

International Students

Pre Departure

Booklet

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| **International Students** |



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**1. Why New Zealand?**

New Zealand is a very popular destination with international students. We have an excellent educational system in our schools, universities, and polytechnics and they 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 as well as many more.



**2. Auckland**

Auckland is the country’s largest city with a population of around 1.5 million people.

The city is surrounded by sea and many extinct volcanoes which has created a very amazing landscape. As a result of the beautiful harbour, Auckland has been named the “City of Sails”.

Auckland is a multicultural city and people from all over the world come to study, visit, live and work here. Auckland has a number of museums, markets, festivals, theatres etc as well as a variety of cafés, restaurants and shops. Some of New Zealand’s best educational institutions are located in Auckland.



**3. Manukau**

Manukau City is just 25 minutes from downtown [Auckland](http://web.archive.org/web/20080523200601/http%3A/www.welcome2manukau.com/tourism/auckland-city/), North Island New Zealand. Forty minutes on the train will take you from Manurewa to Downtown Auckland City –and this will be even faster once the electric trains start running. [Auckland Airport](http://web.archive.org/web/20080523200601/http%3A/www.auckland-airport.co.nz/) is located in Manukau, and is the arrival point each year for over 1.7m visitors to New Zealand. Framed by 320kms of sparkling coastline, stretched between the Manukau and Waitamata Harbours, beautiful rolling countryside rubs shoulder to shoulder with [Auckland’s](http://web.archive.org/web/20080523200601/http%3A/www.welcome2manukau.com/tourism/auckland-city/) true urban authenticity.  Home to 165 ethnic groups, Manukau reflects the diversity of its [communities](http://web.archive.org/web/20080523200601/http%3A/www.welcome2manukau.com/tourism/culture/) - colourful, vibrant and proud.

Alfriston College is located in Manurewa, towards rural Alfriston and Clevedon. Alfriston College is a new multicultural secondary school. It opened in January 2004 with 275 Year 9 students and now caters for students from Years 9 - 13 (age 13-19) to a capacity of 1500. The learning environment and curriculum have been designed to cater for 21st century learners.

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.

To find out more about Manukau (South Auckland region) visit: <http://www.aucklandnz.com/discover/manukau>

 

**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 around the South Island.

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. Map of Manukau**



**6. Passports**

When you arrive in New Zealand, you’ll 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. An arrival card will usually be given to you during your flight; if not, cards are available in the Passport Control area.

After you’ve cleared 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 students to have a student visa whilst studying at a secondary school in New Zealand for longer than 3 months. Students are now able to study on visitor visas in the same school for a maximum of 3 months. If you have a student visa, on the visa, it must state Alfriston College. If it has another institution, you will need to change the status of your current visa. This can be done with a Variation of Conditions Form.

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

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

We recommend you arrive just a couple of days before school starts as it can get a little lonely waiting without knowing anyone and your host parents are probably at work (most parents in NZ work). We do not allow you to arrive late, as the first days with our orientation are vital for you to fit into school life.

**9. Arrival at Auckland Airport**

One of our international staff will be at Auckland airport waiting for you when you arrive and then they will take you to your family or, in most cases a member of your host family will be there too. Make sure you send us your arrival details (j.lawrence@alfristoncollege.school.nz)

 as soon as you have booked your flights!! We would hate for you to arrive and us not being there to pick you up. Look closely at your tickets as it is often a whole day ahead as NZ is the first place to see each new day! Auckland airport is very small in comparison to other airports around the world so you shouldn’t get lost. 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 Alfriston College. If you cannot see our sign, walk to your left and sit down in front of the MacDonald’s. We will ALWAYS find you!!!

If you get lost at the airport, please call **021 825112** which is the 24 hour emergency number for Alfriston College International Students and we will be able to talk to you.

**DO NOT LEAVE THE AIRPORT.**

**10. Changing Money**

If you have some money to change into New Zealand dollars it is easiest 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 or an international phone card to use to let your parents know you got here safely. It is best to ask your homestay if you can call them to let them know you have arrived and safe in your new host family/DCG. If you arrive on the peak arrival days, the airport will be buzzing with other internationals going to many other schools around NZ. If we have a small group arriving, you will be greeted by one of our office staff and then put into a shuttle can or taxi with a couple of other students who are also coming to Alfriston College.

**11. Homestay Families**

We try to carefully match you and your host family, so the more information you can tell us about what you are hoping for and what your interests are, the better we can match you. We get applications from host families from our local community. If we think they are suitable, we then visit the home and interview the family. If we are happy with them, we then get everyone over 17 years of age in that house Police Vetted by the NZ Police Department to make sure they are suitable to host.

