

ST JAMES-ASSINIBOIA INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE



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CONTACTING THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

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Winnipeg, MB
R2Y 0H4

Email: intered@sjsd.net

Our staff will also give you their email addresses when you arrive in Canada.

WELCOME TO ST. JAMES ASSINIBOIA SCHOOL DIVISION

Welcome to the St. James-Assiniboia School Division's International Student Program! We are pleased to have you join our Program in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and we hope that you will enjoy your time and your school experiences with us. It is our hope that this will be an opportunity for you to develop some life-long friendships with your homestay family and the students at your school. We hope that you will learn new things about Canadian culture, that you will try new foods and activities, and that you will broaden your view of the world because of your time in Canada. Many people are available to help you while you are in Canada—your homestay family, the people at the International Student Program, the teachers at your school, and the new friends you will make. Feel free to call our office at any time if there is anything you wish to talk about. We would be happy to assist you in any way possible.

This guide has been written to help explain the St. James-Assiniboia School Division's International Student Program and to outline some of the guidelines and expectations the Program has for you as a student. It is meant to serve as a guide that you can refer to and discuss with your homestay family. It will describe some of the cultural changes you may experience, give you some advice on how to make the most of your homestay, and help prepare you for your time attending school in St. James. We hope this will be one of the best experiences of your lifetime—one you will remember fondly forever!



ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

The following Code of Conduct is intended to create a safe and productive environment for all international students. The International Student Program hopes this Code of Conduct will promote self-discipline and accountability in students, creating an effective learning environment and positive cultural experience. Please respect these rules; the consequences of not following them is that you may be returned to your home country immediately.

- Smoking is greatly discouraged by the International Student Program. It is illegal to buy cigarettes in Manitoba if you are younger than 18 years of age. Students cannot smoke in a homestay family's house, and doing so may result in leaving the homestay and the International Student Program. Students should also know that smoking is not allowed in most public buildings in Manitoba.
- Students may not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs. Students may not, for any reason, enter a bar or drinking establishment if they are under the age of 18. They may not have, or use, any form of false identification. In Canada it is against the law to carry false identification. These rules are strictly enforced and breaking them may result in expulsion from the program and returning to your home country. Using illegal drugs or under-age drinking of alcohol can also result in criminal charges, which could result in you being required to leave Canada.
- Tattoos and piercing (other than the earlobe) may not be done by the student without written permission from the student's natural parents. This must be given to the International Student Program in advance. Students must also have permission of the homestay parent. The International Student Program will not be responsible for any medical problems or infections that are the result of any piercing or tattoo.
- Students must follow all of the rules of their school and attend class regularly.
- Students are not allowed to operate or drive any type of vehicle that requires a federal or provincial operator's licence and may not apply for or acquire a federal or provincial licence to operate any such vehicle.
- Students must not participate in any activity that may be excluded in terms of your health insurance policy.
- Students must follow the rules of their homestay family, including curfew.
- Any travel during the Program must be authorized by the International Student Program. Permission must be received from your natural parents, and all rules respecting travel must be followed.
- Students may not be employed at any job while they are in Canada. Students are allowed and encouraged to volunteer. Graduation from St. James-Assiniboia, with a divisional high school diploma, requires volunteer hours. Ask your teachers for help with this if you plan to graduate.

One thing you can be quite sure of is that life in Canada will not be the same as it is in your home country. Relax and enjoy yourself while you are here and don't worry about the differences. If you are asked to try a new food or to go to a new place with your homestay family, don't say "no." They may not ask you again! Look for and enjoy new experiences.

ABOUT CANADIANS

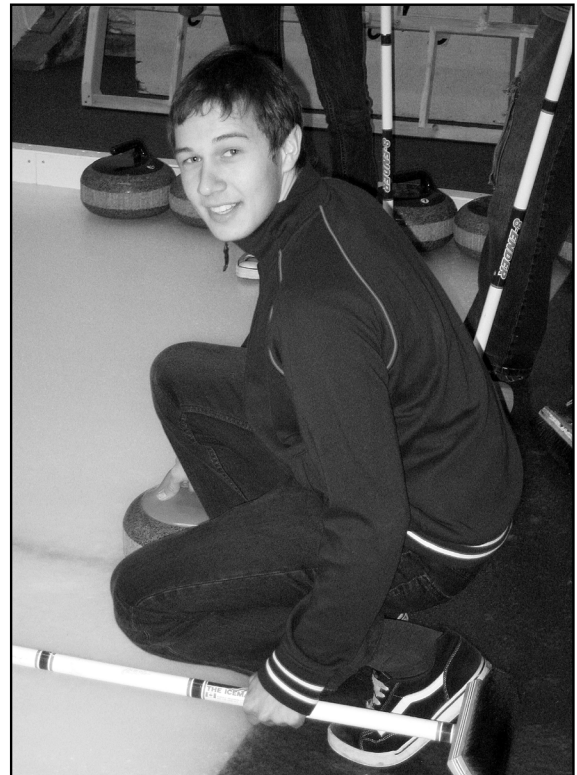
Canadians treat each other equally, and everyone expects to be treated with courtesy and respect. This includes interactions with service workers, such as waiters, store clerks, and bus drivers.

Canadians are used to lots of space, and generally stand a couple of feet apart when they are talking to each other. Canadians tend to value their privacy and personal space, and talk about personal matters only once they get to know you well.

Canadians are quite informal with one another and direct when communicating. Canadian students are not afraid to question a teacher or ask for an explanation if they don't understand something. You can let people know if you don't understand the meaning of what they are saying. Canadians are also fairly direct and independent when problem solving. If there is a problem, they will try to deal with it and will expect you to do the same.

It is very uncommon for Canadian families to have domestic help, and all Canadians are expected to share in chores around the house. In many families, both mothers and fathers work outside of the home, and both men and women will do the work around the home including cleaning, cooking, and child care.

