



**BRITISH  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**  
HO CHI MINH CITY

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

# Welcome to HO CHI MINH CITY

## Parents Guide Book



**NORD  
ANGLIA**  
EDUCATION

*Be Ambitious*

Edited on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2017

**BRITISH  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**  
HO CHI MINH CITY

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

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## 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 your family enjoy your experience at the British International School, Ho Chi Minh City.

This information booklet has been put together by teachers and parents who have all lived and worked in Vietnam. 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 International School is a friendly and welcoming environment and you will find everyone very supportive. When you arrive please do not hesitate to ask for any help, information or advice. We will do everything we can to make sure you settle in and feel comfortable as soon as possible.

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

*Tim Deyes*

*Principal of the British International School*

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE IN HO CHI MINH CITY



### Passport

If your passport is nearly full or will have less than 6 months validity on it when you arrive in Vietnam you will need to get a new one as a **matter of urgency**.

**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.

Please note that the UK is in the process of changing passport renewal procedures which makes obtaining a new passport when you are living overseas more time consuming and difficult. Specific requirements can be checked on this link: <https://www.gov.uk/overseas-passports>.

### 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. 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.

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
- Kindle – for anybody who enjoys reading.
- Preferred cosmetics, shampoo, conditioner, women's personal hygiene products (Tampons)
- Cosmetics – Whilst a lot of the larger department stores now both stock high end and mid-price you may wish to bring your own personal favourites as there is no guarantee they will be available. There is a Body Shop and brands such as L'oreal, Bourjois, Make Up Forever etc. are available.
- Bed linen is more readily available and range from export quality to standard. Whilst the range is not as extensive in comparison to home, Index Living Mall located in Vincom Mega Mall, District 2 has a good selection of affordable items.
- Large shoe sizes - 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 two soft copy 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.
  - ✓ **White** background for work permit or residence card + **Light Blue** background for driving license (8 photos needed)
  - ✓ 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



## International Movers

If you do decide to ship some household belongings to HCMC be prepared for bureaucratic delays and don't ship anything you will need immediately! There are several reputable international movers to choose from. Their website address is listed below

### AGS Four Winds

[www.agsfourwinds.com](http://www.agsfourwinds.com)

### Allied Pickfords

[www.alliedpickfords.com](http://www.alliedpickfords.com)

### Asian Tigers

[www.asiantigers-mobility.com/](http://www.asiantigers-mobility.com/)

### Crown Worldwide Movers

[www.crownrelo.com](http://www.crownrelo.com)

### Santa Fe Relocations Services

[www.santaferelo.com](http://www.santaferelo.com)

**Note:** It is advisable to get the customs declaration on arrival. Without this document it is harder to receive your shipment.



## USEFUL INFORMATION

<b>Currency</b>	Vietnamese Dong – approx. 28,000 VND = £1 GBP.
<b>Local Time</b>	Vietnam is GMT + 7 hours.
<b>Language</b>	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.
<b>Saigon</b>	Ho Chi Minh City is the official name of the city but Saigon is often used. Either name can be used without causing offence.
<b>Climate</b>	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.
<b>Sun Protection</b>	Good polarised sunglasses and hats are essentials. Sunscreen is now easily available in a range of factors, though tends to be quite expensive.
<b>Electricity</b>	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.
<b>Clothing</b>	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.
<b>TV and Radio</b>	A variety of cable and satellite packages are available. VietExpat TV also provides on demand TV at a good price with a great range of British stations to choose from. <a href="http://www.vietexpat.tv">www.vietexpat.tv</a>
<b>Internet</b>	Broadband is now widely available, but slower than the UK.
<b>Newspapers</b>	The Vietnam News and the Saigon Times are local English language newspapers.
<b>Magazines</b>	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 shops. They are available at various locations around the city including school reception desks. Your welcome pack will contain a copy of each.
<b>Water</b>	The tap water is not drinkable. Bottle water is very inexpensive. It is recommended to buy a water dispenser on arrival and use large 5 litre bottles of water available from La Vie. Apartment reception can arrange delivery for you. Some shops offer delivery also.
<b>Post</b>	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.
<b>Good Websites</b>	<a href="http://www.asialifemagazine.com/vietnam/">www.asialifemagazine.com/vietnam/</a> - <a href="http://www.expats-advisory.com">www.expats-advisory.com</a> - <a href="http://www.wordhcmc.com-wikitravel.org/en/Ho_Chi_Minh_City">www.wordhcmc.com-wikitravel.org/en/Ho_Chi_Minh_City</a> - <a href="http://hcmc.angloinfo.com">hcmc.angloinfo.com</a> - <a href="http://www.facebook.com/groups/anphuneighbours/?fref=ts">www.facebook.com/groups/anphuneighbours/?fref=ts</a> (expat public forum)

