

International Students - Academics and Attendance Policy

ESOS Standards 8 – Overseas student visa requirements

- All of Brighton Grammar School's policies are intended to be up to date and be consistent with all relevant laws.
- Employees are expected to comply with all applicable policies.
- Various parts of the policies require managers and staff to exercise discretion and the policies are not intended to be applied in a legalistic or prescriptive manner.
- These policies may be varied by Brighton Grammar School from time to time, at its absolute discretion.
- Brighton Grammar School is fully committed to the protection of children and young people during all School activities and environments both within and outside of School hours.
- This is a whole of school policy and there may, from time to time, be variations in different parts of the School. In such circumstances, advice will be issued by the relevant Head of School

Introduction

The Education Services for Overseas Student (ESOS) Act sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. Within the ESOS legislative framework are the standards to ensure quality with which Brighton Grammar School must comply in order to retain registration as an educational provider for an International Student.

Brighton Grammar School is committed to providing quality education to all students and acknowledges the unique challenges faced by international students from differing cultures and backgrounds in particular those with English as a second language.

This policy outlines the academic expectations and attendance monitoring, structure and ongoing support that Brighton Grammar will provide each international student for the duration of their studies at BGS in line with requirements as set out in Standard 8 of the ESOS Act, National code.

Purpose

Brighton Grammar School will ensure that all students make satisfactory progress in their course where applicable and meet required attendance levels to meet conditions of their visa. BGS will:

- Monitor the overseas student's course progress and attendance according to the requirements of their sector and to ensure that students are in position to complete the course within the expected time frame and within their CoE.
- Identify and offer support to those at risk of not meeting course progress or attendance requirements

- Only extend the duration of an overseas student's enrolment in certain circumstances and advise them of potential impacts on their student visa
- only deliver online learning in accordance with the online learning requirements for their sector or under direction from the Department of Education Victoria.

Course Duration and Location

Students undertake studies in appropriate year levels suitable to their age group. The school program is divided in to 4 terms and each year level takes 40 weeks (approximately 10 weeks per term).

Progression through each year level in the junior school (P-6) and lower year levels in secondary school (7-9) is usually automatic however progression through some senior secondary school subjects may be dependent on academic achievement in the relative subject in previous year.

Brighton Grammar does not normally offer online or distance education unless exceptional circumstances require it. Redirecting any part of a primary or secondary school course to an online or remote format will only be considered with consultation and direction with the Victorian Department of Education and/or Independent Schools Victoria.

All programs studied within the curriculum framework are only offered on campus at Brighton Grammar School in Brighton, Victoria. However, Outdoor Education, school camps and other co-curricular activities often take place offsite at various and more appropriate locations.

In the event that a student wishes to undertake a subject not on offer at Brighton Grammar opportunities to study this elsewhere may be explored. Students must discuss this with the Head of House, Director of Students and Careers Adviser as applicable.

Upon enrolment the Compliance Coordinator will create the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) in PRISMs. The maximum period that the enrolment will be granted for is 5 years however students may receive additional CoE's in order to complete studies if they have not completed Year 12 within this time frame.

Monitoring Satisfactory Course Progress

Satisfactory Progress is the meeting of set targets and milestones as directed through the schools governing authorities and via set curriculum framework. Progress, particularly in senior school levels is assessed by monitoring and recording:

- Minimum attendance requirements as set by the school and its governing bodies, and attendance levels determined by visa requirements
- Achieving minimum set scores in set classroom tasks, assessment and tests, and exams as per the curriculum guidelines.

The school clearly sets out this expectation in pre-enrolment material such as the International Student Handbook and regularly monitors the Academic progress of each student to ensure they will meet all the course requirements in the set timeframes. The Head of House, Director of Students, and specialist subject teachers will proactively communicate with the student and family regarding progress. Open dialogue via the specialist subject teacher, the student's House Tutor, Head of House and Director of Students is a continual and consultative process ensuring

that students are always aware of expectations of the course and their current progress against these expectations.

If a student is found to be falling behind and may not meet the set academic guidelines additional academic support will be offered to assist the student to catch up to the required levels.

Additional Academic support can be offered via:

- Extra subject support through after hours and weekend support classes and study groups
- Homework clubs
- Mentoring programs
- EAL support sessions
- Extended Library study times

All reporting of student progress is recorded in Synergetic, the school's database. Formal, written school reports are provided to parents twice per year and face to face interviews conducted with each subject teacher, the student and parent (or nominated support person) at the end of term 1 and during term 3. Interpreters are made available to assist in these interviews and if needed and pre-organised these can also take place via an online format.

