)
- School Counsellor/s
- School Nurse



#### 4. Distribution of Handbook

#### 5. Additional Information:

- Mobile phone or how to use pay phone
- Emergency contact number of staff member
- Emergency number for police, fire etc is **000** in Australia
- 24 hour school emergency number will be given to you by OSLO
- Buddy for first week
- How to travel to and from school – Bus Bay and buses
- Uniform requirements
- How to seek assistance on and off campus
- Bank account (if appropriate)
- OSHC
- Complaints and Appeals Processes
- Available student support services
- Legal services available to students
- Student visa conditions relating to course progress and attendance
- Grounds for suspension or cancellation of enrolment
- School Calendar
- School rules and Code of Conduct
- Subject selection, textbooks, etc
- Assessment policies and requirements
- School Camps
- Expectations of a Christian School
- Extra-curricular activities, clubs, etc

#### 6. Other Information/Activities:

- Information about Cultural Awareness/ Culture Shock/Adjusting to life in a new environment
- Orientation to local area – shops, recreational areas, etc



## Overseas Students Support Services

Application for Overseas Student Liaison Officer Contact and / or Follow-up	
Student Name:	
Grade:	
Pastoral Care Class:	
Pastoral Care Teacher:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to meet with the Overseas Student Liaison Officer	
<i>If possible please outline the nature of the things you want help with or to discuss with the Overseas Student Liaison Officer:</i>	
Student Signature: _____	Date: ___/___/_____



## Overseas Students Support Services

Application for Change in Living Arrangements			
Please read the Overseas Students Welfare Policy before completing this form			
Student Name:			
Grade:			
Current Address in Australia:			
Address in home Country:			
Phone No.:		Mobile:	
Email Address:			
<p>I am applying for:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A change in living arrangements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approval of changes / conditions at my existing address</p>			
<p><i>Please outline the nature of the changes and state why you wish to make them. Include details such as your proposed new address; the relationship between you and the proposed hosts etc:</i></p>			
<p>Attachments:</p> <p>Attach any relevant supporting documentation.</p>			
Student Signature: _____		Date: ___/___/_____	
<p>Notes:</p> <p>This form will be assessed once all documentation has been received. The school may ask for more documentation if required. Applications are usually processed in 10 working days.</p> <p>Changes in living arrangements and of the Schools approval of them can have an effect on a student's visa. Please contact the Department of Immigration on 131 881 or contact the local DIAC office for more information.</p>			



## Overseas Students Support Services

Application for School Counsellor Contact and/or Follow-up – for the Counsellor only	
Student Name:	
Grade:	
Pastoral Care Class:	
Pastoral Care Teacher:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to meet with the School Counsellor	
<i>If possible please outline the nature of the things you want help with or to discuss with the School Counsellor (confidential):</i>	
Student Signature: _____	Date: ___/___/_____



## Web Links

As an International Student you may find these web links useful:

### **Living and Studying in Australia**

[www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au)

Study in Australia is the official Australian Government site for studying in Australia. This website will prove invaluable to students wishing to study in Australia. It contains a wide range of information covering aspects such as: Culture, History, Money Matters, Safety and Courses.

### **Department of Home Affairs**

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/stud>

This website will guide you through the process of applying for the correct visa and also contains information that would be useful to you regarding living in Australia.

### **Australian International Education Online**

[National Code of Practice 2018](http://www.aieo.gov.au/national-code-of-practice-2018)

The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

### **Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) framework**

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00757>

The ESOS Act sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to international students in Australia on a student visa.

### **Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO)**

<http://www.oso.gov.au/>

The OSO investigates complaints about problems overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. Call: 1300 362 072 Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm Australian Eastern Standard or Daylight Saving Time.

### **Fairwork Ombudsman**

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

International students have the same workplace rights as all other workers in Australia. Fairwork Ombudsman provide free advice and assistance to all workers to help them understand these rights.

### **Medibank Private**

<https://www.medibank.com.au/overseas-health-insurance/oshc/>

Medibank Private is the preferred provider of overseas student health cover. Families may choose to obtain cover from any other medical insurer in Australia.

