

Management, Compliance and Support Services for School Students.

Presenters:

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What are the challenges in managing an international program for school students and monitoring compliance across a large system such as the NSW government school system? How do NSW government schools support young international students adjusting to a new cultural and educational environment and help them succeed?

The NSW government school system has over 2000 international students enrolled in over 160 schools across the state. In managing a large and diverse program, NSW Department of Education and Training has developed a strong support network for international students through the partnership between the central administrative office and schools, communication and collaboration, the development of an e-business strategy, and support in schools based on student needs.

The International Students Centre - role and function

The International Students Centre, the central office for the international student program and supports schools through the following:

- student recruitment, with country specialists working in regional teams;
- admissions, including the assessment of applications and issuing of visa and school enrolment documents;
- monitoring compliance across the system;
- staff training sessions for school staff;
- administrative functions, such as CRICOS registration; and
- promotions and marketing, including publications, agent management and coordination of marketing activities.

Communication across the system is assisted through Newsletters each term, providing updates on major issues such as ESOS legislation, program developments, trends and issues nationally. Schools may contribute so that information is shared about programs and services provided in different schools and international student achievements. Workshops for school coordinators are held annually, which provides an opportunity for schools to share information, discuss relevant issues and strategies to assist and support international students.

Provider and student compliance is coordinated centrally with systems established for monitoring students and only International Students Centre staff having PRISMS access. This allows a separation of school staff who are supporting and counselling students and the central office staff who are responsible for final warnings and reporting non-complaint students. Identifying students who are in danger of non-compliance, early intervention strategies at school and timely communication is essential in this system to assist students to meet their visa requirements.

The International Students Centre is also responsible for the development of new initiatives across the system. An e-business strategy has been developed to target and meet the needs of

generation Y. The e-business strategy uses web based services including a Virtual Adviser where students ask questions and receive an immediate answer, an Enquiry Management System which follows up on student enquiries and email broadcasts to prospective students and their parents concerning promotional activities or when staff will be visiting their country or city.

The following case studies of international student programs in two schools provide examples of how individual schools support international students.

Blakehurst High School – programs and teaching practices to improve student outcomes

Blakehurst High School seeks to provide quality outcomes for all students through our emphasis on quality teaching and learning. This means that we have developed programs to serve the very diverse needs of our student community including our large group of over 60 International Students.

Year 11 Preparation Program:

We identified the most significant challenge for International students to be the language demands of HSC study in Years 11 and 12. In 2004 we trialled a Year 11 Preparation program for those students in year 10 who had identified language difficulties and in most cases had only been studying in Australia for less than one year. This program was also offered to students who had joined the school late in year 11, after May in most cases, and who were not succeeding in Preliminary HSC studies. These students would be repeating year 11 in the following year.

A special Yr 11 Preparation class was established in September of 2004 for 8 weeks intensive study. The school designed curriculum in *English, English for Business, English for Science, English for Mathematics and English for Personal Health and Wellbeing*. In addition students from China studied an introductory program for Preliminary study in Chinese.

This program proved to be such a success for students that by 2006 we began the program in early August and it continues until the end of the year.

In addition we have an International Students Coordinator, Ms Xiao Chen, who regularly liaises with students, guardians and parents to ensure successful communication between home and school. Ms Chen also coordinates a cultural experience program involving excursions and guest speakers to allow students an enriched experience of Australian culture. For example the group has just returned from a visit to Canberra where they met the local member and were shown around Parliament House.

International students of any age, like students in general, need to feel valued, accepted and understood in order to learn successfully. All that we do is focussed on providing a supportive learning environment for our students during their time at BHS.

Concord High School – international student support services

Personnel to support international students include:

- Specifically designated International Student coordinator (teacher)
- Principal / Deputy Principal interview all prospective International Student enrolments
- Clerical assistant specifically designated for International Student enrolment and administrative procedures
- Two part – time Youth Workers (Chinese and Korean) dealing with welfare issues and language interpretation / translation

- School committee responsible for individual students and whole school programs supporting International Students

Support Programs include:

- Orientation – supported by Buddy system and Youth Workers
- “Connecting to Concord” – Field excursions both local and city conducted by staff once per Term
- Discrete English class in Year 10 and one English class as an elective subject to promote the development of English skills before Senior study
- Buddy System – new students aligned with long term experienced International Students
- Celebrating International Students contribution to the school each Term with BBQ
- Phone calls to parents and guardians both overseas and locally
- Meetings held each Semester with Guardians
- Community guest speakers particularly relating to safety within the community eg: Police
- Ongoing monitoring of attendance and academic progress before matters escalate supported by referral program
- Team teaching in classes where a predominant number of International Students are enrolled
- Opportunity to participate in Drama Productions, Musicals, Prefect Selections

In conclusion, NSW Department of Education through partnerships with participating schools provides quality education services across a large and diverse organization, monitors compliance and provides programs and support services to assist young students and prepare them for further study.