



ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL

BAHRAIN

**GENERAL INFORMATION
FOR APPLICANTS
FOR TEACHING POSITIONS**

AND

FOR NEWLY APPOINTED STAFF

March 2009

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
WHY JOIN US?	1
SECTION 1: – THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY	4
WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL IS ST. CHRISTOPHER'S?.....	4
OUR SCHOOL STRUCTURE	4
OUR SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	4
OUR HEAD TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL	5
OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES	5
OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS & FOSC (FRIENDS OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S)	5
BOOKS / MATERIALS / FURNITURE.....	5
CURRICULUM.....	5
ACADEMIC RESULTS	6
IN-SERVICE TRAINING	8
INFANT SCHOOL, SAAR.....	8
JUNIOR SCHOOL, SAAR	8
SENIOR SCHOOL, ISA TOWN.....	8
SECTION 2: LIVING IN BAHRAIN – MISCELLANY OF INFORMATION	9
GENERAL COMMENT	9
FLYING TO BAHRAIN AND ARRIVAL.....	9
ANNUAL TRAVEL FROM BAHRAIN	9
LIVING ACCOMMODATION	10
USEFUL DOCUMENTS	10
HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME.....	10
HEALTH REQUIREMENTS	11
UK SUPERANNUATION	11
UK NATIONAL INSURANCE	11
INCOME TAX, etc.....	11
TRANSFERRING MONEY AND BANKING	12
CLOTHING	12
PERSONAL BELONGINGS	12
SHOPPING AND COST OF LIVING	12
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.....	13
TELEVISION.....	13
TRAVEL WITHIN BAHRAIN	13
BANNED GOODS	14
INTERNET ACCESS & COMPUTERS	14
MOBILE PHONES.....	14
PHOTOGRAPHS.....	14
CONTACT DETAILS	14
FURTHER INFORMATION	14

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS FOR TEACHING POSITIONS AND FOR NEW STAFF

INTRODUCTION

If you have been appointed to a teaching position and will be flying out to join us – then welcome to St. Christopher's School! You will be receiving a lot more information before you arrive and will also be contacted by various members of staff.

If you have applied to join us or are thinking of applying – good luck in your application! We hope that this booklet is useful to you.

The intention of this publication is to answer many of the questions that applicants have asked us over the years. As such the contents are varied and rather less formal than, for example, the Contract that you will receive if you are or have been successful in your application.

WHY JOIN US?

The bullet points shown in our TES advertisements serve (as they should!) as a summary of some of the reasons to join our school. These points are repeated here but you will find that many of these are dealt with in a little more detail later in the text. Our website: www.st-chris.net contains a huge amount of information. Dig in deep to obtain the maximum benefit!

Our ads contain the following or similar:-

- Do you want to teach wonderful, highly motivated, high achieving students?
- Do you want to teach rather than control?
- Do you want to be part of a hard-working, highly professional team?
- Do you value supportive parents?
- Do you like sunshine, a tolerant, secure environment, a high standard of living and a lifestyle that offers a wide range of opportunities?
- Would you like a good tax free salary, free furnished housing, medical insurance, annual travel allowances, baggage allowance and free high-quality education for any children of your own?
- Are you a dedicated and high quality qualified, graduate teacher?

What we were saying to you in the confines of an advertisement is that St Christopher's is a wonderful place to work and if you join us, you will find excellent students and a truly excellent staff. In addition, you will be pleased to learn that:

1. **St. Christopher's is a non-profit making School.** All tuition fees are used in the operation of St. Christopher's. This is a very important feature of our School. Many

other overseas schools are, in essence, businesses with owners who wish to make profits from tuition fees.

