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12th April

Please find below the update 16 from HOPE.

News from HOPE

1. HOPE's work has been fully back to normal from 7th April with all staff back to work as usual.
2. The focuses of HOPE's work are shifting to the following in the next a few weeks after a staff meeting on 8th April:
 - 1) Mini forum on "study in international school in China or study overseas – a comparison of advantage and disadvantage". Both our partner UK/US schools and local international and bilingual schools are invited to attend a series of online dialogue from 18th April hosted by directors of HOPE. The purpose of this event is to give confidence to Chinese families to go ahead with their overseas study plans as well as giving some families other alternatives before they go overseas afterwards.
 - 2) Organizing a series of demo classes on A level and IB subjects on Economics, Business, IT, History, Psychology as well as IELTS training. The purpose is to softly promote our partner institutions (a 15-mins short introduction is allowed at the beginning of the demo class) and to test the water/promote their commercial online programme.
 - 3) Preparing/brain-storming for the pre-departure briefing events before summer for students going to the UK this autumn.

If any of you who are interested in working with us for the above events please feel free to get in touch with us: event@hope-studyabroad.com.

Daniel

News on local media

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Dates announced for reopening of schools

Yang Meiping

21:13 UTC+8, 2020-04-09

Graduating students at local middle and high schools will be able to return to school on **April 27**, Lu Jing, director of the Shanghai Education Commission said on Thursday.

Universities and secondary vocational schools can arrange for the return of graduating students after April 27, he added.

All schools must make preparations for the return of other students before **May 6**, but the date for them to reopen will be decided based on developments of the pandemic and announced later.

“One thing I want to point out is that we will be more cautious in deciding on the time for kindergarten students and low-grade primary school students to return to campus as they are at such young ages and need more care with weak self-protection ability,” he said.

Training organizations should not resume operations before kindergartens and primary and secondary schools reopen, he added.

Lu said online classes via TV and Internet for primary and secondary school students since March 2 were satisfactory and all schools will assess students' performances on their return.

“Schools will arrange campus teaching plans based on the assessment results,” he said. “At present, we will not ask schools to teach on weekends or delay the summer vacation. We will carry out follow-up monitoring and change teaching plans based on opinions from experts, faculty, students and parents, if necessary.”

Some examinations have also been rescheduled. Among them, the college entrance examination has been postponed by a month to **July 7 to 9** by the Ministry of Education.

Lu said the high school entrance examination in Shanghai will be carried out on **June 27 and 28**, about two weeks later than in previous years. Meanwhile, there will be some changes in the PE test in the examination. The test has a total score of 1` 30

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points – 15 from assessment in class and 15 from a united test. This year, the united test will be canceled and all students will get the full 15 points in this part.

Lu said educational authorities and schools are all making preparations, including reserving materials and arranging training and drills, to safeguard security of faculty and students.

“The commission and district education bureaus will inspect schools before students return and those failing to make enough preparations would not be allowed to reopen,” he added.

He said the city has issued guidelines for all schools in the city to prepare for reopening, such as preparing enough masks and temperature-measuring facilities in advance, arranging training and drills, and making plans for morning checks at school gates.

“Students and schools are a special community and we will have higher standards in virus prevention and control,” said Lu. “We hope parents will understand and support us when the strict measures are carried out when schools reopen.”



The announcement of a return date for graduating students eased parents' anxieties somewhat.

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“I have been worried the whole semester they would have to study online and the high school entrance examination will be carried out in late July or even August when it's very hot in Shanghai and thus not a good season for examination,” said a mother surnamed Liu, whose daughter is to graduate from a middle school this summer.

“Teachers are working hard to help students learning online, but I think the campus is a better environment for study than home,” she said. “I'm glad my daughter will go back to school, studying together with her classmates and monitored more closely by teachers. It will make her more focused on her studies.”

She said she believed the government and school will do their best to ensure the safety of students.

