



RELA – A School with a Heart

Pre-Departure Manual

DEVELOPED NOVEMBER 2021 (LAST UPDATED AUGUST 2023)

Kia Ora (Hello)

Thank you for choosing to study with us at RELA. We know you will have an AMAZING time with us exploring all our region has to offer, meeting lots of new people, making life-long friends and learning a lot of English.

This manual will help to answer some of your questions about the school and help you prepare for your journey.

You will also find a lot of useful answers in both the Frequently asked Questions (FAQ) section on our website and in our Student Handbook. You will be given a copy of the Student Handbook on your first day at school.

- Frequently Asked Questions <https://rela.co.nz/frequently-asked-questions/>
- Student Handbook <https://rela.co.nz/enrolment/information/>

The *Naumai NZ* website has a lot of useful information about life as an International student in New Zealand <https://naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz/>

If you have any questions that are not answered in this manual, the Student Handbook or on the “Frequently Asked Questions” page, then please email us english@rela.co.nz

Kia haumaru te haere (safe travels) and see you soon.

The RELA team

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What Should I Prepare and What Should I Bring With Me?

Visa, Passport and Insurance

Passport

As an international visitor to New Zealand, you must hold a passport that is valid for at least three months after the date you intend to leave the country.

Visa - Short Courses

If you are planning to study with us for up to 3 months in total, you do not need a Student Visa. In this case, you will need to apply for a Visitor Visa, or depending on the [nationality](#) shown in your passport, you may only need to apply for a [NZETA](#) before arriving in New Zealand.

Immigration New Zealand provides a [Quick Check](#) to show if you need a Visitor Visa to come to New Zealand.

Visa - Long Courses

If you are planning to study with us for more than 3 months, you need to apply for a Student Visa. More information about this and how to apply is on the [Immigration New Zealand](#) website.

Working Holiday Visas

Citizens of [some countries](#) can come to New Zealand on a working holiday. If you hold a working holiday visa, you can study for up to 6 months at RELA.

Insurance

It is a requirement under NZQA's [Tertiary and International Learner's Code of Practice](#) that all students studying in New Zealand must have adequate health and travel insurance. You will not be allowed to study at RELA if you do not have adequate insurance. We can arrange a policy for you, or you can arrange suitable insurance in your own country. If you are arranging your own insurance, you **MUST** send us a copy of this before you arrive in the country.

Traveller Declaration Card

All travellers to New Zealand must complete a New Zealand Traveller Declaration before reaching passport control in New Zealand. You do this via an app. Instructions can be found at <https://www.travellerdeclaration.govt.nz/> The earliest you can submit the declaration is **24 hours before** you begin your journey to New Zealand.

Clothing

We suggest you bring:

- Light, comfortable clothing such as T-shirts, shorts and sandals for the warmer months.
- Wind-proof jacket, jumpers, jeans, jacket, hat, gloves and strong shoes or boots for the colder months
- Sunglasses and a sunhat (the New Zealand sun is very strong)
- A swimsuit (hopefully you'll get the chance to enjoy our famous hot pools)
- Strong footwear – you will have lots of opportunities to get outside and enjoy our forests and walks.
- Umbrella
- Warm jacket and raincoat (year round)

The weather in New Zealand is very changeable. You can experience 4 seasons in one day, so it is a good idea to bring a warm jacket even in summer – just in case! We always suggest students wear layers so they can either make themselves either warmer or cooler.

If you forget something, don't worry, all types of clothing can be purchased in Rotorua at varying prices.

Average temperatures in Rotorua

Season	Months	Average Temperature Range
Summer	December - February	21° to 29°C (69 to 84°F)
Autumn	March - May	15° to 26°C (59° and 78°F)
Winter	June - August	9° to 13°C (50° to 55°F)
Spring	September - November	13° to 21°C (55° and 69°F)



Electrical Appliances

Electrical appliances operate on 240 volts and you can buy an adapter on arrival at the airport.

Phone

Before you leave your home country, please make sure that your phone is unlocked so you can use it overseas. You can purchase a New Zealand Travel sim at the airport on arrival or we can help you do this when you get to the school. Just talk to our Student Services Team.

If you can, it is a good idea to purchase a sim card on arrival so that you can have internet access right away. Prices range from \$30 to \$99 for 1 – 2 months depending on how much data you need.

More information can be found on these websites:

- www.2degreesmobile.co.nz
- www.vodafone.co.nz
- www.spark.co.nz

Food and Customs

You can buy most Asian and European food and different kinds of Halal food in Rotorua, so you don't need to bring these with you.

New Zealand has VERY strict quarantine and customs laws. Biosecurity is especially strict to avoid introducing pests and diseases from overseas which might negatively impact on the country's agricultural/horticulture industry as well as forestry and tourism.

