



GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL®
EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION



GGs PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

OVERSEAS STUDENT

Last updated May 16, 2025

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01 Introduction

Welcome to Geelong Grammar School (GGS)! We look forward to welcoming you upon your arrival in Australia. This Handbook has been prepared to help you to get ready to travel to Australia, and to prepare for your study at GGS.

For students at our Corio and Timbertop campus, this Handbook should be read alongside the following handbooks (which will give you further insight into your life at GGS):

1. Middle School (Years 5-8) students: The Middle School Handbook;
2. Timbertop students: the Timbertop Handbook; and
3. Senior School (Years 10-12) students: the Senior School Handbook.

We hope you find this Handbook helpful and informative in getting to know GGS and Australia.

If you have any suggestions about any additional items for inclusion in the Handbook, please contact the Overseas Student Manager (lshandley@ggs.vic.edu.au).

02 Key Contacts

Overseas Student Manager - Available to assist all overseas students and their families

Name Laura Shandley

Email lshandley@ggs.vic.edu.au

Phone +61 499 331 746

Bostock House Campus

Name Rachael Dewhurst

Position Head of Campus

Email rdewhurst@ggs.vic.edu.au

Phone +61 3 4232 2656

Toorak Campus

Name Nicole Ginnane

Position Head of Campus

Email nginnane@ggs.vic.edu.au

Phone +61 3 9829 1405

Timbertop Campus

Name Ross Hopkins

Position Head of Campus

Email rhopkins@ggs.vic.edu.au

Phone +61 3 5733 6701

Your Head of Unit is also an important contact for you and your family; you will receive their details upon your arrival at Timbertop Campus.

Corio Campus (Middle School)

Name Esther McRae
Position Head of Middle School
Email emcrae@ggs.vic.edu.au
Phone +61 3 5273 9260

Your Head of House (and other House staff, including the Assistant Head of House and your tutor) is also an important contact for you and your family; you will receive their details prior to your arrival at the School.

Corio Campus (Senior School)

Name	Ant Le Couteur	Catherine Krause
Position	Head of Senior School (Boys)	Head of Senior School (Girls)
Email	alecouteur@ggs.vic.edu.au	ckrause@ggs.vic.edu.au
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Your Head of House (and other House staff, including the Assistant Head of House and your tutor) is also an important contact for you and your family; you will receive their details prior to your arrival at the School.

03 School Campuses

Bostock House

Address: 139 Noble St, Newtown VIC 3220

Bostock House is one of our two primary school campuses, catering to students from Early Learning (ELC) to Year 4. Located in central Geelong, it is approximately a 20-minute drive from the Corio Campus. Please note: In 2026, Bostock House will relocate to the Corio Campus, into a purpose-built Junior School and Early Learning Centre.

Toorak Campus

Address: 12- 14 Douglas St, Toorak VIC 3142

Toorak Campus accommodates students from Early Learning (ELC) to Year 6. It is situated in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Toorak, approximately 20 minutes by car from Melbourne's CBD.

Timbertop

Address: 145 Grammar School Rd, Merrijig VIC 3723

Timbertop is our dedicated Year 9 campus, located near Mansfield at the base of Mount Buller, approximately 3.5 hours from Melbourne. All students board during the term, returning home for school holidays and one scheduled weekend per term (known as an exeat). Set in an isolated alpine environment, Timbertop offers a distinctive and transformative experience that many students describe as both challenging and unforgettable.

Corio Campus

Address: 50 Biddlecombe Avenue, Corio VIC 3214

Corio is our main campus, home to approximately 950 students across Middle School (Years 5–8) and Senior School (Years 10–12). Located on the outskirts of Geelong, it is around one hour from Melbourne by car. Students may attend as day students, weekly boarders (boarding during the week and returning home on weekends), or full boarders (boarding throughout the term with occasional weekend visits home).

04 The GGS Overseas Student Programme and the ESOS Framework

The School is approved by the Australian government to offer primary and secondary school courses to overseas students who are in Australia studying on a subclass 500 visa (a student visa). The GGS Overseas Student Programme supports these overseas students in their study at GGS between ELC and Year 12. Overseas students at GGS attend from a variety of countries across the world, including China, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, USA, UK, Germany, Austria, France, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

As an education provider offering courses to overseas students, the School must comply with legislation and regulations, known as the Education for Overseas Student (ESOS) Framework.

The Framework ensures that the School meet nationally consistent standards in education delivery, facilities and services, and provides tuition fee protection for international students. This includes standards on marketing, written agreements, and accommodation, orientation and support for overseas students. The standards also require that the School monitor and support compliance of overseas students with their visa requirements (including attendance, course progression and behaviour) and to advise the Australian government if these requirements are not being met.

