

FAQs for New Teachers

St Andrews Samakee New Staff Induction 2023-24

St Andrews Samakee is an inclusive child-centred British International International School with 150+ students aged 1+ - 14+, located in Nonthaburi in the suburbs of Bangkok. Our school calendar is organised into a two-term year.

We are very proud to have been awarded OUTSTANDING in all areas by EDT during three consecutive accreditations and the last one took place in May 2018: ISQM (International Schools Quality Mark) and BSO (British Schools Overseas).

We have tried to consider as many potential questions that new staff may have in the lead up to joining our school and in the initial weeks of arriving as possible.

Please read the information carefully and keep this document to hand in order that you can refer back to it over the coming months.

As always, should you have other questions or require further clarification on any of these points, please do not hesitate to ask. Your first point of enquiry should be your Phase Leader.

Further information about our school can be found on our Website, Blog and Facebook. See links below:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/st.andrewssamakee/>

Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Hj8LUod3TSPbHmz47>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sassamakee>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/standrewssamakee>

Website: www.standrews-samakee.com

Safeguarding

The school takes safeguarding children very seriously and before arrival all staff will be subject to rigorous checks, including identity checks, criminal background checks, qualification checks and employment checks and two satisfactory professional references which will be verified.

I've just received a job offer, what do I do now?	Our Head of School, Monica Sudhirak will write to you with an official job offer letter which will include information about salary and package. Once this has been accepted, and all references have been received (if this was not done before the interview), you will be sent two copies of your Contract of Employment, one of which you are expected to sign and return to school.
Who will be my points of contact in advance of starting my employment at Samakee?	<p>We will send and receive emails from the application@standrews-samakee.com email address in regards to all matters relating to visa administration and contracts. This address is monitored by SLT and the school office.</p> <p>Amber Punyaratabhan, our office manager and Bank Showiwattana, our Government Liaison Officer (Visa applications), will be your main points of contact in the school office. You will also be contacted between now and your start date by Kedsanee Pongkanmoon, our IT Manager, in order to set up email accounts and access to online school information.</p> <p>Closer to your start date, contact will be made by your Phase Leader, partner teacher/department teachers and a buddy teacher. We will also, with permission, put all new teachers in contact with one another.</p>
Will I get a school email account?	One of the first things we will set up for you is your school Gmail account. Once this is done, all correspondence with you will be to this new school email address. As a Google School, we use Google Drive and will share documents via the drive in the lead up to your arrival.
For teachers moving to Thailand from another country	
What do I have to do in my home country before I leave?	You are required to obtain your initial visa for entry into Thailand from the Royal Thai Embassy in London or from the Royal Thai Consulate in Birmingham, Cardiff, Hull, Liverpool or Glasgow. This is a category B, Non-Immigrant visa, which allows you to stay for up to 90 days. Office staff will be in touch with you soon to guide you in the visa application process, at which point we will ask you to inform us as to which embassy or consulate you will use. There are a number of documents required, often originals, and there will be many forms for you to sign. This will all be organised into a 'Visa Pack' and sent to you from the school office in advance. Please be informed that visa applications are a lengthy process and the administration required

	<p>often varies from year to year and applicant to applicant. This is a challenge for the school office but we will endeavour to make it as smooth as possible by keeping you fully informed at each stage of the process. In return, we ask that you inform us immediately of any potential delays in sending/receiving documents and ask any questions to ensure that you know what is expect of you.</p> <p>If you have not received your Visa Pack within three weeks of returning your signed contract, please let us know.</p> <p>Once you have obtained your visa and are on your way to Thailand, remember to write this visa number on your arrival card before coming through immigration at Bangkok Airport. This is important, if you do not do this you will automatically enter Thailand on a 3 month tourist visa and will have to begin the visa application process over again.</p> <p>Once you are in school, SAS's Government Liaison Officer staff will begin working on your application for your first 1-year visa and your work permit. Please refer to 'What paperwork do I need to prepare and bring with me' for details of the documents required by our Government Liaison Officer to apply for your work permit.</p>
When do I have to arrive in Thailand?	<p>If you are able to arrive a few days before the start of INSET days, we recommend it. It can be hard to take in all the new information and cope with the excitement of being in your new home whilst suffering from jet lag. INSET days and term starting dates are published on the school calendar. School is open and office staff available throughout the long summer holiday and members of the SLT will be on call to offer support.</p>
How do I get to Thailand and who organises my flight?	<p>We ask you to book your own flight over. This can be an economy seat on any carrier. When you arrive in Thailand, give the receipt to the accounts office and you will then be reimbursed.</p>
What happens when I arrive at the airport in Bangkok?	<p>Once you send school your flight details, we will arrange for the school bus service to collect you from the airport and let you know who this will be. The arrivals exits at Suvarnabhumi Airport can be confusing. Please look for signs directing you to the meeting point and from there, look for exit door number 5. Your driver will be waiting there, holding a sign with your name. If you wish to make your own arrangements, this is fine too, just please inform us.</p>

