

Having Fun @ CA International College



INTERNATIONAL
COLLEGE

Many schools call this an employee handbook.

We call it **HAVING FUN @ CA INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE.**

Because we are a school that believes in creating an environment with maximum 'funness' for our staff, teachers and students.

And your journey starts here.

Version Control

Version / Date	Update	Update by Personnel
1.0 / 3 June 2016	Release of version 1.0	Learning and Academics
1.1 / 7 June 2016	Inclusion of additional information under 'Relief Teacher'	Learning and Academics

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Welcome to CA International College

Welcome to CA International College! We opened our doors in 2009 as Heartpower TESOL. Since the beginning we have invested in the principles of high quality, research affirmed teaching methods. In 2011 we entered the world of English teaching and partnered University of Cambridge for teacher training. We became CA International College in 2014 and the rest, as they say, is history.

Our Identity and Values

Our identity is best encapsulated in two powerful words - **Why Not?** It signifies *infinite possibilities*. It encourages *thinking out-of-the-box*. It's about embracing *unconventionality*.

Our values are drivers to achieve infinite possibilities. They are people-centred and interdependent, working collaboratively to create our dreams for tomorrow.

1. **People** - Celebrating diversity, growing professionally and personally in a fun and accepting environment.
2. **Community** - Making a difference in people's lives and engaging in meaningful community causes.
3. **Relationship** - No relationship = no people = no community.

Ambassadors of the School

You represent the school and we rely on you to do so faithfully. That's why it's important for you to know us for who we are, our beliefs, values and how we work together to make this place different for our students.

Who's Who?

Learning & Academics

Arthur Elfin Chiang
| *Prince of Learning*

Zakhir Salleh-Chew

| *Director of
Directions*

Sales, Marketing & Operations

Amy Sun
| *Queen of All Things*

Anna Bednarek
| *Grammar
Gladiator*

Teaching
Faculty
(ESL
Teachers)

Teacher
Training
Faculty
(Teacher
Trainers)

Finance

Xiaoman
| *Controller
of Monies*

*Sales &
Marketing
(Korean,
Japanese &
Chinese
Markets)*

*Sales &
Marketing
(Teacher
Training)*

Responsibilities of Teachers

Please refer to your Teaching Contract for the full list of responsibilities.

Conflict of Interest

Occasionally, we offer private or small group tuition for students who are interested. This is coordinated by the school. You are not allowed to approach our students if they wish to have extra private lessons or advertise your availability through our students. If you are unsure what is permissible, please approach the Prince of Learning for advice.

Fun Hours

Working hours are known as fun hours here because we expect everyone to have fun in our daily work. While classroom teaching hours are from 9:30 am - 4:30 pm (including a 1-hour lunch), full-time teachers are expected to be in school from 9:00 am - 6:00 pm. Singapore time, please.

Contract teachers are not required to stay past their teaching hours, though there may be occasional meetings or events where attendance is strongly encouraged.

Dress Code

Being in a fun environment means freedom to express your individuality and creativity, including what you wear to work. But we do expect some common sense here. Business casual is strongly encouraged in maintaining a professional look. We didn't think there's a need to explain what business casual means (Google it if you must!).

Accessories usually adds a touch of colour and fun but please make sure they match. Fashion disasters are frowned on, and of course, we aren't going to be responsible if you lose your Mikimoto pearls on school premises, although we'll certainly help look and maybe offer some Kleenex.

Allocation of Courses

Teachers are allocated classes based on two factors - school needs and committed hours in their contracts. We can take your requests into consideration but this is subject to meeting of these two factors. Allocation is done by the Prince of Learning and announced to all teachers a month before classes commence.

Allocation of Classrooms

Rooms are allocated based on current and projected numbers. This may require you to move around. So please make sure you leave the classroom setup EXACTLY the way it originally was. If you can't remember what it looked like before your herculean effort to move tables and chairs then look at the layout on every classroom door. Leaving it in a messy state is bad classroom practice.

