Safety and Welfare of Children and Young People - International Student Welfare Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This Procedure establishes a clear process for the welfare and care of international students under the age of eighteen studying onshore at Victoria University (VU).

(2) It allows VU as the registered provider to meet its obligations under Standard 5 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) This Procedure applies to:

a. all VU international students aged under 18 years at the time of the commencement of their course of study who are on an Australian Government student visa; and
b. all staff with responsibilities for teaching and supporting international students enrolled in any course at VU, including:
    i. higher education coursework award courses;
    ii. vocational educational award courses;
    iii. postgraduate degrees by research; and
    iv. non-award courses where performance is being assessed by the University.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) CAAW Letter: The Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare proforma letter from the Department of Home Affairs.

(5) CoE: A document, provided electronically, which is issued by the registered provider to intending international students and which must accompany their application for a student visa. It confirms the student's eligibility to enrol in a particular course of the registered provider.

(6) Guardian: A parent or other adult legally invested with the managing of the rights of a person under the age of eighteen.

(7) International Student: This means a student who is a citizen of another country, holds a student visa and is studying in Australia.

(8) Study Period: A discrete period of study within a course engaged in by the International Student, such as a term, semester, trimester or a lesser duration, as defined by VU. The study period for each course or unit is stated in each

student’s offer of admission.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(9) See Safety and Welfare of Children and Young People Policy.

Section 5 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
VU International (VUI)	- Advises students and families of the requirements regarding welfare and guardianship. - Issues CAAW letters to accompany visa applications by students. - In conjunction with Student Services, contracts with third-party service providers to deliver welfare and accommodation services to international students under 18.
Student Services: Enrolments team	- In conjunction with Student Services, contracts with third-party service providers to deliver welfare and accommodation services to international students under 18. - Where an international student under 18 has had their enrolment suspended or cancelled, ensures that all required notifications (to parents / guardians as well as the Australian Government) are performed.
Student Services: Student Wellbeing/ Student Support	- Provides support to international students under 18, including specialised services if applicable.
Third-party service providers (student welfare)	- Provides, under contracted arrangements, Welfare Supervision of international students under 18. - Approves and monitors accommodation arrangements for all international students under 18. - Provides ongoing support and advice to the international student during their time in Australia, including providing assistance with personal and accommodation difficulties.

Part B - General Requirements

(10) Before a visa can be issued to an international student under the age of 18, the Australian Government requires that there be appropriate accommodation and welfare arrangements made for the time the student is in Australia. All students must register their accommodation and welfare arrangements with the university before they accept their offer of a place.

(11) Students may arrange welfare and accommodation while in Australia either with:

a. A parent: Students may arrange to stay with a parent while in Australia. The parent will require a short-stay visa (if the student will be turning 18 within 3 months of arriving in Australia) or Student Guardian visa. VU will supply the CoE, and a CAAW letter is not required.
b. A guardian approved by the Department of Home Affairs: Students may arrange a guardian, who must be over the age of 21, of good character, and holding or applying for a visa that allows them to stay in Australia until the student is over the age of 18. A guardian may be a spouse, a sibling, a step-parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew (note: Department of Home Affairs applies some restrictions on who may qualify as a guardian). Students who choose this option also do not require a CAAW letter.
c. A third-party provider nominated by Victoria University: Victoria University may take on responsibility for approving arrangements for the student's welfare and accommodation until the student turns 18, for a time period of sufficient length to cover arrangements for the student to leave Australia, or make other appropriate arrangements. A CAAW letter is provided to Department of Home Affairs by VU and the student is provided with

their COE for the purpose of applying for a visa.

Part C - Guardianship for International Students Under 18

(12) Students without an appropriate guardian in Australia will need to:

a. Apply for appropriate accommodation and welfare arrangements to be approved by Victoria University.
b. Complete a VU form to receive a CAAW letter. Students will need a passport, a copy of parents' ID, and a copy of the COE letter to apply for the CAAW letter.

(13) VU will nominate in the CAAW the start and end date of when they accept welfare responsibility for the student. The minimum length of welfare responsibility is the term of the CoE plus 7 days, or until the student turns 18 plus 7 days, whichever is the later date.