2. **We have excellent support staff.** There are classroom assistants, a full-time examinations officer, assistants to do photocopying and help with displays, technicians in Science, Art and DT, and so on. The Finance Manager, Human Resources and Facilities Manager and Maintenance and Logistics Manager take care of site and maintenance matters and tasks such as ordering resources from the UK. These co-professionals are vital to allow teachers to concentrate on what they do best.
3. **We have freedom to pick and choose from UK educational initiatives** and have a reduced paper-work load as a consequence.
4. **Our staff members are heavily involved in their own professional development,** much of which is funded by the School.
5. **We are a forward-looking school and believe in continuous improvement.** We are currently working hard to enhance the effectiveness of our teaching and students' learning by the application of Accelerated Learning (brain-based learning) and Assessment for Learning techniques as well as initiatives such as BLP (Building Learning Power). We are often ahead of the game compared to the UK and schools around the world.
6. **Non-contact time** already exceeds the aims espoused by the UK teachers unions and supply teachers are brought in rather sooner than is usual in England.
7. **We are a well-resourced school.** For example, ICT: our school network on the Senior School site has approximately 400 computers. There are networked computer rooms in the Infant Schools with one computer / student in these. The Junior School has access to two full ICT rooms whilst the Senior School has five computer labs plus a further area, containing twenty four computers, in the library.
8. **Excellently appointed Infant and Junior Schools,** these provide our Infant and Junior students with the best possible facilities including large rooms, specialist Science Labs, DT, Music and Art rooms, sports hall and a large assembly hall, full-size Astro turf pitch, etcetera).

Outside of the teaching aspects of your life you will find that the overall employment package is excellent. It is vital when comparing packages to look carefully at all aspects. Some schools provide only shared accommodation – here everybody has their own rent-free, furnished, air conditioned accommodation with 67% of electricity and water charges paid for by the School. We provide a medical insurance scheme for the employed teacher and all dependents that live with him or her in Bahrain.

Salary is paid tax-free and we also pay an end-of-service gratuity of one month's salary per year of service. In some countries, it is a few years before gratuity reaches this level. The final monthly salary is used to calculate gratuity.

Travel back to your home will be provided annually (even in the middle of the first two-year contract) – and we give an actual allowance rather than (as is the case in many places) a restrictive ticket. The allowance is given for the employee and all dependents resident in Bahrain and allows total flexibility as to where to travel or, indeed, whether to travel at all!

On appointment, you may send 100kg of baggage to Bahrain at the school's expense. If you are married, you receive another 100kg for your spouse and 50kg for each child.

Day-to-day life is diverse, shopping is excellent, cars are cheaper here than in England and

petrol is about 19p per litre. There are opportunities to be involved in musical and cultural activities in the community and sporting opportunities are extensive.

Oh... and if you hate washing-up, ironing and gardening etc., domestic assistance is obtainable at a fraction of the rates paid in the UK. Many couples with children employ a full-time helper who often lives in a room attached to the house but having a separate entrance. The typical cost of a full-time person is about £285 per month. One never gets over the luxury of coming downstairs after a dinner party or party to find the house immaculate with everything washed and put away!

Sound like a good life? It is !

Read on

SECTION 1: – THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL IS ST. CHRISTOPHER’S?

Those of you who have worked overseas previously will almost certainly have heard about our school. It is acknowledged on the international circuit as an excellent school and many overseas teachers have ambitions to join us. Other schools, when recruiting staff, regard St. Christopher's experience as evidence that a teacher has been working in a professional environment where the highest standards are expected. It has become clear that having St. Christopher's School on one's CV is likely to lead to being short-listed for other prestigious schools around the world.

We have also found that many independent schools in England are well aware of us and have been very complimentary indeed about how advanced our students are and what fine young people they have become during their time with us.

If one were asked to describe, in a sentence, just where St. Christopher's School fits in the educational lexicon one would write something along the following lines:

The educational experiences and quality offered by St. Christopher's School are comparable with those found in the best independent schools in the United Kingdom. It is however less selective than most. Value-added is excellent at all levels and teachers are equally concerned to develop the 'whole child'.

OUR SCHOOL STRUCTURE

We have two sites; at Saar and Isa Town. In January 2008 a new Infant School opened alongside the Junior School at Saar and the Senior School continues to be based at Isa Town.

