



**Pioneers Bacculaureate School's International
Employee Handbook 2008-2009**

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About Pioneers Baccalaureate School

The Future Pioneers Story

The Founders of the Society strongly believe the values, morals, ethics, and educational standards of the Palestinian people were negatively affected in recent years due to the prolonged Israeli occupation, the first and second Intifada, and more importantly, the local authority's inattentiveness to education. This has become a common and widespread problem throughout Palestine. In addition, political factions interfered by immersing themselves in local schools. Due to this situation, the founders decided to immediately intervene and employ corrective strategies by implementing and establishing a chain of schools which would instill values, morals, discipline, and ethics and provide a modern curriculum with the highest academic standards. The Society targeted the youngest generation of learners since they will be the future pioneers, builders, and leaders of Palestine. It is important to note that the Future Pioneers schools are charitable schools which are not affiliated with any political party.

Future Pioneers were well aware that changes in education will have a direct effect on changes in our society. Proper and modern education styles will naturally pave the way for social change and justice. The English curriculum dominating schools in Nablus is very weak in comparison to schools in Ramallah and Bethlehem. Due to the political situation in Palestine, scholarships and grants are seldom given to students from Nablus. There is an inequity when it comes to obtaining a strong education and/or opportunities to study abroad. The intent of Future Pioneers is to have Palestinian children reach out to the rest of the world and share new ideas with their communities. One of the main focuses is to encourage and support a peaceful environment in the region. The Society chose Nablus for these reasons as the springboard to establish their first Baccalaureate school.

Our Vision

The Future Pioneers envision an educational infrastructure which provides students with a variety of academic and social experiences that promote ethics, leadership, creativity, and individual responsibility meanwhile equipping them with all the skills needed to compete in the global world.

Teaching philosophy

Pioneer's teaching philosophy is based on around an individual approach to each child. We believe that taking a uniform approach to a classroom full of students is not going to work for all of them. We are establishing a curriculum that will allow

us to include the weakest students in the most important parts of every area, while at the same time providing a means for our gifted students to go as far as their abilities and our help can take them.

We believe the most important part of teaching children is to involve their imaginations. We want our students to come to school eager to study the latest fascinating topic they are going to explore. Pioneers is committed to an international approach, meaning we are going to take what works from the most modern methods available, while maintaining what is valuable from our own educational traditions. We are committed to providing our teachers with constant opportunities to hone their crafts and learn new techniques. Our English Language curriculum has four goals, which represent the four domains of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is important to note that these domains are interdependent and are often developed together and integrated into a transdisciplinary approach in our school. We provide English language classes for our students in Language Arts, Science, Math and Information and Communications Technology.

Research indicates it may take up to five to seven years for non-native speakers to develop the academic aspects of the language to the same standard as native speakers but we hope to beat that pace. Our school motto is "Building Palestine's Future" and the people who make up the PBS community are our greatest asset. We are proud of the extra effort and learning that our students and staff engage in every day. We salute the parents, family members and community friends who support them and us. We believe that together we can fulfill the goal of "challenging all students to reach their fullest potential and assuring that they acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become responsible citizens.

Employment Structure

Contracts

1. Agreement to abide by standards

A contract indicating that an international employee agrees to abide by the policies outlined by the Pioneers Baccalaureate School International Employee Handbook must be signed prior to employment of any international.

2. Contract Length

The length of employment of any international will be determined by the administrative department and clearly stated in print on the employment contract to be signed by both parties.

3. Contract Breaking Penalties

Any international who wishes to terminate employment must give at least 1 month notice to the administrative department, and may not leave until a suitable replacement is found. If either of these obligations is not met, a financial penalty equal to two months' salary will be paid by the employee to the school.

Housing

Housing will be provided by the school to the international staff. The housing arrangement may be any of the following: home stay, co-ed housing, or single sex housing. Internationals employed with Pioneers Bacculaureate School should be prepared to live in any of the three housing situations. Should there be a concern with the housing arrangement, please send your requests in writing to administration. International employees should also take into consideration that the living conditions in Nablus are not the same as in western countries, and being flexible and adaptable is a job requirement. We will do our best to work with the needs of the international employees.

