Under 18 International Student Welfare Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this procedure is to detail conditions of welfare arrangements engaged by RMIT University in accordance with the university's obligations to international students under 18 years of age, as legislated by:

a. Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
b. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code)
c. Migration Regulations 1994
d. Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022 made under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
e. Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (as amended by the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021)

(2) This procedure should be read in conjunction with RMIT's Child Safe Policy and Student Safety Measures Procedure.

Section 2 - Authority

(3) Authority for this document is established by the Child Safe Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This procedure applies to:

a. international student visa holders (subclass 500) under 18 years of age enrolled at or applying to RMIT University (RMIT) or RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP);
b. international student education agents;
c. parents or legal guardians of international students under 18 years of age;
d. accommodation providers approved by RMIT University to host international students under 18 years of age;
e. caregivers approved by RMIT University to provide welfare services; and
f. RMIT employees responsible for the monitoring, management, and provision of welfare services in accordance with the legislative requirements listed above.

Section 4 - Procedure

Confirming Welfare Arrangements

(5) International student visa holders under 18 years of age issued an offer by RMIT must confirm welfare arrangements before admission may proceed. Welfare arrangements are confirmed through submission of the RMIT Welfare Approval Form, confirming either:

a. the student will reside in Australia with a relative approved by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) until their 18th birthday; or
b. the student will obtain a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) from RMIT.

(6) All international student applicants under 18 years of age are required to provide via the Welfare Approval Form:

a. personal biodata;
b. parent or legal guardian biodata;
c. Australian place of residence and contact details; and
d. a declaration confirming welfare arrangements via the Welfare Approval Form.

(7) A students parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must confirm the nominated welfare arrangements in the Welfare Approval Form and will be understood to act as guarantor by agreeing to the Declaration therein.

(8) A students parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must provide current and up-to-date contact details with RMIT and engage at RMIT's request on matters concerning the student's welfare while they are under 18 years of age.

Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW)

(9) Students who require CAAW must upload signed copies of contracts with an RMIT approved caregiver service and an accommodation provider approved by RMIT to host international students under 18 via the Welfare Approval Form.

(10) Accommodation contracts must commence no more than two weeks prior to the commencement of the student's program and must extend to the student's 18th birthday or two weeks after program completion, whichever occurs first.

(11) Accommodation assurances may be considered sufficient for the purposes of CAAW if the following is provided;

a. a letter of guarantee stating intention to place the student in accommodation no more than two weeks prior to program commencement;
b. an invoice for a matching fee, placement fee, provisional lease agreement and/or any other associated costs; and
c. a receipt of above payment of fees.

(12) RMIT will assume responsibility for the provision and maintenance of welfare arrangements for students who hold an approved CAAW and are enrolled at RMIT University or RMIT UP.

(13) RMIT reserves the right to refuse the approval of welfare arrangements or the provision of a CAAW if the application:

a. is incomplete;
b. does not satisfy RMIT requirements for admission and enrolment as detailed in this procedure; or
c. is in breach of RMIT policy, procedures and reporting instruments including, but not limited to:
    i. Child Safe Policy
    ii. Under 18 International Student Curfew Procedure
    iii. Student Conduct Policy
    iv. Admission Policy
    v. Enrolment Policy
    vi. Information Technology - Acceptable Use Standard

(14) RMIT reserves the right to collect data relevant to the student's welfare, course progression and enrolment from the Welfare Approval Form or other RMIT affiliated sources for the duration of their enrolment while an international student is under 18 years of age, in accordance with RMIT's Privacy Policy.

(15) RMIT may share student enrolment information with the Australian Government, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and contracted third parties if doing so is considered in the interests of student welfare or is required by Federal or State law, in accordance with RMIT's Privacy Policy.

CAAW Conditions

(16) A student subject to CAAW must comply with the following conditions until their 18th birthday or until the withdrawal or expiration of their CAAW:

a. reside in RMIT approved accommodation;
b. maintain a contract with an RMIT approved caregiver;
c. comply with the RMIT Under 18 International Student Curfew Procedure;
d. comply with RMIT enrolment and attendance requirements;
e. advise RMIT of any proposed changes to welfare arrangements;
f. comply with the RMIT Student Charter and Statement of Student Responsibilities;
g. comply with Australian laws;
h. engage the free RMIT endorsed airport pick-up service to collect them from the airport on arrival and deliver them to their approved accommodation, unless a Temporary Welfare Waiver has been approved (see Waiving Welfare); and
i. comply with student visa conditions.

(17) RMIT may withdraw a student's CAAW should the student fail to comply with any conditions of CAAW or is found in breach of RMIT policy.

(18) RMIT may withdraw a student's CAAW if the nominated parent(s) or legal guardian(s) cannot be contacted after reasonable attempts by RMIT or refuse to cooperate with the conditions of CAAW or RMIT policy.

Attendance

(19) Students enrolled in ELICOS or Foundation Studies at RMIT UP are required to maintain a minimum projected attendance rate of 80% of scheduled course contact hours.

(20) In accordance with Standard 8 of the National Code and the RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP) Student Attendance Instruction, RMIT UP will:

a. monitor, record and calculate student attendance;
b. identify, notify and assist students who have been absent from class for more than three consecutive days;
c. issue warnings via email to the student and implement intervention strategies when calculated attendance fails to meet 90% and/or 85% projected attendance requirement; and
d. commence the process of reporting unsatisfactory attendance to DHA, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), caregiver(s) (where applicable) and RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare when calculated projected attendance fails to meet the 80% minimum requirement.

(21) RMIT UP will include students' parent(s) or legal guardian(s), caregiver(s) (where applicable) and RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare in all communications with students relating to attendance.