05 Life in Australia

Time difference

Victoria is within the Australian Eastern Standard Time GMT+10 (AEST) international time zone. In October of each year, clocks are moved forward for one hour for Daylight Saving. Clocks are moved back in April of the following year.

Water

Tap water in Australia is completely safe to drink so there is no need to purchase bottled water. You can use a reusable bottle and fill up at taps in the School, out in public and in your homestay provider home.

Activities, Trips, Adventures and Excursions

If you are boarding at Corio Campus, your House staff will offer opportunities for excursions and activities on the weekends and evenings, both on and off the campus. This may include trips to the beach, activity centres, movies, shopping centres, and theatre or exhibitions.

There is much to do in Geelong and Melbourne (and around Victoria and Australia) on weekends, exeats and school holidays, including shopping centres, movie cinemas, food and drink, festivals, exhibitions, sporting matches, and day trip opportunities. Some further examples of things you may do, by yourself, with your family or homestay provider are included on the Overseas Student Programme Hub.

Climate and Weather

The Victorian climate is mild and comfortable. Weather can change quickly though, sometimes more than once a day. Like all countries in the southern hemisphere, Australia's seasons follow the sequence as follows:

- Summer – December to February
- Autumn: March to May

- Winter: June to August
- Spring: September to November

The minimum and maximum temperatures may vary by location, including proximity to mountains. The Timbertop Campus location is ordinary far colder in winter than the locations of other campuses, and may see temperatures close to 0, including snowfall during winter.

You can find more Victorian weather information at the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) website.

Bushfires

During the summer, and particularly during days of high temperatures and wind, Victoria is at high risk for grassfires and bushfires to occur.

GGs is alert to the risk, however, the GGS campuses have not to date been impacted by a bushfire or grassfire. GGS has an emergency management plan (EMP) in place for each of its individual campuses, which includes details of the responses in the case of a bushfire or grassfire at or near a campus. The School also undertake regular fire evacuation drills at each of its campuses, to ensure staff and students are aware of what to do in the case of an emergency. GGS will communicate with staff, students and families if an emergency occurs.

Please advise the Overseas Student Manager if you would like further information about your campus EMP.

Working in Victoria

If you are aged over the age of around 14 years old, your student visa lets you work while you study in Australia.

While your study and co-curriculars at School may not leave much time for you to work during School Term time, you may choose to do so in school holiday times. Because working during the School Term may affect your studies and opportunities to engage in co-curriculars and sport, if you do wish to work during the School Term, you should discuss this with your Head of House and Head of School before commencing a job.

If you decide to take a part-time or casual job, you must begin your studies before starting work. You can then work up to 48 hours per fortnight during the School Term, and full-time during school holidays.

If you have further queries about work, please speak to the Overseas Student Manager. They can assist you to ensure you have the necessary items to commence work (including a Tax File Number) and also assist you to ensure that any employment is with a 'reputable' employer and that you understand your rights at work. If you are working, and you are worried about your work conditions or anything happens that you feel is not right, you should contact the Overseas Student Manager immediately.

For more information on working in Australia, please see [Fair Work Ombudsman](#).

Insider Guides

Insider Guides are comprehensive, free guides for international students, carefully researched and created by expert locals and fellow international students. This is for older students (entering University) however provides some good information and guidance on life in Australia and Melbourne. <https://insiderguides.com.au/international-student-guides/>

06 Your Safety

No matter how small your question or concern, if you are worried about something you should speak to your parents, your Head of House, a teacher, the Overseas Student Manager, your homestay family or another adult you trust. It is important you feel safe, happy and supported during your time in Australia.

Student Safeguarding Commitment

You can expect to be safe and to feel safe, wherever you go and whatever you do. A fundamental responsibility of GGS and its staff is student safeguarding – the safety and wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance.

At GGS we demonstrate this commitment by providing information, support and processes to you, to other students, and to staff and homestay families to provide for your safety and wellbeing, and to help create child safe environments appropriate for diverse backgrounds.

If you feel unsafe or someone is making you feel uncomfortable or unhappy, or you just don't feel something is right, you must speak immediately to a trusted adult. This may be your parents, homestay provider, Head of House or Unit, the Overseas Student Manager or a teacher or House staff member. They must listen to your concerns and take action.

Emergencies

In an emergency (including a life-threatening situation or for serious injuries) you should call 000 immediately, and request the Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade. Once you have called 000, you should also arrange for someone trusted to be called, whether that is the Overseas Student Manager, your parents/guardians, your homestay provider or another trusted adult. Your homestay provider or parents will also notify GGS, so they will be able to assist you.

You should also download the “Emergency Plus” app on your phone. This app gives direct call access to 000 and also the Police non emergency line, and provides details to you on your exact location, to give to the 000 operator.

<https://www.emergencyplus.com.au/>

Sun Safety

Sun safety is incredibly important in Australia. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Even on a cool day, UV can damage our skin without us knowing, which is why it is important not to rely on temperature to decide whether sun protection is needed.

