



INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES NZ

Student Handbook

Panjabi Language & Sikh Studies · Level 1, 24 Dunnotar Road, Papatoetoe, Auckland

Welcome

Welcome to the Institute of Sikh Studies New Zealand (ISSNZ), a community-driven initiative dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Panjabi language and Sikh values in Aotearoa. This handbook outlines our vision, expectations, and support structures to ensure a positive experience for all learners.

About ISSNZ

The Institute of Sikh Studies NZ (ISSNZ) is a volunteer-led education provider operating within the premises of Gurudwara Sahib Tegh Bahadur Ji at 24 Dunnotar Rd, Papatoetoe, Auckland 2025. Our focus is on empowering learners through Sikhi-based education, Panjabi language literacy, cultural awareness, and leadership development.

Our Vision

To empower individuals with Panjabi language proficiency, fostering cultural connection and linguistic heritage through high-quality education, innovative teaching methods, and a supportive learning environment.

Our Mission

- Provide a nurturing platform to study Sikhi and Panjabi language.
- Foster identity, pride, and service among learners.
- Build educational bridges between cultural values and New Zealand society.

Our Values

- **Cultural Preservation** – We are committed to preserving and promoting Panjabi language, literature, and heritage for future generations.
- **Excellence in Education** – We strive to provide high-quality, structured, and engaging learning experiences across all ISSNZ programmes.
- **Inclusivity & Accessibility** – Our programmes are designed to be inclusive, welcoming learners of all backgrounds and skill levels.
- **Lifelong Learning** – We encourage continuous learning and growth, helping individuals strengthen their connection to Panjabi language, culture and Gurbani.

ISSNZ Staff & Governance Team

At the Institute of Sikh Studies New Zealand (ISSNZ), our dedicated team work together to support your educational journey, uphold Sikh values, and ensure a nurturing environment.

NZQA Registered

ISSNZ is a newly registered PTE approved by NZQA.

Entry Requirements

Admission is open to all students aged 5+ regardless of background. Selection is based on:

- Enrolment form submission (online or hardcopy)
- Commitment to attend regularly
- Parental or guardian consent for students under 18

ISSNZ also ensures that school-age learners subject to compulsory schooling requirements are not enrolled in or permitted to attend classes during school hours.

Fees

- **Programme Fee:** Please contact the Administration Team for information about the fees applicable to your chosen course.
- Fees are non-transferable.
- ISSNZ is exempt from the Student Fee Protection Scheme due to low fee threshold.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Students with previous knowledge in Panjabi or Sikh studies may apply for RPL. RPL forms are available from the Administrator. The RPL process involves the following:

- Student submits an RPL Application Form with required evidence if applicable.
- The Teacher reviews and assesses the application.
- As part of the RPL process, the student may be required to complete summative assessments to demonstrate the required language proficiency for the programme.
- The Academic Manager moderates and approves final outcomes.
- The student is informed of the decision in writing.

Refund Policy

Refunds are granted in accordance with NZQA guidelines:

- **Before start date:** Full refund less \$49 admin fee.
- **Within 8 days of course commencement:** Refund less 10% or \$49 (whichever is lower).
- **Weeks 2–4:** 50% refund.
- **Weeks 5–8:** 25% refund.

- **After Week 9:** No refund unless under exceptional circumstances (medical, bereavement).

Non-Refundable Situations

- Breach of attendance or conduct policies
- Failure to provide required documentation or written notice
- Fee transfer requests to other students or providers

Course Cancellation by ISSNZ

- Full refund before the course begins
- Pro-rata refund based on undelivered weeks if course is cancelled after commencement

Refunds require

- Withdrawal form (signed by guardian if under 18)
- Supporting documentation if applicable (e.g. medical certificate)
- **Processing time:** Up to 10 business days.

The Withdrawal and Refund form is available from the ISSNZ office.

Code of Conduct

ISSNZ has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, discrimination, or disruptive behaviour.

