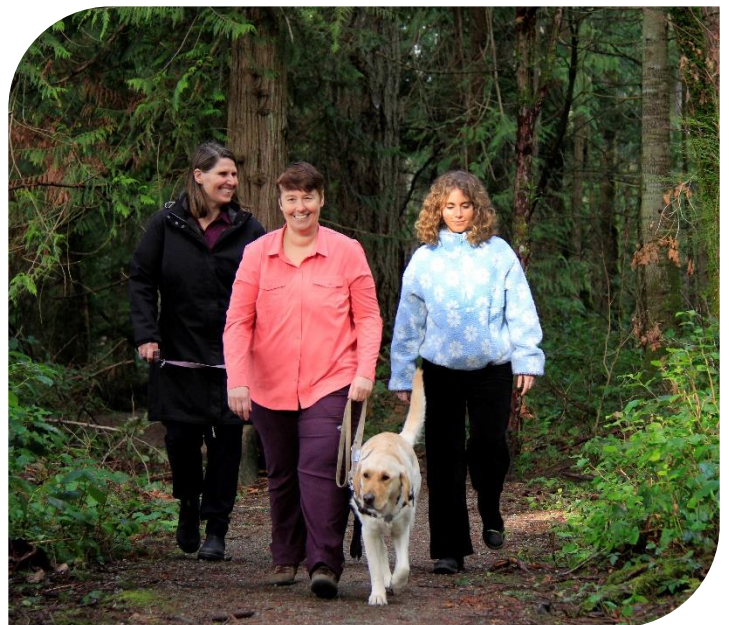
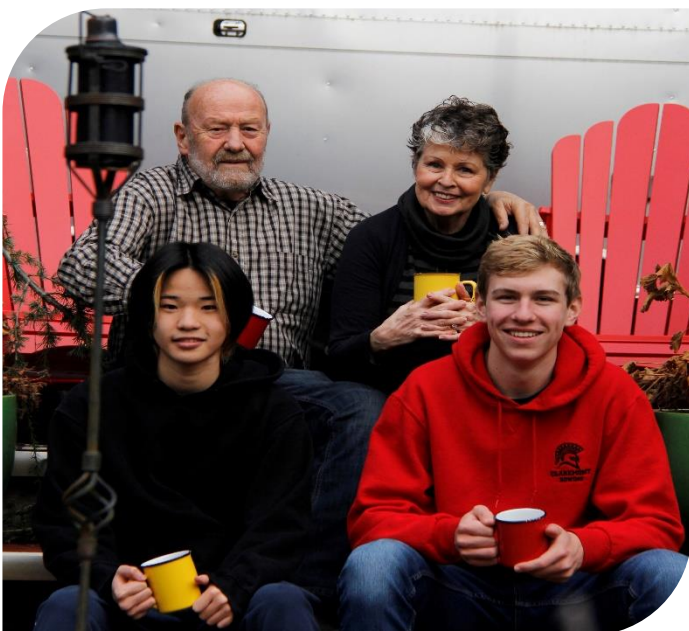




SAANICH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM (SISP)

2023-2024 Host Family Guide

“Transforming lives and communities through intercultural experiences”



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Introduction

Dear Host Family,

Hello and a warm welcome from the Team at the Saanich International Student Program (SISP)!

Territorial Acknowledgement

SISP acknowledges with great respect the W̱SÁNEĆ People on whose traditional territory we live, learn, teach and work. The W̱SÁNEĆ People have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial and their historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Thank You

We want to thank you for supporting SISP and our international students. The homestay experience is a very important component of our program. We know many of our students' most vibrant memories will be of the time they spent with members of their Canadian host family.

Unless you've been a homestay parent, it is difficult to describe the feelings of love and understanding that can develop between host parents and their international "son" or "daughter". In a relatively short period of time, a stranger becomes a member of the family and the beginning of a relationship forms, that may last a lifetime.

By welcoming the student into your home and treating them as a valued member of your family, your family is offering them the chance to experience unique privileges and responsibilities that will make them much more than a visitor here. As each of you come to understand your international student's growing awareness of our society and family life, you will also begin to understand *their* country, *their* family, *their* customs, and *their* beliefs as well. Soon you realize this is true education, one that could not be experienced more profoundly any other way.

The SISP Homestay Team is looking forward to fully supporting you and your student throughout your time together, to celebrate your highs with you and to support you through any issues that may arise.

Thanks to you and your family, your international student will leave with a mind full of memories that encourage them to embrace people of every nationality more easily. Your care and support make all the difference. On behalf of the entire SISP Team, we thank you for all you are about to do!

Sincerely,

The SISP Homestay Team

1. SISP Staff and Contact Information

As a host family, your main point of contact is your Homestay Coordinator. For any questions or concerns regarding school and courses, your first point of contact is the International Student Advisor/Support at your student's school.

