

Making New Friends

When you are in a foreign culture it can seem more difficult than usual to find people who you really “get along” with. Be kind to yourself - remember that making friends takes time. Make the most of social opportunities during your life in Australia, just as you would back home, it will be quicker and easier for you to fit in, make friends and feel at home.

Australian Slang

Much common word usage or 'slang' may seem strange to people new to Australia. If you are unsure what an expression means, it is all right to ask the person who said it to explain. Some common expressions are:

- Arvo - This is short for afternoon. 'Drop by this arvo,' means please come and visit this afternoon.
- Barbeque, BBQ, barbie - outdoor cooking, usually of meat or seafood over a grill or hotplate using gas or coals. The host serves the meat with salads and bread rolls. It is common for a guest, when invited to a BBQ, to ask if they should bring anything.
- Snag - The raw type sausages usually cooked at a BBQ. They can be made of pork, beef or chicken.
- Chook - The term chook means a chicken, usually a hen.
- Cuppa - a cup of tea or coffee 'Drop by this arvo for a cuppa' means please come and visit this afternoon for a cup of tea or coffee.
- Loo or dunny - These are slang terms for toilet. If you are a guest in someone's house for the first time, it is usually polite to ask permission to use his or her toilet. 'May I use your toilet please?' Some people ask, 'Where's the loo?'
- Fair dinkum - honest, the truth. 'Fair dinkum?' when used as a question means, 'is it really true?'
- To be crook - to be sick or ill.
- Flat out - busy.
- Bloke - a man. Sometimes if you ask for help, you may get an answer to 'see that bloke over there'.
- How ya goin? - 'How are you going?' means how are you, or how do you do? It does not mean what form of transport you are taking. Sometimes it can sound like 'ow-yagoin-mate'.

Sun Safety

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. The sun is very intense in Australia and it is important to protect your skin. See below tips:

1. Minimise your time in the sun between 10am and 3pm
2. Seek shade
3. Wear suitable clothing that provides good sun protection



4. Choose a broad brim hat that will protect your face, neck and ears
5. Wear UV protective sunglasses
6. Apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you go out into the sun.

Beach Safety

Understanding the ocean is very important. Recognising danger signs and awareness of surf conditions is an essential part of swimming in Australian oceans.

Remember the **F-L-A-G-S** and Stay Safe

- F** Find the flags and swim between them - the red and yellow flags mark the safest place to swim at the beach.
- L** Look at the safety signs - they help you identify potential dangers and daily conditions at the beach.
- A** Ask a surf lifesaver for some good advice - surf conditions can change quickly so talk to a surf lifesaver or lifeguard before entering the water.
- G** Get a friend to swim with you - so you can look out for each other's safety and get help if needed. Children should always be supervised by an adult.
- S** Stick your hand up for help - if you get into trouble in the water, stay calm, and raise your arm to signal for help. Float with a current or rip - don't try and swim against it.

And remember – NEVER - swim at unpatrolled beaches, at night, directly after a meal and never run and dive into the water.

Section Three: Rules that apply to your exchange

The following rules governing student conduct have been established and agreed to in writing by participating students and their parents or legal guardians. Students are obliged to adhere to these rules or risk being sent home.

You must also abide by any decisions made by Students of the World, its representatives and your host family.

No Smoking

Australian law makes it an offence to sell or supply tobacco products to a person under the age of 18 years. It is illegal for anyone under 18 to purchase tobacco products. Smoking is not permitted at all during your exchange.

No Driving

Driving is not allowed while in Australia. It can be especially annoying because many of you already have a driver's license but the insurance cover you have does not cover you if you are injured whilst driving and Students of the World cannot be responsible for you. Getting behind the wheel yourself is a serious problem and a situation to be avoided completely.

No Drugs or Alcohol

You may find that at your school there is some drug use. You might feel pressured about using drugs. What can you do if your friends urge you to join them? Don't give an excuse, be open and honest and give a reason for your unwillingness to participate without implying a value judgment on their behavior. You might even want to tell them that you do not want to be sent home. You will find that a firm decision is respected. If the person continues to push, perhaps it is not a friend for you. Remember, non-compliance with this rule might result in your arrest and will certainly result in being sent straight home.

School Attendance is Compulsory

All students must attend school regularly and failure to attend school will result in you being sent home. An occasional absence for illness, an appointment or to accompany your host family somewhere is fine but regular nonattendance is not acceptable.



