

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD) is a school jurisdiction located in Alberta, Canada. The rural region stretches from just west of Edmonton, the province's capital, to world renowned Jasper National Park, and north to the Town of Grande Cache. The jurisdiction includes 17 schools, five The Learning Connection (distance education) centres, approximately 4,500 students, and 600 staff members.

GYPSD offers international students the comfort and safety of friendly, rural communities and small schools, a range of recreational opportunities, and high academic standards.

For more information, please contact Assistant Superintendent Karen Shipka at 780.723.4471 or [kareship@gypsd.ca](mailto:kareship@gypsd.ca).

### **School Division**

#### *Are you a private school or a public school system?*

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division is a government funded, public school jurisdiction.

#### *What are the requirements for admission?*

Admission requires a letter of recommendation from the student's current Principal and a short statement from the student indicating why they would be a good candidate for success in an international student program.

#### *What is admission based upon?*

Admission is determined by Grande Yellowhead Public School Division and is based upon the recommendation from the Principal and student's statement, as outlined above. Attitude and maturity are crucial to success in international study and should be addressed in both letters of admission. Students are assessed upon arrival to their school to determine the appropriate program placement and any other supports, such as ESL, that may be required.

#### *What is your academic calendar?*

Grande Yellowhead schools operate from September through June. For a complete academic calendar please visit: [www.gypsd.ca](http://www.gypsd.ca)

#### *What is the application deadline?*

Applications are accepted throughout the year. However, semesters begin in September and early February and schools must decide if they are prepared to accept students prior to these times so early applications are preferred. Placements are made as long as space is available and the services are in place to ensure the student's success.

#### *How big are your towns?*

Each of the four communities that host international students has less than 10,000 residents.

*Which subjects are available?*

Each school provides students with the Alberta curriculum as well as specialized courses designed to meet the needs and interests of their students and communities. For information about Alberta curriculum please visit: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/>. Information about specialized courses available at Grande Yellowhead schools is available through the school Principals.

*Does your school require students to wear a uniform?*

No, none of Grande Yellowhead's schools require uniforms. International students should, however, come with clothing appropriate to the seasons in which they will be in Canada and their interests.

*Do students have to buy school books?*

No, students are not required to purchase school books. However, students are expected to bring or purchase their own basic school supplies, such as binders, papers and writing utensils.

*Is lunch available at a school cafeteria?*

Some schools have hot lunches available for purchase but most students bring a lunch to school with them, or leave the school for lunch. Students who choose to remain at school have a place to eat and often have access to the library, computer labs and/or the gymnasium.

*Do you have bussing available?*

School buses are available for those students who live more than 2.4 kilometres from the school. None of our Towns have public transportation systems as most students live within walking distance of their school.

*Do you hold an orientation session for international students upon their arrival?*

Yes, each school provides an orientation to new students, as well as a number of opportunities during their stay for these students to receive extra assistance and attention from staff and other students.

*Do you offer English language support?*

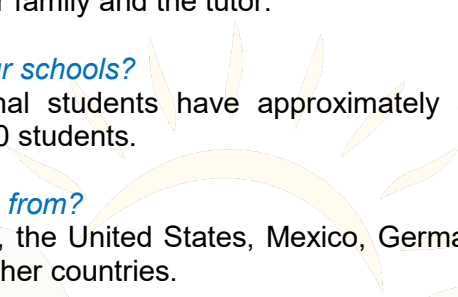
Students will receive English instruction and support as part of the school programming. Some students also hire private tutors upon arrival, but this decision and the associated cost is negotiated directly between the student, their family and the tutor.

*What is the total number of students enrolled at your schools?*

Two of the high schools who accept international students have approximately 500 students; the remaining two have approximately 250 students.

*What countries do your international students come from?*

GYPSSD has hosted students from Brazil, Hungary, the United States, Mexico, Germany, Russia, France, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and many other countries.



*Do you place students of the same nationality in the same school?*

Students and their families are invited to choose their school based on the special programs and extracurricular activities available, as well as community demographics and services. The division endeavors to limit the number of students from a particular nationality at each school in order to encourage students to learn English and interact with their Canadian peers.

*What is the weather like?*

GYPSPD enjoys four distinct seasons, and a range of weather conditions. Complete information about local weather conditions is available from the Weather Network: [www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/stats/north\\_america.htm](http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/stats/north_america.htm).

