

# **Elementary School Enrollment Guidebook for Foreign Parents and Guardians (English Edition)**

**Welcome to Elementary School  
in Kawasaki**



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# For Parents and Guardians of Children with Foreign Connections who

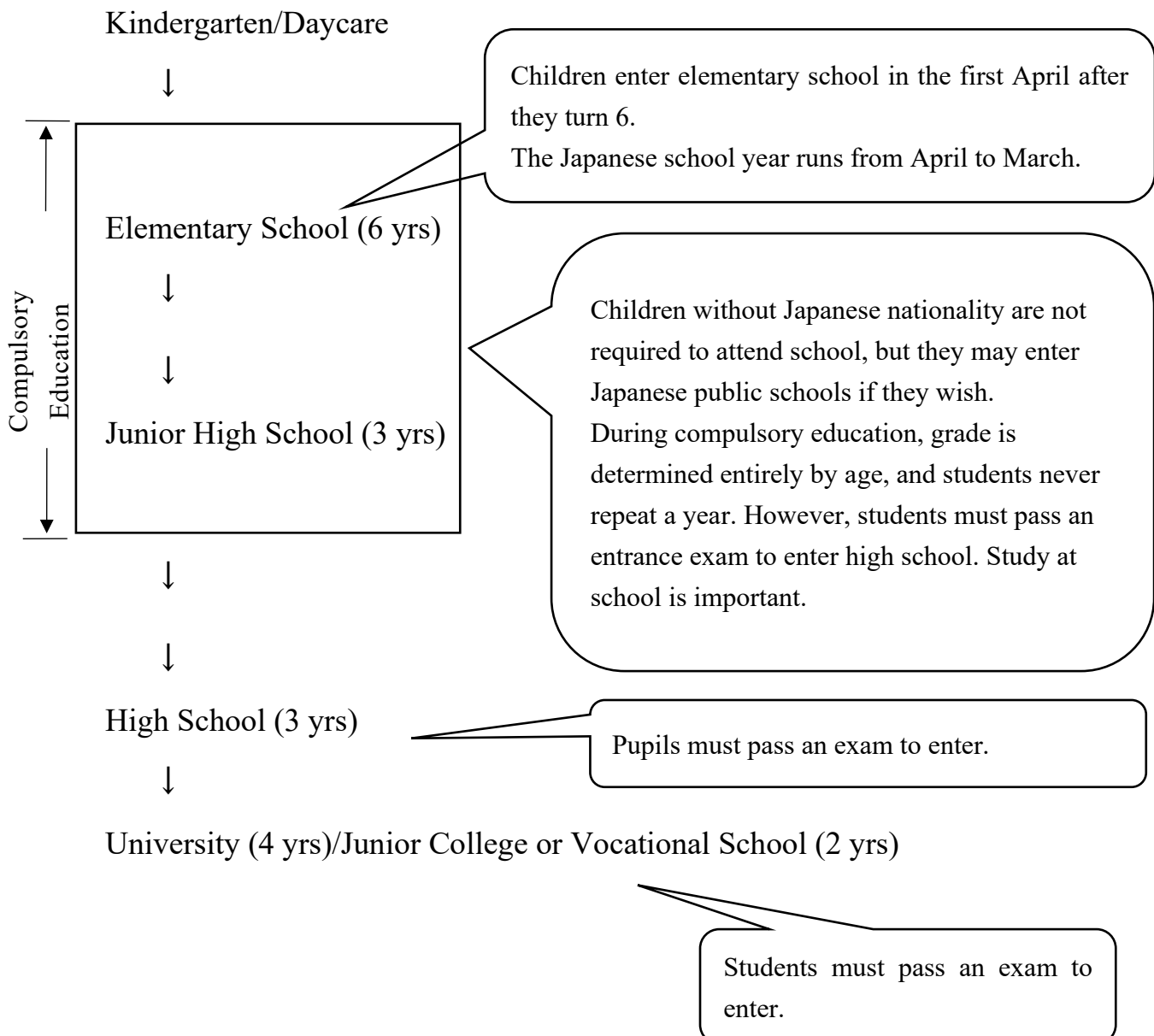
## Plan to Study at Japanese Schools

Japanese schools have systems, rules, and customs that differ from those of your home countries. Even though you want your child to attend a Japanese school, it is natural to be concerned about how things will go, and what you will be expected to do. This guide has been written in the hope that it will dispel at least some of your unease, and help you and your child to enjoy their time at school.

[Note: This English translation uses “guardians” alone to translate the Japanese “hogosha”, which covers both parents and other legal guardians of a child.]



## The Japanese Educational System





# Basic Rules of Japanese Schools

Sometimes children may take a flask to school. It must contain either water or unsweetened tea.

