

## **International Students Pre-Departure Information.**

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## 1. Why New Zealand?

New Zealand is a very popular destination with international students. It has an excellent educational system and our schools, universities, and polytechnics are internationally recognised around the world.

New Zealand is an ideal place to study and travel. We have sophisticated cities, beautiful beaches, rugged coastlines and snow capped mountains. New Zealand offers opportunities to try many different activities like bungy jumping, sky diving, skiing in both the North and South Island, boating and tramping to name just a few.

## 2. Auckland

Auckland is the country's largest city with a population of around 1.7 million people. It is surrounded by sea and has many extinct volcanoes which have created a very picturesque landscape. It is framed by 320kms of sparkling coastline, stretching between the Manukau and Waitamata Harbours with beautiful rolling countryside as you move further inland.

Auckland is a very multicultural city and is home to approximately 165 ethnic groups. People come from all over the world to visit, study, work and live in Auckland. It has a number of museums, markets, festivals, and theatres as well as a variety of cafés, restaurants and shops. Some of New Zealand's best educational institutions are located in Auckland.

The natural advantages of a warm climate, beautiful beaches and cultural events contribute to the popularity of one of the most vibrant cities in New Zealand



### 3. Location and Facilities

Elim Christian College Mt Albert is for students in years NE-13.

Elim Mt Albert has superb facilities including, well-resourced library, visual artrooms, science laboratories, and specialised IT and multi-media suites.

Mount Albert is an interior suburb of Auckland Central, New Zealand, based on Mount Albert, a local volcanic peak that dominates the area. The suburb is situated seven kilometres southwest of the Auckland Central Business District (CBD). Unitec Institute of Technology, the largest technology institute in Auckland, is situated in the north of the suburb. The **Mount Albert Research Centre** hosts the Auckland Centre for Plant & Food Research and other Crown Research Institutes. **Fowlds Park** is situated in the north of Mt Albert.

To find out more about Mt Albert, visit: [Walk in Mt Albert](#)

### 4. Climate

New Zealand boasts temperatures in summer of up to 27° C and in winter around 12° C. The coldest and wettest months are June to August and the warmest months are December to March. It doesn't ever snow in Auckland although you get snow in the middle of the north island around the Central Plateau – Mt Ruapehu. It is generally unnecessary to wear gloves and hats in Auckland but you will need them if you plan to travel to the South Island during the winter months.

While these temperatures are the norm, the weather in New Zealand can change unexpectedly as cold fronts or tropical cyclones quickly blow in. Because of this, you should be prepared for sudden changes in weather and temperature, particularly if you're going hiking or doing other outdoor activities during the holidays.



## 5. Arrival at Auckland Airport

If you are planning to live with a homestay family that the school has arranged, then we will organize one of our international staff to meet you at the airport and take you to your homestay. Make sure you send us your arrival details: you can email our homestay coordinator through school website once you have got your flights confirmed. If you are going to be living with a family friend or relative, or have arranged to come to Elim Christian College through an agent then it is likely that they will arrange to meet you and take you to your accommodation. (Please check arrangements with them before you leave)

Look closely at your tickets as NZ is the first place to see each new day and so you may be arriving a whole day ahead of when you left!! Auckland airport is very small in comparison to other airports around the world so it is unlikely that you will have any difficulty in finding your way around. Walk out the arrivals door and keep to your left. Look at the signs being held up by people for your name and the name of Elim Christian College Mt Albert. If you cannot see our sign, walk to your left and sit down in front of the MacDonald's. We will ALWAYS find you!!!



You will be contacted before you leave your home country with contact details of the International support staff.

**DO NOT LEAVE THE AIRPORT UNTIL SOMEONE COMES TO COLLECT YOU.**

## 6. Passports

When you arrive in New Zealand, you need to be carrying a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond your intended departure date.

On arrival you will need to complete an arrival card before passing through Customs/ Passport Control. It will usually be given to you during your flight; if not, cards are available in the Passport Control area.

After you've cleared the Customs Passport Control, you should collect your baggage and walk through either the green or red exit. Choose the green exit if you have nothing to declare; choose the red exit if you have goods or cash (over \$10,000NZD) that need to be declared.

**Do not bring any food into NZ (unless you declare it) or you will be charged a fine on arrival. Fines start from \$200NZD**



## **7. Visas**

It is compulsory for ALL International students to have a student visa whilst studying at a school in New Zealand. Your student visa will state the school that you will be attending, and the dates that the visa is valid for. If for any reason you decide to change to another school or change your course of study in any way, then you will need to apply for a new visa.

