

June 2018

Dear New Family

Hello and welcome to The British School in Tokyo (BST) and BST's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). At BST all parents and teachers are members of the PTA. One of the PTA's primary objectives is to build and foster a sense of community at the school which includes welcoming new families and providing support for their transition to BST and Tokyo.

**New Joiner Buddy System** – now until the beginning of the school year

If you are new to BST and Tokyo or just new to BST, we are happy to match you with a seasoned BST parent who can help answer any questions you may have over the summer holidays. **Please click on the following [link](#) to send an email to [pta-welcome@bst.ac.jp](mailto:pta-welcome@bst.ac.jp) requesting a [buddy](#).**

**Friday PTA Shibuya Coffee Mornings (weekly)**

Coffee mornings are held every Friday morning in the Shibuya campus library from 8:45am. This is for both Primary & Secondary parents & it is a great opportunity to meet new friends while sampling some of Richie the librarian's delicious homemade cakes!

**Monday PTA Showa Coffee Mornings (monthly)**

Coffee mornings are held once a month in the New Showa foyer on a Monday morning from drop off. This is for both Primary & Secondary parents & it is a great opportunity to meet new friends over some coffee, tea and pastries.

**Opportunities to Meet Other Parents**

Every term the PTA organises a welcome lunch for families new to BST. In addition, in September, we organise other welcoming activities at the start of the new school year.

Please feel free to join [The British School in Tokyo Mums & Dads](#) Facebook page as well – this is an incredibly valuable source of information and a few of you have already joined (and benefited) from this page.

Lastly, we have compiled the following list of what we hope are helpful tips for preparing for your move to BST and/or Tokyo. Please do not hesitate to email us at [pta-welcome@bst.ac.jp](mailto:pta-welcome@bst.ac.jp) with any questions you may have and we will do our best to answer them for you. Should you require support in Japanese, please use the same email address and someone will be in contact.

Looking forward to meeting you and your family.

**The Welcome Committee, the BST PTA <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BSTMumsandDads/>**

### NEW to BST/Moving to Tokyo – Helpful Tips

#### School Uniforms

New school uniforms can be purchased from Lands' End ([www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) Preferred School Number 900061748) or through Top of the Class ([www.schooluniform.ne.jp](http://www.schooluniform.ne.jp)), a local alternative provider in Tokyo. There will also be an opportunity to buy new and second hand uniforms during the school year.

If possible, purchase leather school shoes before arriving in Tokyo. These can be difficult to find in Tokyo. They are also very expensive to purchase locally and shipments of leather goods to Japan are heavily taxed.

#### Items to Bring with You

While most of these items are available here in Tokyo, the choice is very limited and expensive. Having a small supply of these items will make your life easier from the outset –

- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Basic medicines – Nurofen, Paracetamol, Calpol, cold and cough, allergy
- (Sudafed & Vicks Inhalers are **illegal in Japan**)
- Nit (hair lice) shampoo

#### Food Allergy Support

If you have questions about managing food allergies and/or intolerances in Japan, please contact: [pta-classdietaryrep@bst.ac.jp](mailto:pta-classdietaryrep@bst.ac.jp) and one of our parents will be in touch.

#### Medical Clinics and Hospitals

Should anyone in your family need medical care, English speaking services are available through Tokyo Medical and Surgical Clinic located across from Tokyo Tower ([www.tmsc.jp](http://www.tmsc.jp); 32 Shiba koen Building 2F, 3-4-30 Shiba-koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo). Appointments are available by phone 03-3436-3028.

[Japanese Red Cross Medical Center](#) (Nihonsekijūjisha Medical Center) in Hiroo is also a good place to seek medical assistance (4-1-22 Hiroo, Shibuya, Tokyo 150-0012; 03-3400-1311)

#### Electronics in Tokyo

Japan is on a 100v voltage system versus 110v in North America and 230v in Europe so please consider this when deciding whether to bring electronics (for more info go to [www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/essential/electricity.html](http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/essential/electricity.html)). Japan may also be on a different region for DVDs and Apple TV (and like products) than your home country so you may find it helpful to bring a DVD player from your home country along with any internet-based entertainment platform like AppleTV.

The following are stores where you can easily purchase necessary electronic items (e.g. TVs, stereos, toasters, kettles, irons, etc.) in Tokyo –

- Bic Camera (multiple locations, there is one very near the Shibuya campus)
- Don Quixote (multiple locations)
- Amazon ([www.amazon.co.jp](http://www.amazon.co.jp))

### Food Shopping in Tokyo

Some international and popular places for food shopping include –

- National Azabu (Hiroo) – stocks a wide a range of international and western foods
- Nissin (Azabu Juban)
- Costco – approx. 40 mins drive from the Shibuya campus, wholesale/bulk
- Life – the branch nearest to the Shibuya campus is Higashi Life
- OK
- The Meat Guy - [www.themeatguy.jp](http://www.themeatguy.jp) - home delivery for a wide range of meat products, mostly frozen
- Kiwi Kitchen - [www.kiwikitchen.jp](http://www.kiwikitchen.jp) - home delivery for 'home packs' (ready meals) and popular for party catering

Online grocery shopping is in its infancy in Japan compared to the UK, but there are two options, both relatively new to the market you might find useful:

**Amazon FRESH** offers same day delivery, one-hour delivery timeslots, for a range of groceries. Delivery is free over a certain amount. <https://www.amazon.co.jp/>

**Honest Bee** is a concierge service – you pay a concierge fee (usually 490Yen), and a delivery fee (usually 490 yen) or delivery is free over a certain amount. There is an online app in English and Honest Bee currently cover National Azabu and Costco and are adding new stores all the time.

