



**VIJAY**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**SCHOOL**  
PRASLIN SEYCHELLES

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## **Teaching at the Vijay International School, Praslin and living in the Seychelles;**

The following provides additional useful information about the school and the country.

### **Working at VISP**

- The school was founded in 2008 on the island of Praslin, which is the second largest island in the Seychelles group both in terms of size and population.
- Currently the VISP roll stands at about 240, with the majority of students Seychellois. The school educates to Year 13. The entry class is Reception 1 (3 years).
- The school delivers a British-style curriculum. In essence this means that we pick and choose how we interpret UK models. We try to keep paperwork to a minimum and if an initiative is unlikely to impact positively on our students it is unlikely to be adopted.
- We do not run any external assessment systems other than IGCSE and A-Level, relying on our own formative and summative assessment systems.
- We have a strong extra-curricular programme as each staff member is required to run one extra-curricular club per week. This enables us to offer a broad range of clubs from sporting, to academic to arts based clubs.
- The school is a not-for-profit institution owned by the parents. It is not a proprietor school.
- The elected Board of Governors is comprised entirely of parents of children on roll.
- We are a small and friendly school. We have high expectations in terms of the conduct and behaviour of our students. We have very supportive parents.
- We have a relatively slow turnover of students. Our intention is for a local student to complete 15 years of education with us on one site.
- We have a strong SEN provision for both EAL students and those with learning difficulties and the delivery of differentiation to mixed ability classes is one of the strengths of the school.
- We have target sizes of 18 (Reception 1) and 24 (R2 – Yr11). Secondary classes average 16 students, Juniors about 20.
- The school is all purpose built and air-conditioned. We are continually improving our resources and facilities. We have a Sport Hall and we also have use of the nearby public swimming pool.
- The school has an ICT suite with 28 computers. The secondary and junior libraries, sixth form common room and SEN room all have a small number of older computers for student use and the staff room has 3 desktops for staff use. Every classroom has a computer for staff use and a projector. The ICT suite is hard wired to the internet with Wi-Fi available for staff only throughout the rest of the school.
- Staff accommodation is of a good quality. We rent houses and apartments from private landlords. If a teacher wishes to move from the property initially allocated he or she can do so within a set budget. Our aim is to provide the kind of accommodation that a teacher is very happy to return home to at the end of a day's teaching. There are excellent beaches in every part of the island.
- We run an in house CPD programme with a range of staff leading regular training sessions in school, although external CPD can be hard to come by. Many of our staff use our relationship with Cambridge Examinations in order to gain additional accreditations. Currently, 5 of our staff are Cambridge Examiners.
- Seychelles has a reputation as a high-end holiday destination. Whilst it is true that it is very pleasant to be sitting on a beach next to tourists who have paid a small fortune to be there, it would be untrue to claim that Seychelles is a complete paradise. There are negative aspects to living here, which are outlined below, but generally teachers who come here do so for the quality of life on offer, both professional and social/domestic.

- The school runs an orientation programme upon arrival; we assist with opening bank accounts, acquiring resident documentation and registering with high commissions. We show you around Praslin and also Mahe, help you hire a car initially and generally do all we can to help you settle in comfortably and quickly.
- Seychelles is a small island nation and as such suffers with occasional import problems. This can lead to delays in the school receiving resources such as paper or photocopier toner. It is therefore vital that our staff are able to be flexible and professional enough to teach for short periods of time without these resources from time to time. Praslin is also prone to sudden power cuts and this can mean whole days without electricity in school. Again, staff must be able to adapt their lesson plan, often with little notice, to teach without electricity.
- There are many social opportunities, both in terms of socialising with colleagues and making new Seychellois friends. The hotels offer the usual facilities and the deal here is that local residents can use hotel restaurants, pools, bars, clubs, etc., without any problem. Many local hotels have good connections with the school, allowing staff discounts on rooms and restaurants and free use of hotel facilities.