Canadians usually eat three meals a day. Breakfast during the week will likely be toast, a muffin, or cereal, and may include pancakes, eggs, or hot cereal on the weekend. Lunch is usually a light meal, such as soup, a salad, or a sandwich. Dinner or supper is the main meal of the day, and will be eaten in the early evening, usually sometime between 5:00 and 6:00 pm. Family members are expected to be home at a scheduled time for supper, and to call if they will not be home on time.



YOUR HOMESTAY FAMILY

A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

We choose homestay families who can provide a safe and supportive environment for our international students. All families are screened and their homes are visited before we place a student with them. We look for families who want our students to be a part of their family—to provide a home that is interesting and friendly, and a family that is concerned for your academic, linguistic, and personal development. We especially look for homes in which our students will be comfortable and will be able to develop their English language skills. For the best interests of both you and your homestay family, we attempt to make the best family matches possible. To do this, we consider how close a home is to your school and the bus routes, siblings, pets and special interests. Before you arrive in Winnipeg, your host family will receive a file containing the personal information you sent. If you have sent photos and letters, they will have been given to your host family. We will also try to include cultural and geographical information about your country.

Being an international student and living in someone else's home requires a great deal of adjustment from you. Your new family also will have adjustments to make. Many

things, from what you eat for breakfast in Canada, to table manners, to how a household is managed, will be different for you. However, the rewards of being an international student are many and we believe you will grow as a person and make new friends while you are enjoying your homestay experience in Canada.



Your Canadian family's behaviours and attitudes may be different from those that you are used to in your home country. This can lead to "culture shock." Understanding cultural differences and being open-minded and tolerant about these differences are the best ways to prevent culture shock.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF HOMESTAY FAMILIES

Your homestay family will provide you with a comfortable private room, including a bed, dresser, lamp, closet and desk. The room will have adequate heat, light, and ventilation as well as access to a bathroom and bathing facilities. You can expect three meals daily and other reasonable snacks, use of laundry facilities, and a key to the home and phone numbers for you to reach your homestay family during working hours. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors must be accessible in all our homestay homes. The homestay family should discuss with you what to do in case of a fire, where their first aid kit is, and who to call in case of an emergency. Families are asked to meet reasonable transportation needs for you—this does not necessarily include daily transportation to and from school. Host families should discuss the bus routes with you, and if necessary,

travel the routes with you the first time you use them. While the homestay fee does not cover extra-curricular school costs and extra costs for family outings, homestay families may pay for some of these costs, especially when you are going out together as a family. Families are expected to pay for your meal if the family is eating out together.

YOUR ROLE WITHIN THE FAMILY

A homestay family provides the best opportunities to learn and to use English and is the ideal place to learn new skills and to experience ordinary Canadian life. The International Student Program asks our homestay



families to treat you just like you were one of their family members. Don't expect to be treated as a guest—remember to pitch in and help out—you may cook some simple meals, or clean your room, or help with the laundry. (Be sure to have someone show you how to use the appliances before you use them.) Join in with family life and activities as much as possible. You will get to know your homestay family much quicker and you will be less likely to be homesick. Remember to treat your homestay parents with the same respect you would treat your own parents. Be polite and say “Good morning” when you get up, and “Good night” before you go to bed. Don't forget to say “Good-bye” when you leave the house and be sure your homestay family

knows where you are going. Say “please” and “thank you” when it is appropriate. Remember to speak English as much as you can while you are with your homestay family. Ask how their day was, or tell them about something that happened at school. If there are young children in the family, you might try reading to them or playing with them for a few minutes each day. Try not to spend all your time in your bedroom, but don't hesitate to let your family know if you need more time to study. Take note of birthdays and other special events that occur within your homestay family's life. You don't have to buy a present, but a card from you or showing your homestay family how you might celebrate that event in your home country, would be a nice gesture.

FAMILY MEALS

Meals in Canada may be very different from what you are used to at home. On school days, breakfasts are usually quick and easy, as everyone eats toast or cereal with milk before heading out the door. Students generally take a bag lunch to school, with a sandwich, a drink and some cookies or fruit, or some leftovers to re-heat in the microwave oven in the school cafeteria. You may be asked to prepare your own school lunch from food at home; this is normal for Canadian students. Dinner will usually be a hot meal, often between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. and is usually the meal that families eat together. Sometimes dinner will be fairly quick since family members may have to go out in the evening. It is your responsibility to be at home on time for dinner—if you

are not, you may have to make other arrangements for dinner and reheat the leftovers or make a sandwich. Trying new foods is a part of the homestay experience. Try to adjust to your homestay family's diet, but be sure to tell them if there are foods you are allergic to or especially do not like to eat. It is not considered impolite to ask for more food if you are hungry. (It is impolite, though, to burp at the table or chew your food with your mouth open.) If you are having a hard time adjusting to a certain food that is served regularly for a particular meal, talk to your homestay family about it and suggest something that would be suitable. You may even want to prepare a meal for the family from your own country. Open communication is very important if you are going to have a good experience in Canada.

