International Students Policies
St Scholastica’s College

THE COLLEGE

St Scholastica’s College is an independent Catholic secondary school for girls. It began in 1878 and has been at its site in Glebe since 1901. St Scholastica’s College welcomes students from other countries at all year levels, from Year 7 to matriculation in Year 12 as day students or boarders. Not only do we have a lot to offer such students, we also believe we have much to gain as a multicultural establishment which advocates friendship, tolerance and understanding.

The College is conveniently located in a quiet, leafy and historic neighbourhood approximately five minutes from the central business district of Sydney. Two of Sydney’s universities are close by and the Darling Harbour/Chinatown district is located between the College and the city itself. The College is well served by public transport - train, bus and light rail.

The College is registered and accredited by both the New South Wales Board of Studies and the New South Wales Vocational Education & Training Accreditation Board to provide courses for International students from Year 7 to Year 12.

St Scholastica’s College offers International students the ability to obtain the NSW Higher School Certificate on completion of their Year 12 studies.

Students at the College study full-time, Monday to Friday from 8.50 a.m. to 3.15 p.m. Extra-curricular sport activities are available on Saturdays.

APPLICATIONS

Applications are accepted from individuals and also from agents with whom the College has binding agreements. These nominated agents (listed on the webpage) are expected to be used by applicants if they so desire and applicants need to directly deal with them. Contracts with agreed agents hopefully secures a student’s welfare and pastoral care needs at the College and recognises that the student is dealt with in a trustworthy and educationally sound manner. The College does not accept applications from other agents other than those nominated but agents/agencies but organisations may apply directly to the college if they wish to.

Information is collected during enrolment in order to meet our obligations under the ESOS Act and the National Code 2007, to ensure student compliance with the conditions of their visas and their obligations under Australian immigration laws generally. The authority to collect this information is contained in the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001 and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007. Information collected during enrolment can be provided, in certain circumstances, to the Australian Government and designated authorities and, if relevant, the Tuition Protection Scheme. In other instances information collected during your enrolment can be disclosed without your consent where authorized or required by law.

Applications will be evaluated and a decision made regarding acceptance only when all of the documents listed below have been received.

1. A completed and signed International Students Application Form
2. A complete official transcript of the student’s school record including the results of any standardized testing or other assessments. Parents should request an official transcript from each school attended in the last two years.
3. Completed and signed Appointment and Acceptance of Carer forms as well as accommodation arrangements for the student.
4. Police checks for those adults accepting any responsibility for the welfare of the student.
These forms are available on our website www.scholastica.nsw.edu.au.

The **APPLICATION FEE** must accompany each application form. No application will be considered unless accompanied by this fee. This non-refundable fee covers all administrative work involved in processing the application. Please check the current Fees Policy for this Application Fee.

**AGENTS**

There is a requirement under the DEEWR National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (Code) Standard 4 to document the application criteria and formalise the written agreement between agents and the College.

The agreement must meet minimum standards which are defined by the code. The code also requires processes for monitoring agent performance and recording corrective action and conditions under which the agreement can be terminated. The suggested appointment of an education agent should be made following a review against a criteria which is consistent with the College ethos and requirements under the Code.

- The agreement is to be signed on behalf of the College by the principal and is to be signed by an officer of the Education Agent authorised to sign on behalf of the entity.

- The Director will ensure that the educational agent fully completes and signs the application and agreement recognising that the educational agent is meeting the requirements of the criteria (stated below).

- The agreement is signed by the Principal, signed by the agent and copies are held by the College (original) and a copy is kept with the agent. All files referred to in this policy are stored in Director of Overseas Students’ office.

- The Director keeps a record (electronically or hand written) of dealings inquiries and/or with the agent in a student’s file.

- Corrective action is taken by the Director and Principal if there is a breach of the agreement.

- Meeting with agents occur throughout the year in person and/ or on visits to the College with prospective students.

- Based on the assessment of the criteria the Principal and Director will proceed with a renewal of the agreement or termination on the upon renewal date. This will be confirmed in writing.

- A list of agents is available to prospective students on the website.

**Criteria**

**Education Agent profile** – define the background and qualifications for performing the role of an educational agent, including the number of staff, years of experience, the location and details of all offices and key personnel. Check experience recruiting students and familiarity with Australian Education industry especially the ESOS act.

