

New Student Orientation Handbook



learning | **as unique** | as every student



**Calgary Board
of Education**

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Welcome International Students

The Calgary Board of Education would like to welcome you to Calgary! Studying abroad is a truly memorable experience. You are exposed to another way of living, another culture, and sometimes other languages.

This handbook is designed to give you information as you prepare to move to Calgary.

Contacts

Add the following contact information into your phone along with your host family's and/or custodian's address and contact information. Be sure to provide your host family and/or custodian with your family's and friend's names and telephone numbers for emergencies.

Emergency: (medical, fire, police, poison treatment)

Call 9-1-1

Global Learning:

1221 - 8th St. SW

Calgary, Alberta T2R 0L4 Canada

Phone: 403-817-7711

Website: www.cbeinternational.ca

Email: internationalstudents@cbe.ab.ca

Calgary Transit:

www.calgarytransit.com

Kids Help Phone: (24 hour hotline for kids and teens)

1-800-668-6868

kidshelpphone.ca

[Text at 686868](tel:18006686868)

Your School:

Visit <https://cbe.ab.ca/schools/school-directory/Pages/default.aspx> for details.



Facts about Canada



In terms of size, Canada is the second largest country in the world and has a population of approximately 37 million. Canada consists of ten provinces and three territories.

Canadian geography is very diverse, so if you are looking for the rainforests of British Columbia, the vast plains of Saskatchewan or the beautiful scenery of the East Coast, it is all possible. Climate can vary from province to province.

Canada has two official languages: English and French. You may notice that some items are printed in both languages (examples are food packages or government signs).

The National emblem of Canada is the maple leaf, and the national anthem is 'O Canada', which is usually sung before National Hockey Games, or special ceremonies like Canada Day on July 1st.

About Calgary



Calgary is a clean and safe city which is located close to the famous Rocky Mountains. Calgary is also a rapidly growing city with a current population of 1.6 million people. This multicultural city has many people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Calgary offers a vast array of festivals, restaurants, and activities related to different cultures. You can choose from hundreds of restaurants that cater to every taste and budget. Whether you are craving food from your home country, or want to taste some of our Alberta beef, you are guaranteed to find a restaurant that will satisfy your appetite.

Calgary offers many different attractions including theatres, art galleries, shopping, concerts, parks, a lively night life and our famous Calgary Stampede.

For information on things to do in Calgary visit www.visitcalgary.com

Preparation

What to Bring

Before leaving you should make sure to bring these important documents:

- Your passport and visa (if applicable)
- Study Permit approval letter (if applicable)
- Travel itinerary
- Plane tickets
- Money (ensure you have enough local currency to take a taxi, to use the phone, or to purchase food while en route and in the event you miss a flight during your journey)
- Medical insurance, medical information, and prescriptions
- Contact information of your homestay family and homestay coordinator

Study Permit

If you are studying for longer than one semester, you need to apply for a study permit before coming into Canada. To find out more on study permits visit www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/index.asp

Items to Pack

Here is a quick list of items you may want to pack for studying abroad:

- Journal
- Pictures from home
- Reading books
- Prescription medication (make sure to visit your own doctor at home to get all the prescription medicine needed during your stay in Calgary)
- Extra glasses or contact lenses
- Backpack (for daily use and day trips – you can use this for your carry on so you have less luggage to bring)
- Laptop with charger
- Adapters (these change the shape of the electrical plug/convertor and reduce or increase the current's voltage to Canadian standards)

Clothing to Pack

Here is a list of items to keep in mind for the seasons, whether bringing them from home or purchasing them in Calgary:

Winter

- Warm coat
- Boots
- Gloves, hat and scarf





Spring/Fall

- Warm jacket
- Clothes that you can layer
- Umbrella/rain boots

Summer

- Light clothing
- Sweater
- Umbrella

Keep in mind many basic items can be purchased in Calgary, so do not over pack your suitcase.

If you are planning to purchase clothing here, make sure you bring enough with you to get you through at least the first week of your arrival.

Weather

Calgary's weather is always changing, and the temperature can change rapidly in just a few hours. It is important to always pack and wear layers, so you can add and remove clothing as necessary.