It is quite common in New Zealand for families to be divorced/separated. Most of our parents work (both mother and father). You will always have your own room. The houses in The Gardens area tend to be quite large and often have two or more bathrooms. It is common for the children/students in the house to share the bathrooms. Always pick up your towel and put it on the towel rail. Your host family will do your washing, however they will not come and collect if from your room.

When you arrive talk to your host mother about what to do with your dirty clothes so they get washed. Most families have a washing basket and you will just need to put your dirty clothes in the basket so they get washed.

If you are unhappy with your homestay placement when you get to NZ, we will ask you to try to work things out. If this still doesn’t work, we will do our best to move you to another suitable family. There are sometimes personality clashes and we understand this. We want you to feel as happy as you can in NZ and this is a major part of your experience. We do require 1 week’s notice if you or the host family decide to make a change.

If you damage any property in your homestay, please be honest and tell you homestay so you can work out a way to fix anything. Please leave the house clean and tidy when you move out otherwise you may be charged a fee for having your room cleaned.

**12. 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 should always make your own lunch. You will need to ask you homestay/caregiver what is available for lunches. Try to avoid eating unhealthy snacks and takeaways during the day and then eating a big cooked dinner. It is also a nice idea to help around the house at dinner time – perhaps ask if you can help by setting the table, helping to cook dinner every now and then.

Why don’t you bring a recipe from home and cook if for your new family? Meal times are a great way 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 say so.

**13. Getting Places**

In NZ we do 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 parents to treat you just the same as their own family. Sometimes you will get picked up and other times you will need to catch buses or trains. 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 about 2 weeks after the start of school. This will get you cheap bus and train 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. At orientation, you will receive the local bus and train timetables – remember to keep it!!

**14. Pocket Money & General Living Costs**

Pocket money is a personal decision to make. Most NZ school students get only about $50 per week to spend on going out. We suggest for an international student, around $80 – 100 per week is a good estimate. Buses are more expensive than you are probably used to. We suggest to budget around $30 for buses per week. Take a look at the “Guide to Living and Studying in New Zealand” which is available as a download at <http://www.newzealandeducated.com/int/guide> OIn these pages there are many good tips about living costs e.g. burger, coke etc. Make sure your parents are aware there are extra school costs such as uniform, books, field trips, sports fees so you do not pay for them out of your pocket money.

**15. Working in New Zealand**

You are also allowed to work part time (only 10 hours per week during school time, 20 hours per week in holidays) **only if you are in year 12 or year 13**. You will need to submit a Variation of Conditions form NZ immigration dept along with a letter from your parents stating you can work and also a letter from Alfriston College. If you want to apply for a work visa with your student visa application, it is cheaper. This is a privilege for international students. Alfriston College does have the right to have your work visa terminated if we think it is affecting your school work.

**16. Can I Drive Whilst in New Zealand?**

International students are not allowed to drive at all while studying at Alfriston College unless you live with your own parents. However, you are allowed to sit the tests as it is much cheaper than in your home country but you MUST get approval from the international office before doing this.

**17. 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 smoking age in NZ is 18yrs or over. If you need to smoke, we suggest you go for a short walk away from your homestay and do it. In NZ there are very strict rules about not smoking. You are not allowed to smoke in buildings and work places and you are also not allowed to leave school to smoke. This rule is enforced by the school staff.

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

**18. Can I have friends around to my house?**

Your host family will treat you like a family member. Of course you are allowed friends around to visit. Make sure you ask your host parents before you have your friends around. When they leave, please ensure you have not made a mess and if so, 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.

**19. Curfews in New Zealand**

Most of our homestay families have or have had children so can relate to going out and wanting to get involved. Curfews can be tricky. The older you are, the later families will allow you to stay out at night, but what you must realise is, that New Zealanders go to bed quite early by international standards and there is not a vibrant night-life for those under 18. Photo ID is required for 18 year olds to go to licensed premises. 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 for your own safety.

**20. Do I have to wear a uniform at Alfriston College?**

All junior and senior learners must wear 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 high schools wear uniform. Don’t worry about it – just think of it as part of the experience. Our school blazer is only used for formal occasions and the school lends one to you for these occasions.

If you play sport at Alfriston College, you will be required to hire an Alfriston College sports uniform for that particular sport. These are available from the sports department at school.

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

There are many clubs and activities to join in with at Alfriston College. The more you get involved the more friends you will make. Our application form has all these listed for you to choose. Don’t panic if you didn’t fill it out, we can arrange this when you arrive. Alfriston College has the “Daily Notices” which are shared on the TV screens in Whanau blocks every day which inform all the students what is on in and around school – i.e. where to sign up for sports teams, music groups etc. Make sure you read them every day!

Sports are seasonal so it is essential to check if the one you are interested in is in fact on while you are here. The schedule of when each sport is on is in our policies and guidelines document so make sure you have a look. Let us know if you are interested in any activities so we can let the teachers in charge know you are coming….especially if you are in the top teams/groups in your school / province.

