

Know Before You Go

 Amerigo
2024-2025



Welcome to

 Amerigo[®]



Welcome to Amerigo!

Our entire team is so excited for you to arrive. Your time here will be filled with many exciting adventures, new friends, interesting classes, and life-changing moments. Maybe you'll join a club, take part in the school play, learn to play an instrument, meet a new best friend, or find a new favourite academic subject – whatever your future with us holds, we know it will be wonderful.

We're sure that you have many questions as you prepare for the school year, and this ***Know Before You Go Guide*** will provide all the information you need to know ahead of your arrival – including a packing list, airport arrival information, information about living with a homestay family, Frequently Asked Questions and much more. Please review all of the information carefully to make sure you're ready for your arrival.

We cannot wait for you to arrive, and we look forward to seeing what amazing things the years ahead hold for you.

See you soon!





Trent Smith

Director of Operations

Villanova College International, Toronto, Canada

Regent Christian Academy, Vancouver, Canada

I am thrilled to help bring students from all over the world together in the spirit of community. It is an opportunity for each of us to share our cultures and I look forward to guiding each student towards a successful experience that will last a lifetime.

Your arrival on campus is only a short time away – and we are as eager as you are for you to join us! We are here to guide you from this moment until your graduation from high school.

We hope that this guide gives you the tools you need as you prepare to begin your Amerigo journey!

The Know Before You Go Guide was developed to answer many of the most commonly asked questions that students and parents may have prior to arriving on campus. As you prepare for the school year, it is a valuable reference and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

As you are reading this, we are sure that you are both a little bit nervous, and a little bit excited. We created this guide to help calm some of your nerves and affirm some of your excitement.

In creating this guide, we have covered topics ranging from local attractions and necessary clothing to descriptions of the home you will soon be inhabiting. We have tried to be as thorough as we can in preparing this and have relied on our years of working with young international students to help direct us. However, there may be topics or subjects that we do not address fully.

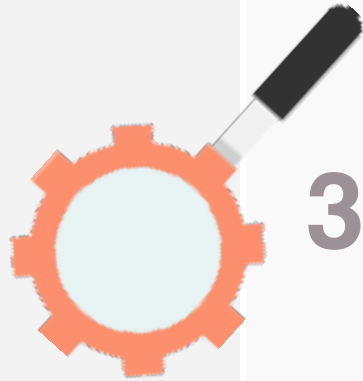
If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact your Homestay Student Success Manager.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Amerigo admits students who possess the motivation, ability, and character which would enable them to succeed in our Program, regardless of race, color, creed, ethnic, national origin or any other applicable categories protected by state and local law. The program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletics, and other campus-administered programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

P	<u>PREFACE</u>
Page 7	Honour Code



3	<u>GET A HEAD START WITH ORIENTATION</u>
Page 18	Orientation overview

1	<u>WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAVE</u>
Page 9	Packing list
Page 10	Cell phones
Page 11	Money in Canada
Page 12	Frequently asked questions

4	<u>LIVING WITH A HOMESTAY FAMILY</u>
Page 20	Host family responsibilities
Page 21	Student responsibilities
Page 22	Student support
Page 23	Out of school activities

2	<u>AT THE AIRPORT</u>
Page 15	Arrival in Canada
Page 16	Customs and Immigration

5	<u>5 IMPORTANT TIPS AT CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOLS</u>
Page 25	5 Important tips at Canadian High School

6	<u>LIVING IN CANADA: 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT</u>
Page 27	5 Things to know about Living in Canada

7	<u>MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR AMERIGO EXPERIENCE</u>
Page 29	Making the most out of your Amerigo Experience



Preface



At Amerigo, we believe that a fundamental part of the student experience is the culture of our campus. We strive to create a fulfilling and safe environment, which starts with the ethical behavior of our staff and students.

Therefore, we expect the following from every student who is a part of our campus:

INTEGRITY

I will be honest in all my interactions with others. I will not lie, plagiarize, cheat or steal, nor will I tolerate these actions by others.