CURFEWS AND SOCIAL PLANS

You should spend time with your homestay family, but we also know that you will spend time visiting sites in the city and seeing your school friends. Remember, your social life in Canada probably will be different from what you were used to. We expect you to discuss your social plans with your homestay families and to ask permission before leaving home. Your homestay family may place limits on the amount of socializing you do and the hours you are out. You need to provide detailed information to your family -- where you will be, how long you will be, whom you will be with and a phone number where you can be reached. You need to call if you will be later than you originally thought. If you go out when no one is at home, leave a note on the kitchen table so that your family will know where you are. Your homestay family would expect the same information from their own children, so you should not feel upset that they ask this of you. Good communication is important in order to prevent misunderstandings and confusion. The International Student Program encourages families to have a curfew time. We suggest a 10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. curfew during the week, and a midnight to 1:00 a.m. curfew on the weekend. You can make special arrangements with your family for special circumstances. Canadian families may expect you to come home earlier than you did in your home country, but please remember these curfews are reasonable times for Canadian teens, and your homestay parents will treat you as one of their own children. Many homestay parents will wait up for you until you are home to be sure that you are safely in the house. Remember to introduce your friends to your homestay family, so they know who your friends are. Your homestay families won't know your friends, in the same way that your own parents might know your friends at home. Remember, if your parents call from your home country, it is reassuring to them if your homestay family can tell them where you are. We remind you to respect the rules of your homestay family's house. They probably are different from what you have been used to. Your Canadian family has had to adjust to having you in their house as well; adjustments are being made by all of you. If you are planning to sleep over at a friend's home, be sure to arrange it in advance, both with your homestay family and your friend's family. Canadians tend to plan things a little more than some other cultures, and it is a good idea to make the arrangements in advance.

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BATHROOM USE

Find out what your homestay family's expectations are for using the bathroom, such as when it is a good time to take a shower. Try to keep your shower to about ten minutes, and leave the bathroom clean and dry after you use it. In Canada, the bathroom door is usually left open if there is no one in it. Your homestay family will provide necessary bathroom items, such as toilet paper, soap, and towels, but you should provide your own personal items like shampoo, toothpaste, and razors.

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CHARGES/INTERNET USE

Payment for long distance calls made by you is your responsibility. Your homestay family should give you a copy of the phone bills with your calls marked. Your homestay family might talk to you about the time of the day that it is best to receive telephone calls and how long you can be on the telephone. Don't forget the telephone is used by all of your homestay family. Many of our students use telephone cards to manage their telephone charges, but there may be phone plans that give you a better rate; your homestay family will help you to figure that out. The Internet is great for you to communicate with your friends and families back home. Many, but not all, families have Internet service at home. If they do not, talk to the International Student Program about setting up access for you at your school. If your homestay family has access to the Internet, you should discuss how much you can use it. Public libraries in Winnipeg also have computers to access the Internet and send emails. A homestay family may limit the amount of time you spend on the computer, particularly if it seems to be all you are doing. Also, if you are spending many hours on the computer, you won't be spending much time with your homestay family or speaking English and this can be a problem in trying to enjoy your time in Canada. At no time should you alter, add, or delete any programs on your homestay family's computer. Do not visit any websites with pornography or immoral or questionable content.

TIPS FOR A GREAT HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

- Always speak English at your homestay family's home. Speak English as often as you can!
- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- Help out at home. You are responsible for picking up your things and keeping your room neat.
- Always let your homestay family know where you are and be home on time.
- Keep your phone calls and Internet use brief. Discuss a reasonable time with your homestay family.
- Let your homestay family know in advance if you will not be home for a meal.
- You cannot smoke or drink alcohol in your homestay family's home.

RELIGION

Homestay families and students must respect each other's beliefs. You have the right to practice your religion, and your homestay family should make it easy for you to attend religious services. You may go with your homestay family to their religious services or activities if you would like to, but you do not have to.

HOMESTAY FEES

Most of our students pay their homestay fee through the St. James-Assiniboia School Division. If you are paying the fee directly to your family, it is a good idea to pay with a personal cheque or bank draft instead of cash. Your homestay family should give you a receipt when you pay them. If you are paying the family directly, please make sure you pay on time every month. If you will be away for part of a month during the program (Christmas vacation, Spring Break, etc.) you are still responsible for the full month's homestay fee.

CONCERNS WITH A HOMESTAY FAMILY

If you are having difficulties living with your homestay family, try to consider several things to improve your situation. Maybe you are suffering from culture shock. Suddenly, all the differences that seemed exciting in the beginning have become annoying. You might be struggling with the language, unhappy about the food you are eating, feeling confused and wondering if this was all worth it. This is very common among international students. Generally, it is not a good idea to be critical and judgmental of everything around you. Try to be open-minded and accept the differences for what they are. Talk to your homestay family about what you are feeling. Very soon, you will probably find that you are adjusting to things and settling in. Remember that conflicts are inevitable—consider whether you would agree with every decision made by your own family. You probably will have some disagreements with your homestay family—that is normal. Part of the international student experience is learning to live with somebody who thinks a little differently than you do. If you are finding that you are still very unhappy living with your homestay family, you can meet with the Homestay Manager and discuss your situation. A move should only be considered as a very last resort and should only come after trying to solve the problems with the homestay family. Often, miscommunication, a lack of communication, or a misunderstanding is the source of the problem and these things can usually be worked through with an open-minded attitude, some understanding, and some give-and-take from both sides.

SOME FACTS ABOUT CANADIAN FAMILIES

Life can be hectic for Canadian families. Children might play sports on a team, or take music lessons. The parents may volunteer at their children's school, take a night class or play a sport. They may not be home every evening, and so there may be times that you are alone. When they are home together, families will often watch a movie or a television program together to relax after a busy day. In Canada, many mothers have a job outside of their home. Mothers in Canada won't have a lot of time to clean up after you, so you will need to help out with some of the housework and to keep your room clean. Your homestay family may have a cleaning lady who helps with the housework a few hours a month, but most Canadian families do not. This may be different from life in your home country. Some homes are single-parent homes. That means that there may be just the mother or the father living in the home with the children. Children might even live with their mother one week, and their father the next if their parents are separated or divorced. Many Canadian teenagers have part-time jobs to pay for their entertainment or to save for university tuition. They might work after school or during the weekends. Many Canadian families recycle plastics, glass, and paper. Your homestay family can teach you what they do as part of their recycling efforts. Many Canadians are also conscious of how much energy they use and try to conserve it by taking short showers, turning off lights and electrical equipment when it is not being used, and turning the heat down at night.

