



SAANICH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM (SISP)

2026-2027 Student Arrival Guide

“Transforming lives and communities through intercultural experiences”

Territorial Acknowledgement

SISP acknowledges with great respect the W̱SÁNEĆ People on whose traditional territory we live, learn, teach and work. The W̱SÁNEĆ People have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial and their historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Introduction

Hello and a warm welcome from the Team at the Saanich International Student Program (SISP)!

SISP oversees and supports all international students in the Saanich School District, on beautiful Vancouver Island. SISP is committed to ensuring each international student has the most enriching experience possible. We strive to provide a caring, safe, and culturally rich environment in schools, homestays and the community.

Our Schools

We are very excited to welcome you to Saanich. Soon you will be joining one of three Secondary (high) Schools in Saanich Schools.



Claremont Secondary



Parkland Secondary



Stelly's Secondary

In this Student Arrival Guide, you will find important information about preparing for your journey, travelling here, your arrival in Canada and your stay here with us in Saanich. Please read this information carefully.

It is important to understand the information in this Student Arrival Guide is subject to change.

We look forward to meeting you soon!

International Program Information & Staff

The SISP office is located in the Parkland Secondary School building.

Address

Att: Saanich International Student Program
10640 McDonald Park Road
North Saanich, B.C. Canada V8L 5S7

Phone: +1 (250) 655-2720

The team at SISP works diligently to support you during your time here in Saanich. You will find all contact information for SISP staff in Appendix 1.

The SISP Team



Principal
Mr. Spencer Gray



Senior Manager
Mr. Colin Guiguet



Homeslay Manager
Kim Ewer



Homeslay Coordinator - Clarenah
Ms. Kristen Belusic



Homeslay Coordinator - Stelly's
Ms. Karla Steeds-Karod



Homeslay Coordinator - Parkland
Erika Bertram



Program Assistant
Ms. Naoko Tsumori



Program Assistant - Finance
Ms. Lisa McClelland



Program Assistant
Mr. David Ding

Pre-Departure Information for All Students

Communication and Relationship Building with your Host Family:

- Before you come to Saanich, connect with your host family by having several Zoom, WeChat, FaceTime or WhatsApp calls to get to know one another.
- Speak with your host family about your arrival information:
 - When will they pick you up?
 - Where will they meet you?
 - How will you recognize them?
- SISP also sends arrival flight itineraries to your host family, ensure your natural parents or agent have sent your complete arrival flight itinerary to sisp_info@saanichschools.ca as soon as you book it.
- Exchange phone numbers and email addresses and save this information in your cell phone.

Checklist of what you need to have ready at the border

You will need to have the following items with you for assessment by our government officials at the border:

- Study permit, permit confirmation document OR Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) if studying for 5 months or less.
- Custodianship documents
- Letter of Acceptance
- Homestay Profile and contact information
- Contact information sheet for SISP emergency line and staff (see the last page of this Guide)
- Saanich Schools is an authorized Designated Learning Institute (DLI). We do not have a DLI number as no public K-12 school districts have one. Our letterhead on the LOA is sufficient per the IRCC's recommendation if asked for a PAL letter.

Make sure to save the SISP Emergency Number in your phone in case you need assistance during your travels: +1-250-812-0731

Packing, Airport and Flight

In this section you will find information on what to pack, and what to be mindful of during your flight and at airports. All students must bring a cell phone and a laptop or tablet when coming or returning to Canada for the 2026-2027 school year.

In your carry on:

You will need to bring the following things with you on the plane. DO NOT put these in your suitcase, but have them with you at all times!

- Cell phone + charger
 - Laptop
 - Passport
 - Wallet
-

- Change of clothes
- **Important documents (printed):**
 - Study permit, Temporary Resident VISA (TRV) or ETA, which ever is applicable
 - Custodianship documents (page 1 and 2 notarized)
 - Letter of Acceptance
 - Homestay Profile and contact information
 - Contact information sheet for SISP emergency line and staff

In your suitcase:

- Regular items such as:
 - Clothing
 - Toiletries
 - Personal belongings
 - Books
 - Maybe a small gift for your host

Medication:

If you take medication for any health condition, you will need to:

- Bring a supply that lasts you throughout your stay in Canada, OR
- Have your family send you your medications throughout your stay in Canada OR
- Make plans on how you will obtain your medication in Canada BEFORE you arrive here

SISP is not responsible for making sure you obtain medication in Canada for any pre-existing conditions, and you and your family will need to plan ahead to ensure you have what you need. Students have been sent home when this was not prepared in advance.

