Contents

1. Welcome to Australia 3
2. What to do in an emergency 4
3. Rules 4
4. When you arrive 4
5. Whitsunday Anglican School Rules for International Students 5
6. Whitsunday Anglican School Rules 6
7. Bank account 87
8. Student I.D Card 8
9. Passport and return airline ticket 8
10. Shopping 8
11. Illness 8
12. What is culture? 8
13. Your new family 9
14. Daily life with your home stay family 10
15. Family rules 11
16. Handy hints for living 12
17. Money 12
18. Teachers and your home stay coordinator 13
19. School 14
20. Health insurance OSHC 15
21. Travel 15
22. Travel Release procedure 17
23. Booking your return flight 17
24. Religion 17
25. Work 17
26. Reports 18
27. Driver’s license 18
28. Transport in Australia 18
29. Activities that could involve some measured risk 18
30. Smoking. Drinking and drugs 19
31. Regardless of your age 20
32. Information to help you in Australia 20
33. Friends 21
34. Saying goodbye 21
35. Grievance Procedure 22
1. **WELCOME TO AUSTRALIA**

On behalf of Whitsunday Anglican School, we would like to welcome you to your educational adventure in Australia as an International Whitsunday Anglican School Student.

International education can be a life changing experience and we hope that you learn and grow as an individual during your stay. The quality of your experience is much like a bank account……the more you put in, the more you get out of it……Good luck!

In this handbook are the guidelines to help you adjust to life in Australia. This handbook must be kept for the whole of your time in Australia and we suggest you use it regularly. It should help you answer all your questions about living with a home stay family or living in our boarding house, however you are also welcome to ask your Home Stay Coordinator or teachers at School.

Best wishes for the exciting time that is ahead of you!

Mike Partridge
Director of Admissions
International Student Coordinator

**Campus location:**

- Mackay is a city of over 78,000 residents, and is positioned on the north coast of Queensland (400 kilometres north of the Tropic of Capricorn). Maps are available which show the location of Queensland (State of Australia), Mackay, North Mackay (Northern suburb where School is located) and the School campus map (this is also found in the Student Diary).
- Average annual temperature of 23 degrees Celsius
- Further details can be found on the Mackay Council website: [www.mackay.qld.gov.au](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au)
2. **WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY**

An emergency is a problem that occurs suddenly, requiring immediate action – it is a crisis. An emergency is usually a medical problem. For you, an emergency can happen here in Australia or to a relative or a close friend overseas. Contact your home stay family or Head of Boarding immediately if you have an emergency. If you cannot contact your family telephone your Home Stay Coordinator.

The emergency number is 0400400331

3. **RULES**

Why do we have them?
The School Rules are extremely important – as an international student you must follow these. They are carefully designed to provide a smooth program for everyone – you, your home stay family, your natural parents and your school.

The rules must be followed and not be changed. Please accept the rules as written and everyone involved will have a much better chance for a positive experience.

International students at Whitsunday must obey all the laws of the Australian Government including laws covering immigration status requirements, State and Local Government laws, as well as the rules set by the School and the home stay family.

A student who disobeys the school rules may have his/her participation in the program terminated and the student may be sent back to his/her home country at his/her natural parents’ expense.

4. **WHEN YOU ARRIVE**

Arrival
You will probably have spent many sleepless nights preparing for your trip and wondering what life in Australia will be like. You parents will also be worried about you, so call home when you arrive at your home stay family’s residence and let them know you arrived safely.

Physical side effects
You may be very tired for the first few days of your adventure. Your body is still on the time schedule of your home country. You may lie awake in the middle of the night and be ready to go to bed in the middle of the afternoon. This is “jet lag” and all travellers must adjust to it. Knowing what effect it will have on you will help you respond more calmly. You may experience some stomach problems during the first weeks as your body adjusts to the different food and water. Eventually, your body will become accustomed to your new environment and your upset stomach will be back to normal. We suggest that you eat plain food in small amounts until your body adjusts.

As all this is going on, you are also getting to know your home stay family. The will want to show you their community as soon as possible before school starts. Be patient, let them know you are excited, but a little tired. Fortunately this stage only lasts for a few days and you will soon be feeling fine.
Immediate Cultural Differences
Australians are generally a relaxed nation of people – we call it being ‘laid back’ and you will find yourself becoming more like this as time goes by. You may be surprised by the direct questions you receive but you will learn to answer in a direct manner. It is important, however, to always say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, ‘good morning’ and ‘good night’. Remember, if you don’t understand anything – **ASK**. Your family will be as anxious as you are to make sure you relax and begin to feel at home.

Subject Choices
Your home stay family and teachers will organise for you to meet with your school to choose your subjects, purchase your uniform and get your class timetable and book list. Where possible, they will assist you to buy a second hand uniform which can then be resold when you leave the School.

5. **WHITSUNDAY ANGLICAN SCHOOL – RULES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Students must strictly obey the following rules of Whitsunday Anglican School International and the School’s Rules and General Regulations set out in the School Diary.

1. Drinking alcohol – except at home when offered by the host family and only with the consent of the student’s natural parents or guardians – is prohibited.

2. Possession and/or use of non-prescription and illicit drugs are prohibited. (Please note: marijuana is illegal in Australia).

3. Driving of any motorized vehicle is prohibited, except when supervised by legally qualified instructors and with your natural parent/guardian’s permission.

4. Complying with all school rules and keeping grades within a passing range is required (C grade or above).

5. Independent travel by students – except the day to day travel within the Mackay area – is not permitted during the program unless the School gives prior permission.

6. Students must not be convicted of any breach of Australia Federal Government or State Government laws, and students must not have any charge of such alleged breach found proved even if the courts record no conviction.