Participation in activities outside of the home

Any activities that you would like to participate in, such as sport, catching up with friends after school or on the weekend, going to the movies, to a party or barbecue, must be approved by your host parents. They must always know and be kept informed where you are, how long you will be out for, who you are with and what time you will be home. If you have arranged with your host parents to be home by a certain time and cannot make it by that time or would like to extend your time out, you must call your host parents to inform them that you will be home later or get their approval to stay out longer.

Appropriate Use of Social Media

You must use the internet and social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and other blogs, chat rooms and sites appropriately. You must not post personal information or inappropriate material online. Do not put your contact details online. Make sure you ask permission from your host family before you post any photos of any family members.

During the induction session our representatives will guide you through social media and internet exposure and its risks. It's very important to be aware of the danger of exposing personal information on these forums and getting in touch with unknown people.

No Paid Work

You must not participate in any paid work for the duration of your exchange.

Section Four: School

School Rules

- Be polite to all teachers and students.
- Do not talk to other students in class when you should be learning.
- Do not correct the language teacher (unless asked to do so) if he or she does not pronounce or teach your language correctly.
- Follow the rules without arguing with teachers even if you think the rules are silly or childish. If however, an adult makes you feel uncomfortable or frightened please call us.
- Return all library books and text books belonging to the school on your last day.
- Obey all school rules e.g.:
 - No alcohol/drugs/smoking
- Attend all classes and try to complete all work, if you have any questions about the school expectations, please check with your host family and school coordinator.
- Always be very polite and try to speak to other students.

There are rules in many schools that are seriously enforced. The rules apply to uniforms and behaviour. Some rules may annoy you and others might make you angry, but you must follow them, and if you do it with a smile, everyone, including you, will be happier.

Subject Selection

The school should provide you with a list of subjects to choose from for your stay. However, some schools, depending on your year level, may not be able to offer you much choice. Try selecting subjects that are different from what you study back home, to give you an alternate experience.

School Attendance

You are attending school as an **EXCHANGE STUDENT, not as a tourist or visitor**. This means that you are expected to attend school every day, take your classes seriously and demonstrate a positive attitude.

School Expenses

Please remember that you must buy your own school supplies, except possibly text books, which may be lent to you. If you lose a book you will be charged for it. All library books and borrowed text books must be returned to the school before you leave.

Sharing your experience and your country

People in your school and your community are curious about you. You have something to share that may be new to most of the other students: an intimate knowledge of another culture. Join in when you can and you won't regret it. Be an ambassador for your country and don't be afraid of sharing



your knowledge with your classmates and host family. They are curious to know something about your school system and life.

Uniform

Unlike in Europe, schools in Australia have a strict uniform policy that needs to be adhered to. You will need to supply shoes, normally black lace up shoes, and will need to buy new socks or stockings (depending on the season). The uniform can be purchased from the school's uniform shop. Some schools have second hand uniforms available from their uniform shop. In some cases host families may have spare items of uniform that they can lend you for the duration of your stay. If you do borrow items of uniform, please take care and don't lose the items. New items of school uniform can be very costly.

Don't be concerned if you don't have your school uniform for your first day of school. If not organised before, it can be sorted on your first day. Host families will assist you with this.

Transport to/from School

How you get to and from school depends on your host family. All host families have different circumstances, differing proximities to school, work commitments, number of children and so on. In some cases your host parent may drive you to school, while some of you may need to catch public transport or the school bus. If you do need to take public transport to and from school please be aware that this is at your own expense. In some instances host families may live within walking distance to the school. Transport arrangements will be made with your host family when you arrive.

First Day

On your first day of school your host mother or father will most likely accompany you to the school office. There you will meet the teacher from the school that manages the international students. On the first day you will be able to arrange uniforms, your class schedules, have a tour of the school and meet your new school community.

Section Five: Staying with your Host Family

Your host family have chosen to host you because they are interested in learning about your culture and your country. Your host family is not being paid for hosting you, they have a desire to make it possible for you to stay and study in their country because they feel it will be a wonderful experience for both them and you.