### **Within the contract offer**

- Housing is provided free, and the terms of contract also offer
- Medicare cover for all hospital treatment in Seychelles. Any medical problems which cannot, in the opinion of the school's principal physician, be satisfactorily dealt with on Praslin or Mahe are initially referred to The Appollo Hospital Mauritius, and then further afield if necessary. The costs for regular check ups at a GP, prescriptions or visits to the dentist / optician are paid by staff. A visit to a GP on Praslin costs SR200 and prescriptions are generally inexpensive.
- There is a baggage allowance at both the commencement and the end of a contract. In addition to your outward flight allocation a teacher is allowed 50 kgs of personal effects and 50 kgs of professional materials. These are collected from any UK address and shipped to the Seychelles.
- Outward flight at the start of contract and return flight at the end.

All salaries are paid in local currency, Seychelles Rupees (SRs). The school assists teachers with the setting up of monthly standing order (SWIFT) payments whereby rupees may be converted to hard currency and transferred to overseas banks. Once the transfer is agreed the banks are very good at making regular payments. Currently there is no shortage of foreign exchange in the Seychelles. However, until 2008 the country experienced severe restrictions of supply and conditions could of course change depending on the continued economic growth of the country.

### **Living in Seychelles**

#### **·Cost of Living.**

Prospective teachers often ask if it is possible to live on the salaries paid which are, compared to some international salaries, modest. The answer is “Yes”, but this has to be qualified as the cost of some items in a weekly shopping basket can be high. Nevertheless our expatriate teachers manage to maintain reasonably good lifestyles and take advantage of many of the assets of Seychelles. Teachers are allocated National Identity cards and numbers, which sounds sinister but in fact is very positive, as holding such residency status means that you can benefit from exceptional deals in terms of flights (inter-island crossings cost us a fraction of the tourist rate for example), holidays (many top-class resorts offer attractive resident deals, particularly in ‘low’ season) and other benefits.

The cost of living in Seychelles is the proverbial piece of string. Some items are very affordable, for example fresh fish – high quality and a fraction of the UK price, obviously. Fish can be bought at the beach directly from the guy who caught it. Most vegetables and salads/fruits are also reasonably priced and availability and variety is becoming better all the time. We have several good, albeit small, supermarkets, but the price of imported – particularly processed - foods can be high. Think SR55 rupees for a box of cereal or SR90 for a piece of mature cheddar cheese.

Alcohol is not expensive, a decent bottle of wine will cost about SR100, with spirits costing SR285 for local rum (75cl) and 250+ for other spirits. Beer, locally brewed and of excellent quality, is SR24 for a bottle, with imported beers ranging from SR35 – SR50 per can. Petrol is SR21.00 per litre.

A number of ex-pat staff support non-working partners and children, living comfortably on a single school salary, although clearly this requires some budgeting as it would in the UK.

Generally with good management a teacher can eat and live well, explore and enjoy some of the 115 islands of Seychelles, and travel overseas (direct flights to London, Zurich, Paris, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Mumbai, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Kenya, Dubai, Doha, Istanbul and Abu Dhabi with Europe easily reached via the latter 4), on the salary paid.

#### · **Bills**

Electricity (for which teachers are liable for) is on a sliding scale, the more you use the higher the unit charge. An average monthly bill will be several hundred rupees but nowhere near what you would pay in the UK. Your bill depends on the way in which you heat water and cook. Most people prefer to cook with gas but heat their water electrically. Some accommodation has solar energy panels for heating water. Water bills are reasonable; a monthly bill of SR200 would be expected for most houses. Gas is bottled, a large canister is about SR245 and lasts for at least a month even if you cook and heat water on it, but this depends on usage.

Broadband internet is available but is expensive and heavily capped. It is around SR900 per month for 40GB of downloads. It is prone to faults and is slow but is steadily improving. The school has an unlimited internet package allowing students and teachers to make use of online resources and videos in lessons.

