



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

2007/2008



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WELCOME MESSAGE

From the Principal

Welcome to Tannum Sands State High School!

Tannum Sands is a township of 10 000 people, located on the coast of Central Queensland. Queensland is one of the six states of Australia. The capital is Brisbane. Tannum Sands is situated 600 km north of Brisbane. We have a beautiful beach and lots of walking and cycling tracks. Gladstone, a major port and industrial city, is twenty minutes drive away.

Tannum Sands State High School was established in 1998 and has gained a reputation for quality in our district. We have a Sister School relationship with Saiki City in Japan, fifteen of our students recently returned from a tour of Vietnam and we have hosted many exchange students over the years. Our students are keen to support our International Student program.

Tannum Sands State High School has excellent, modern facilities, an extensive curriculum and a wide range of sporting, artistic and cultural programs. Our students are friendly, the community is welcoming and we have a great mix of young and experienced teaching staff. We endeavour to live out our Key School Values: respect, responsibility and excellence.

Thank you for choosing Tannum Sands State High School as your destination. Please do not hesitate to forward any questions you may have to: the.principal@tannumshs.eq.edu.au.

We trust you will have an enjoyable and rewarding stay.

Yours sincerely

Ray Johnston
Principal
(M.Ed., B.A., Dip.T.,
J.P.Comm.Dec)



ADMINISTRATION

Principal

Mr Ray Johnston

Deputy Principals

Mr John Adie

Mr Rohan Brooks



The Administration team will oversee your stay at Tannum Sands State High School. They will meet you when you first arrive and will formally enrol you in the school. They will issue you with a timetable and will monitor your progress during your stay.

Regional International Student Program (RISP) Staff

International Student Program Manager Mrs Ellen Kean



Mrs Kean will assist you with orientation when you first arrive at Tannum Sands State High School. She will help you with subject selection and will ensure that you settle into the school as quickly and easily as possible. You will meet with Mrs Kean once a week during your time here to discuss your progress, achievements and any concerns you may have. Mrs Kean will also arrange your homestay. She will contact your homestay family on a regular basis. You must advise Mrs Kean of any travel arrangements and then have them approved by the Principal.

Pastoral Care

House Coordinators

House Coordinators are responsible for pastoral care issues. You will be allocated a House Group when you enrol and this will be the group you are with for morning House Group time.

Mr Russell Maynard

Burarhl House

Ms Edwina Harding

Ghinmhine House

Mr Tony Muller

Nagatin House

Mr Rebecca Robinson

Whoolghun House

General Contact Details

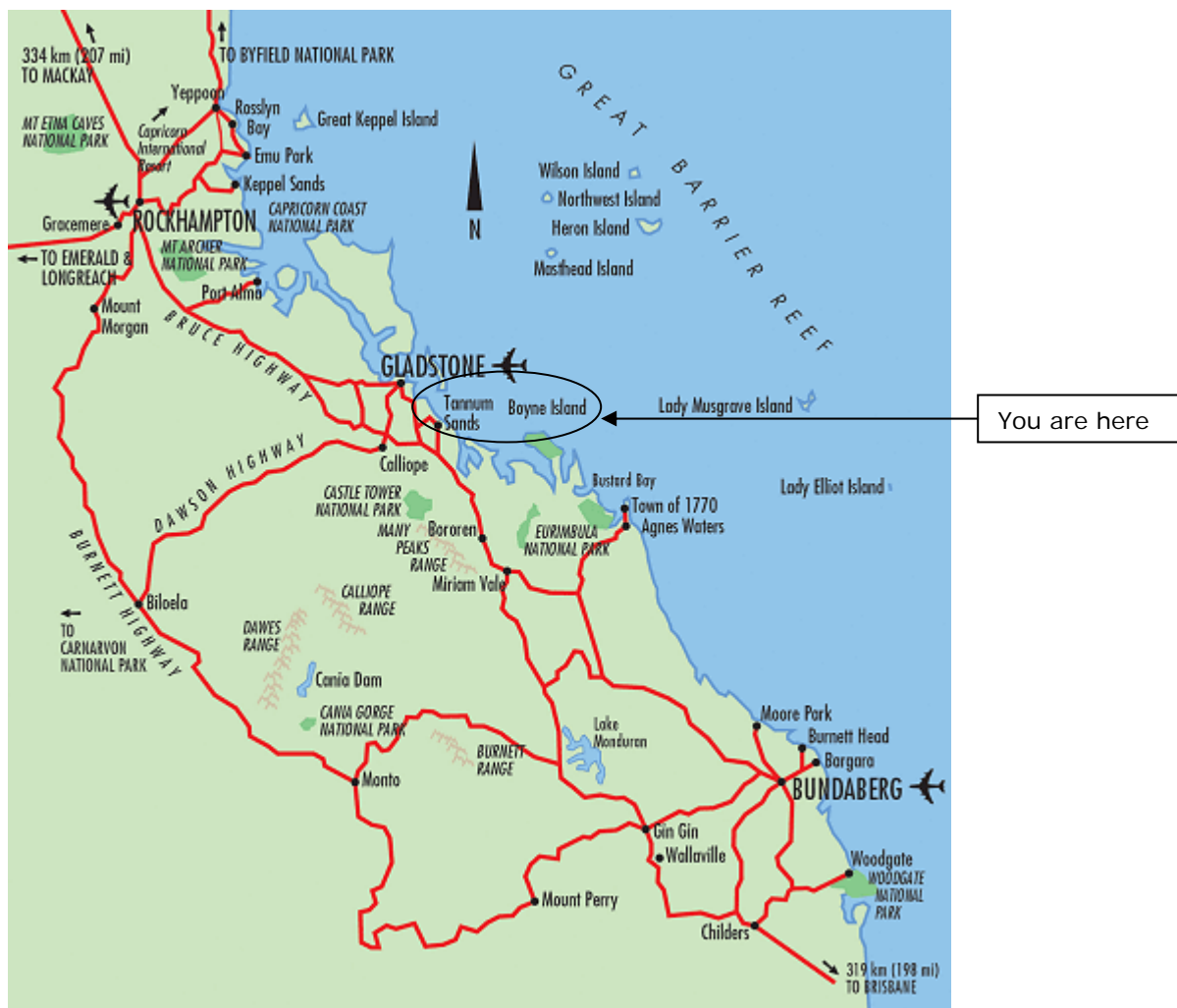
ADMINISTRATION	STUDENT SUPPORT
<p>General Enquiries Ph: +61 7 4979 9777 Fax: +61 7 4979 9700 Email: info@tannumshs.eq.edu.au Website: www.tannumshs.eq.edu.au</p>	<p>Guidance Officer Mrs Julie Gracey Mr Andrew Higgins +61 3 7 4979 9704</p> <p>Chaplain Mr David Kamholtz +61 7 4979 9703</p> <p>School Health Nurse Ms Lyn Stiller +61 7 4979 9781</p>

