

# Pembina Trails International Student Program

## Homestay Student Guide



**Pembina Trails**  
International Student Program  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



**This guide has been designed to help explain our Homestay Program, outline some guidelines and expectations as well as be a general resource for the International Student Program.**

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## *Welcome to the Pembina Trails School Division International Student Homestay Program here in Winnipeg!*

The Pembina Trails School Division's International Student Program (ISP) will choose a homestay family that has a keen interest in other cultures, offers a strong English language environment and has been screened and deemed able to provide an appropriate and healthy living environment. Any person 18 years of age or older living in the home must undergo a Criminal Record Search (including Vulnerable Sector Check) and Child Abuse Registry Check to ensure the safety of the student (both of these checks are renewed every 5 years by hosting families in order to ensure our files are kept current). Families are also interviewed and their homes visited by ISP homestay personnel to assess interest, friendliness, cleanliness and concern for the growth and development of the student. The emphasis is on a home that provides the student with safe, comfortable surroundings and a place for practicing and developing English language skills.

The International Student Program works hard to ensure that international students are placed with families that best match the needs of the student, including:

- a) proximity to school placement;
- b) dietary needs;
- c) medical concerns (e.g. allergies);
- d) general interests (e.g. sports, music, art);
- e) pets;
- f) family dynamics.

The International Student Program has established guidelines for both students and homestay families. We do our best to match students with families based on the information provided to us on the application forms and to facilitate good relationships between them. We encourage students to keep open communication with their homestay families and our program. We organize ISP student meetings on a monthly basis to assist students; we ask that students make time to attend these sessions as they provide valuable and important information as well as a wonderful opportunity to meet with other ISP students. We also organize several activities throughout the school year to which students and occasionally homestay families are invited. Students should make every effort to attend these activities as they provide a great opportunity to meet and connect with other international students.





# Preparations for Arrival

*Students and their parents are asked to read this handbook.*

This handbook contains important information about our program from beginning to end, including details about preparations for arrival, student expectations, homestay guidelines, health insurance, travelling, contact information and much more. It is best for students to familiarize themselves with this information and address questions and concerns with the ISP staff ahead of time to ensure the best Canadian experience possible!

## ARRIVAL INFORMATION

**A member of our program and the homestay family welcome students at the Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport upon their arrival.** Students or their agency must inform ISP personnel of their travel details (including flight number, date and time of arrival) and alert them of any changes to their itinerary. It is essential that the flight booking reference number be provided ahead of time in case ISP personnel need to inquire about travel plans on route.

At the first port of entry into Canada, students will need to remember to pick up their luggage and take it through border customs. **Students who have been approved for a Study Permit will also need to present their approval letter at the port of entry into Canada to receive their Study Permit.** The students' luggage will need to be dropped off to get onto their connecting flight to Winnipeg.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** In the event of delays and/or difficulties during travels, it is very important that students, parents or agencies contact an ISP personnel immediately to inform them of accurate arrival times. Please refer to the **Contact Us** section (page 30) of this handbook for the emergency and after-hours telephone number.

## STUDY PERMITS AND VISAS

All students studying in the Pembina Trails School Division ISP for more than 6 months are required to obtain a Study Permit. That said, we strongly recommend that all students, regardless of the length of their program, obtain a Study Permit. Please refer to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website for information on how to apply for a Study Permit from outside Canada: [www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/student.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/student.asp).

We recommend that students obtain a Multiple Entry Canadian Visa as some students may wish to return home during holidays. It is also beneficial for students to obtain a U.S. Visitor Visa in the event of travel with the homestay family across the U.S. border. The ISP will obtain copies of the students' passport, Study Permit and visas after their arrival.

**Students from Austria, Belgium, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland and Taiwan are currently exempt from requiring a Multiple Entry Canadian Visa and a U.S. Visa.**

Students from these countries, who do not have a Study Permit or students who have a Study Permit and who plan on leaving and then returning to Canada during their study program, need to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). Please refer to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website for information on how to apply for an ETA: [www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit.eta.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit.eta.asp). Students from these countries should also apply for an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) if transiting through the U.S. or in the event of travel with the homestay family across the U.S. border by air. Please refer to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website for information on how to apply for an ESTA: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>.



# Expectations of Students

## STUDENT'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HOME

The student's role in the homestay family is to be part of the family and to participate in the family's daily routine. Consequently, the student should not be treated as a guest nor should they be expected to act like one. This means spending quality time with the homestay family during meals as well as outside of mealtimes.

Students must **communicate** with their homestay family and ask questions if there is something they don't understand. All members of the homestay family are encouraged to promote good communication with their students.

Students are expected to respect their homestay parents' requests and wishes. Showing appreciation and consideration towards the homestay family is also extremely important. This includes making personal plans in advance, including communication with their family regarding the plans and obtaining permission from them. It is important that students learn to **balance** their time between school work, spending time with their homestay family, participating in extracurricular activities and spending time with their friends.

**Students are expected to speak English at all times, both at school and in their home** (with the exception of speaking to family back home who are unable to speak English). If a student is speaking to a fellow student from their home country, they are strongly encouraged to speak English, even if it is difficult or challenging for them.

## CHORES AND HOUSEHOLD DUTIES

Students are responsible for keeping their bedroom clean (this includes not storing food in their bedroom), in addition to maintaining tidiness in other areas of the house. Students should also be prepared to help with meal preparation, cleaning of dishes, cleaning the bathroom they use and even doing their own laundry. All forms of household chores are in fact excellent learning opportunities and in some cases sharing moments between family members.

Students cannot be asked or expected to perform duties that would normally require someone to be paid (e.g. babysitting, dog walking, etc.).



## PERSONAL HYGIENE AND BATHROOM USE

Due to the fact that cultural norms regarding personal hygiene and bathroom use vary widely, the homestay family may discuss proper etiquette with their students soon after they arrive. The length, time of day and frequency of a shower or bath must be mutually agreeable. Students may be informed as to what is an appropriate amount of time to spend in the shower (10 - 15 minutes is considered reasonable) and how many times a week they are expected to shower (once a day is considered normal).

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

At no time should students be behind closed doors with another person. Doors should be kept open at all times except when privacy is warranted (e.g. changing clothes, using the washroom, going to sleep at night). Another exception to the open door policy is if students do not want the family pet(s) in their bedroom.

## LAUNDRY FACILITIES AND USE

Some homestay families offer to include their students' clothes in the family laundry, however, this is not an expectation. Some students may feel awkward about including personal clothes with their family's laundry. Homestay families may provide laundry bags that can be put directly into the washer and dryer to avoid any feelings of embarrassment. Families who expect their students to do their own laundry will discuss the operation and use of washers and dryers with the students and will show the students how to use the machines.