Part D - Welfare and Accommodation for International Students Under 18

(14) International students under 18 must make arrangements via VU's nominated third party service provider/s to be provided with welfare supervision and access to homestay or other accommodation.

(15) The student or their family enters into an agreement with the third-party provider to provide welfare and accommodation services for the student while they are in Australia.

(16) The third party provider appoints a “Welfare Supervisor” to assist and monitor each Student.

(17) The Welfare Supervisors are suitable people who:

a. are at least 21 years of age;
b. have a valid police clearance and Working With Children Check;
c. have or agree to undergo a Working With Children Check every five years as required by the Laws of the State of Victoria;
d. speak the same first language as that of the Student Participant (where deemed necessary by the provider).

(18) Students under 18 years of age are required to live under the supervision of an adult of good character and this is usually in a ‘Homestay” with a “Homestay Host”.

(19) The Homestay Host is generally arranged through a “Homestay Agency” which ensures the character and suitability of the Homestay Host to provide the care and support required for the Student.

(20) Where the Homestay is not engaged via an Agency (e.g. a family relative), the third party provider will ensure the Homestay meets all requirements as if it were a Homestay Agency and will ensure supporting documentation is completed.

Part E - Support for International Students Under 18

(21) Third party providers are contracted to provide a range of supports for international students for whom they provide services, including:

a. Regular contact (weekly upon arrival and then minimum fortnightly communication) with student whilst enrolled at VU;
b. Assisting the Student to settle into Australia and into the University;

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c. Supporting the Student Participant with any personal matters;
d. Making contact with the Homestay Host to check on the student's welfare and assist with any settling-in issues; and
e. Provide regular monitoring of the accommodation arrangements of international under 18 students, including being available for student issues arising.

(22) The University also provides:

a. Information Services: These include but are not limited to:
    i. pre-departure information
    ii. airport reception program (must be pre-booked)
    iii. orientation Program
b. Academic support: The Centre for Student Success provides a variety of academic support services. These include but are not limited to:
    i. workshops
    ii. study groups
    iii. meeting with Academic Support and Development
    iv. student mentors and student rovers
c. Counselling: Services during office hours include but are not limited to:
    i. individual counselling
    ii. workshops
    iii. online well-being resources
d. Disability support: Disabilities services can support and assist students with disabilities. This includes:
    i. inclusive course adjustments (inclusive teaching practices, provision of notes, audio taping of classes, negotiating alternative assessment arrangements, accessible course materials)
    ii. direct help in class (sign language interpreters, note-takers, participation assistance)
e. Student Support: provides a variety of support and advice including:
    i. access to the Housing Service for issues relating to their accommodation
    ii. general welfare support
    iii. liaison with the third party to assist with the management of issues that may arise
    iv. practical wellbeing, life skills and transition support

(23) International students under 18 have access to additional University support services in connection with issues arising with their accommodation.

Part F - Monitoring Welfare and Accommodation Arrangements

(24) All accommodation utilised by students aged under 18 where VU has issued a CAAW will be monitored by the third-party service provider in accordance with the contract of service.

(25) This monitoring process may involve:

a. written check-ins with the student and the accommodation provider;
b. phone check-ins with the student and the accommodation provider;
c. face to face inspection of accommodation.

(26) If accommodation is found to be unsuitable, the student's parent/guardian must seek a register a new suitable

residency as soon as possible. The third-party service provider will provide assistance with sourcing emergency accommodation for transitional periods.

(27) Failure to seek new accommodation for a student whose current accommodation has been assessed as unsuitable will result in suspension of the student's enrolment until the matter can be rectified.

Part G - When Enrolment is Suspended or Cancelled

(28) When the enrolment of an international student aged under 18 is suspended or cancelled, the University via its third-party provider will continue to monitor the suitability of student's accommodation until:

a. the student is accepted by another registered provider and that provider takes over responsibility for accommodation; or
b. the student leaves Australia; or
c. suitable alternative arrangements are made that satisfy the Migration Regulations; or
d. the University reports to Department of Home Affairs that it no longer approves of the arrangements for the student.

Status and Details

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