



Case Study EiM



Flying expat teachers and their families home after a two-year wait

An innovator in education

Education in Motion (EiM) are leaders in pre-tertiary education, educating thousands of learners around the world. EiM operates a family of school brands, including **Dulwich College International, Dulwich International High Schools, and Dehong Schools**, all of which have campuses across Mainland China. EiM provides a pioneering education to students from the ages of 2 to 18 years.

EiM employs many expatriate staff, who are primarily teachers. Due to the pandemic many of these staff had not been able to return home to see family and loved ones for at least 2 years. Given the ongoing pandemic restrictions in China EiM committed to sponsor travel for staff to return home over the summer, returning to China in advance of the new school year.

EiM tendered for a travel services partner capable of managing the complex operational arrangements of moving teachers and their families from nine schools across China to destinations worldwide and back again, in time for the first day of school. FCM won the tender and the confidence of EiM, and was duly appointed.

330+



Teachers and their dependents

1200



Tickets booked

10



Destinations

A large global operation

Plans began in February 2022. The programme involved nine EiM schools, each of which had a project lead. Led by programme lead Amy He, FCM worked closely with all the project leads to understand their travel needs and budgets, and held regular meetings to provide progress updates on the travel arrangements.

More than 330 travellers were identified; the teachers, their families and in one case, a newborn baby. A large amount of traveller profiles were created to manage the bookings and any changes.

The travellers were flying to home country destinations worldwide, including the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Thailand, Singapore, South Africa, Ireland, and Spain. Overall, it was estimated more than 1,000 flight tickets would need to be booked.

The outward leg was only half the job, FCM was engaged to ensure that all the travellers were able to return to their schools in China on time for the start of the new school year.

“I am so impressed with how fantastic everyone at FCM is. It really means a lot to us to be able to see our families this summer.”

- TRAVELLER

Against an ever-changing landscape

Amy and the FCM team are used to booking travel for large groups; however, the planning was disrupted by three factors that were out of the team's control.

1. China inbound flight cancellations

At the time, China required airlines to suspend a flight route if 4% or more of passengers onboard tested positive for COVID-19. Travellers immediately became anxious on hearing their flight was cancelled. But their FCM travel consultant was always there to find an alternative option. It was a challenge, with many flights being suspended or cancelled, but the team always found a way.

The most heavily affected flight routes were:

- 62 passengers flying Amsterdam to Guangzhou
- 64 passengers flying Helsinki to Shanghai
- 10 passengers flying from Sydney to Shanghai/Guangzhou

2. Europe's travel challenges

Both airline and rail strikes in Europe affected travel plans. Additionally, the travel boom in the summer presented operational challenges, particularly with the aviation industry's labour shortage. This led to some last-minute changes and cancellations, causing more flights to be rebooked.

3. Ever-changing guidelines and policies

The teachers and their families were entering China from countries across the world and into different Chinese cities. Entry requirements varied greatly, dependent firstly on the country of departure, and secondly by the local quarantine requirements in the city in which the flight lands. These regulations were changing frequently and without prior warning.

FCM's travel consultants managed the complexities by planning the best routes possible. Each traveller had the information they needed for their international and domestic flights, including transits, quarantines, and testing requirements. They were kept up to date with relevant procedures and announcements.

Home and back again

Even though they faced a large volume of enquiries, our FCM team maintained a high level of service. More than 1,200 tickets were booked, with many needing to be changed and rebooked due to the challenges faced in the aviation industry, by local travel disruption, and ever-changing regulatory controls.

All the travellers were successful in returning home to spend time with their family and loved ones, and able to return to China in time to resume their valuable roles educating their students.