



BRITISH VIETNAMESE
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
HO CHI MINH CITY

Bridging the world



Welcome To
HO CHI MINH CITY



**BRITISH VIETNAMESE
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL**

BVIS HCMC
44-46 St. 1, Binh Hung Wd.,
Binh Chanh Dist., HCMC

Tel: (08) 3758 0709/17
Email: bvis@bvisvietnam.com

BVIS HANOI
72A Nguyen Trai St.,
Thanh Xuan Dist., Hanoi

Tel: (04) 6266 8800
Email: bvisroyal@bvishanoi.com

WELCOME TO HO CHI MINH CITY NEW FAMILY GUIDE

After you have spent a short time adjusting to your new surroundings, we are sure you will find Ho Chi Minh City an interesting and exciting city to live in and we very much hope that you enjoy your experience teaching at the British Vietnamese International School.

This information booklet has been put together by teachers and staff who have all lived and worked in Vietnam. Each year it is updated based on suggestions from the most recently appointed teachers. We hope it will provide answers to some of the many questions you will have about living in HCMC and make you feel better prepared for your move.

The British Vietnamese International School is a friendly working environment and you will find everyone very supportive. When you arrive please do not hesitate to ask any of your new colleagues for help, information or advice. We will do everything we can to make sure you settle in and feel comfortable as soon as possible.

In the meantime, have a look through the Guide. You will have been allocated a “buddy” by now who will readily answer any questions that arise from reading through this information booklet.

We are all very much looking forward to working with you.



Principal



SAIGON

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE IN HO CHI MINH CITY



Passport

If your passport is nearly full (less than two available pages) or will have less than 6 months validity on it when you arrive in Vietnam you need to get a new one as a **matter of urgency**. We would recommend that you get a 48 page passport booklet. Bring at least 6 passport size photographs with you.

IMPORTANT: If you renew your passport while you are in Vietnam, please ensure you keep the expired passport in a safe place. You will need to show your first Vietnamese visa when you depart from the country and request a Police Clearance certificate for your time in the country.

Vaccinations

It is sensible advice to get your vaccinations up to date before you arrive in Vietnam. If that isn't possible then you can get them done here in HCMC and probably at a significantly lower cost. However, this will mean that you may not have sufficient protection during your first few weeks in Vietnam. The school will send you an information sheet on 'Suggested Immunisations for Vietnam'. We recommend you seek advice from your own GP if you have any questions about vaccinations.

What To Bring

To a large extent this has to be your own choice – you could travel light and buy what you need when you get here, or you could freight all your worldly goods by sea or air, but remember that there is only a limited relocation allowance from the school. Your apartment will have air conditioning, cooker, fridge, washing machine, basic furniture including easy chairs, curtains, dining table and chairs, beds and bedside tables, adequate storage in kitchen and bedrooms.

We will send you typical inventory lists after Easter – exact details may vary from apartment to apartment. (Check if your apartment has sheets and pillow-cases or whether you need to bring some with you). You may wish to consider bringing small electrical appliances like hair dryers with you – the availability and range of quality products is limited. Some staff buy a small electrical oven when they get here as most accommodation only has a two-ring stove for cooking.

If you decide you would like to live in a house rather than an apartment, you should expect to find it less well stocked with cutlery, kitchen utensils, pillows and bedding. These can all be bought locally, but you need to be prepared for your first night.

US dollars are less widely accepted now; you may change some money into VND upon arrival but your settling in allowance is given to you in cash when you get here.

