

Saskatoon



"Study here, succeed anywhere."



Student Handbook



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM



GSCS is located on Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Metis

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

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www.facebook.com/GSCSISP



<http://www.gscs.ca/isp>

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GSCS ISP Department



ISP Director – Kari Weiman – 306-659-7689

If you have questions about school programming, agent commission, refunds, registration fees and open spaces, or the schools in general, you can contact her by phone or email her at kweiman@gscs.ca.



ISP Coordinator – Tammy Chartier-Anderson – 306-659-7688

If you have questions about True North, making a payment, document requests, information about study permit renewal or visa extensions, you can contact her by phone or email her at international@gscs.ca.



Homestay Coordinator - Malvina Rapko – 306-371-5457

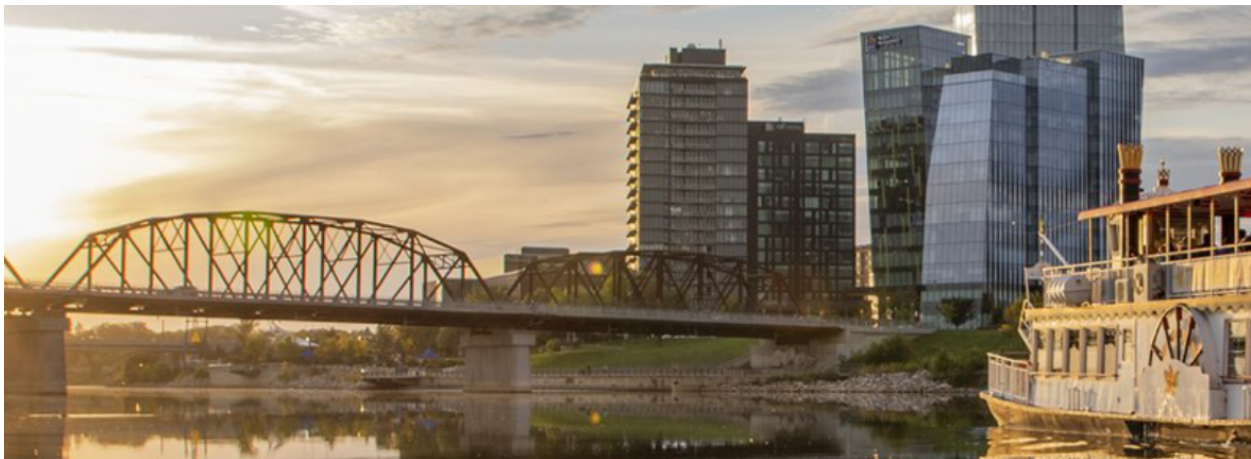
We have moved to providing an in-house homestay program instead of using a service provider as of April 1, 2026. If you have any questions about our homestay program, you can contact her by email at homestay@gscs.ca.

Information About Saskatoon



Information About Saskatoon

Saskatchewan is located in Western Canada on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Metis. The name Saskatchewan comes from kisiskatchewan, a Cree name meaning “swiftly flowing river”. Saskatchewan is referred to as the “Land of the Living Skies” with breathtaking blue skies, more than 100,000 lakes and beautiful prairie landscapes.



In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan we are fortunate to experience all four seasons each year so make sure that you have appropriate clothing for every season. It’s a good idea to do some research about the weather before you leave for Canada. We are also fortunate to be one of the sunniest cities in Canada, no matter the season or the temperature outside.

Information About Saskatoon



There are many activities to try throughout the year including private clubs for a variety of sports, art, drama and music classes and other social opportunities. Saskatoon students can also participate in the many extra-curricular activities offered in our schools. We have an outdoor skating rink near the river in the city centre and a small ski hill (Optimist Hill) that operates all winter.



Information About Saskatoon



There are numerous beautiful lakes and campgrounds within driving distance of the city where you can experience nature at its finest. In addition, there are over 120 hectares of riverbank parks and natural areas through the heart of the city. The Meewasin Valley Trail follows the river through the city and offers over 21 kilometres of well-maintained paths used for walking, jogging, bicycling, and cross-country skiing. Walking along the Meewasin trail, you will see many people enjoying the riverbank as you walk past the 10 bridges that give us the nickname “City of Bridges”. There are also many events and festivals to take part in throughout the year, including a fireworks festival on the river in early September.