RESPECT FOR ONESELF

I will work to develop healthy habits of mind, body and spirit. I will not use alcohol, illegal drugs or other harmful substances.

RESPONSIBILITY

I will take responsibility for my actions, rather than make excuses or blame others. When I fall short, I will learn from my mistakes and try again.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS AND THE COMMUNITY

I will treat others as I would like to be treated and will also look for opportunities to better the community around me.

In addition, at Amerigo Education, we are rooted in a core set of values that set expectations for our culture, our staff and our students.



MENTOR

Embodies the spirit of looking out for youth; an experienced individual tasked with training and counseling new students.



VOYAGER

Demonstrates a curiosity of the world and new ways of doing things; works in sync with everyone in the community, looks out for them and has fun with them.



CANDOR

Views a direct and open presentation of one's own thoughts and ideas as essential; willing to be honest in holding oneself and others accountable.



Section 1

What to Know Before You Leave

PACKING LIST

10

ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Casual clothing for use outside of school
- ☐ Athletic wear
- ☐ Lace-up or loafer-style shoes for school
- ☐ Jacket and Winter Coat
- ☐ Sneakers and Winter Boots
- ☐ Formal wear, e.g., sport coat/blazer + tie, or a dress
- ☐ Formal black leather shoes
- ☐ Winter essentials: warm hat, winter gloves, and winter scarf
- ☐ Backpack: Used for schoolbooks and supplies during the day—students will also have a school locker
- ☐ A cell phone: *Very important* for communication
- ☐ Personal toiletries
- ☐ Prescription medicine including a doctor's note in English
- ☐ International converter
- ☐ International credit card

OK TO BRING

- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Small electronics, e.g., cameras, iPads, Air Pods, speakers
- ☐ Personal sports equipment
- ☐ Room decorations, e.g., pictures, posters, plants

YOUR HOST FAMILY WILL PROVIDE

- ☒ Bedsheets
- ☒ Pillows
- ☒ Linens
- ☒ Towels
- ☒ Clothing hangers
- ☒ Shower curtain
- ☒ Bathmat

DO NOT BRING

- ☒ Decorations or clothing with inappropriate content
- ☒ Alcohol, tobacco products, vapes, and any other illegal substance
- ☒ Lighters, matches, candles
- ☒ Pets
- ☒ Small appliances, e.g., coffee maker, electronic blankets or heaters, hot plates, irons, microwaves, televisions, rice cooker, toaster, etc.
- ☒ Weapons, including knives and imitation firearms such as airsoft guns
- ☒ Any medications that do not align with the Medication Policy in the Student Handbook

All students are required to have a cell phone for communication with their host family.
This is extremely important to ensure students' safety.

Upon arrival, students will have two options for procuring a cell phone plan, including a SIM card:



PURCHASE A CELL PHONE PLAN

A student may pursue cell service through a third party in Canada. Students should purchase unlimited talk, text, and data plans. Freedom Mobile offers this service to students under the age of 18. Other service providers may require an adult to co-sign the contract.



BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

For students who already have a smart phone, you may be able to use an international cell phone plan or purchase a Canadian SIM card that provides you with cell service. It is not always a guarantee, depending on model of your phone and whether it is locked or unlocked.



While most expenses for your daily life are covered by Amerigo, you will need to pay for personal services, incidentals, and other individual purchases out-of-pocket. In most instances, payment will be made by you at the time services are offered. Examples are services at medical facilities where payment is usually required up-front and reimbursed later. School club activity fees, test fees, and sports gear are other examples.

Below are two ways our students have access to money.

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT CARDS

Students can use a family credit card with their parent's permission or endorsement.

This is the most convenient and preferred form of payment. Parents appreciate having access to the transaction history.

BANKING IN CANADA

Students may choose to open a bank account in their own name when they arrive

All major banks will serve you.

This allows parents to wire funds directly from a local bank in the home country. Please check with your local bank as fees apply.



When do I choose my classes?

