

## International Students Policy

This policy adheres to and should be applied with due consideration to the College's commitment to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

### **Mission Statement:**

Our mission inspired by the Christian tradition is to be a community based on faith, hope and love; developing each individual intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to achieve their full potential.

To achieve this we will:

- Provide a welcoming, supportive community where everyone is valued.
- Provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person, inspired by the Notre Dame tradition.
- Promote a caring environment, rooted in the virtues of service, kindness, gratitude and respect.
- Work together for the benefit of each person as well as the wider community.
- Recognise, celebrate and treasure, without exception, the unique gifts and dignity of each person, ensuring equality and fairness for all, as found in the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Policy to be reviewed by or before	June 2026

This policy covers the full process for sponsored students from the application to Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College through to completion of a programme of study at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College.

The College holds responsibility for the management of the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Student Sponsor Licence.

This policy follows all student sponsor guidance as issued by the Home Office. **All sponsored students at all times must comply with the Home Office rules and regulations for Student Sponsor.**

## **1. Overarching Principles of Student Sponsorship and Duties**

To ensure full compliance with the Home Office student sponsor guidelines. The College as a sponsor understands that sponsorship is a privilege and not a right and must therefore fulfil its duties to ensure that immigration control is maintained. As a sponsor, the College has responsibilities for each sponsored student from the moment they assign a CAS to the student until:

- they withdraw sponsorship from the student
- the student leaves the UK or
- the student is given permission to stay in the UK with a different sponsor or in another immigration category.

### **1i The College will ensure it will:**

- Act honestly in all its dealings with the Home Office.
- Act with integrity as a genuine education provider.
- Take responsibility for all its sponsored students while it is sponsoring them, including by doing all it can to ensure that prospective students are genuine students who can comply with the Immigration Rules, and that students enrol, comply with their conditions of leave, and see their course through to completion.
- Ensure that concerns about the conduct and integrity of Students are treated consistently with other students, including taking appropriate action where students are found to have used deception to gain advantage in their studies.
- Comply with all aspects of the Immigration Rules and sponsor guidance, and support immigration control, including by taking steps to ensure that every student at their institution who is subject to immigration control has permission to study in the UK throughout the whole period of their study.
- The Director of Finance & Operations (DFO) is an approved Level One user for access to the SMS and the listed Authorising Officer. The Deputy Principal is an additional Level One user to ensure the SMS can be accessed at all times.
- Co-operate with the Home Office at all times including and not limited to: reporting any incorrect conditions made by the Home Office, reporting any changes to a sponsored Student's circumstances.
- Ensure that the College website and any marketing material accurately reflects its current Student Sponsor status.
- Ensure that the Staff who manage the SMS have regular training to ensure they remain up to date with Home Office Student Sponsor compliance.

## **2. Record-keeping and Reporting Duties for any sponsored student**

The College will collect evidence as required by the Home Office. The College will retain documents either as paper copies or in electronic format as listed in Student Sponsor Guidance Document 2: Sponsorship Duties 2.12-2.18 and listed below:

