

Together We Learn



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

International Education



International Student Guide

SEPTEMBER 2024

Canada

Experience

Learning

Welcome to the Central Okanagan

Experience. Learning.



The Central Okanagan hosts approximately 400 international students a year from over 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 our area.

Please review this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. Information can also be found on our website.

We hope that you make many wonderful memories and friendships during your time in our program. Best of luck during your Canadian academic adventure.

~The International Education Team

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Contact Information

Contacting the Office

**Central Okanagan Public Schools
International Education Program**

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

Phone: 1 250 470 3258

Email: international.education@sd23.bc.ca

Website: internationaleducation.ca

Instagram: @okgn23world

WEBSITE: 



INSTAGRAM: 



Emergency Phone Line

Program Emergency Phone Line Number

250 801 5684

This number is monitored by International Education Program staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Emergency Services

Dialing 911 will connect you with Emergency Police, Ambulance, and Fire Services.

Police officers (RCMP) will help you with emergency and non-emergency police related issues.

RCMP liaison officers also work in all our schools. Police officers in Canada are very helpful.



Supports when in Canada

Homestay Coordinators

- Support students while they adjust to homestay.
- Host weekly meetings at school.
- Organize Program activities.
- Communicate with homestay families.
- Help with issues that arise between students and homestay.



Homestay Parents

- Have a caring, safe, comfortable home.
- Provide a daily meal and ensure there is food for lunches and snacks.
- Supervise and keep you safe.
- Set your curfew.
- Give you permission to go out.
- Report unsafe situations to the program.



International Teachers

- Help you when you are at school.
- Answer questions about the school, courses, and teachers.
- Plan school activities for international students.
- Teach ELL/ESL and other subjects in the school.
- Help you plan for college/university.



Program Administrators

- Are your legal custodian.
- Make decisions regarding your well-being.
- Create procedures and rules for your safety.
- Support host families and homestay coordinators.
- Communicate with your agent.



Program Staff Information

Homestay Coordinators

Your Homestay Coordinator wants to ensure that you are happy, healthy, and having a positive experience in Canada. They will be at your school at least once a week to help you.



Wendy Burridge

wendy.burridge@sd23.bc.ca

250 860 9729 ext. 8549

Rutland Secondary

Rutland Middle

Springvalley Middle



Masao Matsubara

masao.matsubara@sd23.bc.ca

250 860 9729 ext. 5390

Okanagan Mission Secondary

Canyon Falls Middle



Lori McPhail

lori.mcphail@sd23.bc.ca

250 860 9729 ext. 7249

Mount Boucherie Secondary

Constable Neil Bruce Middle

Glenrosa Middle



Nathalie Messent

nathalie.messent@sd23.bc.ca

250 860 9729 ext. 8233

George Elliot Secondary

HS Grenda Middle

Kelowna Secondary

Dr. Knox Middle

KLO Middle

Emergency Phone Line



250 801 5684

Monitored 24 hours a day by staff members



Ariana Pastora

ariana.pastora@sd23.bc.ca

250 860 9729 ext.

Homestay Support *(all schools)*

Program Staff Information *(continued)*

Program Administrators



Wynter Oakes
District Vice- Principal
*International Education
& Settlement Services*
wynter.oakes@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258



Elisé Saraceni
Director
*International Education,
Anti-Racism & Equity*
elise.saraceni@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258



Violeta Malfair
Director
*International Education
& Settlement Services*
violeta.malfair@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258



Raquel Steen
Assistant Superintendent
*Central Okanagan Public
Schools*
raquel.steen@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3210

Administrative Assistants

Julie Melia
International Education Assistant
international.education@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258

Heather Oishi
International Education Assistant
international.education@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258

Alisha Trethewey
International Education Assistant
international.education@sd23.bc.ca
250 470 3258

Contacting the Office

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

Phone: 1 250 470 3258
Email: international.education@sd23.bc.ca
Website: internationaleducation.ca

Hours: 08:00 - 16:00 PST

For emergencies, please call the **Emergency Phone Line 250 801 5684**

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

Student Insurance

studyinsured™

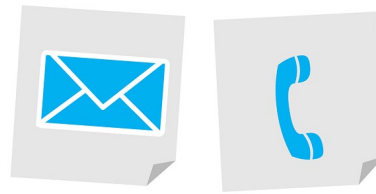
International Students receive insurance coverage when in Canada during their program.

