



Beijing BISS International School  
北京BISS国际学校

# *New & Prospective Faculty Handbook*



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## Introduction from Head of School

Dear New and Prospective Faculty

Thank you for your interest in teaching at Beijing BISS International School! BISS was one of the first international schools to begin operating in Beijing 20 years ago, and we are proud to have established a solid reputation for academic performance in a desirable (and rare!) family-oriented school atmosphere. I want take this opportunity to share with you one of our most important secrets in creating this reputation. In addition to years of promoting a caring environment, it is our sense of community, and in particular our faculty team. If you value such a work environment, then we are interested in you joining our team!



Some of the benefits of working at BISS include the opportunity to teach in an established three-programme IB World School, and receive a high level of professional development that will enable you to develop your skills and work toward your aspirations. If you have not already researched BISS, please take time to review our website, related class blogs and media. These sites have information about the school and will give you a good idea of what makes BISS so special. We are happy to provide more information and answer any questions to help you make an informed decision on whether this is the right step for you, or for you to make a successful transition to Beijing and BISS.

If you are a prospective teacher, please visit the “Working at BISS” page on our website ([www.biss.com.cn](http://www.biss.com.cn)). If you feel you are a good fit for an advertised position, then please do not hesitate to submit an application via our online application system (<http://fs7.formsite.com/biss/form2/index.html>). If there is no advertised position but you wish to indicate your interest, you may submit a speculative application via the same system, but please do keep checking back for openings. We typically do the bulk of our hiring from November through January, but positions may open up outside of these times as well.

One of our principals or I will attend selected recruiting fairs as necessary, but we also interview candidates independently via Skype, Facetime, or in person. We tend to use an open-ended date application system, and typically make an offer as soon as we find the ideal candidate for the position. Therefore, it is to your benefit to apply early to ensure consideration.

If you plan to attend a hiring fair at which we will be available for interviews, we would ask you to prepare for the interview by bringing along copies of the following items to help facilitate the selection process:

1. Your teaching portfolio, if you have one. If you do not, it would be to your benefit to collect a few artefacts of which you are most proud, in order to demonstrate a particular skill, ability, lesson, unit and/or project from your classroom or school.
2. If you have children you plan to enrol at BISS, please bring copies of their report cards from the last two years.
3. A one-page (double sided) summary of your CV to facilitate our discussion.

Our current teachers report that you can not only live and travel comfortably on our benefit package, but you can also save a substantial sum and afford to pay your financial commitments back home as well. You can read more details about savings potential at the end of this handbook, where teachers have left personal messages for you.

Our faculty are also contracted to teach in our After School Activities (ASA) programme. This provides our students with valuable extra-curricular learning opportunities, and offers faculty an opportunity to interact with students in an environment outside the classroom. By having our teachers help with the after-school activities, we know that we are getting quality activity leaders, and find it promotes strong communication between the students, school and home.

Please take time to research aspects of living in China, as well as on BISS compared to other international schools. I am confident that once you compare, you will see the potential in China and in BISS. If you remain unsure but are attracted to BISS and feel you are a good fit, please consider applying. If you become a shortlisted candidate, we will be happy to answer your questions more fully, and if you want we can put you in contact with a few of our teachers who can give you their perspectives on working at BISS and living in Beijing.

Welcome to new faculty – we look forward to working with you all this coming school year. Prospective faculty, hurry and apply! We would love for you to become part of our team!

Warm Regards,  
Dr Gwyn Underwood  
Head of School



## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Mission Statement

BISS is an IB World School serving the international community, committed to the ideals of the International Baccalaureate. Our mission is to educate and empower our students to attain personal excellence and positively impact the world.

### Core Values

We believe in:

- embracing diversity and treating everyone with dignity and respect
- living a balanced life
- people thrive in a caring, safe, healthy and stimulating environment
- acting with integrity, taking responsibility, and learning from our actions
- working for a better future by helping others and conserving our planet's resources
- striving for excellence.

### Strategic Objectives

Each student will:

- acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts necessary for their success in life
- demonstrate the competence and confidence to identify and choose their own course of action
- achieve their own goals and the outcomes of the IB programs to their personal best
- be an active, responsible participant in their various communities.

### About Beijing BISS International School (BISS)

BISS is a progressive IB World School located close to the centre of Beijing. Beijing is at the heart of a rapidly developing and dynamic nation, and offers unprecedented opportunities. The School is just north of the famous Forbidden City, near the Asian Games Village, the Bird's Nest and the Beijing Olympics Centre. The location is convenient to a number of major expatriate residential areas.

As an international school, we believe that it is important to foster academic excellence and a tolerant, understanding and caring attitude towards others, their cultures and their beliefs. BISS is a microcosm of our global society, which prepares our students to be active, responsible, independent and creative participants in an ever changing and challenging world. The pursuit of academic achievement, social understanding and individuality are of paramount importance at BISS. All members of our school are committed to assisting each student achieve their potential, and to equip them with the skills necessary for a successful future.

BISS was one of the first international schools in Beijing, founded in 1994 by the ISS International Schools Educational Group based out of Singapore. Our sister school [ISS Singapore International School](#) was founded in 1981. BISS is an independent proprietary, co-educational, English-language day school offering the IB PYP, MYP and DP for Nursery to Grade 12 students from the expatriate community of Beijing. We currently enrol approximately 300 students from over 25 different countries.

The small, traditional campus is located in central area of Beijing within easy access to many historical and entertainment sites. The four-story main building has heated and air-conditioned classrooms, Elementary and Secondary School libraries, music rooms, science laboratories, drama black-box room, art rooms, a design technology studio, hot-lunch cafeteria, and offices. A multi-purpose annex with a seating capacity for 300 is used for assemblies, stage shows and social evenings. There is also a health clinic on campus with an on-site doctor. The Elementary School (ES) physical education department have a small gym, and there are outside play and games areas including basketball courts, a track, volleyball courts, tennis court and a garden with picnic-style sitting areas for both ES and Secondary School (SS) students. SS students have privileged access to the Olympic Centre facilities for PE and both ES and SS students use the Olympic facilities for after-school sports and activities. Swimming is taught at pools at the Olympic "Cube", or the Hilton and Crowne Plaza Hotels depending on unit timing, all of which are in the vicinity of the school.

All teachers are experienced and well qualified, with many holding Masters Degrees, and we make extensive use of Educational Assistants (EAs) to assist our teachers in the classroom. Entry testing helps us determine the students' language (ESOL) and academic level, and our Optimal Learning Centre (OLC) focuses on support and enrichment. Teacher-student

ratios are low, enabling maximum interactive opportunities within the classroom. Chinese Studies is an integral part of the curriculum from K-12; mother-tongue programs support our Third Culture Kids in the maintenance of their first language level despite their relocation from the home culture. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities are offered including sports, arts, music games and community service clubs. An annual "BISS on the Road" activity week integrates travel in China with specific curricular goals.

BISS has an established and progressive mobile device and 1 to 1 laptop programme, that facilitates students and teachers access to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and teaching methodologies. Our vision is for mobile and ubiquitous computing to empower students to develop critical thinking skills and support continuous inquiry, including fostering the essential role of the student as a communicator, collaborator and creator.

BISS is registered by the Beijing Educational Bureau and is a member of the East Asian Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS) and the Association of China, Mongolia International Schools (ACAMIS). We are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Council of International Schools (CIS), and are authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) to offer the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the IB Diploma (DP). BISS is also accredited by the National Centre for School Curriculum and Textbook Development (NCCT), Ministry of Education, China. BISS was one of the first schools to conduct a joint accreditation visit by IB, WASC, CIS and NCCT in 2009, and hosted a successful 5-year re-accreditation visit in 2013.

### **School Calendar**

The BISS academic year consists of two semesters. The first semester starts in August and ends mid December. The second semester runs from January to mid June. The major holiday periods during the year are October Break, the Christmas & New Year Holidays, Chinese New Year Holiday, the Spring Holiday and the Summer Vacation. National holidays are also observed. Newly hired teachers are asked to arrive in Beijing in the last few days of July to take part in extensive orientation activities and to prepare for the school year.

### **School Day**

The school day begins at 8.15 for Secondary School and 8.25 for Elementary School, and ends at 3.10pm. After School Activities take place from 3.20 to 4.20 pm. The school day is divided into 7 periods of 45 minutes duration and a 55-minute lunch-break. In addition there is a 15-minute morning break. [We are currently reviewing these times and may adjust depending on the outcomes of the review next school year.]

### **Faculty Profile**

Our approximately 50 BISS expatriate faculty members come from USA, Canada, Australia, Korea, New Zealand, China, Japan, Spain, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Greece, Mexico, Israel and the UK. This diversity is sought after to reflect our multicultural student body make-up, and contribute to the school's international character. Faculty are all experienced and qualified in their respective fields, and we target the selection of faculty who are experienced in international education and the International Baccalaureate programmes.

### **The Curriculum**

- **Early Learning Centre (Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten) - IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)**  
Our ELC makes use of PYP Units of Inquiry, incorporating the philosophy & pedagogy of Reggio Emilia when applicable, to provide abundant experiential learning opportunities appropriate to 2, 3 & 4 year olds.
- **Elementary School (Kindergarten (K5) to Grade 5) - IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)**  
Essential elements of the PYP encompass knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action. The programme seeks to develop the student's creativity, communication and thinking skills, and curiosity to learn through structured inquiry. The PYP offers a framework that meets children's academic, social, physical, emotional and cultural needs.
- **Grades 6 to 10 – International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP)**  
Courses and activities through Language A, Language B, Mathematics, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Technology and Design, Physical and Social Education and the Arts accentuate the interrelatedness of the various disciplines and so advance them in a holistic manner. The interdisciplinary perspective and Areas of Interaction require the student to consider issues and problems in their widest scope and realize that good solutions often draw upon insights one has acquired from many sources.

- **Grades 11 & 12 - International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP)**

The DP is a rigorous pre-university course of study that makes use of a combination of internal assessment tasks and externally assessed examinations in six subject areas, three at a higher level and three at a standard level, in order to obtain the IB Diploma. Courses offered at BISS are:

- Language A (English, Korean, Japanese or Chinese)
- Language B (English or Chinese)
- Mathematics
- Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Design Technology)
- Individuals and Societies (History, Economics, Business and Management)
- The Arts (Music, Theatre Arts, Visual Arts).

Students are also required to take the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, complete an Extended Essay, and satisfy CAS (Creativity/Action/Service) requirements to earn the IB Diploma.

Students not studying for the full IB Diploma can select DP courses at any level, and earn IB Certificates in their subjects, which are credited towards their BISS High School Diploma.

### **Graduation**

Students may be eligible for either the BISS High School Academic Diploma or the BISS High School General Diploma, depending on the combination of subjects studied. Students who do not meet the requirements for these two Diplomas may earn the BISS Leavers Statement. In addition to the BISS Diploma, the IB Diploma is awarded directly by the IB to those who satisfy the requirements.

### **Community Service**

Our students and teachers are very active in numerous community-service projects. These are conducted not only as part of the IB curriculum and profile requirement but also because our students, parents and faculty have a deeply developed sense of purpose in helping and caring for others.

### **Student Services**

Additional programmes such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and the Optimal Learning Centre (OLC) support students in their academic pursuits:

#### **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)**

ESOL is offered to students from Grades 1 - 10 where necessary. This successful and comprehensive programme includes an Intensive English Programme at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Support is provided in Elementary School by withdrawing groups of students and in-class support. In the Secondary School, ESOL students receive in-class support and extra assistance outside the regular class if necessary. All BISS teachers are specially trained in a course entitled "Making it Happen" (which is similar to the well-known "ESOL in the Mainstream" course, but developed to address our specific environment), with trainers from our own staff.

#### **OLC (The Optimal Learning Centre)**

The OLC seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the student's individual needs through differentiation in teaching strategies, academic adaptations, observations, team meetings, family interviews and assessment. It ensures that the students are always striving for their maximum potential with the support of the OLC staff and the community of teachers, family and peers within the school.

### **College and Career Advisement**

Our college counsellor works with students and parents to help them make decisions regarding careers and university selection. The counsellor ensures submission of paperwork and helpful application advice. The counsellor helps students navigate the college search and application process. Selecting prospective institutions of higher education, choosing major, gathering recommendations, writing application essays, dealing with applications, applying for financial aid are among the tasks that seniors will juggle this year. The counsellor arranges numerous opportunities for students to meet with representatives of various colleges and universities around the world.

### **Guidance Counselling Services**

Here at BISS, we are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for students and families. Our counsellor helps to provide support to students for social, emotional, academic and learning issues, as well as to parents and staff in the school community when applicable to helping our students.

## Medical Services

BISS has its own medical clinic situated on the second floor of our main building. We employ a qualified doctor who provides medical services for BISS students and staff.

## Some Traditional Events at BISS

- **Welcome to New Parents (September)**

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Head of School and the Principals organize this event to welcome new parents to the school. Members of the PTA outline the variety of ways that parents can be involved in the life of the school community. Refreshments are provided and faculty members are encouraged to attend if possible.
- **ES/SS Meet the Teacher Evening (September)**

Meet the Teacher evening provides the opportunity for teachers to present an overview of the academic year to parents, and to explain specific details of the grade level/subject programme. Parents appreciate the chance to meet all of their children's teachers at one time, as well as the parents of their children's friends.
- **ES/SS BISS on the Road Activity Week (September)**

BISS on the Road week is one of the most popular events on the school calendar. Students and staff alike enjoy the opportunity of getting to know each other and developing teamwork and a sense of community in new and exciting contexts. K-Grade 5 students usually explore Beijing and its environs, while Grades 6-12 students visit other parts of China.
- **ES/SS Assemblies (every two weeks)**

Assemblies are held to celebrate all that is happening in the school community. Staff share the responsibility of organizing them and students play an active role in presenting aspects of the academic cultural, social and sporting life of the school. Community and service projects are also a feature.
- **BISS Invitational Track Meet (October)**

Each year BISS invites students in Grades 1-3 to an invitational Track Meet. Held on a Saturday, it has an emphasis on fun and participation and all students receive the same recognition for their efforts.
- **MYP Awards Ceremony (November)**

This ceremony is held every year to acknowledge the achievements of the secondary students completing the MYP (Grade 10). Students receive their School-Based MYP Certificate and Record of Achievement to acknowledge completion of the programme, while other students across the school are also recognised for their achievements throughout the year.
- **House Activities (throughout the year)**

House Activities are very popular at BISS. A natural extension of the sporting house system, activities include everything from spell-a-thons to Mass Drumming. Pride and participation are the main aims.
- **ES Spell-a-thon (November)**

This event is run as a house competition and is meant to emphasize the importance of accurate spelling and provide an enjoyable context in which to recognize the children's skills and practice.
- **Whole School Christmas Music Concert (December)**

This concert is a showcase of the school's musical ensembles and musicians. While the time of the year lends itself to a Christmas theme, it is also related to celebrations around the world.
- **SS Tech Week (January)**

SS Tech Week is held each year to promote the development of staff IT skills, especially in the areas of E-learning and Web 2.0. Outside trainers and internal presentations take place all week with staff encouraged to take time away from classes to learn new skills.
- **Chinese New Year Celebration Week (February)**



This is certainly the most festive week on the school calendar. Chinese New Year celebrations are renowned the world over for their colour, noise, fun and food. The Chinese committee invests a huge effort to ensure that the customs and traditions are understood and enjoyed by all.

- **ES Art Show and Student Led Conferences (March)**

The ES Art Show is a showcase for the students' work throughout the year; the annex and courtyard at the school provide a perfect venue for this event.

- **BISS Idol (Spring)**

This event is a highlight of the students' year. Organized by the Student Councils with faculty assistance, the show allows students to showcase their talents in the performing arts. Faculty are usually persuaded to join in, which is a highlight for the students, and makes for some great memories.