SCHOOL

We know you are coming to Canada to experience a new culture and to see a new city, but don't forget that school is your primary reason for being in Canada. You must attend classes regularly. Homestay parents need to call the school if you are going to miss or be late for classes—otherwise, the school will call your homestay parents and ask where you were. If you miss too many classes, the school may ask you to withdraw from those classes and you won't get your school credits. It is important to be on time for classes. When you arrive late, it interrupts the entire class and Canadian teachers don't appreciate it very much!

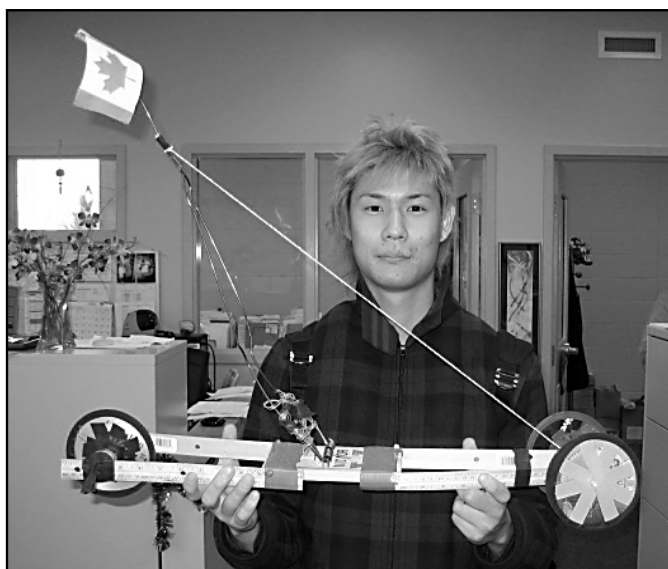
Teachers and all school staff should always be addressed formally (i.e. Mr. -----, Mrs. -----) unless you are told otherwise.

International students are expected to follow the rules of their school, as all students are. Each school's rules can be a little bit different, and your school will let you know what their rules and expectations are. Some things are common to all schools: hats may not be worn in school, and iPods/MP3 players and cell phones are not to be used in school. You may have these taken away, as wearing or using these items in school is seen as disrespectful.

When our national anthem, "Oh Canada" is played, you should stand up at attention. If you are in the hallway when "Oh Canada" begins, stop and stand respectfully until the song is over.

If you need extra help with your school work or do not understand something in class, talk to your teacher. Do not hesitate to ask for help— Canadian teachers expect to be asked questions or for an explanation if a student doesn't understand something. The International Student Program will also help if you have any concerns with your schoolwork.

Getting involved with extracurricular activities and school groups is a great way to get to know other students who have the same interests as you, learn more about Canadian culture, practice your English, and make the most of your school experience. Join a sports team, the drama club, or a musical band. Get involved!



You should show your report cards and progress reports to your homestay families. Homestay families may attend Parent-Teacher Meetings or discuss your work with a teacher. Your homestay parents feel responsible for you while you are living with them and want you to do your best. Don't be afraid to ask them for help if you don't understand how to do an assignment or don't understand a teacher's explanation.

Don't be surprised if you find that you are tired and sleep a lot, especially when you first arrive in Canada. Many students have said that they are often tired because they have so much "thinking to do" while they are mentally translating and constantly learning the new language.

A staff member from the International Student Program will be at your school to greet you on your first day, and a staff member from your school will show you around the school and assign you a locker to keep your books and jacket in.

Your school will have some fire drills while you are attending. Your teachers will explain to you what to do in case of a fire during the school day. During the fire drill, the alarm bell will go off without warning, and all students and staff in the school will practice getting out of the school as quickly and orderly as possible as explained by your teacher.

THINGS TO DO AT SCHOOL

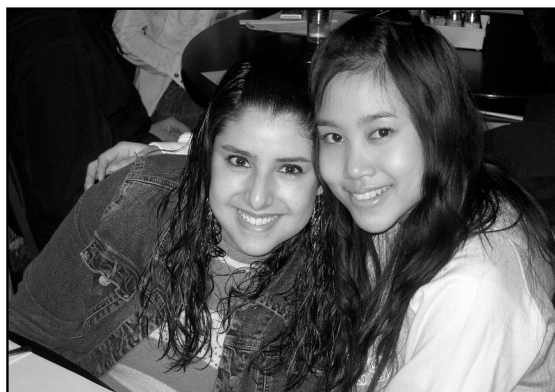
- Student Council
- Yearbook Committee
- Science Fair
- Student Drama Production
- Band
- Dances
- Math Club
- Public Speaking/ Debating
- Sports Teams



CULTURE SHOCK AND HOMESICKNESS

Adjusting to living in a different country and culture can sometimes be challenging. Although no two people have exactly the same reaction, most students go through several common stages of adjusting. At first, everything is new and exciting, and many students are enthusiastic to see new places, meet new people, and experience a new culture. It may not take long, however, before you start to experience some small irritations: you may miss things from home like the food you are used to, you may be experiencing some difficulties communicating and expressing yourself in English, and everything is just “different.”

All these differences can become overwhelming, and there can be a period of “culture shock” that begins days or weeks after you arrive. You may feel more tired than usual and more irritable. You may worry about things, spend a lot of time sleeping, eat too much or too little, and feel homesick and unhappy. You may feel critical of the new culture and the people you meet. These are all signs you are experiencing culture shock. This is normal!