STAFFROOM 1	STAFFROOM 2
<p>Mrs Heather Moller: Head of Department—Science/ Gifted Education</p> <p>Mrs Anna Osborn: Head of Department—Arts/ Middle School</p> <p>Mrs Rebecca Robinson: House Coordinator—Whoolghun</p> <p>Mr Tony Muller: House Coordinator—Nagatin</p>	<p>Mr Leon Sternberg: Head of Department—HPE</p> <p>Mr Michael Small: Head of Department—Humanities (Acting)</p> <p>Ms Edwina Harding: House Coordinator—Ghinmhine</p> <p>Mrs Ellen Kean: International Student Program Manager</p>

STAFFROOM 3	STAFFROOM 4
<p>Mr Mal Connolly: Head of Department—Manual Arts</p> <p>Mr Kevin Giles: Head of Department—Maths/ Learning Support</p>	<p>Mrs Jayne Ball: Head of Department— English/Languages/Resource Centre</p> <p>Mr Todd Comrie: Head of Department—Senior School/Business</p> <p>Ms Narelle Cleaver: Head of Department—Teaching and Learning/Computers (Acting)</p> <p>Mr Russ Maynard: House Coordinator—Burarhl</p>

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

Map of Gladstone Region



For other maps, see our school website: www.tannumshs.eq.edu.au

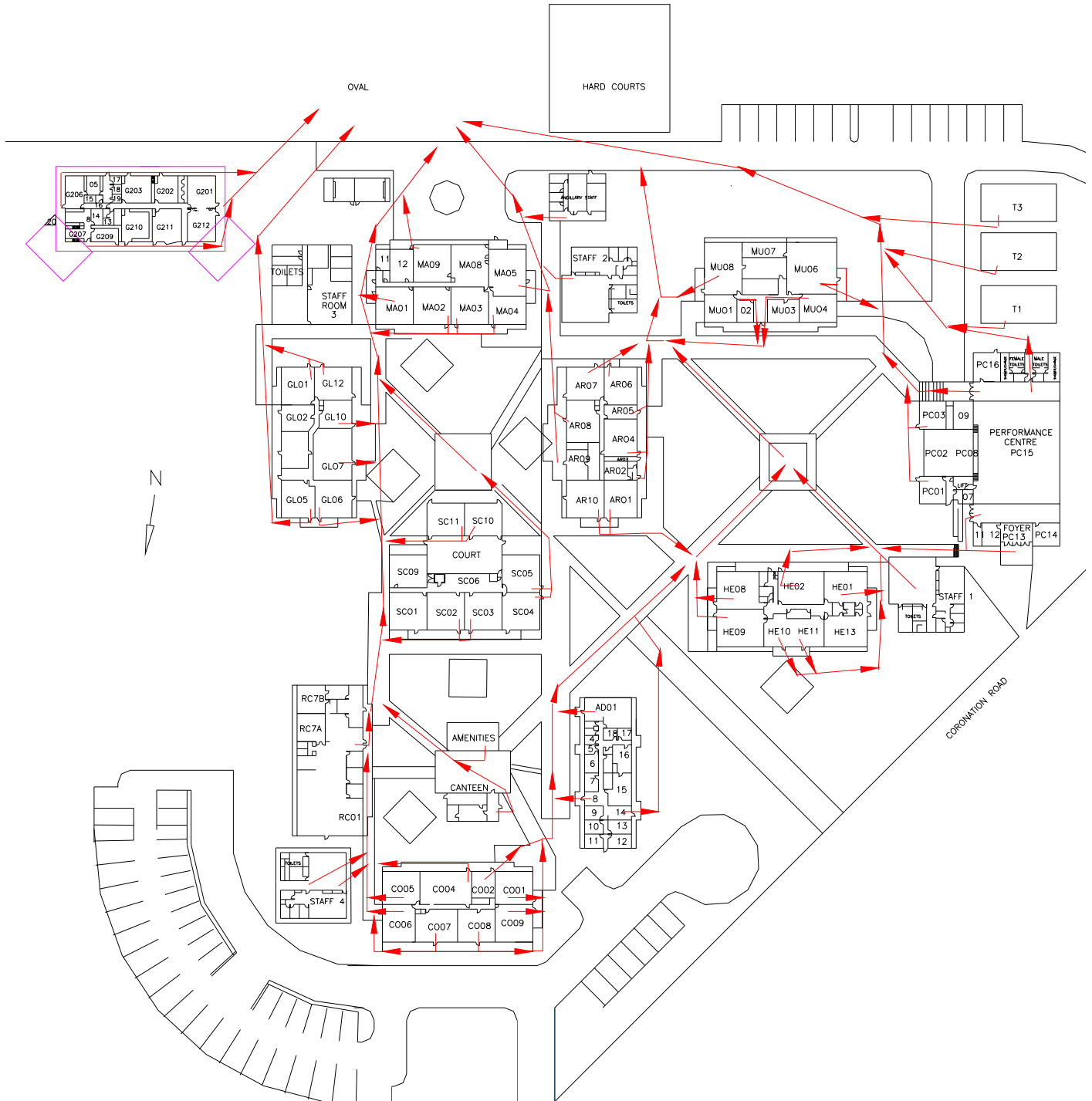
School Bus Service

There is a school bus service catering for students attending Tannum Sands State High School. If you are travelling to school by bus, your host family will be able to assist you with this. A fare is payable at the time of travel. Weekly tickets or term passes are also available.

Travel to Brisbane/Sunshine Coast

Queensland Rail operates a regular train service to and from Brisbane/Sunshine Coast. The station for departure is located in Gladstone. You must inform the International Student Manager and your homestay family of any travel arrangements you make and gain approval from the Principal.

