



Billanook College  
International Student  
Homestay Policy Handbook  
2018



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# Welcome to Our Homestay Program

Billanook College welcomes students from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, both for the relatively short term student exchange experience and as full time, fee paying members of our College community.

It is our firm belief that international students gain most from this educational opportunity when they are able to live with, and be under the care of, an Australian family. In rare circumstances, where the student may have an approved adult relative living within close proximity of the College, consideration may be given to the student residing with that relative as long as they, as host family, agree to accept all terms and conditions of the Homestay Program.

On occasion, the Student Recruitment Agent who is often the primary source of enrolment, will choose to organise accommodation for the student on a fee for service basis, in accordance with College approval. This accommodation must be within adequate proximity to the College.

In the vast majority of cases, Billanook College will undertake to select an appropriate homestay family for international students, once their enrolment at the College is confirmed. Where possible, the wishes of the international student and their parents are sought and considered in the matching of the student to a specific homestay family. Prospective homestay families are carefully sourced and selected on a range of criteria, including:

- motivation for undertaking this important function
- previous experience with young people of different cultures
- family structure
- the level of care and supervision able to be offered
- suitability of the homestay location and facilities
- the time and effort the homestay family members may be able to devote to this function

Ideally, the homestay families become a wonderful source of support for the international student, as they adjust to our cultural differences, way of life and educational system in Australia. Homestay accommodation is co-ordinated by the College in the interests of providing safety, security and stability for international students undertaking studies with us, and in accordance with all student welfare regulations imposed by law.

As Billanook College issues the Confirmation of Approved Accommodation and Welfare for the vast majority of international students under the age of 18, it is to be noted that the College accepts full responsibility for monitoring such arrangements in the interests of the welfare of the student. International Students are NOT permitted to make their own accommodation and welfare arrangements. It is a Condition of Enrolment that such arrangements are to remain in place for the full duration of enrolment regardless of the student's age.

Billanook College strictly adheres to VRQA Guidelines and as such shall not place an international Student under the age of 13 years in Homestay Accommodation. While Billanook College does have CRICOS registration for students younger than 13 years of age, such students must reside with a Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) approved parent or relative. As a general rule, Billanook College seeks to enroll International Students from Year 9-12 studies, with a minimum age of 14 years at enrolment.

This booklet outlines the Homestay Policy of the Billanook College Homestay Program. We trust that this information will be of great support as the international student and the homestay family commence the process of forming a mutually rewarding relationship throughout their homestay arrangement.

Please do not hesitate to direct questions relating to any homestay or College matter to Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer.

Finally, we wish all parties to the homestay arrangement, the student, their parents and the homestay family members, well as they reap the benefits to be gained from this experience.

### **Mission**

As a School in the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia, our Mission is to develop a dynamic, caring, learning community which fosters the growth of the whole being of each girl and boy - in body, mind and spirit; providing a range of pathways to life-long learning through and beyond academic excellence.



Roger Oates  
**PRINCIPAL**



Steven Lingard  
**MANAGER,  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

## College Contacts

Roger Oates  
Principal  
9724 1179  
registrar@billanook.vic.edu.au

Belinda Vertriest  
Deputy Principal and Head of Senior School  
9724 1115  
catrina.coraci@billanook.vic.edu.au

Josephine Reed  
Registrar  
9724 1179  
registrar@billanook.vic.edu.au

Nick Owen  
Head of Middle School  
9724 1136  
secmid@billanook.vic.edu.au

Steven Lingard  
Manager, International Programs  
9724 1166  
0421 993 571  
steven.lingard@billanook.vic.edu.au

Roxanne Chung  
Homestay Officer  
0407 543 338  
homestayofficer@billanook.vic.edu.au

Weekend Driver Service  
0409 232 483

Debra Kane  
International Student Programs Officer  
0409 331 380  
debra.kane@billanook.vic.edu.au

Absence Lines  
Senior School, 9724 4224  
Middle School, 9724 4225

# Terms Dates 2018

## Term 1

Staff Commence  
Years 7 and 12 Students Commence  
Years 7 and 12 Students  
Australia Day Holiday  
Term 1 Commence  
Labour Day Holiday  
Term 1 concludes

Monday 22 January  
Wednesday 24 January  
Thursday 25 January  
Friday 26 January  
Monday 29 January  
Monday 12 March  
Thursday 29 March