## ELECTRONIC DEVICES GUIDELINES

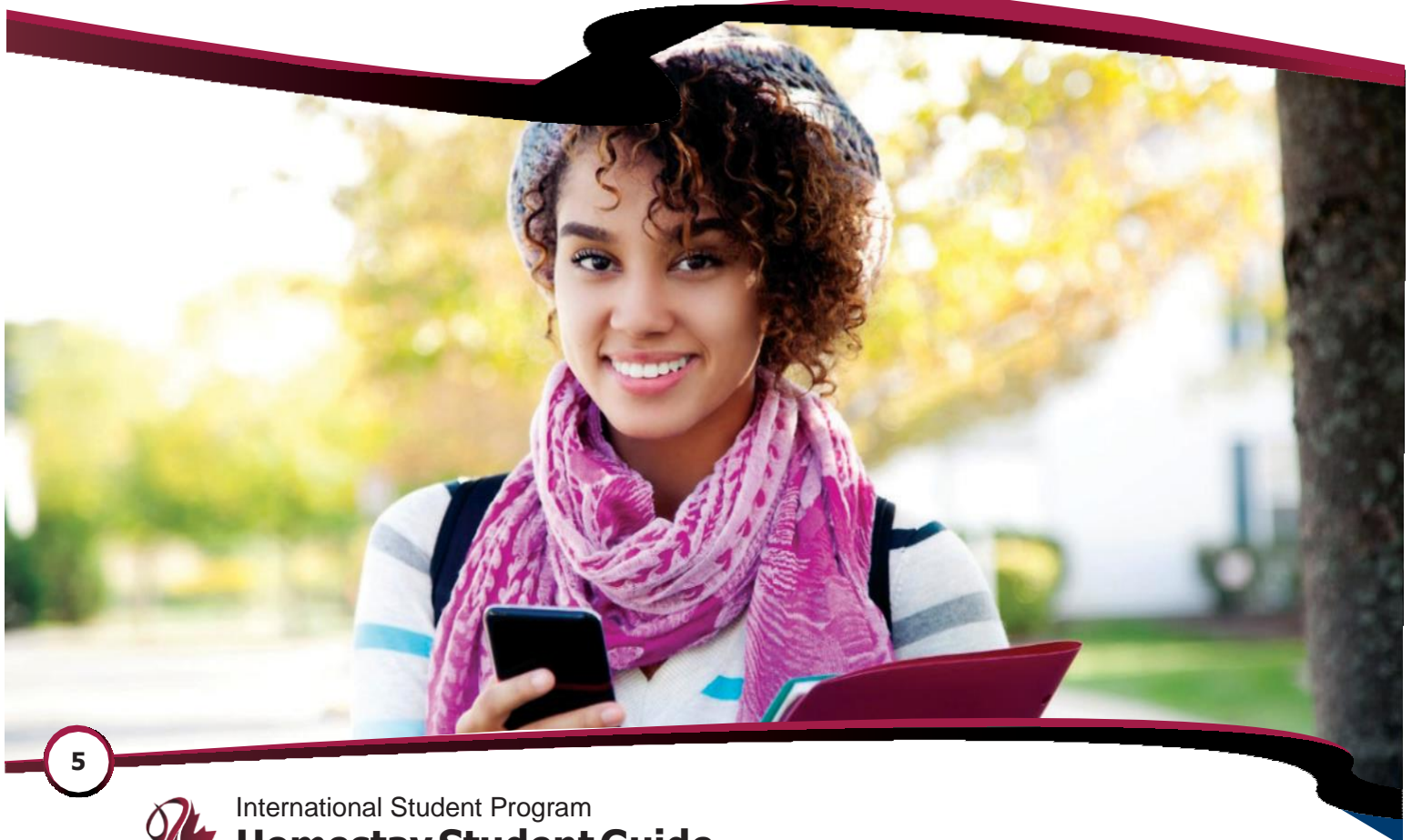
Most students bring their own electronic device(s) and will only need an Internet connection and/or local SIM card. Some homestay families may choose to purchase a cell phone for their students to use during their stay. **Homestay families are not permitted to sign any contracts relating to cell phone/data plans.** All charges associated with the use of electronic devices, whether they belong to the students or their homestay families, are the students' responsibility.

Homestay families will establish guidelines for the use of electronic devices. Whether students use the homestay family's device(s) or their own. Students are strongly encouraged to bring their own devices. Homestay families may limit the amount of time students spend on their electronic devices particularly if students spend excessive amount of time using them. However, it is understood that in this era of technology students are more reliant on devices not only for personal communications with friends and family but also for banking, schoolwork, school communications and ISP related communications.

It is important for students and their biological families to be aware of the time differences and homestay family routines so that very late night or very early morning communications, which are disturbing to the household, can be avoided. Unless there is an emergency, communication must not begin before 8:00 a.m. and must be completed before 10 p.m. (CST - Winnipeg time), as these are considered quiet family times. The Internet is a fast and easy way for many students to communicate with their friends/families back home via Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp, etc.

Although having their own electronic device(s) is essential, it may also end up being a hindrance or crutch. Students who spend a great deal of time on their electronic devices will not be interacting with their homestay families, engaging in their studies or focusing on being in Canada. Experience has shown this to be problematic.

**It is important that students communicate with family and friends back home. However, please be mindful of the homestay family members and limit your time on the internet and your device.**



## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Please never discuss any financial matters relating to homestay fees with the homestay family. In cases where students are away for part of the month (Winter Break and/or Spring Break) the family still receives the full monthly payment.

Homestay fees **do not cover** extracurricular costs such as sports team fees, school band fees, bus passes, specific personal hygiene products, clothing, personal entertainment, cell phone/data charges or extra costs for family outings such as vacations. Homestay families are expected to pay for some activities such as a family meal at a restaurant, family bowling or movie night, etc. Homestay family should provide generic shampoo, soap, toilet paper, toothpaste.

If students depart after the program specified departure date, students are required to pay their homestay family the prorated amount for each additional night. **Arrangements to stay beyond the program's specified departure date must be made through the Homestay Coordinator in advance.**

## SPENDING MONEY

The ISP discourages all of their students from carrying or displaying large amounts of cash and monies. Most students now use and/or have access to bank or credit cards. If students want to open a bank account, they should ask their homestay family for assistance. **To avoid any complications, students who use a credit card should have a card in their own name (not their parent's name).**

The cost of living in Winnipeg is generally quite reasonable and students with extensive cash flow tend to be easily distracted from their studies. **Students should not lend or borrow money to or from family members or other students.** All students are responsible for their own transportation costs (e.g. bus passes or taxis), personal hygiene products, clothing, extracurricular activities (e.g. sports teams, school band fees, etc.), personal entertainment and all cell phone/data charges.

## BIOLOGICAL PARENTS' SIGNATURE

Often during the time that a family hosts international student there will be a need for a "biological parent/guardian" signature on some documents. This could be something from school, wanting to join a sports team or a gym, taking music lessons or getting a cell phone, just to name a few. **All** of these situations and any others that ask for such a signature **must** have the **student's biological parent(s) signature**. Students are asked to contact someone in the ISP Department for assistance whenever such a signature is required.



## MAKING SOCIAL PLANS

While academic study, growth and development are the principal goals of the International Student Program, group interaction and socializing are also important elements of a successful stay with the program. Students should set aside a regular amount of time each week for leisure activities and relaxation. Much of this time should be with members of the homestay family, although activities with school friends are also important. Regardless, **all international students should provide detailed information to their homestay families** as to where they are going and how they can be reached (e.g. phone number), when they will be back and with whom they are going out. It is not acceptable for a student to be away from home for the majority of a day without any communication with their homestay family. Students should maintain regular contact with their homestay family when out with friends. **Communication with the homestay family is very important to prevent confusion and misunderstandings.** If students are going to be later than they had planned, they must contact their homestay family immediately!

Students should ask for permission **before** making plans to go out (one day notice is expected), as opposed to informing their homestay family that they are going out. The homestay family has the right to limit the amount of time spent socializing by their students, if it becomes excessive and other areas begin to suffer.

## MEALS WITH THE HOMESTAY FAMILY

Most international students are living away from home for the first time. Usually they have not been involved with meal planning and preparation or grocery shopping, and are unaware of the time, effort and costs associated with food. **Students should be present for all evening meals in order to take part in family conversations as much as possible.** Most international students will find Canadian food very different from what they are accustomed to. It is also common practice for families to eat food that was left over from a previous meal. **Students should discuss their food likes/dislikes and go with the homestay family on at least one grocery shopping trip to see what is available.** If students are interested in cooking, this should be discussed with their homestay family. Students may even want to prepare a meal for their homestay family that represents their country.

Students should provide input as to what they might like to eat for breakfast and lunch. In most cases, students will be expected to prepare their own breakfast and lunch during the school week. Homestay families will let students know what is available for snacks right after school or in the evenings. Homestay families will inform students of the limits to snack food so that students know what they need to purchase on their own.

If the homestay family invites their students to a restaurant for a meal, the meal should be paid for by the homestay family. If the students decide to go out with friends for a meal, the students are responsible for paying for that meal.





## TRANSPORTATION

Most students tend to ride city transit bus to and from school each day. Students must purchase a peggo card, which costs \$5. These cards can be purchased at any 7-Eleven or Shopper's Drug Mart store. Once a card has been purchased, they can load one month of unlimited transit fares on the card. For more information about the peggo card, rates and how it works, visit [www.winnipegtransit.com](http://www.winnipegtransit.com) and select the "Say hello to peggo" banner at the top of the page. Students should register their peggo card by selecting the "peggo online" button. To plan a trip with Winnipeg City Transit, students should select the "Navigo" button.

Students may choose to walk or ride a bike to and from school, depending on proximity to their school and the weather. Students who choose to ride a bike **must** wear a helmet for their own safety. **When going out socially, if there is no bus service available, if the bus ride is more than one hour or if it is really cold outside, student should request a ride from their homestay family or if their homestay family is not available, students should discuss other possibilities of getting to their destination, like car pooling with another host family or as a last resort hire a taxi.** For safety reasons, students should **never** get into a personal vehicle with someone they do not know.

