



International Student ORIENTATION HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO THE RED DEER PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

We want to welcome you to Red Deer and to Canada. We hope you will enjoy your stay, your host family and the wonderful opportunity to experience life here in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada.

In this guide you will find information that will help you to get started and to be more familiar with Red Deer. Read it carefully, we are sure that it will be very helpful to you in your first few weeks in Canada.

Don't forget that you are here to complete your education, to improve your English and to experience a new culture. Do your best to make it enjoyable, constructive, enriching and it will be an experience of a lifetime!!!



Sincerely yours,

Mr. Robert Porkka
Director of International Education



Mrs. Lisa Loeppky
International Services Assistant



Mrs. Ashley Guenther
Homestay Coordinator

VISIT OUR STUDENT ORIENTATION WEB PAGE:
www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices/orientation

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP CALLED
"RED DEER PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ALUMNI"



PAGE	TABLE OF CONTENTS
2	Welcome
5	International Services Contact Information
6	What to Bring With You To Canada
7	Airport Arrival
8	Sample Orientation Day Schedule
9	Red Deer Location
10	Map of Red Deer Neighbourhoods and School Locations
11	How to Use the Bus in Red Deer
12	Banks in Red Deer
13-14	Recreation Activities in and Near Red Deer
15	Movie Theatres in Red Deer
16	Fitness Centres
17	Text Messages and Facebook Messages About Events
17	Report Cards
17	Attendance Expectations
17	The Honour Code
18	Alberta High School Diploma Requirements
18	Graduation Ceremonies and Banquet
19	Studying in Canada
20	People in the School
20	Accessing Your Marks Online Via E-Link
21	Living Expectations
21	Culture Shock or the Adjustment Process
21	Student E-Mail
22	Homestay Guidelines and Rules
22	Canada Homestay International
22	Preparing for Your Homestay Experience
22	What Makes a Great Homestay?
22	Getting Settled
23	A Tour of Your New Home



PAGE	TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED
23	A Tour of the Neighbourhood
24	Life Inside the Canadian Home
24	Household Chores
24	Laundry
25	Bedrooms
25	Bathrooms
25	Telephone Usage & the Internet
25	Use of Computers
26	Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
27	Life Outside the Canadian Home
27	Night Life
27	Curfews
27	Sleepovers
28	TRAVEL
28	Travel With a School Group
28	Homestay Travel Policy
28	Travel Outside Canada
28	Driver's License
29	Smoking
29	Alcohol and Drugs
29	Money and Valuables
29	Pocket Money
29	Valuables
30	English Language Learners
31	Techniques for Mutual Understanding
31	Tips to Encourage Communications
32	Persistent Problems
32	Why Would You Be Moved?
33	Medical Emergencies
33-34	Doctor's Visits and Insurance Claims



INTERNATIONAL SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

The Red Deer Public International Services office is located at 4747-53 Street.
The office is open from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. The office is closed on weekends and holidays.

Website: www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices

Email: internationalservices@rdpsd.ab.ca

Phone: 403-343-1405

INTERNATIONAL SERVICES CONTACTS

Mr. Robert Porkka	Director	403-342-3726	rporkka@rdpsd.ab.ca
Mrs. Lisa Loeppky	Assistant	403-357-3990	lloeppky@rdpsd.ab.ca

HOMESTAY CONTACTS

Mrs. Ashley Guenther Homestay Coordinator 403-754-5562 Ext 2038
homestay@rdpsd.ab.ca

24 Hour Emergency Number if unable to contact Ashley:

1-877-441-4443 then press 1

INGLE INSURANCE CONTACTS

Emergency Assistance	1-800-715-8833
Direct Line	1-866-230-2477

SCHOOL CONTACTS

Hunting Hills High School	403-342-6655
Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School	403-347-1171
Gateway Christian School	403-346-5795
Central Middle School	403-346-4397
Eastview Middle School	403-343-2455
Westpark Middle School	403-347-8911
Fairview Elementary	403-343-8780

EMERGENCIES (Ambulance, Fire, Police or other Emergencies) call 911



WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU TO CANADA

CLOTHES:

Summer: Swimsuit, light clothing, summer shoes

Fall/Spring: Light jacket, sweater, raincoat, hiking shoes/boots

Winter: Check out the page on Winter in Red Deer and it will give you information on the necessary winter clothing

- ◆ No matter the season, you should bring:
- ◆ Warm coat, Raincoat
- ◆ Comfortable walking shoes
- ◆ Comfortable clothes
- ◆ Back pack



PERSONAL ITEMS:

- ◆ Bring some personal items that can make you feel at home!
- ◆ Pictures, Souvenirs, Books in your own language

DOCUMENTS AND THINGS TO HAVE WITH YOU AT THE AIRPORT:

- ◆ Passport
- ◆ Letter of Acceptance from Red Deer Public Schools
- ◆ Letter with the file number from Immigration Canada (if you are in Canada for more than 6 months)
- ◆ Proof of your medical insurance (card will be issued on arrival, receipt for payment is proof)
- ◆ Important phone numbers (Emergency, Consulate of your country in Canada, host family, International Services, parents, etc.)
- ◆ Bank card (that is accessible via the Interac or Cirrus networks)
- ◆ Credit Card (Visa, Mastercard or Amex)
- ◆ Some Canadian CASH in case you need to make a phone call from the airport



SECURITY

You must be ready for security check before boarding the airplane at the Customs. Do not panic, do not make jokes and answer all questions honestly

Remember that some items are NOT allowed in your carry-on luggage in the plane:

- ◆ Scissors, knives, razors or any sharp objects.
- ◆ Anything that can be used as a weapon.
- ◆ Liquids of any kind unless they are in quantities no greater than 100 ml or 3.4 oz. (these must be put in clear plastic bag and placed in tray at security)
- ◆ Flammable items such as lighters, sprays, etc.
- ◆ Hazardous materials of any kind.

BAGGAGE

For more details on checked baggage rules, please check out this link:
<http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/airport/baggage/checked.html>

AIRPORT ARRIVAL

(Preferred airport arrival: Calgary)

Students with connecting flights in Canada will go through Canadian Immigration and Customs in the FIRST PORT OF ENTRY to Canada (for example, a student flying from Mexico City to Vancouver and from Vancouver to Calgary will clear Customs and Immigration in Vancouver)



At the first arrival at a CANADIAN airport (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary....)

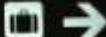
1. Follow the signs to baggage claim and immigration
2. Go to immigration area
3. Have ready for the Immigration Officer:
 - Customs card (given to you on the airplane to complete)
 - Passport
 - Letter of acceptance from Red Deer Public Schools
 - If you are here for more than 6 months, your letter with the file number from Immigration (to get the study permit from the Immigration Officer)
 - Be ready to tell the Immigration Officer you are here to STUDY for a year or a semester
4. If you do have to pick up your luggage (it will depend on your flight) go to the Baggage Claim and pick up your suitcases.
5. Go to Customs (have the Customs card ready).
6. Register your baggage again by placing it on the luggage belt.
7. Go to the gate for your connecting flight.

