

Guide Book
on
Preparation for Elementary school

For the parents and guardians who have kids going to school in Japan

Osaka Prefectural Board of Education

To Begin With

More and more kids from various countries are learning at elementary school in Osaka.

You may be worried, such as,

Can my kids make friends?

Can my kids understand Japanese?

May the differences in culture, habits, and religion cause any trouble?

and so on.

This guide book is designed to show

how your children spend a day in Japanese elementary school,

what they learn in classes,

what should be done for entering the school in Japan, etc.

We'll be pleased if this brochure would cast off your concern.

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1. About School Education in Japan

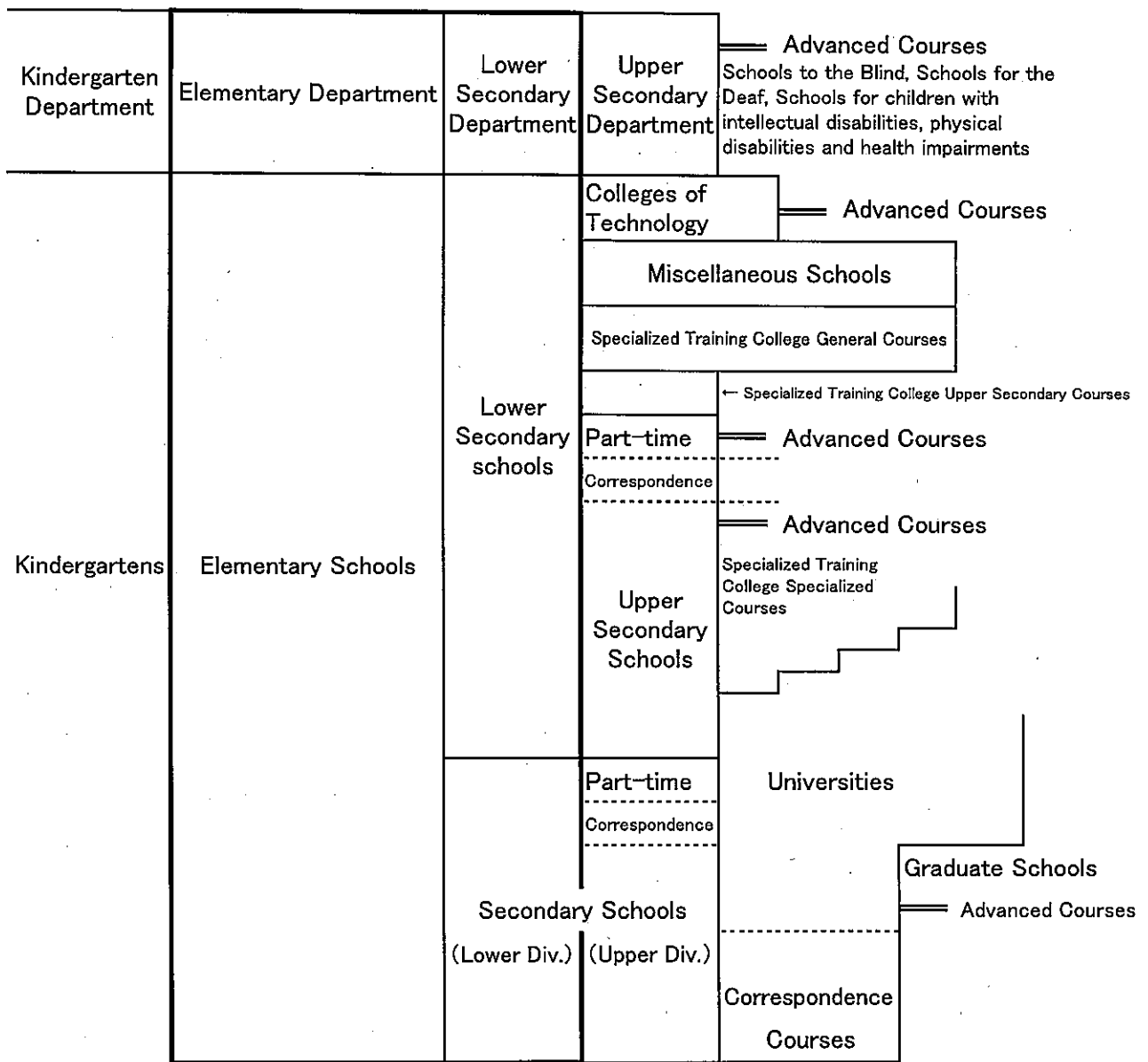
Can kids from any countries learn at elementary school in Japan?