“Think about the protective measures Shanghai has taken. The whole city has done a great job and I think we will continue to do so in the following days,” she said.

School plans

Li Baiyan, principal of Shanghai Jianping Experimental Middle School, said the school has drafted plans for reopening and emergency management and established schemes for 10 special items ranging from morning checks and students' health management to disinfection and quarantine.

“For example, we will ask parents to keep their children at home if they have a fever; if they are found with an abnormal temperature at the school gate, they will not be allowed to enter the campus; if they are found with a fever on campus, they will be brought to an observation area for further examination and treatment,” she said.

“If a suspected or confirmed case is found, we will follow instructions from health authorities to track down all close contacts, disinfect the campus and inform parents,” she added.

But she also pointed out that spring is a high season for respiratory diseases and parents don't have to panic if some students have a fever.

Wang Yang, principal of Caoyang No. 2 High School, said plans had been made for students of all three grades.

“We have been checking information and health conditions of all faculty and students, no matter if they are in Shanghai or not,” he said. “We will also check their health

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condition in the 14 days prior to their return to the school and also those of security guards, dorm managers, canteen staff, cleaners and greenery workers. Every one returning will have to meet health requirements.”

He said the school will arrange disinfection before students return and will organize drills on its plans for daily education, dining, dormitory life, using toilets and handling emergencies.

All outsiders will be banned from the campus and activities not relevant to education will be suspended.

Li said Jianping has been organizing morning class meetings every workday and Friday meetings to exchange views on learning in the past week to ensure quality of online learning. Psychological classes and consultation services are also available to its students.

“The effect of online learning in the past month is better than expected,” she said. “We are making plans to connect online and offline classes and will provide extra help for students with special needs after they return to school.”

Wang said his school had completed a survey with teachers and students about the difference between online and offline learning.

“It’s the first time for us to organize all classes online and we found the teaching content is enough for students, but we need more face-to-face communication in learning abstract content and developing high-level critical thinking ability,” he said. “We will adjust our plans for their learning on campus later.”

Wang said the school will produce a report on each student’s online learning based on assessment on their return. Teachers will arrange catch-up classes if necessary and spend more time in answering questions from students. The school will also guide students to resume normal study rhythms and provide them with psychological services.

Checking health

Universities are also taking action.

Wang Xiaofan, vice president of Shanghai University, said it had made plans to welcome students back to school in different time periods.

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“We have developed a health information platform during the pandemic and know about the health of faculty and students as they are required to report their health condition on a daily basis,” said Wang. “We have installed automatic temperature screening devices at all campus gates to check temperatures of incomers.”

He said the university will carry out inspections of canteens, classrooms, offices and labs, as well as work on food processing and waste disposal to ensure a safe campus to welcome students back. Public space will be disinfected and equipped with hand washing and disinfection products. It will also ensure that stores inside the university have sufficient supplies of daily necessities for students and faculty living on campus.

For graduating students, teachers have been mentoring them on dissertation writing and the university has also opened 10 data libraries for them to use.

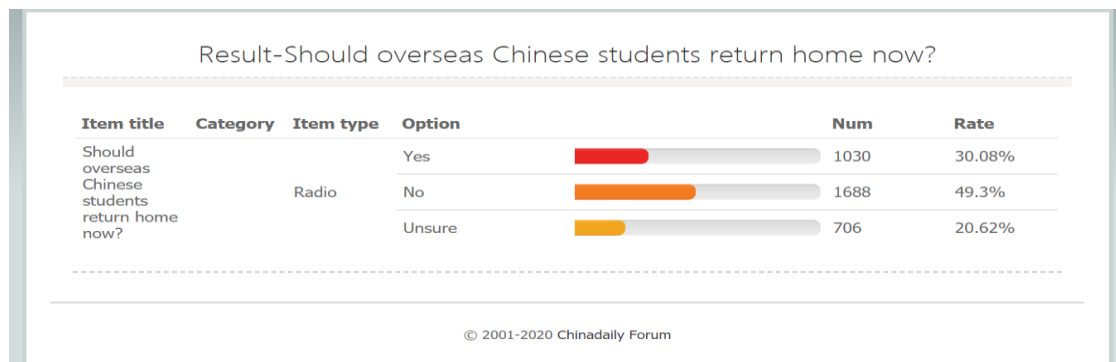
“We will enhance mentoring for them when they come back and provide priority assistance to students who need experiments at labs to finish their dissertations,” said Wang.