7. Students may not get their body pierced or get a tattoo while on the School program. To do so could result in being sent to their home country at their parents’ expense.

8. The School will only permit students to participate in dangerous activities subject to certain conditions. If the student engages in dangerous activities without the permission of the School the student’s program may be terminated at the discretion of the School.
6. **WHITSUNDAY ANGLICAN SCHOOL RULES**

Interpretation of the School Rules lies with Heads of Sub-Schools. Persons requiring clarification or amplification should see the Head of Junior School (K – Yr4); Head of Middle School (Yr5-Yr8) and Head of Senior School (Yr9-Yr12).

**General**

1. Students are expected to arrive at School before the first bell at 8.25am and not depart before the last bell at 3.00pm. Supervision is not provided for students who arrive at School before 8:00am. Students should not arrive at School before 8.00am unless required for supervised activities. Students in Before School Care are also exempt.

2. Students are not permitted to leave the School grounds without prior permission. This will only be granted in specific circumstances and only with the knowledge and consent of the parents/guardians.

3. Irresponsible behaviour within the School grounds and buildings including the defiance of the authority of both teaching and non-teaching staff is not acceptable behaviour.

4. The use of offensive language, the chewing of gum, smoking or being in the presence of smoking, consumption of alcohol, taking or possessing illegal drugs, carrying or possessing dangerous objects, and stealing are regarded as serious breaches of discipline.

5. Harassment of any kind, including bullying, is regarded as a serious breach of discipline. The School has a ‘zero tolerance’ policy on all forms of harassment.

6. Students are not permitted to drive to School and park on School property without prior arrangement with the Principal and the parents/guardians. A condition of permission being granted is that students deposit their vehicle keys, and sign “in” and “out” at the Student Reception for the time between their arrival and departure.

**Timetabled Lessons**

7. Regular and punctual attendance at all lessons is expected. Arrival at all lessons with the correct and named equipment is expected.

8. Students must respect the rights of others in benefiting from the educational opportunities being offered at the School.

9. Students are expected to keep up with the requirements of the subjects being studied. This is inclusive of the assignments, projects, field trips and such commitments.

**Uniform**

10. The School uniform is designed to be functional and not subject to fashion statements. All items of uniform must be clean and kept in good repair. The bottom of the girls’ skirts should be worn at or near knee level when standing. Boys’ shorts or long pants should be worn on the waist and belted where belt tabs exist. In Terms 2 and 3 ties are worn by all **boys** in the Middle and Senior Schools.
11. Hair is to be neat, tidy, neatly trimmed and pulled back from the face. Unnatural hair colours, including streaks and foils, and "fashionable" and radical cuts and/or trends are not permitted. Unnatural colours are those that are not a normal hair colour anywhere, or are not natural for the student’s skin tones. Middle and Junior School students are not permitted any hair colouring at all. Fringes must clear the eyebrows and not be swept back behind the ears. Boys’ hair must be trimmed at reasonably frequent intervals, have the ears showing and must not be worn below the level of the collar. Boys must be clean-shaven and sideburns are not to extend below the middle of the ear. Girls’ hair must be tidy and pulled back from the face including when working at desks and computers. Hair accoutrements are to be similar in colour to the hair and ribbons and scrunchies are to be in the School colours. Hair should not interfere with the wearing of the School hat. It is never acceptable for one student to cut another’s hair. Makeup of any kind, including foundation, tinted moisturizer and lipgloss, is not permitted. Coloured nail polish is not permitted.

12. Jewellery is restricted to a discreet watch and for girls only, one pair of small plain coloured, stud earrings worn in the lobes. Students unable to wear small studs may wear plain sleepers after written parental requests have been made. Clear plastic inserts in any body piercings are not acceptable. Medical bands verified by medical practitioners are permitted. Religious crosses on chains are permitted if worn beneath the uniform.

13. Hats are to be worn on all occasions when students are in the sunlight for extended periods and when on the oval. The wearing of sunglasses is encouraged although reflective lenses are not permitted.

14. The red School jumper or the School blazer may be worn over the day uniform, the sports uniform or the formal uniform. The tracksuit is only to be worn over the sports uniform. The tracksuit jacket is not to be worn over the day or formal uniform.

15. In the Senior School, students are expected to change into Sports uniforms for their Physical Education lessons. They are also expected to change back into School uniform during the closest break following these lessons. Students who are timetabled for sport twice in the same day may remain in their sports uniform for the day so long as this is supported by the time-table.

16. In the Junior and Middle Schools students may wear their Physical Education uniform for PE and Health lessons and the House uniform on House sports days.

Eating

17. All students are to be in the sub-School designated eating areas until the 10 minute bell rings. Students must remain in the Plazas until dismissed by Staff on duty. No food is to be consumed in any other areas of the School.

7. **BANK ACCOUNT**

Ask your family or School staff which is the most convenient bank and ask them to help you open an account. (If you are only in Australia for a term (10 weeks) or less it may be better to use a debit or key card attached to your bank account back home. You will need to visit the local bank and make sure that your card is working so you can get your money). You will need to take your passport, School Confirmation of Enrolment, and enough money to open an account.
8. **STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD**

Whitsunday Anglican School staff will organise your identity card after your arrival. Take care of this card. You can use it to get student discounts on public transport or cinemas as well as accessing resources in the library.

9. **PASSPORT AND RETURN AIRLINE TICKET**

You do not need to carry you passport with you while in Australia so put it in a safe place where you won’t lose it. Please tell a member of your home stay family where your passport is for safety reasons.

