

LOCAL SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



Handbook for Overseas Students



Table of Contents:

1. Introduction	2
2. Definitions	2
3. Enrolment Process, incl. homestay information	2
4. Onboarding and Orientation, incl. useful tips Pre-departure	4
5. Guidelines and Overseas Student's responsibilities, incl Visa requirements	8
6. Student Support & Protection, incl useful contact details	11

1. Introduction

Welcome to Australia! This handbook provides essential information for Overseas Students, including enrolment procedures, homestay regulations, visa and attendance requirements, policies, orientation tips and support services.

2. Definitions

The **German School Johannes Gutenberg Limited by Guarantee** is the CRICOS provider of courses for Overseas Students and legal name of our school which is often referred to and trading and under the name "German International School Sydney".

The **CRICOS provider code** of the German School Johannes Gutenberg Limited by Guarantee is **02379D**.

- **Overseas Students** are students who enter and study in Australia as Primary student visa holders.
- **Unaccompanied Overseas Students** who live and attend school in Australia without their parents or close relatives. These students are placed either with a host family or with family friends (parent-nominated homestay). These students will require a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation & Welfare along with their Certificate of Enrolment.

3 Enrolment process

In addition to our [general enrolment process](#) and in accordance with our "Admissions and Enrolment Policy," we have outlined the enrolment process for overseas students in detail below:

1. Application for Enrollment

- Complete the [online application form](#), which includes the following requirements:
 - Payment of the application fee of 250 AUD
 - Proof of language proficiency (see Language Proficiency Requirements in the [Language Policy](#))
 - Upload the student's last **two school reports**
 - Teacher's evaluation (required for IB applications or if no school reports are available, e.g., for primary school students)
 - For students applying for IB online courses, the teacher's evaluation must include an assessment of the student's ability to work independently.

2. Student Interview / Entrance Test

After receiving the completed application and required documents, each student will be invited to a student interview. For Overseas Students who are not in Australia at the time, this interview can be conducted online via video call.

In many cases, participation in an admission test is also required.

3. Letter of Offer

If the school approves the application and can offer a place, you will receive an official offer letter, called the "**Letter of Offer of Enrolment.**" This includes the online enrolment form, which must be signed by all legal guardians upon acceptance of the offer and the "Overseas Student Acceptance Agreement" form to be signed by at least one of the parents/legal guardians.

4. Acceptance of the Offer / Finalising the Enrolment

To Finalise the Enrolment, you have to have completed the Enrolment form including the acceptance of the School's General terms and Conditions, and the Additional Overseas Student Acceptance Agreement. Together these two contracts form the "written agreement".

To [complete the Enrolment](#) Form:

- **Click "Accept"** to accept the offer. You will then automatically be redirected to the pre-filled online enrolment form.
- **Complete and update the required details** as much as possible. (Emergency contacts are only relevant if they live in Sydney. Parent contact details are already on file.)
- During the completion of the enrolment form, the **enrolment fee of 1,250 AUD** must be paid.
- The enrolment form is only finalised upon receipt of the **second legal guardian's signature**. You will then automatically receive an email with a copy of the completed contract.
- If the following documents and information were not provided during the application process, please email them to us:
 - A copy of the student's **passport**, as used for the visa application with sufficient validity.
 - Exact **arrival and departure dates** (for unaccompanied students under 18 years old).

To [complete the Additional Overseas Student Acceptance Agreement](#):

- You will find this Acceptance Agreement Form attached to the offer or an additional email sent by the Registrar.
- Please take your time to carefully read and understand all conditions of enrolment!

- Complete the form and accept the enrolment conditions including the date, name and signature of at least one parent/guardian.
- Email the completed and signed Acceptance Agreement to registrar@giss.nsw.edu.au .

5. Certificate of Enrolment (CoE)

Once the completed contract and all necessary information have been received, we will register the student with the Australian immigration authorities.

We will then issue the **Certificate of Enrolment (CoE)** and, for unaccompanied students under 18 years old, the **CAAW Certificate** (Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation & Welfare). These documents will be sent to you and are required for the visa application.

