

COVID-19 FAQs for international students 19 May 2020

Where can I access information about the South Australian Government's response to COVID-19?

The South Australian Government has a website containing information about how South Australia is responding to COVID-19, including information about the current situation, health advice and current restrictions. You can access this information at the [SA Government Covid-19 homepage](#).

What is the current situation in South Australia?

The [SA Government Covid-19 Dashboard](#) contains all the latest information and statistics regarding the spread of Covid-19 in South Australia.

What initiatives are in place to reduce the risk of me contracting or coming into contact with someone who has COVID-19?

Australia has quickly adopted social distancing practices, whereby large gatherings of people are not permitted and people are required to maintain distances of 1.5m between each other where practical.

The number of new cases in Australia has slowed substantially, and existing cases are being tracked and monitored to ensure that person-to-person transmission is eliminated or at least minimised. On Friday 15 May 2020, the Chief Public Health Officer announced here were no existing active cases of Covid-19 in South Australia, making us the first state in Australia to eliminate all active cases.

The Australian Government has recently launched the COVID-19 Safe app to assist in tracking contact history and slow the spread of COVID-19. You can download the app to your mobile phone using the links below:



Schools are increasing cleaning schedules, making sure there are adequate supplies of soap, sanitiser and tissues available for all students and staff, and has put protocols in place to practice social distancing.

Should I be attending my school at the moment?

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 are low risk environments for COVID-19, and are open. For this reason, we strongly encourage all international students to attend school.

The only exception being if you have a chronic medical condition or a compromised immune system. If unsure, please talk to your parents/homestay family/carer and general practitioner when deciding if you should return to school. If you are worried about attending school due to potential COVID-19 exposure, please discuss your concerns with your school's ISP Manager.

How can you reassure me that I am safe to continue studying here in South Australia?

International Education Services is working hard to ensure that we are providing accurate information to all stakeholders about the measures South Australia is taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Regular communications are being sent to all stakeholders as more information comes to light. If you are concerned about this issue and would like information relayed to your natural parents, please contact our office and we will arrange this for you.

What do I do if I'm having difficulty paying my international student tuition fees to the Department for Education?

If you are having difficulty paying your international student tuition fees, please speak with your ISP Manager who will pass these concerns onto IES so that we can directly follow this issue up with your natural parents.

What do I do if I'm having difficulty paying my homestay fees directly to my homestay family?

If you are having difficulty paying your homestay fees, please talk with your ISP Manager at your school and discuss this with your homestay family.

What welfare support is available for international students in South Australian Government schools?

IES is providing a support package for international students that includes a \$100.00 COVID-19 assistance payment. Through your school you will be able to claim this money and use it for education expenses such as tutoring, school uniforms, subject specific equipment (calculators), excursions or stationary, etc.

How do I cope if I'm feeling more stressed during COVID-19?

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- fear and worry about your health and the health of your loved ones
- changes in sleep or eating patterns
- difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- worsening of chronic health problems
- worsening of mental health conditions

Make sure you are looking after your physical and mental health. Some tips include:

- developing a routine
- 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 your mental or physical health please contact your ISP Manager, school counsellor, school psychologist or the Student Service's team in IES.

What happens if I have deferred my studies in relation to my homestay accommodation?

Homestay families will continue to charge room holding fees up to a maximum of \$580.00. If your homestay does not wish to continue to hold the room for an extended period of time, IES will make arrangements with you to have your belongings moved to an alternative homestay. The current room holding fee schedule can be found on the Student Portal.

What happens if a member of my homestay family tests positive for COVID-19?

If anyone in your homestay family has 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.

What happens if a student or teacher at my school is confirmed to have contracted COVID-19?

The school will be closed for a minimum of 24 hours to allow SA Health to trace contacts and make contact with anyone at risk and to undertake a deep clean of the school site. If any international student is confirmed to have been in close contact with the confirmed case, they may be required to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

Will I be entitled to a refund if I suspend, withdraw or defer my enrolment because of COVID-19?

Yes, we consider the COVID-19 situation both a compassionate and compelling circumstance and your refund will be considered following your written request.

What will my Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) provide cover for if I contract COVID-19?

If you suspect or are diagnosed with COVID-19, contact your OSHC provider immediately to find out what you are covered for. This will depend on the provider's policies and your level of cover. If your OSHC policy is with BUPA please refer to bupa.com.au.

How can I be supported if I am a victim of 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 their 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. Please alert your school's ISP Manager and homestay family if you encounter racism so that issues can be addressed and resolved promptly.

Should I be allowed 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/faqs>. This website provides clear information about what is and isn't acceptable in relation to social gatherings and is updated on a regular basis. We appreciate your understanding that the current situation is temporary, but necessary.

Do you recommend that I 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 you and your natural parents on the importance of the flu vaccination in the current circumstances. We are not able to force you to have a vaccination and if your natural parents refuse, we will respect their decision.

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 your 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 you visit there may incur a small out of pocket expense. If you have Bupa OSHC you can attend a Bupa preferred clinic with no out of pocket cost for the appointment.

Who can I contact if I need further advice?

In the first instance please communicate with your school's ISP manager and homestay family. You are also welcome to contact our office if you are seeking advice during these challenging times. We are currently actively reaching out to students to check on your well-being, 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

My course is finished but I cannot return home due to travel restrictions/limited flights, what should I do?

In the event that your flight is delayed or cancelled you should notify your ISP Manager and agent. You may need to contact the Department of Home Affairs regarding your visa expiry date.