What do I need to bring with me?	Most airlines have a 20k – 30k luggage allowance and paying for additional bags can be very expensive. You will obviously need to bring clothes (see below) and personal items but household essentials can be purchased easily once you are here.
What paperwork do I need to prepare and bring with me?	<p>Documents you need to bring with you to Thailand in order to apply for a work permit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your passport. Copies of your passport will be made once you arrive at school and you will be required to sign each page. 2. 12 passport type photographs (2" size) & 12 passport type photographs (1" size) - wearing formal dress. 3. Original degree certificate, degree transcript and teaching qualification. 4. A certified letter in a sealed envelope from your university to prove and confirm your attendance there. 5. Recommendation Letter from previous job 6. Signed Contract 7. The school will assist you in obtaining an up to date DBS check for you before you leave the UK.
What sorts of clothes do I need to bring for school?	At school, you are expected to dress practically for your job. It is usually very hot outside and so cool fabrics are best. Men are asked to wear a collared or polo shirt and long trousers, and women to avoid thin shoulder straps and short skirts. Jeans are to be avoided. In line with Thai culture, we remove our shoes inside and teachers are encouraged to wear a hat on playground duty. For more information, please refer to the dress code section of your contract.
Where will I stay when I first arrive?	For staff arriving from abroad, school will provide you with, and cover the deposits and rental for, an apartment for your first three months. We will equip the apartment with a few basic necessities such as bedding, kitchen utensils and some food and drink ready for your arrival. Wi-fi will also be installed. Utility bills, including Wi-Fi, will be delivered to your mailbox in the condominium and it is your

	<p>responsibility to make sure they are paid on time. The school office staff will be happy to show you how to pay bills once you are here.</p> <p>After three months, you are responsible for either extending your existing contract or finding an alternative permanent residence. Existing staff will be on hand to offer guidance over locations and rental agents to support you in moving if you chose to do so. If you wish to make your own arrangements for accommodation upon arrival, please let school know of your plans in advance.</p>
What if I want to ship some belongings from home?	<p>Lots of people ship belongings over as it is cheaper than bringing them on the plane. Use an international shipping company in your home country for this. You are welcome to ship things to the school address but be sure to check about tax and duty that may need to be paid upon arrival in Thailand.</p>
Can I exchange currency when I arrive?	<p>All banks and currency exchange booths will exchange most foreign notes but please be aware that they have strict rules. Notes with small tears or any writing on will be rejected so please check carefully before you arrive.</p>
For teachers already living in Thailand	
Can I come into school before the start of the academic year?	<p>Absolutely! Feel free to let us know when you would like to drop in, whether for a casual visit, to meet with other staff or to actually get involved and do some teaching.</p>
What paperwork do I need to provide the school before the start of the school year?	<p>Documents required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your passport - a copy will be made at school and you will be required to sign every page 2. 6 passport type photographs (2" size) 3. Original Degree Certificate and teaching qualification (Copied + signed) 4. A certified letter in a sealed envelope from your university to prove and confirm your attendance there. 5. Recommendation Letter from previous job (Copied + signed) 6. Signed Contract

