




# ISP
## UGDSB

**Upper Grand District School Board • International Student Guide Book**





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# Welcome to the UGDSB International Student Program

## Message from the UGDSB International Student Program

On behalf of the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) and our International Student Program (ISP) staff, we would like to welcome you to Canada and to our school district. We hope that you will find your time in the UGDSB to be a wonderful experience and a great learning opportunity.

We know that that this will be an exciting time for you. You will have the chance to meet new friends and participate in a variety of classes that you may not have in your home country. We encourage you to explore these new pathways. The UGDSB International Student Program Staff are here to support you in achieving your aspirations. As well, at your new school, you will have your ISP School Advisor, your subject teachers, and school guidance staff to assist you in accomplishing your academic goals. Your homestay family and custodian will also play an important part in ensuring your happiness and success. Our group objective is to give you the tools needed to enable you to have a positive experience during your stay in Canada, with the Upper Grand District School Board International Student Program.

It is our hope that this student guide will provide you with information that will assist you with an understanding of our schools, our program, and our area. However, if you still have questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with your host family, your ISP Advisor, your custodian or any member of the ISP Team, as we are all here to support you.

Lastly, we encourage you to take advantage of any opportunities to explore and participate in the variety of programs, teams, clubs and outings provided by your school, your community, and the ISP team. These activities will allow you to see what it is like to be a Canadian student, will allow you to meet more friends, and will create some everlasting memories of your experience as an International Student.

We are excited to see you start your new adventure!

The UGDSB ISP Team
Upper Grand District School Board

## Upper Grand—Your Future is Here

ISP
UGDSB

# Contact Information

**Email:** international.student@ugdsb.on.ca
**Website:** www.ugdsb.ca/o/isp

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|---|---|---|
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# Arrival in Canada

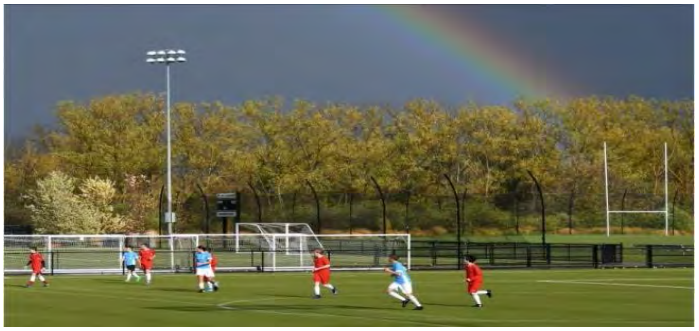


The Upper Grand District School Board is conveniently located about one hour west of the city of Toronto — Canada's largest city and the capital of Ontario. That also means we are in close proximity to Canada's largest airport, Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ), where flights from many parts of the world arrive daily.

It is quite likely that you will be able to get a direct flight from your home city to Toronto. When you arrive, you will pick up your luggage from baggage claims and clear customs before you exit into the public area, where your homestay representative, a transportation service, or the person that you (or your parents) have arranged to meet you will be waiting.

Remember to have our Vital English Welcome app downloaded on your phone. The app uses pictures to help guide you through the airport in Toronto. This will be helpful for your arrival.

# What to Bring





Please consider the following when you are preparing for your stay in Canada:

## CLOTHING

Dress in Canada and in our schools tends to be casual. We have four distinct seasons: autumn, winter, spring and summer. You will need a wide variety of clothing to accommodate changes in the weather from season to season.

The school year begins in autumn. The temperature can vary during the day from warm to cool, and it can be much colder at night. Our winter seasons can be very cold, and very long, sometimes beginning early November. Appropriate winter clothing will be essential and can be easily purchased in Canada if needed. You might want to look online to get an idea of the styles and prices in Canada. Our spring weather is similar to autumn; however, we do tend to get more rain in the spring. And in summer, temperatures vary from warm to hot!

We recommend packing or being prepared to purchase the following items to accommodate Canadian weather and seasons:

- Pants/jeans
- Shorts
- Skirts or dresses (if desired)
- Both short and long-sleeved shirts
- Sweaters
- Jackets (including a rainproof jacket)
- Warm insulated jacket
- Insulated winter boots
- Mittens/gloves, hats, scarves
- Footwear: shoes, sandals, athletic shoes and waterproof boots

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Textbooks and course related materials are provided to all students in both long-term and short-term programs. Students need to supply their own pens, pencils, notebooks and binders, all of which can be purchased locally at an approximate cost of $50. Students can bring their own computers, tablets and/or cell phones to Canada for school and personal use. All schools have free Wi-Fi access.