**Entity details** – provide details of company registration details or if a sole trader or partnership, details of key personnel.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Applicants for Years 7, 8 and 9 have no minimum requirements in English proficiency. Applicants for Years 10 and 11 must meet the requirements as set by DIAC. [http://www.immi.gov.au/business-services/education-providers/schools_english_requirements.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/business-services/education-providers/schools_english_requirements.htm)

A decision will be made by the Director of the Overseas Student Program after consultation with the Registrar as to whether or not an offer is made. If a student’s application is successful, parents, guardian or the agent are sent a letter offering a place at the college. The offer letter restates the conditions of enrolment along with an invoice for the initial fees payable.

All students will have their English proficiency assessed at the beginning of their studies. If further tuition in the English language is considered necessary, students will be referred to private Intensive English Centres. The College reserves the right to alter the level of entry if further English instruction is necessary. This may, in some cases result in the alteration of a student’s visa (an extension may be required).

ACCOMMODATION and WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS
St Scholastica’s is a College established by the Good Samaritan sisters in the Benedictine tradition where respect and care for the individual are paramount. The care, accommodation and welfare of all students are of primary concern to St Scholastica’s College.

The College takes responsibility for the accommodation and Welfare of the students from the date of commencement until completion of the elected course.

St Scholastica’s College accepts International students as either day students or boarders.

In order for a student under the age of 18 to be granted a student visa they must demonstrate that they have adequate welfare arrangements in place for the length of the student visa or until they turn 18.

Under the Migration Regulations, student visa applicants under the age of 18 must demonstrate that they will be accompanied by a parent or legal custodian, a suitable relative until the student turns 18 or that the student’s education provider approves arrangements for the student’s accommodation, support and general welfare.

A suitable relative is defined by DIAC as a person who is:


Such a relative must be nominated in writing by the parents; be a resident of New South Wales; be 21 years of age or over; and be able to provide proof of their relationship to the student.

Day Students: Welfare and accommodation arranged using a recommended homestay agency will meet the DIAC’s requirements and a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) form will be issued.

A homestay is when a family offers the facilities of their home to an International student for a fee. The homestay parent is not related to the student but accepts the role of Guardian/carer.

Where parents choose to make their own arrangements for the student’s welfare and accommodation, approval will only be granted after all the relevant checks including police checks, as required by immigration, including police checks have been made by an agency nominated by the college. This will incur an additional charge payable to the agency.
**Boarders:** Students who are accommodated in the boarding school must have arrangements in place for **alternative accommodation during school holiday periods or in case of emergency.** These arrangements must comply with Migration Regulations for a CAAW to be provided (see above).

A student whose welfare arrangements are approved by an education provider is **not permitted** to travel to Australia until the commencement date of welfare arrangements nominated by the provider on the CAAW letter.

If the student **does** arrive in Australia before the welfare arrangements are due to commence, their student visa may be subject to cancellation.

The student is obliged to notify the school of a change of address while enrolled at the school. This is to ensure that any notifications sent to the student advising of visa breaches are sent to the student’s current address. Where a student is under 18 years’ of age and St. Scholastica’s College has approved the student’s welfare and accommodation arrangements, the student requires school approval before any changes to welfare and accommodation arrangements are made. Any changes will only be approved after all DIAC requirements have been met (see Accommodation and Welfare Requirements above).

Welfare and accommodation arrangements are monitored by nominated agents and College staff. The College is also responsible for the monitoring of homestay conditions and the College appoints staff who visit, check and monitor, on a yearly basis that appropriate homestay arrangements are in place. If a student changes their homestay arrangements, an additional visit and check is required by the agency and the College. This involves a home visit to speak with the student and the homestay family/ persons and to ensure the living conditions and well-being of the student is being met. A report of the visit is filed in the students’ file and teacher reports back to the Director of Overseas Students’ on the visit and any follow up needed for the student and/or homestay hosts.