There is central heating in all Calgary homes, schools, and buses to ensure you are always comfortable.

Warm winds called *Chinooks* occur frequently during the winter months, which warm the temperature up considerably. Chinooks can be identified by an arc pattern in the clouds.

Keep in mind, the three months with the most rain are May, June, and July. You can check out the weather network site for Calgary to see the forecast for future dates at <https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/weather/alberta/calgary>

Temperature Chart

Here is a chart to show the different seasons and their average temperatures:

Temperature	Average Maximum (°C)	Average Minimum (°C)
January	-2.8	-15.1
February	-0.1	-12.0
March	4.0	-7.8
April	11.3	-2.1
May	16.4	3.1
June	20.2	7.3
July	22.9	9.4
August	22.5	8.6
September	17.6	4.0
October	12.1	-1.4
November	2.8	-8.9
December	-1.3	-13.4

En Route/Upon Arrival

Jet Lag

Here are some tips to prevent jet lag when arriving into Calgary:

1. During your flight, switch your watch to Calgary's time zone so you become accustomed to the difference.
2. Drink water before and during the flight.
3. Get up and move around frequently during the flight to avoid any leg cramps.
4. Get outside if you arrive during the day and get as much fresh air as you can.
5. Make sure to relax the first few days and do not overwhelm yourself.
6. Drink water when you arrive, which you can drink straight from the tap.

Culture Shock

What is Culture Shock?

Culture shock is simply a common way to describe the confusing and nervous feelings a person may have after leaving a familiar culture to live in a new and different one. Your homestay family and friends at school have grown up with values and beliefs that differ from yours and because of these differences, the things they talk about, the ways they express themselves, and the various ideas you come across may be very different from what you are used to. The good news is that culture shock is temporary!

What causes Culture Shock?

When you go to a new place, you enter a culture that is different from the one you left. The differences between cultures will mean an adjustment is needed to your new surroundings. Dealing with the differences can be unsettling; those feelings are part of adjusting to a new culture. Many factors contribute to the effects of culture shock, and everyone reacts differently and at different times throughout their stay.

Stages of Culture Shock

Honeymoon Stage

This is when everything is very new and exciting to you.

Distress Stage

This stage is where you may have trouble communicating, or things around you may make you feel distressed, impatient or alone. You will tend to compare things from your home culture to Calgary's and Canada's culture.



Recovery Stage

Differences and similarities are observed, and you may start to set goals for living in this new culture.

Independence Stage

During this stage, you start to adjust to your new life and develop some routines. You will now be more comfortable as you have a better understanding of the new culture.

Re-entry Shock Stage

When returning to your home country, your transition may be challenging as you have changed as a person because of your experiences.

Dealing with Culture Shock

Here are some tips to help you through culture shock:

- Do your research. This will allow you to have an open mind when entering into the new culture, and get a sense of what to expect when you arrive.
- Be patient and positive. To help you understand the culture better, it is important to be patient when communicating or learning new concepts, but also stay positive. By being positive you're allowing yourself to have a better experience.
- Relax and be easy on yourself. It will be tough to adjust so it's best to relax and try not to get stressed.
- Set goals. By setting goals you are allowing yourself to move forward and create enthusiasm in continuing with your plans during your stay.
- Keep in contact. You should stay in contact with your family and friends at home so they can help you when needed. However, try not to remain too connected to home as it may stop you from acclimatizing to your new culture.
- Educate others. By teaching others about your culture, you can interact more and allow others to learn more about you.
- Be active and get involved. Make sure you are enjoying your time by including physical activity into your routine as well as finding a hobby that can help you learn about your new culture.
- Ask for help. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, there are many people who are available to help you such as your host family and/or custodian, the International Student Coordinator and Guidance Counsellor at your school, the Manager and Advisors in Global Learning and our Homestay Relationship Managers.
- A great way to improve your English and meet Canadian friends is to get involved in a club or team at your school.
- And lastly, don't be shy! Canadians are very used to people around them who are learning English and will be very patient. Learning English takes lots of practice and the sooner you can manage within an English environment, the better it will be for your adjustment to your new culture.

