



School District #22

International Student Manual

Vernon School District #22
International Student Orientation Manual
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Welcome to School District #22!

Welcome to the north Okanagan Valley and your educational program abroad! We know this will be an important and fun-filled time in your life. Your decision to take part in this program was a big one – and one we know you will not regret! SD#22 is excited to offer you the quintessential Canadian education experience – in one of the most beautiful locations in Canada.

The International Student Program in School District #22 currently has more than 200 full time students from over 20 different countries, helping to contribute to the multicultural atmosphere of this typical Canadian community. Your job as a student in SD#22 is to learn – but your job is also to teach. This is your chance to share your experiences, your life, and your culture with others. Be sure to take full advantage of all occasions to show others who you are.

The most important thing to remember is that everyone in School District #22 is here to help make your experience the best it can be. This means that if you ever have any questions or concerns, you should not hesitate to ask. There will be people in the schools, staff supporting your homestay family, District Office staff, and many others you will meet during your stay. They are all there to assist you – be sure to talk to them and tell them about your experience!

Vernon, the Okanagan Valley, and British Columbia

School District # 22 is located in the North Okanagan region of the interior of the province of British Columbia. The school district comprises the communities of Vernon, Lumby, Cherryville, Coldstream, Lavington, and Whitevale and is nestled amid the striking Rocky Mountains and surrounded by scenic lakes including Lake Okanagan, Kalamalka Lake, and Swan Lake.

The Okanagan Valley and Lake Okanagan are internationally celebrated as popular tourist destinations (in the summer for the beaches and lake activities, in the winter for world-class ski and snowboarding), the wine country, and one of Canada's largest fruit producing regions. You can walk down the street in any one of our communities and see apple trees, cherry trees, and many other kinds of delicious fruits. Be sure to take advantage of your location and get out exploring!

Our schools are scattered amongst our gorgeous communities. Many of you will study in Vernon, our largest city, but some of you will be afforded the unique opportunity to experience the other, smaller communities that make up SD#22. Regardless of where you live and study, be sure to fully investigate the entire area to get a real feel for the authentic Canadian experience!

Welcome from Superintendent

We would like to extend a warm welcome to each one of you on behalf of School District #22 (Vernon). It gives us great pleasure to offer you an opportunity to continue your education with our school district.

We are located in the area of the Okanagan Valley in south central British Columbia. Our district is a vibrant educational community that provides excellent public education to approximately 9,100 students from kindergarten to grade 12 and to over 400 adults. We also have a new and exciting international education program which is aimed at providing the same high quality educational experience to you while allowing each person to experience the rich culture our community has to offer.

Ms. B. Rundell
Superintendent
School District #22

Welcome from Principal

The International Team of School District #22 welcomes international students to the outstanding school division of Vernon... a great place to learn, live, and experience natural beauty. We are dedicated to serving your individual needs so that you can meet your personal goals. We are an outstanding school division committed to the positive growth and development of all our students. Welcome!

Dave Lee
Principal, International Student Program
School District #22

Section 1 – Academic Information

This section includes very important information about the academic and educational portions of your time at School District #22. Please be sure you are familiar with this information and keep this section handy during your studies.

School District #22 International Student Programs Staff

The team of staff at the School District Office is here to support you throughout your time in Canada. Here are the people in the office:

Dave Lee, Principal
Janet Webb, Accounting Secretary
Donna Hull, Reception
Jenny Inkster, Admissions Officer

In each school, there is an additional team to help you out and answer any questions you have. They are:

Mr. Steve Plecas Charles Bloom Secondary School
Mr. Jeff Routley, Clarence Fulton Secondary School
Mrs. Diana Ward, Kalamalka Secondary School
Mrs. Derri Ann Berube, Vernon Secondary School
Mr. Andrew White, WL Seaton Secondary School

We also have a great team of Homestay Coordinators who are on call to facilitate all aspects of your home life. They are:

Jeanine London , Janice Foster, and Mishelle Schroth

Getting Help

The International Student Programs staff – all of them – are here to help you with any questions or problems you may have. It is important that you know you can always ask for help.

The first and best option you will have is to talk to your homestay family about your questions or concerns related to daily life. If they are not able to help, they will know who to best direct your question.

Your other option is always to speak with the International Contact in your school especially about academic issues. You will meet this person on your first day at the

school and will often have a class with this person as well. Be sure to check in with your school contact on a regular basis. They can help with any problems you might have.

Don't forget about the people in the International Student Program office at the School Board Office. You may not see these people on a regular basis, but they are always available for you. Feel free to call or stop by!

Making Changes to Your Program

If you decide to change your program (for example, alter your course work, change the length of your stay in the program, change the type of program you are registered for) you should first speak to your parents to obtain their consent for the change. It is important that your parents are a part of the decision. The International Student Program will require proof in writing of your parents' authorization for the change.

Once you have discussed this with your parents and they have consented, you will need to discuss the proposed changes with your International Contact at your school. The school contact will assist you in making the requested change.

ESL/English Support

Students whose first language is not English will have English as a Second Language courses programmed into their school timetables. Depending on your English level and ability, you may be permitted to take ESL and regular English credit courses at the same time. This decision will be made by the academic staff at School District #22 based on the information presented in your application, your transcripts, and potentially, a placement test.

Not all students will be registered in the regular high school English courses immediately. Our goal is to ensure you have the skills and background to succeed in your courses. It might be that you spend some time in ESL courses only prior to registering in the full English program. Please discuss your registration expectations with your International Contact in your school to ensure you are on a plan to get all the courses you need.

The goal of the ESL courses is to allow you the time and focus to improve your English for the purpose of academic study and daily conversation. Our focus is not on preparation for English testing; this program is NOT a TOEFL or IELTS preparation program. It is our hope that with lots of hard work, you will become proficient enough in English to successfully complete the English test of your choice at the conclusion of your program.

In addition to the ESL and English courses that are a part of your academic programming, you are encouraged to explore other ways of improving your English. This can include the following:

- taking other courses and electives which are high in interactive and spoken components (such as drama, physical education, leadership or peer tutoring)
- participating in extra curricular activities in the school like sports teams, activity clubs, and volunteer committees

- making a concerted effort to speak English at all times – even when interacting with those who speak your native language

English Testing

Students seeking admission to English-speaking universities in North America and Europe whose first language is not English will likely be required to present some sort of proof of English language proficiency. Most commonly, this would be in the form of a test score – either an IELTS (International English Language Test System) or a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Please note that there are often many ways to meet the English language proficiency requirement for a university or college and students are encouraged to research which method suits their needs.

