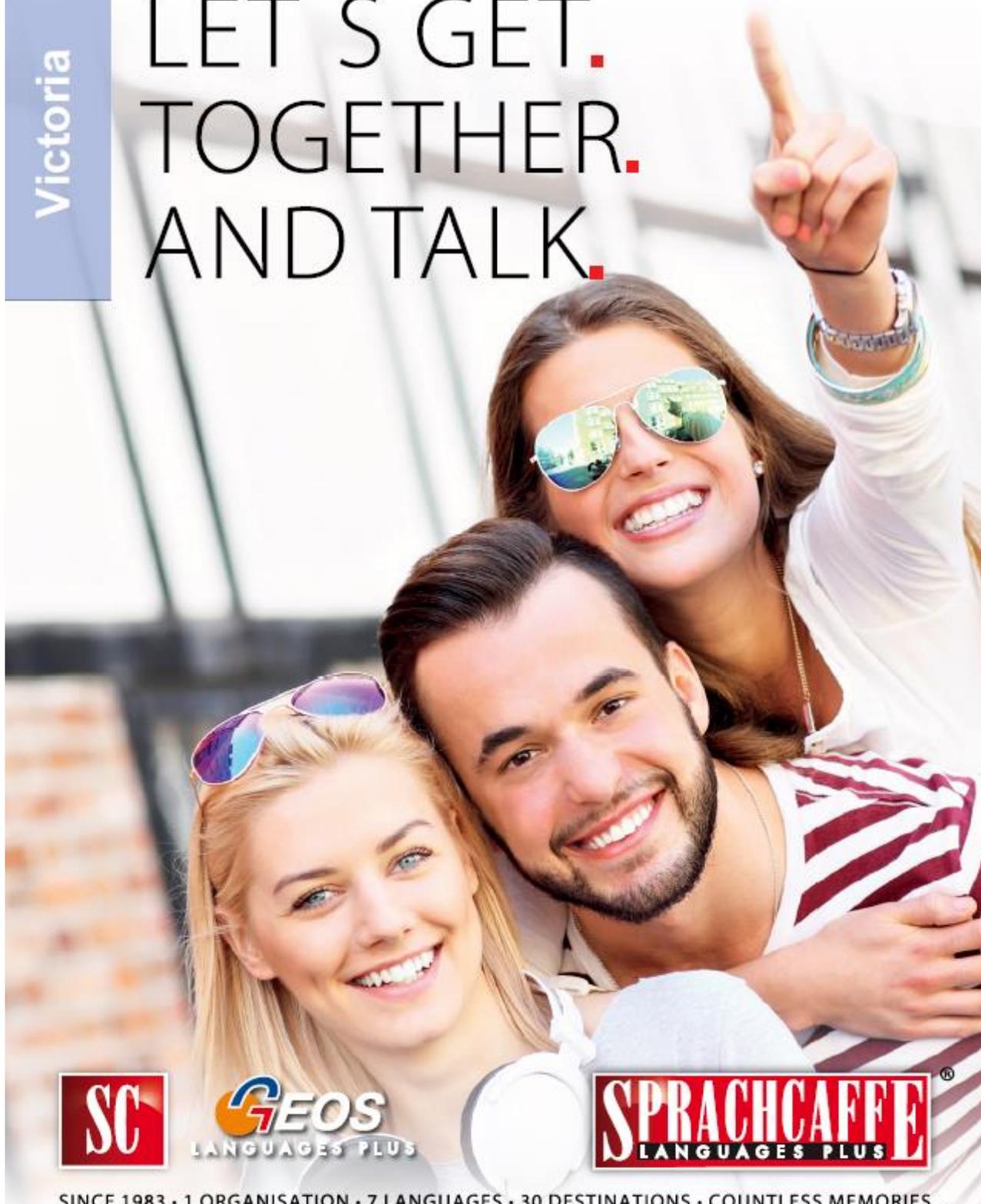


Victoria

LET'S GET.
TOGETHER.
AND TALK.



SINCE 1983 • 1 ORGANISATION • 7 LANGUAGES • 30 DESTINATIONS • COUNTLESS MEMORIES...

WELCOME TO SPRACHCAFFE

You are obviously committed not just to having a holiday, but at the same time, also learning a new language or improving your skills in a language you already know. This is why we would like to send you our warmest congratulations! It is great when people want to make the world a bit smaller for themselves.

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart." Nelson Mandela

It pleases us even more that you have chosen Sprachcaffe GEOS for your language trip. Lively teaching methods, a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere, learning through interaction and chatting (which helps you bond with others) - we have become experts with our 35 year experience in language training and with our 30 destinations worldwide.

