



St. Stephen's

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

# International Program



*Boarding students in the Class of 2019 came from across the United States, as well as from Botswana, China, Jamaica, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan and Thailand. Our 2019 graduates will matriculate at 62 colleges in 25 states and Canadian provinces.*

St. Stephen's Episcopal School celebrates the diverse cultures, traditions and perspectives that international students bring to our inclusive global community. Our 690 students in grades 6-12 come from 26 Texas cities, nine states and more than 12 countries.

Approximately 48 percent of our students are people of color, and 25 percent are boarders.

The six-person International Program staff at St. Stephen's is housed in the International Program Office on the top floor of the student center. These staff members are committed to supporting our international students in all areas of school life, including academics, athletics and the arts, as well as health and wellness. They provide a range of services and resources to ensure that international students thrive on campus and are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared to achieve their goals when they graduate.

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## International Programs and Activities

The International Program Office runs a number of programs and activities designed to broaden the global perspective of the St. Stephen's community while helping international students acclimate to the school and thrive in their academic, extracurricular and social activities.

- ★ International Program staff offer assistance coordinating **travel arrangements and managing immigration issues** for the school's international students.
- ★ The St. Stephen's **Venture Orientation Program**, held in August, helps integrate new international students to school life, preparing them for a successful boarding experience.
- ★ The school's **Transitional English Program** is a full-credit, one-year course designed to help advanced English Language Learner students reinforce skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- ★ Our **Host Family Program** pairs international students with local St. Stephen's families, who include them in family activities throughout the school year.
- ★ **Exchange programs**, such as the Japan Scholars program and Gredos San Diego, give St. Stephen's students the chance to study abroad while bringing students to our campus from countries such as Japan, Spain and Costa Rica.
- ★ St. Stephen's hosts numerous **special events and activities** for international students, including our International Festival, Lunar New Year celebration, badminton program and campus visits by international alumni.





## Boarding Program

The mission of the Boarding Program is to ensure that residential students have a home away from home — a place where they are nurtured and supervised and where they feel a strong sense of belonging. The program also provides international students with a wide variety of community-building events and activities during the week and on weekends. These include cookie-baking contests, pool parties, Saturday afternoon crafting, Sunday night treats and dinners at the head of school's home on campus, as well as off-campus excursions to movies, dining, shopping and cultural events in Austin, which has been ranked the #1 Place to Live by U.S. News & World Report.

## Residential Life

The Boarding Program is supported by a residential life team of 38 employees, including the head of school, who live on campus and fulfill a variety of roles. The team includes duty administrators, house leaders and dorm parents, as well as two residential coordinators focused on helping our 8th grade boarders transition to living on campus. The team is committed to building strong relationships with international students and providing them with a strong sense of safety and community.

Led by Gene Phillips, the residential life team works closely with a number of department staff on campus to fulfill its mission. These strategic partners include Middle School and Upper School administrators, International Program staff and dining hall personnel. Residential life also partners with the school's Health Services team, which is dedicated to meeting the individualized health, wellness and learning needs of all students.

Each dorm is guided by a house leader and supported by a team of four or five house parents, who are each on duty one night a week and one weekend a month. Dorm parents help



ensure that boarding students follow daily routines, including morning wake up, room inspection, study hall and nighttime lights out. These supervising adults also help boarding students deal with a full range of potential issues, ranging from academics, athletics and social concerns, to behavioral and health problems. On the weekends, dorm parents interact with students on campus and accompany them to off-campus activities. They also help students become more independent by teaching them to manage their time between meals, classes, study halls, athletics and extracurricular programs.

## Integrating Our Day and Boarding Communities

Creating a greater balance between living and learning is one of the primary goals of the school's strategic plan, Spark 2023. Toward this end, the school created a residential liaison position in 2019. In this new role, Nicole Wortham works with faculty and staff to develop engaging activities for all students to participate in between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. One of the primary objectives of this new program is to further integrate our domestic and international student populations, as well as our overall day and boarding communities.



## Support Team



**Sarah Todd** brings more than 20 years of experience working with international students at St. Stephen's to her role leading the International Program. During that time, she has managed a team of professionals dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of our international students and making them feel at home. She has traveled abroad extensively to meet with prospective families, current students and alumni. She also teaches world history.



In addition to teaching Transitional English classes, **Caitlin Sweetlamb** serves as the school's English Language Learner resource, helping to strengthen students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. In addition, Sweetlamb works as an international student advisor, dorm parent and co-coordinator of equity and inclusion for the Upper School, supporting international students as they transition to life on campus.



Born in China and fluent in Mandarin Chinese, **Hai Zheng Olefsky** coordinates the school's Chinese Language Program. Olefsky, who has worked at St. Stephen's for 20 years, also teaches cello and assists in the school's Admission Office.



Fluent in Spanish and Italian, **Adriana Redmond** has 20 years of international experience in Europe and Mexico and is the primary immigration specialist in the International Program Office. She works to assist Spanish-speaking students and all who need help with travel and immigration issues.



Born in Hong Kong and fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese, **Ling Allen** has worked at the school for more than 15 years. She serves as an advisor to international students, including 8th graders, and coordinates all standardized testing.



**Mason Cox** has more than 35 years of teaching and administrative experience at St. Stephen's. In addition to serving as an academic and residential life resource for students in the International Program, he teaches Upper School history.



**Gene Phillips** is director of residential life at St. Stephen's. He has 26 years of academic administration and residential leadership experience at the school, and he also serves as senior class sponsor in the Upper School.



As the residential liaison, **Nicole Wortham** focuses on bringing the day and boarding communities together through the new 4-8 Program. She also serves as the school's educational technology coordinator and leads the Project and Idea Realization Lab.

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## Contact Information

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