School District #22 will do its best to offer students an opportunity to take either an IELTS or TOEFL test in the spring. Students wishing to take a different test or test at a different time of year will need to make their own arrangements. You can find details online at:

TOEFL: www.toefl.org

IELTS: www.ielts.org

CAEL: www.cael.ca

MELAB: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/testing/melab/>

Graduation Requirements

Students who are attending School District #22 with the goal of obtaining a British Columbia high school diploma will be expected to meet the graduation requirements established by the provincial government.

Those students who are finishing all three years of high school in Canada will complete the necessary coursework through BC courses. Students who have done part of their high school coursework in their home countries will have this work assessed for possible equivalencies in the BC system. Please note that while every effort will be made to award students credit for previously completed studies, there are basic requirements for the high school diploma that may be met only by completing BC courses, regardless of previous education.

If high school graduation is your goal, please discuss this with your International Contact at your school as early in your program as possible. Every effort will be made to facilitate your graduation in a timely fashion. However, please be aware that each student will work at his or her own pace and that your ultimate goal should be successful completion of your program.

Students who have already achieved high school graduation in their own country will be encouraged to complete the Fast Track program which focuses on preparation for Canadian university education.

Report Cards, Transcripts, and Other Academic Documents

Throughout your time at school, you will receive updates on your academic achievement through various means. Your school will issue report cards at various times which will be provided to you and also sent to your agent and family back home. You do not have to request this report card – all students receive this document.

At the end of the school year, a final report card will be issued to you by your school. It will have your Principal's signature and is an official report card which you can use to return to your home-country school.

If you are applying to university following your study in Vernon and you wrote provincial exams for your courses, you will need to request an official transcript from the BC government. The report card issued by the school is normally not sufficient for final university admission.

To request an official transcript, you must submit a form to the BC government Ministry of Education. You can obtain the form from your school and should be done as early as possible to allow ample time for the documents to be mailed.

Information on obtaining a transcript can be found online at:
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/transcript>

Tips for Academic Success

Attendance

A significant portion of your success in school will be guided by your attendance. It is vitally important that you attend all of your classes. Generally speaking, the only valid excuse for missing class is illness or family emergency. Otherwise, you need to be there. "Skipping classes" (a slang term for not going to class without a good reason) is unacceptable and is against school rules.

Should you need to miss school and know of this in advance, you should speak to your teachers and arrange to get your homework before the missed date. If you are ill and unable to go to school, you need to speak with your teachers immediately upon your return. Missed assignments and exams must be made up as soon as possible.

Participation

Success in the classroom is heavily influenced by your active participation in classroom discussions and activities. Regardless of your language abilities, it is important to force yourself to speak in class and actively engage with your teachers and fellow students. Especially if you are not comfortable in English, this is the best way to see results quickly. Participation doesn't mean getting every answer right – it means trying your best. And don't forget, some teachers will assign marks for participation. These should be the easiest marks you get in the course so take advantage!

Stay on Top of your Work

It can be easy to let the school work slide sometimes. But it is very important to keep your workload balanced and timely. Do your assignments before the due date so you can ask for help if you need it. If you have lots of reading to do, start it early. Especially if English is not your first language, large amounts of reading can be overwhelming. Starting early and breaking it up into manageable chunks will make things much more manageable.

Get Help Early

If you are struggling, don't wait to get help. Speak to your teachers as soon as you are having trouble. Teachers are happy to provide additional assistance – many will do everything in their power to ensure you get all the help you need. In addition to your classroom teachers, you can also speak to fellow students, your counselors, international staff and your homestay family. You have many options for getting help.

Section 2 - Rules and Regulations of the International Student Program

The following represents the rules and guidelines for participation in the International Student Program at School District #22. Each student is expected to be aware of all the rules and regulations as outlined in the information below, as well as the rules and regulations provided by the school.

- Students will abide by all the laws of Canada, the province of British Columbia, and all municipal bylaws. If a student is found to be in violation of any law, the student will be removed from the program and will be sent home. Please note that depending on the nature of the violation, the student may also have to face the consequences within the Canadian legal system.
- More specifically, the unlawful use of drugs will not be tolerated. The use of alcohol by students under the age of 19 is strictly prohibited. (Students who are 19 or older are strongly discouraged from the use of alcohol for the duration of their program.) SD #22 maintains a strict policy of dismissing students violating the drug and alcohol rules.
- Students will become familiar with the rules and regulations governing the school they are attending. Students will adhere to all rules established by the school. Students who are in violation of any school rules and regulations will be disciplined by the school administration, and, if warranted, by the management of the International Student Program. Repeated and flagrant violation of school rules may result in the student being removed from the program and sent home.
- In conjunction with the homestay family, students will learn the rules of their homestay and will obey and respect the rules for the duration of their stay in that home. Concerns or questions regarding the rules of the homestay family should first be discussed with the family. If this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the student will bring the issue to the attention of the Homestay Coordinator. The administration of the International Student Program may also become involved should the issue warrant it.
- Students are expected to attend all classes and educational programs provided. All absences must be explained by a note from the homestay adult and unexplained absences may lead to dismissal from the program. Homework and assignments are to be completed on time.
- English is the primary language of the schools and should be used at all times.
- Travel outside the Okanagan Valley is not permitted unless accompanied and supervised by an adult who is at least 25 years of age. All travel must be authorized by the homestay family and the International Student Program administration. Permission in writing from the students' parents must be provided before SD#22 consent for travel will be granted.
- Students in the International Student Program are not permitted to drive a car for the duration of the stay in the program. (This includes students who hold valid driver's permits in their home country.)

- The International Student Program administration reserve the right to terminate the student's participation on the program at any time should it be found that the student has severely or flagrantly disregarded the program rules, or if it is determined that the student's mental or physical health is in jeopardy.

Discipline and Consequences

Rule-breaking within the school will be dealt with first by the school administration. Should the involvement of the International Student Program administration be warranted, they will be called to participate.

