



BRITISH VIETNAMESE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
HANOI
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

WELCOME TO HANOI





WELCOME TO HANOI INFORMATION FOR NEW TEACHERS 2023

After you have spent a short time adjusting to your new surroundings, we are sure you will find Hanoi an interesting and exciting city to live and we very much hope that you enjoy your experience teaching at the British Vietnamese International School Hanoi.

We hope this information booklet will answer some of the many questions you will have about living in Hanoi and make you feel better prepared for your move.

The British Vietnamese International School Hanoi is a friendly working environment and you will find everyone is supportive. When you arrive please do not hesitate to ask any of your new colleagues for help, information or advice. We will do everything we can to make sure you settle in and feel comfortable as soon as possible.

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



Paul Holyome
Principal

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE IN HANOI



Passport

If your passport is nearly full or will have less than 6 months validity on it when you arrive in Vietnam you need to get a new one as a matter of urgency. Bring at least 6 passport size photographs with you. Passport size photos can also be made in photo shops in Hanoi, of which there are many.

IMPORTANT: If you renew your passport while you are in Vietnam please ensure you keep the expired passport in a safe place. You will need to show your first Vietnamese visa when you depart from the country and request a Police Clearance certificate for your time in the country.

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



Vaccinations

It is sensible advice to get your vaccinations up to date before you arrive in Vietnam. If that isn't possible then you can get them done here in Hanoi and probably at a significantly lower cost. However, this will mean that you may not have sufficient protection during your first few weeks in Vietnam. Here is some information about **Vaccinations in Vietnam** <https://www.vietnammedicalpractice.com/hanoi/en/news/vaccinations-vietnam> by one of the international clinics in Hanoi. We recommend you seek advice from your own GP if you have any questions about vaccinations.



What to Bring

To a large extent this has to be your own choice – you could travel light and buy what you need when you get here, or you could freight all your worldly goods by sea or air, but remember that there is only a limited relocation allowance from the school. Your apartment will have air conditioning, cooker, fridge, basic furniture including easy chairs, curtains, dining table and chairs, beds and bedside tables, adequate storage in kitchen and bedrooms. (We will send you typical inventory lists after Easter – exact details may vary from apartment to apartment). You may wish to consider bringing small electrical appliances like hair dryers with you – the availability and range of quality products is limited.

It is possible to buy most things you are likely to need in Hanoi. However, you may wish to consider bringing the following personal items with you, to at least see you through the early weeks while you source your preferred supplier:

- Prescription medications – at least 3 months supply to tide you over until you find out what is available here. Most medications are available at the international clinics, but they are more expensive there than at the local pharmacies.
- Contact lens equipment
- Sanitary products (especially Tampons)
- Moisturiser (including face cream). Some options can be found but is often more expensive and choices are somewhat limited. If you have a specific brand / type that you use, bring a few !
- Cosmetics – a handful of brands are available in shops such as Mint Cosmetics & Guardian. Foundation and concealer is available, but shades are often limited.
- Large sizes of shoes (size 6 and above) and under garments (including tights) for women can be hard to find
- Warm clothes for the winter. It gets cold from November-December until March, so you will need layers. Jumpers, jacket and scarf, and also woollen hat and gloves if you are going to ride a motorbike.
- Strong insect repellent.
- Suncream

UK shipping company (contactable through FB or here <https://ukshipping.vn>) is a great option for getting some items from the UK to Hanoi in a few weeks. You can buy directly from a website such as amazon and order it to the shipping company's warehouse or have a box of a few items packed by friends/ family and sent there. You pay 700,000 vnd per kg.



International Movers

If you do decide you wish to ship some household belongings to Hanoi, be prepared for bureaucratic delays and don't ship anything you will need immediately! Before making a decision please read the guidance sheet "[Shipment of Personal Possessions into Vietnam](#)" which gives more detailed information.

