ABBOTSLEIGH

Overseas Student **Handbook**

CRICOS Provider Code 02270F

Contents

Part A – General information for overseas students studying at Abbotsleigh 6

Useful contacts 6
Contacts for support at school 7
When to ask for help 8
Wellbeing at Abbotsleigh 9

Part B – Other useful information about Abbotsleigh 10

Accommodation 10
Attendance 10
Banking facilities 10
Casual employment 10
Change of address 10
Co-curricular opportunities 11
Counselling 11
Complaints process 11
Educational guardian 11
Enrolment conditions 12
Extra tuition 12
Government concessions 12
Holidays 12
Immigration and visa requirements 12
Important school calendar dates 12
Medical insurance 13
Money 13
Saturday School of Community Languages 13

Part C – The Australian education system 14

Courses available at Abbotsleigh 14
Education in NSW 14
University entrance 15

Part D – Tuition Protection Service (TPS) 16

Part E – Living in Australia 17

Letter from the Headmistress

Dear parents

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting your daughter during the time of transition to Abbotsleigh. It is my pleasure to welcome you and your daughter to the Abbotsleigh community. There are many exciting opportunities ahead for your daughter and I hope she will make good use of those. In addition, there are family events and parent organisations which you might find of interest. The Development Office will advise you of these at the beginning of the new School year.

My colleagues and I will enjoy getting to know new students at the Orientation Day in January. You will be advised of the details of this day in a separate letter. This is essential for all new girls. Parents and Educational guardians are welcome, if available, to join new girls for afternoon tea. The Year Coordinator will then show overseas students to classroom areas and familiarise them with their new school. Maths and English tasks will be conducted for new girls who have not already completed this activity. We will conduct further orientation processes at the start of the school year including familiarisation with Abbotsleigh's use of technology.

This is an exciting new challenge for your daughter. We will support her to meet any challenges in the year ahead. Please contact the following staff members if you or your daughter have any concerns at any time:

Registrar
Your first point of contact for general issues
Mrs Colleen Fenn
Phone: 61 2 9473 7744

Head of Boarding
For residential concerns
Mrs Victoria Rennie
Phone: 61 2 9473 7713

Director of Wellbeing and Counselling
Student support
Mrs Liz Cannon
Phone: 61 2 9473 7836

Head of Curriculum, Innovation and Design
For issues relating to academic progress and HSC curriculum
Mrs Terri Moore
Phone: 61 2 9473 7798

Communication is a key factor in preventing or resolving any possible issue of concern. Please make sure that you keep the and the Registrar updated with your contact details, including email address.

I look forward to a productive and fulfilling partnership as your daughter matures and grows in her academic ability in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely

Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

Welcome to Abbotsleigh

Our school

Why we exist
We empower amazing girls to do amazing things.

How we do things
Our teachers are role models who inspire each girl to reach her personal best. Their lessons last a lifetime.

What we do
Our holistic education underpinned by the Christian faith, helps our girls thrive today and tomorrow.

Abbotsleigh School Values

Chosen by the girls themselves

Integrity
We do what's right, not what's easy

Respect
We value everyone for who they are

Courage
We dare to take risks

Compassion
We lift each other up

Perseverance
We get up, we don't give up

Part A – General information for overseas students studying at Abbotsleigh

Useful contacts

International dialling

To make an international call from Australia, dial 0011, then the country code, city/region code and phone number.

Australia's country code 61.

Abbotsleigh contact details

Abbotsleigh Registrar
registrar@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Phone 02 9473 7777

International SOS
Phone 1800 234 601

Other useful contact numbers

Chinese/Australian Society
A counselling service for Chinese and Korean students
Phone 02 9787 8333

Department of Immigration & Citizenship
For immigration and visa information
Phone 131 881

Emergency services
Police, fire ambulance
Phone 000

Counselling services
Mrs Liz Cannon
cannonl@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Phone 9473 7836

Kids Helpline
1800 551 800

Lifeline
13 11 14

Department of Immigration and Citizenship
For immigration and visa information
www.immi.gov.au