SISP Homestay Team

Staff	Title	Phone	Email
Ms. Ernestine Fagel	Homestay Manager	250-880-4950 250-655-2718	efagel@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Kristen Belusic	Homestay Coordinator for Claremont	250-655-2723 250-217-6727	kbelusic@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Kimberly Ewer	Homestay Coordinator for Stelly's	250-217-9368 250-655-2721	kewer@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Erika Bertram	Homestay Coordinator for Parkland	250-655-2726 250-880-1589	ebertram@saanichschools.ca
SISP EMERGENCY #	After Office Hours & Evenings	250-812-0731	In Case of Emergencies

SISP Team

Staff	Title	Phone	Email
Mr. Spencer Gray	SISP Principal	250-514-8354	sgray@saanichschools.ca
Mr. Colin Guiguet	SISP Senior Manager	778-676-0447	cguiguet@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Naoko Tsumori	Program Assistant	250-655-2720	ntsumori@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Lisa McClelland	Program Assistant - Accounts	250-655-3022	lmclelland@saanichschools.ca
Mr. David Ding	Program Assistant	250-655-2725	dding@saanichschools.ca

School's International Student Advisors:

School	International Student Advisor	Email
Parkland Secondary School	Mr. Jeff Hilton	jhilton@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Ms. Asha Sidhu	asidhu@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Mr. Dan Berger	dberger@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Mr. Graeme Mitchell	gmitchell@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Mr. Shon Ryan	sryan@saanichschools.ca

School's International Assistants:

School	International Assistant	Email
Parkland Secondary School	Ms. Sara Benson	sbenson@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Ms. Tricia Millman	tmillman@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Ms. Lori Rampon	lrampson@saanichschools.ca

International Office Address: 10640 McDonald Park Road, North Saanich

Hours of Operation: 8:00am – 3:30pm Monday-Friday

Front Office Phone Number: +1 (250) 655-2720

2. General Information

SISP Program Background

SISP oversees and supports all international students in the Saanich School District. SISP is committed to ensuring each international student has the most enriching experience possible. We strive to provide a caring, safe, and culturally rich environment in schools, homestays and the community.

SISP was established in 2001 and has been a pillar in the community ever since. We welcome between approximately 300-350 international students to Saanich yearly!

Our Students

Our students come from all over the world and bring a wealth of cultural diversity into our schools and communities. Students participate in our program for a variety of reasons:

- to become more fluent in English
- to achieve BC Graduation in order to enter university in North America
- to experience Canadian culture and lifestyle
- to experience life abroad

Length of Program

We have short term and long-term students in our program. These are the periods students typically join us for:

- September-December (4 months)
- September-January (5 months)
- September-June (10 months)
- February - April (3 months)
- February - June (5 months)

Host families can state their preference and availability for hosting either a short- or long-term student.

Custodianship and Responsibility

All minors (i.e. age 18 years and under) need to have a custodial adult in Canada as a condition of receiving a Study Permit (visa) from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). For all students in the Homestay Program, the custodial adult is a member of the SISP Leadership Team.

All students that stay with a SISP host family are under custodianship of the Program. Host families act on behalf of the Custodian, but all major or serious incidents must be reported to the Program.

3. Host Family Expectations and Responsibilities

Becoming a host family is a big decision! It takes openness, kindness, and understanding to host a teenager from a different culture. International students will often become a full part of the family. Sharing your culture with your student and learning about their culture can be a tremendously rewarding experience.

The Requirements for Hosting

As a host parent you are expected to provide the environment and support that you would normally provide for your own family. This means you are required to offer your student:

- A private bedroom furnished with the following:
- A bed with a proper mattress and bedding
- A desk with a lamp and adequate lighting for doing homework
- A window that opens
- A closet and set of drawers or other storage space
- Three wholesome meals a day and snacks as required
- Hot water and facilities for daily bathing and basic toiletries, such as soap, shampoo, etc.
- Daily showers of approximately 10 minutes
- Laundry (you may expect a student to do their own laundry if you wish, or you can do the laundry for them if that suits you better)
- Access to the common living areas of the house

Additionally, we require you to treat the student as a valued member of your family. This looks like:

- Emotional support if the student suffers from homesickness, difficulties at school, etc.
- Academic support, such as help with homework if possible, communication with teachers, attendance at parent-teacher-student interview, etc.
- Inclusion of the student in family outings, trips to restaurants, special occasions, recreational activities
- Giving your student a house key
- Pickup and drop-off to the airport or ferry
- Transportation to and from student activities (**host families living in remote areas will be required to provide more transportation**)

Acting on Behalf of the Custodian

Even though the SISF is the legal custodian for all students in the District Homestay Program, host parents play an important role in supervising and directing student behavior on a daily basis. Host parents are expected to act on behalf of SISF and with the best interest of the student and SISF in mind. If any serious concerns or important questions arise regarding a student's behavior, wellbeing, health or otherwise, host parents should contact their Homestay Coordinator right away.

The Placement Process

When deciding upon a student placement, the Homestay Coordinator carefully considers the preferences, needs, interests and specific circumstances of both the student and the host family. Based on this, a suitable student will be selected for you if available. You will be presented with a student profile once the placement process has been done, and the placement will be finalized upon your confirmation.

Please note that SISP does not guarantee continued placement of students with your family each year. Even though we will always try our best to place a student with our valued host families, placement really depends on whether or not we have a suitable student for you. This may change from year to year depending upon the applications we receive.

Issues with the Student

Adjusting to life in a “new” family may take a while and you can expect that both you and your student will need some time to get used to each other and to establish a relationship. Open communication with your student is very important! Please remember that your student is likely used to very different rules, expectations, customs and parenting styles from your own family back home and will view things differently than you do. As long as both you and your student are respectful about differing views, this does not have to be an issue.