- ☺ Money, snacks, cell phones, smartphones and toys must not be taken to school.
- ☺ Children may not leave school between arriving and the end of the school day.
- ☺ All children participate in all lessons and school events.
- ☺ Children walk to and from school. Guardians do not take them or pick them up by car.
- ☺ Communication with the school is through the Message Book. For urgent matters, you should phone.
- ☺ Students go home by using the recognized routes, without dropping by other places.

At some schools, all the children go to school in a group.



## Annual Events (\* indicates events in which guardians also participate)

April	*Matriculation, First Semester Opening Ceremony, Health Check/Growth Measurement, Home Visit, *Open Lessons•Guardians' Gathering	1st Semester
May	PTA General Meeting•School Orientation, *Sports Day	
June	Class Trip, *Open Lessons, Swimming	
July	*Teacher Meetings	
August	Summer Holiday (homework is set)	
September	*Collection Drill, Growth Measurement, *Open Lessons & Guardians' Gathering, *Grade Presentations	
October	First Semester Closing Ceremony, Autumn Holiday, Second Semester Opening Ceremony	2nd Semester
November	*School Presentation, *Open Week	
December	*Teacher Meetings	
January	Winter Holiday (homework is set)	
	Growth Measurement, *Open Lessons	
February	*School Orientation	
March	PTA General Meeting, Guardians' Gathering, *Graduation, Closing Ceremony, Spring Holiday (no homework)	

**Opening Ceremony:** New first graders and their guardians go to the school for the first time. The headteacher welcomes them, and announces their classes and teachers. Both guardians and children dress formally (suits etc.) for matriculation, but do not wear party dresses. The children take their ransel to put their textbooks in, and another bag.



**Growth Measurement:** The changes in pupils' height and weight are recorded on a card. When your child brings the card home, you should stamp it with your hanko in the appropriate place, and return it to the school.



**Home Visit:** The children's home room teachers visit their homes. The purpose is to check where the children live, and it takes about 10 to 15 minutes. There is no need to prepare refreshments for the teacher, and the teacher does not investigate inside the home.



**Getting Your Child Drill:** In the event of an earthquake or other disaster, the school must safely hand the children over to their guardians. This drill practices for such an event, so please ensure that you go to collect your child.

**Class Trip:** The children go somewhere like an aquarium or park. Sometimes they walk, other times they take the bus or train. They take their own packed lunches.

**Open Lessons and Guardians' Gathering:** Guardians go to the school to see how the children spend their time, and what happens in the lessons. After the open lessons, the guardians stay in the classroom for a gathering, at which the homeroom teacher tells them about how the children are getting on in general, and they can talk to and get to know each other. Important announcements are sometimes made here, so guardians should attend if at all possible.



**Teacher Meetings:** Guardians go to the school and talk to their child's homeroom teacher individually. This is an opportunity to ask about how your child is doing at school, and to discuss any concerns with the teacher. If you are concerned about your Japanese ability, please contact the school in advance. It may be possible to arrange interpretation.

**Sports Day:** As well as competitive events, this includes dances and other performances. The children are split into teams and compete for a trophy. The children start practicing for sports day several weeks in advance.



**Graduation:** Sixth graders and their parents attend in formal dress, and the graduating pupils receive their graduation certificates. Fifth graders also attend as representatives of the current pupils of the school, but they need not dress formally.



# A Day In The Life of a First Grader

(Some schools are slightly different)

7:00	Get Up	
7:15	Breakfast (Please ensure that they eat breakfast!)	
7:45	Leave for School	Arrive at school between 8:00 and 8:20!
8:30	Assembly	The children assemble in the playground and are addressed by the headteacher (once per week).
8:50–9:35	First Period	
9:35–10:20	Second Period	
10:20–10:50	Break	There is a 30 minute break between second and third periods. The children can play in the playground.
10:50–11:35	Third Period	
11:35–12:20	Fourth Period	
12:20–13:00	Lunch	Lunch is provided by the school, but the pupils serve it and clear it away themselves.
13:10–13:30	Cleaning	
13:35–14:20	Fifth Period	
	(Sixth Period starts from second grade)	
Class Closing Assembly		Options for after-school care <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Wakuwaku Plaza</i> (advance application necessary) From end of school to 6 pm, from 8:30 to 18:00 when there is no school. Free of charge, although there are charges for special events and snacks, and insurance must be purchased.</li><li>● Private sector after-school facilities.</li><li>● “kodomo bunka center (children’s house)</li></ul>
Return Home		
Sleep by 21:00!		



# School Goods

The child's name should be written on everything.

## Things to Prepare Before Entering School

The total cost is between 50,000 and 100,000 yen, depending on where to buy. For example, a ransel costs between 30,000 and 80,000 yen.