- INFANT SCHOOL, SAAR: Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 2
Approximately 560 students altogether.
- JUNIOR SCHOOL, SAAR: Years 3 to 6
Approximately 580 students.
- SENIOR SCHOOL, ISA TOWN: Years 7 to 13
Approximately 990 students (235 in Sixth Form and growing)

OUR SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

St. Christopher's has three Schools, Infant, Junior and Senior, under the Principalship of Ed Goodwin who co-ordinates and links the work of the Head Teachers of each school who are responsible for their daily administration.

The Principal and the Heads meet weekly; this group is called the Leadership and Management Team (LMT). This is the central coordinating team for the whole School.

The Infant, Junior and Senior schools also have their own Senior Management Teams (SMTs). The Senior School currently has the Head and five Assistant Heads and the Junior and Infant SMTs each consist of the Head and two Assistant Heads.

Assistant Head positions are seen very much as preparation for Headship. Accordingly, each of these has a clearly defined portfolio of responsibilities that will rotate as the years

pass. In recent years, two Junior School Assistant Heads have gone on to good overseas headships and a Senior School Assistant Head left at the end of Term 1 of last academic year (2007/2008) to take up a Headship in Europe.

OUR HEAD TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL

PRINCIPAL: Ed Goodwin, BA, MA, MBA

INFANT SCHOOL: Ian Fellows, BEd, NPQH

JUNIOR SCHOOL: Wendy Bataineh, BA, MEd, PGCE, NPQH

SENIOR SCHOOL: Nick Wilson, BSc, PGCE, NPQH

OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our students are mainly from the expatriate English-speaking community. They are much better motivated than is common in maintained schools in the United Kingdom and new teachers usually comment on this with some happiness. Teachers at St. Christopher's find that they are able to do what they came into the profession to do: TEACH; rather than control! Children and young people from around 70 nationalities attend the Schools; about 40% of students are British. Parents are very supportive of their children's education.

OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS & FOSC (FRIENDS OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S)

The School is governed by a Board which represents both the commercial and business interests in Bahrain and the parent community. The Board consists of between five and eight governors drawn from the original Founder companies, up to four parent-governors, the Dean of the Cathedral and a representative from the Ministry of Education.

There is a joint FOSC (Friends of St. Christopher's) association for the Schools, although individual functions are sometimes arranged. Every effort is made to maintain and extend good relations between the School and the community it serves.

BOOKS / MATERIALS / FURNITURE

These are still mainly ordered from the United Kingdom but increasingly the quality and range of goods available in Bahrain is such that the proportion of UK to Bahrain sourced items is shifting towards local purchases.

CURRICULUM

This follows most of the usual aspects of the National Curriculum at its own pace and with certain sensible modifications. Head Teachers will be able to advise new staff on specific curricular and schemes of work. In addition, Arabic and Islamic religious education is provided for Arab and Muslim children respectively. Classes are generally limited to 24 pupils in the Primary Schools and 22 in the Senior School (although occasionally in KS3 numbers might reach 24) and the emphasis is on individual teaching. There is no streaming, although setting is a feature in the Senior School in some subjects.

GCSE and A-level courses follow UK specifications and a full-time Exams Officer is employed to do all entry, administration and follow-up work. SATs are taken at the end of all Key Stages.

Since September 2008, we have offered a dual pathway at St. Christopher's. Students can

choose to follow either the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or an AS/A2 Level Programme. The IB Diploma Programme is a broad, balanced and rigorous programme, incorporating the best elements of pre-university systems worldwide.

The subject and individual school areas of the website contain more information on curriculum matters.

ACADEMIC RESULTS

A Levels

Academic results have been excellent for many years. The following is an extract from a newsletter to parents concerning A-level results:-

“The pass rate was 100%. Very importantly, 63% of exams were graded either ‘A’ or ‘B’. The figure for schools in the UK was 50% total for ‘A’ + ‘B’ grades.”

A Level Results	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
No. of Candidates	92	79	83	86	88	71	45	46	31	23
% A	38	35	43	42	38	44	30	30	38	42
% A & B	63	66	76	69	63	63	54	54	61	49
% A - E	100	97	100	97	98	97	99	95	96	96

GCSEs

SATs results are such that, typically, 95% of students achieve on-target or higher levels. The last ten years' GCSE results are shown below.