	<p>7. Your Thai Work Permit</p> <p>8. A letter from your previous school stating that you are no longer employed by them.</p>
For All New Teachers	
How can my class start getting to know me?	You will be asked to provide an Introduction Letter/Video that will be sent to families of children in your class and shared with the children themselves on Move on Morning if you are unable to be there. If you would like to record a video message or arrange a time to Skype with the children, please let us know. More details about, and examples of, introduction letters will be sent to you before your arrival.
Can I bring my own resources?	Absolutely, although please feel free to check with us to see if we already have items that you would like to bring.
How can I find out additional information about what I will be teaching?	<p>Once you are in Thailand, you are welcome to come into school and browse resources and planning. Our INSET days before the start of term will provide lots of opportunity to discuss planning and teaching in more detail. If you would like access to more information, planning formats and existing plans etc. before then, these can be made available on the Google Teacher Drive. We are aware that many new teachers are still employed and therefore busy with existing jobs elsewhere, therefore, we try not to overload you with information prior to arrival. However, if you <i>would</i> like more information, please feel free to ask.</p> <p>Tabietha Sudhirak - First School Phase Leader: tsudhirak@standrews-samakee.com Hannah Ridd - Middle School Phase Leader hannah.ridd@standrews-samakee.com Nicky Page - Upper School Phase Leader: npage@standrews-samakee.com</p>
Can I begin reading school policies before school starts?	We do expect staff to read our policies and we understand that you may wish to get started on this prior to arriving. You will be sent an invitation soon to join Firefly where you will find all our policies.
How am I expected to plan?	Units of work are planned using the framework of the 2014 National Curriculum and Development Matters for EYFS.

	<p>We do expect teachers to plan and prepare medium term plans for their topics/units of work each year, ensuring that teaching is relevant to their current class and differentiated to suit the needs of all pupils. We do not provide teachers with 'ready made' lesson plans that they are required to teach from but we do have our own Samakee Curriculum Subject Guidelines to support teachers in adopting the Samakee ethos.</p>
Starting School	
When does term begin?	<p>Term 1, 2023-2024 begins the Week Beginning August 16th 2023. Term 2, 2023-2024 begins on January 9th 2024.</p>
What will happen during the initial INSET days?	<p>New teachers will begin with a tour of the school; meetings with the IT department to set up all accounts and provide an overview of ICT expectations; bank account set up and an opportunity to meet with SLT to begin the initial induction requirements. Existing teaching staff return to school on Wednesday 14th August and will combine with new staff for the remaining three INSET days. More detailed information regarding INSET days at the start of term will be sent nearer the time.</p>
What is the pattern of the school day and when am I expected arrive in the morning?	<p>Staff are expected to be in school at least between the hours of 7:15am and 3:30pm. Staff are expected to be prepared to teach and have the classroom clearly organised for the daily sessions in good time for the start of the day.</p> <p>First School (EYFS & Y1) start the day with Meet and Greet between 8:05-8:15 then all join in our morning Move It programme followed by the flag raising.</p> <p>Middle School (Y2-Y5) take part in Jump Start from 8:00 - 8:20am and then head straight to classrooms for a prompt start at 8:25am.</p> <p>Upper School (Y6-9) are in class for tutor time/citizenship session at 7:30am</p>
What and when is Orientation Evening?	<p>Orientation Evening takes place in the first few weeks of term (August). It is an opportunity for the parents to meet their child's teacher and an opportunity for teachers to share lots of important information with parents. Teachers usually give a presentation to outline their expectations of children and parents and provide an overview of the year. Class teachers share online Curriculum Maps and Home School Link letters. We will work together to produce</p>

	these in the first week of school and previous examples will be shared with you before this.
What is the Buddy System?	Before you start at Samakee, we will put you in touch with other new staff and relevant existing staff via email. Upon arrival, you will be matched up with an 'in-school mentor' who can offer support and guidance on school related matters; this is usually your Phase Leader. You will also be paired with a 'social buddy' who can offer support on matters relating to settling in Thailand and the more social aspects of school life.
Settling into Thai Life	
Where can I live?	There are many different locations available for living. Your initial thought should be whether you wish to be close to school or if a more central Bangkok location appeals to you. The best way to get to know your options is to talk to others. We will be allowing time during our INSET day to discuss this and we can put you in touch with agents who will search available properties for you.
How do I go about finding a house/apartment?	There are agents in Bangkok who will search for places based on your criteria. They are free to use. (landlords pay for the service). Alternatively, if you have decided on a location and/or condo/house you like, you can usually walk in and ask their reception staff about empty units. There are a plethora of empty apartments in Bangkok and finding availability isn't usually a problem. Once you've found somewhere, either your agent or the office staff at school can help you to negotiate your contract. It is usually only a matter of days between agreeing a contract and moving in.
What deposit will I have to pay for a house or apartment?	It is standard to pay the equivalent of 3 months rent in advance. This includes a month's rent in advance and a deposit equivalent to 2 months that will be returned to you on completion of your contract, subject to contract. It is important to thoroughly check your new place, making sure air conditioning is working and that any existing damages are recorded by you and signed by the landlord to avoid having to pay for repairs when you leave.
Will I need to buy my own furniture?	Most apartments/houses in Bangkok come fully furnished so it is unlikely that you will need to buy any furniture. However, it is important to check the details of what is included and be sure to check the inventory when signing your contract.