- **ES/SS Sports Day (April)**

We are proud of our Sports Days because we get almost 100% "willing" participation. House Coordinators and PE Staff put a lot of thought into creating events that mix fun and competition, and most importantly, are greatly enjoyed by the students.

- **SS Student Led Conferences and Personal Project Exhibition (April)**

The MYP Student Led Conference gives students the opportunity to share samples of their work with their parents. This is also a valuable opportunity for parents to see the type and standard of work that their child undertakes at school. These are held as part of the third quarter reporting process in April for Grades 6-9. For Grade 10 students, this process focuses on the presentation of their Personal Project Exhibition, which is also held at this time.

- **Graduation & Prom (May)**

The Graduation is a formal event held in one of Beijing's premier hotels. Speeches, entertainment and the presentation of school certificates to the graduates are followed by an informal meal. The prom is usually held on the night of the graduation, and includes a dance and dinner in celebration of the completion of Grade 12.

- **PYP Exhibition (May)**

This is the culmination of student participation in the PYP. It takes the form of a collaborative inquiry chosen by the children related to one of the Trans-disciplinary themes. Students are required to set personal goals, and use the essential elements of the PYP in applying the knowledge acquired in previous years. Students demonstrate their learning and reflect on the experience.

- **International Day & Spring Carnival (May)**

International Day is a celebration of the school's multi-cultural profile and a chance for families to proudly share their heritage. The Spring Carnival is organized by the students and staff, and has a community and service focus. Fun, Festivities and Food is a feature of each.

- **ACAMIS Sports and Cultural Convention (throughout the year)**

BISS is a member of Association of Chinese and Mongolian International School (ACAMIS). Originally formed to provide sport opportunities for international schools in Greater China and Mongolia, the Association also tries to meet other needs of their member schools. A cultural convention is held each year and their programme offerings are expanding.

- **ISAC Sports (throughout the year)**

BISS is a member of the International School Athletics Conference (ISAC), where we compete in a variety of sports such as badminton, football, volleyball, basketball, handball, athletics, and cross-country with other international schools in Beijing and Tianjin. Our philosophy is to try and give every child the opportunity to participate regardless of ability.

## Teachers' Conditions and Benefits

### Newly Hired Teacher Arrival Date

The first day of School for students is mid-August, so newly hired teachers are asked to arrive in Beijing during the last few days of July (exact dates will be provided to new faculty early in the new calendar year). The time before the rest of the faculty arrive is used to enable new faculty to find and settle into their apartments, complete visa processes, participate in comprehensive orientation activities and prepare for the school year.

### Expectations of Teachers

During the school year, teachers are required to be at school from 8.00am to 4.00pm on all regular school days, and until 4.30pm on days that they lead an activity. In addition, on Wednesdays, we hold staff meetings, sometimes in a general forum and sometimes in programme divisions, that may last until 5pm. Teachers should expect to teach up to 30 contact periods in a week (periods being between 40 and 50 minutes depending on the time of the day). Teachers who teach less due to teaching allocations may be given additional duties or responsibilities to ensure equity. In addition, teachers are required to lead at least one after school activity (ASA) per week and to carry out their share of supervision duty.

There are 180 school student contact days, plus approximately 8-10 professional development and planning days for teachers.

### Technology Expectations for Teachers: 21st Century Teaching and Learning: A Vision for Learning

At BISS, technology is a natural and essential part of everyday school life for teachers and students. Our vision is to have technology empower students to participate and initiate purposeful learning experiences through mobile and ubiquitous computing, as well as be inspired to develop critical thinking skills and support continuous inquiry.

At BISS, we have a vision that all members of the community understand and model respectful, responsible, and ethical uses of technology in academic, social, and personal contexts; and where learning is meaningful for all. The vision for learning across the curriculum is for an embedded approach where higher order thinking is fostered, technology is ubiquitous and teachers embrace all aspects of 21st Century pedagogy, including fostering the essential role of the student as a communicator, collaborator and creator. BISS takes advantage of social learning, globally and collaboratively, supported by effective tools for digital literacy and fluency. Technology in this context is not an end in itself but an infrastructure that can be making enormous advances in the quality of teaching and learning for all.

### Coming towards an Understanding of E-Learning

E-learning is an approach used to facilitate and enhance learning through, and based on, all useful forms of digital devices. E-learning may also be used to suit distance education, and is considered to be a form of flexible learning where just-in-time learning is possible. Essential components of e-learning at BISS include:

- The use of online technologies including the internet and Web 2.0 tools in the learning process
- The use of learning technologies to enhance the learning experience for all
- The use of digital tools for curriculum delivery and assessment
- The use of digital tools for on-going professional development, interaction and collaboration.

### BISS and 1:1 Learning

A 1:1 learning environment is defined as one where students and teachers access to a personal mobile computing device 24 hour a day, 7 days a week. In addition they have access to digital content, appropriate offline and online software and digital authoring tools. The 1:1 learning environment at BISS International School consists of the following:

- Teachers are issued with a laptop (MacBook Pro)
- Students in Grades 5-12 are required to have a laptop (MacBook strongly recommended), charged and ready for classroom use, everyday
- Students in Grade 11-12 also make use of optional mobile computing
- The use of a learning platform (StudyWiz) and other online tools such as wikis and blogs to support virtual learning, and to connect the classroom with the extended learning environment.

BISS "lives" e-learning, and strives to be at the forefront of like-minded international schools globally who want their students to be competitive and have the skills needed for future life-long learning and entry into the workforce.

### Responsibilities of Teachers

The BISS Teacher shall during his/her employment under this agreement:

- Teach as and when assigned by the School when the School is in session

- Strive to be a role model of the IB Learner Profile
- Have a teaching load determined by the School based on the School's academic, administrative and operational requirements and policies current at the relevant time
- Carry out and fulfil administrative duties as the School may from time to time determine
- Complete online and/or be present for orientation courses and/or supervision of examinations and/or Professional Development training and/or teaching cover for absent colleagues as and when required by the School
- Carry out and fulfil all assigned duties and/or activities prescribed by the School at any time
- Attend all faculty, subject or division, parent-consultation, and/or any other meetings or events as required by the School
- Carry out supervision duties before and after school; and during recess and lunch periods when so directed by the school, and generally assist in the maintenance of student behaviour at the School
- Supervise (and/or conduct) an After-School Activity; and/or student functions
- Carry out all teaching duties with due care, skill, expedience and diligence; and participate in additional duties and responsibilities as required by the School.

### **Children of our Educators (dependents)**

Teachers with a full-time contract of at least one academic year may enrol up to two of his/her children at the school without being required to pay registration, tuition or building fees. The costs of extra-curricula activities, excursions, IB DP or MYP examination fees, preparatory courses, special services, transportation/bus fee and all other charges or fees will, however, be borne by the teacher in full. Where the school employs both parents as faculty, this entitlement is limited to a maximum of two children. Children of new teachers must meet the school eligibility requirements for admission, and agree to abide by the conditions of eligibility for their children and sign essential documents demonstrating their understanding of the requirements.

### **Leave Eligibility**

The School may at its sole discretion grant to the Teacher the following special leave with pay provided he/she obtains the written approval of the AMT prior to taking such leave:

- **Compassionate Leave**

A maximum of 5 paid working days in each academic year for compassionate leave arising from the death or critical condition of immediate family members with documented proof.

- **Emergency Days**

A maximum of 2 working days in each academic year:

- Days can not be added to vacations
- Days are not to be taken after 1<sup>st</sup> May; immediately preceding or immediately following school holidays; business trips; professional development trips; or during the first two weeks or last two weeks of the School year, unless due to extenuating circumstances, and permission has been granted by the AMT
- Emergency days are for emergencies, and are not an entitlement.

- **Paternity Leave**

Upon completion of two full years of employment with the School, faculty will be eligible to a maximum of 5 paid working days per academic year for up to two (surviving) children. This must be applied for within 1 month of the birth of each child. A birth certificate of the new-born child must be submitted to the HR Department.

OR

- **Maternity Leave**

A teacher who has completed at least two full years of employment with the School will be granted paid maternity leave of up to 90 consecutive calendar days. This includes 15 calendar days of paid maternity leave before the expected delivery date of their child and another 75 calendar days of paid maternity leave starting from the delivery of their child. The first 15 calendar days of paid maternity leave should not be taken after the delivery date. Other forms of leave or reduced schedule are not applicable.

- **Adoption Leave**

Upon completion of two full years of employment with the School, female employees will be eligible to 20 working days per academic year, for up to a maximum of 2 children. Documentary proof is to be provided to the School. The approved leave granted should not affect the operation of the school. Any leave beyond the maximum limit would be leave without pay.

## II. SOME TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED ON AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER

### Profile of a Person Who Will Make a Successful Transition to Overseas Life

(Adapted from "News Links" November 1999)

- Ability to separate from extended family; a good imagination; strong professional skills; a more reflective approach to life; a sense of adventure and of the exotic; tolerance for the quirks of others; and the capacity to be patient.
- Be flexible, be open-minded, be good at what you do, be mature and have a good sense of humor.
- A team player; flexible, open to new surroundings; **and doesn't expect to find "little China" wherever they go, but not be surprised by how 'westernized' Beijing may appear.**
- Flexibility/adaptability; willingness to accept different cultures, changes in lifestyle and distance from family; ability to maintain a positive attitude- even during adverse situations.
- Understanding; courage; intelligence and compassion.
- Adaptability; sense of humor; patience; persistence; positive attitude; can do personality; and honesty with themselves and with others.
- Ability to adjust; ability to work with other teachers; some of whom they may not enjoy or understand; a sense of humor in order to see odd things in uncomfortable situations: the intellect to become caught up in their classes while the rest of their lives might be unsettled.
- Independent, self-assured; sense of humor; care about others; sense of adventure; dedicated; broad minded; positive and optimistic.
- Love of teaching and life.
- Intelligence and humility go a long way.
- A sense of humor; flexibility; delight in new challenges; patience; energy; collaborative working style; good health; a stable family situation back home; and love of what you do with students as **the primary reason** for being in education.
- Be flexible and keep an open mind; remember that this is going to be a unique and special experience and that is why you should want to do it. It may change your life. Don't go into it looking to be somewhere as similar as possible to the China because it never will be.
- Do your homework first. Read everything you can about the country and culture.

### What Will Your Family and Friends Say?

- You are going WHERE? Are you nuts? Are you crazy?
- What about your family and friends? Will you leave us behind?
- Isn't that where they have high crime rates?
- Where will you live? What will you eat?

We know that one of your first challenges will be to help family and friends understand your desire to make a move and make a difference. The excitement of international travel, experiencing new cultures and learning new languages are all legitimate reasons to come overseas. You will also learn a lot about YOURSELF in the process. Help yourself understand and explain your mobility by reading from our resource list.

### Some Advice how to prepare yourselves for teaching in China

- Read as many of the resources on the book list in this document as you have time for.
- Learn some Chinese phrases to help you transition.
- Read about the country/city - but don't overdo it. You have plenty of time to learn about the Chinese Cultural Revolution. No one will test you on this.
- Read up first about culture shock, stress and strategies to alleviate stress. You'll need it.
- Learn about the terms: Third Culture Kids, Global Nomads, and Internationally mobile children. These kids are different – learn why.
- Re-read your university notes about multi-cultural education, ethnic groups, cross cultural communication, etc.
- Evaluate your goals and reasons for going overseas. Write them down. Bring your notes with you...keep a journal. You will enjoy reading it a year later!
- Evaluate your fears about going overseas. Be honest. How will you overcome them?
- If you have contact with a university nearby, try to find Chinese students who are enrolled. (Check with the Foreign Students Office.) Meet them and interview them about China. Ask them what the things that surprised them about coming to your country. If you switch that over, you might get a perspective of the things that might surprise you when you go to China.

- Many universities have chapters of Global Nomads, International on campus. Ask to interview some GNs (= Third Culture Kids). Ask them about their childhood growing up overseas. This will give you incredible insight into the kind of lifestyle and the kind of families you will meet.
- Interview any colleague/teacher who has taught overseas. Ask them all your burning questions.
- Become familiar with Erickson's stages of identity formation and development, especially at the adolescent ages. TCKs sometimes have problems with identity.
- Think of teaching overseas as a challenge, a test and a learning experience. Your life will NOT be the same; your housing will not be the same; the food will not be the same; your classroom equipment will not be the same; the people, culture and behaviour will be very different from anything you imagined... but isn't that why you decided to change your lives and apply for an overseas position in the first place?
- Go with the flow. There will be good days and bad days; there will be days when you regret your decision and other days where you are as excited as can be; there will be meltdown days with tears of homesickness, and other days where you are on top of the world!

### **Tips from Dr Alan Travers of Queens University (Ontario, Canada)**

Many wonderful overseas opportunities are available to certified teachers. The range is broader than you might think and often the best experiences take place in unexpected locations. To find an appropriate situation it is important to know your own motivation and needs. It's not just a matter of finding a job; it has to be the right fit. There is also the likelihood that you will be asked in an interview: "Why do you want to leave Canada and teach at our school in Buenos Aires, Singapore, Nairobi, Munich...?"

Why go overseas? Teachers go overseas for personal and professional growth. Personally, the challenge is to let go of familiar structures and supports and adapt to another culture, language, climate, diet and routine. Adjustment and adaptation are significant issues. Good schools will provide appropriate support for imported teachers. But, for the adjustment to be effective, teachers must be flexible, tolerant, and self-reliant and have a sense of humour. Assuming that one can make the adjustment, there are rich experiences available – making new friends, learning a language, travelling and exploring different cultures. One of the unexpected benefits of living abroad is a new perspective on, and appreciation for your country.

Professionally, the educational environment also requires some give and take. Classes are often small and in some situations the students are highly motivated. Many teachers enjoy the stimulation and skill enhancement that comes from working with teachers who have different perspectives, values and backgrounds. There is also exposure to different curricula. The students in a particular school may be mostly local, providing access to the host country's language and culture, or they may be from over 40 nationalities, offering the appeal and inherent interest of diversity. Students in Ontario schools also benefit as teachers returning from overseas experiences bring new insights into their home classrooms. A warning though – the adventure and stimulation in all of this can be addictive! There are many teachers who make careers as overseas educators. Why not? There are poor motivations in addition to the healthy ones described above.

Be wary if you are seeking escape from personal or professional problems or from job-search difficulties, or if you want to make a lot of money as quickly as possible. An overly romantic view of a location and an inflated view of one's wisdom and superior learning are also danger signs.

The overriding objective is to have the right people go to the right places for the right reasons.

You will need to gather as much information as possible about a specific city/country and assess your own tolerance for risk. What's comfortable for one person may be off limits to another. Having an open mind about new international locations is a greater challenge than most people realize. There are many websites – both private and official – that provide basic information. Rather than depend on impressions garnered from various media outlets (the 'CNN effect') ask teachers who are currently working on site. We would be happy to put you in touch with some of our new teachers so you can ask your "burning" questions.

### **Timing**

When is the best time to go overseas? It all depends on personal and professional circumstances. There are opportunities for first-year teachers, for those in mid-career and for retirees. The best time to go is when it's right for you. What's out there and how to apply? International teaching opportunities are extraordinarily diverse with respect to potential locations and kinds of schools. Certain categories can help to focus your research.

## International Schools

International schools are located all over the world – more so in non-English-speaking countries. They are independent schools, established to provide an education, in English, to children of host-country nationals and/or the international community. The curriculum is usually American, British, Canadian or International Baccalaureate – often with some modifications to satisfy host-country requirements. Typically these schools have a blend of host-country teachers and imported teachers –Canada, the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand being the main sources of the latter. School sizes vary from 30 students to 3,000+ and the facilities and resources range from modest, small old houses, to state of the art, purpose-built facilities. With some exceptions, students are high achievers and university bound.

International schools may be elementary or secondary, but most are K-12 and the staffing needs reflect this. There are positions for early childhood, elementary, middle school and high school teachers, covering the full range of core subjects. In addition, specialists such as librarians and counsellors are needed, as well as administrators and teachers of physical education, art, music and ESL.