Below are some relocation companies with offices in Hanoi you can contact for information:

Asian Tigers

<https://www.asiantigersgroup.com/>

Crown Relocations

<https://www.crownrelo.com/intl/en>

Santa Fe Relocations Services

www.santaferelo.com





Useful Information

Currency	Vietnamese Dong. 1 GBP = approx. 32,000 VND, and 1 USD = approx. 23,300 VND	
Local Time	Vietnam is GMT + 7 hours	
Language	Vietnamese is the official language. English is increasingly spoken around the city.	
Climate	Hanoi has hot summers with high rainfall and dry cold winters. The city also receives a large amount of sunlight and a relatively high humidity all throughout the year. Although the weather is divided into two main seasons: rainy season (from May to September) and dry season (from October to April), thanks to the transition months, Hanoi still experiences all four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.	
Electricity	The electricity supply in Hanoi is 220/240V AC with standard European 2 pin sockets. Adapters for conversion to UK three pin plugs are easily and cheaply available, although you may want to bring some with you.	
Clothing	Light-weight summer clothing (and a water-proof anorak) is suitable for casual wear during summer. You will need warm clothing, like sweaters, cardigans, winter jackets, scarf, etc. during winter. There is a formal dress code for school, which is in the staff handbook and has already been emailed to you.	
Sun protection	Good sunglasses, hat and sunscreen are essential – bring large bottles if you have children. High factors (above 25) are difficult to get.	
Internet	Mobile data can be used cheaply and easily but broadband is also available. Wi-Fi is often shared in most spaces (such as restaurants and cafes)	
News / Magazines	The Vietnam News and Hanoi Times are two local English language newspapers. VN express and Vietnam News both publish news in English on their websites and Facebook pages. The Word and Asia Life are two local magazines specifically aimed at the expat market.	
Water	The tap water is not drinkable. You will need to buy a water dispenser on arrival and use large 19 litre bottles of water available from La Vie. Most landlords will support you to do this.	
Post	Mail between the UK and Vietnam is slow (2 – 3 weeks) and not terribly reliable. Mail can be delivered to your house/apartment or school. Please note that all mail is routinely opened and inspected. To be confident you will receive post, consider using alternative means.	
Good web sites	www.asialifehcmc.com www.expatriat-advisory.com http://hanoitimes.com.vn	www.newhanoian.com www.wordhanoi.com
Useful Facebook pages / groups	There is a wide range of Facebook groups that are active and regularly updated. You can use the search feature within them to check for previous posts. If you have a particular interest (sports, music, pets) there are specific groups available but a few good places to start are: Wheretothanoi, Hanoi Beautiful and Hanoi Massive	

YOUR FIRST FEW DAYS IN HANOI

The new International Terminal at Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi which opened in January 2015 is modern and is relatively hassle free.

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

If for any reason you arrive without an appointment to be picked up by the school, take a taxi from the official taxi rank outside the arrivals terminal. Do not go with one of the taxi drivers who may approach you inside the terminal building or immediately outside, as they tend to take advantage of foreigners who are new to Hanoi.

You will be taken to your accommodation in one of the school buses and given your relocation allowance. There will be some basic food supplies like milk, tea, sugar, coffee, bread and fruit in your apartment or house.

* Please note, that you might still need to get tested and/or complete health declaration form following the Covid-19 requirement of the airline.

The last day for the arrival of new teachers in Hanoi is Thursday 4th August. We recommend that you arrive in Hanoi between Monday 1st and Thursday 4th August although it is possible to arrive earlier by negotiation. Most new staff arrive earlier than the 4th August in order to give a few days acclimatisation before the more formal introduction to school. The first day for New Staff Induction is Monday 08th August 2022. There will be some social events shortly after your arrival to help you settle into life in Hanoi and to meet new colleagues. A detailed programme for the start of term will be sent to you when it is finalised.

LIVING IN HANOI

Hanoi is Vietnam's capital city, and also its second largest city. It is a fascinating blend of East and West, with Chinese influence from centuries of dominance, and French design from its colonial past. It is largely unspoiled by modern architecture of the 1970s and 80s, and is now going through a modernization that is making it a rising star in Southeast Asia. Its exotic chic of old Asia blends with the dynamic face of new Asia, where the medieval and modern co-exist. A city with a blend of Parisian grace and Asian pace, an architectural museum piece evolving in harmony with its history, rather than bulldozing through like many of the region's capitals.

