



Cultural Immersion Parent and Student Policy

2023/2024



Rationale

At Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs our students are encouraged to challenge themselves beyond classroom walls and become global citizens. Cultural Immersion Tours are considered an educational experience designed to complement classroom learning. Through participation in a Cultural Immersion Tour, students develop problem solving skills, independence, confidence and cultural awareness.

Scripture

Proverbs 3:23, 26

You'll travel safely, you'll neither tire nor trip... because God will be right there with you; he'll keep you safe and sound.



Student Application Process and Eligibility

At Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs, Cultural Immersion Tours are an optional experience for students to further their learning outside of the classroom environment. Cultural Immersion Tours encompass both international and domestic trips. The Cultural Immersion Leader invites eligible students across Year 8-10 to express interest in one or more Cultural Immersion Tours at the College. Only full fee-paying students are eligible to take part in Cultural Immersion Tours. In addition to this, all full fee-paying students must be up to date with their school fees at the time of travel.

The student selection process is as follows:

- students are required to express their interest in attending a tour through a Microsoft form directly to the Cultural Immersion Leader
- students and their parents/carers should attend a Cultural Immersion Parent and Student Information Night to learn more about their interested tour
- the Cultural Immersion Student Endorsement form and Student Code of Conduct form must be completed by the due date and returned to the Cultural Immersion Leader
- parents/carers must pay the deposit by the due date in order to secure their child's place on the tour. Payments must be received by the due date not transferred on the due date. Late payments will not be accepted.

Student Endorsement and Selection Criteria

Students wishing to take part in a Cultural Immersion Tour will be endorsed based on the following selection criteria:

- a commitment to our College motto *Live Fully Act Justly*
- a commitment to their academic studies
- a clear ability to work well in a team environment
- well behaved, well-mannered and respectful
- physically able to partake in the tour (some tours are subject to a medical clearance)
- a genuine interest and commitment to the tour (this includes a commitment to training sessions outside of school hours and after school preparation sessions where applicable)
- willingness to host international students (where applicable)
- previous participation in school-based events.



School Fees and Tour Payments

The process for school fees and tour payments will be as follows:

- only full fee-paying students are eligible for a Cultural Immersion Tour
- deposits will only be accepted by full fee-paying students at the College
- the Finance Manager can assist families to move back to full fee-paying arrangements to be considered eligible for a Cultural Immersion Tour
- school fees must be up to date at time of travel. Failure to comply may jeopardise your child's place on the tour
- deposits are paid directly to reception either in person, by electronic transfer or by phone by the due date and **are non-refundable**
- students that are financially eligible to take part in a Cultural Immersion Tour however do not receive an initial endorsement from the Cultural Immersion Leader, will be able to receive a refund of their deposit
- the Finance Team will invoice each respective family the payment plan for their chosen tour including due dates for each payment
- late fees may apply if the payment plan is not adhered to
- parents/carers should work directly with the Finance Team to discuss questions related to school fees and payments
- the cost and inclusions of each Cultural Immersion Tour may vary depending on the destination.

Withdrawals from Cultural Immersion Tours

The process for withdrawals will be as follows:

- parents/carers must work directly with the school for questions regarding withdrawals and costings for each respective tour
- a student withdrawing from a Cultural Immersion Tour due to change of mind after the deposit has been paid will result in the family forfeiting their deposit
- a student withdrawing from a Cultural Immersion Tour due to change of mind after a full or partial payment will result in the family forfeiting all payments made to date
- a student withdrawing from a Cultural Immersion Tour due to illness or injury should seek recompense through their travel insurance provider
- a student that was initially endorsed to take part in a Cultural Immersion Tour but is now in breach of the Student Code of Conduct may be removed from a Cultural Immersion Tour and result in the family forfeiting all payments made to date



CATHOLIC REGIONAL COLLEGE CAROLINE SPRINGS

- a student needing to be sent home due to breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will be invoiced additional costs incurred because of being sent home prematurely
- If withdrawing from a Cultural Immersion Tour, it must be done in writing to the Cultural Immersion Leader at least 60 days prior to the departure date.

Student Expectations on a Cultural Immersion Tour

Prior to, during and post a Cultural Immersion Tour, students are expected to:

- partake in regular lunchtime meetings with the appointed staff
- attend training sessions outside of school hours (where applicable)
- attend an after-school incursion with fellow students and appointed staff
- attend additional after school support programs if identified by the Cultural Immersion Leader or appointed staff as necessary
- submit all relevant documentation including the Student Endorsement Form, Student Code of Conduct and medical letters to the appointed staff in a timely manner
- uphold high standards of behaviour at school
- maintain academic studies
- represent the College community with reverence and dignity
- respect fellow peers, appointed staff, and external representatives
- respect the property of others including hotel rooms and accommodation
- abide by the Student Code of Conduct at all times
- look after their personal belongings including passports, luggage, medication and valuable items
- follow instructions provided by the appointed staff particularly whilst partaking in 'out of direct line of sight' activities
- always remain contactable with the appointed staff
- always communicate concerns with the appointed staff directly so that concerns can be addressed in a timely manner
- use social media only to communicate with family in a respectful and positive manner
- assist the Cultural Immersion Leader to promote future Cultural Immersion Tours by presenting at College Assemblies and/or creating promotional videos.



