



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM



STUDENT HANDBOOK

and

HOMESTAY GUIDE



2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR



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The Rocky Mountain International Student Program and School District No. 6 (SD6) would like to welcome you to the communities of Kimberley, Invermere and Golden. We look forward to working with you to make your study abroad experience as positive and productive as possible. This handbook is designed to give you the information and advice you need to thrive in our program. We hope you enjoy your time in SD6 and have a memorable experience in Canada.

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome to the Rocky Mountain International Student Program in beautiful British Columbia, Canada. Our program has a rich history and has been providing the very best educational experiences for students from all over the world, for more than 20 years. Our talented and dedicated staff is committed to fostering student success, and you will see that the academic, recreational, and cultural opportunities we offer, along with our incredible world-famous Canadian hospitality will make your study abroad experience truly unforgettable.



Sincerely,
Mr. Paul Carriere
Superintendent of Schools



INTRODUCTION

Canada is the world's second largest country in terms of total area but it has a relatively small population of approximately 33 million people. Canada consists of ten provinces and three territories. British Columbia is Canada's third largest province. It has a population of approximately 4.5 million people. Vancouver is BC's largest city and commercial centre. It was also the host city of the 2010 Winter Olympics. Victoria is the province's capital city.

School District No. 6 is located in the world-famous Canadian Rockies. It stretches some 250km along the Valley of a Thousand Peaks (also known as the Rocky Mountain Trench) from Kimberley in the south to Golden in the north. The school district is home to over 3000 students in grades K – 12 and serves students throughout British Columbia via its popular Distance Learning program. The International Student Program in School District No. 6 is in its 23rd year making it one of the oldest and best-known in the province of British Columbia.



There are three high schools in SD6: Selkirk Secondary School in Kimberley, David Thompson Secondary School in Invermere and Golden Secondary School in Golden. While each school and each community is unique, the international program is the same throughout the school district. International students are given the same opportunities to participate in program activities and events in each town and they are supported by the same administrative structure. They are similarly subject to the same policies and procedures including the International Student Contract (see page 14).

COMMUNITIES



Kimberley is a small, safe community located in the beautiful Purcell Mountains across the valley from the Rocky Mountains. Kimberley has a year-round population of approximately 7000 people and is located only 20 minutes north of the region's largest commercial centre, Cranbrook, British Columbia. The Kimberley/Cranbrook area supports a WHL hockey franchise and boasts a variety of shopping and dining choices. Kimberley is a recreation destination with numerous golf courses in the area and a world-class ski resort five minutes from the city centre. The Kimberley Alpine Resort has the distinction of being closer to an international airport (15 minutes) than any other ski resort in North America. Other outdoor recreation opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, fishing, cross-country skiing and much more. For more information on Kimberley, visit the official website at www.city.kimberley.bc.ca or the ski resort website at www.skikimberley.com.

Selkirk Secondary School (SSS) is a high school with a population of approximately 425 students in grades 8 – 12. Selkirk offers a wide variety of academic, elective and locally-developed courses including unique options like Outdoor Careers, SuperFit, Digital Media and Forensics. The highly-popular Equine Studies courses are available via distance delivery at Selkirk. ESL classes are taught by certified teachers with TESOL training and class sizes are small. International students receive additional support through the Student Services department to help them with homework and exam preparation. For more information on Selkirk, visit www.sd6.bc.ca/sssie/ or www.selkirkinternational.ca.

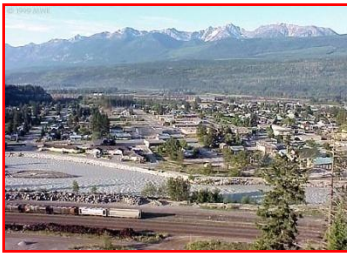


Invermere is located in the Columbia Valley surrounded by the Rocky Mountains to the East and Purcell Mountains to the west and nestled beside the sandy shores of Lake Windermere. This lakeside resort community is the place for all seasons. Invermere is a culturally diverse and geographically unique community located near the gateway to Kootenay National Park and only a few hours from Banff National Park. It offers countless services, recreational and cultural amenities. Invermere has been experiencing growth and change with remarkable speed, transforming from a rural, local community to a community that is attracting visitors from all over Canada and the world with a balance of urban, sub-urban family, and rural areas. From shopping in the artisan shops along 7th Avenue in downtown to taking in an artist showing at the Pynelogs Cultural Centre or a lesson in blacksmithing, arts and culture are alive in Invermere. With miles of mountain bike and hiking trails, the warm waters of Lake Windermere and world-class golf courses in and around Invermere, recreational opportunities are abundant. Visit www.invermere.net for more information.