Hours

Work load per a week during the school year is about 23 teaching hours, and whatever class room preparation time is needed. Beyond that is the choice of each international employee. However, many internationals prefer to apply their talents to after school activities and other organizational tasks.

Payment

The employee will be paid monthly, with the first payment to be received after the first month of employment.

Separation from Employment

Pioneers Bacculaureate School reserves the right to dismiss any international employee on the following non-inclusive grounds:

- Low teaching standards
- Consistent tardiness in the submission of required documents (lesson plans, etc.)
- Disregard for school policies
- Not fulfilling the job description
- Any form of physical violence

- Exposes the students to unacceptable or dangerous ideas, concepts, visual images, etc.
- Not acting as a positive member of the team
- Any other behavior detrimental to the mission of the school

Management and Workplace Expectations

Workplace Structure

Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings are held on a regular basis. All teachers are required to attend a weekly after-school meeting. Other meetings may be called as deemed appropriate by the administration – these are generally held at the end of the teaching day but a meeting may be scheduled during a weekend or holiday for emergency purposes. The Director is responsible for the scheduling and supervision of weekly meetings.

Policy of Absenteeism

Occasional absences are unavoidable. Proper planning will minimize its effect on the students and staff, so teachers are to report their absences as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. If you are unable to attend the school due to an emergency or for a valid reason you must personally telephone the school and your supervising Director before 8.00 am. For any absence, lesson plans must be provided. Lesson plans, written assignments or worksheets are to be submitted to the office no later than 8:15 am.

Daily Announcements

At the beginning of each school day, students, teachers and administrators assemble in the courtyard. Daily announcements relating to school functions and activities are made at this time. Announcements of special meetings, publicity of forthcoming events, reminders about procedures, and all other notices that are of concern to students and faculty are made through the daily announcement before the start of school. Announcements must carry the signature of a staff member and should include such data as the date, time and place of event, and the name of the sponsoring group. Daily announcements should be turned in at the office by 8:00am the day before the announcement is to be made.

Weekly Bulletin:

The weekly staff meeting and bulletin are the main means of communication between administration and teachers. The bulletin is distributed to faculty members and placed in their mailboxes following each staff meeting.

Teachers, Student Council, or club sponsor might wish to use the weekly bulletin to convey information to the rest of the faculty or the students. This information must be submitted to the administration for inclusion in the bulletin.

Conflict Management

Differences will arise among staff members. When they do, they need to be handled with good will and forthrightness. Please remember not to be critical of another staff member in the presence of students, parents, or members of the community, and discuss any differences in private. With regard to students, it is inappropriate to criticize one in front others or to make comparisons between classes. Any form of office gossip is prohibited. Any negative comments that need to be made towards a staff member need to be officially submitted to the administration in writing with suggestions on how the situation can be improved.

Conduct and Appearance

Employees of Pioneers Baccalaureate School are expected to dress in a manner respectful of the local culture, and also suitable for a professional school environment.

In respect to employee conduct, we hold our employees accountable to the highest levels of professionalism. Should the school feel that an employee's conduct is not in line with the mission or policies of the school, it may be grounds for dismissal of the employee.

Employees of Pioneers Baccalaureate School are also expected to refrain from any and all activist activities while under the employment of the school. While we understand and appreciate the need for individuals to show their solidarity with the Palestinian cause, we believe that teaching the children of Nablus is the international employee's act of solidarity. Any participation in activist rallies or actions that may jeopardize an employee's immigration status in Israel and the Palestinian territories is unacceptable while employed by the school.

School Year Operations and Procedures

General Procedures

Evacuation Drills

With the exception of office personnel, all school staff and students are to exit the building using standard drill procedures. Classrooms are to proceed to their

designated areas where attendance will be taken and reported. Support staff should exit the building and circulate among classrooms, encouraging appropriate student behavior. Each room in the building has an exit map that indicates the escape route to be used.