GCSE Results	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
No. of Candidates	121	130	120	107	105	126	113	115	97	101
% A* - C	94	93	96	92	97	94	94	92	86	88
% A + A*	49	47	51	43	53	48	47	46	40	36
% with 5 or more A*-C passes	98	97	99	96	98	96	97	92	84	93

These figures stand comparison with independent schools in the United Kingdom and are even more creditable since our entry requirements for A-level are significantly lower than those required to enter Sixth Forms in typical independent schools.

Key Stage 3

The target levels are 5 & 6 at Key Stage 3:

%	2008		2007		2006	
	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target
English	100	62	100	66	97	12
Mathematics	100	71	99	83	100	72
Science	97	41	100	65	99	59

Key Stage 2

The target level is 4 at Key Stage 2:

%	2008		2007		2006	
	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target
English	96	59	100	76	96	56
Mathematics	94	50	95	53	94	58
Science	98	73	98	81	98	71

Key Stage 1

The target level is 2 at Key Stage 1:

%	2008		2007		2006	
	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target	On & above target	Above target
Reading	100	100	100	98	99	95
Writing	100	86	100	87	95	76
Mathematics	100	85	100	97	99	91

It goes without saying, that... **WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR STUDENTS** and, (this is a crucial aspect of our school) this isn't limited to the academically talented. Those who do not achieve the highest grades are equally valued for the fine efforts that they put into their work.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Members of Staff are encouraged to attend professional conferences and all forms of In-Service Training. Whole School and other issues are sometimes addressed by having experts fly to Bahrain to lead workshops. Some INSET time is also provided before the start of and within the school year. Our in-service provision has been commented upon very favourably by teachers who have joined us in recent years.

INFANT SCHOOL, SAAR

Approximately 12 km from the centre of Manama, this purpose-built School completed in January 2008 stands alongside the Junior School in Saar. Infant children have access to state of the art resources such as whiteboards in all Key Stage 1 classes, two ICT suites, music practice rooms and a purpose built hall. The 'Tiger Turf' football pitch and swimming pool are also fully utilised in curriculum PE as well as in after-school activities. Children are brought to school by their parents, or by buses organised by the employing companies or parents. More information about this fabulous school and its many merits can be found on the school website; www.st-chris.net .

School hours for students, Sunday to Thursday are as follows:

- Nursery Classes N 07.55 to 12.00 hrs
- Infant Classes R 07.55 to 13.50 hrs
- Infant Classes Y1-Y2 07.55 to 13.55 hrs

JUNIOR SCHOOL, SAAR

This magnificent facility was completed in August 2005 (see website for details and photos) and provides our Juniors with the best possible facilities (large classrooms, many with wet areas and all with excellent storage, two science labs, large DT and Art rooms, excellent Learning Support facilities, dedicated rooms for French and Arabic teaching, large sports hall and large assembly hall, full-size Astroturf pitch and so on). A 25 meter swimming pool has been constructed on-site, together with shaded areas for children and spectators.

School hours for students, Sunday to Thursday are 07.40 to 14.10 hrs

SENIOR SCHOOL, ISA TOWN

The Senior School was built in 1986 and has been extended over the years. The latest extension was opened by the Earl of Wessex in 2001. This School has 11 Science Laboratories, an Art suite, specialist Music suite, Design and Technology suite, Library, 5 Computer Laboratories (and an additional ICT suite within the library) and 85 teaching spaces. The sports facilities on site include a Sports Hall and Tennis courts. There is a sports field approximately 1km away from the Isa Town site which provides for Football, Cricket and Athletics. This is shared with a neighbouring private school and is available to all St. Christopher's Schools. An eight lane 25 m swimming pool was completed in 2003. This was a magnificent addition and is 4 m deep at one end to permit SCUBA training and Diving. The pool has a heating facility which extends the use of the pool throughout the year. The move of our Junior School to Saar in September 2005 facilitated improvements to the Senior School site and many of these enhancements are included above. At this time a good sized sixth form study and common room area, equipped with 25 computers for the exclusive use of sixth formers was also added and Music facilities were considerably enhanced as well.