10. **SHOPPING**

Ask your family where the best place to shop is. Try to budget for each week’s transport cost, postage, toiletries, entertainment, clothes etc. You will also need to budget for school items such as excursions, books and stationery. Late night shopping happens on Thursday evenings in Mackay but this will need to be organised through your host family or Head of Boarding.

11. **ILLNESS**

If you feel ill or sick, tell your host family or Head of Boarding as soon as possible. They might have some non-prescriptive medication that will help you. They may think that you need to go to a doctor.

*PLEASE TELL YOUR HOST FAMILY OR HEAD OF BOARDING IF YOU HAVE ANY ALLERGIES BEFORE TAKING ANY MEDICINE. DO NOT TAKE ANY MEDICATION UNTIL YOU CHECK IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO ANY OF ITS CONTENTS.* This should be clear on the medical form that your parents will have signed before departure.

Your personal medications can be extremely dangerous if taken by young children

Young home stay brothers and sisters may think that your medication or tablets are juice or lollies if you leave them where they can reach them.

*Please ask your home stay family where you should keep all your medicines, tablets, sprays or creams so they will be safe from young children.*

12. **WHAT IS CULTURE?**

You will have several new “cultures” to adjust to. These new cultures will be composed of new friends, family, teachers, language and situations.

*Do you know what culture is?*
The culture of a society is the way of life of the people. It is the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. Culture can tell people how to think and feel. Culture directs our actions and gives us our outlook on life. Culture tells us what the accepted ways of behaving are. Accepted behaviours vary from society to society. This can lead to misunderstandings between people of different societies. For example in Japan, it is not polite to look directly at the teachers’ eyes when speaking to them however, in Australia it is rude if you do not look at a teacher when they are speaking to you.

We have provided you with some knowledge of what culture is, it is now up to you to learn about how it impacts on your Australian experience and how to use it to better understand yourself.

**Walk in someone else’s shoes!**

Often we don’t realise how much of our personality and the way we look at the world is affected by the culture in which we grow up. If you are finding situations at home frustrating, think to yourself… do I need to change my shoes? We ask this because growing up in one culture is often like wearing one pair of shoes, but when you go to a different country, you need to change shoes to fully appreciate how people in that country work. If you can learn to wear the shoes of the people in your new country, you will understand them more fully.

Learning to do this is something that you can take with you wherever you are in the world. It will make you a better person. Learning to understand people from a variety of cultures is a gift that you can give to the world. There is an old saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. This means that we should be sensitive to the culture in which we are living and try to follow it as much as we can.

13. **YOUR NEW FAMILY**

Learning to live with another family can be one of the most challenging experiences in your life.

Of all the friendships you will make during your stay in Australia, your experience with your home stay family has the most potential for a close, lasting personal friendship. Hosting an international student such as you is an exercise in “good will” for these families. It can be difficult to get to know other people through letters and phone calls, so the first few weeks of our exchange will include many revelations and maybe a few disappointments for both you and your new family.

There isn’t a rule book for learning about each other! Despite all your preparation, there will still be unforeseen situations which arise. **Be open, truthful and discuss each situation as it happens.**

**Some differences you may encounter**

You may be used to a family where your father is the head of the house and he makes all the decisions. Your home stay family may be just the opposite with every family member giving their opinion before a final decision is made. However, Australian teenagers do NOT make their own decisions about where they are going, or what time they will come home or doing homework – Australian parents make and enforce these rules and you will be expected to obey. You may find you are expected to help with chores, even though you may not be used to doing this. You may be used to your mother or paid household help doing the tasks that you are expected to do in Australia. This does not mean your home stay family has abandoned their responsibilities – it is just a part of our different lifestyle where everyone shares the chores. Australians within a family have a relaxed and generous manner with each other. Of course, there are many, many different types of families and your home stay family will have its own unique ways and ideas.

**Daily Life**
Always be considerate. Your new family, teachers, classmates and friends will all react with pleasure to your thoughtfulness. For instance, if you are going to be late, call someone to let them know. If you want to make a long distance phone call, ask permission and remember to observe the home stay family rules for using the phone. Don’t forget to pay for your call.

How do you live with these differences?
Every family has a different way of operating – it is your job to learn about your new family and work with them. The best way to learn about each other is to COMMUNICATE!

Communication
Bad communication creates misunderstandings. Misunderstandings can start world wars…..so imagine what good communication can do! If you believe in international peace… start by becoming an effective communicator.

If you communicate – it will make a VERY BIG difference to your experience as an International student.

Although we cannot give you an entire book to read we have given you a few pointers:

• If you are not comfortable with something – use ‘I’ statements to express your concern, for example, “When you drive very fast, I feel scared because I am not familiar with such high speeds.” In this example, we have underlined ‘when you’, ‘I feel’ and ‘because’. These words are underlined because they are good to use when you need to phrase a concern. Remember to keep in mind theses ‘I’ statements when you are discussing any problems you have, whether it is with family, friends or teachers.

• Practice listening – remember this famous quote:

  “We have been given two ears and but a single mouth, in order that we may hear more and talk less.”

Avoid using the following communication blocks:
- Ordering and commanding people – for example, ‘you must’, ‘you have to’, ‘you will’, ‘what you have to realise is’.
- Preaching and moralising – for example, what I would do is this’, ‘why don’t you’.
- Giving advice – for example, ‘what I would do is’, ‘why don’t you’.
- Judging – for example – ‘you are lazy’, ‘what’s wrong with you’.

• If you are upset about something, do not react immediately – think about your response before raising your voice at another person and saying something you may regret.

BEWARE!
Frequently we have heard international students object to requests or rules set by the home stay family or school – their objection is often “…but it OK to do this in my home country….”

