

Guidelines for Continuous School Operation in Response to COVID-19  
(As of April 1st, 2022)

1. Basic Policy

(1) The Objective

As we are expecting the transition to fight COVID-19 over a long period, schools and other educational institutions shall continue school operation on top making efforts for limiting the risks of COVID-19 and the spread in schools, aiming to maintain securing rights to education of elementary, junior high, and high school students (hereinafter, “students”).

This Guideline specifies basic policies of school operation to fulfill this objective.

(2) The Scope and Period

The scope of this Guideline includes kindergartens, kindergarten and daycare-type centers for early childhood education and care, elementary schools, junior high schools, compulsory education schools, high schools, secondary education schools, special support schools, and upper secondary courses of specialized training colleges. The effective period of this Guideline is the period for which Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters have operated pursuant to the provisions in Article 15, Paragraph 1 of the Act on Special Measures against Novel influenza infectious disease (the Act No. 31 of 2012, hereinafter, the “Special Measures Act”)

2. Policy of Infection Control Measures in Schools

(1) Basic infection control measures

Schools need to take basic infection control measures to wash hands, promote healthy coughing manners, and ventilation as well as thorough measures to avoid 3 Cs (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings) with high risks to spread infection and to maintain physical distancing.

When schools consider how to deal with COVID-19, based on recommendation from the Subcommittee on Novel Coronavirus Disease Control and infection trend of students in local areas, schools should take actions in response to the trend of infections/a stage of the pandemic in each community.

(2) Vaccination for COVID-19

Vaccines for COVID-19 (hereinafter, “COVID-19 vaccines”) are expected to prevent the onset of COVID-19. Schools shall make efforts to prepare for vaccination against COVID-19 for school personnels and students who wish to be immunized.

3. Measures When COVID-19 Cases Occur in Schools and Actions for Attendance by Students

(1) Cooperation with public health management bureau of the local government

When schools find a COVID-19 positive case among the students and/or school personnels, the schools, in which the competent public health center and/or related authority conduct an active epidemiological investigation, shall cooperate with the responsible public health management bureau for case investigation and contact tracing.

## (2) Dealing with suspended attendance

### [1] Cases in which schools should take measures suspending attendance of infected students/students with close contacts

If schools find COVID-19 transmission among the students and/or identify students' close contacts, schools must take measures suspending attendance of such students pursuant to the provisions of Article 19 in the School Health Act (Act No. 56 of 1958). Even unless determining such students as close contacts, schools should take measures with suspended attendance against the students not-wearing masks during direct communication or having meals with others under poor infection control among novel coronavirus-exposed students in schools (during transmission period of infected people).

In addition, schools can suspend attendance of students with symptoms including fever and/or cough as COVID-19 control measures pursuant to the same Article of the School Health Act. Schools in COVID-19 pandemic areas can also suspend attendance of students with whom any family members living together have symptoms including fever even if the symptoms are not diagnosed as COVID-19. (Refer to 6 (1) for actions against COVID-19 (suspected/exposed) cases of school personnel)

For students whose attendance are suspended due to infection control measures, schools shall also consider about necessary measures specified in 5 (1) to avoid markedly delaying their learning because of participating in classes for shorter hours.

### [2] Cases in which students are not regarded as “be absent” other than above

For students whose parents or guardians tell to get their children absent from school due to concerns about infection, their school principals judge their day-offs acceptable based on their reasonable grounds under following circumstances: in their resident areas COVID-19 patients with the unknown transmission routes are drastically increasing and the students have elderly members or members with underlying diseases in their co-resident family; and they have no choice but taking day-offs unavoidably to prevent infection. In such cases their schools can respond flexibly by counting and recording their off-days as “days of suspended attendance or absence from school due to mourning” in their cumulative guidance records instead of counting as absent days (for kindergartens, such description should be added in remarks columns of records). When their school principals and teachers judge cases and respond such students, it is important to look after them with due care and attention to maintain students learning based on compulsory school attendance of elementary and junior high school students.

For students requiring medical care in their daily lives and those with underlying diseases, refer to (3).

For students who have returned to/reentered Japan from overseas, they need to isolate from others at their home for a certain period as border control measures provided by the Japanese government. Such students can attend their schools after their schools confirm that they have completed their isolation period and have no health problems.