Australian Education International
For Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS)
www.aei.gov.au

Overseas Students Ombudsman
For protection for overseas students and student rights and responsibilities within the ESOS framework
www.oso.gov.au

Medibank Private
www.medibank.com.au/oshc
Phone 1800 234 601
toll free 24 hours 7 days a week

AHM overseas student health cover
www.ahm.com.au/oshc

Study in Australia
www.studyinaustralia.gov.au

Education in Australia
www.education.gov.au

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
For contact details of your country's embassy
www.dfat.gov.au

Australian Customs Service
For information on what you can bring into Australia
www.customs.gov.au

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
www.aqis.gov.au

Tourism Australia
www.australia.com

Contacts for support at school

The School wants your experience to be a happy and safe one while you are being extended academically. There are many people at school who can support you along the way, whether it be in relation to your studies, wellbeing or queries regarding your student visa.

Matter	**Position**
Emergency matters	Contact Emergency Services or your official point of contact for further assistance
Official point of contact for overseas students	Boarding Coordinator (overseas boarders) Year Coordinator (overseas day students)
Wellbeing, welfare and pastoral care	Tutor/Classroom Teacher Year Coordinator Dean Director of Wellbeing and Counselling Head of Junior and Head of Senior School If overseas student resides in Boarding: Assistant Boarding Coordinator Boarding Coordinator Head of Boarding
Academic progress	Specialist subject teachers Heads of Department Head of Curriculum
Academic support for students whose first language is not English	English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) Teachers
Cultural and Mandarin support	Chinese teachers Mandarin speakers in Boarding houses
Healthcare, including seeking medical attention	Nursing Sister
Informal and formal complaints	Go to Abbotsleigh/Contact us/Making a complaint
Enrolments and visa/passport renewal matters	Registrar
Tuition and other fees	Bursar
Quality of student learning, academic progress and wellbeing	Head of Abbotsleigh

When to ask for help

So that we can help you and ensure your safety, please contact one of the people above if you:

- Are feeling unhappy at school or in general.
- Are having difficulty fitting in.
- Think you have chosen the wrong subject.
- Think you need help in a particular subject or area of knowledge.
- Need help with choosing a career or finding out about your options for the future.
- Need to renew your health insurance.
- Need to renew your passport or visa.
- Change your address.
- Are not doing as well as you think you should be at school.
- Need to understand some rules or laws about Australian society.
- Are not well.
- Need to return home early or return to School late.
- Are having transport difficulties or are stranded anywhere.

The Registrar can assist with all visa information.

Wellbeing at Abbotsleigh

Positive behaviour and pastoral care

Abbotsleigh Wellbeing Framework

Strong Minds, Strong Hearts, Strong Hands

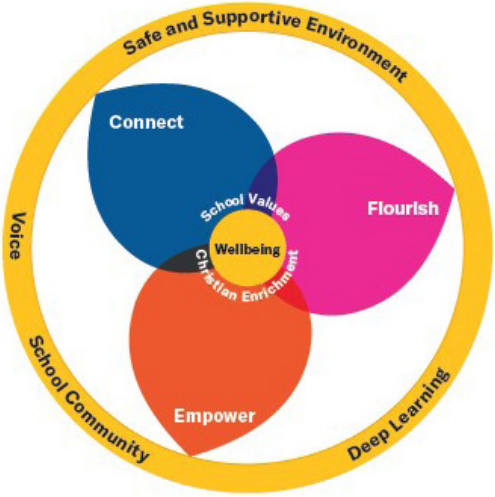
At Abbotsleigh we recognise the important connection between wellbeing, learning and flourishing. We proactively strive to enhance the academic, social, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of each girl through our Pre K-Year 12 wellbeing framework.

Our staff are committed to providing a positive, caring and nurturing environment that supports each girl's growth and development. This enables her to flourish and be empowered to make a positive impact on her world today and tomorrow.