If you are planning to study in NZ for less than 3 months, then you are able to attend school on a visitor's visa.

All visa information is available on the following website: <http://www.immigration.govt.nz>

## **8. When to Arrive in New Zealand**

We recommend that you arrive in NZ a couple of days before school starts, so that you have time to recover from jet lag and adjust to your new surroundings. It is important that you are here for orientation as it is a good opportunity to meet new friends and find out about life in NZ.

## **9. Changing Money**

If you have money to change into New Zealand dollars it is best to do it at the airport. \$200 - \$300 NZ is plenty to see you through the first few days. You may want to buy a mobile phone, sim card and an international phone card to use. If you wish to call your family overseas it is best to ask your homestay and let them know that you have an International calling card.

## **10. Homestay Families**

We try to carefully match students and host families, so the more information you can tell us about yourself, what you are hoping for and what your interests are, the better we can match you.

All homestay families are visited and interviewed and each person living in the home over the age of 17 is Police Vetted by the NZ Police Department to make sure that they are a suitable family.

Houses in NZ tend to be quite large and often have two or more bathrooms. It is common for the children/students in the house to share a bathroom. Always pick up your towel and put it on the towel rail. Usually you will have your own bed room, please do your best to keep it tidy and clean, and ask your host mother what you should do with your clothes that need washing.

Your host parents will go through their family's routines and rules with you soon after you arrive.

If you have any questions or don't understand anything please make sure you ask.

If for any reason you are unhappy with your homestay placement when you get to NZ, you need to talk to the Homestay coordinator at school. She will try to work

things out with you and the homestay family but if this still doesn't work, we will do our best to move you to another suitable family.

There are sometimes personality clashes, we understand this but it is important that you feel happy during your time in NZ so we will do our best to make sure that this happens. We do require 1 week's notice if you or the host family decides to make a change. (There could be a small charge)

## 11. Food

Your host family will feed you 7 days per week (3 meals per day). In NZ we tend to eat sandwiches for lunch, not a hot cooked meal like you may be used to. You might find this hard to get used to if you normally have a cooked meal in the middle of the day. You may be asked by your host family to make your own lunch, if you are, make sure you understand what you can use.

Try to avoid eating unhealthy snacks and takeaways during the day as you may not feel like eating a big cooked dinner in the evening.



NZ children are expected to help around the house at dinner time *Fish & Chips- a Kiwi favourite*

perhaps ask if you can help by setting the table, stacking dirty dishes into the dishwasher and maybe even helping to cook the dinner every now and then; you could bring a recipe from home and cook it for your new family.

Meal times are a great time to practice your English. Your family can teach you a lot about New Zealand so ask lots of questions.

Just remember, food in New Zealand may be different to what you are used to – always try it first, then if you don't like it politely say so.

## 12. Getting Places

In NZ you will not have a driver to drive you places. You will need to be very independent in getting yourself to and from events, sports practice, shops etc. We expect your homestay parents to treat you the same as their own children. Sometimes you will get picked up and other times you may need to catch a bus.

We drive on the left side of the road, so you need to be very careful when crossing the road – make sure you look both ways!! Remember look right first, then left, then right again.... then cross the road. Each year in NZ there are accidents with international students who are knocked over on the roads by cars. This is potentially the most dangerous thing you will do whilst in NZ. Please be VERY careful.

You will be issued with a student ID card soon after the start of school, it will enable you to get cheap bus fares and cheaper entry into places around Auckland and NZ. Your host family will make sure you can get to school on your first day.



### 13. Pocket Money & General Living Costs

Pocket money is a personal decision to make. We suggest for an international student, around \$25.00-\$30.00 per week is a good estimate depending on your age and what things you like to do. It is a good idea not to carry too much cash on you and not to bring large amounts of money or valuables to school.

You will probably find that it costs more to use public transport in NZ than it does in your home country.

### 14. Working in New Zealand

As an International you are only allowed to have part time work **if you are in year 12 or year 13**. If you think you may at some stage like to have a part time job, then it is cheaper for you to do this when you put apply to NZ Immigration for your student visa. Along with your visa application form you will need to submit a Variation of Conditions form, and letters from your parents and the school giving you permission to work.

This is a privilege for international students and Elim Christian College does have the right to have your work visa terminated if we feel that it is affecting your school work.

### 15. Can I Drive Whilst in New Zealand?

International students in year 13 are allowed to drive while studying at Elim Christian College provided that they have sat and passed the **full NZ driving license test**.

If you wish to bring a car to school you need to have permission from the school, which you can get by submitting your driver's license and a permission form signed by your caregivers to the school Principal.