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 in New Zealand.

**22. Food at School**

At Alfriston College we have a cafeteria (or ‘wharekai’). You can buy snack food at morning tea (interval) and at lunchtime. New Zealand schools do not really have sit down cafeterias like in most other countries.

**23.** **Travelling Around New Zealand**

You are allowed to travel around New Zealand if you are with a tour company or have special permission from the International Office at Alfriston College. All travel MUST be approved so please make sure you get used to talking to us before you go anywhere outside of Auckland. We want you to see as much as you can in New Zealand and there is always more than one way of getting to see places. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when looking for places to go – remember we live here!!!

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

 **24. Internet and Telephone Use**

The telephone in New Zealand is free to call when you call within Auckland. If you are calling back to your home country please 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.

Please ask your families 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. This is a privilege, not a requirement as a student. If you are a person who uses the computer a lot, perhaps think about bringing your own laptop to NZ and then you can organise your own internet connection or maybe help pay towards the internet bill. Talk to your homestay family about this.

Computers are also available at school during lunchtimes for students to use. There are also a number of internet cafes around Manurewa, Manukau and Auckland that you can use.

**25. Bank Accounts**

Students in New Zealand should open a bank account. It doesn’t cost anything to do and it makes things a lot easier when you are in New Zealand. We do not recommend that you keep large sums of money around you 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.

**26. What to take to New Zealand?**

Below are items we suggest you bring to New Zealand. Depending on the time of year you are coming, will depend on what you bring:

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, good walking shoes

For formal wear we suggest the following:

**Girls** - dress, trousers / skirt, blouse, dress shoes

**Boys** – Long trousers/pants, shirt, tie, dress shoes, socks

**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 note that if you have a current medical condition we MUST know about this for insurance purposes)

**27. External Examination Fees**

At Alfriston College all senior students sit NCEA exams which are recognised throughout the world at many universities and high schools. The costs were $383.30 for international students in 2014. These exams are for senior students only and the fees are normally due to be paid around July/August each year. For more information about these exams, please go to <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/about/index.html>. If you are not studying at Alfriston College for the whole year, you will not be sitting these exams. If you do not want to sit the exams, you do not have to pay the fees.

**28. Travel and Medical Insurance**

It is compulsory for all International Students who study at Alfriston 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 costs, or if you are travelling around NZ and lose something (i.e. your camera) then we can claim that back too. Please remember to keep your proof of purchase for electronic goods (e.g. laptop, camera, iPod etc) in case you need to claim for anything.

You will be asked to provide a copy of your insurance at our orientation (1st day of school) if we have not already got a copy. We need to see the full policy and in English.

**29. Holidays**

Travel back to your home country is normally only permitted in the mid year holidays (after term 2 - July) and after the school year finishes in December. We strongly advise you to only go home in these holidays and at Christmas time if you need to go home. We will allow you to travel home at other times only for special circumstances, but we need a letter from your parents explaining why you need to go.

All travel within the year MUST be carried out during school holiday time, i.e. after the last day of term and before the start of the next term. Any days off school will result in an absence being marked on the school computer system.

**30. Orientation**

So you have arrived in New Zealand and you have settled in you are now getting excited about starting school. The first day at Alfriston College is what we call orientation. It is a day dedicated to new students. You need to be at Alfriston College at the time and day given on the letter in your welcome pack at your homestay. You need to bring your passport with you.

**31. Culture Shock – Arriving**

Some good ways to successfully minimize and overcome culture shock are to read about the place where you will be staying and the things you will be doing, also, if possible, speak with someone already living in the new environment.

Once you are there, keep in mind that people and customs may be very different from what you are used to. Having realistic expectations and realizing that difficulties and misunderstandings may occur will help you keep a cool head when they do, and keeping an open mind will allow you to find solutions to those problems that may arise.

When possible interact with the local population. Don't succumb to the temptation to isolate yourself, even if it is within a group of people from your home country. Locals will generally be pleased to introduce you to their culture and willing to answer questions. 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 fully understands who you are and feels that your way of being is not strange, or rude. Keeping in touch also makes the homecoming process much easier

**32. Culture Shock – 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 acquired while away. This can be frustrating and dismaying when you envision homecoming as a wonderful moment where the world goes back to feeling "normal" again. The truth is though that like you missed the things and habits customs that made home "home," you will also yearn for those habits and manners that you became accustomed during your absence. Also, after an absence of several years it is likely that things have changed somewhat from your idealized memories. Similarly to culture shock, the feeling eventually passes as you re-acclimatize and settle in to you old surroundings.

**32. International Office Staff**

Ms Jody Lawrence

Homestay and Student Support Co-Ordinator

j.lawrence@alfristoncollege.school.nz

Emergency 24 hour contact: Ph 021 825 112