One of the many Saigon language schools, ILA Vietnam, has a good section on living in Vietnam that is worth browsing

## 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.

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 of such services. It is worth having a chat to some other parents to discuss their arrangements and experiences.

## LIVING IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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 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 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. 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. Alternatively, many staff use a xe-om (motorbike taxi) to get around the city.

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. A taxi from the airport to District 1 should cost about 150,000 VND. District 1 to An Phu should cost around 120,000 VND. All taxis should have a meter. If the meter "isn't working" get out of the taxi. Another will soon be available.

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

**Uber** and **Grab** are now established in the city and are approximately 40% cheaper than normal taxis.

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.

The closest type of supermarkets to what you are used to at home are the Maximart and Citimart supermarkets (District 1) and Big C, An Phu Supermarket and Mega Market in (District 2) which all are a good source of household goods and food stuffs. The addresses for some of the locations close to Central Point Apartments are as follows:

- **Sunflower Market** in Asiana Centre, Hai Ba Trung and in Union Square
- **Citimart** in Parkson
- **Crescent Mall Supermarket**
- **Select (Vincom Centre)** 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, District 1
- **Coop Mart**, 168 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, District 3
- **Diamond Mart**, Inside Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, District 1
- **Vin Mart (Vincom Mega Mall)**, Hanoi Highway, D2

In addition the An Phu Supermarket is located just a few hundred metres from the An Phu campuses and sells a wide range of western groceries. Mega Mart (ID needed for entry) and Big C at the Cantavil Parkson are a good source of household goods and food stuffs. There is a modern Big C in the Thao Dien Pearl Building. Both Mega Mart and Big C deliver. S Mart and My Market at Imperia stock imported and local goods. Chopp App is useful for delivery service.

There are also hundreds of small grocery shops throughout the city, some of the more popular western ones are:

**Veggies** – This is a favourite expat store for buying imported fruit and vegetables as well as meats, cheeses and cereals with a well stocked walk-in fridge. Prices are high, though. It is located on 29A Le Thanh Ton Street in District 1.

**Annam and Naman Gourmet Shops** – a large range of imported foods, beers and wines offering the best of western and Asian delicacies. Both shops are located in District 2, Thao Dien Street and Annam has a further outlet on 16-18 Hai Ba Trung.

**Ham Nghi Street** - There are many small grocery shops, bakeries, and cheese shops on this street in District 1. You will find a variety of western items here so it's a great place to go when you crave things from home.

**Meatworks** – A well-stocked butchers located in D2, sells a good range of Australian choice cuts

**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 Don Dat** - A small friendly market in Chu Manh Trinh Street (behind the Sofitel Hotel in District 1)

**Cho Tan Dinh** - 333 Hai Ba Trung, in District 3.

**Kim Hai Trading Co** - Has a good selection of meat. You can choose online from their brochure and they also deliver. www.kimhai.vn

**Classic Fine Foods** – Supplies the city's five star hotels with a range of gourmet produces, live seafood and fresh poultry etc. It is located at No. 17, Street 12, Q2 (perpendicular to Tran Nao Street) www.classicfinefoods.com