In the enclosed documents you will find everything you need to know for your trip. **Please do not travel without this information sheet.** If you have any additional questions, we are glad to answer them: Please send us an email: info@sprachcaffe.com

We wish you a great holiday and lots of success

Your Sprachcaffe Team



Content

BEFORE YOUR TRIP	3
FLIGHT TO VICTORIA	3
ACCOMMODATION	4
HOST FAMILY	4
APARTMENTS/RESIDENCE	5
THE SCHOOL	6
LANGUAGE TEST	8
GENERAL INFORMATION	13
FEEDBACK	15
LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL	16
CHECKLIST BEFORE DEPARTURE	17
CHECKLIST FOR RETURNING HOME	17

Before your trip

EU Citizens

You are required to have a (temporary) passport valid for the period of the trip in Canada.

Since March 2016 citizens of the European Union have to apply for the **Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)**. For the application a valid passport, a credit card and an e-mail address is required and a small fee will be charged.

The eTA can be requested under the following link: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-facts-en.asp>

An instruction on how to fill out the form for the eTA you can find under the following link:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/eta/english.pdf>

Non EU Citizens

If you are not a citizen of the European Union, we kindly advise you to comply with the visa regulations for Canada. For the entry requirements please check with your local consulate.

Flight to Victoria

Please inform your agent or Sprachcaffe about your arrival time **at least one week** prior to your departure to Canada. If you arrive at an inappropriate hour you need to confirm your arrival with your agent and / or Sprachcaffe key account.

Please understand that we cannot guarantee a smooth check-in if we are not informed of arrival dates and times or delays in advance.

Victoria is served by one major airport: Victoria International Airport, which is approximately a 40-minute drive north of downtown Victoria. We suggest booking a flight all the way through to Victoria, rather than just to Vancouver. Most flights will fly direct to Vancouver International Airport; you can then transfer and take a very quick 15-minute flight to Victoria Airport. Victoria Airport is about 30 minutes from most of our host families. For those students requesting our Airport Pickup Transfer service, please keep in mind that this service is only available for Victoria International Airport. Please note that the alternative to flying to Victoria is to take the Pacific Coach Line bus from Vancouver International Airport to Victoria Bus Terminal via the ferry. However, this mode of transportation is your own responsibility and you must inform us prior to arrival so that we know when to expect you.

When travelling to Canada, be careful not to bring plants, fruit or live animals, as these items are either prohibited and/or subject to quarantine. Also, if you are bringing cigarettes into Canada, please remember that there is a limit of one carton per person. If you bring more than this into the country, you will have to pay tax on the cigarettes. The same is true for alcohol; you may bring one bottle of alcohol into the country when you arrive.

For those students who do not need an airport transfer, you can take a taxi or an airport shuttle-bus from the Victoria International Airport to your host family or downtown. Once you collect your luggage, you will leave the airport and see a line of yellow taxis that belong to the Yellow Cab taxi company. They are the only taxis you can take from the airport (you may take any taxi to the airport). The cost will be about \$60 plus tip (15~20%) to downtown Victoria. The airport shuttle, called the AIRPORTER is much less expensive, costing about \$21 one way. It is located in front of the Yellow Cab taxis.

If you have asked for the Airport Pick-up Service, you will be met as soon as you walk out of the departure area. The host family or Sprachcaffe employee will be holding a sign with your name on it

Emergency number: Cell: +1 250.704.6510

Accommodation

It is our aim to provide the best service possible. However, if you have any issue during you stay please talk directly to the school staff.

You will find your host family contact information in your voucher.

The emergency number for clients with homestay accommodation is the following: +1 250.704.6510

Host Family

Canadian host families are very open-minded, helpful and welcoming to their guests. You will be able to practice what you have learned during the course and you will shed your fears while communicating with the family. Offering your host family a **small** gift as a token of your appreciation is always welcomed.

In general, the families will introduce you to their household rules when you arrive. For example, they will provide a house key, discuss meal times and the use of the washing machine. Normally, the bathroom is shared with other members of the family. Please make sure that you always leave your room and bathroom clean and tidy and that you do not damage the furniture.

Please take the family into consideration and avoid unnecessary noise, especially late in the evening and at night.

Please be respectful and polite to your host family. Please inform them about your daily plans, especially if you decide to stay out late to prevent them from worrying. Please inform them if you will not be home for a meal, if you plan to go on a trip for a few days or if you plan to stay away overnight. Please ask your family for permission before inviting friends over after school and on weekends. In general, families do not mind when you invite new friends over but please be considerate and ask them first.

Please discuss with your family any specific household rules. Students may be expected to help in small household chores. Please ask permission before using the family phone; the family phone should be used for local calls only. Long distance calls may be made with the use of an international calling card. Please also note that our Canadian families do not allow students to smoke in their rooms or anywhere inside house. When staying with a host family, bed sheets and towels will be provided.

Sprachcaffe homestay policies indicate that we do not place two students with the same native language or same gender in the same home. If there is another student in the home who speaks the same native language, please let the school know right away as we want to ensure you are fully immersed in an English environment to improve your ability to learn English.