It is possible to buy most things you are likely to need in Ho Chi Minh City. However, you may wish to consider bringing the following personal items with you, to at least see you through the early weeks while you source your preferred supplier:

- Prescription medications – at least 3 months supply to tide you over until you find out what is available here. Most medications are available at the international clinics or the Franco/Vietnamese Hospital.
- Contact lens equipment is readily and cheaply available near Ben Thanh market. If you are particular or have a specific need, bring plenty.
- Preferred cosmetics, shampoo, conditioner, women's personal hygiene products (tampons): specific brands – Kotex, Helen Harper
- Cosmetics – big established brands such as Lancome and Clinique are available but smaller and lower end brand items i.e. Rimmel, Max Factor are not. Make-up for olive/darker skin is not readily available. Moisturiser is hard to find as the majority of creams are for whitening. You may want to bring some. There is now Bodyshop in HCMC.
- Good novels can be hard to find although many teachers order through Amazon or use an e-reader.
- Whilst there are a wide range of shoe shops in HCMC, sizes can pose a problem for a lot of expats. Sizes in Vietnam tend to run small, so it is advisable to bring a selection of shoes both for everyday wear and sports, particularly if you are larger than a size 10 UK for a male and size 5 UK for a female.
- Female under garments can be hard to find (size 14+) and bikinis/swimwear larger than a size 10.
- Photographs – It is recommended to bring several passport photographs. It is also very easy to get photos printed in HCMC should you need to do this on arrival. Below are the specifications:
 - Neutral facial expression, without smiling or frowning.
 - Don't wear any kind of glasses when taking these photos.
 - Veils, hats and scarfs are strictly prohibited, and any other accessories that cover your ears or foreheads.
- Strong insect repellent, although insect repellent can be bought locally.
- Western style bed linen is expensive. If you want to bring your own duvet cover, bring the largest size you can find. Beds and duvets in Vietnam are big.



International Movers

If you do decide you wish to ship some household belongings to HCMC, be prepared for bureaucratic delays and don't ship anything you will need immediately! Before making a decision, please read the guidance sheet "Shipment of Personal Possessions into Vietnam" which gives more detailed information.

Please be aware that there can be a sizeable import tax levied on the value of your goods imported into Vietnam.

There are several reputable international movers to choose from. Their website address is listed below, along with other relocation companies with offices in HCMC whom you can contact for information:

AGS Four Winds

www.agsfourwinds.com

Allied Pickfords

<http://vn.alliedpickfords.com>

Asian Tigers

www.asiantigersgroup.com

Crown Worldwide Movers

www.crownrelo.com

Santa Fe Relocations Services

www.santaferelo.com

If you are not shipping furniture, but have personal belongings beyond your baggage allowance many teachers have recommended the use of www.excess-baggage.com



Useful Information

Currency	Vietnamese Dong – approx. 33,000 VND = £1 GBP.
Local Time	Vietnam is GMT + 7 hours.
Language	Vietnamese is the official language. English is spoken in the business districts of the city and in key expatriate/tourist locations. Senior citizens are usually able to speak French. It is very useful to learn the basics to get around i.e. directions, numbers, phrases etc. English is increasingly spoken around the city.
Saigon	Ho Chi Minh City is the official name of the city but 'Saigon' is often used. Either name can be used without causing offence.
Climate	HCMC is in the South East Asian monsoon zone. This means 6 months of heat and rain (May to October) and 6 months of just heat (November to April). Day time temperatures range from 25°C - 35°C. Humidity is often high at 75 – 80%. Schools, home, taxis, shops, bars, restaurants etc. are all fully air-conditioned.
Electricity	The electricity supply in HCMC is 220/240V AC with standard European 2 pin sockets. Adapters for conversion to UK three pin plugs are easily and cheaply available, although you may want to bring some with you.
Clothing	Light-weight summer clothing (and a water-proof anorak) is suitable for casual wear. There is a formal dress code for school, which is in the staff handbook and has already been emailed to you.
Sun protection	Good polarised sunglasses, hat and sunscreen are essential – bring large bottles if you have children. High factors (above 25) can be difficult to get.
TV and radio	A variety of cable and satellite packages are available.
Internet	Broadband is now widely available, but slower than the UK.
Newspapers	The Vietnam News and the Saigon Times are local English language newspapers.
Magazines	The Word and Asia Life are two local free magazines specifically aimed at the expat market. They contain interesting articles about life in Saigon as well as listings of restaurants, bars and various types of shops. They are available at various locations around the city including school reception desks. Your welcome pack will contain a copy of each.
Post	Mail between the UK and Vietnam is not always reliable and slow (2 – 3 weeks). Mail can be delivered to your house/apartment or school. Please note that all mail is routinely opened and inspected.
Good web sites	www.asialifehcmc.com www.expatriadvisory.com www.wordhcmc.com www.whatonsaigon.com http://wikitravel.org/en/Ho_Chi_Minh_City http://hcmc.angloinfo.com/

