

# A GUIDE TO YOUR LONG TERM PLACEMENT



WRITTEN BY FORMER TEACHERS FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

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# VISA, FLIGHTS AND INSURANCE



## VISA

To be able to enter China and legally work there you will need a visa – specifically, a (Z) Work Visa. In order to obtain this your school will need to collect and send you a series of documents, which they cannot do until you have provided them with the following documents:

- Signed contract
- Medical document (some schools require a full medical check, others accept a basic statement from your GP confirming you are in good health)
- Official statement confirming you have no criminal record
- Copy of degree certificate
- Degree accreditation
- Reference letter by employer or academic adviser
- Completed TEFL

Once your school has these documents they can begin applying for the documents you will need to apply for your Z visa. They will send these to you in the post and once you have these documents you can apply for your visa through the Chinese embassy.

Within 30 days of arriving in China your school will help you upgrade this visa to a residence permit in a Public Security Bureau (police station). This permit should expire at the end of June, and allow for multiple entry, meaning you can leave and return to China during your year abroad without difficulty.

**Please refer to our “Visa Application Guidance” form for more detailed information.**

## FLIGHTS

Although you may be eager to get your flights booked as soon as possible, please wait to do this until you have got your visa. There can sometimes be delays with the visa process, so it is better to wait until you have it, rather than risking missing the flight and wasting money. Your school will only pay for one outbound flight.

Around the time of the orientation day you will be given an idea of the most convenient time of arrival in China regarding the airport pick up service waiting for you. Websites such as Skyscanner are good for finding the best flight deals, especially if you need to book last minute.

Check your contract carefully, because some schools set a limit on the amount they will fully refund. Some will refund the flights in full at the end of your contract, while others will refund half once you have completed the first semester and the remaining balance at the end of the contract.

There is no need to book a return flight, unless you know when you will be coming home. Your school should give you details on refunding return flights nearer the time. If you plan to travel after your contract it's worth noting that some schools will only refund your flight home if it leaves from China. If your visa has expired by then, it is still possible to fly back from China so long as you re-enter for the sole purpose of catching a connection home.

**As soon as you have booked your flights, please email us the details: departure and arrival cities, date, time and flight number**

## **INSURANCE**

While in China you will need specialised insurance. We work with a specialised travel insurance company, more information about their packages can be found on our website: [http://teach-english-in-china.co.uk/?page\\_id=2014](http://teach-english-in-china.co.uk/?page_id=2014).

Some schools offer minor accident cover as part of their contract. If this is the case, ensure that you ask your coordinator which hospital your insurance covers, because normally, it will apply in one specific place. This school insurance may also only cover incidents that happen whilst you are in your city or on school grounds, so check this and make appropriate arrangements for cover for holidays and trips.

# PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION



## **BANKING & FINANCE**

It's a good idea to inform your bank/building society at home that you may use your credit/debit card in China. Even if you don't intend to use it abroad it's better to be safe than sorry, plus it's easily done online or in branch and could save you hassle further down the line!

It is unlikely you will receive your first pay cheque until the end of September, so make sure you can sustain yourself until then. We recommend £450-500 on top of any rent/deposit costs. This should easily cover settling in costs, transport from Beijing to your city and food at the camp (which will be later refunded).

Please note we offer an optional trip to the Great Wall at the end of the training camp, which costs 200-300RMB (approx. £20-£30)

## **STUDENT LOANS**

If you are a student graduating this summer and have been in receipt of a student loan, you should inform Student Finance England that you are leaving the country. If you don't make them aware of your situation, they are likely to contact you via post and no response can land you in trouble! It's easy to do, just fill in and send off this form:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/slc-overseas-income-assessment-form.pdf>

## **HMRC**

It is also important to inform HMRC of your employment status and whereabouts. This will ensure there are no gaps in your employment/tax history and will prevent any accusations of tax avoidance.

Towards the end of your placement it's important that you ask your school for a certificate of salary or equivalent document clearly showing how much you have earned and taxed.

This document should also state that you only worked between nine and ten full months (allowing for Spring Festival break) as this does materially affect your total earnings for the year. Such evidence may prove invaluable in the future, when requested to provide evidence of income to SFE or HMRC.

## **PHONE CONTRACTS**

UK mobile phone networks are not suitable for use in China, as you will be charged an extortionate amount for texts, calls and data. Therefore, if you have a UK phone contract with time left on it, it may be worth finding out the cost of buying out of it in comparison to your monthly payments.