CONNECT We aim for all girls to be actively engaged in their learning and in their School so that they feel connected. Establishing positive and respectful relationships will help all girls to experience a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

EMPOWER We empower our girls to be strong global citizens who are compassionate and courageous leaders, act with integrity and have a positive and powerful impact on their world today and tomorrow.

FLOURISH We want all our girls to feel valued, respected and supported at school. Underpinned by our Christian faith and values, we aim to support girls to become resilient and adaptable critical thinkers who are equipped to persevere in their learning; to achieve, grow and flourish.



Part B – Other useful information about Abbotsleigh

Accommodation

All overseas students holding student visas and enrolled at Abbotsleigh must be enrolled as Boarding students. Boarding is a long-term commitment unless the School has previously agreed in writing to the contrary. Students enrolled as Boarders are expected to remain as boarders for the full duration of their enrolment at Abbotsleigh.

A change in status, either before or after commencement, is entirely at the discretion of the School.

In the unlikely event of students not being able to be accommodated in the Boarding Houses, the School will be in direct contact with parents. In such instances, and with the permission of the student's parents, the overseas student may reside with her local Education Guardian or be billeted with an Abbotsleigh family until her parents are able to make alternative arrangements. Alternative accommodation arrangements will always be determined in consultation with the student's parents.

Attendance

All Abbotsleigh students are expected to attend school and apply their best effort. Should concerns arise regarding a student's attendance record, punctuality, health or wellbeing, the School will be in contact with the girl's parents.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship requirements for visa renewal are that students must have an attendance record of at least 80% of each term, be performing academically at a satisfactory level and have current medical insurance.

Banking facilities

Upon arrival in Australia we suggest that students open a bank account with a bank that has a night and day facility. Passports are required for opening an account. We also recommend an access account where interest is calculated daily and an ATM plastic card can be used for your convenience.

Casual employment

To work casually you must have permission from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

Change of address

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship must be advised within 14 days of any change to your address.

The change of address form required by the Federal Government can be downloaded from www.immi.gov.au.

Please ensure that the School is always informed in writing of any change of address within seven days of any change to your address.

Co-curricular opportunities

There are lots of opportunities for you to experience different interests and for you to realise your potential. We encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities that you will have to become involved in School events that occur outside the classroom. Extra curricular activities are available during school hours or after hours as part of the School's AbbSchool program.

Counselling

Any student who would like to visit the School counsellor may do so by making an appointment directly with the appropriate counsellor. This can be done by emailing the school counsellor in the first instance via cannonl@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au or by visiting her office. Staff may also refer stduents to the counsellor if they feel the student needs specialised help.

Complaints process

Abbotsleigh values the feedback it receives from students and parents. Responding to both affirmative and negative feedback demonstrates the School's commitment to open communication. Complaints about any aspect of the School's operations, service, personnel or another student, will be handled responsively, openly and in a timely manner.

Overseas students can see the Head of Boarding, Boarding Coordinator, Year Coordinator, School Counsellor or Chaplain for guidance as to who to see to resolve their complaint. In the event that this does not resolve the issue, it may be escalated to the Headmistress.

If an overseas student, or their parents/guardian is not satisfied with the decision, action or the way a complaint has been handled by the School, the student may contact the Overseas Student Ombudsman to investigate the problem. The Ombudsman services are free, independent and impartial. Please contact:

Web address: www.oso.gov.au

Email: ombudsman@ombudman.gov.au

Educational guardian

Overseas students, who reside in the school's Boarding Houses, are required to have a responsible adult appointed as a local guardian for their daughter. Educational Guardians do not have any formal legal status and they cannot act on behalf of the overseas student's parents. The role of an Educational Guardian is to provide pastoral care and support to an overseas student in the event that the School is unable to contact the student's parents.

Enrolment conditions

The overseas student must have a current:

- visa
- passport
- health insurance

The student must also:

- achieve a **minimum** of 80% attendance each term.
- be performing satisfactorily (with sustained effort and diligence) with your studies, as described in the course outlines).

Extra tuition

Often overseas students need some extra help in particular subjects, especially English. Extra tuition may be arranged through the School at an additional cost. These classes are usually held outside of school hours.

