



# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT 42 - MAPLE RIDGE & PITT MEADOWS

NEWSLETTER • AUGUST • 2025



Some of our MRSS graduates of 2025.

## COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

**Aug. 10-31** - Pre-Academic Program

**Aug. 28 - Sept. 1** - Student Arrivals

**Sept. 2** - Orientation Day 1:

Group 1 (MRSS, SRT, THSS)

Program Orientation at Riverside  
& Vancouver Welcome Tour

Group 2 (GSS, PMSS, WSS)

Orientation at Respective Schools  
- First Day of School for Elementary

**Sept. 3** - Orientation Day 2:

Group 1 (MRSS, SRT, THSS)

Orientation at Respective Schools  
Group 2 (PMSS, SRT, WSS)

Program Orientation at Riverside  
& Vancouver Welcome Tour

**Sept. 30** - Truth & Reconciliation Day

(No Classes)

- North Shore Water & Mountains  
Tour (Optional Field Trip)

**Oct. 10** - Non-Instructional Day

(No Classes)

**Oct. 13** - Thanksgiving Day (No Classes)

**Oct. 24** - Non-Instructional Day

(No Classes)

- Victoria 1-Day Sightseeing Tour  
(Optional Field Trip)

## BACK TO SCHOOL 2025

We would like to extend our warmest welcome to our new and returning students and homestay families. Thank you for joining us for the 2025-2026 school year!

## ORIENTATION DAYS

Please pay close attention to which **group** your student is in for orientation as they must attend the correct locations on September 2 & 3. We will email the detailed schedule including pick-up and drop-off times to both homestay families and students in the coming weeks. Orientation is for new students only. Returning students from last year will go to their respective schools starting September 2. Students who attended the Pre-Academic program but are new to the District must attend. Traffic will be busy on these days so please plan accordingly. The drop-off zone at the front of Riverside Centre is one-way traffic; there is only 1 entrance and 1 exit (arrows are painted on the cement for direction).



WSS Wildcat welcomed students at our February 2025 orientation.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



## AIRPORT PICK-UP

Please be in contact with your student prior to their flight. A simple introduction goes a long way to help them feel more comfortable when meeting you at the airport. Exchange phone numbers so they can inform you of any delays or that they have landed. Let them know who to expect to greet them at the airport. Our office includes a welcome sign in the email sent to you confirming their arrival details – this can be printed and brought along to help them recognize you. Remember to check your student's [flight status online](#) before leaving for the airport in case there have been any delays.

## ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Students are expected to attend all classes and finish the year off strong. **This includes attending TA and open blocks at Thomas Haney.** It is important to inform the school if a student will be absent or late so they can be excused. Students must speak with their liaison and teachers to complete all work missed when absent.

### If students are unavoidably late or absent, the following procedures apply:

- Students who arrive to school late are required to sign in at the office.
- Students who leave the school during the school day must sign out at the office. Confirmation (note or phone call) from a host parent granting permission is required.
- If illness causes a student to miss school, **the host parent needs to excuse the absence by notifying the school** (email/portal/phone call) by 8:30am. Our office can not log school absences.
- Students who participate in extra-curricular events should notify the school before the event of their absence.

Excessive unexcused absences and/or late arrivals will result in school-based intervention. If absences persist, students may be placed on an International Education Performance Contract.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

School fees, including locks and textbooks, are covered for international students. Supplies for elementary students are taken care of by their agencies. Secondary students should be prepared to start school with basic supplies:

- 1 or 2 binders
- lined paper and/or notebooks
- pencils, pens, eraser, highlighter, ruler
- graphic calculator (for math & sciences)
- P.E. clothing & shoes



Giulia G. (Italy) & Carlotta F.R. (Spain) hiking in Squamish with their host mom and sibling.