## Term 2

Term 2 Commence  
EXIT Week - Years 8 to 11 students  
ANZAC Day Holiday  
Queens Birthday Holiday  
Student Free Day – Staff Report Writing Day  
Term 2 concludes

Monday 16 April  
Monday 16 to Friday April  
Wednesday 25 April  
Monday 11 June  
Friday 15 June  
Friday 29 June

## Semester 2, Terms 3 and 4 Dates 2018

### Term 3

Staff PD Week  
Year 12 Students commence  
Normal classes commence for whole school  
EXIT Week - Years 10 and 11 students  
Term 3 concludes

Monday 16 - Friday 20 July  
Tuesday 17 July  
Monday 23 July  
Monday 17 to Friday 21 September  
Friday 21 September

### Term 4

Staff and students commence  
Cup Exeat  
Melbourne Cup Day  
EXIT Week - Years 10 and 11 Students  
Valedictory Dinner  
Student Free Day - Staff Report Writing Day  
Term 4 concludes

Monday 8 October  
Monday 5 November  
Tuesday 6 November  
Monday 19 to Friday 23 November  
Friday 23 November  
Monday 26 November  
Wednesday 12 December

## Important Term Break Information

Year 12 Students are **STRONGLY ADVISED NOT** to return to their home country during the academic year. If there is a desire to return to their home country this can **ONLY** occur in the first two weeks of the mid-year term break in July.

Year 12 Students are required to attend Billanook College until Friday 23 November – the date of the Valedictory Dinner. They may book flights to return home after this date.

Years 7 to 11 Students may **ONLY** return to their home country in the mid-year term break period evening of 29 June – morning of 20 July as specified in the Terms and Conditions of Enrolment.

Requests for students to return to their home countries at any other times must be made in writing for **SPECIAL LEAVE** by a parent on compelling and compassionate grounds.

Years 7 to 11 Students must attend Billanook College until Wednesday 12 December, being the completion of the 2018 Academic Year.





# Homestay Program

The homestay arrangement, while facilitated by Billanook College, is an agreement between the International Student and his/her parent/bi-lingual local support person with the homestay parent/s.

## Terms and Conditions

Billanook College sets in place the *Terms and Conditions of the Homestay Agreement*, as specified herein and neither party is to attempt to introduce any change to these Terms and Conditions without the knowledge and consent of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer (refer to Page 16).

## Full Board Provisions

Provision of *full board* is expected in return for the homestay fee payable by the student. This implies that:

- all meals will be provided seven days per week for the student;
- the student has relatively free access to household food supplies, example, fresh fruit and other snacks between meals, as considered reasonable;
- homestay family supply all household consumables such as toilet paper and tissues (*students may choose to provide their own toiletries*)
- reasonable internet access is available, the cost of which is included in your homestay fee.

*In the event the internet access is not considered adequate by the student, they should speak to the Homestay Officer.*

To overcome any dietary differences, ask the student to come shopping with you in the earliest stages of the homestay arrangement so that food likes and dislikes can be resolved. This will also help the student to gain an appreciation of the true cost of additional food provision.

As a guide, homestay families should expect to spend approximately 60% of the weekly homestay fee on additional food, household supplies and household energy consumption.

# Role of the Homestay Officer

The Homestay Officer will regularly discuss and review the progress of the homestay arrangement with either or both parties. Both the International Student and the parent/bi-lingual local support person should feel welcome to contact the Homestay Officer with questions or concerns regarding the homestay arrangement. Equally, homestay parents are encouraged to raise any issues of concern, at any stage, with the Homestay Officer. It is important to understand that most difficulties can be addressed by prompt, honest and open communication on the issue.

The Homestay Officer will use discretion in attempting to resolve any difficulties associated with the homestay arrangement and may call upon the assistance of the College Principal, as deemed necessary.



Roxanne Chung  
Homestay Officer

The Homestay Officer undertakes to:

- source, select and prepare prospective homestay families for this important function;
- be accessible at all reasonable times (no later than 9.00pm) for both the homestay family and the students should there be any issue of concern requiring intervention, advice or assistance;
- phone calls/contact after 9.00pm should only be made in urgent/exceptional circumstances;
- in any instance where the Homestay Officer knows in advance that she will not be accessible, an alternative College staff member will be delegated this function and communication of contact details will occur via email to the homestay family before these alternative arrangements are put into place;
- regularly initiate communication with both the student and the homestay parent on the progress of the homestay arrangement;
- brief the Manager, International Programs and/ or College Leadership on any issues relating to the homestay placement that may require the Manager's input or counsel;
- be the initial arbiter on any matter of dispute relating to the homestay arrangement;
- communicate with the student's bi-lingual local support person on any matter relating to the welfare of the student in the homestay placement or within the College in general, as deemed necessary;
- co-ordinate or facilitate the relocation of the student to a new homestay residence where deemed necessary.

