

Together We Learn



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

International Education



STUDENT HANDBOOK

EXPERIENCE. LEARNING.

2025 / 2026

Table of contents

Welcome	4
Contact Information	5
Community Information	6
Central Okanagan Team	7
Supports when in Canada	8
Student Insurance	9
Mental Wellness Support	11
Program Rules & Expectations	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rules• iCent• Homestay• Social• School	

Table of contents

Money in Canada 22

Transportation 23

- Safety - - - Host Family
 - To School - - - City Bus
 - Taxi - - - Rideshare
 - Other Drivers
-

Travel Requests 27

Big White Ski Resort 28

Ski Shuttle 29

Ski Lessons & Rentals 30

Optional Trips 31

Schools 32

Welcome

The Central Okanagan hosts 400 international students a year from approximately 30 different countries.

The schools and communities of Peachland, West Kelowna, Kelowna, and Lake Country provide a great location for international students to immerse themselves in the language, culture, and recreational activities of the Central Okanagan.

Please review this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. Information about the Central Okanagan (SD23) International Student Program can also be found on our website www.internationaleducation.ca

We hope that you make many wonderful memories and friendships during your time in our program. Wishing you all the best during your Canadian academic adventure in the beautiful Central Okanagan.

~The International Education Team



Contact Information



 +1-250-470-3258

 international.education@sd23.bc.ca

 1040 Hollywood Road S, Kelowna, BC, V1X 4N2

 www.internationaleducation.ca



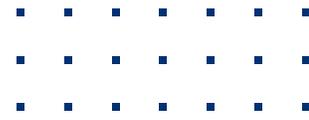
www.internationaleducation.ca



@okgn23world



Community Information



1 Program Emergency Phone Line

Emergency Phone Line

+1-250-801-5684

Monitored 24 hours a day by staff members



It is a requirement that you have a Canadian phone number while in Canada. Your phone plan must have cellular data included so you are reachable when you are not on a Wi-Fi network.

3 Emergency Services

Dialing 911 will connect you with local emergency

Police, Ambulance, and Fire Services.



Police officers (RCMP) in Canada are very helpful. Police officers can help you with emergency and non-emergency police related issues. RCMP liaison officers also work in all our schools.

2 Airport

The local airport is the Kelowna International Airport

ylw.kelowna.ca



Central Okanagan Team



Wynter Oakes
District Principal
wynter.oakes@sd23.bc.ca



Carolina Moreno
Program Manager
carolina.morenopelaez@sd23.bc.ca



Lori McPhail
Program Manager
lori.mcphail@sd23.bc.ca



Masao Matsubara
Program Manager
masao.matsubara@sd23.bc.ca



Nathalie Messent
Program Manager
nathalie.messent@sd23.bc.ca



Wendy Burridge
Program Manager
wendy.burridge@sd23.bc.ca

Office Staff

Julie Melia
julie.melia@sd23.bc.ca
Main Contact – Admissions

Wendy Lu
wendy.lu@sd23.bc.ca
Main Contact – Reporting & Homestay

Nisansala Adurugaha
nisansala.adurugahaa@sd23.bc.ca
Accounts Clerk

For emergencies, please call our
Emergency Phone Line:

1-250-801-5684

*Your call will be answered by a staff
member 24 hours a day, 7 days a
week.*

Supports when in Canada



Canadian Host Parents



- Has a caring, safe, comfortable home for you to stay in.
- Provides daily meals and food for breakfast, lunches, dinner, and snacks.
- Supervises and keeps you safe.
- Gives you permission to go out and do activities.
- Reports unsafe situations to the program.

International Teachers



- Helps you when you are at school.
- Answers questions about the school and classes.
- Plans school activities for international students.
- Teaches ELL/ESL and other subjects in the school.
- Helps you plan for college/university.

Program Managers



Support students by school when in Canada

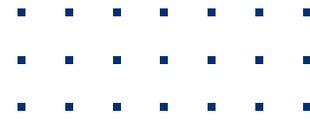
- Supports you while they adjust to homestay and Canada.
- Hosts information meetings at your school.
- Organizes Program activities.
- Communicates with host families.
- Helps if issues arise between you and your host family.
- Communicates with your agent.