On a side note, we do expect teachers to change layouts to mix it up a bit once in a while. Do not let the students get used to any one layout. Pedagogically, different layouts facilitate different things. So a good teacher uses this to their advantage. Using the U shape forever and ever is Usually Uninspiring.

Classroom capacity needs to be taken into consideration so the layout will need to facilitate that. Often clusters maximise floor space.

DO NOT move tables and chairs out into corridors. Fire Safety issues are our main concern.

Placement of Students

It's important students are placed in the right level of study. Every student undergoes a Placement Test to determine their proficiency level. The Placement Test consists of THREE (3) components:

- Component 1 - Grammar and Vocabulary (25 min)
- Component 2 - Reading (20 min)
- Component 3 - Speaking (5 min)

Components 1 and 2 are administered by the Sales and Marketing team. Based on the interim result, students attend a trial lesson (see below).

Trial Lessons

Students are allowed one free trial lesson before signing up for a course. We will make every effort to inform you early but last minute walk-ins are sometimes inevitable. You are not required to note them on your attendance but we'd like you to include them in all your class activities and discussions.

After the trial lesson, the class teacher will administer Component 3 with the students. This can be done individually or in a group setting. Result for Component 3 is recorded and handed over to the Sales and Marketing team to determine the level of study.

School Terms

We don't have 'school terms'. We run our courses on a **6-month cycle**. Every cycle is called a '**Learning Wave**'. This applies to ALL courses - General English, Conversation English and Business English. Course book selected for each class is completed in each **Learning Wave**. Typically, each calendar year has **TWO** Learning Waves - in January and in June.

One of our unique selling points is the flexibility we offer to our students. Students can join a class anytime of the year. We don't believe in making students (and learning) wait. This means while some students start their learning at the beginning of each Learning Wave, you will expect new students joining the class anytime within each cycle. We ask that you help integrate these new students into the learning environment.

See [Assessment for Students](#) for more information.

Our Students

It's imperative you know a little about your students before starting.

a. Motive to study

We have 2 types of students. Most of them are home makers or working adults from overseas.

- i. Home makers are interested in learning English for social reasons and to attain a level of English to "survive" in a foreign environment. Some need to learn English because they are also looking for work and need a certain level of English to get work.
- ii. Working people are very motivated. On most occasions, those who are Japanese and Koreans need a certain level of ILETS/TOEFL scores for promotion. They are particularly interested in conversation skills (listening and speaking) with an emphasis on pronunciation.

b. Homework

We encourage you to give homework. When you give your students homework, be mindful of their other responsibilities at home or work. Some travel considerably at times.

c. Students' Expectations of Teachers

All students, especially Koreans and Japanese, respect their teachers. But you must earn this respect over time. They expect questions to be answered timely and correctly. They expect professionalism. Many of them were professionals in a previous life.

d. Face Saving

Japanese and Koreans place strong emphasis on **accuracy** in spoken English. European and Latin Americans tend to be more **fluency** focused. The concept of 'losing face' cannot be ignored by a teacher. Students don't like making mistakes for all others to see (or hear). It's imperative that you create an environment where making mistakes is OK. Be very careful with error correction and not to single individuals out. This **CANNOT BE STRESSED** enough. Make existing students welcome new students.

e. Know Your Grammar Because They Probably Do

Koreans begin learning English at a younger age compared to Japanese. Their levels of English are generally higher. Their knowledge of grammar is also higher. They learnt English as a second language and were taught grammar. So prepare yourself for grammar related questions, and likely lots of them.

Classroom Equipment and Teaching Resources

Every classroom is equipped with:

- One LCD TV that works as a projector, with integrated audio system
- HDMI cable to connect the LCD TV to a laptop
- A whiteboard (it's not interactive because we expect teachers to create human-to-human interaction with students)

Every full-time teacher is assigned:

- A stationery box
- A school laptop with wireless internet connection
- An individual cabinet for laptop and teaching resource storage

Other teaching resources include visualisers, projectors and CD players. These are available on request only. Please approach the Grammar Gladiator for assistance. For refill of classroom supplies, approach the Queen of All Things.