Respecting the expectations of your host family

Some of you are probably accustomed to going where you please, when you please and with whom you please. You can come home when you want and never be questioned about it. **This will not be the case while on our exchange program.** Your family will expect you to ask their permission to go out, they will expect to know where you are and with whom, and above all will expect you to return at a designated time. If you are late for dinner, please be sure to phone. If you stay late at school please also, phone. If you are held up at a party, please phone. You may feel restricted by this, but you must conform to what is expected of you. Host families are not doing this to annoy you but are doing it so that they always know that you are safe and well. You are their responsibility while in Australia and they want to make sure you are happy and cared for.

Host parents may often work and come home late in the evening. Students generally stay at home, do their homework, study, play sport and watch tv during the week. They are less independent than in many other countries. Do not expect to go out during the week.

Expenses

Your host family provides you with room, breakfast and dinner only.

You must pay your own way, including personal expenses such as restaurants, outings and toiletries. To make sure you don't run out of money you may want to keep a record of what you spend during the first few weeks. This way you will have an idea of how far your money will go and you can then budget for the remainder of your stay.

You must always have at least Australian \$200 as an emergency fund. Remember that your host family is never allowed to lend you money.

I-pad/computer and mobile phone use

You will probably have your own computer, i-pad or mobile phone. Please make sure you have a clear agreement on when and for how long you may use these devices. Be respectful of the time of day you are talking on the phone or computer and for the length of time. For example, don't be speaking late at night or early in the morning when members of the family may be wanting to sleep, or at times when you should be getting ready for school or participating in family activities.



Unlike most countries Australians often have a limit on their data allowance, so please be aware that if you are using the internet, the family may have a limit on data usage, so ask the host family and be respectful of any rules they may apply. If there are any additional costs incurred by you for the phone or internet usage, you will be responsible for paying this. **Please don't abuse your host family's hospitality.**

Travel Plans

You are participating in a HOMESTAY and not a travel program. Any TRAVELLING that you do must be approved by your natural and host family, your area coordinator, and the Students of the World office but in general travelling alone or with other teenagers is never permitted.

Heaters and air-conditioners

It's nice to keep yourself warm in the cooler weather and cool in the hot weather but remember electricity charges in Australia are very high. Always turn off your heater or air conditioner before you leave your room or before you go to sleep at night.

Privacy

Everyone needs a certain amount of time to be alone, but you will find that host families expect you to share a lot of time with them. Meal times are especially important: it's an occasion to chat; make sure you don't miss it, you may really get to enjoy these moments of the day where everybody gets together. Try not to shut yourself up in a room when everyone else is together. Usually the bedroom is not used as a living room or for socialising, but if you invite friends into your bedroom, be sure to leave the door open.

Solving Problems

Successful relationships between people involve everyone being OPEN with each other and DISCUSSING THINGS that might be BOTHERING THEM. Don't let little problems turn into big ones. Sit down with your family and discuss your feelings.

Our Expectations of You

Appreciation – your host family is sacrificing privacy and spending a good deal of money on including you as a member of the family, by providing food, care and affection. There are many ways to show your appreciation. A simple “thank you”, returning home when you are expected, eating the food that is placed in front of you, smiling and saying “hello” when you walk in the door, offering to set the table, to take out the garbage or rake the yard, keeping your room clean or joining the family in their activities. These are all ways of showing your appreciation.



Consideration and Cooperation - choosing to participate in this program requires maturity and it is expected that you always try to cooperate and to have consideration for others. Good manners and respect for everyone is essential. Be aware of what you say and how you say it. Even if you would like to complain about something, try to do it in a positive way and tactfully.

Respecting the Rules - your host family, your Area Representative and Students of the World have the right to set rules for you when it concerns your time here. They know what is dangerous or inappropriate for you in a foreign country and even if you think that what they expect is silly, you must obey the rules. If you feel that you are being treated like a child, please accept the occasional well-intentioned guidelines.

Be positive - a positive frame of mind is always a great help. Be curious and open-minded, look for what is good and what you can learn from any experience. Things will not always be perfect, but the exchange is an experience of discovery and growth. With an open mind and a spirit of adventure, any situation can become interesting and exciting.

Your attitude will greatly determine the experience you have.

Volunteer to Help - offer to help your host family around the house. Try to understand that every member of the household has responsibilities around the house and you must do your share. Some students have found that more was expected from their host family than from their family back home, it really depends on each family. Don't wait to be asked, volunteer and ask what you can do to help. They may be reluctant to ask you as they feel that you should offer to help whenever you can. Remember to keep your room tidy. Don't just close the door, clean up and keep it tidy. Make your bed every morning and wash your clothes. Your host mother will be more than happy to show you how the washing machine works.