## Role of the Manager, International Programs

- Monitor the need for growth in our Homestay Program in light of forward enrolments;
- Contribute to the development of the Billanook College Homestay policies and procedures;
- Consult with the Homestay Officer on current matters arising for students in Homestay placements and for families as Homestay providers;
- Advise the Homestay Officer on resolution of disputes.

*Ultimately, all decisions regarding the Accommodation and Welfare of International Students rests with the Manager, International Programs in consultation with the College Principal.*

## Weekend Driver Service

Many of our students now undertake Language Classes, Tutorial Sessions and short study related programs on weekends, necessitating train travel. In addition, the students do travel on trains and enjoy social activities and hobbies with their friends.

In the interests of student safety and to encourage return to Homestay at an acceptable time, the College has employed a Weekend Driver who is available to meet the students at Mooroolbark Station in the College bus and who shall then transport the students directly back to their Homestay residence. This service operates at the following times:

Friday Evenings	7:30pm – 9:07pm
Saturday Evenings	7:30pm – 9:07pm
Sunday Evenings	6:00pm – 7:04pm

*Students should be home by NO LATER THAN 9.45pm on Friday and Saturday evenings and NO LATER THAN 7.45pm on Sunday evenings.*

Students are to advise homestay families of their estimated return time once on the Bus service.

In the event students are using Public Transport instead of the College approved Service we *Strongly Recommend* an earlier return time to the homestay for reasons of personal safety.

Billanook College reserves the right to review these times throughout the year. Any changes would be communicated to the Homestay families and students.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

*The 9.07pm train is the final train for Friday and Saturday evenings and the 7.04pm train is the final train for Sunday evenings. Students must be in by the specified times to be collected from Mooroolbark station. The weekend bus service is unable to operate after these times. Students will have to contact their Homestay family to collect them should they not be back by the specified times. The College will use its discretion in relation to disciplinary action for students who return home outside these times.*

*In the case of contracted Weekend Driver Service Providers, an important element of induction is training in Child Safe Standards by the Human Resources Manager on appointment. The Weekend Driver Service Providers are required to have read and acknowledged the Billanook College Child Safety Policy and Sign the Billanook College Code of Conduct. Ongoing monitoring of adherence to best practice in Child Safe Standards by Weekend Driver Service Providers is the responsibility of the Manager International Programs. All appointed Weekend Driver Service Providers are required to have a current Working with Children Check.*

***Billanook College strictly prohibits our International Students from utilising taxis, UBER and transportation by friends in private vehicles.***

## Role of the Bi-Lingual Local Support Person

Billanook College requires that all students have in place a bi-lingual local support person who is independent of both the Homestay and the College.

In most cases, the bi-lingual local support person is appointed by the College to perform a number of important functions including:

- being accessible to the overseas parent for advice on the academic progress and personal welfare of the student;
- attending College information evenings and parent/teacher interviews;
- being the point of contact for teachers concerned with the academic progress of the student;
- meeting the students on a regular basis during the College day for discussion on their progress;
- receiving and translating school reports and letters for the understanding of the parent;
- assisting the College with its overall responsibility for the welfare of the student;
- liaising with the student in relation to transportation arrangements to and from the airport.

***Please Note: As part of the Terms and Conditions for International Student Enrolment, parents of International Students shall be offered access to a Local Support Person provided by International Student Alliance - Guardianship and Welfare Services (ISA). All costs of this service are borne by Billanook College. In some cases, the parents choose to appoint a bi-lingual local support person independently, at their own expense. Homestay parents shall be advised of the identity and contact details of the Local Support Person in either case.***

### Monitoring Child Safe Standards by Local Support Persons

In the case of appointed ISA Local Support Persons the College is aware of and satisfied with training and induction provided by International Student Alliance (Guardianship & Welfare Services) on Child Safe Standards for all persons who will be engaged directly with international students enrolled at Billanook College. To supplement that training and induction, all appointed Local Support Persons whether they be through ISA, through another Agency or through parent nomination will be screened and interviewed prior to allowing such persons to be engaged in the role of Local Support Person. This screening will be conducted by the Manager International Programs, and include training on Child Safe Standards on an annual basis, and it is a requirement that the Local Support Person sign the Acknowledgement that they have read and acknowledged the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. Ongoing monitoring of adherence to best practice in Child Safe Standards by Local Support Persons is the responsibility of the Manager International Programs. All Local Support Persons are required to have a current Working with Children Check.