You should have already had the opportunity to select your courses. During school orientation, your timetable will be finalized and you will have the opportunity to meet with school staff to make revisions as needed and available.

What are the resources for learning English?

You will be enrolled in regular ESL Classes as required based on your application testing. Depending on your school and community, you may have access to tutorials via teachers at the school or via a third party resource at your expense.

Is there a dress code or uniform at my school?

Yes! There is a dress code or uniform requirement list in your school's student handbook. Amerigo will provide students with a basic uniform set, and students will have the option of purchasing additional uniform pieces as needed or desired. Students will be measured for uniforms upon arrival. Shoes must be flat with backs and not open-toed.

When will I receive my school uniforms?

Based on your campus and unique tailoring needs, you will receive your school uniform either at time of purchase or up to 2 weeks after the fitting. Additional uniform pieces can be purchased by students at any time throughout the year.

What are the unique requirements at a Catholic High School?

Catholic/Christian high schools are known for their nurturing environment, rigorous academic curriculum and the focus on raising responsible individuals. Students at Catholic/Christian high schools may be required to take a religion course, or be expected to attend a mass when the school hosts such an event. Students are expected to be respectful observers and participate in classes, services or events as required or desired.

Where do I eat my meals?

Breakfast are available in the student's homestay each morning. During the school week, students eat lunch at school and dinner is served at the homestay families in the evenings. During the weekend and on school holidays, all meals are served in the homestay residence (except for special events).

Where do I wash my clothes?

All students have access to washer and dryer units in their homestay. Dry cleaning is available locally at additional cost to the student.

Will I have a roommate? How will that person be chosen?

In most cases, you will have your own bedroom. Additionally, many host families host more than one student in their home, so you may have house mates!



Who should be responsible for lost valuable items?

Your host family offers you a shared living space. It is the student's responsibility to store valuable items, important documents and information, such as passport, study permit and credit card information in a safe place.

Are Amerigo students permitted to have cars?

No, Amerigo students are not permitted to have access to cars in Canada.

Are Amerigo students permitted to learn to drive or have a driver's license?

Out of concern for our student's safety, students are not permitted to take Driver's Education classes. Students are not permitted to drive while in our program.

How will I get to/from school?

This varies by school and by where your host family is located. Some students will have a 5-minute walk to school and others will ride 1 hour one-way to school and back each day. Most students will fall somewhere in the middle.

Can I leave my host family on the weekend?

Students must follow curfew and rules of their individual host family. Please ask for permission from your host family ahead of time with your travel plans and intentions. For any overnight travel away from your host family, a student must complete the travel request form with biological parent's signature one week in advance.

Can I have a sleepover with my Canadian friends at their homes?

Students must follow the rules of their individual host families.

Please ask for permission from your host family ahead of time.

Can I get a job?

No. International students on a study permit are only authorized to study, while any paid employment requires a work permit.

What type of medications can I bring?

Students cannot bring any medications that do not align with the Amerigo Medication Policy. If a student requires prescription medication for certain illnesses and conditions, the medicine must be in its original container, labeled with the student's name, name of the medicine, dose and time to be given, doctor's name (if prescribed) and possible side effects. Medicine documentation must be provided in English. All medications the student is taking must be disclosed on their health forms.

Section 2

At the Airport





- Inform Amerigo of your arrival information
- Arrive on designated move-in dates

- Pack your important documents in your carry-on bag, compiled neatly within a clear plastic folder for easy access.
- Have a printed copy of Travel Tips & Document Checklist



TIPS TO ADJUST TO A NEW LIVING ENVIRONMENT

- Limit naps in the days to help with jetlag
- Rest and eat at regular times
- Get to know your host family
- Say hi to your new friends
- Ask questions

Who will pick me up from the airport and provide transportation to my homestay residence?

Homestay students arriving on the Amerigo specified move-in dates at the Amerigo approved airports will receive transportation from the approved airport to their homestay residence by following the instructions provided to you with your confirmation of transportation. If you are arriving prior to or after the specified move-in dates, Amerigo will provide a list of recommended transportation companies for you to make your own arrangements

When is the earliest I can arrive to Canada?