**Home Stay Accommodation**

*Where do international students live while attending Grande Yellowhead schools?*

Grande Yellowhead arranges home stays accommodation and fees charged include room and board with a carefully selected Canadian family who will treat the student as one of the family.

*Generally how far are home stay locations from school?*

As our communities are small, home stay locations are generally within walking distance of a school. If the student is placed in a home that is more than 2.4 kilometres from their school a school bus will pick them up and drop them off before and after school each day.

*What kind of agreement does your school have with home stay families?*

Families are carefully selected to ensure that they are aware of the responsibility and rewards of hosting international students. These families agree to treat their guest student as a member of their family, sharing with them the support and activities Canadian families enjoy together.

*How are the host families selected?*

Host families are selected by an application and screening process. Host families must provide a private bedroom, school desk and three meals a day to their host child. International students have the same rights and responsibilities as the host family's natural children.

*Is a 'Host family profile' available to international students prior to their arrival in Canada?*

Pictures and detailed information about the host family are arranged and sent once an appropriate host family is chosen for the student, usually within a few weeks of the student's acceptance.

*Do you place students in multi-ethnic homes? If yes, what is their command of English?*

In the GYPSPD area, the vast majority of families are English speaking, though their first language and culture may vary. International students are placed with an English speaking family who will help the student adjust to their life in Canada.

*Do international students have internet access at home?*

The majority of GYPSD families have internet access that would be available to the international student. Arrangements could be made with those families who do not have Internet access, which generally costs less than \$40 CDN per month.

**Tuition and Other Fees**

*How much is the Tuition Fee for a semester and for a year, and what are the services included?*

Tuition: \$13,500 CDN per year or \$6,750 per semester - includes all school fees and academic expenses. However, extra costs such as those associated with extended field trips and specialized courses that require unique supplies are not included in student tuition. Less than full year stays are prorated per month.

*How much "pocket money" do students need to bring?*

Extra money required would depend on the activities and expectations of the student, however, a minimum of \$100 per month should be brought for basic expenses. For example, if the student chooses to ski they will require significantly more money to cover that activity.

*How about medical insurance?*

Students must have medical insurance. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain their own medical insurance and provide proof of same to the division.

*Is making a reservation necessary?*

Yes, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division must be informed of the student's desire to enroll to ensure that the space and programs are available to meet that student's needs.

*What are your cancellation policies?*

If notice of cancellation is not received more than one month prior to the beginning of the semester, the equivalent to one month of the student's tuition and home stay expenses will be retained.

*If a student decides to extend his/her stay for another semester, what are the requirements and costs involved?*

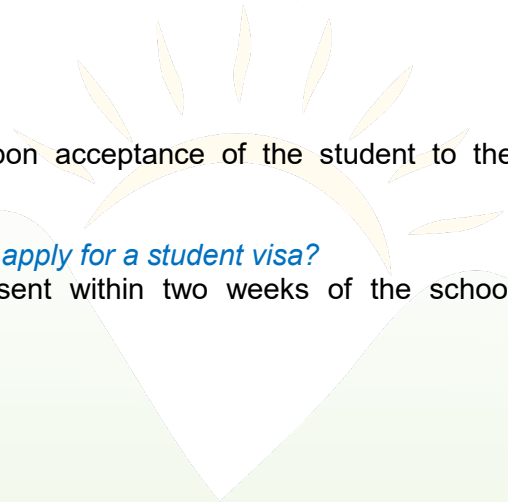
As above, or a percentage there of.

*Do you issue gross and net invoices?*

Complete invoices will be sent to the family upon acceptance of the student to the program.

*When would we have the necessary documents to apply for a student visa?*

In most circumstances acceptance letters are sent within two weeks of the school receiving an acceptable application.



*Can students pay for tuition in instalments?*

GYPSD prefers receiving the entire annual tuition prior to the start of the school year. However, semester payments may be accepted in special circumstances.

*What payment options are accepted?*

Payment must be made by cheque, money order, bank draft or by bank transfer directly to the school in which the student will be enrolled. When payment is made by bank transfer, the Institution number, branch number, account number and a swfit code (used for international transfers) is required.

*Are academic, social adjustment and host family experience reports available?*

Academic reports are sent at the midpoint and end of each semester. Other types of reports can be arranged to meet the student or their family's needs.