Teachers must take responsibility for the use and secure storage of laptops and all resources assigned and will be liable for damages if they magically disappear or are damaged. If you are being replaced by a relief teacher, ensure that everything is in working order. When you come back, do the same because you will be responsible for the equipment.

Course Material and ESL Library

Course books for the different classes are determined by the Prince of Learning in consultation with teachers at least ONE (1) month before classes commence. Teachers will be assigned a copy of the Teacher Resource Book (and accompanying Audio CD/DVD ROM), Student Book and/or Workbook for the classes assigned. Please do not write, draw or doodle in them.

Our ESL library has a collection of excellent teaching materials and teachers are strongly encouraged to consult these additional resources for teaching purpose.

Steps must be taken to preserve the library to avoid inconvenience to any teacher from the loss of books and resources. Please return them to the library immediately after using them. Leaving them unattended on tables, chairs and anywhere will always result in their disappearing. They are also not to be taken out of the school premises.

Assessment for Students

Assessments are called Learning Checkpoints. They are generally done in the 2nd last week of each Learning Wave. It's a good idea for all students to undergo a Learning Checkpoint (although it cannot be forced on students!) because it gives both teacher and students a good sense of where they are in terms of their skills and language levels.

We always stress there is no judgment associated with Learning Checkpoint results, because we allow students to join anytime. Some students start a course with Unit 1 in the Course Book. Others who join later on will start with different units - and they are not expected to know everything in the book. The purpose of a Learning Checkpoint is to see if they should remain in the same level or move up - not how 'good' they are. The important thing is for them learn at the correct level, so that they don't miss any of the progressive language learning steps.

Learning Checkpoints should include 'written tests' (these can be taken and adapted from the Teacher Book or the accompanying Test CD) and ongoing interaction between teacher and student on a daily basis. With this holistic approach, teachers can make sound recommendations on the progress and next level of study for the students. And students who are ready will move up.

However, a Learning Checkpoint can also be done when a teacher believes a student is ready to progress anytime within a Learning Wave. We encourage students to progress to the next level as soon as they are ready rather than wait till the end of each Learning Wave. We must respect their time and money by not keeping them at the same level unnecessarily.

Photocopying

All teachers will use a unique code for photocopying. This will be issued to you. The code consists of a User ID and a Password. But please go green whenever possible. Trees are beautiful and don't deserve to be lumbered.

Taking Leave

Teachers entitled to annual leave need to request leave as far in advance as possible with a minimum of 8 weeks through the DAVE system. Leave must be approved by the Prince of Learning.

In the case of the school being unable to accommodate multiple teachers being away, leave will be approved on a first come first serve basis. Please don't book flights and hotels before your leave is approved. As much as we love you, we won't reimburse any cost incurred from cancellation or postponement.

Teachers are responsible to coordinate their lessons and material with the substitute teacher(s) - yeah, there can be more than 1 at times. Substitute teachers are assigned by the Prince of Learning so it's essential you inform him well in advance to avoid incurring any wrath. Teachers should also inform their students when they'll be away and who the substitute teacher is.

Relief Teaching

Our students do NOT want grammar lessons. You must allow for a minimum of 70% speaking and listening time for them. The basic rule is that they cannot leave the class thinking they just had a grammar lesson.

If you are relieving a teacher, you are responsible for organising all the materials from the teacher. Useful information that you will need are: 1. the book, page and pace. 2. the student attendance sheets, 3. name of students and their personalities. (who is shy who is stronger, who is motivated), 4. whether you should give homework

If you are being relieved, you are responsible for making sure you pass over the materials and laptop. Please remember when you come back, check the laptop to make sure it is working properly.