Immigration laws do not allow you to arrive more than 30 days before the first day of school (also known as the report date). Additionally, host families cannot accommodate students prior to the stated move-in dates. If you have any questions, please contact your Homestay Student Success Manager.

What if one or both of my parents are flying with me?

Will they receive transportation and accommodations as well?

It is wonderful that your parents plan to travel with you to Canada. Unfortunately, Amerigo and your host family will not be able to provide transportation and accommodations for parents.

What if I have connecting flights?

If you have a connecting flight within Canada, allow enough time (at least 4 hours) between flights. Customs and Immigration personnel may search your bag for unauthorized items. Your arrival will be registered electronically. If you have a connecting flight in the US, you will have to go through US Customs at your first entry point in the US and complete an ESTA form.

When entering Canada, you will need to show your passport and your study permit approval. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your arrival. Be ready to show proof of finances (parents' bank statement), host family information and letter of acceptance from the school.

What should I have with me when I enter Canada?

When entering Canada, you will need to show your passport and your study permit. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your arrival. Be ready to show proof of finances (parents' bank statement).

What will happen at Border Control?

You will be fingerprinted, photographed, and an entry stamp will be placed in your passport. You may be asked to go to another line where an Immigration Officer will look at your documents and ask you additional questions. Please do not let this worry you. This is a normal part of the process, and it may take 2-4 hours or longer to complete. There is nothing to worry about here – just ensure that you answer honestly.



What are some common questions asked by the immigration officer when entering Canada?

- ***What is the purpose of your trip?***

The purpose of your trip is to come to Canada to study in high school. You should know the name and location of your school. You should also be prepared to answer questions related to the grade you will be starting and why you chose to study in Canada.

- ***How long do you intend to stay?***

Students should be able to answer when they plan on going home, and when the current school year ends.

- ***Do you have anything to declare?***

Please review this form: <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/forms-formulaires/e311-eng.pdf>

We highly advise against bringing any vegetables, fruits, or meats into Canada; these items can be confiscated by border control.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about Port of Entry, immigration status & what you can bring to Canada, visit

<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>



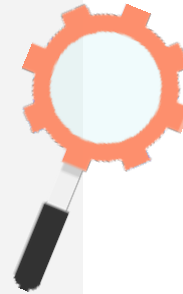
Section 3

Get a Head Start with Orientation

THE COUNTDOWN HAS STARTED FOR YOUR CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE!

Are you excited? Nervous? Curious? To ensure you have a smooth and successful transition to your Canadian high school, we have planned a fun-filled and academically-focused Orientation this summer.

All incoming new students are required to attend this important Orientation program.



Academic Success

- School campus tour
- School schedule, classes, academic support
- Extracurricular activities
- School policies and rules

Amerigo Community

- Introduction to campus team members
- Amerigo policies, rules and expectations

Recreation Time

- Icebreaker games
- Local sightseeing
- Day excursions

To Do List

- Get your laptop configured
- Receive your Lock and Locker
- Receive your timetable



IMPORTANT NOTE:

Orientation is a mandatory experience for all new incoming students. Aside from the transformative experience it offers, many required activities are conducted during Orientation. Failure to attend Orientation may result in limited choices for academic courses, a late start to classes, restricted independent mobility while abbreviated Orientation is conducted, and logistical complications, uniforms, cell phone, school supplies, and the like.

Section 4

Living With a Homestay Family



COMMUNITY SPACE

SAFE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Hosts will provide a safe and secure home for students to reside and will provide a home away from home during their program. All hosts must be respectful of students and provide a warm and welcoming environment.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to/from school varies by school and by where your host family is located. Some students will have a 5-minute walk to school and others will ride 1 hour one-way to school and back each day. Most students will fall somewhere in the middle.

When communicated in advance, host families will do their best to provide transportation to school events, field trips, and extracurricular activities when given proper notice but are not required to provide transportation to non-school related events.