## HOUSEHOLD CURFEWS

As a regular member of their homestay family, students should **respect** the individual rules of their homestay family's household. This includes the hours that are spent outside the home. Factors determining this may include: age of the students; school night vs. weekend; type of activity and whether or not the students respect their designated curfew. **The ISP supports a curfew for students under 15 years old no later than 9:00 p.m. from Sunday to Thursday and no later than 11:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. Students 15 and older no later than 10:00 p.m. from Sunday to Thursday and 12:00 a.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. All students, regardless of age, must adhere to the allowed curfew times. Students must phone their homestay parent(s) immediately if there is a problem. Special arrangements may be made for different circumstances.**

## SLEEPOVERS

The ISP allows students to attend **and** host **one** sleepover per semester, providing the following conditions are met:

- sleepovers are only permitted at the home of one of our approved homestay families;
- upon approval of their homestay family, students hosting a sleepover may be allowed to invite a **maximum** of two (2) other students to their homestay family's house;
- the Homestay Student Sleepover Permission Form must be completed and signed by the students' biological parent(s) and a homestay parent of each involved student;
- the permission form must be submitted to the Homestay Coordinator **at least 3 days prior** to the sleepover date;
- the permission form can be found on the ISP website under the "Homestay" tab then under "Forms".





## HOLIDAY TRAVEL PLANS

International students and their homestay families may plan trips outside of Winnipeg during holidays. In some cases, it is not possible for students to travel with their homestay family so other hosting arrangements need to be made. The ISP Homestay Coordinator must always be involved in making such arrangements for the student.

On occasion, students will go home during the holidays such as Winter Break or Spring Break.

**Travel should not interfere with academic studies and should be limited to designated school holiday periods (2 weeks at Winter Break or 1 week at Spring Break).** Please check the school division website ([www.pembinatrails.ca](http://www.pembinatrails.ca)) calendar for specific holiday dates. Students must contact the ISP Homestay Coordinator as soon as the possibility of any travel plans have been discussed so that the proper paperwork can be completed in a timely manner. Failure to complete the required paperwork will result in the students not being allowed to travel.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**All students are expected to participate in at least one extracurricular activity while in the program.** It is important that students get involved within their first month in the program so they do not miss out on any opportunities. The activity may be school or community based. For some community based activities please visit [www.leisureonline.ca](http://www.leisureonline.ca). The Leisure Guide is available every 3 months and is filled with all kinds of activities. If students require assistance with finding an activity of interest, they should speak with their homestay family or the ISP Activities Facilitator.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Any forms associated with these activities must be signed by the students' biological parent(s) and all fees associated with the activities are the responsibility of the students.**

*Getting involved in extracurricular activities is one of the best ways for students to meet and make Canadian friends!*

## GRADUATION, CONVOCATION, DINNER/DANCE AND SAFE GRAD

Students are responsible for covering **all costs** of their graduation including their convocation, dinner, dance and Safe Grad. ISP students in grades 11 or 12 may attend Safe Grad as a graduate or guest, provided they satisfy all the requirements that are stipulated by the school's Safe Grad Committee. Students are responsible for completing all forms required by their school and securing the necessary signatures from their biological parent(s) and the adult responsible for picking them up at the end of the event. The ISP office will be pleased to assist with securing the necessary signatures. Please contact the ISP School Liaison for assistance. **Once ISP students leave Safe Grad, they must return directly home; they are not permitted to proceed to another venue.**



## DRIVER'S LICENSE AND DRIVING

International students in Pembina Trails are not permitted to take any type of driver's education course. Students cannot write their driver's license test while enrolled as an international student and they are not permitted to own, rent or drive any type of motor vehicle.

## SMOKING/VAPING, ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT DRUGS

Smoking and vaping are greatly discouraged by the International Student Program. Smoking or vaping in any homestay residence is strictly prohibited and violation of this may result in eviction from the house and possibly the Homestay Program.

- Breaking any Canadian law could result in students being sent home immediately at the students' expense.
- The possession or consumption of alcohol by any international students could result in the students being sent home immediately at the students' expense.
- Students are not permitted to enter a bar, lounge or nightclub. Students who violate this rule could be sent home immediately at the students' expense.
- Students are not permitted to attend a social unless their homestay parent(s) are also in attendance.
- Students are not permitted to attend parties that do not have a house address (e.g. bush party) nor can they attend parties where there is no parental supervision.
- The possession or use of any illegal drug by any international students will result in the students being sent home immediately at the students' expense.

**It is extremely important for both international students and homestay families to realize that being a student 18 years of age (or older) does not change any of the student or homestay rules and guidelines. Nothing changes when a student enrolled in our program turns 18 years old.**





## THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR HOMESTAY FAMILY

Homestay families are not expected to be tour guides, however because we know that students appreciate and benefit from participating in family activities, **families are expected to plan at least one monthly activity that includes their students.** Here is a list of ideas that have been popular with students.

### YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES

- The Forks
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- Adrenaline or Vertical Adventures
- Fort Whyte Alive
- Sporting events (football and hockey are sports most countries do not have)
- Bird's Hill Park (always an adventure with options for both summer and winter activities)
- Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP)
- The Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG)
- Assiniboine Park Zoo and Conservatory
- The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
- The Royal Winnipeg Ballet
- The Royal Canadian Mint
- The Planetarium (or other museums)
- The Golf Dome or U-Puttz Mini Golf
- Pan Am Pool
- Oak Hammock Marsh
- Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre

### SPRING/SUMMER/FALL ACTIVITIES

- Ballet or Jazz in Assiniboine Park
- Rainbow Stage (or other outdoor concerts)
- Riel or Ross House Museum
- Fun Mountain Water Slide Park
- Living Prairie Museum
- St. Vital, Kings or Kildonan Park
- St. Norbert Farmer's Market
- Lower Fort Garry
- Mennonite Heritage Museum
- Thunder Rapids Amusement Park
- A Maze in Corn
- Narcisse Snake Dens

### WINTER ACTIVITIES

- Skating at Arctic Glacier Winter Park
- Springhill Winter Park
- Festival du Voyageur
- The Festival of Trees and Lights
- Harbour View Recreation Complex (to go ice skating, tobogganing, cross-country skiing or play some hockey or broomball)



# Important Links

**International Student Program:**  
[www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp)

**Pembina Trails School Division:**  
[www.pembinatrails.ca](http://www.pembinatrails.ca)

- **Divisional Policies:**  
[www.pembinatrails.ca/Governance/PolicyandGuidelines/DivisionalPolicies](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/Governance/PolicyandGuidelines/DivisionalPolicies)
- **Divisional Guidelines:**  
[www.pembinatrails.ca/Governance/PolicyandGuidelines/Divisional%20Guidelines](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/Governance/PolicyandGuidelines/Divisional%20Guidelines)

**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada:**  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

- **Study Permit Application:**  
[www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp)
- **Study Permit Extension Application:**  
[www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/extend-student.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/extend-student.asp)

**City of Winnipeg 311 - Information Service:**  
[www.winnipeg.ca/interhom](http://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom)

**Winnipeg Transit - Public Transportation:**  
[www.winnipegtransit.com/en](http://www.winnipegtransit.com/en)

**Tourism Winnipeg:**  
[www.tourismwinnipeg.com](http://www.tourismwinnipeg.com)

**Travel Manitoba:**  
[www.travelmanitoba.com/things-to-do](http://www.travelmanitoba.com/things-to-do)

**Restaurant Guide - Winnipeg Hot Spots:**  
[www.eatingwinnipeg.com/restaurant\\_guide.htm](http://www.eatingwinnipeg.com/restaurant_guide.htm)

**Things to do - Downtown Winnipeg Biz:**  
[www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com](http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com)

**Things to do - Osborne Village Biz:**  
[www.osbornevillage.com](http://www.osbornevillage.com)





# Students' Safety

## PREVENTING THEFT

- Record serial or identity numbers for insurance purposes or to report to police.
- Mark valuable items with your name.
- Use security passwords on your electronic devices.
- Carry only what you need.
- Keep your valuables in a safe place.
- Use ATM bank machines during the day after checking to see if it is safe. If you feel unsafe, you should use a different ATM machine.
- Store documents (e.g. passport), money or electronic items in a secure place.
- Keep your pockets, purse and backpack closed. Hold your purse or bags securely.
- Never leave your things unattended in public places.



## STREET SAFETY

- Get directions before leaving home.
- If possible, stay on roads that are well lit.
- Avoid areas with few people.
- Tell your homestay family your schedule. When going somewhere, let them know who you are going with, where you are going and when you will be home. You may want to also let them know when you have arrived safely at your destination.
- Avoid going out alone at night.
- If walking alone, know where you are going and look confident.
- Using your headphones or a cell phone can distract you, so do your best to avoid this while walking or when on a city transit bus.
- Avoid unsafe situations.
- Trust your feelings - if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, leave or get help.

## RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

- Talk to your homestay family about appropriate Canadian behavior so you know what to expect.
- Never give your personal information like your name, address or telephone number to a person you don't know or to anyone over the Internet.
- When meeting someone new or when going on a date, meet in a public place and if possible, have a friend join you. If going alone, never meet in a place that you have not been to before. Don't meet someone new at your home, in a car or anywhere private.
- Make new people in your life earn your trust. Don't let anyone make decisions in your life until you are sure they will not hurt you.
- It is easy to misinterpret dating behavior because of cultural differences and language barriers. Set clear limits if on a date and respect the limits of others.
- In Canada "NO" means "NO". If you feel scared or unsafe, if you want someone to stop or if you want a relationship to end, say "NO". Be direct, strong, and firm.
- Be careful when approached by someone you don't know.
- If you feel someone is following you, go to the nearest public place and call your homestay family.
- Trust your feelings. If you feel uncomfortable, leave immediately or get help.
- Always carry money for transportation, know how to get home, and carry a cell phone in case you need help.
- **Never** get into a vehicle with someone you don't know.





## TRAVEL SAFETY

- Learn your route and city transit bus schedule before you leave home. You may even want to print a copy of your schedule to take with you so that you can ask the bus driver for help if needed.
- Sit as close to the bus driver as possible.
- If someone bothers you or you feel unsafe when you are on the bus, change seats or ask the bus driver for help.
- Don't fall asleep on the bus; it makes you more subject to crime.
- Choose busy, bright bus stops after dark.
- Ask your homestay family to pick you up if you are going out late. If they are not available, use a taxi.
- If lost, either call your homestay family or ask for help from a bus driver or someone who works in a store or restaurant.



## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

- Buying alcohol for minors (under the age of 18) is a serious offense in Canada.
- Using, buying or selling illegal drugs is a serious offense in Canada.
- Never let strangers or friends pressure you into using drugs or drinking. If they are real friends, they would not ask you to do something illegal or that you don't want to do. **Also remember, as a student in the International Student Program you signed an agreement not to consume any alcohol or illegal drugs while in our program.**
- If going to a party, never go alone. You and your friend(s) need to watch each other. If anyone feels uncomfortable or unsafe, you should all leave together.
- Never leave what you are drinking unattended. A drug can easily be put into your drink. Never accept a drink from someone you don't know.
- Never accept a ride with someone who has been drinking or using drugs. Some people may not look or act drunk, but their driving could put you at risk.

## GETTING HELP

An emergency is when you or someone else needs the immediate help of the police, fire department or ambulance. In Canada, you can get help anytime and anywhere when you call 911. Translation is available.

- Program emergency numbers into your cell phone.
- If you don't carry a cell phone, always note where the public telephones are when you are traveling throughout the city.
- No coins are needed to call 911 from a pay phone. If you are calling from a pay phone or your home phone, the operator will know your address. If you use a cell phone, the operator will ask for your location.
- If you have non-emergency questions or concerns, talk to your homestay family, ask someone in the ISP or contact any one of the services listed in the "Crisis Services Winnipeg, Manitoba" section.



## CRISIS SERVICES - WINNIPEG, MANITOBA (24 Hour Help Lines)

Emergency (Police, Fire Department or Ambulance)	911
Child and Family Services	1.888.834.9767
Domestic Violence	1.877.977.0007
Gambling Helpline	1.800.463.1554
Health Links	204.788.8200
Kids Help Phone	1.800.668.6868
Klinic Crisis Line	204.786.8686
Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line	204.786.8631
Seneca Help Line (depression)	204.942.3052
Manitoba Suicide Line	1.877.435.7170
Smokers Help Line	1.877.513.5333
Teen Touch (counselling)	204.783.1116



## CONCERNS ABOUT THE HOMESTAY FAMILY

When students have concerns about their homestay family, it is recommended that the students discuss the concerns with their homestay family **first**. Contacting biological parents or the agent about homestay family concerns will not solve any issues with the homestay family, therefore students are asked not to speak with them before speaking with their homestay family and/or the ISP Homestay Coordinator.

The homestay family is also encouraged to speak with their students about concerns they may have. **Many times miscommunication, a lack of communication or a misunderstanding is the source of the problem.** Most issues between a homestay family and their students can be worked through with an open-minded attitude, some understanding and some give-and-take from both sides. If the situations and/or concerns continue to happen, notify the ISP Homestay Coordinator immediately. We will work with students and their homestay family to help resolve any issues.

**Living inter-culturally can have many challenges. See section about Student Wellness (pages 16 - 18).**

## MOVING TO A NEW HOMESTAY FAMILY

We ask that students and families make every effort to adjust to their lives together. However, in cases where there is a breakdown of communication and cooperation, or where families and students have strong personality conflicts, the Homestay Coordinator will assess the situation. If it is not possible to resolve the issues, the Homestay Coordinator will arrange to relocate the students to another family. It is important for both students and homestay families to understand that this process takes time. The Homestay Program reserves the right to move students without advance notice if a situation is unsatisfactory or in the case of an emergency situation.



## 1. EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Emotional wellness involves how one feels, thinks and copes with the challenges of life. Everyone experiences emotional or mental stress from time to time, so it is important to take care of your emotional and mental well-being.

Emotional wellness includes:

- self-understanding - being aware of and accepting of the wide range of feelings one experiences
- the ability to cope with stress in a healthy way
- having a generally optimistic outlook
- the capability of adjusting to change
- managing feelings effectively
- the ability to enjoy life

## 2. EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Academic life can be stressful for every student, but international students can experience additional unique stressors. They have to adapt not only to the academic demands of school but also have to learn about Canadian culture, such as differences in:

- educational systems and procedures
- food and climate
- language and terminology (slangs)
- establishing friendships and more

Experiencing the challenges of school life and cultural transitions can put a lot of pressure on one's mental well-being, especially being a long way from family and friends back home and not having their immediate support.

## 3. MANAGING CULTURAL TRANSITIONS

People who enter a new culture can expect to go through a process of cultural adjustment. Students who experience "culture shock" (emotional or physical discomfort experienced when dealing with unfamiliar environments and cultural dissimilarities), are not alone - other international students have had similar experiences. The experience of culture shock is normal!



### SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK

- sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- preoccupation with health
- aches, pains, and allergies
- insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- feeling frustrated/confused/depressed
- anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact
- homesickness
- unable to solve simple problems
- lack of confidence/self-doubt
- feeling of inadequacy/insecurity
- developing stereotypes about the new culture
- developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness
- boredom
- feeling of being lost, overlooked, exploited or abused



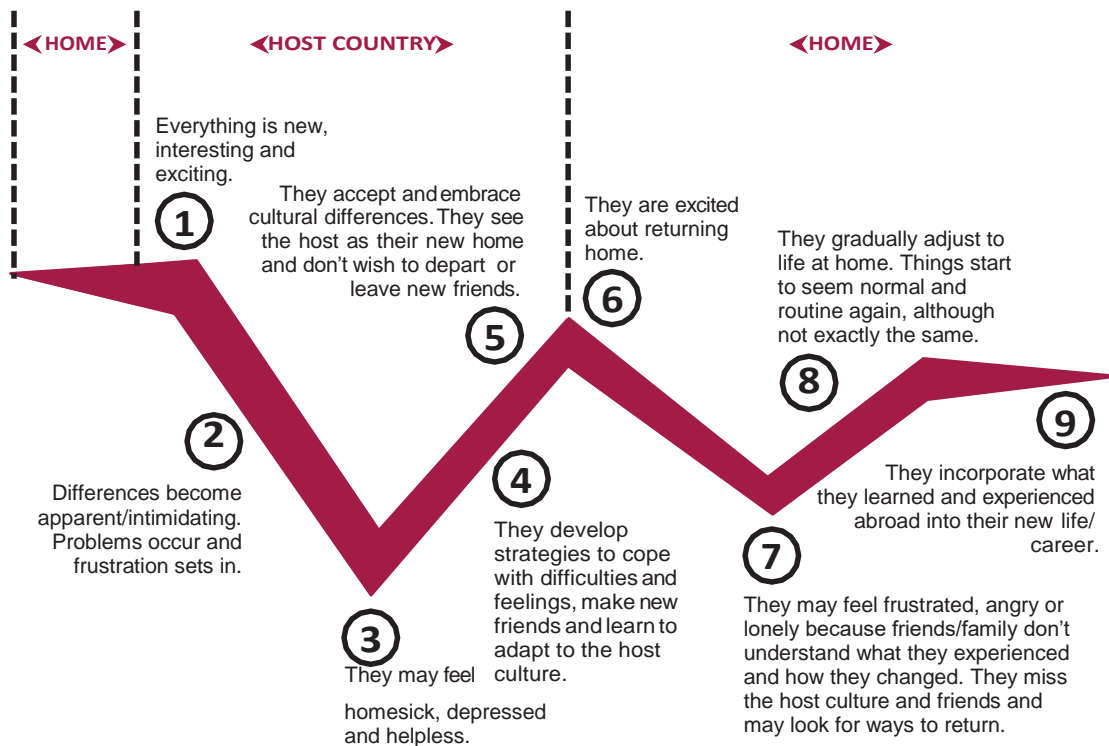
## 4. STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK

Some stages in the adjustment process are described below. Even though the adjustment process is described in stages, **not all people go through each stage and not necessarily in the order mentioned**. The length and intensity of each stage will vary with each individual. Sometimes people cycle through these stages more than once.