Support for Students

The Cultural Immersion Leader alongside the appointed staff will liaise with parents/carers to support all students attending a Cultural Immersion Tour. This support can include but is not limited to, setting up Cultural Immersion Care Plans.

For students requiring additional support, the following steps will be put in place:

- parents/carers will be contacted by an appointed staff to set up a meeting at the College
- parents/carers will meet with key staff members such as appointed staff, Counsellors, First Aid Officer, Learning Diversity Leader, Head of Student Wellbeing and the Cultural Immersion Leader
- a Cultural Immersion Care Plan will be agreed upon and signed by all attendees
- students will be offered additional support and counselling as required to ensure they feel prepared for the Cultural Immersion Tour
- students may be required to provide a medical clearance from their doctor to ensure they are able to safely take part in a Cultural Immersion Tour
- students may be required to attend after school support programs to be deemed eligible for the Cultural Immersion Tour (as applicable).

Health and Medication on a Cultural Immersion Tour

The following must be adhered to:

- parents/carers must disclose all health concerns including allergies and student medication to the College First Aid Officer and on the Medical Operoo prior to departure
- parents/carers must ensure Operoo is up to date with student details, health issues and medication requirements
- students are responsible for the carriage of their medication when moving through the airport on both domestic and international flights
- medication must be clearly labelled with the students' names and placed in a clear zip lock bag
- all prescription medication must be accompanied by a letter from the doctor
- all medication must be in its original packaging and prescribed to the participating student
- staff will administer medication to students following instructions provided by parents/carers on the Medical Operoo



CATHOLIC REGIONAL COLLEGE CAROLINE SPRINGS

- staff will collect student medication and house it in a staff hotel room if students do not require that medication during the night. Staff will then distribute the medication to students in the morning to carry themselves throughout the day as required.

Postponements

The College reserves the right to postpone a Cultural Immersion Tour without notice. The postponement of a Cultural Immersion Tour will only occur under extreme circumstances such as when:

- it is unsafe for students and staff to continue with the tour
- government imposed travel restrictions are enforced
- lockdowns occur in either Victoria or the travel destination

Parents/carers will be notified of postponements in writing and a new date will be explored. Several postponements may be required to ensure the tour takes place when it is safe to do so. Withdrawing from a tour due to a postponement will result in forfeiting all funds paid.

School Approved Absences

At times, Cultural Immersion Tours may overlap with regular school days throughout the term. The College fully supports and encourages students to partake in these such tours, and therefore Cultural Immersion Tours are considered School Approved Absences and will not impact student attendance records.

It is expected that students will:

- notify their teachers that they will be partaking in a Cultural Immersion Tour, including travel dates
- complete work in advance as requested by their teachers
- catch up on missed assessment tasks/tests as requested by their teachers
- attend Assessment Re-sit as requested by their teachers.

In line with our Assessment Re-sit Policy, a score of zero will be awarded to students that miss an Assessment Re-sit without providing a medical certificate or valid reason.

If a student is completing a VCE or VET Subject at Catholic Regional College Sydenham, they should speak to their teacher directly regarding attendance and course work requirements.



International Exchange Program

The College has established a comprehensive exchange program with Sister Schools in both Italy and Japan. Both exchange programs include a homestay arrangement. This homestay arrangement is pivotal in the success of the exchange and is therefore a compulsory aspect of the program. If students wish to travel to Japan or Italy, they will be expected to reciprocate by hosting a fellow student. Every effort is made for students to host the same student that hosted them in the Sister School country however this cannot always be guaranteed.

The purpose of a homestay program is for students to be able to:

- have the experience of living with a family in the host country
- develop a deeper understanding of the culture and customs of the host country
- develop communicative competence in the language of the host country
- become familiar with and appreciate the host family's lifestyle during the homestay period
- develop new friendships with host sisters/brothers
- develop intercultural understanding and awareness.

Expectations of Host Families

When you agree to host an exchange student, you agree to the following:

- providing the Cultural Immersion Leader with at least one valid Working with Children Check per family
- providing suitable accommodation for the host student and accept them as a member of the family during the period of homestay
- assisting the host student with traveling to and from school each day and providing them with three meals a day
- clarifying any concerns with the Cultural Immersion Leader at least 1 week prior to the arrival of the host students
- planning weekend activities for their family and the host students to explore the visiting country and develop cultural awareness
- communicating with the Cultural Immersion Leader during the period of homestay to express concerns especially medical issues that may arise. This may be done via the emergency school phone number that will be provided during the hosting period
- ensuring host students attend organised excursions and are dropped off/picked up at agreed upon destinations as stated in the Operoo (I.e., Watergardens Station).

Vouchers

Upon the completion of hosting, families will receive a voucher of up to \$150 per student hosted. In the unlikely event that a student is required to move to another host family, the original host family will forfeit their voucher.