

# SHANGHAI: SUBURBS



Every year, Shanghai is one of our most popular placement locations, and rightly so. It has charm, bustle and is jam packed with new and exciting things around every corner.

## Salary & Accommodation

The monthly salary for the suburban placements in Shanghai is 11000 RMB. In addition to this, the school a housing allowance of 1500 RMB for those living and working in the suburbs of Shanghai. Most of our teachers try to spend half and save half, be it for travelling or to take back to the UK.



Your school will help you find an apartment by assigning you an estate agent. If you would like to live with other people, do enquire about the number of foreign teachers living in that area, as it may well be possible for you to live together. The estate agents will show you a handful of places, varying in size, location and price. Once you have chosen a home and signed the contract you are almost always free to move in as soon as you like, so it is not uncommon for 'house hunting day' to become the day you actually move in!

The location of your apartment is largely up to you; living in the suburbs it is worth looking into how long it will take you to get into the centre. You will very quickly grow tired of a commute which could be up to an hour and a half! Living in the suburbs is far cheaper, leaving plenty of money free for travelling, however, some people would still rather live downtown.

## Classroom Life

Class sizes can vary massively, from as little as 15 to a packed room of 50. However, it's important to remember that whatever the number, you will very quickly adjust!

For larger class sizes, it is important to split your class up into manageable chunks, be it row by row or girls vs. boys. This is key anyway for team games, but also helps you see the class as a few smaller, more manageable groups rather than one big whole. Do not worry about learning everyone's name, especially in these larger classes, but do try and make feedback personal to individuals by not giving the same praise to everyone. For example, if you do not know a student's name and say "well done, you did a great job," then turn to another student and say "well done, you did a great job" to them too, the first student will feel that their praise is less valuable. Keep things simple, manageable and personable!

The majority of placements within Shanghai are in primary school and middle schools. Primary schools normally go from 6-11, and middle schools cover from 11-16. You will have a say on what kind of age group you would like to teach, as it is very much personal preference.

Your time table may swap and change a lot, but you will quickly get used to living on 'China Time,' where things move around a lot, often impacting your whole day of classes. This is all part of the China experience!

A typical contract may stipulate that you must work up to 26 periods per week. One period can be between 35 minutes to 50 minutes, depending on the age group. In the suburbs it is unusual for a foreign teacher to work the full 26, with 10-15 hours being the average workload. In some cases, teachers have had a whole morning or afternoon off!

Much like in the UK, Chinese schools mostly operate Monday to Friday between the hours of 7:30-4. Within the school day there is normally a ten minute break between classes, which is signified by a bell or by music playing over the tannoy system. Younger students will also have an extra five minutes twice a day to do their eye exercises. These eye exercises are designed to improve blood circulation and relax muscles, and are normally accompanied by music over the tannoy to help the students count. Lunch breaks are often long in Chinese schools, giving everyone time to relax, eat and even nap at their desks.

### **The best 5 things about the Shanghai suburban placement**

1. One of the fastest growing cities in the world is right on your door step
2. There is a huge expat community, giving you the opportunity to meet even more new people from different cultural backgrounds
3. The travel opportunities from Shanghai to the rest of the world via plane or train are endless – be it bullet trains to Beijing or last-minute flights to Thailand
4. Food glorious food. Shanghai has everything you could want and more
5. There is always something new to see or do, from heading up to the top of a brand new sky scraper to admire the view, to mulled wine at a pop up German Christmas Market