On days where the UV is above 3, we recommend that you do the following, to protect yourself:

- wear clothing that will protect you from UV rays;
- wear a hat, preferably broad-brimmed;
- wear sunglasses;
- apply SPF 50 sunscreen before going outside; and
- seek shade outside.

The GGS Sun Safety Policy details how GGS addresses sun safety for its staff and students. For further information, please see the Cancer Council's [SunSmart resources](#).

Water Safety

Australia has over 10,000 beaches, along with various other rivers, lakes and waterways available for swimming. You may come from a country or location with many beaches and you may be a confident swimmer or you may instead live in a big city, not be close to beaches in your home country, or not be a confident swimmer. You should consider your capability and confidence before getting into the water; conditions at beaches (and other places) can potentially be dangerous or there may be unseen hazards.

Always choose a patrolled surf beach for swimming, where lifesavers are on duty.

Swim between the flags

When you see the red and yellow flags on a beach, it indicates that there is currently a lifesaving service operating on that beach. The lifeguards have chosen a section of the beach that's best for swimming and they'll closely supervise this area.

If you can't swim, tell your homestay family or the friends who invite you to the pool or beach so they can keep you safe.

Be aware of rip currents

Rip currents are the number one hazard on our beaches. Avoid getting caught in a rip current by swimming at patrolled beaches between the red and yellow flags.

Read the safety signs before you go on to the beach

Safety signs are put in place to warn you about the permanent and occasional hazards such as large waves or even marine stingers. Swim with others and be aware of changing conditions such as tides; wind strength and wave height/strength.

If you see someone in trouble in the water, call 000 for help and seek assistance from those nearby to assist (lifeguards or a surfer) – do not jump in if someone has been washed into the water.

Don't mix swimming and alcohol

Your judgment and reflexes while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are significantly impaired.

There's more information about beach safety online at [Surf Lifesaving Victoria](https://www.surflifesaving.vic.gov.au/).

GGS Water Safety Policy

The GGS Water Safety Policy details how GGS addresses water safety for its students, including swimming competency assessments which are undertaken at the start of each year at Corio and Timbertop campuses.

The ability to swim and be safe around water is an important part of life at the School. Students at Corio Campus have access to the indoor pool at the Handbury Centre, and also may participate in water based sports (rowing, sailing and swimming). Timbertop students swim in the Dam at the Timbertop campus. Students at Toorak and Bostock House campuses will undertake swimming lessons annually as part of their curriculum program.

Safe Partying

While at GSS, you will likely attend events and parties alongside your peers and friends. Some may be School events, and other may be personal birthday parties, or other personal events.

The legal drinking age in Victoria is 18 years. Child under the age of 18 years are not permitted to buy, be served or drink alcohol. This may be the same or different to your home country, however, while you are in Australia you need to ensure you comply with these laws. At School events you will never be served alcohol, regardless of whether you are over or under 18 years old.

To ensure you have a fun time and stay safe, some tips are as follows:

- Plan how you'll get home afterwards;
- Look after each other, stick together in large crowds, don't leave a friend alone;
- Ensure your phone is charged;
- If aged over 18 years, set a limit on any alcohol you consume;
- To prevent risk of drink spiking, don't accept a free drink from someone you don't know; and
- Give your body time to sober up, your body needs approximately 1 hour to process $\frac{3}{4}$ of a standard drink. Anyone driving on a Learner or Probationary (red P1 or green P2) licence is required to have a 0.00 reading for blood alcohol concentration.

There's more information available about safe partying at [Youth Central](#) and [Headspace](#), or on the HIVE Safeguarding Hub.

Online Safety

Please see below some online safety tips, to keep yourself safe while online:

12 ONLINE SAFETY TIPS FOR STUDENTS



There's more information available on the [HIVE Safeguarding Hub](#).

Remember, if you are being targeted, attacked, harassed, or bullied online, you should talk to a trusted adult so they can assist you. It's important to know you will not be in trouble, you've done nothing wrong and you can make it stop.

Personal Safety

While Victoria is a relatively safe location, when you are out in Geelong or Melbourne you should ensure you take care of yourself and your personal belongings (including keeping watch over your bag and phone), to prevent loss or theft.

Unless you need to do so (because you are intended to travel) you should not take your

passport with you when out and about. It should be safely held by your parents (if they are in Australia) or otherwise held in your House or Unit safe until required.

If any of your belongings are ever lost or stolen, you should tell your parents and the School, so we may assist you.

Further Information

For further information about how you may stay safe while in Australia, please see the GGS Safeguarding Hub.

Student Safety Card

When you arrive at the School, you will receive a copy of the GGS Student Safety Card, which has phone numbers to call in an emergency. You should include these numbers on your phone, and keep the card in your wallet.