YOUR FIRST FEW DAYS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

The International Terminal at Tan Son Nhat Airport in HCMC is very modern and usually relatively hassle free. Make your way through immigration to Baggage Claim and then be prepared to place your bags back on the x-ray machine before exiting the airport.

On arrival you will be met by a colleague from school. As you step out of the Arrivals Building look out for the British Vietnamese International School sign.

You will be taken to your accommodation in one of the school buses and given your 13 million VND relocation allowance (\$600). There will be some basic food supplies like milk, tea, sugar, coffee, bread and fruit in your apartment or house. You will be given a SIM card for a mobile phone with 50,000 VND credit.

It is not uncommon or unusual that many expatriates employ domestic staff during their time here. If this is your first expatriate location, this will be something that may take some time to get used to if you choose to avail yourself of such services. It is worth having a chat to some of your colleagues to discuss their arrangements and experiences.

The last day for the arrival of new teachers in HCMC is Thursday 13th August. We recommend that you arrive in HCMC between Monday 10th and Thursday 13th August although it is possible to arrive earlier by negotiation. Most new staff arrive earlier than 13th August in order to give a few days acclimatisation before the more formal introduction to school. The first day for New Staff Induction is Monday 17th August 2015. There will be some social events on 15th – 16th August to help you settle into life in HCMC and to meet new colleagues. A detailed programme for the start of term will be sent to you when it has been finalised.

LIVING IN HO CHI MINH

Formerly known as Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is Vietnam's largest city. Its vibrancy and timeless charm combined with a young, educated and enthusiastic workforce have moved it back into position as a business leader in Asia. It is a fast-paced, friendly and relatively safe city. It is expanding and developing rapidly which brings its own share of growing pains, however, this also makes life interesting and varied.



Personal Safety

Vietnam is probably one of the safest countries you could possibly live in. However, HCMC is like any big city in that it is not crime free. Please don't tempt fate, especially in tourist areas, and use common sense wherever possible. The last couple of years have seen an increase in "bag snatches" petty crime i.e. bag and phone snatches from motor bikes as they drive close to pedestrians. You are not advised to visibly carry handbags on your shoulder where they can become a target. and be conscious of your surroundings when speaking on your phone in a busy street.



Getting Around HCMC

Most teachers get around the city either by a small motorbike or by taxi. Small 125 cc motorbikes are inexpensive to buy or to hire. Many staff use a xe-om (motorbike taxi) to get around the city. There are two shops in D.2, BOMB and Saigon Scooter Shop – 80 Xuan Thuy www.saigonscootercentre.com which sell a good range of EU standard motor bike helmets in a range of sizes. Don't be tempted to buy the cheap local helmets. It is recommended that you bring your UK full driving licence with you. It is easier to convert your UK licence to a Vietnamese licence than it is to undergo a Vietnamese

driving test for motorbikes. A UK provisional licence will not be recognised.

Taxi rates are very reasonable in Ho Chi Minh City as long as you use a reputable company and the meter is used. It is useful to always have your location address written down before you embark on a taxi trip. It is not difficult to find a taxi on the street at most times, but sometimes it is easier to call for one. Below are a list and telephone numbers of the more reputable taxis in the city.

Mai Linh Taxi	Phone 3838 3838
Vina Taxi Phone	3811 1111
Saigon Taxi	Phone 3823 2323
Vinasun Phone	3827 2727

Taxis usually cost approximately 40,000 VND for short journeys (in and around District 7). It is usually better to choose a well known cab company as the smaller cabs often have meters that start very cheap but rise rapidly. Mai Linh have the largest fleet in the city and are generally honest and reliable. A taxi from the airport to Sky Garden (apartments in D7) should cost about 250,000 VND. A taxi from Sky Garden to most of District 1 destinations should cost 130,000 VND. All taxis should have a meter. If the meter "isn't working", get out of the taxi. Another will soon be available.