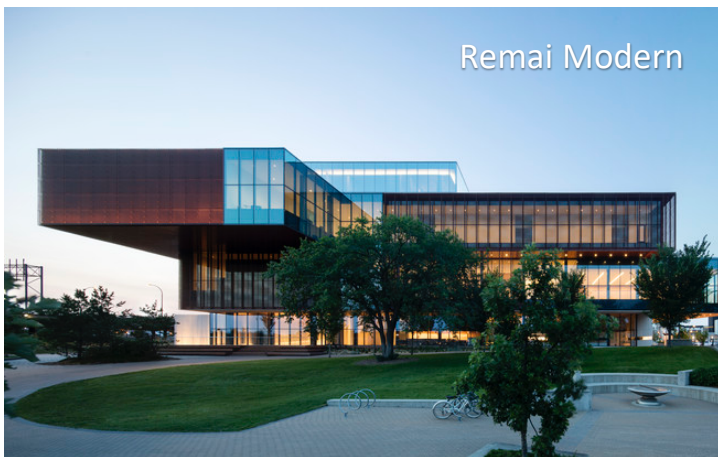
You can find many things to do by visiting the Tourism Saskatchewan website.

www.tourismsaskatchewan.com

Information About Saskatoon



This thriving city of just over 300,000 offers the services and facilities of a large city in the friendly environment of a small town. There is a rich and vibrant arts community featuring a wide variety of artistic, musical, and theatre attractions. Some examples include the Saskatoon Symphony, the Rемаi Modern Art Gallery, and Persephone Theatre.



Saskatoon is the commercial and education centre for central and northern Saskatchewan and is the home of the region's premier university, the University of Saskatchewan, which includes a cluster of science facilities that makes Saskatoon a centre for world-class scientific endeavours. 30% of Canada's agricultural biotechnology activity occurs in Saskatoon. The university is the home to the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron, Innovation Place, Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, National Research Council Plant Biotechnology Institute, POS Pilot Plant, Saskatchewan Research Council, Saskatchewan Structural Science Centre, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre.

Information About Saskatoon



Using Public Transit

It is very easy to get around the city of Saskatoon using public transit. A monthly bus pass for a high school student costs just \$59.00 and you can use it for unlimited rides throughout that month. Monthly passes can be purchased at the main office in each school, or you can purchase them directly on the mobile app.

[Saskatoon Transit Mobile Ticketing Information](#)



You can download the TGo mobile app and see your bus route in real time as well as information regarding bus stops, routes and arrival times

Information About Saskatoon



You may even get the chance to experience seeing the Northern Lights at various times throughout the year.

School Selection



Students are placed in schools within the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School division based on proximity to their residence. When deciding where you would like to live in the city, please use the list of schools from our website to guide your decisions.

<https://tinyurl.com/GSCS-Schools>

If you are a high school student who is requiring a homestay placement with us, we will take your school requests into consideration when looking for a homestay match for you, but it is not always possible depending on where the available homestay hosts reside.

We want to ensure that it is a good match between the student and host family, not simply a match based on proximity to a particular school.



Details We Need from You



There are a few pieces of information that we require you to communicate to us as soon as you can. This will help to ensure a smooth transition to your studies in Saskatoon.

- Home address in Saskatoon – this will help us to select a school for you.
- If you acquire a new email address while in Canada and it becomes your primary email, please notify us so we can add it to your student profile. The email address attached to each parent contact is the address used to access information in the True North portal. You will use your primary email to create an account to gain access to important documents and invoices.
- Canadian phone number. When the family obtains a Saskatoon phone number, it is important that you provide it to us as soon as possible so that we can provide it to the school your child is attending.

Details We Need from You



- It is important that the International Student Program office is updated if there is ever a change of home address, email address or phone number.
- Flight information/ date of arrival - this will help us to set up a registration meeting with the principal of the school you will be attending. **Please do not contact the school or go to the school before we have had a chance to set up a meeting.**
- A copy of your study permit and of the date of entry to Canada stamp page in your passport – these are needed to apply for your Saskatchewan health card. The study permit is also necessary to register you at a school if you are studying in Saskatchewan for more than 6 months.

Please also familiarize yourself with our refund policy, should your circumstances change. <https://www.gscs.ca/isp/page/4668/refund-policy>

Health Insurance



We will apply for a free Saskatchewan Health card for you once you arrive and we receive a copy of your study permit and date of entry stamp. It takes up to 2 months for the card to be processed and sent to the students. For this reason, we have included the mandatory purchase of private health insurance as part of our tuition schedule so that you are covered from the minute you step off the airplane in Saskatoon. Starting in September 2025, we are adding in a \$25/month fee for a top-up insurance plan to cover expenses not covered by the free Sask Health card, including emergency dental, eye exam, 24/7 access to online mental health services, etc. Students who are studying with us for less than a year will need to purchase private health insurance for the duration of their studies. If you are interested in information about private health insurance, please contact us as we have partnered with a company that can provide that for you at a cost of \$1.60 per day.