MEALS

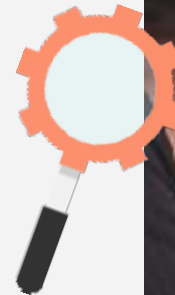
Host Families are expected to provide:

- ▶ 3 meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) every day.
 - You may be asked to make your own breakfast and/or lunch and have the option of purchasing a hot school lunch (at additional cost) for each school day.

HOUSE RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Each host family and house is unique. House rules will be different in each home and will be communicated clearly to each student by the host family at the start of the school year.

* Please understand each student's experience may vary based on the host family's lifestyle and preferences.



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

22

Welcomed by our wonderful host families, students will have an authentic experience of living in a Canadian home. We strongly encourage you to be a responsible guest and take a step forward to build friendship with your host family.

- **Follow House Rules**

Students should respect their host family's rules and ensure that they meet all expectations accordingly.

- **Keep Space Clean**

Students must keep their room clean along with any common spaces that they use - living rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, etc. Hosts are not required to clean after their students nor do laundry. Hosts can provide cleaning supplies when needed.

- **Communicate Effectively**

Effective communication is key to a positive host family experience. Students must be open and honest with their hosts and ask questions as needed to resolve issues as they arise.

- **Be Respectful**

Students must remember that they are a guest in their host's homes. It is important that students be respectful of their host's space, time, and family.



■ SCHOOL DAY SUPPORT

During the school week, your HSSM is regularly available either in-person, by phone or by email and text. The HSSM is located within the school so that students can visit for support and attention.

■ STUDENT INSURANCE

We provide all Amerigo students with an international student insurance plan that covers most outpatient and inpatient treatment. Like other insurance policies, it doesn't cover pre-existing conditions. If you have a pre-existing medical condition, we recommend you bring one-semester supply of medication with a doctor's note. Please note that all students are required to provide Proof of Health Insurance before they're allowed to begin classes.

■ ACADEMIC SUPPORT

You will have a wide variety of academic supports, including your HSSM, the school guidance counsellor, your ESL teacher and each individual subject teacher.



OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

24

Amerigo's Homestay Program offers opportunities for homestay students to participate activities and events throughout the year to enhance their learning about Canadian culture and experience local entertainment and leisure options.

Opportunities are offered approximately once a month and typically follow the seasons, such as Pumpkin picking and Haunted houses for fall, Gingerbread Making Contest for winter.

**MAJOR LEAGUE SPORTS GAMES | ICE-SKATING | OUTINGS
CONCERTS | HOLIDAY EVENTS | AND MUCH MORE**



Section 5

5 Important Tips for High School in Canada



1

Your work must be your own

In Canada, academic integrity is important. This means that any work you do for school originates from your own thoughts and evaluations. Even answers found from outside sources must be either rephrased so that they reflect your own thoughts and word choices, or attributed to the source.

2

Your Canadian educational experience is a marathon, not a sprint

A marathon is a long race that requires consistent effort, while a sprint is a short race that requires a quick burst of effort. Canadian school is more like a marathon, where your consistent contributions and efforts will be rewarded.

3

Get ready to actively participate in class

A Canadian classroom is full of activity, with lots of discussion, debate, and vocal participation. Understanding the material is important, and Canadian teachers like to see that students are able to show their understanding of the material and contribute to the discussion.

4

Technology is for schoolwork—not just for socializing

Many of your courses will require that you use a laptop or iPad in conjunction with written or physical materials. Although it is tempting to use your device for other purposes (gaming or browsing the internet), this is something that is not permissible in school and can lead to disciplinary action.

5

Make sure to schedule one-on-one time

Make appointments with teachers and guidance counselors – this will afford you even more one-on-one time with some important people in the school so you can build a relationship.