When you first arrive, everything will be new and exciting. You will be curious and interested in your new surroundings and will look forward to exploring new opportunities. Most people feel energetic and enthusiastic during this stage.

Once the initial excitement is over, your focus may turn to the difference between your home culture and the new culture. You may feel like people here don't understand you or you may have difficulty understanding others.

As you begin to accept your new surroundings and spend more time in the new culture, you will become more comfortable. You will have learned more about your new home and will start adapting and participating in the local culture - making friends and enjoying life.



## 5. STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH CULTURAL TRANSITION

- Manage your stress by staying healthy - eating well, getting enough sleep and staying physically active will be helpful.
- Get involved in clubs and activities to meet people and make new friends.
- Write letters, send emails, use Skype or make phone calls to friends and family.
- Talk with other students about your cultural transition - you will be surprised how many of them have had similar experiences.
- Talk to someone in the International Student Program, a school counsellor or teacher.

## 6. ENHANCING EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

The majority of individuals and families that immigrate from other countries or study abroad have the ability to positively confront the obstacles of a new environment. Some ways to combat stress produced by culture shock are:

- Develop a hobby.
- Don't forget the good things you already have!
- Remember, there are always resources that you can use.
- Be patient, the act of immigrating or studying as an international student is a process of adaptation to new situations. It is going to take time.
- Learn to be constructive. If you encounter an unfavorable environment, don't put yourself in that position again. Be easy on yourself.
- Don't try too hard.
- Learn to include a regular form of physical activity in your routine. This will help combat the sadness and loneliness in a constructive manner. Exercise, swim, take an aerobics class, etc.
- Relaxation and meditation are proven to be very positive for people who are passing through periods of stress.
- Maintain contact with your ethnic group. This will give you a feeling of belonging and you will reduce your feelings of loneliness and alienation.
- Maintain contact with the new culture. **Learn the language.** This will help you feel less stress about language and useful at the same time.
- Allow yourself to feel sad about the things that you have left behind: your family, your friends, etc.
- Recognize the sorrow of leaving your old country. Accept the new country. Focus your power on getting through the transition.
- Pay attention to relationships with your homestay family and at school. They will serve as support for you in difficult times.
- Establish simple goals and evaluate your progress.
- Find ways to live with the things that don't satisfy you 100%.
- Maintain confidence in yourself. Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future.
- If you feel stressed, look for help. There is always someone or some service available to help you.





# Expectations of Homestay Families

Homestay families are not only able to provide their students with an environment to develop and improve their English language skills, but also valuable life lessons and survival skills. Whatever level of English students arrive with, they will be encouraged by the homestay families to speak English at all times. Students should know that it's okay to make mistakes and that their homestay families are there to help them learn.

The first week or two is a critical time for getting to know one another and building trust. Some one-on-one time with the key family members is important. Students may have travelled a long way and may need several days to get over jet lag and become acclimatized. A rough estimate is to allow one day for each hour of time difference. Students are expected to take in a great amount of information when they first arrive, so it is not surprising when certain things need to be repeated several times. The homestay family will make every attempt to be patient with their students' attempts to adapt to a new culture, language and food.

**Students should not be afraid to ask questions if there is something they do not understand.**

The homestay family should take an interest in their students' school activities and new friends.

Students should be treated with respect just as all other family members.





## HOME

The homestay family will provide the following for their international students:

1. A private room with:
  - a) a window that meets fire-code regulations, coverings (curtains/blinds) and nearby smoke detector;
  - b) a door that closes for privacy;
  - c) a bed that has bedding, a dresser, closet and alarm clock;
  - d) adequate heat, light and ventilation.
2. Space for their students to do homework including desk, chair and ample lighting.
3. Access to a bathroom and bathing facilities or shower.
4. Three healthy meals daily and reasonable incidental foodstuffs (see the Canada Food Guide for a guideline). The homestay family will discuss who is responsible for what meal preparations. **Students should join their homestay family when they are going to the grocery store so that the family can become acquainted with their food likes and dislikes.**
5. Reasonable transportation, which does not include transportation to and from school.
6. Access to laundry facilities and procedures for use and routines/schedules.
7. Fire extinguishers, especially in the kitchen, are advised.
8. A key to the home along with any codes that are needed to access the home.
9. Phone numbers where students can reach their homestay family at all times.
10. Internet access.



## KEYS

The students will have their own key to the house. Keys need to be taken good care of, as it can be very costly to replace locks due to keys being carelessly lost, misplaced or damaged. It may help to put the key on a good keychain that cannot be easily misplaced or dropped. If students lose a key, they may be asked to cover the cost to replace the key and/or the lock to the house.

## ALARM SYSTEMS

The homestay family's home may have an alarm system. If this is the case, the homestay family will be sure to help their students understand how it works. Students will also be given instructions about how to react if the alarm goes off, accidentally or otherwise. Students may need to write the alarm code down. This number should be kept in a safe place.

## PREPARING TO SAY GOODBYE

Just as the homestay family prepared for their students to come live in their home, they may also play a huge role in helping students finalize their plans to return home. Many homestay families will maintain contact with their students long after the students have gone home. The homestay family may be able to help their students with some of the practical things that need to be taken care of, such as closing out bank accounts, phone contracts, gym memberships and of course returning all textbooks to school. There is also the matter of making sure that their students' suitcases meet all current airlines regulations both for weight and number of pieces allowed. Check on the airline's website for the most up-to-date information. It is very unfortunate and embarrassing if students have to either unpack at the airport and leave things behind or discover that they have to pay huge fees to get their belongings home. Be advised not to leave this until the night before, as this is usually when students want to say good-bye to their friends.



# Medical Coverage

## Medical insurance is mandatory for all ISP students.

Students who will be studying in our program will be covered through the **Studyinsured** Insurance Comprehensive+ Plan. This plan includes:

- ground ambulance
- medical supplies and appliances
- repatriation of remains/burial or cremation at place of death
- psychologist, psychiatric care and trauma counselling
- family member transportation
- prescription drugs
- paramedical practitioners
- eye examination
- dental accident
- dental emergencies
- wisdom teeth
- vaccinations
- coverage outside Canada
- accidental death and dismemberment
- emergency air transportation



### If an ISP student is hospitalized, the Insurance will also cover:

- accommodations and meals at the standard level
- nursing services
- diagnostic and lab tests
- medications given in the hospital
- costs associated with surgery, including anesthesia and surgical supplies
- occupational, speech and physiotherapy
- dietary counselling

Before going to a doctor or clinic, please call this 24 hour number to open a claim:

**1-866-883-9787**

Additionally, if you require any mental wellness assistance call: **1-877-234-5327**