Medication for Students

School-Administered Medication: Requests for the district to administer medication shall be made by the parent/guardian in writing. Written instructions from the physician are required for all requests to administer prescription medication. Such instructions must include the following information: Name of the student, name of the medication, dosage, routine, frequency of administration, and any special instructions. A prescription label meets the requirement for written instructions from the physician if the information above is included.

~Written instructions from the parent that include the above information are required for all requests to administer nonprescription medication. All medication to be administered by the school personnel must be brought to school by the parent/guardian in the original container. Medication not picked up by the parent within five school days of the end of the medication period or at the end of the school year, whichever occurs first, will be disposed of by the district staff.

Afternoon Bus Dismissal

The bell rings at 1:00 PM.

All activities should cease in plenty of time to help the students prepare themselves and their room for dismissal. Good classroom management will enable you to have the students get their room spic and span before leaving for the day. Bus loading is very important and should be given your fullest attention. Students are not able to ride to a neighbor or friend's house without permission from the parents in WRITING. Permission must also be received from the office. All children MUST ride the bus to which they have been assigned in order to keep our loads equalized. Children must not be left unsupervised at the end of the day to get on the buses at their leisure.

Restroom Policy

The teacher's assistant must escort child to the restroom. Do not send more than 2 students at a time. Students should be encouraged to use the restroom during breaks.

Excusing Students

A student leaving school early must get permission to leave through the main office. DO NOT MAKE AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. All students must have

an excuse in writing from their parents if they are to leave school after arriving. Parents are to sign them out in the office.

Food

Students are expected to eat during break times only. No food allowed in the classroom.

Visitors/Parents

Visitors/parents are always welcome. The following guidelines have been established for the safety of all students.

- All visitors must report to the office.
- All visitors will be issued a visitor's badge to wear.
- All parents should wait in the lobby for dismissal at 1:00 PM.
- Only in an emergency should students be dismissed early. All students will be dismissed through the main office.
- No students will be dismissed from the classroom.
- Parents should not pick up other children (neighbors) without notifying the office and providing a written note from the parent.
- Parents wanting to visit a classroom should make prior arrangements with the teacher for classroom visits.

Birthdays

Some students and their parents may approach you with the desire to observe their child's birthday with a party at school. Parents who would like their child's birthday celebrated must make arrangements with the teacher in advance. Invitations to private birthday parties may be distributed at school only if all children in the class are invited. The celebration must be limited to a cake or cupcakes and a drink – no gifts or treat bags- and last no longer than 15 minutes.

Money and All Personal Items

All cash should be locked in the school office. Put money in an envelope with your name/class marked on it. Check with the office staff if you need anything from the locked cabinet. All personal items of any value should be locked in a cabinet in your room during the day. If you do not have a cabinet that will lock, please notify the office immediately.

Break time Rules

The classroom teacher will discuss rules regarding the playground so that students will have a thorough understanding of the playground rules. It is very important that playground rules be clearly understood by all students.

1. The following activities are NOT permitted:

- Fighting
- Kicking
- Tackling
- Pulling on clothing/other people
- Pushing
- Picking up/throwing sticks, dirt, rocks, mud balls and/or other debris

2. The students will line up quietly when signaled.

3. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds for any reason unless the main office has notified the teacher on duty.

4. No roughhousing allowed.

5. Students are not to bring athletic equipment from home without prior approval from the Director.

6. Students should not play around the building walls or talk to those students in time out.

Behavior Management Plan

The strength of student management lies with the teacher within the classroom and is, in its most effective sense, a regular part of the teaching process.

Developing responsibility is a learning process - students learn to be responsible. Fortunately, most students generally act in a responsible manner and have no difficulty with school rules. Teachers are expected to handle routine disciplinary problems within their classrooms.

1. Prevention

All teachers need clear and specific classroom rules. The rules should be written and either posted and handed out to students and parents. The teacher needs to go over the rules with the class so that each student understands the teacher's expectations. Good classroom teaching techniques, i.e., using eye contact, moving close to a disrupter, providing positive reinforcement and praise, etc., will prevent many disruptions. Enforce your classroom rules with reasonable

consequences that are related to the misbehavior. Be consistent. Make good behavior desirable. Students are going to get attention one way or the other. If they cannot get it in a socially desirable way, they will get it in other ways. If the majority of the students disapprove of poor conduct, they will have a powerful influence on keeping others in line. Recognize each individual's human worth and respect his/her dignity. A word of sincere praise and a display of some interest in each student will avoid many discipline problems.