Such a response is not in the spirit of this program – please do not use it.
It is OK to compare you home with Australia, however, make sure that it is used to better your relationship through understanding and sharing.

Manners and courtesy
Each culture has its own rules of behaviour, each unique to itself. Your sensitivity and willingness to learn and adapt to new ways will help you to adjust into Australian life quickly. Courtesy everywhere
is based on consideration of feelings. Most manners come from the natural desire to please, or to show respect for another.

14. **DAILY LIFE WITH YOUR HOME STAY FAMILY**

Soon after you arrive, sit down with your family and discuss their daily life, their expectations and their routines. We suggest you include the following topics:

- **Addressing your host parents.** Some host parents prefer Mum and dad while others prefer first names. Be sure you and your family discuss this and choose names that suit you and your home stay family – not calling them a name is very rude.
- **Family rules.** Think about the rules such as attendance at meals, curfews, use of television, computer and the internet, power, acceptable noise levels, asking permission and so on.
- **Eating.** The most important issue to remember is that there are other people in the house and that you must never take the last of anything unless you ask! Ask your home stay family what the rules are in regard to eating snacks and meal times.
- **Family routine.** This will include meal times, weekend activities, family outings and chores. Ask when the family does the shopping. Many Australians shop once a week and their purchases must last all week.
- **Chores that need to be done.** Ask if they would like to make a roster of duties – if not make sure you know what is expected of you – and do it!
- **Laundry routine.** This means the washing and ironing of clothes, changing of bed linen and so on. Your home stay family will most likely do this for you, but you may like to wash your own personal items.
- **The location of clean towels, toilet paper, soap and other household items.**
- **Ask if there are special requirements such as not using too much hot water and there may be a drought so be mindful of this. Don’t take too long in the shower (5 minutes should be adequate). This is one thing that often causes problems - people really do not like to miss their shower. Please check when all the family members shower and agree with them on the best time for you to use the bathroom.**
- **When and how does your home stay family expect you to pay your share of the telephone bill?**
- **If you do not understand – ask – and be prepared to go through some of these things again later.**
- **If you do need to use a hairdryer or put on your make-up – it is better to do this in your bedroom rather than the bathroom as someone may be waiting to use the shower.**

**Privacy**

You are expected to respect your home stay family’s privacy. Good manners should be applied. Knocking on doors before entering and respecting personal property are essential to any family.

**WE HAVE ALSO REFERRED TO PRIVACY AS CONFIDENTIALITY – AND WE EXPECT IT TO BE MAINTAINED.**

Respecting your family’s privacy includes not talking about them to school friends, neighbours, other international students and so on. Of course, you can talk to your Home Stay Coordinator and teachers about issues if there is a problem.

Do **NOT** take other students into the house without your host family’s permission when the host family are out.
15.  **FAMILY RULES**

As in all families, there are probably many unspoken rules in your new home stay family. A lot of families are uncomfortable about discussing these rules and this is not an easy thing to do, but discussing the following is very, very helpful to making your program a success:

- Curfew – what time are you expected home if you are going out? Telling them where you are going and if you are going to be late.
- What you should do if you are going to be delayed coming home
- Turning off lights
- Household chores
- Use of television and stereo
- Use of computer and internet
- Transportation to and from school and social activities
- Schedule for use of the bathroom
- Snacks
- Using the telephone
- Entering the parents’ bedroom (e.g to answer the phone, use the ensuite etc.)
- Holidays and special events

As some houses sometimes use a different sewage system – girls are asked not put sanitary items down the toilet. Usually there will be a bin in the toilet where you can put wrapped items.

16.  **HANDY HINTS FOR LIVING**

The following list of simple suggestions will make life easier for you and those around you:

- If you open it – close it
- If you turn it on – turn it off
- If you unlock it – lock it up
- If you break it – admit it and have it fixed or replaced
- If you don’t know how to operate it – leave it alone and ask someone
- If it is broken – don’t try to fix it, ask someone who can
- If you want to borrow it – ask the owner for permission
- If you value it – take care of it
- If you move it – put it back
- If it will brighten someone’s day – say it
- If you hurt someone’s feelings – be first to say, “I’m sorry, let’s talk”
- If someone hurts your feelings, - say “Let’s talk about it”
- If you have a problem – talk to your teachers or Coordinator at the School

17.  **MONEY**

You are required to have adequate money throughout the duration of your program for your personal expenses.
Within three days of your arrival you should ask your home stay family to clarify what they expect you to pay for, what they expect to pay for themselves and how you will reimburse each other.

This discussion should include such expenses as:

- Telephone bills
- Restaurants
- Holidays
- Internet access
- Additional food items
- Toiletries
- Cosmetics

Remember the ideas we gave you earlier for good communication. Asking questions of this nature can be difficult but it is something that you must do. Money can be a sensitive issue, and it is important that you discuss it with your family. This will help avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings later on.

For many international students, this is the very first time they have had to rely on their own financial budgeting skills. Therefore, your Home Stay Coordinator will understand if you require assistance in working out how to budget your allowance.

Some important issues to remember and discuss with your home stay family:

- Your home stay fees will be paid to your family on a weekly basis by the School.
- If you arrive with a Visa or Mastercard to access money, you will need to be shown where to do this.
- If you arrive with traveller’s cheques or cash you will need to open a bank account. You will need to take identification to the bank to open an account. This will include your passport.
- If you are short of money, or having problems managing it, please contact your Home Stay Coordinator. **Do not** lend money or borrow money from your home stay family as this can lead to misunderstandings.
- If you owe money for phone calls, you must pay it as soon as the bill is received by your family (this means immediately). Your home stay family will usually know when the next phone bill is due. Australian phone bills are itemized and for intestate and overseas calls so there should not be any dispute over the amount owed.
- Please remember to pay for your local calls, which will not be itemized. **“Local calls” only refers to calls made in the Mackay area.** It is a good idea to use and international dialling phone card, which automatically charges the costs to your natural parents’ telephone bill or a pre-paid phone card which can be purchased from any Post Office and many newsagents.
- Damage to property – you may be asked to pay for damage that you cause.