# Homestay Family Expectations

It is policy that homestay families shall provide accommodation to no more than two International Students. Students must have their own bedroom and study facilities.

Many students are living away from home for the first time and learning to cope with study in Australia. Homestay families can assist students to become accustomed to life in Australia by:

- including the student as a family member;
- guiding the student in community safety considerations, including use of public transport;
- taking an active interest in the student's academic progress, social life and interests;
- encouraging the students to enjoy a well-balanced life;
- ensuring the students are maintaining an acceptable diet and routines of eating.

## **Some specific requirements of Homestay parents shall include:**

- providing guidance to the student on effective study habits;
- monitoring the home based routines of the student and reporting any concerns to the Homestay Officer, particularly overuse of recreational technology;
- provision of three meals per day each day of the week and reasonable access for the student to healthy snacks such as fresh fruit between meals;
- assisting the students with transport where convenient to do so;
- training the student on safe and energy efficient use of all homestay amenities;
- ensuring the students comply with laundry routines of the home so as to ensure that the student always has access to laundered College uniform items;
- reporting ANY instances of late arrival home by the student to both the Local Support Person and the Homestay Officer as soon as possible;
- reporting any anomalous requests made by the students to the Local Support Person and Homestay Officer, such as:
  - a. plans to attend a social gathering beyond curfew hours;
  - b. plans to organise a social event/party at the Homestay or at a public venue;
  - c. plans to stay overnight at the home of somebody else;

- reporting ANY observed or suspected student behaviour of concern, particularly where the behavior may be damaging to the welfare of the student, to members of the Homestay family or to members of the College or wider community;
- exercising strict adherence to the requirements of the Billanook College Child Safe Policy in terms of the student's privacy, and emotional and physical safety in the home. To view this policy, please see link below. Please also refer to Child Safety under the Terms and Conditions in this booklet.

<http://www.billanook.vic.edu.au/child-safety/>

- ***Please Note: Homestay families must advise the Homestay Officer of any additional adults that may be residing in the home - regardless of brevity of stay.***
- maintaining an awareness of Billanook College events by reading the fortnightly College Bulletin sent by email;
- reporting Student Absence Due to Illness.

### **Absence Due to Illness**

We require homestay families to assist the College to maintain accurate records of school attendance by reporting any known International Student absence from the College by use of the attendance line phone number listed at the front of this booklet.

Should the student need medical assistance, please inform the Homestay Officer to make necessary arrangements.

A medical certificate must support any absence of more than two consecutive days due to ill health. A student undertaking a Unit 1/2 or 3/4 (VCE) subject must have a medical certificate if they miss a SAC, test or scheduled assignment deadline. All absences will be monitored systematically by College administration staff in order to comply with our legal requirements.

Should the student become ill during the course of the school day, the College will contact the Homestay family to advise and discuss what action needs to be taken.

Students need to be aware that there is an out of pocket cost of between \$70 and \$90 per doctor's visit. Some rebate may be claimed afterward through their health insurance.

In cases of illness, students ARE NOT permitted to contact their Homestay family directly. In such instances, all decisions regarding the student's health management must flow through the College Wellness Centre.

# Expectations of Students as a Member of a Homestay Family

The only accommodation option for International Students enrolled at Billanook College shall be placement of the student with a College approved Homestay Family. Students must understand that it is a privilege to be able to reside with a local family and as a result the College expects nothing but the very best effort of all International Students to adhere to the following expectations.