At what age do kids start school?

What kinds of schools are there in Japan?

- (1) Kids from any countries can learn at elementary school in Japan.
- (2) In Japan, children must go to school from 6 (*1 “full-6 years old”) to 15 years old as a total for 9 years. Elementary school is for 6 years.
*1 “full 6 years old” : In Japan, we count 1 year old after the 1st birthday. “Full 6 years old” means that he/she has reached his/her 6th birthday.
- (3) We have both public school (established by the state, prefectures, and municipalities) and private school (non-public school). Public schools have each school district. Which school your kids go to depends on where you live.
- (4) Pre-school kids can go to kindergarten or nursery school.
- (5) Japanese school year starts from April and ends at March. From the children born on April 2nd to the children born on April 1st in the next year are put in the same grade. Because of this, it sometimes happens that your child’s grade is different from the one in your mother country. There are 2 types of systems; trimester system, which divides a year into 3 terms, and semester system, which separates a year into 2 terms. It depends on the school.

pre-school Education	Elementary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education
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School Year

3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Age

from "Guidebook for starting school" issued by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
2005 (Heisei 17)

2.Procedures for Entering Elementary School

What should we do for entering elementary school in Japan?

(1) Procedures at City Hall

① Foreign Resident Registration

When a baby is born or when your kid comes to Japan, you go to your City (Town/Village) Hall to register your child as a foreign resident.

② “Guidance for Starting School” and “Attendance Notice”

If you’ve done the registration, “Guidance for Starting School” is sent when your kid reaches school age. If it isn’t mailed, please contact your City Hall.

③ Cross-check

Please make sure the name and place of the school.

(2) Procedures at School

① To the school

Around February, orientation session is held for the prospective students and their guardian.

② Talk to the Teacher

It’s a good idea to have a talk in person with the teacher; such as when the child came to Japan, how long he/she will stay, how much he/she can speak Japanese, and what language he/she speaks at home, and so on. It is also recommended to make sure the contact information and the needs of an interpreter in the case of emergency. In addition, if you have some questions or concerns about health, culture, dietary habits, and religion, feel free to ask the teacher.

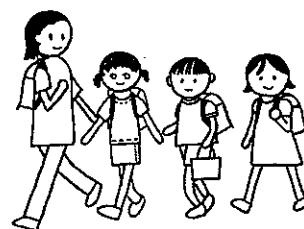
3. About School Life

(1) A Day in School

How do the students spend a day at school in Japan?

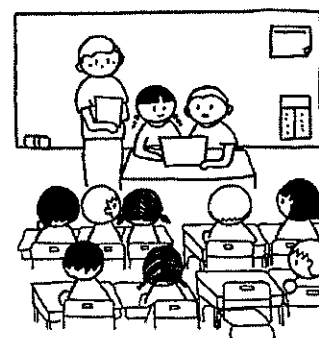
● TOKO (Going to School)

Each school designs route to and from school.
Some schools require their pupils to come to school as a group. Please check with the school.



● ASA-NO-KAI (Morning Meeting)

Before class starts, the homeroom teacher greets the students and tells them informative matters.

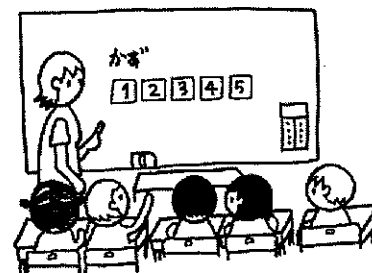


● Start Time

If your kid would be late for school, or be absent from school for sickness, please make sure to contact school.