## Tips from BISS Veterans in International Education

1. Send important documents via DHL or Federal Express or with any of the most reliable courier services. Keep receipts for your relocation allowance.
2. Use a reputable airline for your flights.
3. Living close to the school may prove to be very convenient for travel.
4. Contact your Principal and develop communication channels from the beginning.
5. You will also be given the email address of the person whose position you are replacing or another colleague to be a “buddy”. It is advisable that you communicate with this person to receive specific information about the school and ask them any questions you may have.
6. BISS will assist you in opening a local bank account upon your arrival. However, you should maintain your foreign account. We recommend you keep your account current and keep your credit card current at least for the first 4 months. Note you can only wire money out of China after you get your first salary payment, as you need your tax certificate to transfer money. You can only wire the amount you are paid, minus the tax you have paid.
7. Remember to ask questions of those who are very familiar with daily life in Beijing. Don't be shy.
8. If you do not speak Chinese, plan to begin your study of the language immediately upon signing your contract and continue after you arrive.
9. Do **NOT** invite your family and friends to visit too early on after you arrival. It is very stressful to have guests even if you miss them and are happy to have them staying with you.
10. Keep a journal or blog while you are in Beijing to remember your unique experiences and help you sort through any anxieties you are having. If you really want to make the most of your time abroad, set goals for yourself and continually re-evaluate them and your experience.



### III. PREPARING YOURSELF TO RELOCATE OVERSEAS

#### Important Documents to Prepare

The following document list is a generalized one and it's unlikely that a school will require all of them. We should mention that one of the documents that is often cause for concern among teachers going overseas for the first time is the "police certificate". It's not really a certificate, but simply a statement from police officials that you have no criminal record. We suggest that you visit the local police officials and explain to them (they may be puzzled by the request) why you must have such a statement. In the next several months you (and your family) should prepare original and copies of:

Passport(s)		Visa(s)	
Birth certificate(s)		College transcript(s)	
Marriage certificates(s)		Police certificate(s) (statement(s))	
Adoption certificate		It is helpful to bring 10 passport-sized photographs with a white background	
Divorce certificate(s)		Will or power of attorney	
Teacher's graduation/qualification Documents (Bachelor/ Master)		Complete medical history (especially if you have medical issues)	
Teaching certificate(s)		List of prescriptions/medication	
Health certificate(s)			

#### Personal Documentation

- Begin a file of all possible important names, addresses, phone numbers, policy numbers, account numbers, etc.
- Secure original (official) copies of birth certificates, marriage licenses, and divorce records.
- Complete and file a will.
- Obtain a signed contract from the school that includes pay schedule, health insurance, retirement program, responsibilities, travel and shipment reimbursement allowances, etc.
- Insure that your present health insurance will "overlap" your new policy to provide continuous coverage. (BISS insurance coverage typically commences on August 1 when contracts start for each school year).
- Bring any records of special medical conditions, glasses, or prescriptions in generic name.
- Include extra photocopies of passport, certificates, contracts, household inventories, and drivers' licenses in records binder for convenience - a photocopier may not be convenient when you need a copy.
- Consider applying for absentee ballots so you can vote.
- Home income tax documents to file before deadlines.
- DO NOT CLOSE your bank account at home.
- Bring your credit card with you.
- Make multiple photocopies of important documents (especially passports). Keep them in various accessible locations (e.g. toiletry case, suitcase, document box). Leave copies or originals with family members, as well.

#### Packing and Shipment of Goods

- Check with the school for a list of "most important items" to include in your shipment, the general rule is to bring enough, but not too much.
- When packing, compare availability and purchase price overseas to shipping fees.
- Begin packing as soon as possible, keep an inventory of box contents and estimated replacement value. Consider bringing small gifts unique to your area and include photographs. Label each box with your future addresses. Tape securely. Purchasing new packing cartons may be worthwhile since they stack efficiently and can be reused on return. (Or use a moving company that does all this for you!).
- Research and arrange shipment of personal and household goods. While goods shipped via air are normally charged by weight, goods shipped via sea are charged by volume, and generally are a better value.
- Contact respective consulate/embassies and inquire about customs duties and special restrictions. To avoid customs duty you may need to bring receipts to prove that your goods are used. (Moving companies often have this information as well).
- Find out if the country where you'll reside has 100v or 220v and what type of transformers you may need for appliances. China has 220 like in Europe. Most wall sockets have a combination of US, Europe and Australia/NZ socket types.
- Arrange to sell/rent/lease/store home, auto and personal property, being certain to verify proper insurance, contract, and disclaimer of responsibility.

- Double check all travel reservations, arrival/departure times, baggage allowances, and good shipments to avoid unwelcome surprises.

## **Relocation**

- Reservations with airlines must be made well in advance of departure - but make sure you can change date of ticket, if necessary. When purchasing tickets, be certain to check baggage allowances, carry on baggage, extra baggage rates, and departure/arrival times.
- Make “address cards” using your name and the new school’s letterhead, address, and phone number for use in notifying family, friends, and businesses of your impending move.
- Arrange mail forwarding with the postal service and leave some large, self-addressed envelopes so it’s easy for friends or family to send your mail.
- If you plan to take a pet, be sure you check on rules, regulations specific to the country to which you are moving. Ensure all health certificates and other required documents for the animals are complete.
- Investigate overseas auto purchase programs.
- If planning to purchase a car, request that your current automobile insurance company send a verification of your claims records. In some countries, your driving record determines insurance rates.
- Obtain an overseas AT&T/MCI or other phone calling card for convenience and reduced rates if you communicate via phone.
- Open a Skype account.
- Buy and use Foreign Language DVDs so you can understand and speak some of the basics of the language.
- Contact that country’s tourist bureau for the latest travel and vacation information.
- Buy informative Guide Books in English, such as Lonely Planets, Frommers, etc.
- Buy an English-Chinese dictionary and phrase book.

## **Financial Matters**

- Establish a checking account in your home country in order to pay any bills while you are overseas, or to receive bank transfers from China.
- Ensure that all your important insurance policies and bills will be paid in the transition period; prepay if necessary.
- Have a credit card that is widely accepted overseas such as American Express, Visa or MasterCard. Be certain to record account numbers, lost card number, and the overseas customer service number in your files.
- Bring sufficient cash (Traveller’s checks are probably safest) to operate while in transition, or ensure you have access to cash via an ATM (it would help if you set up a debit card account before you come if you did not have one, even if just for peace of mind).
- Ensure that your previous employer can forward your tax forms if your home country requires income tax statements. Make sure that you have all the documents you need to prepare your home-country income tax forms each year.

## IV. MOVING YOUR BELONGINGS TO BEIJING

### Guidelines on Shipping/Freight/ Storage

The teacher will be reimbursed for “in-coming” shipping of personal effects and storage against original receipts up to the maximum allowance as mentioned in their employment contract. The teacher will be reimbursed for “out-going” shipment of personal effects from Beijing upon completion of the teacher’s full term employment up to the maximum allowance as mentioned in their employment contract. The reimbursement for “out-going” shipping will be paid in RMB.

New teachers must make their own arrangements concerning what they will ship and who and how they choose to ship their personal effects. Contact information for moving companies previously used and recommended by BISS teachers are listed below, but BISS will not be involved any further with the selection process. We do, however, recommend that you choose a moving company that has an agent or branch office in Beijing. The following shipping agent(s) for your information & check details with them directly:

- Asian Tigers – K C Dat (China) Ltd [www.AsianTigers-China.com](http://www.AsianTigers-China.com)
- Allied Pickfords [www.alliedpickfords.com](http://www.alliedpickfords.com)
- Sante Fe Relocation Services [www.santeferelo.com](http://www.santeferelo.com)
- UniGroup Worldwide [www.unigroupworldwide.com](http://www.unigroupworldwide.com)

You should also consider shipping your bags and boxes on your flight. If you are not bringing too much, it may be the best value for money, and you arrive with all your possessions and do not need to wait for 2-3 months. (Note, you can choose to use your shipping allowance for accompanied baggage if you want.)

When a foreigner relocates to Beijing for the first time for work, the person is allowed by Customs a reasonable amount of one-time duty-free allowance on personal effects such as clothes, books and furniture, but not food and electrical goods. Be wary of bringing any electrical appliances/goods, then, because they incur higher tax/duty costs and most of them can be purchased relatively inexpensively in Beijing. All in all, customs tax/duty charges are inconsistent in Beijing, thus, we strongly recommend that you obtain the most updated custom tax/duty information from your selected moving company prior to deciding what to ship. Also, try to speak to veteran teachers to listen to their tips.

Use your own discretion in bringing things to Beijing that might be needed to make you feel more at home. Clothing and footwear are abundant and affordable in Beijing, although very large sizes can be difficult to find. Clothing sizes available are often not as big as western sizes; however, tailors are readily available at reasonable prices. If you wear larger sizes you may wish to bring some clothing from home. Basic kitchenware can be purchased easily in Beijing at department stores, supermarkets, IKEA, etc. However, specialised baking utensils, unique food ingredients or favourite uncommon western spices may be hard to find. Good quality face/body moisturizers for Beijing’s dry weather are beneficial. Household brands for cosmetic, body care and feminine products are easily available (Vaseline, Nivea, Lux, etc.).

China has a good mobile phone network and most teachers chose to have a mobile phone. BISS provide each new teacher a mobile phone with a SIM card and telephone number upon arrival, for use in the first week while you get settled. This will give you time to switch SIM cards on your own sets, or select and purchase your desired model locally. Major brands such as Nokia, Motorola, Ericsson, Siemens etc. are all available - prices are dependent on brand and model. Pre-paid phone cards can also be readily purchased.

As for computers, if you would like to bring your own laptop, please carry it as hand luggage. Upon deciding to ship unaccompanied personal effects, please ensure that you use the **door-to-door** service provided by the moving companies

with insurance coverage for the entire shipping process. You can also claim shipping insurance costs using your incoming shipping allowance.

**Timing of your shipment is very important.** Please **DO NOT send anything NOW**. Without you being physically present in Beijing, we cannot clear Customs on your behalf. Customs clearing can only be done after you have obtained your Resident Permit. Residency documents will ONLY be ready around 4-6 weeks after your arrival in Beijing, so it should be safe to arrange for your shipment **to arrive in mid September!!!** We therefore recommend that you bring enough clothes in your baggage to tide you over for up to 1-2 months (if necessary). Billing for your shipping can be done via one of the following methods:

- Have the moving company bill the school directly – the original invoice should be sent to your HR department contact. Please make sure that you are the shipper and recipient of the shipment, and not the school. Please note the payable amount must be within your allowance.
- You can pay for the shipment first and request reimbursement upon arrival. Please make sure that you have the original invoice and receipt for reimbursement.

**Note:** *Your incoming shipping allowance can be used to cover storage expenses, but this cuts into your allowance.*

### Shipping of Cats and Dogs

As regulations tend to change frequently in China, and different procedures are sometimes provided by different sources, we asked a moving company for up-to-date details, and these are the notes they gave (*as of December, 2013*):

1. You can only import cats and dogs
2. One passport can only import / export one pet
3. For pets to enter to China, a vaccination certificate and health certificate will usually be requested
4. One blood test certificate may be requested in China, but there are different requirements according to the policies between origin countries and China. (Note: to apply for blood tests, determination of which policy between the Chinese government and foreign lab is necessary may take 3-6 months, so we strongly recommend clients begin to prepare for importing pets at least 6 months to one year in advance.)
5. According to quarantine requirements, any pet imported to China must be quarantined for a certain number of days. Again, there are different policies for different countries (For example, pets from Germany, France or Italy, need to be quarantined for 7 days; pets from South Korea, USA, or Canada need to be quarantined for 1 month).
6. What we can do is to help clients to pick their pets up from airport on the day they arrive in Beijing in order to avoid long quarantine periods. The normal service charge is CNY12,000/pet minimum, but needs have to be discussed on a case by case basis.

Should you have any question about pet move (export, import and domestic), please do not hesitate to contact me. Contact number: 6423-5749.

Clients can also contact Beijing Guanshang Animal Hospital for more information – they are the only government authorized Beijing animal hospital for export and import blood tests and import / export issues.

**Beijing Guanshang Animal Hospital: <http://www.chinapet.com.cn/eng>**

**Contact number: 400-700-1542 ext. 0.**

Regards,  
Edward Wei



#### Beijing Headquarters

Address: Bldg. 10, Area 2, Anhuaxili,  
Chao Yang District, Beijing, P.R.China, 100011

Tel: +8610 6423 5749 Fax: +8610 6425 4795  
Website: [www.chinawaygroup.com](http://www.chinawaygroup.com)

In order to ensure you have all possible bases covered, here are some more notes we have collected from prior pet relocations. We feel it is better to be well informed of what you may be asked for than be caught lacking a document or test etc.:

- Only Z visa HOLDERS can import pets into China and only one animal per Z visa (a Z visa is the work visa employees receive).
- You will need a get portable kennel and book cargo space on the flight you're taking. Note many airlines won't accept pets during the middle of summers or winter for good reason!
- You will need a letter from your vet certifying that your pet is fully inoculated and in good health.
- You'll also need written permission from your Beijing housing complex for the animal, a picture of your pet taken next to a ruler (there are size restrictions depending on where you live – one is generally large dogs within the 5<sup>th</sup> ring road are not permitted), passport copies, and a letter from BISS stating that you'll be working for them in China.

Some pets may be brought into Beijing with the proper papers; for example, evidence of a rabies shot and a 48-hour good health certificate etc. Officials at the airport will check all the necessary documents, and you will be on your own handling the immigration procedure for your pet (maximum one small dog per family) inside the restricted area. If you arrive late after "offices" hours, there may be no one there to hand over your pet. Please be prepared that your pet will be quarantined, and you will be responsible for the quarantine fees. Take note that bringing pets to China is your responsibility, thus, to make the process less frustrating, you are strongly recommended to contract a relocation company to give you the assistance.

When you and your furry friend arrive in Beijing, you'll have to pay RMB 1,000 customs fee and negotiate the quarantine period. Officially, this is 45 days that you'll have to pay for at RMB 400 per day. However, if you sign a waiver agreeing to keep your animal inside for 45 days, customs may waive the fees.

For more detailed information, consult [www.outpostbeijing.com/BringingPets.htm](http://www.outpostbeijing.com/BringingPets.htm)

Quarantine Department: 6, Tianshui Yuan Jie, Tel: 58619111

Beijing Pet Hospital: 7 Beisanhuan zhong lu, Tel: 62371359, [www.chinapet.com.cn](http://www.chinapet.com.cn)

A recommended contact specializing in bringing pets into Beijing:

International Centre for Veterinary Service, Tel:84561939/40/41 [www.icvsasia.com](http://www.icvsasia.com)

**Disclaimer & advice on bringing pets:** The information provided above is from various (non-BISS) sources, thus the variations in requirements noted. We have provided the information to enable you to be aware of all possible needs, and it is your responsibility to check with your relocation agent to ensure you get the specific requirements for bringing your pet from your point of origin.

## V.VISA PROCUREMENT FOR CHINA

### Chinese (PRC) Embassies and Consulates in Various Countries

Foreigners intending to work in Beijing must enter Beijing with a work visa, which can be obtained at your local Chinese Embassy or Consulate upon production of the required documents. The process is relatively detailed and takes time, but providing all documents requested are produced as requested, it is usually straightforward. Please note you need to take responsibility to allow sufficient time to obtain all necessary documentation for this process. The BISS HR department will provide instructions and support, and complete the necessary steps required in China. Please review the steps outlined below, as well as the website of the Chinese Consulate/Embassies for your originating country and considering your nationality in case there are country-specific requirements we are not aware of. Also be aware the regulations have been known to change with very little notice, so keep an open mind and practice being flexible by rolling with any challenges that come your way!