1. All documents relating to a sponsored Student at Notre Dame will be kept throughout the period that the College sponsors them and for a time as specified in the guidance, after the end date of sponsorship, (at least one year).
2. Copy of each sponsored student current passport including all pages showing any personal identity details including biometric details, stamps, or immigration status document including their period of permission to stay in the UK. This must show the sponsored student entitlement to study with Notre Dame as the licensed sponsor in the UK if the applicant has been issued a vignette for travel. If the student does not have an entry stamp, The College will check the date of entry by asking to see other evidence such as, but not limited to, e-tickets or a paper or electronic boarding pass. The College will record the date the student entered the UK, but do not have to retain evidence of the date of entry.
3. If the sponsor student is an EU national, EEA national or a national of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland or the United States of America, they may enter the UK through an automated e-Passport gate ('e-Gate') if they hold valid permission confirmed by digital status or a vignette. In such cases, they will not have an entry stamp in their passport which states the entry date. If the student does not have an entry stamp, evidence of the date of entry must be provided to College such as, but not limited to, e-tickets or a paper or electronic boarding pass. College will retain a record of the date the student entered the UK, but do not have to retain evidence of the date of entry.
4. All successful applications under the Student routes decided after 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 will receive an eVisa (a digital version of their immigration status information) rather than a vignette and a physical biometric residence permit. The validity of the Student permission will be confirmed on the eVisa. They will be subject to the requirements of the Immigration Regulations 2008.
5. All Sponsor Students will need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa and view their immigration status.
6. Student Sponsors with an eVisa can prove their status online. Students with this status can obtain a share code which can be used to prove an individual's immigration status. The College will collect evidence of the Share Code and maintain a record of the Share Code on file. The College will thereafter obtain a digital copy of the Student's eVisa using the view and prove service.
7. The College will request copies of decision notifications of all Sponsored Students and will ensure that a sponsored student has not been granted leave with incorrect conditions of stay.
8. The College will record and retain attendance whilst on programme at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College.
9. The College will retain up-to-date contact details including:  
UK residential address, telephone number and/or mobile telephone number. This will include both the current details and any previously held details. Sponsored Students are expected to notify the College of any changes to these details within 5 working days of the relevant change.
10. Students will have a College email address, which will be a key form of communication between The College and sponsored Student, whilst on programme at the College. Therefore, all Student Sponsors will be expected to regularly review this and respond to any communication in a timely manner.
11. The College will notify the Home Office of any changes to the Sponsored Students programme of study, attendance All College

12. and accommodation in line with their duties as a Student Sponsor. The UKVI's sponsor guidance will be regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with our reporting duties at all times.
13. The College will report these changes in student circumstances under the below timeframes. A record of this report will be thereafter stored within the relevant students file. Guidance should be sought if there is any doubt as to whether a change is reportable to the UKVI.

	IF	THEN
a.	A student withdraws from their course before they travel to the UK.	The college will report this on the SMS within 10 working days of the college becoming aware.
b.	A student's start date is delayed before they enter the UK but after they have been granted entry clearance.	The college will agree with the student whether they can still complete the course within the dates of their visa and take the necessary steps outlined in the UKVI's guidance if this is not possible.
c.	A student does not enrol within the enrolment period.	The college will report this on the SMS within 10 working days of the enrolment period ending.
d.	A student misses 10 expected contact points without permission as outlined in the UKVI guidance and this is unauthorised absence.	The college will report the required information on the SMS within 10 working days of the last expected contact point.
e.	A student defers their studies after they have arrived in the UK and is no longer actively studying.	The college will determine if the deferral falls within the UKVI's requirements and if so, report this on the SMS within 10 working days agreeing to this.
f.	A student no longer requires sponsorship in the United Kingdom	The college will report this under the relevant reason on the SMS within 10 working days of the college becoming aware.
g.	There is a significant change in a student's circumstances.	The college will report this on the SMS within 10 working days of the college becoming aware.
h.	There is reason to believe that a student is not a genuine student.	The college will report this by email to the UKVI as soon as possible in accordance with the process set out in the guidance.

14. The College will retain all documentation relating to the whole process of application, from making an offer, this will include (but not limited to) copies of references, examination certificates, enrolment forms, interview records or transcripts, offer letter, attendance on programme of study through to completion of programme of study. The College will notify the Home Office of any changes in line with their duties as a Student Sponsor.

15. The College will keep a copy of the parental consent letter for any sponsored student under the age of 18 years and ensure this is signed by the parents or legal guardian, or just one parent if that parent has sole legal responsibility for the child and gives consent to the arrangements for the child's application, travel, reception and care arrangements in the UK. Children aged 16 and 17 have the legal right to live independently in the UK, and may make their own arrangements for accommodation, but will need to provide the consent of their parent(s)/legal guardian to do this and to travel to the UK (if applying from overseas). The Parental Consent Requirement for an applicant not applying as a dependant child which applies to applicants under 18 years can be found here: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix Children - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
16. The College will ensure that sponsored students are aware of their requirement to notify the College as to any changes to their living arrangements as soon as possible. These changes must be reported to the International Administrator.