It is also a good idea to get your phone unlocked before you leave, unless you plan on buying a Chinese one when you arrive.

## **VPN**

It may come as a shock to some, but internet sites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google (including Gmail) are blocked all over China. If you want to have access to such sites you will need to purchase a VPN connection, a programme which directs your internet server through that of another country, enabling you to access blocked websites. It is much easier to get a VPN while in a Western country, so it's preferable to arrange this before you leave home.

There are many options ranging in cost from free upwards. The most reliable one from our experience is Astrill, priced around £27 for 6 months, or £45 for one year. It is a matter of personal choice whether or not you choose to buy a VPN, but many of our teachers do so in order to maintain familiar internet services and contact friends and family at home.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

How well each school is equipped in terms of overhead projectors and internet access can vary greatly, but in all situations teachers have found using their own personal laptops vital for lesson planning and games. In previous years, some teachers have tried to use only iPads for these functions and found this difficult. By all means bring an iPad as well as your laptop, but your laptop will be your go-to for school work.

A portable memory stick is another essential item to pack so that you can transfer work from your own computer to the school network. It's always good to have a second copy of your PowerPoint and warm up/cool down videos too in case of any technological faults.

It's also a good idea to have a watch for the classroom, as more often than not the wall clocks will be wrong!

## **TEFL**

The TEFL qualification consists of a 60-hour online course and the two-week training camp in Beijing. Many teachers in the past have noted that the online course actually took them a lot less time - around 30 hours. This should be reassuring to those who may be anxious about the time commitment involved in the training and particularly those students for whom final degree deadlines and examinations are fast approaching.

Once you have completed the final online test you cannot revisit the content, so it is worth taking notes as you go along.

If you already have a TEFL from previous experiences, please say so, as you may not need to complete the online course. However, you will still be required to complete the Beijing training.

## **ORIENTATION DAY**

Included in the cost of the package is an orientation day, normally held towards the end of July in London. We cannot stress enough the importance of this day; it is a chance for you to meet everyone who will be travelling out to China with you, to get more information on lesson planning and day to day life and to learn some basic phrases in a Mandarin taster session.

Former teachers from the programme will be there to discuss their experience and offer advice, so it is an ideal opportunity to put your mind at ease over any last-minute queries which may not have been answered elsewhere. Our teachers have been through the same process and are familiar with how you may be feeling, so feel free to bring along a list of things that you are still unsure about!

For most teachers going for the first time, working in China represents the beginning of a challenging but hugely rewarding adventure, so it is good to be as fully informed as possible before departure.

## **FACEBOOK GROUP**

To help our teachers get in contact with each other, we set up a Facebook group each year. One of our former teachers will be in the group to answer any questions you may have in the run up to leaving. It's also useful for keeping in contact when in China and for sharing lesson materials. Once it has been created, the link will be sent out to you via email.

## **MEDICAL**

We advise that you check with your GP well in advance which vaccinations you will need for your time in China and anywhere else you may visit. We can't advise you which ones you should get, however we can say that some are provided free on the NHS, so do your research!

It sounds obvious, but make sure you are up to date with routine checks and the dentist etc. you don't want to have to do any of this when you are there!

## CLOTHING

Most schools have a 'business casual' dress code, but how seriously this is taken varies drastically from school to school. Some insist on shirts, smart trousers/dresses all year round, whereas others allow a much more casual wardrobe of long shorts and t-shirts/polo shirts. In all schools women should avoid short skirts/dresses and spaghetti strap tops, and everyone should avoid flip flops. If in doubt just pack clothes suitable for a professional environment.

If you wish to travel lightly and buy clothes when you arrive, please be aware that unless you are in a larger city like Shanghai or Beijing, clothes that fit Western body shapes can be difficult to find. Shops like H&M can be found outside the metropolises, but these can be expensive. Shoes in particular are tricky to buy in larger sizes, especially if you are a woman above a size 6 or a man above a size 8/9.

When planning your wardrobe, research the average regional temperatures in your assigned town or city at different times of the year. Many people don't realise how drastically temperatures can change in China, so it can come as a shock for some when the winter arrives! Thermals may seem silly when you arrive in the heat of the summer, but you will be grateful for them later when the cold sets in. Despite this, southern cities such as Shenzhen has a mild climate all year round.