## ADDITIONAL ITEMS

You will need to bring (or purchase) your own toiletries. We suggest that you bring personal items for your room, such as photos of family and friends. If you wear glasses or contacts, we recommend packing an extra pair, as well as a copy of your eyewear prescription. If you require prescription medication, you will need to bring the prescription information and a supply of medication with you.



# Studying in Canada



## Academic Expectations

To be a student in good standing, the Upper Grand District School Board expects you to comply with Board rules and policies. As well, each school has its own code of conduct, which can be found on each school's website.

### ATTENDANCE

Academic success requires regular class attendance and punctuality, and both are expected of every student. Acceptable absences include school-related activities such as trips and teams, as well as unavoidable causes such as illness, medical appointments and emergencies. Most schools have an automated phone system that will call home when you miss a class to report the absence to your host family. If you are absent, when you come back to school, you must bring a note from your host parent. Notes must detail the reason for the absence and the date of the absence and must be signed by your host parent or custodian.

If a student is absent without authorization or a meaningful explanation, there can be serious consequences: You may lose academic credits; you may be expelled from your homestay; and your custodianship may be cancelled. Frequent unexcused absences will result in the student being placed on academic probation or being asked to leave the program.

### BEHAVIOURS AND EXPECTATIONS

It is the goal of the UGDSB to maintain a safe and inclusive learning and teaching environment. The Board promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence, and sets clear standards of behaviour for all members of the school community.

The goal is to create a positive school climate where all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Prior to your arrival in Canada, you and your parent(s) will have signed the Student Participation Agreement form. You need to have a clear understanding of the agreement, as it outlines your responsibilities and what we expect of you during your stay in Canada, so please read it thoroughly. A copy of this is included in the appendix of this guide for your reference.
If you have any questions about the agreement while you are in Canada, please feel free to ask your ISP Advisor/Custodian, homestay coordinator or anyone on the UGDSB International Student Program team.

## FINAL EXAMS

Final exams are written at the end of each semester during a specified exam period, as outlined on the school year calendar (found on pg. 12 of this guide) Students must be here to write exams, no exceptions can be made. Please ensure your flights are booked after the exam period ends.

## REPORT CARDS AND PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS

High school students will receive two report cards each semester: a midterm report card (in Nov. and April), and a final report card at the end of each semester. Also, your host family and/or custodian will be invited to attend parent-teacher meetings after the mid-term report cards are issued. These meetings provide an opportunity for your teachers and host parents to talk about your school work and progress, and to ensure you are supported both academically and emotionally. You may accompany your host/custodian to this interview.

## YEARBOOKS

Yearbooks are a great way to capture some of your memories while you are here. If you choose to purchase one, please leave a prepaid envelope with your ISP Advisor. Include your home country mailing address so they can send you your yearbook when it is ready.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires that students earn a minimum of 30 credits and be here for at least 1 year to qualify for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and graduate.

The credits are earned through a combination of required courses laid out by the government and optional, elective courses chosen by the student. Elective courses are based on what is offered by the school the student attends. Students must also complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and pass the Ontario Secondary Literacy Test to successfully graduate from an Ontario high school.

An assessment will be done for international students who are already part way through high school when they come to Ontario, to determine how many credits they will be given based on their previous education and how many they will need in order to graduate from high school in Ontario.

Note: Students cannot take courses elsewhere without permission from the ISP Administrator.



## STUDENT PERMIT RENEWAL

Students are responsible for obtaining a study permit and for providing us with the expiry date of the permit, prior to your arrival in Canada. You are also responsible for renewing your permit, and for completing the renewal form on time. If you need assistance, ask your agent/custodian to help.
If you let your study permit expire, you may be required to pay fines of up to $200 CAD and you risk being asked to leave the country. Also, please note that it takes 6 to 8 weeks to get a new study permit. This is an important detail to consider when making your travel plans. Please refer to the Canadian Immigration and Citizenship website for information on how to apply for a study permit from outside of Canada:
www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp or Extend your study permit

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

If you are planning on attending college or university upon graduation, it is your responsibility to make sure you have all the required courses and prerequisites you need. Your school's ISP Advisor and guidance counsellors are there to help. Careful planning in grades 10, 11 and 12 will ensure a smooth transition from the Ontario high school system to post secondary school. All Canadian universities require students to have six courses at the grade 12 University/mixed level to apply. At least one of the six courses must be grade 12 University English.