Please note that after-school tutorials are available for Maths and Science two or three times a week and for English, by arrangement. These after-school tutorials are available within the normal day school program and are free of cost to Abbotsleigh students.

Government concessions

As a temporary resident, you are not able to access any government concessions for services provided to residents. This means that you will pay full price for transport, medical services and education. At Abbotsleigh we request that you take out overseas student health cover with Medibank Private (See Medical Insurance).

Holidays

The following arrangements are subject to visa conditions permitting:

- As most overseas students will live in Abbotsleigh's boarding residences which are not open during the holiday breaks, overseas students are required to spend vacations with their families either in Australia or in their home country.

Immigration and visa requirements

It is the responsibility of each overseas student to ensure that her visa to stay in Australia is valid, and to ensure her passport is current. The School Registrar is available to assist overseas students with their visas.

Important school calendar dates

Details such as terms dates and calendar events, will be given to you via the official School newsletter, The Shuttle, which is available electronically to all parents by email or through the Parent Portal. This newsletter will be of particular interest because it contains lots of information about what is happening at Abbotsleigh.

Medical insurance

Students need to pay their overseas health cover for the full anticipated study period before arriving in Australia and prior to the issue of their visa.

Money

Students are advised not to carry or store large amounts of cash or open cheques either on their person or in the house. Students are not to have large amounts of cash at School.

Saturday School of Community Languages

A number of students from the School choose to undertake their native language as a Higher School Certificate subject, which involves travelling to a Saturday Language School in the Sydney Metropolitan Area each Saturday morning. This is seen as part of their official school curriculum. Transport to and from Sydney is each student's personal responsibility. There are no tuition fees for Saturday School of Community Languages classes.

The Head of Curriculum is the contact person for this school and will receive regular progress reports along with reports of any absences. However, the Dean of Senior College or Head of Curriculum will be consulted in the case of Year 11 and 12 students as this Saturday activity may impact on the total number of units the student will sit for her HSC.

Part C – The Australian education system

There is a big difference in the way the Australian education system operates compared to other parts of the world. For example, value is often placed on the application of knowledge in different situations outside the classroom (e.g. at student camps, work experience and different School functions).

In high school, students tend to move from room to room, and not the teacher. Abbotsleigh has a uniform and there are rules about what and how you are to wear it.

Courses available at Abbotsleigh

- Primary Years K-6
- Junior Secondary Years 7-10
- Senior Secondary Years 11 and 12

Education in NSW

Schooling in NSW is normally split into three main parts. Very young children normally complete their primary schooling between the ages of 5 and 12. This program provides a core basis of knowledge across the main subject areas (called 'key learning areas') in preparation for secondary studies (that may commence in a junior high school or middle school).

The next four years of schooling go to make up an accredited certificate called the Record of School Achievement (ROSA). If a student is to graduate with this certificate (at the end of Year 10, (aged about 15 or 16 years), she must have completed a certain pattern of study or its equivalent. It is the Headmistress's decision whether to grant this equivalent study or not. This record of achievement will be awarded to students who leave school prior to receiving their Higher School Certificate (HSC). There will be no changes in the current curriculum requirements.

The next two years (senior high school) normally go towards attaining the HSC. Students can only enter this program if they have achieved the ROSA or its equivalent. This is why overseas students must supply recent reports of three years of education and pass an English test (as outlined in the entry section of the forms). This certificate has set requirements that students must complete as a pattern of study in order to qualify for it.

The HSC and the ROSA are accredited by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). You can read the detailed requirements to achieve these certificates on the NESA website, https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home. Note that the NESA and the School require students to undertake all of their studies with diligence and sustained effort. This means that students can get a warning letter about unsatisfactory performance if they do not meet their work requirements in the manner outlined to them.

These expectations will be made very clear through the School's Assessment Guides – these outline what you have to do to pass each course, when certain tasks are due and how to put in an appeal if something goes wrong. Students will receive an Assessment Guide at the start of each year from Years 7 to 12.