Contacting StudyInsured™

From Canada & USA: **1 866 883 9787**

From anywhere: **1 416 640 7865**

Email: studentassist@studyinsured.com




STUDENT PROTECTION AT-A-GLANCE
 Keep in a safe, easily accessible place

MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE
 STUDYINSURED™ ASSISTANCE
 Confidential, multilingual emergency assistance
 and mental health support line

1.866.883.9787

Call any time you need help. Call every time you seek treatment

IMPORTANT: FOR MAJOR ILLNESSES OR INJURIES, YOU MUST INFORM STUDYINSURED™ ASSISTANCE WITHIN 48 HOURS

Speak with a doctor over video chat by calling StudyInsured Assistance™ and asking for our Virtual Health Service

studyinsured™

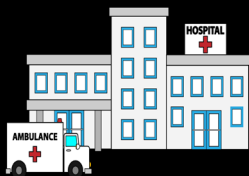
You will receive your personal ID insurance number by email. You can use your ID number to seek assistance, 24 hours a day for the following:

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

Opening an Insurance File

You must call immediately if you are:

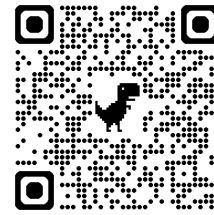
- Being hospitalized for any reason
- Requiring surgery or an MRI or a CT scan
- Seeking medical attention outside of Canada



Insurance & Medical Assistance

www.studyinsured.com/centralokanagan

Student Insurance *(continued)*



Submitting an Insurance Claim

Submit by email: studentclaims@studyinsured.com

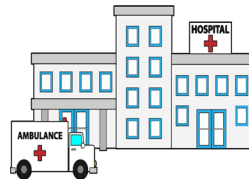
Submit online: <https://www.studyinsured.com/centralokanagan/en/onlineclaim>

You must sign and submit a claim form every time if the claim totals more than \$500, whether you were treated at a direct-pay facility or not.

StudyInsured™ Assistance may instruct students to complete a claim form for claims under \$500 in special circumstances.

Collect all invoices, receipts, doctor's notes, ER reports, etc. because they will need to be submitted with the claim.

- Many medical facilities will send this direct, 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



(MSP) Medical Services Plan

After 3 months, full year students will also have medical coverage through the provincial health plan. Your homestay coordinator will deliver your BC MSP card when it arrives. Once you have your BC MSP card, please present this card when you seek medical attention. StudyInsured™ becomes extended medical coverage for full year students after MSP is in place.

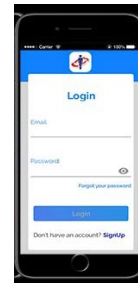
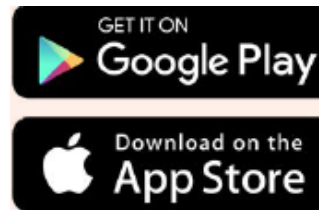
Mental Wellness Support

Access confidential counsellor support in English or your preferred language.

Call **1 866 883 9787 (then press 3)** [or] **1 833 646 1524**

Stay Healthy in Schools

- Video chat, text or phone a counsellor
- Help available 24/7
- Support in 180 languages
- Mental health resources
- Free App – iConnectYou
- Fill our registration form
- Enter passcode SIMW



Mental Wellness Hub

<https://www.internationalstudentwellness.com>



- Mental Health Tip Sheets
- COVID-19 Useful Links for Students
- Province for BC Resources



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

Money in Canada

Canadian currency has both coins and paper money.