☐ Ransel



☐ Carry bag



☐ Indoor Shoes  
(Uwabaki)



☐ Indoor Shoes  
Bag



☐ Pencil Case, Pencils, Erasers, Pencil Sharpener



About five 2B black pencils and one red pencil.  
Sharpen the pencils at home before taking them to school.  
It is useful to have a sharpener at home.



☐ Plastic Underlay Sheet (shitajiki)

☐ Scissors, Glue, Colored Pencils, Origami

Paper (in the stationery box: dōgubako)

☐ School Hat



☐ PE Kit

☐ Red and White Cap

☐ PE Kit Bag

☐ Emergency Hood  
(bōsai zukin)



☐ Lunch Napkins (to spread on the desk)

☐ Lunch Bag (for the napkin)

☐ Cleaning Cloths



## Items Prepared By School (Please do not prepare by yourself)

(These items will be paid for by direct debit from your bank account; see later)

Stationery Box (dōgubako), Japanese Exercise Book, Mathematics Exercise Book, Mathematics Blocks, Message Bag, etc.

## Things to Buy After Starting School

The school will inform you when it is time to buy these.

☐ Piano Harmonica



☐ Skipping Rope



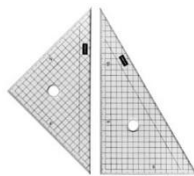
☐ Pool Set (Pool Bag, Swimming Costume, Swimming Cap, Towel, Beach Sandals, Goggles)



☐ Recorder (3rd Grade)



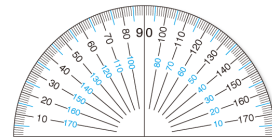
☐ Set Squares



☐ Compasses



☐ Protractor



☐ Chisels



☐ Calligraphy Set (3rd Grade)



☐ Paints Set (2nd Grade)



☐ Sewing Set (5th Grade)



**What to buy differs depending on the school. Please check it with your school.**



# Subjects Studied in First Grade

## **JAPANESE**

The children talk about their thoughts and ideas, and listen to their classmates. They begin reading and writing from the hiragana syllabary.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Numbers are linked to everyday experience, for example by looking at pictures and answering questions like “how many dogs are there?”.

Study starts from the numbers 1–10.

## **LIVING ENVIRONMENT STUDIES**

The children learn about their own way of life and the local area. From third grade, this splits into science and social studies.

## **MUSIC**

The children enjoy singing and playing together on piano harmonicas, castanets, tambourines, and so on.

You need to buy a piano harmonica.

In later years, they use recorders.

## **DRAWING AND MANUAL ARTS**

Drawing pictures, and craft using paper, clay, and similar materials.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Tag, ball games, mat exercises.

In the summer, there are swimming lessons, for which you need to prepare a pool set (described earlier). Guardians sometimes help with swimming lessons.

In higher grades...

In home economics, they do cooking practice. They need an apron, headscarf, and cloth.

Science includes experiments.

They go out to observe and experience various aspects of society.



## How to inform school about absence, lateness and going-home-early.

If your child is absent from school or late, you must inform the school by the security app for children so-called ‘Mimamorume’.



### How to inform your message

In Japanese	In English
けっせきします(やすみます)	My child will be absent.
ちこくします	My child will be late.
そうたいします	My child will leave school early.
ねつがあります	My child has a fever.
きもちがわるい	My child feels ill.
はきけがする	My child feels sick/nauseous.
おなかが いたい	My child has a stomach ache.
あたまが いたい	My child has a headache.
せき	cough
げり	diarrhea
かぜ	A cold
いんふるえんざ インフルエンザ	Influenza, the flu
けがを した	My child has been injured.
びょういんに いく	We will go to the hospital/clinic/doctor.
こまったことがあります	We have a problem.

In the case you are unable to inform by Mimamorume, please be sure to call school and tell the reason of your child’s absence, delay or early-leave.



# School Lunches and Packed Lunches



## School Lunches

The school provides a cooked lunch, prepared at the school by the catering staff.

The children eat lunch in their classroom, with their teacher and classmates. The menus are designed by nutritionists to provide the necessary calories and nutrition to a child.

The lunch fee is about ¥4,600 per month.

If you have a restricted diet due to your religion (e.g halal) or allergy to some foods, please consult your school beforehand. Your child can take the substitute food from home.

The children take turns going to fetch the food and serving it to the class. Each child is on duty for one week at a time. The children on duty wear a white kappōgi overall, hat, and mask (see the picture). At the end of their week on duty, the children take the kappōgi home, where it should be washed and ironed before being taken back to school the following Monday.

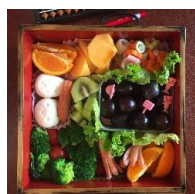


## Packed Lunches

Packed lunches should be taken on class trips and to Sports Day. As they are made in the morning and eaten at midday, it is best to avoid liquids and things that go off easily. They should be homemade if at all possible, but it is not necessary to make anything special, and there is no problem with using bought or frozen ingredients. You can put the rice and other food in any lunch box that your child likes.



