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On October 7th, 1963, Yokkaichi established a sister city relationship with Long Beach, California. Since then, many cultural exchanges have been made. Many of Yokkaichi’s citizens have visited Long Beach and enjoyed learning about Long Beach’s educational, medicinal and cultural achievements. Likewise, many of Long Beach’s residents have journeyed to Yokkaichi’s port to experience our educational system and way of life.

The City of Long Beach has been kind enough to support the Yokkaichi English Fellows (YEF) Program, delegating YEFs to our public schools as a part of this 50 year sister city relationship. This is one of the most important aspects for the education of our students. It helps their communicative ability in a global economy.

If you are interested in education you are more than welcome in Yokkaichi. As a Yokkaichi English Fellow, wouldn’t you like to interact and connect with our students? This handbook provides only a glimpse of life here in Yokkaichi, come and see for yourself what our city has to offer. We have many traditional wares such as our banko ceramics, tea, a beautiful night view of the petroleum refinery and the port of Yokkaichi. In addition to that we have cultural events, like the Yokkaichi Grand Festival in August (unfortunately cancelled this 2021 year because of COVID). We are also home to cultural facilities such as the Yokkaichi Sports Dome, the Yokkaichi Museum, and a planetarium. Yokkaichi Pollution and Environmental Future Museum opened in March 2015. We have been promoting industrial development with an emphasis on environmental conservation. Yokkaichi will contribute by using our own environmental technology. Our city, rich with nature and warm hearted people, are looking forward to welcoming you.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for all the support and cooperation extended to us over the years by the city of Long Beach. We hope that the friendship between Long Beach and Yokkaichi will continue to prosper.
The subject “English” in our educational curriculum is one of 9 subjects which include Japanese, mathematics, science, social studies, art, home economics, arts and crafts, music and physical education. While they are all very important, English is an essential subject which helps students open their eyes and a means of communication with people around the world. In order to make English education more efficient, the Yokkaichi City Board of Education employs the practice of “team-teaching,” which uses an English teacher and a native English speaker, the Yokkaichi English Fellow, in the classroom.

The Yokkaichi English Fellows have helped us greatly to improve our English education and are essential to the students and teachers of Yokkaichi. Through interacting with the YEFs, students will have exposure to a variety of differences in culture, customs and lifestyle. In order to better understand each other, communication is very important. If we listen carefully and make an effort to clearly express ourselves, we can better learn from each other. We can think about things multilaterally, and find something of value that has not been noticed. This will lead to better international understanding and peaceful interaction among various countries.

On behalf of the Yokkaichi City Board of Education, I would like to express our sincere thanks for the assistance extended to us by the members of the Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association, Long Beach Unified School District and California State University, Long Beach without which the YEF Program would not have been as successful as it is now.

The YEF program has proven to be indispensable to the children in Yokkaichi and the Yokkaichi City Board of Education for the work and efforts of the YEFs. When students study and spend time with the YEFs, they can hear “live” English and feel that the English they have learned in class can be used in real life. Having YEFs in schools forces them to use English to communicate with native English speakers on a daily basis, and it motivates them to study English a little harder. They truly feel happy when they are able to use the English they have learned. We appreciate the YEFs’ strong effort for the great affect they have on our students.

The goals of Yokkaichi English Board of Education are to improve English language and communication skills. We desire to address the differences in culture and values. We also wish for students to have a strong global understanding and increase their interaction outside of Japan. Gradually, YEFs learn to understand the students here as well as our education system. The more the YEFs understand us, the more the students are willing to open their minds to the YEFs, and try to communicate in English. This desire makes English more interesting to the students.

To those interested in the YEF program or in the City of Yokkaichi, please drop by the Long Beach Unified School District or California State University, Long Beach to get more information.
The experience of working in Japan is a wonderful opportunity that we are glad to offer to you. You will find that the YEF Program provides benefits and an experience not commonly found in competing “teaching abroad” programs. Working as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in the junior high school systems will be your primary responsibility throughout your years of employment. However, you will have many other opportunities to grow professionally and to explore various aspects of Japan’s unique culture.