IF YOU MISS YOUR CONNECTING FLIGHT:

- ◆ Call your host family and your homestay program's Emergency number (Red Deer Public Homestay Program Emergency # 1-877-441-4443 then push 1)
- ◆ Go to the airline desk to rebook your connecting flight

Upon arrival in Calgary or Edmonton:

8. Follow the Baggage Claim signs.
9. Pick up your suitcases.
10. This is where you will meet the person in charge to pick you up.

Baggage Claim 

If the person who is picking you up doesn't seem to be there, contact your Homestay Coordinator or International Services.

Homestay Coordinator: 1-403-754-5562 Ext 2038
International Services: 1-403-343-1405

SAMPLE ORIENTATION DAY(S) SCHEDULE

ORIENTATION DAY 1

Location: Central Office, 4747-53 Street, Red Deer

Bring your
Passport, Plane Ticket, Student Visa, and Study Permit
for the meeting.

After this meeting, place those documents in a **SAFE** place at your home.

- 8:30 AM Introduction of Staff
Getting to Know You
- 10:30 AM Short Break
- 10:45 AM Pre-Registration Paperwork
- 12:00 PM Lunch will be provided (Please let us know if you have any allergies)
- 1:00 PM Homestay Tips and Questions/Bus Routes
- 2:00 PM ESL and Math Placement testing
- 3:30 PM Ready for Pick-up by Host Families

ORIENTATION DAY 2

Students will have scheduled appointments to meet with counselors at their individual schools to register for their classes. While at the school, students will get their locker, take a tour of the school and visit to the bookstore to purchase their books and bus pass.

Bring money (approximately \$150-\$200) or credit card to pay for your text books and your bus pass.

**** NOTE ****

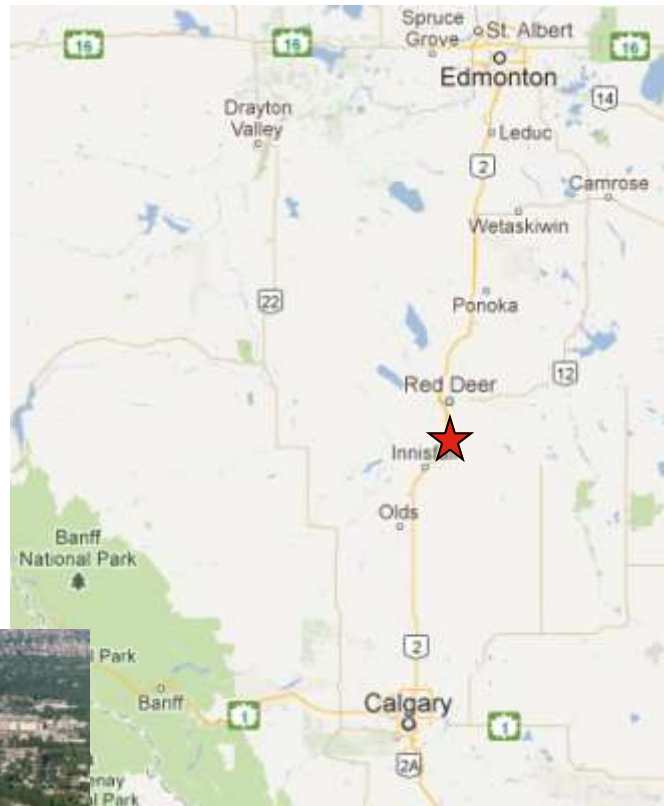
On one of the orientation days we will likely take a short walk to downtown Red Deer to learn where the main bus station and other landmarks are.

RED DEER LOCATION

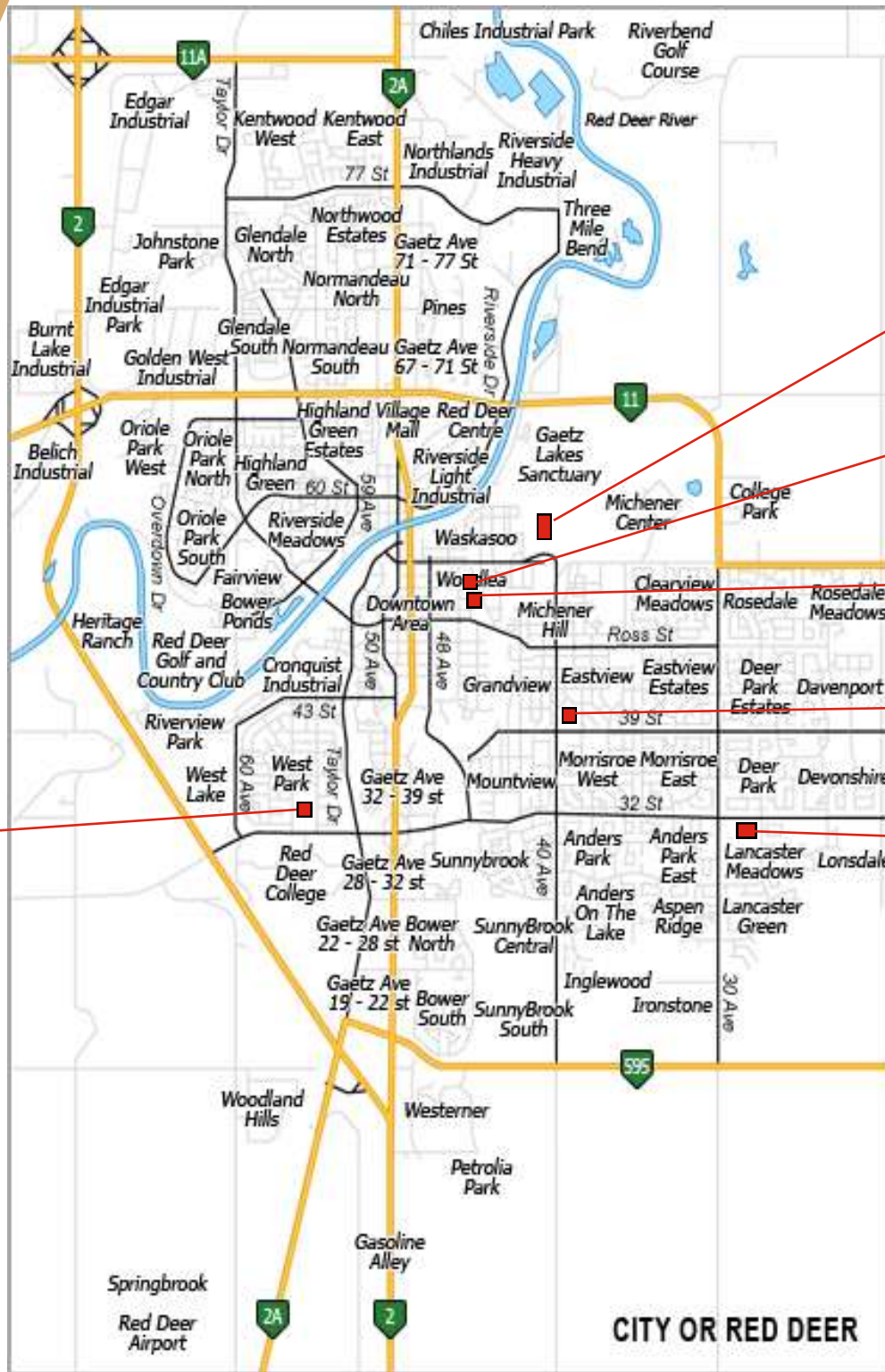
Red Deer is located between the cities of Edmonton and Calgary.