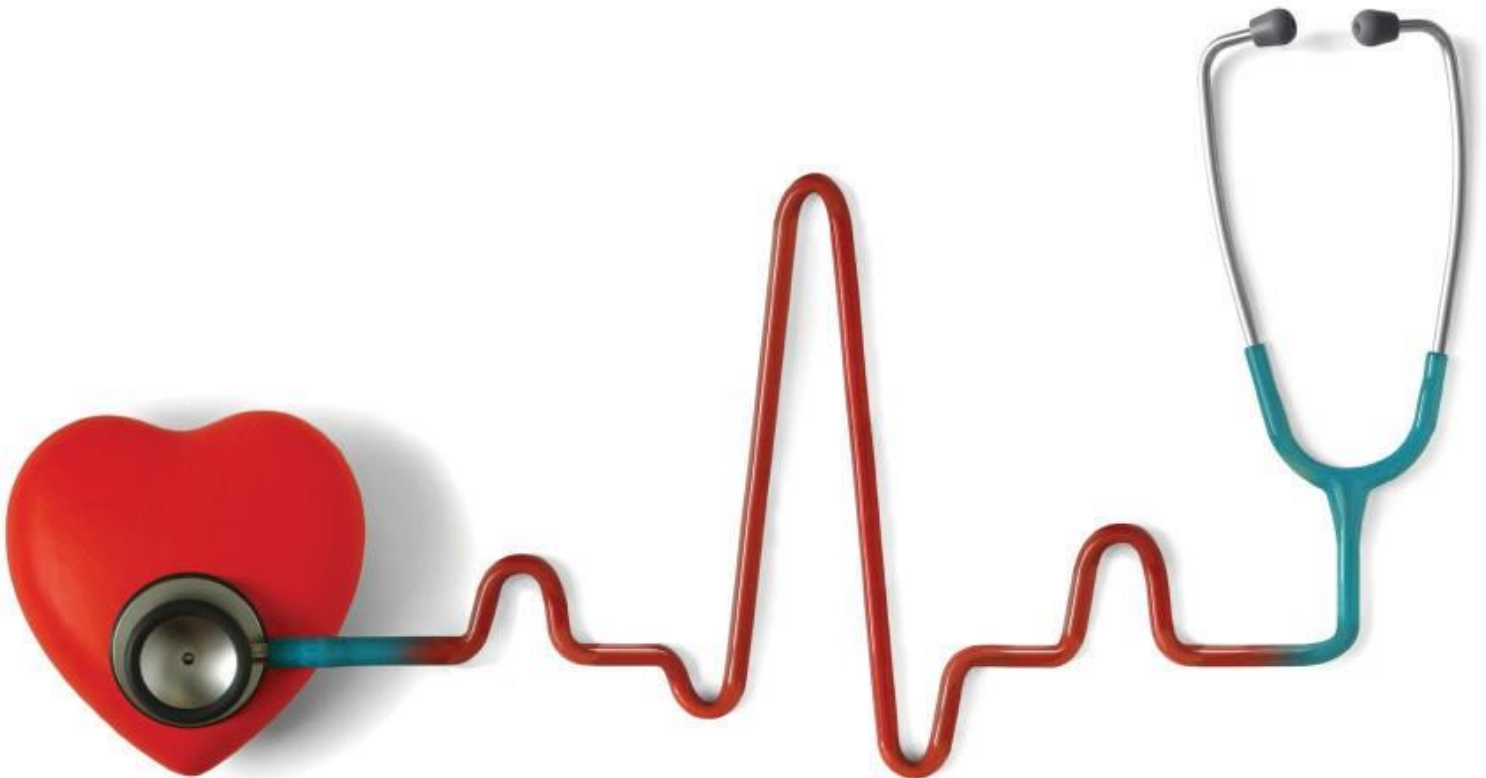
For more detailed information please visit: [www.studyinsured.com/pembinatrails](http://www.studyinsured.com/pembinatrails)





## ALL STUDENTS:

1. Students will receive a health insurance card from **Studyinsured** Insurance. Students should always keep this card in their wallet.
2. If students are looking for a clinic or hospital in their area, this information can be found at the **Studyinsured** website at [www.studyinsured.com/pembinatrails](http://www.studyinsured.com/pembinatrails). Under the “**Services**” tab, select “**Health Services, Find a Doctor**”, then select “**Find a Doctor**” and follow the steps. Type in “**Winnipeg**” for the city, the homestay family’s postal code, select the appropriate radius, select “**Clinic**” or “**Hospital**” and then enter the students’ Studyinsured Policy Number which is located on their International Student Health Insurance card (e.g. 237266). A map will appear that shows all of the locations in the area and there will also be a corresponding list on the left hand side. The list also specifies whether the clinic or hospital does direct billing to Studyinsured. If they direct bill, the student will not need to pay for services at the time of their visit, however if they do not direct bill, the student will be required to pay for services and then will be reimbursed by Studyinsured once the completed claim form has been submitted.
3. If students require assistance with completing an insurance claim submission, they should contact Studyinsured Insurance directly by emailing [helpline@studyinsured.com](mailto:helpline@studyinsured.com) or by calling 1.888.386.8888.
4. Health Links is a 24/7 medical help phone line. Whether students have a small medical question or a more immediate need, call 1.866. 833.9787. The caller may be required to leave a message and then a medical person (usually a nurse) will return the call.
5. In case of a medical emergency, dial 911.



# Travelling

Students are encouraged to explore and experience North American culture through travel during their stay in Winnipeg. **However, this travel should not interfere with academic studies and should be limited to designated school holiday periods.**

All independent travel outside of Winnipeg as defined below, and all travel with the homestay family that takes place outside of the province of Manitoba requires a completed and authorized **Permission to Travel form**.

## PERMISSION TO TRAVEL

1. All students must provide the International Student Program with a detailed itinerary of their travel plans including the names and addresses of those they will be travelling with and staying with during their travels. If travelling by air, students must also provide their flight itinerary.
2. A copy of the **Permission to Travel form** can be found on our website at: [www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp/](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp/), under the “**Homestay**” tab. It outlines the details of the information that we require. Once travel details have been completed on this form, it must be sent to the Homestay Coordinator or designate. **The completed form must be received at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled departure date.** The Homestay Coordinator or designate will send the completed form via email to the students’ biological parent(s) or agent for approval. Once the form has been authorized by students’ biological parent(s) it must be returned directly to the International Student Program office.
3. The International Student Program takes no responsibility for students’ actions taken on travel that has not been approved by the ISP. Furthermore, unapproved travel is a serious infraction of ISP rules and may result in removal from the program.

## INDEPENDENT TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF WINNIPEG

Independent travel is defined as travel outside of Winnipeg by ISP homestay students who are not accompanied by their homestay parent(s) or by a Pembina Trails School Division staff member. Independent travel outside of Winnipeg is only permitted if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. Students must discuss their travel plans with their homestay family **first**.
2. Absolutely no class time is to be missed.
3. All arrangements are the sole responsibility of the students. This includes transportation to and from the airport, bus terminal or train station.
4. Neither the students’ homestay family nor the Pembina Trails School Division can assume any responsibility during the students’ independent travel.
5. Students must be accompanied by at least one other travel companion who is 35 years of age or older or must have an adult who is at least 35 years old responsible for them at their destination. Each adult can only be responsible for one ISP student.
6. **The International Student Program office must have received a completed Permission to Travel form at least 5 business days prior to departure** so that the necessary signatures may be obtained in a timely manner.



## TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF CANADA

There are several important documents that students must have before travelling outside of Canada. Students must make arrangements to receive all required documents well in advance of their trip. These documents include, but may not be limited to:

- A valid passport from their country with an expiry date beyond 6 months of their return date.
- A **Multiple Entry Canadian Visitor Visa** may be required for students from many countries.
- If traveling to the USA, a **US Visa** (must be Category B1 or B2) is required for students from many countries.
- A **Permission to Travel Form** signed by the students' biological parent(s).
- An authorization letter (provided by the ISP), giving permission to the homestay family or other adult to take the students outside of Canada, signed by the students' biological parent(s).

If travel to the USA is by driving through the Emerson border crossing, the students may be required to complete an I-94 form. There is a small cost associated with this and the students will be fingerprinted. This form is valid for 6 months but **MUST be returned to US Customs before departing Canada**. Not returning this form prior to departure could result in the students not being allowed back into the USA.

Students from the following countries do **not** require a US Visa to travel to the USA due to the fact that their home country is part of the US Visa Waiver Program: Austria, Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain and Switzerland. To verify that there have not been any changes, please visit [www.immihelp.com/visa-waiver-program](http://www.immihelp.com/visa-waiver-program).





## PERMISSION TO TRAVEL

The **Permission to Travel** form is **not** required for:

1. Day field trips that are arranged by the Pembina Trails School Division within the Province of Manitoba (see **Important Note** below).
2. All travel with the students' homestay family within the Province of Manitoba or to the Lake of the Woods area.
3. Overnight field trips and/or field trips that take place outside of the Province of Manitoba that are arranged by the students' school. The permission forms issued by the school will be used in lieu of the **Permission to Travel** form in these cases.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Permission in these situations has been granted via the students' biological parent(s) signature on the ISP Student Application form.