It is a friendly and very safe city. It is expanding and developing rapidly, but without compromising its history and architecture. This makes life interesting and varied.



Personal Safety

Vietnam is probably one of the safest countries you could possibly live in. However, Hanoi is like any big city in that it is not crime free. Please don't tempt fate, especially when in tourist areas, and always use common sense. The last couple of years have seen an increase in "bag snatches" from motor bikes as they drive close to pedestrians. You are therefore advised not to carry handbags on your shoulder on busy streets where they can become a target.



Getting Around Hanoi

Most teachers get around the city either by a small motorbike or by taxi. Small 125 cc motorbikes are inexpensive to buy or to hire. Many staff use a xe-om (motorbike taxi) to get around the city. It is recommended that you bring your UK driving licence with you. It is easier to convert your UK licence to a Vietnamese licence than it is to undergo a Vietnamese driving test for motorbikes.

It's not difficult to find a taxi on the street at most times, but sometimes it is easier to call for one.

Download the Grab app before you arrive. You can connect a credit card to the app or pay the driver in cash. It is very easy to use and taxis normally arrive within 5 minutes. You can track where your driver is and it also tells you the vehicle registration.



Food Shopping

Hanoi has several supermarkets scattered around the city.

The supermarkets that are closest to the type of what you are used to at home are the Fivimart, Citimart and Big-C supermarkets. These are chains and have several locations. The addresses for some of the locations are as follows:

BigC Supermarket

Address 1: 222 Tran Duy Hung Street, Cau Giay District
Address 2: Savico Shopping Center, Sai Dong, Long Bien District

Winmart

Vincom Towers, 191 Ba Trieu Street, Hai Ba Trung District

Winmart

Serena Towers (Fraser Suites) – second floor, Tay Ho

Aeon Mall Long Bien

No8 Co Linh Street, Long Bien District

Anam gourmet

Serena Towers (Fraser Suites) – first floor, Tay Ho

Annam imports a lot and is a great stop for those 'speciality' western items (think Marmite, Vegemite, Robinsons squash).

There are hundreds of small minimarts scattered around the city which are well stocked. L's place, Quang Ba Mini Mart, Dans Place and Hung Long all stock a selection of Western items alongside plenty of other stock.

Markets - Wet markets are good for buying fruit and vegetables, as well as other grocery items. If you are buying meat or fish from the markets it is best to get there very early in the morning. It is suggested that for washing vegetables you use Vegy-wash.

Bread

One of the great things about eating in Vietnam is that the French bread making tradition has remained. French-style baguettes are the most common type of bread available, but it is also possible to buy sliced white and wholemeal breads. Most supermarkets stock a range of bread and there are also quite a few individual bakeries to choose from. Good quality French pastries can be bought at a number of patisseries.



Clothing

Cotton-based clothing is practical for the climate in Hanoi. There are a number of outlets selling local and imported clothes, including larger western sizes. There is a chain of shops called Made in Vietnam, which sells surplus clothes in western sizes made by the Vietnamese garment industry for export.

The large shopping malls also sell clothes and shoes in western sizes, but they are almost as expensive as in Europe.

Quite a few outlets offer a 'made to order' service for clothes. Dressmakers are reasonably priced and will make almost anything you request, but standards vary. Shop around and find a tailor that suits you.

You may find a tailor who will come to your home. This is usually the cheapest option. You will need to buy the material yourself and have items to be copied or pictures of what you want made. The Cho Hom market in Pho Hue Street, Hai Ba Trung District, has a wide range of materials, and there are several fabric shops just outside this market.

If you want to make a really good bargain, visit Ninh Hiep, the northern region's largest textile market, and probably the cheapest in the country. It is located about 20 km north-east of Hanoi, and about 6 km from the school.