### Chinese (PRC) Work (Z) Visa

BISS reimburses new teachers, spouse and dependent children (maximum of two) for all visa application fees (this does not include extraneous costs such as visa agent costs, transportation or accommodation).

BISS also reimburses the teacher for the basic costs related to the medical check-up up providing the medical check-up is required by the Chinese Consulate for work visa application purposes. Any other medical check-up at the choice of the teacher and will be at the teacher's personal expense. Original payment receipts and full medical check-up report are required for all reimbursement claims.

Following employment, the school will pay for and assist in securing visa extensions and Foreign Expert Certificate (work permit) during the teacher's employment with the School. The school will cover the application and renewal fees once a year, for the teacher and the contractual dependant(s) stated in the employment contract agreement. Additional applications within a year due to personal reasons, such as loss or renewal/extension of passports will be at the teacher's personal expense.

All other incidental expenses (e.g. Chinese driving license) will be at the teacher's own expense; however, the school will provide non-monetary assistance when possible.

### Work Visa Application Procedures

See the flow diagram on the next page for details. As a summary, after you are offered a contract, these are the steps required to obtain your visa and related documents to work in China:

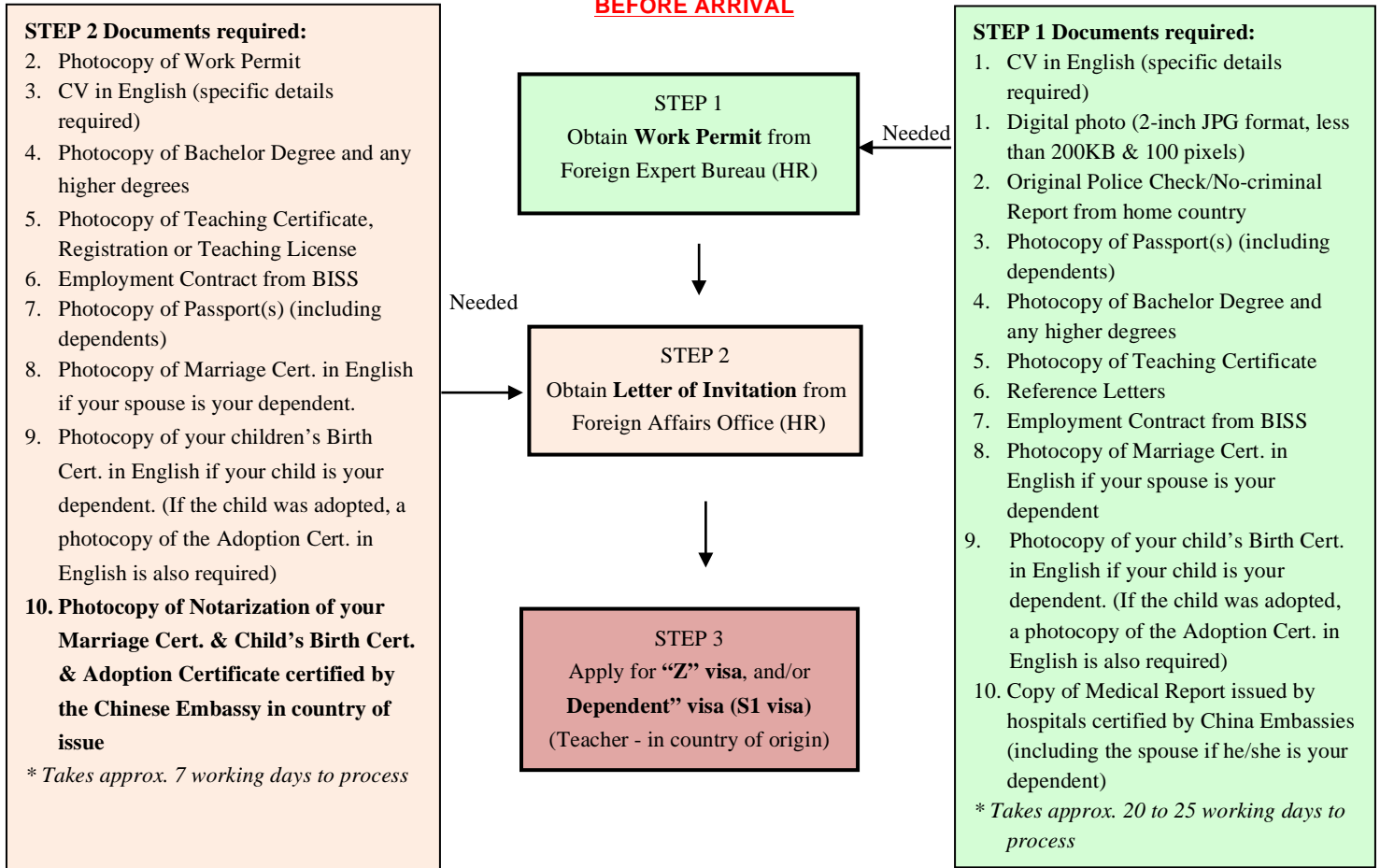
- 1: New teacher sends documents requested by HR to BISS (preferably before mid March). HR uses these to apply for your work permit and letter of invitation, which are couriered back to you.
- 2: New teacher gets medical check-up (if requested by your specific overseas Chinese Embassy)
- 3: New teacher receives the work permit and letter of invitation, and visits the Embassy/Visa Office in country in which s/he is a resident. A work (Z) visa is issued to teacher for a single entry.
- 4: New teacher arrives in Beijing during the last week of July (exact dates will be provided to new teachers closer to the date). Do not plan on arriving earlier than the official dates, as your temporary visa is limited in time and may run out making you ineligible for the permanent visa.
- 5: Upon arrival, the HR will assist you in completing the in-country steps (4-8 on the diagram), which will eventually result in your receiving a Foreign Expert Certificate (like a passport) and your residency permit.



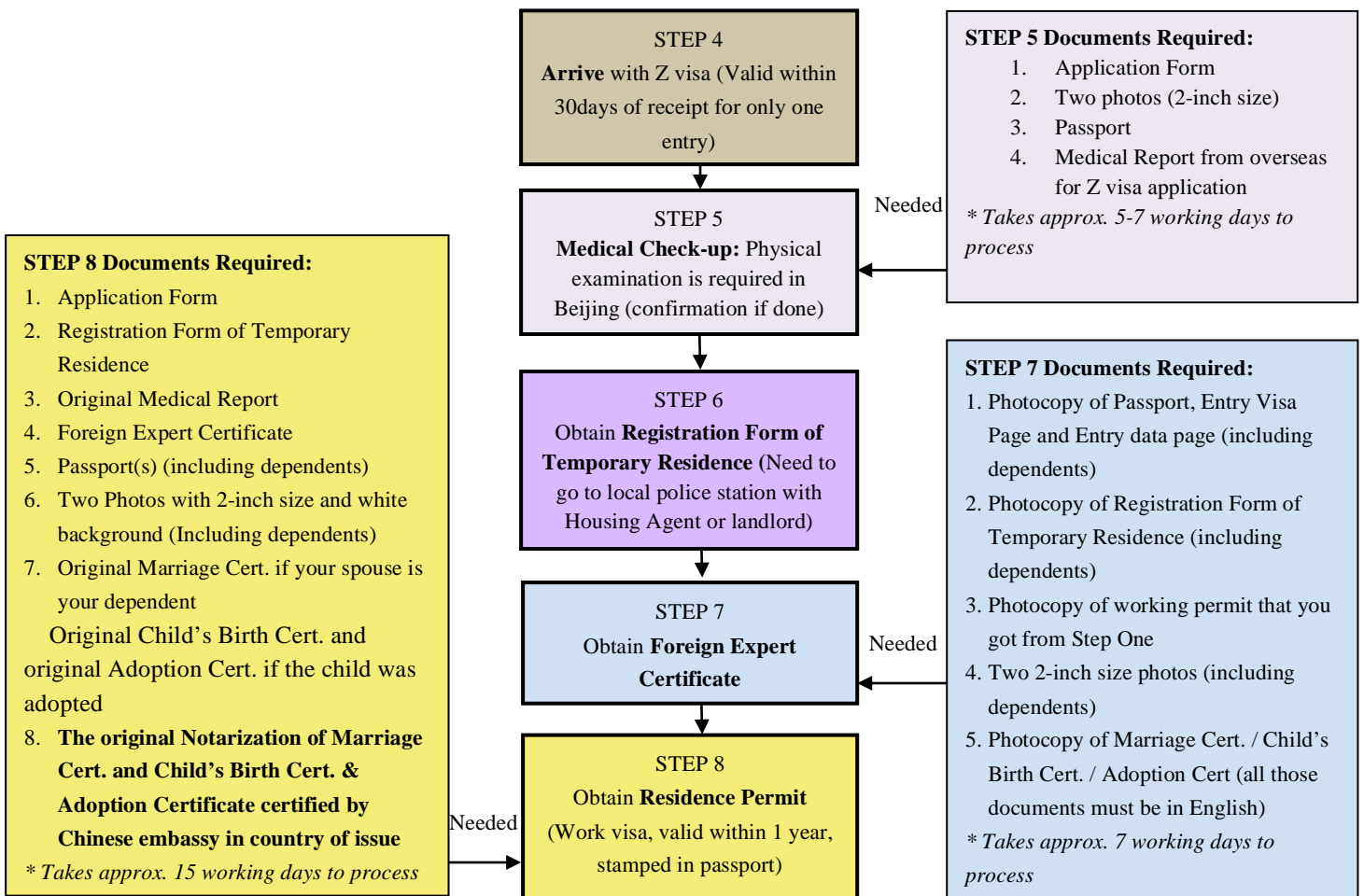


**Work Visa Application Process Flow Diagram (Jan 2015 update)**

**BEFORE ARRIVAL**



**AFTER ARRIVAL IN BEIJING**



## VI. ARRIVING IN BEIJING & AT BISS

### Arriving in Beijing

Once the HR department has your arrival information, we will arrange to have a school representative with a van/bus and driver, meet you at Beijing International Airport. After you have claimed your baggage and cleared Customs, the school representative will be waiting for you at the arrival hall with the BISS sign. Every effort will be made to have your housing unit ready for your arrival (providing you have selected your preferred unit prior to coming). You will be taken directly to your housing unit from the airport if it is ready, and be given a schedule for the new faculty orientation program. We will also arrange and assign a “Buddy” to assist you in settling into Beijing. They will communicate with you prior to your arrival in Beijing to ensure a smooth transition.

### New Teachers Orientation

The AMT and HR department organise a comprehensive Orientation Programme to help new hires settle in and learn the basics about working at BISS and living in Beijing city. The programme will include:

- Transitioning considerations
- Shopping – for household things, kitchenware, cleaning stuff, grocery, food etc.
- Eating out – local food, restaurant, fast food, supermarket etc.
- Medical examination – for visa application
- Introduction to administrators, teachers and staff
- Tour around School campus
- Faculty / Curriculum meetings
- BISS School Calendar and procedures
- Classroom preparation
- Sightseeing/Culture trip(s)

### After Arrival/Getting Settled in

- Register at your country’s embassy
- Contact shipping company to verify address, arrival time, method of payment, customs requirements, and delivery time
- Contact Customs and completing necessary paperwork for release of goods
- Request reimbursement for relocation allowances
- Establish savings/checking account at a local bank
- Obtain driver’s license if desired - an international driver’s license, cannot be used in Beijing
- Familiarize yourself with local area resources, attractions, history and transit system streets and district
- Set up new mobile phones, internet services etc.

### Housing

The housing allowance is a needs-based benefit offered to provide faculty suitable housing in areas suitable for expatriates. The allowance amount (listed on your contract) is determined by your category (single teacher, married/partner, children etc.), and based on an average range for apartments typically rented by our faculty. The HR department will work with you to choose an apartment and arrange for a contract with the landlord in your absence. The type of housing provided to new hires will be according to your monthly housing subsidy. Once you have acclimatized to Beijing, you may wish to search for your own housing of preference in the following year, but be aware of contractual obligations to minimise transfer costs. Faculty who choose a unit that is cheaper than their allowance can save the difference between the rent and their allowance via the flexi-plan. Alternatively, they can choose a more expensive unit if they wish to “top-up” the rent from their salary. Note:

- All rentals are paid in RMB
- All lease agreements will indicate fixed RMB amount per month
- All landlords must produce monthly “fapiao” (original receipts)
- Proof of residency in Beijing is required to lease an apartment
- A School Lease Agreement will be given to use with your landlord

Some teachers find identifying a rental apartment and managing the lease negotiation is a real culture shock, while others find their experience is pleasant and uncomplicated. The type of housing you choose will depend on your personal connection to the home, coupled with expectations and experiences from your home country or previous work locations. It

will also take time for you to identify ideal housing type and location, as well as for your real estate agent to understand your needs. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you give yourself ample time, maintain a positive attitude and be prepared for things not turning out exactly the way you thought they would. Keep in mind you can always change your housing after the contract if you wish. Breaking the contract will result in loss of your deposit, however (usually 1 month rent).

The school will sign the lease agreement and pay the rental deposit on behalf of our new teachers. The subsidy will cover rental and related expenses of the property. Depending on the actual unit, the landlord, and your agent's negotiation skills, you might be able to include items such as rent, management fee, cable TV, internet/broadband fee, and sometimes utilities within your subsidy amount. Large furniture and appliances are often included in the rent, but always check what exactly is covered.

For any questions about housing and landlords, speak to our HR department. They will guide you and explain all the intricacies. These topics will also be discussed during our Orientation for Newcomers program.

### **Term of the Lease**

The leases are typically for a period of one year but automatically renewable with an exchange of signatures. The first year of the lease is usually obligatory for the tenant, but after year 1 the tenant may leave whenever he wishes by giving 1 or 2 months notice in writing to the landlord.

### **Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance of the Property**

It is the owner's obligation to hand over the property in perfect condition, clean and with everything in working order. During the first 30 days of your lease the owner will take full responsibility of anything that breaks or malfunctions, and has the obligation to organize the repair within the shortest timescale possible. At the end of this 30-day period, the owner has the responsibility to repair any major or structural problem, such as a leaking roof. The tenant however has the obligation to repair any defect that results from everyday use or wear and tear, including such items as window blinds, leaking taps, etc. Tenants may be responsible for most plumbing problems, especially if pipes are inside the apartment. Upon departure, the tenant is expected to leave the property in good condition and make good any damages.

### **Payments Required Upon Signing a Lease**

Upon signing a lease the following is required:

- The first month rent.
- A deposit of one month's rent. This deposit will be returned when you leave as long as the property is left in good condition and all the utility bills have been paid. The owner has 30 days following the date of the tenant's departure in order to return the deposit. Typically, this deposit is returned, providing no damage has occurred over and above normal wear and tear.

### **Housing Options in Beijing**

It is difficult to give exact figures for apartments, as even units in the same apartment complex can have wide ranges between units depending on the landlord, size and condition of the unit, number of bedrooms, what is covered (furniture, utilities etc.), and even which direction it is facing. Timing and availability is often a critical factor as well. The following prices and locations of apartments below are given as a guide to demonstrate the ranges of costs.