The YEF Program is both exciting and challenging. Our group consists of ALTs of various ages, backgrounds, and experiences. Some members have been hired through the Long Beach - Yokkaichi Sister City partnership, which was founded on October 7, 1963. Other members have been hired through the JET Program. Regardless of where each member was recruited from, once they join the program, their official title is “Yokkaichi English Fellow” (YEF).

The YEF Program is designed to be a minimum two-year program (going up to 4 years for Long Beach YEFs and 5 for JET members), consisting of new and experienced members. Depending on your performance, your contract may be renewed every year. In this setting, the continuing YEFs provide training to the new YEFs based on their accumulated knowledge and experience, while the new YEFs bring with them fresh ideas and methodologies. Thus, each year the program is enhanced and improved upon, changing in order to strive for better English education in Yokkaichi.

Living in Yokkaichi is a special experience. Yokkaichi offers various outlets to study Japanese, get involved with community events, or take part in other cultural activities during your time here. Many YEFs have been delighted by the warmth and hospitality they have received from the Shidouka staff, teachers, and students at their schools, and from their new community. Yokkaichi is only thirty-five minutes away from Nagoya, the fourth largest city in Japan, and it is centrally located for easy access to popular travel destinations such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Nara.

We welcome you in joining us in this unique teaching opportunity.
During your time at school, you will be team-teaching with JTEs. Team Teaching refers to a YEF and JTE working together to plan and jointly present lessons to that particular JTE’s students. Team teaching between YEFs and JTEs has been going on in Yokkaichi for many years. Our office has a number of helpful resources on the subject and provides extensive training to assist you after you arrive.

The role of the YEF in team teaching varies greatly depending on the assigned school and teacher pairings. You may be asked to plan an entire 50-minute lesson on some days, while only asked to provide native pronunciation for textbook vocabulary on other days. Your involvement will be at the discretion of the JTE, but what you make of that involvement will be up to your own individual motivation and perseverance. JTEs’ preferred teaching styles also vary widely. Some prefer review-based games while others prefer structured activities. **You will be expected to be flexible and open to your JTE’s input.** Often, they have specific grammar points or set vocabulary words that they want to cover and will ask you for lessons to support their goals.

Communication is very important when working with JTEs, but once you have a good rapport. You’ll have an even better time!
Advance planning and effective communication are both critical for successful team teaching. When you meet with your JTE to plan lessons, it is great to have some ideas ready to present to them. Their schedules are very demanding, so you will have to use your time wisely. At times, you may be tasked with heading a lesson on your own, but please keep in mind that you are always the assistant teacher. JTEs have extensive training and experience teaching English in a Japanese classroom. This can be particularly disorienting for those YEFs who come from a professional teaching background or have various forms of training. Curriculum, long term planning, grading, and classroom management are all mainly the responsibilities of the JTE. The YEF position offers rewards and challenges that are quite different from those of leading your own classroom.

Occasionally, you may need to support your JTE in classroom management and classroom resources. But, as a YEF, your main focus should be on creating a positive team-teaching environment with your JTE to create an engaging and fun English learning experience for students.

A good relationship with your JTE colleagues will assist you in your work and become an invaluable resource to those with limited experience with Japan and its culture. If you need anything while you are at school, it is best to ask a JTE. Good communication with JTEs helps you stay informed, even when you can’t understand staff announcements or read the daily bulletins at school. The JTE is also your main point of contact for official business, such as securing necessary approvals to participate in school functions or events outside of your work hours (ie. field trips, club activities, etc).
As YEFs in schools, we have 2 main goals. The **first** is to assist the JTEs in integrating communication-based language skills into their classroom. The **second** goal is to make the study of English more lively and relevant to students’ lives so that they are motivated to continue their studies. Some JTEs will place higher value on the language goals, requesting more serious activities that focus on listening or speaking skills, while others prefer to focus on our motivational role, asking us to create fun games that students can enjoy.