Food Shopping

HCMC has many supermarkets scattered around the city.

Citimart (three in District 7) **Co-opmart** (one in District 7)

Queenland – next to Sky Garden

Lotte Mart on Nguyen Huu Tho street.

Giant Supermarket – the best of all, located in the Crescent Mall in D7

There are also hundreds of small grocery shops throughout the city including:

Veggies – expat store for buying imported fruit and vegetables as well as meats and cheeses. Prices are high, though. It is located on Le Thanh Ton Street in District 1 and on Nguyen Duc Canh in D7.

Annam Gourmet Shop – has a large range of imported foods, beers and wines offering the best of western and Asian delicacies. It specialises in international cheeses, Australian meats, garden-fresh organic vegetables and Vietnamese coffees, teas and spices. Also on Nguyen Duc Canh in D7.

Markets - Wet markets are good for buying fruit and vegetables, as well as other grocery items. If you are buying meat or fish from the markets it is best to get there very early in the morning.

Some of the nearby markets are:

Cho Ben Thanh The biggest city market. Quach Thi Trang Square (main entrance off Le Loi in District 1)

Cho Tan My Near to FV Hospital in District 7

Meat - There are wholesalers who import meat from Australia and New Zealand. Imported and gourmet meats are available in some hotels and special butchers' shops, but are expensive. The following are some suppliers:

Kim Hai Trading Co Has a brochure and will deliver. 338/2A Nguyen Xi, Ward 13, Binh Thanh District. Tel: 6553 4095

Lan Trinh	48 Ham Nghi, District 1, HCMC. Tel: 3833 4068
Le Cochon D'or	32 Dong Du, D1, HCMC. Tel: 3829 3856
Kim Hai Butchers	41, NamKy Khoi Ngia, D1 Tel: 38216057

Bread

One of the great things about eating in Vietnam is that the French bread making tradition has remained. French-style bread sticks are the most common type of bread available, but it is also possible to buy sliced white and wholemeal breads. Most supermarkets stock a range of bread and there are also quite a few individual bakeries to choose from. Good quality French pastries can be bought at a number of patisseries. Two examples are:

Harvest Bakery available at Annam Gourmet

Tous les Jours franchise bakery with many outlets.

Water - the tap water is **not** drinkable. You may wish to buy a water dispenser on arrival and use large 19 litre bottles of water available from La Vie. Alternatively, it is just as easy to buy 2 litre bottles almost anywhere.

Cotton-based clothing is practical for the climate in HCMC. There are a number of outlets selling local and imported clothes, but it is difficult to find larger western sizes.

Quite a few outlets offer a 'made to order' service for clothes. Dressmakers are reasonably priced and will make almost anything you request, but standards vary. Shop around and find a tailor that suits you.

You may find a tailor who will come to your home. This is usually the cheapest option. You will need to buy the material yourself and have items to be copied or pictures of what you want made. The markets have a wide range of materials and there is a strip of fabric shops opposite the Cho Tan Dinh markets at 333 Hai Ba Trung Street, D3.

Ready-made cotton sheets and bed linen can be expensive so you may wish to have them made by a tailor

HAIRDRESSING

There are numerous local barbers and hairdressing outlets of reasonable standard in HCMC. Some of them include a face, head and neck massage as part of their inexpensive service.

Most salons also provide full facials, manicures and pedicures, and sell hair care and beauty products, on request. Some salons have 'international' stylists working for them, but they are much more expensive.



Banks and ATMs

You are required to open a local bank account in Vietnam into which your salary will be paid. Most teachers choose Standard Chartered, HSBC or ANZ. You will be provided with more information during the Induction Week and will have the opportunity to meet representatives of these banks.