Expected Behaviour

- Compliance with ISSNZ's policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct
- Positive engagement with learning, asking for help when needed
- Respect for all learners, staff, and volunteers
- Observance of Sikh customs (e.g. shoe removal, wearing head covering)
- Punctuality and regular attendance
- Positive and inclusive communication in and out of class
- Keep shared spaces clean and tidy

Prohibited Conduct

- Disrespectful or aggressive language or behaviour
- Vandalism or theft
- Substance abuse including smoking, vaping, alcohol, or drug use, derogatory comments, name-calling, or slurs
- Spreading rumours or exclusion from group activities
- Physical intimidation or threats
- Offensive jokes or inappropriate sexual advances
- Mocking cultural, religious, or gender identity
- Online bullying (e.g. abusive messages, sharing harmful content)
- Repeated absenteeism without valid reason

Types of Misconduct

Category	Examples (include but are not limited to)
Minor Misconduct	Disruption in class, late arrival, inappropriate phone use, not following dress code
Repeated Misconduct	Ongoing minor issues despite reminders or verbal warnings
Serious Misconduct	Bullying, harassment, threats, theft, vandalism, academic dishonesty, unauthorised absence, inappropriate digital conduct
Gross Misconduct	Violence, illegal activities, serious safety breaches, bringing ISSNZ into disrepute

Dress Code

All students must:

- Wear modest and respectful clothing
- Remove footwear before entering gurdwara and class spaces
- Cover their heads (patka/dastaar/dupatta/scarf)

Digital Conduct

When using ISSNZ's online platforms:

- Refrain from accessing and/or sharing inappropriate content, e.g. gambling sites, hate speech, pornography
- Respect others in digital discussions
- Avoid all forms of cyberbullying, harassment or threats
- Avoid sharing content that is offensive, threatening, discriminatory, or misleading
- Use technology only for educational purposes

Device Use in Class

- Mobile phones must be on silent and stored unless required for class activity
- Students must not use messaging apps, games, or social media during class
- Devices may be confiscated temporarily if misused

Disciplinary Procedures

Step	Action
1. Informal Resolution	Staff discuss behaviour with student, give verbal reminder, clarify expectations
2. First Formal Warning	Issued for repeated issues; written warning given; behaviour plan may be created; under-18 parents informed
3. Second Formal Warning	Issued if behaviour continues or escalates. Formal meeting with Academic Manager / Teacher (and parents for under-18s). Student signs a behaviour agreement with improvement conditions.
4. Final Warning & Risk of Withdrawal	Issued if serious concerns continue or attendance drops below 75%. Principal is informed; dismissal risk discussed with student. Final warning letter issued outlining dismissal risk.

Step	Action
	Student has 5 working days to respond or appeal.
5. Suspension / Dismissal	Applied for serious/gross misconduct. Disciplinary meeting led by Principal. Decision issued in writing with appeal information — outcomes may be: Suspension (temporary), Dismissal (permanent), or Referral to external authorities (e.g. Police, Oranga Tamariki).

Appeals

- Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal within 5 working days.
- Principal reviews all evidence and makes a final decision within 10 working days.
- If unresolved, learners may escalate to NZQA.

Complaints Process

To make a complaint, please follow the steps below:

Step 1 – Talk it through

- Speak with your teacher or a staff member you trust.
- Most problems can be solved quickly through discussion.

Step 2 – Make a formal complaint

If the issue is not resolved, you can make a formal complaint.

- Fill in the ISSNZ Complaints Form (available from reception or online).
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- A written outcome will be provided within 10 working days, where possible.

Step 3 – If you are not satisfied

If you are still not happy with the outcome, you can raise your concern externally:

Option A – Contract or financial disputes

Contact the Dispute Resolution Scheme operated by Study Complaints:

- **Phone:** 0800 00 66 75
- **Website:** www.studycomplaints.org.nz

Option B – Concerns about education providers

Contact the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for concerns about education quality, safety, or wellbeing:

- **Phone:** 0800 697 296
- **Website:** www2.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/make-a-complaint/concerns-about-education-providers/
- NZQA's contact centre can assist you with completing the online webform.

Confidentiality

All complaints are managed in line with the Privacy Act. Only those involved in resolving the issue will have access to the information.

Record Keeping

All formal complaints will be logged in the ISSNZ Complaints Register.

Attendance Policy

Attendance Requirements

- 100% class attendance is expected unless there is a valid reason
- Attendance is recorded at each session
- All absences must be communicated in advance

Under-18 Students

- Parents/guardians must notify ISSNZ of any absences
- Absences will be followed up promptly
- ISSNZ ensures that school-age learners subject to compulsory schooling requirements are not enrolled in or permitted to attend classes during their normal school hours.

Adult Students (18+)

- Must email absences to admin@sikhstudies.co.nz and also post in the dedicated class WhatsApp group with name and reason
- Illnesses may be excused with documentation, but the student will still be marked absent.