If serious issues do arise, there are a few steps you should take:

1. **Talk to your student:** when an issue arises with your student, the first step should always be to talk to them about this. Many times, a student will not even be aware of problematic behavior until it is pointed out. If they don't know, they can't make changes! When talking to your student, make sure to create a safe environment. Sometimes, it works best if one host parent first opens up the conversation rather than two parents together, which can be intimidating.
2. **Contact your Homestay Coordinator:** inform your Homestay Coordinator of the issue and what you have already done to address this with your student. Your Homestay Coordinator will give you strategies to help resolve the situation.
3. **Meeting with Student and Homestay Coordinator:** if, after using the strategies your Homestay Coordinator gave you, the situation is still not improving, your Homestay Coordinator will organize a meeting with you and your student to discuss the issue and see if there are any possible solutions. This opportunity usually assists with resolving the situation.
4. **Potential Change of Host Families:** if, after all the previous efforts, and there isn't positive progress and the issue persists, you or your student may request a move to a different host family with your Homestay Coordinator. Your Homestay Coordinator will assess the situation and make a final decision, based on the efforts to resolve the issue as well as the availability of another suitable host family. Bear in mind that this will take time to arrange.

Host Family Travel

Without the student – Respite Required

Students are not to be left alone at home overnight under any circumstances, regardless of their age, level of maturity or trustworthiness. They are minors in our care, and SISP requires appropriate adult supervision (persons 25 years of age or over, with a valid CRC and vulnerable sector check) to be responsible for your student while you are away

You can go on any trips or outings without your student, but will need to make alternative arrangements for your student well ahead of time. When planning an overnight trip without your student, please:

- Complete the [Homestay Respite Form](#) on the SISP Website once you know when you are planning to be away – the earlier, the better!
- Indicate whether you have arranged an appropriate supervising adult for your student, or need help arranging this. An appropriate, responsible adult can be:
 - Another Host Family in our program - this is often the easiest option as all our host families are already vetted by us. Ask your student if they have an international friend they could stay with!
 - A family member or trusted friend
 - Family of a Canadian friend of your student
- The adult will need to have a valid Criminal Record Check with the vulnerable sector check, and a copy of the Clearance Letter needs to be shared with SISP through the Department of Justice. This can take up to 6 weeks!

Please confirm with your Homestay Coordinator if the supervising adult you have arranged is approved. If you need help finding a respite Host Family for your student for the duration of your time away, you can indicate this on the Homestay Respite form and your Homestay Coordinator can help with this. SISP will also assist with finding a supervising adult in case of emergencies.

With the student

Host families can take students on trips if the student is interested in joining. Please follow the following guidelines for informing SISP of trips you are taking your student on:

- Within BC: no notification necessary
- Outside of BC: please email your Homestay Coordinator about your trip
- Outside of Canada: please email your Homestay Coordinator about your plans and confirm the following:
 - Insurance coverage
 - Any necessary visas (student and host family's responsibility)

With another international student

If you are planning a trip and you would like to invite one of your student's international friends, that student will need to submit a Travel Application on our website. Please see the Student Travel section for more information.

4. Financial Considerations

Monthly Reimbursement for Hosting Expenses

Host families receive a monthly reimbursement for expenses incurred for hosting their international student(s). Per September 1, 2023 the monthly reimbursement is \$1,150 per student.

Payment Dates

This reimbursement is paid out via direct deposit on the last Friday of each month for the expenses incurred that month. The only exception is September, when the reimbursement will be paid out in two installments, to bridge the gap between welcoming a student in your home and receiving your first payment:

- 50% on or around September 15
- 50% on the last Friday of the month

Monthly Reimbursement and Homestay Moves

In circumstances where a student needs to be moved to a different host family, both the first and new host family will receive the reimbursement for the amount of nights the student spent in their home that month. The amount per night will be calculated based on the amount of days in the month.

If the change of host families happens near the end of the month, the monthly payment for that month may have already been processed and payment for the last few days may need to be rectified afterwards. In that case, the host family must repay the reimbursement for those nights of the month the student was no longer in their home. This can be done via E-transfer or cheque:

- For E-transfers: please use the following email address and message:
 - accounts_receivable@Saanichschools.ca
 - In the memo section, please note: International Homestay and your last name
- For cheque, please mail to the following address and make cheque payable to SD#63:
 - Lisa McClelland
Saanich International Student Program
10640 McDonald Park Rd
North Saanich, BC V8L 5S7

What should host parents pay for?

Below are a few examples of what host parents are expected to pay for. If any specific questions regarding this topic arise, the SISP Homestay Team is happy to offer support.

- If your family initiates the activity, such as going to a movie or out for dinner, the expectation is you would pay for the student.
- It is expected you would pay for any items, food or entertainment that you would pay for your own children.
- If you are planning a trip and inviting your student it is expected that you pay for food and accommodation. Other such expenses, such as ski passes etc. should be the responsibility of the student. Please speak to the student prior to the trip to discuss any extra expenses, with the intention of allowing them time to budget for the trip/outing.

What should the student pay for?

The following list includes examples of items and activities students have to pay for themselves. Again, if questions arise, please contact your Homestay Coordinator.

- Clothes
- Phone cost
- School supplies and extra-curricular lessons or activities
- Medicines and medications of all kinds
- Any dental work (dental work other than emergency dental is not covered by the student's medical plan)
- Haircuts and/or other personal services
- Personal entertainment and expenses (If the student chooses to eat in a restaurant or go to a movie with friends, the student is expected to pay)
- Costs associated with participation in school-sponsored activities such as graduation ceremonies, school dances, trips, extra-curricular sports, costs related to certification, etc.
- Costs related to renewal of student study permits and airplane tickets home
- Grad fees, yearbook fees
- Public transportation (suggest a monthly student bus pass)

It is strongly recommended host parents refrain from lending money to their student, and never to borrow money from your student.

What expenses does SISP cover?