More and more large shopping malls are opening around the city with international shops, such as Gap etc



Hairdressing

There are numerous local barbers and hairdressing outlets of reasonable standard in Hanoi. Some of them include a face, head and neck massage as part of their inexpensive service.

Most salons also provide full facials, manicures and pedicures, and sell hair care and beauty products, on request.

Some salons have 'international' stylists working for them, but they are much more expensive.

It is very hard to find someone who can cater for blond hair but there is one hair dresser that seems better than most - Q-cut! at 53 Au Co – Mobile 0763 580 028.



Banks and ATMS

You are required to open a local bank account in Vietnam into which your salary will be paid. Most teachers choose Standard Chartered or HSBC. You will be provided with more information during the Induction Week and will have the opportunity to meet representatives of both banks.

Once you have opened your bank account the details must then be submitted to the Chief Accountant for salary payment. Salaries are paid into accounts in VND.

There are a large number of ATM's located all around the city.



Dining Out in Hanoi

There are a large number of bars & restaurants to choose from in Hanoi. The range is from street vendors to expensive 5 star hotels and top notch restaurants with menus in US dollars. It can be very inexpensive to dine out each evening if you wish. Here are just a few suggestions to start you off:

OLD QUARTER

Hanoi Garden: <http://hanoigarden.vn/index.html>

This restaurant is very popular with Vietnamese diners, which is always a good sign. It serves southern Vietnamese and spicy Chinese dishes, and has an open courtyard.

36 Pho Hang Manh. Tel: 024 3824 3402

Cha Ca La Vong

This place has been run by the same family for five generations, and serves only one dish: Cha Ca, filleted fish slices grilled over charcoal.

14 Pho Cha Ca. Tel: 024 3825 3929

Pincho Tapas restaurant

34C Cao Bá Quát, Điện Bàn, Ba Đình, Hà Nội

HOAN KIEM

Salt and Pepper

Very popular place for brunch and lunch.

2nd floor, no. 28 P. Tống Duy Tân, Str, Hoàn Kiếm.

T.U.N.G Dining

Fine dining restaurant

2C P. Quang Trung, Hàng Trống, Hoàn Kiếm.

La Badiane

French fusion, more expensive.

10 P. Nam Ngư, Cửa Nam, Hoàn Kiếm

Colette French Bristo and Wine Bar

12 P. Lò Sũ, Lý Thái Tổ, Hoàn Kiếm

Pizza 4P's

Very popular and the pizzas are amazing

11B, Bao Khanh Alley, Hoàn Kiếm

TAY HO

This is the area where you will find the largest variety of western food.

Bao Wow

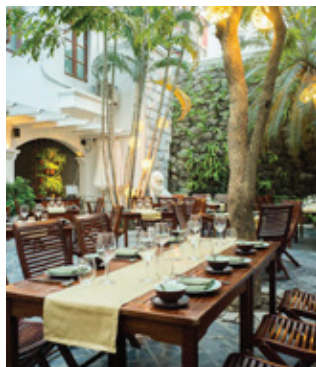
An Asian fusion restaurant which is a local favourite for many

No. 31a Alley, 12 Đặng Thai Mai

Chao Ban

Vietnamese food in a more formal setting

98 Đ. Tô Ngọc Vân, Quảng An



Grumpy dumpling

Fusion dumplings

37 Ngõ 52 Đường Tô Ngọc Vân, Quảng An.

Turtle lake brewing company

Serves craft beers, events and western food.

105 P. Quảng Khánh, Quảng An, Tây Hồ, Hà Nội

Hanoi cider house

A great option for a good roast dinner

278 Nghi Tàm, Yên Phụ, Tây Hồ, Hà Nội

Hanoi sandwich house

A good option for lunch soup, jacket potato and sandwiches

166 Từ Hoa Công Chúa, Quảng An, Tây Hồ, Hà Nội

Los Fugeos

Argentine steak and grill

12 Đặng Thai Mai

Pepe la Poule – amazing views and huge menu.

