

Sarah College starter pack

Table of Content

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1) Study program for international students – Tibetan language class | 2 |
| 2) Arrival to Sarah College | 2 |
| Arrival by plane to Kangra Airport | 2 |
| Arrival by bus to Dharamshala bus station | 2 |
| 3) Staying at Sarah College | 3 |
| Accommodation | 3 |
| Food, water | 3 |
| Garbage disposal + cleaning | 3 |
| Shopping | 3 |
| WhatsApp groups | 4 |
| His Holiness Dalai Lama's teachings | 4 |
| School rules | 4 |
| 4) Sarah office, important documents | 4 |
| Office registration | 4 |
| Visa for India | 5 |
| FRRO | 5 |
| Printing, scanning | 5 |
| 5) Indian phone number, Wi-Fi | 5 |
| 6) Bank and cash withdrawals | 5 |
| Bank | 5 |
| Cash withdrawals | 6 |
| Phone payments | 6 |
| 7) Getting around | 6 |
| Bus | 6 |
| Taxi | 7 |
| Scootie | 7 |

1) Study program for international students – Tibetan language class

When you arrive to Sarah College and you are not sure about your language proficiency you can choose to attend either beginner or intermediate class depending on your proficiency. You will be given 1 week to choose between these two classes, if you are not sure.

Language study program for beginners consists of 2 years – 1st year beginner class, 2nd year intermediate class.

The study year runs in 2 semesters a year + 2 months holiday:

1st semester starts after HHDL birthday (after July 6) and finishes at the end of November, with a written exam, followed by few days of holidays announced by the principal.

2nd semester starts from the 1st/2nd week in November and finishes at the end of April, with an exam

May + June are holidays.

Usually the holidays are announced by the school in advance, school observes holidays on July 6, December 10, March 10, Losar etc.

International students study from Monday – Friday (Tibetan students study also on Saturday, every month a 2nd Saturday is a holiday for everyone)

Example of beginners' class program:

- Language class for 120 mins everyday Monday – Friday – mandatory, included in the price
- Conversation class – schedule depending on the principal's decision – mandatory, for extra fee
- Buddhist class – Monday, Wednesday, Friday, for extra fee, optional
- Reading, writing class – 2x a week, optional

Study materials are provided by the school, for a small fee.

2) Arrival to Sarah College

Best time to arrive to Sarah is during the last week of June. This will allow you to get settled and be ready for the beginning of the school year.

Arrival by plane to Kangra Airport

There are few flights a day from Delhi to Kangra airport, which is 10 mins by taxi from Sarah College.

When taking domestic flights in India, be aware that the luggage limit is smaller than for international flights. Usually 15 kg per checked-in luggage.

Arrival by bus to Dharamshala bus station

You can take an overnight bus from Delhi – Majnu Katila (Tibetan colony in Delhi), which goes daily. Bus departs from Delhi in the evening and arrives to Dharamshala very early in the morning and 1 way costs around 1000 INR. It takes around 30 minutes by taxi to Sarah College. Make sure to get semi-sleeper bus with AC. Seats in the front are more advisable.

3) Staying at Sarah College

Accommodation

You will be assigned your room through a lottery. Foreign students are getting single rooms. You have to pay every 3 months for your accommodation at the Sarah office (by cash, money transfer or phone payment).

Your room will be very basically equipped with bed + mattress. Other equipment might or might not be there. You have to bring pillow, duvet, sheets, towels, cleaning products for cleaning your room upon arrival.

You also need to have a plate, bowl, cup, utensils for the dining room, bottle for drinking water. All preferably unbreakable.

Food, water

Sarah College provides mostly vegetarian meals in the school mess on following schedule. Be on time, time for eating is usually limited for 20-30 mins, then the mess closes.

- 7:00 breakfast
- 10:00 tea
- 12:30 lunch
- 16:00 tea + tsampa
- 18:00 dinner (17:30 on Wednesdays!)

Tap water in India is not suitable for drinking for foreigners. In Sarah there are 2 drinking water stations – one next to the mess, second next to basketball playground. School shop also sells bottled water.