## Ranges of Rental Costs for Typical Apartment Complexes Suitable for Expats

Location	m <sup>2</sup>	# of Bedrooms	Rental (RMB) /Month	Remarks
UHN Village	68	1	7500-7800	5-10 mins walk to subway & Capital Mall 15 mins walk to Carrefour and Metro supermarket 30 mins bus ride to BISS
UHN Village	100	2	9500-10500	
UHN Village	139-147	3	12000-15000	
Phoenix City	80	1	9000-9500	Phoenix City - 5 mins walk to subway & Gallery Mall 15 mins walk to Carrefour and Metro supermarket 30 mins bus ride to BISS
Phoenix City	102-132	2	12000-16000	
Phoenix City	145-197	3	16000-20000	
Tai Yang Gong Yuan	65	1	7500-8000	Tai Yang Gong Yuan - 10 mins walk to subway 20 mins walk to Capital Mall 15 mins bus ride to BISS
Tai Yang Gong Yuan	82-87	2	9500-10000	
Tai Yang Gong Yuan	95	3	10000-11000	
Tai Yang Gong Yuan	130	3	13000-15000	
Sun City (Jin Xing Yuan)	65	1	7000-7500	Sun City - 15 mins walk to subway, Capital Mall 5 mins walk to Metro supermarket 20 mins walk to Carrefour supermarket 30 mins bus ride to BISS
Sun City (Jin Xing Yuan)	100-115	2	9400-10000	
Sun City (Jin Xing Yuan)	145	3	12000-13000	
Mars Park (Huo Xing Yuan)	95	2	9500-10000	Mars Park - 5 mins walk to subway, Capital Mall 20 mins walk to Carrefour and Metro supermarket 30 mins bus ride to BISS
Mars Park (Huo Xing Yuan)	140	3	12000-14000	
Time Fortune	65	1	7500-7800	Time Fortune - 10 mins to subway, Carrefour 30 mins bus ride to BISS
Time Fortune	95	2	9500-9800	
The Seasons (Wangjing West)	70	1	6800-7300	10 mins walk to subway Line 13 Wangjing West
The Seasons (Wangjing West)	110-119	2	8500-9000	
The Seasons (Wangjing West)	140	3	11000-12000	
The Seasons (Wangjing West)	165	3	12000-13000	
Jing Shi Yuan (Olympic Village)	90	2	8000-8500	15 mins walk to subway Line 8 Lingcuiqiao, no shopping areas around
Jing Shi Yuan (Olympic Village)	120-130	3	9000-10000	
Guo Ao Village	125-130	2	15000-16000	15 mins walk to subway Line 8 Forest Park South Gate, no shopping areas around
Guo Ao Village	166-200	3	18000-20000	

## Banking in Beijing

As in any international relocation, it takes a while for all the bureaucratic issues to be straightened out. This includes banking, wire transfers, exchange for local currency, getting cash, etc. So that you do not get frustrated, anxious or stressed, we strongly recommend the following:

- Ensure that you have at least enough funds in your home bank to pay your financial commitments for August, September, and October. You will not be able to transfer money out of China until October (due to local law requiring you to have your first salary tax certificate before you send money out).
- Bring at least \$500 cash with you, and/or an international debit card that you can use at ATMs
- Bring your credit card to use here until you get an ATM debit card from the local bank (if you choose). Note debit cards are more common than credit cards at local banks in China. They are available, but typically start with low limits (unless you keep large amounts in your account which enables you to a VIP card with a higher limit!).

## Banking and Credit Cards

We highly recommend all new overseas hire staff to open new or maintain their existing offshore bank accounts, and have an internationally recognised ATM debit and/or credit card.

The local currency is called the Renminbi (RMB). The basic monetary unit is called the “yuan” or “kuai”. The money is used mainly in banknotes of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 1 and .5 yuan; and coins of 1 or 5 Jiao (.1 Yuan, or similar to cent), and some even smaller that you are unlikely to see! Read up on details here: <http://www.chinatoday.com/fin/mon/>



*Image of the back and front of the common 100RMB note*

China has traditionally been a “cash” country, but is adapting quickly to debit and credit cards. You should bring your foreign credit cards to China, but be prepared for them to not work at every location, so cash debit cards are a good back-up!

### **Expenses & Savings**

Beijing city is not expensive by international standards, although it is considered an expensive city to live in within China. Beijingers soon learn where to purchase all ranges of products at very good prices, so unless you are into buying imported luxury brand name goods, you can live on a very reasonable amount per month.

Ultimately, your personal needs and your life style will determine just how much you spend and save. If you eat out several nights a week at expensive restaurants, you can spend a good deal; on the other hand, eating at home or at local reputable restaurants can be very inexpensive. See below for some teacher testimonials about savings potential!

### **Buying/Renting a Car in Beijing**

As part of Beijing’s efforts to reduce pollution, the government is attempting to limit the explosion of vehicles in the capital. In order to get a licence plate, you need to enter a lottery, which has hopefuls waiting for years at a time. For this reason, owning cars is rare amongst expat teachers. Renting a car with a driver is an option, but as costs are typically in excess of RMB10,000/month, this is not common. With 5 yuan or less subway and bus tickets and relatively cheap taxis (currently a RMB13.50 starting fare) available, almost all faculty either cycle (manual or electric bicycles and motorbikes are popular), use taxis, or take the bus or subway.

For those who still wanted to try, you can select a variety of new or used cars for purchasing, but we suggest you seek assistance and information from colleagues that know about the process when you arrive. Do be aware that:

- International Driving Licenses are not valid in China.
- If you want to hire or buy a car you will therefore need to get a Chinese Driver's License
- You must bring your Driver's License from your home country as evidence that you can drive.

A local license can be obtained with the assistance of Beijing Foreign Enterprise Service Group Co., Ltd. (FESCO) in Beijing. They will carry out the paper work for you, and help you with the written exam. Once you have successfully passed the written exam, the license can be picked up from FESCO.

### **Medical and Dental Care in China**

The School Doctor can help you with minor ailments at school. The School medical insurance provider MSH ([www.MSHChina.com](http://www.MSHChina.com)) provides direct billing to some of the clinics and hospitals. You can visit their websites for more details:

Beijing United Family Hospital	<a href="http://www.unitedfamilyhospitals.com">www.unitedfamilyhospitals.com</a>
International Medical Center	<a href="http://www.hkclinic.com">www.hkclinic.com</a>
International SOS	<a href="http://www.internationalsos.com">www.internationalsos.com</a>
Beijing Vista Clinic	<a href="http://www.vista-china.net">www.vista-china.net</a>
Bayley & Jackson Medical Center	<a href="http://www.bjhealthcare.com">www.bjhealthcare.com</a>

Medical facilities in Beijing are increasingly becoming world-class. For certain serious medical conditions, however, some faculty may prefer alternative locations for treatment, such as Bangkok or Hong Kong. The simplest way to ensure this option is to have one or more credit cards with credit limits that guarantee hospital admission or that you can charge your medical bills to. You will be insured, but the insurance company might not be able to guarantee a direct billing relationship with all the

hospitals in Beijing and/or Hong Kong. You might have to pay the hospital first and then claim reimbursement from the insurance company.

With incidence of Hepatitis (both A & B) and Japanese Encephalitis in China, it is suggested that people coming to live and work in Beijing consider getting these inoculations. Some of these inoculations (like Japanese Encephalitis) may not be available in some western countries, or may be very expensive, so you could wait till you arrive before getting them. Note, inoculations are not covered by medical insurance.

There are Watson's drug stores available at many locations such as shopping malls, and there is a small local pharmacy across the road from school. Please note that limited prescription drugs are obtainable here, so you are advised to bring any special prescription drugs you require with you, although they are becoming more available at the clinics and hospitals mentioned above. There are also Chinese medicines available locally for all ailments.

Shampoos, conditioners mouthwash, shaving cream, toothpaste, contact lenses and glasses etc. are all available here in Beijing. In fact, you will feel like you have not even left home in some of the mall shops!



## VII. PREPARING FOR LIFE IN BEIJING AND CHINA

We are delighted that you are soon to be relocating to Beijing. We are sure that you will soon find yourselves enjoying this wonderful country to the fullest, and we shall certainly do our best to ensure that you settle and feel happy living here in the shortest time scale possible!

### How to Prepare Yourself/Your Family

1. Try to learn a little Chinese BEFORE you arrive. Studying Chinese in your country before arrival can be a great way to improve your Chinese, and many teachers continue their study of Chinese throughout the year with tutors, weekend or vacation classes in Beijing, and exchanges with Chinese teachers. If you don't know any Chinese, however, do not fret. You can easily get by in the Chinese community knowing only a few words.
2. Read about China and Chinese culture, history, etc. Remember there is a lot of information available on Internet.
3. Encourage your children to discover as much as they can about your new destination. Children are normally troubled by the unknown and have difficulty imagining what their life will be like in China. The more information you can give them and the more you include them in all the plans, the better they will accept the change and the easier they will adapt.
4. As the time draws nearer for your departure, be prepared for the initial excitement that you felt when you decided to accept the contract give way to sadness and nostalgia as you begin to say good-bye to friends and family.
5. Remember that this is absolutely normal, and that China is a wonderful city for friends and relatives to visit. Invite everyone to come to see you, but be careful because they will come and you could find that you feel you are running a hotel during your first few months here.
6. It is important, especially for children, to say good-bye, and it is also very important to maintain yours and their links with home during the time that you are away. Encourage the children to maintain contact with their friends via social media networks. When they start school in China they can add new friends to the old ones and start to build their international network of friends, which they will maintain well into the future.

### About the City

<b>Geography</b> Beijing is the capital city of China and located in the north-eastern part of China. China is the 4th largest country after Russia, Canada and the United States. It is located in Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam	<b>Clothing</b> Dressing in Beijing is casual and modern. Bring along heavy clothing for the cold winter, and light clothing for the hot summer. Please note that most of the clothes and shoes sold in China are small in size. However, it is not very difficult for foreigners to find a good bargain in some local shops where brand name products for export are sold at a very low price. Tailors are also very inexpensive and many foreigners have their clothing made to order.
<b>Population</b> 14-21 million (depending on the boundary used!)	<b>Electricity</b> 220 volts, 50 cycles
<b>Land Area</b> 16,808 square kilometres	<b>Utilities</b> Most utility payments are made either to management office of condominiums, who then pay it onto the utility boards or by cash payment at a bank.
<b>City Districts</b> 18 districts – Chaoyang, Dongcheng, Xicheng, Xuanwu, Chongwen, Haidian, Fengtai, Shijingshan, Fangshan, Mentougou, Changping, Tongxian, Shunyi, Daxing, Huairou, Miyun, Pinggu, Yanqing	<b>Drinking Water</b> The quality of the water in Beijing is variable, and it is not recommended to drink out of the tap. Boiling water will kill germs, but will still leave any pollutants that may be present. Experts recommend either a water dispenser or a water filter in your home. Neither are very expensive.
<b>Government</b> Communist state: Chairman elected by the National People of Congress for five-year terms	<b>Tipping</b> It is not customary to tip and not necessary to do so. A 10% surcharge is addressed to the bill in most hotels and high standard restaurants. But ordinary restaurants usually do not have this requirement.
<b>Language</b> The official language in China is Mandarin but distinct dialects are spoken throughout the country. Chinese from Beijing speak Mandarin.	<b>Travel to and from Beijing</b> Beijing is becoming a hub for Asia and is served by most of the world's airlines at reasonable rates. Trains and buses tend to be very cheap, and tickets for long journeys can be obtained without much difficulty. Overnight sleepers are popular for longer journeys. Booking in advance is a necessity and returning staff can assist you with contact information for reliable travel agents. The subway is clean, new, efficient and very cheap.
<b>Religion</b> China is officially atheist, but traditionally pragmatic and eclectic. 2% to 3% of the population practices Daoism (Taoism), Buddhism and Islam. Chinese citizens are free to participate in religious activities as long as they	<b>Airport</b> The Capital Airport is 30 km from the centre of the city, and taxi fare to downtown Beijing will be around RMB80 (excluding toll fees) and takes approximately one hour (depending on the traffic condition).

do not attend religious activities organized by foreigners.	There is a train from the airport to the Sanyuanqiao subway as well.
<b>Shopping</b> Bargaining is generally not possible in department stores, but usually possible and often expected in smaller shops, particularly where items are not visibly priced. Take full advantage of the open-air markets for its low price and the fun of bargaining.	<b>Shopping Hours</b> Shops generally open around 9:00am and close about 10.00pm, six to seven days a week. Actual hours depend on the nature the business. Shops in areas frequented by tourists may open earlier. There are a lot of 24-hour convenience stores in Beijing.
<b>Food and Drink</b> There are a variety of restaurants and cafes serving a wide selection of cooking styles including Chinese, American, Korean French, Italian, Japanese, Mexican and Spanish. There are many fast-food chains and continental-style cafes. The visitor should note that food usually varies in price rather than quality and some of the cheap eateries are amongst the best.	<b>Special Festivals</b> January – New Year’s Day February – Spring festival (Chinese New Year) April – Tomb Sweeping Day May – Labour Days June – Dragon Boat Festival (dumplings) September – Mid-Autumn Festival (moon cakes) October – National Day
<b>Mobile Telephones</b> China Mobile is the largest provider, with China Unicom another alternative. You can receive your bills every month and international calls service can be included on request. You can also choose to use a prepaid cards system. You will need first buy a SIM card and then buy a prepaid mobile phone card, which can be purchased at supermarkets, convenient store, post office etc.	<b>Social Conventions</b> Beijing has a long history with an abundance of historical and cultural heritage that represents treasures from the city’s civilizations. As the capital, Beijing is the political, economic and cultural centre of the whole nation. The local culture in Beijing is splendid and gorgeous. You will be spoiled by the places of interests and the cultural activities in Beijing.
<b>Internet</b> Most properties have access to ADSL or broadband. Internet service providers offer free installations while you have to pay for the subscriptions monthly, quarterly or annually.	<b>Smoking</b> No strict legislation exists, but smoking is prohibited in hospitals, on public transport, and in cinemas and theatres. In other public places there is a very relaxed attitude. Non-smokers may find it difficult and frustrating to be in bars, restaurants and concert hall lobbies filled with smoke at times, although the government is increasingly promoting healthy habits.
<b>Currency</b> The currency in China is RMB (Renmenbi–people’s money). The unit of currency is the ‘Yuan’, and you will also hear the expression ‘kuai’ used often for RMB.	<b>Mail</b> China’s mail service is generally reliable, but for important items, it is safest to use the registration services. International Express companies such as DHL, FEDEX and UPS are also available in China. Post Offices can be found everywhere in Beijing.
<b>Currency Exchange</b> A helpful rule of thumb is divide RMB by 6 to get USD, and times USD by 6 to get RMB (eg. 1USD is about 6RMB, 100RMB is about 16.6USD)	<b>Time Zone</b> GMT +8, the entire country recognizes one time zone
<b>Credit and Debit Cards</b> The most common cards accepted in Beijing are Union Pay (Chinese) and Visa, but others such as MasterCard are becoming more and more common as well.	<b>Security</b> China is a relatively safe place compared to other countries. The crime rate is low, but it’s good to be careful when you’re out for shopping and keep your eyes on your belongings. Your identification card should be carried with you all the time. It is best to visit or check out the location of your embassy soon after your arrival and register.
<b>Banking Hours</b> Monday to Friday: 9:00am to 5:00pm Most local banks are open during the weekend Bank of China opens 7 days a week for most branches	<b>Health</b> Visitors to China are required to fill in a health declaration form at Immigration Customers upon arrival at the airport. Medical facilities are generally adequate in Beijing. Pneumonia and influenza are common, and there is a limited risk of hepatitis A and B, typhoid, polio, malaria, tuberculosis, dengue fever, tetanus and rabies (especially) in rural areas. In areas where dengue or malaria is found, use mosquito nets or bug spray and wear clothing that covers your entire body, and consider taking anti-malarial pills.
<b>Government &amp; Commercial Offices Hours</b> Open from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm, from Mondays to Fridays	<b>Climate</b> Beijing’s climate is defined as “continental monsoon”. The city has a rather dry, monsoon-influenced humid continental climate (Köppen climate classification Dwa), characterised by hot, humid summers due to the East Asian monsoon, and generally cold, windy, dry winters that reflect the influence of the vast Siberian anticyclone.[44] Spring can bear witness to sandstorms blowing in from the Mongolian steppe, accompanied by rapidly warming, but generally dry, conditions. Autumn, like spring, sees little rain, but is crisp and short. The monthly daily average temperature in January is -3.7 °C (25.3 °F), while in July it is 26.2 °C (79.2 °F). Precipitation averages around 570 mm (22.4 in) annually, with the great majority of it falling in the summer months. Extremes have ranged from -27.4 to 42.6 °C (-17 to 109 °F).