School Map / Evacuation Plan



Key Dates for 2007

ACADEMIC UNIT DATES IN 2007	
Term 1 Units	Monday 29 January to Thursday 5 April <i>Easter Holidays: 06.04.07 to 16.04.07 (16.04.07 is a student free day)</i>
Term 2 Units	TUESDAY 17 APRIL TO FRIDAY 22 JUNE <i>WINTER HOLIDAYS: 25.06.07 TO 09.07.07 (09.07.07 IS A STUDENT FREE DAY)</i>
Term 3 Units	Tuesday 10 July to Friday 21 September <i>Spring Holidays: 24.09.07 to 07.10.07 (22.10.07 is student free day)</i>
Term 4 Units	08 October to 14 December—Yrs 8 and 9 08 October to 30 November—Yrs 10 and 11 08 October to 16 November—Yr 12 <i>Summer Holidays 17 December to 28 January 2008</i>

COMMENCEMENT OF SCHOOL 2008	
Monday 21 January	School office reopens
Monday 21 January Tuesday 22 January Wednesday 23 January Thursday 24 January Friday 25 January	Payment/Collection of UNIFORMS at CANTEEN 9-12am and 1-3pm
Monday 21 January Tuesday 22 January Monday 28 January Tuesday 29 January Wednesday 30 January Thursday 31 January Friday 1 February	Payment of RESOURCE HIRE SCHEME at ADMINISTRATION OFFICE 9-12am and 1-2pm. <i>(Textbooks will be issued to all students in the first week. Students, please bring your receipt when collecting your textbooks).</i> Please note: No payments can be made on Wednesday 24 January and Thursday 25 January, as the School office will be closed all day for staff induction.
Thursday 24 January	Student Free Days—whole staff inductions/meetings Administration office will be closed ALL DAY Thur 24 Jan.

Tuesday 29 January	School commences for Years 8 and 11 students
Wednesday 30 January	School commences for all Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 students
Please note that the Uniform Shop operates from the school Canteen building, payment for the Resource Hire Scheme to be made to the Administration office. The collection of Textbooks operates from the Resource Centre during class time in the first week of school.	

ACADEMIC UNIT DATES IN 2008	
Term 1 Units	Tuesday 29 January to Friday 4 April <i>Easter Holidays: 21.03.08 to 24.03.08</i> <i>Autumn Holidays: 05/04/08 to 13/04/08 (14.04.07 is a student free day)</i>
Term 2 Units	Monday 14 April to Friday 27 June <i>Winter Holidays: 28.06.08 to 13.07.08 (14.07.07 is a student free day)</i>
Term 3 Units	Tuesday 14 July to Friday 19 September <i>Spring Holidays: 20.09.08 to 05.10.08 (20.10.08 is student free day)</i>
Term 4 Units	06 October to 12 December—Yrs 8 and 9 06 October to 28 November—Yrs 10 and 11 06 October to 14 November—Yr 12 <i>Summer Holidays 15 December to 26 January 2009</i>

Staff development days

2007

Six days during the year are designated as ‘**student free**’ days. These days are set aside for **professional development** activities for all teaching and non-teaching staff. One date (concessional) is “moveable” ie: it is determined each year, in consultation with the P & C, subject to availability of outside facilitators and priorities at the time. (**Note:** term 4 is the only term that does not automatically commence with a student free day).

Term One 25 January
Term Two 16 April
Term Three 09 July
Term Four 22 October
Concessional—to be advised

2008

Term One 25 January
Term Two 16 April
Term Three 09 July
Term Four 22 October
Concessional—to be advised

Calendar of Events

2007

Term Three

- Term 2 Reports
- Year 10 Transition into Year 11 Information Night
- QCS Practice Test
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Year 10 Transition into Year 11 Subject Selection
- Year 8 Transition into Year 9 Subject Selection Night
- Year 10 Agnes Water Excursion
- Pathways Night
- School Athletics Carnival
- Australian Maths Competition
- Year 11 Work Placement
- McDonalds Maths Competition
- Year 7 Transition into Year 8 Information Night
- Mentor Training
- Eisteddford – Instrumental
- QCS Test
- Year 12 Reference Appointments
- Whoolghun Formal Assembly

Term Four

- North West Excursion
- Term 3 Reports
- Year 8 Vaccinations
- Year Sevens visited by administration
- Awards Night
- School Beach Bash
- Year 12 Transition Week
- Year 12 Formal Evening
- Burarhl Formal Assembly

- Year 12 Valedictory Event
- Year 10 Certificates posted
- Year 9 Canberra Excursion
- Term 4 Reports

2008

Term One

- Swimming Carnival
- School Photos
- Uniform Free Day
- Carnarvon Excursion
- Year 10 Mock Interviews
- Ghinmhine Formal Assembly

Term Two

- Term 1 Reports
- Year 12 Work Placement
- Cross Country
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Uniform Free Day
- Interviews for Student Leaders
- Year 10 Set Plan Interviews
- Nagatin Formal Assembly

Term Three

- Term 2 Reports
- Year 10 Transition into Year 11 Information Night
- QCS Practice Test
- Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Year 10 Transition into Year 11 Subject Selection
- Year 8 Transition into Year 9 Subject Selection Night
- Year 10 Agnes Water Excursion
- Pathways Night
- School Athletics Carnival
- Australian Maths Competition
- Year 11 Work Placement
- McDonalds Maths Competition
- Year 7 Transition into Year 8 Information Night
- Mentor Training
- Eisteddford—Instrumental
- QCS Test
- Year 12 Reference Appointments
- Whoolghun Formal Assembly

Term four

- North West Excursion
- Term 3 Reports
- Year 8 Vaccinations
- Year Sevens visited by administration
- Awards Night
- School Beach Bash

- Year 12 Transition Week
- Year 12 Formal Evening
- Burarhl Formal Assembly
- Year 12 Valedictory Event
- Year 10 Certificates posted
- Year 9 Canberra Excursion
- Term 4 Reports

Absences

Parents are asked to furnish notes explaining all student absences or phone **the office** before or on the day. The school trialled, in 2006, a technology called "Truancy Call", which rings home or mobile if students are absent. Work will not generally be collated for absences of one or two days: students are expected to see their teachers upon return for the work missed.

Carrying Books

At Tannum Sands SHS, you will have only four lessons per day. Some books are issued on a 'whole year basis', the rest are used only at school or taken home for shorter periods. Thus the load of books should not be substantial. In general students will be expected to keep their books in their bags. There are no lockers for bags. Bags are to be outside classrooms, in port racks, during lessons and **with their owners at all other times**. Neither money nor valuables (eg walkmans, MP3's, I-pods, calculators) are to be kept in bags. If necessary, valuables can be left at the office; keep your calculator in your pencil case in the classroom with you. Any students with genuine medical problems can apply for a locker—see Mr Rohan Brooks, Deputy Principal. **Ergonomic bags are available for purchase from the School Uniform Shop.**

Canteen

Nutritious but tasty food and drinks are on the menu at Tannum Sands State High School. Softdrink vending machines, along with sweets and sausage rolls, went out as Smart Choices, the State Government's Strategy for healthy food and drink supply, was introduced in early 2006.