There are 100 cents in one Canadian dollar.

Canadian coins used are:

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

Canadian bills used are:

- \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 bills.



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

$$0.05 = \mathbf{0.05}$$

$$0.10 = \mathbf{0.10}$$

Round cents down for:

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

Round cents up for:

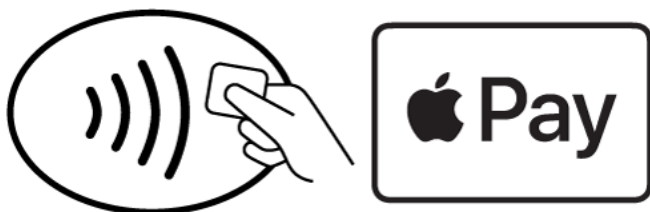
- 0.03 & 0.04 = **0.05**
- 0.08 & 0.09 = **0.10**

Examples for paying with cash:

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

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

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



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

First Few Days in Canada

Contact home:

Contact your parents - they will want to know you arrived safely.



Ask questions:

Your Canadian family wants you to feel at home and help you settle in. If you do not understand something, please ask them for what you need.



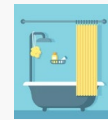
Tour your home & neighborhood:

Ask your Canadian family to show you your house, yard & the neighborhood.



Learn the rules & routines of your home:

Discuss the rules, expectations, and routines of your home. Learn how to use household items correctly (kitchen, laundry, shower, toilet, etc.).



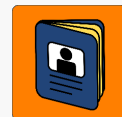
Unpack:

Unpack your belongings and get comfortable. Your room should have a desk, chair, bed, bedding, lamp and closet or dresser.



Store your passport:

Find a safe place to store your passport and other important documents. Only carry your passport when you are travelling across border.



Take a photo of important cards:

Take a photo of both sides of the program **Emergency Card** and your unique insurance card. Enter the **Emergency Phone Line** number and your Canadian parent(s) numbers in your phone.



Sign up for a Canadian phone plan:

You must have a phone number that is free for your Canadian family and our program to contact you while you are in Canada. Your phone plan must have cellular data included so you are reachable when you are not on a Wi-Fi network.



One option is to sign up for a Canadian phone number **before** arrival with PhoneBox™ <https://welcome.gophonebox.com/studyinsured/>.

You can set up a mobile phone plan in August and get an eSIM after receiving the email with your insurance policy information from StudyInsured™. Or you can request a PhoneBox™ sim card when you arrive in Canada.



Program Expectations & Rules

General Expectations

Be open to new things:

Enjoy your school and homestay experience to the fullest in Canada. Be open to new experiences and Canadian culture.



Review Program expectations and rules.

Take time to review the expectations and rules for international students. Additional information about expectations and rules is available on our program [website](#).



Attend weekly International Student Meetings:

International Student Meetings are held by your homestay coordinator weekly. During these meetings, students are provided with important program information and informed of details about upcoming events.

Your attendance is mandatory at these meetings.



Ask for support:

Talk to your Canadian parents and/or your homestay coordinator if you are having problems or if you are feeling down.



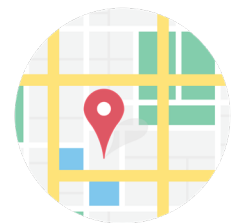
Get involved at school and in the community:

Ask the international teacher at your school how to find out about school events. Consider joining a club or team to meet new people.

Check out these links for information about community activities and opportunities.



- [Community Activities](#)
- [Tourism Kelowna](#)
- [Tourism Lake Country](#)
- [Tourism Peachland](#)
- [Tourism West Kelowna](#)



Program Expectations & Rules

Program 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 homestay coordinator if you are unsure about any law in [Canada](#) or [BC](#).