He said the university has also been working hard to help graduating students in seeking jobs, such as launching online job fairs, streamlining employment procedures and allowing students and employers to sign employment contracts online.

Since February, 1,193 employers have registered on its website and released 4,584 positions.

Source: SHINE Editor: Yang Meiping

A Toll chart – Chinese students overseas – return or not?



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Wuhan restarts: Public transportation, fast food record jump in payments

By Zhang Jie | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2020-04-10



Residents in Wuhan, Hubei province, walk down a main shopping street on March 30, 2020, as stores reopen after being shut down for more than two months due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. [Photo by Wang Jing/China Daily]

Life in Wuhan is getting back on track after the city lifted its months-long lockdown due to the novel coronavirus epidemic.

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The recovery is most obvious in such sectors as public transportation, beauty service and restaurants, technology portal TechWeb reported on Wednesday.

The offline transactions via WeChat Pay rose 162 percent during March 25 to April 3 compared with the period from February 25 to March 5.

The payments on public transportation, including bus and subway, surged 1,502 percent, and the consumption on fast food jumped 349 percent.

As the city recovers, the night-time economy is springing up again. Between 12 pm to 4 am on April 3, the consumption growth on snacks and fast food increased 198 percent and 105 percent, respectively, from same period on March 27.

At 8 am on April 3, the breakfast consumption data reached its peak during March 25 to April 3.

Cailinji, Wuhan's fast-food iconic chain restaurant, received 20,000 orders in past 10 days.

Moreover, some e-commerce platforms – Tmall, Taobao, JD, Suning and Pingduoduo – launched online sales promotion to help local merchants and famers sell products.

Alibaba bought crayfish valued at 1 billion yuan from Hubei province, and is selling it via its branches including Hema Fresh stores, Taobao and Tmall to customers.

From April to June, the company will hold 100 sales promotions to assist the local products.

Pinduoduo reported it has sold 2.65 million orders of agricultural and sideline products from Hubei with the total sales surpassing 150 million yuan during March 29 to April 2.

Cooperating with celebrities on livestreaming platforms opens a new path to traditional enterprises and farmers to access markets.



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On April 6, a two-hour livestreaming session jointly hosted by CCTV news host Zhu Guangquan and celebrity Li Jiaqi on Taobao Live sold 16 products from Hubei provinces and attracted 15.45 million visitors and about 660,000 orders, generating a total turnover of about 23 million yuan.

In addition, another livestreaming session on Pinduoduo on March 15 attracted 1.25 million visitors and sold 30,000 kilograms oranges from Zigui, a county in Hubei province.

All's fair in love and war for Brit art teacher

Zheng Qiong

15:22 UTC+8, 2019-03-01

As a former British Royal Marine, it is fair to say Ian Smith has dodged a few bullets in his time.

The 57-year-old spent 10 years in 45 Commando Group Royal Marines, a mountain and arctic warfare group specializing in amphibious deployments. He was in active service during the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the early 1980s and saw action in the war between the UK and Argentina in 1982. The Newcastle-born Englishman emerged unscathed from those military escapades, and time running a successful landscape gardening business in south west London, but he couldn't escape Cupid's Arrow.

Love's most famous archer took him out while studying for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education as an art teacher at Roehampton University, in London. It was there he met future wife, Zhang Yan, 43, who was studying for a Masters in Business Administration.