Regulations require that the education provider must advise DIAC as soon as possible in the event that an under 18 year old student has changed his or her living arrangements or the registered provider no longer approves of the arrangements. If a provider reports the student for changing his or her living arrangements and the provider approves of the changed arrangements, DIAC will be informed of the change but no further action will be taken. If a provider reports the student for changing his or her living arrangements and the provider no longer approves of the arrangements, the student is in breach of student visa condition 8532 and their visa may be subject to cancellation.

**STUDENT SUPPORT**

The Director of the Overseas Student Program is one of a number of staff members overseeing the pastoral care of International students studying at St Scholastica’s College. The Director of the Overseas Student Program monitors the daily attendance and academic progress of students to ensure visa conditions are being met. Early intervention and counselling is provided to students and their guardian/carer to ensure students are continually aware of their obligations under the student visa.

Other staff members in the student support network are:

- Class teachers
- Learning support staff
- Faculty coordinators
- College counsellor
- Guidance coordinators

Guardians/carers and parents are encouraged at all times to contact either the Director of the Overseas Student Program or the Guidance coordinator if there are any concerns or issues relating to the progress of their student at the college.

Full contact details are provided at the student’s orientation.
The Staff are given information regarding overseas students at the start of the year and this printed information is updated each term. The information includes the student’s home country, date of birth, date and place of entry into the College and a graph depicting the home country origin of all overseas students. The Staff is regularly updated at the staff morning briefing of the status of students and their pastoral needs. Communication via email and discussion occurs on a regular basis. Individual classroom teachers are encouraged to come and discuss the student’s progress and needs with the Director of overseas student program. A record is kept of essential correspondence in the student’s file and a log sheet is kept as part of an ongoing dialogue that monitors the student’s well-being and progress at the College.

**ENROLMENT**

If the offer is accepted, **all fees as stated on the invoice attached to the letter of offer must be paid** before a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) are issued. The CoE and CAAW are required to apply for a student visa. Once the fees are paid a place is reserved for that student.

All international students are required to have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the length of their visa. This can be arranged by the college using Medibank Private. Students may organise their own OSHC using a different provider but must produce evidence of this to DIAC before a visa is granted.

**FEES**

Current fees charged may be found on the college website in the International student section. Fees do not include payments for uniforms, some excursions and camps, music tuition, instrument hire, drama performances or in school activities for which a charge is made. Fees do cover textbook hire. Annual fees are payable in two instalments at the beginning of each semester. Students in Year 12 who sit for the Higher School Certificate are regarded as enrolled for the whole year and are not entitled to a refund for Term 4.

**REFUNDS**

Upon acceptance of the offer of a place at the college and the payment of fees, a binding contract is created. If the enrolment is cancelled by the student/parents less than five calendar weeks prior to the commencement of a course, a **cancellation fee** equivalent to one term’s tuition fee shall be deducted from any refund.

If a student withdraws from a course after it has started, no refund of that semester’s tuition/boarding fees will be made. If there are exceptional circumstances for a student’s failure to start a course or withdrawal from a course, a written explanation of the circumstances should be made to the college Principal. In such cases, a variation to the refund policy may be made. Each individual case will be decided on merit.

**If a student’s enrolment is cancelled because of a breach of visa conditions, no refund will be paid.**

If a student is not able to obtain a student visa, all fees paid, except for the Application Fee will be refunded. The student will need to notify the College in writing if they are unable to obtain a visa as soon as they are aware of the decision. The letter should also provide the family’s banking details in which all refunded money will be paid. Refunds will usually be paid within 30 days.

The college’s refunds policy does not remove the right of the student to take further action under Australia’s Consumer Protection Laws. Refunds will only be paid to the student’s parents.
ATTENDANCE and COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Conditions of Enrolment
Students must adhere to College rules and the terms and conditions of enrolment as stated on the international student application form. They will receive information about College rules and expected behaviour at orientation.

The College may suspend or cancel a student’s enrolment on grounds of misbehaviour. For further information about student behaviour and suspension and expulsion of students, refer to the Guidance Coordinator of the student’s Year Group.

All fees and charges must be paid on time. All students are presented with an invoice for fees and charges at the beginning of each semester. If a student began her studies part way through the previous semester she will also receive an invoice with the new semester’s charges. Adjustments will be made for fees already paid or any increases. If fees are not paid, a student’s enrolment may be cancelled.