Health Insurance



Important Orthodontics Information

Please note that if you are currently undergoing orthodontics treatment, it will be very difficult to continue this while studying abroad. You can ask your current orthodontist to connect with one in Saskatoon who may be willing to take on your treatment plan. You may not be able to find an orthodontist who will be willing to do this, however, so you must be prepared to halt treatment until you return to your home country. This will be less of an issue if you are using Invisalign (or similar option) instead of traditional wire braces, as you can bring your upcoming trays with you.

If you haven't started treatment yet, but will be getting braces before you depart, please consider a tray system that you can bring with you or pause your plan until you return home.

You also need to be aware that the private insurance we provide does not cover orthodontics, only emergency dental that doesn't involve orthodontics. This is also not covered by the free Saskatchewan health card. Please reach out prior to departure if you have questions about this.

Elementary School Information



As mentioned previously, please see the list of elementary schools to help you choose an area of Saskatoon to live in. Elementary students are not eligible for homestay placement through Canada Homestay Network. Some families choose to arrange private homestays if a parent is not able to accompany their child to live in Canada. Students are placed in schools based on the proximity to their residence.



<https://tinyurl.com/GSCS-Elementary-Schools>

In Saskatoon, elementary school runs from kindergarten to Grade 8. Students are placed in an elementary school grade based on their birthdate. This is done so that students are the same age as their classmates. Please see the chart for age and grade placement information.

2026 - 2027 Academic Year

Birth Year	Grade
2009	12
2010	11
2011	10
2012	9
2013	8
2014	7
2015	6
2016	5
2017	4
2018	3
2019	2
2020	1
2021	K

2027 - 2028 Academic Year

Birth Year	Grade
2010	12
2011	11
2012	10
2013	9
2014	8
2015	7
2016	6
2017	5
2018	4
2019	3
2020	2
2021	1
2022	K

Elementary School Information



Students attend school from Monday to Friday from about 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The schedule varies by school as to start and end times. All elementary schools provide EAL (English as an Additional Language) support for international students. Although applications are accepted for either a September or February start, there is some flexibility with arrival dates for elementary school students.



Parents will be sent an email invitation from their child's school to sign up for EDSBY. EDSBY is a platform that is used for communication between the home and school including attendance, assignments, teacher contact, registering for parent-teacher conferences, school calendar and news and information about the school and any events happening there. Once you have accepted the EDSBY invitation, you can select the language you would prefer to see by editing your settings.

High School Information



All our high schools offer high-level academic programming, including the opportunity to select AP (Advanced Placement) courses, if a student's English language proficiency allows for it. One of our high schools, Bishop James Mahoney Catholic High School, offers two first-year university classes/credits (Biology and Math) that are taken at the high school and are taught by teachers who have met the standards set by the University of Saskatchewan. Students who graduate from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools have been accepted to post-secondary programs and institutions all around the world.

***Something to note, many universities require transcripts from grades 7-12 or proof of enrollment, if you have studied in Canada since then. We recommend you keep a file with these documents as you receive them.**



The high schools in Saskatoon operate on a two-semester system with the first semester starting on September 2, 2026, and the second starting on February 2, 2027. **Students who arrive more than two weeks after the semester start date will be deferred to the next semester, as they will have missed too many days of instruction to be placed in classes at that time.** Please refer to the 2026-2027 school year calendars when planning your flights.

High School Information



There will be a student orientation covering important information regarding the ISP program and the homestay program at each high school after during the first week of school in each new semester. Since all students do not arrive on the same day, we wait until classes have started to do the in-person orientations.



If high school students arrive a few days prior to the start of school, they are welcome to come to the school early to pick up their schedule and see the school.

Please contact us if you would like to do this so we can make arrangements with the high school you are attending.

Elementary school

<https://tinyurl.com/Elementary-Calendar-2026-27>

High school

<https://tinyurl.com/High-School-Calendar-2026-27>

High School Information



All our high schools also have robust extra-curricular programs with a wide variety of activities that our international students are also able to access. Some sports have tryouts for the teams, but some do not. In addition, there are many extra-curricular clubs to join.

Some high school classes have extra fees attached to them to pay for the materials that are used for the classes, the clothing required for a physical education class, or for experiences out of the school that are a part of taking the class. These fees are not covered by the tuition that has been paid and will need to be paid to the school the student is attending once the invoices are given out shortly after each semester starts. A list of the classes that have additional fees and an idea of the approximate fees for classes can be found on our website under “Fees”.

<https://tinyurl.com/GSCS-Fees>



High School Information



You can also read about the different classes that are offered at each school by clicking on their registration handbooks. Please be advised that the school may not be able to accommodate a request for a specific class if the student's English language proficiency level would not provide an opportunity for the successful participation in and completion of that class.



