



International Student Program Comox Valley

**HERE
FOR YOU**

www.studyinbritishcolumbia.com

Welcome to the Comox Valley International Student Program



The Comox Valley International Student Program is a division of the Comox Valley School District. The program is dedicated to offering personalized education to international students from around the world. Since 2005, we have been empowering students and helping them develop a global mindset while fostering their emotional and academic intelligence.

- Small class sizes emphasizing individual attention to students
- Staff and homestay families provide students with a dedicated support system
- An advanced curriculum prepares students for success in their post-secondary education
- Experienced teachers, nationally recognized in their fields
- ESL/ELL support available to all students at no extra cost
- International Support teachers at each high school exclusively provide guidance for international students
- Learning support teachers at every school
- Mental health counselling service available to all students
- University application assistance

96% student satisfaction rate

8,000 students

Our Community

Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland are the three main communities found in the Comox Valley. This friendly, inclusive community offers urban amenities in a close-knit environment. The majority of the residents in the Comox Valley is well-educated and they enjoy having new commers in the Comox Valley to make the region more diverse and fun.

- A very safe and welcoming community
- Four-season outdoor recreation; skiing/snowboarding, mountain biking, hiking, golfing and multiple watersports
- Modern facilities including recreation centres, movie theatres, restaurants, boutique shopping and local transit service
- Stunning natural surroundings
- Mildest climate in Canada



Join Us in the Comox Valley

Nestled between the mountains and the sea, the Comox Valley is located halfway up the east coast of Vancouver Island

- 20- minute flight from Vancouver
- 2.5 - hour drive from Victoria
- 1 - hour drive from Nanaimo Ferry Terminal

The Comox Valley International Airport welcomes multiple daily flights from Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. Ferry service is a one hour drive south, operating between the city of Nanaimo and Vancouver.



98% English Speaking environment

80,000 population

Our Program Offers You Great Options

Whether you wish to graduate from a secondary school and pursue a university education in North America, experience a short-term program of 3 to 10 months in a Canadian high school environment, or study English in our 1 to 2-month Summer Program, the Comox Valley International Student Program offers you full integration into an authentic Canadian high school environment, with academic and elective classes based on your needs and interests.

Graduation Program

- Start in September, January or April
- BC Government approved graduation courses and exams
- Earn the prestigious British Columbia Dogwood Graduation certificate
- Receive post-secondary application consulting designed to help you successfully apply to the top North American universities

Short-Term Program

- Start in September, January or April (upon availability)
- ESL/ELL instruction
- International student activities and trips designed to maximize your experience

26:1 - student teacher ratio

85% of graduates go to top universities like University of Toronto, University of British Columbia and McGill University

55% of graduates receive university scholarships.

Summer Program

- Start in July or August
- Classes are taught in English within local school classrooms
- Daily recreational activities in the community and beyond (surfing, hiking, whale watching)

Specialized Programs

- EXPLORE Outdoor Education
- Golf Program
- Volleyball Program
- Creative Collective Design Program
- Social Justice Education Program



Exciting Opportunities at Each School

Our students have access to every academic course offered in BC, as well as a huge variety of elective courses that range from the Fine Arts (music, photography and Art) to applied technology (robotics, programming, and animation) and many others. Our 300 international students come from over 25 countries around the world and make up 10% of the total student population in our secondary schools.

At Comox Valley Schools, we believe that every child deserves a supportive and nurturing environment to unlock their full potential. Our educational philosophy is to provide students with comprehensive services in a multifaceted way. The school district, schools and host families work collaboratively to help our students achieve their academic and life goals.



Personalized Education

Recognize that that each student has their strengths, talents and challenges, we strive to offer personalized pathways to meet our students' uniqueness. We provide free ESL/ELL support, adapted classes and individual university admissions plans to ensure our student success. By tailoring their education, we tap into their greatest potential and empower them to reach the best version of themselves.



Academic Excellence

Our school district is dedicated to academic excellence and committed to offering a well-rounded education that prepares students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Our rigorous curriculum is designed to challenge students and encourage them to explore diverse interests, develop critical skills, and cultivate lifelong learning. Every year, 85% of our graduation students go to top universities such as University of British Columbia, University of Toronto and McGill University.



Inclusive Learning Environment

We celebrate the uniqueness of each student as well as their proud cultural backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion are highly promoted in the Comox Valley School District. We provide Anti-racism training to our teachers and staff, and make sure this important knowledge is embedded in our curriculum and learning discussions. It is important for us to foster an environment where international students feel valued, respected, and empowered.