6. Accommodation in Host Families

All unaccompanied guest students (including those over 18 years old) will be placed with host families. After completing the school enrollment, please contact our host family agency, [Oz Homestay](#), independently. The school will also liaise with the agency to confirm school-related details (CoE and CAAW).

For students who will be staying with family friends or distant relatives, these families must also qualify and register as a "[Parent-Nominated Homestay](#)" with the agency. This measure ensures the student's welfare and safety.

7. Documents required for Visa Application

For detailed information, please refer to the official website: [Study Australia](#).

Summary of required documents before starting the visa application:

- CoE (Certificate of Enrolment), provided by the Registrar upon completion of enrolment
- CAAW (Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation & Welfare) – required for unaccompanied students under 18 years old, provided by the Registrar
- Proof of completed OSHC (Overseas Student Health Cover), done online by the parents
To see all approved providers: [Overseas Student Health Cover \(OSHC\) | Study Australia](#).

8. Certificate Of Enrolment (Schulbescheinigung) / Certificate Of Attendance

Students requiring a Certificate of Enrolment or Certificate of Attendance please email our registrar.

4 Onboarding and Orientation

Orientation for Semester Starters

For all new students beginning their enrolment at the start of a semester, the school invites families and host families to attend an information session held one day prior to the first day of the semester.

During this session, students will:

- Set up their Microsoft accounts,
- Try on their GISS polo shirt and jacket,
- Receive locker keys and concession cards
- Have their ID photo taken
- Meet their class teachers,
- Tour their future classrooms or subject rooms, and
- Meet with the student counsellor (primarily for unaccompanied Overseas Students).

Student Buddies and Integration

In most cases, new students joining an existing cohort are paired with a student buddy to help them integrate smoothly. This process differs for entry levels such as Kindergarten and Year 7, where multiple transition and bonding activities are organized to ensure all students feel welcomed and included, fostering new connections and friendships.

Communication with Homestay Families

For unaccompanied Overseas Students, if their parents provide consent, the student's homestay family will be included in all communication, information, and requests concerning the host student. They will be treated as primary points of contact, similar to any other parent, ensuring clear and consistent support for the student.

Orientation for Mid-Semester Starters

For students starting in Term 2 or Term 4, orientation is conducted gradually over the first two to three days of attendance. This process is facilitated by the school's registrar, student counsellor, homeroom teacher, and student buddies, ensuring a smooth and supportive transition to the school environment.

Parent Handbook

All new students and their parents receive an email between 2 to 4 weeks before their child's first day at GISS with important contact details, a supplies list and our Parent handbook, including:

- Login details for our parent Portal
- Information bell times, holidays
- Laptop use / Bring Your Own Device Program
- Absence/Sick days
- Counselling and Support
- Transport
- School Wear and Dress Code
- Rules and Procedures

The Parent Handbook, supplies list and all policies can also be found in our Parent Portal and in Compass.

Parents will receive two separate additional emails with login details to:

- our GISS App "Compass" and
- FACTS for their School Fee - Payment Portal.

Pre-Departure & Orientation Tips for Overseas Students

Documents:

It might be useful to prepare a folder with physical documents to bring along to Australia, including:

- Valid passport
- Visa confirmation
- Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and CAAW (if applicable)
- Confirmation of Accommodation / including your Australian address, issued by Ozhomestay
- Receipts of payments (Overseas Student Health Cover, bank statement, other insurance policies, if applicable)
- Other ID e.g. birth certificate, driver's licence, if applicable
- Medical records / Immunisation overview and/or prescriptions and medical action plans

On you flight:

Before landing in Australia, passengers are given an **Incoming Passenger Card** to complete. This is a legal document. Have your passport, your Australian address and a pen handy so you can complete this during the flight to save time and stress after landing!

You must tick YES if you are carrying any food or plant material including wooden souvenirs or animal products. This includes fruit given to you during the flight. If you have any items you don't wish to declare, you can dispose of them in Quarantine bins in the airport terminal.

Don't be afraid to ask airline staff if you have any questions.

Customs (quarantine)

The Australian Government restricts food, plant and animal products brought into the country. Please check the Australian Quarantine website for items that are banned and for items that must be declared and inspected.