"We actually met at a Halloween party," said Smith, who also graduated from Kingston University with an honors degree in Fine Art and a Masters in Education via the UK

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Open University program. “It just so happened we were both studying at the same university. I’d seen a Chinese art exhibition earlier that day and asked whether she would like to see it with me. She said yes, thankfully. We liked each other straightway.

“Our relationship grew and we knew we would spend the rest of our lives together. The conundrum was, where do we live? Yan said ‘if you want to be with me, you have to come to Shanghai,’ so I did.”

And, after a difficult period settling in, he now lives with his Shanghainese-born wife, son Rory, 7, and works as an art teacher at Shanghai United International School, Jiaoke Campus.



A family photo with wife Zhang Yan, son Rory and JJ the dog

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Q: How was it when you first came to Shanghai seven years ago?

A: I didn't like it at first. It was a culture shock. I was confused at that time because I couldn't understand anything. I have traveled all over the world but Shanghai was so different. I couldn't recognize anything and I couldn't find something to eat. I would go to a shop, look at some foodstuffs and think, 'I don't know what any of this is.' I couldn't ask anyone because I couldn't speak Chinese. And if I could, I wouldn't understand their answers. It was terrible.

Q: How did you get over the culture shock and manage to settle down?

A: I came back to Shanghai a few months later. This time my wife organized some trips all over China. We went to Xi'an, Yinchuan, Inner Mongolia, and Huashan. Then I started to like China after having some interesting experiences with food and people. We also went to Tibet and Qinghai Lake in western China. When we finally came back to Shanghai, I was pleased to reacquaint myself with the city.

I originally did a TEFL course before arriving in Shanghai, so I could teach English until I got a job as an art teacher. But after a very short time teaching English, I got a job interview at SUIS in October of 2012. The school said they wanted me to start tomorrow. This is my impression of how things work in China. You always get some surprises, don't you? It is cool and I am still here.



Ian Smith in his class with a selection of his students' works in the background

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Q: Have you found any good places to go hiking in China?

A: I love being in nature and started hiking as soon as I got here. Huashan, Huangshan, and many places in Anhui and Zhejiang provinces are good.

I also did the Seven Peaks Challenge. We would do 50 kilometers in two days. It was exhausting but I found it very rewarding.

It is good to see so many beautiful parts of China, around Shanghai. At the end of the 2017, I went to Everest or Qomolangma. We spent more than a week there. It has amazing scenery and for me, it was a fantastic experience.



Hiking at the Tianmu Mountain Nature Reserve

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Q: Besides hiking, how do you spend your weekends in Shanghai?

A: I play for an England Veterans' football team. There are several football teams in Shanghai for expats. They have young fit guys who can play good football, so it is skillful and competitive. Every team is allowed three players under 35 years old, in a team of 11, and eight players over 35. I am 57 and there is another English guy the same age who plays for a different team. One time, he asked, "How old are you?"

I said, "I am 57."

And he said, "I am 57 as well, when is your birthday?"

I found I am one day older than him so I took senior priority. We joked that he should respect me as his elder, ha ha.

I'm also a supporter of my hometown team Newcastle United. There is a Shanghai Magpies Supporters Club with lots of Geordie expats and Chinese guys, some of whom studied in Newcastle and adopted them as their team. The Magpies is our nickname. We get together most weekends to watch a game in a local bar.

I also take a calligraphy class once a week. I think Chinese calligraphy can help me find a balance in life. It soothes and calms me.



Ian Smith (fourth left) poses with members from England Veterans football team

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Q: Do you have any interesting stories about your time in Shanghai?

A: I got sick a few years ago and went to hospital. The first thing I saw was lines of people sitting with intravenous drips in their arms. In my country, you only get a drip if you've been in a serious accident, like, in an airplane crash. A drip means something really bad happened.

I thought 'what is going on?' I guessed there must be a huge crash or something. But about 20 minutes later, I was also one of these people with a drip.

