

Overseas students in Queensland Catholic Schools

Position Statement



Introduction

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) is committed to overseas students experiencing an enriching Catholic education and promoting international cultural intelligence amongst all students and staff at Catholic schools in Queensland.

Intercultural understanding is one of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum¹ which describes how students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. All students and staff in Catholic schools benefit from learning about the diversity and richness of people from different cultural backgrounds, enabling them to become more globally engaged citizens. Intercultural understanding fosters a capacity to see ourselves as part of the international community, where our actions contribute to building both local and global community values and practices.²

Queensland Catholic Schools value the pastoral care, health and wellbeing of all students. For every school that enrolls overseas students, it is essential they understand the legal requirements for enrolment, and ensure arrangements are in place to support the wellbeing of these students, noting the unique challenges they may face being away from families and home countries. Catholic School Authorities seek to ensure that overseas students have an enriching and positive learning experience while studying in our Catholic schools.

Definition

For the purposes of this Position Statement, an overseas student is a student who holds a visa specifically related to studying in Australia. This includes students on a student visa subclass 500 and full-fee paying overseas students, who for the purposes of the requirements of both the Australian Government's Non-government schools Census and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) state Census, the student holding the visa or their dependents are usually reported as full-fee paying overseas students.³ As of 1st July 2016 an overseas student must hold a student visa subclass 500. A school offering courses to overseas students *who hold their visa directly* must be a registered CRICOS provider. Overseas students with a student visa who attend a CRICOS registered school must be recorded on the Commonwealth's Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). Depending on the type of school, these students will usually stay in a homestay arrangement outsourced by the school or otherwise a school boarding facility.

¹ <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/intercultural-understanding/?searchTerm=intercultural+understanding#dimension-content>

² <https://www.theglobalcitizensinitiative.org/index.php/what-it-means-to-be-a-global-citizen-2/>

³ https://ssphelp.education.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/2019_census_guidelines.pdf
<https://nssab.qld.edu.au/Census/overseas.php>

However, if a child is dependent on another family member's student visa, that child does not have to be enrolled in a CRICOS registered school since the family member who is the primary visa holder will already be enrolled in a course of study with a CRICOS-registered provider.

For the purposes of both the Australian Government's Non-Government Schools Census and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) State Census, overseas students do not include students enrolled at a school under a visa category other than a subclass 500 student visa. The following categories are not included in the definition of overseas students⁴:

- permanent residents of Australia
- New Zealand and Norfolk Island citizens
- a dependent of a person, who is receiving a sponsorship or a scholarship from the Commonwealth for the purpose of undertaking a course provided by an institution or other body or person in Australia; or
- exchange students who are studying in Australia through a Queensland government-registered secondary student exchange organisation⁵.

Rationale

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration⁶ on the education goals for young Australians affirms the importance of education in developing globally aware and responsible citizens, with the goals being that young Australians:

- be confident and creative individuals who understand their responsibilities as global citizens and know how to affect positive change (p. 6) and;
- be active and informed members of the community who are informed and responsible global and local members of the community who value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences and engage in the global community (p. 8).

Globalisation has increased the interdependence of people and communities. The Congregation for Catholic Education states that through open dialogue among cultures, different religions make a decisive contribution to forming an awareness of common values and building a more united and peaceful world⁷. This dialogue enables Catholic schools to reflect on their own identity⁸ while pursuing the good of all in a climate of mutual trust.

Queensland Catholic schools provide overseas students with support, care and encouragement to make the most of their opportunities in a safe and focused learning environment. This may include support to improve students' English skills, self-confidence and independence. All students benefit from a whole of school approach that fosters the development of international friendships and networks. Overseas students benefit from opportunities to learn about Australia's way of life, history, culture and opportunities for further learning and career development.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/programs/exchange/long>

⁶ Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, December 2019, Education Council.

⁷ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Vatican City 2013, nn 19 – 20.

⁸ Ibid, n 57.

Position Statement

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission advocates that Catholic School Authorities commit to establishing appropriate policies and procedures that:

- contribute to the positive wellbeing of overseas students enrolled in Catholic schools
- support programs and pastoral arrangements such as induction programs and inclusive processes for overseas students
- promote a whole of school approach to intercultural understanding
- provide professional learning opportunities to build intercultural understanding among staff, students, parents and community
- respect and promote the expertise, knowledge and experiences of students and staff from diverse social and cultural backgrounds
- develop a deeper understanding of Catholic values and teachings to live and work harmoniously in local and global communities

Implications

Catholic School Authorities will give consideration to:

- information on intercultural understanding to engage staff, parents and the wider school community
- curriculum policies and practices for the development of intercultural understanding as one of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum⁹ which describes how students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others
- capacity and resources ensuring they provide the necessary supports for overseas students to fully access curriculum offerings
- pastoral programs that support and celebrate different cultures and countries such as induction and farewell programs, tutoring and inclusive processes for overseas students
- currency of information regarding emerging issues with respect to education for overseas students
- professional development for staff to ensure they are informed of cultural sensitivities and duty of care responsibilities so that they are equipped to support overseas students
- understanding of the complexity and costs involved in providing education to overseas students, such as funding, legislative and regulatory compliance according to the standards set out in the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students

References

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Vatican City 2013

Education Council (December 2019), *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Alice Springs: Education Services Australia.

⁹ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/intercultural-understanding/introduction/introduction>