Before you pack, have a look at the following website to see what you can and can't bring into New Zealand

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/bring-send-to-nz/bringing-and-posting-items-to-nz/check-if-you-can-bring-or-send-an-item-to-nz/>

Customs Declaration

When you arrive in New Zealand you're required to declare all food, animal products, plants and other specific items in your possession. You make the declarations on a Traveller Declaration Card

You're breaking the law (the Biosecurity Act 1993) if you don't declare risk goods you have in your possession. This can include the uneaten sandwich or apple you have in your bag! Please be careful.

A quarantine officer will look at the answers you gave on the card and may ask you questions to assess the biosecurity risk of those goods.

There is no excuse

You are breaking the law if you fail to declare:

- unintentionally
- by accident
- because you forgot
- because you were careless

- because you didn't know the rules or what was in your baggage.

In all these situations you've made an erroneous or false declaration, which is an offence under section 154N(21) of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

In legal terms, it's called a strict liability offence. That means you may have broken the law even if you didn't mean to. It's like a speeding ticket or a parking fine.

The penalties

The penalty for a false declaration is an NZD\$400 infringement fee – commonly called an instant fine. You do not get a criminal conviction.

However, if you deliberately make an incorrect or false declaration to try to conceal items, the consequences are much worse.

If you're convicted of deliberate smuggling, you could be fined up to NZD\$100,000 and be sentenced to up to 5 years in prison.

How to avoid getting a fine

You can avoid the risk of making a false declaration (and getting a fine) by making sure you know what is in your bags and luggage, and the baggage of anyone under the age of 18 travelling with you.

Declare all biosecurity risk goods you have:

- in your luggage or bags
- in the clothes you're wearing (like in a jacket pocket).

(taken from <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/bring-send-to-nz/bringing-and-posting-items-to-nz/what-happens-if-you-fail-to-declare/> 3 November 2021)

Arriving in New Zealand

Arrival at Auckland International Airport

If you have chosen to use our shuttle transfer service, one of our representatives will be waiting to collect you after you clear customs and enter the Arrivals Hall. Instructions of where our driver will be waiting can be found in **Appendix 1**

Our driver will be holding a sign with our RELA logo (**Appendix 2**) If for some reason, you cannot find the driver, please do not to panic but to go to Dunkin Donuts and wait there. Our driver will go to look for you there.

If you need to call us, please use our school number +64 7 349 0473. This number is 24/7 and will be answered by one of our administration staff.

You will be driven to your homestay or to RELA depending on the time of arrival.

On the return trip, the driver will drive you to Auckland International Airport.

This service is 24 hours, so it does not matter what time your flight arrives or departs 😊

Arrival at Rotorua Airport or Bus Station

If you have chosen to be met at Rotorua airport or bus station, one of our staff or your homestay will be waiting to collect you when you arrive off the plane or bus. They will be carrying the school sign (**Appendix 2**)

If you cannot find our staff member or your homestay, don't panic. Please use our school number +64 7 349 0473. This number is 24/7 and will be answered by one of our administration staff.

Your First Morning At RELA

On your first morning at RELA, please come to the school office before 8.30am. If you are in a homestay, your homestay will bring you to school on your first morning.

You will be met by one of our staff members and they will show you to the student room where you can meet some of the other new students and have a cup of tea or coffee.

At 8.30am, you will meet Jan, our School Manager, and our Student Services Team. They will look after you for the morning and take you through an orientation programme. This will include an introduction to our school and to Rotorua. This is an excellent time for you to get to know the other new students who are starting.

We hope you will have already taken our online placement test. If they have not, you will be given the placement test during the morning. You, and the other new students, will take part in a short, informal interview. Don't be nervous about this. It is not as scary as it sounds 😊

During the orientation we will tell you which class you will be placed in. We will also explain about our testing procedure and the different classes you can study in. You will start class at about 10.30.

Please bring the following with you on your first day:

1. Passport
2. Your visa (if you have a student or work visa)
3. Copy of your insurance – if they don't have RELA insurance
4. A pen

You will also receive a detailed orientation pack and [student handbook](#).

All of us will take very good care of you and make sure you soon feel at home.

Lunch

Your homestays do not provide lunches but there are a lot of cafes and places to eat very close to the school. An average priced meal will cost between \$10 and \$20.

Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30~10.00	*First lesson	First lesson	First lesson	First lesson	First lesson
10.00~10.30	Break time	Break time	Break time	Break time	Break time
10.30~12.00	Second lesson	Second lesson	Second lesson	Second lesson	Second lesson**
12.00~1.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.00 ~ 3.00	Afternoon class	Afternoon class	Afternoon class	Afternoon class	Free-time, unguided self-study or join our Friday afternoon activity

Morning Classes

Work is in weekly units and the teachers usually change every three months. This means they can get to know you and your English and work with you on your progress. When you start your class on a Monday, all the students will have new work, just the same as you.