Fusion restaurant

22 P. Quảng Khánh, Quảng An, Tây Hồ

El Loco Tapas Bar – Spanish tapas

65 Ngõ 52 Đường Tô Ngọc Vân

Maison de Tet

A nice place for brunch with views of the park and lake

26 P. Quảng Bá, Quảng An, Tây Hồ

Eastern oriental

Great cakes and you can get birthday cake made here.

46 Quảng An, Tây Hồ

Italian

Dragonocello

Nice for a special occasion as the dishes are more expensive.

201 P. Vệ Hồ, Xuân La

Pizza Belga

Pizza and pasta

225 Đ. Âu Cơ, Quảng An, Tây Hồ

La Bottega

Sometimes they have events on they also have a very small menu for eat in and takeaway (this is also a small deli)

46 Tô Ngọc Vân, Quảng An

Cugini

They have a fire in the winter and a roof top area

67 Đ. Tô Ngọc Vân

Naco Taco

166 Từ Hoa Công Chúa, Quảng An, Tây Hồ, Hà Nội.

A wide selection of food is available to order on the 'Grab' app (which is similar to Uber) or through directly messaging the restaurant on Facebook. Delivery is quick and fresh.



Bars And Nightclubs

There are many good bars and restaurants in Hanoi. Many night clubs are centred in the Old Quarter, Tay Ho or Truc Bach areas.

Bia hoi places

All around the city you will see signs for “Bia Hoi”. This basically means home brewed beer. They are usually outdoor beer gardens, crowded with Vietnamese men. Bia Hoi is not strong, but very cheap, typically 3,000 – 5,000 dong per glass. They often have snacks and barbequed food.

The most popular place for foreigners to drink Bia Hoi is the intersection of Ta Hien Str. / Luong Ngoc Quyen Str. in the old quarter, where Bia Hoi is served on all four corners.



Recreation And Leisure

Cinemas

There are several cinemas in Hanoi which show current releases in English with Vietnamese subtitles. CGV is very well priced and offers the most recent showings. Locations can be found here:

<https://www.cgv.vn/en/cinox/site/>

Golf

There is a number of good standard golf courses around Hanoi, but membership and green fees are expensive. Hanoi Club (<https://www.thehanoiclub.com/>) has a driving range on the edge of West Lake, where balls are shot into the lake.

Football

Friendly Friday football takes place most weeks after school. If this is of interest to you, join the Whatsapp group for more information. If you play at a more competitive level, there are other local teams available.

Hanoi Hash House Harriers

This is a walk/run that is held on Saturday afternoons. It's a good way to see the countryside and meet people socially. Hashers meet at the American Club, 19-21 Hai Ba Trung, at 1:30 pm. You can contact them through their website <http://www.hanoi3.com/>

Other sports

There are plenty of Sports Teams scattered around the city. These include Gaelic football (Viet Celts), Rugby (Hanoi Dragons) and Netball (Hanoi Oi's netball club). The best way to find the most up to date, useful information and to contact the clubs is through their Facebook pages. These can be found through a quick search or in the groups mentioned earlier in this pack.

Quiz

There are several local quizzes that run throughout the week. "The Local" in Tay Ho runs a weekly quiz for teams of 6 where money raised goes towards a monthly charity. <https://www.facebook.com/thelocalhanoi/>

Live Music

Hanoi Opera House is a small scale replica of Paris' Palais Garnier, the smaller of Paris' two opera houses. It was built in 1911 by the French, and has been restored to its former glory. There are periodical performances of classical music and sometimes opera and ballet. The atmosphere is incredible, and must be experienced, even if you not that much into classical music.

<http://www.ticketvn.com/shows/what's-on-and-how-to-buy-tickets.1-Pho-Trang-Tien-street,Hoan-Kiem-district>

You can also become part of the performance by joining The Hanoi International Choir, which is always looking for new members. Rehearsals: Monday evenings 7.30 - 9.30pm at VNOB (Nha Hat Nhac Vu Kich) 11 Ngo Nui Truc. For more information contact grahamhn@fpt.vn

Minh's Jazz Club is the place to go if you like jazz. The owner, Quyen Van Minh, teaches saxophone during the day and jams here at night with various musicians. Great atmosphere.
31-33 Pho Luong Van Can, Hoan Kiem district.