For more information on graduation requirements, go to the Ontario Ministry of Education website: https://www.ontario.ca/page/high-school-graduation-requirements



Your ISP Advisor at your school is available to assist you with course selections that are in keeping with your goals.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Do not be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something, especially regarding homework and assignments. If you are quiet, teachers will think you understand. Teachers are often available before or after class to help you.

- Be on time for classes. Teachers take attendance at the beginning of class and will mark you as late or absent if you are not on time. If you are going to miss class, notify the school.

- Organize your time. You will be responsible for balancing your own time between school, friends, activities and home.

- You may find classes very different from your experiences in your previous school. It will take some time to adjust and remember that your teacher is always there to support you in your success.

- Almost everything assigned to you will count toward your final grade. Do your best on every assignment.

- Hand in all assignments on the day they are due. If you do miss an assignment or test, ask the teacher if there is a way to make up for it. If you need more time, ask before due date.

- Get involved! We believe that students are more successful in school when they participate in a variety of activities outside of class time. There are many opportunities for extracurricular activities (including sports, clubs, and the arts) in our schools and in our communities.










# English









A primary goal for many international students who study in Canada is to improve their English. Prior to arrival in Canada, you probably did a pre-arrival online English assessment. This assessment gave us a good indication of your level of English and helped us to suggest, if required, the school that would best support your language needs. However, once here for orientation, you may be asked to do a more in-depth English assessment. During this English assessment you will be asked to show your knowledge of grammar and perform activities to demonstrate your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This assessment will then be compared to your original online English assessment. If you did your pre-arrival assessment a long time prior to your arrival, your English may have improved and we might be able to put you into a more challenging English class. If we find you require more support, that change will also be reflected in a more appropriate class timetable.

Some of our schools offer ESL (English Second Language) classes, which are designed to develop your English skills and prepare you for the regular-curriculum English courses, which demand a greater knowledge of English. If needed, you will be assigned to an ESL class, and it will be in your timetable.

| General ESL Levels | Ontario | European |
|---|---|---|
| Beginner | ESLAO | A1 |
| High Beginner | ESLBO | A2 |
| Low Intermediate | ESLCO | B1 |
| High Intermediate | ESLDO | B2 |
| Advanced | ESLEO | C1/C2 |

ENGLISH Grade10 or 11 After ESL

Our ISP staff will determine your best level of English instruction based on your assessment(s)and place you accordingly into either an ESL English course (levels A, B, C, D or E), or directly into a mainstream English class with native English learners. Each level of ESL English (A-E) requires one semester of work, where the successful completion of this level means a move forward into the next level. Following the completion of ESLEO, your ISP Advisor will work with you to help place you into a mainstream English course.

## LONG TERM STUDY

Your teachers want you to perform to the best of your ability and to not be hindered by a language barrier. Thus, your English skills must be at a high level of proficiency to be able to join regular-curriculum courses. Therefore, taking the ESL classes may be mandatory, especially if hoping to graduate with an Ontario high school diploma.

If your goal is to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Graduation Diploma (known as an OSSD), please note that you must pass a compulsory English course at the grade 12 level and be here for at least 1 year.

## EXTRA HELP

If you are having difficulty understanding your homework assignments or the level of English is too difficult for you in any of your courses, make an appointment with the ISP Advisor at your school so they can help you. Your ISP Advisor can also help to arrange for a tutor, if you or your parents feel that having one would be beneficial to you. (But please note that your parents will need to pay for any cost associated with hiring a tutor.)

## PRACTICING ENGLISH

Expect to spend a few hours each night during the week doing homework, though you might not have homework in all your subjects. You can also work on improving your English in the evenings by engaging in conversations with your host family, watching English TV and reading in English.

You may want to chat online in your native language with your friends, but we advise you to limit the time you spend doing so. Your English Language skills will not improve if you spend too much time communicating in your native language.

