



**School District #22 (Vernon)**  
International Student Program

**Pre-Departure Information Package #1**

School District #22 is looking forward to welcoming you to the Okanagan! We are working really hard to make sure your time in Canada is a once-in-a-lifetime event! What we are working on right now:

- We are placing all of our new students in schools to create a community of international students. You can look forward to meeting students from not only Canada but many countries from all over the world!
- Our teachers and counselors in the schools are planning your class schedule to find a great combination of courses for your studies. Any special requests? Let us know and we will do everything we can to make it happen!
- We are also reviewing your application and homestay profile to find the best homestay family fit we can. This process is so important so we take our time to find the right family for you. Details on your host family match will be sent to you this summer.
- And don't forget how important your social calendar for your time in Canada is! We are developing a month-by-month activities and events calendar for you to review in advance so you can get a feel for the social events available during your stay in Canada!

Before you leave home, it is important to read through this section and be sure that you are well-prepared for your journey. We have included some important information that will help you get the most out of your time in Canada.

**When to Arrive in Canada**

**You should book your travel plans to arrive on Thursday, September 1, 2011 – you should not arrive earlier unless you are planning to attend the English Prep programs beginning August 22 or 29.** In Canada, the first Monday of September is a national holiday (Labour Day) and normally marks the first week of school. Please ensure you plan accordingly as this is a very busy time for travel in North America. It is recommended that you arrive earlier rather than miss any of the first week of school; this week is vital in the smooth transition into the program.

**Arrival Dates other than September**

Fulton second quarter	Friday, November 11, 2011
Second semester all high schools	Thursday, January 26, 2012
Fulton third quarter	Thursday, April 12, 2012
Summer School	Monday, June 25, 2012

Once you have scheduled your travels, please inform the International Student Program office and provide them with a copy of your travel itinerary. We will ensure that your host family is available to meet you at the Kelowna International Airport.

Students who are not able to schedule their arrival for this date should contact the International Student Program office immediately to inform them of the nature of the problems.

## Applying for Travel Documents

Depending on where you are from and how long you are planning to stay in Canada, you will require different documents. Please be sure to obtain the correct documents. Your agent should be able to assist with this process, as can the nearest Canadian embassy, consulate, or high commission. Also feel free to contact our office should more information be needed.

*Study Permit:* This is a document issued by the Canadian government that allows you to study in Canada. It is only required for students who are pursuing a program of study longer than 180 days (six months). Those studying for less than 180 days do not need a Study Permit.

*Visa:* A Visa is a document issued by the Canadian government that allows you to enter Canada. Not all students will need a Visa; this is determined on a country-by-country basis. Ask when you contact the Canadian diplomatic mission and they can confirm whether or not you need a Visa. You can also find the information online at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

You are responsible for ensuring your travel documents are valid and appropriate. Please note that School District #22 International Student Programs office is available to provide assistance should you have any questions about this process.

## Connect with your Host Family

In the summer, you will be provided with the profile (usually one month before school begins) and contact information for your host family in Canada. Once you do receive this information, contact the family and start getting to know each other. Ask questions, share information, and get comfortable with your new host family. This is a chance to find out anything that will make your stay in Canada more comfortable. Interested in skiing? Find out about getting pass. Like to play sports? See about community league registration. Want to take dance lessons? See what is available. (Please note that host family matching is an intensive process and every effort will be made to send your host family match a minimum of one month prior to your departure.)

## Orientation Days in Vernon

Students arriving for the September intake will take part in a mandatory orientation session hosted for all international students attending all schools in the district. **This orientation will be held Friday, September 2, 2011.** The session will be all day. Students are expected to arrive at the orientation at 8:30 AM. More details, including the location and exact schedule, will be forwarded to you in August, prior to your departure.

Orientation will include valuable information necessary for your successful transition to your new school. Sessions will discuss such topics as academic programs and expectations, course registration, school activities, as well as provide you with the opportunity to meet staff and other students, ask lots of questions and have fun! Orientation and the first week of school will end with an outdoor barbeque for all new international students and their families.

## Calendar and Important Dates

There are a number of important dates to keep in mind when you make your plans to travel to Canada. Please take the following calendar in to consideration if you are making plans to travel away from School District #22 during your stay in Canada. Every effort should be made to ensure you do not miss any class time! For more information on travel during your program at School District #22, please consult the International Student Orientation Manual.

Event	Date
Orientation	Friday, September 2, 2011
Activity at Paddlewheel park 1 to 4 pm	Saturday, September 3, 2011
First day of class	Tuesday, September 6, 2011
Fulton second quarter begins	Monday, November 14, 2011

Schools close for winter vacation	Tuesday, December 20, 2011
Schools reopen after winter vacation	Tuesday, January 4, 2012
Second semester orientation	Friday, January 27, 2012
Second semester begins all high schools	Monday, January 30, 2012
Schools close for spring vacation	Friday, March 16, 2012
Schools reopen after spring vacation	Monday, April 2, 2012
Good Friday (schools closed)	Friday, April 6, 2012
Easter Monday (schools closed)	Monday, April 9, 2012
Fulton orientation third quarter	Friday, April 13, 2012
Fulton fourth quarter begins	Monday, April 16, 2012
Last day of classes for academic year	Thursday, June 28, 2012

There are additional single day school closures for holidays and special events. Student travel during those dates is not recommended.

### Medical Insurance

As a part of your participation in the International Student Program, you are covered by our private medical insurance. We will automatically register you for the insurance program and the coverage will begin prior to the start of your program. Therefore, you are eligible for coverage beginning August 30. Please note the coverage only begins when you have left your home country. (In your home country, you are covered by your family's traditional, local medical coverage.)

If you plan to arrive in Canada earlier than August 30, please inform the International Student Program as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements for the necessary insurance coverage. Early arrivals will be responsible for additional medical insurance costs.

When you arrive and attend the orientation program, you will receive more information about the insurance program, including your insurance card.

### More Questions?

Wow! So much to think about! We are very excited to welcome you to Canada in September and hope that this package answered some of your questions. Still have more questions? Please do not hesitate to ask! Email us at [international@sd22.bc.ca](mailto:international@sd22.bc.ca), or call us at 1-250-549-9295.