

1. My student is having difficulty paying their homestay fees due to financial hardship. What should I do?

If your student is having difficulty paying their homestay fees, please contact IES so that we can follow this issue up with the student's family directly. Supporting homestays and students in this situation is case-by-case and best discussed with our team.

2. What mental health support is available to students who are extremely vulnerable in these uncertain times?

While it is important to look after our physical health, it is also important to keep our mental health in check. With constant changes, announcements and media coverage on COVID-19, it is easy for students to feel anxious or become depressed. Ensure that international students are looking after their physical and mental health. Some tips include:

- Developing a routine so that
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Developing an exercise regime that can be done from within the home
- Going for a walk/run/bike ride (remember to adhere to social distancing rules)
- Practicing positive thinking
- Meditating
- Limiting screen time
- Getting fresh air

For more mental health information and support visit/contact:

- [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#) (Beyond Blue): 1800 512 348
- [Headspace](#): 1800 650 890
- [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 55 1800
- [Lifeline Australia](#): 13 11 44

If you have any concerns about the mental or physical health of your international student(s), please contact the ISP Manager at your student's school or the accommodation team here at IES.

3. What happens if my student or a family member tests positive for COVID-19?

If anyone in your family, including International students or other tenants in the home have returned a positive COVID-19 test then all members of the home would be required to follow the direction of SA

Health in relation to self-isolation. Please refer to our [factsheet on COVID-19](#) for more information on self-isolation.

Our office should also be contacted urgently so we can provide the best support to you as a homestay and for ensuring we can keep the student's natural family informed.

4. My student has deferred/suspended their studies, but plans to return. What room holding fees should I charge?

Please continue to apply current room holding fees to such cases (max \$580). IES respectfully asks that homestays don't request any further fees from the student. The current Room Holding Fee Schedule can be found on the Homestay Portal [here](#).

We understand in these circumstances that homestays may not wish to continue to hold the room for an extended period of time, in which case we will make arrangements with the student to have their belongings moved from your home.

5. My international student and I do not agree on whether he/she should attend school in Term 2. What should I do?

The South Australian Department for Education has consistently followed the expert advice from our senior health officials from the outset of this COVID-19 pandemic.

The medical advice from SA Health and Australia's expert health body, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, remains unchanged. Schools, preschools and early childhood facilities are low risk environments for COVID-19, and should remain open.

For this reason, we encourage all international students to attend school from next term.

Please refer below to read a letter and message from South Australia's Chief Public Health Officer, Professor Nicola Spurrier (please see next page):

Ref: A2022416



Dear parents and carers

I hope that you have had the chance to enjoy time with your children during the school holiday period.

The COVID-19 pandemic is and will continue to be, a very worrying time for many parents and carers as we see the devastation caused by this virus around the world. Importantly, schools are a central part of a child's life. They provide stability, a sense of achievement and a rich learning environment for every child. This is especially important at a time when many children and young people are feeling stressed about COVID-19 and worried about what the future may hold.

We have been lucky in South Australia to now have very low numbers of positive cases in our state. This is the result of closing both the national and state borders, having effective quarantine processes, having many people in our community coming forward for testing and having every single one of you reducing your travel, practicing social distancing and good hygiene. Please keep it up, we have achieved a lot, but there is still a long way to go before we can say it is over. Thank you for all that you and your family are doing.

My job is to ensure that the South Australian community stays as healthy and disease free as possible. Together with the other Chief Health Officers in other States and Territories, I have weighed up the pros and cons of children attending school.

With the very low levels of COVID-19 in South Australia along with the wider public health strategies in South Australia, I strongly believe there is no need for school closures in this state, at this time. Even when we had higher rates of disease in South Australia, only 2% of cases were school students, all of whom had mild illness and have fully recovered. I encourage families to feel comfortable and safe about sending their children to school.

However, if your child has a chronic medical condition or a compromised immune system, you may wish to consult your GP or paediatrician when deciding if your child should return to school.

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Message to parents and carers from
Professor Nicola Spurrier,
Chief Public Health Officer



It is safe to send your child or children back to school,
kindy and day care.

Don't send them if:



They are sick.



They have a health problem and you want to talk to your doctor first.

I am confident it is safe for them to return because:



We have a low rate of community spread in SA.



Borders are still closed.



Lots of the community has been tested.



Good social distancing and hygiene.

To keep schools safe we are:



Increasing cleaning.



Making sure there is soap, sanitiser and tissues available.



Not having large gatherings.



Teaching kids to not spread germs.

sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019



If you are worried about your student attending school due to potential COVID-19 exposure, please discuss your concerns with the school's ISP Manager.

6. How can we reassure our students' natural families that they are safe to continue studying here in South Australia?

International Education Services is working hard to ensure we are providing accurate information to agents and natural families about the measures South Australia is taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Regular communications are being sent to key stakeholders as more information comes to light.

If you are concerned about this issue and would like information relayed to your students' family, please contact our office and we will arrange this for you.

7. How do we support our international students, now and in the future, if they face racism as a result of the pandemic?

It is important that international students continue to be made to feel welcome here in South Australia. Schools are working hard to educate students and the wider community about the risks racism brings to international visitors and society as a whole at this point in time. Blaming other cultures for the spread of COVID-19 is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within our program.

As members of the International Student Program community, it is expected that all homestay families monitor this situation closely and report any concerns of racism to the school or IES so that issues can be addressed and resolved promptly. We appreciate the support of all homestay families in monitoring this delicate issue.

8. Should I be allowing my international student to leave my home for any reason other than going to school?

International students are required to follow the same social distancing rules imposed by the South Australian Government as everyone else. Please continue to stay informed of the current restrictions by visiting <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/restrictions-and-responsibilities/fags>. This website provides clear information about what is and isn't accessible in relation to social gatherings and is updated on a regular basis. As a homestay we appreciate your support in explaining to students that the situation is temporary, but necessary.

If students are seeking to meet in larger groups or you become aware of students doing so, please notify our office so that we can follow this up appropriately.

If as a homestay you are uncomfortable with your student's behaviour you are encouraged to contact our office so we can intervene and liaise with the student's ISP Manager to access further support. Depending on the circumstance this may result in a homestay change for the student.

9. What happens if I get sick and cannot look after my student?

If you become unwell and find yourself unable to look after your student it is important you contact our office as soon as possible so that we can support you and find an alternative homestay placement for your student(s).

10. Are international students encouraged to get a flu vaccination?

Current advice from SA Health is that all members of the South Australian community should be taking up the opportunity to have a flu vaccination this year.

Our office has provided information to international students overseas and their families to educate them on the importance of the flu vaccination in the current circumstances. We are not able to force students to have vaccinations and if the student or their natural parents refuse, we will need to respect their wishes.

The annual flu immunisation program includes free immunisations for those considered to be vulnerable or at risk. International students do not fall into this category, so will incur a small cost to cover the cost of the vaccination itself (approximately \$16.00).

The cost of the GP appointment to administer the vaccination is covered by the student's Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), which is up to 100% of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee. Please note that depending on the GP clinic your student visits, there may be a small out of pocket expense.

If student has Bupa OSHC they can attend a Bupa preferred clinic with no out of pocket cost for the appointment (these clinics can be found [here](#)).

11. Who can I contact if I need further advice?

IES welcomes you to contact our office if you are seeking advice or clarification so that you can perform your role as a homestay provider with more confidence and support during these challenging times. We are currently actively reaching out to homestay families to check in, so please expect to be contacted by our office in the coming weeks.

Please also remember that if you have significant concerns after hours, please contact the IES emergency phone on 0401 123 205.