**Lan Trinh** - 48 Ham Nghi, District 1, HCMC. Tel: 3833 4068

One of the great things about eating in Vietnam is that the French bread making tradition has remained. Baguettes are available everywhere, 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. Some are listed below:

**Voelker** - 39 Thao Dien, District 2 - Opposite An Phu Supermarket.

**Harvest Baking** - No 5 St 11, Thao Dien, District 2. www.harvestbaking.com

**Crumbs Bakery** - 117 Cong Quynh Street, Ward Nguyen Cu Trinh, District 1. www.crumbs.com.vn

**Tous Les Jours** - 59 Tran Hung Dao, District 1.

**Breadtalk** - Cantavil Parkson, D2. www.breadtalkvietnam.com

**Saint Honore** - 17 Tran Ngoc Dien, Thao Dien



## Household Goods

Household goods including sheets, towels and duvets can be found at :

- **Index Living Mall:** Vincom Mega Mall, 161 Ha Noi Highway, Thao Dien Ward, District 2
- **Uma at Saigon Pearl:** 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh District.
- **Crescent Mall:** Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu Ward, District 7.
- **Life 1:** 14 Thao Dien, District 2



## Clothing

Cotton-based clothing is practical for the climate in HCMC. Newer department stores are i.e. Top Shop, New Look, Miss Selfridge, Dorothy Perkins, Oasis, Warehouse to name a few. It is extremely difficult to find larger sizes, particularly anything over a size 16. Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok are accessible shopping destinations.

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.



## Banks and ATMS

There are many ATMs located all around the city. These include Standard Chartered, HSBC and ANZ



## 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](http://www.asialifemagazine.com) and the Word [www.wordhcmc.com](http://www.wordhcmc.com) magazines:

### AN PHU

**Mekong Merchant** Offers Teacher discounts

Lovely courtyard setting, international cuisine - 23 Thao Dien, D2 Tel: 37446478

### The Deck

Eclectic Asian fusion menu, on the banks of the Saigon River - 38 Nguyen U Di, D2 Tel: 37446632

### Boat House

Menus built around surf and turf - APSC Compound, 40 Lily Road, D2

### Al Fresco's

The Al Fresco's Group have 29 restaurants in Vietnam. Offering teacher discount, they provide a comprehensive menu with affordable prices. - 89 Xuan Thuy, D.2 Tel: 3519 4260

### Buddha Bar

Local bar with good food - 7 Thao Dien, D2

### Snap Café

International café fare with safe play area for young children - 32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2

### Dat Viet, Aroli Coffee and Jasmine Kim

Restaurant/Café selection - Imperia, D2

### Baan Thai

Authentic Thai Food - Street 55, Thao Dien, D2 Tel: 37445453

### Good Eats

Eastern and Western Cuisine - NTFQ2, 34 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2. Tel: 3744 6672

**Trois Gourmands** – Classic French Cuisine - 39 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2.

**Lubu** – 97 Thao Dien, healthy menu inspired by Europe & The Mediterranean. Open Tuesday to Sunday for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Pendolosco** – 36 Tong Hu'u Dinh. Tel 62532828. Offering traditional Italian cuisine and wood fired pizzas.

## 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 - 39A - 39B Ngo Duc Ke street, Ben Nghe Ward, D1.

### 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

### Paris Deli

Good sandwiches.

Lunchtime specials. Home delivery - 65 Le Loi Street. Tel: 38216127

### Skewers

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

### Warda

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

### El Gaucho 7

4/1 Hai Ba Trung – Excellent Argentinian Steak house

### Blanchys Street

74 Hai Ba Trung – Fusion of gourmet Japanese-inspired dishes utilising South American ingredients

### The Society Bar & Grill

99 Nguyen Hue, D1 Great cocktails with indoor/outdoor dining, and high-end decor



## 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](http://www.vietnammm.com) and [www.eat.vn](http://www.eat.vn) are websites in English that have the menus of lots of restaurants around the city and will deliver to your home for a small fee.