Bringing Children to Vietnam

We believe that giving your children the experience of living in another culture is enriching and advantageous. Of course we can all experience culture shock, but remember that children adapt far easier than adults and happy parents will make for happy children!

You will find that the International Medical Clinics are helpful and thoughtful if you need to attend them with your child.

Your children will enjoy the wide variety of cuisine offered out here and they will be able to find things that they enjoy and also sample new delights! Eating out with children is fun and restaurants make them feel welcome.

Framing is inexpensive in Hanoi and bringing in your suitcase a few photos of friends and family to put in your child's room can make them feel at home. Also a new pillow case and quilt cover or an old favourite can quickly bring a child's room to life and make them feel good about their new bedroom. It's natural to feel concern bringing your child/children to a new culture but in our overall experience they will survive and, far more than that, they will thrive!

Finally, at risk of stating the obvious, they will get the opportunity to attend a first class school and be taught by great teachers in the company of other motivated children who all want to do well.



Churches, Temples and Mosques

The majority of Christian churches in Hanoi are Catholic, with the main one being the St. Joseph Cathedral at the end Nha Tho (Church) street. Built in 1886 in the Neo-Gothic style, it is also a tourist attraction, and holds several masses throughout the day and is usually crowded on weekends and religious holidays.

Hanoi International Church holds services in English every Sunday at 10:30. It is located at the Hanoi Club, 76 Yen Phu street, at West Lake





Medical Services

There are several international clinics for expatriates, but below are a few of the most commonly visited. These clinics provide a range of medical services and they can arrange evacuation to Singapore or Bangkok for treatment in the event of a medical emergency or serious illness.

Family Medical Practice

Van Phuc Compound, 298 I Kim Ma Street,
Ba Dinh District
Tel: +84 4 3843 0748
<http://www.vietnammedicalpractice.com/>

Raffles Medical International Clinic

Fraser Suites, 51 Xuan Dieu St., Tay Ho Dist.
Tel: 024 3934 0666
<https://www.rafflesmedical.vn/>

The school health insurance company will help to cover the cost of health care. More details will be sent to you at a later stage.

HOSPITALS

There are two hospitals of international standard:

Hanoi French Hospital

No.1 Phuong Mai street, Dong Da district
Telephone: 84-4-35771100
<http://www.hfh.com.vn>

Vinmec International Hospital

458 Minh Khai, Vinh Tuy, Hai Ba Trung district
Telephone: 04 3974 3556
vinmec.com



Pharmacies

“Nha Thuoc” means pharmacy.

You will find plenty of pharmacies throughout the city selling drugs at very low prices. Check expiry dates on these before you buy.

The expat medical clinics (see above) also have their own pharmacies although these are much more expensive.

OPTICIANS

Japan International Eye hospital
32 Phố Đức Chính, Trúc Bạch, Ba Đình, Hà Nội



Technology in Hanoi

Mobile phones

You can purchase a mobile phone from any of the many mobile phone shops that are just about everywhere. Prices are similar to UK or USA and the latest models are available.

We strongly recommend that you unlock your current mobile phone before arrival and bring it with you so that it can use the available networks here. You should speak with your provider before you leave the UK.

Vietnamese SIM cards are easily available. The school will provide you with a local SIM card in your welcome pack which can then be topped up in a few ways. The easiest, and quickest is through mobile banking (with Standard Chartered). You can also buy pre-paid top-up cards just about anywhere.

Facebook is one of the most popular ways for locals to communicate. If you do not have it, downloading just the messenger app is advised as this makes life a lot easier.

Software

Vietnam has very relaxed copyright laws and piracy is the norm. It is actually much harder to find legitimate copies of software. There are many shops specializing in general software and games for Play Station and x-box. You can buy a pirated version of any software for under USD 1. Quality is generally fine, you may get occasional glitches. If you have any problems you can usually exchange for another copy.

