



HANDBOOK

For Teachers of Japanese Students

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**The Guidance Center
In Japanese School of Detroit**

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Dear Educators at local schools,



We always appreciate your warm care and understanding of Japanese students.

The student who has just come from Japan, and whose manner is totally Japanese, might cause problems with which you may feel uncomfortable. You may also have difficulty communicating with these students and their families.

The statistics shows that, in order for children to acquire the basic English skills (conversational level) as a second language, it takes 1~3 years, and to acquire the academic level of complex English, it takes over 5 years. Of course these statistics are not necessarily applied to all children. However, it is true that a child does not understand a single word that was said in classroom on the first day of school, not to mention that a child is not familiar with any routines and rules. The only thing a child can do is to copy what everyone else does without experiencing any feeling of achievement. Can you imagine it must be to feel so small?

Children are trying hard in their own way to fit in and to make it in this different culture. Although I have seen extreme cases, fortunately, most of these children become accustomed to schools, and make new friends who support them. Above all, they feel encouraged by positive words and warm smiles from their teachers.

I hope this booklet will be an aid for better understanding and communication between you and your Japanese students and I hope to cooperate with each other as educators. If I can be of any help to you or to your Japanese students, please feel free to contact me. The cooperation among schools, both local and Japanese, and families is truly important for the success of academic development in every Japanese child.

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Section 1

I. Japanese school of Detroit

A. The make-up of the Japanese School

1. This school was voluntarily founded for children in 1973 by the local Japanese companies with only 23 students.

2. The school year starts in April and ends in March.

3. Elementary school : 1st ~6th

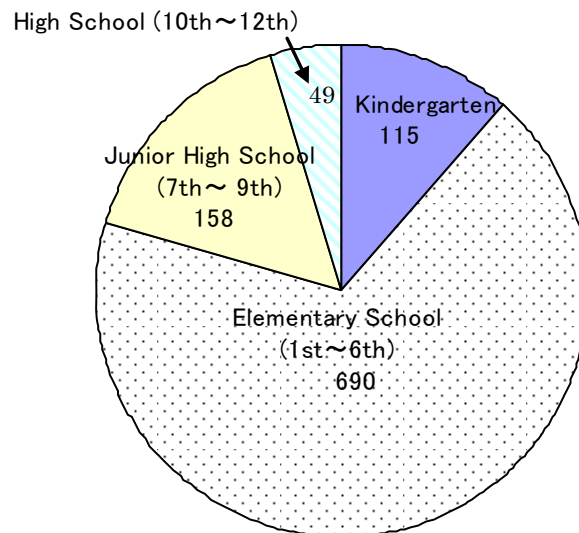
Junior High school : 7th~9th

High school : 10th~12th

4. Now, about 1,000 students are studying at two different school buildings.

a. West Maple Elementary School Kindergarten ~ 3rd grades

b. Seaholm High School 4th ~ 12th grades



The number of students in August 2008 (1012 in total)

B. Principles and Purpose

1. The emphasis is on retaining the Japanese language so that the students who stay here for three to five years on the average will be able to catch up with the students in Japan after they return to Japan.
2. There are no English lessons here except at high school level, and generally students are requested not to use English during the class.
3. A Japanese educational doctrine is based on the idea that every student has the ability to complete the curriculum without much difficulty.
4. The purpose is that all students will successfully master the curriculum given each year.

C. Curriculum

All students study for six hours on Saturdays, using textbooks and other materials which are the same ones that students in Japan use. Textbooks for the students in 1st to 9th grades that are obligatory in Japan are provided by the Japanese Government.

1. 1st – 3rd grades Japanese Language Art and Math
2. 4th – 6th grades Japanese Language Art, Math and Social Studies
3. 7th – 9th grades Japanese Language Art, Math, Social Studies and Science

D. Homework

1. Students are given homework every week.
2. Some students take a full week to complete it.
3. It is important for students to exercise Kanji characters at home every day. Even lower elementary school children have to memorize about 200 Kanji characters every year.

E. School Terms and Report Cards

1. Apr. - Sept.: 1st semester
 - a. All 1st graders must be six years old by April 1st.
 - b. Summer Vacation is for about 30 to 40 days.
2. Oct. – Mar.: 2nd semester
 - a. Winter Break is for about two weeks.
 - b. Spring Break is for about one week.