In addition to working with JTEs, other Japanese teachers, and the City of Yokkaichi, you will be working closely with other YEFs. At a glance, English education in Yokkaichi development projects, cultural exchange ideas, teaching methods, and much more will be what we will work on together.

In this program, we do our best to try and look out for each other. Living in a completely different country can be hard and adjusting might be difficult, so please call for help from the returning YEFs if you need it.

Learning together is something we advocate. We are excited to learn from you and about you.
Remember, every experience is different from school to school. When it comes to working in Yokkaichi schools, conditions and surroundings may be same or similar but the experience from school to school can vastly be different. Every April, YEFs usually will change schools, so you will most likely experience different school environments. This section is but a brief look of what to expect in your school life.

**Scheduling**

There are 22 junior high schools in Yokkaichi. Each YEF is assigned one or two junior high schools. YEFs rotate between the schools on an individualized schedule depending on the sizes of their schools. Your typical work week will be M~F; from 8:20AM to 4:15PM. Lunchtime starts anywhere between 12:20PM and 12:40 PM depending on the school.

Your weekly class schedule will be decided by the head JTE at each school. Normally, you will receive your teaching schedule one week in advance, but often some initiative on your part may be necessary to assure that you get plenty of time to plan.

**School Year**

The school year is divided into three trimesters, which run loosely from April through July, September through December, and January through March. When you arrive in Yokkaichi, your students will have already completed their first trimester of English instruction. Also, since the second trimester will not begin until September, your first month of work (August training) will take place at the Board of Education in City Hall (This is a nice time to get oriented and to get to know your co-workers before the academic year begins. More about this part of your job will follow once you arrive!).

**Curriculum**

The Ministry of Education (Monbukagakusho)—which tries to keep education standardized in Japan—sets the curriculum. The textbook and instruction closely mirror this curriculum. JTEs usually teach directly from the textbook with only their presentation styles differing. When you rotate from school to school, you will find students are studying about the same thing around the same time.

**Climate**

Winters are cold and summers are hot in Yokkaichi. It is uncomfortable at times, but you will acclimate to the weather if you dress accordingly. Keep a jacket or windbreaker handy in the fall and winter season. In the summer and spring, keep a hand towel in reach, either for wiping off sweat or drying your hands after washing them.
Relationship with JTEs and Other Teachers

Outside of the JTEs, many of the teachers can be a bit shy, especially when it comes to speaking with foreigners, but you will find teachers to be kind and friendly, as well as very eager to help you if any problems arise. A teacher’s room seating chart will help you get acquainted with everyone. Often YEFs develop wonderful friendships with not only the JTEs, but with the other teachers as well.

Teaching Attire

A suit is required for the first day of work and for various occasions throughout the year. The rest of the time, you have the option to dress business casual is appropriate (collared shirts, slacks). Casual attire, such as jeans, sleeveless shirts, shorts, low cut blouses, T-shirts, and anything else deemed inappropriate by the Board of Education should not be worn. Slip-on shoes that have not been worn outside are required for school, as are a new pair of tennis shoes for the gymnasium.

Teacher’s Room (職員室 – shokuinshitsu)

At every school there is a teacher’s room where you will spend time when you are not in class. It’s common to see students in the teacher’s room before school, between periods, and after school. This is a good place to interact with students and get to know them. Depending on the school, tea and coffee are available, but snacking is generally frowned upon outside of certain situations (eating Omiyage is usually ok). If you smoke, please do not do so at school.

Classrooms (教室 – kyoshitsu)

Students are each assigned to one classroom, where most their classes are held. Most students are reasonably well-behaved; however, just like in your home country, discipline problems will occasionally arise. Be aware that some Japanese teachers’ approach to classroom management can be different from American teachers’.