No alcohol or drugs:

Students are not allowed to use drugs or drink alcohol at any time during their time in Canada and 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 allowed in our program.

There are extensive laws restricting vaping/smoking from school property as well as access, supply and distribution of products to minors.



No driving:

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



Program Expectations & Rules

Expectations in Homestay

Get involved with your homestay family:

Your host family wants to spend time with you and to share their family time with you. Be open to spending time with them and participating in their daily activities



Clean up after yourself:

Keep your room and bathroom clean and organized. Clean up after yourself in the house when you use something.



Follow expectations & rules of the house:

Your host family will have expectations and rules for their home. Respect and follow the homestay rules and our program's "Golden Rules" for living in a homestay.



If you are unsure about an expectation or rule, ask your host parents or your homestay coordinator.

Social time:

You must ask permission when you would like to do something with friends. You will need to tell your host parents where you will be and how you plan on getting there and back home.



Curfew:

Your host parents will set a curfew for you. You need to plan appropriately and be home by curfew. Your curfew may be set for a different time for school days than on weekends.



Program Expectations & Rules

Expectations at School

Study and work hard:

Speak English as much as you can. Try your best in school. Ask your teachers for help if you do not understand.



Follow the Code of Conduct:

Students who are in violation of the Code of Conduct may be suspended from school. 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



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

Attend school:

You must attend school every day unless you are sick or have an approved trip. Your host parent 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 also not be late for classes during the school day.

Plagiarism and cheating:

Plagiarism is a serious offense in schools. Students cannot copy work from the internet, books, or other students. Copying other work is considered cheating.



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

Transportation for School

Travel to & from school

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

Your homestay coordinator 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.



Transportation safety

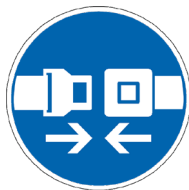
Walking

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 mandatory 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.).



Transportation in the Community

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](#)



Taxis & rideshare services

Download the apps on your phone for faster taxi or rideshare service.

Taxi / Cab Services:

- Current Taxi 250 864 8294
- Kelowna Cabs
 - 250 762 2222 (Kelowna)
 - 250 762 2222 (West Kelowna)
- West Cabs 778 754 8888

Rideshare Services:

- Uber
 - <https://www.uber.com/global/en/r/cities/kelowna-bc-ca/>
- URide
 - <https://www.uride.co/locations/kelowna>

Rides from host parents

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



Transportation with Novice drivers

Riding with 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.

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 in the Central Okanagan School District area.

Any travel with Novice drivers outside the Central Okanagan School District area, including Big White Ski Resort, must be approved by Program Administration.

Please speak to your homestay coordinator about the request form you need to complete before finalizing any travel.



Travel Requests while in Program

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 should be informed if you purchase a Big White Seasons Pass or purchase a Ski Shuttle seat.

Additionally, you need permission from Program Administrators if you wish to travel:

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



The Travel Request Form is available on the International Education website.

Travel Request Form [LINK](#)

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

If you are travelling outside Canada and returning anytime during your program, there are documents that you must take with you to be able provide at the Canadian border when re-entering Canada. Our office needs 2 weeks notice to prepare these documents.

The local airport is the **Kelowna International Airport**



ylw.kelowna.ca

Big White Ski Resort

Seasons Passes

Many students enjoy skiing and snowboarding in the winter months in the Central Okanagan. Below are instructions on how to purchase a season's pass from Big White. You will need natural parent consent as part of the purchase process, and before you can be on the hill.

Instructions for international students can be found on the [Community Activities](#) page of our program website.

Step 1: Students purchase the Season Pass online through the Big White website www.bigwhite.com.

Step 2: As part of the process, natural parents must sign the online liability waiver.

Step 3: Upload a photo for the season pass. If a photo cannot be uploaded online, a photo will be taken when the pass is picked up.

Step 4: Students collect their pass in Canada at Big White's Kelowna office or the village ticket office when the mountain is open. Photo ID is required to pick up the pass.