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*

*Explore. Dream. Discover.*



# School Information

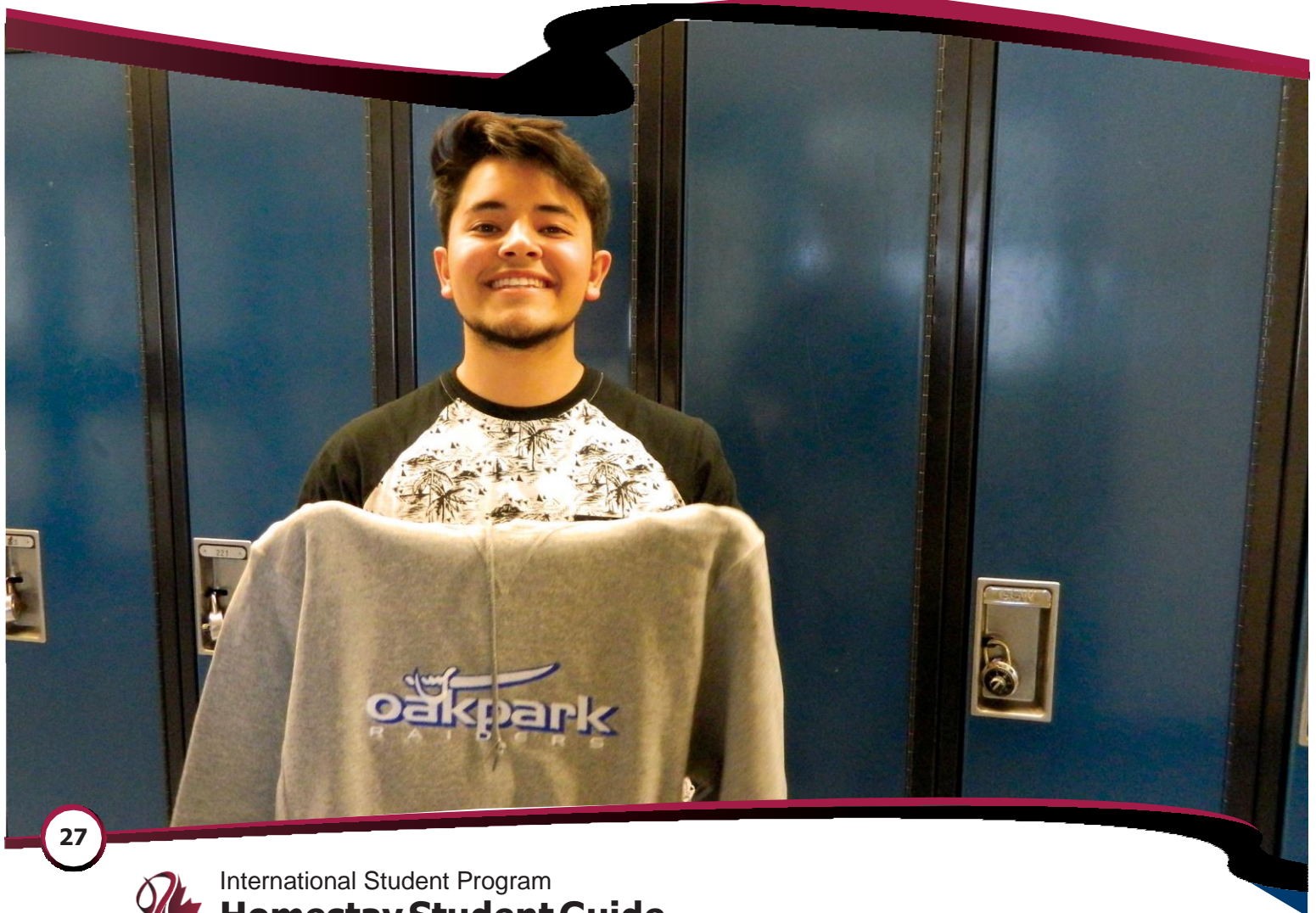
**Students will receive their timetables at their school orientation.** Should students require any changes to their timetables, they will need to speak with the designated person at their school.

School supplies required by students will depend on the courses they are enrolled in at school. If students have any questions about what supplies are needed, they should address this at their school orientation.

All students must take a minimum of 4 full credit courses. **If students wish to change or drop a course, the students and their teacher need to contact the ISP School Liaison Teacher for permission before the course is changed or dropped.** It is expected that each homestay family is aware of the course load that their students are taking. If students are having difficulties with a subject, the homestay family may wish to call the teacher on their students' behalf to arrange for help.

Regular school attendance is expected of all students participating in our International Student Program. Classes missed due to illness must be documented by either a note from the homestay family or from a doctor. If students are at home sick the homestay family must phone the school to advise them, otherwise it is considered an unexcused absence. The school will report unexcused absences to the homestay family. Excessive absences may result in loss of credit or removal from the International Student Program.

School Attendance Reports will be emailed to the students' homestay family by the ISP office. Report cards are also forwarded by the school office to the students' biological parent(s) and/or agents via email. Homestay families have the privilege of attending parent-teacher meetings to discuss the performance and progress of their international students.



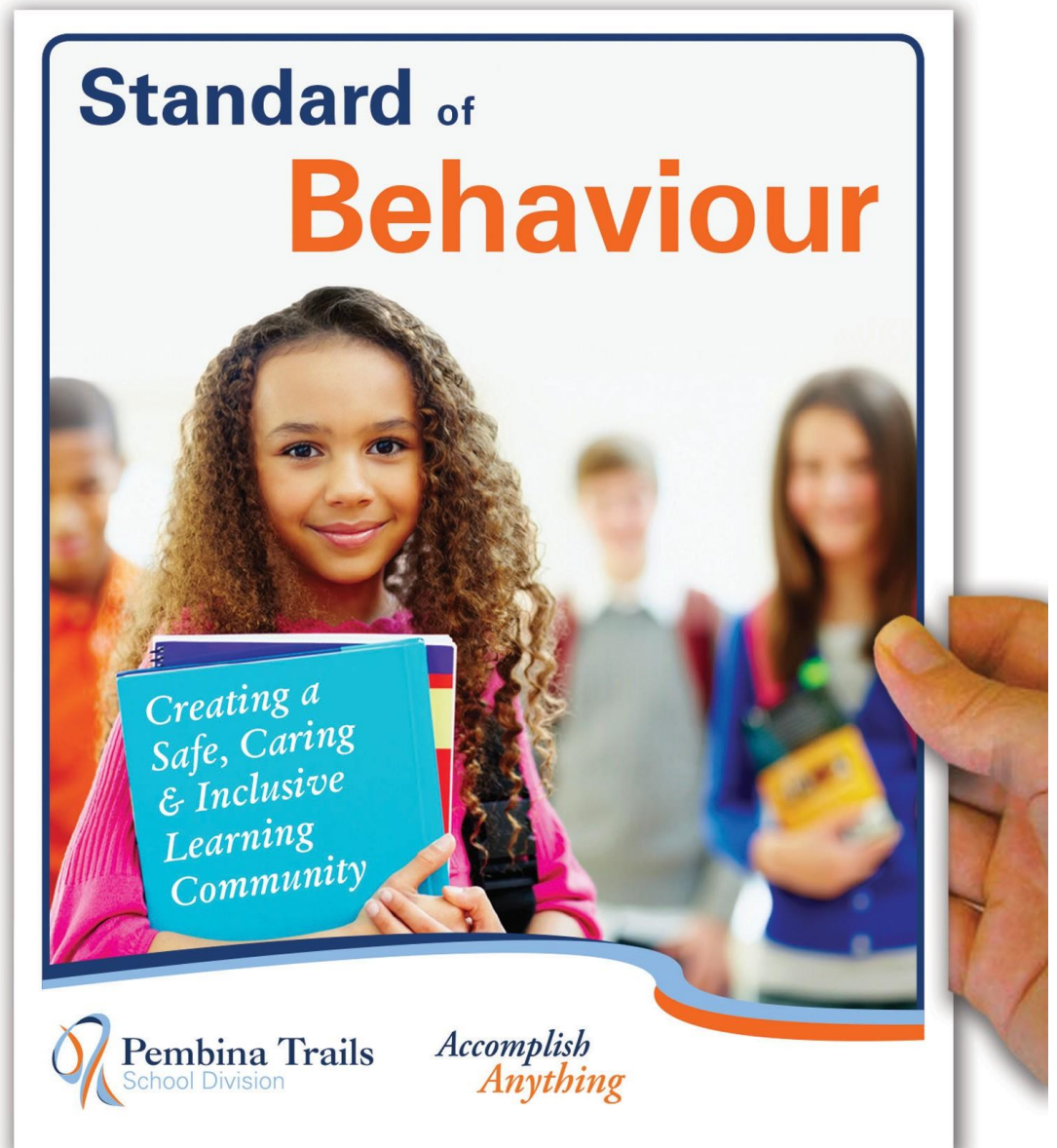


Students who require a transcript validation must pay the transcript validation fee as per the invoice generated by the ISP. All transcript validations are completed by the ISP and are subsequently sent to students upon completion of their program and after they have returned back home to their country. **Transcript validations may take up to 3 months to be processed and sent to the students, depending on the students' country of origin.**