Above all, remember that you are expected to ACCEPT and ADAPT to the lifestyle of your host family.



Section Six: Child Protection

Most people who you meet during your Australian experience will be nice people who are genuinely interested in you, where you come from and what you do. However, like most countries not every single person is a good person and while we hope you never encounter them there may be people who wish you harm. If anyone makes you feel frightened, fearful or anxious please follow the steps below. Even if you are unsure you can still call or text us for help and support.

Crisis or Emergency Situation

SOTW provide an emergency phone service which students or families can call 24/7 if they experience a genuine emergency.

If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe:

For immediate assistance, please call the police on 000

If you feel unsafe because of the way an adult is treating or interacting with you, you can call:

Students of the World (24hrs): 0401 562 768

If you feel distressed and would like to talk to someone you can call:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Complaints

On arrival into the host country, you will receive a copy of the UN Rights of the Child and will have your rights explained to you. You will also be given a complaint form and explained what it is for and how to use it and the contact details for SOTW representatives including the local area co-ordinator and child safe officers.

Complaints can be given face to face, by telephone or sms, by using our Students of the World complaint form on paper (can be posted) or online (emailed to student) or via our website www.studentsoftheworld.com.au.

All complaints will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

Keeping safe from neglect, sexual, physical and emotional harm and grooming

SOTW is committed to child safety and requires zero tolerance of child abuse from all management, staff, students, volunteers and families.

We are committed to the principle of zero tolerance, child-safety and wellbeing and:

- Follow our child safety policy.
- Support, encourage and enable staff, parents, volunteers and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters. During the induction session, students will be briefed on the above mentioned child safety matters.
- Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Our child safety policy applies to all exchange environments.
- Child safety is considered in the recruitment, screening, selection and management of staff, host families and volunteers to reduce risk of child abuse.
- In each country that SOTW work with there are variations in the legal requirements of working with children and criminal background checks for volunteer host families. In all cases, we and our overseas partners comply with the requirements of the law when selecting management of staff, host families and volunteers to reduce risk of child abuse.

Child Abuse is when the adults responsible for caring for you harm you or do not meet your needs properly. If you are being hurt in any way, it is okay to tell someone and we would like to help you. Abuse is not your fault and you have done nothing wrong. You have the right to feel safe.

Types of Abuse

Emotional Abuse is when people aren't talking to you nicely and hurting you with words. This may involve name-calling, swearing, yelling or being put down. This could include hitting, biting, pushing, kicking or smacking or anything else that hurts your body.

Neglect – Is if your family fails to meet your basic needs, such as providing enough food, drink, somewhere safe to sleep, medical attention if needed, leaving you unattended for a long period of time

Physical Abuse - occurs your parent, host parent or other adult hurts you physically. This could include hitting, biting, pushing, kicking or smacking or anything else that hurts your body.

Sexual Abuse - occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve you in any form of sexual activity. It might include watching you naked, touching genitals or breasts, showing you pornography or inappropriate phone calls/texts.

Support Networks

Great importance is placed on the safety and wellbeing of all international students. Our support service starts before a student leaves the home country and continues throughout their stay to ensure students enjoy their experience at school and in their homestay.

An assigned local area coordinator is available for regular contact, support, and advice. If you are having a problem, you can talk to your local area coordinator who will offer advice and assistance.

Furthermore, we assist you with ongoing support including;

- Orientation program on arrival into host country providing information about;
- Living in that country - expectations of the international student program
- Monitoring of homestay experience
- 24-hour emergency phone service

If you are experiencing any emotional distress while away, from homesickness to discomfort in your environment, please talk to someone about the way you feel. You can talk to your host-family, a teacher, or a local coordinator. We don't want you to feel alone.

Your exchange with Students of the World will give you the opportunity to grow and develop socially, personally and academically. It will be exciting, rewarding and often challenging.

Ultimately it is up to you – your level of commitment to the program, your enthusiasm, positivity, willingness to contribute and participate and spirit of adventure are the attributes that will determine an experience that you can build on for the rest of your life.

We wish you a wonderful, memorable time in Australia!

STUDENTS OF THE WORLD TEAM 😊