The fees that students' families pay SISP cover the following:

- All tuition for the school they attend
- Medical insurance fees
- School bus registration fees
- Some activities arranged by the International Program Staff.

5. Student's Pre-Departure and Arrival

Pre-Departure

Communication and Relationship Building with your student:

- Prior to your student's arrival in Saanich, connect with them and their family by having several Zoom, WeChat, FaceTime or WhatsApp calls to get to know one another. This is a great way to start building your relationship and ease the transition once the student arrives. They will be happy to see your "familiar" face waiting for them at the airport!
- Speak with your student about airport pick-up:
 - When will you pick them up?
 - Where will they meet you?
 - How will you recognize them and vice versa?
- SISP sends your student's arrival flight information once it's received by our office
- Exchange phone numbers and email addresses with your student and tell them to save your contact information in their phone

We strongly recommend host families downloading apps such as WhatsApp on their phone for easier communication with students while they are in transit. Students can use this while on airport Wi-Fi to keep you updated on their schedule. Different countries use different applications, so please discuss which app to use for this when you first talk to your student.

Arrival

- Host Parents are responsible for picking up and dropping off their student on arrival and departure at the airport or ferry terminal, as part of participation in the program and providing a warm welcome to their student.
- Host parents should also make sure their student contacts their parent(s) to confirm they have arrived safely.

Departure

- Host families need to plan to be available to drive their student to the airport or ferry for their departure travels.
- Host families should remind their student there are weight restrictions on luggage. Students should research how much luggage they can take and be prepared to pay any additional fees.
- Please note, it's the student's responsibility to pay for these additional fees, and the Saanich International Student Program will not be responsible to reimburse a host family if they choose to pay the additional fees.

6. Information and Tips for the First Days

Many students are eager and excited to be here in Saanich and have looked forward to this experience for a long time. To get students off to a positive start, please see the suggestions below. For students experiencing culture shock, jetlag and homesickness, tips and suggestions are also included.

The first few days

- Encourage your student to contact their parents soon after arrival
- Speak to the parents yourself saying how pleased you are to have their child with you; even if they don't understand English, they will appreciate the gesture
- Introduce your student to extended family members, neighbors and close friends.
- Write down names to help them remember them and take the time to learn the correct pronunciation of your student's name
- Discuss how you would like your student to address you and other family members
- Make sure your student has your phone number and those of the members of the family who might be able to assist them if they find themselves lost. Include emergency numbers!
- Keep your student busy but also arrange for some time alone to compensate for jet lag fatigue
- Go over your house rules with the student. Having them typed up and printed can be helpful!
- Help arrange for a Canadian phone or sim card, but do not sign a phone contract for them
- Go with your student to open a bank account. Stress not to carry large amounts of money or leave it at home
- Show your student how to use his/her ATM card and explain the importance of keeping the PIN number secret
- Show female students where they can buy personal supplies and discuss how you would like them to dispose of sanitary items in your home
- Visit local points of interest and make sure your student knows the route from your home to school
- Review school information and discuss the plans and the times for getting to school
- Ask your student what they would like to do and eat
- Take your student to the grocery store and have them point out what they like. If there is a grocery store that carries items from their home country, this can be a great way to comfort the student during those first days!
- Provide your student with a transit schedule and go over it with them
- Take your student on a bus ride and show them where to catch the bus and how to get to school
- Celebrate small milestones right away (the end of the first week, the first month, etc.)
- Establish a pattern of daily conversation and have your student help to make a list of conversation topics to get through the first few weeks
- Explore the neighborhood and show the student local points of interest
- Have fun getting to know each other!

While most of the students arriving are excited and eager to explore Canadian life, there are also students that need some time adjusting due to culture shock, jet lag and/or homesickness.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is what people experience when they are suddenly immersed in a culture which is different from their own. "Culture" means the largely unwritten patterns of behavior that govern the lives of a particular group of people. Culture shock comes from the realization that basic assumptions about life and familiar ways of behaving are no longer appropriate or useful.

The student can be struggling with new (and in many cases, strange) things such as language, climate, community, customs, food, home, family, behaviour and ways of showing emotions. It is worth noting that the host family may experience some culture shock as well!

Symptoms of culture shock may occur in many different forms:

- Difficulty to engage in conversations
- Staying in their room
- Wishes to be home where people understand
- Frequent and lengthy phone calls home

Some things host families can do to help during this stage:

- Identify it is culture shock and explain to the student what culture shock is
- Acknowledge the feelings are normal and temporary
- Offer a sympathetic shoulder to cry on
- Remind themselves that the student's culture shock is not a reflection of their hosting ability or a sign of rejection; it is a normal stage many students experience
- Allow the student time to be alone
- Encourage extra rest
- Encourage the student to talk about their feelings with other students
- Offer the student some, 'one on one', away from the home and other siblings. This may include, going for a walk, going out for a tea or coffee, going shopping together, sharing a quiet time talking about the student's family and friends back home or looking at the student's family photos
- Take the student out to a restaurant that specializes in their ethnic food, as familiar food can be comforting

Jet lag

Most students have traveled through several time zones to reach Vancouver Island. They may suffer from the effects of jet lag for up to two weeks, including sleeping problems, drowsiness at the wrong time of day, loss of appetite, general fatigue, and disorientation.

The best ways to manage jet lag are:

- Adjusting to the new time zone
- Limit naps and set alarms to not oversleep in the morning
- Proper hydration and nutrition
- Exposure to sunlight – get your student to go outside and be active!
- Find exciting things to do during the day to distract from the jet lag symptoms

Homesickness

It's possible that your student suffers from homesickness for the first few days or weeks of their stay. This is totally normal and almost always passes with time. Below are some suggestions on how to help your student cope with feelings of homesickness.