● Classroom Hour

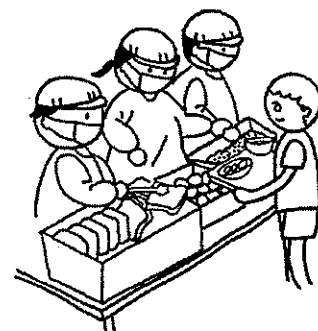
A classroom hour is for 45 minutes.
There is 10 to 20 minutes break time between classes.
The homeroom teacher (*1 “TAN-NIN”) usually teaches almost all the classes.



*1 “TAN-NIN”: Each class has own homeroom teacher, called TAN-NIN.

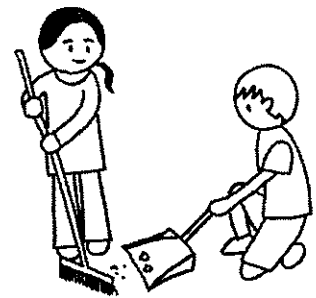
● Lunch Time

Most elementary schools in Osaka offer KYUSHOKU, which is the lunch provided by school.
The pupils serve meals and clean up in turn.
This turn of duty is called KYUSHOKU-TOBAN.



● Cleaning

The students clean their classroom, staircases, corridors, or washroom together with the teacher.



● OWARI-NO-KAI

There is a meeting before going home for the students and the teacher to talk about what happens on the day. Add to that, the teacher tells them up-coming events in school life. The teacher sometimes gives them handouts which have informative matters.

● HOUKAGO (After School)

The kids can go to “GAKUDO-HOIKU” (*2).

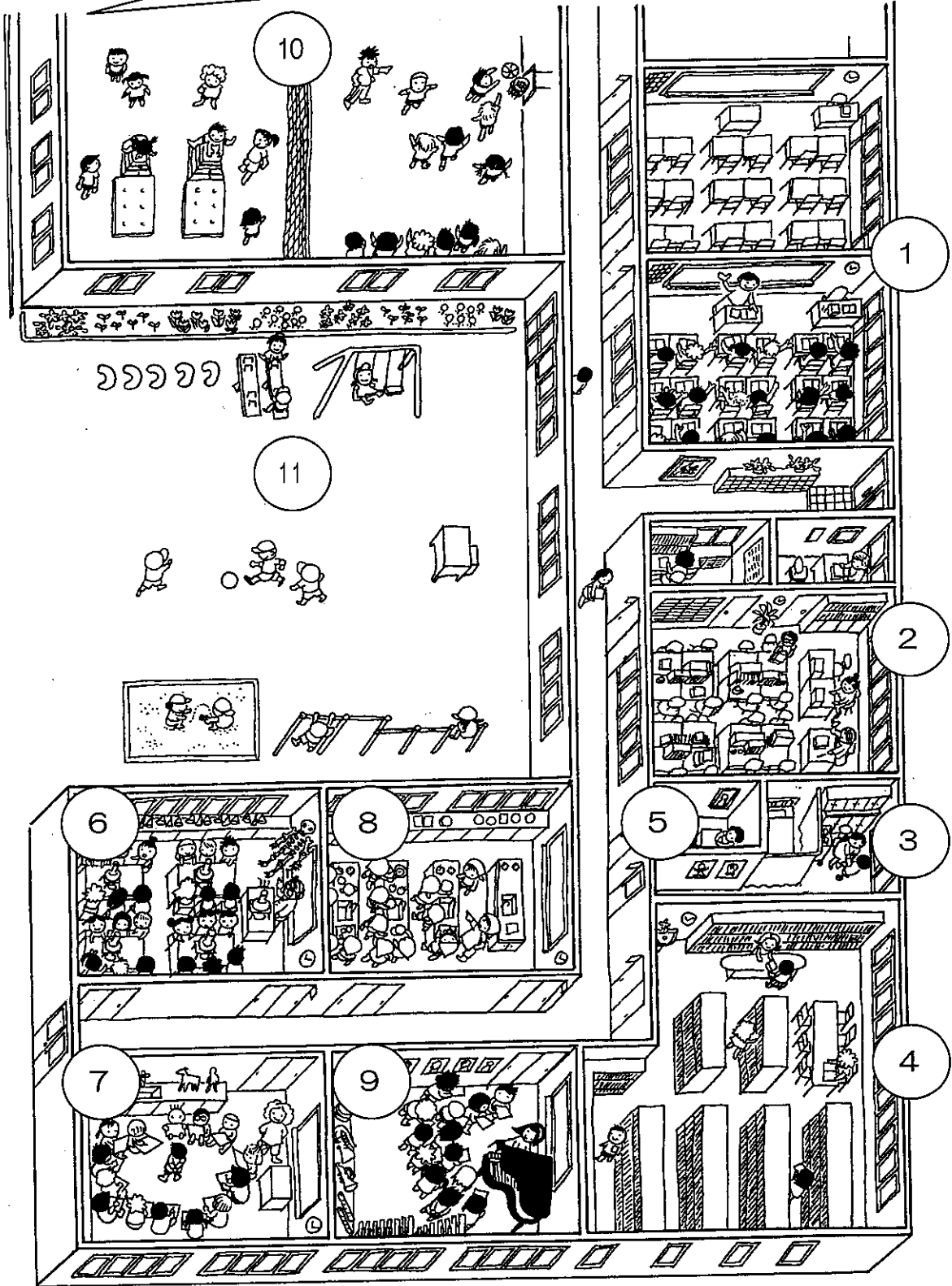
*2 “GAKUDO-HOIKU”: This is a place that they can take care of the students from after school to the time they set. The guardians can use this service if they work late at night. Some municipals don’t have this service, or they sometimes limit the pupils’ age. Please check with the teacher whether GAKUDO-HOIKU is available or not, whether it requires fees or not.