Lesson Times

8.15	No students in grounds before this time
8.30	Suggested arrival time
8.45	Preparation for the day
8.50	Parade/House Group meetings for roll marking, notices
9.00	Lesson 1
10.10	Morning Break
10.40	Lesson 2
11.50	Lunch
12.35	Lesson 3
1.45	Afternoon Break
2.00	Lesson 4
3.10	School Finishes

Timetables

Some subjects are compulsory and others are electives. You will be issued with a **subject selection booklet** that will detail the information on each subject and will help you make your subject selection decisions.

Compulsory/Core subjects	a subject you must study
Elective subject	a subject you choose to study
Authority subjects	year 11/12 subjects that contribute to entry to University
Non-authority subjects	subjects that do not contribute to entry to University

Once you have chosen your subjects, you will be issued with a timetable. Timetables provide you with a plan of your subjects, teachers and rooms for your lesson. Students walk from room to room for their lessons.

Example student timetable

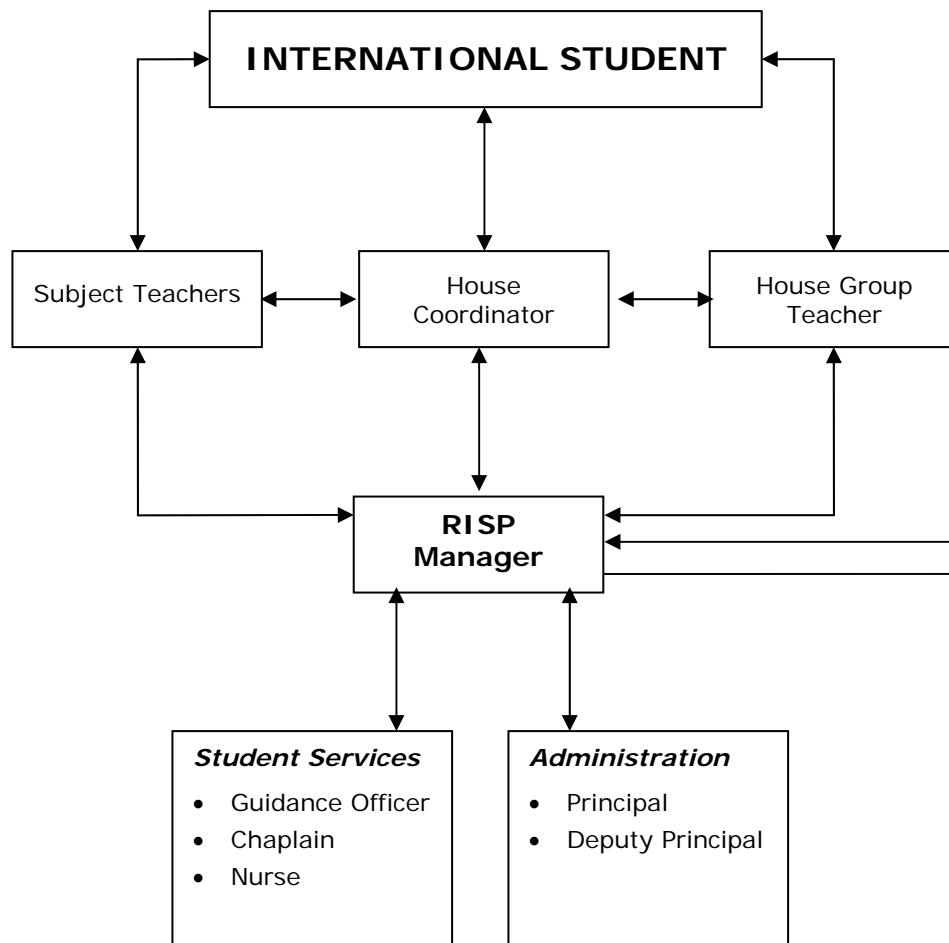
		STUDENT SURNAME CHRISTIAN NAME Yr 10 W03 MBEE				
		MON.	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Lesson A						
Roll		W03 HURLJA PC15	W03 HURLJA HE11	W03 HURLJA PC02	W03 HURLJA PC15	W03 HURLJA HE11
Lesson 1		EG3102C COTTEL CO07	M42102D WELLTE G210	TH1102C MCPHRO CO05	SS4102G NISSKY G102	WW3102A LEESJA MA01
Lesson 2		M42102D WELLTE G210	EG3102C COTTEL CO07	WW3102A LEESJA MA01	SP1102A JOHNSAN SC03	TH1102C MCPHRO CO05
Lesson 3		TH1102C MCPHRO CO05	SS4102G NISSKY G102	M42102D WELLTE G210	REDSU2L COLLM' HE13	SP1102A JOHNSAN SC03
Lesson 4		WW3102A LEESJA MA01	SP1102A JOHNSAN SC03	EG3102C COTTEL CO07	BBLSU2U WABIAL MU08	SS4102G NISSKY G102
	Teacher	Mr McPherson				

Subject code (refer subject selection booklet) → EG3102C, M42102D, TH1102C, WW3102A
Room—General Learning 2 Room 10 → COTTEL CO07, WELLTE G210, MCPHRO CO05, LEESJA MA01

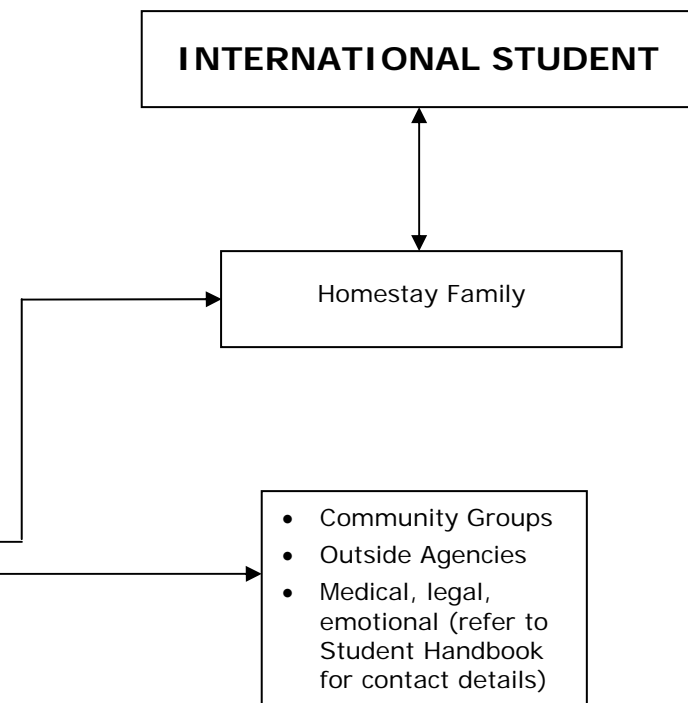
International Student Program Student Support Flowchart

RISP students are members of the general school community and will be supported through the mainstream structures. Due to their particular needs, this additional structure has been implemented to enhance the support provided.

