



## Cherishing the Spirit of Challenge

Principal Tetsuro Kawahara

The year 2026 has begun. I hope that you were able to welcome the New Year peacefully with your families. I sincerely wish that this year will be a wonderful one for everyone.

This year is the Year of the Horse. Since ancient times, the horse has been loved as a symbol of vitality and forward progress, running powerfully across the land and traveling far. Like the horse, we too would like to move forward gracefully and with strength throughout this year.

What is essential for moving forward is the spirit of challenge. In today's schools, there is a growing emphasis on personalized learning, collaborative learning, and multi-track lessons, making effective use of ICT. In order for children to take initiative in their learning and deepen their understanding through collaboration with friends, we teachers must also continue learning and challenge ourselves to improve our teaching practices.

In addition, it is important to provide educational activities that broaden children's perspectives, spark their interests, and allow them to grow by engaging them in various challenges. By recognizing and encouraging those who are trying their best, and by valuing the effort toward a goal even when things do not go well, we want to create an environment where children feel safe to take on challenges and where we can support their growth. A challenge does not necessarily mean striving toward a big goal. Saying hello cheerfully every day, or sharing one's own idea once during a lesson—these small steps are also wonderful challenges. There is no ranking in the size of challenges. What matters most is cherishing the feeling of "I'll give it a try" and taking that first step.

At the foundation of children taking such steps forward is the sense of security and stability nurtured by love at home. When children feel loved and accepted, they gain confidence and motivation to grow even more. For children, the home is a source of energy. As we begin the New Year, why not take time as a family to talk with your child about hopes for the year ahead and the challenges they would like to take on?

Date	Day	Events
1	Th	New Year's Day
2	F	
3	Sa	
4	Su	
5	M	
6	Tu	
7	W	Winter vacation ends
8	Th	B schedule 4 periods, Opening Ceremony, Safety lesson
9	F	School lunch starts, <i>Sekishokai</i> (G1, G2, G5, G6)
10	Sa	
11	Su	Minato Tag Rugby Class
12	M	Coming of Age Day
13	Tu	<i>Sekishokai</i> (G3, G4), Measurements (G1), Committees⑨
14	W	B schedule 4 periods, Measurements (G2)
15	Th	Student assembly⑤, <i>Kakizome</i> Exhibition preparation
16	F	Open School, Open Lecture on Morals Education (5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> period), <i>Kakizome</i> Exhibition begins
17	Sa	Open School, Japanese Culture③, <i>Kakizome</i> Exhibition ends
18	Su	
19	M	Substitute day off
20	Tu	Measurements (G3)
21	W	B schedule, Measurements (G4)
22	Th	Clubs⑧
23	F	6 periods for G2⑤, 6 periods for G3⑦, Tag Rugby class (G4), Measurements (G5)
24	Sa	
25	Su	
26	M	Morning Assembly, Family Asobi⑥
27	Tu	4 periods, Teacher Development (5-3 5 <sup>th</sup> period)
28	W	B schedule 5 periods, Evacuation drill⑨
29	Th	Student assembly
30	F	Legacy Classroom (G4), City Exhibition starts
31	Sa	

**January's Goal**

**Let's be on time!**



### \*Open School\*

The third Open School of the academic year will be held January 16 (Fri.) and 17 (Sat.). In the first and second terms, families saw how their children spend their time at school during events like Open School and the Sports Festival. This time, we invite families to see how their children have grown and matured over the year.

### \*Kakizome Exhibition\*

Dates: January 16 (Fri.) – 17 (Sat.)

Location: Hallways outside of classrooms



### \*Human Rights Day\*

Human Rights Day is January 20 (Tue.). The lunch for that day will be paella and Spanish omelette from Spain.

## Open Lecture on Morals Education

Morals Education

On January 16 (Fri.) our school will hold an Open Lecture on Morals Education. During 5<sup>th</sup> period (13:25–14:10) morals education lessons will be conducted in classrooms. In 6<sup>th</sup> period (14:15–15:10), there will be a lecture and discussion session. The lecture theme is “Morals Education for the Coming Era”, with the topic “What Is Needed Now”. The lecturer will be Ms. Yasuko Tsuchiya, Director of the St. Cecilia Children’s Center of Yamato Gakuen Educational Corporation, Lecturer at the University of the Sacred Heart, former Vice Chair of the Tokyo Elementary School Morals Education Research Association, and former Principal of Rinsen Elementary School in Shibuya City. All parents of our school and members of the local community are welcome to attend.

Following the lecture, there will be an opportunity for an exchange of opinions. We warmly invite you to take this opportunity to think together about the lecture theme, “Morals Education for the Coming Era”. We look forward to the participation of many parents and community members.

## Grade 4

Grade Head

The grade 4 students learned about flower arrangement and activities to improve the environment from Hibiya Kadan Floral Company Ltd., who support our school’s educational activities. Through these experiences, the children developed a strong desire to fill the school with flowers and continued their activities with enthusiasm.

They decorated the walls of the annex with flowers made of paper, created and displayed animal figures, explained their activities to the grade 3 students, and shared paper flowers they had made.

Through these activities, the children made many new discoveries—such as becoming more aware of environmental issues, deepening friendships through interaction with others, and developing a greater interest in flowers.



## Introduction to the Sekishokai

Sekishokai and Kakizome

Every year at the beginning of the New Year, Higashimachi Elementary School holds a *Kakizome*. *Kakizome* is one of Japan’s traditional annual events and refers to writing characters or pictures with a brush for the first time in the New Year. It is said to have begun in the Heian period and spread during the Edo period through temple schools as a custom of practicing calligraphy at the start of the year.

Each year, grade 1 and 2 students practice calligraphy with a pencil, while students in third grade and above practice calligraphy with a brush.

Students in all grades focus on maintaining proper posture and carefully writing each stroke while closely following their examples. At school, practice begins during lessons in December, continues through repeated practice as part of winter vacation homework, and culminates in the *Sekishokai* held in January, where students can demonstrate the results of their efforts.

The completed works will be displayed during open school, so we encourage you to take the time to view them.