There are some things you can do to combat culture shock and help yourself adjust to a new culture. Remind yourself that this is a normal stage of becoming used to a new environment and many other students are experiencing the same thing. Talk to other students and your homestay family about what you are feeling. Get involved in the types of activities you were involved in at home, or find new activities and interests. Reconnect with your own culture by having some food from home, or email home. Do not call or email home continually, though, as this will only slow your adjustment and make you feel homesick longer. Talk to the International Student Program or counsellors at your school. Soon, maybe even without you noticing it, you will feel better and more used to everything as you get involved in your new surroundings. You will make friends and have many different experiences that will become good memories. You will feel more at home in the new culture and more comfortable communicating in English.

TIPS TO DEAL WITH HOMESICKNESS

- Remember homesickness is normal in your situation
- Talk about your situation with others, especially other students who have gone through it before
- Bring a few special items with you from home
- Get to know your new surroundings so they feel more familiar
- Make sure you get enough sleep and eat well
- Become involved in student groups or sports teams at school
- Keep in touch with family and friends from home, but limit your calls and emails home
- Be adventurous and open minded to make the most of the experience
- Talk to school counsellors and the International Student Program

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students are covered for health insurance by a group benefit plan. This is compulsory for all students. You will sign a form for your insurance as soon as you arrive in Canada to begin the International Student Program. Soon after this, you will receive a medical card in the mail. Keep this card with you at all times in case you need to see a doctor or go to the hospital. A copy of this card will also be given to your homestay family and your school.

For information about what the health insurance plan will cover, please see their website: <http://www.miship.ca/benefits/index.html> Some medical services, such as dental care (except as specified), eye glasses, and ambulance service, are not included in the plan.

You will be provided with insurance claim forms. When you visit a doctor or hospital, you may have to pay for the services at this time. Be sure to keep all of your receipts to submit with your claim to receive a refund. The International Student Program will help you with this if you need help or have questions.

You should be aware that if you travel outside of Canada, benefits are only payable in the case of an emergency, and only up to the cost that would be paid in Manitoba. We very strongly recommend that you take out extra health insurance if you travel outside of Canada. The Manitoba International Student Health Insurance Plan is not travel insurance.

Please be responsible for your own safety. Always wear a seat belt when in a vehicle—this is the law in Manitoba. Never get into a vehicle if the driver has consumed any alcohol. Make sure you understand what you should do if there is an emergency at your house, such as a fire.

In case of any serious illness or injury, contact the International Student Program immediately. You can contact our pager 24 hours a day at 935-6071.

STAYING SAFE

- Always wear a seatbelt when in a car.
- Never, ever, get into a car with a driver who has consumed alcohol.
- Only carry a small amount of cash with you. Do not carry your passport.
- Always let your homestay family know where you will be and when you expect to be home.
- Know what you should do if there is an emergency such as a fire in your home.
- Call **911** in an emergency for the police, an ambulance, or the fire department

TRAVEL

You may have opportunities to travel and experience Canadian and North American culture during your stay in Winnipeg. Any traveling you do should not interfere with school and should be planned for school holidays. The International Student Program must be informed of your travel plans and receive written permission from your natural parents. You will be given “Permission to Travel” forms by the Program, and there is also one in this guide. **Unapproved travel is a serious matter and may result in being expelled from the Program.**

The International Student Program will not be responsible for your actions while you are traveling. Your parents must sign the Permission to Travel form which states this. All students must be accompanied by an adult who is at least 21 years of age or have an adult at least 21 years of age who will be responsible for them at their destination. Your natural parents must also provide this information on the signed form. While traveling, all students must abide by the laws of Canada and the province or state they are visiting.

If you plan to travel outside of Canada, such as to the United States, you will likely need a visitor’s visa to this country. Usually, you will need to have this visa before you come to Canada. If you have questions about traveling to the U.S.A., we recommend that you go and talk to a U.S. Immigration officer at the airport in Winnipeg. Please check your passport and with the immigration office of the country you will be traveling to before making any travel plans. Your homestay family can help you with this. Take a copy of your Letter of Acceptance with you, and a letter of Permission signed by the International Student Program’s director—we will provide you with this if you give us enough notice.

Your homestay family may want to include you in their own travel plans and holidays too. If you are traveling within Manitoba with your homestay family (for example, to visit relatives or to stay at the family cottage), the International Student Program does not require signed permission from your natural parents but should be informed you will be leaving Winnipeg.

Any travel outside of Manitoba or overnight trips outside of Winnipeg if you are not with your homestay family (including school trips) requires signed permission from your natural parents.

If you are traveling outside of Manitoba, we highly recommend that you purchase additional travel health insurance. Your homestay family can help you with this.

You may plan to travel once you are finished attending school in St. James-Assiniboia and before returning to your home country. You must inform the International Student Program and provide written permission from your parents for your travel plans. Plan your trip to begin once your exams at school are complete. The International Student Program will not be responsible for you once you leave Winnipeg to go traveling, and you

should purchase travel health insurance from the date you leave Winnipeg to the date you return to your home country.

Your natural parents may fax the Permission to Travel form to our office at 1-204-888-0945, or scan it and email it to intered@sjsd.net. **Remember, this is very important. Do not travel unless your parents have sent our office this signed form.**

TRAVEL CHECKLIST

- Travel Permission Form
- Passport
- U.S. Visa if traveling to the United States
- International Student Program Letter of Acceptance
- Travel Insurance purchased for the trip



VISITORS TO CANADA

If you are planning to have visitors come to Canada, you need to talk about this in advance with both the International Student Program and your homestay family. It is a good idea to plan visits when they will not interfere with your studies. Do not expect that your homestay family will be able to host your friends and family members. The International Student Program can recommend good hotels in various price ranges in St. James.

The International Student Program will arrange a tour of your school if your parents would like to see your school and meet your teachers. Boyfriends/Girlfriends are not allowed to visit you while you are participating in the International Student Program.

