

# HomestayNews

December 2023 • The Holiday Season is Already Upon Us!

**T**he holiday season is already upon us! Thank you and Happy Holidays from all of us at International Student Programs. We are grateful for the experiences and opportunities you provide to students from around the world - students choosing to spend the holiday season in Canada, away from their family and friends at home.

## *Student Voice - Daniel*

My name is Daniel and I am from Cuenca in Ecuador. I am spending a semester of my last year of high school in Delta, British Columbia, Canada. I go to North Delta Secondary School.

I am very happy because my host family has treated me very well and has always supported me in everything.



The school classes are excellent. My favorite class is English Studies. The work we do is very enriching, increases my level of English, and allows me to learn new things. I want to thank the Delta School District International Programs and invite everyone to have an amazing experience as I am having!

## *Students Leaving in Late January*

Quick reminder to check with your January departure students about their return flights. If there is conflicting information, please reach out. Remember to go over the student's room together and check for any damage or forgotten items.

**Conversation Starter Topic:**  
**What is your favorite holiday (any holiday) meal?**

## **Holiday Season Planning, Family Meals, and Gift Giving**

December is a busy month for many of us. There are many activities taking place and we can find ourselves running here and there more than usual.

It is a great idea to have a dinner table conversation with your student and discuss the plans and activities for the season with them. It would be a great preview for them to see what is planned and also to add their own opinion, request, idea, etc.. Also, please explain the expectations, in advance, around attendance at family events.

Family meals are a universal holiday pastime. Many students may be missing that feeling of a big family meal. They may also not know that is how they are feeling or not communicating it effectively. It could lead to the impression that they are not doing great and are feeling homesick. Letting them know the plans for the season and even asking what they might want to contribute to the family meal would be wonderful.

Additionally, the holiday season is one for gift giving in many cultures. It is also a good idea to have a conversation with your student around the culture of gift giving and receiving in your home. Suggestions around price limits can be useful. It will help them better understand the way your family celebrates the holidays as well as ensuring they don't purchase gifts that they shouldn't have.

As always, please reach out with any questions.

## Delta ISP January Activity - Vancouver Canucks Game

With the enormous amount of interest in the November 28<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Canucks game, Brent secured an additional 100 tickets for a game in January.



We will head back to Rogers Arena on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The students on the waiting list from the November Canucks game have been emailed a few times with the offer of first choice for the January game.

There are still some spots available. If your student wants to go, and did not go to the November game, please have them email [Brent](#).

If there are still open spots in January, mass emails will be sent out again to all students, including those who went in November.

## Ski Friends and Skiing over Winter Break

We have heard from a few students looking for ski buddies. We will be trying to connect them so they can enjoy some skiing together on the North Shore mountains this winter. The students looking for ski buddies are typically higher level / ability skiers.

The friends those students have made are also interested in skiing, but are less experienced or not experienced at all. If your student is an avid skier and is looking for people to go to the mountain with this winter, please reach out to your Homestay Coordinator and we can try to connect them. There is a good section in the Homestay Handbook with wording around ski daytrips for international students and their friends.

## Holiday Lights

Candy Cane Lane in Ladner (55A Street) is always a good choice for seeing lovely lights. This [article from the Delta Optimist](#) is from last year but will still be largely accurate.

Please post on our Facebook page with any other locations you feel are worth a visit.

## Travel

Contact [Brent](#) so we can get the documentation and permission in place before your trip!

Please let us know early about travel plans. Driving to the US requires an [ESTA](#) and [I-94 form](#). Not all nationalities can visit the US freely. We will prepare a travel letter to the US, even for day trips, with your international student.

If you are planning a day trip, please let us know. The same documentation is not required if staying in Canada, but because Karen Symonds, the Program Director, is the custodian for the majority of our students, we do need to know where they are travelling to outside of the Lower Mainland. It allows us to stay in the loop and be ready to assist if the need arises.