District Principal



- Is your legal custodian if in homestay program.
- Reviews and approves travel requests.
- Creates procedures and rules for your safety.
- Makes decisions regarding your well-being.
- Supports you, program managers and host families.
- Communicates with your agent.

Student Insurance



studyinsured™

Coverage

International students receive insurance coverage during their program.

You will receive your personal ID insurance number by email in August. When you are in Canada, use your ID number to get help, 24 hours a day for the following:

- Emergency Medical Assistance
- Medical Virtual Video Conference
- Medical & Mental Health Support
- Insurance Coverage Questions

Insurance & Medical Assistance www.studyinsured.com/centralokanagan

StudyInsured

Contacting StudyInsured:

- From Canada & USA: **1-866-883-9787**
- From anywhere: **+1-416-640-7865**
- Email: studentassist@studyinsured.com



Opening an Insurance File

You must call immediately if you are:

- Being hospitalized for any reason
- Requiring an MRI or a CT scan, or need surgery
- Seeking medical attention during Program but are travelling outside of Canada



Student Insurance



Submitting a Claim

STUDENT PORTAL

Submit through the portal by going online to:

www.studyinsured.com/centralokanagan/en/onlineclaim

You must sign and submit a claim form every time a medical claim totals more than \$500. However, if you are being treated in a direct billing facility, you are not required to submit a claim form.

- In special circumstances, StudyInsured Assistance may instruct you to complete a claim form for claims under \$500.

Be sure to collect all invoices, receipts, doctor's notes, ER reports, etc. because they will need to be submitted with your claim.

- Many medical facilities will send this directly to StudyInsured, however, you should get your own copies just in case.

Codes for Claims

- Policy Code: **MCP**
- Group #: **013** (full year) **141** (one semester)
- ID Number: (***your unique personal ID insurance number***)

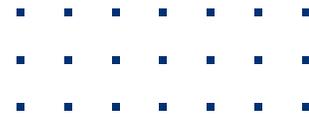


Medical Services Plan

After 3 months, full year students will also have medical coverage through the provincial health plan, as required by the Government of British Columbia. Your Program Manager will deliver your BC MSP card when it arrives.

Once full year students have a BC MSP card, they must present this card along with their StudyInsured card when seeking medical attention. StudyInsured becomes extended medical coverage for full year students after MSP is in place.

Mental Wellness Support



Feeling Down

Talk to your host parents and/or your Program Manager coordinator if you are having problems or if you are feeling down. They can help connect you with supports.

Access confidential counsellor support in English or your preferred language.



Stay Healthy in Schools

Stay Healthy in Schools offers medical and mental health support 24/7 for students. Video chat, text or phone a counsellor. Support is available in 180 languages.

Read more about how to access medical or mental health resources in the [Stay Healthy in Schools QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE](#).

You can:

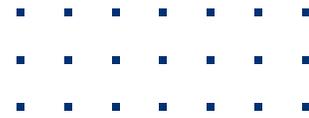
- Call **1.833.646.1524** any time, day or night, to access mental health care.
- Login to the **iConnectYou** app using the passcode **SHAS** for resources and to book appointments.



- Find resources on the ca.helpwheretheyouare.com website. Use the company code **SHAS** and click "Login"



Mental Wellness Support



Province of BC Resources

The Province of BC also notes that there are the following resources regarding child health and safety that international students can access.



Kids Help Phone

Provides counselling and mental health support.

- Phone: **1-800-668-6868**

Kelty Mental Health Resource Center

Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living.

- Website: <http://keltymentalhealth.ca>

HealthLink BC 8-1-1 Services

Free-of-charge health information and advice phone line available in BC.

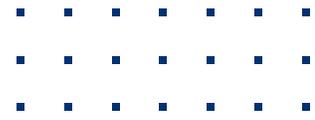
- Phone: **811**

Suicide Crisis Helpline

Confidential, free, 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention.

- Text: **988**
- Phone: **988**
- Website: <https://988.ca>

Program Rules & Expectations



Rules



Follow all the laws of BC & Canada:

- While in our program students must follow all laws of BC & Canada at all times.
- Ask your host family or Program Manager if you are unsure about any law in BC or Canada.