SPENDING MONEY

It is very easy for you to open a bank account in Canada and to access your money using a bank machine or a debit card. It is not a good idea to carry large amounts of cash with you. When you go out, only take with you the amount of cash that you will need. If you carry a lot of money, people may notice it and you may be expected to pay for meals or after-school activities. Some former students have lost their wallets or had them stolen. If your wallet is stolen or lost, you should report it immediately. We also advise our students not to lend money or to borrow money from anyone.

You may have a bank card or credit card from your bank account in your home country. This card may not work at all automated teller machines in Canada, or all the time. If you have any difficulty, it is a good idea to open a bank account in Canada. Your homestay family can help you with this.



YOUR PASSPORT



When you arrive in Canada, the International Student Program will make a copy of your passport to keep on file. Store your passport in a safe, secure place. You do not need to carry it with you while you are in Canada, and you do not want to lose it. If you do lose your passport, tell your homestay family, the International Student Program, and your country's consulate in Canada right away. You may also need to file a police report. The process to replace a lost or stolen passport takes a long time and it is important to do this immediately.

WINNIPEG WEATHER

Manitoba has four distinct seasons with cold winters and hot summers. During the winter, temperatures can be as cold as -35 degrees Celcius, and can feel even colder because of the wind (this is called *Windchill*). You are responsible to have and wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Please take your homestay family's advice about dressing warmly. It may not always look fashionable to wear winter clothing, but dressing for the cold weather is important to avoid frostbite. Frostbite is when your skin begins to freeze. This can be very dangerous and can damage your skin. Your homestay family can help you shop for the winter clothing items you will need. It is a good idea to buy these items in Canada, because they will be made to be warm enough for our winter weather.

You will have the opportunity to try many different winter activities and sports while you are in Canada. You may not be used to the cold weather, but if you dress warmly, you will enjoy the crisp and bright sunny days of a Winnipeg winter!

HOW TO KEEP WARM IN WINTER

- Wear several layers of clothing.
- Wear long underwear.
- Wear an extra pair of socks. Cotton or wool is the best.
- Wear mitts (even two pairs!). They are warmer than gloves.
- Wear a hat that covers your ears. A lot of body heat is lost through the head, and ears are often first to get cold.
- Wear a scarf to cover your neck and chest. On a very cold day, you can use it to cover your face too.
- Wear winter boots. They should have a low heel and a rubber sole, to help you not slip on the ice. Make sure they are large enough to fit an extra pair of socks and also have warm lining.
- Wear a long parka or coat, and make sure it is big enough to fit when you are wearing an extra sweater or



GETTING AROUND WINNIPEG

Public transportation in Winnipeg is safe and reliable, and a great way to get around the city. You may take the bus to school every day, or to go out with your friends. Canadian students very often use public transportation to get around. There are usually seats available on the bus, and do not be afraid to ask the bus driver for help if you need it.

If you will take the bus every day, you should buy a Student Bus Pass. This allows you to ride the bus an unlimited number of times every month, and costs less money than a regular bus pass. If you will take the bus only sometimes, you should buy Student bus tickets. You can use these each time you take the bus instead of carrying correct change to pay for the bus, and it will save you money as well. You will need to carry your student ID card with you as the bus driver may ask to see it. Bus passes and tickets can be bought at most grocery stores, drug stores, and convenience stores such as 7-11 and Mac's. Your homestay family will let you know where you can go to buy them.

Every bus route has a name and route number. Each bus will have this marked on the front, as well as its destination. Each bus stop will have a list of the route numbers that stop there. Your homestay family will help you with directions about what bus to take to where you are going.

Winnipeg Transit has a very good website to help plan your route, tell you which buses to take, and what time to be at the bus stop: www.winnipegtransit.com/main/index.jsp

The "Navigo" link will plan your route for you.

If you will need to take more than one bus for your trip, ask for a **transfer** when you get on the first bus. This will allow you to ride other buses until the time it expires, including your bus ride home if it is within the time limit.

If you are taking the bus after dark, when you get on the bus you can ask the bus driver to drop you off at your street, even if there is not a scheduled bus stop there.

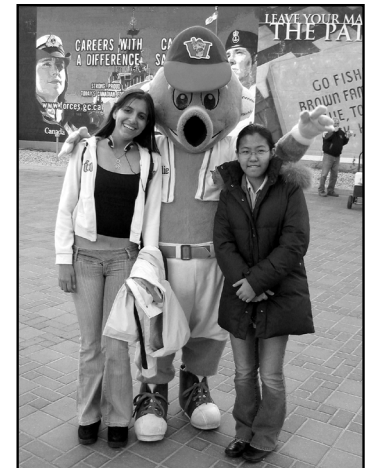
If you want to take a taxi, you will usually need to call a taxi company to order it. It is often not possible to wave down a taxi in Winnipeg as it is in some other cities. There are several taxi companies in the Yellow Pages listed under "Taxicabs."

ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

The International Student Program plans activities every month to show Winnipeg to our students. These events give you a chance to experience Winnipeg's events and culture. We plan different types of activities so there is something for everyone. This is also a good opportunity to meet international students from other schools in the division as well as Canadian students.

These events are generally open to homestay family members and Canadian students also, so you can invite your friends and homestay family to our events, too.

A list of the upcoming months' activities will regularly be mailed to your home. Please inform the Program of which events you would like to attend, and, if required, pay for the event by the deadline listed. Your homestay parent will also need to sign a permission form for you to attend the event.