If a student is not meeting academic standards by more than 50% and a resolution can not be found and supported by the School then this may be in breach of visa conditions and BGS must advise the authority of this concern.

Brighton Grammar will provide the student with a written letter of intent to report explaining the reasoning behind the report, and the process that will be followed during the reporting process.

The student will have 20 working days to respond to Brighton Grammar's intention to report. Students must follow the complaints and appeals process if they wish to challenge the unsatisfactory academic study result.

Once 20 working days has lapsed, if no response has been received, the student has decided not to lodge a complaint, the student withdraws from the course in writing, and/or no further action is required, the school will report the outcome in PRISM's.

Details of all steps in the management and reporting of attendance will be recorded in the school's database and will remain on record for the timeframes specified below and in the school's data retention policy.

Attendance requirements

International Students must attend a minimum of 85% of on campus studies per year in order to meet visa requirements. The school will work to assist the student and family proactively to address any non-attendance however failure to attend may result in reporting a breach.

Arriving late or leaving early

The school understands that from time to time there may be situations where a student arrives late to school or has the need to leave early. Proactive communication from parents advising the school of the reasons behind this

requirement must be undertaken. All late arrivals and early departures will be recorded against the student records in the school's database.

Absence from school due to holidays

The school does not support absence due to family holidays during term time and requests that all arrangements made to holiday be within designated school breaks. If an exemption to not attend due to a family holiday is required the parent must contact the Director of Students via the Head of House in writing, formally request the exemption and detail the reason behind the request.

The Director of Students will assess the situation and contact the family by phone to further explore the reasoning and decide whether to grant the approval. Students studying VCE subjects will not be granted extension of absence during term time under any circumstances other than those defined in the 'Compassionate and Compelling' guidelines.

Short term absence from school due to illness

Absence due to illness requires proactive communication from the primary carer to the school. Return to school should be accompanied with a medical certificate. Students who have been recorded as unexplained absences of more than 5 consecutive days will be contacted by the School and the situation immediately addressed with the parent or carer. Support and strategies whether medical, psychological or academic will be implemented where necessary to ensure the student addresses any concerns and attendance and learning is not further impacted will be implemented.

Long term absence from school

Unless the school has deemed Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances, each student must physically attend school each day and, each class, to have their presence in class recorded. Attendance will be checked each day in each class and recorded in Synergetic, the school's database.

Compassionate and Compelling circumstances may include:

- Medical illness or injury to a student or a student's immediate family member that requires hospitalisation and/or impairs a student's ability to engage with their studies
- This includes physical injury or serious illness, and episodes of mental illness or cognitive function impairment
- The bereavement of an immediate family member, close friend, partner or classmate
- An adverse experience that has impacted on the student's physical or mental wellbeing, including but not limited to witnessing a serious accident, or being the victim of a serious crime
- Instances where the student is unable, through no fault of their own, to participate in the learning experience, and for which no additional learning opportunity can be provided to make-up for the loss of learning
- Instances where the student is unexpectedly required to care for a close family member

Where possible the student should confirm the reason for non-attendance due to any of the above as soon as practicable.

The school will endeavour to work with the student and family to put immediate steps in place to support the student. The Director of Students and Head of House will review learning requirements and attendance where possible to suit the individual situation. Where an alternate learning structure, such as remote learning can be successfully implemented the school will work with the student to ensure both learning and attendance is not compromised.

The student may be considered and recorded as attended if agreed upon structures are met and if once daily (minimum) communication with the Head of House is undertaken and all work is submitted within the timeframes agreed upon.

The Director of Students will ensure the schools database correctly reflects the attendance of the student learning under these circumstances and will work with the MIS team to adjust electronic records where needed. Under exceptional circumstances manual records may be maintained which can then be uploaded to the student's profile in the database.

The school cannot generally offer any extension to a course end date. However, if a student is identified at risk of not finishing the course in the set timeframe due to Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances and all intervention strategies have not been successfully implemented the Director of Students and relevant Head of House will meet with the family and discuss appropriate further action to take. This may include the offer to extend studies in which case the school will formalise the requirement via a formal letter of extension. This letter will support the family to be able to seek advice on visa extensions (if required) from the Department of Immigration.

Attendance Monitoring

Boys who are absent from school greater than 20% may be in breach of visa conditions and communication with relevant authorities will be undertaken where required.