Other Travel Tips

- Wash hands frequently
- Keep your cell phone charged
- Bring a refillable water bottle and food with you
- If you need help at the airport, go to the Information Desk or look for volunteers who can help you!
- **Your agency is your primary support resource until you arrive in Victoria International Airport (YYJ) and are picked up by your homestay family.**

Arrival in Canada

When you arrive in Canada, you will need to undergo a screening by a Canadian Border Services Officer. Please have your documents as outlined under “packing” ready to provide to the Canadian Border Services. Most of our students’ first port of entry is Vancouver Airport (YVR), however, if you are flying via Calgary, Toronto or Montreal, the information below applies the same.

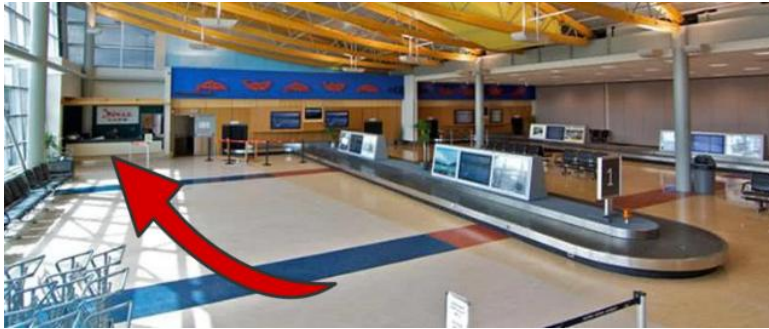
Upon arrival at Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, or Montreal Airports, make sure you:

- Log in to the Free Airport Wi-Fi
 - Text or WhatsApp your host family, natural parents and agent contact to letting them know you have arrived in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, or Montreal
 - Have your documents ready to share with Canadian Border Services Agency
 - Listen carefully to Canadian Border Services Agency agents, and if you don’t understand something, ask questions
-

- Go through immigration and baggage pick up
- Receive your study permit at immigration and review it, to make sure the information is correct.
- For assistance at the:
 - Vancouver International Airport, if you need help, look for Customer Care Ambassadors (blue jackets, white shirts). They will can assist you, and help with watching/caring for you and minors in transit. They can also help with language barrier issues and if by chance you miss a flight and need to be in the airport overnight, they will make sure to check in with you. Students can also use customer care phones if they don't have cell service, etc.
 - Calgary International Airport, the Customer Care Ambassadors will be found wearing red uniforms, if you require any assistance, please reach out to them.
 - Montreal-Trudeau International Airport, the Customer Care Ambassadors can be found wearing red jackets with black pants or skirts and are there to help you.
 - Toronto International Airport, if you require any assistance, please reach out to any staff member at the airport.

Upon arrival at Victoria International Airport (YYJ), make sure you:

- Connect to the airport Wi-Fi and message your host family that you have arrived
- Proceed to baggage pick up
- If your baggage did not arrive, go to the lost baggage counter in the baggage claim area:



- **If you have an emergency call the SISP emergency phone at 250-812-0731 AFTER contacting your agent or natural parents.**

General Program Information, Rules and Expectations for All Student

Important Rules for SISP Students:

- **Travel:** travel outside of our local area without your host family is not allowed during the month of September. After that, if you wish to travel outside of the Victoria area, you will need to submit an online [Travel Application](#) for each trip via our website.
 - [Student Travel Overview](#)
 - **Alcohol and drugs:** all SISP students are strictly prohibited from drinking alcohol or consuming drugs during their stay here, regardless of your age or what the rules are in your home country. SISP maintains a [Zero-Tolerance Policy](#) when it comes to consuming alcohol or drugs.
 - **Driving:** SISP students are not allowed to drive a motorized vehicle during their stay here, nor can they obtain a driver's license. This is not covered under our insurance.
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- **School:** SISP students need to follow school rules, attend school regularly, complete homework assignments and maintain a satisfactory level of academic achievement.
- **Working:** Not possible while in Canada. You are a student here to study.
- **Volunteering:** All requests to volunteer must be approved by SISP or your assigned school.