ACTIVITIES TO WATCH FOR

- Winnipeg Blue Bombers football games
- Manitoba Moose ice hockey games
- Royal Winnipeg Ballet performances
- Ice skating at the Forks
- Films at the IMAX theatre
- Manitoba Legislative Building tour
- Winnipeg Goldeyes baseball game
- "Boo at the Zoo" for Halloween
- Winter activities at Fort Whyte Centre

WINNIPEG WEB SITES

ABOUT WINNIPEG:

www.destinationwinnipeg.ca

www.winnipeg.ca/interhom

www.winnipeg.foundlocally.com

www.tripadvisor.com/GetawayDestination-g154954-Winnipeg_Manitoba.html

WINNIPEG WEATHER:

www.winnipegweather.com

WINNIPEG TRANSIT:

www.winnipegtransit.com

WINNIPEG AIRPORT:

www.waa.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CONCERTS:

www.mtscentre.ca

www.whatsonwinnipeg.com

www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com

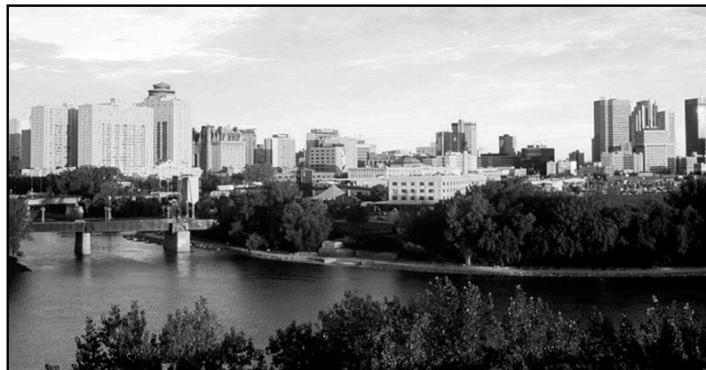


Photo courtesy of Travel Manitoba

CANADIAN HOLIDAYS

Learning how Canadians celebrate holidays is an important part of your experience in Manitoba, so you are encouraged to join your homestay family in these celebrations. Remember that on many Canadian holidays, stores are closed, the buses run less often, and only emergency services are available.

Labour Day (first Monday in September): Public holiday honouring working people. Usually considered the last weekend of the summer holiday season.



Thanksgiving (second Monday in October): Public holiday, a day of general thanks. Usually celebrated with a big family meal, likely having turkey as the main dish.

Halloween (October 31): A day when people emphasize scary things, wear costumes, and have parties. Young children wear costumes and go door-to-door around their neighbourhood to collect candy (“trick-or-treating”).

Remembrance Day (November 11): An official day of observance to honour Canadian soldiers, and the anniversary of the end of World War 1.

Christmas (December 25): Celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Usually celebrated by exchanging gifts, decorating a Christmas tree, and a variety of family traditions.

Boxing Day (December 26): Most people celebrate this holiday by going shopping as stores have after-Christmas sales, or spending the day with family and friends.

New Year’s Day (January 1): Public holiday celebrating the start of the new calendar year.

Valentine’s Day (February 14): A day for friends and loved ones to give cards and gifts to one another. This day originally honoured St. Valentine.

St. Patrick’s Day (March 17): A day named after St. Patrick, who brought Christianity to Ireland. People often wear green on this day to represent Ireland.

Good Friday (in March or April, depending on the lunar calendar): A day to remember the death of Jesus Christ.

Easter (in March or April, depending on the lunar calendar, on the Sunday which follows Good Friday): Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and has become a general holiday marking the beginning of Spring. Many families have traditions of colouring boiled eggs ("Easter Eggs") and giving chocolate eggs or Easter bunnies.

April Fools' Day (April 1): A day when people often play practical jokes on each other.

Mother's Day (second Sunday in May): A day honouring mothers.

Victoria Day (the Monday before May 25th): Celebrates Queen Victoria of England, who was the queen at the time of Canadian federation. For many Canadians, it marks the start of summer.

Father's Day (third Sunday in June): A day honouring fathers.

Canada Day (July 1): A celebration of Canada's birthday. Most cities will have fireworks at night. Usually considered the first weekend of the summer holiday season and many Canadian families go away or begin their holidays at this time.

GOING HOME

It may be difficult to think about leaving Winnipeg at the end of your studies. You might have mixed emotions to be going home—excited to see your family and friends again but also sad to be leaving your homestay family and new friends. Keep in touch with your new friends and family: you will have made new friendships that can last a lifetime.

If you plan to stay in Winnipeg after you are finished your academic program, be aware that the International Student program is no longer responsible for you. We must have written permission from your parents that they are allowing you to stay (an email sent directly from your parents is sufficient). Also, check with your homestay family if it is OK for you to stay longer. After the end of your school program, an extended visit will be a private arrangement between you and your homestay family and you will need to pay them yourself for the extra time you will be staying with them. Your health insurance will also expire at the end of your school program. If you stay longer than this, you must extend your insurance through the International Student Program office so that you have medical insurance for as long as you are in Manitoba.

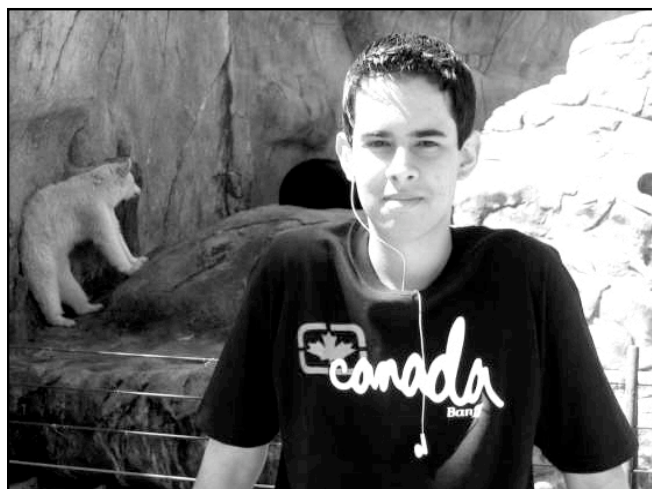
Make sure that the International Student Program knows the date and time of your flight when you will be leaving Winnipeg. If you will be doing any traveling before going home, you must let the program know and provide written permission from your parents.