### 16. Smoking and Drinking in New Zealand

Smoking is not allowed anywhere at school or while you are wearing school uniform (this means on the way to and from school as well).

Most families in NZ are anti smoking and will not let you smoke in the house.

The legal age for smoking is 18 and NZ has very strict rules about where you are allowed to smoke. You are not allowed to smoke in buildings, work places on public transport or in restaurants.

The legal drinking age in New Zealand is 18 and no one under the age of 18 can buy or should drink alcohol. Drinking alcohol at school or in school uniform, even if you are 18 or over is definitely not allowed.

### 17. Can I have friends around to my house?

Your host family will treat you like a family member so you should be allowed friends around to visit but make sure that you check with your host parents that it is convenient before you do. When your friends are ready to leave, please make sure

you have not made a mess, and if you have, get your friends to help clean up! “Many hands make light work”. If you wish to have friends stay the night, it is entirely up to the host parents. If they say no, please respect their decision.

### **18. Curfews in New Zealand**

Most of our homestay families have or have had children so they will understand that you will want to go out with your friends and get involved in activities. Curfews can be tricky, your host family will have been given an idea of acceptable curfew times by the school and we expect you to comply with them. The older you are, the later families will allow you to stay out at night, but what you must realise is that New Zealanders tend to go to bed quite early by international standards.

Discussion and communication is the key to curfews working well with you and your host family. The most important thing is to inform your host family of your location – especially if you are going to be late home, not home for dinner, staying at a friend's house etc. This is common courtesy and also important for your own safety.

### **19. Do I have to wear a uniform at Elim Christian College?**

All students at Elim Christian College must wear a uniform. The standards are strictly enforced so you must wear the correct shoes, socks, shirts etc. You will get used to it! Nearly all students in New Zealand schools wear a uniform. Don't worry about it – just think of it as part of the experience.

For more information about the school uniform go to our school website: [www.elimtalbert.school.nz](http://www.elimtalbert.school.nz)



### **20. What sports or cultural clubs can I join in New Zealand?**

There are many sports teams and activities that you can join at Elim Christian College Mt Albert. The more you get involved the more friends you will make.

Sports are seasonal so it is essential to check if the one you are interested in is in

fact on while you are here. Let the International staff know if you are interested in any activities so we can let the teachers in charge know.

New Zealand/Kiwi students

can be quite reserved so you will need to be bold and make the effort to make friends. The international students that get involved in the different sports and cultural groups make the most Kiwi friends and have a better experience while they are in New Zealand.





## 21. Food at School

At Elim Christian College Mt Albert we do not have a school tuck shop, but students can bring their own lunch and snacks.



## 22. Travelling Around New Zealand

You are allowed to travel around New Zealand so long as you have written permission from your parents and from the International Student Coordinator at school. All travel **MUST** be approved so please make sure to talk to us before you go anywhere outside of Auckland.

**The rules we have regarding travel are for your own safety.**

## 23. Internet and Telephone Use

The telephone in New Zealand is free to call when you call within Auckland. If you are calling your home country, please either use your own cell phone or use a calling card which you can get from the local shops and let the host family know you are using this so they can recognise the number on their phone bill. These calling cards are **MUCH** cheaper than making a collect call. When you want to use the phone, always ask before you use it out of courtesy to your host family. Please spend a maximum of 15 minutes on the phone at any one time.

At Elim Christian College Mt Albert, laptops are used in most classes. We would recommend that you bring your own laptop with you to NZ so that you are not dependent on using your homestay computer. Students studying in the Junior years are recommended to bring an iPad.

Please ask your host family before using the internet. They will probably have a limit on their internet usage so do not download a lot of information – i.e. music or movies without checking first. This is a privilege, not a requirement as a student. You may find that you would like to have more internet than is available in which case you may need to make a small contribution towards internet usage. Computers in the school library are also available for students to use during lunchtime.

## 24. Bank Accounts

It is a very good idea for International Students in New Zealand to open a bank account. It doesn't cost anything to do and it will make things a lot easier for you. We do not recommend that you keep large sums of money around your house/room or carry it around the streets on a regular basis. In New Zealand most people use EFTPOS bank/debit card and we encourage you to do the same. This is both the most convenient and the safest.

## 25. What to bring to New Zealand?

What you need to bring with you in the way of clothes is dependent on the time of year you are coming, here are some suggestions:

### **Spring/Summer (Oct – April)**

Swimwear, sunhat, sunglasses, sunscreen, shorts, skirts, t-shirts, 2 jumpers/ sweatshirts, light raincoat (something that will keep you dry), good walking shoes.

