***ESOS* Training Video for School Staff**

Video transcript

Slide 1: Introduction

Hello everyone, and welcome to this *ESOS* Training Video. This is for school staff who interact with students in the International Student Program run by the International Education Division of the Department of Education and Training.

Slide 2: The *ESOS Act* and the International Student Program (ISP)

The International Student Program (ISP) that is run by the International Education Division is governed by the *ESOS Act*, which stands for the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.* It’s a Commonwealth Act that has other legislation attached to it in a framework, and it applies to all schools and their staff in Australia who interact with international students who are enrolled in schools as the **primary** holder of a sub-class 500—Schools Sector visa. There may be other international students at your school as dependants of their parents who hold a visa, but the *ESOS* laws apply only to the students who have the subclass 500—Schools Sector visa and who have come through the ISP.

The *ESOS Act* and its framework laws give certain responsibilities to your Principal and your International Student Coordinator—your ISC—and they do their own training. This video covers the responsibilities and compliance information for you—the teachers, welfare and support staff, both teaching and non-teaching—as you support your international students in their school journey.

Slide 3: Why is *ESOS* Important?

The *ESOS* legislation provides minimum standards for the education and care of international students, and for the administration of the ISP. There are several main reasons why we all need to comply with the *ESOS* legislation.

Firstly, it’s to protect the rights and welfare of international students: to ensure they have access to quality learning and support that are tailored to their needs in order for them to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. As you know, they come to Australia young, sometimes aged only 13, often with a home language that is not English, and without their parents or other family support. So they’re vulnerable and need some particular protection and care. *ESOS* formalises the way that we can meet their needs and protect their rights.

Secondly, *ESOS* protects the integrity and quality of the Australian education that is offered to these students by making the standards consistent and transparent for every school who has international students.

And, in the event of something going wrong, records that show that staff have followed the policies and procedures protect the staff and school as well as the students.

Slide 4: Student welfare: monitoring wellbeing

The *ESOS Act* legislates that schools need to help international students to know how to be safe and to adapt to living and studying in Australia. Of course, they will have an orientation period that helps them to find their way around, access facilities and know where to go for help and information.

However, even when the official orientation period has finished, they may still need some significant support. Staff need to be aware of their heightened vulnerabilities, including that they may be staying in homestay accommodation without familiar parental support. Even if a student is staying with a family friend or extended family, the school is still responsible for their welfare.

It is important to monitor students’ wellbeing continually. They need to feel safe as well as be safe. If you have any concerns at all, go to the ISC in the first instance, not the homestay host. If you think that there **is** something serious or concerning that the homestay family does need to be told, again, it’s best to go through your ISC, or the Homestay Coordinator, if your school has one.

Slide 5: Supporting student welfare: enabling a sense of belonging

Having a sense of belonging to their new school and community is a major factor in students’ welfare and will have consequences for their academic progress as well.

School staff can help students to feel that they belong with acts as simple as smiling, starting a conversation with them in the schoolyard or introducing them to other students so they can make new friends. They may seem diffident and lack confidence at first, especially if English is not their first language.

So anything that you can do in or out of the classroom to help students to understand their new cultural and social environment and feel that they are an integral part of the school community will be helpful.

Slide 6: Supporting students: attendance

International students have very strict attendance requirements related to their visa conditions. It is crucial that all staff who are aware of students’ attendance monitor this closely and tell the ISC directly if a student is absent.

Even at 90% of attendance, the school needs to set in place intervention support strategies for the student; at 85%, they are deemed to be “at risk”.

So if you have **any** concerns about the attendance of an international student, let your ISC know immediately. The information will be in the attendance records, but direct verbal and written communication streamlines the process and could save time later on.

Slide 7: Supporting students: academic progress

Strict rules about academic progress also apply to international students that are linked to their visa conditions, and there is a specific procedure to be followed if they do not seem to be progressing satisfactorily. This relates mainly to classroom teachers, who, in line with the *ESOS* laws, must give students reasonable support to enable them to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes.

There are 6 steps, called “warnings”.

**Warning 1:** As soon as a teacher knows that a student is not on track to pass their subject, they need to do three things:

1. Speak to the student and find out what is happening for them to see what support could be offered
2. Inform the Year Level Coordinator (if your school has one) and the ISC. They will tell the student’s parents or legal guardian, using your school’s official pro-forma document
3. Document all your conversations and actions manually using the official channels in your school’s record-management system.

Slide 8: Supporting students: academic progress cont.

If the student still does not progress satisfactorily, we go to further warnings. In **Warnings 2-5**, you need to:

1. Make an offer of individual help to the student each time the situation escalates.
2. Inform both the ISC and the Year Level Coordinator.
3. And document everything that’s said and done manually through the official channels, including if the student does not turn up to their appointment with you.

During these steps, the ISC will also be supporting the student, speaking with them, perhaps putting them on a contract and certainly keeping their parents informed. If it gets to Warning 4, the ISC will contact the International Education Division in the Department of Education and Training, and by Warning 6, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is involved. This would be very unusual.

Slide 9: Child Safety Laws and Mandatory Reporting

The *ESOS* legislation states that all staff need to know about the Child Safety Laws and Standards. They apply particularly to vulnerable children, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which of course includes international students.

The law says that if there are any allegations of child abuse and/or neglect from any source and in any context, you must report them. You would tell your school Principal immediately. It is also good practice to tell your ISC.

Sometimes people are not sure if they should say something just in case it’s not true. The threshold is deliberately low for having a suspicion to enable the authorities to act to protect children as quickly as possible if it is true.

You would also need to tell your Principal and ISC if you had concerns for anyone else’s safety as a result of the behaviour of an international student.

Your school will run Child Safety Training and you will need to participate in this, and remain up to date in your knowledge of the Child Safe Standards and policies.

Slide 10: Know your School’s *Critical Incident* procedure

Your school will have its own documented procedure on what to do if there is a critical incident or emergency involving an international student. Your school will give you training in it because you need to know your role. With international students, if there is a critical incident, you would also tell the ISC immediately, as they will be in touch with the student’s parents or legal guardian.

The ISC will have given the student a Student Safety Card on their first day, and they need to carry it with them all the time. This will have the phone number of the ISC as well as emergency phone numbers.

Slide 11: Keeping full and accurate records

The record-keeping requirements are important and are a protection for all staff who interact with international students, not just teachers. Naturally, the students’ contact details and those of their parent or legal guardian, and their carer in Australia need to be up to date. Anything that happens beyond the normal daily schoolwork and activities needs to be manually entered into your school’s official record-management system. This could include things like:

conversations with the student to see if they need extra welfare or academic support,

making an offer of individual academic help to the student,

meetings and notifications about the student with the ISC, Year Level Coordinator, school welfare staff or other involved staff,

any time you were in contact with the student’s parent or legal guardian,

any critical incidents or accidents. These would also be recorded in the Schools Incident Management System (SIMS) as per its Critical Incident procedure.

Slide 12: Conclusion and thank you for watching

The big things to remember are to monitor the students’ welfare, attendance and progress continually, and if you have any concerns at all, let your ISC know. They can help you if you have any questions about your role and responsibilities under the *ESOS* Act. Thank you for watching! We thank you for all your hard work and care, and hope your time with your international students is rewarding and enjoyable.