Garbage disposal + cleaning

There are no dumpsters at Sarah College. You should keep the garbage in your room until the campus cleaning is announced in the WhatsApp group – usually every Friday (not during examination period) around 16:00 and at this point you need to carry your garbage to the basketball ground. If you presort it, it is better.

Organic waste can be disposed at the food disposal bins at the dishwashing station opposite the mess. It is used for feeding pigs, so do not put egg shells there.

Students are also responsible for cleaning the classroom and its surroundings on the campus cleaning day.

Shopping

There is a shop at Sarah, which sells daily necessities and snacks, basic food (milk, butter, cheese, drinks) also serves as a restaurant. Once you arrive at Sarah College, you will need cleaning products and tools – those you can buy in Dharamshala or Gaggal markets at first.

Almost every day between 12:00 – 14:00 an Indian vendor comes with a small car and sells vegetables and fruits. There is also an organic farm vendor, coming irregularly, who sells honey, nuts, peanut butter, sweets etc.

Sometimes a shoe repair person comes to Sarah (once a month).

Best shopping places for daily necessities are street bazars at Dharamshala + Gaggal. You can also order anything from Amazon (make sure not to use "P.O." in the address when registering it at Amazon, otherwise they will limit deliveries of some items, for example fridge).

WhatsApp groups

There are WhatsApp groups, where you request to be added upon arrival.

International students group – with the international students monitor, who announces important events in English

Taxi group – where students share drives between Sarah and Mcleod Ganj.

His Holiness Dalai Lama's teachings

International students are usually given permission to attend HHDL teachings, upon agreeing with the teacher, if majority of the students go, the class is cancelled.

For some teachings you need to register at the main temple in Mcleod Ganj and collect your permission prior the teaching. You will need you need hardcopies of the following documents to receive your pass: passport, visa, C-form, student card, FRRO certificate, passport photo.

School rules

Girls are not allowed to boys' hostel, boys are not allowed to girls' hostel.

There is a study time between 14:00 – 16:00 (you are not allowed to sit in cafes, but you can study outside or in the library or classroom) and 19:00 – 21:00 when you can only study in your room and visitors are not allowed. You can go outside between 21:00 – 22:00, by 22:00 you have to be back in your room.

When leaving school for the weekend, you do not need permission, but when leaving during classes or for a longer time, you always need permission either from your teacher or from the principal, depending on the nature and duration of your leave.

Morning and evening prayers are not mandatory for beginner and intermediate students.

Students are not allowed to drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs on campus.

4) Sarah office, important documents

IMPORTANT: Have your hard copy passport photos with you, when come to India, you will need many.

Office registration

Sarah College office opens from Monday to Friday, with a lunch break between 12:00-14:00. You should contact the office as soon as possible upon arrival and you will be instructed on the paperwork procedure.

VERY IMPORTANT - You need to register in India within 14 days of your arrival at FRRO – office will assist you with this.

Once you register as a student and with FRRO, you need to receive following documents from the office:

- Student card
- FRRO certificate

- C form (proof of your address in India)
- Letter for the bank for opening your bank account

Visa for India

Students can study in Sarah only with student visa, which is usually valid for 1 year and can be prolonged online from India, with the assistance of the school office. Contact the office 2 months before your visa expires.

Sometimes the visa is issued for 3 entries to India, sometimes multiple entries. Check your visa carefully.

FRRO

FRRO is a government office for registering foreigners staying in India. You have to register here within 14 days of your arrival in India.

Once leaving India, you need to receive a letter from the school, visit the FRRO office in Dharamsala where you receive an exit stamp and only after that you can leave India.

If you change your passport during your stay in India, purpose of your stay, location etc., you have to inform FRRO and update your information.

Printing, scanning

You can print/scan documents at the library or printing office in Sarah.