David Thompson Secondary School (DTSS) was named after the famous explorer who developed trade routes through this area. The school enrolls over 500 students in Grades 8 through 12. A wide selection of courses is offered by 35 teachers who are assisted by



support staff. The school has a combination of semestered, linear and term courses. The school colors are Royal Blue and White and teams are nicknamed "Lakers". Many activities are offered at Lunch Break and after school. All school activities are available to every student, provided there are staff members to sponsor them. Inter-school athletic teams include Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country Running, Curling, Golf, Skiing & Snowboarding, Soccer, Track & Field, and Volleyball. Clubs include Art, Creative Writing, Drama, Football, Free Press, Knitting, Ping Pong, Open Mic, Remote Control Club, Student Council, Yearbook, Youth Action Team, and Weightlifting. The Rocky Mountain Café, run by the Chef Training program is environmentally conscious and offers healthy food choices at 10 minute break, lunch time, and after school. Muffins, soups, sandwiches, entrees, and desserts are available Monday to Thursday. Silver and Gold punch cards are available to purchase at the office. David Thompson secondary also has an outstanding Band program. If Band does not fit into the school day, consider enrolling in the Wednesday evening Jazz Band course for credit. Much more information about David Thompson Secondary School can be found on our school website www.sd6.bc.ca/dtss or our international program site at www.sd6.bc.ca/dtss-ie.



Golden is a friendly community of 7000 people on the TransCanada Highway, located 1.5 hours driving time from Banff and 2.5 hours from Calgary, Alberta. It is a very safe, small community with excellent recreation facilities, yet it is close enough to larger centers that locals make frequent trips for various city activities. It is very near several National Parks and is surrounded by mountains with beautiful scenery. It has an award winning golf course and is

home to the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, which is one of the most exciting ski destinations in the entire country. Golden is a four season recreational community. Clean air, fresh water and beautiful views of the Rocky Mountains are normal fare. For recreation you can ski, snowboard, play hockey, ice skate, mountain bike, hike, canoe, river raft, swim, golf, play tennis, play soccer, horseback ride, enjoy hot springs, visit an alpine slide and more.

Golden Secondary School (GSS) has a well trained and dedicated staff of 40 for a student population of 400. Students have access to the full range of provincial curriculum, including French Immersion courses, and locally developed curriculum that is engaging and relevant. Counselors monitor student programs and facilitate connections to colleges, universities, or the workforce when students complete the secondary school program. Our students have the opportunity to study Calculus, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology or French Language in our AP (Advanced Placement) Program, which are first year University credit courses. A beautiful school building houses networked classrooms and science labs, four computer labs, a modern library, a cafeteria meals program, textiles, mechanics, wood and metal shops, music, art and drama facilities, a gym with climbing wall and more. Students can participate in team sports, a hockey or figure skating development program, a ski patroller program, a hairdressing program, an office administration program, rock climbing, cross country and downhill skiing, mountain biking, golfing, and music, drama and art activities. International students receive additional support through the Student Services Department to help them with homework and exam preparation. More information on GSS can be found at www.sd6.bc.ca/gss or our international program site at www.sd6.bc.ca/gss-ie.



WEATHER



School District No. 6 is located on the warm side of the Rocky Mountains. While winter temperatures are generally milder than those of Alberta, it can still get very cold. Bring clothing suitable for temperatures as low as -20C or be prepared to purchase clothing once you arrive. The coldest month of the year is January and both December and February can be cold as well. Most of the time, expect winter temperatures to be between -1C and -10C (daytime highs) during those three months. Kimberley, Invermere and Golden are all ski destinations so expect a lot of snow as well. See the chart below for more detailed information.

Spring and fall are both beautiful times of year in School District No. 6. Temperatures are comfortable and outdoor recreational opportunities abound. Once again, however, it is better to be safe than sorry. All three communities are located at high elevations where mornings and evenings can be cold even when the afternoons are warm.