Cost of Living

In addition to paying course/tuition fees and accommodation/food costs, we estimate that the average additional living costs for an International student is AUD 250-400 per week. This pays for Mobile phone, transport, sport activities and spending money.

Your living costs could be higher or lower than this, depending on where you study and the lifestyle that you lead. It usually costs more to live in Sydney than in other cities or towns in New South Wales.

Preparing your finances

Arrange a bank card or credit card with your financial institution before you leave home.

We recommend to set up a [wise](#) account including a debit/credit card to save on regular money transfer fees and to be able to access the money directly via [wise card](#).

Have approximately AUS\$300 in cash when you arrive, but do not carry large sums of money on you or in your luggage.

Please note that Australian law limits the amount of cash you can bring into the country. If you are bringing AUS\$10,000 or more (or the equivalent in foreign currency) you must declare this to customs officials on arrival in Australia.

Mobile phones

- Many students prefer pre-paid mobile packages to help manage costs.
- Major providers include Telstra, Vodafone, and Optus, with many smaller providers using their networks.
- Depending on your home network and device, you may be able to use a Dual SIM or eSIM to keep both your overseas and Australian numbers active.
- WhatsApp calls over free Wi-Fi or a good data plan are a cost-effective way to stay in touch with family and friends.

Internet and email

- GISS provides their students with their own email, Microsoft account and free Wifi at school.
- Your internet access at your Host family is regulated through your agreement arranged by Oz Homestay.

Health issues

Health insurance is compulsory for international students studying in Australia. Your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) generally does not cover any pre-existing medical conditions. Serious medical problems should be taken care of before you come to Australia. OSHC covers only certain conditions. You should check your policy carefully and think about whether you will need Optional Extra Cover.

If you are taking prescribed medication please check with the Australian Diplomatic Mission (ADM) in your home country to confirm what medicine you are allowed to bring into Australia. Ask your doctor to write a letter (translated into English) stating why you need the medicine. This will be useful if you need to see a doctor about the same condition in Australia. You may even need to show this documentation when you pass through customs at Sydney Airport.

In case an overseas student needs to consult a doctor or General Practitioner (GP) in a Medical Centre in the local area, any consultations must be paid upfront and can be claimed online through the OSHC.

Electrical sockets (plugs)

You will need an adapter to use electrical items brought from your country. Voltage in Australia is 240 volts with a 50-Hertz frequency. Australian electrical plugs have three flat angled prongs.

Airport pickup

If Oz Homestay has arranged airport pickup, a representative will meet you at the airport in the arrivals hall, holding a sign with your name on it. You will enter the arrivals hall after clearing Customs.

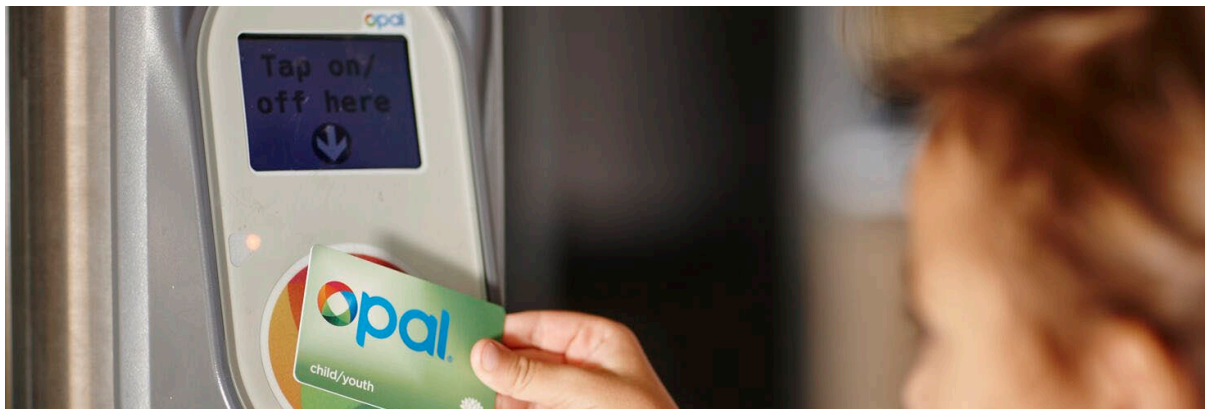
There is no need to worry if your flight is delayed as the representative will wait for you and take you directly to your host family. In other cases, your host family will pick you up at the airport.