## 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:

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

**Blanchy's Tash - 95 Hai Ba Trung, D.1**  
Cocktail Bar

**Xu - 71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D.1.**  
Restaurant Lounge with good cocktails, DJ and Vietnamese inspired menu

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

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

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

**Bia Hoi Places** - All around the city you will see signs for "Bia Hoi". This basically means home brewed beer. They are usually outdoor beer gardens, crowded with Vietnamese men. Beer is very cheap. They often have snacks and barbecued food.

**BiaCraft - 90 Xuan Thuy, Thao Dien**  
Craft and microbrewed beers

**Pasteur Street Brewery - 144 Pasteur, Ben Nghi, D1**  
American craft brewery located in Saigon, Vietnam producing exotic styles of craft beers for the global market!

**Chill Bar - 76 Le Lai, Ben Thanh, D1**  
Excellent views over Saigon

**Social Club/Pool Bar, Hotel des Arts - 76-78 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1**  
Recently awarded 'Best hotel Development', excellent venues with rooftop views.



## Recreation and Leisure

### Cinemas

There are several cinemas in HCMC. In District 2 there is a Lotte cinema in the Cantavil Parkson, a Megastar Cinema in Thao Dien Pearl, District 2 and a BHD Cineplex in the Vincom Thao Dien.

### 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.

### 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

### DanCentre

For Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, Salsa and Belly Dancing lessons - 53 Nguyen Dang Giai, D2. Tel: 3519 4490

### 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 approx. 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. Note: Advisable to bring boots from home if you are larger than a size 10 UK.

### Netball

A group of women of all nationalities play in a local league and train on Mondays in An Phu.

### Saigon Sports Academy

Multi sports training school that teaches soccer and basketball

### Vietopia

A great place where children get to be grown-ups for the day and try out various jobs and activities.

### Saigon Pony Club

Riding lessons, pony rides birthdays etc.  
[www.saigonponyclub.com](http://www.saigonponyclub.com)

### 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.

### Jump Arena Trampoline Park

63 Hanoi Highway, Thao Dien - A fun, active and popular environment for families

### 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](mailto: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. A new facility is now open on the 5th Floor, Cantavil Parkson, District 2



## 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 your child can be involved in if they are of school age.

The school has a Fundinotots - Baby and Toddler Group that is open to all parents and children aged 0-36 months.

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.

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 favorite 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, 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 at BIS and be taught by great teachers in the company of other motivated children who all want to do well.



## 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.







## 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.

### Family Medical Practice

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

### Columbia Asia Clinic

8 Alexandre de Rhodes  
Tel: 3823 8888

### HOSPITALS

There are two hospitals of international standard:

#### Franco Vietnamese Hospital

6 Nguyen Luong Bang Street, South Saigon, D7, Tel: 5411 3333  
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



## Dental Services

### Westcoast Int'l Dental Clinic

- 79 Dong Khoi St, District 1, Tel: 38256777
- 27 Nguyen Trung Truc, District 1, Tel: 38256999
- 27 Nguyen Ba Lan, Thao Dien, District 2

### Starlight Dental Clinic

3 Han Thuyen Street, District 1 Tel: 83226222 / 0903834901  
2 Bis, Cong Truong Quoc Te Street, District 3  
24 Thao Dien, Quan 2, HCM Vietnam

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

**Family Medical** and **European Dental Clinic, An Phu**, also have good 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.

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. Data is also very cheap.

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. There is in fact a shop opposite the An Phu Secondary campus selling both SIM cards and top up cards.

### 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.

### 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.

### Internet Connection

Both broadband and dial up connections are available, inexpensive and 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.



## 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

### BIS HCMC Contact Details

An Phu Primary Campus	225 Nguyen Van Huong St., Thao Dien Ward, District 2, HCMC. Phone Number: 3744 4551
An Phu Secondary Campus	246 Nguyen Van Huong St., Thao Dien Ward, District 2, HCMC Phone Number: 3744 2335
Tu Xuong Primary Campus	43-45 Tu Xuong St, District 3, HCMC Phone Number: 3932 0210