Afternoon Classes

You will have a new teacher and classroom in the afternoons. Make sure you look at the timetable each Monday to check your classroom. We will show you where to find copies of the timetable on your first morning.

What will I learn?

Every morning you will have a lot of speaking and listening, and also some reading, writing and grammar. You will learn new vocabulary and useful everyday English.

In the afternoons you can choose either:

An integrated skills class at your level where you will develop your communicative skills and fluency and your understanding and use of natural, everyday English. At higher levels, post-intermediate level, you can expect greater input on your reading and writing skills.

An examination class. You need to be at a B1 Intermediate level or higher for these classes. You can study for IELTS; an internationally recognised examination which is used for entry into university or for entry as a new citizen into Australia and New Zealand. If your English is at Upper Intermediate (B2) level or above you may be able to study for Cambridge First (FCE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE) as an afternoon option.

Some of these classes are subject to demand

After Class

Self-study

Self-Study is an excellent way to further improve your English. You can practise listening, use interactive computer lessons and language games, read books and listen to the book at the same time, borrow books from the library, study specific grammar or vocabulary points, improve your pronunciation with online and recorded materials, take practice tests, or just talk to the teacher about any concerns you may have. These sessions are free for all RELA students who wish to practise and improve their English with the help of a tutor after school.

Where: Self – Access Centre

When: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons (3.15 –5.00pm)

Job Club

RELA offers support to students with work rights on a Student visa or a Working Holiday Visa. This happens at lunchtimes on Mondays and Thursday, or by arrangement. Come along and talk to the Students Services Team, get any questions you have about working in New Zealand answered.

We can help you to prepare a CV, open a bank account, get an IRD number and also tell you about your rights as an employee. *Please note that we do not **find** you a job!*

If you have a student visa for 14 weeks or more, or you are on a Working Holiday Visa, you are able to work in New Zealand.

Activity Programme

The school has a fantastic, varied activities programme. On Friday afternoons a teacher or activities guide takes the students on a visit to an interesting place or action-packed activity, and you get the opportunity to socialise and talk in English while having fun.

We also offer activities some afternoons after school. These activities are excellent ways to see all the wonderful things that Rotorua has to offer and a great way to meet and get to know your fellow students and teachers better.

Information about the different activities we offer can be found at

<https://rela.co.nz/courses/english-with-activities/> .

Have a look at our weekly Notices to see what the students are doing this week

<https://rela.co.nz/rela-news/weeklynotices/>

Your Homestay

A homestay experience can be very rewarding and many of our students have stayed life-long friends with their homestay families. It is certainly the best way to improve your English more quickly.

Homestay means that you live in a New Zealand home and are treated as one of the family. The host family will be friendly and helpful. If you are going to enjoy the experience, it is important that you are friendly and positive too.

Your host family will provide you with:

- Breakfast and dinner from Monday to Friday
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays
- A room of your own
- Towels, bed linen and bed covers
- A key to your home if you are a mature student.

It is important that you understand that your homestay is not a hotel. You need to have a flexible attitude and be very adaptable. When you move into a family you have to accept the family's lifestyle and help with the chores. Your homestay mother is not your maid or your servant. You must respect her and help her.

You can read more information about living in homestay at <https://rela.co.nz/accommodation/accommodation-options/>



Coping with A New Language and in a New Environment

A lot of students find the first week a little difficult. Don't worry, just relax and try to enjoy yourself. Learning a new language takes time and patience. You may think your classmates are much better than you. This is not true. Everyone in your class has tested at a similar level. They have just been here longer. Remember they were once in your shoes and were feeling exactly the same as you are!

By the end of the week, you will start to feel more "at home" (comfortable) in your class. On Thursday of the first week, we will talk to you one-to-one and ask how you are feeling in your class. If you think it is too easy (and your teacher agrees), we can move you up. If you think it is too difficult (and your teacher agrees), we can move you down.

We will also ask you if you are happy and relaxed in your homestay. If there are any issues, we can work together to sort these out.

Talking to Homestay, Teachers and Classmates

When you talk with your host family, teachers and friends, ask them to speak clearly, slow down or repeat themselves. They will be happy to support you. It is normal to become tired and frustrated when you do not learn as quickly as you would like, just remember to relax and slow down.

Useful Expressions:

- "I'm sorry, I don't understand. Can you say that again, please?"
- "What does mean?"
- "Can you help me please?"
- "I would like some help with homework / English"

Asking For Help

Remember, we are here to help you. Our office is open between 8.00 and 5.00 each weekday and our Student Services Team is always happy to help you.