If you need to contact the Overseas Student Manager anytime - while at the School, on exeat or School holidays - please call or text the mobile number or send an email using the details on the Card.

This includes if you feel unsafe or worried at any time or for any reason – your safety and wellbeing is our top priority. Your parents or homestay provider can also contact the Overseas Student Manager on your behalf.

07 Transport and Travel

Airports

There are two airports in Victoria, Avalon Airport (close to the Corio Campus) and Tullamarine Airport (which is the main international airport for Victoria). When booking flight tickets, you should confirm which airport the flight is arriving or departing from, to ensure a safe arrival and someone to meet you.

In choosing flights, where a homestay provider will be collecting you or dropping you off, consultation with them and consideration of their family and work commitments is important. Flights which go out very early in the morning, or during the day on a weekday may make it difficult for a homestay provider to support transport. In this case, a taxi or a private car service may be a more appropriate option.

If your homestay provider or another trusted person is collecting you from the airport, you should ensure they have your up to date phone number and flight details (including the flight number) so they can track your flight, including any delays. You should also ensure you have their phone number or another way to contact them on your arrival.

If you have issues in the course of your travel, you should ensure you contact your parents, homestay provider or the School's Overseas Student Manager, to assist you.

Public Transport

Victoria's public transport system has buses, trains and (in Melbourne's city centre) trams. Within Melbourne, *Metro* is the train network provider. To travel regionally (outside of Melbourne) *VLine* is the regional rail provider. You may use public transport for travel to and from your family or homestay provider home, or on weekends, exeats or during school holidays while you are not at GGS. If you are a Middle School overseas student, you will not be able to take public transport to and from the Corio Campus.

Trains run from around 5am until after midnight on most lines. On Friday and Saturday nights, metro trains and some trams operate throughout the night.

Information about and timetables for the public transport system (buses, trains and trams) are available at Public Transport Victoria.

Public Transport - Ticketing

To travel on any public transport in Victoria you will need to purchase a **myki card** – you may then use this card to ‘tap on’ and ‘tap off’ on trams and buses, and in train stations. The price of your trip will depend on where you are travelling (ie whether you are travelling only in Melbourne, or regionally). The myki card system allows you to top up your myki card with money at most train stations, newsagents and convenience stores, or to set up an online account to pay online.

If you are under the age of 19, you are able to purchase a child myki card, and pay a concession/reduced fare. If you are aged 17 or 18 years old, you must carry proof of your age at all times on public transport to be able to use a child myki.

You must carry a myki card with a balance at all times while on public transport, and you must touch on and off public transport. Victorian public transport officers regularly conduct checks of passenger mykis and if you have not touched on you may be fined (\$300 for adults, and \$99 for children).

Your parents, your homestay provider or another person who is familiar with the transport system will assist you to purchase a myki card, arrange a method to top up and show you how to use your myki before you travel alone on public transport. If you have further questions, please speak to the Overseas Student Manager.

Corio Campus - Transport

The School operates a daily bus service to and from the Corio Campus for day students to locations around Geelong, Surf Coast, Bellarine Peninsula, and Western Melbourne, including Toorak campus for Middle School students only. Middle School weekly boarders may also use the bus service on weekends to travel home.

On exeat weekends and at the start and end of School Term, GGS operates bus services for boarders to locations in Melbourne and to Tullamarine Airport. Information is provided by GGS prior to each exeat or school holiday period.

If you are using the School’s bus system, either to travel home daily or at exeats, you may need

to download the BusMinder app. More information about this is available on the HIVE, and your parents will have received details to register you on the GGS BusMinder system.

To get around, you may also use your family or homestay provider's car, taxis or ride share, or you may walk or ride a bike. For Senior School students on weekend leave, another travel option is the Vline, which is accessed via a 10 minute walk to the Corio Train Station.

Timbertop Campus - Transport

Public transport is not available for travel to Timbertop campus, due to its location.

On exeat weekends and at the start and end of Term, GGS operates bus services for boarders to locations in Geelong, Melbourne and to Tullamarine Airport. Information is provided by GGS prior to each exeat or school holiday period.

If you are departing or arriving outside of the days of scheduled travel, you may arrive or depart Timbertop campus in your family or homestay providers car, or otherwise you may require the assistance of a private transport service. The School has a number of suggested private transport services; their details are available on the Overseas Student Programme Hub.

Bostock House Campus – Transport

The majority of our Bostock House students walk or are driven to Bostock House Campus daily by their parents or guardians. The School operates a bus service from the Corio Campus to Bostock House Campus; for more information please speak to the Head of Campus.

A number of public buses run close to the Bostock House Campus, if needed.

Toorak Campus - Transport

The majority of our Toorak students walk or are driven to Toorak Campus daily by their parents or guardians.