**You are not expected to:**

- Go to a restaurant with your home stay family and eat out where you are required to pay for food. (Of course, you can choose to do this – and offering to help pay your portion of the bill will be greatly appreciated by your home stay family).
- Pay anything towards household expenses except for your personal needs and phone calls.
- Lend money to family members.
- Borrow money from family members

18. **TEACHERS AND YOUR HOME STAY COORDINATOR**
Your teachers and your Home Stay Coordinator are there to help both you and your home stay family. They are the first people you call with a question, a problem or to share your joys other than your home stay family.

Your first contact with the Home Stay Coordinator will most likely be at the airport on your arrival and then soon after to conduct an orientation with you and your home stay family. Your teachers and Coordinator can be great friends to you – please keep in regular contact and cooperate with them.

19. **SCHOOL**

Learning to ‘fit-in’ to a new school can be scary, fun and sometimes the experience is disappointing.

The school may have supplied some books, class information and uniform requirements. Reading and re-reading school information once you have commenced school here will increase your understanding of the different system.

Remember, as an international student the following is expected of you:

- You must attend school.
- As an international student, the School is constantly monitoring your behaviour and grades. (Remember the C grade average rule). The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs also monitors your performance and your continued stay in Australia is dependent on your commitment to study.
- If you are having problems academically, the School will identify the best course of action – and the most appropriate response. The final decision about a student’s continued enrolment rests with the School.
- The School determines the year level you will undertake.
- Participate in exams and submit work assignments no later than the due dates.
- Accept the different structure of the School. Students attend classes from 8.30am to 3.00pm five days a week. Many students then attend sport or other activities after school and sometimes on weekends. A light lunch is eaten at school and you can either bring this from home or buy at the tuckshop. You will be placed in a tutor group and meet regularly with the other students.
- Class work and assignments are different in Australia. In senior classes you will sit for some exams, but much of your assessment will be based on assignments. In Australia, there is a great emphasis on research and report writing and this work is done during class and at home. It is very important for you to draw up a good study plan that suits your schedule and family life. If you need help doing this then ask your Tutor to help you. If you want to do well it is essential that you understand how important assignments are in Australian schools. Do not be afraid to ask your teachers for help – especially from your ESL teacher if there is a language problem. Reports in Australia show both your achievement results in each subject and information about effort and behaviour. It is extremely important for you to obtain a good mark for EFFORT as well as ACHIEVEMENT.
- Wear your school uniform with pride. If you have never worn a uniform before, you may feel strange for a little while. However, think of the positives – you don’t have to bring as many clothes from home; you won’t have to choose what to wear each day; you will not be faced with that competitive feeling that sometimes arises among fashion conscious teenagers; and you will very quickly feel part of the group.
- Many of you will want to obtain an ‘Overall Position’. This is possible but you will need to study at School for the final two years to graduate. Coping with a mid year arrival – The Australian academic year mirrors the calendar year and you may arrive during the mid year
holidays in July. This could be seen as a disadvantage as everyone has settled into a pattern and friendships appear to be established. However, school work is based on the semester and if you arrive in July, you will arrive for the beginning of a new unit of work, with a newly formed class of students.

- Some types of behaviour and actions are sure to lead you into trouble. These include truancy, bad language, not wearing school uniform correctly, and actions such as smoking, consuming alcohol, possessing and taking illegal drugs. These are all regarded as very serious breaches of School Rules and can lead to suspension or expulsion from School

(The above information is outlined in the Student Diary that you will be given to each student at orientation.)

Teachers

It is common to be surprised at the way Australian teachers relate to their pupils and they sometimes appear to be more of a friend than an authority figure. You may find this ‘informal’ but do not take this as a sign that they are not interested in your behaviour or performance.

Facilities

- Whitsunday is a school of over 800 students from Kindergarten to Year 12
- Junior School K-4 has 11 classrooms all with internet-linked computers
- Middle School 5-8 has 8 classrooms, one being a computer laboratory
- Senior School 9-12 has 12 classrooms all with computers internet-linked
- 2 computer labs with 28 computers
- Fully equipped Resource Centre with 30 computers and a computer lab for senior students
- The resource centre also provides reading and reference material for studies.
- A department specialising in ‘learning support’ for students with English as a second language.
- 200 seat theatre for assemblies, concerts and drama
- Large assembly hall (used also for indoor sport events)
- Woodwork and metalwork rooms
- Dedicated Art Centre – exhibition hall and 2 classrooms with pottery kiln
- Dedicated music centre – with a large complement of musical instruments.
- Ovals with rugby field, soccer pitches, a tennis court and basketball courts

20. **HEALTH INSURANCE – OSHC (OVERSEAS STUDENT HEALTH COVER)**

The Australian Government’s compulsory health insurance has been paid by the School. You will receive your membership card with an identity number on it. Keep this card in your wallet to show the doctor or to make a claim. If you have another insurance policy with you, please explain this to your home stay family so they know where to find it should you become ill.

It is a mandatory government requirement that all students have basic medical insurance with Medibank Private. This is paid before you arrive in Australia and your membership card will be mailed to you at your home stay address. If you have any problems at all, please contact your international student coordinator.

