

12/5 Meeting with Mr. Matsuura, Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Tomcal

The Agenda:

- A. Sick Leave (9 points)
- B. Short Contract/ Leavers (3 points)
- C. Future Changes (2 points)
- D. Misc./ Other (4 points)

Please note that this document is meant to serve as a summary of the meeting between Mr. Matsuura, Mr. McCarthy, and Ms. Tomcal with the express purpose of informing the Kobe ALT cohort regarding concerns presented by the community to the ALT leader. Sharing of this file outside of the intended audience is discouraged and done at personal liability.

A. Sick Leave

1. explanation of circumstances/ decision

The decision to redistribute sick leave from paid leave to unpaid leave was made in order to join in a national effort to bring all civil servants regardless of full time/ part time/ other status under the same law. This law can be found in the 国家公務員の非常勤講師等の休暇 (kokka koumuin no hijoukinkoushi tou no kyuuka) on page 106. The access to this file is unknown for ALTs, but this is what was told to the folks at the BoE. Under this law, sick leave/byokkyuu is categorized as unpaid leave/mukyuu. While CLAIR was able to ensure that our salaries as JETs will not change/be reduced, things like vacation leave/nenkyuu, sick leave/byokkyuu, rental assistance, etc. are changing all over the country.

To understand why ALTs will also be subject to this rule from April, even though our contracts are supposed to be from summer to summer, it was discovered that from this year (2019-2020), the government (?) decided that ALTs, whose term of employment is from summer to summer, need to be treated as Japanese fiscal year/ April to April employees. If I understand correctly, due to this change of categorization, the government/BoE is allowed to change the aforementioned paid/unpaid leave days. So, ALTs will fall in with every other civil servant/koumuin and no longer be able to use sick leave/byokkyuu as paid leave/yuukyuu starting April 2020.

This brings up the question of why ALTs were not made aware that the way we would be categorized (from summer~summer to April~April) would be

changed, essentially changing the way we would be treated mid-contract. While the cessation of our paid sick leave is a shock, it is this prior change that allows it to be enacted. In terms of a violation of contract, this re-categorization may be at the heart of the matter. Please contact Tiffany regarding any thoughts/concerns about this new information.

2. When will ALTs receive this explanation (officially) in writing?

The BoE is now working on sending out an email with the English translation of the Japanese explanation.

3. Why elimination instead of reduction?

Because the Kobe city legal department and elected officials decided to match every civil servant/koumuin under the federal law, on a city-wide scale, and the federal law says sick leave/byokyyu is unpaid leave/mukyuu.

4. What will byokyyu be called now?

Sick leave/ byokyyu is still called "byokyyu" however, its status will change from paid leave/ yuukyuu to unpaid leave/ mukyuu

5. How will the procedure for taking sick leave change?

At this time there is no planned change to how sick leave/ byokyyu will be taken. If a large amount of days are taken at once you may be suggested by your school/ the guidance division to take paid vacation leave/nenkyuu instead of your unpaid sick leave/ byokyyu. Should you choose to take the unpaid sick leave/ byokyyu, a payment plan will be decided and the amount "owed" will be deducted from future paycheck(s). For those that are still uncertain, the BoE will be sending out some information to make it clearer.

6. When will this take effect for ALTs?

ALTs, and every other civil servant/koumuin, will no longer be able to use sick leave/ byokyyu as paid leave/yuukyuu starting April 1, 2020 (Unfortunately this is no April Fool's joke). And, in accordance with this change, the proof of employment/ ishokujo (the certificate with your name, the BoE's stamp, remuneration, and dates of employment) will be reissued from April as well.

7. What about pregnancy? Freak car accidents? Developing a disease that requires constant routine checks?

For large medical bills there is always the JET insurance remuneration process.

However, to my understanding, this doesn't change that either paid vacation leave/nenkyuu, or unpaid sick leave/byokyyuu, will have to be used for the days not attended at work.

8. What is the chain of command on this? Who can we write to directly about this matter?

The people who made the final decision on this matter were the Kobe legal department and Kobe's elected officials. However, Mr. Matsuura and others will have a meeting about this matter sometime between December 16~20 so if you'd like to have your opinion expressed by him, please write a brief letter with your thoughts/ concerns and have them to Daniel/Priyanka **no later than 5pm December 15th**. It will be good for the committee to see a physical representation of our voices.