-Red Deer to Edmonton (North)
157 km
1 hour 40 minutes

-Red Deer to Calgary (South)
145km
1 hour 30 minutes



MAP OF RED DEER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SCHOOL LOCATIONS



Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive

Gateway Christian School

Central Middle School

Eastview Middle School

Hunting Hills High School

Westpark Middle School

HOW TO USE THE BUS IN RED DEER

BUS ROUTES

- ◆ All the buses go to the Sorensen Station Transit Terminal, in downtown Red Deer.
- ◆ To complete your trip, you might have to take two buses (the second one leaving from downtown)
- ◆ If you need to get into a second bus:
 - When you enter the first bus, ask the driver for a “Transfer Slip”.
 - It allows you to get into the second bus to complete your trip.
 - This ticket is good only for the next transfer in the same hour.
- ◆ You can take your bike with you and attach it on the front of the bus (for details ask your host family)



OVERLOAD ROUTES

There are “Overload Busses” which are special DIRECT busses that go to and from school daily in the morning and in the afternoon

WHERE TO BUY TICKETS OR BUS PASSES

Bus passes are available for purchase at school.

- ◆ “Restricted Bus Pass”: for use between your school and your home, from 7 AM—5 PM
- ◆ “Unrestricted Bus Pass”: anywhere and anytime.

TRANSIT SERVICE HOIURS

Monday to Saturday: 6:15 AM—11:15 PM

Sundays/Holidays: 8:45 AM—6:45 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can visit the City of Red Deer website at:

<http://www.reddeer.ca/City+Government/City+Services+and+Departments/Transit/default.htm>

Email: transit@reddeer.ca

Phone: (403) 342-8225



BANKS IN RED DEER

There are a number of banks located near the downtown bus terminal as well as ones located close to both of the local shopping malls. Here are a few that you may find convenient:

Scotiabank



5002-50 Street (downtown)
4421-50 Ave
2950-22 Street (near Lancaster)
6704-50 Ave (near Parkland Mall)



RBC Royal Bank of Canada
2610-50 Ave (near Bower Mall)
4943-50 Street (downtown)
6791 Gaetz Ave.

CIBC



6721-50 Ave. (near Parkland Mall)
5111-22 Street
4702-50 Street (downtown)



BMO Bank of Montreal
2325-50 Ave (near Bower Mall)
#300, 6130-67 Street
4903 Gaetz Ave. (downtown)
3825 40 Ave. (Eastview)

ATB Financial



4999 Molly Bannister Drive (near Bower Mall)
4919-59 Street
#100, 4911-51 Street
6794-50 Ave.

TD Canada Trust



4902-50 Ave (downtown)
6320-50 Ave (near Parkland Mall)
63 Clearview Market Way

ATM Machines are located in the malls, most corner stores, gas stations and at all of the above banking locations. There are also ATM's located in the high schools.

RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN AND NEAR RED DEER



Parks, Trails & Picnic Shelters:

Red Deer has an excellent network of 80 kilometers of paved bike trails for walking, biking, roller blading and cross-country skiing in winter. Most parks have picnic tables and benches and many are along streams, creeks and the Red Deer River. For details:

<http://www.reddeer.ca/City+Government/City+Services+and+Departments/Recreation+Parks+and+Culture/Parks/Parks+Trails+and+Picnic+Shelters/Trails/default.htm>

Great Chief Park: Fenced fastball and baseball diamonds and a combination soccer/football field, a 9 hole pitch and putt golf course and horseshoe pit also nearby. Address: 4707 Fountain Drive. (403) 309-8411

Bower Ponds:

Depending on the season, the Bower Ponds Pavilion offers ice skating as well as kayak, paddleboat and canoe rentals. A concession area and washrooms are also available. Address: 4707 Fountain Drive, Red Deer. (403) 347-9777



Recreation Parks (Swimming and Sports):

G. H. Dawe Centre: (Indoor pool, waterslide, indoor skating rink, fitness centre indoor gym)

Rotary Recreation Park: (Indoor and outdoor pools, indoor and outdoor tennis)

Collicutt Centre (Indoor pool, indoor running track, fitness centre, indoor soccer pavilion, field house, indoor skating rink, climbing wall, dance studio) **Roland Michener Aquatic Centre:** (indoor pool)

Heritage Ranch: An equestrian centre to enjoy some of Alberta's western heritage. Kayak rentals, fishing pond, access to the city's trail system, trail rides, and carriage/sleigh rides are just a few of the activities offered. (403) 347-4977



Indoor and Outdoor Ice Rinks:

Kinex Arena: indoor rink open year round at 4725-43 Street.

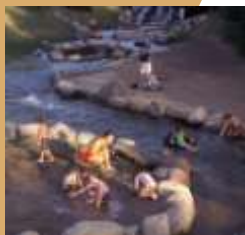
Kinsmen Arena: Indoor rink open year round at 5 McIntosh Avenue.

Collicutt Centre: Indoor rink open year round at 3031-30 Avenue.

G. H. Dawe: Indoor skating rink open year round at 56 Holt Street

Red Deer Arena: Indoor skating rink open year round.

Outdoor skating rinks are located in most neighbourhoods throughout the city during the winter months.



Discovery Canyon: Bubbling pools of water and a float creek for tube floating. Small pond and beach for swimming at the bottom of creek. Concession and tube rentals open during summer months. Located on the East side of the river beside River Bend Golf course.

Golf Courses:

River Bend Golf course is a scenic 18-hole golf course located on 30 Avenue, just 5 km North of 67 Street. There are 4 other golf courses within 2 km of the city limits including: Balmoral Golf Course, Red Deer Golf and Country Club, and Alberta Springs Golf Resort.