Facts About Our Schools



300 international students enrolled



25+ countries represented



3 high schools



2 middle schools



13 elementary schools



GP Vanier Secondary

- » 1200 students
- » 100 international students
- » Grade 8-12



Opened in 1968, G.P. Vanier Secondary is the oldest school in the Comox Valley School District and has a long and proud tradition of excellence in academics, athletics and the arts. The school recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation, making it one of the most modern facilities on Vancouver Island. At G.P. Vanier we hope to create a well-rounded experience for students. International students who come to Vanier not only comment on the excitement of a variety of classes, but they also emphasize the support and care they received from their teachers. Many of our teachers have taught internationally at Vanier and really appreciate how the students can contribute to the world in their unique ways.

Academic Highlights

Vanier is proud of its great achievements in various subjects and competitions. Teachers have won provincial and national Teaching Excellence Awards in Geography, Arts and Theatre. Vanier also has two unique Academy choices within the Humanities Department.

Special Electives

EXPLORE Outdoor Education Academy, Social Justice Education Program, Golf, Tennis, Badminton, Business, Guitar, Drama & Performance Dance, Photography, Spanish, Graphic Design, Journalism, Tourism, Accounting, Animation, Culinary, etc.

Student Clubs and Sports Teams

Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Rugby, Track & Field, Skiing & Snowboarding, Model United Nations, Mountain Biking, Improv Theatre, Wrestling, Environment, Robotics, Social Justice, Chorus, Band, , etc.

* Please ask us for a full list of the course selection



What I enjoyed the most about the Comox Valley was to interact with people from everywhere. I made friends from Germany, Spain, Vietnam and many other countries. The friendship is so memorable. My school Vanier is a very friendly place. Here you can choose from a great variety of courses and they made my dream going to the Engineering program possible. I really enjoyed learning here.

-- **Minami, Japan**



Mark Isfeld Secondary

- » 1100 students
- » 80 international students
- » Grade 8-12



As soon as you walk into the foyer at Mark R Isfeld, you see the four pillars: Academics, Athletics, Arts and Citizenship. This is the foundation of Isfeld's approach to learning. Isfeld hopes that when our students leave our building, they become individuals who try exploring in all four areas. Isfeld prides its high achievements in various subjects, such as physics, mathematics and biology. It is one of the highest ranked secondary schools in BC for its academic performance. International students who attended Mark Isfeld enjoyed a fully immersed academic environment as well as a supportive learning atmosphere.

Academic Highlights

Mark Isfeld is a dual track French immersion school with a strong science and mathematics department. It also houses a flourishing Humanities department that offers a wide variety of academic classes to prepare students for post-secondary studies. Many Isfeld graduates receive scholarships from Canadian universities to pursue their degrees in Sociology, Environmental Science, Business, etc.

Special Electives

Golf Academy, Badminton, Spanish, French / French Immersion, Athletics, Drawing & Painting, Music, Information Technology, Computer Design, Electronics, Marketing, Leadership, Woodwork, Creative Writing, Concert Band.

Student Clubs and Sports Teams

Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Rugby, Track & Field, Skiing & Snowboarding, Cross-country Running, Electronics & Robotics, Environmental Science, Musical Theatre, Choir, Jazz, Model United Nation, Interact Club, Queer Straight Alliance.

* Please ask us for a full list of the course selection



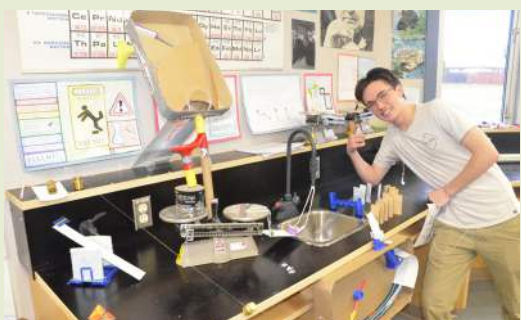
I received my offers from both University of Toronto and UBC after graduating from Mark Isfeld. I chose U of T at the end. I had the most enjoyable time in the Comox Valley. I love my host family and often went skiing with them. Teachers here are very kind and they helped me to overcome lots of difficulties.

-- Chae Eun, Korea



Highland Secondary

- » 600 students
- » 60 international students
- » Grade 8-12



Highland Secondary School, in the heart of Comox BC, is a close-knit community of learners from around the world. Being the smallest of the three high schools in the Comox Valley, Highland has a staff full of dedicated teachers and staff, many of whom were once graduates of Highland Secondary! International students who studied at Highland often express how impressed they were by the inclusive learning environment and the caring support they receive from Highland. "Highland has heart" is the motto of this school, which drives the school's provision of outstanding services.