Where the school or International Student Program administration are involved in discussions regarding rule violations, communications will be sent to the student's agent and family to inform them of the situation. Students will also be encouraged to discuss the matter with their family back home.

If a student breaks any of the rules of the International Student Program, the first step will be a meeting with the Principal of the International Student Program. During this meeting, the student and admin will discuss the situation and behavior. Students will be given the opportunity to present their side of the story and to explain the events and the situation.

As a result of this meeting, there may be ensuing consequences. The types of punishment will vary depending on the exact nature of the infraction and can range from verbal reprimand to suspension from school. Please note in the event of severe and/or repeated rule breaking, more serious consequences may be implemented, which could result in the student's dismissal from the program.

Understanding the Rules

If you find that you don't understand the rules or have questions about specific rules, it is important to ask questions of your homestay family, your teachers, the school administration, or the International Student Program administrators. Asking questions is the best way to learn about the program and your new culture. It is important to note that ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable defense for breaking the rules.

School District #22 Fee Payment and Refund Policy

Students will be assessed a mandatory, non-refundable \$100.00 (CAD) application fee upon submission of the application form. The application fee is to cover the administrative costs of the processing of the form and documents.

Upon receipt of the application form and the application fee (and relevant supporting documentation), the Letter of Offer will be sent to the student. Along with the Letter of Offer, an invoice for the fees will be included.

The invoice will include the following:

- tuition fees for the duration of the program
- Homestay fees for the duration of the program

- Homestay monitoring fee
- Medical insurance
- Where applicable, activities fee

Fees are due prior to the start of the program. Deadlines for payment are as follows:

- September start date: August 15
- November start date: October 15
- February start date: January 15
- April start date: March 15

Nonpayment of fees will result in the student not being permitted to attend classes. Payment must be made prior to the start of school to avoid any effect on the student's studies. Please note that in the event that fees are not paid on time, late charge penalties will be applied.

Refusal of Visa

In the event the student's visa or travel documents are denied, the student will receive a full refund of fees paid, minus the \$100 application fee and an additional \$100 administration fee (total deduction from the refund \$200). Proof of denial of visa will be required in order to initiate refund.

Cancellation by Student Prior to Program Start

Fees are paid for the duration of the program and therefore are non-refundable. School District resources are allocated on the basis of enrolment and therefore it is not possible to refund fees for any reason.

No refund of fees will be granted once the Visa and Study Permit have been granted.

No refund will be granted if the student withdraws from the program after the program has started. Program is considered to have started as of the first official day of school – not the date the student arrives.

No refund will be granted if the student is found to be in violation of the rules and regulations of the program and school district and is, as a result of this violation, removed from the program. Students will be sent home at the student's expense by the first available transport.

No refund will be granted if it is found that the student obtained admission to the School District #22 International Student Program under false pretenses or with forged documents.

No refund will be granted if the student's immigration status changes after 30 days of beginning the program in September. No refund will be granted if the student's immigration status changes at any time following the beginning of the program at any other time of year (November, February, or April).

Refunds on Homestay Fees

Please note that refunds will be granted only on the unused portion of the homestay fees paid. Unused portions will be calculated on a pro-rated basis of the days and nights the student did not stay with the homestay family.

Section 3 - Daily Life

Healthcare

All students who participate in the International Student Program will be provided with medical coverage for the duration of their stay in Canada. Depending on the length of the program, students will have a combination of private health insurance and public (government) health insurance, or possibly just the private health insurance. The International Student Program Office will assist with the procurement of the insurance and will provide you with the appropriate information upon your arrival. Your homestay family and your Homestay Coordinator will also have access to the information.

In the event that you require medical attention and the situation is not an emergency, please make arrangements to visit one of the medi-centres that the International Student Program has established a billing arrangement with (a list will be provided to you with your insurance information). This will avoid you having to pay out of pocket for most procedures.

StudentGuard Health Insurance

StudentGuard is the chosen private health care insurance company for School District #22. All students will spend the first three months of their program insured by StudentGuard. Students will receive an insurance card from the International Student Program office which will have the insurance information necessary to obtain services.

StudentGuard has made arrangements with **Vernon Family Doctors** (#116 – 3101 Highway 6, Fruit Union Plaza) to provide direct billing for most services. It is therefore recommended that students use this walk-in clinic whenever possible.

Where students must use another walk-in clinic or the hospital for treatment, students will need to pay for the medical services. The student can then submit a claim for the cost of treatment to StudentGuard directly. Payments are typically made within a week.

Visit the StudentGuard website for detailed information on coverage and claims: www.studentguard.com They have copies of the coverage policy in 11 languages as well as downloadable forms for claims and lots of other useful information.

Medical Services Plan (MSP)

MSP is the BC government-provided medical insurance. Students whose program is longer than three months will be switched to MSP, as required by the BC government. Students will receive a new government-issued “Care Card” that is to be presented to the service provider upon treatment. MSP does not require you to visit a specific clinic; MSP is accepted at virtually all treatment facilities.

In addition to the coverage available through MSP, students will continue to receive “top up” benefits from StudentGuard to provide extensive medical coverage for their stay in Canada. A list of services and treatments covered is available online.

Phones and International Calling

Calling overseas can be very expensive – and it can be very confusing about which option is the best. Be sure to discuss all options with your parents and your homestay family to ensure that you know what the best service is for you.

Prepaid Phone Cards

For long distance and international calls, this is the best option. Prepaid phone cards can be purchased in various amounts (from \$5 to \$50) and are convenient because they can be used from almost any phone, including pay phones. You can find these cards at many stores such as grocery stores and convenience stores. Be sure to do some research as the rates and charges will vary from card to card. Many charge usage fees, connection fees, or lose value over time. Questions to ask:

- What is the “per minute” charge to my country?
- Is there a connection fee? If so, how much is it?
- Will the card expire or lose value over time? How much time do I have to use the minutes?