Student’s must attend at least 80% of classes for each term or semester and achieve satisfactory academic results. Monitoring of academic progress is according to the general college policy on assessment. The Director of Overseas students’ monitors daily attendances via daily rolls and lateness, checks with roll call teachers and Guidance Coordinators as to actions and follow up procedures. Parents/guardian and carers are contact if necessary if serious concerns arise immediately by phone.

Reporting and Assessment
International students are assessed according to the College’s assessment policy which is available on the College website.

Formal reports are issued at the end of each semester and are provided to parents and/or guardian/carers.

Attendance
A student must attend a minimum of 80% of all scheduled classes. If she does not meet attendance requirements, she may be reported to DIAC, unless there are compassionate or compelling circumstances (guidelines are provided below).

Attendance is monitored daily and for every term of the course a student is undertaking. Any initial cause for concern will be brought to her attention and measures to improve attendance suggested by the Guidance Coordinator and the Director of Overseas Students Program. The agent/guardian and parent is contacted by phone/email or internal College letter (a record of this is kept in the student’s file) to alert them to concerns over attendance. Internal College letters are sent to the student and print outs of days unexplained absences/ absences and late/s are provided for the student to check against their own records. Counselling of the student by the Guidance Coordinator and the Director of Overseas Students Program of how to rectify the situation is provided to the student. Prior to official letters related to the DIAC guidelines the school’s own attendance policies take effect and the principal is given the discretion to assess the situation on case by case basis. The College’s general policies are to be found at: http://www.scholastica.nsw.edu.au/html/about_us_policies.html

Once a student’s attendance falls below 90% a first warning letter is issued to her and her parents or guardian/carer. She will be counselled and given the opportunity to improve. If poor attendance continues and begins to fall further, a second warning letter is issued. If there is still no improvement and the student has fallen below 80% attendance required by her visa conditions, a third letter, a notification of the intention to report the student to DIAC will be sent.

An appeal may be lodged, in writing, within 20 working days of being informed of any decision being made. A working day is defined as any day the College is open with staff present.
A student must provide a doctor’s certificate for any absences of 3 days or more. The doctor must be a registered medical practitioner. If she is absent for 1 or 2 days, a letter of explanation must be provided by her guardian/carer or if she is over 18 years, a student needs to provide her own written explanation.

If a student is absent from school for more than five consecutive days without approval, the student or the student’s carer/guardian or the student’s agent will be contacted by phone for an explanation. If the student cannot be contacted by phone, a registered letter will be sent to the last known address, requesting an explanation. If no explanation is received within 7 days, DIAC will be informed.

A student must meet course progress requirements. Student progress is monitored by the classroom teacher, Subject Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, Pastoral Guidance Coordinator and the Director of Overseas Student Program. Students must make a serious attempt at every assessment task and achieve satisfactory results, as deemed by their classroom teacher and subject Coordinator, in order to continue studying in a course. The College will provide a student with information about course requirements as outlined by the Board of Studies. Further information about course requirements is available at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

If a student is failing to meet course requirements, the guidance coordinator will notify the student and her parents. The student needs to be pass (50%) of her courses in adherence to the National Curriculum Standards. If concerns about achievement and course attainment are of concern, then the Guidance Coordinator and the Director of Overseas Students discusses these issues with the Principal who has the flexibility to make a decision about the student’s enrolment based on individual considerations. The Careers Counsellor is also asked to support the decision making process for the student alongside with guardians/carers or parents via phone calls or meetings.

Attempts to improve the student’s performance will be made and if the student fails to respond, the Director of the Overseas Student Program will be informed. The Director will then send a notification of the intention to report the student to DIAC.

An appeal may be lodged, in writing, within 20 working days of being informed of any decision being made. 

A working day is defined as any day the college is open with staff present.

In the case of suspension or cancelation of enrolment the College policy is followed but counselling and support as per the College’s welfare policy is followed and the variation of Conditions of Enrolment is also adhered to and this may affect the student’s visa status.

**COURSE CREDIT**

The Junior and Secondary course do not have course credits.

**Taking Leave**

If a student is going to be absent for a week or more during school term, her parents must request approval from the principal. A student must not defer her start date or take extended leave without the principal’s permission. Approval is only granted on compelling or compassionate grounds (guidelines below).