### Approximate Prices of Common Items (\$1USD=~6RMB)

ITEMS	PRICE (RMB)	ITEMS	PRICE (RMB)
Mineral water (500ml) (5Litre)	2 15-18	McDonalds meal (Big Mac, large fries and drink)	27
Can of Coca-Cola	3	Double room in a 4 star hotel	700
Daily newspaper	1	Taxi fare – flag-fall cost	13.5
3 Course meal at an expensive restaurant	300-400	Cinema ticket	60
Pack of 20 cigarettes	20	1 beer in a restaurant/cafe	20
Full 3 course meal at Chinese Restaurant	100	Mobile Charges – depends on contract or pay as go, and how much you use it!	30-60/month
Electricity	50/month	Cell phone	0.6/minute
Cable TV	120/month	Maid – part time	20-50/hour
Tutor for Chinese lessons	100/hour	Full-time Ayis	3000-4000/month
Gym subscription	4000/year	Part-time Ayis	700/month
Mail Postage	10-50	Hourly-rated Ayis	20/hour
Internet/Broadband (ADSL)	120/month	Haircut/highlights	25/100
Weekend travel within Beijing	200	Manicure/pedicure	30 - 100
Litre of milk	10-20	Foot Massage	100-150
Subway fare (just went up from a flat 2!)	3-5 (depends on zone)	Entry Ticket to places of interest in Beijing	35-100
Single bus ticket	1 or 0.4	Used car Mitsubishi 1999	150,000
Glass of Wine	50	Used car Volkswagen 2002	200,000
Concert Ticket	200-1500	Flight to Xi'An (round-trip)	600

### Beijing Emergency Telephone Directory

Police	110
Fire	119
Hospital	120, 999
Weather	121
Traffic Accident	122
Phone Inquiry	114
Post Code Inquiry	11185
Price Complaint	12358
Traffic Rescue	122
Police Station	85225050
Health Bureau	83970909
Environment Bureau	68413817
Tourist Information Centre	85162288

### Entertainment and Recreation

Places of Interest in Beijing: [www.travelchinaguide.com](http://www.travelchinaguide.com)

An invaluable guide to life in Beijing – with comprehensive information and listings of restaurants, bars, pubs, films, art events, community events – are magazines like “The Beijinger”, “City Weekend” and “That’s Beijing” that can be picked up for free at many locations and at our school.

There are many health clubs throughout the city that have different standards of facilities. Expatriates in Beijing can play tennis, squash, golf and many other sports. There are also associations, groups or clubs like Badminton, Basketball, Bowling, Cycling, Darts, Hockey, Running, Rugby, Soccer and Volleyball. Some of your housing has health club facilities, most of the time at your own cost.

Websites for more details:

- [www.cyclechina.com](http://www.cyclechina.com)
- [www.bikebeijing.com](http://www.bikebeijing.com)
- [www.ymcabj.com](http://www.ymcabj.com)
- [www.beijinghikers.com](http://www.beijinghikers.com)
- [www.clubfootball.com.cn](http://www.clubfootball.com.cn)
- [www.avidgolfchina.com](http://www.avidgolfchina.com)

[www.danzcentre.com](http://www.danzcentre.com)  
[www.kungfuinchina.com](http://www.kungfuinchina.com)  
<http://www.chinaculturecenter.org>  
[www.internations.org](http://www.internations.org)

There are also an increasing number of places where you can eat many different types of foods and you can also sample ethnic cuisine from various parts of China, at sidewalk cafes or eat out at five star hotels.

If you like reading for your own enjoyment, bring lots of books. It is not easy or cheap to buy English books here. There is a well-stocked library in school or you can share used books with each other. Many teachers order books online from Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

In most expatriate housing compounds a number of TV channels, including CNN, HBO, BBC, AXN, Cartoon Networks, CCTV9 (the Chinese international channel in English) etc. are available.

### **Transport around the city**

Some teachers ship in their own bicycles if they have a favourite, but they are inexpensive to buy here. Beijing has no shortage of bicycles! But easy come, easy go – bike theft is common so ensure you lock your bike up when you leave it.

Some of the suburban housing complexes offer inexpensive shuttle services to malls or city centres, and taxis are relatively cheap. There are extensive bus routes as well, and the subway/metro/underground networks are new, very convenient and very cheap at RMB3-5 depending on the zone!

### **Food / Grocery**

You can buy local fruits and vegetables and other goods (like frozen chicken and fish) at very reasonable prices at local markets and western style supermarkets of varying quality. Many big supermarkets (Carrefour, Walmart, Market Place) have a separate imports section, otherwise, there is the famous Jenny Lou's dedicated to western imports.

There are many restaurants in Beijing, which include Chinese, Western, Italian, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Thai, and Indian etc. Of course, the famous Starbucks, McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, Hard Rock Café, Subway and TGI Fridays. Please keep in mind that the Chinese use MSG in their food.



*A selection of fruit and veges to last 1-2 weeks for a couple purchased at a small stall next to BISS for 57.5RMB (<\$10 US)!*

### **Chinese Language – Putonghua**

Putonghua is the official language of China, although there are many dialects throughout the country. It is not essential to speak Chinese to survive, especially within the school community, but it will certainly make your stay easier and less frustrating to speak and understand a few basic words and phrases. Some staff will choose to learn more about the language by hiring private Chinese tutors or attending Chinese lessons from some schools. There is a growing number of local Chinese learning English and you should find it easy to settle in.

### **Security**

As the capital of China, Beijing is a relatively safe city. Even though crime is minimal and generally non-violent, most expatriate housing employ 24-hours security services. Of course, like big cities anywhere in the world, there are pickpockets, so please be cautious and aware of personal belongings, especially in crowded shopping areas.

## English Bookshops in Beijing

Beijing Foreign Language Bookshop

[www.bpiec.com.cn](http://www.bpiec.com.cn)

The Bookworm

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

## Resource Reading List for Relocation and/or Living in Beijing, China

We encourage staff to read up well before arrival and refer to these resources after arrival.

Adult	Author
No Longer at Ease	Achebe, Chinua
The Poisonwood Bible	Kingsolver, Barbara
Paper Airplanes in the Himalayas: The Unfinished Path Home	Seaman, Paul
A Strangers at Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land	Smith Carolyn
Parenting Abroad	Jehle-Cuttcheon
The Handbook of Foreign Student Advising	Gary Althen
Breaking Through Culture Shock	Elizabeth Marx
A Peacock in land of Penguins. A Tale of Diversity and Discovery	Barbara BJ Hateley and Warren H. Schmidt
Lets Move Overseas	Beverly D. Roman
Painted Words and Spoken Memories	Brandenberg, Alikei
The Third Culture Kid Experience Growing up among worlds	David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken
Notes for a Travelling Childhood	Foreign Service Youth Foundation
Of Many Lands	Sara Mansfield Taber
Let's Make a Move	Beverly D. Roman
The Absentee American: Repatriates' Perspectives on America	Carolyn D. Smith
Home Away from Home	Beverly D. Roman
Footsteps around the world	Beverly D. Roman
Relocation 101	Beverly D. Roman
Intercultural Insights	Yale Richmond & Phyllis Gestrin
Figuring Foreigners Out	Storti, Craig
Good-bye books	American School of Budapest
We're Moving Where?	Ben Voegele
Portable Roots: Voices of Expatriate Wives	Gordon & Jones
Encountering the Chinese	Hu Wenzhang,C.Grove
Descriptive Statement of Missionary Families	Austin, Clyde N.
Cross-Cultural Re-entry: A Book of Readings	Austin, Clyde N.
Foreign at Home and Away: Foreign-Born Wives in the Foreign Service	Bender, Margaret
Life on the Outside: Memoirs of a Nomad Mother and Daughter	Dehner, Haidee and Maya
Educating the Special Needs Child Abroad	Eaking, Ray Branaman
The Foreign Service Teenager – At Home in the US: Thoughts for Parents Returning with Teenagers	Eakin, Ray Branaman
The Journey is the Destination. The Journals of Dan Eldon	Eldon, Kathy
Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing Up Abroad	Bell, Linda
Teen talk: Straight Talk About Moving, One teen to Another	Franklin, Michigan
Characteristics of Internationally Mobile Adolescents	Gerner, Michael et al.
The Foundation of a National Identity among US Citizen Growing Up Overseas	Giardini, Alyson M.
Going International: Beyond Culture Shock (video)	Griggs Productions
Moving Days	Harshman, Marc
International Schools and International Education	Hayden, Mary and Thompson, Jeff
International Education Principles and Practice	Hayden, Mary and Thompson, Jeff
Daughters of Britannia – The Lives and Times of Diplomat Wives	Hickman, Katie
Moving Your Family Overseas	Kalb, Rosalind and Welch, Penelope
World-Wise Kids: Special Qualities Mark These Global Nomads	Kilham, Nina
Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad	Kohls, L. Robert
Internationally Mobile Pupils In Transition: The Role of the International School	Langford, Mary E
Notes From a Traveling Childhood: Readings for International Mobile Parents and Children	McCluskey, Karen C
The Moving Experience: A Practical Guide for Psychological Survival	Meltzer, Gail and Grandjean, Elaine
Between Two Worlds: A Story about Pearl Buck	Mitchell, Barbara
The Teenager's Survival Guide to Moving	Nida, Patricia Cooney
This Same Sky: A Collection of Poems from Around the World	Nye, Naomi Shihab

Culture Shock! Successful Living Abroad: A Parent's Guide	Pascoe, Robin
The Wife's Guide to Successful Living Abroad	Pacoe, Robin
Here Today There Tomorrow: A Training Manual for Working with International Mobile Youth	Parker, Elisabeth, K. Rumrill-Teece
Re-entry for Teens	Piet-Pelon, Nancy
College Applications and the Foreign Service Child (video)	Family Liaison Office
The Transition Model	Pollock, David C.
Footsteps Around The World: Relocation Tips for Teens	Roman, Beverly D.
Intercultural Marriage: Promises and Pitfalls	Romano, Dugan
Family Relocation Study	Steinglass, Peter & Edwards, Martha E.
The Art of Crossing Cultures The Art of Coming Home	Storti, Craig
Of Many Lands: Journal of a Traveling Child.	Taber, SM
Raising Multilingual Children-Foreign Language Acquisition and Children	Tokuhama-Espinosa, Tracey
Letters Never Sent	Van Reken, Ruth
Living Overseas: A Book of Preparations	Ward, Ted
Home is Where My Heart Lies	Warrenton, Virginia
Impact of Family Relocation on Children's Growth, Development, School Function, and Behavior	Wood, David et al.
Global Nomads: Cultural Bridges for the Future (video)	Wu, Alice & Clark, Lewis
Military Brats, Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress	Wertsch, Mary Edwards
The Expert Expatriate: Your Guide to Successful Relocation Abroad: Moving, Living, Thriving	Hess, Melissa Brayer & Liderman, P.
Third Culture Kids: The Children of International School Educators	Zilber, Ettie ( <i>an ex-BISS Head of School!</i> )
101 Stories for Foreigners to Understand Chinese People	Yi S. Ellis with Bryan D. Ellis

## Recommended Websites to Learn about Overseas Living

First Rule of Success in International Mobility - Prepare yourself by doing your homework:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <a href="http://www.womanabroad.com">www.womanabroad.com</a><br><a href="http://www.directmoving.com">www.directmoving.com</a><br><a href="http://www.wowgulf.com">www.wowgulf.com</a><br><a href="http://www.worldsapartreview.com">www.worldsapartreview.com</a><br><a href="http://www.indsoc.co.uk/futures">www.indsoc.co.uk/futures</a><br><a href="http://www.catalystwomen.org">www.catalystwomen.org</a><br><a href="http://www.books-on-spain">www.books-on-spain</a><br><a href="http://www.going-there.com">www.going-there.com</a><br><a href="http://www.womanabroad.com">www.womanabroad.com</a><br><a href="http://www.internationaleled.about.com">www.internationaleled.about.com</a><br><a href="http://www.interchangeinstitute.org">www.interchangeinstitute.org</a><br><a href="http://www.tckworld.com">www.tckworld.com</a><br><a href="http://www.aaconnect.com">www.aaconnect.com</a><br><a href="http://www.visitguatemala.com">www.visitguatemala.com</a><br><a href="http://www.aroundantigua.com">www.aroundantigua.com</a><br><a href="http://www.langlink.com/guatemala.html">www.langlink.com/guatemala.html</a><br><a href="http://www.internations.org">www.internations.org</a> | <a href="http://www.virtualcountries.com">www.virtualcountries.com</a><br><a href="http://www.journeywoman.com">www.journeywoman.com</a><br><a href="http://www.expatexpert.com">www.expatexpert.com</a><br><a href="http://www.shrmglobal.org">www.shrmglobal.org</a><br><a href="http://www.ujnews.com">www.ujnews.com</a><br><a href="http://www.interculturalpress.com">www.interculturalpress.com</a><br><a href="http://www.terracognita.com">www.terracognita.com</a><br><a href="http://www.cultureshockguides.com">www.cultureshockguides.com</a><br><a href="http://www.advancingwomen.com">www.advancingwomen.com</a><br><a href="http://www.branchor.com">www.branchor.com</a><br><a href="http://www.diplomaticprivilege.com">www.diplomaticprivilege.com</a><br><a href="http://celebratethetckjourney.com">http://celebratethetckjourney.com</a><br><a href="http://www.atitlan.com/contents.htm">www.atitlan.com/contents.htm</a><br><a href="http://www.terra.com.gt">www.terra.com.gt</a><br><a href="http://www.sanjoseelviejo.com">www.sanjoseelviejo.com</a><br>"Insider's Guide to Beijing" - <a href="http://www.immersionguides.com">www.immersionguides.com</a> |
|--|--|
- Search words for further research: global nomad, relocation, TCK

## Foreign Embassies in Beijing

1	Embassy of Australia	5140 4111	21 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Sanlitun	<a href="http://www.china.embassy.gov.au/bjngchinese/home">www.china.embassy.gov.au/bjngchinese/home</a>
2	Embassy of Canada	5139 4000	No. 19 Dongzhimenwai Dajie	<a href="http://geo.international.gc.ca/asia/china/bj-splash.htm">http://geo.international.gc.ca/asia/china/bj-splash.htm</a>
3	Embassy of France	8532 8080	No.3 Dongsa Street, Sanlitun	<a href="http://www.ambafrance-cn.org/accueil.html">http://www.ambafrance-cn.org/accueil.html</a>
4	Embassy of New Zealand	8532 7000	No. 1 Ritan Dongerjie	<a href="http://www.nzembassy.com/home.cfm?c=19">http://www.nzembassy.com/home.cfm?c=19</a>
5	Embassy of Spain	6532 1986	No.9 Sanlitun Road	<a href="http://www.embassyofspain.cn/cn/index.htm">www.embassyofspain.cn/cn/index.htm</a>
6	Embassy of United States	8531 3000	No. 55 An Jia Lou Lu	<a href="http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn">http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn</a>

## BISS Key Contacts

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ES Principal – Shannon O'Dwyer	<a href="mailto:sodwyer@biss.com.cn">sodwyer@biss.com.cn</a>	13521959467
Director, Business Admin – Louis Lim	<a href="mailto:lilm@biss.com.cn">lilm@biss.com.cn</a>	15910539554
HR Manager – Lillian Song	<a href="mailto:lsong@biss.com.cn">lsong@biss.com.cn</a>	

## VIII. TEACHER TESTIMONIALS: WHAT WE THINK ABOUT WORKING AT BISS AND

### LIVING IN BEIJING (*unedited*)

#### Comments about housing

Our house is great. We love it – it is Atlantic Place – 3 bedrooms; a large kitchen; 2 balconies; we are on the top floor – 9th floor; good facilities' close to the shops; Housing is quite good. However it all depends on your own standards. We are a Family of 3 (Wife, myself and our young son) and live in a 3 bedroom apartment in Wangjing (15mins away from school) and we are within our housing budget allowance. We are close to shopping, Walmart, Hualian (Chinese Supermarket with most needs) Carrefour and plenty of restaurants and other markets. - (Catherine & Robert 7 years)