Canyon Ski Area: Canyon is located just 10 minutes East of Red Deer. It has 5 different lifts and 13 runs as well as a terrain park for snowboarders. You can also ski in the evenings thanks to the extensive lighting system. For more info: www.canyonski.ca

Skate Park: Enjoy the Red Deer Skate Park for skate boarding and roller blading. It is located at the base of Spruce Drive Hill next to the Red Deer Arena.



Sylvan Lake:

Sylvan Lake offers year round tourism with the lake as a primary attraction which includes waterslides, golf, ball diamonds, parks and walking trails. Winter activities include curling, ice skating, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, etc.

Bower Place:

Bower Place is a shopping mall located on the South side of the city at 4900 Molly Bannister Drive. The large department stores here are The Bay and Sears.



Parkland Mall:

Parkland Mall is a shopping mall located on the North side of the city at 4747-67 Street. The large department store in this mall is Walmart.

MOVIE THEATRES IN RED DEER

Carnival Cinemas (downtown)
(Approximately 1 km walk Sorensen Transit Terminal)
<http://www.carnivalcinemas.net/>

Carnival
Cinemas



Galaxy Cinemas (South of Red Deer off Highway 2)
(Bus Route 12 to the Leva Ave. stop near Costco)
http://www.cineplex.com/Theatres/TheatreDetails/E3A7208E/Galaxy_Cinemas_Red_Deer.aspx

Galaxy
Cinemas



FITNESS CENTRES



THE COLLICUTT CENTRE

Get involved in your favourite sports at the Collicutt Centre!

Activities include: Basketball, Tennis, Volleyball, Badminton, Soccer, Ice Skating, Hockey, Wall Climbing, Running, Gymnastics, Fitness Centre, Swimming.

Prices (approximately)

1 visit (must show Student ID) \$6.50

10 visit card (must show Student ID) \$52.00

Monthly Pass (must show Student ID) \$32.50

*the monthly pass entitles you to enter other City of Red Deer recreation facilities including: G. H. Dawe Community Centre, Roland Michener Aquatic Centre, and the Recreation Centre.

DANCE MAGIC STUDIOS

(at the Collicutt Centre)

Dance Magic Studios (located at the Collicutt Centre) offers 8 Week Dance Classes for all levels in: Hip Hop, Jazz, Tap, Ballet, Zumba, Lyrical, Contemporary, and Breakdance. Call 403-309-7319 or check their website at www.reddeerdancemagic.com.

G. H. DAWE CENTRE

The Dawe Centre has many of the same facilities as the Collicutt Centre but is located on the North side of the city.

Activities include: Swimming/waterslides, Fitness Centre, Hockey, Ice Skating,

Prices (approximately)

1 visit (must show Student ID) \$4.50

10 visit card (must show Student ID) \$36.00

Monthly Pass (must show Student ID) \$22.50

*the monthly pass entitles you to enter the G. H. Dawe Community Centre, Roland Michener Aquatic Centre, and the Recreation Centre. This pass does not give you access to the Collicutt Centre.

TEXT MESSAGES AND FACEBOOK MESSAGES ABOUT EVENTS

The International Services department organizes a few activities throughout the school year specifically for our International Students. Notices of these events are posted on our Facebook Group “Red Deer Public Schools International Students Alumni”. We suggest you join this Facebook Group.

If you get a Canadian cell phone to use while you are here, we will also ask you to share your phone number with us as we will send occasional group text messages with important information on upcoming events/activities.

REPORT CARDS

High school students will receive two reports each semester: a progress report card approximately half way through the semester and a final report card at the end of the semester.

Host families and custodians are invited to participate in Parent-Teacher interviews. Please let your host family know when these are scheduled.



ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Your first obligation in Canada is to attend school every day and go to all your classes. You can have fun, too, but your main job is to do well in your studies.

You must have your host parent call in to the school to verify your absence each time you miss a class. This rule applies to students both under and over 18 years of age.

If you are absent without verification, there can be serious consequences: you may lose academic credits and if the number of un-verified absences is too great, you may be asked to leave the international student program.

THE HONOUR CODE

International students are expected to understand and follow the Honour code:

1. I will not copy from another student and claim the work to be my own.
2. I will not allow another student to copy my work.
3. I will not plagiarize* Plagiarism is a serious offence and is not acceptable.
4. I will not use any electronic equipment such as a computer, calculator, or cell phone to give me an unfair advantage.
5. I will not cheat in any way. As an International Student, I agree to the conditions of the above Honour code.

*Plagiarism, as defined by Gage’s Canadian Concise dictionary, is “to take and use as one’s own, the thoughts, writings, etc. of another”.

Credit must ALWAYS be given to the originator of the words or idea.

ALBERTA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

If you are planning to graduate here in Alberta and want to obtain an Alberta High School Diploma, please be sure to let the staff in the International Services office know this as well as your in school guidance counselor as soon as possible after your arrival in Canada. The school guidance counselor will need to evaluate your previous school transcripts and help you ensure that you are enrolled in the necessary courses to qualify for graduation in Alberta. This can take some time so advance notice is required.

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND BANQUET

All International Students attending Red Deer Public Schools are invited to participate in the cap and gown graduation ceremonies no matter what grade level they are. Students are encouraged to participate in the ceremony. You must let your counselor at the high school know that you want to participate and pay the small fee for the cap and gown rental. There is no special attire required for this portion of graduation as clothing is covered by the gown.

All International Students and/or their host parents are invited to participate in the graduation banquet and dance. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Fundraising opportunities to help with the cost of the banquet tickets are usually available at the schools. The attire for this event is typically quite formal. Following the dinner, there is a dance. International Students can request to be seated together at the banquet.

We encourage you to take part in one or both of these official school events. If you have further questions or concerns about graduation, please don't hesitate to speak to your school counselor or an International Services staff member.



STUDYING IN CANADA

Some Characteristics of Canadian Education

You will likely find some differences between the educational/value system in your own country and that in Canada. It is essential for you to understand the appropriate and accepted roles for students in the Canadian educational system.

In Canada:

- ◆ Students are encouraged to ask questions for clarification, to challenge information, or to extend thinking. The philosophy of education in Canada includes the idea that students should be involved in an interactive learning process; that is, they should not sit passively and accept or memorize what the teacher says.
- ◆ Teacher-student relationships tend to be relatively informal compared to those in many Asian countries. For example, teachers may begin the class with a joke or with friendly conversation.
- ◆ Group work is an important part of school learning; it stresses cooperation, tolerance, and compromise. It is also evaluated as part of your mark.
- ◆ Discussion is often used as a means of teaching. Students are expected to be able to discuss in order to develop their ideas and opinions and to present them in class.
- ◆ Students learn not just information, but how to arrive at conclusions, to solve problems, and to analyze. As part of this process, students are often asked how they got an answer, rather than just what the answer is.