If you would like to move out of homestay, 2-weeks notification is required. If you leave early, you would be responsible for these fees

If you go on vacation while in homestay, you are still responsible for the accommodations fees.

For any financial questions about your accommodations, please do not speak with the family or the residence, please address these questions to the school.

Most families have wireless internet at home. Whether or not students have their own computers, they should still ask their host family about the rules for using the internet at home

Alcohol: The legal drinking age is 19 in Victoria, and all of the province of British Columbia. In terms of drinking alcohol at home, please make sure to check the rules with your host family, as different families have different rules about alcohol consumption at home.

All families have been visited by members of our school staff and live in safe, comfortable neighbourhoods close to the school.

Facilities: A private room with a bed, desk, lamp and closet. Students will have full access to the kitchen and the bathroom. Families will also provide bed linens. Some families provide internet.

Services: The host family does the basic cleaning but students are encouraged to clean their rooms.

Distance to school: 10-40 minutes by public transit

Please make sure to let Sprachcaffe know in advance of any food allergies, pet allergies, or special food requirements that you may have.

Apartments/Residence

By choosing an apartment you will get to experience a special kind of “shared accommodation” for the duration of your holiday. You share the apartment, kitchen and bathroom with other course participants who normally come from different countries. This “shared accommodation” is part of our concept for communicative learning and offers you the possibility of organising excursions such as theatre and cinema visits.

The apartments in Victoria are located in downtown – central and close to all amenities the city has to offer. Also, our language school is just around the corner and to be reached in five minutes walking.

The apartments are modern and completely furnished. In the café lounge you can sit comfortably by drinking a coffee and reading the newspaper. Additionally, evening programs are organized frequently which means you may have the chance to listen to the latest songs of local bands. Furthermore, there are convenient parking areas and a room where to lock the bike safely. If you have any questions, you can contact the residence staff anytime. Wi-Fi is available in all rooms.

In every kitchen you will find pans, dishes and diverse other cooking utensils. The apartments will be provided with bed sheets and towels.

Please note that all our apartments are only available for course participants and not for friends or relatives.

For extra-stays, which cannot be granted for free, you need to have our confirmation. Therefore, we kindly ask you to contact us well in advance. Please note that the apartments are not hotels.

All course participants have to take care of the cleaning themselves. Sprachcaffe only organises the basic cleaning.

We recommend that you and your fellow-lodgers make a plan so that the work can be shared evenly. Rubbish and empty bottles will have to be thrown away daily.

We want all our course participants to feel just like at home and hope that everyone treats the apartments, rooms and facilities accordingly. Your fellow-lodgers would surely appreciate a clean lounge, kitchen and bathroom. We, therefore, believe that the minimum contribution should be to wash up the daily meal dishes. You should respect the privacy of your fellow-lodgers in general and avoid unnecessary noise, especially late in the evening or at night.

Depending on availability we may book other residences of the same standard, but location/ distance and facilities might be different.

Check-out: We kindly ask you to check out of the apartment until 11 am. If your flight back is much later, you can also leave your luggage at the reception for a few hours.

The School

Our school is conveniently located in the heart of downtown Victoria on the main street. Our school is at 225-1207 Douglas Street. We are on the 2nd Floor. By Bus: Virtually every city bus stops either directly in front of the school or within one block of the school. All students must arrive by 8:30 a.m. on the first day of school for Orientation and Testing. You should bring:

- Your Passport
- A notebook, pen, pencil & an eraser
- Travel insurance

School Address: **Sprachcaffe Victoria / GEOS Languages Plus**
225-1207 Douglas Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8W 2E7
(TEL) 250-382-1196
(FAX) 250-382-1128

Emergency number +1 250.704.6510

Opening hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5p.m., Monday to Friday

Languages spoken by the staff at the school: English, Japanese, Arabic, Turkish & Korean

Student card: A student card with photo is issued on arrival.

Bistro, Snacks and Drinks: Lounge, cafeteria, vending machines, microwave ovens, drinks machine, water cooler

Internet room: There is a computer lab with 4 computers and free wireless internet throughout the school.

Study Room: A study room where students can work on/revise their homework is available.