Academic Highlights

Academics is the backbone of Highland Secondary School. With small class sizes and world class teachers, the school offers students fun and engaging lessons and experiential learning opportunities in one of the most beautiful areas on Vancouver Island. Highland has an outdoor classroom, so students often receive lessons by the ocean, on the mountain or in a park. By immersing into a diverse learning environment, students get unique experiences and insights towards their academic and life achievements.

Special Electives

Fitness, Badminton, Soccer, French, Information technology, Media, Social justice, Emergency medical responder, Engineering, Horse-back riding (close by), Philosophy, Marine biology, Robotics, Business, Sailing (close by).

Student Clubs and Sports Teams

Female volleyball, Drama & improv, Concert band, Jazz band, Track & field Skiing & snowboarding, Art, Robotics, Environmental science, Rugby, Gardening, Chess, Book & reading clubs, Knitting, Environmental action.

* Please ask us for a full list of the course selection



I met so many awesome teachers here and made many good friends from all over around the world whom I will visit one day. I don't think there are many places in the world where you can find this amazing combination of great people and great nature, but in the Comox Valley you can. I love Highland Secondary. The teachers really try to help every student and they support us with our homework and even mental health.

-- Sina, Iran

Middle School and Elementary School Opportunities

Comox Valley School District houses 2 middle schools (Grade 7-9) and 13 elementary schools (Kindergarten - Grade 7). They all adhere to the district's individualized, student centred and people oriented educational philosophy, aiming at providing students with multi-faceted services and support. Students are encouraged to learn through hands-on experience with facilitation and guidance from the teachers. Most schools provide additional English support to international students at no cost.

Community Environment for Young Kids



Comox Valley is where many people rated as one of the best places to raise kids due to its safe and peaceful environment and the inclusive community culture. You will be living in the warmest area in Canada with beautiful oceans, lakes and mountains nearby. The majority of residents in the Comox Valley are well-educated. They love where they live and are eager to introduce their home to you. Parents rarely worry about safety issues around their kids. In fact, many people don't even lock the doors when they leave their houses! With the abundant resources in the community, both kids and parents get a variety of support, such as ELL learning, newcomer services, immigration consultancy, etc. Meanwhile, there are a number of learning groups, clubs and camps for kids to enjoy. Growing up in the Comox Valley is an amazing experience!

Activities for Kids and Families

It is easy to connect with other families in the Comox Valley to participate in different activities. There are a great number of lessons and events which kids and parents can easily access to. Children Programs are available for kids from 5 to 14 years old, such as dance, cooking, music, martial arts, etc. The Youth Programs for Kids from 8 to 18 years old include art, skiing, snowboarding, skating, baking, golfing, horseback riding, ice hockey, etc.





Lake Trail Middle School

- Built in 1955, renovated in 2021
- 350 students Grade 7-9
- Located right downtown
- Small class size
- ELL support at no cost
- A Learning Support Team dedicated to students
- Individualized study plan
- Mental health counselling service
- A variety of student clubs such as STEM, volleyball, basketball and track & field

Cumberland Middle School

- 300 students Grades 7-9
- Small class size
- Very friendly community environment
- Excellent homestay families
- Well-established academic support system
- Mental health counselling service
- Walking distance to the school

Queneesh Elementary School

- 450 students, Kindergarten to Grade 7
- ELL support to students and families at no cost
- Many free family events, such as Family Games, Paint Nights, Bedtime Stories, etc.
- Located along the city bus route
- Supportive community with kind residents
- Strong focus on community connections, compassion and effective communication