No alcohol or drugs:

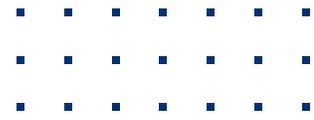
- Students are not allowed to use drugs or drink alcohol during their time in Canada in the Program.
- It is against the law for minors to use drugs or drink alcohol.



No smoking or vaping:

- Smoking cigarettes or using vape products are not permitted in our program.
- There are extensive laws restricting vaping/smoking from school property as well as access, supply and distribution of products to minors.

Program Rules & Expectations



Rules



No driving:

- International students are not permitted to drive while in Canada in the program.
- This includes motorized vehicles such as cars, motorcycles, boats, watercraft vehicles, recreational vehicles, etc.
- It is against the law to drive unless you have a valid license for the specific type of motorized vehicle.



No Lime e-Scooters or e-Bikes:

- Aligning with Lime Technology and Services rider restrictions, students in the Central Okanagan International Student Program are NOT permitted to ride Lime e-scooters or e-bikes.



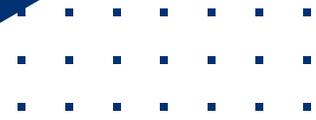
Canadian Cell Phone Number:

For safety reasons it is a requirement that all international students have a Canadian phone number during their time in the Central Okanagan.

- A Canadian phone number is needed to connect fully with 911 services.
- The Program Emergency Phone line is unable to receive calls from apps such as What's App, etc.
- Students need to be reachable by their host family and Program staff when they are not on a Wi-Fi network.

Please see our Arrival Guide for one option through PhoneBox to register for a Canadian phone number and plan before arriving.

Program Rules & Expectations



iCent



Central Okanagan iCent App:

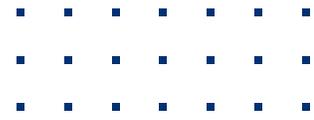
Our Program uses the secure iCent app to communicate about program information and with individual students. As such, all international students who are in grade 9-12 MUST be registered in iCent.

Personal registration instructions will be sent to the your personal email as listed in your application to our Program.

Notifications for iCent must also be turned on so you do not miss information about:

- School & program updates
- Activities & sightseeing trips
- Skiing/snowboarding information

Program Rules & Expectations



Homestay



Follow expectations & rules of homestay:

Respect and follow the expectations and rules of your homestay and our Program expectations for students in homestay.

- If you are unsure about an expectation or rule, ask your host parents or your Program Manager.

Your host family must know where you are at all times and approve of what you are doing.

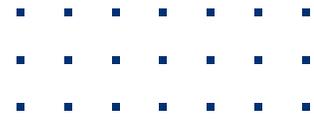
- Ask – do NOT tell – your host parents if you would like to make plans with friends.
 - Requests should NOT be last minute, give at least one day notice if you wish to make plans.
- You MUST keep your Canadian cell phone charged, turned on, and always with you.
 - It is an expectation you answer your host family and program staff if they contact you.



Spend time with your Canadian host family:

- Balance social time with friends with spending time with your host family.
 - For example, you should spend about half your time outside of school with your host family, and half your time with friends.
- Limit your technology use when you are spending time with your Canadian family.
- Students are expected to have dinner with their host family a minimum of four (4) nights per week.

Program Rules & Expectations



Homestay



Clean up after yourself:

- Keep your room & bathroom clean and organized.
 - Your bathroom should be cleaned once a week.
 - Towels/sheets should be washed a minimum of once every two weeks.
- Clean up after yourself in the house when you use something in common areas.
- Your host family will show you where cleaning items are stored, and how to use them.



Meals and food:

Your host family is responsible to provide 3 meals and sensible snacks for you.

- Please understand that your homestay is NOT an “open” kitchen. Buy specialty items and/or extra food if necessary.
- If you are not having a meal at home, you need to let your host family know in advance.

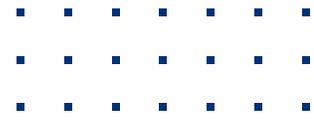


Quiet time:

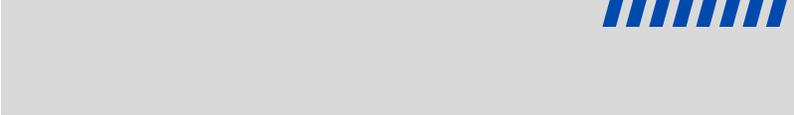
Canadian families go to bed early compared to some other cultures. For example, host parents will typically go to sleep between 9pm-11pm.