5) Indian phone number, Wi-Fi

You need to have an Indian phone number when arriving to Sarah College. The only operator which works here is Airtel. Indian phone number is mandatory, you need it for:

- Studying at the school
- Registration at FRRO
- Prolonging your visa

There is no wifi on campus, therefore you need your phone data. Phone credit can be recharged via amazon at first, later when you have an Indian bank account, you can do it via phone payment.

6) Bank and cash withdrawals

Bank

If you plan to stay in Sarah for more than 1 year, you need to have an Indian bank account in order to be able to prolong your study visa.

- **SBI bank** – state bank, the bank account for foreign students does not allow to deposit cash, or to transfer money from different Indian accounts. Money can only be transferred from foreign accounts, for which a high fee is charged. When transferring from Revolut – money does not arrive to SBI bank
- **Canara** bank – private bank allows to deposit cash and transfers from Revolut as well as transfers from foreign accounts – therefore is better for your purpose

- In order to open a bank account (you can only open a „Foreign student bank account“) in Canara bank (Gangchen Kyishong branch, next to Tibetan Library and Museum) you need 3 steps:

1st visit of the bank you need to bring:



- Hard copy of passport
- Hard copy of student visa
- Hard copy of C-form
- Hard copy of a document proving your permanent address in your home country
- Hard copy of you Sarah student card
- Hard copy of FRRO certificate
- Hard copy of your tax number in your home country
- Letter from Sarah College to the bank, asking for opening you bank account, signed by the principal
- 2 standard size passport photos
- 1500 IRP in cash – you will deposit it upon opening an account and it will be credited Towards your account

2nd visit of the bank you:

- You will collect your account pass book + payment card will be sent to Sarah college by regular mail

3rd step – not necessary to visit bank, but helpful!

- You have to activate your card in the ATM machine and set your password
- You have to download and activate your Canara bank application

Cash withdrawals

Maximum limit for a cash withdrawal at the ATM is 10 000 IRP, but you can do it several times in the row. SBI ATM does not charge for withdrawals from Revolut card.

Phone payments

Phone payment is the most popular cashless payment, even possible at small street vendors, unfortunately does not work with foreign accounts, you can only use it once you have an Indian account.

7) Getting around

Bus

There is a public bus service connecting Sarah College with Gaggal and Dharamshala. Women have 50% discount for bus tickets in Himachal Pradesh.

Bus runs every day according to this schedule, except for Sundays, when the private operators are not working and only the HRTC buses are coming, but they are little bit unpredictable.

Fastest if of course to take bus up to Dharamshala, but if not available, you can take bus down to Gaggal market, from where you change to the bus to Dharamshala, which goes almost every 10 minutes.

From Dharamshala to Mcleod Ganj you can use shared jeeps for 20 INR (one way). Jeeps are going from the gate of the bus station in Dharamshala. Sometimes there is a bus instead of a jeep, price is the same.

BUS SCHEDULE - school bus stop is called Sarah College or Lama Colony

| From Sarah do Dhasa | operator | From Dhasa to Sarah | operator |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| 6:30 | H.R.T.C. | 6:30 | H.R.T.C. |
| 7:50 | H.R.T.C. | 8:00 | H.R.T.C. |
| 9:15 | H.R.T.C. | 8:30 | Green line |
| 10:15 | Green line | 10:30 | Green line |
| 12:30 | H.R.T.C. | 11:00 | H.R.T.C. |
| 13:50 | Bhatia | 12:30 | Bhatia |
| 15:30 | H.R.T.C. | 14:10 | H.R.T.C. |
| 17:15 | H.R.T.C. | 16:10 | H.R.T.C. |
| 18:40 | H.R.T.C. | 17:10 | H.R.T.C. |

Taxi

There are usually some taxis at the Sarah gate. If not, you can order the taxi to pick you up. Price is 300 IRP to Dharamshala, 500 IRP to Mcleod. Taxi numbers are at the canteen.

There is a taxi sharing WhatsApp group in Sarah, where you can arrange shared drives with other students.

Scootie

You can rent a scootie or buy a scootie but students are not allowed to park in the school premises. Ask for other parking options around Sarah.