

Law says visit old relatives or pay a fine

31st December, 2012



China has passed a new law that says people must visit their older relatives. This means older parents or grandparents can sue their kids and

grandkids for not visiting them. The new law will start on July 1, 2013. It is part of a new campaign called the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly. China says it is so the country's aging population is not left alone. There have been many stories recently in China's newspapers of old people dying alone because their children do not visit them. More than half of China's elderly live alone. Even though the law says children have to visit their older relatives "often," it does not say how often "often" is. It also does not say how much the fine is for not visiting often.

China is becoming an aging society because of its one child per family policy. In 1978, the Chinese government told all couples they could have only one child. Some families could have two or more, such as those living in the countryside, ethnic minorities, or people who had twins. The Xinhua news agency said that at the end of 2011, almost 14 per cent of China's population was over 60 years old. That's more than 184 million people. This number is increasing because of China's rapid economic development. More and more young people are leaving the countryside to work in China's cities. Their parents are left alone and have to look after themselves. There are very few homes for the aged in the countryside.

Sources: *China Post* / *BBC*

Writing

Everyone should visit their relatives or pay a fine. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

new law / visit / older relatives / grandparents / campaign / alone / aging population / one child / family / countryside / ethnic minorities / twins / economic development

True / False

- a) A law in China means parents can get money from kids who don't visit. T / F
- b) The new law started on Christmas Day. T / F
- c) China is worried about the number of old people being left alone. T / F
- d) The law says children must visit older relatives at least once a month. T / F
- e) China's one child per family policy started in the 1970s. T / F
- f) There were no couples in China who could have more than one child. T / F
- g) 60 per cent of China's population is over the age of 14. T / F
- h) The article says there aren't many homes for the elderly in rural China. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. passed | a. penalty |
| 2. law | b. strategy |
| 3. campaign | c. aged |
| 4. elderly | d. fast |
| 5. fine | e. partners |
| 6. couples | f. legalized |
| 7. increasing | g. growth |
| 8. rapid | h. care for |
| 9. development | i. getting bigger |
| 10. look after | j. rule |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'elderly'?
- b) Are the elderly looked after well in your country?
- c) What do you think it is like to be 70 or 80 years old?
- d) How often should children visit their older parents?
- e) Why is this law needed?
- f) Has society broken if old people are dying alone?
- g) What do you learn from the old people around you?
- h) Do you think you'll be alone in your old age?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. China has passed | a. "often" is |
| 2. aging | b. development |
| 3. More than half of China's | c. the fine is |
| 4. it does not say how often | d. family policy |
| 5. It also does not say how much | e. population |
| 6. its one child per | f. in the countryside |
| 7. ethnic | g. a new law |
| 8. rapid economic | h. after themselves |
| 9. look | i. elderly live alone |
| 10. very few homes for the aged | j. minorities |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think the elderly worry about?
- What do you think of a law that says you must visit your aging parents?
- What are the good and bad things about being old?
- What do you think of China's one child per family policy?
- What are the problems of an aging society?
- Should the government build more care homes for the elderly?
- What questions would you like to ask an elderly person about this law?
- What do you think their answers would be?

Spelling

- grandparents can seu their kids
- part of a new macignap
- rnseestti of the elderly
- the country's gngai population
- many stories ernyectl in China's newspapers
- Even htuogh
- one child per family ypcoli
- all lsoepecu
- ethnic iionetisrm
- This number is niarcsigne
- rapid economic oemtdenpelv
- leaving the ntoisrdyeu

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. j	3. b	4. c	5. a
6. e	7. i	8. d	9. g	10. h

Role Play

Old parent - You are so happy with the new law. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell the young people they have lost respect for old people. You think young people should go to prison for not visiting their old relatives. You think young people should live with their parents or visit them every day.

Young person A - You do not like the new law. Tell the others three reasons why. You think respect for old person should not be automatic. There should be no fine or penalty for not visiting old people. The government should look after old people. That would really help the economy.

Young person B - You think the new law is great. You are shocked at young people who do not visit the aged. Tell Student A three reasons why (s)he is a bad child. You think the elderly are national treasures. Tell the others three reasons why. The young should visit the old daily, or get a \$1,000 fine.

Government - You think the new law will make society better. Tell the others three reasons why. You are worried more old people will die earlier and alone. You hate young people who don't visit the elderly. Tell the others three reasons why. The next law is for the elderly to live with their children.

Speaking - Grandparents

What's best about them? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often.

- their love
- their wisdom
- their stories
- their photographs
- their presents
- their humour
- their calm
- their view on life

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.