What will I need to buy?	Some apartments even come with basic kitchen equipment such as pots, pans, plates and cutlery, bed linen and cleaning equipment. However, you may wish to buy your own, as well as things like towels and decorative items to make your new place feel like home. School can provide transport for a trip to Ikea during the induction weekend to help you get hold of any essentials you need for your first few weeks.
Can I get support with familiarising myself with my journey to and from school?	When you arrive we will provide a taxi card detailing the school address in both English and Thai. We will arrange transport to school during the initial INSET days for those staying in school assigned accommodation. For further information about transport to and from school, as well as around Bangkok, we recommended speaking to other staff that may live in a similar location.
I would like to learn to speak Thai, how can I go about this?	There are hundreds of Thai language schools and centres both in central Bangkok and close to school. The best way to find a good school/teacher in your area is to ask other staff/new friends for recommendations. If you are keen to get started before your arrival, www.learnthaifromawhiteguy.com is a popular online course which offers free introductory lessons. There are also apps such as Luv Lingua which provide a good starting point. Once term begins, introductory Thai language lessons will be offered to new teachers by our Thai staff.
Do you have any tips for meeting people and making friends in Bangkok?	There are many different groups, clubs and organisations that you can get involved in. These include expat groups, sports clubs and meet up groups. A good starting point are the links in the 'Cultural Differences' question below but again, speaking to people living here already is the best source of information.
How else can I begin to understand cultural differences, especially those that I may experience at school?	There are many cultural differences that you will encounter working at an international school. The most important thing is to be open to learning about them and respectful of differences that you come across. At school we make the most of CPD (staff meetings), these take place on Wednesdays 2:45pm to approximately 4:00pm, and informal discussion to address cultural differences and make sure that all staff are aware of and are promoting the school's values and ethos.
What do I do if I need medical attention?	You will be issued with your medical insurance card when you arrive and this should be kept on your person at all times. You will need to show this when using a medical service.

	<p>Unlike in the UK, there isn't a GP service - all medical issues are dealt with in clinics or hospitals. Once you have found somewhere to live it is wise to register at your local clinic or hospital and office staff are happy to help you with this. However, you can walk into any hospital at any time to see a doctor, without prior registration should you need to.</p> <p>191 is the Thai emergency number. 1155 is the Thai Tourist police number (English Speaking)</p> <p>Please be aware that these emergency numbers are not manned as efficiently as in the UK therefore we recommend of having contact details on your phone/person of a Thai speaking friend who could help you in case of an emergency.</p>
How do I get reimbursed for medical costs?	<p>If you need medical treatment while your are in Thailand and the treatment requires payment, you can claim reimbursement through the school office using a Medical Reimbursement Form (MRF). Teachers are requested to attach the original receipt and Medical Certificate from the hospital/clinic with the MRF.</p> <p>There is an excess fee of BHT 1,000 per medical treatment which is covered by the teacher, and the remaining balance is covered by the school.</p> <p>For in-patient hospital treatment, you must show your insurance card and contact the school office to inform them of your hospital stay.</p>
What about food at school?	<p>School provide a wide variety of lunch choices. There is a Thai and Western choice everyday as well as a salad bar and break time snacks. If you wish to have school lunch, a charge of 130B per day will be deducted from your salary. Coffee and tea are available for free but for staff with more refined tastes in coffee, percolated coffee is available for 110 Baht per week.</p> <p>We do not allow any nut products in school.</p>
How can I set up a bank account?	<p>The school office will set up a Kasikorn bank account for you as soon as you arrive. Even if you have an existing Thai account, we ask that you allow us to set up a Kasikorn account for your salary.</p> <p>Please note that the ATM card you will be issued with can be used as a debit card to pay for items in stores both in Thailand and abroad but it is not possible to use it for making online payments. If you wish to make online payments from your Thai bank account, you will need to request a 'Web Shopping' card from the bank.</p> <p>Credit cards can be applied for once you have your bank account set up.</p>

	In Thailand, unlike the UK, ATMs give out the cash first followed by the card - many people end up losing ATM cards by walking away once they have their money and leaving the card in the machine!
How will I get paid?	Your salary will go into your Kasikorn bank account on the 25 th of every month. If this day falls on a weekend or public holiday, it will go in on the previous working day.