- If you stay up later than 9pm, be quiet and respectful of others in your home.
- Speak to your host family about their household quiet time expectations and guidelines.
- All electronic equipment should be turned off or silenced by 10pm.

Program Rules & Expectations



Social



Social time:

You must ask permission from your host parents every time you would like to do something with friends.

- You will need to tell your host parents:
 - Where you will be going.
 - What activities you will be doing.
 - Who you will be with.
 - How you plan on getting there and back home.



Curfew:

You need to plan appropriately and always be home by curfew. This requires you consider the bus schedule and travel time when planning.

Curfew on school days (i.e., Sunday to Thursday)

- **9:30 pm** for students in **Grades 11 and 12**
- **8:30 pm** for students in **Grades 9 and 10**

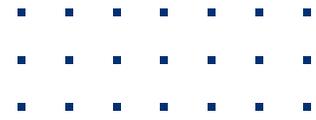
Curfew on non-school days (i.e., Friday and Saturday)

- **11 pm** for students in **Grades 11 and 12**
- **10 pm** for students in **Grades 9 and 10**

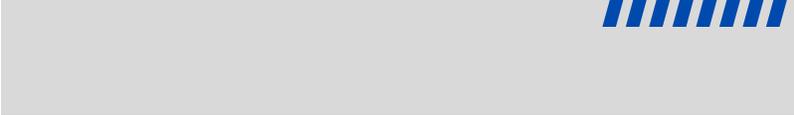
There are a variety of reasons your host family may require an earlier curfew, the Program supports your host parents in establishing these specific guidelines.

Similarly, under special circumstances like a school/team event or a family outing, curfew can be extended.

Program Rules & Expectations



Social



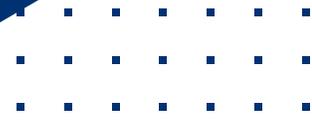
Sleepovers:

For safety and record-keeping purposes, you must have permission from your host parents any time you are not sleeping at your home.

Each time you are staying at a friends house for a sleepover:

1. **You MUST ask permission** from your host parents at least 48 hours in advance.
 - Part of your request is to provide your host parents with the contact number of the host parent that will be supervising you during the sleepover.
 - Your host parents will call to confirm the sleepover arrangement is okay with the other host parent.
2. When you have permission, **you MUST complete the Travel Request e-Form** at least 48 hours in advance to notify the Program that you will be staying away from your homestay for the night, and to identify the adult (25+ years) who will be supervising you.

Program Rules & Expectations



School



Lunch Meetings:

Students are expected to attend all International Student Lunch Meetings. Important information is shared at these meetings about:

- Program Updates and Information
- Big White & Ski Shuttle
- International Program and School activities
- Optional Trips

It is NOT a requirement that students have a laptop for school purposes when in the Central Okanagan. However, bringing a personal electronic device such as an iPad, tablet or laptop may be helpful in Homestay for communication purposes.

Study and work hard:

Speak English as much as you can.

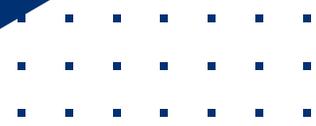
- Try your best in school.
- Ask your classroom teachers for help if you do not understand something.
- The International teacher at your school can also help you if you are struggling with schoolwork.



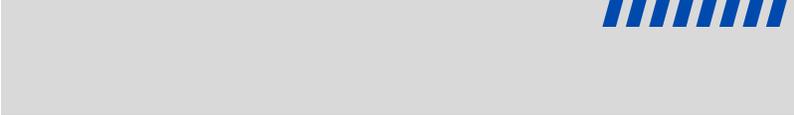
Attend school and be on time for classes:

- You must attend school every day unless you are sick or have a school or Program approved trip.
- Your Canadian host parents must inform the school if you are sick.
- Missing school for no reason is called "skipping" and violates the school Code of Conduct.
- You must NOT be late for classes during the school day.
- This includes the beginning of the day and after each break.

Program Rules & Expectations



School



Follow the Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct has guidelines for behavior including:

- School attendance and tardiness
- School assignment completion
- Plagiarism/cheating
- Cell phone use
- Smoking/vaping/alcohol/drugs
- Fighting

A violation of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension from school.

