



IDENTITY NUMBER AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Foreign Worker's Identification Number or Residence Number (*Número de Identificación de Extranjeros* or NIE) is the one essential document you will need to have during your time living and working in Spain. This Identification Number (NIE) is required for opening bank accounts, applying for credit in a bank or shops, receiving tax returns, buying a house, buying a car, applying for a Spanish driving licence, general identification and for employment contracts.

The NIE, as well as a Social Security number are legal requirements for the school to draw up your work contract. Staff may also have to register with the Employment office. The school will help new members of staff with these procedures although ultimately they are the responsibility of each individual and have to be applied for in person. We strongly recommend allowing a full working week for these administrative procedures to be completed prior to commencing employment.

In order to apply for the NIE and Social Security numbers you will need copies of your passport, passport photos, a pre-contract and the official application forms – the latter two will be provided by the school.

Contracts cannot start until this process is completed.

MONEY AND BANKING

You will be paid in Euros at the end of each month. Once you have a Bank account you must inform the school's administration of the full account number (20 digits) so your salary can be transferred to you. Your salary should reach your account on the 1st or 2nd working day of each month, but can sometimes take until the 5th of each month (depending on whom you bank with, so please take this into account when setting up direct debits for bills).

Your bank will issue a cash withdrawal card and these can be used widely throughout Spain. Credit cards can be applied for. Some larger shops have their own charge cards but will also take VISA etc.

Banking hours are from 8.30am to 2.00pm. Some banks open on Saturday mornings or Thursday evenings from 4.30pm to 7.30pm. During the summer months (June to September) however, opening hours are mornings only. Please check times with your own bank as the hours may vary.



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TAXES

Whilst working in Spain you are liable to pay Spanish personal income tax - IRPF. This is deducted at source from your salary at a rate which varies according to your gross salary and personal circumstances. Anyone earning above the minimum annual threshold is obliged to fill out a tax return form during May/June, when any tax overpaid from the previous calendar year can be claimed back. The tax office calculates how much you are due according to your earnings and outgoings.

To complete the tax return, you can either go to the Tax Office, **Hacienda**, who will do this for you free of charge or use an accountant, **asesor**, who will charge about 80 euros. You will need to take your NIE number and certificate of earnings provided by the school nearer the time as well as statements regarding interest and/or mortgage payments provided by your bank. The forms must be handed in either at the Tax Office or at your bank.

Money is returned to you from the tax office by the end of the calendar year you complete the return. Some banks, at their discretion, will forward the money to you as a loan although they do charge for this service.

Personal income tax is payable at source, according to each employee's personal circumstances. The Spanish Tax Year runs from January to December and tax is calculated following the national tax brackets. An employee beginning work in September is automatically assigned a non-resident tax rate of 19% for the first six months in Spain. After that, the tax rate is adjusted according to each person's circumstances (married or not, children or not). A tax return is completed each year and some of the first months' emergency tax may be returned to the employee.

MEDICAL/HEALTH MATTERS

There are no particular health hazards in Alicante. Tap water is drinkable although many people prefer bottled mineral water. As the climate is hot and humid, flu and some allergies are quite common.

As an employee of the school, you are covered under the Spanish public health system, which has good facilities but be aware that in some areas it may be hard to find an English speaking doctor.

You should register at your local Health Centre/Surgery on arrival where you will be assigned a GP. Your GP will be your first port of call for any medical issues and will refer you to a specialist if required. Sick notes, required by law on the 4th day of absence due to illness, can only be issued by a GP and not by a private practice. You should carry your medical insurance card at all times (**tarjeta/cartilla de Seguridad Social**). This is issued to you by your doctor.

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In an emergency go to one of the hospitals or health centres with a casualty department.

The school has a medical insurance company which provides care after any accidents occurring within the school grounds and working hours. Every member of staff is covered by this policy. The school is obliged by law to offer an annual medical check-up to all staff.

There are several private health insurance companies in Spain who own and run clinics. Many state doctors also work privately through these companies and have more flexible working hours in their private practices. Under this system you are able to choose your own doctor and specialist. Private health care costs vary according to each provider and the services contracted.

Chemists are open from 9.30am to 1.30pm and again from 4.30pm to 8.00pm during the week and also on Saturday mornings, although some now stay open longer hours. In each area there are two or three duty chemists open 24 hours a day. A list of the *farmacias de guardia* is displayed on all chemist shop fronts and in local newspapers.

The public health system does not cover dental treatment or check ups.

CLIMATE

Winter temperatures are mild, although December and January can be cold and the weather can be damp. The summer months, particularly May to September, can be very hot with temperatures reaching 35 degrees centigrade or above at times.

ACCOMMODATION

Many people in Spain live in flats. However and especially in coastal areas, 2/3 bedroomed houses and rentals are readily available. Houses or flats are usually furnished. A 3 bedroomed furnished house in the area close to the school is likely to cost approx 500 euros, although there are both cheaper and more expensive options. Heating bills are fairly low. Central heating is rare and people use electric radiators or fan heaters or butane gas heaters. Water bills are sometimes included in the *Comunidad* charge – a charge for cleaning of communal areas, rubbish collection etc, but are usually metered charges. Water heaters and cookers often use butane gas bottles. These are very economical and can be changed for about 12 euros when they run out. Some bills are available in English and the main phone company has English speaking operators.

Help with finding a first flat can be given. Please take into consideration that it is very difficult for the School to choose accommodation for another person. The school will make every effort

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to find suitable accommodation in the area preferred by the teacher. This can take some time and availability can vary. Should a flat not be available in the first few days after arrival the School will pay for a hotel room.

TRANSPORT

Bus services within the local area are inexpensive but the punctuality and frequency are not always reliable. If you do not have a car it is probably easier to use the private school bus service. This is not possible on evenings when meetings are arranged, although it is easy to arrange a lift with other members of staff. The school operates several bus routes to bring pupils to school. Staff are welcome to use these services when space is available. Staff who choose to travel to school by school bus are expected to actively support the bus monitor in maintaining good order and ensuring safety.

Coach travel between cities is easy and is the cheapest form of long distance travel. The Spanish National Rail Network (RENFE) has a major station in Alicante. Services to Madrid and Barcelona are good. There are 4 or 5 trains a day which connect with other major cities. All offer comfortable services with restaurant cars, videos, air conditioning and first and second class compartments. It is advisable to pre-book long-distance coach or train tickets especially at weekends and during holiday periods.

Our nearest airports are Alicante (El Altet) and Murcia (San Javier). Alicante is about 45 minutes away and Murcia about 30 minutes away by road but Alicante is the easiest to reach using public transport. Alicante offers more charter flights with low cost airlines such as Easyjet, Ryanair, Flybe and some fly direct to San Javier from UK airports. Winter timetables tend to be more limited. The national airlines also run domestic flights from both airports.

It should be noted that whilst the school does all it can to provide support for a member of staff in all of the above areas, they are ultimately the responsibility of each member of staff.

Villamartín, April 2017