Bethlehem Catholic High School

<https://tinyurl.com/Bethlehem-2026-27>



Holy Cross Catholic High School

<https://tinyurl.com/Holy-Cross-2026-27>



Bishop James Mahoney Catholic High School

<https://tinyurl.com/BJM-2026-27>



St. Joseph Catholic High School

<https://tinyurl.com/St-Joseph-2026-27>

Just a reminder that students are placed in schools based on the proximity to their residence. If you are a high school student who is requiring a homestay placement, we will take your school requests into consideration when looking for the best possible and the most compatible homestay match for you, but it is not always possible depending on where the available homestay hosts reside.

High School Information



Students who are joining our program in Grade 11 or 12, and who are looking to graduate with a Canadian transcript, will need to have their Grade 10 and Grade 11 transcript from their home country validated for Saskatchewan course equivalencies through the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Education to then receive a Canadian transcript. Please bring your original transcript with you as copies or digital versions will not be accepted by the Ministry of Education.

This Canadian transcript will consist of the credits earned while in Saskatchewan as well as the credits granted as equivalencies that were taken in the student's home country. If you are not interested in a full three-year transcript from Saskatchewan and are only looking to earn credits to be validated back in your home country, or if you are just wanting the experience of studying in Canada, you will not need to complete this process. This process is also not necessary for any high school student wanting to start in Grade 9 or 10. All students who study with us for a minimum of one semester will receive a report card showing the classes they took and the grades they earned.

Edsby



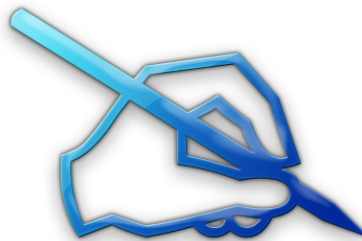
Parents will be sent an email invitation from their child's school to sign up for EDSBY. EDSBY is a platform that is used for communication between the home and school including attendance, assignments, teacher contact, registering for parent-teacher conferences, school calendar and news and information about the school and any events happening there. Once you have accepted the EDSBY invitation, you can select the language you would prefer to see by editing your settings.



Participation Agreement



The participation agreement must be signed for your application to be accepted. Please ensure that you and your parents understand all parts of the agreement prior to signing it, as you will be responsible to adhere to all parts of it. Pay special attention to the items that state you agree to comply with the rules of the school, the district and all laws in the city, province, and country, that you agree to attend all classes, and to complete homework as assigned. Please also sign the homestay section if you require a homestay placement. We want this to be a positive experience for everyone involved in the program. The expectations are reasonable, and they are in place to ensure your safety and success as a student with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Failure to comply with the items listed in the participation agreement may result in removal from the International Student Program.



GSCS Homestay Program



We provide an in-house homestay program to accommodate students requesting a homestay while they study with us. We are extremely fortunate to have a wonderful and dedicated team who quickly attend to needs as they arise. Homestay placements are only available for high school students. Students who are studying in our elementary schools must make their own arrangements. This usually means that they will live with a parent, relative, or family friend.

You will be able to see the homestay fees for various lengths of stay on our website. Please make sure to sign the homestay section of the Student Participation Agreement as part of your application as you will not be matched with a homestay family until it is signed.

We have wonderful, caring hosts who are excited to welcome you into their families. All hosts have gone through a vigorous screening process to ensure the safety and well-being of the student. There is no one type of Canadian family – people settle in Canada from all over the world and have much to share with you. Hosts provide a student with their own bedroom and a desk, but it is very common to share a bathroom with other family members. You will be provided with three meals a day and have the opportunity to be part of a Canadian family and be included in their daily life.



Some host families live close enough to school for the student to walk, but some students will need to take public transportation to get to and from school each day. Please keep in mind that it is not the responsibility of the hosts to drive students to meet with friends or to participate in recreational activities, although some hosts may offer to drive from time to time.

Your host family will have expectations regarding keeping your room tidy, helping with dishes, doing laundry, etc., much like your own family. These expectations may or may not match up with what you are used to experiencing at home, but that is all part of the learning experience. You can expect that you will be safe, well-fed and warmly welcomed into family life.

Communication with your host family (and them with you) is very important to ensure a positive experience for everyone. Please ask questions if you are unsure of something or need help – your host family is more than happy to help.

A complete homestay guide for students can be found here: [GSCS Homestay Guide for Students](#)

Please familiarize yourself with it prior to arrival to ensure a successful transition.



We hope this handbook helps to answer some questions you may have. If you have questions that were not answered here, please feel free to email us at international@gscs.ca

We are looking forward to meeting you, supporting you through your studies with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools International Student Program, and celebrating your success.