School Bus and Public Transportation

- **School Bus:** Saanich Schools has a school bus system, however seats on these buses are allocated based on distance to school and are not a guarantee for international students. Many of our students prefer to use Public Transportation. When you have received your host family profile, please check with your host family whether you need a School Bus Pass. The SISP office registers you for a school bus if your homestay family has a need for this service.
- **Public Transportation:** BC Transit is the public transportation service in our area. To find bus schedules, fares and where to buy bus cards, please visit, [BC Transit Website](#). Your host family can also help you with this, so don't hesitate to ask them for more information!

Curfew

It is up to your Host Family to set the curfew, although SISP has created the following guideline for a weekend (Friday-Saturday) curfew:

- Grade 9 ⇒ 10:00pm
- Grade 10 ⇒ 11:00pm
- Grade 11 ⇒ 11:00pm
- Grade 12 ⇒ 11:00pm

Students should be home between 6-9pm on weeknights (Sunday-Thursday) and the expectation is that you are home most nights for family dinner.

Medical Insurance

Medical Insurance is required to be an international student in Saanich. You are welcome to purchase your own medical insurance in addition to the required Guard.Me or Medical Service Plan (MSP) coverage.

Graduation Program Students: MSP

The British Columbia Medical Service Plan (MSP) coverage is required for all graduation program students (10 months or more), provided the student has a valid Study Permit.

4/5/10-Month Students: Guard.Me

Guard.Me coverage is required for the duration of your study period in Saanich. Guard.Me is private insurance for students without the BC Medical Service Plan (MSP).

If you have guard.me insurance coverage and go to a clinic or hospital, keep your receipts, follow the instructions and submit the online claim form. Visit [guard.me](#) for insurance plan details and frequently asked questions (FAQs).

The SISP office enrolls you with guard.me before you arrive and provides you with a guard.me card during new student orientation.

Pre-Existing Conditions

A pre-existing condition is any illness, injury or medical condition, for which you've had advice, treatment or experienced symptoms, prior to the start date of your insurance here in Canada. If you have a pre-existing condition, it's important to know that:

- Any treatment sought in Canada for this condition is likely not covered by Guard.Me
- Any treatment sought in Canada for this condition will need to be arranged (where possible) and paid for by you or your natural parent(s) at the appointment.

If you are interested in learning more, visit <https://www.guard.me/saanich> for more information.

Orientation

Orientation is scheduled for Sept. 3-4, 2026. A detailed schedule will be posted very soon on [Important Student Documents](#) page of the SISP website. You should plan to be attending orientation both days. Sept. 3 will see all students register at Claremont Secondary School by 10:00am. A presentation by program staff will commence promptly at 10:30am followed by a provided lunch. The afternoon will be a field trip to downtown Victoria.

Sept. 4 will be an orientation day at your assigned school. This is when you will receive your class schedule for the first semester and a school tour.

Homestay Information and Expectations

Your host family is a very important part of your stay here in Canada. Our host families are wonderful families who are eager to give you a fantastic experience. There will be new things, rituals and family traditions to get used to. The information in this section is to help you establish a strong relationship with your host family and avoid any unnecessary issues.

The two most important things - Integration and Communication

Integration:

Trying to be part of the family is an important responsibility you have while you are here. Your host family will appreciate it when you:

- Engage in conversations
- Talk about your home and country
- Are home for meals - dinner is a great time to connect with your host family
- If your host family invites you to activities you should go!

Communication:

Communication is the key to building trust and respect with your host family as they are responsible for you and are your parents while you are here.