School hours for students, Sunday to Thursday are 07.50 to 14.30 hrs.

SECTION 2: LIVING IN BAHRAIN – MISCELLANY OF INFORMATION

GENERAL COMMENT

It is important to say at the outset that Bahrain is a friendly and tolerant place in which to live. Bahrainis are generally a warm and welcoming people. English is widely spoken and it is unnecessary to learn Arabic - although classes are available to those who wish to do so. It is also noteworthy that Anglican, Catholic and Evangelical Christian Churches all thrive in the tolerant atmosphere of Bahrain.

The effect of the various Middle East situations on Bahrain and expatriate life has, in the view of expatriates, been much exaggerated in the UK press (their aim is to sell the maximum number of papers after all). A general comment from expatriates is that they feel much more secure in Bahrain than, for example, in London. The level of crime, although rising, is low indeed compared to that experienced in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. It is also important to note that Bahrain is all of 1550km from Jerusalem. We are not, as people often seem to believe, 'on the doorstep'.

So, what is the downside of life in Bahrain? It depends very much on the individual. Most would mention driving standards; but a person who has lived elsewhere in the Middle East or Italy or London, is likely to find no particular problem. Some find living on a smallish island to be slightly claustrophobic. Most do not feel this but, for those that do, the feeling usually doesn't click in until around about the third year. Other aspects that have been mentioned are: no mountains or rivers, books and UK newspapers are expensive (and UK papers arrive the day after publication), sometimes humidity is very high and there is an increasing amount of traffic on the roads.

FLYING TO BAHRAIN AND ARRIVAL

Your flight to Bahrain will be booked for you from London Heathrow or from the nearest major airport to your home by prior arrangement. We will let you know, as soon as possible, the actual date of departure. Your air tickets will be sent to you two to three weeks before your scheduled departure from your point of origin. We will get in touch with you regarding the timing of your flight, tickets, etc. There will probably be others on your flight joining St. Christopher's, so please keep an eye (ear?) out for them. We will meet you at the airport and transfer you, your family and your baggage to your new home. You will find that some basic foodstuffs have been supplied so that you can make breakfast on your first morning in Bahrain. In most cases, your phone will be connected so that you can call home to say you've arrived and that it's really hot! If the phone has not been connected ask one of the Heads, Assistant Heads or the Principal, Ed Goodwin (whoever is in the meet and greet party) if you can use their mobile. They will answer 'yes'!

ANNUAL TRAVEL FROM BAHRAIN

At the end of each academic year, the School provides teachers who are returning the following September, their spouses (if in Bahrain with them) and resident dependent children with an allowance based on the cost of an excursion return ticket to and from the United Kingdom. The allowance is sufficient to purchase a ticket with direct carriers such as BA or Gulf Air. Many teachers, however, fly with lower cost airlines and save the balance of the allowance for themselves. Others will fly off to the Far East or elsewhere in the world. A one way allowance is provided in the case of those whose service with the School has been completed, as per contracts.

LIVING ACCOMMODATION

For single teachers and married couples with no accompanying dependants, this is normally an apartment with living/dining room, kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms. Accommodation is comfortable and spacious.

Heads, Assistant Heads and married teachers with resident children would normally (if preferred) be provided with a house or bungalow. Most of the apartments are in Manama and within easy reach of shops, cinemas, hotels, etc. All accommodation has air-conditioning and is rent-free. Two-thirds of the cost of electricity and water is paid by the school, the remaining one-third should cost on average BD10/BD20 per month. Please note that the school does not provide washing machines or TVs/VCRs/Sound systems, although some landlords do so - it's the luck of the draw on this one!

Accommodation is generally furnished according to housing policy inventories although there will be minor variations between accommodation. In addition to furnishings, teachers are provided with a consumables pack consisting of cutlery, crockery, cooking ware and utensils, broom, dust-pan, waste bins, bedding, etc. This pack becomes the teacher's property after completion of the first contract period.