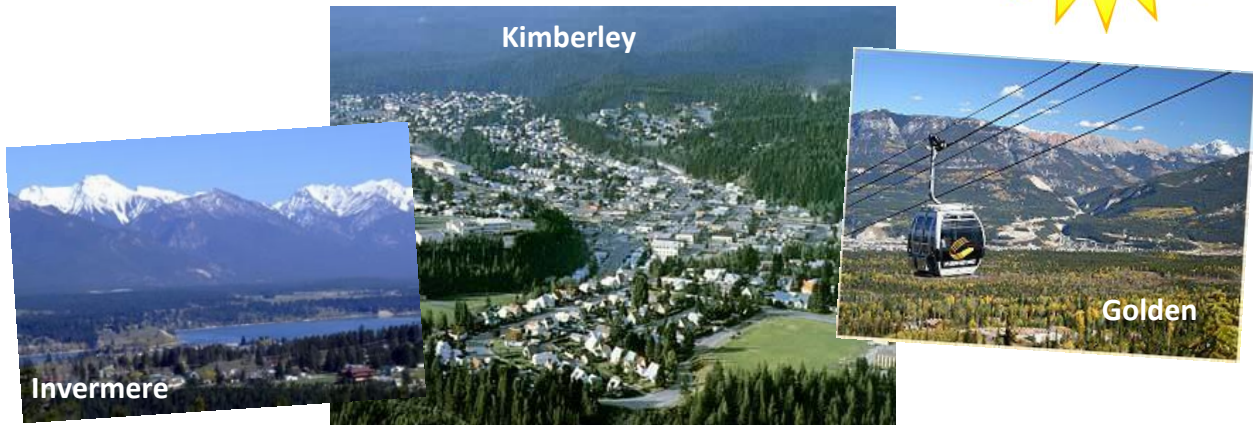
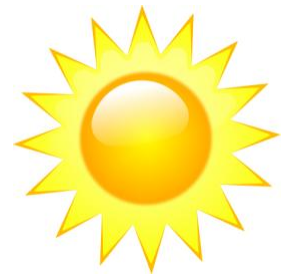
If you have questions about what to pack, please contact your designated Homestay Coordinator. Here are some general tips to help keep you warm:



- layer your clothing beneath a water-resistant outer jacket
- wear a hat (a Canadian toque works well) when it is cold
- bring or buy warm boots and gloves if you are coming between November – March.

Summers in Kimberley, Invermere and Golden are hot and dry. Be prepared for temperatures to peak at 35C in July and August. June and September can be quite hot as well so bring shorts and light clothing if you plan to participate in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program during these months.

Overall, the weather in School District No. 6 is as good as it gets in Canada. The region is known for being one of the sunniest in the country and the snow that falls in the Rockies is light and fluffy – perfect for skiing! The area truly is a recreational wonderland.

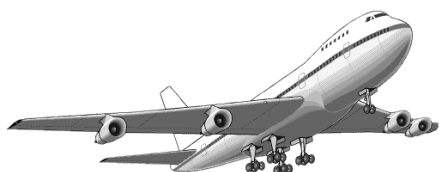


ENVIRONMENT CANADA WEATHER DATA – Canadian Rockies International Airport averages

Temperature:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Daily Maximum (°C)	-3.2	1.5	7.1	12.8	17.7	21.6	25.6	25.4	19.6	11.7	2.3	-3.1
Daily Minimum (°C)	-11.8	-8.4	-3.8	0.2	4.6	8.2	10.9	10.2	5.1	-0.3	-5.5	-10.8
Precipitation:												
Rainfall (mm)	4.3	4.3	8.9	21.7	42.6	52.7	38.2	31.6	27.3	15.8	16.7	6.7
Snowfall (cm)	33	22	13.8	5.8	0.7	0	0	0	1.4	3.2	24	36

For more information on the weather in SD6, visit the Environment Canada website and click on the map of British Columbia. Up-to-the-minute weather data can be accessed for each SD6 community: Golden, Invermere and Cranbrook/Kimberley.

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS



When packing for your study abroad experience, keep the following in mind: the less you bring, the more you can take back. Airlines have very strict baggage limits and will charge passengers penalty fees if they exceed them. Most students wear casual clothing like jeans and t-shirts or sweatshirts to school. Keep the season in mind (see above) when packing. Be sure to bring spare prescription glasses and/or contact lenses and a copy of your prescription as well.

PREPARATIONS

If you require prescription medication, try to bring enough to last you for the duration of your stay. If that is not possible, consult your doctor about the active ingredient in the medication and get a prescription for the Canadian equivalent that can be filled in SD6 if/when necessary. If you are particular about toiletries and other personal care items (e.g. feminine hygiene products), bring enough to last for your entire stay. Consider going to the dentist prior to departure. Dental visits are not covered by BC Medical Insurance and may not be covered by private insurance, either.