As a member of a Homestay Family, students agree to the following:

- display respect for the Homestay family members and their home at all times;
- display respect for any Homestay Rules considered necessary for the smooth functioning of the specific family Homestay routines;
- communicate openly and honestly at all times with Homestay parents and be willing to ask questions when unsure of any matters of concern;
- maintain a co-operative and friendly manner toward other Homestay members at all times;
- accept and follow all Billanook College imposed guidelines on return times to Homestay and to strictly use the Billanook College Weekend Driver Service
- students, regardless of age should not be returning to their Homestay Residence any later than 9:45pm on Friday and Saturday or 7.45pm Sunday evenings.
- under NO circumstances should students be using Taxis, Uber Transport or Private Transport supplied by friends of a similar age;
- restrict social outings to no more than two out of three possible weekend occasions. Students may engage in social activities on Fridays after school and on either Saturdays or Sundays **but not both**. On such occasions the student must ensure that they are accessing public transport in a convenient and timely manner or utilising the Weekend Driver Service provided by the College;
- accept that on Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings, it is unacceptable to engage in social outings;



- always having their mobile phone turned on and charged ready to receive calls from Homestay parents, Local Support Persons (Guardians), Homestay Officer and other Billanook Staff. It is also a responsibility of the student to ensure they always have sufficient mobile phone credit to be able to make calls;
- notify the Homestay parent, Local Support Person and Homestay Officer of any change in their mobile phone contact details;
- inform the Homestay parent IN ADVANCE if the student is not intending to be home for a meal;
- maintain an acceptable routine of personal hygiene – bathing / showering daily and to accept responsibility for cleaning bathroom and toilet amenities after personal use;
- accept and adhere to the OPEN DOOR POLICY in study spaces so that Homestay parents may have awareness of appropriate use of technology by the student;
- seek permission from a Homestay parent, in advance, before inviting a friend or visitor to enter the Homestay residence;
- inform the Homestay parent if the student has any health related concerns, including informing the Homestay parent of any medications they may have in their possession in the Homestay residence;
- accept responsibility for maintaining a tidy bedroom and follow directions from the Homestay parent on any routines associated with this matter;
- accept that they may be required to assist with some basic Homestay family chores;
- report to the Homestay parent, without delay, any damage they may have caused to the Homestay property or amenities;
- openly discuss with their Homestay parent, Local Support Person or Homestay Officer well in advance any plans for social gatherings such as parties regardless of the planned location of such activities. Students are reminded of Australian laws regarding purchase, possession and/ or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and other tobacco products and illegal and harmful drugs;
- communicate plans for return travel to their home country through their Local Support Person to the Homestay Officer and Homestay parent no later than six weeks prior to such travel. This includes providing copies of departure and arrival tickets to the Homestay Officer;

- complete Homestay payments to the Homestay parent in the agreed manner always ONE MONTH in advance. Should there be any reason that the Student cannot make the Homestay payment on time this matter must be communicated to both the Homestay parent and the Homestay Officer for their consideration;
- students are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have regarding their Homestay placement with their Homestay parent, their Local Support Person or the Homestay Officer for advice and assistance. This should be done as early as possible to prompt resolution of any difficulties.
- should students have any issues with their homestay family, they are to contact the Homestay Officer to discuss a resolution.

### **Commitment to Responsible Use of Public Transport**

Students are expected to be well informed of their transport options to and from their homestay through efficient use of Public Transport.

Homestay parents have a right to know the location of the student at all times and also have a right to impose clear expectations upon the student regarding safe and convenient use of public transport.

***Late returns to the Homestay residence outside the designated hours of the Weekend Driver Service will not be tolerated by the College.***

The instruction and advice of the Homestay parent, the Local Support Person and the Homestay Officer is to be respected and followed by the student **at all times**. Should unexpected situations arise with public transport it is essential that the student advises their homestay parent as soon as possible.

### **Overnight Stays**

No students of any age are permitted to stay out overnight without the express permission of the Homestay Officer and that of their bi-lingual support person. Permission will **ONLY** be granted once the Homestay Officer is satisfied that appropriate adult care and supervision shall be in place for the student. Breach of this condition may place the student visa status at risk. Contact details **MUST** be provided to the Homestay Officer.

# Terms and Conditions

Billanook College as facilitator of the Homestay Program sets in place the base Terms and Conditions of the Homestay placement of each International Student. These Terms and Conditions may not be varied by the Homestay Parent, the Student nor the Parent/Local Support Person without the prior knowledge and approval of Billanook College.

