



For a Smooth Social Life

Principal Yoji Hatano

Spring is just around the corner, but surely I am not the only one who feels like they have been paying more attention to the number of COVID-19 cases than the passing of the seasons. As of now, a state of emergency until February 7 is declared for Tokyo metropolis and ten other prefectures. Even after the state of emergency was declared, the number of COVID cases has begun to drop, but with the continued increase in the number of critical cases and deaths, the situation remains unpredictable.

School continues amid numerous restrictions, including refraining from activities that involve singing in loud voices or physical contact. Activities unrelated to those restrictions can be quickly reinstated once the state of emergency is lifted, but activities that do involve singing and physical contact must still be postponed. The current situation, including an extension of the state of emergency, may still have an effect on school activities in the near future, but we will inform parents and guardians if and when they occur.

On a different note, when my daughter (who attended her Coming of Age Ceremony this year) was in junior high school, she went on a workplace field trip as part of one of her classes. The night before, I told her three things:

- Greet people in a clear voice.
- Respond if you understand what to do. Ask and listen carefully if you do not.
- If you make a mistake, be honest about it and listen to how you should fix it.

The reason I told her these three things is because, for one, the people who do the opposite of the above cannot get along with others at their job and cannot be trusted. No matter how skilled someone may be, if they lack social skills, they cannot adequately perform their duties and will therefore not be properly evaluated. That is how important social skills are.

The Saitama Integrated Education Center published the following 9 criteria for developing sociability.

- Basic life skills Basic life skills necessary to function in society
- Awareness Following rules
- Adaptability in groups ... Can make friends and function in groups
- Assertion Expresses own ideas while listening to others
- Proactivity Is proactive and completes tasks
- Sympathy Understands and internalizes others' feelings
- Future Outlook Has dreams and plans for the future
- Self-Esteem Has pride and self-confidence

Development of sociability starts in infants with emotional and physical affection from the parents. As toddlers (1 to 3 years old), children develop basic social skills through play and conversation with their parents. By playing with peers in nursing school, kindergarten, and elementary school (4 to 7 y.o.), they develop consideration, morality, and trust in others. Their time in elementary school after that is very valuable for developing social skills. It is my wish that students will be able to have a smooth school life and social life by fostering healthy social skills.

February

Date	Day	Event	After-school
1	M	Safety lesson	—
2	Tu		G3
3	W		—
4	Th	P.E. assembly (remote)	G4
5	F	Evacuation Drill	G5
6	Sa	Saturday School	—
7	Su		—
8	M	Club activities, Club observations (G3: 6 periods)	—
9	Tu		G6
10	W		—
11	Th	National Foundation Day	
12	F		G5
13	Sa		
14	Su		
15	M	Committees	—
16	Tu		G6
17	W		—
18	Th	Music assembly (remote)	G3
19	F	International Assembly	G4
20	Sa	Saturday School, Japanese Culture Time	—
21	Su		
22	M		—
23	Tu	The Emperor's Birthday	
24	W	UNICEF Donations, 4 periods	—
25	Th	UNICEF Donations, Student assembly, 2021 Grade 1 Parent-teacher conference (registration at 14:45, begin at 15:00), Grades 1, 2: 4 periods	G5
26	F	UNICEF Donations, School Trustees Meeting	G6
27	Sa		
28	Su		

Notices

Cancelling Viewing the International Assembly

In previous years, the International Assembly on Friday the 19th was held for students and parents/guardians were able to watch. However, this year, to avoid crowding, parents and guardians will not be able to view the Assembly.

Also, students will perform one class at a time to a limited audience.

UNICEF Donations

The steering committee will be collecting donations for UNICEF in front of the entrances during school arrival from Wednesday the 24th to Friday the 26th.

Evacuation Drill

On Friday the 5th, students will practice protecting themselves in the event of flooding from Furukawa River. The drill will be conducted by grade to prevent the 3C's.

Human Rights Day

This month's Human Rights Day is Thursday, February 18. Lunch for that day will be maple toast and salmon cream stew from Canada.

P.E. Assembly and Music Assembly

The P.E. assembly and music assembly this month will be held remotely. Students will do stretches in P.E. assembly and rhythm exercises in music assembly.

Educational Counselling

February's Goal

"Let's beat the cold and exercise!"