EN ROUTE (travelling to Canada)

International travel is exciting and exhausting. To mitigate the effects of jet lag, drink lots of water on the plane and during layovers at connecting airports. Avoid alcohol consumption. Use hand cream and possibly even a nasal spray to counter the effects of the dry conditions on airplanes. Get up and walk around as often as possible during your flight.

UPON ARRIVAL

Set your watch to Mountain Time once you arrive. Try your best to stay up until your normal bedtime. If you must nap, set your alarm and limit the length to 30 minutes or less. Spend as much time as possible outside in the fresh air. Drink lots of water and other fluids. Do not drink alcohol. It prolongs the effects of jet lag. It is also prohibited under the terms and conditions of the International Student Contract (see below), even for students of legal age.



CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is a very real psychological process everyone experiences upon arrival in a new country. There are four stages of culture shock and they affect everyone differently. The key to coping with culture shock is to understand the stages and that the feelings associated with each one are normal. Most students will get homesick and miss their families, their friends and even their schools. Some become frustrated with how different things are in Canada and how tired they become having to use English all day, every day. The good news is that almost all students get past these feelings and end up having the time of their lives in SD6.

THE HONEYMOON STAGE

When students first arrive in Canada everything that is new and different is also wonderful and interesting. This is the only stage most tourists experience because they never have to settle into a new culture. This stage can last anywhere from a week to a month or more.

THE DISTRESS STAGE

This is the stage where the reality of being abroad for a longer period of time hits home. Cultural differences that you found interesting earlier in your stay can become taxing. You may feel confused, isolated and/or overwhelmed during this stage. This stage can be exhausting, particularly if learning English is proving a challenge as well.



THE TRANSITION STAGE

This is the most important stage to understand. During this stage, some students become angry or frustrated with Canadian life. They constantly compare it to their home culture and begin to lament the differences. Don't worry, this is normal. The key is to recognize the symptoms of this stage and not give in to them.

THE INTEGRATION STAGE

Cultural challenges and language issues begin to subside as students accept and embrace the differences that previously frustrated them. This is the stage when your study abroad experience becomes everything you hoped it would be; you feel confident and relaxed in your community, your school and your homestay.

While it is important to be aware of the stages listed above, it is equally important to point out that not everyone goes through every stage. Some students arrive and are immediately homesick. Others never experience the frustration of the transition stage and skip quickly to the integration stage. The key is to be aware of what is happening and to remember that people are available to help you like your Homestay Coordinator and school counsellor.

TIPS AND TRICKS (to minimize the effects of culture shock)

- Do your research. Know as much as possible before you leave so that there are fewer surprises once you arrive. Make use of the Internet and don't hesitate to email your Homestay Coordinator with as many questions as you like.
- Be open-minded. Don't judge and try not to compare. Canada is different from your home country. That's one of the reasons you chose it for your study abroad experience! Challenge yourself to learn about different ways of doing things; don't dismiss them as wrong or inferior.
- Get involved. Participate in school clubs and/or sports teams and, if possible, become active in the community.
- Be patient. Give yourself time to adapt to your new surroundings and to make new friends. Don't put pressure on yourself; it takes time to acclimate.
- Keep active! Feeling good physically will help you to feel good mentally. Make physical activity part of your daily routine and/or your school timetable.
- Relax. Make sure your day includes time set aside for mental rest. Studying, speaking English and navigating the day-to-day realities of a new country and culture require a lot of energy. Spend some "down time" each day listening to music, surfing the Internet or reading a book in your first language.
- Manage your connections to home. Keeping in touch with family and friends is vital and can be a valuable support during your overseas stay. Too much contact, however, can be counterproductive. Keep in touch but not at the expense of making new friends, participating in activities and/or keeping up with your studies.
- Stay healthy. Eat foods that are good for you and make you feel good. Get enough sleep at night. Consider taking a vitamin supplement. Don't wait too long to visit a clinic if you are feeling ill.
- Ask for help. You are not alone in SD6. If you are feeling sad, lonely or frustrated, talk to your Homestay Coordinator or a staff member at your host school.




Most important of all: remember why you came to Canada! It is supposed to be different and challenging. If Canada was the same as your home country, there would be no reason to come.

MEDICAL SERVICES

There are **pharmacies** in all three host communities: Kimberley, Invermere and Golden. Both prescription and non-prescriptions medications are available. If you have allergies, please consult a pharmacist before purchasing a non-prescription medication to ensure it is safe and/or appropriate for you to take.