You will find a lot of excitement about your presence at school. Some students and teachers will be eager to talk with you, but others may be shy about speaking English. Your effort and initiative are helpful in overcoming this barrier in the classroom. It’s important that the students gain confidence and are willing to use what they have learned in real English conversations. Have fun with the students and show them there is more to English than studying and tests.
~7:15 – Leaving for School
You will usually leave home between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., depending on the distance of your school and the weather. You might ride your bike, take a bus, ride the train, walk, or all four.

~8:15 – Arriving at School
You should arrive at your school and get settled before the teachers’ meeting. You can arrive earlier and greet the students at the gate, briefly meet with your teachers about the plan for that day, or take a breather before the day begins.

8:20 – Teachers’ Meeting
Every school begins the day with a teacher’s meeting. Your attendance is required. Announcements, updates, and new information about the school can be heard here. If you are curious but have a hard time understanding, ask your teachers!

8:30 – 8:40 Homeroom and Reading
Most schools begin with a short homeroom or reading period. This is a good opportunity to make final preparations before classes start for the day.

8:50 – Morning Team Teaching (4 Periods)
You may begin team teaching first period after homeroom. Classes are usually 45-50 minutes with a 10 minute break in between. You will usually teach about 3-4 classes per day. During the class periods that you are not teaching, you will likely spend your time planning lessons, talking with the JTE, or performing some administration work for City Hall.
12:40pm – Lunch

Normally you will have 20 minutes for lunch and another 20 minutes of free time. Most teachers are assigned to eat with their homeroom and with their permission you may take your lunch and eat in the classroom with the students as well. You have the option of ordering school lunch or packing your own lunch.

*after lunch break or after 6th period* – Cleaning (depends on your school)

At some point in the afternoon there is usually a scheduled cleaning period of about 10 minutes, called 掃除 (souji). There are no janitors in the public junior high schools. Teachers and students are responsible for cleaning the school. You are encouraged to assist teachers and students during the cleaning period.

~1:20pm – Afternoon Team Teaching (1-2 Periods)

The last one or two periods of the day are after lunch. There are two schedules at school; one for a regular schedule (50 min classes) and one for a short schedule (45 min classes). There will be some days without a 6th period lesson in the afternoon. You will still be expected to stay in school to plan lessons, correct papers, or do YEF-related work. After the final class of the day, there is usually a 10-minute homeroom.

3:20pm – Lesson Planning and Clubs

After the last class, there are a variety of club activities that you can participate in if you are not planning lessons or working with students. If you have time, it can be rewarding to participate in clubs and use the opportunity to communicate informally with the students.
Self-Introduction

Your first 45-50 minute lesson at all of your junior high schools will be a self-introduction lesson. This basic lesson will be repeated many, many times. Your students will want to hear about you. They will be interested in your family and your hobbies, as well as your likes and dislikes. You may want to share interesting information about your city, state or country. Both the ordinary and the unusual are capable of bringing a lesson to life.

Seemingly mundane items that highlight day-to-day reality in your home country are very popular. You might want to gather some materials about your community. Bringing enough flyers to hang at school can be very helpful. Try stopping by your city hall for brochures or other materials about your city and its attractions. Students are interested in images of everyday things like houses, stores, restaurants, post boxes, signs in English, the beach, local landmarks, etc. Students are especially interested in what you looked like when you were in junior high school!

We encourage you to bring the items that you think will be appropriate and make your classes fun and exciting. Most JTEs will gladly welcome your presentation materials in the classroom.

In the past, YEFs have brought some of the following materials to Japan for their self-introduction, and for lessons throughout the year:

- advertisements
- bus schedules
- catalogs
- flags
- pamphlets
- foreign currency
- holiday decorations
- magazines
- yearbooks
- picture books
- maps
- menus
- newspaper articles
- pictures
- etc.
YEF duties outside of school

** ➔ possible cancellation due to COVID

Kindergarten Visits
During the junior high school testing period every trimester, all YEFs will visit 23 Yokkaichi kindergartens over a period of 3-4 days. These visits aim to expose the students to English through basic vocabulary-targeted lessons found in the YEF Kindergarten curriculum. We use songs, picture books and games to engage students of ages 4-5 years old and introduce the idea that English is fun and possible for them.