Initial school-provided housing is adequate, but when that contract expires there's great housing available, all for within the housing budget and conveniently located. – (Allison, 8 years)

My housing is modern, comfortable and spacious. – (Justin, 8 years)

I have a very nice apartment. It has 2 bedrooms, 2 baths and an extra room on the 2nd floor. It is in a huge apartment complex that is beautifully landscaped. There are guards at each gate that usually check who is coming and going. There tend to be lots of maintenance issues even though the apartments are quite new. The management office sends repairmen to take care of problems. - (Pat , 3 years)

The apartment complexes are in a great location – short taxi or bus rides to school and all city locations. Our unit is spacious with functional, basic furniture provided. It can be tricky to work out how to pay electricity/water/other utility bills. Just keep in close contact with your agent and don't be afraid to keep calling until you get the help you need. – (Shannon-first year)

My apartment is fully furnished, broadband internet, heating; water and electricity are all included in the housing allowance. – (Elmer, 14 years)

We are very happy with our lodging. We were relieved that the school did not force us into an arrangement, but gave us a possibility to find our own arrangements after 6 months. – (Ginette & Lewis, 2 years)

I have lived in two apartment complexes: UHN and Phoenix town. Both are lovely places and they are very different from one another. The bonus of both places is their location. They are close to work (4 km or so), next to the third ring road and have a subway stop within 5 to 10 minutes walk. Both locations are close to local markets and restaurants. Phoenix has a small western grocery store but UHN is next to an indoor market that is open all year round. Both places have a gym. If you crave western restaurants they are only a 5 to 10 minute taxi ride away. – (Michelle, 5.5 years)

The housing allowance allows you to find something reasonable and comfortable. Rent in Beijing is getting more expensive each year. It is important to bargain and negotiate with your rental agent and landlord for having things included and keeping the price down. The new flexi-plan gives you freedom to spend any unused housing allowance which is a nice bonus! – (Tim – first year)

#### Comments about professional development at BISS- both on-site and off-site

Upon my appointment at BISS it was known that I was not PYP trained. I was lucky to be employed as other potential schools commented if I had of had training I would have got the job but without it they could not appoint me. BISS offered me the job and the opportunity to get trained – which I really appreciated. Prior to coming to BISS I was in the Middle East and received absolutely no PD within the school or outside for 3 years. It is very easy to lose touch with what is happening in



current education but at BISS I have never been turned down for any PD that I have applied for. Also we have a considerable amount of in house PD from other staff members and visiting people. – (Michele, 6 years)

I've been funded to go to PD in Tokyo, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore over the years I've been here. The school makes sure that you are IB certified first, and other PD is possible after that. – (Allison, 8 years)

The school supports professional development for its staff. – (Justin, 8 years)

Each year we have presenters come to the campus for in service training. We have had some excellent presenters. I have attended a Cath Murdock workshop, sponsored by another school in a city one hour away. The school sent me to Thailand to attend "Math in the PYP". There are many local opportunities as well at weekend workshops within the city. – (Pat, 3 years)

BISS works hard at providing necessary PD for the welfare of the school. The sessions are very enlightening and inclusive of everyone in the school (i.e. all specialist teachers. This is a rarity). – (Mei Ling, 2 years)

In my case I am being trained in PYP online as I am new to PYP. I could also have been trained in ESL in the mainstream but already had that qualification. – (John, 3 years)

Plenty of PD's happening in school and out...I think I average about 2-3 sometimes in a year – (Elmer, 14 years)

Working with a talented and professional staff in the ES has been fantastic PD. They are great teachers of students and staff. PD opportunities are available regularly and the school subscribes to the theory of internal PD and sharing knowledge. I have learnt a great deal already. – (Lara-first year)

Professional development is plentiful and encourage within the school and opportunities to travel within Asia for a wide assortment of workshops. – (Patty-first year)

I am delighted by the number of quality PD opportunities here. As this is my first year and my experience with the IBO is limited, they are training me up in PYP! From next year, I hope to have PD opportunities specific to my area (SEN). The PD coordinator is very approachable and organised. – (Akane, 3 years)

I am very pleased with the quality of professional speakers that have come to BISS while I have been here. The coordinators have succeeded in making the workshops relevant and engaging. The school is very committed to PD for teachers. You can also apply for off-site workshops within your teaching area(s). – (Michelle, 6 years)

As a new teacher to an International School and IB, I feel very privileged that I have been able to access the amount of PD I have had. As much as I have found this overwhelming and overloading with new IT programmes, along with ESOL in the mainstream, IB PD as well as settling into a new life style it has been worth it and very transferrable. – (Gail, 3 years)

Online PYP courses are paid for by the school and are easy to complete. I recommend trying to do one in the summer holiday before you arrive. It's easier than making time at night during the first few months at a new school. There are plenty of experts on staff for face-to-face PD discussions. The school brings in well-known experts for in-house PD and a variety of courses/conferences are advertised regularly. – (Shannon-first year)

Professional development opportunities are enormous at BISS. There are many options and the school provides a very adequate amount of resources including money to attend various events. – (Mindi-2 years)

PD is valued here at BISS, lots of opportunity online and a few opportunities face to face. – (Matthew-first year)

### **Our comments about savings potential**

Saving potential is large for most people. – (Mindi-2 years)

Depending on the lifestyle you choose, you can save quite a bit in Beijing. – (Cheryl, 13 years, spouse+2 children.)



I have been able to save at least 25 % of my income, it just depends on how frugal or not you are. There are too many wonderful restaurants and venues within Beijing to spend your money if you are so inclined. –(Patty-first year-single)

I am part of a teaching couple, because of the housing allowance, the cheapness of Beijing; we can save 90% of my wage and live off my husband's wage – (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

I save about 20% of my salary each year. – (Allison (single teacher), 8 years)

The saving potential is there however it has taken the first 6 months to get set up and stable enough to save. The cost of living here compared to the west is very low but still things are going up so it is important to understand value for “dollar” as opposed to salary total. – (Lara-first year-single)

A couple living on a single salary, which enjoy a good lifestyle and like to travel during the holidays will find it difficult to save in their first year. – (Kristin + Gary, 3 years)

I travel and return home each year and manage to save about 30% of my salary. – (Justin (single teacher), 7.5 years)

I usually can save at least 30 % of my salary each month. This is after I spend money on traveling around the country.  
- (Pat (single teacher), 3 years)

I can save 15% of my salary per year. – (Mei Ling (single teacher), 2 years)

A teaching couple can easily save one salary. In the four years at BISS, I have managed to pay off a 30,000 USD student loan and pay for a master's degree. – (Stanley, 7 years )

I save about 40-60 percent of salary, depends on my travel plans during the week long holidays (3x a year), plus the Christmas and summer holidays. – (Elmer, single, 14 years)

Beijing offers many kinds of lifestyles. You can live quite lavishly or quite simply and save more money. It's really up to you and how you want to live. I can save about 65% of my income. – (Tim, single, first year)

As a couple we are putting a third of our salary aside. We spare no expense and are not here to save. – (Ginette & Lewis, 1.5 years)

We are a family of three on one salary. One salary is enough to live comfortably if you have no debt (e.g., student loans, credit cards) back home to pay off. We go out for dinner on the weekends but cook at home as much as possible. However we don't have any saving potential since the cost of living in Beijing is higher than I expected. – (Alfredo, first year, 2 dependents)

You can save a significant proportion of your salary – in the end it largely depends on the nature of your lifestyle! – (Wayne & Clare, 7 years)

About than 10% if on a single salary with dependants, and only in the second year forward – (Gary, 2 years)

We are able to live comfortably in Beijing, maintain our home in the USA, travel each break, and save money.- (Sheryl, teaching couple with child)

If you live a moderate lifestyle...some cooking at home and some eating out, a mix of transportation (subway, bus and taxis), combined with traveling at the major holidays...you can still save quite a bit of money. Last year, I banked 60% of my salary and lived off the other 40% local salary for trips and day to day living. Flights out of China are expensive but travel in Asia is generally very cheap so one balance out the other. – (Michelle, 6 years)

I am able to save about 30% without even trying. If I were to budget a little better, I could save even more. – (Paige-2 years, 1 dependent)

## **Comments about the medical insurance at BISS and the medical/health services in Beijing**

The quality of the medical care available in Beijing is quite good; however, it is not cheap. – (Cheryl, 14 years)

The services are good. They are expensive though. If you have a pre existing condition you need to check that you will be covered. Chronic illnesses only get covered to a certain level; Health insurance is mainly covered by the school's insurance. We have to pay a premium first up but after that most people would find all their medical costs paid for. Extenuating circumstances may also require a top up. E.g. when my wife gave birth to our son last year we had to top up on some costs such as immunization needles etc.- (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

The only problem with the insurance is the company's labelling of some conditions as "chronic" thereby severely limiting the amount of coverage given. – (Paige-2 years)

Medical services here are expensive, but the school provides health insurance that is taken at Western style clinics. There is no insurance in the USA except for emergencies. –(Sheryl-first year)

Medical facilities are modern and competent. – (Justin, 8 years)

Medical service is excellent. The best places are very expensive. The insurance company is encouraging people to find less expensive treatment if possible. – (Pat, 2 years)

I have already had some medical appointments and after USD 100 is paid on the first visit most regular procedures and medicine are covered in the medical cover which has bulk billing (no need to pay upfront). – (John, 3years)

The medical insurance provider makes doctor's visit very easy and straight forward if you go somewhere with a direct billing arrangement. There is lots of choice in Beijing of excellent health care providers, both western and Chinese- (Karen, 3 years)

The foreign hospitals here have fairly high standards, but it's worth remembering that if you need any serious treatment, you will likely be transferred to a local Chinese hospital anyway, so you might want to acquaint yourself with the one nearest to you to scope out their services, level of English spoken etc. – (Akane, 3 years)

I have been very impressed with the health care I have received at Beijing United Family hospital. Our insurance provides everything except for dental. I feel very comfortable knowing that there is quality care at the ready. – Michelle

## **Comments about weekend, social and travel activities**

There are MANY activities for weekends and socializing in Beijing. One of the favorite activities in my family is to head out to the surrounding mountains to go hiking on the weekends. This is much easier to do if you purchase your own vehicle, but there are hiking clubs that you can join or you can hire a driver for the day. – (Cheryl, 13 years)

There is just too much to do in Beijing! Any sort of ethnic food restaurant you could want. Lots of galleries, artist districts to meander through. Musical Performances and Dramatic productions abound. – (Patty-first year)

We have travelled all over China – Harbin, Xangjing province; Tibet; Yunnan; Shanghai; Suzhou; Xian – still more to see; early travel flights are good; great sleeper trains; With a baby – good travel – Chinese like kids; great at restaurants Weekends – friends; food; and visiting some of the sights we haven't got to yet. Lots of opportunities to travel. We have various groups within the school that are involved in many different sporting activities, Football, Rugby, Cycling, Walking etc. Also when the winter comes around there is always a group or someone going skiing for a weekend or for the day – (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

Plenty to do but its important to learn some Chinese – makes things a zillion times easier and the locals appreciate your effort – (Damian, 4 years)

The social club at BISS is great, it offers different kinds of activities including the activities for major festival celebrations. – (Tracy-2 years)

Travel opportunities are excellent and Beijing provides many activities for expats. - (Alexis-2 years)

Where do you start? Moving to Beijing was such an easy transition. The city is extremely safe. The public transportation is excellent. The people are helpful and friendly. There is so much to see and do, theatre, art exhibitions, book festivals, clubs for every activity possible, parks, markets, malls, temples, restaurants. The school's social club organizes great functions/activities and spouses are made to feel so welcome. Travel opportunities are endless and it's not until you start traveling around China that you realize how diverse the culture and landscape is. Good internet resources: Time Out (<http://www.timeout.com/cn/en/beijing/>), City Weekend (<http://www.cityweekend.com.cn/beijing/>), The Beijinger (<http://www.thebeijinger.com/>), International Newcomers Network (<http://220.231.54.68/innbeijing/>) – (Kristin Post - non working spouse, 3 years)

I have been able to travel and explore many out of the way corners of China including Tibet and Kashgar and the Tajikistan/China border. In addition, Beijing is an easy and affordable trip to all of SE Asia including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. After roughing it in some of these areas, it is always great to have a quick trip back to my comfortable home in Beijing. - (Mary, 4 years)

I spend quite a bit of time traveling with the Chinese Culture Center on weekends. They provide short guided tours all over China on weekends and local tours also. They are a bit expensive, but do a great job. During holiday periods they have longer trips. Our school has a very active social club with barbeques, pub nights, quiz night and special dinners. Most teachers participate. There are always different groups from school doing different activities. There are lots of museums and interesting areas to visit right inside the city also. – (Pat, 3 years)

There's a lot to explore in Beijing if you dare to venture out. Many clubs offer hikes through the city, but other things would include caves, historical sites, and scenic routes on mountains for a very reasonable cost. There are Chinese cultural classes you can take to meet other ex-pats and Chinese like calligraphy and Chinese cooking that make the city so intriguing. – (Mei Ling, 2 years)

We're new this year but already have a list of travel activities planned within China. Socially we were very warmly welcomed and there are regular social events planned. – (Julie & John, 3 years)

There are fantastic opportunities for travel, theatre, music, clubbing, restaurants-whatever you want, you can find in Beijing. I try to get tickets for a theatre performance or concert about once a month, but if you wanted to, you could be out every night of the week! Eating out is very affordable and there is a huge range of restaurants all over Beijing. – (Karen, 3 years)

If you're bored in Beijing, you're not trying. There is something going on here every day of the week! – (Paige-2 years)

Fantastic- it doesn't get much better than Beijing with regard to variety, accessibility and affordability. – (Wayne & Clare, 7 years)

Internal travel is difficult due to the language difficulties, and air travel is not cheap. Train and bus services are very good and affordable. The public transport in Beijing is outstanding, so getting around the city is no problem. There is an unbelievable array of things to do and see in the city – (Gary, 3 years)

BISS has a very social school community – Quiz Nights, Bowling nights and the recent Staff Holiday party. There is so much to do and see in Beijing and China. (Sheryl-first year)

Loads of stuff going on in the city – hook up with an expat networking site like Beijing Café and you'll hear about all the cooking classes, calligraphy courses, coffee mornings etc. that are on offer. The expat community here is very social because it's so cheap to go out and have a nice time. Lots of week-long national holidays also means lots of travelling to fantastic locations. The BISS Social Club also does a wonderful job of planning fun activities, and we're a very tight crew. – (Akane, 3 years)

People are very good at sharing their plans and including others in their weekend & social activities. There's plenty to do around Beijing and always someone doing it! Small trips can be taken around China during the short holidays and it's cheap to fly to SE Asia for a tropical break during the long, cold winter.-(Shannon-first year)

Weekends can be easily booked with cultural trips, dinners and sports & social activities; there is something for everyone. Beijing is a great hub from which to explore the rest of China and Asia. I am a keen traveller and had many opportunities for (independent) and adventurous travel. – (Ruth, 3 years)

## Comments about safety, security, hygiene in China

In general, I feel Beijing is quite a safe place. However, pick-pocketing is quite common, so people need to be vigilant, especially in crowded areas. – (Cheryl, 13 years)

I have never had issues with security but have had friends who have had things stolen from restaurants – from other expats probably. Hygiene can be an issue, especially when you are traveling to more rural and remote places but just be smart and wash your hands! – (Tim-2 years in Beijing)

Brilliant safety wise; has to be the safest place I have loved – including my home country; hygiene – improved. You get use to squat toilets – part of the Chinese experience; China is a very safe place. In fact almost safer than at home in London or Australia. Hygiene you need to be aware of etc but nothing too drastic- (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