A number of public buses run close to the Toorak Campus, if needed. The Number 58 tram also runs on an adjacent street. The Hawksburn and South Yarra Train Stations are the closest train station to the Toorak campus.

Travelling by Bicycle or Scooter

If you ride a bike or scooter (including an e-scooter or e-bike) you must wear a properly fitted helmet at all times. This ensure you stay safe, and is also required by law – if you are caught not wearing a helmet you may be fined.

08 What to Bring to Australia

The below is general information on what you should consider in packing for your trip to Australia. You should also consider your airline luggage size and weight limits.

The Middle School, Senior School or Timbertop Handbook will have further information for you on what is suggested that you bring, particularly if you will be boarding at GGS. Your Head of House may also provide further information, or recommendations and suggestions on things to bring.

Passport

Ensure your passport is valid and you have a copy of your visa. You should also photocopy or have a scanned copy of your passport and your visa, in case these are lost or stolen at any time. Your parents should also keep a copy, and a copy may be provided to the School.

Uniform, Booklist, Computer and Other Equipment

You will receive information as to your uniform, booklist, computer device requirements, and other equipment requirements (including for any sports and music lessons) from the School prior to your commencement. These will vary dependent on your age and your campus. The majority of these items can be purchased through GGS.

The GGS uniform and sports uniforms may be purchased from the Uniform Shop, which has a shop at both the Corio Campus and Toorak Campus. The Uniform Shop offers both new and pre-loved uniform items.

For students who are attending the Overseas Student Programme Orientation in January, you will have the option to attend a uniform fitting as part of the Orientation. For all other students, you and your parents, guardians or homestay provider will need to make an appointment to be fitted for a uniform prior to commencement.

Items purchased from GGS, through the uniform or hike shops or similar, and any excursions will be put on your student account for payment by your parents / guardians.

If you are a Senior School student and you are bringing your own device (ie computer) to GGS, your parents will receive instructions on how to set up your device to access the GGS systems in mid January – you should access this email to set up your device before you arrive at GGS.

The Corio Campus book room, located in the Cook Quad, sells a range of pens and pencils, general stationery, books and novels to students and is open during School Terms, Monday to Friday.

Casual Clothing and Toiletries

You will need casual clothing for evenings, weekends and other times you are not at GGS / in School uniform. Given Victoria has varied weather, you will need to ensure you have clothing for both hot and cold weather.

Don't forget toiletries and personal care items as well. Additional items can be purchased through the School, or on weekends and exeats with your parents or homestay provider.

Further details on what to bring are available in the Middle School, Timbertop and Senior School Handbooks.

Medicine

If you need regular medicine for a medical condition (like diabetes, asthma or eczema), you will need to pack this along with a letter from your doctor (written in English) which details how the medication is to be taken.

If you are a boarder, the GGS Kennedy Health Centre or Timbertop Health Centre will have been in touch with you and your parents to discuss the School's requirements for your medication. This includes giving the medication to your House or Unit staff on your arrival and they will arrange for you to have your medication as required. You must not keep any medication in your dorm room or unit.

Mobile Phone

Ask your mobile phone provider if your phone will work in Australia – if not, you might need a new Australian SIM to use while you're here. You may arrange this at most supermarkets and shopping centres, and your family or homestay provider will be able to assist you to get a

SIM card and set it up.

If you need a new Australian SIM you should ask your parents or homestay provider to assist you to do this on your arrival in Australia. This will ensure you are able to get in contact with your family, friends and homestay provider while in Australia. The easiest way to stay in touch with your family is via Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger, Facetime or something similar.

Students at Timbertop are not permitted their phones or other devices during School Term however you are able to access phones and devices during exeats and School holidays. They may, however, communicate via letter with their families – further details is available in the Timbertop Handbook and will be provided by your child's Head of Unit. For overseas students, letter are scanned and sent to parents to avoid delays in international mail. Parent replies are printed from email and provided to their child.

Money and Banking

If you are not in Australia with your family, you should have a debit or credit card from your parents, which you can use to purchase food, personal items and activities when you go on excursions, visit your homestay provider, or spend time away from GGS.

While your homestay provider will provide you food and accommodation, you are responsible to pay for your personal treats, special foods or tuck you may wish to buy, your activities and trips, and any personal items you buy while you are in their home.

If you will be using a card connected to your parent's bank, it's important for you or your parents to tell your bank that you are about to travel and arrange to either access money in Australia or make charges in foreign currency.

An alternative to debit cards may be a prepaid card. Well known examples in Australia include [Spriggy](#), [ZAAP](#) and [FLX](#), but there are a number of other options out there. Prepaid cards are similar to debit cards but they are not linked to a transaction account. Instead, money is loaded onto the prepaid card and you may only spend what is on the card. You and your parents may monitor the balance via an app.