Being Late for Class

Punctuality is expected but in the case of extenuating circumstances, teachers need to give the school as much notice as possible, preferably at least 24 hours' advance notice so we can inform students. If advance notice is not possible, you will need to contact your students in the earliest possible time (please keep a record of their mobile numbers!)

Cancellation of Classes

In cases of medical and family emergencies, teachers need to inform the school administrative staff and the Prince of Learning at least 2 hours before class commences. Teachers must also contact their students directly on their mobile in the earliest possible time to inform them of class cancellation only after getting written approval for class cancellation from the Prince of Learning. The school will arrange for a replacement class for the students.

In the event of students being late, with the possibility of not showing up for class at all, teachers are still required to stay at least 30 minutes to ensure that students didn't turn up. Part-time teachers will be paid for that. Teachers are also required to ask the school administrative staff to call up these students to be certain that they're not coming to class.

School Holidays

CA International College is closed for the week between Christmas and New Year. These days off will be taken from your Annual Leave entitlement. CA International College is also closed on all Public Holidays.

Teacher-Student Relationships

While the school is strongly inclusive, teachers are to refrain from any inappropriate relationship with their students. The school reserves the right to terminate the employment or contract of teachers in such cases to maintain integrity and professionalism. This is not Don't Ask Don't Tell. This is Don't Do or Don't Stay.

Pay Day

Full-time teachers will have their salary credited into their bank account on the last working day of the month. Time sheet submission is not required.

Contract teachers are required to submit their time sheet (see Appendix 1) to the Prince of Learning for checking and approval by the last working day of the month. He reserves the right to question and reject any claims that are non-bona fide. Your pay will be deposited by the 4th working day of the following month.

Student Attendance

Attendance sheets must be signed by every student before the end of the lesson. These sheets are kept in a class folder. It is the responsibility of the teacher that your attendance sheet is accurate and up-to-date.

Under no circumstances are you allowed to "strike a deal" with any student with regard to attendance marking. You are also required to mark attendance in DAVE. You will have up to 3 working days to submit the attendances before the day is closed. You will then need to ask DAVE's administrator to open up the days for you to enter. This way we know if you are keeping up to date.

Make-Up Lessons

Students are allowed a certain number of lessons to make up some of their missed classes. If students are having any difficulty with this, please refer them to the front desk.

Professional Development for Teachers

It's essential our teachers are exemplary models of lifelong learning and continuous development. We have put in place a few professional development initiatives. You are responsible for your own PD. Not us. It's your life. We do hope that you aspire to be either a CELTA trainer and/or a potential Head of Department. Whichever path you choose, we will work together and help you get there.

a. Peer Observations

Our teachers take turns to observe each other in class once every 3 months. This is developmental in nature and NOT meant to be evaluative. We believe one of the effective ways to learn is to observe our peers (and to be observed), followed by a short coffee/tea chat afterwards. Each Peer Observation lasts for about an hour. During the observation, you are required to make notes in the Reflective Journal provided. The Reflective Journal is immensely helpful in consolidating your thoughts (and for the coffee/tea chat after observation).

The schedule for Peer Observation is arranged by the Prince of Learning, typically in March/April, July/Aug and Nov/Dec period.

b. Ad-hoc Development Workshops

We provide Development Workshops for our teachers on an ad-hoc basis. These workshops generally centre on teaching methodology, classroom management and curriculum/material development aspects, arranged by the teaching team. Teachers will take turns to facilitate these sessions..

Emergency Exit and First Aid Kit

In case of fire, run like the wind and save yourself. BUT teachers need to be aware of where the nearest emergency exits are in case of a fire or other emergency situations. Students need to be informed too! Many of them are mothers so it's nice to keep them safe. Please approach us if you're unsure of where it is located. Also ensure that you know where the gathering point is. As a teacher, you are responsible for all your students to vacate the premises safely.

The First Aid Kit is located above the photocopier. In the event of any accident or injury, please approach the front desk for assistance. Paper cuts and bad feedback do not warrant emergency treatment.