Tips for Studying in Canada

- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand. Teachers expect to be questioned. Make sure you understand what the teacher wants you to do in an assignment. If you are quiet, the teacher will think that you understand. Teachers are usually available before and after school for questions and extra help.
- ◆ Be on time for class. If you are late you will be marked as late on the attendance sheet. If you miss a class, see the teacher the next day to find out what school work missed during your absence.
- ◆ You will probably find the classes less structured in Canada. You will have to organize your own time after school for study. Plan your time carefully, balancing school work, English practice, and relaxation.
- ◆ Hand in all assignments on the day they are due. If you are not able to finish your assignment on time, talk to your teacher before it is due. If you miss any assignment/quiz/text exam, see the teacher and ask if there is any way to complete the missing assignment.
- ◆ Almost everything you do that is assigned by the teacher counts in your final mark. That means that class tests, presentations, discussion assignments, working in groups are worth certain marks. Overall, class work is worth about 70% of your final mark while the formal examination itself is worth between 20% and 30%. A student who works hard all semester will likely pass the course, but a student who doesn't work hard and misses many classes will likely fail.

PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL

School staff are eager to help international students adjust to the new learning environment.

Principal: The principal is in charge of programs at the school and works closely with staff, students and parents.

Vice-Principal: The vice-principal assists the principal in running the school and looks after discipline.

Teachers: Students have different teachers for different subjects. You can call the teacher Mr. Ms. or Mrs. as appropriate and the person's surname (e.g. Mr. Smith), rather than "teacher".

ESL Teachers: They help students learn English and strategies for success in their other classes.

There may be school specialists who work with teachers and help students learn. These people include:

Teacher-Librarians who help students access resources on the internet and learn about books, tapes, videos, and magazines.

Guidance Counselors who assist in planning students' timetables and applying to university. They can tell you about other programs in the schools and in the community.

Office Secretaries, who assist in registering students, do the school's office work and answer phone calls.



Teaching Assistants who help teachers in the classroom.

Custodians who keep schools clean and make sure the building is operating safely and properly

ACCESSING YOUR MARKS ONLINE VIA E-LINK

You can check your marks on assignments and tests online.

Open up Internet Browser

-In the address bar type <https://portal.rdpsd.ab.ca/my.logon.php3>

-Type in your user ID and password

-Click on Elink

-Re-enter your ID and Password

-Click Enter Gradebook

NOTE: Your user ID and Password are the same as used to access your school email account.

LIVING EXPECTATIONS

You must live with a family, preferable with an English-speaking family who can help you with your English. You cannot live alone or with a friend in an apartment.

If you change families, you must inform our office right away. If you insist on living alone, you will have to leave our program.

Although Canadian students 18 and over may legally live alone, this does not apply to international students, who, as a condition of acceptance to the Red Deer Public School District, agree to live with a family all of the time they are studying with Red Deer Public Schools. It should be noted that the majority of Canadian high school students live with their families until they have completed high school. Living with a family provides students with the necessary support and stability they will need to succeed in a school and a foreign environment.

CULTURE SHOCK OR THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

As a newcomer to Canada, you will go through a predictable sequence of stages in adjusting to your new circumstances. The adjustment phase usually takes 3 to 4 months.

1. Arrival and first impressions: You will be excited to be in a new environment and everything will seem new and wonderful.
2. Culture Shock: You may become less optimistic as you find it difficult to make friends and learn English. You will miss your friends, family and everything that was familiar. You may become depressed and long for home.
3. Recovery and optimism: You feel better because you are experiencing success at school and making friends. You feel more confident about fitting in at school.
4. Acculturation: You become more comfortable in your new surroundings and can balance the new culture with your own culture. You can appreciate what the new experience is bringing to you.



STUDENT ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL)

All students in Red Deer Public Schools will be assigned an E-mail to be used for the purpose of exchanging information for educational purposes. Students will be given a user login and a password. Students are expected to use this E-mail responsibly and in an ethical manner.

Use of the Email system contrary to this policy or in an illegal manner shall be subject to revocation of privileges and potential disciplinary action.

HOMESTAY GUIDELINES AND RULES

CANADA HOMESTAY INTERNATIONAL (CHI)

Canada Homestay International works closely with Red Deer Public Schools to provide safe, caring, and friendly homestay accommodation for its international students. CHI and Red Deer Public Schools have worked together to establish the following guidelines and rules for the Red Deer Public Schools International Student Program. Please study the rules carefully and make yourself familiar with them.

PREPARING FOR YOUR HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

Every host is different—just like every student.

What our hosts have in common is that they want to provide a safe, caring environment for you. We choose hosts who will provide the same comfortable, healthy and supportive home life they would ask a host family to provide for their own children.

Why do we trust our hosts? Because we've met them in person and toured their homes; we've talked with them about their experiences in the world and in Canada, and we've helped them adjust to being hosts. We have also asked students like you to evaluate them. If they fail to meet our—and your—expectations, we won't work with them again.

If you're not happy with your match, tell us. You can call or email us. You can also speak with your coordinator when he or she visits your school or home. We are always glad to hear from you.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT HOMESTAY?

Your homestay experience will largely depend on your own attitude and friendliness. How can you make the most of living in Canada? Come with an open mind and be ready to embrace the ways in which Canada and the people you will meet here are different and unique. Your host family will be eager to help you adapt to their family and Canada. The more you get involved in your new life the happier you will be.



GETTING SETTLED

The first few weeks living in a new country with a new family can be difficult. You may feel homesick and frustrated with your new environment and the language. This is natural. Give yourself time to adjust to your new surroundings. We've found that doing the following things when you first arrive will help you feel settled. And please remember: you're not alone. We're always here to help.

A TOUR OF YOUR NEW HOME

Please ask for a tour of your house when you first arrive. Your host should show you where everything is, with special care to point out your bedroom and bathroom; the kitchen and dining area; the laundry room; the linen closet (or wherever clean linen and towels are kept); and so on. Please make sure you understand how to use:

- ◆ The bathroom, including the bath/shower, toilet and sink (it is okay to flush toilet paper);
- ◆ Appliances and entertainment items, like the TV, microwave;
- ◆ The fire extinguisher, as well as what to do in the event of a fire (for example, suitable exits and emergency phone numbers).
- ◆ See below for a discussion of the laundry facilities, telephone and the computer/internet.

You can treat this house as your own but do respect everyone's right to privacy and quiet. Always knock and announce yourself before entering someone else's room, and be considerate when using common areas.

A TOUR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



Ask your host for a tour of your new neighbourhood, including directions to and from your school and any local attractions or meeting places.

