



<b>Policy Date:</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
<b>Authorised by:</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Contacts:</b>	<b>Director, Communication and Admissions Dean of Student Wellbeing</b>
<b>Locations:</b>	<b>School Website Intranet – Parents &amp; Staff</b>

## ***DEFERMENT, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION POLICY - INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY***

1. Communicating with families about changes in enrolment status
  - (a) All communications regarding changes to enrolment status will be made directly with students and parents, in accordance with the latest contact details provided to the School.
  - (b) Parents must, therefore, keep Somerville House informed of their current contact details, as per the conditions of the student visa.
  - (c) Where relevant and where approved by the parents, the School may also share copies of correspondence with the child's education agent to help facilitate communication about any changes in enrolment status. However, the parents with whom the School has a formal written agreement are the primary contact for the School in such matters. The School will not act on any decision affecting the student's enrolment that is not made by the parents.
  
2. Deferment of commencement of study requested by the student
  - (a) Somerville House will only grant a deferment of commencement of studies for compassionate and compelling circumstances. These include but are not limited to:
    - i. illness, where a medical certificate states that the student will be unable to attend classes
    - ii. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
    - iii. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country that has impacted on expected commencement of studies
    - iv. a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (where possible, these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports).
    - v. after undertaking ELICOS studies, the student has not/will not meet the English language benchmark required for entry into the desired course, and the School is willing to defer the student's commencement in the course until a later date when the required benchmark is achieved.

- (b) All applications for deferment will be considered within 10 working days.
  - (c) The final decision for assessing and granting a deferment of commencement of studies lies with the Principal. Where a student's request to defer her commencement of studies is refused, the student has a right of appeal (see the School's Complaints and Appeals Policy).
  - (d) Deferment will be recorded on PRISMS within 14 days of being granted.
3. Suspension of study requested by the student
- (a) Once the student has commenced the course, Somerville House will only grant a suspension of study for compassionate and compelling circumstances. These include but are not limited to:
    - i. illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
    - ii. bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided);
    - iii. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has/will impact on studies; and
    - iv. a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (where possible, these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports).
  - (b) Where there is a significant issue impacting upon a student's attendance or course progress, it is essential that the student or parents contact the School as soon as possible to discuss the concern so that appropriate support can be put in place. Where deemed necessary, this may involve temporarily suspending the student's enrolment so that matters can be resolved without having a negative impact on the student's ability to satisfy their visa conditions.
  - (c) Temporary suspensions of study cannot exceed 6 months duration.
  - (d) Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS within 14 days of being granted if the student is under 18 years of age, and within 31 days if the student is over 18 years of age.
  - (e) The period of suspension will not be included in attendance calculations.
  - (f) Applications will be assessed on merit by the Deputy Principal.
  - (g) Some examples of circumstances that are not considered compassionate and compelling at Somerville House include:
    - i. Requests for early departure or late return from vacation, including the inability to secure cheap flights
    - ii. Leaving early or returning late from holidays in order to attend festivals in the student's home country
    - iii. Returning home to attend family gatherings that occur during term time.
  - (h) As part of any assessment of a request to defer or temporarily suspend studies, the impact of the request on the student's ability to complete their intended course of study in accordance with their CoE/s and student visa will be considered. Any implications will be communicated to students.
  - (i) All applications for suspension will be considered within 10 working days.

- (j) The final decision for assessing and granting a suspension of studies lies with the Principal. Where a student's request to suspend studies is refused, the student has a right of appeal (see the School's Complaints and Appeals Policy).
4. Student-initiated cancellation of enrolment
- (a) All notification of withdrawal from a course, or applications for refunds, must be made in writing and submitted to the Principal. Please see the School's Refund Policy for information regarding refunds.
  - (b) A student will be deemed to have inactively notified Somerville House of cancellation of enrolment where:
    - i. the student has not yet finished her course/s of study with the School, and
    - ii. does not resume studies at the School within 14 days after a holiday break, and
    - iii. the student has not previously provided the School with written notification of withdrawal.
  - (c) Student-initiated cancellation of enrolment, including 'inactive' cancellation of enrolment in 4(b), above, is not subject to Somerville House's Complaints and Appeals Policy.
5. School-initiated exclusion from class
- (a) Somerville House may exclude a student from class studies on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Exclusion will occur as the result of any behaviour identified as resulting in exclusion in the School's Code of Behaviour (Students) /Community Code of Conduct.
  - (b) Students may also be excluded from class for failure to pay fees that she was required to pay in order to undertake or continue the course, as stated in the written agreement.
  - (c) Where Somerville House intends to exclude a student from class, it will first issue a letter which notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will provide details of the reason/s for the intended exclusion, as well as information about how to access Somerville House's internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated exclusion from class is outlined below.
  - (d) Excluded students must abide by the conditions of their exclusion from studies and must adhere to any welfare and accommodation arrangements in place, as determined by the Principal.
  - (e) Where the student is provided with homework or other studies for the period of the exclusion, the student must continue to meet the academic requirements of the course.
  - (f) Exclusions from class will not be included in attendance calculations for the study period and will not be recorded on PRISMS.
6. School-initiated suspension of studies
- (a) Somerville House may initiate a suspension of studies for a student on the grounds of misbehaviour by the student. Suspension will occur as the result of any behaviour identified as resulting in suspension as outlined in the School's Code of Behaviour (Students) /Community Code of Conduct.