Aspen Elementary School

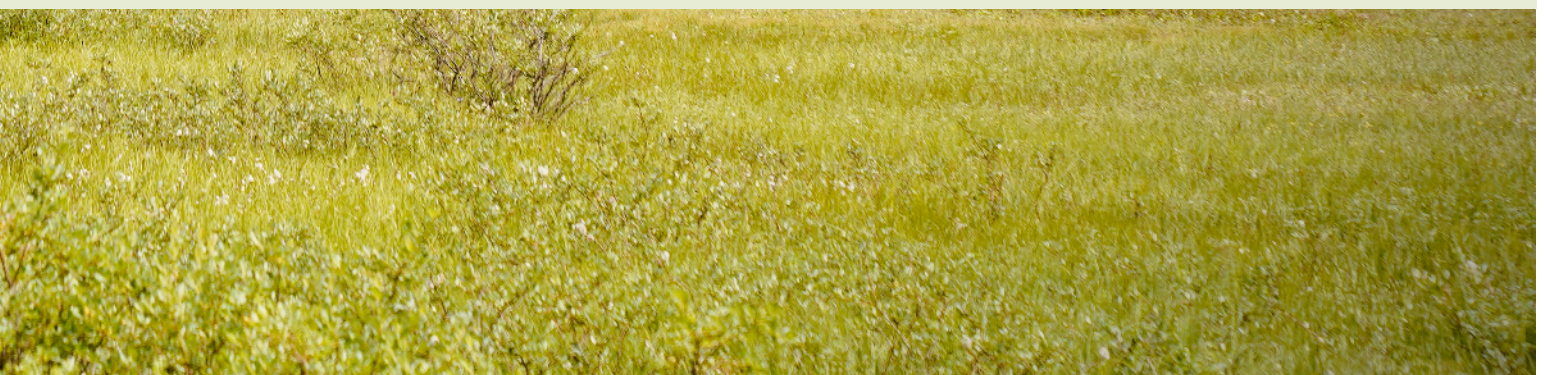
- 350 students, Kindergarten to Grade 7
- ELL support at no cost
- High technology to support student learning
- Hub of ENTER Robotics program
- STEM curriculum offered to all students
- Strong athletics program
- Close to many recreational facilities

Valley View Elementary School

- 350 students, Kindergarten to Grade 7
- ELL support at no cost
- Strong athletics community, such as soccer, basketball, etc.
- Located next to Mark Isfeld Secondary School
- Situated in the heart of the Comox Valley
- Strong focus on community support

Courtenay Elementary School

- 250 students, Kindergarten to Grade 5
- ELL support at no cost
- Daily breakfast and lunch programs available
- After school programs include Sign Language, Athletics, Art and Garden Clubs
- Before school gym and library programs
- Located in downtown area
- Strong, collaborative teachers and staff



Become Part of a Canadian Family

The Comox Valley International Student Program is very proud of our internally run Homestay Program. Our dedicated Homestay Coordinators carefully screen each of our homestay families. Before you arrive, we provide homestay families with a thorough orientation to ensure you are always safe and well cared for. Our Homestay Coordinators are available to assist you and homestay families. They will maintain active communication throughout your time in our program.

Our Homestay Program is open to students above age 12. For all the students who are part of our Homestay, the Comox Valley School District will provide free custodianship. If students are under 12 years old, they will need to be accompanied by their parent(s) and the parent(s) will be the custodian while they are in Canada.



You'll be treated like 'part of the family' and can expect:

- Three meals per day plus snacks
- A private room and access to all amenities in the home
- Participation in family events and holidays
- Your homestay parents to advocate for you with your school
- Assistance with personal banking, SIM card, homework, activity sign-ups, and completing school forms
- Access to medical or dental care if required
- Transportation to activities outside of school hours

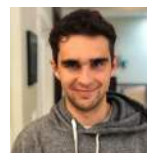


Here's what our students and homestay families have to say



"I called my host parents Mom and Dad. My Mom is very good at cooking. She often makes me good food and takes me out for family trips." --Doris, PR China

"I feel very lucky to live with my host family. I always talk to my host Mom when I come across difficulties at school or in life. I trust her a lot." --Molly, Vietnam



"I'm very happy with my host family and I could say many good things about them. They like to do activities and made me feel part of the family." --Jose, Spain

"The bond you created worldwide with different families and students is really something to be treasured." --Corrie & Ed Howard