Homestay Family Long Distance Plans

Many home long distance plans now include unlimited or large quantities of long distance minutes that allow you to access most international numbers at little or no cost. If your homestay family is amenable to this option – be sure to discuss it thoroughly before making any calls on the homestay phone line – it might be the cheapest option for calling home. Be sure you understand when you are permitted to make calls, how long the calls should be, and what the priority is for phone usage. It is important to respect the family rules regarding phone time. Questions to discuss include:

- What is the rate for long distances calls to my country on your long distance plan?
- Would it be possible for me to call my family from your land line?
- Can we establish a payment plan for the calls which have additional costs associated with them?
- What rules does your family have in place regarding phone usage? Is there a maximum time limit? What hours would you prefer not to receive phone calls?
- Can I share with you the time that it is best for me to call my family? (Be sure to outline the time zone differences and find a time that will not interfere with your homestay family’s schedules, but is also appropriate for your family back home.)

Cell Phones

While you may have had a cell phone (or mobile phone) in your home country, it is important to decide if it is cost-effective to obtain a cell phone in Canada for the duration of your stay.

It is highly likely that a cell phone will not be the most economical means of calling your family in your home country. Long distance rates on cell phones can be very high. If you do obtain a cell phone, be sure to research exact costs prior to making any long distance calls.

Should you decide to get a cell phone, it is recommended that you get a pre-paid cell phone. This will allow you to control the amount you spend and limit the chance of running up large bills.

Skype

Computer phone services (such as Skype or VOIP) are also an excellent option for long distance phone calls due to their affordable nature. Be sure this is a service supported in your home country and that your homestay family is open to the idea of you using this service. Please note that if you are using the computer to contact your friends and family back home you are still required to adhere to the homestay family rules regarding phone and internet usage.

Money and Banking

Money

The currency used in Canada is the Canadian dollar (\$). One dollar is divided into 100 cents. Each coin has a value (in cents) marked on it; coins are available in units of 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, \$1, and \$2. Each coin is referred to by its denomination and also by another “nickname”. Paper bills are available in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. Paper bills are all different colours to make it easier to see the difference.

| Name | Value | Name |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| 1 cent | \$0.01 | Penny |
| 5 cents | \$0.05 | Nickel |
| 10 cents | \$0.10 | Dime |
| 25 cents | \$0.25 | Quarter |
| 1 dollar | \$1.00 | Loonie |
| 2 dollars | \$2.00 | Twoonie |

Please note, Canadian currency has a lot in common with the American dollar but the currencies are different.

Taxes

When you go to the store to make a purchase, you may find that you are charged an additional fee on top of the price of the item. This is called a tax and is a fee paid to the government as a percentage of your payment. In BC, we have two government taxes: the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) which is 7% of the purchase price and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which is 5% of the purchase price. Not all items are charged taxes; some are assessed one tax and not the other, other items are assessed no taxes. Your receipt should clearly label which items are taxed and which tax it is. If you are not sure, ask the cashier before you make a purchase.

Banks

Depending on the length of time you plan to stay in Canada, you may want to consider opening a bank account at a Canadian bank. All major Canadian financial institutions are represented in Vernon so the choice is yours. (Please note that many major Canadian banks also have overseas locations or associates so it may be worth investigating which banks do business with your home country to facilitate the transfer of funds.) Be sure to do your research to obtain the best account for your needs. You should take into consideration the location of the bank, the services offered, as well as interest rates and service charges. It is

recommended that you discuss this with your homestay family and perhaps use the financial institution they use.

Once you have a bank account, you will be issued bankcard which can be used at Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), also known as bank machines, to withdraw cash from your account. You can also use this card at stores and services to pay for purchases by electronically withdrawing funds from your account. This is a handy service that does not require you to carry large amounts of cash. Be sure to keep your bankcard secure and never give anyone else your Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Receiving Money from Home

The easiest way for you to receive money from home is by wire transfer. Once you have set up your bank account, you can provide your parents with the necessary information so they can transfer funds directly into your account. You will need to give them the following information:

- the name and address of your bank
- the bank transit number
- your account number

With this information, money can be transferred directly to your account, avoiding processing delays often associated with cheques.

Basic Financial Advice

For many of you, this will be the first time you have had to take responsibility for your personal spending without the supervision of your parents. The independence may be exciting, but it is important to follow a few rules to ensure you have sufficient funds to make to the end of your program. Here are a few basic tips that will help you spend responsibly:

- Be aware of bank fees. Some banks or accounts will charge you for each use of your bank card or each withdrawal from your account. Know what those charges are and make your spending choices accordingly.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money with you. Whenever possible, deposit the money in an account at a bank, or keep it in a safe place at home.
- Try not to borrow or lend money. Should you need to borrow funds from someone, be sure you have a discussion about how and when you will repay the loan. In Canadian culture, the discussion of money is often considered awkward and can cause problems in friendships.
- Carry your lunch to school from home. Buying meals every day will get very expensive very quickly.
- Develop a budget with your family about what you expect to spend. Be sure to budget for social activities and some shopping money.

Mail and Courier

If you wish to send packages and letters back to your home country, you have a choice between the government mail system and private courier companies.

Canada Post (the Canadian government mail system) is the most affordable means of sending mail. It is a very efficient system, but relies on the receiving mail system in your home country to deliver the items. If you know that the mail system in your home country is unreliable, this may not be the best way to send home important documents.

Canada Post has a central outlet in downtown Vernon and also a number of sub-outlets all over town. You can also often buy stamps at various food and convenience stores around town. Drop boxes for mail are also scattered all over town.

Private courier companies (such as Purolator, TNT, and Fed Ex) are the most secure and the fastest way to send mail overseas. Please note that it can be very expensive to send packages via courier so use your discretion. You will need to visit an outlet for the courier company directly to send anything using their services.

Weather and Climate

Vernon and the Okanagan Valley experience Canada's four seasons. Summers in Vernon are hot and sunny (temperatures on average 27 to 30 degrees Celsius) and winters are some of the mildest in Canada, but still with the full "winter" experience of snow (temperatures on average -5 to -10 degrees Celsius).

Religion and Places of Worship

Canada is a multi-cultural country and welcomes all cultures, languages, and religions. As a result, you will likely find a community that shares your religion in the Okanagan. For more information, consult your homestay family or contact the International Student Programs office.

Local Lingo

"The Okanagan": Okanagan Valley, Lake Okanagan – Okanagan is a region of the interior of British Columbia that surrounds Lake Okanagan. People refer to "The Okanagan" as both the region and the lake itself. If people ask you where in BC you are going, you can respond "The Okanagan", meaning the collection of communities that surround Lake Okanagan.