- Reiterate that your student's feelings are normal and show understanding
- Help them personalize their room to make them feel more at home
- Ask your student about their favorite food and cook this for them – this can be incredibly powerful in helping curb feelings of homesickness. You can also offer to make a dish from their home country together as a bonding activity.
- Encourage your student to come out of their room to spend time with your family, even if it feels scary – let them know they're safe and welcome and you are there to support
- Do allow your student alone time when needed
- Support them communicating with family and friends back home when needed
- Encourage them to fully step into their new life by getting active and getting to know new people
- Discuss the feeling with your student and encourage them to discuss it with friends
- Encourage your student to get involved in school clubs and activities

Food and table manners

It can take some time for students to get adjusted to Canadian food. The food you serve in your home, no matter how well, thoughtful and lovingly prepared, will be different from the food they are used to. Worldwide, many people derive great comfort from their familiar and favourite foods. Eating times, table manners, and methods of serving and presenting food will also be different for your student. Most students adjust quickly to a Canadian diet but some may take longer than others.

Table manners can vary greatly in other cultures such as chewing with the mouth open and declining offers of food at least three times before accepting. If your student displays manners inappropriately to your expectations, you will need to gently explain and demonstrate the proper Canadian behaviour. Please do not be offended if your student does not say please or thank you, as it is not part of every culture; feel free to let them know how important it is in our culture.

Please be patient, as changing lifelong habits to adapt to a new culture takes time!

7. Expectations, Guidelines and Curfews for Students

SISP has several rules, guidelines and expectations in place to help manage student behavior, safety and overall wellbeing.

Important General Rules for SISP Students

- **Travel:** travel outside of our local area without you as their host family is not allowed during the month of September. After that, if your student wishes to travel outside of the Victoria area, they will need to submit an online [Travel Application](#) for each trip via our website.
- **Alcohol and drugs:** all SISP students are strictly prohibited from drinking alcohol or consuming drugs during their stay here, regardless of their age or what the rules are in their home country. SISP maintains a Zero-Tolerance Policy when it comes to consuming alcohol or drugs.
- **Driving:** SISP students are not allowed to drive a motorized vehicle during their stay here, nor can they obtain a driver's license. This is not covered under our insurance. You and your family members that have a valid license (full or N) can drive the student, granted that the rules pertaining to the license are always abided by.
- **School:** SISP students need to follow school rules, attend school regularly, complete homework assignments and maintain a satisfactory level of academic achievement.
- **Working:** Not possible while in Canada. They are a student here to study.
- **Volunteering:** All requests to volunteer must be approved by SISP or their assigned school.

Homestay Expectations for Students

During the first week of school, all students will receive a Homestay Orientation. During this orientation, the Homestay Coordinators outline the expectations for students in regard to their homestay. You can find the hand-out students receive during this orientation [here](#).

Students will also sign a Participation Agreement during the general New Student Orientation. This covers various topics, including general rules and laws in Canada, as well as homestay expectations. You can find the Participation Agreement [here](#).

Curfews

Ultimately it is up to the host parents to set the curfew for their student, although SISP has created the following guideline for curfews:

Weeknights (Sunday-Thursday)

- Students should be home between 6pm-8pm on weeknights (Sunday-Thursday) and the expectation is that they are home most nights for family dinner.

Weekend (Friday-Saturday)

- Grade 9 ⇨ 9:00pm
- Grade 10 ⇨ 10:00pm
- Grade 11 ⇨ 11:00pm
- Grade 12 ⇨ 12:00am

If you'd like to stick to these curfews, our program will fully support you if any issues arise. Should you feel that a different curfew suits your student and family better, you have the discretion to make that decision, as long as the alternate curfew is reasonable for your student's age.

Communication

Your student should let you know where they are at all times. It's okay to ask them to provide clear and detailed information regarding their whereabouts. We have shared the following with our students, and it is the expectation they provide you with the following information. Please hold them accountable to this expectation.

Make sure your family knows where you are at all times, text or phone them to let them know, clearly communicate the following details:

- *Where you are and where you are going*
- *Who you are with*
- *When you will be home*
- *Let them know if your plans have changed*
- *Let them know ahead of time if you are going to miss dinner*
- *Example: I'm on the {bus number} bus, heading to Uptown Mall with {friend's names} and going to go for dinner at {name of restaurant}. I'm now at the restaurant. I'm now on the {bus number} bus and will be home at {time}. Please respond to your host family in a timely manner, especially when they ask you to clarify or ask you to provide more information.*

Contribution to Household Chores

This is a list of various contributions/chores and rules that you as host family may expect your student to do and follow, which are reasonable. Many host families will have a list printed and hanging it in their home as a reminder of the expectations in the home.

Not all students are used to doing chores, and some come from families that hire household help. You will need to demonstrate the tasks that you would like them to do. For example, if you wish your student to do their own laundry, you will need to demonstrate how to use your machines.

Make additional rules as necessary: showers/bathing (explain use of shower curtains and how to use shower, appropriate length of shower, etc.), table manners, other manners, use of household appliances, laundry, bringing friends home, etc. You may also want to explain to your students what is appropriate to flush down the toilet.

Please note that students cannot be expected to care for pets and children and SISP will not support enforcing students to help with this. If your student enjoys helping out with for example walking the dog or babysitting the kids occasionally, this is fine. However, this should not be a continuing expectation and should only happen in full agreement with the student.