If you are unsure about a school rule or expectation speak with the international teacher at school.



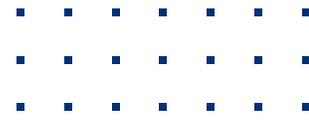
Plagiarism, cheating, and use of AI:

Plagiarism is a serious offense in schools. Students cannot copy work from the internet, books, or other students. Copying other work is considered cheating. AI can only be used with the specific approval of the teacher.

If you do not understand an assignment, ask for help. Teachers, and school staff will be happy to help you with your school work.

School Board **Policy 486: Student Use of Network Services and Digital Technologies** outlines appropriate use of technology including A.I. International teacher can assist with questions about this district policy.

Money in Canada



Canadian Currency

Canadian currency has both coins and paper money. There are 100 cents in one Canadian dollar. The Canadian **coins** used are:

- 5¢ (nickel)
- 10¢ (dime)
- 25¢ (quarter)
- \$1.00 (dollar / loonie)
- \$2.00 (twoonie)

Canadian **bills** used are:

- \$5
- \$10
- \$20
- \$50
- \$100

Rounding

In Canada cents (¢) are calculated but we use a rounding system for the amount owed when paying with cash:

0.05 = 5¢

0.10 = 10¢

Round cents **down** for:

- 0.01 & 0.02 = **0.00**
- 0.06 & 0.07 = **0.05**

Round cents **up** for:

- 0.03 & 0.04 = **0.05**
- 0.08 & 0.09 = **0.10**

Examples when paying with cash:

A total of \$13.57 is rounded down to **\$13.55**

A total of 107.59 is rounded up to **\$107.60**

**If you pay by card, there is NO rounding.*

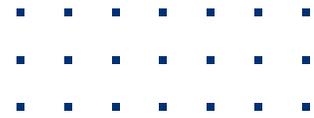
Payment Options

Depending on the store or service, in Canada items may be purchased using Canadian currency (coins or paper money) or:

- Debit bank card
- Credit card
- Prepaid credit card
- Apple pay



Transportation



Safety



Walking:

- Use sidewalks when they are available. Cross the street at a corner and use a crosswalk when it is available.
- Be sure that vehicles see you and stop before you cross the street.



Riding in a vehicle:

- Seatbelt use in cars is the law in Canada.
- If you are the only passenger in the car, it is customary to sit in the front seat.



Driving:

- You are NOT permitted to drive a motorized vehicle when you are in the International Student Program.
 - This includes cars, motorcycles, boats, watercraft vehicles, etc.).

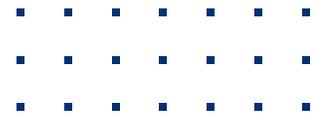
Host Family



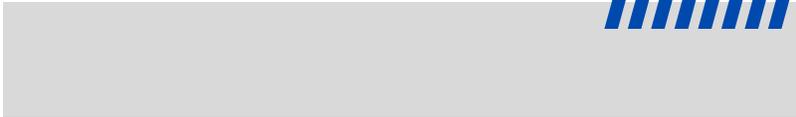
Your host parents will provide transportation to and from events a reasonable amount of the time. Give them plenty of notice if you are asking for a ride and always ask politely.

Remember, they are not a car service. Learn to be independent bike, walk, take the city bus, carpool, etc.

Transportation



To School



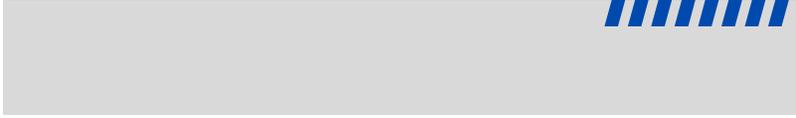
You will either be able to walk to school, take the school bus, or purchase a city bus pass.

The Program will register you for the school bus if you are eligible.

- You do not have to pay to ride the school bus.
- Your host family will show you where to find the bus stop near your house.
- You will need to ensure you have your school bus pass with you every school day.

If your host parents drive their other children to school, they will drive you too.

City Bus

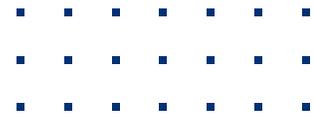


You can use the city bus to get around the Central Okanagan. For routes, maps and general info go to the [BC Transit](#) website.