Discipline: Code of Conduct

Effective discipline procedures are important to the overall function of our school. Consistent expectations and consequences/reinforcements are critical to any discipline policy. School wide rules and classroom rules should be clearly communicated to students on the first day of school. Classroom rules should be posted in each classroom. Expectations should be reviewed on a regular basis.

At the Pioneers Baccalaureate School, we believe in the development of each student's potential for learning in a positive, safe and orderly school environment. We believe that we must state behavioral expectations and discipline procedures in a manner most likely to be read and understood.

Discipline at PB is based upon the following assumptions:

1. All students are innately good and have the capacity to behave responsibly and make good choices.

- 2.

A school environment, in which appropriate behavior is consistently expected and recognized, creates a sense of security for students that will increase their attention to learning and to self responsibility.

- 3.

Disciplinary consequences should be productive, reasonable and related to inappropriate behaviors.

- 4.

Students' benefit from the educational process best when teachers, administrators, counselors and parents work cooperatively to ensure that students gain the most from their mistake.

The aims of discipline procedures at PB are as follows:

To help students recognize that freedom and responsibility go hand-in-hand.

To help students learn from their mistakes.

To help students develop effective communication skills, problem solving skills and other important social skills.

The Code of Conduct is in line with the IB Learner profile, creating a positive means of encouraging appropriate behavior. The Code of Conduct includes five statements. These are written in a positive manner, and represent the desired behaviors and habits that students are expected to model and practice on a daily basis. We will consistently challenge students to consider their behavior and contributions to school life in terms of the Code of Conduct.

Our Code of Conduct

1. Be truthful; communicate honestly.
2. Be actively engaged in learning; ask questions, listen to others, work together.
3. Be caring, friendly, helpful and polite to others.
4. Be responsible for personal property and for the property of others.
5. Be respectful and sensitive to the needs of others.

Problem Solving Steps

Students are encouraged to use the following steps to help them solve problems.

• Stop

Talk

Walk

Ask for Help

2. Action (What to do when misbehavior occurs)

Disciplinary Procedure

The PB reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for activities of a student, whether on-campus or off-campus, which are considered detrimental to the welfare of the school, student body or individual.

• PB students are subject to school rules and disciplinary responses for incidents of misconduct or breaches of discipline occurring during school or while attending school-sponsored activities.

PB students are subject to school rules and disciplinary responses while away from school should actions by them be considered detrimental to the welfare of themselves, others or the school.

Breaches of discipline shall be dealt with by applying progressively serious measures, which appropriately meet the seriousness of the offence, which may include behavioral or academic issues.

Disciplinary measures are as follows:

1. Verbal warning to student
2. Time Out Section in the class

3. Student Completes Letter of Apology and Action Plan

4. Loss of Privileges or do Extra Jobs in class

5. Visit with Principal or Assistant Principal (Complete office referral when sending a student to the principal. Please be specific regarding what inappropriate behavior the student is exhibiting and include what interventions you have tried in the classroom.

6. Conference

The teacher, counselor or Principal will confer with the student. The parents may be conferred with in person or by phone. As a result of the conference process, one or more of the following consequences may be imposed as a result of a student's inappropriate behavior.

7. Weekly Progress Report

The Principal or Vice Principal may place a student "on report" due to academic and/or behavioral concerns. We will closely monitor the student's academic performance and/or behavior for the week. A student on report will be required to have his/her teachers complete a report at the end of each lesson for the entire week. After the report is completed, the student will sign it and acquire the signature of parents.

8. Contract

A formal written contract between the school, parents and student may be required which specifies expectations and consequences of behaviors.

9. Detention /In School Suspension

Detention/In School Suspension shall mean a disciplinary measure, which requires a student to remain in a designated and supervised area of the school for a specified period of time. Students may be assigned specific work during a detention. Detention may result from inappropriate behavior in class or on the playground, and may be imposed by the faculty or the administration.