Please see a list of appropriate chores and expectations below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Curfew
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask if it is okay to go out. Provide details, where you are going and/or where you are, who you are with, what bus you are on and when you are to be home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your host parents ahead of time, if it is okay for you invite a friend over for a visit or a sleep over
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your host family ahead of time (at least 1 day) if it is okay for you to stay overnight at a friend's home and share with your host family the person/family you will be staying with and your friend's parent's/guardian's name and contact number.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you aren't going to be home for dinner, please let your host parent know by pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	You are to do your own laundry. Your laundry day is
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make your bed every morning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep your bedroom tidy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean your bedroom weekly, garbage into the main garbage can, recycling to recycling boxes, dust, vacuum, etc
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash and change your bed sheets once a week
<input type="checkbox"/>	No food or eating in your bedroom.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bedroom room temperature should be degrees when you are in your room and degrees when you are not home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep your bathroom tidy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean your bathroom. Ask your host family for cleaning supplies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showers are minutes long and to be taken between the times of and .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Help prepare dinner and/or set the table.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean up the kitchen after you have prepared food, wash down the counters and table.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash, dry and put dishes away.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Put dishes in the dishwasher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empty the dishwasher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take out the garbage and recycling.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cell phones are to remain in your bedroom during mealtimes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer to help out, such as carrying groceries into the house, going grocery shopping, asking your host if they need help, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiet time is between and on weekdays and between and on weekends.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect all family members and be open to communicate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in family activities.

8. Conduct Protocols

Appropriate Conduct by Host Parents

Not only do different cultures have different protocols about personal space, within cultures individuals will have a wide range of comfort level and preferences around relationships, conduct and expressing affection. As a general rule, host families should exercise caution in expressing affection towards their student and base their approach on the relationship and trust built with their unique student.

If SISP receives any kind of information about ‘inappropriate conduct’ by anyone, adult or student, in relation to a SISP student, then we must investigate immediately. This is a legal requirement.

Please note these points:

- Adults should remember to dress appropriately while in the company of students.
- Adults should not use ‘sexually suggestive’ language or tell off-color jokes in front of students.
- Please note that jokes perceived as innocent by host parents, can be received very differently by students, either due to cultural background, language barrier or simply a personality difference. Refrain from making jokes, even light-hearted ones, about your student until you are absolutely certain you have established a relationship where your student understands and appreciates this.
- Do not discuss personal matters such as your relationship with your partner, children or ex-partners with your students. You are the adult, they are the child.
- Overt or excessive displays of affection, both in public and private, are NOT appropriate.
- Please respect the student’s right to privacy in their own room. This does not mean you can never enter the room but give notice to your student before entering their room.
- Some students may not want anything other than a ‘formal’ relationship with their host family, while others may want a warm family relationship with their host family. Attitudes vary with each individual, don’t take it personally if your student prefers the more formal relationship. Each student is different.
- **Under no circumstances** serve alcoholic beverages to your SISP high school student in your home. Sometimes, parents elect to serve their own older teens a drink on special occasions such as Christmas dinner. Your international student **cannot** be afforded this “adult” privilege. It’s not legal to provide any kind of alcoholic beverage, to your student, even in your own homes.
- **Physical discipline is not permitted under any circumstances and will result in immediate removal of the student from your home.**

As Host Parents, you are the responsible adult, NOT the best friend of the student. You are expected to act “in a kind and judicious” manner with respect to your dealings with your student.

Student Relationships

Just as Canadian teenagers, our international students are likely to form relationships with other students. SISP does not “forbid” romantic relationships. However, a primary responsibility of the host parent is to care for the student and to keep the Homestay Coordinator informed about the welfare of the student. This includes informing us of behavior of other students which may impact on your student.

It is the host family's responsibility to inform the Homestay Coordinator of potentially dangerous or inappropriate personal relationships so that the student can be counseled appropriately.

Communication and Language Barriers

General Communication

Both the host family and the student deserve courtesy and respect. These can mean different things to different cultures. If you feel that the student is being discourteous, explain to them how they should behave in Canada.

It is important to communicate gently yet explicitly with students. All rules and expectations will be new to them and you cannot assume that they understand things that are obvious to most Canadians. You might want to start by explaining your "house rules" such as chores, personal hygiene, and laundry.

Language Barriers

Please keep in mind that language barriers can pose a considerable challenge for your student. Many of our students come to Canada with very basic English skills and will need your patience and understanding as they slowly start making this language their own over the course of their time here. When communicating with your student, especially in those early days, spend time assessing their English skills and adapt the way you communicate with them accordingly. Use basic vocabulary, use translating tools if necessary and be gracious if your student does not understand what you are saying.

Even students that come with advanced English skills, still can experience a language barrier. Especially jokes can be lost in translation, so please remain conscious of your student not being a native English speaker.

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

We are proud to welcome such a diverse group of students from all parts of the world to our communities. We urge all our host families to exercise the highest level of integrity and respect when learning and talking about your student's cultural background.

We encourage host families to show positive interest for their student's cultural backgrounds, customs and traditions. Ask them questions, share similarities and differences, have them cook their traditional foods for you – the possibilities to be enriched by their culture are endless!

Host families should completely refrain from making jokes or comments about their student's cultural background, customs and/or traditions. There is no justification for such jokes or comments, and SISF will not support host families who offend or hurt their students with this kind of behavior.

Please note that intent on the host parent's part is irrelevant here – even if you don't mean a joke to be hurtful, this does not change the fact that your joke may very well be perceived as very hurtful by your student.