## Financial Arrangements

- Billanook College sets the Homestay Fee each year and advises the parents of the amount that needs to be provided to their student in advance so that the Student may self-manage Homestay payments in advance;
- the Homestay Fee as at 1 July 2017 is \$315 per week = \$1,365 per calendar month;
- Homestay Fees are payable by the student in ADVANCE on a monthly basis;
- it is preferable that Homestay Fee Payments are made by Electronic Funds Transfer directly by the student into the Homestay Family bank account. In the event that both parties agree on payment of Homestay Fees in cash, the Homestay family must provide the student with a written receipt as proof of payment;
- Billanook College will inform all parties at least two months in advance of any change to the Homestay Fee. As a general principle Homestay Fees are adjusted upwards on 1 July each year to offset increases in cost of living;

## Homestay Fee Adjustment in Periods of Student Absence

If the International Student wishes to take a vacation in the MID-YEAR school holiday break, they are entitled to a 50% discount of Homestay Fees for that period of absence, provided NO LESS than two weeks' notice was provided to the College and to the Homestay family.

Most International Students return to their home country in the Australian Summer holiday break (December/January). If Students are planning to return to their current Homestay family and shall be leaving some of their possessions at the Homestay residence then a HOLDING FEE of 10% of the scheduled Homestay Fee is due and payable before departure in December.

In the case of student absence as a result of published school camps, the student is entitled to a 50% discount/refund of the Homestay Fee for the number of days of absence. Rather than being a physical reimbursement of that sum, it is acceptable that the student simply pays a lower Homestay Fee to reflect that discount in the next monthly Homestay payment.

## Notice of Termination

Unless otherwise stated, homestay arrangements are in place for an on-going period of time. If either party wishes to terminate the Homestay Agreement, this can only occur with the knowledge and involvement of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer. In most circumstances, either party will require a minimum of two weeks' notice to terminate the Agreement. This period of notice may be waived, at the discretion of the Manager, International Programs or the Homestay Officer, by negotiation and as deemed necessary in unusual or extreme circumstances.

## Accommodation Policy

Billanook College insists that all international students are accommodated in College-approved homestay for the duration of their studies. The College chooses to manage and administer our own homestay program as opposed to outsourcing this function.

***NB: If your child is required to be relocated to a new homestay for any reason, the first move will not incur a fee. Second and successive moves may incur a fee. This will be at the Manager, International Programs' discretion.***

## Child Safety

Billanook College is committed to child safety. All children at the College should feel safe, happy and empowered. The College has a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated consistently and very seriously.

In accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards schools are required to develop and implement codes of conduct for staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors working in all school environments. This includes homestay placements.

In selection of Prospective Families for inclusion in the Billanook College Homestay Program, the Homestay Officer is required to provide adult members of the family with training on best practice in Child Safe Standards when engaging with International Students in the Homestay environment. This is an ideal opportunity for prospective homestay family members to ask questions. The Homestay Officer is able to assess the responses of the prospective Homestay family members and identify any possible risk factors.

Once approved as a Homestay provider for Billanook College, it is mandatory that at least one Homestay Parent from each Homestay family attends the Homestay Information Evening scheduled in mid-February each year. The evening will include updated training on Child Safe Standards in the homestay environment in addition to updates on general Homestay Policies and procedures.

As a contracted provider to the College of Homestay accommodation, all Homestay parents are required to read and agree to abide by the **Billanook College Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety** (see appendices).

If you form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 you must report that information to Police and College Leadership Team. Failure to report the information is a criminal offence.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### **Damage to Homestay Residence**

In the event that damage is caused by the student to the property of the Homestay family it is important that this matter be brought to the attention of the College Homestay Officer as promptly as possible, for further investigation. The College will require the Homestay parent to submit a Homestay Damages Claim Form:

- a. As a general principle, the student is liable to pay the cost of repair or replacement of property damaged by their act or omission. Exceptions to this rule may apply in the case of general wear and tear issues and other case by case circumstance;
- b. Billanook College agrees to mediate, in consultation with the students and or their parents, for the restoration of the property damage;
- c. Homestay Parents are well advised to check their Home and Contents Insurance Policy to ensure that significant losses sustained through the actions of a Boarder or Guest shall be recoverable under that policy.

### **Insurance of Student Property**

- a. Homestay parents undertake to make every effort to maintain the security of student possessions within the Homestay residence;
- b. International Students should make a list of all personal property items stored in the Homestay residence, with a replacement value of more than \$500;
- c. Photos of such possessions, receipts as proof of purchase and records of serial numbers should be maintained by the student as proof of ownership;
- d. It is recommended that Homestay parents enquire with their insurer as to the process involved in declaring such possessions on the Household Contents Insurance policy. Should there be an increase in Insurance Premium Cost to do this, payment of this additional premium by the student and/or their parents should then be negotiated through the Homestay Officer.