Ask your host for help using buses—how and where to buy passes/tickets and getting to know the local routes. More information on using the buses will be provided at your orientation day.

Make sure you understand how to recognize public telephones, and ask your host to help you write a list of important contact numbers which you can keep with you at all times.

If your host cannot show you how to get to our office for your orientation day and cannot arrange for anyone else to help, please contact the homestay coordinator or the International Services office for assistance.

As a courtesy, the homestay family may drive you to an appointment but they do not typically provide daily transportation to and from school.





LIFE INSIDE THE CANADIAN HOME

Your host family will have certain rules concerning daily life in the house. These include when to have baths and showers; where food can or cannot be eaten; how to do laundry; curfews; non-smoking policies; limits on the use of the television/stereo/computer and other family property; family schedules & bedtime hours; when it is OK to have friends over, and so on. There may be areas of the house your host will ask you not to use. Please respect their wishes.

All the rules or guidelines that apply to your family members also apply to you. We ask our hosts to arrange a family meeting to go over the house rules at the beginning of your stay.

For all students in our programs, the following rules will apply regardless of age:

- ◆ No smoking (and no purchasing cigarettes)
- ◆ No drinking of alcoholic beverages
- ◆ No drug use

It is your responsibility to understand and observe all household rules. If you are having difficulty doing so, please contact the homestay coordinator for assistance.

Household Chores

Your host parents will welcome you into their home as a member of the family. As part of the household, you will be expected to do some assigned chores. For example, you will be responsible to keep your room clean, and others areas of the house if you use them. You should also be prepared to help with meal preparation, cleaning of dishes, and doing your own laundry.

In many cases, you may also be an older brother or sister to your homestay family's children. We hope you set a good example for them. However, you will not be expected to babysit them.

Laundry

Please check with your host at the beginning of your stay to work out a laundry schedule. They may ask you to do your own laundry. Please ensure that you have a full load and are not washing a few items every few days.



Bedrooms

Your bedroom will include a window and smoke detector nearby; bed and bedding; a dresser, desk, chair and a lamp for studying; a closet; and adequate heat, light and ventilation. Please ask your host to show you how to use the bed and blankets, and where to find extra blankets if needed.

Your homestay family will discuss with you what you can put on bedroom walls and how to attach items. As a courtesy, and to conserve energy, please turn off the light before leaving your room.

Bathrooms

Please try to leave the bathroom clean and dry after you use it. Your host will explain when to use the bathroom and for how long. Most students will share a bathroom with one or more family members or other students. If there are several members of your household, please be considerate with the use of hot water, which might run out before everyone has showered.



Telephone Usage & the Internet

Collect calls, calling cards or Skype are recommended. It is not acceptable for students to run up charges on the host family telephone account. We discourage phone calls home more than once a week as it makes it more difficult for the student to adjust to live in Canada.

Please make sure you know how to use the telephones in the house. In case of emergency, dial “911” and you will be connected with an operator who will be able to send the police, fire truck and/or ambulance. This number should be near the telephone and you should discuss other emergency numbers and what to do in the event of a fire or emergency.



Your host will allow you a reasonable amount of time to make local calls on the house phone. However, please call collect or use a calling card or credit card when phoning long distance. Remember not to talk on the phone for too long at a time (more than 15 minutes). Do not make calls late at night or early in the morning.

Similar rules may apply to the use of the internet.

Use of Computers

We encourage you to use computer for schoolwork. However, the program guideline is that computer use must end at 10:00 p.m. Use of Skype, MSN and chatting with friends back home should be restricted to 1 hour per day of recreational use. The family that you are living with must approve any variation to this policy. Students who do not adhere to this policy risk having their computers disconnected.

Meals

Everybody likes different foods. Part of the fun of homestay is learning what Canadian families like to eat, and teaching your host family what you like to eat. Now is your chance to prepare a traditional meal from your home country for your host family. This will be a treat for you and them!

Your host family will always provide your meals—but this doesn't mean that your meals will be served to you. Sometimes your hosts will not be at home for every meal—and sometimes they will have different customs from you for certain meals.

Here is what you can expect in a typical Homestay regarding meals:

Breakfast. Each host family has its own unique morning schedule, so it is important to decide on a routine that will work best for everyone. Weekdays, breakfast is a quick, light meal. On weekends, families may prepare breakfast together. Some families eat a hot breakfast; others prefer to have something cold, such as cereal or toast, and juice.

Your family might leave it up to you to decide what to eat in the morning—please ask them to show you where the food is kept and how to prepare your own breakfast if this is the case.

Lunch is eaten midday and usually consists of a light main course (soup, a salad, or a sandwich), a drink (water, milk, or juice), and a dessert of fruit or cookies. You will be able to bring a bagged lunch to school from your home. In many host families students will be responsible for packing their own lunches. Ask your host family to show you where the lunch foods are kept and to show you how to prepare it. Some families prefer to prepare school lunches the night before so as not to be rushed in the morning. Talk to your host family about their routines.

Dinner. Your host family will try to have a sit-down dinner—which is usually the largest meal of the day and may consist of a main course, with or without a salad—as often as their weekly schedule allows. It is the most important meal of the day to many families. It is very important that you communicate with your family when you will not be home for dinner (dinners are usually eaten between 5:00 and 7:00 pm). To be considerate, if you will not be home for dinner, you **MUST** phone your family and tell them before dinnertime. This way, they will not expect you, they will not worry, and they will leave some supper for you in the fridge.

Please try to be at home for this family dinner hour as often as possible as this is the best time for families to talk about their day and for you to bond with your host parents and host brothers and sisters.

It is important that you are happy with the food prepared for you—you can speak to the host or the homestay coordinator can. Let us know if you have concerns about the food available. If you have special dietary needs—if you have extreme likes or dislikes, or any allergies—please discuss them with your host as soon as you arrive.



LIFE OUTSIDE THE CANADIAN HOME

Canadian families spend a few evenings each week engaged in leisure activities and relaxation. We encourage you to spend some time with them. However, it is perfectly alright to spend a few evenings out with your own friends from school.

Night Life

When you do go out, please tell your homestay family where you will be going, and how you can be reached (include all relevant phone numbers); when you will be home (remember your curfew!) and who you will be with. This information is important for your safety and your host's peace of mind.

Please do not assume your homestay family knows where you are, or remembers plans you have discussed in advance. Always review your plans with your homestay family on the evening you're going out. Always let your host know when you will be coming home—and always call if you're going to be late. If you are texting your family to tell them you will be late, do not assume they received the text unless they reply to your text confirming that they received it. They will worry if you're not home on time. When you do get home, please enter the home quietly!



Curfews

Host families and international students need to discuss curfews. Host families are responsible to set curfews and students are expected to respect the routines and rules of the household.