Make sure your family knows where you are at all times, text or phone them to let them know, clearly communicate the following details (ask your host family for help getting a Canadian sim card for your cell phone or use an electronic sim card):

- Where you are and where you are going
 - Who you are with
 - When you will be home
-

- Let them know if your plans have changed
- Let them know ahead of time if you are going to miss dinner
- *Example: I'm on the {bus number} bus, heading to Uptown Mall with {friend's names} and going to go for dinner at {name of restaurant}. I'm now at the restaurant. I'm now on the {bus number} bus and will be home at {time}. Please respond to your host family in a timely manner, especially when they ask you to clarify or ask you to provide more information.*

Everyday Important Things

Food:

Please be aware that the cost of food in Canada, including here in Saanich, is high and that food can be more expensive than what you might be used to in your home country. Prices are especially high for products such as meat, dairy, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Host families are expected to provide you with balanced and nutritious meals; however, it is not an expectation that host families serve meats and/or other costly products daily. As this might be different to what you are used to, this is an important thing to take into consideration. Other suggestions regarding food include:

- Talk to your host family about the foods you like and dislike.
- Go grocery shopping with them and show them what you would like.
- Talk to your host family about breakfast and lunch preparation.
- Share recipes from your home and country.
- Be home for dinner often.
- Be open to trying new foods.

Manners:

Canadians are considered very polite and say “please” and “thank you” a lot. You are expected to adopt these habits while you are here. If you are unsure about how to be polite in a situation just ask, they’ll be happy to tell you. For example, even though host parents are expected to make dinner for you, it is customary to thank the cook for the meal and let them know that you enjoyed it.

Showers, Laundry, Chores

Showers:

- Limit the length of time you shower to approximately 10 minutes.
- Make sure you put the shower curtain inside the shower before starting the water.
- Clean up any water that gets on the floor.
- Do not shower late at night when your host family is trying to sleep.

Laundry:

- Your host family will let you know how they would like to handle the laundry.
- Some will want to do your laundry for you and others will teach you how to do your own laundry.
- **Do not do laundry late at night.**

Chores:

Each homestay is different so make sure you discuss what chores you are expected to do. You can find examples on the next page. Most homestays will ask students to:

- Help with the dishes
 - Make the bed and tidy the bedroom
 - Clean up after yourself in the kitchen and public areas
 - Some homestays will expect students to:
-

- Clean the student bathroom
- Do their own laundry

Heating and Lights:

- Families in British Columbia keep their homes quite cool, 20 degrees is normal for us.
- Some host families will allow the students to heat their rooms to 25 degrees, but they must turn the heat down when they are not in the room.
- If the heat is on, please do not open windows, as the heat will escape.
- Please turn off the lights and heat when you are not in your room.

Phone, Computer and Internet Use:

- Minimize the amount of downloading that you do. Host families may have to pay extra if you download too much, there is a limit per household.
- Stop gaming and video/audio chats/calls at an early hour, around 10:00 PM so you do not disturb the family members while they are trying to sleep. You need sleep as well!
- Avoid being on the phone after 10pm to not disturb nightly quiet time in the home.

Contribution to Household Chores and Rules

This is a list of various contributions/chores and rules that are your host family may expect you to do and follow, which are reasonable. Many host families will have a list printed and hanging it in their home as a reminder of the expectations in the home.

There's a good chance your host family's rules are different from your own family's rules! If anything is unclear you can discuss this with your host family.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Curfew is X on weeknights and X on weekends.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask if it is okay to go out. Provide details, where you are going and/or where you are, who you are with, what bus you are on and when you are to be home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your host parents ahead of time, if it is okay for you invite a friend over for a visit or a sleep over
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your host family ahead of time (at least 1 day) if it is okay for you to stay overnight at a friend's home and share with your host family the person/family you will be staying with and your friend's parent's/guardian's name and contact number.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you aren't going to be home for dinner, please let your host parent know by X pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	You are to do your own laundry. Your laundry day is X.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make your bed every morning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep your bedroom tidy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean your bedroom weekly, garbage into the main garbage can, recycling to recycling boxes, dust, vacuum, etc
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash and change your bed sheets once a week
<input type="checkbox"/>	No food or eating in your bedroom.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bedroom room temperature should be X degrees when you are in your room and degrees when you are not home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep your bathroom tidy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean your bathroom. Ask your host family for cleaning supplies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showers are X minutes long and to be taken between the times of X and X.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Help prepare dinner and/or set the table.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean up the kitchen after you have prepared food, wash down the counters and table.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash, dry and put dishes away.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Put dishes in the dishwasher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empty the dishwasher.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take out the garbage and recycling.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cell phones are to remain in your bedroom during mealtimes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer to help out, such as carrying groceries into the house, going grocery shopping, asking your host if they need help, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiet time is between X and X on weekdays and between X and X on weekends.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect all family members and be open to communicate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in family activities.

