



MERCEDES COLLEGE

Pre-departure: What to Know Before You Go

Living in Australia will be very different to living in a student's own home. Even if the student was to move in with family friends who live in the next town in their own country, there will be many new things to get used to. After a while, many new situations get familiar and students settle into their new Australian life.

It is suggested that students look to see what the weather conditions in Adelaide are like in the weeks leading to their arrival. As most students are coming from the Northern Hemisphere, they need to be aware that the seasons are the opposite in the Southern Hemisphere. Students are advised to check if they will be flying into a cold winter morning of 10 degrees Celsius or a hot summer day above 36 degrees Celsius. Then they can be prepared for the temperature they will experience when they leave the plane and go to meet their Homestay host.

Pastoral Care

Australian life may be very different from the student's own country and it will take time for each student to learn a different way of doing things.

All students will experience a period of adjustment. Students who arrive with a willingness to try new things will find it easier to settle into a new country. Homestay parents guide and support the student throughout their study at the College.

All international students are provided with the contact phone number of the Coordinator of Student Welfare and Accommodation, Mrs Robyn Halliday, on arrival into Adelaide. She can be contacted 24 hours a day should a problem arise.

The Coordinator of Student Welfare and Accommodation will liaise between the overseas family, international student, Homestay parents and Mercedes College to resolve any issues.

Orientation

Each home has different house rules. Homestay parents will orientate their student to their home and neighbourhood and assist their students with transportation enquiries.

As part of the orientation into Australian life, students are expected to join their Homestay parents in activities and outings.

Shortly after arrival students will begin orientation into the life of the school, their Homestay accommodation and the Australian lifestyle.

Homestay parents will assist their student with:

- Traffic code
- How to travel to and from school
- Buying transport tickets
- Banking details

- Postal details
- Living with a family, including:
 - dietary information and meal times
 - laundry rules and sharing duties
 - expectations using the phone / internet / bathroom

The Process of Adjustment

- 1. Leaving home** – farewells. Feeling both happy and sad.
- 2. Arriving in Australia** – feeling both excited and anxious about being in Adelaide and at Mercedes College.
- 3. Adjusting to the Homestay family** – feeling happy and excited, but maybe also confused and tired. Everything is so new.
- 4. Culture shock** – missing your family, being lonely without friends, and experiencing your new school and possibly unusual foods with the Homestay family.
- 5. Feeling uncertain** – wondering did I do the right thing? Will I achieve my goal?
- 6. Adjusting to your new life** – feeling confident, making new friends in Adelaide, enjoying classes at Mercedes College and living with your Homestay family.
- 7. Completion of studies** – achieving your goal at Mercedes College, with a new future ahead. Feeling positive.
- 8. Leaving Australia** – farewells. Feeling sad leaving your Mercedes friends and your Homestay. Anxious about your new life, but happy about seeing family members and old friends.
- 9. Arrival in home country** – getting to know family/friends again, starting tertiary studies and adjusting to your new life back at home - or perhaps you enjoyed life at Mercedes College so much, you wish to go back to continue studying in Australia!



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Bathroom

Homestay parents will instruct each student on the way to use the bathroom and how to adjust the hot and cold water.

As the bathroom will usually be shared with other household members, everyone needs to be considerate about the following:

- Showers (short in length)
- Water is to be confined to the shower recess or bath as water spilled on the floor is dangerous to others.

Water Usage

Students are required to have an understanding that water and power are valuable resources. Turning off lights, heaters and taps is ecologically and financially desirable. Australia is a dry country with long summers and therefore water is a resource that is highly valued. The excessive use of water is not encouraged in Australia. Students who are excessive in the use of water and power may be charged for the excess.

Climate Control

As Adelaide only experiences a few short months of cold weather, but many months of hot weather, most Australian houses are designed to be cool and insulated from the hot weather outside. Most homes have good cooling for the long months of heat, but are not centrally heated during winter.

A lot of homes will have heating in the living areas, but not necessarily in the bedrooms. People wear warmer clothing indoors during these months. Nights and mornings of the brief winter season can be cool.

Students may find some Adelaide families dine in the early evening. However, during the daylight saving months of summer, many meals are eaten outside in the balmy evenings and served later in the evening. These differences are all part of the experience of living in another country within a different culture.

Bank Account

All international students at Mercedes College are requested to open an Australian Bank account. An Australian bank account provides the student with easy access to their money, as ATM machines are available in every shopping complex. The homestay parent can assist the student to open a bank account and instruct the student on how to operate an ATM.

Sun Safety

Adelaide has up to 10 hours of sunshine in the spring and summer months. The sun in Adelaide is stronger than in many other countries, and there is a culture of wearing protective clothing and sunscreen in the summer. Many people frequently walk and sit in shaded areas.

The sunshine and warm weather is to be enjoyed, but students are reminded to listen to advice from their Homestay hosts and school staff about wearing sunscreen during the hot summer months and drinking lots of water. Sunburn is painful and can occur easily if sun protection is not used. Students will hear more about sun safety during their school orientation.

Water Safety

Many families in Adelaide have swimming pools in their back gardens or easy access to the beach and public swimming pools. During the warmer months, families visit the beach and other water recreation areas. Enjoying water sports and spending time around the pool or at the beach is a big part of the Australian culture.

Students are reminded to listen to the advice of their Homestay hosts regarding water safety. Extra safety and care is required when swimming at the beach where on-duty Surf Life Savers are to be obeyed and swimming is only to occur in the designated areas. Water safety will be covered in the student's school orientation.

Curfews

Monday to Thursday and Sunday

The student can arrange to meet with their friends in a safe environment, but must be home by 6:00pm.

Friday and Saturday

The student can arrange to meet with their friends in a safe environment and must be home by:

- 14 years old – 8:00pm
- 15 years old – 9:00pm
- 16-17 years old – 9:30pm
- 18 years old and above – 10:00pm

These curfews are in place for the safety of students and are in line with those of typical Australian families and other school residential facilities.