In general, the schedule on the first day is:

- 08:30 – 09:00 Welcome & Speaking Test
- 09:00 – 10:00 Placement Tests
- 10:00 – 11:00 GEOS Orientation (School Rules, Life in Victoria, etc . . .)
- 11:00 – 11:30 GEOS Orientation (Homestay)
- 11:30 – 12:15 Walking Tour of the neighborhood around the school
- 12:45 – 13:00 Lunch Time
- 13:00 – 14:30 Elective Classes (IE & SIE program only)

Your schedule:

09.00-10.30 Lessons
10.30-10.45 Break
10.45-12.15 Lessons
12.15-13.00 Break
13.00-14.30 Lessons
14.30-14.45 Break
14.45-16.15 Lessons

Please note that you need to pay a for the course books. The approximate prices are:

\$50 for Part-Time Course – 10 lessons per week
 \$50 for Standard Course – 20 lessons per week
 \$150 for Intensive Course – 30 lessons per week
 \$200 for Super Intensive Course – 40 lessons per week
 (changes during the year are possible)

Students will be charged per class and will be given their own book to use, write in and keep. If you are enrolled for 4 weeks or less, you have the option to rent the books instead of buy them. The deposit fee is \$40 per book and the rental fee is \$10 per book / per week. The rental fee is non-refundable.

Class types:

Part-time course	2 lessons per day; 10 lessons per week; 5 days a week (Monday to Friday); 1 lesson = 45 minutes
Standard course	4 lessons per day; 20 lessons per week; 5 days a week (Monday to Friday); 1 lesson = 45 minutes
Intensive course	6 lessons per day; 30 lessons per week; 5 days a week (Monday to Friday); 1 lesson = 45 minutes
Super-intensive course	8 lessons per day; 40 lessons per week; 5 days a week (Monday to Friday); 1 lesson = 45 minutes
Individual lessons	2, 4 or 6 lessons per day, 5 days a week (Monday to Friday), 1 lesson = 45 minutes

Students may be able to change into a lower or higher level class after consulting and receiving permission from the school's Academic Coordinator. The maximum number of students in one class is 14-18.

The morning class focuses on the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and the second class in the morning focuses on Listening and conversation skills. We also offer elective classes such as IELTS Test Preparation, Power Speaking, Communicative Grammar and Pronunciation Skills classes.

Our employees and teachers have a lot of experience with long-term students and especially with examination preparation courses. However, please also take into consideration that the teachers, despite their years of experience, cannot be held fully responsible for the examination results. Only if you participate actively in the lessons, will you be best prepared for the examination.

Lessons are not held on the following public holidays in 2018: 01.01., 12.02., 30.03., 21.05., 02.07., 06.08., 03.09., 08.10., 25.12.-28.12. and 01.01.2019. Please note that lessons lost due to public holidays, late arrival or early departure will not be made up.

It is our aim to provide the best service possible. However, if you have any issues during you stay please talk directly to the school staff.

Language Test

Sprachcaffe has introduced a new online placement test. We kindly ask you to do it before you arrive at school. Doing the online exam in advance will allow you to start your lessons straight away.

To access the online test, please go to <https://booking.sprachcaffe.com/login/> You can log in using your surname (or email address) and booking number (see our documents for the correct spelling).

The test can be done at any time up to 12:00pm (CET) the Friday before the program begins. Thereafter the test will be switched off and you will no longer be able to access it. This deadline is to ensure that the school has enough time to assign you to an appropriate class.

Please do not use a dictionary or any other aids when doing this exam as its purpose is to assess your language ability and place you in an appropriate class. It is better not to answer questions that you do not know, as guessing will affect your score and could result in your being placed in a class that is too difficult for you.

You have 45 minutes to do the exam from the moment you enter the site. Thereafter, the test will automatically shut down. If you finish before time runs out, you can click 'submit' at the bottom of the test. The test result will automatically be forwarded to Sprachcaffe. You will find out your teacher's name and classroom number on your first day at school.

Levels

Based on your speaking and written test scores, you will be placed in one of six levels: Level 1-Beginner, Level 2-High Beginner, Level 3-Intermediate, Level 4-High Intermediate, Level 5-Pre Advanced, Level 6-Advanced. Each level can usually be completed in 12 weeks.

Advancement Policy

After 12 weeks in one level, you will be eligible for advancement if:

- 80% attendance
- 80% average on the weekly assessments
- the recommendation of your teachers

Conditional advancement is sometimes offered to students who have met the following:

- 8 weeks in one level
- 80% attendance
- 80% average on the weekly assessments
- the recommendation of his/her teachers
- a passing score on the written test

If you have any questions or concerns about your level placement or advancement, please talk to the Academic Coordinator.

Course Retention Guidelines

Students who are assessed for advancement but have failed to meet all the requirements stated above will be placed on academic probation and retained in the current level. Students will be notified that they have been placed on academic probation by letter from the Academic Coordinator. If after 24 weeks in the same level a student cannot demonstrate the proficiency needed to advance to the next level, he/she will face dismissal from the program.

Assessments

You will be given weekly assessments in each class, and you may not make up missed assessments. If you miss an assessment, the first missed assessments of the session will be excused and not counted negatively towards your overall skill averages. However, if you have a second or more absences on an assessment, a 0 will be recorded on your SPR and it will count negatively toward your overall skill

averages. This can affect your eligibility for advancement, so it is important that you are not absent on the day of an assessment.