If you need to attend a doctor you will have to pay for the medical treatment and then claim for reimbursement. Please make sure you keep copies of all medical transactions (receipts, payments, claims etc.). OSHC has a very basic health cover and does not cover services such as dental, physiotherapy, optical, pharmaceuticals and pre-existing conditions.
Please note: If you have medical insurance from your own country, you must keep your receipts to claim on this insurance. You can only claim once for each medical bill.

21. TRAVEL

Any time you spend a night or more away from your home, it is considered ‘travel’ and falls under the rules and guidelines set up by the School. These rules are for the safety and protection of the student, the home stay family, the overseas organisation and the School.

We are not trying to stop you having fun- we just want you to be safe!

Two basic rules about travel:

1. Inform your Home Stay Coordinator and ensure that the travel is approved well before the travel is to take place.
2. Under no circumstances are you allowed to spend a night away without adult supervision.

Travel and time spent away from your home stay family -
Definition and rules:

- Adult supervision is defined as being with someone over 25 years of age (and/or authorized by the School).
- Overnight – if you wish to stay at a friend’s place overnight you must:
  - Be supervised by someone over 25 and
  - Have your home stay family’s permission for the overnight stay
- In addition, your home stay family are to have a contact number, name and address of where you are staying. You must comply with the arrangements you have made – under no circumstances are you to change arrangements without notifying your family and having their approval.

If you do not follow these instructions – you have broken the School’s rules

Home Stay family Travel

You do not need to follow the ‘Travel release procedure’ if you are travelling with your home stay family for less than 14 days. However, you will need to provide your Home Stay Coordinator with a copy of your itinerary complete with contact details. An itinerary is only necessary if you are travelling from one place to another and staying at more than one location. It is important that your Coordinator knows where to contact you whilst you are away from your home stay’s normal place of residence. This means that you need to provide him/her with a contact telephone number and if possible an address. For longer holidays, please follow the process outlines under Travel Release Procedure.

School Excursions

This refers to any trips conducted by or on behalf of the School. Permission for official School trips is included in your application. Please ensure that you give your Home Stay Coordinator a copy of the itinerary complete with contact details.

Individual/Independent Travel

This type of travel requires a special approval process and it is only under very rare circumstances that the School will approve requests by students to travel alone. Permission for individual travel must be obtained following the guidelines outlined under Travel Release Procedure. Failure to obtain permission could result in you being expelled from the programme and returned home early at the cost to your natural parents. Hitch hiking and backpacking also fall into this category, even though an overnight stay may not be involved.
**Extended Travel**
This is all travel lasting longer than two weeks. You must follow the ‘Travel Release Procedure’ and seek permission from your Home Stay Coordinator.

**Travel with natural Family**
Natural parents should visit you at the end of your programme or during the School holidays but not during the School term. This type of travel requires you to follow the ‘Travel Release Procedure’.

**Day Travel – over or under 18 years of age**
Eg: Mackay vicinity. You must go with a school approved adult or meet an adult at the destination who will supervise all travel and take responsibility for your welfare. Travel release forms must be completed and signed by your natural parents, you and Whitsunday Anglican School before the travel date.

**22. TRAVEL RELEASE PROCEDURE**

You are not permitted to travel until all signatures have been obtained on the Travel Release Form. Remember we can sometimes require up to two weeks for this process to be completed.

The process is:
- First, check with your home stay family that they approve.
- If your Coordinator is happy with the arrangements ask them for a Travel Release Form.
- The Travel Release Form is to be completed and signed by you, your home stay family and the School. This form will not be sent overseas unless all details are complete. A copy of your itinerary is also to be provided – this must outline travel dates and times, type of transport and supervision.
- The form and accompanying itinerary is to be faxed overseas by the Home Stay Coordinator for your natural parents'/guardians signature.
- The School will notify you of permission to travel once all signatures are complete and your parents'/guardians’ permission has been obtained.

If this procedure is not followed it is likely the request for Travel Release will be denied.

**23. BOOKING YOUR RETURN FLIGHT**

You will most likely arrive with a return air ticket. Some term dates will be booked, but many are open tickets. This is due to the complexity of the airline computer system which does not allow bookings over 333 before the actual date.

Please make your return flight booking as early as possible, at least three months before your departure………..you cannot make it too early! Flights out of Australia are often full, so you need to book early to get your chosen date. Please give all the details to the Coordinator at the School.

**24. RELIGION**

Participation in your home stay family’s religious activities is entirely voluntary. We expect you to treat your family’s religious needs with respect. Living in a family situation with people of differing religious views is a wonderful opportunity for learning and sharing.
Mutual respect in matters of religion is essential to your success. You may wish to attend your home stay family’s church with them when you arrive but it is not compulsory. Many churches have active youth groups and it is a good place to make new friends. If you wish to attend another church, temple or synagogue, ask your home stay family’s assistance in getting information about it.

Our School is affiliated with the Anglican Church and attendance at chapel and Religious Education classes while at school is mandatory as outlined in the School’s curriculum.

25. **WORK**

International students holding a current Student Visa are not allowed to work under this visa. Under the new Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) regulations you must apply for special permission to work. According to DIMA, applicants must produce evidence that they have commenced studying and pay a $50 fee.

This School does not favour international students working. If you decide to work please remember that you are here as a student and your study must be your first priority – this decision must also be discussed and approved by the School. Once permission is granted, students will be limited to 20 hours work per week.

For more information regarding Australian immigration matters you can refer to their information phone number: 313 881. Alternatively, you can visit their web site at [http://www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

26. **REPORTS**

Reports are an important part of your time at the School. The School will send reports to your natural parents at the end of June and November. Your final School report may not be ready until you arrive back in your home country. It is important that you make sure the School understands your needs.

