

May 13th, 2020 (Reiwa 2)
School superintendent Fujita Yoshihisa

Announcement for the Reopening of Elementary and Junior High Schools

To the parents and parent guardians of elementary and junior high school students,

On behalf of the Higashiomi City schools we would like to give our deepest thanks for your continued understanding and cooperation during the extended school closing due to the Coronavirus.

As we follow the official recommendation from the Japanese Ministry of Education “Concerning Preventative Measures for Coronavirus” (Reiwa 2, May 1st, 2020) we have strived to keep the risk of infection for students and staff as low as possible. At the same time, we must realize that keeping schools closed for such a long period of time may create other risks to our students’ health, well-being, and education. We must, as a society, continue to combat Coronavirus as we return to our daily lives. As a result, we will take step-by-step measures to prevent the spread of infection while also providing our students with a safe environment in which to learn. To achieve that goal we must give careful consideration to our plan moving forward. Given the fact that the number of infections in Shiga Prefecture has been steadily decreasing, as well as the fact that there have been no new cases in Higashiomi City in the past month, we have decided that it is time to move forward towards reopening our city schools.

**Please find our guidelines for school reopening and Coronavirus prevention listed below.
The following list is subject to change pending the release of new information.**

1) Reasoning behind the decision to reopen schools

The decision to reopen schools is based on the above-mentioned official recommendation from the Japanese Ministry of Education “Concerning Preventative Measures for Coronavirus.” We must put students’ health and well-being first while also guaranteeing students’ right to an education.

2) Schedule for school reopening

- (1) Schools will reopen on June 1st, 2020.
 - ① **All students may return on this date.**
 - ② School lunch will resume on **Monday, June 8th.**
 - ③ The school schedule will be adapted to half days for the week of Monday, June 1st to Friday, June 5th. However, each school may be flexible to allow (for example : 6th grade and 3 year) students to attend afternoon classes as deemed necessary.

- (2) Providing school attendance days in anticipation of school reopening.

Schools have provided various services up to this point. However, schools will make an effort to allow students to visit school at limited intervals to create a smooth transition into reopening.

 - ① **School attendance schedule:**
 - May 18th to May 31st.
 - Students may attend school for up to two hours at a time, up to twice a week.

② **Student arrangements for school attendance days**

Students may be divided up into different groups such as by neighborhood or by grade.

③ **Purpose of school attendance days**

- To get an understanding of students' conditions, including mental health needs.
- To create communication between students and school staff.
- To answer questions and provide explanations for studying at home activities. To prepare effective methods for studying at home before and after school reopening.
- To provide instruction on how to prevent the spread of infection as students return to school life.

(3) Starting May 18th, elementary school day-care services will be conducted at area nursery schools.

3) Preventative measures for infection after school reopening

(1) Basic preventative measures:

① Stopping the source of infection

- A) Please perform a health check at home every day by taking your child's temperature and checking for cold-like symptoms.
 - If your child has a fever of 37.5 or higher, or has cold-like symptoms, please do not send them to school.
- B) Students who have not had a health check will be checked upon arrival at school.
 - Please make arrangements to have your child picked up from school in the event that they are sent home due to health reasons.

② Eliminating the route of infection

- A) Students must observe coughing etiquette and wash their hands thoroughly.
 - Students will be instructed to disinfect their hands upon arriving at school, before and after lunch, when entering and exiting the classroom, and after using the restroom.
- B) Students must wear a mask.
- C) Areas that are touched by many students, such as doors and light switches, will be disinfected.

③ Raising your child's resistance to infection

- Please make sure your child gets plenty of sleep, exercise, and a balanced diet.

(2) Lowering the risk of infection in groups

① Schools will avoid the three "mitsus" (small, crowded spaces, poorly ventilated spaces, and close-up, face-to-face conversations.)

② Thorough ventilation

- Windows will be opened to allow proper ventilation throughout the school.

③ Students and staff must wear masks when speaking in close distance.

(3) Concerning classes

① For the time being, students will face forward during class.

- Desks will be arranged in a way to give adequate distance and to prevent face-to-face seating.

② Pair and group work will be restricted, and if conducted students must wear masks.

③ All students and staff will be expected to wear masks during class.

④ Regarding various school subjects:

- School activities that put students at a higher risk of infection will be suspended.