 There are **clinics** in all three host communities as well. Use a clinic when you feel like you need to see a doctor but the situation is not urgent. Appointments are recommended but walk-ins may be accommodated.

In an emergency situation, go to a **hospital**. Golden and Invermere are served by district hospitals located in each town. The Kimberley/Cranbrook area is served by the East Kootenay Regional Hospital in Cranbrook. Call 911 if you require an ambulance.

MONEY AND SHOPPING

There are banks and credit unions in Invermere, Golden and Kimberley. You can change money, receive wire transfers or cash traveller's cheques at any one of them. If you have a student visa, you can open a bank account. The banks are generally open between the hours of 10:00am and 5:00pm. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are accessible 24 hours a day on-site at each bank and at other locations throughout each community.

Almost all stores and restaurants accept credit or debits cards in addition to Canadian cash. Ask your host family for advice on shopping for particular goods and services. If you can't find what you are looking for in your host community, it will likely be available in Cranbrook or online.

While not mandatory, tipping is common practice at restaurants in Canada. If the service you receive from your waiter/waitress is good, please add 15% to the total bill as a tip. Tipping is also common for taxi drivers and some hotel staff (e.g. the bellboy who carries your luggage to your room). A tip of 10% is usually enough.



CANADIAN CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE

Canadians are generally easy-going and fun-loving. We don't take ourselves too seriously and we aren't easily offended. There are, however, some cultural expectations and standards to be aware of. Use common sense and keep the following DOs and DON'Ts in mind:

- do knock before entering a home (and wait to be invited inside);
- do remove your shoes before entering someone's home;
- don't ask an adult their age (unless you know them very well);
- do offer to hold the door open for someone else when entering a building;
- don't burp or pass gas (flatulence) in public if possible;
- don't slurp your food or chew with your mouth open;
- do say "excuse me" if you bump someone accidentally

Be polite. Say “please” and “thank you” when applicable and say “excuse me” if you require assistance or need to get someone’s attention. Do not interrupt people when they are speaking, particularly teachers. Raising your hand and waiting for the teacher to call on you is standard protocol in all classrooms.

Canadians value their personal space but some forms of physical contact are common. Handshakes are routine when being introduced to someone for the first time and a pat on the back is a common way of supporting or congratulating someone. Hugging as a final farewell or to console someone is also common.

Canadians greet one another using their given/first names. In class, however, use Mr./Mrs./Ms. and your teacher’s second/family name: e.g. Mr. Smith.

It is important to be aware of gender roles in Canadian society. Women and men are equal in and out of the home. Housework is generally a shared responsibility.

Canada is a liberal and multicultural society. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. In Canada, all people including immigrants and visitors have the right to be treated equally without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Important: *all students are to be treated equally by one another regardless of any of the above-listed criteria including nationality. Students who bully other students in any way are subject to dismissal from the Rocky Mountain International Student Program.*

LIFE IN YOUR NEW HOME

Life in a Canadian home is likely much as you have imagined it. Host families come in all shapes and sizes including those with and without children, some with two parents and some with one.

HEAT AND ELECTRICITY

Most Canadian homes have central heating (natural gas furnaces). Some are heated by wood. Homes are generally kept warm during the day and cooler at night. They are well-built and insulated. Please do not bring space heaters or electric blankets from your home country; they may be a fire hazard.



Canada's electrical supply and electrical outlets (sockets, wall plugs) are the same as those of the USA. The electrical supply is 110 Volts and 60 Hertz (cycles per second). Canadians are generally very energy-conscious. Make sure you turn off the lights when you leave a room and that you turn off appliances and other electronic devices when you are finished using them.

FOOD AND DRINK

Families generally eat three meals a day. Breakfast is usually quick and light on weekdays. Cereal and/or toast are common and may be “self-serve.” Most students bring bagged lunches prepared by their host families to school. Dinners are the biggest and most important meal of the day. It is a time to eat, relax and socialize.



Please make a point of maximizing the dinner experience; it is a great time to connect with your family and improve your English.

Canadian food is very eclectic. In any given week a Canadian family might eat Italian pasta, a Chinese stir-fry, a North American bar-b-que and a British-style pot roast for dinner. Local grocery stores stock ingredients for meals made around the world. Please advise your host parents of any food allergies and let them know what foods you enjoy the most. Meals are usually served “home-style” which means you help yourself to the various dishes on the table.