## (3) Students requiring medical care and those with underlying diseases

For students requiring medical care in their daily lives (hereinafter, “students requiring medical care”) and those with underlying diseases, their schools should ask their parents or guardians about

their doctor's findings to judge if the students are allowed to attend the school. If the schools judge their attendance is unacceptable, the schools can deal with their day-offs as "days when the school principals allow them to be absent from the school due to reasons unattributed to the students nor their parents or guardians under an emergency disaster." In addition, the schools shall count and record their off-days as "days of suspended attendance or absence from school due to bereavement" in their cumulative guidance records instead of regarding as absent days (for kindergartens, such description should be added in remarks columns of records).

When students requiring medical care are allowed to attend the school, teachers need to consult school doctors beforehand about support systems to accept such students.

Special support schools shall take appropriate actions for students with physical or mental problems/disabilities, taking into account of their problems or severity of disabilities and teachers' unavoidable contacts with the students because teachers in such schools should have close contacts with the students when giving instructions or when supporting their coming all together by school buses.

#### 4. Policy of Temporary School Closures

##### (1) When COVID-19 transmission is detected in students and/or school personnel

If COVID-19 transmission is detected in students and/or school personnel, the school principal will suspend attendances of COVID-19 infected students/school personnel and those with close contacts (i.e., such school personnel are not allowed to come as a prevention control measure), in addition that, the owner of the school shall judge whether the whole or part of school should be closed based on investigations by the responsible public health center and recommendation from the school doctor. At temporary school closure, the school should take flexible measures within necessary extent and period, closing firstly classes to which COVID-19 infected students/teachers belong while paying attention to maintain students learning.

##### (2) Response to local COVID-19 transmission trend

###### [1] Continuing schooling activities

Even if a prefecture government needs to elevate their alert levels against COVID-19 in response to the trend of regional COVID-19 transmission, the prefecture government and the superintendent of the prefecture board of education should take account into comprehensive regional school closure carefully from the perspective of securing children's healthy learning and impacts on not only their physical and mental condition but also the employment of their parents or guardians.

Upon considering temporary school closure, before making a decision of a complete closure, schools should make efforts to maintain students' learning opportunities on the basis of students' growth development levels by positively using various potential methods including staggered school hours and staggered attendance (school attendance by dividing students into multiple small groups to have them come to their schools to study at and on group-specific time and days) and adopting remote learning.

Moreover, under the circumstances that the spread of COVID-19 among school personnel leads to teacher shortage, a lead teacher and/or a vice-principal shall make up for insufficient resources to keep students' learning. In particular, if heavy teacher shortage results in difficulty in conducting classes due to COVID-19 transmission, the school shall adopt a temporary teacher to allocate

necessary human resources for the time in cooperation with the local board of education.

[2] The certain areas/regions under the state of emergency declared by Japanese government

Once Japanese government declares a state of emergency, prefecture governors may pose restriction or request a halt to use school facilities pursuant to Article 45, Paragraph 2 of the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response, or prefecture governors or mayors may request each board of education to take necessary measures pursuant to Article 24, Paragraph 7 and Article 36, Paragraph 6 of the same Act. In either case, school owners shall comprehend the pandemic trend of COVID-19 in students' resident areas to judge the necessity of temporary school closure while taking account into securing students' learning in accordance with [1] and based on adequate discussion between the boards of education and the heads of local governments.

(3) Precautions for temporary school closure

Schools shall pay attention to following points in the cases of temporary school closure due to the spread in schools of COVID-19 or in response to regional COVID-19 transmission trend.

[1] Continuing schooling activities

Upon temporary school closure, schools shall also consider about necessary measures specified in 5 (1) to avoid markedly delaying their learning because of participating in classes for shorter hours.

If the period of temporary school closure becomes longer, it is important for schools to continue schooling activities while reducing risks of COVID-19 as much as possible by positively adopting available ways such as setting optional school days in accordance with the local trend of COVID-19 transmission including the regions under the state of emergency and other methods depending on students' growth development; for example, staggered school hours or staggered attendance and remote learning.

