



Living and Studying in Victoria: Information for Students and Parents

We are excited to welcome you to Canada! Here are some suggestions to help you prepare for your time in Victoria:

Preparing to Leave

- The weather in Victoria is generally very mild, but it is usually cool in the evenings with rain in the winter months. You can buy suitable clothing in Victoria if you need to. You will want waterproof footwear and a warm jacket/coat.
- Students in the Victoria School District are not required to wear uniforms. Students wear clothes that they are comfortable in. You may want to bring traditional clothing from your country to wear at special events (i.e. graduation).
- You will need pens and notebooks for school, but we suggest waiting until you are in Victoria to buy any course specific items. Laptops are not required at school, but students often use laptops at home. Please remember that all electronics, including computers, are to be turned off by 11:00pm at night.
- Cell phones and SIM cards are readily available, however homestay hosts will not sign a contract for your phone. One option is to bring an unlocked cell phone and get a SIM card and prepaid plan. There will be a SIM card company available to help you at orientation if needed.
- If you require special medications, be sure to bring them along with you with a copy of the doctor's prescription. Please ensure that all important medical information has been shared with the program.
- If you have allergies, be sure to bring the medication that you use or prefer. You never know when you might have an allergic reaction to something.
- If you would like, you are welcome to bring the recipes of your favourite foods so that you can share them with your host family. It is fun for your homestay family to learn about your favourite foods.
- Please complete any scheduled dental or orthodontic work before travelling. Regular dental visits and visits to the orthodontist are not covered by our medical insurance.





- Be sure you have two photocopies of your passport and other documents. One copy should stay with your adults at home and the other should be packed safely in your luggage.
- Develop a plan for your financial needs when you first arrive in Victoria. We suggest that you do not carry large amounts of cash. When you arrive, you may open a local bank account. Be sure to keep financial information and PIN numbers private.
- Make sure that you send the Program your travel information. We need the information as soon as possible to arrange airport pickup and meeting with your homestay family. Please email your full flight itinerary to isp_arrivals@sd61.bc.ca
- If you are staying with a host family, please let your host family know if you have any flight changes or delays. If you need any extra help, please contact us on the emergency line.

VIE Emergency Line 778-676-3781

- Please carry the emergency number with you when you travel. Someone from the Program is available to answer the phone at all times and is there to help you if needed.

Living in Homestay

- Communicate with your host family before travelling. Get to know each other. Some host families have house rules that they might like to share with you. If you have any questions about the rules, talk to the host family about them.
- You may find your living environment and the food very different than you are used to. Please keep an open mind and ask questions if you are not sure about something. Let your host family know if you would like more of a certain food or if you don't like something.
- Spend time with your host family to get to know them, especially at the beginning of your stay. Dinner time is a great time to get to know each other.
- Please make an effort to keep your bedroom tidy and clean up after yourself.



Adjusting to Life in Victoria

- It is normal to feel some homesickness. This should pass. Some things students find helpful include:
 - a) Getting outside and getting fresh air
 - b) Finding a place in the city that they feel comfortable (i.e. coffee shop, bench by the ocean, etc.)
 - c) Keeping up routines. Continue to go to school each day.
 - d) Spending time with new people (host family or new friends.)
 - e) Going to the gym or the pool – recreation centers have drop in times that everyone is welcome to go to.

*if you continue to feel unhappy, let your homestay coordinator know. There is counselling available if needed.

Parent/Caregiver Information

- Please know that we are here to support your child and will do everything we can to ensure their safety and well-being. If your child is having any difficulties, please encourage him/her/them to reach out to the homestay coordinator.
- If you will be travelling to Victoria to visit, please email or call ahead. We need to be aware if you will have your child stay with you during your time here and any visits to the homestay need to be organized through the homestay office.
- Thank you for reminding your child that there are rules in place to keep them safe and healthy. These rules were developed to best support each student in the unique Victoria environment and community.

Wishing you safe and happy travels!

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