

# Guidebook *for*

# International Students



Excellence in **Action**



*respect*

*responsibility*

*honesty*

*empathy*

*fairness*

*initiative*

*courage*

*integrity*

*perseverance*

*optimism*

**CHARACTER**

# WELCOME

... to the York Region District School Board, where *Character Matters*.

York Region District School Board (YRDSB) is one of Canada's leading providers of public education. We look forward to welcoming you to York Region and trust that you will enjoy your time in Canada, feel at home in your new community and have a successful learning experience at school.

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

### *Required Documents*

It is important that you collect and bring with you a number of documents to ensure a smooth registration:

- Education Services Agreement signed by parent/custodian
- Original Letter of Acceptance
- Your passport with your Study Permit
- Updated school report cards/transcripts
- Dictionary & Calculator

### *Clothing - What to Pack*

The climate in Ontario is characterized by four seasons: summer, fall, winter and spring. Each season brings frequent and abrupt changes in temperature. As a result we suggest a variety of clothing items to accommodate the fluctuations in temperature.

The temperature ranges from up to 34C during the summer to occasional lows of -20C in the winter.



Make sure to check [www.theweathernetwork.com](http://www.theweathernetwork.com) for comprehensive weather information before your departure so that you are dressed comfortably for your arrival to Canada.



Most Canadian students wear jeans, shirts, sweaters and sweatshirts to school. Although, shorts are permitted in the school environment, short-shorts, low-cut tops and other revealing articles of clothing are not permitted. If you arrive at school with inappropriate attire, parents or custodians may be contacted and you will be sent home.

Be sure to pack:

- casual clothes for daily wear
  - sweatshirts and sweaters
  - warm jacket
  - winter coat, scarf, gloves and winter hat
- 
- boots for the cold weather
  - lightweight waterproof jacket for spring and fall
  - walking shoes and running shoes
  - personal hygiene items (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.)
  - prescription medication
  - eye glasses and eye care requirements along with prescription

Other Suggestions:

- backpack to carry books to school
- digital camera
- pictures of your home and family
- special sport clothing (ski clothing, bathing suit)
- small gift to give to friends or host family
- clothing for special occasions
- traveller's cheques in Canadian dollars

# UPON ARRIVAL

## Orientation Program

To provide every secondary student with the best possible start, all new students are required to attend a two-week orientation program. The orientation is relevant to you as it will prepare you to adapt to your new home, school and community. As part of the first week's program, you will participate in the Math and English assessment. You are not able to register at your home school until the assessment is completed.

The selection of your courses and the appropriate placement in these courses is dependent on the Math and English assessments which will take place during the orientation program.

## SCHOOL LIFE

**Daily Schedule** – Classes begin at various times depending on the school you will be attending. The start/end times will be confirmed during the Orientation Program.

**Text Books** – The York Region District School Board supplies text books for all students on a loan basis. Students are financially responsible for lost or damaged text books. Final marks/report cards will not be issued if books are not returned.

**Attendance** – Daily attendance and punctuality are vital to the process of learning and essential for success in a course. If a student is absent, it is the responsibility of the student/guardian (if the student is under 18) to contact the attendance office and advise staff accordingly.



**Exams** – Time is set aside during each semester for exam scheduling. It is the student’s responsibility to know his/her exam schedule. On occasion, teachers may substitute the examination, with special project/presentations.

**Report Cards** – Students will receive a report card for every semester with the final term marks being distributed. Students should be aware that final exam marks are worth 30% of the overall mark and day to day classroom work/assignments make up 70% of the total mark. For this reason, it is imperative that full attendance, class participation and homework be priority to all students.

**Parent Interview Night** – Once the report cards are received, parents/custodians are invited and encouraged to attend the Interview Night. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the teacher and to discuss your academic progress and in some cases provide advice on what needs to be done for improvement.

## HOMESTAY PROGRAM

YRDSB Homestay Services makes every effort to ensure that students are provided with a safe and caring home environment. Our host families are carefully selected. Not only are they required to meet specific requirements, but families are interviewed on a personal basis by our homestay representatives. Students



in a homestay setting will meet with the homestay representative on a regular basis to ensure that the student/homestay family are comfortable with the existing arrangement. Once the interview is completed, a detailed report is given to the Homestay Coordinator.

If you have any concerns contact our Homestay Coordinator at 905.884-2046 ext. 254, or by e-mail [homestay@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:homestay@yrdsb.edu.on.ca). An emergency toll-free number is available 24 hours per day 1.866.694.1323

## YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD CUSTODIANSHIP

If you have appointed York Region District School Board as your *Custodian* while you study in York Region, you will be under the York Region District School Board's guardianship for the time you spend in Canada.

Throughout the school year designated staff will be visiting your school on a regular basis to monitor your academic progress. You may discuss any concerns that you have with them during these visits.

The Liaison Officer will be the contact person between the school and your parents about issues regarding your academic learning, behaviour, attendance or any other issue that may require attention.