10. Suspension of student

Behavior judged to consistently deviate from accepted standards, or in a single more serious incident, will lead to suspension by the Principal for a period of from one to five days. Consistent unacceptable behavior or serious infringements of the rights, safety or welfare of others may result in suspension. The parents will be advised of the circumstances and action to be taken. A suspended student may not return to school until a conference is held between the administration and the student, parent(s) or guardian. A student shall be referred to the Counselor on returning to school.

11. Probationary enrolment

Students shall be placed on probationary enrolment as a consequence of behavior judged sufficiently serious that repeated similar behavior will result in automatic recommendation for expulsion.

12. Expulsion of student

Any serious and/or chronic offences may lead to expulsion, resulting in a student being removed from the school rolls.

Other Procedures

Financial Reimbursement

A student and parents may be required to reimburse individuals or PB for damage to or destruction of property.

Our purpose is to provide an opportunity for all students to be successful in school. The classroom climate, expectations, and teaching techniques are paramount in providing this opportunity. When students do well and meet your expectations---praise, a celebration of their success, or a note to parents will create wonders in continuing appropriate behaviors and success.

Accidents

Any accident, no matter how minor, which occurs to a student during a school day must be reported to the office at the earliest possible time and an accident form completed by the supervising teacher or staff member. Forms may be obtained at the office. Emergency First aid kit is available in the School Kitchen.

In the event of serious injury, contact the office immediately. Do not move the student or adult. Wait for a qualified staff member with a first-aid card to administer first aid. All teachers are encouraged to seek first aid training.

Activities

The principal is responsible for overseeing all duties of an activities director, including (but not limited to) dances, assemblies, and fundraisers. In addition, the principal is responsible for overseeing discipline and attendance matters.

Student Sign In/Out

No student is to leave the school building or immediate school grounds any time during school hours, including lunch period, without permission. Register is located at the main office counter for a student to use any time he/she comes to or leaves school during the school day. Any student who comes to school late or who returns to school during school hours after having left school must sign in at the office before going to class. Students may not leave school during school hours without permission from his/her parent/guardian and the office. A parent/guardian may provide written permission or give oral permission to the principal or his/her designee over the phone.

Attendance Record Keeping

Forms for reporting absences will be furnished to teachers. Teachers are required to keep accurate records of absences (excused or unexcused). Attendance information is to be entered in the grade book and will be included on the student's progress report. Records must be both accurate and legible. Teachers need to take attendance and have it ready for pickup 10 minutes after the start of first period.

Confidentiality

Teachers must use good judgment when discussing school business, student behavior or achievement. No school employee shall reveal personal information concerning any student, except under judicial process.

Campus and Playground Supervision

Teachers will be assigned supervision on a regular rotating basis throughout the year. During supervision, teachers will:

1. Be present in playground at all times during the assigned periods (morning period, recesses, at the end of the day after classes etc.).
2. Promenade around the playground and/or supervision area to ensure complete supervision.
3. Ensure students remain in assigned areas.
4. Supervise the orderly queuing for the canteen.
5. Ensure students are following playground regulations - littering, rough playing, improper language is not permitted.
6. Administer discipline as needed.

Movement through the building

Movement of students will be orderly. Teachers will direct students to leave their classroom or instructional area in an orderly manner. Students must be instructed to walk at all times when moving throughout the building. Teachers will be outside their rooms during periods of student movement for the safety of all children.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside the building.

Bulletin Boards

Classroom bulletin boards serve as teaching aids. They should be used extensively and changed regularly. As for hallway bulletin boards, a schedule will provide opportunities for each teacher to display student work.

Special Programs

This refers to programs such as play performances, musical concerts, etc. The following guidelines describe the procedure that should be followed to sponsor such programs.

The Director must approve any program involving in a public performance.

1. The sponsoring teacher(s) submits a request to the Director providing all the detailed information such as costumes, location and date of performance, dates of rehearsals, students involved, type of audience, etc. All these details should be discussed with the director before finalizing a program.
2. Other teachers may be assigned to help in the production and supervise during the performance.