Harassment

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. We expect all students to be free of harassment in both the host family home and at school. If you are aware of any problems of this nature please contact the SISP office, the Homestay Coordinator, or the International Student advisor.

Harassment is defined as:

- Any improper behaviour that is directed at or offensive to another person, is unwelcome, and which the person knows or ought to reasonably know would be unwelcome; or
- Objectionable conduct, comment or materials or displays that demean, belittle, intimidate, or humiliate another person; or
- The exercise of power or authority such as intimidation, threats, coercions and blackmail.

Sexual Harassment is defined as:

- Any comment, look, suggestion, physical contact, real or implied action of a sexual nature which creates an uncomfortable environment for the recipient, made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know such a behaviour is unwelcome; or
- Any circulation or display of visual material of a sexual nature that has the effect of creating an uncomfortable environment; or
- An implied promise of reward for complying with a request of a sexual nature; or
- A sexual advance made by a person in authority over the recipient that implies a threat or an expressed or implied denial of an opportunity which would otherwise be granted or available, and may include a reprisal or a threat of reprisal made after a sexual advance is rejected.

If SISP has good cause to suspect harassment of the student on behalf of the host parent(s), the student will be removed from the home immediately.

9. Medical Information & Emergencies

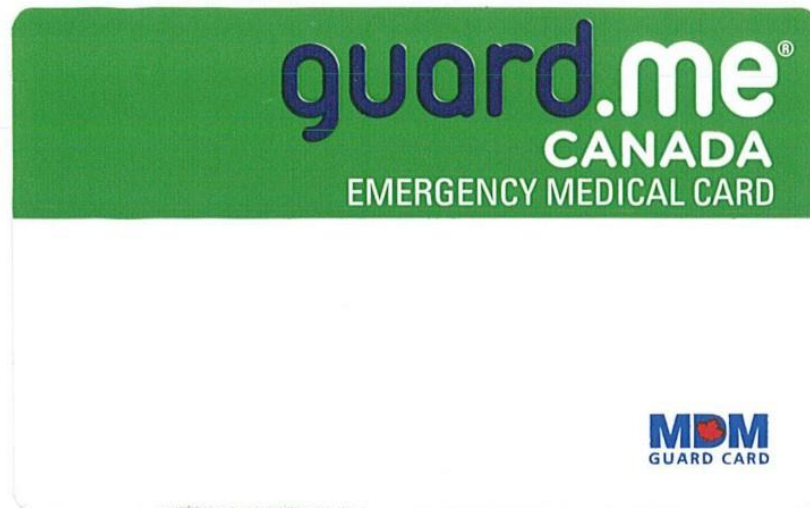
Medical Insurance for Students

Medical Insurance is required to be an international student in Saanich and arranged for all students in the program by SISP.

- **Returning students:** The British Columbia Medical Service Plan (MSP) coverage is required for all graduation program students (10 months or more), provided the student has a valid Study Permit.
- **10-month students or less:** Guard.Me coverage is required for the duration of their study period in Saanich.

Guard.Me is private insurance for students without the BC Medical Service Plan (MSP). If your student has guard.me insurance coverage (10 month students or less) and go to a clinic or hospital, they should keep their receipts, follow the instructions and submit the online claim form. Some clinics directly bill guard.me, so please check while at the appointment to avoid the student having to pay up front if possible. Visit [guard.me](https://www.guard.me) for insurance plan details and frequently asked questions (FAQs).

The SISP office enrolls students with guard.me before they arrive and provides them with a guard.me card during new student JumpStart/Orientation.



What if my student gets sick or injured?

As a host parent, we ask you to give the student the same level of support and care you would give your own family members.

- Seek medical attention as required - take the student to the appropriate clinic, doctor or ER.
- Use the online service [Maple through guard.me](https://www.guard.me) if your student is on guard.me
- If the illness or accident is serious, please inform the Homestay Manager immediately.
- If you have challenges getting your student into a treatment centre/walk-in clinic, please reach out to your Homestay Coordinator for assistance.

Unless it is a medical emergency please consider taking your student to a clinic first. Clinics charge between \$70.00-\$100.00, while the emergency room charge is \$700.00-\$1000.00. In many countries, students are used to going to the hospital for non-urgent conditions so you may have to explain the difference here in Canada.

If URGENT medical attention is required, the student should be taken to the hospital emergency room. Please call our emergency number (250-812-0731) to report emergencies to the program.

Host families are expected to support their student with planning and attending doctor's visits, as well as supporting their student in case of an emergency. The SISP Homestay Team can support in those instances that a host parent truly cannot be there for the student, but the default person to support the student is the host parent.

Outstanding invoices for hospital/clinic visits

If your student receives an invoice from Island Health, please have the student or yourself send your Homestay Coordinator a copy of it and our Homestay Manager will work with Island Health to see if it may be direct billed to Guard.me. Ambulance bills often are sent months after the date of the incident. Please forward any ambulance bills to the Homestay Manager.

- Host Parents will not be held responsible to pay for a student's medical costs
- Please refrain from paying any medical-related cost for your student

10. School-Related Matters

Bell Schedules

Bell schedules for the schools can be found on the individual school websites or by calling the school office.