Uber Eats is a good source of takeaway food! The Tokyu Food Show at the bottom of the Tokyu Department store in Shibuya station offers a good selection of food, and will gift wrap food items for free – useful for gifts.

There are also local Japanese groceries in every neighborhood! The Google Translate App can be invaluable for navigating the grocery store... especially the local ones. You can photograph the packaging with the App.

### Furniture and Home Shopping in Tokyo –

In general furniture is pretty expensive to buy in Tokyo and the selection is more limited than, say, in London. Less expensive options can be found at these popular stores–

- IKEA (delivery available on IKEA's website. There are also specialist services such as [www.hilomarket.com](http://www.hilomarket.com) which will assemble furniture for you)
- Franc Franc (Aoyama dori)
- Zara Home (Omotesando)
- Muji (Shibuya, Ginza)
- Loft (Shibuya)
- Tokyu Hands (Shibuya)
- Nitori (Shibuya)

### **Clothes Shopping in Tokyo –**

The following well-known retailers have a presence in Tokyo –

- GAP, Banana Republic
- H&M, Zara, Forever 21
- Uniqlo
- Ted Baker, Paul Smith
- Next

**If you are above about a size 6 UK (women's) or size 10 (men's) you are likely to find it easier to shop for shoes in the UK (or Australia, the US etc).**

### **Online Shopping from the U.K.**

The following U.K. retailers ship to Tokyo; however, please be aware that high duty is placed on leather and lycra

- Marks and Spencer
- John Lewis (John Lewis do not offer online shopping with delivery to Japan, but you can contact [export.oxford.street@johnlewis.co.uk](mailto:export.oxford.street@johnlewis.co.uk) to arrange delivery – they will refund the VAT but delivery is expensive)
- Monsoon
- [www.nextdirect.com](http://www.nextdirect.com)
- [www.asos.com](http://www.asos.com)
- [www.boden.com](http://www.boden.com)

Import tax rules are complex but generally if you keep your order below around £100 or 15,000yen you will avoid import duty taxes

*Once you are in Tokyo – [Amazon.co.jp](http://Amazon.co.jp) is your friend....and there is an English version setting. Note though that there is sometimes more limited selection and higher prices through the English setting, and you may find it more convenient to get google chrome on your browser, and use the automatic translate option, which will automatically translate websites into English. You may find that sometimes it is cheaper to buy the same item through Amazon US or Amazon UK and pay for shipping to Japan, so do check the different Amazon websites for certain items. Amazon US offers a prepaid duty option, for example.*

## Days out with the Kids

If you are arriving before school starts and aren't sure how you will keep your kids entertained, here are some kid friendly activities

- Kidzania
- Science Museum (Ueno)
- Ueno Zoo (Ueno)
- Miraikan Emerging Sciences Museum (Odaiba)
- Legoland (Odaiba)
- Orbi (Yokohama)
- Yoyogi Park (bike hire available)
- Niko Niko Park (1 Chome-7 Kita-aoyama, Minato-ku)
- Showa kinen Park
- Tokyo Fire museum
- Tokyo Toy Museum
- Heiwa no Mori Koen (Obstacle park)
- Disneyland & DisneySea (summer tends to be busy, check the crowd calendar at <http://tdrnavi.jp/forecast/disneyland?lang=en>)
- Karaoke – Rainbow karaoke in Shibuya is good but ask for a non-smoking room
- Bowling – there is Bowling in Shibuya at EST Bowling

## Nurseries and Preschools close to the Shibuya campus

**BST only takes children from age 3 (Before August 31<sup>st</sup>). If you have younger children and are looking for a pre-school or nursery, there are a wide variety in Tokyo, especially in the Azabu area. Here are some close to the Shibuya campus:**

Tokyo Creator Kids - <https://www.tokyocreatorskids.org>

Yoyogi International School - <http://www.yoyogiinternationalschool.com/preschool-kindergarten/>

Clarence International School - <https://www.clarenceschool.jp>

### Useful community networks and blogs

Best Living Japan - <http://bestlivingjapan.com/> - Sign up for the weekly newsletters. Also a whole host of practical information about attractions and shopping in Tokyo.

The Tokyo Chapter – <http://thetokyochapter.com> - Useful blog covering child-friendly attractions, restaurants etc

### Facebook Groups

TOKYO EXPAT NETWORK

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TokyoExpatNetwork/>

TOKYO MOTHERS GROUP

<http://tokyomothersgroup.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TokyoMothersGroup/>

TOKYO GARAGE SALE – good source of second hand goods

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tokyogaragesalepickuponly/>

TOKYO HELPERS CONNECT – group to advertise for domestic help  
Helpers - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/260093380996323/>