Exit Evaluation

For US destinations, any student with an enrolment of eight weeks or longer will be required to take an exit evaluation during his/her last week. The assessment used for this is the placement test so that scores and progress can be easily compared. The test will be scheduled outside of class hours, and the AC will meet with you once the test is corrected so that you can receive feedback.

In Canada, this test can be arranged upon request.

Student Progress Policy

All students are expected to maintain good attendance and adhere to their scheduled completion date. Students must work diligently to acquire the many learning objectives needed for successful completion of each class.

GEOS tracks both current and overall attendance. Current attendance is the rate of attendance from the first day of the enrolment until the current date. This number can fluctuate up and down. Overall attendance is the rate of attendance from the first day of enrolment until the last day of enrolment, assuming that the student attends every class until the end of the enrolment. This number can only go down and will never improve. Therefore, GEOS looks at the current attendance rate when determining eligibility for attendance probation since there is room for improvement.

Full-time students must maintain a current attendance of 80% or higher. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the student being placed on attendance probation. The student will receive an attendance probation warning letter outlining the terms of the probation, and a signed copy will be kept in the student's file. The student must immediately attend class and participate fully in classroom activities for the next 4-week session, and students are off probation if their attendance is at least 80% at the end of the following 4-week session. Students placed on attendance probation are not eligible for class advancement or a Leave of Absence. Additionally, students whose overall attendance falls below 80% will not receive an end-of course certificate.

If a student's overall attendance falls below 70%, they will be automatically expelled from the school unless the student can provide documentation to prove extenuating circumstances exist. In the case of a full time student in the US, their I-20 will also be terminated; in the case of a student studying with a study permit in Canada, the CIC will be notified and the student may lose their ability to study, at the discretion of the CIC. All evidence will be reviewed and adjudicated by the School Manager. Furthermore, students cannot make up or defer any missed classes unless the absence is part of an approved Leave Of Absence.

In addition to monitoring attendance, students' weekly test scores are monitored as well. Students enrolled in general English classes must achieve an average of 75% on their weekly assessments after they have completed the first four weeks of their enrolment. If a student does not have an average of 75% or higher on the weekly assessments at the end of the second session, he/she will be placed on academic probation. The student will receive an academic probation warning letter outlining the terms of the probation, and a signed copy will be kept in the student's file. Students are off probation if their average skill scores reach 75% at the end of the following 4-week session.

Students enrolled in test-prep classes will take full length practice tests at six week intervals. Students must achieve an increase of 5% from their previous full length practice test score, otherwise he/she will be placed on academic probation. The student will receive an academic probation warning letter outlining the terms of the probation, and a signed copy will be kept in the student's file. Students are off probation if they achieve a 5% increase on the following assessment.

If the student has not reached an average of 80% or higher on the weekly assessments after 12 weeks in one level, he/she will be retained in the current level. If after 24 weeks in the same level a student cannot demonstrate the proficiency needed to advance to the next level, he/she will face dismissal from the program. Students can enroll in classes for a maximum of 36 months.

Tardiness Policy

Students are not allowed into any class more than 15 minutes after the start of class and will be counted absent. Students that miss a class will be allowed into subsequent classes, as long as they are on time for them. Students who leave class early, more than 15 minutes before the scheduled end of class, will be marked absent. Students who arrive late but within the first 15 minutes of class more than twice in any week, on the third and subsequent incidences, will not be allowed into class and will be counted absent. Students who leave class within the last 15 minutes more than twice in any week, on the third and subsequent incidences, will be counted absent. Instructors should mark students arriving within the first 15 minutes or leaving within the last 15 minutes with an "L" so that the Academic Coordinator can track multiple lateness.

Leave of Absence

The Leave of Absence (LOA) policy is outlined below:

- ~ Students must give two week's written notice to the Administrative staff.
- ~ No LOAs will be granted in the first eight weeks. Exceptions will be made for breaks indicated at the time of booking.
- ~ LOAs must be in one-week blocks only, beginning on a Monday and ending on a Friday.
- ~ LOAs must be a minimum of one week and a maximum of four weeks. Exceptions will be made for breaks indicated at the time of booking.
- ~ If the LOA extends the study term past the expiry date of the student's visa, the student is responsible for applying to extend their visa.
- ~ If the LOA extends the study term past the expiry date of the student's visa, and if the student is unable or unwilling to extend the visa, no refunds will be given on remaining study time.
- ~ The total length of time permitted is 20% of a contract, or two weeks for every 12 weeks of enrolment. Exceptions will be made for breaks indicated at time of booking.
- ~ LOAs are to be taken for legitimate reasons, which must be approved by administration.
- ~ Time off for illness is permitted but requires a written note from a medical doctor. Such time off must be approved by the school administration.
- ~ We will try to place the LOA student in his/her original class but this cannot be guaranteed.
- ~ In the case that space is not available in the student's appropriate level, GEOS may ask the student to delay his/her return date.
- ~ Students who take an LOA accept that they may return at a point in the curriculum that they have previously studied. This does not mean that they will be automatically advanced to the next level.
- ~ This policy is separate from and independent of any accommodation agreement. In the case where the LOA policy and accommodation agreement are in conflict, the terms of the accommodation agreement shall take precedence.