Transport

Sydney has a good public transport system including trains, buses and ferries. There are also bicycle paths as cycling becomes more popular.

You can travel around Sydney and NSW on **trains, buses, ferries.**

Sydney uses a travel ticket system called **Opal card**. The Opal card is a smartcard ticket that you keep, top up and reuse to pay for travel on public transport. Simply add value to your Opal card then tap on and tap off to pay your fares on metro, trains, buses, ferries and light rail – anywhere within the Opal network which includes Sydney and the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra and Southern Highlands. You can buy your Opal card from any newsagency or order it online: www.opal.com.au.



Most buses or trains started accepting credit cards in lieu of an Opal card but the use of a credit card won't give you a student discount.

International students are not eligible for a school Opal card which allows free travel between home and school. However, OS students are eligible for student / youth concession.

Please purchase a Youth Opal card for discounted travel rates.

To travel on a Child/Youth Opal card or a child/concession ticket, students over 15 years of age must carry a concession entitlement card.

Children aged between 4 to 15 years do not require a proof of entitlement for concession travel.

However, if they look more mature, they can get a

Transport Concession Entitlement Card to verify to authorised officers that they are under 16 years old.



In preparation of any trip we can highly recommend the [NSW Trip planner](#) to find the best public transport connection for any location you wish to travel to and from, at any given time.

Many students use the **Trip View App** on their phones for free timetables and tracking of buses, etc.

5 Guidelines and Overseas Student's responsibilities

Visa Requirements

- **Visa Validity:**
All students must ensure their visa to stay in Australia is valid at all times.
- **Student Visa Conditions:**
Students must adhere to all conditions of their visa, including satisfactory course progress and attendance. Visit the [Department of Home Affairs](#) or use [VEVO](#) to verify visa conditions.
- **Course Progress and Attendance:**
Students must meet the academic and attendance requirements of their visa. This includes achieving satisfactory results in assessments and examinations as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Attendance must not fall below **80% in any given term**.
- **Non-Compliance:**
Failure to meet visa or NESA requirements may result in the cancellation of the student's visa.

Attendance Requirements

- **Minimum Attendance:**
Students must attend at least **80% of their course program** per term.
- **Absences:**
 - Any non-attendance day is counted as an absence, regardless of the reason.
 - Late arrivals and early departures are recorded as partial absences.
 - **Notify the school via the Compass App**, or call reception
 - For absences due to illness, a medical certificate from a recognised medical center must be provided after 2 days of absence.
 - Any other absence for more than 2 days or in conjunction with school holidays require a formal leave of absence application (form can be found in our Operoo form library)
- **Attendance Monitoring:**
Attendance is closely monitored by the class teachers, Receptionist and Registrar.
- **Consequences of Non-Attendance:**
 - Falling below **85% attendance** triggers a warning email to the student, parents, and homestay guardian.
 - Attendance below **80%** results in the school's intention to report the student to the Department of Immigration via PRISMS.
- For more information please read our [Overseas Student Visa Requirements Policy and Procedures](#), published on our website.

Holiday Travel

- Students must provide their travel itineraries, including flight details, before holiday departures.
- Students must remain at school until the last day of term and return on the first day of the next term to comply with visa requirements.
- A leave of Absence request can be sent to the Principal by the parents, keeping in mind the student's overall attendance rate and potential effect on academic progress

Course Progress Requirements

- Academic progress is assessed at the end of each term according to our [Assessment and Reporting Policy](#).
- To demonstrate satisfactory progress, students must:
 - Complete their studies in all subjects within the expected duration of the course.
 - Maintain satisfactory participation in all subjects.
 - Submit assignments and homework on time, serious attempts must be made for all tasks.
- Monitoring Course progress / completion
Where a student is identified as being at risk of not completing the program within the expected duration:
 - Meetings with the subject teacher and the Head of Secondary / Primary to devise a study plan or intervention strategy
 - Continued lack of progress may result in enrolment termination and visa cancellation.

