



**BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL**

HO CHI MINH CITY

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Welcome To HO CHI MINH CITY



**NORD
ANGLIA
EDUCATION**

Be Ambitious



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**BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL**

HO CHI MINH CITY

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

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WELCOME TO HO CHI MINH CITY NEW TEACHERS 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 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 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.

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. 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).

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.

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
- 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, one for your work permit and residence card and the other for your driving license (optional). 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
- 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.
- Tea – Lipton is readily available but not very strong. Premium brands are also available at a much higher cost than home.



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! Before making a decision please read the guidance sheet "Shipment of Personal Possessions into Vietnam" which gives more detailed information.

There are several reputable international movers to choose from. **AGS Four Winds** have specifically worked with BIS to provide an information package and guarantee an attractive and competitive price for BIS staff. 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

www.alliedpickfords.com

Asian Tigers

www.asiantigers-mobility.com/

Crown Worldwide Movers

www.crownrelo.com

Santa Fe Relocations Services

www.santaferelo.com

Asian Tigers

www.asiantigers-mobility.com/



Useful Information

Currency	Vietnamese Dong – approx. 30,000 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.
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.
Sun protection	Good polarised sunglasses and hats are essentials. Sunscreen is now easily available in a range of factors, though tends to be quite expensive.
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. VietExpat TV also provides on demand TV at a good price with a great range of British stations to choose from. www.vietexpat.tv
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 shops. They are available at various locations around the city including school reception desks. Your welcome pack will contain a copy of each.
Water	The tap water is not drinkable. You will need 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.
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 websites	www.asialifemagazine.com/vietnam/ - www.expats-advisory.com - www.wordhcmc.com-wikitavel.org/en/Ho_Chi_Minh_City - hcmc.angloinfo.com - www.facebook.com/groups/anphuneighbours/?fref=ts (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.

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

You will be taken to your accommodation in one of the school buses and given your 13 million VND relocation allowance. 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 of such services. It is worth having a chat to some of your colleagues 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.

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.

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 30,000 dong for short journeys. It is usually better to choose a well known cab company as the smaller cabs often have metres 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 Central Point should cost about 120,000 VND. A taxi from Central Point to most of District 1 should cost 30,000 VND. Central Point 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.



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 Metro 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
- **Tax Centre** 135 Nguyen Hue, 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 Higway, 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. Metro and Big C at the Cantavil Parkson are a good source of household goods and food stuffs. S Mart and My Market at Imperia are also good for basic supplies.

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



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

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 the school accounts department 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 many ATM's located all around the city.



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:

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 Ngong

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 and 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

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

Pacharan

Tapas restaurant and bar serving Spanish fare – 97 Hai Ba Trung, D.1

Blanchy's Tash

Cocktail Bar – 95 Hai Ba Trung, D.1

Xu

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

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

Vasco's

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

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. The new multiplex cinemas which have only recently opened show current releases in English with Vietnamese subtitles. There is also a new Lotte cinema in the Cantavil Parkson, District 2 and a Megastar Cinema in Thao Dien Pearl, District 2.

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

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 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. Contact James Hornby who teaches at the Tu Xuong Campus. Note: Advisable to bring boots from home if you are larger than a size 10 UK.

Netball

A mixed group play in a local league and train on Monday in An Phu.

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. A new facility is now open on the 5th Floor, Cantavil Parkson, District 2.

Staff School Based Activities

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

Health Club Corporate Membership

The school offers a gym membership benefit. We recommend you speak to your new colleagues during the induction week to find out about the range of options available.

Vietnamese Language Classes

Some of the teaching assistants from the school have run Vietnamese language classes for teachers. If you are interested in joining a class please speak to Thao at An Phu Primary Campus or Mai at An Phu Secondary Campus.

There is also an excellent language centre on Mac Dinh Chi Street, 5 minutes walk from Central point Apartments. The school is called LASSHO and they will run one-to-one tuition for 7 \$US an hour or groups classes at a pre-arranged rate. Phone 3823 3816



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 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.

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 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

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.

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

Starlight Dental Clinic

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

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

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. 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.

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.

The school is well equipped with IT and every teacher has a PC or laptop for school use and every classroom has an LCD projector and printer. All staff and students have a Google account under the school domain which provides access to the Google Apps suite.

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.

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

BIS 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