Cancellations and Schedule Changes

In the event of extraordinary situations such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, political unrest, blizzards, etc., the school will generally follow the example of the area's public school system regarding school closure. If public schools are on break at the time of the extraordinary situation, the school management will decide whether or not to close the school and will leave a voice message by 8am on the school phone to inform students if the school is closed for the day. Therefore, it is important that you phone the school if an extraordinary event is taking place before attempting to travel to school. Group lessons missed because of school closure due to extraordinary situations are not counted towards a student's attendance record, are not recuperated and are not refunded. Private lessons missed because of school closure due to extraordinary situations will be rescheduled with the agreement of the student, instructor and the school management.

English Only

English is the only language spoken at our school, as it is the only language that all staff and students speak. If you are found speaking any language other than English, you will be given a warning on the first instance. On the second instance, you will be asked to leave school for the day. Failure to comply will take you to the next level which is that for a third offence, you will be barred from attending one class and will be counted absent for it. On the fourth and subsequent instances, you will be barred from class for an entire day and counted absent. These absences will count negatively towards your overall attendance.

Pathway Program

GEOS North America has over 70 pathway partners to facilitate your entrance into a Canadian or US college or university. If you are interested in learning more about the Pathway Program, please talk to the Academic Coordinator.

Certificates

Certificates will be awarded to students who have successfully completed their enrolment during a graduation ceremony on the student's last day.

Contact Information

If your address or phone number changes during your enrolment at GEOS, please inform any staff member as soon as possible so that we have your updated contact information. A GEOS staff member will also confirm that the information we have on file is accurate every 12 weeks.

Problem Resolution

GEOS Languages Plus will try to resolve disagreements informally. If this policy is unable to provide a resolution, a formal procedure will be applied to ensure a fair outcome. If such is the case, GEOS Languages Plus has established a set of procedures based upon a flexible set of actions aimed at ensuring that ultimate intervention will be undertaken by appropriate persons.

Step One: Internal Procedure

A student must put his or her complaint into writing and submit it to the appropriate member of staff. In the case of *academic-related cases*, students should address their concerns, in writing, to the school's Academic Coordinator or to the Program Coordinator if the Academic Coordinator is not available. In the case of a disagreement with *money-related issues*, the student should write and talk to the School Manager.

The appropriate member of staff will conduct an investigation and a meeting with all the people involved will be held within 24 hours upon written notification.

The appropriate member of staff will provide all parties with his or her written decision within 48 hours.

If a student is still unsatisfied with the decision made, and still maintains an honest belief that the problem has not been resolved, an external procedure is available to try to provide a final opportunity for a solution:

Step Two: External Procedure

The Director of Operations of GEOS Languages Plus, Canada may be called in to resolve the problem.

Students also have the right to contact Languages Canada if the student feels a resolution is not possible. Students should visit the website: www.languagescanada.ca

PCTIA may also be contacted to help resolve disputes. You can find information about that at <http://www.pctia.bc.ca/>

Both internal and external procedures are intended to ensure that both parties to a dispute have every opportunity to state their own terms under relatively informal and confidential conditions. It is hoped that very few problems will carry onto the external procedure stage, but since GEOS Languages Plus' reputation is involved, our institution has a right to demonstrate the equity and fairness of our process, and students have every right to be assured that they will be heard.

This process is set to be non-threatening and helpful. However, the people involved in such a process should be reminded that the process does not rule out future legal action. Problems involving matters of transfers between institutions or related to the perceived value of courses would not be considered in this context.

The mediator in both internal and external disputes shall interview the people involved separately before and after making any resolutions. Once a decision has been settled, the mediator will provide all the people involved with a written summary of the conclusion of the dispute.

Student Conduct Policies

GEOS is strongly committed to educational programs that provide a foundation for intellectual, cultural and social growth. GEOS has standards of behaviour for all students, instructors and coordinators. They are expected to conduct themselves in an honourable and dignified manner. Any student may be dismissed from the school for inappropriate behaviour such as aggressive or threatening actions, theft, vandalism of any sort, illegal drug use, or the use of alcohol. Similarly, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, behaviours that violate school rules, disobedient or disrespectful behaviour toward students, staff, or instructors will also not be tolerated and will result in students being placed in counselling sessions, probation, suspension or, at the School Manager's sole discretion, dismissal from the school. If dismissed from school, the student will be expelled.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in school buildings, including restrooms. Students are asked to step outside of the building if they wish to smoke.