Getting Started in Calgary

English Only

The school you will be attending will be English speaking and there will be English Language Learner (ELL) teachers and an International Student Coordinator available to help you as needed.

Etiquette

Every culture has their own set of customs and etiquette that dictate how people conduct themselves. It is best to keep an open mind, and to take note of people around you and how they are greeting each other, or acting throughout the day.

Canadians pride themselves on being polite and saying 'please' when making a request and 'thank you' when someone helps them. Try to avoid saying 'I want...' and instead say 'I would like...' when asking for something or rather than saying "You should...", say "Would you mind..." when making a request. This includes not only your host family and/or custodian and teachers, but also people who serve you in stores and restaurants. For example to get the attention of a waiter or waitress, say 'Excuse me...'

Canadians tend to be informal and call each other by their first names. All elders (such as parents or teachers) should be referred to by Mr. or Mrs. and their last name, unless they indicate you can refer to them by their first name.

Do's and Dont's:

- Do not spit.
- Do not ask someone their age, unless they are a child.
- Do not ask how much money someone makes.
- Do not slurp while eating soup, chew with your mouth open, or talk with your mouth full.
- Do not walk into a home with your shoes on. Take them off at the front door.
- Do not arrive late; try to arrive five minutes early or right on time.
- Do not burp or pass gas in public.
- Do not rest your elbows on the dinner table.
- Do not sit too close to others and respect their personal space.
- Do open doors for other people.
- When sneezing in public, sneeze into a tissue or into your shirt sleeve.
- Blow your nose into a tissue.
- Say excuse me to get the attention of a waiter or waitress.
- Refer to your teacher as Mr./Mrs./Ms. (their last name).
- Thank the cook for the meal, if eating at home.
- Offer to help cook, or clean at home.
- Feel free to refuse food, as long as you are respectful and reasonable.

Food

In Canada, you will find a wide range of cuisines. In Calgary, Alberta beef is our specialty. Other Calgary food specialties include ginger beef (at any Chinese restaurant) and poutine (originating from Quebec) which is fries with cheese and gravy.



Greetings

The most common way to greet someone is with a handshake, however at a younger age it is more appropriate just to be introduced or introduce yourself and smile. Try to notice what others are doing around you when greeting people, to get an understanding of what to do.

Health Insurance

It is mandatory for all students studying at the Calgary Board of Education to have medical insurance before coming to Canada. You will have received policy information and insurance card with policy number directly from StudyInsured.

You can find policy details, how to make a claim and more at

<https://www.studyinsured.com//cbe>

Hospitals

If there is an emergency, go to a hospital or **call 9-1-1** for an ambulance.

Foothills Medical Centre
1403 – 29th Street N.W.
Calgary, AB T2N 2T9
Phone: 403-944-1110

Alberta Children's Hospital
2888 Shaganappi Trail N.W.
Calgary, AB T3B6A8
Phone: 403-955-7211

Rocky View General
Hospital
7007 – 14th Street S.W.
Calgary, AB T2V1P9
Phone: 403-943-3000

Peter Lougheed Centre
3500 - 26th Avenue N.E.
Calgary, AB T1Y6J4
Phone: 403-943-4555

Internet

Computer time should be limited unless working on homework or assignments for school. Too much time on the computer takes away from family or school activities and can disrupt sleep, making you tired in school.

Manners

It is always important to be polite, respectful and to keep an open mind when meeting new people and making new friends.

Money and Banks

Make sure to bring enough money for purchasing souvenirs, paying for activities or events and always make sure you have some for emergencies.

There are many banks located around the city. At the bank, you can set up your own bank account, exchange money or receive funds.

Banks in Calgary include the following:

- ATB Financial
- BMO Financial Group
- CIBC
- First Calgary Savings
- HSBC
- ING Direct Canada
- National Bank of Canada
- RBC Financial Group
- Scotiabank
- TD Canada Trust



Canadian Currency



Please note the penny is now out of circulation.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies are easy to find. Along with filling prescriptions received from a medical doctor, they can also provide free advice on non-prescription medication.

Post Offices

There are many post offices around Calgary for you to send postcards, letters or packages. You can visit the Canada Post website for more information at <https://www.canadapost.ca/web/en/home.page>

Safety and Security

Calgary is known to be a safe city, but you must take the same precautions that you would in any large city. In any situation, use common sense and leave valuables at home.