Things that are worth buying in China are a winter coat and a towel.

## PACKING

Below are some items we recommend taking:

- Photocopy of passport, visa and National Insurance card
- Insurance details
- Passport photos
- Paracetamol, cold and flu tablets etc. (difficult to find in China)
- Spray deodorant and for girls tampons (neither are available in China)
- Blank set of Christmas cards/English gifts

# ARRIVING IN CHINA



## TRAINING CAMP

Upon arrival in Beijing, you will be picked up from the airport free of charge and taken to the hotel, where you will attend one day of training workshops with teachers from other UK companies, like the British Council, before moving to a summer school on the outskirts of Beijing to begin the practical part of the TEFL. As this is the final stage of the qualification you must complete it to obtain your certificate.

The 2-week training camp is very intense and can be a shock to the system, but it is an extremely fun and rewarding experience that will undoubtedly build your confidence as a teacher. Two or three teachers will be assigned to one class to deliver the lessons, meaning that although you will teach alone others will be there to offer support and help with lesson planning. The certificate will be presented to you on the final day of the training camp.

It's worth noting that due to the high amount of online traffic from the teachers trying to plan lessons during the camp, the hotels internet may be much slower than usual. Therefore, it is a good idea to arrive with a rough plan of what you will teach along with some videos and images to support this. Although you may not know the age and ability of your students before you arrive, ideas for topics and games that can be adapted to match the needs of different age and ability groups will save you a lot of time and stress both at the training camp and when you arrive at your school. You can find plenty of ideas in our lesson plan library to help give you some inspiration.

Several teachers choose to arrive in Beijing early to explore the city. If you decide to do this, it must be arranged and paid for by you.

These two weeks are a great chance to practice your teaching skills, use your creativity and get to know our other teachers.

## ARRIVING IN YOUR CITY

After the training camp, you will head to your new city where the adventure begins! The contact from your school should be in touch to arrange meeting you at the station and within 24 hours of your arrival they will take you to the Police station to register. This is something that must be done for all foreign nationals staying somewhere other than a hotel or guesthouse.

## ACCOMMODATION

Unless otherwise stated in your contract, your school will provide your accommodation. This can be on or off campus and may or may not be equipped with kitchen appliances and bedding etc.

New high rise apartment blocks are being built at considerable pace, so it is not unusual for teachers to move into an apartment that has been unoccupied for 6+ months. If this is the case, the place may need a 'spring clean'. The landlord should pay for this cleaning, but if they don't, then bear in mind that a fair cleaning rate is 25RMB per hour (around £2.50). It should not cost more than this. Some teachers decide to hire a cleaner for the year, your 'wàibàn' (coordinator) should be able to help you find one if you wish.

If you would like to live with or near other foreign teachers do say so because, if it's possible, they're likely to be able to make it happen, or else place you in apartments nearby. Just ask your school about other foreign teachers in the area.

Your contract should state if you are to pay your own household bills. Some schools will cover them to a certain limit. Household bills are very easy to pay – often you can pay them over the counter in some convenience stores if you take a printed bill with you. Electricity tariffs are generally cheap in comparison to Western prices, but this of course depends upon usage; you could pay up to £50 p/m if you use it often.

You may or may not need to purchase internet access in your accommodation. When it comes to internet in China you get what you pay for; the more you pay the better the speed. Prices are similar to those in the West.

## FINDING ACCOMMODATION

Some schools do not provide accommodation, in which case they will help you find an estate agent. If you would like to live with other people, do enquire about the number of foreign teachers living in that area.

Estate agents normally charge a fee of between 10% and 35% of the cost of one month's rent. They 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 move in.

The cost of rent varies considerably depending upon location. For example, a flat for three people could cost £350pp in the centre of Shanghai and only £120pp in the suburbs. Do your research and consider what you're willing to pay.

Don't be afraid to barter when it comes to paying the rent. Landlords normally ask for three month's rent upfront, meaning you could need around £1100 readily available for move-in day, including a deposit. However, many landlords are flexible about this, and will let you pay monthly. Most teachers do not bring cash with them to pay the initial rent instalment. Instead they use a bank card to withdraw the money when it is required. If you choose to pay this way, it's worth noting your banks daily withdrawal limits.