You must phone your host if you are delayed past your curfew, or require help at any time. Remember, if you are texting instead of phoning, be sure that you receive a reply confirming that they received your message.

Sleepovers

We do not promote sleepovers however ultimately, this is a decision to be made by your host family. If you wish to have a guest in your home overnight, you must ask permission from your host. If you want to sleepover at a friend's home, this is allowed if they are in the same homestay program and your host parents have spoken to the other host parents in person or by phone to confirm adequate supervision is in place.

In cases when your homestay host is away and needs to make alternate sleeping arrangements for you, the host must inform the Homestay Coordinator who will assist them in making respite care arrangements.

You are not permitted to bring guests into the homestay if the homestay family is not at home. Opposite gender sleepovers are not permitted. Opposite gender shall not visit private areas of the home (eg. Bedrooms).

TRAVEL

Travel With a School Group

Travel with a school group for an official school activity (eg. Physical Education class fieldtrip, school organized ski trip) is allowed. Your host parents can sign the permission form for you.

Red Deer Public Schools Homestay Program Travel Policy

FOLLOWING IS THE TRAVEL POLICY FOR RED DEER PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

1. Students may travel out of town *with their* host families.
2. Students may travel out of town *with another* hostfamily.

Under *any* other circumstances, ALL of the following conditions must be met:

1. Student must be under the direct supervision of an adult 25 years or older.
2. Student's natural parents must provide written consent.
3. Student must provide details of proposed trip with contact info of supervising adult, etc.
4. Student must receive consent from Mr. Rob Porkka before incurring any costs associated with the proposed trip.

This policy applies to all students studying in High School or Middle School, even those over the age of 18.

- Our travel policy is a School Board policy.
- Students risk being removed from the program should they not follow the guidelines.
- Should the above conditions be met, students are welcome to travel outside of Red Deer.



Travel Outside Canada

The homestay coordinator and the International Services office must be notified of all travel arrangements outside of Canada well in advance. The International Services office can provide the student with a letter or registration that will aid their re-entry into Canada.



Your biological family must arrange travels outside of Canada. It is the responsibility of the student and biological family to research and obtain the necessary visa/documents from the embassy or consulate of the country to be visited.

Drivers's License

International students in Red Deer Public Schools are not permitted to obtain a driver's license while they are in our program.

Smoking

Canadians observe strict rules about smoking. It is illegal to buy cigarettes in Canada if you are under the age of 18. Students in the Red Deer Public Schools International Student Program are not allowed, under any circumstance, to smoke in Canada—at home, at school or elsewhere.

If you break this rule, you may be asked to leave the program.

Alcohol and Drugs

Although the legal age for drinking alcohol in Alberta is 18 years of age, students in the Red Deer Public Schools International Student Program are not permitted to drink alcohol at any time during their stay. You could be expelled from the program if you drink alcohol; use or distribute illegal drugs including marijuana; use false identification. and no refunds will be given.

MONEY AND VALUABLES



Pocket Money

Please bring an adequate amount of money for extra expenses such as meals out of the home, movies, extra curricular school activities, and so on. Homestay fees do not cover these costs. Also, your Homestay fees do not include costs of major family outings. If you choose to participate in family holidays and/or travel where there are extra costs, you should expect to pay.

While theft is not common in Canada, it can and does happen. To keep yourself and your valuables safe, please do not carry or display large amounts of cash at any time. Displaying wealth can also lead to uncomfortable situations among your peers: money attracts attention, and if other students think you have a lot of it to spend, they may start expecting you to pay for their meals or activities.

You should not be expected to lend money to, or borrow money from, other students or members of your host family household.

When you arrive in Canada, it's a good idea to open a bank account. This is common practice in Canada and is the most reliable and safe way to handle money. Bank accounts are insured by the Bank of Canada; you are not risking anything by depositing your savings with a bank. It's also convenient: you can access your funds at ATMs (Automated Debit Machines) and even pay for meals, retail purchases and tourist attractions with your bank card.

Valuables

It's a good idea to make two copies of important documents (such as airline tickets, health insurance forms, and your passport): one for you to keep with you, and another for your hosts. Keep the originals in a safe place—they should not stay in your school bag or suitcase.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

An important goal of international students is to improve their English while attending school in Canada. Most of our schools offer special English language support classes for all levels of learners. These courses help students become more proficient in English.

When students arrive at their Orientation Day, they are assessed for their language abilities. This information is used by the school guidance counselor to place them in courses at the appropriate level.

Students with a strong foundation in English are placed in regular English classes.

Students who need to develop one or more of the skills of reading, writing, speaking or listening are placed in the most suitable English as a Second Language (ESL) class, in addition to regular classes with Canadian students.

International students have found these useful ways to meet English-speaking people and practice English:

- ◆ Practice English as part of the normal household routine
 - talk with your homestay family during dinner and relaxation time
 - join family events and outings
 - play with children
- ◆ Join school clubs (eg. International Students Association, choir, drama) and/or sports teams
- ◆ Go on school trips
- ◆ Get involved in community activities outside of school at:
 - local community centers
 - churches
- ◆ Consider getting involved in activities in a variety of ways:
 - act as a volunteer (your school has information on opportunities)
 - take part in sports (community teams as well as school teams)
 - take community courses in art, crafts, music, dance, etc.

You have come to Canada to become more confident and assertive in English, so be brave. You might make mistakes at first, but your host family will help you. The best way to improve your English is to practice.



TECHNIQUES FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Accept invitations to talk about yourself—don't be shy! Try to give full answers to questions—explain how you feel and why, rather than simply saying “yes” or “no.” Offer lists of things you like and don't like.

Ask your hosts to explain idiomatic expressions and slang. These can be hard to understand at first—and lots of fun to use. For example, “hang on” is equivalent to “one moment, please” or “please wait.”

If someone asks, “Do you understand?” be honest! Don't just say “Yes” for the sake of harmony! Instead, ask for help. Ask if your host understands you. Try to rephrase what you've said, or what you've heard. It can take effort—but it will always be worth it.

Smile and laugh a lot.



Tips to Encourage Communication

Conversation may be very difficult at first—but you must keep trying! As you go along, keep in mind that it helps to:

Speak English at all times.

Speak slower, not faster, if you're having trouble making yourself understood. Try rephrasing the same ideas using different words.

Listen to the expressions your hosts use in English, make sure you understand them, and try to use them, too.

Use charades, pointing, and body language!

Try writing items down—sometimes your reading and writing skills will be ahead of your verbal skills. Make the most of them!

Purchase a Foreign Language—English dictionary.

If all else fails, call the homestay coordinator for assistance!

COMMON CHALLENGES

A Word About Communication And Compromise

We hope that you enjoy your time with your host family.