Problems with your host family?

Adjusting to life in a “new” family may take a while and you can expect that both you and your host family will need some time to get used to each other and to establish a relationship. Open communication with your host family is very important! Please remember that your host family is likely very different from your own family back home and will view things differently than you do. As long as both you and your host family are respectful about differing views, this does not have to be an issue.

If you feel your placement with your host family is not working out, there are a few steps you should take:

1. **Talk to your host family:** when an issue arises with your host family, the first step should always be to talk to them about this. Many times, a host family might not even be aware there is an issue. If they don’t know, they can’t make changes to make you feel better!
2. **Contact your Homestay Coordinator:** book an appointment with your Homestay Coordinator to talk about the issue and what you have already done to address this with your host family. Your Homestay Coordinator will give you strategies to talk to your host family to resolve the situation.
3. **Meeting with Host Family and Homestay Coordinator:** if, after using the strategies your Homestay Coordinator gave you, the situation is still not improving, your Homestay Coordinator may organize and mediate a meeting with you and your host family to discuss the issue and see if there are any possible solutions. This opportunity usually assists with resolving the situation.
4. **Potential Change of Host Families:** if, after all the previous efforts, and there isn’t positive progress and the issue persists, you may request a move to a different host family with your Homestay Coordinator. Your Homestay Coordinator will assess the situation and make a final decision, based on you and your host family’s efforts to resolve the issue as well as the availability of another suitable host family. This will take time to arrange.

Important note: A casual request to change host families without any efforts to improve the situation will not be entertained. Students will not be moved immediately and without discussion with the host family first, unless there is an emergency situation or the student is not safe.

Healthy Relationships Guide

The main priority of SISF is ensuring your wellbeing at school and in your homestay.

Please carefully review the SISP Guide to Healthy Relationships (Appendix 2), which outlines what healthy relationships with your host family and at school should look like. This handout also tells you who you can reach out to if you feel that you need support.

Damage to Homestay Property

It could happen that you accidentally damage something in your host family's home during your stay. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Stains on carpets, furniture or sheets
- Broken objects such as mirrors or shower heads
- Burns on pans or other items from cooking or microwaving
- A broken septic system after flushing anything but toilet paper down a septic toilet
- Water damage from showering without closing the curtains properly

If you accidentally damage something in your host family's home, the following actions are very important:

- Be honest with your host family about causing the damage! Accidents happen and host families will usually be understanding if you are honest and upfront about this
- Explain what happened and what you should do to repair/clean/fix (if possible)
- If the damage is such that it requires professional cleaning, replacing, or repairing, your host family will follow the process outlined below

Process for Damages:

- Your host family will discuss the damage with you, then contact your Homestay Coordinator
 - Your host family will have to complete the SISP Damage/Loss Report form received from Homestay Coordinator, including photos of the damage and 2-3 quotes to repair the damage or replace the item
 - You will be asked to write a short statement as to how the damage occurred
 - If it is determined the damage was indeed caused by you, damages up to \$300 are to be covered by your natural parent(s)
 - Damages exceeding \$300 will have to be submitted to the insurance provider Guard Me by the host family, with the assistance of the SISP Homestay Team.
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Appendix 1: Saanich International Student Program – Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns regarding your Homestay, please contact your Homestay Coordinator.

For any questions or concerns regarding school and courses, your first point of contact is the International Student Advisor/Support at your school. They are also able to assist you with all kinds of other problems by directing you to the person who can help. They are at your school to help you – don't hesitate going to talk to them!