# Statement of Commitment to Child Safety



*A safe and nurturing environment for all children and young people within the Billanook College community*

Billanook College is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, and to ensure that those people who care for our students act in their best interests and take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure school environment. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Billanook College is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse. The College has a duty of care to provide safe, open and supportive environments that protect our students, and where those who represent the College (staff, volunteers and contractors) work within the framework of our vision, mission and objectives. In particular we are committed to providing an environment where all of our students are protected from any form of abuse.

Creating child-safe school environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by the College, families and our community. It is marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

Every person involved in the Billanook community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

**Billanook College commits to providing a safe and nurturing environment, promoting and protecting the interests and safety of our students through:**

## **1 Upholding the importance of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.**

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our school community will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with specific attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a safe and supportive environment, and to ensure we are able to protect the children under our care, the College will actively develop, review and modify our child protection policies, processes and practices.

## **2 Empowering families, children, young people and staff to participate in maintaining a culture of child safety.**

The College, in partnership with our families, will ensure children and young people feel empowered to contribute to the school's understanding and treatment of child safety.

As such the views of staff, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to secure and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.


## **3 Employing rigorous risk-management and human resources practices.**

The College will systematically and continually identify and assess risk to child safety and will work diligently to reduce potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in College life through clear, effective, transparent, and accessible policies, procedures and practices.

The College will employ highly competent and professional staff who are trained and motivated to maintain the safety of all students. The high quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices.

Billanook College will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet its legislative duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards; mandatory reporting; and the grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect reporting requirements under the Crimes Act (Vic.).



	<b>CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT</b>
<b>Approved:</b> College Board	<b>Date approved:</b> 2 August 2016
<b>Responsible Officer:</b> The Principal	<b>Policy Review Date:</b> 12 January 2018

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT BILLANOOK COLLEGE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

All staff, volunteers, contractors and board members of Billanook College are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behavior towards and in the company of children, as noted below; and are required to abide by this code.

Billanook College adheres to the standards contained within the Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870 *Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*, and promotes and maintains a zero tolerance stance to child abuse in all its forms.

This code does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or specific professional codes of conduct (e.g. *Victoria Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics*) that apply to staff at Billanook.

This code should be read in conjunction with the Billanook College Child Safety Policy.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Under the Principal, the College Leadership Team will:**

- Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of students, staff and volunteers;
- Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards students, staff and volunteers; and
- Provide information, guidance and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

#### **All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Billanook College will:**

- Work towards the achievement of the College's vision and mission;
- Operate within and adhere to the policies and guidelines of Billanook College, including the College's Child Safety Policy;
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and to maintain a child-safe environment (Note: Environment includes out of hours, off site, online – refer Child Safety Policy for full definition of school environments);
- Be fair, considerate, respectful and honest with everyone in the school community (this includes staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents);
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people;
- Promote the cultural safety, diversity, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable;
- Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
- Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between adults and the children and young people they work with in the College;
- Be professional in their actions at all times;
- Maintain strict impartiality;
- Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children (refer Staff Protocols in the Staff Handbook);
- Respect the privacy of children, their families and carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know – refer the College's Privacy Policy;

- Understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (refer Mandatory Reporting Policy);
- Report any child safety concerns to the Principal or a member of the College Leadership Team;
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe; and
- Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

**No person shall:**

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Put children at risk of abuse;
- Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
- Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves (for example toileting and bathing arrangements, or changing clothes);
- Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily or without a valid context and for more than a very short time. It is recommended that a second staff member be present when personal counselling is involved;
- Show favouritism to a child through the provision or acceptance of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- Arrange personal communication or contact, including via written or electronic means (including but not limited to email, text messages, phone, social networks), with children or young people outside of the College's educational programs and activities; or without a valid context. Staff must not breach the boundaries of their profession;
- Photograph or video a child or young person without a valid educational context – refer the College's Privacy Policy;
- Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (refer Staff Protocols);
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
- Do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

**What happens if you breach this Code of Conduct**

If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the College.

*I have read this Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy and agree to abide by it at all times to protect myself and the children I am in contact with through my work for Billanook College.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**Billanook** College

197 – 199 Cardigan Road  
Mooroolbark, Victoria, 3138  
Phone: +61 3 9725 5388  
[contact@billanook.vic.edu.au](mailto:contact@billanook.vic.edu.au)  
[www.billanook.vic.edu.au](http://www.billanook.vic.edu.au)