



## Valuing Tradition and Culture

Principal Tetsuro Kawahara

Thank you very much to everyone who attended our final Open School of the academic year. I hope you were able to see how much your children have grown. At the same time, we were also pleased to hold our annual *Kakizome* (New Year's Calligraphy) Exhibition.

I truly enjoy watching the children practice *kakizome* and viewing their completed works, and I look forward to it every year. There are many sayings related to calligraphy, such as "writing reflects the person," "handwriting reveals one's character," and "calligraphy is a painting of the heart." All of these express the idea that a person's writing reflects their personality and state of mind. As I observe the children while they write and look at their finished pieces, I can sense each child's concentration, their desire to write carefully, and their energy and enthusiasm. In today's world, where computers and digital devices are widespread and handwritten work is becoming less common, the value of handwriting and the mindset of writing carefully are things we want to continue to cherish, even as times change.

*Kakizome* and regular calligraphy lessons are not only opportunities for children to learn how to write beautifully, but also chances to experience Japanese tradition and culture through calligraphy. At Higashimachi Elementary School, we have also established dedicated Japanese culture classes, where grade 5 and 6 students deepen their understanding of Japanese traditions and culture through hands-on experiences. In addition, we provide opportunities for students to learn about the traditions, cultures, and lifestyles of other countries.

Respecting one's own country's traditions and culture while also learning about and appreciating those of other countries is essential to promoting international understanding education, which Minato City and Higashimachi Elementary School actively support. We hope that our children will grow into individuals with broad global awareness and hearts open to diverse values.



Date	Day	Events
1	Su	
2	M	Morning Assembly, Committees ⑩, Safety lesson, UNICEF collection
3	Tu	UNICEF collection
4	W	4 periods, UNICEF collection
5	Th	Student assembly (club presentation①), New (2026) G1 Parent-Teacher Conference
6	F	Kanji Proficiency Test (Kanji Kentei)
7	Sa	
8	Su	Minato City Rugby Lesson
9	M	Morning Assembly, Clubs⑨
10	Tu	
11	W	National Foundation Day
12	Th	Student assembly (club presentation②), Tax Education Class (G6)
13	F	Measurements (G6)
14	Sa	Tokyo Metropolitan Public School Art Exhibition starts
15	Su	
16	M	Morning Assembly, Tokyo Metropolitan Public School Art Exhibition closed (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum is closed)
17	Tu	
18	W	4 periods
19	Th	Student assembly (club presentation③), Tokyo Metropolitan Public School Art Exhibition ends
20	F	G3 6 periods, Family <i>Asobi</i>
21	Sa	
22	Su	
23	M	The Emperor's birthday
24	Tu	
25	W	5 periods
26	Th	Music Assembly
27	F	G6 Send-off party
28	Sa	

## February's Goal

**Let's beat the cold and keep exercising!**



### \*Emergency Evacuation Drill\*

There will be no prior announcement of the evacuation drill. Students will practice listening to the announcement and following instructions.

### \*Kanji Proficiency Test\*

Friday, February 6 5<sup>th</sup> period

Levels 10-8 40 minutes

(Dismissal around 14:30)

Levels 7-2 60 minutes

(Dismissal around 14:50)



### \*Human Rights Day\*

Human Rights Day will be on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup>. The lunch for that day will be julienne soup, fish with Ravigote sauce, and Lyonnaise potatoes from France.

## Club Activities

### Extracurricular Activities

Club activities begin in grade 4. Through these activities, students develop positive relationships, grow as individuals, and learn to cooperate as members of a group while working together to create better clubs. Teachers carefully supervise the activities with attention to safety, while encouraging students to participate and manage the clubs independently and voluntarily. Students are also able to carry out activities they have planned themselves, and many look forward to this time with excitement.

This year, there will be Student Assemblies held in February again to introduce clubs. Each club will present its activities in front of the entire school. For grade 1 and 2 students, this assembly provides an opportunity to learn that club activities begin in grade 4. For grade 3 students, it helps them look ahead to the club activities that will start in April. For students in grades 4 through 6, it is a valuable chance to present their own clubs and learn about the activities of other clubs as well.



## Grade 3

### Head G3 Teacher

Grade 3 students have been learning to follow school rules in their daily lives, to act with consideration for their friends' feelings, and to better understand others' ideas by sharing and discussing their opinions.

At the *Sekishokai*, the grade 3 children challenged themselves to write "New Year" (お正月) using calligraphy with a brush, which they began learning in third grade. Kneeling on the gymnasium floor and supporting their bodies with their arms, they carefully wrote each stroke with focus and care. While each child has their own strengths and areas for improvement, every piece reflected the individuality of the student who created it. As I looked at their work, I could vividly imagine the children practicing repeatedly and writing each character with great seriousness, which was truly heartwarming to see.

Through this experience with calligraphy, I hope the students will develop a strong foundation for writing better characters in pencil as well, and deepen their awareness and appreciation of written language as part of Japan's traditional culture.

Next year, the children will advance to grade 4. As the second year of the middle grades, grade 4 is an important stage that prepares students for the upper grades, and it is a year of significant growth both mentally and physically. We would like to ensure that the remaining two months of grade 3 are filled with meaningful learning experiences, so that the children can continue to grow in a healthy and positive way as they move on to the next grade.

## Japanese Culture

### Japanese Culture

At our school, Japanese Culture classes include a variety of learning experiences such as tea ceremony, Japanese drumming (*wadaiko*), and shogi lessons taught by guest teachers from the local community, as well as classroom activities including *karuta*, *kendama*, spinning tops, *Hyakunin Isshu*, and calligraphy. This year as well, we welcomed guest teachers from the community, and grade 5 and 6 students participated in three special lessons:

Green tea ceremony-Kaneko-sensei and Iwamoto-sensei

*Wadaiko*- Noda- sensei and Komeya-sensei

*Shogi*- Sugawara-sensei and Uyama-sensei

We were also grateful for the support provided by local community members and parents who volunteered their time. In the tea ceremony lessons, students sharpened their five senses and, based on the practices of the *Urasenke* school, enjoyed matcha and traditional Japanese sweets while learning the spirit of hospitality and the principles of Zen. In *wadaiko*, students enjoyed the powerful sounds and vibrations they felt throughout their bodies and learned to play together in rhythm. In *shogi*, students interacted with professional *shogi* players, learning how the pieces move and how to develop strategies, while also gaining an attitude of respect for their opponents regardless of winning or losing.

We will continue to value Japanese Culture classes as a whole school and connect these experiences to daily life by approaching even small tasks with care, beauty, and perseverance, thereby strengthening students' problem-solving skills.