School (Level 1)



Non-School (Level 2)



Extra and Co-Curricula Activities

There are many cultural and sporting programs available to all students throughout the year. A significant number of subjects include class-time excursions in their programs. More information about these activities is available in the Student Service Guide, which you have been issued.

Visa Requirements

Attendance

DIMIA requires students to maintain at least 80% attendance. EQI policy states 100% a student attendance is desirable.

If you are sick you need to visit a doctor and obtain a medical certificate. If a medical certificate is produced the absence is considered acceptable.

Achievement

Students must complete all school work. Students must achieve a minimum of a Sound Achievement for all subjects. More than one Limited Achievement or Very Limited Achievement must be reported to EQI. Passing subjects is a condition of your Student Visa. Poor results may result in the cancellation of your visa.

If you are having difficulties with any of your subjects you must discuss your concerns with the RISP Manager immediately.

Application to work part-time

Student visas are issued with no provision to work included. If you wish to work part-time in Australia it is necessary to apply for a visa with permission to work. This visa will be granted at the discretion of EQI and the school, keeping in mind that a job should not negatively impact on academic achievement.

Duration

Your student visa is issued for the duration of your school program. If you think you may want to extend your stay at our school you must see the RISP Manager at least 8 weeks before your visa is due to expire so a new visa can be arranged.

General School Responsibilities

The student ORGANISER details general student responsibilities. Please refer to your copy of the student organiser for information on:

- Your behaviour
- Attendance Information
- Homework Policy
- Discipline Chain
- Dress Code
- Assignment Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Mobile Phone/MP3 Policy.

Legal Details

Driving

The legal driving age in Australia is 17. International students can drive on an International licence for 3 months, but then must take the test to obtain a Queensland licence. Heavy fines apply for students found to be driving on an International Licence after 3 months.

If you are riding a bicycle you MUST wear a bike helmet or you will be fined.

Drugs and Alcohol

It is illegal to drink alcohol until you are 18 years old in Australia. Nightclubs and bars require identification to prove you are 18 years old before entering. All non-doctor prescribed drugs are illegal (eg. marijuana, speed, ecstasy etc.). Your visa may be cancelled if you are caught in the possession of drugs.

Health and Safety

Overseas Health Cover (OSHC)

EQI will organise your health cover for you for the length of your stay. If you extend your stay, you will have to renew your OSHC yourself. The RISP Manager will help you renew your cover at the nearest Medibank Private Office.

Visiting a Medical Specialist

If you need to visit a medical practitioner ask your homestay family to help you make the arrangements. The RISP Manager is also available to help you make the appointment.

Socialising

Going out with friends is fine, but try to stay in a group, especially at night. Keep to the rules of your host family. Staying out overnight is not permitted. Do not walk home alone.

Valuable Items

At Tannum Sands State High School, students leave their bags outside their classrooms during class. It is important that you do not leave any valuables eg. money, cameras, passports in your bag. If you must bring valuables to school for a specific purpose ask a member of the office staff to lock them away for the day. On your arrival, you will be asked to provide the RISP Manager with a copy of your passport and visa. These records are kept in case a passport is lost

Surf, Beach and Sun Safety

Tannum Sands is a beachside community, and the beaches are amongst the best in Queensland. However, they can be dangerous for people who are not used to the ocean. Understanding the ocean is very important—the more you know about how waves, wind and tides affect conditions in the water, the better able you are to keep yourself safe.

Most of the sun's dangerous UV radiation (as much as 70%) occurs in the middle of the day, so if you are heading outside then, you need to take particular care to seek shade, cover up, wear a hat and use sunscreen at school, a school hat must be worn at all times when not in the shade.



Surf Life Saving Australia's 10 Surf Safety Hints

1. Always swim or surf at places patrolled by surf lifesavers or lifeguards.
2. **Swim between the red and yellow flags.** They mark the safest area to swim.
3. Always swim under supervision or with a friend.
4. Read and obey the signs.
5. Don't swim directly after a meal.
6. Don't swim under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
7. If you are unsure of surf conditions, ask a lifesaver or lifeguard.
8. Never run and dive in the water. Even if you have checked before, conditions can change.
9. If you get into trouble in the water, don't panic. Raise your arm for help, float and wait for assistance.
10. Float with a current or undertow. Stay calm. Don't try to swim against it. Signal for help and wait for assistance.

Dangerous Animals

Some animals to be aware of (most in **other** parts of Australia) are listed below. Don't worry—just get advice from your host family:

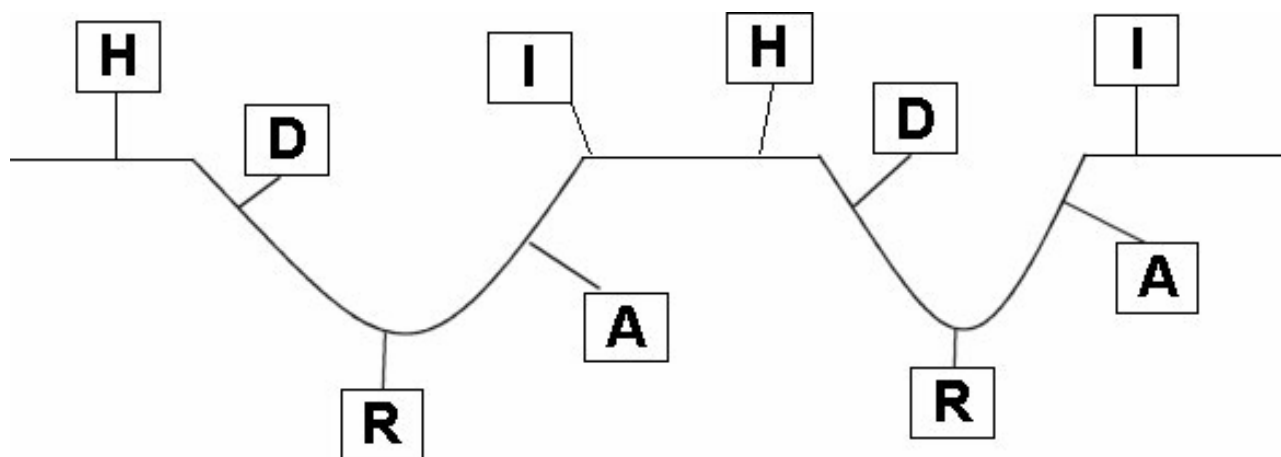
- Sharks
- Crocodiles
- Box jellyfish
- Stonefish
- Blue Bottle Jellyfish
- Venomous snakes
- Cone shells
- Red back spiders
- Funnel web spiders.