Should you have any questions or concerns Liaison Officer can be reached by telephone at 905.884.2046 ext. 245, through the direct line at 416.315.8986 or by e-mail [international.liaison@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:international.liaison@yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

## OTHER INFORMATION

**Cell Phone Use** – In Ontario there are a number of major cell phone providers. Each communication company offers a wide range of options, unfortunately the cost tends to be very high with additional incurred costs for overseas calling. A more convenient way of communication is by using the “calling card” which is available for purchase at most convenience stores, drug marts and grocery stores. The calling card appears to be the choice of most international students. Pay telephones are readily available at a cost of \$.50 for local calls with some phones allowing credit card payments.



**Banking** – As an international student of York Region District School Board, you will have the option of opening an account with one of the many banks in Canada. If you wish to begin the process of opening an account before arriving in Canada, please contact the International Banking Centre of your local bank. In most cases, to open an account you will need:

- primary ID (e.g. valid passport)
- secondary ID (e.g. driver's licence, credit card, national/student ID)
- official Letter of Acceptance from YRDSB
- valid Study Permit

Canadian major banks include: Royal Bank of Canada, Scotia Bank, Bank of Montreal, Canadian Imperial Bank of Canada, and TD/Canada Trust. Other banks which have headquarters outside of Canada include: Citibank Canada, HSBC Bank, ING Bank, ICICI Bank, Korea Exchange Bank, etc.

**Transportation** – The majority of students take advantage of the York Region Transit system to move around. VIVA Service runs every fifteen minutes or less, seven days per week. Monthly passes, discounted sets of ten-tickets and single ride fares can be purchased from MultiRide machines located in all terminals. For additional information, please visit [www.yrt.ca](http://www.yrt.ca) or [www.vivayork.com](http://www.vivayork.com) or connect with your school VIVA representative.

Other connecting services are Toronto Transit Commission ([www.ttc.ca](http://www.ttc.ca)) which offers bus, streetcar and subway (metro) service in Toronto. Go Transit ([www.gotransit.com](http://www.gotransit.com)) offers short-distance regional train and bus service within the Greater Toronto Area.

## INTERNET – (CYBERSPACE SAFETY)

Gathering information (often for school), playing games, participating in chat rooms and posting to online message boards are popular activities for Web surfers.



The Internet has brought many benefits, but it has also raised some safety concerns such as the potential for crime and predators. The Canada Safety Council recommends that you follow the following rules:

- Do not give out any personal information. This includes name, phone number, address, e-mail, location of your school, telephone numbers credit card numbers and pictures. This goes for anywhere on the Internet, including e-mail, chat rooms, news groups - even web sites that promise you free stuff or prizes, or on Web pages that you create yourself.
- When using the Internet, do not make reference to your name or nickname that would reveal that you are male or female.
- Do not make arrangements to meet individuals unless you are accompanied by friends and even then be wary.
- Do not send insulting or rude message to anyone online. This is called “flaming” and it is definitely not good Netiquette.
- A wise decision would be not to open e-mail, files, links, pictures or games from individuals that are not known to you.

## FUN THINGS TO DO IN YORK REGION

York Region has many opportunities for growth and discovery in the range of cultural, sporting, outdoor, entertainment, shopping and dining. Here are just a few to choose from:

Canada's Wonderland – Canada's largest amusement park  
[www.canadaswonderland.com](http://www.canadaswonderland.com)

NASCAR SpeedPark – race-themed amusement park  
[www.NASCARSpeedPark.com](http://www.NASCARSpeedPark.com)

The Wave Pool – York Region's first and only indoor wave pool  
[www.richmondhill.ca](http://www.richmondhill.ca)

McMichael Canadian Art Collection – Art Gallery of famous Group of Seven, First Nations and Inuit artists  
[www.mcmichael.com](http://www.mcmichael.com)

Black Creek Pioneer Village – Discover life in rural Ontario in the 1860's  
[www.blackcreek.ca](http://www.blackcreek.ca)

The Kortright Centre for Conservation - is Ontario's premier environmental and renewable energy education and demonstration centre.  
[www.kortright.org](http://www.kortright.org)

Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts – celebrates 20 years of award winning professional entertainment. It also promotes community and educational performances and arts programs.  
[www.markham.ca](http://www.markham.ca)

Vaughan Mills – 250 store mecca combines fashion, outlets, dining and entertainment  
[www.vaughanmills.com](http://www.vaughanmills.com)

Pacific Mall – The largest Chinese indoor mall  
[www.pacificmalltoronto.com](http://www.pacificmalltoronto.com)

Additional tourism information can be found by visiting  
[www.yorktourism.com](http://www.yorktourism.com)

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Some telephone numbers to keep handy:

### **International Education Services**

General Admissions: 905.883-2046 ext 243

admissions@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

### **Homestay Coordinator**

905.884.2046 ext. 254

Emergency toll-free telephone 1.866.694.1323 (available 24/7)

homestay@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

### **International Student Liaison Officer**

905.884.2046 ext. 245

Direct line: 416.315.8986

international.liaison@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

### **Ingle International Student Medical Insurance**

1.800.663.0399 (24-hour claim emergency line)

<http://www.inglestudents.com/york>

### **Police/Fire**

911 - To be used in case of emergency only. When connected, inform the emergency operator of the reason for the call and answer all questions correctly.

In cases of emergency, timing is of the essence.





International Education Services  
York Region District School Board  
Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning  
36 Regatta Ave.,, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3E3  
T 905.883.3434



[www.yrdsb-international.ca](http://www.yrdsb-international.ca) | [international.education@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:international.education@yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