Once you have opened your bank account the details must then be submitted to Mrs. Thao Nguyen (Chief Accountant) for salary payment. Salaries are paid into accounts as VND. This will need to be converted into other currencies before being transferred out of Vietnam. There are an increasing number of ATM's located all around the city and in District 7.



Dining Out in HCMC

There are a fantastic number of restaurants to choose from in HCMC. The range is from street vendors to expensive 5 star hotels and top notch restaurants. with menus in US dollars. It can be very inexpensive to dine out each evening if you wish. Here are just a few suggestions to start you off: but there are many more in the Asia Life www.asialifemagazine.com and the Word www.wordhcmc.com magazines:

In District 7 (Addresses in listings in the Word and Asia Life)

Al Fresco's – Tex/Mex food with an Italian flair (pizzas/pastas etc...)

Natalie's – Thai cuisine

Ganesh – Indian food

The Crescent – A collection of mid/top range restaurants located next to a lake

Au Lac Du Brasil – Brazilian restaurant

Peaches – SE Asian curry

Tavern – British style bar/restaurant

Tokyo Deli – One of many Japanese restaurant in D7

Scott and Binh's – Western style food

In District 1

Le Jardin - French. 31 Thai Van Lung, D1 Tel: 38258465

4P's - Excellent Japanese/Italian gourmet pizza. - 8/15 Le Thanh Ton, D1. Tel: 0120-789-4444

Fanny's Ice-cream - 29-31 Ton That Thiep D1. Tel: 38211630

Tandoor - Excellent Indian curries - 74/6 Ha Ba Trung, D1. Tel: 39304839

Sarpinos - Italian – Good pizzas - 125 Ho Tung Mau, D1. Tel: 3821 7788

The Sushi Bar - 2 Le Thanh Ton D1. Tel: 3823 8042

Lemon Grass - Vietnamese - 4 Nguyen Thiep D1. Tel: 3822 0496

Quan An Ngon - Vietnamese. Very cheap and popular - 160 Pasteur, D1. Tel: 3827 7131

Tib - Hue style Vietnamese. Separate vegetarian menu available

187 Hai Ba Trung. D3. Tel: 38297242

Flow – Contemporary European, 88 Ho Tung Mau, D1 Tel: 39153691

Skewers - International/Mediterranean - 9A Thai Van Lung, D1 Tel: 38224798

Warda - Middle-Eastern - 71/7 Mac Thi Buo, D1 Tel: 38233822

Also, look out for ... Elbow Room, The Refinery



Takeaway and Home Delivery

Many restaurants have a 'take-away' and delivery service. Ask for their menus when you dine there.

Chez Guido's is a delivery only outlet, for everything under the sun. Tel: 38983747

www.vietnammm.com and www.eat.vn are websites in English that have the menus of lots of different restaurants for home delivery.



Bars and Nightclubs

Saigon has a lot of nightlife options. There's a great range of local and expat places to try, depending on your mood and your company. Below is a small selection:

Acoustic Bar – Live music – 6E Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3 Tel. 39302239

Phatty's - Sports bar with pub grub – 46-48 Ton That Thiep, D.1.

Hog's Breath – Aussie sports-diner, al fresco too (GF Bitexco tower)

Blue Gecko – Aussie Pub style – 31 Ly Tu Trong Street, D1.

Ciao Lounge - Elegant and romantic with reasonably priced drinks – 2nd floor, 74-76 Nguyen Hue, D1

La Habana - Cuban themed bar with live music most nights – 6 Cao Ba Quat, D1

Level 23 - Good views, excellent cocktails, 5 star prices – 23rd Floor, Sheraton Hotel, 88 Dong Khoi Street, D1

Q Bar - Trendy, located underneath the opera house – opposite the Caravelle Hotel, D1

Sheridan's Irish House – Authentic Irish pub – off Le Thanh Ton, D1

Temple Club – Great French architecture & live jazz – bar and restaurant. 29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1

Vasco's - Popular expat bar – 74/7D Ha Ba Trung, D1 Tel. 38242888



Churches, Temples and Mosques

The majority of Christian churches in HCMC are Catholic, with the main one being the Notre Dame Cathedral in District 1. The Cathedral conducts services Monday - Saturday at 0530 and 1700hrs and on Sundays at 0530, 0630, 0730, 0930, 1600, 1715 and 1830hrs. The 0930 service is in a mix of Vietnamese and English.