We hope you have a wonderful experience in St. James-Assiniboia!



END OF PROGRAM CHECKLIST

- Book your return flight home.
- Tell the International Student Program your return flight, date, and time.
- Close your Canadian bank account if you have one and make sure the bank has your address in your home country.
- Pay any outstanding bills (homestay parents, telephone, school).
- Return your homestay house key.
- Return all borrowed items (library books, text books, etc.)
- If you want to receive a yearbook from your school, order and pay for it at your school's office. The International Student Program will mail it to you.
- If you plan to stay in Winnipeg for any time after the end of your Program, check with your homestay family if it is OK with them.
- If you plan to stay in Winnipeg for any time after the end of your Program, you must make arrangements to extend your health insurance through our office.
- Check with the airline for the amount and size of luggage you are allowed to take on your flight. Weigh your packed luggage to see if it is within the allowed limit. If not, be prepared to pay extra baggage costs.
- Call the airline the day before your flight to confirm it will depart as scheduled.
- Make sure the International Student Program has your correct home address.
- If you are leaving before your report card is ready to be picked up, we will send it to you. We will also send it to the Consulate for validation if that is required.
- Thank your homestay family!
- Let your homestay family know you have arrived safely once you get home.



St. James-Assiniboia
International Student Program
470 Hamilton Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R2Y 0H4 Canada
Tel: 1-204-837-1331 Fax: 1-204-888-0945

Parental/Legal Guardian Permission to Travel

(Must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to departure)

Select One: **Independent Travel** **Travel with homestay family outside of Manitoba**

Students who wish to travel while they are participants in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division International Student Program must, prior to departure, provide the written permission of their natural parents/legal guardians, for such travel to the Director of the Program or designate. Unauthorized travel by a student is not permitted and will result in the student being released from the Program and sent home. Neither the St. James-Assiniboia School Division nor the homestay families can supervise the independent travel of an international student outside the City of Winnipeg, or assume any responsibility for the student during such travel.

All international students must be accompanied by at least one other travel companion who is 21 years or older, or must have a responsible adult who is at least 21 years old who will be responsible for them at the destination.

Name of Student: _____ Method of Travel: Air Train Car Bus

Destination Address: _____

Dates of the trip: (Include Flight # and times) _____

Departure from Winnipeg: _____ Return to Winnipeg: _____

Winnipeg Contact: (In case of emergency:)

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Contact in Home Country: (In case of emergency:)

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Country Code City Code Number

Address: _____

I give my child permission to travel as outlined above. I hereby acknowledge and understand that the St. James-Assiniboia School Division and my child's homestay family cannot supervise and is not responsible for my child during independent travel outside the Province of Manitoba, or independent travel outside the City of Winnipeg but within the Province of Manitoba, as the case may be. I hereby acknowledge and understand that independent travel is the complete responsibility of the student's natural parents/legal guardians.

Responsible Adult(s) and Age(s) Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Address: _____

Note 1: Additional travel health insurance is required if you are travelling outside the Province of Manitoba. Please contact the International Student Program office for further information.

Note 2: If you are travelling outside of Canada, please ensure you have all necessary immigration documentation. Failure to do so may result in the refusal to enter another country, or being refused re-entry back into Canada. This is important and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure all immigration requirements are met.

Signature of Natural Parent/Legal Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Reminder to all International Students

Travel outside of Winnipeg

This is a formal reminder that travel outside the Province of Manitoba is forbidden unless authorized by your parents/legal guardians. Students who travel without this permission will be sent home. There will be no warnings. This requirement applies to International student of all ages.

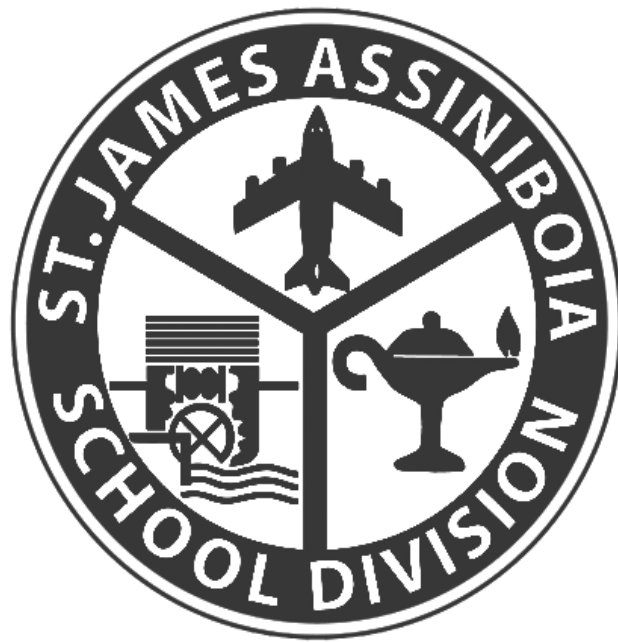
If you plan to travel either:

- (a) ___ outside the Province of Manitoba; or,
- (b) ___ unaccompanied outside the City of Winnipeg, but within the Province of Manitoba,

you must, in advance of such travel, provide a copy of the Parent Permission to Travel form signed by your parents/legal guardians(s) to the Director of International Student Program, St. James-Assiniboia School Division. The Parent Permission to Travel form is available from the Director of the International Student Program.

Local travel within the Province of Manitoba with your homestay family or with others who have prior permission from your homestay family, is permitted without additional authorization from your parents/legal guardians.

Your purpose for being in the City of Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba is educational, therefore travel during those times when classes are in session is discouraged. For travel during vacation periods, please contact the Director of the International Education Program.



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