All school textbooks must be returned to the school before students return home at the end of their program. **Students are not permitted to reschedule final exams for the purpose of departing early.**

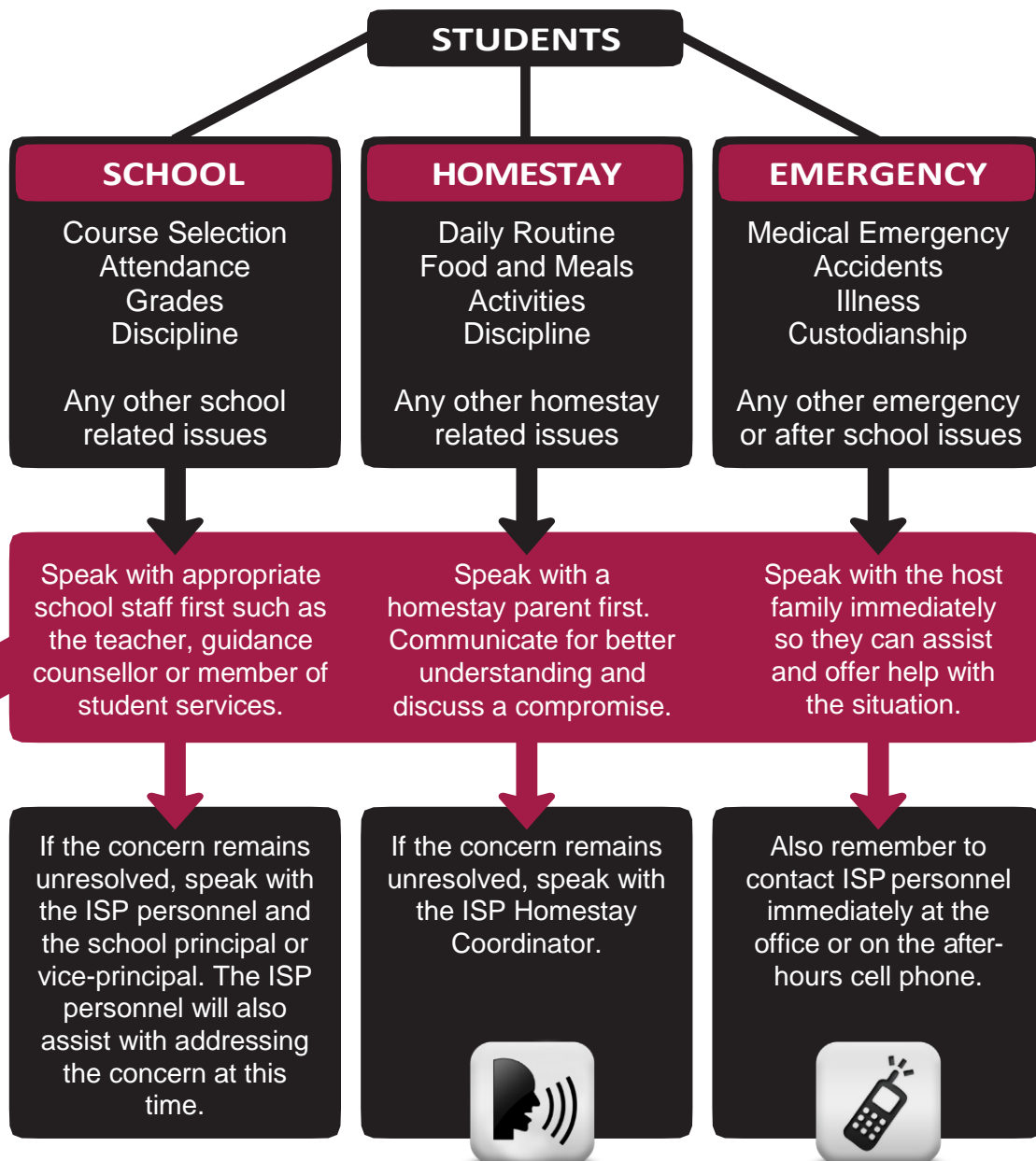
The Pembina Trails School Division's Standard of Behavior applies to all international students. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with this document. Please visit [www.pembinatrails.ca/Documents/Standard%20of%20Behaviour%20Brochure.pdf](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/Documents/Standard%20of%20Behaviour%20Brochure.pdf) for all the details.

The ISP School Liaison Teacher is available for support of students' issues pertaining to school. These issues include course selection, attendance, grades and discipline.





# Communication Protocol



Even if concerns are resolved without involving ISP personnel, it is still very important to keep them apprised of all concerns or issues. These communications are essential to help to ensure a positive experience for everyone involved.



**PLEASE REMEMBER:**

ISP personnel are always available to act as a liaison and assist students and homestay families if concerns arise.



# Contact Us

**P:** 204.488.1757  
**F:** 204.487.4021

**W:** [www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp)

## Admin. Office:

181 Henlow Bay  
Winnipeg, MB.  
R3Y 1M7 Canada

## Students should always talk to their homestay family first!

If students' concerns or questions are still not resolved, then students should phone or email a member of the ISP team.

**Any questions or concerns relating to students' arrangements should be brought to the attention of the Homestay Program personnel.**

## Contact us at:

### Paul Friesen, Homestay Facilitator

**P:** 204.488.1757 Ext. 1178

**E:** [pafriesen@pembinatrails.ca](mailto:pafriesen@pembinatrails.ca)

For emergencies AFTER regular office hours, please  
Phone: 204.793.7073.

### Donna Gray, Homestay Aide

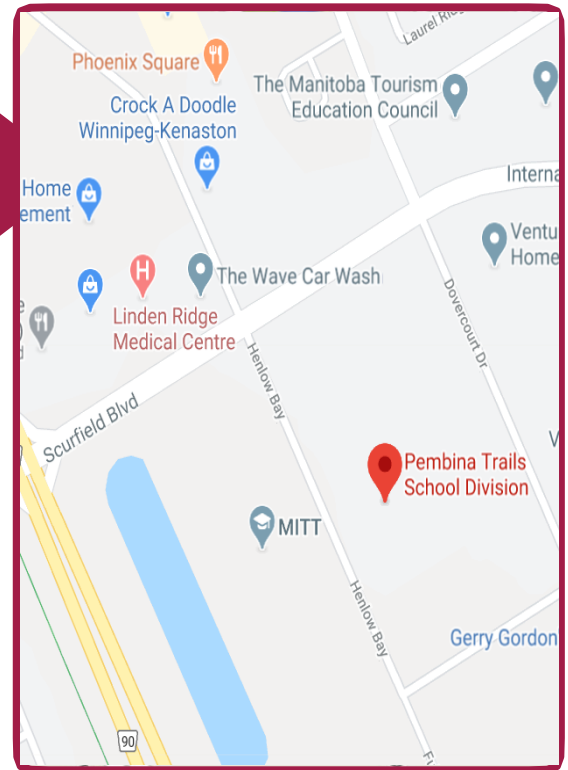
**P:** 204.488.1757 Ext. 1225

**E:** [dgray@pembinatrails.ca](mailto:dgray@pembinatrails.ca)

For any other questions or concerns, please contact **Tess Cordeiro, Director** by calling 204.488.1757 Ext. 1246 or via email at [tcordeiro@pembinatrails.ca](mailto:tcordeiro@pembinatrails.ca).

## EMERGENCIES

The International Student Program has dedicated a cell phone for homestay **emergencies only**. The cell phone number is 204.793.7073. It would be kindly appreciated if you would use the Homestay Coordinator's landline for all non-emergency matters at 204.488.1757 Ext. 1178.



## FOR SCHOOL ISSUES, CONTACT:

Your ISP School Liaison teacher, or

### Kyllikki Ruus, Assistant Director

**P:** 204.488.1757 Ext. 1182

**E:** [kruus@pembinatrails.ca](mailto:kruus@pembinatrails.ca)

## FOR FINANCIAL ISSUES, CONTACT:

Jennifer Liu, Accounting Clerk

**P:** 204.488.1757 Ext. 1176

**E:** [jenliu@pembinatrails.ca](mailto:jenliu@pembinatrails.ca)





Visit us at: [www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp/Homestay/Homestay-Program](http://www.pembinatrails.ca/affiliates/isp/Homestay/Homestay-Program)

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