An International Choir sings at the Cathedral and they are always keen to recruit new members.

A Protestant group provides an English service for expatriates in a room at the Saigon Prince Hotel on Nguyen Hue Street (in District 1) every Sunday morning at 10am.

An inter-denominational group called "Crossroads" meet at different members houses every week. There is an all English Catholic service at 6pm Saturdays at 413 Le Van Sy Street, Tan Binh District HCMC.

There are two Mosques – The Indian Islam Chancel – 66 Dong Du, D1 and the Islam Community Board – 52 Nguyen Van Troi Street, Phu Nhuan District.

There is a Hindu Temple at 44D Truong Dinh Street, D1.





Recreation and Leisure

Cinemas

There are several cinemas in HCMC. The new multiplex cinemas which have only recently opened show current releases in English with Vietnamese subtitles. Lotte Mart and Crescent Mall in District 7

Cricket

The English Cricket Club of Saigon meets each week throughout the year at RMIT - 702 Nguyen Van Linh Boulevard, Tan Phong Ward, District 7. It is essentially a village cricket team playing in the Saigon Cricket League. Currently, half a dozen teachers from the school play in the team including a couple of Aussies!

Dam Sen Park

A popular park with local families. Monorail, butterfly gardens, children's rides and boats. Off Hoa Binh or Lac Long Quan, District 11

DansCentre

For Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, Salsa and Belly Dancing lessons – 46/2 Nguyen Cuu Van, Binh Thanh District.
Tel: 38406974

Football

Saigon Saints and Saigon Raiders are two of the most popular teams.

Golf

There are a number of good standard golf courses in and around HCMC, but green fees are expensive. An Phu Village, Thu Duc is a 36-hole golf course with driving range and clubhouse facilities. This can be played on a casual basis for USD100 per round of 18 holes on weekends and holidays and USD80 on weekdays. Another option is the Song Be Club which is 20km north of the city. This is a Par 72, 18 hole course billed as a resort and is open to non members at for US\$88 per round on weekdays and US\$113 on weekends. There is an inexpensive 9 hole par 3 course in Saigon South.

Rugby

Saigon Geckos Rugby Club play at RMIT in District 7. All welcome to play both touch and contact rugby. Games 4pm on Saturdays. Training at Parklands in District 2 on Thursday at 7pm.

Phu Tho Club

2 Le Dai Hanh, District 11 - Principal venue for horse racing and distance cycling events. It is possible to bet here. A VIP club overlooking the track is open to visitors.

Saigon Hash House Harriers

This is a walk/run that is held on Sunday afternoons. It's a good way to see the countryside and meet people socially. Hashers meet at the Caravelle Hotel. The bus leaves at 2.30pm sharp. The cost is 120.000 dong per session. You can email saigonhash@yahoo.com.

Ten Pin Bowling

Diamond Plaza - There is a large bowling rink on Level 4 at Diamond Plaza at 34 Le Duan Street, District 1 Saigon Superbowl – 32 lanes. 1st Floor, 43A Truong son, Tan Binh District.
Lotte Mart - 469 Nguyen Huu Tho Street, Tan Hung Ward., District 7, HCMC

Staff School Based Activities

Groups of teachers take part in a variety of sporting activities using the school facilities afterschool hours. These currently include football, netball, swimming, cycling and running.

Health Club Corporate Membership

All overseas contracted teachers have an allowance for Health Club membership – approved health clubs include: An Phu Nutrifort, The Village, Parkland, California Wow, Sedona, Star Fitness (The Manor), The Rex Hotel, Saigon Pearl, Sky Garden (Golden Health Co, YOFI Club), Hollywood, Crescent Gym, Fit 24. Colleagues will give you the low-down on each.