You can buy single tickets, 10-day passes or monthly passes for the city bus. The fares for each type of ticket can be found here: [FARES](#)

You can buy bus tickets and passes at many locations: [WHERE TO BUY TICKETS](#)

Transportation



Taxis



Taxis are safe to take in the Central Okanagan. Download the apps on your phone for faster service.

- Current Taxi **250-864-8294**
- Kelowna Cabs
 - Kelowna **250-762-2222**
 - West Kelowna **250-762-4444**
- West Cabs **778-754-8888**

Rideshare



Rideshare services are safe to take in the Central Okanagan. Download the apps on your phone for faster service.

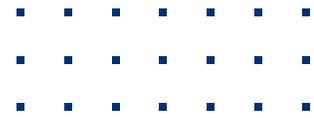
URide

- www.uride.co/locations/kelowna

Uber

- www.uber.com/global/en/r/cities/kelowna-bc-ca/

Transportation



Other Drivers



You are permitted to ride in a car with adults who have a full drivers permit.

You are NOT permitted to ride with L drivers.

You can ride in a car with an N driver if they are following all restrictions for their permit including:

1. The driver displays their N sign.
2. There is no use of hand-held or hands-free cellphones or other electronic devices.
3. There is a limit of one passenger only unless there is a supervisor age 25+ with a valid Class 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 license (i.e., host parent).
4. The driver has NOT consumed alcohol or drugs.

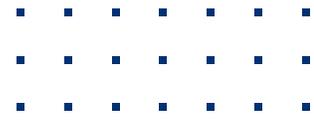
Regardless of who the adult is that will be driving you, **ALL travel outside the school district MUST** be approved by the Program PRIOR to the trip.

Travel Request e-Forms must be submitted 2 weeks PRIOR to travel.

Provided the driver is following all restrictions of their N permit, and you are the only non-family member passenger, you may ride with an N driver ONLY within the boundaries of the Central Okanagan School District geographical area (Peachland to Oyama & Black Mountain to North Glenmore).

Travel with N drivers outside the School District area, including Big White Ski Resort, is NOT permitted.

Travel Requests



In Program



If you are travel outside Canada anytime during your program, there are documents that you must take with you to be able provide Border Officials when you re-enter Canada.

Our office needs 2 weeks to prepare these documents.

For safety reasons, our program must know when you travel anywhere outside the Central Okanagan Public School District area, including trips to Big White Ski Resort. The program also needs to be informed of any sleepover arrangements that your host parents have approved.

The link for the **Travel Request e-Form** is available on the International Education website.

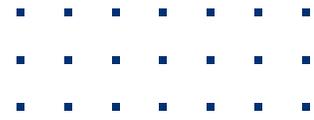
All Travel Requests must be completed and submitted at least 2 weeks before your requested trip.

For Program review and recordkeeping purposes, ALL sleepover arrangements must be submitted at least 48 hours before the date of the sleepover.

You need permission from the Program if you wish to travel:

- Outside of Kelowna, BC or Canada with your host family or natural parents.
- Within BC with a supervisor who is not your natural parent, your host parent, or a school staff member.
- Within BC with a school field trip that is considered high risk.
- Alone for any portion of any trip.

Big White Ski Resort



Seasons Pass



If you are purchasing a seasons pass, your natural parent will need to consent as part of the purchase process. See purchase process below.

Big White will NOT permit you on the hill until your natural parent has signed your waiver.

Pass Purchase

Instructions for students wanting to purchase a Big White Ski Resort Season's Pass can be found on the **Big White & Ski Shuttle** section of the International Education website.

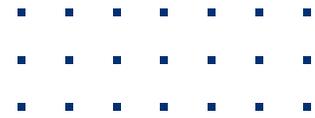
Step 1: Students purchase the Season Pass online following the listed instructions.

Step 2: As part of the process, natural parents MUST sign the Big White Ski Resort online liability waiver.

Step 3: Once the waiver is signed, natural parents must email Big White (tickets@bigwhite.com) indicating the waiver has been signed.

Step 4: Students collect their pass in person AFTER arrival in Canada at Big White's Kelowna office or the Village ticket office on the mountain. Photo ID is required to pick up the pass.