Maintaining Welfare Arrangements

(22) RMIT will not delegate responsibility for welfare arrangements for the duration of a CAAW.

(23) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will maintain the welfare and wellbeing of students subject to CAAW by:

a. monitoring and confirming the safe arrival of students in Australia;
b. monitoring curfew register data;
c. conducting student welfare checks when required;
d. maintaining regular communication with caregiver(s) and parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
e. reviewing and approving activities outside of CAAW;
f. coordinating and approving changes to welfare arrangements; and
g. managing and reporting critical incidents in accordance with the Student Safety Measures Procedure.

(24) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will verify that an accommodation review has occurred within six months prior to the placement of an international student under 18 years of age with a homestay host or Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), and that reviews continue at regular six-month intervals to assess compliance and contribute to continuous improvement.

(25) RMIT Student Welfare will report on and conduct assurance of accommodation providers' obligations under Child Safe and Gender-Based Violence legislation, RMIT Child Safe Policy and RMIT Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Policy as part of the inspections.

(26) In agreement with a homestay service provider, RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will assess homestay hosts for suitability to accommodate international students under 18 years of age based on the established standards of the provider and agreed to by RMIT.

(27) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will review approved homestay host properties every 6 months after initial approval.

(28) RMIT Student Welfare will conduct homestay inspections of sites where RMIT students are placed according to provider standards as agreed by RMIT by the following cadence:

a. Initial in-person inspection one to six weeks prior to student arrival.
b. Digital survey six months after student placement and every 12 months thereafter.
c. In-person inspection every alternating 6 months.

(29) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will conduct annual reviews of externally contracted caregiver services.

Waiving Welfare

(30) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare may temporarily waive CAAW conditions if a student submits a Temporary Welfare Waiver or Offshore Abscence Request (Holiday Request). For waiver conditions and criteria, see the Under 18 International Student Curfew Procedure – Curfew Exemptions and Extensions.

(31) RMIT will not delegate responsibility for student welfare if a temporary waiver of CAAW is approved.

Amending CAAW

(32) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare may approve changes to welfare arrangements and will report any

approved changes to DHA via PRISMS within the legislatively required 14-day timeframe where the proposed change:

a. continues to satisfy requirements under this procedure;
b. does not unreasonably impact course progression; and
c. does not contravene student visa requirements.

(33) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare reserves the right to deny a request to change welfare arrangements if the application to do so is incomplete, or the request is in breach of legislative requirements or RMIT policy.

Managing Disruptions to Welfare Arrangements

(34) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare reserves the right to determine whether the organisation can meet its obligations to underwrite the welfare of a student subject to CAAW.

(35) Where a student's behaviour or circumstances inhibit the provision of appropriate welfare as defined by CAAW or are found to be non-compliant with the conditions of their CAAW, RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare may recommend a transfer of welfare arrangements whereby:

a. a parent or legal guardian approved by DHA agrees to move to Australia and assume responsibility for the student until they turn 18;
b. the student agrees to, and is approved for, a Leave of Absence until they turn 18, during which time they will reside in their home country; or
c. the student withdraws their enrolment from RMIT to either return to their home country or enrol with another registered provider.

(36) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare will not approve or implement a transfer of welfare arrangements without consultation with:

a. the student;
b. the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
c. the contracted caregiver and caregiver service;
d. the accommodation provider;
e. RMIT Student Support and/or RMIT UP Student Wellbeing;
f. representatives of the RMIT School, College or institution in which the student is enrolled (as appropriate); and
g. the education provider who has agreed to accept the transferring student, where applicable.

(37) RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare and International Admissions will inform DHA via PRISMS of any changes, including withdrawal, to welfare arrangements within the legislatively required 14-day timeframe.

(38) RMIT agrees to continue to maintain welfare arrangements as defined in a student's CAAW, even if CAAW is withdrawn, or enrolment is suspended, cancelled, or deferred (LoA) until alternative welfare arrangements are confirmed.

Section 5 - Compliance

(39) Compliance with this procedure is monitored by RMIT Under 18 International Student Welfare.

(40) Compliance with student attendance requirements and communications is monitored by RMIT UP.

(41) RMIT Education Regulation, Compliance Assurance (ERCA) is responsible for conducting annual assurance reviews, monitoring organisational compliance with this procedure, and providing updates to the Audit and Risk Management Committee via the ERCA bi-annual report.

(42) Breaches of this procedure are reportable via the Organisational Breach Reporting Form and are managed in accordance with the Compliance Breach Management Procedure.

Section 6 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Approved accommodation provider	Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) or Homestay approved by RMIT to host international students under 18 years of age.
Approved caregiver service	Caregiver service approved by RMIT to host international students under 18 years of age.
Biodata	Copy of passport, identity card or other photo identification authorised by an education migration agent, or photo identification notarised by a Public Notary.
Caregiver	Representative from a student caregiver service contracted to a student subject to CAAW and approved by RMIT.
CAAW	Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare
Curfew	A requirement for students subject to CAAW to remain onsite at approved accommodation between specified hours.
Homestay service provider	A registered and accredited homestay service that coordinates the accommodation of international students with Australian individuals/families.
RMIT	RMIT University.
RMIT UP	RMIT University Pathways.
Student	International student visa holder (subclass 500) under 18 years of age enrolled at RMIT University or RMIT UP and subject to CAAW.
Welfare arrangements	Contractually binding arrangements endorsed by either RMIT University or the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) that support the welfare and wellbeing of an international student under 18 years of age.

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Policy Author	Dene Cicci Executive Director, Students
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