Vietnamese Language Classes

Some of the teaching assistants from the school may run Vietnamese language classes for teachers. If you are interested contact the Head TA.



Bringing Children to Vietnam

We believe that giving your children the experience of living in another culture is enriching and advantageous. Of course we can all experience culture shock, but remember that children adapt far easier than adults and happy parents will make for happy children!

You will find that the International Medical Clinics are helpful and thoughtful if you need to attend them with your child.

There are activities in HCMC for the children which are similar to what they could be doing at home eg football, dance, horse riding and the school offers a wide variety of after school activities which, if your child is of school age, they can be involved in.

The school has a Mother and Toddler group, Fundinotots, for children who are not of school going age.

Your children will enjoy the wide variety of cuisine offered out here and they will be able to find things that they enjoy and also sample new delights! Eating out with children is fun and restaurants make them feel welcome.

Black leather school shoes can be a problem to get out here so we would suggest you coming out with a couple of pairs.

Framing is inexpensive in HCMC and bringing in your suitcase a few photos of friends and family to put in your child's room can make them feel at home. Also a new pillow case and quilt cover or an old favourite can quickly bring a child's room to life and make them feel good about their new bedroom. It's natural to feel concern bringing your child/children to a new culture but in our overall experience they will survive and, far more than that, they will thrive. Children thrive in this setting and embrace both the national elements of their new country along with the international experience gained from living in a diverse expatriate community.

Finally, at risk of stating the obvious, they will get the opportunity to attend a first class school and be taught by great teachers in the company of other motivated children who all want to do well.



Medical Services

There are several international clinics for expatriates, but below are a few of the most commonly visited. These clinics provide a range of medical services and they can arrange evacuation to Singapore or Bangkok for treatment in the event of a medical emergency or serious illness.

Franco Vietnamese Hospital (FV Hospital)

6 Nguyen Luong Bang Street, Tan Phu Ward, South Saigon, D7, Tel: 5411 3333 or 62906167
This is a very modern and well equipped hospital with a wide range of services.

Columbia Asia Hospital

01 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh District, Tel: 3803 0678

Vietnam Hospital: Cho Ray

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, District 5, HCMC. Tel: 38554137 or 38554138

Family Medical Practice

- Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan Street, D1. Tel: 3822 7848
- 95 Thao Dien Street, D2, (a few minutes' walk from the An Phu campuses). Tel: 3744 2000

Columbia Asia Clinic

8 Alexandre de Rhodes Tel: 3823 8888

The school health insurance company will help to cover the cost of health care. More details will be sent to you at a later stage.



Dental Services

Westcoast Int'l Dental Clinic

79 Dong Khoi St, District 1, Tel: 38256777
27 Nguyen Trung Truc, District 1, Tel: 38256999

Starlight Dental Clinic

3 Han Thuyen Street, District 1 Tel: 83226222 / 0903834901

The **Franco Vietnamese Hospital** has excellent dental services.

Family Medical also has dental care



Pharmacies

“Nha Thuoc” means pharmacy.

You will find plenty of pharmacies throughout the city selling over the counter medication at very low prices. Check expiry dates on these before you buy. NB: go to a reputable pharmacy to avoid the risk of buying copied medicine.

The expat medical clinics (see above) also have their own pharmacies, although these are much more expensive.



Technology in HCMC

Mobile phones

You are able to purchase a mobile phone from any of the many mobile phone shops that seem to be on every street. Prices are similar to UK or USA and the latest models are available.

We strongly recommend that you unlock your current mobile phone before arrival and bring it with you so that it can use the 3 available networks here. You should speak with your provider before you leave the UK. You can get your phone unlocked in HCMC but it is more expensive, time consuming and difficult.

Vietnamese SIM cards are easily available. Calls are paid for on a pay as you go basis by buying inexpensive top up cards. The school will provide you with a local SIM card in your welcome pack.