- (b) Students may also be suspended for failure to pay fees that were required in order to undertake or continue the course, as stated in the student's written agreement.
- (c) Where Somerville House intends to suspend the enrolment of a student, it will first issue a letter that notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will provide details of the reason/s for the intended suspension, as well as information about how to access Somerville House's internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated suspension is outlined below.
- (d) Suspended students must abide by the conditions of their suspension from studies and must adhere to any welfare and accommodation arrangements in place, as determined by the Principal.
- (e) Students who have been suspended for more than 28 days may need to contact the Department of Home Affairs. Please see contact details at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us>.
- (f) Suspensions will be recorded on PRISMS.
- (g) The period of suspension will not be included in attendance calculations.

#### 7. School-initiated cancellation of enrolment

- (a) Somerville House will cancel the enrolment of a student under the following conditions:
  - i. Any breach of an agreed condition of enrolment as outlined in the student's written agreement, including
  - ii. failure to disclose a pre-existing condition requiring a high degree of specialised support or care
  - iii. Failure to pay course fees
  - iv. Failure to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (visa condition 8532)
  - v. Any behaviour identified as resulting in cancellation in the School's Code of Behaviour (Students) /Community Code of Conduct.
- (b) Where Somerville House intends to cancel the enrolment of a student, it will first issue a letter which notifies the student and parents of this intention. The letter will also provide details of the reason/s for the intended cancellation, as well as information about how to access Somerville House's internal appeals process. Further information about the appeals process in the event of a school-initiated cancellation is outlined below.
- (c) Somerville House is required to report any confirmed breach of course progress and attendance requirements to the Department of Home Affairs. Where a student is reported for breach of visa condition, her enrolment at Somerville House will be cancelled, and this may impact on the student's visa. Further information can be found in Somerville House's Student Progress, Attendance and Course Duration Policy.
- (d) For the duration of the internal appeals process, Somerville House will maintain the student's enrolment, and the student will attend classes as normal. The Principal will determine if participation in studies will be in class or under a supervised arrangement outside of classes.

- (e) If a student decides to access the Somerville House's complaints and appeals process because they have been notified of a school initiated suspension or cancellation of enrolment under Standard 9, the change in enrolment status will not be reported in PRISMS until the internal complaints and appeals process is finalised unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply (see Definitions below).
  - (f) Where extenuating circumstances are deemed to exist, a student may still access the complaints and appeals process, but Somerville House need not await the outcome of this process before changing the student's enrolment status in PRISMS. If the School has issued a CAAW for such a student, welfare provisions under Standard 5.6 are applicable.
  - (g) The use of extenuating circumstances by Somerville House to suspend or cancel a student's enrolment prior to the completion of any complaints and appeals process will be supported by appropriate evidence.
  - (h) The final decision for evaluating extenuating circumstances lies with the Principal.
8. Student to seek information from the Department of Home Affairs
- (a) Deferment, suspension and cancellation of enrolment can have an effect on a student's visa as a result of changes to enrolment status. Students can visit the Department of Home Affairs website <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500> for further information about their visa conditions and obligations.
9. Definitions
- (a) Day – any day including weekends and public holidays in or out of term time
  - (b) Extenuating circumstances - if the student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk. Examples include:
    - the student refuses to maintain approved welfare and accommodation arrangements (for students under 18 years of age)
    - the student is missing
    - the student has medical concerns or severe depression or psychological issues which lead the School to fear for the student's wellbeing
    - the student has engaged or threatened to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student or others
    - is at risk of committing a criminal offence, or
    - the student is the subject of investigation relating to criminal matters.

<b>Version Control Table</b>			
<b>Version Control</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
1	March 2020	Principal	Policy created in accordance with CRICOS update 18 October 2019.
2	May 2021	Principal	Policy updated in accordance with CRICOS update 15 October 2021.