Kalamalka Lake (Kal Lake) – Another lake in the Okanagan valley, on the south side of Vernon. Less famous than the larger Lake Okanagan, Kal Lake is certainly no less beautiful. Depending on who you talk to, Kalamalka Lake either means "Lake of many colours" or it is named for the Native Indian chief who lived on its shores. Both are good stories.

Kalamalka Secondary School – One of the five high schools in School District #22. Also known as "Kal".

Vernon Secondary School – One of the five high schools in School District #22. Also known as "VSS".

WL Seaton Secondary School – One of the five high schools in School District #22. Also known as “Seaton” or as “Ecole Secondaire WL Seaton Secondary School” because it operates the French Immersion program in our district.

Clarence Fulton Secondary School – One of the five high schools in School District #22. Also known as “Fulton”.

Charles Bloom Secondary School – One of the five high schools in School District #22. This school is located in Lumby, BC which is a short 20 minute drive from Vernon. It is also known as “Bloom” or “CBSS”.

Section 4 - Vernon and Area

The city of Vernon and the Okanagan Valley provide everything you need to enjoy your experience in Canada. The Okanagan Valley is widely recognized as a four season playground; there is so much to keep you busy during your visit!

Shopping & Restaurants

- Downtown Shopping District – Enjoy wandering the streets of Vernon’s downtown district. Explore the murals scattered throughout the shops, restaurants, and coffee shops. Keep your eyes peeled for the numerous festivals and celebrations that take over the downtown core during the year.
- Village Green Mall – Vernon’s shopping mall houses a number of stores, a food court, and a grocery store. Be sure to stop in and explore!
- Coffee Shops – Vernon is renowned for its broad selection of independent coffee shops. Find your favorite and hang out with friends over a latte or cup of tea.
- Restaurants – So many great restaurants to choose from. Italian to Thai, Mexican to burger places... you will find the meal to satisfy your craving.

Activities

- Davison Orchards - a family owned and operated farm with 50 acres of fruit and vegetables, a country gift shop and a bakery as well as a picnic and children's play area for families.
- Historic O’Keefe Ranch – A BC Historic Site, come take part in guided tours of preserved traditional buildings. This is a chance to get a glimpse of historical Canadiana.
- Silver Star Mountain Resort – A multi-season activity centre, Silver Star is a world-class downhill ski resort in the winter, and a hiking and mountain biking site during the winter.
- Sovereign Lake Nordic Club – Over 100 kilometres of groomed cross-country ski trails located in beautiful Silver Star Provincial Park.
- Atlantis Waterslides – Ten outdoor waterslides are the perfect place to enjoy the hot summer days of the Okanagan Valley.
- Recreation Complex – The City of Vernon offers a number of recreation and sport programs available through the community recreation complex. Everything from yoga to dance to swimming – they have a class for you.
- Movie Theatre – Enjoy current releases at the movie theatres in Vernon.

Lumby

Nestled on the northern edge of the Okanagan, the town's location provides an excellent starting point for outdoor adventures whether they be fishing, hunting, hiking, or camping, the possibilities are endless. Visit www.lumby.ca for more information.

Section 5 – Immigration and Visas

The information contained here is for informational purposes only and should be verified on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website. Where there are any discrepancies between this document and the official CIC website, the CIC website should always be taken as the official regulations. You can find the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca

Study Permit

A Study Permit is a document issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada that allows someone who is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada to study in Canada.

The Study Permit is required for those who are pursuing a program of study that is longer than 180 days, or six months. Those studying for less than 180 days are not required to obtain a Study Permit. However, if there is even a slight chance that you might choose to remain longer, you are encouraged to apply for the Study Permit prior to departing for Canada.

Temporary Resident Visa

A Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) or Visa, as it is commonly known, is a document issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada that allows someone who is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada to enter the country.

Not all students will need a Visa. It is determined on a country-by-country basis. To confirm whether or not you need a Visa, visit the Citizenship and Immigration website (www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp).

What is the difference between a Temporary Resident Visa and a Study Permit?

A Temporary Resident Visa is the document that allows you to enter Canada. A Study Permit allows you to attend school during your stay and dictates how long you are permitted to remain in Canada. They are not the same document and not every student will require both documents. Be sure to consult Citizenship and Immigration Canada website for confirmation.

Extending or Renewing a Study Permit

If your Study Permit will expire before you will complete your academic program, you will need to renew your Study Permit. Do not let your Study Permit expire! Please note that while Vernon School District can support your application procedure, it is your responsibility to ensure your travel documents are all current and up to date.

You may apply to renew your Study Permit as early as 90 days before it expires. Citizenship and Immigration Canada advises students to apply for Study Permit renewals at least 30 days before the current permit expires.

Changing the status of your Study Permit is different than renewing your Study Permit. “Renewing” refers to you studying in the same program for a longer period of time.

“Changing the status” refers to you changing institutions, level of study, or type of program. Please note if you are changing the status of your Study Permit you should do so immediately upon receiving confirmation of the admission to the new program, regardless of how much time remains on your current Study Permit.

To renew your Study Permit, you will need to complete an Application to Change Conditions or Extend Your Stay in Canada. The application and all required supporting documents should be mailed to the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta. Application kits and detailed instructions are available on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website at www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/extend-student.html or from the International Student Programs office at the School District Office.

Study Permit renewal times vary throughout the year. Citizenship and Immigration Canada posts the current processing times for all permits processed within Canada on their website. To find out the current processing times, visit:
www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/times/process-in.html

How much does a Study Permit renewal cost?

The fee to renew to renew a Study Permit is \$125.

There are two methods of payment:

1. Obtain a receipt form from CIC (available on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website at www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/index.asp Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “order an original receipt” OR visit the Vernon School District International Student office to obtain a form from them). Take the receipt and your payment to a financial institution where you can make your payment. They will stamp the form and return two copies to you. Include Copy 2 with your completed application.
2. You can also make your payment on the CIC website with a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or American Express) at <https://services3.cic.gc.ca/epayweb/Welcome.do?lang=en> Print the CIC official receipt and fill in the Payer Information section. Then attach the bottom portion (Copy 2) of this receipt to your completed application.