Your parents, homestay provider or another trusted adult should show you how to use the card before you arrive at the School, so you are confident to use it.

If you need to pay money from overseas into an Australia bank account you will need a

SWIFT code from the payee to make the transfer. This is a code which is specific to each bank in Australia. The payee (the person receiving the money) will be able to tell you their SWIFT code and bank name, along with their BSB and Account Number.

Personal Insurance

Your parents will have arranged Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) as part of your enrolment process, with a health insurance provider. This medical insurance provides different levels of cover, so make sure you and your parents understand any limits or conditions. In all cases, OSHC will cover ambulance in Australia.

For more information on Overseas Student Health Cover see the [Australian Government](#) website, your provider's website or your relevant Policy.

You and your parents should also consider whether you should obtain separate travel insurance as well, to cover things like flight delays, and lost or broken personal items. The School may also recommend further travel insurance for certain Adventures or activities, and will advise you and your parents in those circumstances.

09 GGS Orientation

Start of Year Arrivals and Orientation

The majority of our overseas students arrive in January, for the start of the new School year and for our orientation programmes. If you are one of these students, you will be joined by many other students who have only just arrived in Australia like you, as well as many students from Australia who are also starting their first day at the School.

If you are a new overseas student commencing in Year 7 to 12, arriving at the start of the School year, you will need to attend the Overseas Student Orientation, which takes place in late January of each year. Details of the Orientation will be provided to your family in Term 4 of the prior year.

This Orientation Programme is mandatory for overseas students and you and your family (if they are coming with you) should arrive in Australia prior to the commencement of the Orientation. If your family is not joining you in Australia, you should ensure your homestay provider knows your flight details and will be available to collect you from the airport on your arrival.

The Overseas Student Orientation is in addition to other orientation programmes arranged by GGS, including the Middle School sleepover, and start of year orientations for new students.

Arrivals during the School Year

If you are a student starting partway through the year, don't worry! There are many people at the School who will help you settle into life at GGS, and help you with anything you are unsure about.

For Students commencing after the start of the school year at Corio Campus and Timbertop Campus, the Overseas Student Manager will meet with you in the first couple of weeks, to check in around how you are settling in, go over orientation matters, and answer any questions you may have about the School, homestay, or the Overseas Student Programme. You will already have had an orientation to the School from your Head of House, and also from

your teachers by that time.

Arrivals at Bostock House and Toorak Campus

New overseas families to Bostock House and Toorak Campus will be provided with the opportunity for an overseas student information briefing.

Bostock House and Toorak Campuses provide orientation and settling in days for new commencing students, and further information will be provided to you by your campus.

10 Timetables, Term Dates and Special Events

Term Dates

The GGS School Term dates are available [here](#) for all campuses.

More information about school holidays, and bus travel arrivals and departures will be provided to you and your parents or guardians prior to each term break and exeat via the HIVE.

Special Events

Dates you should take note of include the start and end of term dates, dates of exeat weekends and also special events including **Family Day** and **Athletics Day** (for Corio Campus) and **Parents Dinner** (for Timbertop). If you are at Corio Campus, your House will also have a yearly House dinner (to which your family is invited) and a Valedictory Dinner for Year 12 students (to which families are also invited). You may wish to ask your parents or other family members to join you for these special dates.

Each campus puts on parent and community events during the year, including 'Connect' and 'Friends of' events and activities, which your parents may be interested in attending.

Academic and Co-Curricular Timetable

You will receive a timetable on your commencement, which is regularly updated as required and which details your academic classes and also your co-curricular commitments – sports, music, community, musical and other events and activities.

You should ensure you check your timetable and attend all timetabled academic and co-curricular requirements, or that you tell your teacher or coach if you are not able to attend for any reason. Remember, as part of your student visa requirements you must have an 80% minimum attendance at your academic classes and maintain satisfactory course progression and behaviour. If you fail to meet this requirement, GGS may be required to advise this to the

Australian Government.

11 Taking Care of your Health

While you are away from your home country it is still important to look after your health and wellbeing. This includes physical health, mental health and personal hygiene.

Physical Health

For all students at the School, physical health, sports and activity is an important part of the School's curriculum and co-curricular programmes. Making good choices of food to fuel your body is also something you should think about, and this forms part of the School's pastoral and academic curriculum.

Toorak and Bostock House campuses incorporate physical education and activity into the everyday curriculum, and offer after school activities for students in various sports.

For Corio campus students, involvement in co-curricular sports is a requirement, with training and matches occurring across the week and over the weekend. Sports offered include swimming, rowing, badminton, sailing, cross country, netball, football, rugby, soccer, hockey, athletics and equestrian.

For Timbertop students, running, hiking and camping are a key component of your Timbertop experience.

If you feel unwell or get sick

If you feel unwell or sick while at School, you should let a trusted adult know.