Junichi Takagi
Educational Counsellor

The cold days continue, and, while it is difficult to get out of the house during this time, we can make our bodies stronger by exercising outside.

We will instruct the students to play in the gym or outside on clear days and to walk with their hands out of their pockets.

Also, we will continue to instruct them on washing their hands, gargling, keeping social distance, and keeping rooms ventilated.

Class Window **Grade 5 and the *Sekai Tomodachi* Project**

5-1 Junichi Takagi
5-2 Yoshiyasu Tabei
5-3 Erika Kobayashi

At Higashimachi, national flags from 5 countries and regions are displayed on the roof of the entrance. These 5 countries are related to the *Sekai Tomodachi* Project ("Making Friends around the World Project") spearheaded by the Minato City Board of Education. The Board of Education received requests from all of the elementary schools in Minato City for 4 to 5 countries to become more acquainted with and support during the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Higashimachi was given U.S.A., Egypt, Cyprus, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.



During integrated studies class, Grade 5 students have already started researching how Japan is connected to other countries in the world, and, having learned that they will participate in the *Sekai Tomodachi* Project, they are eager to understand more about the 5 chosen countries. Their time in class is spent using their individual iPads to research and learn in more detail about their assigned countries.

While learning about other countries, the students are looking back on what they have learned about Japan and developing a fresh curiosity about what other countries in the world are like.

In-School Teacher Development

Misa Nojima
Head of Teacher Development

At the end of every school year at Higashimachi, teachers discuss the state of the children's education and decide on an issue to address and develop for the following school year. This year, the teachers wanted the children to help improve each other by expressing their own ideas, listening to others, and accepting opinions different from their own. This school year's decided development topic was "Educating Students to Improve Each Other" with this goal in mind, teacher development lessons were conducted to focus on *kokugo's* speaking and listening.

Due to the school closure in the first term because of COVID-19, teacher development classes could not be held; however, because of this, we feel the importance of educating the children to our best ability while they are at school. From the second term, the lower, middle, and upper grade teachers were split into sub committees, and teacher development and teacher development classes were able to proceed.

By asking ourselves what concrete measures we can take for each stage of the students' development and creating lesson plans that target their speaking and listening abilities, students who said that they could not think of ideas in class or had no confidence to speak in class were soon seen actively engaging in their lessons.

Our goal is to impart on the children a comprehensive education that is proactive and interactive, as dictated in the new course of studies that was fully implemented this year. We hope that through our own research and development, the students will continue to improve their speaking and listening abilities by learning proactively and interactively.

Using the Tablets

Hiroto Sasaki
Head of ICT

For today's children, saying that a PC is just as necessary for school as a pencil and notebook is no exaggeration; and in a technologically progressive age such as ours, MEXT's GIGA School initiative to give individual students their own computer device has been long-awaited. The reason for such speedy action is, of course, COVID-19. Students received tablets in December to ensure they can continue their studies with the help of ICT in times of emergency.

Students were already using the internet for research before they had received their tablet; but with their own powerful devices connected to a high capacity network, students are able to expand their learning with techniques like taking pictures and writing down observations for science and exchanging comments about writing assignments for *kokugo*. Also, different applications are being used for a variety of lessons.

We are considering conducting online lessons for learning at school and at home and we will inform parents and guardians once details have been finalized. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.



From the Counselling Room

Nobuko Arai
School Counsellor

This year, the counselling room will be open on Tuesdays (with School Counsellor Arai) and Thursdays (with School Counsellor Tamura), and the children are welcomed to drop by anytime.

Children have many concerns that range from relationships with friends to situations at home as well as issues with their studies. Every year from March to July, all Minato elementary school counsellors conduct interviews with the Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. Because of this, many children feel a connection to their counsellors. There are children who often visit the counselling room to just try putting their concerns into their own words as well as those who come seeking practical strategies concerning their relationships with their friends. In the case of bullying, the counsellor can work with the class teacher – with the child's agreement – to resolve the issue. Seeing the children cheer up after their consultation makes us counsellors happy as well.

Parents and guardians are also free to receive advice from the school counsellors. Please consult with us if you are concerned about your child's mood or behavior, have trouble reading their emotions, or cannot seem to get them motivated. We will be happy to discuss any issue with you. Please schedule an appointment with us via your child's teachers, School Nurse Shimosato, or the Vice Principal.