● GEKO (Going Home)

The students go home along the route.

(2) Classrooms

What's it like inside the school ?



- ① Classroom: where the kids take classes and eat KYUSHOKU (Lunch).
- ② Teachers' Room: Where the teachers are.
- ③ School Nurse's Office: If the student feels ill, he/she can come here to be taken care of by the school nurse.
- ④ Library: Where a lot of books are. The students can read books while the library opens, or they also can borrow them to read.
- ⑤ Counseling Room: Where a school counselor or teacher who is ready to listen to what the students (sometimes also the guardians) suffers.
- ⑥ Laboratory: It has laboratory instruments and desks for Science classes.
- ⑦ The Room for Arts and Crafts: It has tools and equipments for Arts and Crafts classes.
- ⑧ The Room for Home Economics: It has kitchen and machines for cooking and sewing classes, which are the parts of HE.
- ⑨ Music Room: There are music instruments and facilities for Music classes.
- ⑩ Gymnasium: The students can exercise and enjoy sports.
- ⑪ Play Ground: It is used for PE classes, whole school meeting, and so forth.

(3) Teachers

What kind of teachers are there in school ?

- Principal: The representative of the school.
- Vice-Principal: To support the principal's work, and run things around classes, school events, clerical works, and so on.
- Faculty Members: Faculty members consist of teachers and staff. Teachers have teacher's licenses, and conduct classes. Staff work for defending the kids' security and improving the learning environments.

(4) What the Students Learn

What the students learn at elementary school ?

School classes consist of each subject, ethics, special activities, integrated studies, and so on.

Subjects	Contents (This is a rough summary of Education Ministry guidelines *3.)
Japanese	To learn speaking, listening, writing, reading the language (Japanese).
Social Studies	To learn about local industries and geographical environments in Japan, Japanese history, politics, culture, and the relationships with the other countries.
Arithmetic	To learn numbers, calculating, diagrams, and so on.
Science	To learn about living nature and the environments, materials and energy, the earth and universe, and so on.
Life	To be interested in the relationship with people around, society, and the nature. This class is designed for fostering the students' ability to think. This is only for 1 st and 2 nd grades.
Music	To perform, appreciate music.
Arts and Crafts	To enjoy the creation by drawing pictures, making crafts.
Home Economics	To learn and experience about something related to domestic life, such as, clothes, foods, and so on.
Physical Education	To play games with balls and equipments, and learn about health. In summer it has swimming classes.
Ethics	To think about oneself, and the relationships with people around, nature, and society.
Special Activity	It is aimed for fostering the attitudes which enable the students to act as a member of a group through classroom activities, student-body activities, club activities, school events.
Integrated Studies	It is designed for students to find tasks, learn and think independently, and solve problems by themselves. Specifics are depends on the school.