Other effective ways to practice English and meet English-speaking people include:

- Joining school clubs (such as choir, drama or band) and/or school sports teams
- Going on school trips
- Getting involved in community activities (such as local church groups and doing volunteer work)









# Holidays and Important Dates

| DATE | HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL EVENTS TO REMEMBER |
|---|---|
| September 8, 2026 | First Day of School – Semester One |
| October 12, 2026 | Thanksgiving Day (National Holiday) |
| November 27, 2026 | PD "Professional Development" Day (No School) |
| December 19, 2026 to January 3, 2027 | Christmas Break (No School) |
| January 4, 2027 | First Day of School for the New Year |
| January 26 to February 1, 2027 | First Semester Exam Period |
| February 2 to 3, 2027 | PD "Professional Development" Day (No School) |
| February 4, 2027 | First Day of School – Semester Two |
| February 15, 2027 | Family Day (National Holiday) |
| March 15 to 19, 2027 | March Break (No School) |
| March 26 to 29, 2027 | Easter Weekend (No School) |
| May 24, 2027 | Victoria Day (National Holiday) |
| 7June 22 to 28, 2027 | Second Semester Exam Period |
| June 29 to 30, 2027 | PD "Professional Development" Day (No School) |
| July 1, 2027 | First Day of Summer Vacation! |

UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## SECONDARY School Year Calendar 2026- 2027

**Ministry Approved**

**Legend:** H - Statutory Holiday  P - Professional Activity Day  B - Board Designated Holiday

*** First day of classes for students - Semester 1 and Semester 2**  **# Last day of classes for students - June 21, 2027**

| Month | 1st Week | | | | | 2nd Week | | | | | 3rd Week | | | | | 4th Week | | | | | 5th Week | | | | | # of Instructional Days | # of PA Days | # of Exam Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | T | W | T | F | M | T | W | T | F | M | T | W | T | F | M | T | W | T | F | M | T | W | T | F | | | |
| August 2026 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 31 | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| September 2026 | | 1 | 2 P | 3 P | 4 B | 7 H | 8 * | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | 17 | 2 | 0 |
| October 2026 | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 H | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 21 | 0 | 0 |
| November 2026 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 P | 30 | | | | | 20 | 1 | 0 |
| December 2026 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 21 B | 22 B | 23 B | 24 B | 25 B | 28 B | 29 B | 30 B | 31 B | | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| January 2027 | | | | | 1 B | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 25 | 26 E | 27 E | 28 E | 29 E | 16 | 0 | 4 |
| February 2027 | 1 E | 2 P | 3 PS2 | 4 * | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 H | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | | | | | | 16 | 2 | 1 |
| March 2027 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 B | 16 B | 17 B | 18 B | 19 B | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 H | 29 H | 30 | 31 | | | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| April 2027 | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 22 | 0 | 0 |
| May 2027 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 H | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 31 | | | | | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| June 2027 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 21 # | 22 E | 23 E | 24 E | 25 E | 28 E | 29 P | 30 P | | | 15 | 2 | 5 |
| July 2027 | | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Totals | | | 177 | 7 | 10 |

P - denotes Secondary Only PA Day
P - denotes System-wide PA Day
PS2 denotes Secondary only PA Day and first day of Semester 2
E Scheduled Examination Day

# Living in Canada



Welcome to life in Canada! While attending school here, international students live alongside some of the most friendly and welcoming people in the world, and can experience a country with a diverse mix of cultures and an expansive wilderness.

## Adjustment Process

The host family plays an integral part in the international student's experience as a newcomer to Canada. Your host family is there to offer you support throughout the duration of your stay. It is natural to experience some anxiety and nervousness – or what is often referred to as "culture shock" – in adjusting to your new home.

You might experience these stages during your adjustment:

1. "Honeymoon" Phase: During this phase, everything you see and do in your new country is exciting and positive.
2. Culture Shock Phase: In this phase, you feel a sense of disconnection and general unease. Symptoms include feeling uncomfortable, confused and frustrated; withdrawing and spending excessive amounts of time alone; and sometimes, developing some negative feelings about the people and culture of the host country.
3. Adjustment Phase: In the final "adjustment" stage, you begin to accept and embrace your new surroundings, to balance the new culture with your own culture and to appreciate what the new experience is bringing to you.