27. **DRIVERS LICENCE**

Driving of a motorized vehicle is not permitted. The only exception is learning to drive with an approved driving school. You can obtain a Learner’s Permit to drive but should you get your licence, it must be given to the home stay Coordinator at the School to be sent to your natural parents for safe keeping.

28. **TRANSPORT IN AUSTRALIA**

If your friends offer to drive you somewhere make sure they hold a current driver’s licence and that you have permission to go in the car with your home stay family.

As an international student, for your own safety we recommend that you:

- Do not get in a vehicle with someone who has been consuming alcohol
- Travel only with experienced and competent drivers
- Be cautious about accepting lifts from inexperienced ‘P’ plate drivers (this means the driver is currently holding a Probationary Licence) – this may include your host siblings and older friends.
• Do not travel in a vehicle with a driver on ‘L’ plates (this means the driver holds only a current “Learners Permit”.
• If you have concerns about a driver you are to travel with, please discuss this with your Home Stay Coordinator, teachers or home stay parents.
• Driving a motorized vehicle is prohibited by School under no circumstances can you purchase a vehicle while in Australia on this school programme.

29. **ACTIVITIES THAT COULD INVOLVE SOME MEASURED RISK**

You must get permission from the School to do any activity that could involve some measured risk **before you do it**, except if this activity is organised by the School. See the Home Stay Coordinator **at least a week before. They will need to get your natural parents written permission.**

Although OSHC will cover you for emergency attention resulting from an accident, you should be aware that it does not cover specialist or rehabilitation costs associated with these activities.

These activities include, but are not limited to:

• Horse riding
• Hang-gliding
• White-water rafting
• Skiing or snow boarding outside maintained trails or slopes of ski resorts
• Mountaineering
• Hunting
• Use of firearms or air/spring powered guns
• Skydiving/parachuting
• Ice hockey
• Judo
• Karate
• Wave running
• Bungee-cord jumping
• Scuba diving (natural parent permission must be obtained if this is in the School’s curriculum).
• Rock climbing/abseiling
• Flying in light aircraft
• Caving
• Other potentially perilous or violent activities not included in the above list.

Please check with the Home Stay Coordinator about any activity before making plans, in case there could be some measured risk, and then we will need to get written permission from your natural parents.

30. **SMOKING, DRINKING AND DRUGS**

**Smoking**

Australian society does not approve of young people smoking. In many states, you must be 18 years of age to legally purchase tobacco products. Many Australians prefer not to smoke and do not allow anyone to smoke in the house. Indeed, new laws recently introduced mean there are very few places in public that allow smoking. You **must** follow your home stay family rules about smoking. If you have marked on your application form that you don’t smoke, then don’t.
Drinking
School rules say that students must not consume nor possess alcohol. The only exception to this rule is in your home stay family’s home with your home stay family on special occasions if they offer. You must also have your natural parents’ permission to do this. In Australia you cannot legally purchase alcohol if you are under 18.

Drugs
You must not use or possess illegal substances (drugs). It is against the law in Australia. You could get sent home or put in prison. It is against School rules and will result in immediate dismissal from the School. You will be sent home at the expense of your natural parents. Please note that marijuana is illegal in Australia.

31. REGARDLESS OF YOUR AGE….

Remember you are an International student
In your home country, when you turn 18, you may be considered an adult. You no longer legally have to do what your parents ask of you. If you are 18 while on this School program in Australia, this privilege does not apply to you. Even if you are 18, you are required to do what your home stay family and School ask you to do. This includes what is written in this handbook.

Australian teenagers may not understand that you have more restrictions than they do. It is a good idea to tell them about those restrictions and what could happen if you break rules for international students.

31. INFORMATION TO HELP YOU IN AUSTRALIA

Take the initiative – The students who enjoy themselves and get the most out of this adventure are those who take initiative. Don’t wait for other people to do things for you. Get out there and make friends. Be interested in the things your home stay family does. Talk to them. Talk to people at School. Join in School activities. Do these things and you will do better at school and enjoy life more.

Expressing yourself
Even if you find speaking English difficult, talk to your family, teachers and students. Mime or draw pictures if you have to – it doesn’t matter – just have fun and people will help you. Don’t forget – English is your second or third language – how many languages can other people you meet speak? If you make a mistake it doesn’t matter. It is important that you try and people will like you for that.

Responsibilities
Take responsibilities given to you by your family or teachers seriously.

Maturity
Your place in your new family can be very demanding, especially when you first arrive. There is only one of you for the home stay family to deal with but there may be three or four of them for you to consider. You need to use a lot of understanding and patience.

Spending time with your home stay family
Remember that your home stay family wants to see you and spend time with you. They should take priority over all other social activities. Take the time to sit and talk with them, play a game, watch the television. Give your home stay your attention. Remember, your home stay family has chosen you to share their house.
If you need support
Talk with your Home Stay Coordinator or teachers about anything at all. This is why we are here – as a support and to help you. Sometimes another point of view can help you sort out a problem.

Greetings
When Australians meet sometimes they shake hands. Teenagers usually just smile and say ‘hello’ or ‘hi’. Sometimes friends will hug or kiss you on the cheek.

Visiting
Australians are usually relaxed and informal. When visiting each other they often just call in. At first students should always phone first to see if it is ok.

Eating
The main meal of the day is in the evening. Families usually eat together in the evenings and more frequently at weekends. Many Australians call the meal ‘tea’ or ‘dinner’.