Saanich International Student Program Staff

Staff	Title	Phone	Email
Mr. Spencer Gray	Principal	250-514-8354	sgray@saanichschools.ca
Mr. Colin Guiguet	Senior Manager	778-676-0447	cguiguet@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Kim Ewer	Homestay Manager	250-217-9368 250-655-2720 ext 80387	kewer@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Kristen Belusic	Homestay Coordinator Claremont	250-217-6727 250-655-2720 ext 80559	kbelusic@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Karla Steeds-Karod	Homestay Coordinator Stelly's	250-880-4950 250-655-2720 ext 82315	ksteedskarod@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Erika Bertram	Homestay Coordinator Parkland	250-880-1589 250-655-2720 ext 80700	ebertram@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Naoko Tsumori	Program Assistant	250-655-2720 ext 80558	ntsumori@saanichschools.ca
Ms. Lisa McClelland	Program Assistant - Finance	250-655-2720 ext 81793	lmclelland@saanichschools.ca
Mr. David Ding	Program Assistant	250-655-2720 ext 81712	dding@saanichschools.ca
SISP EMERGENCY #	24/7 – emergencies only	250-812-0731	

School's International Student Advisors:

School	International Student Advisor	Email
Parkland Secondary School	Ms. Tara Beaucamp	tbeaucamp@saanichschools.ca
Parkland Secondary School	Ms. Karen Romell	kromell@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Ms. Asha Sidhu	asidhu@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Mr. Dan Berger	dberger@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Mr. Graeme Mitchell	gmitchell@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Mr. Shon Ryan	sryan@saanichschools.ca

School's International Assistants:

School	International Assistant	Email
Parkland Secondary School	Ms. Sara Benson	sbenson@saanichschools.ca
Stelly's Secondary School	Ms. Tricia Millman	tmillman@saanichschools.ca
Claremont Secondary School	Ms. Lori Rampon	lrampon@saanichschools.ca

Appendix 2: SISP Guide to Healthy Relationships

Saanich International Student Program Guide to Healthy Relationships

Guidelines to help you understand what healthy relationships with your host family, school staff and peers look like during your stay in Saanich.



Building Healthy Relationships

During your time in Saanich, we hope you will build positive, healthy relationships. We are proud of the many opportunities that are available to enrich your experience here in Saanich!



What To Expect

You Should Expect:

- People respecting your boundaries, and cultural background and differences
- Clear and respectful communication
- Feeling safe and comfortable
- Appropriate behavior and language



Your Host Family:

Your host parents should act like your “Canadian Parents” and treat you as their family member. Your Canadian host brother or sister should treat you like a sibling.



What your Host Parents Should Do:

- Respecting your privacy
- Respecting your cultural background
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Communicating respectfully
- Offering parental guidance and support



What Host Parent Should Avoid:

- Inappropriate comments or behavior
- Discussing private matters with you
- Offering you alcohol or drugs
- Showing excessive affection towards you
- Making you feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Asking you to keep secrets

School Environment and Trusted Adults

School should be a safe and caring space where you feel comfortable and are treated with respect.

What You Can Expect From School Staff:

- Being heard
- Welcoming you as a unique individual
- Respecting and trying to understand your cultural background
- Establishing clear rules, expectations and consequences
- Behaving professionally at all times

CONTACTING A TRUSTED ADULT

If you ever have questions, feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or need advice, you can reach out to trusted adults for support.

Contacts at the Saanich International Student Program (SISP):

- **The SISP Emergency Phone:** 250-812-0731
- **The SISP Homestay Manager:** Ms. Fagel
 - Email: efagel@saanichschools.ca
 - Phone: 250-880-4950
- **Your SISP Homestay Coordinator:**
 - Claremont: Ms. Belusic: kbelusic@saanichschools.ca
 - Parkland: Ms. Bertram: ebertram@saanichschools.ca
 - Stelly's: Ms. Ewer: kewer@saanichschools.ca

Contacts at School:

- The International Advisor or Assistant
- The School Counsellor/Teacher
- The Principal or Vice Principal
- Find their contact information in your Student Arrival Guide