## TIPS FOR A SMOOTH ADJUSTMENT

- Understand that it is a process that might have some impact on you. Being anxious is not a sign of weakness; it is a normal part of the adjustment process.
- Get involved in your new culture. Whether you study art or music or learn a new sport, being interested and actively engaging in Canadian culture will make a world of difference.
- Make friends and develop relationships. Take the time to get to know your host family well; spend time talking to them beyond day-to-day activities. Getting to know your host family, fellow students, and other people in your community will help you to overcome cultural differences and to understand the country.

## Homestay



The Upper Grand District School Board works closely with Homestay providers which place students in homes that will best compliment the personality and further the learning of the individual student. Students experience the culture by living with a Canadian family in a caring and safe environment.

You must live with a homestay family or an adult family member for the duration of the program regardless of your age. It is also your responsibility to contact the International Student Program Office if there is any change to your custodianship, change of host, change of address, telephone number or emergency contact.

Be sure to read the next section thoroughly, to familiarize yourself with all the rules and regulations of homestay. They are in place to ensure your wellbeing and that of your host family.

## PREPARING FOR HOMESTAY



As an international student within the UGDSB, you will live with a host family. They will provide you with the support and stability you need to succeed in school and in a new environment. Your host family can also help you develop your English language skills.

We ask our homestay agencies to place our ISP students in homes with Canadian families who speak English in the home. As well, we stipulate that no more than two international students live with the same host family. And, when this occurs, each student must speak a different language.



## RULES AND EXPECTATIONS WITHIN THE HOMESTAY FAMILY

Students should expect to be treated like a member of the family, and the homestay family will expect the student to act like a member of the family. This means being involved in family activities and celebrations, helping out with household chores, and communicating daily with family members.

Be polite and courteous. Treat all members of your host family with respect, and the home and its possessions in a caring, respectful manner. All the rules or guidelines that apply to members of your host family, also apply to you. We encourage you and your host family to go over house rules at the beginning of your stay, to talk about such things as using showers, telephones and computers, and expectations for mealtimes and evening curfews. If you don't understand something, ask your host parent to explain: it's up to you to know the house rules and to respect them.

This includes coming home at an agreed upon time after school. If you are going to miss a meal or be late coming home tell your host family as soon as you are aware. If you are invited to dinner at a friend's home, ask permission from your host family first. Be sure to call if an



emergency comes up.

Keep your room clean and tidy, and clean up after yourself in your host home. And please ask your host parents if you need something. Communication is key!

Your host family might practice a religion and might invite you to participate or attend. It will be your choice to accept or politely decline.



# THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN IN HOMESTAY



**COMMUNICATION IS KEY:** Your host family members, especially your host parents, are there to support you throughout your stay in Canada. Do not be afraid to go to them if you have a problem, are in need of something or feel anxious about being away from your family and home country.

**YOU ARE SEEN AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR COUNTRY:**

Do your best to be polite and courteous, and to follow school and house rules. Do not use illegal drugs, alcohol, or participate in activities that could be considered dangerous and that could potentially have you removed from the program. If you are unsure about an activity, check with your host family, your Homestay Coordinator or a member of the International Student Program team.

**USE ENGLISH:** Most international students consider learning and improving their English an essential part of their stay in Canada. Take full advantage of this opportunity by practicing English as much as possible, especially with your homestay family. Ask your family members about their day and tell them about yours! They won't judge your ability to speak English; they will help you learn.

**CHORES:** Being part of the family means helping out around the house. As noted earlier, you are expected to keep your room clean and tidy, as well as clean up after yourself in the bathroom. You are also encouraged to offer to help in other areas of the household, with indoor tasks such as cleaning and vacuuming, or with outdoor chores. Your host family will be very appreciative.

**CELEBRATIONS AND GIFTS:** Your host parents are your family away from home. One way to show you appreciate them is to give a small gift — it does not have to be expensive to be special. It's also customary in Canada to give a small gift or card on birthdays and other special occasions. Ask your host family about their special occasions.

# Life Inside the Canadian Home

## FOOD AND TABLE MANNERS



Living with your host family in a Canadian home will be a new cultural experience. When you arrive, ask your host for a tour of your new home so that you know where things are and what each room is for. This would be a good time to ask about the house rules too, as you will need to know them and follow them.