Hygiene
Australians generally shower at least once a day and sometimes more often in summer. Personal cleanliness is very important. Students also need to change their underclothes daily. Make sure that your clothes are washed frequently. Boys and girls should both use deodorant and antiperspirant.

Water usage
Australia is the world’s driest continent. Many families in the country use tank water and are dependent on rainfall for the water they use. Families in cities and towns have to pay for the amount of water they use. Australians use water sparingly. Students need to be careful not to use a lot of water – only have quick showers. Don’t leave taps running at any time.

Saving Power
Electricity is expensive. Switch off lights and fans when you leave a room.

32. FRIENDS

The new friends you make will make your stay even more enjoyable. We hope that you make many new Australian friends. We understand it is easy to ‘hang out’ with other international students. However, don’t let this become a habit. This can lead to problems. Your home stay family and the Australian students at School, who are excited that you are here, will feel left out if you are only friends with students from other countries. You will not learn English quickly. Yo will not find it easy to adjust. While it is fun to talk with other international students, it is not a good idea to spend all your time with them. You chose to come to Australia to live the Australian lifestyle. The best way to do this is to make friends with Australians. Be yourself. Take part in many activities. For example, get involved with a sporting team. You could join a club like bush walking, swimming, sailing, chess, music, soccer, rugby or basketball. All these things will help you to meet other people and become good friends.

33. SAYING GOODBYE

Keep in touch
Some people you have met during your stay in Australia will become good friends. Keep a list of all the people you want to thank and those who you want to write to. When you return home you will be pleased you did it.
Before you leave
- Return all library and other borrowed books
- Clean and sell your uniforms (speak to the book and uniform shop)
- Collect your final report or have the School send it to your home.
- Repay any money you owe and pay your final telephone account
- Close your bank account
- Send excess belongings/luggage home by sea mail.
- Have enough cash to pay for excess luggage and travel needs.
- Reconfirm your flight

34. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you, your home stay family, School or Coordinator have a problem or a concern in relation to your program, it can often be solved by talking directly to the people involved. This means that you tell the other person how you feel. This can be done very successfully providing you are willing to be reasonable and objective. It is important that you try and start sentences with “I’. For example, “I am concerned about something and I am wondering if I can talk about it”.

Whitsunday Anglican School expects International students to first talk directly to the person involved.

Sometimes, however, it is difficult to know where to start when you are confronted with a problem. For this reason, Whitsunday has put in place the following ‘Grievance Procedure’. As a student you are expected to follow and respect the procedures.

1. Speak to the person directly. This might be your home stay family, your host sibling or maybe a friend or teacher. It is okay to tell your Coordinator about the problem, but ask them to respect your maturity and desire to solve the problem yourself; they can become involved if you need them to later.

   If the problem stops then congratulate your self on being such a good problem solver and communicator. If talking directly to the person involved does not solve the problem, then ask your Coordinator for help.

2. Make a time to meet with your Coordinator – ask that you meet in private or speak on the telephone when the other person is not present. When you tell your Coordinator about the situation, tell them what you have already tried to do to solve the problem.

3. Now it is time for your Coordinator to help you with this situation. There are a number of ways open to your Coordinator depending on the nature of the problem.

Outcomes
- Coordinator and you speak about the problem and come up with a number of ways to approach the problem. The two of you work together and the problem is solved.
- Coordinator approaches the family and arranges a meeting to discuss the problem. You may or may not be involved be invited to take part in this meeting.
- Agreement is negotiated. In most situations this will be written down and signed by all members of the family and you. Your Coordinator will send a copy of this to your agent. Experience shows that this is a very useful way to resolve problems and usually results in no further action.
Student is moved. Occasionally the only option is to change home stay families. If this is a recommended outcome, a thorough investigation into both family’s and student’s conduct is instigated. Moving families is not something we condone unless absolutely necessary, and if it is a result of the student’s behaviour, re-placement is likely to occur along with the School’s discipline procedure.

**Contacts for Grievance Problems**

1. The student should contact the appropriate staff member for an appointment to discuss the issue. Written notes of the discussion will be kept for the student’s record.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Academic / Subject concerns</th>
<th>For Personal Problems</th>
<th>For Homestay / Boarding Problems</th>
<th>For unresolved problems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting Deputy Principal</td>
<td>Acting Director of Admissions</td>
<td>Head of Boarding</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT ARBITRATOR/MEDIATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mike Partridge</td>
<td>Mr Jamie Novosel OR</td>
<td>Mr Jaye Beutel OR</td>
<td>Hilary Egan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR Head of House/Tutor</td>
<td>The Chaplain Rev’d Janet Story</td>
<td>Director of Admissions</td>
<td>49423088 0417070319</td>
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2. If there is no resolution, the student should make an appointment to discuss the issue with Mr Darren Fleming (Deputy Principal). The student should take a written statement outlining any issues or concerns to this meeting. The Mr Darren Fleming (Deputy Principal) will refer to previous notes from the student’s record.

3. If there is still no resolution, the student should make an appointment to discuss the issue with the Principal.

4. The student should discuss the problem with the Principal. If there is a resolution, details will be noted on the student’s record. If there is no resolution, the student will be made aware of other steps available to him/her, and his/her rights under legislation in the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth of Australia. The School will arrange independent mediation.

5. If you wish to lodge an external appeal or complain about this decision, you can contact the Overseas Students Ombudsman. The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au) or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

**For more information please contact:**

Mr Jamie Novosel  
Acting Director of Admissions

Phone: +61 7 4969 2000  
Fax: +61 7 4969 2001  
Email: jnovosel@was.qld.edu.au

Website: [www.was.qld.edu.au](http://www.was.qld.edu.au)