During orientation on your first day, you will be introduced to everyone who can help you. You will also be given a copy of our *International Student Health Resource* manual which has a lot of information about how to access help while you are in New Zealand.

Our **Student Services Team** can help you with almost everything, including the following:

- Course changes and course extensions,
- Holiday requests
- If you are feeling unwell or unable to come to class
- Activities and city information
- Visas
- Working in New Zealand
- Opening a bank account
- Getting and IRD number

The **Homestay Team** can help you with

- Questions related to homestay or accommodation
- Your return transport to Auckland Airport

The **Academic Team** can help with

- Questions about your classes, teachers and textbooks
- Your progress
- Enrolling in an Exam
- Further education options (e.g. going to high school or university)

We also have a number of language counsellors who can help if you need to talk in your first language. Our Student Services Team can help you to contact them.

Opening a Bank Account

You can open a bank account in New Zealand if you have a visa that allows you to stay in the country for some time—this could be a work or student visa.

Our Student Services team can help you to open an account but it is often easier to start the process from your home country. There is a lot of information at the following links from New Zealand's five main banks.

- <https://www.kiwibank.co.nz/personal-banking/accounts/international/moving-new-zealand/>
- <https://www.anz.co.nz/promo/moving-to-new-zealand/>
- <https://www.westpac.co.nz/accounts-cards/international-student-account/>
- <https://www.bnz.co.nz/personal-banking/international/moving-to-new-zealand?link=mainbody>
- <https://www.asb.co.nz/moving-to-new-zealand/studying-in-new-zealand.html>

All the major banks are located close to RELA.

Most savings accounts come with a "cash card" which you can use to access automatic teller machines (ATMs) 24 hours a day to withdraw and deposit money. Like a lot of countries New Zealand is moving to a cashless society and most payments are done electronically via internet banking or EFT-pos.

To open a bank account, you will need

- your passport
- proof of address in New Zealand (RELA can help you with this)
- your Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) from your country. A TIN can have a different name in other counties, e.g. social security number, national ID number.

Key Cultural Differences

You may find New Zealand a little different to what you're used to. Some of the differences may be:







- Generally New Zealanders dress informally
- Appointments are made in advance to see professional people (e.g. to see a doctor) and punctuality is expected for these appointments, but don't be concerned or offended if someone is a little late for a social meeting, as New Zealanders are not always punctual for social occasions
- People are usually very happy to answer questions, so don't be shy
- Personal privacy is important and subjects such as salary, mortgages and age are not often discussed by New Zealanders outside of the family
- It is impolite to make personal comments about matters such as weight, age, appearance or mannerisms, or to stare or look closely at someone
- It is polite to say "please" and "thank you" when paying for goods and services or when help has been given
- Spitting and littering is considered offensive
- Tipping is not expected in New Zealand although some cafes and restaurants may have a container for tips. Tipping is more common in towns with large numbers of overseas tourists, such as Queenstown
- Bargaining or haggling is not common but for more expensive items such as cars, whiteware, appliances or even bicycles it may be acceptable to ask for a discount.

Remember: These things are different; they are not wrong. Enjoy learning a new culture and new ways of doing things. Your journey to New Zealand is not just about learning the language 😊

Appendix 1 – Airport Arrival Instructions



Auckland International Airport - Arrivals Area

<p>These are the International Arrivals doors (as we see them from the Public Gallery inside the terminal)</p> 	<p>When you go through the glass doors, you will see the Public Gallery. Turn LEFT</p> 
<p>This is the sign you can see on the left of Photo 2, directing you to turn LEFT to go to the PRE-BOOKED TRANSPORT.</p> 	<p>Keep walking towards the PRE-BOOKED TRANSPORT sign, where your driver will be waiting for you.</p> 
<p>Your driver will be just ahead at the PRE-BOOKED TRANSPORT area holding a greeting board with your name on it. He/She will be wearing a uniform like this.</p> 	<p>Our name board looks like this. It will have your name on it.</p> 

*It will help us to find you quickly if you can have a sign saying "Rotorua English Language Academy" We always do our very best to make sure you are met at the Airport. However, sometimes there may be traffic delays because of road works, bad weather or an accident

* If you cannot find the driver, please wait at Dunkin Donuts, and ring one of the numbers below and we will help you.

* If you need help show someone these instructions.

*Your transport is with a shuttle company. There may be other passengers as well as you, so you may have to wait for others before leaving for Rotorua. We hope this will not take long. It takes about 3 hours to drive to Rotorua as it is 250km.

*When you are a traveller, unexpected things happen sometimes. Please be calm if something goes wrong, and we will help you as fast as we can.

Emergency Contacts –

- Phone the school on 07 349 0473, 24 hour service. Please ring this number first.
- Or try Ready 2 Roll Shuttles 021 2589 856 or 021 258 9887