Section 6

Living in Canada: 5 Things to Know





5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT LIVING IN CANADA

28

1

There is a zero-tolerance approach to drinking, smoking, and/or substance abuse

One major difference between many countries and Canada are laws around smoking, vaping, and drinking. Canada takes smoking, vaping and drinking laws very seriously. Even if you come from a country where people your own age are allowed to smoke, vape, or drink, it is important that you acknowledge that it is against the law in Canada that people under the age of 19 purchase or consume cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, alcohol or any other substance.

2

Utilize your English skills

One of the key components of your experience in Canada with Amerigo is that you graduate from our school with very strong English skills! At the same time, we know that learning a new language can be exhausting and that it can be very comforting to finish the school day and speak with your friends in the language of your home country. That being said, we hope you use English as much as you can, but that you monitor yourself and recognize when you need to take a break and go back to your home country's language.

3

Mr., Miss, Ms. Or Mx!

Respectful greetings for adults vary from culture to culture. When you get to Canada, refer to adults by the title, Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mx, followed by their last name.

4

Tips on tipping

Canadians have a tipping culture for many of its service workers. We ask you to be mindful of this while living in Canada. Here are some tips on how to tip service workers:

- Do tip: waiter, meal delivery person, hairdresser, nail salon staff, coffee shop worker
- Do not tip: help desk workers, mechanic or plumber, teachers or Amerigo staff, flight attendants

5

Be careful with what you joke about!

In general, Canada has a pretty casual approach to joking in social situations. However, some topics are considered off-limits, or even threatening. Before you arrive in Canada, we wanted to make sure you were aware of some of these topics:

■ Self-harm:

Any jokes about hurting yourself will be taken extremely seriously and can even elevate to contact with parents or medical officials. Amerigo will always help any students going through difficult feelings, but joking about this topic is insensitive and can be harmful to you and your community.

■ Violence:

Jokes about violence of any kind, particularly threatening someone with weapons, will likely result in a meeting with your Principal, Director of Campus Operations, or even local authorities. Additionally, serious consequences, up to and including dismissal, are possible outcomes.

■ Another person's appearance:

Depending on where you're from, this may seem odd, but Canadians generally do not make jokes about each other's appearance. In fact, jokes about appearances can be viewed as offensive and may be considered bullying.

■ Jokes of a sexual nature:

Sexual jokes are also considered to be extremely offensive and should not ever be made.

■ Race/Ethnicity:

Amerigo is a diverse and inclusive environment that embraces the traditions and culture of all ethnic and/or racial backgrounds. Disparaging comments made about any race or ethnicity will not be tolerated.

Section 7

Making the Most of Your Amerigo Experience



1

Make Friends

Canada is known to be a melting pot where people come from various countries, cultures and ethnicities. It may feel comfortable to spend time with people from a similar background and culture, but we encourage you to make friends with local students and students from other countries. You can be an ambassador of your own culture and country, and you will be amazed at how much you can learn from each other!

2

Join a Club or Activity

Your high school years are one of the best opportunities you will ever get to explore new activities, try different things, and see what you're passionate about. Inside the classroom and outside of it, you'll start to get a better idea of who you are and what drives you. This is also the best way to make friends, build your communication and leadership skills, and above all, have some fun.

3

Spend Time with your Host Family

Spend time with your family! Don't stay alone in your room or on your devices. Try to spend time with your hosts, participate in family activities, watch (and help) cooking. Sometimes your host family may invite you to travel with the family during the holidays. When opportunities arise, we encourage you to say yes!

4

Volunteer for Those in Need

You will have to complete 40 hours of required community service in order to graduate in Ontario. Doing what you can to give back to the community is also one of the traits advocated for in Canadian education. There will be opportunities provided by the school and within your community for students to engage in volunteer work. Guidelines for acceptable activities will be provided to you by school leadership. You will get so much satisfaction by knowing you have helped someone in need!

5

Take on a Leadership Role!

Leadership is one of the characteristics that Canadian colleges and universities look for in an applicant. Leaders are simply the ones that serve others and make a difference in a community regardless of how small or big the community is. There is an abundance of opportunities at school or a local community where you can take a leadership role. Just remember, no role is too small.



We Look Forward
To Seeing You Soon

