

# Why Orientation is important



## **Orientation a big difference to how quickly and how well students adjust to their new life!**

The first official day of school is typically the first Tuesday of September. Orientation runs from Monday to Thursday the week before school starts. After orientation and before school begins students have a long weekend, which gives them time to settle into their homestays, get rested, and get to know the community.

On the first day of school, students who attend orientation:

- are well rested and well-adjusted to their new environment
- are well informed and better prepared for the year ahead
- know all about the program and school expectations and guidelines
- are already connected with new friends
- feel secure because they know the school and the people who can help them
- can begin class together with their local classmates
- get all the important information that is given by subject teachers on the first day of classes

Students who don't attend orientation and arrive right before classes begin often

- are jetlagged and tired
- aren't clear about where to go and what to do
- don't know anyone and can feel alone
- don't know their way around the school, or who can help them
- miss connecting with other students during the first days of classes while they instead get tested, programmed, and brought up to date on the topics already covered in orientation
- miss all the important information presented by teachers during the first days of classes

On the first 3 days of orientation all the students are together in one location. We do some language assessment to determine how much English support each student may need, and to figure out what level of courses students can take. We also talk to all students about life in Canada, life in Abbotsford, the program rules and expectations, problem solving and communication....

During orientation students meet our Homestay Coordinator, who makes a presentation about how to succeed in homestay, and how to get help if they need it. Students also meet their personal International Assistant (IA), who will explain all the ways that they can provide assistance and support throughout the year. They go through the student handbook, an important resource which makes the

program's policies, guidelines and expectations clear. The IA's also help with some of the start-up administration that takes place during orientation, such as registering for health insurance.... On the 4th day the students go to their assigned schools, where they meet with their Principal and counselors, they tour the school, find out about some of the various events and activities, school specific rules and expectations.... They meet with their counselor who will review their transcripts and assessment results, together they finalize the course schedule for the coming semester or year. They are told exactly where they need to go on the first day of school, and what they will need to do, bring etc.

Orientation is not all work and testing, teachers include fun "ice-breaker" games, and last year we held a very popular "international" talent show which was very well received.

At the end of Orientation students are better prepared to start the semester with their peers. They are well informed, well rested and feel confident knowing more about their community, program and schools. We strongly encourage all students to attend this critical introduction to their new home.