Students must abide by all local, provincial and federal laws.

General Information

The city of Victoria is the state capital of British Columbia. Victoria is located in the south of Vancouver Island. The name goes back to the British queen Victoria and as there are lots of immigrants from Britain, the city still keeps her British style which can be seen for instance in the countless red double-decker busses.

Downtown Victoria is situated in a small bay on the Pacific coast. Approximately 340.000 people are living in the metropolitan area of Victoria.

Food

Victoria, like any Canadian city, has a variety of cuisines to choose from. There are restaurants that cater to all tastes and budgets. Just about every cuisine in the world can be found here. There is great Chinese food in Victoria's Chinatown (the 2nd oldest in North America). As well, there are Italian, French, Korean, Mexican, Thai, Greek, Japanese (traditional & fusion), Indian, and of course amazing seafood restaurants in and around Victoria, not to mention a huge variety of British style pubs where you can drink a pint. You will discover that all of the restaurants will serve liquor to those 19 and over. Please remember that the legal drinking age is 19 and that all eating establishments are non-smoking.

Banking

The Canadian dollar, known as the "Loonie" is the basic unit of currency and 100 cents is equal to one dollar. Paper bills come in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, and \$5. There is a 2-dollar coin, known as a toonie and a 1-dollar coin, called the loonie. There are 25, 10 and 5-cent coins. There is also a 50-cent coin, but this is much less common. The most commonly accepted credit cards are Visa and MasterCard. American Express and Diners Club are accepted in many, but not all places.

Some banks are open on Saturday as well. If you want to open a bank account, you will need an Enrollment Verification Letter from the school and your passport. All savings and checking accounts come with a plastic "debit card" with which you can access automatic teller machines (ATM) 24 hours a day to withdraw and deposit money. Debit cards can be used to make purchases in most stores that accept debit cards. The use of debit cards is very popular and widespread in Canada.

Most people use the ATM to withdraw or deposit cash or check their account balance. Please remember that if you deposit cash or cheques into the ATM, you must put the cash or cheque into an envelope first. **Do not** put any coins into the ATM machine. If you do, you will probably end up breaking the ATM – very embarrassing!

Cellular phones

Your existing cell phone may work in Canada, but keep in mind that it may be costly to use in Canada because every local call you make is an international call from your phone. It is also costly for those who call you from inside Canada because calling a cell phone with an overseas phone number is an international call as well. If you are planning to be in Victoria for more than a month, you may want to consider getting a cell phone from one of the major telephone companies here. Some of the providers are FIDO, BELL, TELUS, or ROGERS. Phone cards are sold at the school as well.

Post Office

The main Canada Post branch is a 1-minute walk from the front door of the school. There is also a branch directly across the street from the school. The Canada Post office is open between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Some other branch post offices may be open on Saturdays. Mailboxes are located around the city and suburbs, and mail is collected several times daily. There is even a mailbox in the building that we are in.

You can receive mail and parcels using Sprachcaffe Victoria's postal address:

GEOS Languages Plus Victoria
225-1207 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC,
V8W 2E7
CANADA

You may also receive faxes (\$0.25/page)
Our fax number is: 250-382-1128

Please ask the sender to make sure that your name is clearly marked on your mail.

Health insurance

Medical insurance is recommended for all international students. You can arrange for overseas insurance before departure if you prefer, or we can assist you in obtaining medical insurance upon your arrival. We currently use an insurance company that will pay claims for 80% to 100% of the scheduled doctors' fees and medication, depending on the plan you choose.

Shopping

Victoria has 3 large shopping malls: the Bay Centre, located kitty corner to the school; Mayfair Mall, a 10-minute bus ride from the school; and Hillside Mall, a 15-minute bus ride from the school. Most stores are open seven days a week, except on some national holidays. There are bargain sales on all the time, but the day (sometimes the whole week) after Christmas is one of the best times to shop if you are a "shop-a-holic". If you stay in Canada for the Christmas season, you will learn that this day is called Boxing Day and is a great tradition in Canada. Most stores and shops are open from about 9:00 or 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. weekdays and until 9:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Feedback

Before the everyday routine back at home sets in completely, we would be very pleased if you could give us your feedback. As a participant you can tell us about your experiences. Just fill out the online form at <http://www.sprachcaffe.com/english/feedback.htm> We always welcome ideas, tips and constructive criticism!