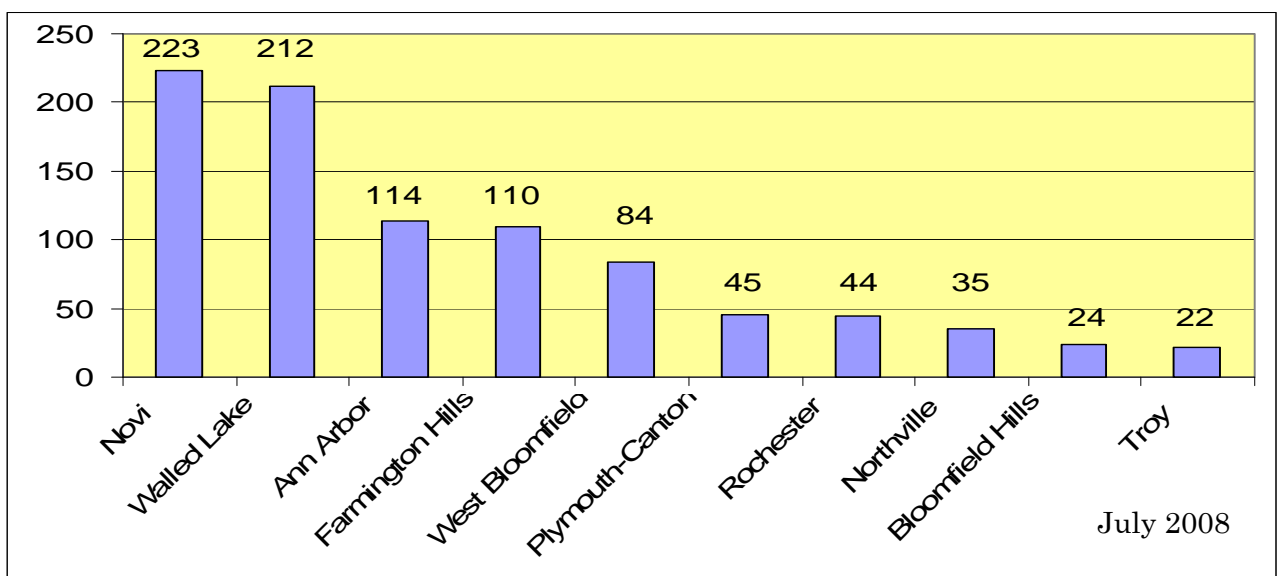
Students at the Japanese School receive report cards at the end of each semester.

1. 1st - 6th Three grades (Outstanding, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory)
2. 7th - 9th Five grades (1 to 5. 5 is the best.)

F. Other Information

1. Explanations about American culture, events and American schools are not given here.
2. The 1st to 9th grades are obligatory in Japan
3. An unofficial class (not sponsored by the Japanese government) for the high school students is available. Classes are offered also for the kindergarteners.

***Number of Japanese students who also attend Japanese School in grades K~12th in each school district (Top 10)**





* “THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDING JAPANESE SCHOOL ON SATURDAYS”

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A girl in 2nd grade cries every night in her bed saying she doesn't like school . . .

A boy in 4th grade becomes aggressive towards his mom after he comes home from school. . .

A boy in 7th grade tackles homework with an English dictionary in-hand every night until past midnight. . . .

These are just a few examples of the emotions and experiences faced by students of the Japanese School of Detroit on a regular basis. Most of the Japanese students who live in Southeast Michigan are not immigrants. They are here because their fathers have been assigned to work here for a period of about 3~5 years. Japanese children who come here with their parents attend their neighborhood local schools, since there are no full-time Japanese schools in the area. It is a great opportunity for them to learn a foreign language and culture. However, it is not difficult to imagine what these students go through when they initially arrive in an unknown environment with a different language, different food, and unfamiliar expectations of behavior. In essence, everything they are accustomed to is very different here in America. They often lose their self-confidence and pride as they begin their new lives here. So most Japanese families recognize the importance of their children attending the Japanese School while they are here in America:

- ◆ They can continue to develop and maintain their native language skills equivalent to their grade level.
- ◆ They can proudly say to themselves “I understand perfectly and I can do it!”
- ◆ They enjoy their success and achievements in learning.
- ◆ They can express themselves freely, in another words, they can be themselves.
- ◆ Not only can they share their hardships with others going through the same experience, but they can also get current news and information about Japan.
- ◆ They learn the cultural differences and maintain the important values of Japanese society.
- ◆ They recover their much needed confidence and pride in themselves.

All of the reasons mentioned above explain why families choose to have their children attend Japanese School on Saturdays even if it means they will have to tackle homework from both schools. I often hear the students saying, “I like Japanese school but I would love

it if we didn't have to study so much!"

By the time that these students' fathers finish their assigned jobs here in Michigan, this foreign country becomes a second "home" to the children, and people who were once unfamiliar have become respected teachers and best friends. The students return to Japan with a newfound confidence of having overcome their hard times, confident with the English language they have acquired. They also have maintained the Japanese language equivalent of their grade level needed to re-assimilate themselves, and they have a greater understanding of different cultures and a more open worldview. For the continued well-being and happiness of these students, we appreciate the cooperation we receive from all our local educators.



II. Japanese culture and customs that affect Japanese students and parents

A. Japanese disposition

1. Japanese society generally values group cooperation over individuality.
2. Japanese people are afraid of being shunned.
3. Japanese people consider it rude to say "NO," because they have a tendency to avoid confrontation.
4. Japanese people expect others to guess what they are thinking, without any verbal expression of their thoughts. To be able to understand another's thought is a virtue.
5. The shyness of the Japanese is mainly due to the fact that they are not used to associating with foreigners.