## BREAKFAST

Breakfast is what you eat in the morning, after waking up. Ideally, it will be a nutritious meal to start your day. Your host family might prepare breakfast for you, or it might be up to you to prepare your own breakfast, in which case you will need to know where the breakfast foods are kept, so be sure to ask your host. On weekends, families often eat breakfast together.

## LUNCH

This meal is eaten mid-day, around 12 o'clock noon and consists of a variety of foods. A common school lunch is a sandwich, a drink (juice, milk, water) and maybe a dessert, perhaps a cookie, or fruit. On school days, your host family will provide you with food to make a lunch that you will take to school.

Most of our secondary schools also have a cafeteria where you can buy hot food or extra items, and usually for less than $10.

## DINNER

Dinner is the primary meal. Customarily, there will be a main course, often with meat, poultry, or fish, plus pasta, rice, or a potato dish. There might also be side dishes, which could include vegetables or salads. Dinner is more likely to be a sit-down meal, where the family eats together at the table. This is a great time to practice English with your host family. Be polite and respectful by listening well – give your host family members your full attention when they are talking.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER AT THE DINNER TABLE:

- Wash your hands before sitting down to eat.
- Wait until other people begin to eat before you begin.
- Some families say a short prayer, called "grace," before eating. It's the custom to listen quietly during the prayer.
- It is polite to ask someone closer to an item or dish on the table to pass it to you rather than reach across them. You can simply say, "please pass the . . . ".
- Do not speak with food in your mouth, nor chew with your mouth open.
- Wait until everyone is finished eating before leaving the table. If you need to leave, ask to be excused. You can simply ask, "may I please be excused?"
- Remove your own dishes from the table and offer to help with cleanup.
- Try new foods — you might like them!
- Ask your family for smaller portions if you need to, or for more food if you are still hungry.

## TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Use of telephones and computers at your Canadian home will be governed by your host parents, and you are expected to follow their guidelines. You are encouraged to use computers for schoolwork, but your host parents might restrict your free time on the Internet because of the cost or wellbeing concerns.

## TIPS FOR ENGLISH

During your stay in Canada, you need to use English to communicate. Be patient with yourself, it will become easier as you develop your English language skills. If someone has difficulty understanding you, try to not become frustrated. Pause for a moment, and try again, speaking more slowly and clearly. If there is a word or phrase you are unsure of, you might look it up in an electronic dictionary, or ask a teacher or friend.

# Free Time



Most Canadian families spend a few evenings each week engaged in leisure activities and we encourage you to participate. You are also free to make plans with friends from school. (Just remember to talk to your host parents about your plans.)

## TRAVEL WITH YOUR HOMESTAY HOST OR FRIENDS

If your host family offers to take you on day trips, you are welcome to join them, without having to fill out any forms. But If your host family would like to take you on an overnight trip or if you would like to travel with a friend, you will need to fill out a form. Ask your Homestay Coordinator for the appropriate form, and when you have completed the form, please provide the International Student Program Office with a copy.

## CURFEWS

Host families and international students need to discuss curfews. For weekends, we recommend that curfews be set for one hour past the grade level of the student. However, ultimately, the curfew is to be decided by the host family. You are expected to abide by the family's rules and routines and to adhere to your curfew.

| GRADE | SUGGESTED CURFEW |
|---|---|
| Grade 8 | 9:00 pm |
| Grade 9 | 10:00 pm |
| Grade 10 | 11:00 pm |
| Grade 11 | 12:00 am |
| Grade 12 | 1:00 am |









## PUBLIC TRANSIT

### GUELPH

The City of Guelph has the most extensive public transit (bus) system of all regions within the school board, and it runs seven days per week. You may wish to use the transit system to explore your new city.
Guelph Transit offers several fare options, including monthly passes, day passes, tickets and subsidized passes.

| Fare Structure | Cash | Single Tickets | Day Pass | Monthly Pass |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adults | $3.50 | $2.90 | $8.70 | $98.60 |
| Youth | $3.50 | $2.35 | $8.70 | $79.90 |

Find more information, including schedules and routes, on the transit website:
http://guelph.ca/living/getting-around/bus/schedules/

### ORANGEVILLE

The Town of Orangeville has a less extensive public transit system, which operates Monday through Saturday, from 7:15 AM to 8:45 PM (to 6:15 PM on Saturdays).