### **3. Admissions**

The College uses a number of recruiting agencies. The College will regularly communicate the list of recruiting agents it uses to the Home Office and ensure this is updated whenever there is a change.

The College will review applications using the following criteria:

- All students must agree to respect and support the Catholic character of the College before their place is confirmed.
- All students must be educated to the level ready to undertake a RQF Level 3 programme of study and satisfy the entry requirements per subject and/or have academic ability suitable for the programme of study.
- All Students must satisfy the general entry requirements to undertake an RQF level 3 programme of study. This includes
  - Minimum UKVI IELTS for Academic Purposes – CEFR Level B2 or IELTS B2 (band score 5.5-6.0) and above in English and Level B1 Maths.
  - Evidence of academic ability – for example Senior Middle School years 1-2 reports
- Age – All sponsored students must be at least 16 years old at the time their Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) is assigned to them by the College. The College will not assign a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to any applicant under the age of 16.
- The College will decide to accept an application or reject an application depending on suitability for the programme applied for.
- College will not reject an application on the basis that a student has additional educational needs.

### **4. Programme Study Offer and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)**

Once an application has been accepted for the programme of study the College will make a conditional offer in writing. The conditional offer will set out conditions to be met to enable study on a chosen programme of study, it will include key information about the offered programme of study, the requirements of the Home Office, the fees payable starting with the deposit payable and set out the timeframe for payment.

The conditional offer means the College is ready to sponsor a student under Student routes and subject to further checks, will only assign a CAS if it is reasonably clear the Student will meet the legal requirements to be granted their visa. When a CAS is assigned, a unique

reference number will also be generated and this will be given to the student to enter on their visa application form. The CAS is valid for 6 months from the date it is assigned. The College will treat the CAS number as a secure and confidential document. The CAS number will be sent securely and directly to the student personally and no other person.

Prior to assigning the CAS, the College must be satisfied that the student will meet the requirements for entry clearance or permission to stay by obtaining all required supporting documentation needed for their visa application. Guidance should be sought on this if there is any doubt.

The conditional offer letter will also specify the information and documents which must be provided in order to enter the UK and undertake a programme of study.

At all times the Sponsored Student must comply with the Home Office rules for sponsored students. Any deviance from this put both their place at the College at risk and their ability to stay in the UK.

Parents or Legal Guardian or just one parent if that parent has sole legal responsibility for the child must provide a signed letter consenting to the arrangements for the child's application, travel, reception and care arrangements in the UK. Children aged 16 and 17 have the legal right to live independently in the UK, and may make their own arrangements for accommodation, but they need the consent of their parent(s)/legal guardian to do this and to travel to the UK. This letter must be obtained before a CAS can be assigned to the student.

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College reserves the right to withdraw an offer if circumstances or evidence changes which means the applicant can no longer be considered a suitable student.

## **5. UKVI Sponsorship Licence**

The Director of Finance and Resources (DFO) has Level One user access to the SMS and is the Authorising Officer. The Deputy Principal is an additional approved Level one user for the SMS.

The DFO manages the Student Sponsorship Licence on behalf of the College and ensures the College meets all regulatory and legal compliance of the UK Home Office rules and guidelines for Sponsored Students and all UKVI Policy and guidelines for Sponsored Students. The DFO will renew our annual Certificates of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and apply for our Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA) by the relevant deadline.

## **6. Accommodation**

### **Principles and Guidance:**

- Every sponsored student must have a valid and approved address for the duration of their time in the UK and to study at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College.
- The accommodation must meet College safeguarding standards and be deemed appropriate by the College.
- The address must be within a reasonable distance from Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College.
- The College can refuse study on the basis that the accommodation is not within reasonable proximity to the College.