B. The idea of education for Japanese people

1. Generally Japanese parents take great account of education.
2. Many parents believe that the school report card is very important.
 - A good report card brings self-confidence to the children.
 - A good report card brings a feeling of triumph to the parents.
3. Japanese parents take their children's poor performance as lack of their efforts.

C. Problems that Japanese children meet in their daily life at American schools

1. Behaviors related to Japanese culture

- a. Japanese children are disciplined to be patient, so their keeping silent could yield misunderstandings.
- b. Japanese children will apologize first even if they think that they are not wrong, because apologies are used in Japanese collectivistic culture as social lubricants, to ease the tension and restore harmony.
- c. Japanese children think that they are not allowed to act without permission such as going to the bathroom.
- d. They hesitate to speak their minds or state an opinion that is different from the rest of the group.
- e. They are not used to asking questions, but are ready to answer questions.
- f. They are educated to obey the direction given by their teachers.
- g. Japanese children are not used to hugs, because Japanese people prefer to keep some physical distance and feel annoyed with a public display of affection. They understand that the actions of patting their shoulders and heads mean praise.
- h. Japanese children hesitate to look straight at the speaker's eyes especially when disciplined, because it is considered rude and might aggravate the person more.

2. Problems due to lack of English

- a. Japanese children may use physical actions such as pushing or shoving to express what they want to say.
- b. The teacher's scolding may not be understood by Japanese children.
- c. Japanese children may pretend that they have understood what the teachers have said, even if they have not understood. Nodding doesn't necessarily mean that they understood, but simply means that they are listening. Japanese children are taught that one listens until the speaker is finished.
- d. Japanese language differs from English language.

Example

Q: Don't you want a doughnut?

A: Yes. I agree with you, so I don't want it.

B: No. I don't agree with you. So I want it.

D. Suggestions

1. How to make Japanese students feel comfortable

- a. Smile
- b. Even a simple act of greeting gives them a sense of relief.
- c. Buddy system may be effective.
 - 1) They will feel reassured to have someone help them when they are lost.
 - 2) Some parents want a Japanese buddy to help their children feel at ease.
(Keep in mind that the parents of the Japanese buddy might complain that their child will lose his/her own study time.)
- d. Japanese students are glad to find encouraging comments by the teacher in their homework or work papers.
- e. It will be helpful if you repeat your words.
- f. Sometimes it is good for Japanese students to be leaders in their classes in order to make them feel proud, and self-confident.
Example: Teaching Kanji characters, about their hometown, Origami crafts.
- g. Japanese students do not understand the meaning of swear words.
Many parents want a list of them.

2. What Japanese parents expect from American schools.

- a. They want their children to go to school without complaining.
- b. They want their children to become used to school life.
- c. They want their children to have friends, and expect them to learn the English language and culture.
- d. They want their children to learn how to express themselves.
- e. They want to obtain textbooks used in the classroom, or they want permission to bring textbooks home to help their children.

3. How to make contact with Japanese parents.

Japanese parents prefer notes or e-mail to telephone calls, because most of them can read English even if they cannot speak well.



Section 2 Useful Expressions in Japanese

The followings are the expressions that are used by teachers addressing their students, so they are not always formal ones. The simplest expressions have been selected. We hope that a phonetic Japanese pronunciation in the bracket will help you to pronounce the sentences and words.

I. Greetings

Good Morning.	Ohayo Gozaimasu.	[OHIO GO ZAY MASS]
Good Afternoon.	Konnichiwa.	[KON EECHEE WAH]
Good Evening.	Konbanwa.	[KONG BANG WAH]
Goodbye.	Sayonara.	[SI OH NAH RAH]
Thank you.	Arigato.	[AH REE GAH TOH]
Thank you very much.	Domo arigato.	[DOE MOE AH REEGAH TOH]
You're welcome.	Do itashimashite.	[DOE EE TAH SHE MASHTAY]

II. Questions (Rising intonation at the end of a sentence indicates a question.)

What is your name?	Namae wa?	[NAH MAH EE WAH?]
What's the matter?	Do shita no?	[DO SHETA NO?]
Why are you crying?	Doshite naite iru no?	[DO SHETAY NAH EE TAY EERU NO?]
Do you want to go to the bathroom?	Toile ni iku?	[TOILET NEE EEKOO?]
Do you feel sick?	Kibun ga warui no?	[KEEBUN GA WAH ROOEE NO?]
Do you understand?	Wakaru?	[WAH KAHROO?]
Do you want to call mom?	Okaasan ni denwa suru?	[OKAHSANN NEE DENGWA SOO ROO?]

III. Words

Language Art	Kokugo	[KO KOO GO]
Math	Sansu	[SAHN SOO]
Science	Rika	[REE KAH]
Social Studies	Shakai	[SHAH KAH EE]
Teacher	Sensei	[SEN SAY]
Book	Hon	[HON]
Eraser	Keshigomu	[KAY SHEE GO MU]
Paper	Kami	[KAH MEE]
Scissors	Hasami	[HAH SAH MEE]