Find more information, including schedules and routes, on the Orangeville Transit website: http://www.orangeville.ca/en/living-here/transit.aspx

# Medical Information

You will need to have healthcare coverage in Canada, and all healthcare costs are the responsibility of the student/parent. Thus, it is mandatory for all ISP students to have medical insurance. The majority of our students purchase Guard.Me medical insurance. Guard.Me insurance is available for purchase through our ISP office. Proof of insurance not purchased through our program must be sent to our office prior to student's arrival. We strongly recommend that you keep a copy of your insurance policy on you at all times and that you bring a second copy to give to your host family in case of an emergency.

## DENTAL INSURANCE

Guard.Me does not cover regular dental care. You will likely need to purchase a separate dental plan. If you do not have a dental plan and you need to see a dentist, you will have to pay for it at your own expense. If you are in need of dental care, for your health and safety, we encourage you to make an appointment with a dentist here. Your host family or custodian can help you. But again, dental care is not covered through our policy carrier, so please be prepared to cover the expense.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

To study in Canada there are several vaccinations you are required to have before arrival. The rules have changed very recently, so make sure you are up to date. You must have proof of vaccinations for the following:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- The following are specific to Ontario
- Meningococcal Disease – NEW requirement
- Pertussis (whooping cough) – NEW requirement
- Varicella (chicken pox) – NEW requirement

For more information, visit the Government of Ontario website : www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines

## EMERGENCIES

If you get sick or are injured, tell your host family/custodian. Do not be shy! They want to help you and, if necessary, can take you to a doctor. That is what your medical insurance is for – so that you can be well cared for during your time in Canada.
In an emergency, dial 911 on your phone — for ambulance, police, or fire services.

## LOCAL HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CLINICS

**GUELPH**
Guelph General Hospital: 115 Delhi Street
Telephone: 519-822-5350
Silvercreek Walk-In Clinic: 105 Silvercreek Parkway N
Telephone: 519-822-9363

**ORANGEVILLE**
Headwaters Health Care Centre: 100 Rolling Hills Drive
Telephone: 519-941-2410

Headwaters Walk-In Clinic: 170 Lakeview Court
Telephone: 519-307-1201

**FERGUS**
Groves Memorial Community Hospital:
131 Frederick Campbell Street
Telephone: 519-843-2010

**PALMERSTON**
Palmerston and District Hospital: 500 Whites Road
Telephone: 519-343-2030

**MOUNT FOREST**
Louise Marshall Hospital: 630 Dublin Street
Telephone: 519-323-2210





## MONEY

You will need to have some Canadian cash for immediate costs. Consider purchasing traveller's cheques, which can be easily cashed at a Canadian banking institution.

Please budget your money to cover extra expenses such as dining out, movies and some activities at school and in the community. Your homestay fees do not cover these extra costs. Major outings with your host family are not included in your homestay fees either, so please be prepared to pay for those as well.

If you choose to participate in some of the optional cultural excursions offered by the International Student Program, budget for those costs too.

Students should also familiarize themselves with Canadian currency, which is the dollar ($).

Denominations of five dollars ($5) and higher are in the form of coloured paper bills. Lower denominations are in the form of coins, including the popular two dollar ($2) coin known as a "toonie" and the one dollar ($1) coin known as a "loonie."

The Bank of Canada website provides the current exchange rate for Canadian Currency:
www.bankofcanada.ca

## THEFT

Theft is not common in Canada, but be sure to keep your valuables and money safe. Do not lend or borrow money from friends, host family members or other students. If you have a problem with your finances, please tell an adult you trust. As well, host families should not ask you for additional funds for basic room and food costs. If they do, please tell your homestay coordinator immediately.

## BANKING

We recommend that you open a bank account in Canada. Many banks now have branches around the world, so you may find the same bank here in Canada that you or your parents use at home. Banks are insured and very safe, so you are not risking anything by putting your money into a Canadian bank account. And it will make it easy for your parents to transfer money to you, and for you to access your funds during your stay. Your bank here will provide you with a debit card that will allow you direct access from an ATM (automated teller machine) at any time. You can also use the card safely for all sorts of purchases at many stores and businesses in Canada.