CULTURE SHOCK

The confusion that goes with living in a new country is called "CULTURE SHOCK". It is a reaction most people experience when they are removed from their familiar surroundings.

Culture shock is not always easy to notice because it usually builds up slowly, and the signs are not always obvious. People experience culture shock to different degrees. Some don't notice it at all, while others are affected very much. Some people go through it in the first month, while others don't notice it until months later. However, most people follow the adjustment pattern below. As you can see, you may have adjustment problems after you come to Australia, and again when you return to your home country. This is a normal reaction!

Culture Shock double whammy for international students



- H = Honeymoon stage
- D = Disintegration stage
- R = Reintegration stage
- A = Autonomy stage
- I = Interdependent stage

Signs of culture shock

- you begin to dislike your host country, the school system, your host family
- you begin to spend a lot of time alone in your room
- you are easily upset, can't concentrate at school, and sleep a lot.

What can you do about it?

- talk about how you are feeling with your host family, friends, or a member of the International Studies Faculty
- try to keep busy
- be aware that this is a normal reaction and talk it over with other International students.

REMEMBER: COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

Cultural Passage for International Students

TIME						
At Home	1st Month	2nd Month		3rd Month	4th & 5th Month	6th Month
Possible feelings	Anticipation	Exhilaration & anxiety	Restlessness & impatience	Discouragement & irritability	Gradual improvement of mood	Normal feelings
Significant events	Planning, packing, partying & saying good-bye	New housing, school, sights, shops, orientation, classes begin	Beginning of classes, unfamiliar language, food & smells	Cut down or stop language study, look for familiar recreation, midterm grades	Acceptable class performance, final exams	Normal class performance new term begins
Possible emotional reactions	Excitement, enthusiasm, fear of the unknown, concern about leaving family	Tourist enthusiasm	Uncertainty, anger, withdrawal, increase in unhealthy behaviours	Discouragement, bewilderment, concern about sanitation, missing home	Interest in new culture or acceptance of differences	Balance of likes & dislikes
Possible attitudes & behavioural responses to events	Anticipation, loss of interest in current activities at home	Curiosity about Australians, enthusiasm for classes/colleagues	Suspicious, frustrated & questioning values of self & others	Avoid contact with local people, become hostile & or fearful, stereotyping people	Constructive attitudes & accommodations	Balanced attitudes
Possible physical responses to events	Fatigue	Stomach ache & sleeplessness	Colds, headaches, stomach aches	Minor illnesses (cold or flu)	Improved health	Normal health

Source: Adapted from "Culture Shock - Stages & Symptoms" International Center, University of Michigan.

Symptoms and Strategies for International Students

Common Symptoms

Feeling Nervous or Overtired?

You may feel tired, have colds or feel drained and need to sleep a lot when you first arrive. This might continue for up to a month.

Feeling Homesick?

Missing your family, friends and community is a normal feeling. If you only think of home and cry a lot, you may be suffering culture shock or culture fatigue.

Feeling Angry or Anxious?

You may feel frustrated by small problems that would usually not bother you or make you feel anxious. You can discuss these feelings with your International Student Coordinator.

Are you only mixing with other students from your home country?

Friendships are very important, and mixing with other students from your home country can make you feel comfortable. Try to mix with the Australian students as well as this will help you to understand the culture of your study destination.

Worried about the decision you have made to study in Australia?

You may worry that you will not be able to do well in your courses or that you will disappoint your family with your results. It is normal to feel this way in new situations. Give yourself time to adjust to a new environment.

Do you feel that there is no-one that you can speak to about how you are feeling?

Not getting involved in your new culture may make you feel alone. You might not know who you can speak to about how you are feeling. You can always speak to your International Student Coordinator or the Guidance Officer at school who will be able to listen to your concerns.

Coping Strategies

Adjusting to a new culture

Adjusting to life in a new culture will take time. It does not happen overnight.

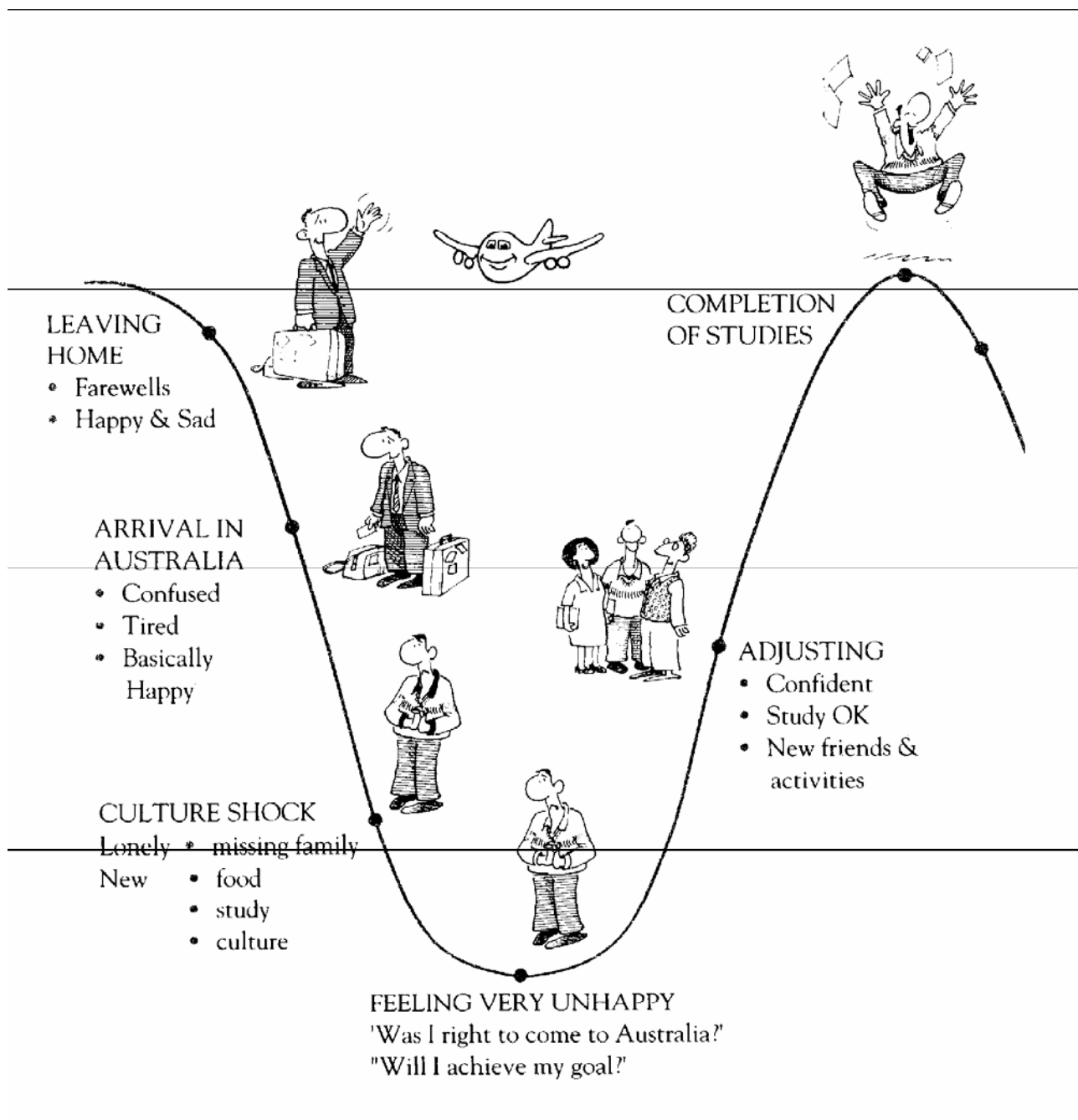
There are new experiences, people act in different ways, say things in different ways.