Please note: the water in School District No. 6 is clean and is drinkable straight from the tap.

IN THE BATHROOM/LAUNDRY ROOM

Most Canadians shower in the morning, before work or school. Please talk to the members of your family about the best time to shower in the morning so that there are no line-ups at the bathroom. If you plan to shower at night, try to do so before 9:00pm. A typical shower in Canada lasts about 10 minutes.

Sewer systems in Canada are high-capacity and plumbing in homes is durable. Toilet paper should be placed in the toilet but feminine hygiene products should be placed in the garbage.

Washing your clothes in Canada is easy but it is not inexpensive. Do not wash your clothes until you have enough to make a full load. Some host families will give you the option of including your clothing with theirs. If you would prefer to wash your clothing separately, ask for instructions on when and how to use the machines.

CHORES

Most Canadian children are expected to do chores. Chores are small jobs done around the house, usually on a regular basis. As new members of a Canadian family, expect to be assigned one or two chores: some examples include setting the table for dinners, shoveling the walkway when it snows and taking out the garbage.

IMPROVING YOUR ENGLISH

Your study abroad experience in SD6 is a great opportunity to improve your English. To support this opportunity, the Rocky Mountain International Student Program has designated each high school as an English-only campus. There are dedicated ESL teachers and education assistants available to support you as well. The rest is up to you! Here are some tips you will find helpful:

- Make Canadian friends! Talking with friends about topics of interest to you and them is a great way to improve your oral English.
- Join a club or team: Doing so will introduce you to new people and present you with opportunities to speak and listen to English in meaningful situations.
- Don't be shy! The communities of SD6 are friendly places. It is common to chat with people in line-ups and other public places.
- Participate in the program: There are activities and events throughout the year and they are an excellent opportunity to speak English, make friends and have fun.
- Create a word bank: Write down new words or phrases you don't understand and show them to your ESL teacher or host parents.

- Don't worry about making mistakes: People are not going to correct your grammar or pronunciation outside of the classroom. Speak freely with a focus on exchanging information and making connections with other people.
- Keep an English journal: Write to yourself each night in English. If you like, you can share your journal with an ESL or English teacher to get feedback on your writing.
- Connect with your host family! The people you live with have the greatest potential to help you improve your English. Talk with them as much as you can and ask them questions about the language if you are having trouble.

Improving your English is easy to do if you don't take it for granted. Studying abroad isn't magic; you need to activate your Canadian experience to make the most of it.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The communities of Golden, Invermere and Kimberley are all very safe. Crime rates are extremely low and violent crime is almost non-existent. Some precautions are still necessary. Please abide by the program curfew at all times. Do not leave valuables unattended at school or any other public places. Do not hitchhike or accept rides from strangers. Do not attend parties where alcohol or drugs are being used. Do not ride in a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs. Finally and most importantly: do not use alcohol or drugs yourself! These products put you at risk and are a violation of the International Student Contract.

A list of emergency contact numbers is included below. Please keep copies of this information with you at all times as well as in your home. Please carry contact information for your host family (names, address, phone numbers, email addresses) with you as well.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION



Emergency services can be contacted by dialing 9-1-1 in all three communities of SD6. Call this number if you need the police, ambulance or fire department.

Other key contact information is listed below. Remember, we are here to help. Do not hesitate to call any one of us at any time, 24 hours a day.

Duncan MacLeod	International Education Manager	School District 6 (all zones)	250-427-2245 (w) 250-427-3193 (h) 250-427-5985 (c)
Tom Ristimaki	International Student Program Coordinator	School District 6 (all zones)	250-427-2245 (w) 250-427-6168 (c)
Monica De	Homestay Coordinator	Golden zone	250-344-2201 (w) 250-344-5579 (h) 250-272-6694 (c)
Mark Davies	Homestay Coordinator	Kimberley zone	250-427-4827 (w) 250-427-5428 (h) 250-432-5904 (c)
Lori Sluth	Homestay Coordinator	Invermere zone	250-342-9213 (w) 250-346-3377 (h) 250-688-0790 (c)



HOMESTAY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program have the right to:

- a private bedroom with a closet, night table, lamp and bed;
- shared access to a family bathroom;
- Internet access in their home (and reasonable access to it);
- access to a washer and dryer to clean their clothes;
- free use of the telephone for local calls;
- feel safe and secure in their homestay;
- three meals per day plus intermittent snacks and beverages;
- not be harassed, discriminated against or otherwise abused by any member of their host family including resident children and visitors;
- be included in family activities and trips;
- not be subjected to second-hand smoke inside the home;
- to be treated like a member of the family!