What happens if my Study Permit Renewal is not processed before my current Study Permit expires?

If you apply to renew your Study Permit before it expires, but Immigration does not finish processing it before the expiry date, you may continue to study until your application is processed and a decision is reached by the Case Processing Centre.

Students in this situation have implied status. Implied status allows you to continue studying according to the conditions of your expired Study Permit while you are waiting for your Study Permit renewal to be processed. To qualify for implied status, you must have sent a complete application for a Study Permit to the Case Processing Centre before your current Study Permit expired.

Students are encouraged to send their Study Permit renewal applications to the Case Processing Centre by XpressPost so that they can confirm the date the application was delivered. Do not lose your XpressPost tracking number. You may need it to prove that your application was delivered to the Case Processing Centre before your current Study Permit expired.

The mailing address for CIC is:
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Study Permit
Case Processing Centre Unit 101
Vegreville AB T9C 1X5

The phone number is 1-888-242-2100
The website is: www.cic.gc.ca

Transit Visas (USA and Europe)

What is a Transit Visa?

A Transit Visa is a document that allows you to pass through another country when you travel from your home country to Canada (or vice versa). If your flight takes you through a third country where you will not stay for any longer than it takes to board your next flight, you may need a Transit Visa. If you plan to stay in the third country for any longer than this, you will need to obtain a Visitor Visa.

Most students requiring a Transit Visa will pass through the United States of America, Germany, or the United Kingdom en route to and from Canada.

Transit Visas are the sole responsibility of the student. Be sure to consult your travel agent or the relevant mission or embassy for details.

Useful websites:

United States of America: www.unitedstatesvisas.gov

United Kingdom: www.ukvisas.gov.uk

Germany: www.germany.info/relaunch/info/consular_services/visa/transit.html

Section 6 - Homestay Rules and Regulations

Homestay

As a part of the experience of studying in Canada, you will live with a Canadian family. It is our hope that you will become a member of the family and have some of the best experiences of your time in Canada with your family.

Our homestay families get involved with the program for a lot of reasons – but something they all have in common is they want to share their life with you and they want to learn about your life.

Homestay is NOT a dormitory set up – it is intended to be a family-like experience. You will be expected to participate actively in the daily life. This will include the fun parts – family trips, activities, sports, and social life and it will also include some of the work – you will likely have chores and responsibilities to take care of.

Homestay Coordinator

To support you and your Canadian family, we have dedicated staff members who are on hand to help with homestay issues. This means you can always talk to your Homestay Coordinator if you have any questions, concerns, or need help. **Your Homestay Coordinator is your first contact.** You will have access to the Coordinator's email and phone number, as well as they will be visiting your home and your school periodically throughout the year.

Homestay Family Rules

Each family establishes its own family rules and regulations. Upon your arrival in the home, you will discuss with your family what the rules are for their home. You are expected to obey all family rules. If you feel a rule is unfair or do not understand a rule, speak to your family immediately. If you feel that the situation is not solved, you should then speak to your Homestay Coordinator who will assist in establishing rules that meet everyone's needs.

Airport Pickup and Dropoff

As a part of your program with School District #22 International Student Program, you will be met at the Kelowna International Airport upon your arrival and delivered to that same airport for your return home by your host family. In rare circumstances where your host family cannot meet you at the airport, alternate arrangements will be made.

Please note that further trips to the airport will have to be arranged on a case-by-case basis with your homestay family. Trips home for Christmas or other school holidays are a reasonable expectation but must be discussed and agreed upon with your homestay parents. Please note that your homestay parents are not a taxi service but will do their best to help you out whenever possible.

Changing Homestays

Every effort is made to ensure the homestay family that you are matched with is a good fit. We interview the families and use the information you provided in your application to find a family that will make you feel welcome and share your interests and passions.

Please try to remember that when you arrive, it is likely that everything will seem strange and different. Try to be accepting of things that are different than home and give it a chance before passing judgment. One of the greatest things about your time in Canada is the things that *are* different from home and hopefully, you will grow to appreciate many of these quirks.

However, sometimes, there can be other factors which we cannot predict and can lead you to want to change your accommodations. When this situation arises, it is very important that you speak to your Homestay Coordinator as soon as possible.

Mediation, negotiation, and discussion are our first options when issues arise in our homestay families. We prefer to do everything in our power to avoid moving students in order to reduce stress on you and the family.

If you wish to change your homestay family, the following is the procedure:

- Contact your Homestay Coordinator (via phone or by email). Explain, in detail, the reason you wish to change your homestay arrangement. Be specific about your concerns.
- Your Homestay Coordinator will discuss your concerns with you and with your Homestay Family. Every effort will be made to change the situation in your current Homestay Family. A process of negotiation will take place where you can share your concerns and suggest possible solutions to the problem.
- If, at the conclusion of the discussion the Homestay Coordinator determines that no mutually agreeable solution exists, a move of homestay may be initiated. Depending on the severity of the issue, the move may take place immediately or it may take place at a later time.

Your Homestay Coordinator is your advocate and is there to ensure you are safe, healthy, and happy.

Money

Generally, there should be no financial transactions between you and your homestay family. Homestay fees for the school year will be paid out by the School District #22 International Student Program Office.

If you come to an arrangement with your homestay family about using their phone to call long distance, or use another service of some kind where you agree to pay part of the cost, please arrange to pay your family in a timely fashion. You are responsible for clearing any debts you have immediately. In Canada, it is considered rude to not pay debts in a timely fashion and can affect your relationship with your family members.

Services Provided

The following is a list of the services students can expect from their Host Family and SD#22:

- Kelowna airport pick up upon arrival in Canada at the beginning of the program and drop off at the Kelowna airport at the conclusion of the program. Any other airport transfers (i.e. vacation trips) must be negotiated and arranged directly with the Host Family by the student.
- A private bedroom including a desk, a lamp, and a chair.
- Three (3) meals per day, seven days a week. Meals will be nutritionally balanced and suitable variety will be provided. Host Family is not obligated to prepare separate meals for their students than for the rest of the family. Students are expected to eat the meals with the family and what is prepared for the family. Special requests for other foods should be negotiated with your Host Family.
- Some basic toiletries are included – toilet paper and laundry soap – by the Host Family. Others (such as soap, shampoo, etc.) you must provide for yourself.

