

International Student Programs

Definitions and Frequently Asked Questions

Definition of Parent/Guardian

A parent/guardian is the student's biological parent or a person that has been appointed by a court.

Definition of Legal Custodian

The custodian is an individual who has been designated by the parent/guardian to provide care for their minor child while he/she studies in Canada for a period of study. The custodian is responsible for the care and support (health and academic) of the student until they reach the age of majority (18) or return back to the care of their parents.

Definition of Delegate

An individual appointed to act for or represent the custodian when not available. The Custodian may appoint a delegate to perform all duties as assigned. The delegate cannot edit or change student demographic records. The International Education Department recommends that a delegate is appointed for each student.

Definition of Homestay

A Homestay is where an International Student resides. Students must have adult supervision (Homestay Parent), be provided with 3 + meals a day and should be involved as an active member of the family. The TCDSB does have Homestay providers that have been approved by the Materials Management Group and which are posted on the International Education website.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can legal Custodians be changed? Do they have a term?

To officially change a custodian, the two forms provided by Immigration Canada (IMM 5646E 2 pages), need to be completed and notarized. The updated forms must be provided to the day school and the day school will update Trillium and file a copy in the student's OSR. Custodianship forms do not have a term. The custodianship can only be ended if the custodian is replaced by the appointment of a new custodian, the student turns 18 or returns back to their home country. Please note that many custodians charge an annual fee. The TCDSB currently has 3 approved homestay and custodianship providers.

2. How do parents find a custodian?

Approved Homestay providers also have a list of approved custodians in the area of where the child will be living. Some parents decide to use a family member or friend that resides in Toronto. If parents decide to use a company not recommended by TCDSB, they do so at their own risk.

3. How do custodians know their responsibilities?

The International Education Department meets with every custodian and hosts mandatory information sessions to inform them of their duties and responsibilities. The custodian must update contact information and sign the Custodian Information Document indicating that they understand and will abide by the expectations.

4. Can the delegate change (update) documents for an individual student?

No. Only the custodian can change and/or update student records.

5. What if there is a concern with the homestay?

Concerns with homestay should be shared with the student's legal custodian. For severe concern with the homestay family, please consult your school administrative team and/or the International Education Department.

6. Can a Homestay be changed?

Yes. The parent and/or the custodian can change the Homestay location to best suit the needs of the student. The custodian is responsible to inspect the new Homestay prior to moving in. It is the custodian's responsibility to continually check the Homestay on a regular basis to ensure the standards recommended by TCDSB are being met.

7. If a custodian cannot be reached, what are my next steps?

Once the custodian cannot be reached, it is recommended that the delegate be contacted. If you continue to have difficulty in reaching someone, please inform your school administrator for assistance. Alternatively, the International Education Department can be contacted to assist at 416 222-8282 ext. 2135.

8. What if I'm having difficulty with a custodian or delegate not providing the requested support?

Please discuss with your administrative team if you feel the custodian is not meeting the standards set by the Board. The admin team will then consult with the International Education Department if needed.

9. What if there is a communication barrier between the school and the custodian?

TCDSB International Education Office recommends all custodians are able to communicate in English as well as the student's first language. The custodian is responsible for having a translator if he/she is unable to speak English. If it is required, the school can request translators centrally.

10. Do International students have emergency medical insurance?

Yes. All students are insured during the duration of their studies. Students and custodians are given a copy of the policy, and the main office has a backup copy found in the P: drive for each school. For inquiries, staff and students can contact the International Department.

11. Are there additional programs/supports for students?

Yes. The TCDSB offers the following:

A. Teacher Advisor Program An after-school program available to further support your students. It is a program for new international students. It consists of two components: classroom instruction and excursions/events. For the classroom instruction, students will have the opportunity to meet with their teacher advisor once or two times per week at their schools to have lessons that can enhance their English skills and life skills for about 10 weeks. In order to further facilitate bonding, sense of belongings and social engagement for these international students, teacher advisors can work with them to plan for trips and out of the classroom events.

B. Summer Orientation Program A three-week program focused on Language acquisition, cultural adaptation and academic preparedness. Students meet with post-secondary institutions to create a student success plan.

C. e-Notice An electronic announcement sent to students, their parents, custodians, recruiters at least on a monthly basis. It delivers important dates and relevant news to the International Education community.

D. Social events Organized and hosted centrally by the International Education Department throughout the academic year to provide students opportunities for team building as well as networking with local students.

12. What occurs at the Orientation Centre?

Students with their custodians attend a half day assessment. Academic records from home country are analyzed, student literacy and mathematical skills are assessed, levels are determined and shared with the homeschool.

13. What programs are in place for international students in need of social/emotional support?

Staff and students follow the same procedures as local students to initiate social work support. The custodian will provide signed authorization to allow the school based team to begin providing support.

14. Who do I contact when a student has social/emotional concerns?

Local support(s) at the school (SBSLT/Case Conference) are the initial starting point after discussing with your administration. International students have access to the same support(s) as local students. The International Education Department can be contacted to consult if needed.

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