STUDENT RIGHTS

Students in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program have the responsibility to:

- show consideration and tolerance to all host family members;
- respect household rules and program curfews;
- inform their host family if they will not be home for a meal or will arrive home late;
- invite guests to the home only with the knowledge and permission of the host family;
- consult with the host family before using household appliances or equipment and use them in ways that have been approved by the family;
- clean up after themselves in the home;
- keep their bedrooms neat and tidy;
- not borrow money from host family members;
- use the telephone/computer for reasonable lengths of time;
- exercise consideration and good judgement when interacting with family members;
- not enter host family bedrooms or the bathroom when they are occupied;
- promptly reimburse the host family for damages to household items;
- be tolerant and respectful with regard to race, religion, gender and disabilities;
- never use abusive or sexually-oriented language with host family members;
- never resort to physically threatening or violent behaviour;
- always be suitably clothed in the presence of host family members;
- never participate in the viewing of sexually explicit photos, movies, Internet sites or written materials while in the home;
- never touch host family members in an inappropriate manner;
- not discuss the private matters of the host family outside the home unless it is with a Homestay Coordinator and involves the safety and/or security of the student or someone else.



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Important: The Rocky Mountain International Student Program reserves the right to move students without notice if a Homestay Coordinator or the Program Administrator believes the

student's safety and/or security is at risk. Students may also be moved (on short notice or otherwise) in cases of family emergencies and other extenuating circumstances as deemed necessary by a Homestay Coordinator or the Program Administrator. Temporary placements may be required until more permanent situations can be arranged.

HOMESTAY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your homestay placement is an integral part of your study abroad experience in SD6. The Rocky Mountain International Student Program selects host families very carefully and supports each placement with Homestay Coordinators located in all three communities. We want your time in our school district to be the best it possibly can be, in and out of school. To achieve that goal, the following policies and procedures are in place for the benefit of both host families and students.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

All homestays are required to provide at no charge to the student some avenue of Internet access. The two most obvious options are:

- 1) a wireless gateway for students to access the Internet via their own computers; or
- 2) reasonable access to a family computer provided by the host family.

Alternate arrangements must be acceptable to the student and approved by the Homestay Coordinator. Students are encouraged to contact their host families in advance of arrival and should confirm the type of Internet connectivity available to them at that time.

SLEEPOVERS

Students may sleep over at the homes of Canadian or international friends with the permission of their host parents for a maximum of two nights with host parent approval. Sleepovers of more than two nights' duration require Homestay Coordinator approval. Students of different genders may not sleep over at one another's homes under any circumstance. Students may never be left in the home alone over night regardless of age or any other factors.

ENGLISH ONLY POLICY

Students are expected to speak English when in the presence of host family members and their guests. Similarly, host families are expected to speak English in the presence of their student(s) at all times. If host family members are speaking a language other than English in the home, the student should notify their Homestay Coordinator immediately.



CURFEWS

As a general rule, all secondary students should be home by 10:00pm on weeknights and 12:00am on weekends unless an earlier curfew is requested by the natural parents. Host parents may at their discretion approve a later curfew for a specific event or activity. Extensions of curfew and/or requests for sleepovers will not be approved at the last moment if situations and/or arrangements cannot be confirmed by the host parents.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

Host parents are aware of and support the enforcement of the Rocky Mountain International Student Program's Student Contract (see below). Breaches of the Student Contract are reported to the Homestay Coordinator.

International students must wear the appropriate equipment for all activities. This includes but is not limited to helmets for skiing and cycling, and life jackets for canoeing and other boating. Please bring appropriate equipment with you or be prepared to purchase it upon arrival.

International students are permitted to date other students but they are not permitted to date non-students (e.g. a 20-year-old ski resort employee). When in the home, students are not to be alone with one another; i.e. doors to bedrooms should remain open when hosting friends.

COMMUNICATION/FEEDBACK

Communication and feedback are vital to the success of the Rocky Mountain International Student Program and ensure the best possible experience for each participating student. All students must attend group meetings during lunch hours at school as required (usually twice a month) and make themselves available for individual meetings with the Homestay Coordinator as required. Students must also complete a monthly survey sheet and submit it on time.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

Students with homestay placements arranged by School District No. 6 are not permitted to drive or undertake the process of qualifying to drive. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Students are required to follow relevant rules as passengers in cars. Students must always wear seatbelts. As per the terms of the Student Contract, they must not ride in cars with "N" permit drivers if another passenger is present. Students are not permitted to hitchhike under any circumstances.