You need to understand that people are acting according to their own set of rules from a culture that is most probably different to yours.

Try to face new situations as a challenge. If you find that you are having difficulties adjusting to the new culture, talk to your International Student Coordinator or the Guidance Officer at school, who will be able to talk to you about some strategies that you can use. Adjusting to a new environment takes time and you need to be patient with yourself and with others around you.

Adapted from "Culture Shock - Stages & Symptoms" International Center, University of Michigan.

The Process of Adjustment



Source: AusAID

HOMESTAY

Family

Your homestay family is very important to your success and happiness in Australia. Please make a huge effort to make friends with them as this will provide you with many advantages in return to make your life easier. Whatever the make up of your host family, each member has decided to welcome an international student into the home, so feel welcome and enjoy your time with them.

Your homestay family will provide you with a room of your own, a place to put your belongings, and a place to study. You will be given three meals a day and have access to the laundry and the main living areas in the house. You will also be given an opportunity to learn about Australian culture within a caring family environment.

Costs

The cost of homestay can vary but, in general, it is AUD\$160 per week. The cost of homestay can increase during your time in Australia as the cost of living increases.

In most cases you will also be expected to pay your telephone costs.

You or your family pay the homestay family via payment to the school. Payments to your host family start from the date you move into your homestay. Homestay will be paid in advance (usually two weeks).

The money they will receive from you will cover food and lodging, with a little left over as a "bonus" for their efforts, so offer to help and do not expect your family to pay for all your outings. If you feel you are being asked to do too much or that rules are unreasonable, talk to the RISP Manager, who will discuss your concerns with the family.

It is important to establish at the beginning of your stay, the expectations of both students and homestay parents. The RISP Manager will visit you in your home after you have settled in to fill out the Homestay Arrangements Form. This is an agreement between you and your family as to the rules and responsibilities of the household.

If you are unsure of some of the ways of doing things, ASK!!! On the following pages is a list of suggested questions to ask your host family, and hints for a successful homestay.

Cultural Differences

The way Australian families live may be different from the way you live in your home country.

When you live in homestay with an Australian family you are usually considered part of the family. The Australian families that take international students for home-stay are generally considerate, kind people who try to understand the cultural differences between themselves and their international students. You, also, need to try to understand these differences so that your homestay is a good experience for you.

Australian families are not all the same

Australian families, like families everywhere, differ from each other in many ways. This is especially so because Australia is a multi-cultural country. It has been settled by people from all over the world, including Europe and Asia. There is freedom of religion in Australia and people practise many different religions (for example, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism).

In general, Australians live in nuclear families (that is, mother, father and children) rather than with grandparents, uncles and aunties, although they often have regular contact with their relatives. In recent years, the number of single parent families (one parent and children) and childless families (husband and wife only) has increased.

Everyone Helps

In Australia, families do not normally have household help and, frequently, both parents work. Therefore, it is usual for all members of the family to be expected to help with household tasks. These might include helping with food preparation and clean-up, keeping their own room clean, and washing and ironing their own clothes. In many families, the children prepare their own breakfast and lunch and either the mother or the father prepares the evening meal.

Mealtimes

The food eaten by Australian families and the customs associated with eating depend on the cultural background of the family. For example, families from a European background eat mainly European food, although many families like to try different types of food and may buy or cook dishes from China, Mexico, Thailand, Lebanon, etc. Breakfast, for many Australians, consists of cereal or toast, and perhaps fruit and a juice drink. Lunch is often sandwiches and fruit or cake. Your host family will try to cook food that you like, so tell

your family if there is anything you cannot eat or do not like. Go shopping with your host family so that you can show them anything you particularly like that they may not have at home. Cook a meal occasionally for your family. They will love you for it. Your host family may make lunch for you on school days, give you money to buy lunch, or you may make your own lunch. Discuss this with your host mother and father.

All members of the family normally eat their evening meal together. This meal is often a time for discussion and sharing of information about what has happened during the day. Australian families, while encouraging their children to join in discussions at mealtime, consider noisy eating (e.g. loud chewing, slurping, chewing with your mouth open) to be impolite.

Expressing Emotions

Australians tend to express their emotions openly. They are usually not embarrassed about showing others that they are angry, happy, sad, etc. Many Australians find it quite acceptable to openly disagree with another person's opinion, as long as this is done in a non-aggressive, reasonable manner. In most cases, it is also considered acceptable to discuss personal problems with other people, especially friends, family and trained professionals (e.g. guidance officers in schools). Australian parents encourage their children to say 'please' and 'thank you' when they ask for something and to apologise (say 'I am sorry') when they upset someone.

Australian Homes

Most Australian homes have a kitchen, living room (where the family may watch TV, entertain friends, etc), bedrooms, laundry and bathroom. The bathroom usually contains a bath or shower or both. Sometimes the toilet is also located in the bathroom and toilet paper, not water, is used.

When Australians bathe, they usually do so in the bath or shower cubicle so water does not splash on the bathroom floor. If there are many people in the family or if there is a drought, water (especially hot water) may be scarce and family members must limit the length of time they spend bathing.