The main post office in District 1 sells cards for international calls. For 200,000 VND you can get 45 minutes to the UK. You just type in the code before dialling the number. *100 (number on card)*#

Internet Phone

You are able to use Skype, Viber and WhatsApp in Vietnam which will drastically reduce the cost of your telephone bills to home. Buying credit can sometimes be tricky but the savings are well worth the effort. Using My Private Network or similar VPN services back to your home country can make Skype even cheaper and is also useful as it makes you ‘appear’ to be in the UK. You may also use any of the free smartphone options for calling overseas – such as Viber, Line or Tango.

Computers

HCMC has a thriving computer shop area and prices are cheap. Numerous shops sell complete PCs and accessories and many will build you a computer to your personal specifications at a good price. A decent laptop can be bought here at a reasonable price, which is always open to negotiation.

The school is well equipped with IT. Every classroom has a LCD projector and printer. Teachers are issued with laptops and have laptop docking stations in classrooms. Laptops can be taken home but a disclaimer must be signed as doing so is at your own risk.

Internet Connection

Both broadband and dial up connections are available, inexpensive and fairly reliable. If your laptop has a wireless card, more cafes and bars have wireless internet connection that is free to use. Internet in apartments can normally be arranged through the reception.

Access to Facebook can be sporadic. Speak to current teachers when you arrive as there are ways to access it.

Software

Vietnam has very relaxed copyright laws and piracy is the norm. It is actually much harder to find legitimate copies of software. There are many shops specializing in general software and games for playstation and x-box. You can buy a pirated version of any software for under USD 1. Quality is generally fine, you may get occasional glitches. If you have any problems you can usually exchange for another copy.

DVDs

The very latest cinema films and a huge range of British and American TV series are easily and inexpensively available all over the city. Prices vary, but a film should cost no more than 30,000 VND each and a whole American TV series of 23 episodes no more than 60,000 VND.



Useful Phone Numbers

International Direct Dialling Access Code	00 or +
Country Code for calls to Vietnam	84
Area code for calls to HCMC	8
International Telephone Service	110
Phone number enquiries	116
Police	113
Fire Brigade	114
Ambulance	115

BVIS Contact Details

44-46 Street 1, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh, HCMC
Phone Number: 37580717 or 37580709



Useful Phrases

1. Hello! - Xin chao! (seen chow!)
2. Goodbye - Chao (chow!)
3. How are you? - Ban co khoe khong? (ban co kwe khome?)
4. I'm fine, thank you! - Cam on ban toi khoe (gahm un ban thoy kwe)
5. And you? - Ban thi sao? (ban ty sao?)
6. What's your name? - Ban ten gi? (ban thane zee?)
7. My name is... - Toi ten la (thoy thane la...)
8. Thank you - Cam on (gahm un)
9. You're welcome - Khong co' gi (khom go zee)
10. Yes - Vang (vung)
11. No - Khong (khome)
12. Excuse me... - Xin loi (seen loy)
13. Can you help me? - Ban giup toi duoc khong? (ban zoop thoy duc khom?)
14. I'd like to eat - Toi muon an (thoy moowan un)
15. I'd like to drink - Toi muon uong (thoy moowan oowanh)
16. Good - Tot (thote)
17. Bad - Khong tot (khome thote)
18. What is this? - Cai nay la gi? (guy nai la zee?)
19. How much? - Bao nhieu? (bow nyew?)
20. Too expensive - Mac qua (mahk qwa)
21. Where is the nearest internet shop? - Cho internet o dau? (choh internet uh doh?)
22. Where is the nearest bank? - Nha bang o dau? (nya bung uh doh?)
24. Hot - Nong (nom)
25. Cold - Lanh (lang)
26. Coffee - Ca phe (cah feh)
27. Hot black coffee - Ca phe nong (cah feh nom)
28. Hot Coffee with milk - Ca phe sua nong (cah feh sua nom)
29. Tea - Tra (chah)
30. I like - Toi thich (thoy tick)
31. I am happy - Toi vui (thoy vuoy)
32. I am tired - Toi met (thoy mate)
33. Go straight! then turn left/ right - Di thang, sau do re trai / phai (di thang, sao do re chai/fai)