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

As detailed in the TEFL course, culture shock is something everyone is likely to experience in one way or another when moving abroad. Adjusting to a foreign culture is a very personal process, so there are no hard and fast rules about how long it will take you to settle in and to feel comfortable in your surroundings. There will of course be highs and lows of your experience, so it's important that you have people to speak to on those days where the cultural differences are getting on top of you.

There are several aspects of Chinese culture that in Western cultures are commonly seen as wrong. For example, children are frequently seen urinating in the street, public spitting is widespread and queuing is not a social norm.

These things are likely to seem bad mannered, baffling and downright frustrating at times but, it's important to remember that in China such behaviour is normal and is not done to cause offence.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

As the initial stages of the culture shock wear off and you are familiar with your new city, China will most likely become a home away from home. However, this won't prevent the feeling of homesickness, which can creep up on you when you least expect it.

Again, this is a very personal thing which everyone deals with differently, however here are some tips from former teachers on how to deal with it:

- Be proactive; make plans, accept invitations and take all the opportunities you can. This will keep you looking forward to things and take your mind off what's happening at home
- Take your hobbies with you; acoustic guitars, ukuleles, sketch books & water colours. This will provide you with something familiar to do if ever you feel down
- Regular contact with home; Skype can make it seem as though your friends and family are just around the corner
- Establish a routine; this will help you feel in control of your new life, keep you busy and enable you to enjoy what your city has to offer
- Hangout with other foreigners; they are likely to have a good understanding of how you are feeling and are the best people to vent to! Some of our teachers have attended concerts by big Western names such as Ed Sheeran. Such activities can be a great taste of home

The goodbyes on the way out will be hard, but so too will they on the way home. You'll be surprised by how emotionally attached you'll become to your school and local area!



## YOUR SCHOOL

You will learn a lot about the Chinese culture in your workplace, but something you should be aware of before you arrive is the concept of 'guanxi' (关系) which translates loosely as the 'relations/relationship'. This is a central idea in Chinese culture and is all about connections, relationships and respect. Put simply, if you do someone a favour or treat them kindly, they will do the same for you.

It is important you respect this by being punctual, friendly and always willing to help. Offering your assistance with English classes or marking will benefit your relationships with your colleagues, who will be willing to help you if you have any problems, which will make settling in easier for you.

It's unlikely that everyone in your school will speak English, and often those who do will be very shy about speaking with a foreigner. If you are friendly and welcoming, they'll soon realise you aren't as scary as you look! The head of English will most likely be your lifeline within the school, though they will be extremely busy, so help out where you can or offer them resources that you have found.

You will quickly realise how busy the students are too; their day typically begins at 5/6am and doesn't end until they've completed three to four hours of home study after their day at school. Afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities can be of real benefit but do not try to push them on your school if they do not ask them of you, as most of the students may not have time to attend. Your school should tell you if you are required to set your students homework.

Foreign teachers do not usually have their own classrooms, but instead move to where their students are. For this reason, you should ensure you can carry your resources with you.

Depending on the age of your students, you may have to set or help with exams. You should never be left alone with this task so don't worry! Normally, you will work in conjunction with the head of English or other English teachers in your faculty to create a paper and mark scheme.

Your school or academy should assign you an English speaking 'wàibàn' (coordinator) to help you with any personal or professional problems you may have, e.g. if you need to visit the doctor, they're the person to ask. Treat them well because they will be your lifeline.

## **PLANNING**

The more lessons you plan, the easier and quicker it becomes; you will soon build up a bank of ideas that you can apply to various topics and ages groups. Your students too will quickly learn how you structure things –the games you play often will not need explaining, and they will learn to understand your gestures and key words. Lesson planning is much more about quality than quantity and it's important to prepare engaging activities and have a lively and enthusiastic attitude that engages the students.

## **REWARD SYSTEMS**

Each teacher uses their own reward systems within their classes, but often stickers and stamps are very effective, particularly those with English words on.

It is likely that very young children won't have a formal exam at the end of the year to test their learning, so it is important in such cases to push short term goals, using sticker charts or team points. Competition is a great tool to use for all ages.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Disciplining the students will mostly be left to the Chinese teachers. However, it is important to establish ground rules and silencing techniques with your students from the outset. Chinese students are generally very well behaved, but they can be loud and distract one another. If you do not lead the class, they will.

Introduce your own systems of dealing with this that the students can familiarise themselves with. Effective methods are;

- Knocking points off during team games for poor behaviour
- Writing names of loud students on the board for their class teacher to see
- Using 'repeat after me' clapping or counting systems to quieten the group

You should have a Chinese teacher in the room with you, but that may not always be the case, so you still need to be able to manage your class well without them.

