

Recruitment Information & FAQs

For 80 years, St. Michael's International School has been a leading provider of international education in Kobe, Japan. Accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS), the International Curriculum Association (ICA), and the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), we are also members of EARCOS and founding members of Japan Council of International Schools.

St. Michael's International School specialises in providing a broad and balanced international education to children between three and eleven years of age. Our enthusiastic and highly qualified teachers come from the UK, America, Australia and Japan. With 160 pupils from Nursery to Year 6, representing 22 nationalities, the language of instruction and shared playground language is English. This unique environment enables us to achieve a family-orientated, community school ethos in a high-performing, international setting. Our students are without doubt the jewel in the St. Michael's International School crown; they are highly motivated, creative, curious and eager to learn.

The only accredited British curriculum school in the Kansai region, our broad and balanced curriculum is accredited through the International Curriculum Association (ICA) and enriched by specialist teachers in Library Studies, Japanese, English Language Learning (ELL) Music and Physical Education. We pride ourselves on providing a creative, active and engaging learning environment which offers a balance of academic, personal and international learning designed to support and nurture our young learners to become responsible global citizens. Proud of the achievements of our young people and committed to providing the best education possible, St. Michael's became an International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) member school in September 2017 and in 2019 was the first school in Japan to achieve accreditation with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and completed the most recent joint re: accreditation in 2023.

St. Michael's is well resourced with updated and age-appropriate facilities. In 2008 we built a new wing with classrooms that are spacious, attractive and functional and in August 2017 the final phase of our main building renovation was completed which included upgraded teaching areas and a wonderful multi-purpose hall. In August 2018 we completed an ambitious renovation project with the installation of exciting new play equipment, an impact-absorbing play surface and in 2021 a refurbished sports roof completed our age appropriate facilities.

Teachers benefit from a well-developed EdTech strategy that includes interactive screens in classrooms, a one-to-one chromebook programme for all primary students as well as a class set of iPads in Years One and Two. A Google Workspace for Education school since 2012, we promote collaboration within a secure e-learning environment. Our STEM lab, known as the Creativity Zone, was installed in 2020 and provides a range of exciting resources which enhance our science and technology learning.

Investments in ukuleles and xylophones have enhanced music learning and during the pandemic, a string ensemble was formed and now runs alongside our popular School Choir. Learning is further enhanced through a well-stocked library and media centre and a wide range of extracurricular activities which offer enrichment as well as leadership opportunities for our students. A School Counsellor supports students and staff and a full-time school nurse takes care of all first-aid and medically related matters for our community.

Located in a vibrant and international city, Kobe regularly comes up as one of the best places for expatriates to live in Japan. It says much about the quality of our School and perhaps the attractions of life in Japan, that staff turnover tends to be much lower than in many other international schools both in Japan and around the world.

The excellent reputation of our school is well-established both at home and abroad, spanning a period of 80 years.

Come and join us!

FAQs about working at St. Michael's International School

Q: What experience and certification is required to work at SMIS?

A: We accept applications from candidates in Japan, the UK and overseas.

Applicants for teaching positions should hold a UK teaching qualification (B.Ed or P.G.C.E.) with Qualified Teacher Status or an international equivalent with at least 2 years' teaching experience in a UK or British international school. Applicants with IPC/IEYC experience will be at an advantage.

Q: What sort of school is SMIS?

A: SMIS is an accredited IPC and IEYC member school, St. Michael's delivers a British style education based on the National Curriculum of England and Wales, adapted to more fully meet the needs of our environment and our school population, delivered through the [International Primary Curriculum](#)

Q: What kind of teachers thrive at SMIS?

Colleagues who enjoy small-school community life, value inclusion and pastoral care, and bring creative, hands-on approaches aligned with a British-style primary curriculum. Teachers who are dedicated to creating an inclusive and diverse school environment that values the unique contributions of all individuals, strengthens our school community and enriches learning for every child will fit in well.

Q: What is the approach to technology?

We use Google Workspace for Education, interactive screens, and a 1:1 Chromebook programme in Primary. Teachers are provided with a classroom desktop, laptop and mini iPad for teaching and learning. Personal devices (staff and students) are not used in school, should be kept silent and stored away from classrooms. The school uses AI platforms such as Canva AI and ChatGPT to streamline administration tasks. Technology supports learning, not the other way around.