Make sure you have updated contact information in your phone in case of an emergency.

Hitchhiking is not allowed within Calgary's city limits, and not recommended for safety reasons.

When riding in a car, you must always wear a seat belt.

Taxis

Taxis in Calgary are very safe and reliable. The numbers for taxis are:

Associated Cab: 403-299-1111

Checker Cab: 403-299-9999

Mayfair: 403-255-6555

You generally cannot flag taxis down. You are more likely to get one by phoning an above number, telling them your location and name and they will pick you up.

Uber is also available in Calgary

Tipping

In Canada there is a 15% tipping for services at sit-down restaurants where you are served by a waiter/waitress, taxis, hairdressers, and hotel staff if they help you with your baggage. Tipping is meant to be in appreciation of good service.

Transportation

You will likely take the bus or train to school each day. You can visit the Calgary Transit website to learn more about bus schedules and train times at www.calgarytransit.com

If you are lost, call the Calgary transit operator. Tell them where you are and where you want to go and they will be able to provide you with the fastest route via bus or train.

Calgary Transit Operator: (403) 262-1000

Walk-In Clinics

To be used in non-emergent situations such as cold, flu, or minor, non-life threatening injuries:

South Calgary Health Centre
31 Sunpark Plaza S.E.
Calgary, AB T2X3W5
Phone: 403-943-9300

Sheldon M. Shumir Health Centre
1213 - 4th Street S.W.
Calgary, AB T2R0X7
Phone: 403-955-6200



Well Being

Emotional Well-Being

Your initial experiences in your new culture can be overwhelming, and you may go through stages of culture shock. When this occurs it is important to be mindful of your emotional well-being. Keeping a journal may help by writing your thoughts down. This helps you to express yourself and also gives you a record of your experience when you return home. There are contacts at your school including the guidance counsellor and the international student coordinator to provide support as needed and there is a 24/7 wellness line available through our insurance provider where you can access support in your first language.

Physical Well-Being

Make sure you are being provided healthy meals and snacks. Don't be shy to ask your host family and/or custodian for healthy foods, or even offer to cook for them to share some of your own cuisine. Also, keep active by taking a gym class in school or doing daily physical activities.

Besides being healthy, personal hygiene is important. Canadians usually shower once every one or two days. You can do laundry once a week or once every two weeks, but make sure the clothes you wear are clean. You should also make sure to have good oral hygiene by brushing your teeth at least twice a day. Usually Canadians like to brush once in the morning and once at night

Spiritual Well-Being

Allow yourself to have reflection time, quiet time or spiritual devotion. If you wish to attend a place of worship, ask your host family and/or custodian for the closest one.

Academic Well-Being

A way to make sure you are keeping on top of your homework, and class work is to get a proper sleep at night. Spending too much time on the computer or watching television can affect your sleep.



School Information



School Orientation

Most of our high schools offer a group orientation for all new international students. At that orientation:

- you will meet the international student coordinator and various other school staff members;
- your custodian will be asked to complete and sign a variety of forms on your behalf;
- you will be asked to complete some testing to determine your English level which helps your international student coordinator to plan your schedule for the year;
- you will receive a tour of the school;
- you will receive all other information needed to get started in school.

Please visit www.cbeinternational.ca to find a link to the Orientation schedule. There you will find the details of when you should go to your school as well as the coordinator's name and phone number. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact your coordinator directly.

If you are in elementary or junior high, your starting point is to:

- contact Global Learning at internationalstudents@cbe.ab.ca to set up an intake/assessment appointment. You are advised to do this as soon as possible (do not wait until arrival in Calgary). This appointment takes place at the CBE Welcome Centre, 1221 – 8 Street SW.

What to Bring to Orientation

- Your custodian or parent must attend this appointment
- Passport and study permit
- Copies of your school transcripts
- Contact information of your custodian/homestay family

Before First Day of School

Before your first day at school make sure you know how to get to school and that you have purchased basic school supplies such as binders, paper and pens.

