



For Each Child's Happiness

Principal Yoji Hatano

Although the nights and mornings are still cold, we can feel spring approaching with the warm temperatures in the daytime. This month marks the end of the 2020-21 academic year with COVID-19 restrictions.

The Grade 6 students who are graduating in March entered school in April of 2014, the same time I was assigned to Higashimachi. Looking at their cute faces as they entered the gym, I realized that I wanted to be the one to see them graduate. As an educator, nothing brings me greater joy than watching children grow up during their six years at elementary school.

Now for a story from a time seven or eight years after I started as an educator. I was the Grade 6 teacher and accompanying the students on a field trip to the National Diet building. As one leg of the tour finished, a member of the Diet who had helped organize the field trip came to greet the students in an outdoor area. In the middle of the member's greeting, one girl from the class came to me and asked if I, as her teacher, wanted her to grow up to be someone like the Diet member. I told her that I want everyone to be happy. If someone wants to be the prime minister, I want them to be the prime minister. If someone wants to be a pâtissier, I want them to be a pâtissier. If someone wants to be the best bride of Japan, I hope they will be the best bride of Japan. Is it not more important that someone chooses a career they want instead of a career that people think they should have? The girl thought about my answer and then walked away. I am not sure how much of my response she understood, but I know that my feelings then have not changed. Incidentally, the careers I mentioned – prime minister, pâtissier, the best bride of Japan – were dream jobs mentioned by Grade 6 students I had taught in the past.

"I want each child to be happy" is probably an extremely abstract thing to say, however, I try my best so that each child lives a life where they think they are truly happy. Happiness is different for each person. Whether a certain job or way of living makes one happy can only be determined by that individual. Happiness is not determined by others, but by oneself. I hope children will decide for themselves what happiness is and do what they can to make that happiness a reality.

I will continue to do my best to make sure everyone – this year's graduates and graduates from previous years, students currently enrolled at school, and all the students I have taught up to now – will live a life of genuine happiness.

March

Date	Day	Event	After-school
1	M	Club activities, Safety lesson	—
2	Tu		G3
3	W		—
4	Th		G4
5	F		G6
6	Sa	Saturday School	—
7	Su		—
8	M	Club activities, Club observation (G3)	—
9	Tu	Parent-teacher conference (G3 – 15:00; G4 – 16:00)	G5
10	W	Four periods Parent-teacher conference (G5 – 13:30; G1 – 14:30; G2 – 15:30)	—
11	Th		G6
12	F	2021 Higashimachi Olympics (G6) Parent-teacher conference (G6)	—
13	Sa		
14	Su		
15	M	Committees	—
16	Tu		G4
17	W	Graduation trip (G6)	—
18	Th	G6 Send-Off Party	G5
19	F		G6
20	Sa	Spring Equinox	—
21	Su		
22	M		—
23	Tu	School lunch ends, Graduation rehearsal (G5, G6), Report cards (G6)	—
24	W	Graduation (10:00 a.m.)	—
25	Th	Closing Ceremony, Report cards (G1-G5)	—
26	F	Spring break begins	—
27	Sa		
28	Su		
29	M		
30	Tu		
31	W		

※ There will be one unannounced evacuation drill in March.

Notices

*Club Observation (G3)

The Grade 3 club observation will take place on Monday, March 8. Dismissal for that day will be around 15:45.

*Changes in Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule

The schedule for the final parent-teacher conference of the academic year has been changed. Please refer to the calendar on the left.

*Cancellation of Hakone Trip (G6)

The Hakone Trip, originally scheduled for 4 days and 3 nights in November, was rescheduled due to COVID-19 to 3 days and 2 nights, and then again rescheduled for 2 days and 1 night on March 9 (Tues.) and 10 (Wed.). However, due to risk of infection, the trip has ultimately been cancelled. In its place, students will go on a graduation trip to Yomiuriland on March 17 (Wed.).

*Cancellation of Arigato no Kai (G6)

Due to the lack of practice from the state of emergency, the Arigato no Kai scheduled for Friday the 12th has been cancelled.

On that day, Grade 6 will have their 2021 Higashimachi Olympics as a chance to show how much they have grown. Parents and guardians are invited to observe the events (while observing social distance).

*Human Rights Day

The last Human Rights Day for the school year is the 16th (Tues.). The lunch for that day will be hand-made Chinese steamed buns, Chinese egg soup, and Chinese sesame salad with vermicelli.