9. The people's voices

- This decision shows a lack of respect for employees as human beings.
- This decision penalizes those who care for their health & their community by making doing the right thing (staying home when one is sick) a personal financial hit.
- This decision penalizes those who may get sick more often by making them choose between a financial hit (taking unpaid sick leave) or less vacation time (taking paid vacation days instead).
- For ALTs, this decision goes beyond basic job conditions and into cultural differences. Are you prepared for many ALTs to take their remaining sick leave days all at once in the coming months? (P.S. The answer was no, and the BoE did not even consider this point because it's so different from Japanese workforce common sense.)
- Besides cultural differences, this goes into the cultural conditioning side of things as well; especially for American ALTs, vacation days are not taken in lieu of sick days. And if sick days are unpaid they will go to work, even under dire situations. Not only does this make everyone sicker overall/transfers disease much more easily, this will inevitably lead to ALTs burning out faster & not staying as long.
- The city/government wants us to stay, to be loyal, to work hard, but then also wants to take away all the things that make this job special and competitive compared to our home-country options. With this decision, the JET program is becoming more like any other job and both the numbers of those choosing to stay & those making the choice to go in the first place will decrease.

B. Short Contract

1. What does summer leave and nenkyu look like for the extension members?
An official/final decision hasn't been made, but if the formula for the regular contract is followed, short term contractees will receive 5 days of summer leave, and 2-3 days of paid vacation leave (depending on their initial start date).
2. What does the end of contract look like re: last day, new ALT procedures, etc.?
There will be some overlap between the new ALTs and leaving ALTs. Because of this, and the perceived difficulty of getting permission for working ALTs to receive shuccho, short contract ALTs will be expected to help with Neighborhood Days. However, the last official day of work is forecasted to be September 25th, with the remaining days as special leave in order for leavers to take care of personal things regarding their return home/their next destination.
3. Leavers & Residency Taxes
All leavers be forewarned that your monthly paycheck will change in the last few months to account for the residency tax you must pay before leaving the country. This is forecasted to be about 2man less than usual, but will depend on other factors and for which the details will be given in the upcoming leavers meetings.

C. Future Changes

1. How does the summer event schedule look?
Job Training will be cancelled/postponed due to there being no first years to train, however this does not necessarily mean that there will be no work event for the 2-5th years during the regular job training time (which is usually the Obon period). Summer school will proceed as planned from August 18-21, with the 18th being the prep day. Neighborhood Days will be moved to September, when the new ALTs arrive and be primarily carried out by leaving ALTs.
2. With the new curriculum requirements & increase in ALTs, what changes to the ALT division of labor will there be?
It is expected that the number of schools one has will change (for example, if you have 1 JHS and 3 ES, you might change to having 1 JHS and only 1 or 2 ES), but whether there will be more full time JHS or full time ES positions remains to be decided. The BoE is currently deliberating what would be the best for Kobe city overall, so if you have ideas or suggestions now is the time to send them in

(to your leaders or the CIRs).

D. Misc./ Other

1. Re-contracting information, deadlines, etc. a bit unclear
Thanks for the feedback, they'll try to make it more concise next year.

2. Emailed essay instructions but have to mail in physical copy
Even if y'all emailed the essay to the CIRs, they'd still have to print them out so it doesn't save paper in the long run.

3. Feedback forms/access
We are currently deliberating a better way to provide access to your school's feedback forms, in addition to providing more regular opportunities for feedback from ALTs as well. If you have ideas/ suggestions please message Tiffany.

4. Info about interviews
 - Please be honest about whether you want to change schools
 - It's ok to bring up ideas or suggestions you have for Kobe city/ ALT work-life/ etc. at this time
 - It is alright for you to bring a list/notecard with things you want to make sure to tell the interviewers/ Mr. Matsuura/ Daniel or Priyanka in with you to the interview
 - If you have anything you'd like your leaders to bring up on your/the community's behalf, please let them know beforehand

For any of the above points, please let Tiffany know if you have any further questions, concerns, ideas, or suggestions.