Ski Shuttle



Ski Shuttle



International students have the option of taking a district organized shuttle for a fee on weekends to Big White. Information is available on the **Big White & Ski Shuttle** section of the International Education website and registration for a seat on the shuttle is done through iCent.

Other Options



International students are NOT permitted to travel to/from Big White Ski Resort using a taxi or rideshare (i.e., uRide or Uber) or with N drivers.

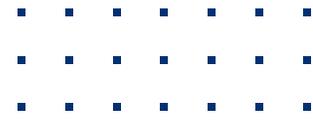


Program approved options for transportation to/from Big White Ski Resort include:

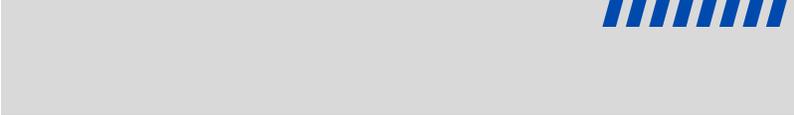
1. With your Host Parents
2. With another Host Parent
3. Taking a Community Shuttle
 - A list of approved community shuttle providers is available on the Program website
4. Travelling with a Canadian Family
 - You will need to complete a travel request in this situation, and approval by the Program MUST be granted prior to your trip

For more information link to the Big White & Ski Shuttle section of our website: **Travel to Big White**

Ski Lessons & Equipment



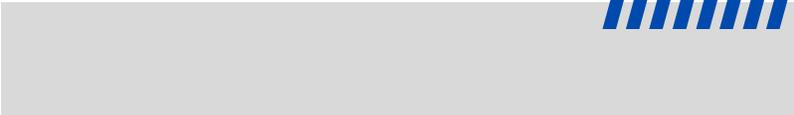
Lessons



If you have not skied or snowboarded 5 or more time in the last 2 year, we strongly recommend that you take sign up for ski/snowboard lessons.

Big White Ski Lesson information is available through this [LINK](#).

Rentals

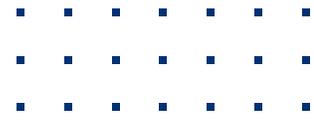


International students have many options for winter clothing, as well as ski and snowboard equipment. You can:

- Bring your own winter clothing and ski/snowboard equipment to Canada with you.
- Purchase new/gently used winter clothing and ski/snowboard equipment after you arrive in Canada.
- Rent ski/snowboard equipment for the season from a provider in the Central Okanagan.

There are ski/snowboard rental shops and ski swaps to get equipment from. Information regarding shops & swaps is updated each season and available on the [**Ski & Snowboard Equipment Options**](#) section of our International Education website.

Optional Trips



Trips



Many students are interested in not only exploring the Central Okanagan, but also Western Canada.

Our Program offers a variety of OPTIONAL TRIPS that students can register for.

These optional trips to other cities in Western Canada are provided by tour companies we partner with and registration and payment is done outside of our Program. However, Program staff do supervise students on each trip.



In the past, optional trip destinations have included:

- Sundance Ranch, BC (Horseback Riding Ranch)
- Vancouver, BC
- Victoria, BC
- Banff, AB

Sample itineraries and more information can be found on the **Current Students** section of our International Education website.

Students will be provided further information about the optional trips for this school year at Student Orientation and in school lunch meetings.

Schools



George Elliot Secondary

Grades 9-12
10241 Bottom Lake Road,
Lake Country
ges.sd23.bc.ca

Program Manager:
Carolina Moreno



Kelowna Secondary

Grades 10-12
1079 Raymer Avenue,
Kelowna
kss.sd23.bc.ca

Program Manager:
Nathalie Messent



Mount Boucherie Secondary

Grades 9-12
2751 Cameron Road,
West Kelowna
mbs.sd23.bc.ca

Program Manager:
Lori McPhail



Okanagan Mission Secondary

Grades 9-12
4544 Gordon Drive,
Kelowna
okm.sd23.bc.ca

Program Manager:
Masao Matsubara



Rutland Secondary

Grades 9-12
705 Rutland Road,
Kelowna
rss.sd23.bc.ca

Program Manager:
Wendy Burridge



George Pringle Secondary

New School
Opening September 2027
West Kelowna