## *Free Events (and others) to Enjoy in December and During Winter Break*

A big thank you to homestay parent Liz S for sharing this list of events to enjoy in December.

**Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> to Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>:** Burnaby Village Museum  
"Heritage Christmas" 6501 Deer Lake Ave, Burnaby.  
Gate admission is free. Carousel rides are \$2.52. Check website for hours of operation and parking.

**Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> to the end of February:** Lafarge Lake (from dusk to 10:00pm) Town Centre Park - 1299 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam.

**Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> to Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>:** "The Bright Nights Train" at Stanley Park (4:00pm to 10:00pm; free parking; entrance by donation to the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund). Train tickets are sold out but you can still visit the lights

**Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> to Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>:** Bright Walk in White Rock - Kick off event @ 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Memorial Park at the Waterfront

### **Ticketed events to do around Vancouver**

**Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>:** Martini Town Film Studios in Langley. 9390 198 St. Langley, BC. Step into a world of movie magic and indulge in a unique holiday "Christmas wonderland" experience, where over 12 Hallmark movies have been filmed. Tickets are sold for specific arrival time slots but you can stay as long as you like. [martinievents.ca](http://martinievents.ca)

**Now until Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>:** Capilano Suspension Bridge "Canyon Lights" (11:00am to 9:00pm). 3735 Capilano Rd., North Vancouver. Free Shuttle from several locations (Canada Place is one of them) [capbridge.com](http://capbridge.com)

## *Study Insured - ER Billing Steps*

A trip to the Emergency Room (ER) is stressful enough without worrying about payment and billing.

If you have to take your student to the ER, please let us know right away. Additionally, have them bring their Study Insured Policy and Study Permit (if they have one). Students should know if they are on MSP and have their BC Health Card. When you arrive at the ER, have them state they are an international student. It will change the billing if they are not on MSP. Give our office address to the staff:

**4585 Harvest Drive, Delta, BC, V4K 5B4**

Students should not have to pay at the ER, even if they are not on MSP. The bill will either be given in person at the time or mailed to our office. Delta Hospital is much better at this than Surrey Memorial.

Students are able to claim the expense through their Study Insured insurance without having to first make payment.

To do so, they complete the [Medical Claim Form](#) on the [dashboard website](#) and submit it, along with a scan of the bill.

Once approved, Study Insured will reply with an image of the cheque they will be sending to Fraser Health (or the local Health Authority if it the ER visit took place somewhere else). Questions about the claim should go to their toll free number:

**1-866-883-9787**

## Home Insurance

Updating your home insurance (home owner's / renter's) to properly reflect that you are hosting an international student is important.

It has come up a handful of times this fall where insurance companies are contacted regarding accidental damage to the home and they are in the dark about who is in the home.

If you rent, please inform your landlord that there is a Delta School District International student in your home. They can contact our office if they need confirmation that hosting a student does not mean profit or subletting.

Our staff can provide them with details about the program and the payment host parents receive being remuneration for their services and not rent or income.

## Homestay Referral Gift Card

We are still actively recruiting more homestay families. If you refer a family who completes the application process and is able to host a student, you will receive a \$100 referral incentive gift card.

## Epic Rides - Whistler

Whistler is a big name for many students. They have it on their "Canada Experience Bucket List."

Students cannot go to Whistler on their own. Even for daytrips, they must be accompanied by an approved adult aged 25+. A great option for a trip to Whistler with visiting family members or with homestay parents is by using [Epic Rides](#).

*Epic Rides*

The locally owned company provides direct transportation from Burrard Station to the Whistler Village Bus Loop. Round trip tickets are just \$44 plus tax.

### Homestay Handbook

We have uploaded a working version of our [Homestay Handbook](#). We are continuing to make adjustments and edits to it. Please review it on our website and reach out to your Homestay Coordinator if you have any questions.

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Our dedicated team of Homestay Coordinators are here to support you. Feel free to reach out to them.

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