Extra Fees

You will receive a document from the school outlining extra fees and these **do** apply to you. They are over and above what you have paid for tuition and you must pay the school directly for those fees that apply based on the classes you are taking.

For more information, visit <http://www.cbe.ab.ca/Parents/fees.asp>

Calgary High School Timetable

An example of a basic Calgary High School timetable is set up like this:



Tutorials/Mentorship 8:30am - 9:00am					
Class 1 9:00am - 10:30am	English	C.A.L.M	English	C.A.L.M.	English
Class 2 10:30am - 12:00pm	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
LUNCH 12:00pm - 12:30pm					
Class 3 12:30pm - 2:00pm	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
Class 4 2:00pm - 3:30pm	Social Studies	Phys. Ed	Social Studies	Phys. Ed.	Social Studies

Keep in mind this is a sample only and the class order may change from day to day. Also, each high school has their own rotation schedule.

Diploma Requirements

If you would like to graduate with an Alberta High School Diploma, there are certain requirements for completion. You can find out more details at the following link: <http://cbe.ab.ca/programs/high-school/Documents/Get-Ready-Get-Set-Go-For-It-Short.pdf>.

First Day

On your first day of school, carry your class timetable so you know where you are going and what time your classes are scheduled.

Your first day might be intimidating, but staff and other students are friendly so feel free to ask for help.

Throughout the day, try talking to students around you, and compare schedules to see if any of them are in the same classes as you are.

At lunch time, try talking with other classmates that may be in the same class, or that you met earlier. This also improves your English by practicing with friends.

Throughout each semester you are expected to do all of the homework and projects that are assigned by the teachers. The majority of your marks are from homework and assignments. Exams are only a certain (and sometimes small) percentage of your grade. To make sure you are keeping on top of your grades, you need to hand in all homework and assignments.

There are many resources for extra help. Your International Student Coordinator is your best resource at the school for finding out what extra help may be available to you.





Custodianship

Students cannot live on their own (regardless of their age) for the duration of their studies at the CBE, and must have a custodian who is over 25 and a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident.

Any change of address, living arrangement, etc., must immediately be reported to Global Learning and to your school.

If there is a change in custodianship, you must provide the school and Global Learning with updated notarized documents.

Student Agreement

International Students are required to follow all program rules as outlined in the application guidelines. You must abide by Canadian laws, attend all classes, hand in all assignments, meet CBE behavioural standards, maintain good academic achievement and cooperate with your host family and/or custodian. Both you and your natural parents/guardians signed an agreement that clearly outlines our expectations and guidelines prior to your arrival in Calgary and this is considered to be a contract between you and the Calgary Board of Education.

In the event of a serious infraction of the Calgary Board of Education rules (such as participating in criminal activity), a student may be immediately dismissed from the program and returned home without moving through the behaviour protocol.

Student Behaviour Protocol

The Calgary Board of Education International Student Behaviour Protocol has three stages designed to give students an opportunity to correct and improve any behaviour that is considered unacceptable (an example of this would be unexcused absences from classes). Each of these stages will involve a meeting between the student and school administration to discuss the behaviour and the requirements for improvement.

The Three Stages of Behavior Protocol for International Students are:

Stage 1: Informing/Reminder(s)/Warning

If the student's misdemeanour is not considered highly serious in nature, and it appears the student truly intends to improve, verbal or written reminders/warnings may be issued. This will be at the discretion of the school staff (International Student Coordinators/Administration Team).

Stage 2: Probation

A student may be given a timeline or a series of steps to complete to improve behaviour. Placing a student on probation will be done in writing with copies being placed in school and Global Learning files. Natural parents/guardians, custodians and in some cases, agents, will be notified. This is done in partnership with the staff at the school and Global Learning .

Stage 3: Final Warning

This stage is the student's last chance. If the student does not fulfill the requirements outlined in the probationary stage, a final warning will be issued with a short time frame to improve and could result in dismissal from the Calgary Board of Education's international student program.

If dismissal is mandated, the following will occur:

- immediate removal from the Calgary Board of Education international student program
- timely return to the home country at the student's expense
- no refund of tuition or associated fees

If the student has any questions regarding the Student Agreement, please refer to the student contract attached to the application form.