## **CHINA TIME AND HOLIDAYS**

Timetables, work days and holidays in China do not always seem to operate to as rigid a timetable as we are used to in Western cultures. You may not be told about a class change until you turn up to see your classroom empty, and it's likely you won't discover when your school will break up until a fortnight before. Things may move, change or be cancelled all together for no apparent reason. You should remember that it's never personal; it's just part of the Chinese culture that can take time to get used to! Sometimes it will work in your favour; you might finish early on a Friday or have an unexpected day off.

There are several National Holidays in China throughout the year that differ in length. The calendar below outlines the main ones. In some cases, such as Spring Festival each school will have its own rules on how many days off you will have.

| Holiday               | Days off   |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mid-Autumn Festival*  | 1 day, Sept/Oct                                  |
| Golden Week           | 7 days, 1 <sup>st</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> October |
| Spring Festival*+     | 3-6 weeks, Jan/Feb                               |
| Qingming              | 1-3 days, April                                  |
| Dragon Boat Festival* | 1 day, May/June                                  |

\*These holidays are determined by the lunar calendar, so can fall on different dates each year.

+ Your school will determine if you are paid during this break, it should be in your contract.

Following certain holidays the Chinese government declares an official working day on either a Saturday or Sunday to make up for the missed day of work. It's a bizarre rule that doesn't make much sense, but it is important you check with your school around each holiday if you will be expected to work a weekend. Otherwise this website publishes the official calendar so you can check; <https://www.thebeijinger.com/blog/2015/12/11/official-2016-china-holiday-schedule>

Unfortunately, few schools will allow you to take Christmas Day off. However, you may be encouraged to teach classes about it and to lead festive activities which can be a lot of fun.

## CHINESE BANK ACCOUNT

Your school will help you set up a new bank account with when you arrive in your town/city, into which your salary will be paid each month. When you receive your new Chinese bank card it is important to make a note of the details on it – this makes it much easier to replace should you lose it.

Once your new bank account is set up, transferring money into your UK account is possible, however as a foreigner this can be extremely difficult. Therefore, asking a Chinese friend to help may be better.

Transferring through banks can be quick, but costly. A simpler and more cost-effective option is 'Alipay', an app used by most Chinese people. This app calculates the transfer fees before you agree to the transaction, meaning there are no hidden costs. If you have a trusted Chinese friend, ask them to make the transfer for you. This will however mean transferring the sum of money to their account (hence the word trusted).

For both options, you will need; your UK bank branch SWIFT Code, your personal IBAN number, your banks address, your UK account sort code and account number.

## MOBILE PHONE

Your school will help you set up a Chinese SIM card, usually with one of the big names such as China Unicom or China Telecom. It's a good idea to download 'WeChat', the popular Chinese version of Whatsapp.

## SAFETY

Generally, China is a very safe place in which to live and travel. However, as in most busy tourist cities around the world, foreigners can be targeted by pick-pockets and scams so it is important to take care of belongings and beware of suspicious people.

One common scam in big cities is the 'tea scam.' This will normally involve a young Chinese person approaching you, claiming they want to practice their English with you and offering to take you to a nearby tea house or 'tea ceremony'. Once the tea is finished the bill will be presented and it will be astronomically high! If you refuse to pay things can get nasty. There is a similar scam involving art galleries and the "Chinese Picasso". If such a person approaches you kindly decline their offer to go to the tea house/visit their art gallery.

When catching a taxi, always go for a marked, city licensed cab. These can be found in taxi ranks outside any train or subway station, or can be flagged down in the main street if they have a green light on the top. Avoid any unmarked cars or drivers eager to give you a ride. Remember you should

never have to barter for a taxi - they should always run on a meter. Make sure the driver starts it at the beginning of the journey.

## **POLLUTION**

Although improving, pollution is still a problem in China, especially in the larger northern cities. Attempts are regularly made to attempt to clear smog, with factories being forced to close for the day, or driving restrictions being enforced. Spending a few years in China is unlikely to have an effect on your health.

## **FOOD AND DRINK**

You should not drink water straight from the tap in China, however if you boil it first it is perfectly safe to drink. If you would prefer not to do that, bottled water can be found all over and is very cheap to buy.

