

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. How does a student apply to study in Surrey School District?**

Applying is simple and there is no application fee required. In order for an application to be considered it must be submitted and accompanied by the student's last 2 years of school records (translated into English) and a copy of the student's passport. The documents can be faxed, emailed or dropped at our office. A copy of the application can be found here: <http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/Index.html>

**2. Can students enrol more than once per year?**

Yes. Surrey has two intakes each school year. Elementary students (Grades K-7) can start in September or January and Secondary students (Grades 8-12) can start in September or February.

**3. When will applications to study in Surrey be accepted?**

Applications for September are accepted between February 15 and May 31 and applications for January or February are accepted between October 15 and November 30.

**4. Can students choose the school they want to attend?**

Yes. Students can apply to study at his/her choice of school if there is space at that school. When necessary, and in very few cases, the Surrey School District reserves the right to change school assignment where student accommodation is not within school boundary area and/or to conform with provincial government class size policy.

**5. How do you determine which grade a student will be placed in?**

Elementary (Grades K-7) students are placed in the grade that corresponds with his/her year of birth and Secondary (Grades 8-12) students are placed according to the last completed courses in his/her home country.

**6. After submitting the application, when and how will the student find out if he/she has been accepted?**

A decision is made within two-four business days if we receive all the necessary documents with an application. These documents are listed on Page 1 of the Application form and include: the completed and signed application form, two years of school records (translated into English), and a copy of the student's passport. A Confirmation of Acceptance (COA) letter will be sent confirming acceptance at the school for the length of study. The COA is an invoice and will detail grade and school placement and how much the tuition fees will be and accepted methods of payment.

**7. Is there a fee to apply to the Surrey School District?**

No. Unlike most international programs, Surrey School District does not charge an application fee.

**8. When are the tuition fees due to be paid?**

Tuition fees must be paid within two weeks of receiving the Confirmation of Acceptance Letter. If the tuition fees are not paid, we will remove the student's name from the enrolment list for the school they have requested.

**9. When do I receive my Official Letter of Acceptance (LOA)?**

You will only receive your Official Letter of Acceptance once the application process is complete with all supporting documentation received and full payment has been received.

**10. What are the approved methods of payment?**

Tuition must be paid by certified cheque, bank draft, money order (payable to Surrey School District) or via wire transfer (contact International Education Department for instructions). Credit/debit cards, cash and personal/business cheques cannot be accepted.

**11. Which secondary schools in Surrey are on the semester system?**

All Secondary schools in Surrey are on the semester system. Students take four courses from September until the end of January and then take four different courses from February until June. This allows for students to enrol in Surrey twice each school year.

**12. Are Surrey and White Rock the same school district?**

Yes. The largest district in the province of British Columbia, Surrey School District represents all public schools in the cities of Surrey and White Rock.

**13. Can the Surrey School District be the student's Custodian?**

No. All fee-paying international students (other than those living with a parent) studying within the Surrey School District are required to appoint a Custodian by way of a notarized declaration. While the District does not provide this service, students can either choose their own custodian (family friend, relative, etc) or for a list of companies that provide this and other related services can be found here:

<http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/CustodianServiceProviders.pdf>

**14. What are the requirements of a Custodian?**

A Custodian must be 25 years of age or older and be a Permanent Resident or Canadian Citizen. There are several other important requirements of a Custodian and a detailed list can be found here: <http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/CustodianRequirements.pdf>

**15. If a student is living with a parent is a Custodian required?**

No. Students living with at least one parent for the duration of their term of study do not require a Custodian.

**16. How is a Custodian appointed?**

Once you have determined who your Custodian will be, that person must be identified with notarized documents. The parent(s) must complete a form assigning the responsibility to the Custodian and the Custodian must complete a form accepting that responsibility. Both forms must be notarized (by the parents in home country and by the Custodian in Canada) and copies must be given to the International Education Department. The standard forms issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada can be found here:

<http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/CustodianParentDeclar.pdf>.

**17. What if a Custodian or parent will be away or what if he/she is not available to register a student at school?**

If a Custodian or parent will be away or unavailable for any length of time, he/she must contact the International Education Department to request a form to assign temporary Custodianship.

This form is to be completed and will assign temporary Custodianship of the student for the duration of time the Custodian or parent will be away or unavailable.