To be eligible to sit the HSC, students must comply with the entry requirements, course restrictions and rules and regulations set down by the NESA from time to time.

Overseas students will also be levied with a government charge. This charge is independent and over and above the School's tuition fees.

If you have been successful in your program of study by the completion of Year 12, the NESA has the power to award students with the HSC along with a Record of Achievement. This certificate describes what competencies you have achieved in each subject that you have completed at HSC level.

Universities then use this information to give an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which students require for entry into Australian universities. This score (which is out of 100) ranks all of the students in the State of New South Wales by comparing how well each one did. The courses at university that are more in demand tend to have higher ATAR scores as an entrance mark.

University entrance

The majority of overseas students aim to enter a university or some other tertiary training institution after Year 12. The Abbotsleigh Careers Advisor gives careful guidance regarding courses available and necessary applications. Overseas students are encouraged to attend university open days. The HSC can be used to gain entry to universities in a variety of Australian, American, European, British and Asian universities.

Part D – Tuition Protection Service (TPS)

The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist international students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study.

The TPS ensures that international students are able to either:

- complete their studies in another course or with another education provider or
- receive a refund of their unspent tuition fees.

Australia has a well established international education sector with over 1200 education providers delivering a high quality education to international students. For many years now Australia has been a world leader in protecting the tuition fees of international students studying in Australia on a student visa. Recent changes to the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act have further strengthened protections for international students through the introduction of the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

In the unlikely event your education provider is unable to deliver a course you have paid for and does not meet their obligations to either offer you an alternative course that you accept or pay you a refund of your unspent prepaid tuition fees (this is called a provider's 'default obliga-tions'), the TPS will assist you in finding an alternative course or to get a refund if a suitable alternative is not found.

Student default occurs:

Under section 47A of the ESOS Act, an overseas student or intending overseas student defaults, in relation to a course at a location, if:

- the course starts at the location on the agreed starting day, but the student does not start the course on that day (and has not previously withdrawn); or
- the student withdraws from the course at the location (either before or after the agreed starting day); or
- the registered provider of the course refuses to provide, or continue providing, the course to the student at the location because of one or more of the following:
- the student failed to pay an amount payable to the provider for the course;
- the student breached a condition of his/her student visa;
- misbehaviour by the student (Note: the student is entitled to natural justice under subsection 47A(3)).

Provider default occurs:

Under section 46A of the ESOS Act a registered provider defaults, in relation to an overseas student or intending overseas student and a course at a location, if:

- the provider fails to start providing the course to the student at the location on the agreed starting day; or
- after the course starts but before it is completed, it ceases to be provided to the student at the location; and the student has not withdrawn from the course before the default day.

Part E – Living in Australia

This section is designed to give you a quick summary of some of the major differences between your own country and Australia. There is more comprehensive information available from the Study in Australia website, https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/live-in-australia.

- **Roads and traffic** – In Australia, people drive on the left hand side of the road. If this is different to your country, you need to be very careful when crossing the road.
- **Water usage** – Australia is a much drier country than others. On top of that, it has been in drought for many years. Water usage must be managed carefully in each home.
- **Food** – In the Abbotsleigh boarding house dining room, food is served on a self select basis. There is at least one meat/fish dish, with a vegetarian option and a selection of salads and pastas.
- **Lifestyle** – Australians value their leisure time. Pollution levels are much lower compared to the majority of other countries and Australians enjoy their environment by participating in many outdoor activities. You may find this quite different if you have come from a large urban city.
- **Population** – The largest city in Australia is Sydney. Some international students may come from cities that have the population of the whole of New South Wales (NSW) or even the whole of Australia in them – such as Shanghai in China.
- **Telephone and internet** – In Australia, people have to pay for all telecommunications. Even local telephone calls are not free.

Notes:

ABBOTSLEIGH

Junior School
22 Woonona Avenue
Wahroonga NSW 2076
T 02 9473 7700

Senior School and Administration
1666 Pacific Highway (Cnr Ada Avenue)
Wahroonga NSW 2076
T 02 9473 7777

www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

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