Instruction

Manage the teaching process and:

Develop weekly and daily lesson plans in accordance with the curriculum and guidelines of the school.

1. Prepare assignments, experiments, demonstrations, teaching aids, bulletin boards, etc.
2. Use audio-visual aids, field trips, and other resources to supplement and reinforce teaching.
3. Plan, organize and direct assemblies and other instructional programs

Student evaluation and assessment

1. Evaluate students' learning strengths and weaknesses, adapt teaching methods accordingly, and provide assistance or attention during and after school hours.
2. Determine and implement teaching methods appropriate to students needs and capabilities, group size, topics and program objectives.
3. Evaluate and report student progress.
4. Initiate and participate in conferences with pupils, parents and/or administration.

Classroom management:

1. Foster safe, healthy, and attractive conditions in the classroom and on campus
2. Establish and maintain discipline, through self-assigned measures.
3. Implement the school's procedure fairly and consistently.

4. Ensure the cleanliness and tidiness of the classroom, students' desks and other furniture and materials.

5. Last Class of the Day – all teachers are to make sure that students pick up all books, writing instruments and papers from the floor and leave the classroom neat and tidy.

Preparing for Departure and Arrival into Israel and Palestine

What to Bring

Some things can be quite expensive to buy here, or may not be widely available. You should bring a good supply of your favorite brands of deodorant, lotion, razors, etc. Also, for women, tampons are very hard to get a hold of here and are extremely expensive; it's wise to pack a good supply.

Electronics are also very expensive and hard to get a hold of. If you own a laptop, iPod, digital camera, etc. it would be to best to bring it with you. Keep in mind that these items might be searched when you go through immigration, so be sure to delete any files that might deter your entry into Israel.

Other things to bring are:

Modest clothing

Bed sheets according to your preference

Money: Cash and bank/credit cards

Pictures and small objects that remind you of home.

Electrical Outlet converters

What to Leave Behind

Anything that might deter your entry into Israel, including such things as Kaffiyyas and Palestinian flags.

Visa Clearance Guidelines

You will get an Israel entry visa (standard length is 90 days) upon arrival at the airport. Although the Ben Gourion airport is one of the easiest entry points into Israel it still can be tricky. Please study the below guidelines and follow them to help you with a smooth processing of your passport. It is highly advised that you get an entry stamp in your

passport, even though this will complicate and likely prevent your entry to Lebanon and Syria among other Arab countries. If you do not have a stamp on your passport you can encounter difficulties moving within the West Bank.

If you have not been to Israel before please follow the below guidelines for entering the country as a tourist:

Do not bring this print out with you in your checked, personal, or carry-on luggage.

Above and beyond everything, be very polite and answer all of their questions without acting frustrated or annoyed. Being friendly and patient is the best way to minimize the questions. Let them understand that you know that their questions and the intense security are for everybody's well-being.

Answer briefly and to the point. Since you are not telling exactly the truth please make sure that you know what you are going to say. The below are a list of the questions that you will be faced with and then the suggested answers hopefully they will give you a good idea of what you should answer.

– When asked what the purpose of your visit is?

- Answer: Tourism, I will be visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Tel Aviv. I plan to stay at the El Hashimi Hotel in Jerusalem, which I found on the internet. (Write on a piece of paper the address to El Hashimi Hotel: Souk Khan El Zeit no 73, Old City Jerusalem). I don't have reservations, but I read that they usually have availability. I don't have reservations in Tel Aviv yet as I am hoping to get recommendations from the Jerusalem hotel or other travelers I meet. I hope to stay in Jerusalem until June 15th touring the city and near by sites and cities. I am not interested in going to the West Bank outside of Bethlehem.
- Here they may really push you about not having reservations, etc. Insist that you're a free spirit, have heard great things about how kind Israeli kids and other travelers are, and are planning to go with the flow, etc...

– How will you be getting to Jerusalem?

- Taxi.

– Do you have a return ticket? How long are you staying?