Some teachers (single and married) find that they would prefer to live in a house ('villa') rather than a flat. Relocation between School accommodation and opting out completely from School accommodation should be discussed with the HR & Facilities Manager. Such moves are subject to approval from the Principal (which is usually given).

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

There are several documents which will make your life considerably easier in Bahrain:

- U.K. Driving Licence
- International Driving Licence *
- D.C.S.F. - copy of your record of service (available from the address given earlier for Superannuation enquiries)
- D.C.S.F. Pensions Branch (documentation of your current pensions contributions as mentioned above)
- No-claims bonus certificate from your car insurers.

* The International Driving Licence (IDL), after endorsement by the Traffic HQ in Bahrain will enable you to drive immediately for up to a year! A Bahraini licence may then be obtained. The school will assist new staff in obtaining a hire car, should they wish, on their second day in Bahrain. The car hire company can endorse the IDL at that time. Those who do not hire cars can obtain assistance in obtaining the endorsement when necessary.

HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME

The School scheme covers teachers' health bills, where approved by our medical insurers, for treatment at good private hospitals, such as The American Mission, BAPCO's Awali Hospital, the Bahrain Defence Force's Hospital, or the International Hospital. An excess applies to the scheme and staff members are expected to cover this in part or in full (depending on the conditions of the scheme which are currently in operation).

Please note, in common with other insurance schemes, pre-existing conditions, maternity, provision of spectacles, dentistry, hearing aids, etc. dangerous sports or other individual exclusions made by the insurance company may not be covered. However, in some cases, upgrades or additions to the policy provided for the school can be purchased at the teacher's expense, to allow cover for these exclusions. In the event of serious medical problems, staff may elect to return to their home country for investigation and treatment. In some circumstances, medical insurance covers transportation to the UK for treatment, in

others this is not the case. The insurance does not cover any UK accommodation costs or sundry items arising from travelling to the United Kingdom.

Medical facilities in Bahrain are very good and many expatriates would prefer treatment here than back in their home country. As a generalisation; if you needed to, you could see a GP today, a specialist in a couple of days and have an operation within a week or so! We hope of course that you will not need all these services; however it's reassuring to know that they are readily available.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

At present there are no injections required for entry into Bahrain for travellers from the United Kingdom. New residents are however required to undertake a Government medical examination for issue of their work permit. Inoculation against Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Meningococcal ACWY is recommended as per Bahrain Ministry of Health Immunisation Schedule recommendations. For further information you should go to www.moh.gov.bh or www.moh.gov.bh/immunizations.asp. Anti-malarial drugs are not required, whatever your doctor may tell you. If you are undergoing medical treatment and need to bring prescription drugs into Bahrain, be sure to bring a copy of your prescription with you. You will need a medical check in the U.K. prior to your departure and a copy of the certificate must be transmitted to the Principal (at the School's expense).

UK SUPERANNUATION

The school does not contribute toward superannuation. You cannot now continue to pay into the D.C.S.F. Superannuation Scheme. If you wish to continue to make provision for your retirement you will need to do so privately.

UK NATIONAL INSURANCE

If required, contributions may be continued in Bahrain and a copy of Leaflet NI 38 "National Insurance Guide for People Abroad", or its current equivalent, would prove useful. Some expatriates pay Class Two Contributions to maintain entitlement to the UK state pension and certain other rights.

INCOME TAX, etc

The School pays salaries gross – what you are quoted is what you are paid! The following is our understanding of the current tax situation with regard to expatriates living in the Middle East. Please note, however, that we cannot be held liable if the following interpretation is proven to be inaccurate.

Before coming to Bahrain, you should obtain the status of being non-resident for taxation purposes. Your local, friendly tax office will be able to give you assistance with this (it hasn't proved difficult to obtain in the past). With this established you will have no liability for UK income tax provided you remain resident outside of the UK for at least one complete tax year (holidays and other visits up to a certain limit are fine). In the year of departure you may be entitled to a tax rebate. You should check with the Inland Revenue. There are also a number of capital gains advantages to living overseas.

