

Background

The Covid-19 global pandemic has affected over 200 countries and territories worldwide with devastating and far-reaching consequences for all sections of their populations. In particular, students have had to cope with this challenge at a critical time in their lives, when the importance of social interaction and education plays such a central part in the growth of their learning journeys.

However, the situation is improving in most countries and thankfully, here in Ireland, we are seeing significant advances in the control of the virus. It is with real optimism that we can look forward to welcoming our students back into the schools for the new academic year.

Nevertheless, we are also cognisant that the conditions for the reopening of schools must adhere to the strict requirements and important guidelines as detailed by the Government of Ireland for the safety of all the students in our care.

To this end and to ensure that you understand the terms and conditions of our service, we have developed a number of policies which will come into force at the beginning of this academic year and we would urge you to familiarise yourself with these new arrangements. Please also be aware that the situation continues to be monitored and changes in government policy may alter existing requirements.

Arrival and quarantine

All students are advised to take adequate precautions when travelling to Ireland. This includes the wearing of an appropriate face mask and gloves and taking the required precaution of washing hands and using the correct hygiene protocols.

Currently, all entrants to the country are required to self-isolate and quarantine for a period of fourteen days. This may change as the situation improves and the requirement may be lifted. Quarantine does not necessarily mean that a student has to self-isolate in his or her room, but will be expected to stay within the family 'bubble' or within a similar 'bubble' in a boarding school. This will necessitate staying at a single address during the quarantine period and will require the student to arrive in Ireland mid-August

For now, students arriving into the country will be accommodated in one of following situations:

- Some boarding schools are providing the fourteen-day quarantine and will require their students to arrive in advance of the school term. In such cases, the boarding schools may levy an additional charge for the accommodation and supervision. As the educational guardian of your son or daughter, there will also be an additional fee of €160;
- Homestay accommodation will be provided for the period of quarantine in one of our selected families. This family may or may not be the family that provides the accommodation for the remainder of the programme. There will be an additional accommodation and guardianship cost for the period of quarantine of €720 (Including 2 Weeks Host Family Accommodation);
- Parents may wish to accompany their son or daughter for the quarantine period.

We will contact you with details of costs and additional school fees for your particular programme.

A Potential Second Wave of the Virus

In the unlikely event that there is a second wave of the pandemic and schools are required to close again following their scheduled reopening in late August, your son or daughter may remain with the homestay family only where the homestay family is in agreement.

In circumstances where the homestay family is unwilling to accommodate a student during a school closure mandated by the Government of Ireland, Equinox Education Service Ltd will endeavour to secure an alternative homestay accommodation.

In the event that Equinox Education Service Ltd is unable to source another homestay accommodation due to government restrictions, Equinox Education Service Ltd will advise that your son or daughter return home and Equinox Education Service Ltd will assist in organising flights and airport transfers. Parents will be responsible for any extra costs involved in securing new flights and any associated costs thereof.

It is important to note that if schools are required to close in part or wholly, tuition will be maintained through an online or 'blended' learning programme to ensure that the curriculum is delivered appropriately to students, whether they are resident here in Ireland or in their home countries.

Emergency Illness provision

In the event of a student becoming ill the following conditions apply:

- Equinox Education Service Ltd will enact its 24/7 Emergency Response as guardians in cases of any illness not diagnosed as Covid-19.
- In cases where the student is suspected of contracting Covid-19, Equinox Education Service Ltd will take responsibility for the care of the student until a diagnosis is received.
- In cases where the diagnosis is negative for Covid-19, Equinox Education Service Ltd normal provisions of supervision and care for the student will apply.
- In cases where the diagnosis is positive for Covid-19, Equinox Education Service Ltd will provide supervision and care for the student for a period of time until the natural parents of the student can take over the responsibility of care either by travelling from their home country or by appointing a representative of the family to take care of the student.
- The parents are liable for all costs associated with the supervision, medical care, transportation and any other relevant expenses.

Cancellation and refunds in General (Non COVID 19 Related)

Existing cancellation policy continues to be in force in the absence of cancellations due solely to Covid-19 governmental advice, restrictions and other circumstances specifically related to Covid-19.

Cancellations before arrival

For cancellations more than 6 weeks before arrival, a €550 non- refundable application fee & Homestay Placement fee are due plus any application fees/deposits paid to school.

For cancellations between 6 weeks and arrival, 30 % of Guardianship fee will be due plus any application fee and/or deposits already paid to school plus the aforementioned €550 Equinox fee as well as any expenses occurred by Equinox Education Services e.g. books , uniform etc.

Cancellations After arrival

One full term's notice must be given if a student decides to return home early. Once a student arrives and starts school then there are no refunds. If a student must return home early due to medical reasons, then

only the remaining homestay fee will be refunded, minus 10% for administration upon receipt of a medical report.

Cancellation and refunds Solely in respect to COVID 19

The following cancellation fees apply solely in respect of a cancellation as a result of a requirement by the Irish Government to close schools following advice from the National Public Health Emergency Team:

1. If schools are closed by the Irish Government prior to the official opening date of the school then all funds paid to Equinox Education Services will be returned with the exception of Equinox Application fee & Homestay Placement Fee as well as any other expense incurred on behalf of the student or parent.
2. If schools are closed for periods of 2 weeks or more by the Irish Government **after** the student has arrived in Ireland then the following costs are incurred if the student decides to return home.
 - a. 30% of unused Guardianship Fee
 - b. Homestay Placement Fee. The remaining balance of the Homestay Accommodation costs are fully refundable minus 10% administration fee . (Applicable only for day school students)
 - c. Any expenses incurred by Equinox Education Service Ltd on behalf of the Student or Parent
 - d. Fees due to school as stated by the school's cancellation policy.

Notes regarding all Cancellations

Schools will enforce their own policies with regard to a cancellations. Parents should be aware that additional charges may be applied by schools and it is understood that Equinox Education Service Ltd cannot accept any responsibility or liability for such charges as may be levied by schools in circumstances of school closure in part or wholly due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Boarding schools may refund the boarding accommodation fees completely, on a pro-rata basis or not at all and parents are advised that Equinox Education Service Ltd cannot be held responsible for any decisions, actions or policies made by such schools and will accept no financial liability in relation to refunds. Any remaining approved refunds will be processed within 30 days of the end of the programme less any costs, sending bank charges, existing liabilities or other outstanding financial obligations.

Additional conditions

Parents of NON-EU students that need to apply for a Visa may cancel this agreement without fee liability (Not including the Equinox Application fees of €550) or any application or deposits paid to school prior to the commencement of the Programme. This will apply in such circumstances that a properly completed visa application has been refused and an authenticated proof of such a refusal is provided to Equinox Education Service Ltd. In the event of the Student being expelled by the school in contravention of the school's rules and regulations, Equinox Education Service Ltd shall immediately be released from all its obligations to the parent and to the student under this agreement and under the programme. In such an event the parents shall remain liable for the unpaid fees until the end of the programme and shall not be entitled to any refund of fees. Any new arrangement for the student following expulsion from the school is subject to separate agreement between the parents and Equinox Education Service Ltd. In the event of a student displaying continually persistent, unreasonable behaviour or a behaviour of a seriously unreasonable nature, and under circumstances where Equinox Education Service Ltd acting reasonably, shall no longer be prepared to accept responsibility for the student; Equinox Education Service Ltd may terminate this agreement forthwith by notice in writing to the parents. In such an event Equinox Education Service Ltd shall immediately be released from all its obligations to the parents and the student under this agreement and the parents shall remain liable for the unpaid fees until the end of the programme and shall not be entitled to any refund of fees.