Insects

Many Australian families have insects called cockroaches in their homes. Cockroaches are difficult to eliminate from homes as the Queensland climate is a perfect habitat for cockroaches. Seeing a cockroach is not a sign that a home is dirty.

Sandflies and mosquitos are also insects that are common in Queensland. During the summer months around dusk, mosquitos and sandflies are most noticeable. Insect repellent applied to uncovered skin will prevent bites.

Australian teenagers

Australian teenagers, in general, are fairly independent although parents would normally expect teenagers to seek permission to go out, and then tell their parents where they are going, who they are going with, what they will be doing, and the time they will be home. It is extremely important that international students let their home-stay parents know these things also. This will avoid a lot of worry for the home-stay parents. It is also polite for students to tell home-stay parents in advance (the day before) if they are not coming home for dinner. Most parents set a time by which their children must return home when they go out at night. Sometimes they set a time for going to sleep (for example, 10.30pm). Some international students find this difficult because, in their home country, they stay up very late at night.

Australian teenagers participate in a wide range of leisure activities, including sports, movies, parties and visiting friends. Shopping with friends is also enjoyed. A favourite activity of Australian teenagers is telephoning friends. Parents, however, normally place a time limit on telephone calls so that other family members have access to the phone. International students are expected to pay for the telephone calls they make. This may be done after each call or at a time negotiated between the student and the home-stay parents.

Australian teenagers often invite their friends to their home. This is with their parents' permission and knowledge. International students can do this also, but they must first make sure it is okay with their home-stay parents.

Additional Spending Money

In many Australian families, the parents give their children spending money each week (called 'pocket' money). The amount given usually depends on the age of the child and what the child is expected to buy with the money. Some teenagers might be expected to pay for their own transport and entertainment. Transport could cost up to AUD\$20 per week, while one trip to the movies might cost as much as AUD\$15 (this includes transport and something to eat). Most international students, who are careful with their money, could manage with approximately AUD\$50 additional spending money per week.

Talking to the family

It is normal to feel nervous when you first meet your home-stay family. You will begin to feel happier when you get to know the family better. Talking to your home-stay family about any worries or questions you have when you first arrive will help you adjust to living in a new country.

If you do not speak English well, you can still communicate. Write down what you want to say if your written English is better than your spoken English. Draw a picture of what you want to say. Use your bilingual dictionary. Mime or act out your message. Ask another student to interpret for you or use the telephone interpreter service (your home-stay or school can tell you about this).

If you spend most of your time in your room with the door closed, the home-stay family may think you do not like them. Spend some time each day with the family talking, watching TV, or helping the family with household tasks. Tell the home-stay family about your culture and find out about theirs.

Transport To School

If you live close to the school, you may walk to school or ride a bike. If you live further away, you may catch a bus or your host parent may drive you. International students are not eligible for a bus pass, so you will have to pay the bus fare to and from school.

Social Life

You will make lots of friends while you are in Australia, and will want to go out with them. Be considerate of your host family, always ask their permission and let them know where you are and when you will be home. As a general rule, socialising should be limited to week-ends as week nights are for study and to spend time with your host family. If friends ask you to stay over, discuss this with your host family. You will need to check with the RISP manager if you want to stay overnight. They may also allow you to have friends to stay, but remember not to inconvenience your host family by always having your friends in the house.

Make the most of your homestay experience

Staying in home-stay gives you an excellent opportunity to:

- learn about Australian culture
- make friends with Australians
- improve your English language skills
- share information about your culture and
- adjust to a new country while living in a safe and caring environment.

TIPS AND HINTS

Advice for students

- Be open-minded
- It's not wrong, just different
- If things go wrong, don't panic – stay calm!
- Create your own opportunities - be enthusiastic, committed and motivated
- Watch what is going on around you
- Communication is the key to a successful stay - talk over your problems immediately
- The more interest you show, the more people will try to help you
- If homesick, get busy and more involved
- Accept cultural differences, don't resent them
- Be prepared to try new things
- Make the most of every day - don't think of the things you miss about home, think of what you will gain by being here
- Be patient, things won't be perfect from the start – you have to work at it!
- Don't be swayed by rumour, make up your own mind and don't judge!
- Always remember why you came to Australia and what you hope to achieve during your stay. It will give you more motivation when times are tough.

Coming to stay with an Australian family can be a great experience for both you and the homestay family, but although people are the same in most ways in all countries, you may find that your host family may do some things differently to what you are used to in your own country. It may take a little time for you and your host family to get used to each other and for you to feel at home.

Here are some ideas on how to make sure that you have a good relationship with your host family:

- Offer to help with household chores. Ask for a specific job that you can do to help and do it!
- Keep your room tidy. Some families are tidier than others but make sure that your room is ALWAYS tidy.
- Don't leave clothing and towels on the floor of the bathroom.
- Put your dirty clothes into the family clothes hamper if you want them washed with the family washing.
- Let your homestay family know where you are AT ALL TIMES. Your host family is responsible for you while you are here, so you must tell them where you are going, give a contact number so they can reach you, and tell them when you will be home. If you are going to be late for a meal, let your family know.
- Ask before inviting friends over. Most homestay families will be happy for you to have friends over to visit or stay but you must always ask first and obey the rules they set.

- No smoking or alcohol.
- Offer to pay for yourself when you go to a restaurant or on an expensive outing
- Your host family will pay for most of your meals but if they take you out to an expensive restaurant or to a theme park which is very expensive, offer to pay for yourself. They may wish to pay for you if they have enough money, but it is important to offer to pay.
- Be kind and patient with your host brothers and sisters.
- If you are not happy in your homestay, the RISP Manager will follow these steps:
 - talk to both parties separately to obtain each person's point-of-view about the concern
 - talk to both parties together (an interpreter may be necessary)
 - attempt to resolve the problem by generating strategies and making a time in the near future to talk about the result of these strategies
 - if the problem can not be resolved, new homestay arrangements may have to be made.

Helpful Things to Ask Your Host Family

- What would you like me to call you?
- What do you expect me to do daily?
- Where do I put my dirty washing?
- Can I use the washing machine or iron at anytime?
- What are the best times to use the bathroom?
- Can I help myself to food and drink at any time?
- Are there "private" areas in the house?
- Can I move my bedroom furniture around if I wish?
- Is there a special getting up time on weekends?
- Is there a bedtime?
- Can I invite friends around?
- What are the rules for using the telephone?
- What time am I expected home on the weekends?
- Can I use household appliances when I wish?
- When and how loud can I play music?
- What are the general procedures in the household?
- How do I use any appliances eg. toilet, shower, TV etc