Educational Counselling

March's Goal "Let's Wrap Up the Year"

Junichi Takagi
Educational Counsellor

At last, it is time to wrap up the school year. We will guide the students to look back on the past year and prepare for the next grade.

The students will clean the desks, chairs, and lockers they have been using over the year so that the next students can have a fresh, clean start and recognize that they are advancing to the next grade.

Heading into the 2021-22 Academic Year

Principal Yoji Hatano

School events for the 2021-22 academic year are outlined below. Depending on the circumstances, changes to the events are possible, however, even as we take measures against COVID-19 we will continue to explore ways to return to normal school life.

*Opening and Closing Ceremonies will be held by grade level (outside) or by individual grade (gym).

To prevent crowding, Opening and Closing Ceremonies will be held by grade level (lower, middle, and upper) in the schoolyard or, in the event of rain, in the gym by individual grade. The Opening Ceremony for term 1 of the 2021-22 academic year will be done in staggered attendance.

*Open School will be held with restrictions on the number of people who can attend as well as the dates and times to attend.

Open School will be conducted as it was this year, with grades divided into groups A, B, and C and only one group attending each session. Over the three-day period, each class will have a set time for Open School. Please contact your child's classroom teacher if you are unable to attend during the assigned time.

*Parent-teacher conferences will be held either in the gym or remotely, depending on circumstances.

Parent-teacher conferences will be held by grade in the gym or online, depending on the circumstances at that time. In-person conferences will be held at the beginning and end of the school year.

*Report cards will be issued in October and March.

By issuing report cards twice within the year, more leeway will be allowed in the schedule for events in July and December. Individual parent-teacher meetings will be held at the end of the second (July) and third (December) terms to share about your child's educational progress.

*Sports Day will be held on May 29 (Sat.).

Sports Day is scheduled for May 29 (Sat.); however, if students are unable to practice or if parents and guardians cannot attend because of the situation with COVID-19, then P.E. Performances and short-distance races will be held.

*The School Performance will be held on November 19 (Fri.) and 20 (Sat.).

The School Performance is scheduled for November 19 (Fri.) (for students) and 20 (Sat.) (for parents), however, just like Sports Day, the way the performances are carried out may change due to COVID-19.

*Excursions and field trips for life studies and social studies will be decided depending on the circumstance at that time, but excursions will re-evaluated at a later date.

Because public transportation cannot be used, excursions and fields trips will be decided depending on the circumstances at that time.

Excursions, for reasons unrelated to COVID-19, are being re-evaluated for next year. Field trips are not.

*The Hakone summer trip (G5) will be for 2 days and 1 night.

Due to bus availability during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Grade 5's Hakone summer trip will be for 2 days and 1 night, July 22 (Thurs.) and 23 (Fri.).

*The Hakone Trip (G6) will be for 3 days and 2 nights.

In response to the pandemic, inter-school events have been changed to single school events, so Grade 6's Hakone Trip will be 3 days and 2 nights. Also, due to the number of students, one class from Higashimachi will go from June 15 (Tues.) to 17 (Thurs.) and the other class will go from June 17 (Thurs.) to June 19 (Sat.).

Despite anticipating new experiences and challenges unique to Grade 6, the students have had to see those opportunities taken away throughout the year by the novella coronavirus (COVID-19). Many school events were cancelled and their everyday school life was full of restrictions. We, the homeroom teachers who have been with them since Grade 5, were also disappointed with how the year turned out. Even still, the children focused all their efforts on living for the moment and doing whatever they can do now. Many students shared that staying at home during the pandemic has made them treasure the time they get to spend with their friends at school. Indeed, that sentiment adequately sums up Grade 6 this year.

We hope the Grade 6 students will spend their remaining days at Higashimachi pleasantly and leave the school with happy memories from such a troubling year.

☆ Practicing for the 2021 Higashimachi Olympics



The International Assembly

Heads of the International Assembly Leo Okajima

Erika Kobayashi

Due to COVID-19, the International Assembly this year was conducted differently from previous years as students were unable to perform for other grades. Since classes were not able to practice together, this year was the first time that they performed for each other. Even though classes in each grade had the same performance, classes were able to appreciate the differences in gestures and how the lines were delivered. All grades were able to utilize what they learned in their international studies class and put on spectacular performances.

After the performances, the children showed a sense of accomplishment, saw the efforts their classmates put towards creating something together, and realized the importance of such an experience. As the students watched the performances of other grades and thought about next year's International Assembly, their awareness in international studies classes was noticeably heightened.