For example:

- Music activities where students would sing together in a small space or be crowded together.
- Home economics activities such as cooking.
- PE or Health class activities where students exercise in small spaces or frequently come into bodily contact.
- Group activities for extended periods of time in small spaces.
- Sports festival, culture festival, school presentations, etc. where students are in crowded spaces for extended periods of time.
- Overnight school trips, field trips, and trips outside of the prefecture.

(4) Reconsidering school events

- ① Due to the high risk of infection, schools will review and consider alternate plans for cancelled school events such as sports festival, sports day, school trips, field trips, and so on.
- ② Swimming classes will be cancelled.
(Due to regular health check-ups not being available, crowded changing rooms, and other crowded areas.)
- ③ Junior High School Challenge Week is cancelled.
(Due to contact outside of school.)
- ④ Student council events.
- ⑤ For the time being, school recitals and performances will be suspended.

(5) Concerning club activities

- ① Club activities will resume on Monday, June 8th.
Club activities will be limited to inside the school activities on weekdays. Activities will not be held on weekends or holidays until further notice.
- ② Matches against other schools will be suspended for the time being.
- ③ Schools will carefully enforce preventative measures for contact sports such as judo, kendo, basketball, handball, etc.
- ④ Students will not be forced to participate.

4) Guaranteeing an education

Due to the hours missed during the temporary school closing, long vacations will be shortened to make up class time.

(1) Making up class hours

- ① Shortening of long vacations

○ Summer vacation dates: Saturday, August 1st – Monday, August 17th

- Term 1 School Closing Ceremony (July 31st) Term 2 Opening Ceremony (August 18th)
- School Days

July 21 st (Tue) 22 nd (Wed) 27 th (Mon) 28 th (Tue) 29 th (Wed) 30 th (Thu) 31 st (Fri) August 18 th (Tue) 19 th (Wed) 20 th (Thu) 21 st (Fri) 24 th (Mon) 25 th (Tue) 26 th (Wed) 14 Days

○ Winter vacation dates: Saturday, December 26th – Sunday, January 3rd

- Term 2 School Closing Ceremony (December 25th) Term 3 Opening Ceremony (January 4th)
- School Days

December 25 th , January 4 th – 6 th 4 days

- ※ To prevent heatstroke during the summer months, measures to prevent dehydration and cool down classrooms will be taken.
- ② Some of this time will be used for alternate school events.
- ③ Saturday classes up to once or twice a month will also be considered.
- ※ School make up hours for Seitoku Junior High School and Gamou Nishi Elementary school may differ due to ongoing school renovation.

(2) Considerations for making up class time

- ① To make up for instruction time various methods may be used. For example:
 - Time for morning meetings and end of the day meetings may be used for instruction time.
 - For Junior High School, a 7-class schedule (45 minute periods).
- ② Special considerations will be made for 6th grade Elementary students and 3rd grade Junior High School Students. In particular, assistance for 3rd year students taking High School entrance exams.
- ③ Due to limited class hours, core classes for each grade level may emphasize key points in a concise way to reduce the workload. Also, school subjects with overlapping content may be consolidated if a high rate of success is determined.
- ④ Schools will make an effort to balance core subjects with other learning activities.
 - During the extended school closing, students may have had trouble adjusting their daily lives, become upset, and/or lost their energy. Schools will keep this in mind so as not to overwhelm students with a heavy workload.
- ⑤ Students who are unable to attend school, special needs students, and students from foreign countries may receive personalized instruction as needed.
- ⑥ Although some kinds of activities will not be permitted, schools will consider students' needs so that instruction does not become monotonous.
- ⑦ Regarding students' mental health needs:
 - Students' may have experienced stress from their daily lives being disrupted and may be upset about having been away from school for an extended period. Schools will respond to the individual needs of students to help them deal with their emotions.
- ⑧ Students who are absent due to illness:
 - Students who become ill and/or require medical treatment must consult with a school nurse or other medical professional to determine if they may attend school.
 - If it is determined that a student should not attend school, that student must be absent.
 - Absent students will have access to Communication Technology (ICT) so they may continue their studies.
 - If after consulting with the school, parents and parent guardians do not wish to have their child attend school out of concern for infection, arrangements for studying at home may be implemented.
- ⑨ Instruction to students regarding Coronavirus:
 - Students will be given the facts about Coronavirus and preventing infection so they may be able to reduce their risk and act appropriately to keep themselves safe.
 - Although we cannot completely eliminate the risk of infection, the local health professionals have a system in place to notify schools and neighborhood associations right away in the case that an infected person is discovered.
 - In the event that someone from a school is discovered to have been infected, the school will take measures to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and bullying against the affected person.