

WELCOME!

Arrival Guide

Nanaimo
Ladysmith
International
Education



2026-2027



Welcome

We look forward to meeting you soon!

Studying abroad is a life-changing journey. It gives you the chance to discover a new country, adapt to new cultures and customs, and even learn new languages. Along the way, you will build meaningful friendships with people from around the world.

We are pleased to share this guide to help you prepare for safe travel to Canada and to support you throughout your experience here. Come and Love Learning in Nanaimo Ladysmith!

Pre-Departure

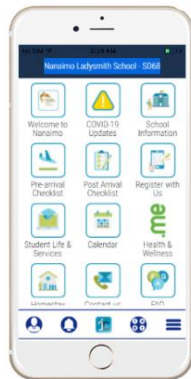
Please take time to read this guide and follow the instruction in each Step. This information will help you follow the rules for entering Canada safely and be prepared for life in Canada.

To Enter Canada, here are the Travel Documents Required:

- Passport**
- Immigration Canada Letter of Introduction for a Study Permit, or eTA, or Visitors Visa**
- Nanaimo Ladysmith International Program Official Letter of Acceptance**
- Custodian Declaration**

iCent

Before arriving, download our Nanaimo Ladysmith International Program App called **iCent**. This app will have the latest updates and information you will need for planning your stay in Canada. All students are required to have this FREE app downloaded onto their phones prior to arrival.



*Destination Country: **Canada***

*Institution Name: **Nanaimo Ladysmith School – SD68***

iCent's user interface is easy to download and follow. If you are having difficulty downloading the app, please contact our office staff at ise@sd68.bc.ca

International Education Program Contacts



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Add Important Contact Numbers to Your Phone

Please add these Cell numbers to your phone to access help when you are travelling:

Your Homestay Family and Your Homestay Coordinator – Call if there is a change in arrival plan or arrival time

International Program Urgent Matters phone – Call if you experience challenges entering Canada, miss a connecting flight, become lost, or experience a medical event.
Our Urgent Matters Phone is monitored 24/7.

+1 (250) 714-2252

Emergency Number in Canada – Call for matters requiring police, fire/rescue, or ambulance

911

Get to Know Your Homestay Family

Contact your host family to get to know them--video chat is a good way to meet! Exchange email, phone, and WhatsApp details. Check your junk folder if you have trouble connecting. Some email filters send international emails here! Set up a text chat with your host before you depart.

As soon as possible, share your flight information and arrival times with your host family AND the international program (ise@sd68.bc.ca). If there are last minute changes in your flights and arrival times, please inform both your host and email ise@sd68.bc.ca

Arrange Student Finances

Please discuss with your bank advisor, family, agent about the best student banking card options for international travel to Canada. **Your country's bank card may not always work in Canada.** (Several students from Türkiye, Spain, and Brazil have experienced challenges with their bank card.)



It is recommended that students use a chip-based debit card from Visa or Mastercard. Some services such as fitness gyms no longer accept cash and require students to pay with a Canadian credit card. If your credit or debit card does not work in Canada, we can help you set up a Canadian bank account with a Canadian debit card once you arrive. This is free for students.

Set up a Canadian Phone Plan

For your personal safety, it is an ISE requirement to have a Canadian phone plan, with data, for the duration of your stay in our program. **We strongly recommend you set up a phone plan prior to departure to ensure you have access to your phone once you arrive in Canada.**

Many international students in BC use PhoneBox but you can use any phone plan provider you choose. The phone plan must give you a Canadian number with a data plan. PhoneBox is convenient for international students, as it does not require an adult to co-sign with a credit card. Your Homestay family cannot sign for this service. Here is their website: [PhoneBox](#)



You can use an e-SIM or, if you set up your phone plan when you arrive, our program can provide you with a SIM card. We recommend that you use the e-SIM service. An e-SIM card is simple to use – you will be emailed a unique QR code.

For the Love of Sport - Playing Community or Club Sports in Canada

There are great sport organizations in our community! If you are interested in playing community sports at a high level while in Canada, it is important to plan ahead. **You may need to apply for an International Sport Transfer Certificate to be eligible to play.** Please contact us before you come if you are interested in Community Soccer (Football) as the registration with FIFA has many steps.