- I'll be in the region for the summer. I hope to be here in Israel for a few weeks then travel by bus to Jordan to tour the sites there, go to the Dead Sea and then fly home at the end of the summer. I might try to climb Mt Sinai and go to the beaches there too.
- It is a long time to be traveling alone, you can emphasize having this last precious free summer before you start work, that you've saved up a long time to explore the fascinating history of the region...

– Are you traveling alone?

- Yes. I had the opportunity to travel this summer and couldn't find anybody to travel with.

– You don't have any friends here?

- No. This is my first visit to Israel. I do not know anyone here.

– Do you speak Hebrew?

– You can be honest here, just make sure that you don't add anything that indicates you know someone in Israel, or that you speak it fluently.

– That is very odd that you are traveling by yourself. . .

- I couldn't find anybody to travel with – most friends work and have wanted to tour Israel for some time so decided to do it this summer.
- Did you choose to come to Israel?
 - I chose to come here.
- Why?
 - I am interested in the area and the history of the region. I studied the history and culture. Try to avoid saying anything about the conflict and don't say Palestine say "West Bank" if you have to mention it. If they ask you about the conflict, say that you are not particularly up on the situation, but wish that there could be peace for the people of Israel, or people of the region in general. Again, try to stay away from politics, but if it does come up, just try to use the word peace and be vague.
- Why not travel to a different area of the world? Etc...
 - Just be aware that they may keep pushing a single point, getting seemingly personal and/or belligerent. Keep your cool, be patient, friendly and polite throughout.
- Who bought your ticket?
 - I bought my ticket.
- Do you know anybody in Israel or West Bank?
 - No
- Who is paying for this trip?
 - I am paying for this trip. (They may get really personal about who is paying for the trip and just say that you have saved up the money for it by working)
- What is your father's name?
 - Say your father's first and last name.
- Have you ever been to Israel?
 - No

Your experience and waiting time will depend largely on the staff person who you face, their mood that day, etc. Hopefully you will be passed through quite quickly as an American tourist, but be prepared for the fact that you may not be, and may even be asked to wait in a separate room while they inspect your luggage or ask other questions.

Check Points

As with immigration, going through the checkpoints in Palestine can be a very simple or a long and drawn out process. The best thing you can do is to be calm, friendly, and respectful of the officers at the checkpoints. Do not mention that you are living in Nablus. Remember that it is important to maintain your tourist status while you are living and teaching in Palestine.

Visa Runs

It is important to note that there is no work permit available for the West Bank at this time. All internationals employed in the West Bank are here on temporary

tourist visas. This means that before an international's 3 month tourist visa expires, they must leave the country and return to receive a new visa.

Palestinian Culture and Expected Cultural Sensitivity

Religious Traditions

Palestine is a land where many religious traditions are practiced. The majority of Palestinians follow Islam, while a minority follow various Christian and Jewish traditions. In Nablus there is also the Samaritan community, who lives on Mt. Gerizim and considers it to be sacred.

To learn more about Islam please see the attached document, "A Brief Guide to the Basics of Islam" by Jazakallah Khairan.

Traditional Culture

Please visit the following websites to get an idea about the traditional Palestinian culture:

<http://www.bethlehem.ps/culture>

<http://www.palestine-net.com/culture/>

Expected Cultural Sensitivity

Traditional Palestinian culture is very conservative compared to western society. Here are some basic guidelines to be respectful of the culture here in Nablus:

- If you are not sure about something please ask! It is always better to err on the side of caution. In respect to gender roles, it is always best to ask questions of someone of the same sex to avoid any awkward situations.
- In Nablus especially, the consumption of drugs and alcohol is strictly out of the question.
- Never reach for the hand of someone of the opposite sex. If they offer their hand first, it is acceptable to shake hands.
- Individuals of the same sex often kiss on both cheeks as a common greeting--never people of the opposite sex.
- Dating is not common here, and any form of relationship is expected to result in marriage.
- If you are invited into someone's home it is polite to bring a small gift: ex. Flowers, sweets, sugar, tea and/or coffee, etc.
- Clothing should be modest and not expose the shoulders, or legs.