(5) A Year in School

What kinds of school events are there in a year ?

◆ 1st Semester (April-July)

- ① Opening Ceremony: There is a ceremony at the beginning of each semester.
- ② Entrance Ceremony: This is the ceremony to welcome the new 1st grade students.
- ③ Health Checkup: School doctors are invited to check the students' health status.
- ④ Body Measurement: Gauging height and weigh.
- ⑤ Home Visit: The homeroom teacher visit the students home to talk about the kids' life at home,.
- ⑥ Field Trip: Going out of school, the students lean about nature, history and culture chaperoned with teachers.
- ⑦ Classroom Visitation: The guardians come to see the classes to find out about their kids' life at school.
- ⑧ The Guardians and Teacher Meeting: The guardians go to school to talk over the student's learning status, life at school and at home.
- ⑨ Closing Ceremony: There is a ceremony at the end of each semester. The students usually receive "TSUCHI-HYO" (Some schools call it "AYUMI".) which tells each student's learning status.

*2nd and 3rd semester also have both Opening and Closing Ceremony.

◆ Summer Vacation (Late July-Late August): Approximately 40days vacation.

Some schools have "TOUKOU-BI" (going to school day), on which the students have to go to school during the vacation. Some schools offer their pool for the students.

◆ 2nd Semester (September-December)

- ① Athletic Festival: A festival in which the students enjoy doing sports. They participate in footrace, relay, dancing, and cheer their classmates. Some schools allow the guardians and family to join in.
- ② Excursion: Being 6th grade, the students go on trip together with the students in the same grade. This is usually in 2nd semester. The Guardians pay the cost of the trip.
- ③ Annual School Festival: The students exhibit drawings, photos, or any pieces of work, and the reports that they learn in classes. Some students play the musical instruments, do group singing, do plays, and so forth. The guardians usually can visit this festival.

◆ Winter Holiday: Approximately 2 weeks holiday.

◆ 3rd Semester (January-March)

- ① Graduation Ceremony: It is a ceremony which celebrates 6th grade students. At the ceremony, the principal hand the diploma to them. The guardians of the 6th grade can attend the ceremony.

◆ Spring Holiday (Late March-At the beginning of April)

After this holiday, the students precede next grade. The students study in the next grade from April.

(6) Rules and Regulations of School

What rules does school have?

① Time

Be on time. The students have to move in the classroom without delay.

② Belongings

The students are not allowed to bring in the things that are not related to classes.

All the belongings should have the owner's name.

③ Clothes and Shoes

The students are sometimes required to have the clothes and shoes showed below.

<Clothes>

• “GAKUSEI-FUKU” (School Uniform): The students wear this when they come to school, during classes.

• “TAISOU-FUKU” (Gym Uniform): The students wear this in PE class.

- “MIZUGI” (Swim Suits), “SUIEI-BOU” (Swim Cap):

These are needed for swimming.

- Apron, Mask, Cooking Cap: These are need when the students serve school lunch.

<Shoes>

- “UWABAKI”: Room shoes for entering classrooms.
- “TAIKUKAN-Shoes”: Room shoes for entering the gymnasium.
- * These rules are different from one school to the other. Please check with the school.

④ Make-ups, Accessories, and Hair-style

Most schools ban students’ make-up and accessories such as pierces and earrings. Died hair is also not allowed.

4.About Tuition Fee

Do we need tuition fee?

At public primary school and junior high school, tuition fee and text books are free. But sometimes we need fees such as below. Each school gives detailed information.

① The cost of the School Lunch

You have to pay for school lunch (about 3,500-4,000 yen per month). If your school doesn't offer meals, you don't need to pay for it. In that case, you have to prepare lunch by yourself for the kid to bring it to school.

② Deposit for Field Trip and Excursion

③ Things needed for Classes

Japanese: Equipments for Calligraphy (Calligraphy-Brush, Black Writing Fluid)

Music: Some musical instruments, such as recorder.