**18. Is there a difference between a Custodian and a Guardian?**

Yes. The legal term 'Guardian' is often misunderstood. A Guardian is usually the biological parent of a child. Sometimes, a Guardian is an adult who has legally adopted a child in the BC Courts. If another adult is asked by a parent to take care of their child during their time of study in Canada, this adult is a 'Custodian', not a 'Guardian'.

**19. Does Surrey have a Homestay Department?**

No. The Surrey School District does not provide homestay accommodation, but refers students to a homestay service provider for assistance. A list of providers and the languages in which they offer their services can be found here:

<http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/HomestayInformation.pdf>

**20. At what age can a student live in homestay and study in Surrey without a parent residing here?**

Students in Grade 6 or older are permitted to live in homestay. Students in Grade 5 or younger must be accompanied by a parent or reside with a close relative such as an aunt or grandmother.

**21. How many international students can live in a homestay?**

A 'best practice' of the Surrey School District is that no more than two international students live in one homestay.

**22. If a student changes his/her Custodian or homestay or receives a new Study Permit, how is this information updated?**

Any changes in Custodian or homestay need to be communicated through the International Education Department. All documents such as new proof of address, Custodian Declaration forms or Study Permit must also be submitted for copying. The International Education staff will take copies and share this information with the school.

**23. What does Proof of Address mean?**

Proof of Address, or Proof of Homestay, is defined by Surrey School District as either a utility bill (hydro, gas, cable) OR a tenancy, rental or property purchase agreement. All students whether international, Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident are required to submit a proof of address.

**24. Is a Study Permit required for study 6 months or less?**

Yes. All students studying in Surrey School District for 4 months or longer require a valid Study Permit.

**25. Who applies for a student's Study Permit?**

The Custodian, agent or parent is responsible for applying for a student's Study Permit. Information about applying for a Study Permit including forms and an instruction guide can be found here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/student.asp>

**26. Why does Surrey School District arrange medical insurance and what are details of coverage?**

For the protection and safety of all international students, Surrey must arrange the medical insurance. According to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, all students studying in British Columbia for longer than three months must enrol in the Medical Services Plan (MSP). Because students are not eligible for MSP in the first three months, Surrey has arranged a private insurance policy through Guard Me: StudentGuard. The policy can be viewed in several different languages here: <http://www.guard.me/studentguard/policies.php>. After three months of study the International Education staff will automatically enrol international students with MSP and the card will be mailed directly to the student. More information can be found here: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/infoben/faqs.html>.

**27. After the student arrives does he/she also need to register at the school?**

Yes. All students must report to the school prior to the first day of classes to complete the school's registration process.

**28. Can a homestay parent who is not the Custodian register a student at school?**

No. Only the registered Custodian can register a student at the school. The Custodian can temporarily assign the homestay to act on behalf of the Custodian, but will require a form provided by the International Education Department. The completed form is then sent to the International Educational Department who will then forward this form to the school.

**29. Upon arrival, is there an ESL assessment and what are the results used for?**

Yes. All students in Secondary (Grades 8-12) must complete an ESL assessment prior to registering at the school and selecting courses. The assessment will determine the level of ESL support required and help the school determine which courses are appropriate for the student to enrol in. Students in Elementary (Grades 1-7) can register and start school as long as an ESL assessment is conducted prior to school starting or within the first two weeks of classes. The assessment will determine the level of ESL support that the school will need to provide in order to support the child.

**30. How does a Secondary student (Grades 8-12) choose his/her courses?**

Upon completion of the ESL Assessment all Secondary school students will then register at their assigned school and will be given an appointment with an Academic Advisor (Counsellor) who will work with the student to determine courses that meet his/her academic needs.

**31. When an international student graduates in BC will they receive the same high school diploma as a BC resident?**

Yes. International students who successfully complete all requirements receive a graduation diploma known as the BC Dogwood Diploma: the same one awarded to local secondary students. A complete outline of the graduation requirements for international students is available here: [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/international\\_grad\\_credit.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/international_grad_credit.htm)

**32. Does Surrey have short term programs during the regular school year?**

No. Due to limited space in classes, Secondary students must enrol for a minimum of one semester (September – January or February – June). Elementary students must enrol for a minimum of one term (September – December or January – June).

**33. How many international students are enrolled in each school?**

Surrey limits the number of international students to 5% of the school population, with the average being 1-2% in most elementary schools.

**34. What is the Refund Policy?**

Surrey School District includes a detailed refund policy as part of the application form which can be found here: <http://www.sd36.bc.ca/general/InternationalEd/Index.html>  
See the last page of the form for details.