Dealing with Culture Shock

Living and working in a culture different from one's own can be very rewarding, but also very challenging. Almost everyone living in another culture will experience culture shock to some degree. There are four stages of culture shock that are commonly experienced:

Honeymoon stage: Everything is exciting and new. You're having a wonderful time.

Shock: The cultural differences are intensified, and you don't know how to deal with them. Often comparisons are made between the host country's culture and the home culture.

Negotiation: You learn to deal with the problems set before you and try to integrate them into your own beliefs.

Acceptance: You are able to live well in the environment with the differences you are experiencing.

Some symptoms of Culture Shock:

1. Feeling very angry over minor inconveniences
2. Irritability
3. Withdrawal from people who are different from you
4. Extreme homesickness
5. Sudden intense feeling of loyalty to own culture
6. Overeating or loss of appetite
7. Boredom
8. A need for excessive sleep
9. Headaches
10. Upset stomach
11. Small pains really hurt
12. Depression
13. Loss of ability to work efficiently
14. Unexplainable crying
15. Marital or relationship stress
16. Exaggerated cleanliness
17. Feeling sick much of the time

Qualities for successful solutions to culture shock:

- Flexibility
- Open-mindedness
- Awareness of differences between cultures
- Desire to take chances, not fear failure
- Desire to educate yourself about the new culture in which you live
- Willingness to adapt

- Good listening and observation skills
- Become part of the culture
- Free yourself of misconceptions and stereotypes
- Avoid comparisons between the home and host country
- Socialize and be active
- Learn the language
- Keep journals
- Make new friends
- Volunteer

Nablus

Introduction to Nablus

Please visit the site of Nablus the Culture to learn more about the city of Nablus.

<http://www.nablusculture.ps/index,flash.htm>

Recreation

In Nablus the typical form of recreation is talking with friends and family, drinking tea or coffee, smoking sheesha, and going for walks in the evening. For internationals, many find walking around the city, going through the souq (market), and meeting for knafa (a famous Nablusi sweet) to be enjoyable forms of recreation. Nablus is also home to a city park, the Turkish baths, and a few recreational pools (the baths and pools are segregated by sex, be sure to ask about the times open for women/men).

Transportation

Taxis are the general form of transportation around Nablus. The typical taxi fare is 10 NIS, although from the city center to nearby locations should cost about 2.5 NIS. Walking is another common form of transportation, and many international employees find walking to be enjoyable and convenient.

Food

Food available in restaurants is fairly limited since families eat together in the homes. Certain foods are almost always available to purchase and these include:

Falafel Sandwich: 3 NIS

Bread (Houbz): cheap and plentiful

Hummus: 3 NIS

Shawarma: 9 NIS

Cola: 1 NIS

Items such as fried chicken and pizza are also available but are much more expensive than the Arabic food.

Other shopping

Nablus had a very active and vibrant souq (market). Almost everything is available to purchase there from meat to shoes. Prices are the cheapest in the souq. Other forms of shopping such as retail stores are available.

Traveling out of town

Traveling out of Nablus requires going through a checkpoint. Usually this will be Hawara check point. A taxi to Hawara should be about 10-15 NIS, and services to other cities in the West Bank are widely available on the other side of the checkpoint.

In case of emergency

U.S. Consulate General, Jerusalem

18 Agron Road, Jerusalem 94190

27 Nablus Road, Jerusalem 94190

PHONE: 972-2-6227230 / 972-2-6253288

FAX: 972-2-6259270

E-MAIL: uscongenjerusalem@state.gov

British Consulate General, Jerusalem

19 Nashashibi Street

Sheikh Jarrah Quarter

P O Box 19690

Jerusalem 97200

britain.jerusalem@fco.gov.uk

Lana Khalif

0599240000

Police: 100

Ambulance: 101

Dr. Jamal Aloul: 0599206080

Survival Arabic

You will find these websites helpful:

<http://arabic.speak7.com/>

<http://afl.sakhr.com/freetour/menu/menu.html>

<http://i-cias.com/babel/arabic/index.htm>

<http://www.madinaharabic.com/>