When in restaurants it's best to use the phrase "búyàobīng" (no ice), as this is often made using tap water and is unsafe to drink.

Food plays an important role in Chinese culture and you will never be far from a restaurant. There is a huge street food culture in China; pavements across the country are lined with sellers preparing all kinds of different delicacies.

We advise being careful about what you eat from such stalls, especially when you first arrive, as the meat can be left to stand uncovered for hours. Just use your common sense when it comes to things like this; if it doesn't look safe, don't eat it.

It's not unusual for the stomach to struggle to get used to new foods and new bacteria at first, but being wary will go some way towards preventing illness.

## **LEARNING MANDARIN**

Although will not be expected to speak or understand any Mandarin when arriving in China, we do encourage you to try and learn the basics. We work with an experienced Mandarin teacher who will give a short introductory lesson at the orientation day. With patience and a willingness to learn it's not as difficult as it seems! People in shops, on public transport and at your school will be eager to help you learn their language, so use these opportunities and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Finding a private tutor is a great way to help you progress. The price of private lessons can vary from around £10-£30 per hour, but again don't be afraid to barter the cost. A good place to find a cheap rate is at Universities, where there will undoubtedly be people studying to teach Mandarin as a foreign language, eager to get some extra practice and make some extra money.

The free app 'Pleco' can be a life saver when out and about, allowing you to take a photo and get the definition of a character. It can even say the word for you!

Several people suggest focussing on spoken Mandarin rather than reading and writing to speed up your learning, but you are likely to be familiar with a handful of characters you see frequently.

## TRAVELLING

Living and working in China not only gives you the opportunity to live as a local, but the chance to visit other parts of this vast country. The National Holidays provide a great opportunity to explore other provinces, but beware; you aren't the only ones wanting to travel – National Holidays are popular times for the Chinese to visit other cities and can be unbelievably busy. For that reason, it is wise to get your transport and accommodation booked early.

China has a great train system that allows you to get almost anywhere in the country. There are a range of trains varying in speed and price.

[www.travelchinaguide.com](http://www.travelchinaguide.com) is a reliable site to check timetables, information and book through, however it is cheaper to buy tickets directly at the station. Many railway stations have an English-speaking desk.

You need to take your passport for all travel within China, even within the same Province. This is used as your ID card, which all Chinese citizens must carry. When booking trains or planes online, sites will often ask for a scanned version of your passport.

Some of the bigger cities in China have extensive and efficient metro systems, which are a quick, reliable and cheap way to get around. City Metro Map apps are available and can be very useful.

Hostels are very cheap in China; a dorm bed costing between £5-£10 and a private room £15-£20.

A great way to avoid the crowds during Chinese holidays is to travel outside of China. Many of our teachers have done this, visiting South East Asian countries, or heading further afield to Australia.

## TEACH ENGLISH IN CHINA RESOURCES

- Instagram: [teachenglishinchina](https://www.instagram.com/teachenglishinchina)
- Youtube: 'Teach English in China' channel
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Teach-English-in-China/8861318597>
- Website: [teach-english-in-china.co.uk](http://teach-english-in-china.co.uk). Our website is packed with information, articles and photographs from former teachers
- Lesson plan library: <http://www.teiccorner.co.uk/Login.aspx>

# AFTER YOUR PLACEMENT



## GETTING YOUR LUGGAGE HOME

At the end of the year you may find that you have accumulated a lot of things; clothes, gifts from students and teaching materials add up!

If you are flying home directly from China at the end of the year, it's easy to add an extra suitcase onto your flight ticket, otherwise a good option is shipping. This can be done through China Post for around £30 (depending on weight) and will take around 2 months to arrive. There are concerns over the safety of this, so we advise keeping any items with high financial or emotional worth with you. Another option is booking through a UK overseas delivery company. Although more expensive than China Post, it is safe, reliable and quick, delivering your package home in less than a week.

Please note that Chinese law prohibits the shipping of any items containing lithium batteries.

## HELPING TEACH ENGLISH IN CHINA

We encourage our foreign teachers to stay involved with Teach English in China after their placements have finished. You can do this in many ways – from helping out at careers fairs and lectures, sending on your photos or writing articles about your experiences in China. If you have an idea for an article or would like to work for Teach English in China in any other way, email Arnold Vis at [arnold@teach-english-in-china.co.uk](mailto:arnold@teach-english-in-china.co.uk)