Speech Contest**
Another duty you have as a YEF involves working with students from your schools who will be participating in various English speech contests in Mie Prefecture. It is a joy to have the opportunity to work individually with these students and see the results of their enormous effort and enthusiasm.
In addition to instructing students, you may participate as judges and commentators for the speech and composition contest sponsored by the city of Yokkaichi.

Open Class**
At least once a year, some YEFs will host a class where members of Shidouka, YEFs, and others will observe you. This gives the observing YEFs a chance to get ideas. It is also a chance for the other YEFs to provide you with feedback about what worked or didn’t work well in your class.

Here We Go! Meetings
The junior high school English textbook you will be using is called Here We Go!. Once or twice a trimester, YEFs will make their own lesson and present it in a monthly meeting. In these meetings, YEFs will discuss the new activities to exchange ideas and make them better. After revision, the lessons are then added into one of the YEF’s best teaching tools, the YEF Shared Drive (a collection of past and present YEF-made lessons). You may also be involved in updating and revising these lessons.

Trimester Planning Sessions (Choseikai)**
Before each trimester begins, you will meet with the other YEFs and at least one JTE from your junior high school for a schedule-planning session. During these sessions, you will be confirming your schedule of school visits for the upcoming trimester. In addition to scheduling, these sessions also serve as a forum for the JTEs and YEFs to exchange ideas in order to improve the team-teaching methodologies used in the classroom.
When we are not at schools teaching, we are assigned to our office in 指導課, or Shidouka, (The Teaching Guidance Division). In Yokkaichi, kindergartens, elementary, and junior high schools are under the auspices of the city government. The chain of command at the office begins with the Mayor, followed by the Superintendent of Schools, and two Vice Superintendents. Several offices are under their supervision, including our office, Shidouka. Shidouka has a manager, two vice-managers, and a number of other regular employees, with whom the YEFs share office space. **Two of Shidouka’s regular employees are also our YEF coordinators/supervisors. Below, you can see the 2021-2022 YEF Coordinators.**

On the days we are assigned to work at City Hall, our workday is from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. During this time, you will work with other YEFs to plan and teach English lessons. As previously mentioned, your first month in Yokkaichi will be spent in Shidouka for team teaching and other various trainings. After August, the amount of time each YEF spends at the office varies greatly.

The other members of Shidouka are warm and friendly, and want you to feel welcome in Yokkaichi.

The YEF Program is continually being enhanced and developed thanks in part to the YEFs and the English teachers of Yokkaichi as well as through the leadership of our 課長 kachou (Manager) and our YEF Coordinators. **The YEF Coordinators are the direct supervisors, and translators of the YEF Program.** YEFs share many responsibilities and, as a team, are able to meet the needs of the program, utilizing their strengths effectively toward Board of Education’s goals.

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**Members of Shidouka and current YEFs greet new YEFs from JET at Yokkaichi station.**
Every experience is different in both the professional and personal aspects of living in Japan. Some may have a hard time adjusting while others have an easier time, but remember that we are all here to support each other. The YEF program stands out from most other ALT programs in Japan because of the amount of YEFs that Yokkaichi employs at one time. It’s also unique in how closely YEFs work together on various projects all year round.

Lastly, keep in mind that you will be officially employed by the Yokkaichi City Board of Education, making you a civil servant of Yokkaichi. Unless you are ethnically Asian, you are likely to stand out in town and attract a lot of attention. The number of foreigners in Japan is increasing, but there are still very few in Yokkaichi. A single action on your part may contribute significantly to someone’s opinion of foreigners and the YEF Program in general. Please be aware that you are an ambassador of your country at all times.

Good luck! See you soon!