Attendance Monitoring Process

Attendance Rate	Action
Below 90%	First Warning – Email reminder and encouragement to improve attendance
Below 85%	Second Warning – Written explanation required and/or supporting documentation requested
Below 80%	Third Warning – Formal meeting with Principal and behaviour agreement put in place
Below 75%	Final Warning – Risk of dismissal unless valid justification is accepted

Health and Safety

- Follow fire evacuation signage
- Fire drills will be conducted once per term
- First aid kits available at reception
- Report all accidents or injuries to staff
- No running indoors or tampering with equipment

Student Contact Details

It is important that students notify ISSNZ immediately if there are any changes to their contact details — such as address, mobile number, or email. This helps us maintain accurate records and ensures we can reach you or your guardian when needed.

Please visit Reception to complete a Contact Update Form whenever your details change.

Student Support

Code of Practice

NZQA's Code of Pastoral Care for domestic students ensures that New Zealand students are adequately supported while completing study at an education provider. Please refer to the following resources for more information on the Code and the support available:

- Helping domestic tertiary learners and international students resolve disputes with their education provider — Study Complaints
- Concerns about education providers — NZQA
- The Code for learners — NZQA

If you require any form of support, please talk to your Pastoral Care Coordinator, Harpreetpal Kaur Dhillon, or your class teacher in the first instance.

Supporting Diverse Learners at ISSNZ

At ISSNZ, we value and respect the diversity of our students. You bring unique backgrounds, strengths, languages, and experiences — and we are committed to making sure you feel welcome, included, and supported throughout your learning journey.

What Does This Mean for You?

- **Respect for Who You Are:** We recognise students come from all cultures, ages, genders, and abilities — including Māori, Pasifika, migrants, refugees and other minority groups.
- **Extra Help When You Need It:** If you need support with language, learning difficulties, disabilities, or personal challenges, please speak to your teacher or ISSNZ's Pastoral Care Coordinator.
- **Inclusive Teaching:** Our teachers use flexible teaching strategies to help everyone learn and succeed, no matter your starting point.
- **Cultural Safety:** We aim to make ISSNZ a culturally respectful and safe space, especially for Māori, Pasifika and other minority groups.
- **Confidential Support:** All support services are provided with care and confidentiality.

What You Can Do

- Let us know if you have specific needs or challenges when you enrol or at any time during your studies.
- Take part in student surveys and feedback sessions — your voice helps us improve.
- Speak with a staff member if you ever feel excluded, bullied or unsupported.

We're here to help you succeed — no matter your background or learning needs. If you would like support or advice, please contact our Pastoral Care Coordinator or ask any staff member.

ISSNZ offers

- Language and literacy help

- Cultural mentoring
- Volunteering and leadership roles
- Referral access to community counselling services

Basic Needs — Accessing Student Support Services

At ISSNZ, we are committed to supporting your wellbeing throughout your learning journey. If you need assistance with everyday essentials or health-related services, the following options are available:

1. Food Support

If you are experiencing food insecurity or financial hardship, please speak confidentially with the Pastoral Care Coordinator. We can connect you with local foodbanks, community pantries, and Sikh Gurdwaras in Auckland, where langar (free vegetarian meals) is provided daily. Emergency food parcels may also be available upon request.

2. Transport Subsidies

Eligible students may apply for public transport concessions through AT HOP cards. ISSNZ can assist you with the application process and provide verification of enrolment for Auckland Transport. In special cases of hardship, additional travel support may be considered — please contact the Pastoral Care Coordinator for more information.

3. Community Health Services

All students are encouraged to enrol with a local GP (General Practitioner) for primary healthcare. ISSNZ can help you locate low-cost or free medical clinics near your residence. If you are unsure where to go, our team can also refer you to services offering:

- Free dental checks for eligible youth, specifically those from Year 9 until their 18th birthday, through the Ministry of Health's Oral Health Scheme
- Mental health and counselling support
- Sexual health clinics and health promotion programmes

Contact the Pastoral Care Coordinator at Reception or the Level 1 Office — support@sikhstudies.co.nz, 09 558 9408. All support is provided in a respectful, confidential, and non-judgmental manner.

Available Facilities

Classroom / Teaching Space

- All teaching occurs in designated classrooms on the first floor of Gurudwara Teg Bahadur Sahib.
- Food and drink are not permitted in class spaces, and students must always maintain respectful behaviour.

Office / Reception Area

- The ISSNZ office on Level 1 is the first point of contact for student enquiries, enrolments, absence notifications, lost property, and administrative support.
- Students are encouraged to approach office staff for help outside class hours.

Eating Space (Langar Hall)

- Located on the ground floor, the langar hall serves free meals, hot drinks and drinking water. Please inform staff if you have any allergies or dietary requirements.
- Students must ensure the area is cleaned after use.
- Cooking or food storage is not permitted.

- No food or drink (except water) is allowed in classrooms or prayer areas.