More details can be found in our [Overseas Student Visa Requirements Policy and Procedures](#) on our [website for policies](#).

Change Of Residence Or Homestay

- If you are moving homes (with your legal guardian/homestay family) the School must be informed in writing prior to the move. In the case of homestay, the School will engage Oz Homestay to inspect on our behalf and ensure the new home continues to meet requirements. Any costs incurred as a result of the change of address will be payable by the student
- If a student wishes to change their homestay accommodation:
 - the student or their parents contacts Oz Homestay to request the change or to discuss the reasons of the request to find an alternate solution
 - they have the option to meet with the Students Counsellor to discuss the request and see if the challenge can be resolved without relocation
 - The student is responsible for any additional costs incurred to facilitate a change of accommodation, in accordance with the terms and conditions of their Oz Homestay contract.

Sharing of Information:

The School collects information before and during your enrolment to comply with its obligations under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) and the National Code 2018. This ensures that students meet the conditions of their visas and adhere to Australian immigration laws.

The authority to collect this information is granted by the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#), the [Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019](#), and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#).

In certain circumstances, the information collected may be shared with the Australian Government and designated authorities. Additionally, it may be disclosed without your consent if authorised or required by law.

Please note that this authority, along with the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not affect your rights under Australia's consumer protection laws.

Fees Payable:

Please refer to the [School's School Fee Schedule](#) for all fees payable. Tuition fees for Overseas Students include the Overseas Student levy in addition to regular tuition fees.

Our [School Fee Calculator](#) may assist you in summarising all relevant costs, including applicable sibling discounts and pro-rata (termly) calculations.

Please be advised that the school fees are set in advance for a calendar year and may change during the period of enrolment if enrolment extends past the end of a calendar year, however the school fees for the IB are set at the start of the program and do not change during the 2 year program.

Refund of Fees:

In the unlikely event that the School is unable to deliver the course in full (**Provider Default**), the School will offer a pro-rata refund of the school fees paid to date. The refund will be paid within 2 weeks of the day on which the course ceased being provided.

In the event that a student's visa application is refused prior to commencement of the course (**Student Default**), the application and enrolment fees are retained but all other pre-paid tuition and non-tuition fees are fully refunded.

In the event that the student decides to terminate the enrolment prior to the intended and/or paid enrolment period, the School will offer a pro-rata refund of the school fees, taking into account the notice period as set out in the [Overseas Student Refund Policy and Procedures](#).

The refund of school fees only applies to the ongoing tuition fees. Application fee, Enrolment fee, resource levy, exam fees and charges for books, school camps and swimming are not refundable. As bus fees are paid up to one term in advance, there is no refund for bus fees unless

Overseas Students Transfers

Guideline Reference 3.10 (NESA Guidelines for Approved NSW School Providers Delivering Courses to Overseas Students April 2018)

As mandated by the ESOS Act, overseas students may not transfer from their first registered school sector course before completing the first six months of study, except in the following circumstances:

- a. The original registered provider has ceased to be registered or the course the student is undertaking has ceased to be registered.
- b. The original registered provider has provided a written letter of release.
- c. The original registered provider has had a sanction imposed on its registration by the Australian Government or similar that prevents the student from continuing his or her principal course.
- d. The German International School Sydney (GISS) considers the change to be in the student's best interests and provides written support of the change.

Please find more details in our [Overseas Students Transfers Policy and Procedures](#).

6 Student Support and Protection

ESOS Legislative Framework

The ESOS Framework (Education Services for Overseas Students) provides the regulatory requirements for education and training institutions offering courses to overseas students who are in Australia on a student visa. ESOS also provides tuition protection for overseas students. The ESOS Framework protects the rights of overseas students studying in Australia.