## PARENT PORTAL

Host parents are connected to the parent portal automatically to stay informed about upcoming school events. For school field trips (*different than the optional trips offered to international students*) you will need to confirm your student would like to attend via the portal. This will trigger a notification to our department to authorize the trip as the legal custodian. Your email in the portal must match what we have on file. If your email address has changed, please contact your homestay coordinator with an update. To access your parent portal account, click [here](#).

## COMMUNICATIONS

Our International Department is committed to providing support to all homestay parents and students in our program. We believe in clear, open, and consistent communication. In most cases, minor conflict between a student and host family member can be worked out with a solution that is of mutual benefit. If the issue persists despite your efforts, please do not hesitate to contact your homestay coordinator for support in a timely manner. They can act as a mediator and help build or improve the relationship with the goal to come to a resolution. You can also access our online [Health & Wellness Guidelines and resources here](#) to help support your student(s) through the challenges of acculturation stress, homesickness, and other mental health concerns. We appreciate your efforts to approach conflict in a calm manner, as teens can test boundaries from time to time.

## HOMESTAY COORDINATORS

### **CECILIA JEONG**

SUN-THURS 604-349-9951  
cecilia\_jeong@sd42.ca  
MRSS

### **JOY JIN**

SUN-THURS 604-353-8823  
joy\_jin@sd42.ca  
GSS, PMSS

### **YURI KIMURA**

TUES-SAT 778-846-6231  
yuri\_kimura@sd42.ca  
SRT, THSS

### **SACHIKO TAKAHASHI**

TUES-SAT 604-880-6338  
sachiko\_takahashi@sd42.ca  
WSS

### **MICHELLE DU**

CASUAL 604-516-9531  
michelle\_du@sd42.ca



## HOMESTAY UPDATES

- 1.) Please advise your Homestay Coordinator of any changes to your family or home such as pets, family members moving in/out, dietary restrictions, ability to accommodate allergies, large renovation plans, contact information updates etc. We appreciate you disclosing any frequent visitors to the home, such as a partners who do not live in the home permanently, so there are no surprises to students and/or parents.
- 2.) We are happy to announce monthly host fees have increased from \$1150 per month to \$1200 per month, per student, effective July 1, 2025!
- 3.) The BC Ministry of Education's K-12 Homestay Guidelines have been updated. Please take a moment to review them on our website [here](#).
- 4.) Our **homestay family referral program** is still in effect! If you have friends, relatives, neighbours, or coworkers living within our district who would make a good host family, please refer them to us through your homestay coordinator. Once we successfully onboard the referred family and place a student, you will receive a \$100 PC gift certificate as a thank you!



August 2024's Pre-Academic group exploring Vancouver on one of their first field trips.



## MEDICAL INSURANCE

Please contact your Homestay Coordinator if your student has been injured or unusually ill. It is important to communicate this with our office so we can assist or follow up as needed.

International students are insured through StudyInsured, which allows us to provide better service and additional support to students and host families when dealing with medical issues. More information and helpful print-outs for Study Insured can be found online [here](#).

StudyInsured's online Virtual Health service connects students with doctors who can support them online with services available in multiple languages. 24 hour multilingual support is available through their INTREPID24/7 service. **For any medical needs that may arise, such as clinic or hospital visits, your first call should always be to their toll-free 24/7 medical help line: 1-866-883-9787.**

Students can also access free professional counselling and mental health assistance by phone at **1-833-646-1524**. Calls are completely private and will not be shared with our program, schools, parents, or the insurance company.

Full year students are registered for MSP after a 90 day wait period. An MSP number and BC Services Card will be provided to the student. It is very important that the student and/or host family do NOT change the mailing address for MSP. This could happen when taking the student to the hospital or doctor and they ask to confirm the student's address. Changing the address will cause invoices to be delivered to your home. Our office address should remain on file: 20575 Thorne Avenue, V2X 9A6.

**Hospital visits:** If your student requires x-rays, scans, or tests of any kind please have them request their medical records before leaving the hospital. This greatly simplifies and speeds up the insurance claim process.

If you have questions regarding insurance coverage, please reach out to your homestay coordinator or contact our office for assistance.