Early / Late Arrivals and Early Departures

In the event that you are scheduled to arrive earlier than your official start date, you may need to pay for additional homestay nights. Once you have arranged your travel itinerary, the International Student Program office will inform you of any additional costs.

If you choose to travel during school holidays but return to the program following the break, you are not entitled to any refund for the nights spent away from the homestay family. The reason for this is the family continues to maintain your living space for the duration of your holiday.

Early departures will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, depending on how early the departure was and what fees remain outstanding. If you have any questions about your fees, please contact the International Student Program office.

Food and Nutrition

As a part of your program and fees, you are entitled to **three meals per day**, provided by your homestay family. This does not necessarily mean that someone else will cook each meal for you. It means that well-balanced, healthy foods will be available for you at home. Generally, you will take your meals with the family (breakfast and dinner) and you will pack a lunch to carry to school. **Sometimes**, you may be expected to prepare your own meal, depending on your schedule and the schedule of your homestay family.

It is common practice for Canadian students to prepare their own meals on an occasional basis. Please note that meal preparation should be discussed with your homestay family. If you would like specific foods or items for preparation, it is also recommended that you discuss this with your family. Often, your family would be happy to provide you with the foods you are more familiar with and in fact, it is very likely that they would like to learn about the foods from your home! Take this opportunity to teach your family about something special from your home country!

By that same token, please be ready to try some different foods from what you are used to. At each meal, make a point of trying a new food and learning about what is common in Canadian meals. Your homestay family will behave much like your own family and will ensure you are eating a healthy, balanced diet. Veggies included!

Transportation in Community

SD22 and your school will provide bussing to and from your school. The bus schedule will be made available to you and then bus is the preferred means of transportation for all students.

Any transportation to school and extra-curricular events outside of the normal school bus schedule must be pre-arranged with your Host Family and is at their discretion. Every effort should be made to find alternate means of transportation (that is, share rides with others, walk, take the public bus) so as not to put too much demand on your Host Family. Doctor or dental appointments, after school activities, social outings, and similar activities should be planned according to the availability of transportation. Your Homestay Family is not your chauffeur, but they will be happy to help when they can.

Overnight Travel/Travel out of Jurisdiction

The key to any travel plans is communication. Whenever any travels are planned, be sure to let your Homestay Coordinator know in advance. The School District is your legal guardian for your stay in Canada and therefore must be informed of any travel plans.

If you are traveling **without** your host family outside of our jurisdiction, you must provide a written consent from your natural parents to the School District #22 International Student Program office (copied to your Homestay Coordinator) **one week** prior to departure. A full itinerary of where you will travel and for what purpose must also be provided to SD #22. As the legal custodian of the student in Canada, SD #22 reserves the right to refuse any travel of students outside of our jurisdiction.

Please note that airport transfers for vacation travel are not guaranteed as a part of your program and must be discussed with your Host Family well in advance. You must ask (nicely) if your family can assist with your airport transfer. If they are not able to assist, you are to explore other options including the Airport Shuttle (from The Vernon Lodge), a taxi, or an independent driver. If needed. The International Student Program Office can provide you with a list of potential drivers who will assist with airport transfers for a reasonable fee.

If you are traveling **with** your homestay family within British Columbia, but outside of our jurisdiction for overnight stay must inform the Homestay Coordinator of such plans. An email would be sufficient. Natural parents may need to be informed as to such plans and early notice of such travel is requested.

If you are staying **overnight** with a friend, you need approval from your Host Family. Both families must be made aware of the arrangement; it is your responsibility to inform both your Host Family and the family where you will be staying of your plans. Your Host Family will approve your overnight stays.

If the homestay family needs to leave town for emergencies or holiday plans, the Homestay Coordinator will assist the Homestay Family. The Host family may arrange for another adult to come and supervise the student. However, the homestay coordinator must approve the person who will supervise the student.

Please note that students enrolled in the International Student Program are not to be left alone at home overnight. The Homestay Coordinators must be informed of any homestay family travel that does not involve the international student.

Student Behavior and Regulations

Household duties – It is expected that you will contribute to the household chores, as it common with all Canadian families. Upon your arrival, you will discuss with the family what the expectations are. If you have questions about your household duties, you should discuss this with your homestay family.

Examples of tasks that students can be reasonably expected to participate in include:

- setting and clearing the table before and after meals
- cleaning his/her own room, making bed
- vacuuming, dusting, or general tidying of private student living areas
- cleaning of student's bathroom

Smoking – is **strictly prohibited** in our program. If smokes you must do it away from school premises and the home. Discuss with your homestay parents what the rules are regarding smoking at home. Additionally, Canada has very strict laws with regards to minors and smoking. No one under the age of 18 is permitted to purchase tobacco. Be sure you are familiar with these laws.

Alcohol – Underage use of alcohol is prohibited by law and may result in removal of the student from the program. Students who are of a drinking age will have to follow the rules and regulations established by the homestay family, society and SD #22. Consumption of alcohol is discouraged in general for all program participants as it is not in accordance with the goals of an educational program. **British Columbia legal drinking age is 19 year old.**

Curfew – Host families will set up a reasonable weekday and weekend curfew. You must always inform the host family of where you are going and when you will return. As with all Canadian families, curfews can vary from child to child. It is important that you discuss your situation with your homestay family and reach an agreement as to what is reasonable for all involved.

Babysitting – You may be asked to assist your homestay family with this service but you are not obligated.

Vacation Time Services

The following additional services may be provided:

Students staying after the end of their program. If you join the SD #22 summer program, you will be under the custodianship of SD #22. Discuss your plans to stay for the summer with your homestay family. If you request to stay over the summer, are not registered in the SD #22 summer program, and the

host family agrees, you must provide SD #22 with a letter of release of custodian duties signed by your natural parents.

- **Storage of luggage.** This service is provided by SD #22 at a cost of \$40.00 per month. Students make arrangements to drop off their luggage at a designated place and pick up their luggage when they return. This service is on a first-come-first-serve basis, and SD #22 does not bear responsibility for damage or loss due to theft.

Visitation by Family / Agents / Friends

Homestay families are requested to accommodate (if possible), one parent or both parents, to visit for a short time. Please note that this should be discussed with your homestay family well in advance of any planned visits. Host families can work directly with you to make these arrangements with your parents. Compensation to the homestay family is provided for this service. Contact your Homestay Coordinator to get assistance in these matters.