All attendances are continually monitored and reviewed by the House Tutor, Head of House and Director of Students (Deputy Head of Junior School) to ensure that all students are in a position where they will meet the course requirements within the set timeframes and as specified on their CoE.

Daily non-attendances that have not been proactively communicated by the parent or guardian are contacted by phone or text message by the school before mid-day of the non-attendance day in order to establish valid reasons for absence and offer support where needed.

Any concerns regarding continued regular non-attendance are addressed directly with the student and parent/guardian and support services put in place immediately to address the concern. This may be extra academic support or counselling by the school psychologist.

The school will provide opportunities for rectification where it is believed that the concerns can be resolved and the student can maintain attendance in the future. All situations will be assessed based on the individual circumstance surrounding non-attendance, the student's willingness to be proactive and open in communication, past attendance history and behaviours, and the students' academic ability to be able to catch up for any time and learning lost. The school will engage with both the student and family openly and honestly to ensure the student is aware of obligations and requirements, understands the rectification process and knows the impacts on the conditions of his visa.

If the above assessments are made and it is determined by the school that the student will not meet the course attendance requirements the school will meet with the student and parent to discuss the reasons behind absence and the requirement to report.

Any decision made, including the requirement to report will be formalised in writing for the parent and student to read and if needed, respond to.

The student will have 20 working days to respond to Brighton Grammar's intention to report. Students must follow the internal and external complaints and appeals process if they wish to challenge the unsatisfactory attendance decision.

Once 20 working days has lapsed, if no response has been received, the student has decided not to lodge a complaint, the student withdraws from the course in writing, and/or no further action is required, the school will report the outcome in PRISM's.

Details of all steps in the management and reporting of attendance will be recorded in the school's database and will remain on record for the timeframes specified below and in the school's data retention policy.

Course Credit

Brighton Grammar does not offer course credit in the junior school or from Year 7-9.

However, for students who are transferring in to the school in years 10 -12 that have already studied a VCE subject with another Victorian secondary school, the results achieved in this subject will be recognized as prior learning and considered valid under course credit guidelines.

Students must provide proof of course completion and their results prior to the credit being recognised. This can be in the form of past school reports, a letter from the previous schools outlining the details of subject's studies and results obtained, or official results from the VCAA.

However, if a student believes that there is another reason for granting credit then a submission should be made in writing to the Headmaster for consideration.

Further discussions regarding the granting of course credit will be undertaken directly with the student in the initial enrolment interview.

The school will provide in writing the approval and recognition of course credit or a detailed reason why the application for course credit has not been recognised.

Generally, the recognition of course credit will not alter the duration of the course. However, if this is found to be the case the Director of Students will, in consultation with the Headmaster, family and Compliance Coordinator outline this exception and ensure the CoE is updated in PRISMs to reflect the variation.

All information and details around course credit will be kept on the student file in the school's database and retained for a minimum of 2 years in line with the schools data retention policy and National Standard 2.

For further information on course credit recognition Brighton Grammar recommends the following website:

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/results/credit-recognition/credit-vce/Pages/Index.aspx>

Record Keeping

All academic records such as results and attendance are kept on the students file on the school database.

Retention information for documentation relating to attendance and academic performance are as follows:

Documentation	Criteria	Retention timeline
Attendance records, absence information, sign in and sign out registers	Homestay Students	Indefinitely
Attendance records, absence information, sign in and sign out registers	International students not in homestay	75 years from date of birth
Teaching and Learning - academic results, student reports	Homestay Students	Indefinitely
Teaching and Learning - academic results, student reports	International students not in homestay	75 years from date of birth
Co Curricular activities – participation, injury and accident records	Homestay Students	Indefinitely
Co Curricular activities – participation, injury and accident records	International students not in homestay	75 years from date of birth

Documents and websites to further support this policy:

Victoria's Curriculum Framework

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

The following links provide details on the assessment of student results and recognition of course credit

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/results/credit-recognition/credit-vce/Pages/Index.aspx>

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/results/credit-recognition/credit-vce/Pages/apply-credit.aspx>

- International Student – Student Support Policy
- International Student – Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Data Retention Policy

This Policy is a controlled document. Any printing of this document is uncontrolled. Please refer to the school portal for the latest version of this policy

Policy Version number	20201111
BGS Compliance Framework Risk Area	Student Academics
Policy Owner	Director of Students
Policy reviewed and endorsed by	Governance and Risk Committee
Endorsement date	November 2020
Next Review Date	November 2022