## DOCUMENTS AND VISA

Documents such as your passport, visa, study permit and medical insurance should be kept in a safe place at all times during your stay in Canada. We require copies and recommend that you bring copies of each document to give to your host family for safekeeping.



# RESPONSIBILITIES

If you make plans during your free time, it's your responsibility to notify your homestay family beforehand: tell them where you will be going, how you can be reached, what time you will be home (keep your curfew in mind) and who you will be with. All of this information needs to be shared with your host family both for your safety and to not cause your Canadian family to worry.

Always review plans with your host family on the evening you are going out. Be sure to abide by the rules that your host family has laid out for you and do not hesitate to contact them in the event of an emergency. If you are going to be late, be sure to call and notify your host family.

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

International students with the UGDSB are not allowed to use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs under any circumstances. You will be expelled from the homestay program and your custodianship will be revoked if: you drink; purchase alcohol for yourself or others; use/distribute illegal drugs including marijuana; or use false identification. Be smart and make responsible decisions at school, at your Canadian home, and during your free time!

## SMOKING

Canadians observe strict rules about smoking. It is illegal to buy cigarettes in Canada if you are under the age of 19. All students are expected to abide by municipal smoking laws. Be aware of the smoking restrictions and limitations in public buildings, on public transportation, and in public places, including restaurants and theatres.

## DRIVING A MOTORIZED VEHICLE

The UGDSB does not allow international students to operate a motorized vehicle while in Canada.

## PAID EMPLOYMENT

It is illegal for international students in the UGDSB to have paid employment during their stay in Canada.

## CONSEQUENCES

Students should be aware that they could be removed from the International Student Program for such things as missing school too often, doing poorly in school, being dishonest and fighting.
Students who engage in illegal activities or break homestay rules and expectations, or who are suspended or expelled from school will be removed from the International Student Program.





# Ontario Ministry of Education Expectations of Students

## STUDENTS' RIGHTS

As a school community it is absolutely critical that we believe that ALL students are people of worth with ideas and feelings that deserve respect. The main purpose of a school is to be a place of learning.
Consequently, we believe that all students have the right to:

- an education according to the provisions of the Education Act
- select a program best suited to needs and abilities
- have the assistance of professional staff in pursuing an education
- be free of discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, economic status, political belief or marital status
- be treated with respect and dignity

## STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education Act lists expectations of students. A student shall:

- be diligent in attempting to master such studies as are a part of the program in which the pupil is enrolled
- exercise self-discipline
- accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind and judicious parent
- attend classes punctually and regularly
- be courteous to fellow students, and obedient and courteous to teachers, secretaries and custodians
- be clean in person and in habits
- take such tests and examinations as are required by or under the Act or as may be directed by the Minister of Education
- show respect for school property



# School Code of Conduct - Standards of Behaviour

All schools will have their own school code of conduct. Below are generalizations which will apply to all of the schools in the UGDSB.

## RESPECT, CIVILITY AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

*All school members must:*

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws
- demonstrate honesty and integrity
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability
- respect the rights of others
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others
- take appropriate measures to help those in need
- respect persons who are in a position of authority
- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching

## PHYSICAL SAFETY

*All school members must:*

- not be in possession of any weapon, including but not limited to firearms
- not use any object to threaten or intimidate another person
- not cause injury with an object to any person

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

*All school members must:*

- not be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs

## PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

*All school members must:*

- not inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person
- seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully



# Appendix

**Student Participation Agreement** This is to remind you of your responsibilities while you are here.

**Guard Me brochure** This explains what is included in your medical insurance.

**GuardMe Student Support Program** This is information about a student help hotline available 24/7

**Plan of Care Form for students with life threatening allergies** If you have severe allergies or other life-threatening conditions, this form must be filled out and sent to our office before your arrival.

**Returning Student Form** Please submit to our office when you are doing course selections for the upcoming school year, or if you need to be invoiced to extend your study period and/or study permit.

**Student Transfer Form** Cutoff date for a transfer the following September is March 1st and to transfer between semesters (February transfer) is October 31st.

**Student change of address form** We must be informed of any address changes prior to your move.

**Ontario Ministry of Education website** Further information on the code of conduct for students in Ontario.




www.ugdsb.ca/o/isp

ISP UGDSB

Upper Grand—Your Future is Here