If you experience any problems the following process helpful; please try it:

1. Speak with your host family immediately if you are upset by something. Most families will be happy to talk to you and to find out what can be done to resolve the problem.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved by speaking with your family, please call the homestay coordinator for help. Do not call your parents or Agent before you speak to us. We can help you better and more quickly if we hear about the problem from you directly. You can always call them later if you are not happy with our solutions.

Persistent Problems

If a problem comes up again between you and your host, the first thing we ask you to do is to contact us for assistance. Our goal is your safety, your host's safety, happiness, and health; we've found that most problems can be resolved when we listen to one another's feelings and thoughts. In some cases we may have to find you a new host family.

Why Would You Be Moved?

A student may be relocated (and may even be sent back to his or her home country) if he or she is disrespectful toward his or her host family or refuses to follow the family's rules. We are also very strict about how our host families should treat you. We will relocate you immediately if any member of your homestay household:

- ◆ Regularly fails to provide adequate and/or healthy food
- ◆ Neglects you, by failing to include you in suitable family activities, or by failing to pursue constructive communication and conversation with you.
- ◆ Willfully disrespects you, either through lack of consideration or insensitivity toward your feelings and/or culture.
- ◆ Fails to provide a clean and adequately maintained physical environment; or
- ◆ Continues in unresolved personality conflicts with you, individually or in the family;
- ◆ Steals your property
- ◆ Harasses you in any way—verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually.

Final Thoughts

Almost every difficulty our students face in homestay is connected with poor communication. It's not surprising—in your first weeks in Canada, you may have a hard time making your hosts understand what you need and how you feel—and your hosts may have a hard time making you understand them. This is totally natural and to be expected.

Sometimes the difficulty communicating can result in either the student or the host seeming rude or insensitive—or both. Sometimes we can all just become frustrated and unhappy. But we're here to help. We know it can be hard at the beginning, but **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** We've helped lots of people like you get through the first, hard days and weeks.

Here are a few things to keep in mind while you adjust:

- ◆ We know that the hardest thing for you to do is complain. We know that lots of ordinary things about your homestay may feel strange at first, and we know that you won't want to seem ungrateful or unhappy. But it's okay to ask for help. Please don't say things are "fine" if they aren't. (But don't make insults, either!) Please ask specific questions, whether you're concerned about laundry or dinner.
- ◆ It's okay to need some quiet time to yourself—but sometimes the best way to grow more comfortable at home is to keep busy and involved, to meet people, and most of all to talk—your hosts have welcomed you into their home because they want to know about you. If you're feeling overwhelmed (or even a little homesick), then why not practice your English by telling your host family all about life at your home!

In the meantime, please stay in touch! And remember: Have fun!

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency, please call 911 from the nearest phone. This is a toll-free call that will send medical, police or fire services to you immediately. Then call the Emergency Telephone number for your Homestay Coordinator located in the front of this guide. The homestay coordinator will assist you to contact your host family as well as notify your own family if/when necessary. If you are admitted to a hospital, you must call your insurance company within 24 hours.



DOCTOR'S VISITS AND INSURANCE CLAIMS

Our insurance company is “Ingle International”.

Please, always carry your Ingle Insurance Card with you. For more information on our insurance policy, please visit the website: www.inglestudents.com/rdpsd

Where to go if you are sick or injured

Is your condition serious or life-threatening? Or is it a minor or moderate health issue?

In most cases, a visit to a walk-in clinic is most appropriate and the fastest way to see a Dr. Please go to the Emergency Department at the hospital only for services such as cuts requiring stitches, broken bones, etc.

We have designated hospitals, clinics and pharmacies that will allow direct billing and you will not be required to pay for services. To find the most up-to-date list, please visit the website: www.inglestudents.com/rdpsd and choose the “Find a doctor” tab.

To use the Find a Doctor Tool and the Direct-Pay providers list:

- ◆ Click the “Find a Doctor—Search for a Doctor” tab
- ◆ Enter the student’s policy number (from their Ingle Insurance Card) the city and postal code
- ◆ This will take you to a map and a list of all providers Ingle Insurance currently has agreements with.

NOTE: Under the name, address and phone number of the Dr., Clinic or Pharmacy, it will specify Direct Billing: Yes or No. If you do not want to have to pay for the service with your own money, please only choose the locations that confirm that they provide Direct Billing. Please remember to have the student sign the claim form at the facility prior to leaving in case Ingle International needs to collect more information from the Doctor on behalf of the student.

Sometimes a facility may request payment from the insured even though direct billing is in place. This may occur when a staff member at the medical facility is unfamiliar with our agreement. If this is the case, please call Ingle International directly at 1-888-386-8888 or the number on the student health card and Ingle International will gladly liaise with the facility on your behalf.

At hospitals in Alberta, there may be internal regulations that require payment upfront from the insured. Remember, under the Canada Health Act, medical facilities cannot deny treatment to anyone in an emergency (Canadian or non-Canadian). If, for any reason, you are required to pay up front, ask the facility to provide you with a receipt. You can then submit the receipt and claim for form reimbursement.

At the Red Deer Hospital, you can simply tell them you are unable to pay and to please send an invoice to Red Deer Public School District, International Services, 4747-53 Street, Red Deer, AB, T4N 2E6.

What to bring with you to the Doctor's office or hospital



It is important that you bring the right documents for visits to any type of medical facility. Your checklist must include:

- ◆ Your photo id
- ◆ Ingle International wallet card
- ◆ A copy of the claim form (you can download it here: www.inglestudents.com/rdpsd/downloadclaim)
- ◆ Ingle International's toll-free phone number
- ◆ A list of medications you are taking (if applicable)
- ◆ A list of any allergies you may have (if applicable)

What to do if you have to make a claim

If you have gone to a facility outside of the Direct-Pay Network, you will have to submit a claim for reimbursement. You have the option of submitting it online or mailing in your claim form and receipts. If you choose the online option, you will still need to print out the claim form, sign it, and scan it and the receipts, before submitting your claim electronically. Make sure to keep all original documents and receipts in case you are asked to provide them at a later date!

At Direct-Pay facilities, you will still be asked to sign a claim form. Always keep receipts or any other documents you receive from staff, doctors, or administration. These documents may be needed later on.

Please visit www.inglestudents.com/rdpsd for detailed instructions on submitting a claim.

If you have any questions or problems with completing your claim, you can contact Lisa in the International Services office for assistance.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU WITH ANY PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS

We hope that you will find the information in this book helpful. If you have any further questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact a member of the International Services staff, your Homestay Coordinator, or your school counselor. We are here to help you have a safe and enjoyable experience.



VISIT OUR STUDENT ORIENTATION WEB PAGE:
[Www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices/orientation](http://www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices/orientation)

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP CALLED
"RED DEER PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ALUMNI"