Many high street banks have a section or employee who can give more definitive advice on the taxation situation and who may have a range of useful leaflets.

TRANSFERRING MONEY AND BANKING

There is no restriction on the transfer of funds in either direction between banks in Bahrain and the United Kingdom. Banks are quite advanced in their operations and money transfers are generally efficient and quick. There is a wide range of banks from which to choose: those most familiar to UK applicants will be HSBC, Standard Chartered and Paribas. In addition, there are many good Gulf-based banks. On your first full day in Bahrain, you will be invited to come to the Junior School where help will be given to you to open a bank account and banking staff will be invited to the premises.

CLOTHING

It will be very hot and humid when you first come to Bahrain. Climatically, it is the worst time of year and can only, therefore, get better! School dress for men is tie, shirts and front-creased smart trousers and for ladies, cotton dresses, skirt or trouser-suits in light-weight materials (avoid pure nylon and other man-made fabrics in hot weather). If you arrive at any other time of the year, say Christmas or Easter, the weather is cooler. Clothes may readily be obtained in Bahrain and some items (Indian cottons, tee-shirts and casual jeans for example) are very cheap. There are numerous tailors in Bahrain who can make up clothes, even from catalogue pictures or sketches. Material is plentiful and reasonably priced, but specific dress patterns are sometimes quite difficult to obtain, so if you are a dress-maker, bring your favourite patterns with you. Clothing is also widely available from various well known retailers usually located within the major shopping malls.

The weather does become quite cold in winter (well we think so! 16°C feels chilly after a few years in the sun). So, clothing appropriate to a British autumn would prove useful, especially sweaters and blankets. Laundry and dry-cleaning services are available and reasonably priced.

Sensible (i.e. modest) dress should be worn in all public places in Bahrain however women do not have to 'cover up'. Generally it is considered respectable for ladies to have hemlines reach the knees and shoulders covered when in public places and a little extra care is appropriate during the Holy Month of Ramadan. This is the annual month of fasting by Muslims and the date as with other lunar calendar Public Holidays, is announced in the press by the Government.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Experience shows that a greater feeling of stability and 'homeliness' is established if a few personal ornaments and possessions are brought, especially if this is your first time away from home. The usual educational materials are available at the Schools, but if you have favourite resources you should bring them with you. Baggage allowances may be extended slightly to cover the weight of useful resources; however you should first contact the HR and Facilities Manager regarding this.

SHOPPING AND COST OF LIVING

It is possible to buy practically everything in Bahrain, but the cost of certain items is undeniably greater than in the United Kingdom. This is more than compensated for however, by other much cheaper goods such as some meats, petrol, cameras, gold, jewellery and watches. Local vegetables and produce are excellent value and overall it is probably accurate to say that the cost of living is slightly lower than in the UK. However some will find it much cheaper and others more expensive as it depends on what is purchased and where one shops.

During the last decade, Bahrain has enjoyed the arrival of large shopping malls and hypermarkets. We now have the French company Geánt, for example and also stores such as Marks & Spencer, BHS, and Debenhams, Next, River Island, Top Shop, Clarks and many more. Of course, Starbucks and Costa Coffee franchises have sniffed out the possibility of good profits and are to be found cohabiting with these shops. There are several large, well-stocked supermarkets; one of which actually sells Tesco produce! Small, corner shops (called cold-stores) are everywhere and very useful and many of them will deliver. Video and DVD hire is widely available at very reasonable prices. Amazon.co.uk and some other online stores deliver to Bahrain.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

There are several clubs offering a variety of sporting and social activities, with membership fees approximately BD 200 per annum. Some of the clubs maintain libraries of English-language books. Clubs commonly frequented by expatriates include the British Club, the Dilmun Club, the Yacht Club, the Rugby Club, the Marina Club and Al Bandar. A number of teachers are members of the luxurious club run by the Ritz Carlton Hotel with its private beach and a wide range of services. This costs rather more than the other clubs! Alcohol is freely (and legally!) available in clubs, bars and hotels. A wide range of wines from around the world and all of the normal alcoholic drinks that one would find in the UK can be purchased (except during Ramadan) from a number of specialist shops. A number of night clubs of varying levels of sophistication are frequented by both expatriates and Bahrainis. There are numerous hotels and restaurants and some have said that the range of types of food available is the best they've seen anywhere in the world. Friday brunches in major hotels are popular and the range of food available and the service puts the best UK hotels very firmly in the shade!