Q: Who attends SMIS?

A: Our student body is quite varied and includes children from bicultural families, expatriate children, Japanese returnees and children from a long-established Indian community. Like all international schools, we experience some turnover from families coming and going in a transient community, but we also enjoy the stability of permanent residents attending the school. There are approximately 22 different nationalities represented.

Q: What sort of benefits do you offer full time teachers recruited from overseas?

- ***Initial two-year contract*** starting 1 August until 31 July
- ***Fully furnished accommodation*** in the local area with key money (deposit) paid by school as well as the first month's rent. Staff are then responsible for the monthly rent and utilities.

- **Health insurance & pension**
- **Visa expenses**
- **One way economy airfare** to KIX at the start of contract
- **Shipping** to and from Kobe at the start and end of contract
- **Moving in allowance** at the beginning of employment
- Round trip economy airfare for **home leave** at the end of each two year contract
- **Laptop and tablet** for teaching and learning
- **One way economy airfare** from KIX at the end of contract

Q: What is the healthcare system the school provides?

A: St. Michael's International School is part of the Japanese national healthcare system through the *Private School Mutual Aid (Shigaku Kyosai)*; School pays 50% of the premiums. Health insurance covers 70% of hospital, clinic and prescription costs and also covers eyes, dental and a comprehensive annual health check-up at the local hospital with English speaking professionals. The standard of healthcare services in Japan is very high; in 2020 Japan was ranked in the list of top 10 countries with the best healthcare in the world according to the Legatum Institute.

Q: What about pensions?

A: SMIS is part of the Japanese pension scheme. The school pays 50% of the contributions. Upon completion of employment, staff can claim back approximately 50% of their personal contributions or if from the USA or Australia staff can transfer contributions to their national scheme.

Q: How am I paid?

A: The full salary is paid in Japanese yen, on the 20th of each month. It is paid by direct deposit into a local bank account.

Q: How will I get a visa?

A: The school will sponsor your visa and communicate with you regarding any required paperwork necessary for it to process your visa. This process typically takes 6–8 weeks.

Q: Isn't Japan a really expensive place to live?

A: While individual spending habits and salaries vary, the income is certainly sufficient for life in Japan. Most teachers are able to easily travel and save. Those teachers who wish to make additional savings take advantage of the opportunities for additional income which exist through leading clubs, teaching afternoon or Saturday English classes or Summer School. Cost of living comparisons can be made between Kobe and your home or current city using the following websites:

www.expatisan.com

<http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living>

Q: What about local hire teachers and TAs?

A: The benefits package for local-hire teachers and teaching assistants, in addition to salary, is as follows:

- Japanese health insurance
- Japanese pension

- *Daily travel allowance*
- *Visa expenses*

Q: What kind of support do you have for teachers new to the school?

A: On appointment, new staff receive a detailed and comprehensive induction handbook designed to support relocation to Kobe. On arrival, new teachers receive an orientation to the school and city as part of a thorough induction process. New teachers are given a mentor, an experienced SMIS member of staff who will help them adjust and answer any questions. As we are a small school, a lot of informal support goes on amongst the close staff.

Q: What is the extra-curricular commitment required of teachers?

A: Teachers are encouraged to offer at least one after-school club each year. Clubs offered include arts, music, sport, STEM, languages and drama. Teachers may choose what to offer and are generously compensated for their contribution.

Q: What about safeguarding and child protection?

A: St. Michael's International School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults. All appointments are subject to reference checks, verification of qualifications, and background screening (including an enhanced DBS or national equivalent).

Q: What kind of teachers are you looking for?

A: We are looking for enthusiastic and suitably qualified teachers to join our team. Teachers who are familiar with the UK curriculum and confident working with students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. You will be an excellent communicator and confident with technology; someone who gets on well with colleagues, students and parents. Teachers who share our passion for teaching and learning and a commitment to providing the very best education possible for the young learners in our care.

We look forward to meeting you!

St. Michael's International School is committed to fostering a community where every individual feels respected, valued, and empowered to contribute. Our policies and practices are regularly reviewed to remove barriers and to prevent discrimination including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity or expression, religion or belief, age, disability, marital or family status, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive and diverse school environment that values the unique contributions of all individuals, strengthens our community, and enriches learning for every child.

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