What You Need to Know About Being an Overseas Student in Australia

The ESOS Framework covers a range of information you have a right to know about and the services that must be offered to you by Australian education providers. These include:

- **Orientation:** Assistance to help you understand the course and more about the place you are studying, as well as access to support services that can help you study and adjust to life in Australia.
- **Contact Persons:** Access to your education provider's point of contact or contact person for overseas students.
- **Attendance Requirements:** Understanding your provider's requirements for satisfactory attendance.
- **Course Progress:** Knowing your provider's requirements for satisfactory progress in the courses you study and what support is available if you are not progressing well.
- **Course Credit and Enrolment Changes:** Information about applying for course credit and the circumstances in which your enrolment can be deferred, suspended, or cancelled.
- **Complaints and Appeals:** Access to a complaints and appeals process.

Your Responsibilities as an Overseas Student in Australia

As an overseas student on a student visa, you are responsible for:

- Complying with your student visa conditions.
- Ensuring you have and continue to maintain your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for as long as you stay in Australia as a student.
- Informing your provider if you change your address or other contact details.
- Meeting the terms of the written agreement with your education provider.
- Adhering to restrictions on transfer between registered providers.
- Maintaining satisfactory course progress.
- Maintaining satisfactory attendance.

For more comprehensive information, please read the [ESOS Framework Student Fact Sheet](#).

Fair Trading NSW Overseas Students Consumer Guide

NSW Fair Trading has put together a [Consumer Guide to assist overseas students](#).

In Australia, every person has the right to be protected from unfair business practices. NSW Fair Trading is the state government agency that resolves disputes between consumers and businesses and provides free assistance and information on issues such as shopping, refunds, renting, cars, buying and selling property, home building, product safety, scams, and more. This information aims to help you understand your consumer rights and responsibilities in NSW.

Support Services and Emergency Contacts

Host Family Support - Oz Homestay

If you are living with a host family and need assistance, please contact Oz Homestay directly.

- Phone: **(02) 9325 6988**
- **24 hour emergency number** for advice in a genuine emergency situation: **0421 556 374**
- Website: www.ozhomestay.com.au

If you are not satisfied with Oz Homestay, please reach out to the Student Counsellor or Registrar at GISS.

GISS reception – 02 9485 1900

Student Counsellor Ulrike Miehle: ulrike.miehle@giss.nsw.edu.au

Registrar Antje Eildermann: antje.eildermann@giss.nsw.edu.au

Principal Michael Cordes: michael.cordes@giss.nsw.edu.au

Child Protection at GISS

The German International School Sydney (GISS) follows the School's **Child Protection Policy** and **Child Protection Procedures** aligned with the NSW Government's Office of the Children's Guardian guidelines and regulations. For any concerns, you may speak with a GISS staff member, including the School's Counselling Team, who will assist you.

General Emergency Services

- **Police, Fire, Ambulance** – Phone: **000**
For life-threatening situations, such as a car crash or a fire.
- **Police Assistance Line (General Enquiries and Non-Emergencies)** – Phone: **131 444**
If you are a victim of a crime that is not life-threatening or time-critical, contact the Police Assistance Line to make a report.
- **Local Police Station (Dee Why)** – Phone: **9971 3399**
Alternatively, you can visit Dee Why Police Station for assistance or to report any incidents involving actual or alleged sexual, physical, or other forms of abuse. Youth Liaison Officers are available to support younger victims.

Mental Health and Crisis Support

- **Lifeline** – Phone: **13 11 14** | Website: www.lifeline.org.au
Provides crisis support, suicide prevention, and mental health services for people of all ages. Support is available by phone or via online chat.
- **Kids Helpline** – Phone: **1800 551 800** | Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au
Counselling support for individuals aged 5 to 25 who are feeling depressed, worried, sad, angry, or confused about issues such as studies or personal relationships.
- **1800 RESPECT** – Phone: **1800 737 732** | Website: www.1800respect.org.au
Support for individuals experiencing sexual assault, domestic, or family violence (all ages). Services include 24/7 online chat and multilingual support.
- **Beyond Blue** – Phone: **1300 22 4636** | Website: www.beyondblue.org.au
Mental health and well-being support services.
- **Headspace (Brookvale)** – Phone: **(02) 9937 6500** | Website: www.headspace.org.au
Provides mental health support for young people.
- **ReachOut** – Phone: **8029 7777** | Website: <https://au.reachout.com/>
Support for individuals under 25, offering assistance with everyday questions and tough times.