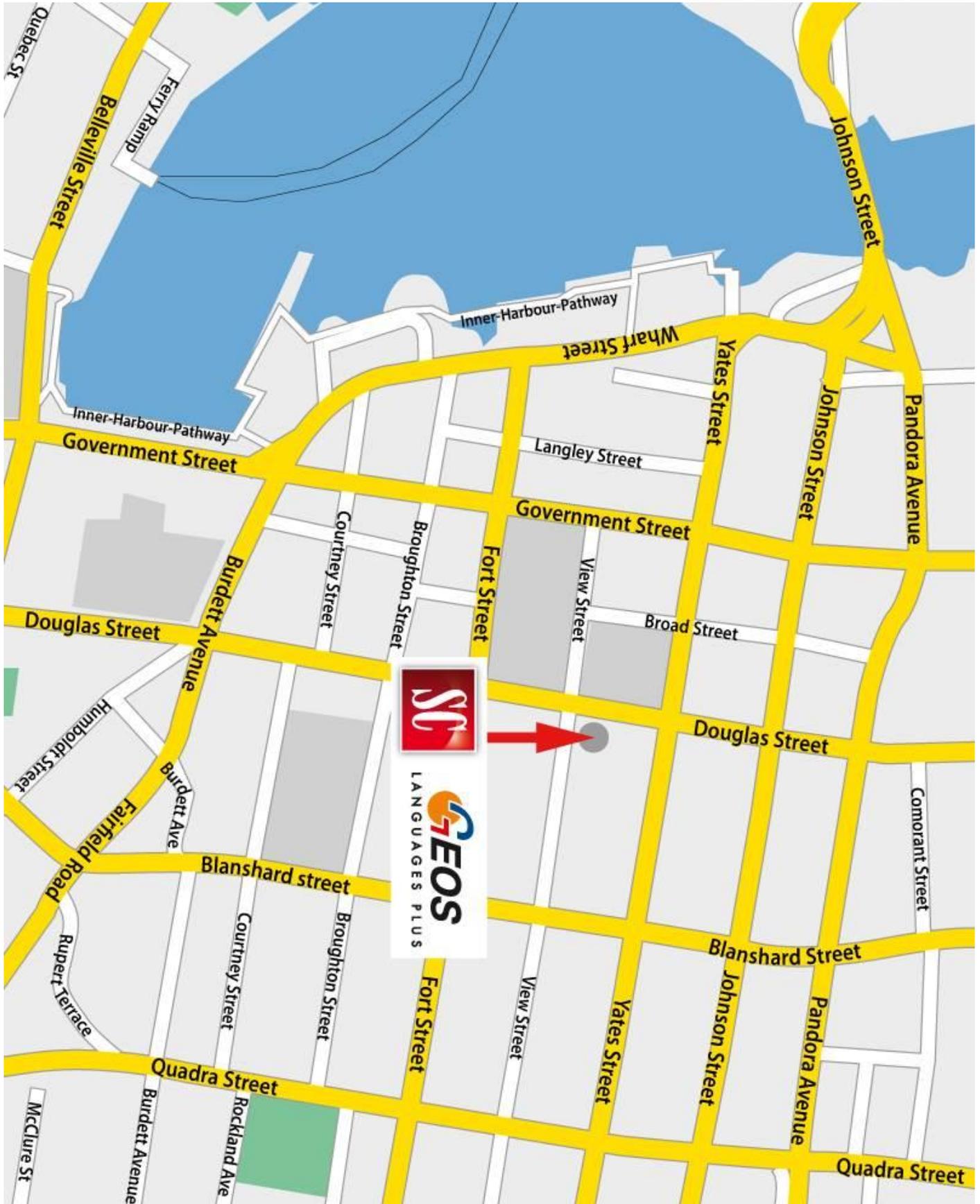
Address:

Sprachcaffe Languages PLUS
Headquarters Gartenstrasse 6
D – 60594 Frankfurt/Main
Phone.: +49 (0)69 6109 120
Fax: +49 (0)69 603 1395
Email: info@sprachcaffe.com
www.sprachcaffe.com

We wish you a wonderful stay and a successful language course!

Your Sprachcaffe Team

Location of the school



Checklist before departure

Things you might want to think of when packing your luggage

Important travel items

- Travel guide
- Reading material
- Dictionary
- Cash, credit card
- Phone number of your credit card company, in case you have to block the card
- Vaccination card
- Inform Sprachcaffe about arrival time
- Alarm clock
- Sunglasses
- International electric plug/outlet adaptor

First-aid kit

- Sunscreen
- Any medicine required
- Insect spray
- Medicine for stomach trouble
- Plasters
- After-sun lotion
- Tweezers

Travel documents

- Identity card/ Passport
- Flight or train ticket
- Student ID
- Sprachcaffe travel documents

Sport/Hobby

- Camera
- Extra film, extra memory card
- Music / radio
- Batteries
- Sports equipment

Insurances

- Travel health insurance
- Luggage insurance
- Insurance card from your car insurance
- Phone number of your car insurance

Checklist for returning home

- Buy souvenirs for friends and relatives at home
- Exchange addresses with people in the course, teachers and host family
- Pick up course participation certificate
- Tidy and clean up the room
- Pack and check the rooms for anything left behind