Please also note that host families can not always provide transportation to sports practices. Please plan ahead with budgeting set aside for some Uber or Taxi rides.

Packing

Be sure to check with your airline on weight limits for your carry on and checked baggage. You will need to bring the following things with you on the plane:

- Passport
- Cell phone, charger, power bank
- Electrical outlet adaptor
- Contact Numbers pre-loaded in your phone
- Visa, or eTA or 'Immigration Canada Letter of Introduction for a Study Permit' OR Study Permit (if you are a returning student)
- Custodianship Documents
- 'Nanaimo Ladysmith International Student Official Letter of Acceptance'
- 'Travel and Arrival Checklist' (in appendix)
- Host Family Profile with contact information
- Money (in case of delays or missed flights)
- Credit Card
- Change of clothes (in case of delayed luggage)
- Hand sanitizer (travel sized - 100 mL or less)
- Disinfecting wipes (recommended)
- Food, Snacks & Water bottle
- Prescription medication
- Laptop/tablet (recommended)

It is best to keep your travel documents separate from your passport. Your passport should be kept on you, always; in a pocket with a zipper or button, or in a passport holder hung around your neck.

Safe Travel Practices

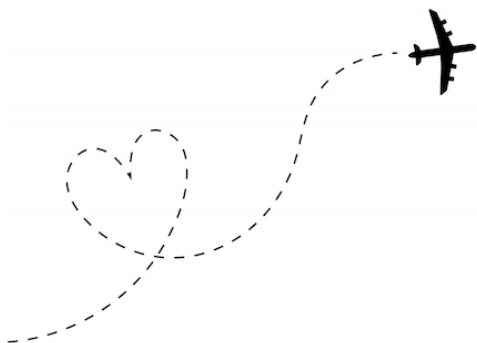
Before Flying to Nanaimo

Contact your host family and confirm your flight number and arrival time in Nanaimo



Travel Tips

Arrive at the airport early. Always stay in public, well-lit areas. Do not leave bags unattended. Ask uniformed staff for help. Keep your passport and boarding pass in a secure place. Keep your cell phone charged in case you need to contact your host family. Bring some snacks in your carry-on bag.



Stay Healthy

Use hand sanitizer, and when you get to your airplane seat wipe it, and your meal tray, with a disinfectant wipe.

If You Become Ill While Travelling

If you become ill while travelling, please contact our Urgent Matters phone at +1 (250) 714-2252. Our International Program Team will assist you!

Arriving in Canada

When you arrive, you will need to go through Canada Immigration and Customs before heading to your flight to Nanaimo. If you are uncertain where to go, ask an airport employee. Most passengers on your flight will be heading to Immigration and Customs so it is a good strategy to follow your group of passengers.

Preparing for Immigration and Receiving Your Study Permit

We strongly recommend you have printed copies of your documents and do not rely on digital copies on your device.

To prepare for Immigration, have the following documents ready:

- Your Passport
- Your eTA or Visitor Visa, or Immigration Canada 'Letter of Acceptance for a Study Permit' OR Study Permit (if you are a returning student.)
 - **This is where you receive your Study Permit**
 - **Make sure the Immigration Officer prints and gives you your STUDY PERMIT BEFORE leaving the immigration area.**
 - Please email or text a photo of your Study Permit to Devon Slater devon.slater@sd68.bc.ca or Cell phone: (250) 668-5017 (+1 if using WhatsApp)



Also have these documents ready:

- Your Nanaimo Ladysmith International Program
 - 'Official Letter of Acceptance'
 - 'Travel and Arrival Checklist'
- Custodianship Documents
- Host Family Profile with contact information

Contact your host family

Let them know you have arrived in Vancouver and confirm your arrival time in Nanaimo.



If you miss your flight to Nanaimo

Members of our international team will be at the Vancouver Airport to help you, August 31 and September 1 for fall and full year students and January 30 and 31 for spring students. Our staff members will be located just outside the international and domestic baggage claim areas. Look for a person holding our Nanaimo Ladysmith sign.

Arriving in Nanaimo

Welcome to Vancouver Island!