Agents will only come to visit your home to check in on how you are doing.

Visits by friends from out of town are discouraged. In the event that a visit is desired, you should discuss this with your homestay family in advance of the visit.

Section 7 - Student Behaviour

Academic Integrity

All students in School District #22 are expected to uphold the standards of academic integrity. Since it is possible that expectations and standards of academic integrity can vary from country to country, it is very important that you are aware of what the Canadian standards are. The following are examples of what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please become familiar with this and if you have any questions, be sure to ask! Ignorance of the rules will not be accepted as an excuse for any academic fraud.

Plagiarism: Submitting someone else's words or ideas as your own. Ideas belong to the creator and proper citation must be made. If you research for an assignment or essay and find sources to support your argument, it is important to give credit to these sources. Consult your teacher if you are not sure how to cite a source.

Cheating: Receiving or giving unauthorized academic assistance. This can include obtaining or giving the answers for an exam or assignment, accessing unauthorized technologies or sources during an exam or assignment, and collaborating on school work without teacher permission.

Forgery: Creating a counterfeit document, signature, or grade. Can include altering academic results or marks (either on the assignment, in a mark book, or via technology), forging signatures on documents for the purpose of academic advantage.

Avoiding academic fraud:

- Ask questions. If you are not sure or don't understand, talk to your teacher. He or she would be happy to help!
- Leave enough time to complete your assignment.
- Get help. Ask a friend, get a tutor, or talk to your teacher. There are many ways to succeed in the course.
- Be patient with yourself! Understand that the work in Canada may be different than what was expected in your home country. This, combined with study in another language, can create stress. It is OK if your marks are not as strong as they were before. It may take some time, but your marks will improve.

Social Expectations

A significant portion of your international study program is the social aspect of your experience. This includes making new friends, integrating with your homestay family, and trying out new and different activities. Be sure to take full advantage of all aspects of this opportunity!

Making Plans

Socializing is a big part of Canadian culture, especially for high school students! If you are making plans with other students, it is very important that you inform your homestay family of your plans and where you will be. Be sure you know what time you are expected home (a

curfew) and what level of communication you should have with your homestay when you are out. You have a responsibility to yourself and your homestay family to communicate openly and build a trusting relationship.

Normally, students are not permitted to be away from their homestay overnight without permission (obtained in advance) from the administration of the International Student Program. Since you are in a foreign country and someone other than your natural family has taken legal custody of you while you are in Canada, there are more strict rules regarding where you can stay overnight and how far you can travel. When you are making plans to stay away from your homestay, even for one night, you must speak to your homestay coordinator, who may in turn, ask you to speak to the administration of the International Student Program.

Dating and Relationships

It is common practice for Canadian high school students to get involved in romantic relationships. Students may date, spend time together at school, and have the same network of friends. Generally, dating relationships in high school are quite casual.

Regardless of the type of relationship you form in high school, communication with your partner is very important. Also be sure to share with your homestay family and your own family information about this person. If you are spending lots of time together, it is important that your families know this person.

Dress

Generally speaking, Canadians dress quite casually for day-to-day activities. The schools in School District #22 do not have uniforms and students are able to choose their own clothing for school. Most students choose to wear jeans (denim), cargo pants, track pants, or skirts (for women) and t-shirts, sweaters, or sweatshirts. Schools will have their own rules about how much skin can be revealed and what kind of slogans or pictures may be worn. Typically, comfort and practicality dictate clothing choices, although fashion and style are very important to many teenagers.

Personal Grooming and Hygiene

Canadians are quite fastidious about personal care and grooming. Most Canadians will bathe or shower every day or every second day. Antiperspirant or deodorant should be applied daily and perfumes, colognes, or body sprays should be applied sparingly. Generally, Canadians prefer not to be able to smell each other – in a good way or a bad!

Teeth should be brushed regularly to reduce bad breath and prevent damage to your teeth and gums. Hands should be washed periodically throughout the day to reduce the spread of germs. The goal of any personal grooming routine should be to keep you healthy and to allow you to live among others without having an adverse affect on those around you.

As for other aspects of your personal grooming, they are pretty much left up to your discretion. Hairstyles are a personal choice, providing your hair is clean. Make up, etc. are permitted, within reason, at school.

Safety

Canada is known as a safe country - and with good reason. However, it is still very important that students take care. Discuss with your Host Family and your school any specific concerns you have.

Getting the Most out of Your Stay

In order to maximize your time in Canada, you need to take advantage of all the opportunities available to you. This includes working as hard as you can at school and seeking help when you need it as well as trying new activities and foods. You are here to study and to learn, but you are also here to explore all aspects of Canadian culture and life. Look at this time in Canada as an adventure!

Emergency Contact Information

The following is a list of numbers that may be useful throughout your stay. Please be sure you do your research and call the correct number! If you are uncertain, ask your Host Family, your teacher at school or your Homestay Coordinator for more information.

International Student Program at School District #22

General Number 250-549-9295

- For any general questions about your program, your Study Permit, renewal, insurance, etc.

Dave Lee, Principal Email: dlee@sd22.bc.ca

Jessica Wrightson, Manager Email: jwrightson@sd22.bc.ca

Jason Corday, Vice-Principal Email: jcorday@sd22.bc.ca

Secondary Schools

Charles Bloom Secondary School 250-547-2191

Clarence Fulton Secondary School 250-545-1348

Kalamalka Secondary School 250-545-1396

Vernon Secondary School 250-545-0701

WL Seaton Secondary School 250-542-3361

Elementary numbers can be obtained from the SD 22 website at www.sd22.bc.ca

Homestay Coordinators

Denise Marsh 250-309-8788

Diane Thomas 250-503-4850

Jeanine London 250-549-4866

Michelle Van De Vliert 250-549-0576

Community Numbers

EMERGENCY (Ambulance, Fire, Police) 911

- Please note that this number should only be used in a serious emergency. See other numbers for general inquiries and non-emergent situations.

Vernon Police RCMP 250-545-7171

Lumby Police RCMP 250-547-2151

Vernon Family Doctors (walk-in clinic) 250-545-8332