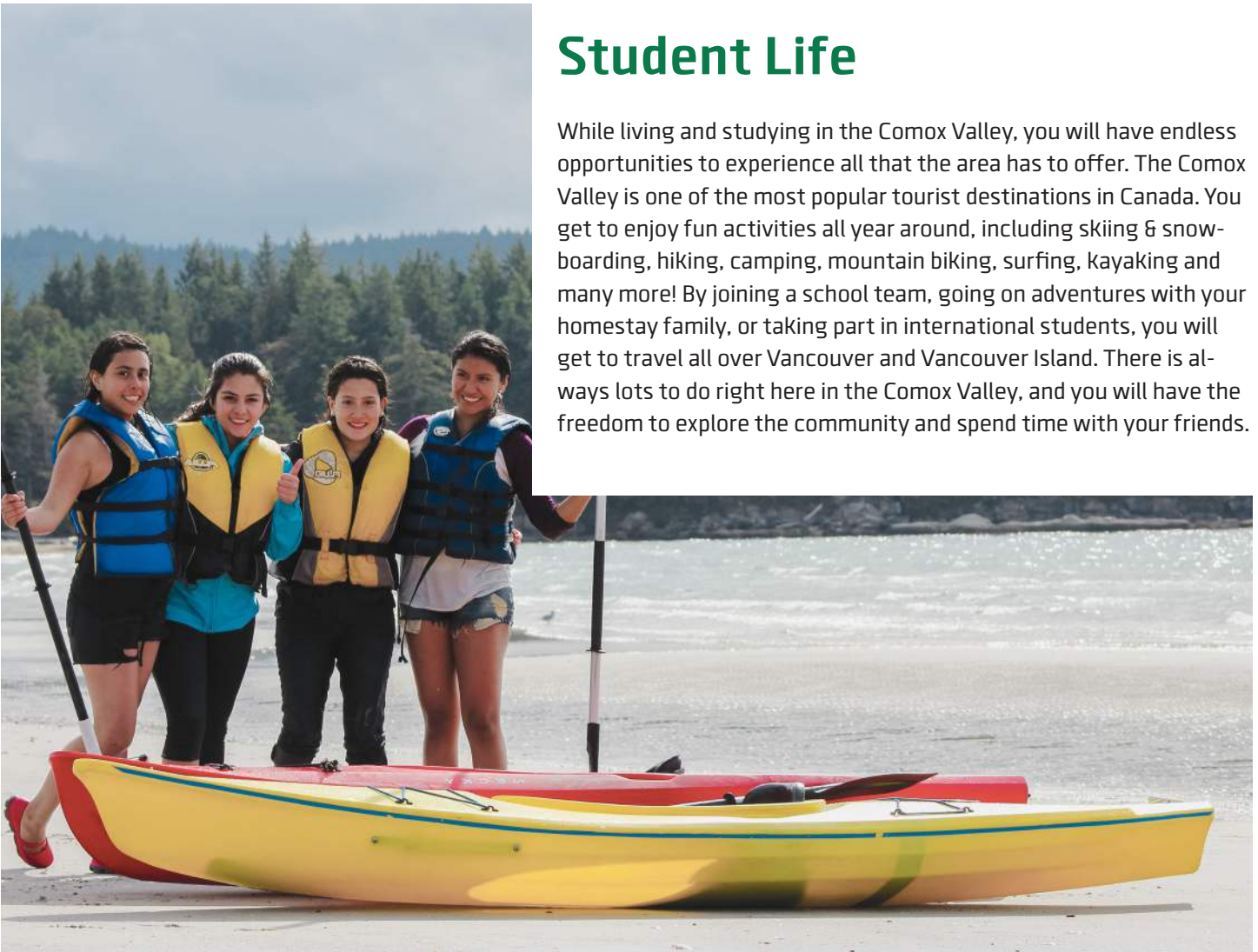
99% English as first language families

1-2 students from different nationalities per family

91% homestay satisfaction rate

Student Life

While living and studying in the Comox Valley, you will have endless opportunities to experience all that the area has to offer. The Comox Valley is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Canada. You get to enjoy fun activities all year around, including skiing & snowboarding, hiking, camping, mountain biking, surfing, kayaking and many more! By joining a school team, going on adventures with your homestay family, or taking part in international students, you will get to travel all over Vancouver and Vancouver Island. There is always lots to do right here in the Comox Valley, and you will have the freedom to explore the community and spend time with your friends.



50+ student clubs
A variety of sports teams

20+ student trips per year

Apply Now

Apply online at: studyinbritishcolumbia.com/apply

1. Include your previous two years of school transcripts as well as your current school year transcript
2. Include a letter of introductions, written by you, in English. Tell us about yourself and why you want to study in the Comox Valley.
3. Choose the program
4. Choose your start date -
- September, January

Our District Principal Welcomes you



We look forward to your arrival in the Comox Valley. The community is one of the most stunning on BC's coast. From skiing in our backyard (Mt. Washington) to some of the best sailing in the world, the Comox Valley is a rare gem in BC. We pride ourselves on offering personalized

service and support to International students from around the world. Your experience here will leave you feeling challenged, energized, and with memories to cherish for a lifetime.

---- *Mr. Greg Kochanuk, District Principal*

Need More Information?

Email the District Principal at
Gregory.Kochanuk@sd71.bc.ca

Check out our website at studyinbritishcolumbia.com

Call us at +1-250-703-2904

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