Mobile phone coverage on the island is excellent with all parts covered by the local provider. SR250 a month gets you more minutes, some 3g and more texts than most people would use.

Cable TV is available with the usual Sports and Movie packages and a few UK channels. Prices start around SR600 per month depending on the package. That would include Premier League and Championship football as well as most European top flight leagues, Formula 1, around 10 up to date movie channels, ITV and BBC and Sky News.

#### · **Transport**

Car prices are very high due to a 100% or higher import tax. This means cars hold their value and in some cases even appreciate as demand is significantly higher than supply. It is almost impossible to buy any car for less than £5,000. Car insurance is below UK rates, but make sure that you bring evidence of no-claims bonuses as the 'top line' premium here is very high. House contents insurance is cheap, less than £100 will cover an average contents inventory. Car maintenance is relatively cheap; although parts can be expensive and hard to track down, labour costs for a mechanic are very low.

Alternatively, many staff have scooters. These are more reasonably priced, starting at around SR35,000 (new) and are of course cheaper to run and maintain.

Buses in Seychelles are good, running regularly to all parts of the island and costing SR5 regardless of the length of journey. However they do not run at night, limiting social opportunities as taxi services are expensive.

Praslin is small and the longest car journey possible on the island takes 30 minutes. No member of staff has a commute which would take longer than 15 minutes by car.

Domestic flights run throughout the day between Mahe and Praslin and are around SR500 return for residents. The journey takes 15 minutes.

Inter island ferries run between Mahe and Praslin (1 hour, 4-6 times per day) and between Praslin and La Digue (15 minutes 7-10 times per day). Both journeys are inexpensive for residents. Other smaller islands require private boat charter to reach and the cost of this varies depending on the distance of the island. Most of Praslin's neighbouring islands can be reached on a day trip for under SR1000 per person.

#### · **Petty Crime**

There is little crime against the person as a rule in Seychelles, what little there is tends to be domestic. However there is a problem with theft, and an unprotected house or belongings left unattended on a

beach may well attract the wrong kind of interest. Some of our properties have security systems, others have burglar bars. This is not meant to be alarmist, and the chances of being broken into are not that high.

#### **·Health issues**

There are no dangerous reptiles, snakes, animals, etc., on land here. The worst that can happen to you is a centipede bite or a wasp sting (both painful by the way...)

We have mosquitoes but they are non-malarial. After a while they stop bothering you – something to do with the effect of the sunshine on your blood we've been informed.

In the sea, stingrays, stone fish and lion fish are venomous but stings are very rare. You may have read of two shark attacks which took place a few years ago, in both cases leading to fatality. This is extremely unusual. We believe that the last such tragedy took place in the 1960's. There may not be another attack for another 50 years or there could be one next week. Suffice it to say that in terms of incidence this remains an unlikely, albeit recently highlighted, problem.

#### **· Children**

Seychelles is a terrific place to raise children, especially young children. If you are a parent and are tired of the peer pressure upon your child to wear a certain brand of trainers or possess games consoles, then Seychelles may be the place for you. Advertising, whilst present, is limited and, to European eyes, a fairly innocent affair. Plus the low-pollution environment is ideally suited to children (and indeed the rest of us too...). Staff receive significant discounts on school fees at VISP.

If, after reading the above, and the school website you feel that the VISP is the kind of school for you, and that Seychelles is the kind of place where you would be happy, please complete the application process as previously outlined. We will notify short-listed applicants of the outcome of their applications shortly after the closing date. Short-listed candidates will have the opportunity to be interviewed in London. The school regrets that it is unable to assist with traveling expenses. We also offer the option of a telephone interview or a Skype interview.

In the meantime if you have any supplementary questions please feel free to direct them to [recruitment@visp-sey.com](mailto:recruitment@visp-sey.com) and I will reply as rapidly and as honestly as I can.

Thanks again for your interest in the school.

Mark Howell

Headteacher

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