Students may travel freely within Canada with their host parents as per the travel permission form signed by their natural parents. For trips outside of the East Kootenay region, the Homestay Coordinator must be notified. Certain trips may be deemed to require additional consent, particularly if they involve air travel and/or a potentially dangerous activity.

Travel permission forms are required for unaccompanied trips (student travelling alone) or trips taken with anyone other than the student's designated host parents or an SD6 staff member.

Travel permission forms are also required for all international travel. Additional documentation including a notarized letter from the International Program Administrator may be required. Please notify the Homestay Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of any planned trip to the US or another international destination. Important update: international students are now required to register online with the Department of Homeland Security before travelling to the United States. This process can take up to 72 hours to complete.

STUDENT CONTRACT

Students participating in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program and their parent(s) have agreed to the terms and conditions of the student contract as a condition of admission. The contract is reprinted below for informational purposes.

Every international student and his/her parent(s) must read and agree to the following terms and conditions to be eligible to participate in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program (hereafter referred to as “the program”).

- 1) International students are subject to all national, provincial and local laws and agree to abide by them. Breaking the law will result in immediate dismissal from the program.
- 2) International students may not purchase or use illegal drugs. Possession or use of illegal drugs will result in immediate dismissal from the program.
- 3) International students are not permitted to purchase or use alcohol or tobacco products. Possession or use of either product will result in immediate notification of the student’s parents and/or agent and may result in dismissal from the program.
- 4) While participating in the program, international students are not permitted to undergo any type of body modification procedure including but not limited to tattooing, piercing and/or branding. Failure to abide by this policy will result in immediate notification of the student’s parents and/or agent and may result in dismissal from the program.
- 5) Selkirk Secondary School, David Thompson Secondary School and Golden Secondary school are all English-only campuses. International students are expected to speak English at all times while at school. Parents and/or agents of international students who repeatedly break this rule will be notified. Repeated transgressions may lead to dismissal from the program at the discretion of school administration.
- 6) International students are not permitted to participate in any high-risk activities (downhill skiing, snowboarding, horseback riding, bungee jumping, white water rafting, etc.) without written consent from their parent(s).
- 7) Academic achievement is a program priority. A minimum of a C+ average is required each semester. Failure to achieve this standard will result in academic probation and notification of the student’s parents and/or agent. Failure to achieve this standard for two consecutive semesters may result in dismissal from the program.
- 8) All students must attend classes and be on time. Unexcused absences and/or tardiness will not be tolerated. Repeated transgressions may lead to dismissal from the program.
- 9) International students must earn a minimum of an “S” grade (Satisfactory) for attitude and effort in every class on their report cards. Students who receive an “N” grade (Needs Improvement) on more than one report card may be dismissed from the program at the discretion of school administration.

- 10) International students in the homestay program are not permitted to drive cars while participating in the Rocky Mountain International Student Program. Furthermore, students are encouraged to be cautious when accepting rides from Canadian students and must abide by “N” or “L” permit rules (Class 7 driver’s license restrictions for student-aged drivers). Parents and/or agents will be notified when international students are discovered to be breaching “N” or “L” permit rules.
- 11) International students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular clubs, activities and program field trips. Parents and/or agents will be notified when students repeatedly choose not to participate to the detriment of their study abroad experience.
- 12) All students must wear helmets when participating in dangerous activities including but not limited to skiing, biking and horseback riding. Parents and/or agents will be notified of non-compliance. Repeated transgressions may lead to dismissal from the program.
- 13) In addition to the above-listed terms and conditions, international students are subject to the Student Code of Conduct and all other school rules and regulations as applicable to all students (Canadian and international) at their host school.

School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) reserves the right to dismiss from the program any student whose physical and/or mental health, as determined by the administration of the school, compromises the safety or security of the student or those around him/her. Students dismissed from the program for this or any of the above-listed reasons may not be eligible for a refund as determined by the administration of School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain).

WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM

We hope you enjoy your stay in our school district as part of the Rocky Mountain International Student Program. Our goal is to make your study abroad experience in Canada the best it possibly can be. We are looking forward to meeting you in person and remind you to email or call if you have any questions in advance of your arrival. Additional program information including a great photo gallery is available on our website. See you soon!





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