

School Rules for Foreign Teachers

(Example from Thailand)

1. The head is sacred, so don't touch the students on the head or ruffle their hair.
2. The foot is "unclean." If sitting down, try to keep both feet on the ground. Don't point it at anyone or any sacred object, such as a Buddha or the King's picture.
3. Thai people take their king and religion very seriously. Please do not criticize these institutions. Also, any portraits or images should be treated with the utmost of respect.
4. A word you will learn quickly is "sanook". This means "to have fun". This is an important word for Thai people. Work must be "sanook" otherwise they won't do it. Although we ask you to act professionally, we also ask you not to take life so seriously while working at the school. Have fun!
5. In the West, bosses expect their employees to make suggestions. However, in Thailand, any suggestions will be seen as criticism and are usually not welcome. If you need to suggest or criticize something, please approach your liaison officer first.
6. Try to learn some Thai (language) and use it in the local community. You will find Thai people to be very helpful if they know you are learning some Thai. However, please do not use Thai during your English lessons.
7. Make sure you offer and receive objects with your right hand even though you might be left-handed. To offer and receive things properly, your left hand should support your right hand.
8. Signs of affection are generally frowned upon. This includes holding hands with your boy/girl friend in public and kissing.
9. You need to be aware of the level of your head at all times. You will probably notice students dip their head as they walk past you. This rule includes adults too. You should dip your head as you pass in front of and behind someone superior to you. You might have to walk past some parents sitting down on chairs. Show respect by dipping your head a little as you walk in front of someone.
10. Also be careful where you sit. Do not sit on steps as this will make it awkward for people trying to walk past you. It is bad manners to climb over someone sitting on the floor.
11. The Thai greeting is a "wai". If any adult wais you first you should wai them back straight away. The exception is if that person is a student. For them you just smile and nod. To wai, you raise your hands in a prayer like gesture to just above chest level and then bow your head down to meet your hands. As a rough rule, your thumb tips should meet your nose. All teachers at the school wai each other in the morning and also at the end of the day. You are expected to do the same.

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Set a good example to the students and cut your hair short

12. If you are a male teacher, be careful of being alone with a female teacher or student. You will notice that older women will be nervous about being alone with you – they might stand by the door and if they come in they will make sure the door stays open. In Thai culture it is not correct for a man and woman to be alone in a room. Students won't understand this, so you have to set a good example.

13. Thai people tend to laugh to cover embarrassment or loss of face. They are not laughing at you so don't take it personally.

14. There are a lot of rules the students have to obey and as a teacher you have to set a good example. One rule you should be aware of is don't eat and walk! There are other things too, like taking off your shoes before entering a room, walking on the right side of the stairs, and having neat hair.

15. You will be expected to dress smartly and behave correctly while at school and on your way to and from school. Everyone in the local community will know that you are a teacher from our school and anything "undesirable" (bad) you may do will look bad for the school.

16 Teachers cannot wear piercings, except small earrings for female teachers. Any tattoos also have to be covered. Your clothes must be sharp at all times and for women, they should be modest.

17. By law, smoking is not allowed on the school grounds. If you need to smoke during the day, we ask you to smoke outside.