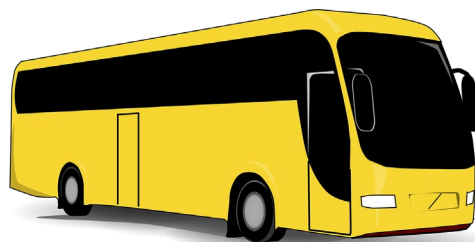
Please note: Big White Season Passes cannot be picked up until **November**.



Your host parents and homestay coordinator can help you with Step 4 after you arrive.

Ski Shuttle to/from Big White

There are options for international students to take a ski shuttle on weekends to Big White. This information will be communicated by the program after arrival. Registration and purchase of seats on the shuttle is done shortly before the ski season begins.



High School Directory

George Elliot Secondary

Grades 9-12

10241 Bottom Lake Road, Lake Country

ges.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Nathalie Messent

International Teacher: Daphne Brown



Kelowna Secondary

Grades 10-12

1079 Raymer Avenue, Kelowna

kss.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Nathalie Messent

International Teacher: Lana Skelton



Mount Boucherie Secondary

Grades 9-12

2751 Cameron Road, West Kelowna

mbs.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Lori McPhail

International Teacher: Darren Pendergast



Okanagan Mission Secondary

Grades 9-12

4544 Gordon Drive, Kelowna

okm.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Masao Matsubara

International Teacher: Lynn Simpson



Rutland Secondary

Grades 9-12

705 Rutland Road, Kelowna

rss.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Wendy Burrige

International Teacher: Julie Loveridge-Marks



Middle School Directory

Canyon Falls Middle School

Grades 6-8

1211 Frost Road, Kelowna
 cms.sd23.bc.ca
 Homestay Coordinator: Masao Matsubara
 International Teacher: Amanda Bourdon



Constable Neil Bruce Middle

Grades 6-8

2010 Daimler Road, West Kelowna
 cnb.sd23.bc.ca
 Homestay Coordinator: Lori McPhail
 International Teacher: Sheri Dodd



Dr. Knox Middle School

Grades 7-9

121 Drysdale Blvd, Kelowna
 drk.sd23.bc.ca
 Homestay Coordinator: Nathalie Messent
 International Teacher: Darcey King



HS Grenda Middle School

Grades 6-8

10168 Korschuh Road, Lake Country
 hms.sd23.bc.ca
 Homestay Coordinator: Nathalie Messent
 International Teacher: Bryn Coape-Arnold



Glenrosa Middle School

Grades 6-9

2974 Glen Abbey Place, West Kelowna
 gms.sd23.bc.ca
 Homestay Coordinator: Lori McPhail
 International Teacher: Dina Douville



Middle School Directory (continued)

KLO Middle School

Grades 7-9

3130 Gordon Drive, Kelowna

klo.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Nathalie Messent

International Teacher: Emily Gingera



Rutland Middle

Grades 6-8

715 Rutland Road, Kelowna

rms.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Wendy Burrige

International Teacher: Elan MacKenzie



Springvalley Middle

Grades 6-8

350 Ziprick Road, Kelowna

sms.sd23.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinator: Wendy Burrige

International Teacher: Sarah Seney & Elizabeth Seitz



Homestay Coordinators (by school)

Nathalie Messent	Nathalie Messent	Lori McPhail	Masao Matsubara	Wendy Burrige
George Elliott Secondary	Kelowna Secondary	Mount Boucherie Secondary	Okanagan Mission Secondary	Rutland Secondary
<i>HS Grenda Middle</i>	<i>Dr Knox Middle</i>	<i>Constable Neil Bruce Middle</i>	<i>Canyon Falls Middle</i>	<i>Rutland Middle</i>
	<i>KLO Middle</i>	<i>Glenrosa Middle</i>		<i>Springvalley Middle</i>