At the other end of the market, it is still possible to eat all you can, at an authentic Indian restaurant, for about £3.00! The surroundings may be a little sparse however, and generally teachers would frequent higher quality Indian, Italian, French, Turkish, Lebanese and eclectic restaurants that are much better and much cheaper than those in the UK. The normal fast-food outlets are also available but as a change from this, try a shawarma stall where, for about 50 pence or less you can buy a delicious hot chicken or beef sandwich in a roll of soft Arabic bread with salad, tahini and other bits and pieces. Want to eat at home? Don't want to cook? There are many restaurants of all kinds as well as, of course, pizza outlets, who will deliver excellent food to your house.

TELEVISION

A wide range of satellite packages are available at various prices. BBC World Service and CNN are available at no charge but for a small extra charge one can obtain a range of channels such as Sky News, BBC Prime (top-selling BBC programmes), US entertainment channels, National Geographic, Discovery, music channels and many movie channels. Sports fans are very well provided for with the great majority of sporting events shown live – premiership football, Six Nations rugby, all grand slam tennis matches, and cricket test matches from around the world and so on.

TRAVEL WITHIN BAHRAIN

Taxis are plentiful; however despite Government rulings regards use of meters, the charges can be erratic and fares should be agreed prior to travel. Telephone taxis are also available and these invariably have meters that work, are more luxurious and comfortable, and have efficient air conditioning. Cars are generally cheaper to buy than in the United Kingdom and loans to purchase these are easily available from many dealerships and banks. Petrol is about 19 pence per litre.

BANNED GOODS

Firearms, lethal weapons, drugs and pornographic literature/videos are banned. Video-tapes and DVDs/VCDs are sometimes subject to scrutiny and inspection by Customs Officers on entry. If they are educational tapes, state this to the Customs Officer and mention St. Christopher's School.

INTERNET ACCESS & COMPUTERS

Teachers may choose from dial-up or broadband connections in their accommodation. These are more expensive than in the UK but computers can be purchased quite cheaply in Bahrain and many (but not all) stores will come and install them for you.

MOBILE PHONES

There are currently two mobile operators in Bahrain; Batelco and Zain. However, a third is shortly to be announced. Global roaming is easy to organise so that the same phone can be used in UK and many other countries as well as in Bahrain. It is also possible to buy prepaid 'sim' cards to insert in your mobile. This generally works out to be the less expensive option.

PHOTOGRAPHS

You will need up to 20 photographs, passport-style for the various documents and memberships, for all the family. These can be readily processed in Bahrain.

CONTACT DETAILS

The School postal address is as follows and should be used by your relatives and friends to write to you:

Postal address is:	To phone call area code	(00973)	
St. Christopher's School P.O. Box 32052 Kingdom of Bahrain Arabian Gulf (NB NOT Persian Gulf!)	Principal's Office: Infant School, Saar: Junior School, Saar: Senior School, Isa Town:	1759 8496 1759 8600 1759 8600 1778 8101	1759 8493 1759 8604 1759 8604 1778 8120
Street address is: Building 119, Road 4109 Isa Town Kingdom of Bahrain Arabian Gulf			Telephone / Fax

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further Information may be obtained from your Head Teacher if it concerns details of your work in the school, or from the Principal or the Human Resources & Facilities Manager – (00973) 1759 8613, if it involves conditions of service, contractual matters, or your journey to Bahrain. You will also be given the name of a contact member of staff, who be your 'buddy' and will be able to help you in a more personal way. Don't be afraid to ask - we've all been through the process and know how unnerving it can sometimes be.

If you are unsure who to call then please phone (00973) 1759 8496, fax (00973) 1759 8493 or email the Principal's Office at (offprin.school@st-chris.net).

