

Volunteer Handbook 2027

Everything you and your whānau need to know before, during and after your three months in a Chinese host school. Keep it handy, and share it with the people at home.

DRAFT for Simon's review. Contact numbers, the emergency line and insurance policy details are given in your volunteer manual before departure.

1. The programme at a glance

What	Detail
Cost to you	Free
Where	Host schools in China. Your school and city are confirmed before departure
2027 intakes	14 March – 13 June · 15 September – 11 December (dates may vary slightly)
Applications close	Three months before departure: about 14 December 2026 (March intake) and about 15 June 2027 (September intake)
Covered	Return flights, visa, Taiping travel insurance, accommodation (your own bedroom and bathroom), most meals, 180 hours of preparation training
Mandatory training	180 hours with Eastern Bridge Education: HSK 1 Chinese, TESOL certification and a China readiness workshop. 80 hours in person in Ōpōtiki.
Stipend	400 RMB per week
Hours	Up to 15 classroom hours on weekdays; no more than 20 hours a week in total
Weekends	Free, unless agreed beforehand

The programme is part of the Bay of Plenty–Jiangxi sister-province relationship, supported by the Ōpōtiki, Whakatāne, Kawerau and South Waikato District Councils, and by the Jiangxi Provincial Government and seven city governments.

Three things we ask of every volunteer

- **Complete 180 hours of preparation training**, including 80 hours in person in Ōpōtiki. Attendance is mandatory. Anyone who doesn't attend will be withdrawn.
- **Follow the coordinator's directions.** Reply to emails promptly and provide information and documents when asked. Not doing so may lead to withdrawal.
- **Act professionally.** Dress appropriately for a school role, be punctual, and be respectful to staff, students and the host community.

2. Your journey, step by step

- **Register your interest** on the Eastern Bridge website. It takes about ten minutes. Applications close three months before departure.
- **Interview.** A friendly Zoom call so we can get to know you and match you with a school.
- **Offer and acceptance.** Read and sign the Terms and Conditions. Your host school and city are confirmed before departure.
- **Checks and paperwork.** Police check, passport, health declaration and emergency contacts.
- **180 hours of preparation training** with Eastern Bridge Education: HSK 1 Chinese, TESOL certification and a China readiness workshop, with 80 hours in person in Ōpōtiki.
- **Visa and flights**, arranged by the programme.
- **Your placement**, about three months at your host school.
- **Coming home.** A debrief, a reference and a place in the alumni community. Many return as volunteer leaders.

3. Before you go

Documents

- A passport valid for at least six months after your return date, with blank pages.
- Your police check result, signed Terms and Conditions and emergency contact form.
- Copies of your passport, visa and insurance details, saved on your phone and with someone at home.

Training

All volunteers complete 180 hours of preparation training with Eastern Bridge Education, covering basic Chinese (HSK 1), TESOL certification and a China readiness workshop on culture, etiquette, health, safety and everyday life. 80 hours are in person in Ōpōtiki. Attendance is mandatory, and anyone who doesn't attend will be withdrawn.

Staying in touch with your coordinator

Reply to emails from your programme coordinator promptly, and send information and documents when asked. Visas, flights and placements depend on it, and not doing so may lead to withdrawal.

Health

- See your GP about vaccinations and bring enough of any prescription medicine for the whole stay, with a doctor's letter.
- Tell us about any condition we should know about. It's confidential and helps us support you.

Packing

- Clothes for the season: we'll advise once your city is confirmed. Many parts of China have hot, humid summers and cold winters with limited indoor heating.
- Comfortable, tidy clothes for school, plus one smart outfit for ceremonies.
- Small gifts from home for your support teacher and colleagues.
- Something to share: a song, a haka, photos of your town, a sport. Students love it.
- Universal adaptor (China uses types A, C and I), power bank and any medicines.

Phone and money apps

- Install **WeChat** before you leave. It's used for messages, our programme groups and payments.
- Set up **Alipay** and/or WeChat Pay with an international card. Cash is accepted but rarely used.
- Download an offline map and a translation app. Ask in training which ones work best.

4. Life at your host school

You'll help students practise English, mostly speaking and listening, alongside local teachers. Classroom time is up to 15 hours on weekdays, and the total, including school events and activities, is no more than 20 hours a week. Lesson planning is usually done with your support teacher.

You're a professional at your school.

- Dress appropriately for a school role: tidy, modest and comfortable.
- Be punctual and prepared for every class and event.
- Be respectful to staff, students and the host community at all times.
- Keep professional boundaries with students. Don't be alone with a student out of sight, and don't add students on personal social media.
- Say yes to school events where you can. They're often the highlight.

Accommodation and meals

Your host school provides your accommodation, with your own bedroom and bathroom, and most meals, usually through the canteen. The 400 RMB weekly stipend covers meals when the canteen is closed and everyday costs. Bring some savings if you'd like to travel at weekends.

5. Staying safe and well

Who to call

- **First:** your support teacher at school, for anything day to day.
- **Next:** Eastern Bridge staff in China and your volunteer leader. Names and numbers, and our emergency line, are in your volunteer manual before departure.
- **Emergency in China:** 110 police · 120 ambulance · 119 fire.
- **Insurance:** Taiping Insurance. Policy and claims details are in your volunteer manual before departure.
- **New Zealand Embassy, Beijing, and Consulates-General** for consular help. Register on SafeTravel before you go.

- Tell your support teacher and Eastern Bridge before any independent travel, and get approval before leaving your region or crossing a border.
- Avoid high-risk activities. They may not be covered by insurance.
- Follow local laws and your visa conditions. Training will cover what this means day to day.
- Look after your mental health. Homesickness is normal, especially in weeks three to six. Talk to someone early.

6. If something goes wrong

Situation	What happens
You're unwell or injured	Tell your support teacher and Eastern Bridge. We'll help you get care and work with Taiping Insurance.
Medical emergency	We work with you, your family and the insurer, and can bring you home if needed.
The placement isn't working	Talk to us early. We'll work with the school on a solution, which may include a change of placement.
You want to leave early (not a medical emergency)	This breaks your agreement. You'll be liable for losses to the programme, which may include a new flight and the cost of bringing in a replacement. See the Terms and Conditions, section 11.

7. For parents and whānau

Your volunteer will have a support teacher at school, Eastern Bridge staff in China and experienced volunteer leaders nearby, plus insurance with Taiping Insurance. In an emergency we will contact the emergency contacts they nominate. If you have questions, contact us any time.

Questions? We're here.

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easternbridge.co.nz/councils-communities/china-volunteer-programme