Overseas students are reminded that they are required to stay at school for the duration of each term prior to returning home for term holidays. We are mindful of the fact that airline schedules often make this difficult, if not impossible and this will be taken into consideration. If a student needs to leave prior to the end of term, permission to do so must be sought, in writing, from the Guidance Coordinator and the Director of the Overseas Student Program, BEFORE travel arrangements are made.
Guidelines for Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

Leave approved on grounds of compelling or compassionate circumstances is not counted in attendance records. Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond a student’s control and which have an impact upon course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- illness, where a medical certificate states that you are unable to attend classes or
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate or other evidence should be provided either prior to departure or on return) or
- A traumatic experience which could include, but is not limited to:
  - involvement in, or witnessing of an accident
  - Witnessing or being the victim of a crime
  - and this has impacted on a student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists’ reports or advice)
- inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER EDUCATIONAL PROVIDER

If a student wants to transfer to another Catholic school she must provide a written reason and request to the college, signed by her parents or guardian if she is under 18, with an offer letter from the new school or institution. The granting of a transfer will be in discussions with the principal and an assessment and decision will be made at the time of the request and certainly within a week of the request being made. A student’s transfer request may not be granted if the principal deems it is detrimental to the student’s welfare and academic ability.

A student may apply to transfer to another education provider before 6 months of enrolment. A letter of release will only be granted where she has provided a letter from the new provider, confirming that a valid enrolment offer has been made. If she is under 18, her parents or legal guardian must provide written support for the transfer.

Applicants transferring from another education provider must have completed six months with that provider before being considered by St Scholastica’s College. If six months has not been completed with the original provider, applicants will be considered on an individual basis, only if a letter of release from the original provider can be produced.

For further information concerning visa regulations about change of provider refer to the DIAC website or the Director of the Overseas Student Program at the college.

WORK

If a student obtains Work Rights on her visa, she is able to work during holiday periods. Any part-time work during school term must not interfere with her school studies and must not exceed 40 hours per fortnight.

COMPLAINTS and APPEALS

The College has a complaints and appeals process. If a student wishes to make a complaint or appeal a decision made concerning her enrolment, course progress or other decision, she should contact the Director of the Overseas Student Program at the college. If the complaint is against the Director of the Overseas Student Program, then the complaint is taken directly to the Principal. (Please refer to the ‘Grievance and Dispute Policy’ page 39 of the ‘policies’ document on the College’s website).

Any appeal must be lodged, in writing, within 20 working days of being informed of any decision being made. A working day is defined as any day the college is open with staff present.

If after contacting the Director, the issue remains unresolved, the Director will then seek to involve the following if needed:

- Guidance Coordinator
- Faculty Coordinator
- Deputy Principal
If the matter is not resolved internally the student or her parents may lodge an external appeal with the Good Samaritan Education which will deal with the matter externally.

If a student or her parents wish to lodge an external appeal or complain about any decision, they can contact the Overseas Students Ombudsman. The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

The college will continue to provide support and maintain enrolment of the student which includes and a continued enrolment for the student during the appeals process and will not seek to have the student's visa cancelled until the matter is fully resolved.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS
St Scholastica’s College has a Critical Incident Policy in place in the event of a serious incident occurring. All staff is made aware through the Staff Handbook of the need to report immediately any incident to members of the critical incident team, who then implement the documented procedures. Please refer to the College’s website’ policies’ document titled ‘Critical Incidents’ page 24):

In specific cases of a critical incident in the student’s home country i.e. Tsunami in Japan of 2011, the critical incidents policy will be followed with a special meeting of overseas students who are directly affected by the incident and a meeting held to inform students of the event, discuss issues, raise concerns and allow students to contact family and relatives as well as offer counselling students who are affected.

Homestay inspectors have a specific set of guidelines in terms of visiting homestays situations which includes the College’s critical incidents policy yet allows for the removal of a student to the boarding school immediately if they deem the homestay situation to be of concern to welfare of the student during their visit. The staff member is to contact the Director of Overseas Students immediately as well as the Principal and the Director of the Boarding House, who will provide accommodation and welfare arrangements for the student.