It's a very safe city. We don't have any qualms about walking anywhere at night and have had no pick-pocketing experiences. Be sure to carry your own pack of tissues when going to public places because you will need to use the squat toilets on occasion.-(Shannon-first year)

None of these an issue – probably the safest place I have worked – (Damian, 4 years)

China is very safe, I've rarely ever had to worry on the streets here, People here are friendly, and the streets are fun to explore. Pollution is something that is bad here, there's constant pollution, though the days when the wind blows it all away and the sky is blue make you realize how beautiful Beijing truly is. The one gross thing is that people do spit on the streets, but this is getting slowly better. Oh, and people smoke in most restaurants here, which can occasionally get tiring. – (Allison, 8 years)

There are no concerns about safety at night or for singles in Beijing. Children as safe as well. Security isn't really needed although many apartments have guards. The hygiene in China is very hard to adapt to and can be very disturbing at times. Many of the people spit or urinate in public places. –(Mindi-2 years)

One of the safest cities I have ever been in. – (Justin, 8 years)

I never worry about my personal safety in Beijing the way I do when I return to the United States. In 8 years I have never felt threatened. It is difficult for me to imagine having a better quality of life than I have in Beijing. Western food and other comforts such as wi-fi are now more easily accessible than ever. At the same time, I live in a non-western area of Beijing and am immersed in the local culture. I believe I have the best of adventure, new experiences, and the comforts of a familiar lifestyle here in Beijing. – (Mary, 4 years)

I feel very safe in Beijing. Security at the school and the apartment complexes are quite high. Hygiene can be an issue when traveling through China, but it is part of the experience. The city is amazingly clean, but certain areas may not be up to western standards. – (Pat, 2 years 7 months)

I come from New York, and one of the reasons why I decided to stay in Beijing is because you can walk down the streets without looking behind your back very often. This is also dependent on where you reside, but it's generally very safe. I also feel that there is less noise pollution here. Beijing might also seem less hygienic and it's important to know that China is rapidly but still developing and that certain behaviors that we frown on ARE acceptable to others and vice versa. We don't have to follow these behaviors, but learn to almost accept them as our part of life when we are in their territory. – (Mei Ling , 2 years)

As a women, I have never felt unsafe during my time in China, and I can not say the same when I go home to my home town in the States. – (Patty-first year)

China is a VERY safe place. I don't worry about walking around alone or being harassed.  
-(Alexis-2 years)

Beijing is a safe city. Hygiene is ok, although the amount of spitting that goes on is quite impressive! – (Stanley, 7 years)

This is one of the safest places we have ever lived. I eat street food and local cuisine with no ill effect. I can get a latte at Costa or Starbucks for \$5 and also \$.60 Chinese dumplings across the street. It is a nice mix of traditional and more Western culture.-(Sheryl-first year)

I feel very safe living in Beijing, as safe as I did while living in Singapore. Spitting in public is probably one of my biggest pet peeves in China. Everyone does it so taking off your shoes at the door has become a way of life here. – (Michelle, 6 years)

Safety here is very good, hygiene is not so great but as long as you consider carefully what you are coming to and not expect it to be something it is not it is great. Pollution is high here but if this is a concern do your research as this will not change. – (Lara-first year)

### **Comments about learning Chinese**

I love learning Chinese, but I love learning languages. Pronunciation of Chinese is difficult for many people, especially since it is tonal language, but it is excellent exercise for the brain! – (Cheryl, 13 years)

The language itself is a bit difficult to learn because of the tones. However, there are many opportunities to take classes at BISS and outside of school. –(Mindi-2years)

Hard Hard Hard – such a tonal language – I am still trying; Chinese is a very difficult language and very tonal. So there are not a lot of fluent Chinese speakers here who aren't from China. Having said that you can pick up the basics to get you around in a Taxi or ordering meals and what not from shops restaurants fairly quickly. A lot of restaurants have picture menus and there are always lots of alternate restaurants...Thai, Indian, German, Italian, and then of course the multinationals e.g. Sizzlers, Pizza Hut, McDonalds etc. – (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

I have a tutor who comes to teach me Chinese once per week. It's the hardest hour of the week! Learning the language is extremely difficult. However, it's not prohibitive to survival. A few basic taxi phrases and hand gestures will take you a long way. –(Shannon-first year)

Chinese is a very difficult language but once here you learn a survival amount. There are many teachers available and it is simply a question of your intention. Local work very hard to help you understand and the universal language a smile goes a long way.- (Lara-first year)

I've had several opportunities to learn Chinese via 1) a small but effective institute in the west of Beijing 2) language exchanges with a Chinese friend 3) communicating with the Chinese staff at BISS – (Mei Ling, 2 years)

Patience is a virtue. – (Elmer, 14 years)

Difficult but not impossible. I believe that learning the language of the country you are living in is a key factor to authentically experience a new culture. You'll need to learn at least a bit of Chinese to do taxis.- (Alfredo-first year)

It's not an easy language, but Beijing taxi drivers are very obliging when you decide to try out a new phrase on them. – (Akane, 2 years)

Some students and staff offer Chinese lessons during lunch period once a week. Also there are many opportunities to hire a personal tutor. - (Matthew-first year)

Chinese is very difficult to learn, but after 5 months I am getting the survival stuff down. I take a class each Tuesday hosted by students at lunch.- (Sheryl-first year)

Chinese is a tough language. I have taken group lessons without great success. I have picked up some survival/daily living (taxis, restaurants, grocery store...) vocabulary just from hanging out with others who speak Chinese. Recently, I have worked one on one with a tutor. For me, this seems to be the best way to learn Chinese as I can ask questions and direct my own learning to satisfy what I want to learn vs. what is laid out in a textbook. I am also looking into Chinese pod, a series of downloaded lessons and worksheets as these have been helpful to a friend of mine. – (Michelle, 6 years)

## Comments about why we chose to work and stay at BISS

I am very proud to be working at BISS. I just love this small, warm and homelike school. – (Yan, 9 years)

Love the kids – great kids; can save money; can afford to travel and still have a great lifestyle; BISS is a very close school and a wonderful collegiate atmosphere where every one pulls together and works together there are lots of opportunities to work on many different projects throughout the year. Musicals, Sports Days, Houses, Activity weeks, Halloween. Lots of work but lots of fun – (Catherine & Robert, 7 years)

Great kids, few hassles in school (they all have them) but here they are ones easy enough to deal with – when I sit and talk with teachers from other schools I have to admit feeling quite happy where I am. – (Damian, 4 years)

I came to BISS for 2 years, and have been here for 6 so far. The kids are sweet, there's rarely a discipline problem that can't be solved by a stern look, and though the kids aren't highly academically minded they all really do work hard and try their best. – (Allison, 8 years)

It is a small school that is like a big family. Everybody chips in to make it a vibrant, happy and happening place. – (Justin, 8 years)

I sometimes refer to BISS as "the little school that could." We are not flashy and do not have the most posh facilities, but this school has amazing heart. I work with terrific students and talented professional colleagues in an atmosphere that is welcoming and encourages my professional growth. It is difficult to come up with reasons why I would leave. – (Mary , 4 years)

BISS is a nice small school with a family feel to it. It is small enough that you get to know the staff and students across the grades. The teachers are great, hardworking and very dedicated. The curriculum is well-developed and there are high expectations for the students. It is a nice place to work. – (Pat, 3 years)

BISS is a small school, but a warm and good school in which both students and teachers grow together as they learn and teach. BISS is like my second family. Colleagues get along well and help each other. Students feel comfortable at BISS because their teachers not only teach them knowledge and skills, but also are their friends to explore their interests and good listeners while talking together. I like this friendly and diversified environment. I truly feel that I grow as I teach at BISS. I also feel quite rewarding when I see my students growing up to be an independent persons equipped with IB Student Profiles. Working at BISS, I have found the value and happiness in my life and career. -(Brenda, 14 years)

I chose to work at BISS to be a part of a more reputable school in Beijing, receive intellectual and serious professional development opportunities, as well as introduce myself to the PYP world, which upholds a philosophy I agree with. – (Mei Ling, 2 years)

BISS is very nurturing and caring environment both for the teachers, staff and students. It is small and friendly with a fantastic spirit and lots of fun! – (Karen, 3 years)

The student at BISS are a delight! They are the best part of working at BISS. It is a joy be working in a school where the students are so well behaved. My fellow teaching colleagues are very accessible and fun to work and be with. – (Patty-first year)

Small school environment, IB, I already knew people here at BISS prior to getting a job...the school came with good recommendations! No regrets. – (Elmer, 14 years)

Inner city location and the staff is outstanding, and they have that reputation. – (Gary, 3 year)

LOVE the staff – they are the nicest, most capable bunch of people I've ever met. It's a little school where everyone pulls their weight and there are opportunities to try your hand at lots of different professional experiences.

The kids are easy to teach in many ways – they're keen and excited to learn, and they're warm & friendly, which makes for a great school climate . The learning needs of the students are very diverse – nearly all children are ESOL learners, plus there are a few highly gifted students, some native speakers, many students with learning difficulties and beginners who arrive with no English at all. However, the ESOL and OLC teachers provide excellent in-class support and the culture of the school welcomes all and makes it work. –(Shannon-first year)

I came to BISS based on the recommendation of a two friends who really loved Beijing, the atmosphere at BISS and the quality of the people they worked with. BISS is a great school for so many reasons. We have motivated students, dedicated and spirited educators, support for professional development and a collegial environment. Upon arrival, I was very impressed with the school spirit and the dedication of the teachers. I plan to stay at BISS for several years to come. – (Michelle, 6 year)

Definitely teachers are the best school asset. I can honestly say that we have the best elementary school team I have ever worked with. - (Alfredo-first year)

BISS is a great small school with lots of great people. Everyone is quite supportive and experienced. – (Tim, 2 years)

I am thoroughly enjoying my time here at BISS. It is indeed a small school and it is important to know if that kind of environment will work for you but the students are all very well behaved, have a wonderful innocence and as a teacher you are very well respected. – (Lara-first year)

### **Comments about how OUR child (ren) is/are enjoying BISS**

Coming to BISS this year has allowed our daughter, Violet in Grade 10, to expand her horizons through an inclusive and balanced approach to learning. She is receiving the support she needs to do her personal best in the MYP programme and is very active in extra activities including the school musical, the jazz/rock band, and the choir. We have seen Violet's confidence grow in an environment that values individuals and encourages holistic and student-centered participation in learning. Our daughter has had opportunities in the areas of music and drama and she has already fitted in well with her peers. – (Julie & John, 3 years)

My daughter has felt welcomed at BISS and enjoys participating in sports and music activities. The Teachers are encouraging and make every effort to help the students feel successful. I am married with a teaching spouse at a different. I have one daughter in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at BISS and enjoy participating in sports and music activities. The teachers are encouraging and make every effort to help the students feel successful. I am married with a teaching spouse at a different school. I have one daughter in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at BISS and another school. – (Karen, 3 years)

My daughter loves her school – she has had so many opportunities already – sports, student council, drama – a small school allows students so many choices and she has taken full advantage of that. We are still here largely because of her love of her school – there is a nice relationship which exists among 'staff kids'. – (Kirsty, 15 years)

This is without doubt the best opportunity they could have had and they love the school! – (Wayne & Clare, 7 years)

Our daughter entered BISS as a grade 7 student. She was coming from a small elementary school in the United States, but would have entered a very large junior high school had we stayed in the States. She has not only adapted at BISS, she is thriving. She was part of a soccer team that earned 3rd place in an ACAMIS tournament and is now currently part of the Volleyball team. This is a child who has never wanted to play competitive sports. The environment at BISS is very friendly and comfortable to be a risk-taker. Teachers at BISS have been wonderful to assist her in her transition. The lunchroom isn't cliquy. Her friends are genuinely interested in academic success. - (Sheryl-first year)

Our children have benefited greatly from their Chinese and specifically their BISS Experience. At BISS they have every opportunity to participate in sport, drama and other extra curricula activities that develop responsible citizenship. They mix with a wide variety of students from other countries to the extent that being in a homogenous environment is abnormal. At BISS their individuality is valued and encouraged by their peers and teachers alike. Our children feel supported by their teachers who take the time to get to know them for their strengths and weaknesses. – (Ross, 5 years)

BISS is a small, cozy friendly environment defined by the focus the AMT and staff place on building a sense of community. It takes only took a few days for my stepson to feel at home.- (Alfredo-first year)

## 42 reasons for you to come teach at Beijing BISS International School

(Compiled from teacher & Principal feedback)

We offer/We are/We have:	
1. The future leaders of the world in our hands, thus, we have a true impact on a better future – each teacher can make a difference.	2. Student support services to help students with learning and behavioural issues.
3. A school with 20 years of history and tradition in 2014!	4. Small, warm, homelike, friendly, caring, nurturing environment, which feels like family almost immediately.
5. A school with an appreciation for innovation and commitment to growth, development and school improvement.	6. Teachers who are always available when you need help; they go above and beyond duty; they are dedicated and hardworking.
7. Sensitive to the needs of the different cultures with students and parents from over 40 countries and staff from 14.	8. Kids who are eager to learn, study hard, positive and respect teachers.
9. Maintain high academic standards and an inquiry approach as an IB World School.	10. Small school with a big heart; everyone knows all the students and strong relationships are developed.
11. Well adjusted and highly motivated students who are well cared for by their families and who have almost no discipline issues.	12. Kids who have a strong sense of ownership & pride in the school and are very involved in numerous activities because they can join in all of them (regardless of their skill level)
13. Integration into Chinese society and the opportunity to work closely with Chinese colleagues, learn the Chinese language (lessons offered on campus).	14. Inclusive education, for ESOL and Special needs and teachers love to have the in-class support; all have high value at BISS.
15. A strong student commitment to community service and a feeling of responsibility to help improve the lives of many others.	16. Teachers who are willing to set aside time for collaborative planning and are willing to differentiate instruction.
17. A positive attitude toward innovation and support for teacher initiatives.	18. A student centered community school where we can offer each and every student a wide variety of opportunities for their education.
19. Luxuriously small class sizes and size policy.	20. A supportive administrative staff.
21. Leadership opportunities as coordinators.	22. Staff and students who are very happy to be here.
23. Opportunities for input and design of IB curriculum.	24. At BISS, students and teachers develop a sense of connectedness.
25. An abundance of educational resources.	26. A small school that gives teachers a sense of ownership in defining the structure and curriculum. Our teachers have opportunities to tailor their interaction with students.
27. High level of technology, including hardware, software programs & 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning focus; 1 to 1 laptop program; teachers get a laptop, too.	28. Teachers can develop professional learning communities and work collectively to improve their skills and curriculum for their students.
29. Commitment to staff professional development with numerous professional development opportunities on and off campus	30. Teachers in small schools, such as BISS, enjoy collegial work environments, close collaboration with colleagues, and the experience of working together toward a common vision, which is not always found in larger schools.
31. Effective communication and teamwork among staff members.	32. Teachers have ownership of the missions of their schools, thereby impact the levels of student achievement.
33. Positive relationships between teachers and parents and students.	34. High motivation to work hard because they have a sense that they are known by their supervisors or teachers and valued. In a small school, such as BISS there are strong bonds between students and teachers and this generates a level of genuine caring and mutual obligation between them that you don't always find in large schools.
35. Comfortable working environment and location in the centre of Beijing; easy access to any place in Beijing.	36. No high stakes testing ☺ and no child left behind ☺.
37. Strong orientation program and support upon arrival: airport pick up, medical and emergency information & numbers, bank and shopping visits, etc.	38. A two-year contract to start with, and a service gratuity bonus each year.
39. Excellent communication between recruits, Principals, Head of School, buddies, and HR department.	40. A competitive salary, with benefits and bonuses; good savings potential.
41. Extra-curricular coaching/teaching opportunities.	42. Comfortable housing possibilities with free choice of living arrangements.

*"Make that Change!" ☺*

- Michael Jackson