At Timbertop and Corio Campuses, the School has a dedicated health centre, operated by registered nurses and with appointments available with external general practitioners and physiotherapists for Students. When booking an appointment you are able to request a preferred gender of your doctor. If you need it, it may also be possible to find an external doctor who speaks your native language.

You are encouraged to have a chaperone for any medical appointment – this may be a health

centre staff member or a friend.

At Bostock House and Toorak campuses, the School has a registered nurse, who is available to provide first aid at the relevant campuses during School hours.

If you need different or more specialised care, this can be arranged with an external organisation. If you need to spend some time away from campus to rest and recover, the School will contact your parents or your homestay provider for you, so they can collect you.

If you are unwell while away from School (for example visiting a friend or with your homestay provider) you should let your host know so they can assist you or contact the School to seek assistance on your behalf.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Living away from close family and friends, adapting to a new culture and keeping up with your studies can be very stressful. Some things which may assist you when you may be feeling upset, stressed, homesick or anxious are as follows:

- Telling a trusted adult;
- Making a call home to family or friends;
- Ensuring you get a good night's sleep, drink plenty of water and eat nutritious food which fuels your body;
- Ensure you have regular study breaks, particularly when preparing for exams;
- Spend time doing things that make you happy, like hanging out with friends, going to the movies or getting involved in your school's extra-curricular activities;
- Try meditation.

Getting help if you have mental health concerns

If you do have any mental health concerns it is important to have a chat with someone that you trust. The School has psychologists and counsellors who are available in its health centres as required.

You may contact the health centre yourself to request an appointment, or your Heads of House, Heads of School or any other person may make contact on your behalf.

Below are some additional external mental health services and support you can access at any time:

Mental Health Services and Support

Beyond Blue

24/7 mental health support service

1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au

headspace

Online support and counselling to young people aged 12 to 25

1800 650 890
(9am to 1am daily)
headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services for children and young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back

24/7 crisis support and counselling service for people affected by suicide

1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

13YARN

24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

13 92 76
13yarn.org.au

Mensline

24/7 counselling service for men

1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

1800 RESPECT

24/7 support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence and abuse

1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

QLife

LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral

1800 184 527
qlife.org.au

If you are concerned about someone at risk of immediate harm, call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.



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12 Important Policies

The GGS Policies and Procedures are available on the School's website and on HIVE. You should read and familiarise yourself with the Policies and Procedures prior to your arrival, in particular the Student Behaviour Rules, and other Student Pastoral Policies. Your House staff will also discuss relevant policies and procedures with you on your arrival, to ensure you understand the School's expectations and commitments to you.

Some of the School's policies and procedures are only applicable to overseas students. These are detailed below and you should also be aware of these additional policies as they relate to you. Copies of these policies and procedures are available via the Overseas Student Programme Hub.

- *Overseas Student Support Policy*
- *Overseas Students Complaints and Appeals Policy*
- *Overseas Students Complaints and Appeals Flowchart*
- *Overseas Students Course Progress and Attendance Policy*
- *Deferral, Suspension or Cancelling Enrolment Policy*
- *Overseas Students Course Transfer Policy*
- *Overseas Students Accommodation Policy*

Complaints and Appeals

If you have a complaint or seek to appeal an internal decision made by the School, the Overseas Students Complaints and Appeals Policy and Flowchart provide information on how you may progress your complaint.

This includes informal and formal complaints, as well as internal and external processes.

Complaints which fall outside of the scope of the Overseas Students Complaints and Appeals Policy may be instead dealt with by the School's Student Complaints Policy.

Course Progress and Attendance

As part of your student visa, you are required to ensure you maintain satisfactory course progression and at minimum 80% attendance each Semester throughout your time at the School. You must also ensure that your behaviour is appropriate and in line with the Student Behaviour Rules and other pastoral policies at all times.

If you do not meet these minimum requirements, the School will take intervention steps to support you in meeting your course progression and/or attendance requirements. If these supports do not result in your course progression and/or attendance improvement, the School may be required to take action to report the breach of your visa to the Australian government.

Further information, including on what constitutes satisfactory course progression is available in the School's Overseas Students Course Progress and Attendance Policy.

13 Homestay

The following information is only for students who will be staying with a homestay provider when not on campus. This information does not apply to you if you are living with a parent or Department of Home Affairs approved relative while you are in Australia.

What is a homestay provider?

A homestay provider is a person who provides care and accommodation to a student when they are not able to be on campus / in their boarding house (for example at exeat, during illness or injury and on School holidays, if they are not flying back to their home country). Students must stay with their homestay provider, or another approved person during times they are not on campus.

This person may be someone nominated by your parents and who is known to you – your older sibling, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or a family friend – or this person may not be known to you – they may have been suggested for you by the School. In some cases, the homestay provider may have children also at GGS. You may be the only overseas student with the homestay provider, or other students from the School may also stay with the homestay provider.