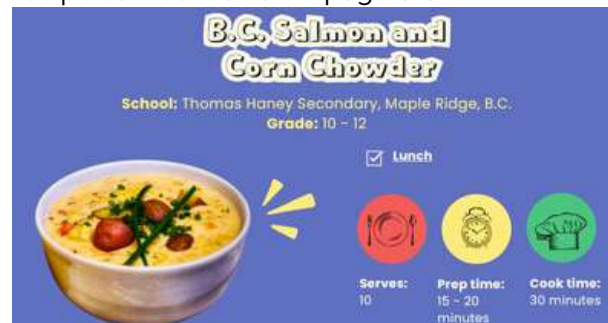
## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As a host family, you create the conditions for an optimal relationship with your student(s). This starts with the first impressions. One of the reasons host families pick students up in person from the airport upon arrival is that it sends a message to the student and their families that they are welcome from the start. A welcome sign or balloon is optional – more important is a warm smile and genuine connection. Students who feel well-supported will find it easier to deal with potential culture shock and homesickness. Here are some recommendations to keep in mind:

- Begin with trust and treat student as a member of the family
- Ensure student's bedroom and bathroom are clean and ready for use
- Show student the local places you love (eg: neighbourhood walk, park)
- Ensure student knows how to get to and from school
- Ensure student is connected with cell phone plan and bus pass if needed
- Bring student to the grocery store for a show/tell and to find out what they like
- Be prepared for homesickness and understand acculturation stress ([see attached pdf](#))
- Encourage peer relationships and connection to an extracurricular club or activity
- Eat sit-down dinners with your student on a regular basis

## RECIPE FEATURE

This month we are sharing an amazing new local resource: [The Great BC School Food Cookbook!](#) This cookbook showcases recipes submitted by schools all over BC using locally grown and/or sourced ingredients. Of special note is Thomas Haney Secondary's entry of Salmon and Corn Chowder, originally created for SD42's annual Chowder Competition! The recipe can be found on page 67.





## TIPS FOR WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTO YOUR HOME



*Welcoming an international student into your home can be challenging for host families. As exciting as the first days are, there is a period of adjustment as everyone learns how to connect and communicate effectively. Here are a few tips and guidelines to help ease the transition:*

### **GIVE YOUR STUDENT A TOUR OF YOUR HOUSE**

Make sure your student feels at home by giving them a tour of your entire home. Show them how to operate appliances and showers. Show them things they will need to know such as where the toilet paper and clean towels are, or which rooms they can bring food into.

### **EXPLAIN HOUSE RULES & EXPECTATIONS**

Setting clear expectations can help to prevent conflict in the future. It is helpful to explain your expectations at the beginning, though you may need to gently remind your student of these once they settle in.

### **BE FLEXIBLE WITH MEALS**

Be patient with your student as they adjust to the types of food and how your family regularly eats. Avoid turning food into another cause of stress as they may already be dealing with culture shock in so many other ways. Students are typically more willing to try new foods once things settle down. Adjusting to a new diet takes time both mentally and physically.

### **LET THEM REST**

Though you may be excited to take your students sightseeing and introduce them to others, try to take it easy when they first arrive. Students may be jet lagged and overwhelmed by their new surroundings and may just want to sleep or stay home. Give them time to rest and adjust in the beginning.

### **PATIENCE & COMMUNICATION**

No matter how great a student or host family is, there WILL be challenges! Being patient and continuing to work at the relationship will help you all get through it. Homestay Coordinators are here to help; remember to reach out to them when you need help working through things and stay in regular communication with them if you have any concerns about your student's well being.

### **GET THEM INVOLVED**

Your student may not know where or how to get involved with an extra-curricular activity or interest. Help them to get connected either at school or in the community by showing them where things are such as the Leisure Centre or gym. Schools have many after-school clubs and sport teams your student can join. Encourage your student to get involved by showing them the options on their school's website or by connecting them with school staff who can help.



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