- The College can refuse admission to the programme of study if the accommodation is deemed inappropriate and/or in breach of safeguarding and/or not within a reasonable proximity. In such instances, the College will notify the Home Office, which could put the right to study in the UK and the right to stay in the UK at risk.
- A sponsored student must notify the College immediately if there is a change to their accommodation address and this will need to meet the approval of the College to ensure it meets the criteria as outlined.
- The College has a duty of care to communicate with the local social services agency and reserve the right to refuse admission if at any time the accommodation arrangements made for the child are deemed by the College to not be appropriate.

**Independent Accommodation:** Children aged 16 and 17 have the legal right to live independently in the UK, and may make their own arrangements for accommodation, but they need the consent of their parent(s)/legal guardian to do this and to travel to the UK. The College will ensure any sponsored student who chooses to live independently and with consent of their parent(s)/legal have accommodation in safe/low risk and appropriate environments.

**Private Homestay:** All private Homestay accommodation hosts will have current enhanced DBS checks. The College will inspect Homestay accommodation and facilities to ensure they are suitable. The College will ensure Homestay accommodation provides fair pricing which is in accordance with local market pricing.

**Local Halls of Residence:** The College will visit and liaise with local university student halls of residence providers to ensure the accommodation meets the national minimum standards, inspections regulations:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20071001175105/dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4005629](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20071001175105/dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005629)

## 7. Enrolment

The College will adhere to all Home Office guidance and require all documental evidence as listed in section 2 to enable enrolment. No student will be able to enrol without the required documental evidence. Should a sponsored student not be able to enrol because of missing documental evidence the college will inform the Home Office which may risk the student sponsors place at college and the right to study in the UK.

## 8. Right to Study Checks

The College will undertake and record mandatory Right to Study checks for all students, including Sponsored Students, prior to enrolment and at any other time as required by Home Office guidance. The College will confirm that the student's visa conditions permit study in the UK at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College

The College will hold records of such right to study checks, in accordance with their Student Sponsor Duties, including copies of relevant documents or confirmation obtained via the online status check.

The College will conduct follow-up checks where a student's permission is time limited, or there is reason to believe a student's immigration status may have changed or where required by UKVI. Students are required to notify the College immediately of any changes to their immigration status or documentation.

No student will be permitted to enrol, or continue on programme, without satisfactory evidence of their Right to Study in the UK.

#### **9. Safeguarding**

International students are covered by the Child Protection, Safeguarding and PREVENT College Policy. The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to share this commitment. Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College fully recognises its role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and works within the national and local guidelines, complying with all legal frameworks and the national framework 'Keeping Children safe in Education.' (KCSIE). All staff employed at Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, and therefore anyone who may come into contact with a sponsored child, have a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check and meet all legally required standards for teaching and/or working with young people in education.

The College has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection from exploitation of the students which it sponsors.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Senior Deputy Principal, and the three Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are the Safeguarding Manager, the Safeguarding Supervisor, and the Safeguarding Officer.

Notre Dame empathises that Sponsored Students are for the most, living apart from their families in a new country.

The College will ensure there is suitable care arrangements for a student sponsor under the age of 18 including arrangements for their travel, reception when they arrive in the UK and care while they are in the UK.

Notre Dame will ensure where a student is living in the UK in accommodation that was not provided by the sponsor, their living arrangements meet the requirements of the UK legislation and regulations: Accommodation of students under 18 by further education colleges: national minimum standards, inspections regulations:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20071001175105/dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4005629](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20071001175105/dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005629)

The College will ensure that any student sponsor who chooses to live independently has their parent/s or legal guardian permission.

All students have an assigned Achievement Tutor who provides pastoral support and are available at all times throughout the College day.

#### **10. Communication with Parent/s or Legal Guardian whilst on Programme**

The College will maintain regular communicate with parent/s or legal guardian of student sponsors regarding, but not limited to, attendance, progress, achievement, pastoral. The email communication will be with the email provided by parent/s or legal guardian.

#### **11. Student experience**

International students will have the same opportunities and access to College as all students.