(Do not include snack food, sweets and cakes, breakfast cereal, and the like.)



(←←Large packed lunches for sharing between the family on Sports Day)



## Illness and Injury

It is very important to stay in touch with the school.

If your child appears to be unwell after arriving at school in the morning, the school may contact you, so please try to be in a position to answer the phone, if possible.

There is a sick bay in the school, and if your child is injured, the school nurse will perform basic first aid. If your child is sick, they can rest in a bed in sick bay. However, the school cannot take the child to hospital; you must do that. If it is necessary, the school will call you. Make sure that the school has a phone number on which you can be contacted.

### Infectious Diseases



Influenza   Measles   German Measles   Whooping Cough  
Chicken Pox   Adenovirus   Infectious Mumps

If your child has, or may have, any of the diseases listed above, they cannot attend school. Their attendance will be suspended, so they do not count as absent.

When your child has recovered and is ready to return to school, please get a “Certificate of Permission to Attend School” (tōkōkyokashōmeisho) from a doctor. The forms are available at clinics, and it costs about ¥500 to have one issued.

\*Prevention measures against COVID-19

When you have symptoms such as coughs and fever please do not go to school.

Please take PCR test at hospital as soon as possible.

### What is the “Saigaikyōsaikyūfuseido”?



This is special kind of medical insurance. Under normal circumstances, all pupils must join the system. It pays medical expenses if the child is injured at school or on the way to or from school. However, traffic accidents and injuries sustained off the recognized routes to school are not included.

Kawasaki City pays part of the premium, so the guardian’s contribution is ¥460 per child per year. If the household is receiving welfare or education support (see later), the guardian’s contribution is ¥0.



## Cost of Elementary School



At public elementary schools, there are no tuition fees and textbooks are provided free of charge.

Guardians must pay for lunches, lesson materials, PTA membership, and special fees for activities outside school, such as class trips and school trips. Each grade has its own necessary school goods.

These are paid by direct debit. You must open an account at the bank and branch specified by the school, as the fees will be taken from that account. How much and when to be paid differs depending on schools.



### How To Open An Account and Set Up the Direct Debit

Take your inkan/hanko, proof of identity, and some cash for a deposit to the bank, and ask to open an account. The school will send you a form to fill in to set up the transfers, so fill that in, take it to the bank, and give the copy that is returned to you to the school. If you are having trouble filling in the form, come to the consultation window at the Kawasaki International Center, where they will help you to complete it. Please be notified that there is the deadline for the form to be submitted to the school.

### Financial Assistance for Education

There is a system to help households who would find it difficult to pay the costs of their children's elementary education, such as lunch fees, purchasing school goods, school trips, and so on. You must apply to Kawasaki City board of Education to receive this assistance. If you would like to apply, please ask for further details. You may ask the school, or at the places below.



## Useful information about learning Japanese

### For children to learn Japanese

A municipal school provides the Japanese learning support for your child. The school teacher will teach your child Japanese or a teacher who can speak your child's language will come to school as a language supporter. Many non-Japanese children find it more difficult in writing and reading than speaking especially after they enter elementary school. For more information about the Japanese learning support, please inquire at the school where your child will enter.

### Can request an interpreter

When you need an interpreter for the meeting with a school teacher, please consult to your school for it. The school has a translation machine. You can request it if the topic is easy or in short conversation.

### Translation apps

School sends you important messages by letters frequently. When you think it hard to read them, please ask your friends who understand Japanese for help. Translation apps would be helpful. Please do not hesitate to ask your school teacher.

### Multilingual consultation service

Please feel free to contact with us at the counselling desk if you have a problem.

Kawasaki International Center (9:00-17:00)

TEL: 044-455-8811

e-mail: soudan39@kian.or.jp

ZOOM consultation: <https://www.kian.or.jp/len/kic/onestop/frm-zoom21.shtml>

Kawasaki City Board of Education

TEL: 044-200-3758



# Things To Be Able To Do Before Starting School

## General

1. Say their own name, and read it when it is written in hiragana.
2. Make standard greetings clearly.
3. Understand and clearly answer questions.
4. Clearly say what they are thinking.
5. Go to the toilet by themselves. Some schools have Japanese-style toilets.
6. Get changed by themselves.
7. Walk to school by themselves. It is a good idea to practice the route before school starts.

## Japanese Language

Children raised in a Japanese-language environment are expected to have the abilities listed above when they enter school. If you are concerned about your child's level of Japanese ability, please consult the school. Extra support is available if necessary, and children who receive this support from first grade do not normally have any long-term problems with their education in Japan. The support is available to children of any age, but it is more effective if they start at a younger age, so please do not delay sending your child to school because of concerns about their Japanese.



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