Unfortunately, I got worse. So I stayed in hospital for a short time. When I was finally dismissed, my wife said she had prepared some special food for me, something for people who try to recovery from their illness.

I went to the kitchen to see what she was making me and saw a big pot of sauce on the stove. I lifted the lid on the pot and jumped, because I got a fright. There was an enormous fish head with eyes just staring at me. For Yan, this was an act of kindness, but in England, we just don't eat fish heads.

Q: What makes you love Shanghai?

A: The thing I really love is the Chinese students I teach. It is great to watch them go up through the grades, develop and go to university. They generally come to say goodbye when they leave, which is always touching and very rewarding. Art and being an art teacher is my passion, so I think I've got quite a good life.



Ian Smith practices calligraphy in his office

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Q: If you were to offer one piece of advice for people moving to Shanghai, what would it be?

A: Even when you have been in Shanghai for a long time, there are still a lot of surprises based around human interaction. Things change very quickly, so I would say to new people coming to Shanghai — expect the unexpected.

Is it time to change the communal eating culture?

chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2020-04-11 09:00 [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [+](#)

Editor's note: *China's communal eating tradition has once again come under the spotlight amid the coronavirus outbreak. Local governments throughout China, including Shanghai, are encouraging the use of gongkuai (public chopsticks) or gongshao (public spoons) in an effort to curb coronavirus transmission. How hard is it to change the communal eating culture? Readers share their opinions.*

sfphoto (US)

This habit will be hard to change as it is part of family life for millennia. I have even observed this behavior in Chinese communities in California. The Chinese restaurants would provide serving spoons but the Chinese guests would just use their own chopsticks.

Banning it would be impossible to enforce unless the serving trays are changed to accommodate a large number of guests with lots of small cups of food instead of one large dish. This would be similar to ordering food in a choose-and-pick joint where the guests would choose their food by picking cups of food which is placed in their own tray. So hypothetically, all orders should indicate the number of guests and the dish would be served in a tray with lots of small cups which guests would then choose-and-pick. Serving dimsum also works this way.

Sharon (China)

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I love sharing food with my family and friends. A shared meal brings people closer and creates social bonds. Sharing food is also a way of showing trust. But it would make me feel uncomfortable to share food when dining out with people I've just met. It's great to see local governments make it a rule for restaurants to serve public chopsticks. Shouldn't the rule be applied across the country?



[Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

pnp (China)

Long overdue, even without coronavirus outbreak. We should have common chopsticks and common spoons; the old communal style eating is a health risk! Hope the use of common utensils will be the new normal in Chinese eating from now on, but alas, it is too much to hope for, old habits are hard to change! Hope the fear of coronavirus spread will spur change for the better! Not every family member needs to be provided with a set of public chopsticks and spoons, just have one set for all to scoop food onto the plate instead of using own chopstick as in old practice!

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Beef and vegetables surround a spicy hotpot at a Sichuan-style hotpot restaurant in Beijing. [Photo by Liu Zhe/China Daily]

12dream (Expat in China)

Stay and practice good hygiene demands a continuous good habit.

1. DO NOT use public chopsticks at all in any public eating places; BRING your own chopsticks;
2. BRING your own forks, spoons and knives (plastic only) .

All must NOT be disposable types otherwise we will kill our own environments and trees. Else, this is one way to help all sorts of viruses, old and new, to emerge, repeatedly.

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A chef makes food for delivery in a restaurant on Tiandi commercial street in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province, April 2, 2020. Restaurants in Wuhan gradually opened amid control and prevention measures. [Photo/Xinhua]

Mary (China)

It is hard to change such a long-time tradition overnight. People will finally come to realize that the individual servings of foods are much better for health and help reduce food waste. No one is sure whether the introduction of public chopsticks and spoons will work, but it's a step forward.



A file photo of 10 dishes prepared for a family reunion dinner on lunar New Year's eve in Chengdu, Southwest China's Sichuan province

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