Main Kitchen (Restricted Area)

- The main kitchen is a commercial facility shared with the Gurudwara and is strictly out of bounds for all ISSNZ students.
- Entry is prohibited due to safety hazards including hot equipment, commercial-grade appliances, and food preparation activities.
- Only authorised personnel with permission from Gurudwara management may access this area.

Toilets

- Toilets are located on the ground floor.
- Please maintain cleanliness and report any issues to a staff member promptly.

Disabled Access Lift

- A lift is available beside the library for students or visitors with mobility needs.
- The lift must be used respectfully and never obstructed.

Darbar Sahib (Prayer Hall)

- Located on the second floor, this is a sacred space used for daily prayers, congregation, and functions.
- Students must adhere to the ISSNZ dress code, including head coverings and removal of footwear.
- Silence and respectful conduct are required at all times.

Shoe Rack at the Entrance

- Footwear (including socks) must be removed upon entering the Gurudwara premises. Please store all footwear in the designated shoe racks near the entrance.
- Follow all signage regarding footwear removal and head covering. These are essential practices within a Sikh Gurudwara and must always be observed.

Car Parking

- Parking is shared with the Gurudwara Sahib Tegh Bahadur Ji. Availability is not guaranteed, especially during peak prayer times.
- If on-site parking is full, students are encouraged to find public parking in the surrounding area and allow extra time to walk to class.

Hazard Reporting

- Any safety concerns, hazards, or incidents (e.g. spills, blocked access ways, malfunctioning equipment) must be reported to ISSNZ staff immediately.
- A Hazard Report Log is available at the office.

General Expectations

- Facilities must be used respectfully, and cleanliness maintained.
- Religious and cultural protocols must be observed, particularly in the Darbar Sahib and Langar Hall.
- Students must always follow signage and staff instructions.
- Misuse of any space may result in disciplinary action.

Emergency Contacts

Service	Contact
Police, Fire, Ambulance	111
Non-emergency Police	105
Mental Health Crisis	0800 800 717
Youthline	0800 376 633 · Free txt 234
Lifeline Counselling Services	09 522 2999 or 0800 543 354 (24/7 helpline)
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0508 828 865
Help with domestic violence	0508 744 633
Middlemore Hospital	09 276 0000
Disabled Citizens' Society	09 638 8153

Useful Tips for Students

- Bring water bottles and stationery
- Dress appropriately
- Lost & found items are kept at reception
- Parents should ensure timely drop-off / pick-up

Acknowledgement Form

All students and parents/guardians (for under 18s) must sign and return the Learner Acknowledgement below. We thank you for being part of this journey to preserve and celebrate the Panjabi language and Sikhi through learning.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Learner Acknowledgement – ISSNZ Copy

Note: This signed and dated acknowledgement page must be detached from the Student Handbook and submitted to the Registrar for official record-keeping.

I confirm that all relevant information regarding ISSNZ's general policies and the specific details of my enrolled programme have been clearly explained to me. By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the rules, regulations, and conditions of study as set out in the ISSNZ Student Handbook.

I also confirm that I have reviewed and understood the following policies:

- Refund Policy
- Attendance Policy
- ISSNZ Disciplinary Procedures
- Student Complaints Policy
- General Rules and Regulations

- Code of Practice for Domestic Students

I have been provided with full details of the course fees. The total fee for my programme is:

\$_____.

I understand and accept that ISSNZ will not be held responsible or liable for any form of loss, injury, or damage (whether direct, indirect, or consequential) that may occur to me, others, or property in connection with any on-site or off-site activities I participate in.

I agree to follow all instructions provided by ISSNZ staff and/or the designated activity supervisor. I will also disclose any medical condition or other relevant information that may affect my ability to safely participate in any activity, whether or not I am specifically asked to do so.

Student name: _____

Student signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature (if under 18): _____

Date: _____

Learner Acknowledgement – Student Copy

I confirm that all relevant information regarding ISSNZ's general policies and the specific details of my enrolled programme have been clearly explained to me. By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the rules, regulations, and conditions of study as set out in the ISSNZ Student Handbook.

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Student signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature (if under 18): _____

Date: _____

Contact Us

Pastoral Care Coordinator: Harpreetpal Kaur Dhillon

Reception / Office: Level 1, Gurudwara Sahib Tegh Bahadur Ji

Address: 24 Dunnotar Road, Papatoetoe, Auckland 2025

Phone: 09 558 9408

Email: admin@sikhstudies.co.nz · support@sikhstudies.co.nz

Website: www.sikhstudies.co.nz

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!