### **Autumn/Winter (May – Sept)**

Warm waterproof jacket, sweater/jumper, long trousers/jeans, long sleeve shirts, scarf, hat, gloves, and good walking shoes.

**Miscellaneous Items:** We suggest the following on top of the items listed below:

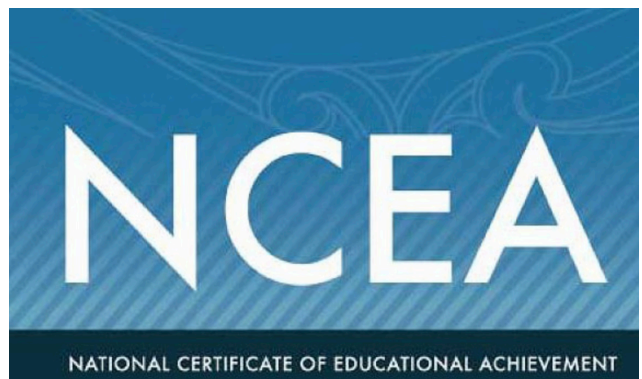
Camera, medication, umbrella, toiletries, towel, photos of friends and family from back home, a few personal belongings to help your room feel like home.

Please note that if you are bringing anything valuable (i.e. camera, phone, laptop etc), you **MUST** have copies of the purchase price (i.e. proof of purchase or receipt) as you will not be able to claim for insurance if you don't have these. (please see notes under insurance below)

## 26. External Examination Fees

At Elim all senior students (years 11-13) sit NCEA exams which are recognised throughout the world at many universities and high schools. The cost for International Students is covered in your activity fees paid on enrolment.

For more information about these exams, please goto: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/about/index.html>.



## 27. Travel and Medical Insurance

It is compulsory for all International Students who study at Elim Christian College to have Travel and Medical insurance. This means that every time you go to the doctors you can claim back the costs of your appointment and medication.

Please remember to keep your proof of purchase for electronic goods (e.g. laptop, camera, iPod etc) in case you need to put in a claim.

## 28. Holidays

Travel back to your home country is permitted during term breaks as long as the school is informed when you are leaving and returning. We **strongly** advise that you return home at Christmas time (end of the school year) as the school will be closed



for approximately 7 weeks. If you wish to remain in NZ, you will need to have permission from the school and your parents to do so.

Generally, we do not like students to travel home at other times unless there are special circumstances that require you to do so in which case we will need a letter

from your parents explaining the reason.

Any absences from school will result in an absence being marked on the school computer system. If there are a large number of unexplained absences, it may be difficult for you to obtain another student visa from NZ Immigration.

## **29. Culture Adjustment– Arriving**

Some good ways to minimize and overcome culture shock are to read about and if possible, speak to someone who has visited or who is already living in the place that you are intending to go to.

Once you are here, you will find that the people and customs are probably quite different from what you are used to. Having realistic expectations and accepting that difficulties and misunderstandings may occur will help you to cope better if things do go wrong. Keeping an open mind will also help you to find solutions to any problems that may arise.

When possible interact with local people. Generally, they will be pleased to introduce you to their culture and willing to answer questions. Don't give in to the temptation to isolate yourself and don't be afraid of making mistakes. When you are eager to learn people are usually more than willing to meet you half-way and learn from you in turn.

Find ways to keep in touch with family and friends at home. Sometimes you just need to talk with someone who understands you and feels that your way of doing things is not strange or rude. Keeping in touch also makes the homecoming process much easier.

## **30. Culture Adjustment – Going Home**

It is often difficult to readjust to the old way of life. While reuniting with friends and family is always a pleasant experience, you may miss the routines and habits that you acquired while you were away. This can be frustrating and disappointing especially as you have probably imagined returning home as a wonderful moment when the world goes back to feeling "normal" again. The reality is that just as you

missed "home", when you first arrived in NZ, you will now miss the things that you became accustomed to while you were away. It is also likely that things have changed somewhat from your idealized memories especially if you have been away for a reasonable length of time.

Similarly, to culture shock, the feelings will eventually pass as you reacclimatise and settle in to your old surroundings.

### **31. International Office Staff:**

**International Student Coordinator:** Mr John Ryu

**Administrator:** Mr Marvin Anderson (Deputy Principal),  
Mrs Norma Van Rooyen (Administration)

Contact email: [office1@elimmtalbert.school.nz](mailto:office1@elimmtalbert.school.nz)



**Welcome to Elim Christian College Mt Albert!**