A homestay provider is not your legal guardian – this is your parents and the School has responsibility for you while in Australia. Your homestay provider is however providing care and accommodation to you, and it is important you are kind and respectful to everyone in your homestay provider home while you reside there.

Australia is a multicultural country and families will be made up of people from different nationalities. Your homestay family may be quite different to your own family. They may also be a little different to your expectations and even not quite the same as the homestay families of other students in the program.

Getting to know your homestay family

If you do not already know your homestay family, the School will arrange an opportunity for

you to meet your homestay family prior to your arrival at the School. Often, this first meeting will be via video call, and then you will meet your homestay family in person when you arrive in Australia with your parents.

Your homestay family will tell you about them and their interests, including any activities they do, what their children do and any pets they have. You should tell them about your interests and your likes and dislikes as well, so they get to know you.

You and your parents will receive contact information for your homestay provider, prior to your arrival in Australia. You should ensure this information is saved in your phone, for you to contact your homestay provider as required.

What to expect from your homestay family

Your homestay family will provide you with:

- a safe, secure, welcoming place to live;
- a household compliant with the Child Safe Standards;
- a separate single room for your personal use;
- three meals a day while you are in homestay;
- facilities – a bed, wardrobe, space to study, towels and linen;
- utilities – gas, electricity, heating and water costs, internet; and
- the use of common living areas within the house.

Victoria can be cold during the winter, so ask your homestay family for extra blankets if you don't feel warm.

Don't be afraid to ask how to use household appliances (including the laundry) as you need them. Everything from the washing machine to the kettle might operate a little differently from what you are used to. It is a great idea to double check with your homestay family before you start using any household appliance.

Day-to-day living with your homestay family

Weekend activities of a homestay family might be different from what you are used to at home. Examples may include Saturday sport or other co-curricular activities, shopping for the week ahead, or visiting friends or family.

We recommend that you get involved in these activities as a great way to get to know your

homestay family and develop your English language skills.

Even though you might be tired after your Term at School, try not to just stay in your bedroom or spend significant time on your devices. Getting to know your homestay family will be easier if you make the effort to spend time together.

House expectations

Each homestay will have a unique set of expectations. This will be something discussed between you, your parents, the Overseas Student Manager and your homestay provider prior to your arrival.

Your homestay's house expectations may cover some or all of the following:

- Expected behaviour, from the School, your parents and your homestay provider;
- Use of common areas and facilities (i.e. bathroom, laundry, kitchen);
- Going out to visit friends or go into Geelong or Melbourne while in homestay and travel;
- Cleanliness expectations (for example, cleaning up after yourself);
- Curfews;
- Phone and device personal use, and having your phone or device with you when you sleep;
- Transportation provided by homestay provider;
- Food and drink which is offered by the homestay provider and what you must buy yourself (personal items, tuck, personal snacks);
- Ordering food in (for example by UberEats); and
- Communication with your homestay provider.

14 Staying with someone who is not a homestay provider or your parents

For overseas students in Australia without their parents and under the age of 18, the School is required to approve all people you stay overnight with – whether that is a friend or a relative.

If you wish to stay overnight with someone during your time at the School, you need to advise your Head of House/Unit, your parents and the Overseas Student Manager, so that your parents approval can be confirmed and the School's approval process can be arranged.

Please do this as soon as possible prior to your intended visit, so that the approvals can be arranged and you are able to visit as you wish. Please note that with less than four days notice of your intended visit, the visit may not be able to take place. GGS will do its best to support these arrangements, however we need you to be timely.

15 Legal Services

Please contact the Overseas Student Manager or speak to your parents, Head of House or Head of Unit if you require legal services at any time. They will be able to assist and support you in this need.

[Youth Law](#) has helpful and easy to read factsheets and information around Victorian and Australian law for people under the age of 25. This includes information about:

- Becoming independent / turning 18 years old;
- Consent;
- Bullying and cyber bullying;
- Police searches;
- Harassment and discrimination;
- Employment;
- Public transport and parking laws;
- Fines for people over and under 18;
- Police arrests;
- Going to Court.

Youthlaw or Victorian Legal Aid may also be able to provide legal assistance or support:

- Victorian Legal Aid: 1300 792 387 or legalaid.vic.gov.au
- Youth Law: 03 9113 9500 or info@youthlaw.asn.au

16 Immigration and Migration Services

If you have an education agent, you or your parents should speak to them in relation to any immigration, visa, passport or migration related questions.

Other helpful links are as follows:

- Foreign Embassies in Australia: 02 6261 1111 or <https://protocol.dfat.gov.au/Public/MissionsInAustralia>
- Department of Home Affairs: 131 881 or www.homeaffairs.gov.au