- [Claremont website](#)
- [Parkland website](#)
- [Stelly's website](#)

Report Cards and Academic Performance

- Ask your student to share their report card with you. We ask you to attend Parent/Teacher interviews to find out how they are doing in school. If you have questions about your student's progress, please contact their International Student Advisor.
- If you receive notification from a teacher regarding poor academic performance and have any questions, please reach out to your student's International Student Advisor.
- *Each student is assigned an international student advisor. For any school related matters please contact their advisor (see page 4).*

Student Absence

- Your student is expected to attend school every day unless they are ill. **If the student is ill please call the school attendance line every day that they are not in attendance.**
- Should your student miss school because of illness, it is their responsibility to catch up on missed school work.

Course Schedules

Students may have questions or concerns about their course schedules. Please do not deal with course concerns (unless it is to alert SISP staff). Students are here for many reasons and scheduling decisions are complicated and demand careful attention. Their designated school advisor has the knowledge about the requirements for your student's program and can assist your student in making informed decisions. Please take an active interest in your student's progress in classes. If attitude towards school, attendance or tardiness becomes a problem, please contact the International Student Advisor.

Extensions Requests

Some students may decide to extend their stay. If your student speaks to you about a possible extension please notify the SISP office immediately. A request for an extension needs to come from the student's agent to our office and there are certain deadlines to take into consideration.

11. Student Travel

Travel Applications

Students are required to fill out an online [Travel Application](#) if they are going outside of the Greater Victoria Area without their host parents. Examples for trips that require a travel application are:

Vancouver or elsewhere on BC mainland, Gulf Islands, and elsewhere on Vancouver Island including Sooke, Mill Bay, etc.

Students do not need a travel application for activities in Saanich and Victoria.

Once our office has received and reviewed the Travel Application, our office will email host parents with the approval or denial. This email is not sent to the student directly, so host parents need to inform them of the decision. Students are not allowed to travel without SISP's explicit approval. If your student tells you they have approval for a trip but you didn't receive an email from our office, you need to contact your Homestay Coordinator to follow up.

- **The Day Trip application** is to be filled out by the student's host family and is required for any student who is interested in travel outside of the Greater Victoria area who isn't chaperoned by the student's host family.
- **Overnight Trip application** is to be filled out by the student's natural parents and is requested for any student who is interested in travel outside of the Greater Victoria area who isn't chaperoned by the student's host family and for all travel outside of the province of British Columbia even if accompanied by the host family.
- **Out of Canada:** When students are going on a trip out of Canada during their stay here without their host parents or natural parents, we will need a Release Waiver signed by their natural parents.

Deadlines for Travel Application submission

- **DAY TRIPS: 3 school days before trip.**
 - Day trips on Friday (in case of no school): by midnight (00:00) on the Monday before.
 - Day trips on Saturday or Sunday: by midnight (00:00) on the Tuesday before.
- **OVERNIGHT TRIPS: 5 school days before trip.**
 - Overnight trips starting on Friday: by midnight (00:00) on Thursday the week before.
 - Overnight trips starting on Saturday: by midnight (00:00) on Friday the week before

Students will not be able to submit a travel application if the deadline has passed. If they do, the general rule is that their trip gets denied. Please contact the SISP office if you have any questions or concerns about a missed travel application deadline for a trip your student is planning.

12. SISP Activities

Every school year, international students studying in Saanich participate in organized activities and excursions. While not required, SISP activities and excursions are encouraged to explore other parts of British Columbia and build long lasting friendships. Registration is completed at the student's school by the school based International Program Assistant or online when trips are provided by our partner, Discover Canada Tours.

Cost for SISP Activities are to be paid by the student and their family. Host families are responsible to support with dropping off and picking up students from their school or the ferry terminal, or help their student plan for public transportation or arrange a carpool with other students.

You can find the overview for SISP Activities for the 2023-2024 school year on the [SISP website](#).



13. Damage to Homestay/Property

Accidents can happen and damage to your home can occur on behalf of your student. Should any damage occur, the process is as outlined below. Please note:

- Maintaining adequate **home and content insurance** is important; check with your insurance provider as hosting an international student may affect your insurance coverage.
- Please take **detailed pictures of the student's room prior to your student's arrival** in case of damage during the student's stay, as these will be used as a reference when claiming damages.
- Please have a regular inspection of your student's room, this should be done to ensure the health and safety of your student and your home.

Process for damage reimbursement

- Discuss the damage with your student, then contact your Homestay Coordinator
- Complete the SISP Damage/Loss Report form received from Homestay Coordinator, **including photos of the damage and 2-3 quotes to repair the damage or replace the item**
 - This is a non-negotiable requirement, as we need this information to determine that the request for reimbursement is fair and reasonable
- If it is determined the damage was caused by the student, the process is as follows:
 - **Damages up to \$300** are to be covered by the student's Natural Parents via the SISP Office
 - **Damages exceeding \$300** will have to be submitted to the insurance provider Guard Me by the host family, with the assistance of the SISP Homestay Team.
- When going through home insurance, Guard Me will pay up to \$1000 of the deductible.
- If not going through home insurance, Guard Me will pay only 50% of the eligible claim. Once you have received confirmation from Guard Me for reimbursement of the 50%, rest of the damage will be requested from the student's natural parents by the SISP Office
- You should advise the SISP Team which route you will take
- Invoicing and payment of damages will be arranged via the SISP Office, and not between host parents and natural parents or the student's agent directly.
- Please do not request or accept payment from your student directly, as this can severely damage student-host family relationships. We are here to support you through this process.

The Saanich International Student Program cannot reimburse host families for any damages; therefore, it is essential that these issues be taken care of before the student leaves.

Lost and/or presumed stolen items

The Saanich International Student Program cannot compensate for lost or presumed stolen items. Both the student and the host family should submit claims to their insurance providers.