You will be greeted at the Nanaimo Airport by a member of your host family or an International Program staff member. Please keep your host family updated on your arrival time. When you arrive, it will be easy to find your host family as we have a small friendly airport and your family will have a sign with your name on it. Gather your luggage and get ready to say hello!

New Student Orientation

Attend the New Student Orientations

All new students will participate in an International Program Orientation and a School Orientation. Students will get to meet their Homestay Coordinator, School Advisor, and program staff. Most importantly, students will get to meet each other!

Students and their hosts will be given specific information about the Orientation session upon arrival in Nanaimo and Ladysmith. If your flight is delayed, Do Not Worry! We will ensure you will receive the Program and School Orientation at an alternate time and date.

The International Program Orientation will take place on September 2 or 3 for fall students – learn about our schools, community, and Vancouver Island. We will introduce you to international student activities and tours, transportation, health services & safety, program rules, and the homestay program. Spring student orientations will occur within the first 2 weeks of February.

School Orientations – learn about your assigned school, your course schedule, school expectations and culture, our computer systems (Google Classroom, Learn68, etc.) and school activities. Times and details about School Orientations vary based on the students' school.

Plan Your Adventure - Discover Vancouver Island!

Plan ahead so you don't miss out!

Your time on Vancouver Island is full of opportunity. Our region is packed with activities from outdoor adventure and sports to arts, culture, food, and local festivals. Whether you love hiking forest trails, relaxing at beaches, attending concerts, or trying new foods, there is always something happening nearby. Here are some ideas:

Nature & Outdoor Adventure

- Beaches, parks, and scenic viewpoints
- Hiking and biking trails

- Kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing, and swimming

Arts, Culture & History

- Museums, galleries, murals, and heritage sites
- Live theatre and school performances
- Local festivals, craft markets, and seasonal events
- Recreational Arts and Crafts classes

Sports & Activities

- Competitive hockey, soccer, baseball, and university games
- Skate parks, climbing gyms, basketball nights
- Swimming pools, skating, and recreation centres
- Dance classes, Tennis lessons, sport specific training sessions

Food & Community Experiences

- Local markets, food trucks, and fresh Island food
- Cultural foods from around the world
- Famous local treats like Bannock and Nanaimo Bars

Fun at Home & with Friends

- Cooking, baking, crafts, and creative projects
- Movie nights and games
- Library makerspaces, VR, and creative tech experiences



Why Planning Ahead Matters

Many events, activities, and sports fill up quickly or happen only on specific days. **Plan ahead and discover** the hidden gems around the Island. Be curious, be prepared, and take initiative—there is always something to discover just around the corner!

Join in, compete, contribute!

Join your Canadian and International peers in athletics and clubs. Make new friends, improve your own well-being and contribute to your Canadian community. After school activities provide memories for a lifetime. There are choices for everyone and places where everyone belongs.

Become part of your Homestay Family!

Plan to experience Canadian hospitality and culture ... create family connections that last a lifetime. Build relationships and engage with your homestay family.



Travel and Arrival Checklist

Welcome to the Nanaimo Ladysmith International Education Program! To plan for smooth and safe travels, please follow all recommendations in the Arrival Guide.

Pre-Departure

- Ensure you have entered all important phone numbers into your phone
- Have a Canadian phone plan (example: [PhoneBox](#))
- Exchange contact information (cell number, WhatsApp number, email) with your host family
- Contact your host family to confirm your flight number and arrival time at the Nanaimo Airport

What To Carry with You

- Passport
- Visitor Visa, or eTA or 'Immigration Canada Letter of Introduction for a Study Permit' OR Study Permit (if you are a returning student.)
- Custodianship Documents
- 'Nanaimo Ladysmith International Program Official Letter of Acceptance'
- 'Travel and Arrival Checklist (this page)
- Money and a credit card
- Phone charger and electric outlet adaptor
- Hand sanitizer, masks, and disinfectant wipes (recommended)
- Change of clothes
- Snacks – in case your flight is delayed (or bring money to purchase snacks)

Arriving in Canada

Before boarding your flight to Nanaimo, contact your host family and confirm your arrival time and meeting plan.

If you collected a Study Permit while going through Immigration, email a photo of your Study Permit to the International Student Office: Devon Slater devon.slater@sd68.bc.ca

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