Arts and Crafts: Water-color pigment, Crayon, Pastel, and so on.

Home Economics: Sewing kits

④ Others

PTA membership fee, alumni association fee, insurance cost, the cost for school uniforms and so on.

5. Things to be prepared

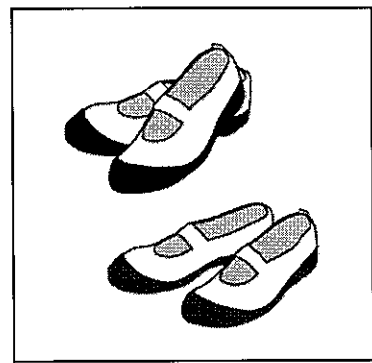
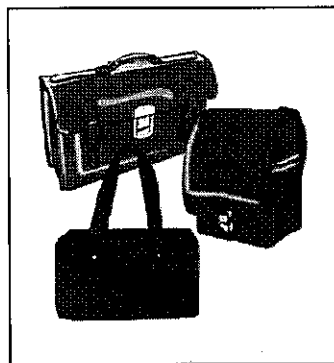
(1) Things to be prepared before starting school.

● School Uniform (summer uniform, winter uniform)

Some schools have its uniform and others don't have.

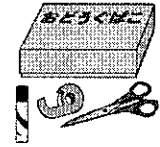

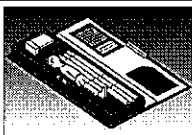
● "RANDOSERU", or bag: a bag which the students put their textbooks and notebooks. They usually shoulder the bag.

● "UWABAKI" (Room Shoes): the shoes which the students wear inside the school.

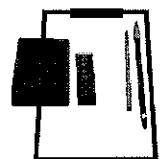


(2) Things to be used at school


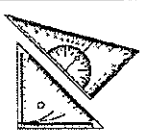


● Necessities

Tool Box		Individual box for scissors, glues.
Pencils and eraser		Pencils are for writing, eraser is for erasing pencil writing.
Pen case		A case for pencils and eraser.





● Japanese Class

Calligraphy Kits		With this, the students practice how to write with writing brush.
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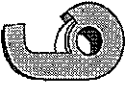
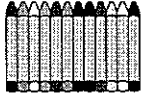
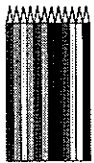
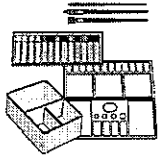

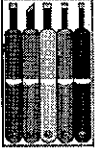
● Arithmetic Class

Ruler		Measuring length, drawing lines.
Triangle		Used for the classes which teach angles and figures.
Compass		Used for drawing a circle.
Protractor		Gauging angles.

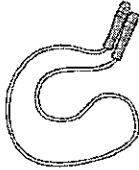




● Music Class

Harmonica		A musical instrument which is played by blowing into it and moving it from side to side. The lower grades students use this.
Castanet		Used for learning rhythms.
Harmonica with keyboard		To learn the row of keyboard, and to practice playing music.
Recorder		Recorder. To practice playing music.



● Arts and Crafts

Scissors		Glues	
Tape		Crayon	
Colored Pencil		Water color, blush, jug.	
Clay		Carving knife	

● Physical Education

Jumping Rope		The ropes for jumping exercise.
Gym Uniform (Summer/ Winter)		The uniform for gymnasium, half-sleeved shirts and half pants for summer, long-sleeved shirts and long pants for winter.
Red and White Cap		For Gymnasium.
TAIKUKAN SHOES		Room shoes for gym.
Swim Wear and Swim Cap		Plastic bag is needed for putting swim wear and towel.

● School Lunch

Chopsticks		Used for eating school lunch or packed lunch.
Tooth Blush and Cup		At some school, the students brush their tooth together after lunch. They bring their own tooth brush and cup.

Guide Book on Preparation for Elementary school

Issued on December 2008 (Heisei 20.)

◆ by Osaka Prefectural Board of Education

◆ “ Support Program for Returnees and Foreign Kids and Parents ”

Hosted by YWCA of Osaka

Osaka municipal office is now encouraging civil activity called "Revitalizing Heart".

The words for the activity is "Praise, Laugh, Reprove"