For adopting staggered attendance, schools can opt for various patterns, such as setting up grade-specific, class-specific, or group- (consisting multiple classes) specific time frames specifying time and days for attending the school.

In addition, upon temporary school closure, schools are allowed to execute flexible measures like accepting school coming of only particular students such as those requiring special attention, final graders needing direct academic consultation and first graders in elementary schools requiring teachers' direct assistance for learning. Similarly, if a same school owner has multiple schools, the owner can adopt measures for each school individually on the basis of each social economy and features of schools and/or regions.

[2] Comprehending physical and mental health of students

Upon complete closing of a school, teachers, especially those in charge of classrooms must regularly follow up on the physical and mental health of students during the period of the school closure through having close communication with students staying at home due to the school closure and their parents or guardians on the phone or other ways. When teachers communicate with their parents or guardians on the phone, teachers should talk with students to assess their conditions properly. Moreover, schools shall prepare and operate a support system (including remote-

counseling depending on students' growth development) by a nurse-teacher or a school counselor so that students can consult about various concerns and stress as needed, as well as informing counseling service center (e.g., "24-hour children's SOS hotline" or consultation center opened by each local government) to take care of students' mental health. Schools must pay attention to, particularly, students registered as children requiring assistance by regional councils of countermeasures for children requiring aid since such students must stay at home longer hours due to temporary school closure, resulting in that potential risks of child abuse may be greatly increased. Accordingly, periodical remote contacts are necessary to follow up such students. In addition, schools should support such students with school social workers in close cooperate with relevant organizations including local child consultation centers.

Even while a school is temporarily closing or adopting a staggered attendance system, teachers can provide instructions to students on the face-to-face basis (including following up students' physical and mental health and taking care of their mental health) under proper infection control measures for minimal short hours as needed.

As described in [1], schools can set school days properly depending on the local COVID-19 transmission trend; however, schools should deal with special cases, such as some students requiring special attention due to risks of abuses are allowed to come to school upon considering about their health conditions even on days other than school days.

### [3] Securing places where children stay

Upon temporary school closure, schools should gain cooperation from students' parents or guardians to ask them to take offs; meanwhile, schools need to judge carefully whether or not to take actions to keep places where children stay, considering COVID-19 transmission risks among students based on the purpose of the temporary school closure. In particular, even when schools temporarily close under circumstances described in 4 (2) [1], for students whose parents or guardians are medical providers, schools should think about how to maintain places where the students are staying based on the purpose of requested temporary school closure after thorough discussion with prefecture head bureaus.

Some students who may attend the school by staggered attendance have childhood siblings and younger siblings in lower classes. When schools decide on partial closures, schools have to assume that such siblings may stay at home alone and discuss with responsible bureaus to make safe places for children in the communities.

On top of that, when schools try to have enough manpower resources and use school facilities to maintain places for children to stay, schools shall take actions, referring to some examples showing measures while all schools close temporarily across the region as described in "Securing Places for Children to Stay by Using After-school Children's Club Associated with Temporal Elementary School Closures due to COVID-19 Prevention Control Measures (Request)" (Joint Notification dated March 2nd 2020, issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and other Director-generals). At that time, following points should be considered.

#### - Using school facilities

Allocating specific spaces are necessary to avoid a congested area and prevent COVID-19 transmission due to higher needs to after-school children's club, after-school day care may arise

from temporary school closure, in comparison to those in usual daily lives.

Accordingly, if classrooms, school libraries, gymnasiums, schoolyards, etc. are available, we promote the use of school facilities in a positive manner without any special procedures for transient utilizing the facilities prepared with public subsidies because this usage does not apply to disposition of property.

If after-school day care providers use school facilities to provide their services during temporary school closure, the providers are allowed to claim payment; hence, we promote the active use of school facilities such as classrooms, libraries, gymnasiums, schoolyards, etc.

- Utilizing a school lunch system

For securing places where children stay, there are some options such as making use of school lunch functions involving kitchens for school lunch and school cafeteria cooks to supply lunch to students. Schools should adopt proper measures in response to the actual situation and the needs in their communities.

- Providing daycare services while kindergartens are temporarily closed.

Kindergartens are necessary for preschool children who cannot stay alone at home. While kindergartens are temporarily closed, owners of kindergartens must take actions based on infection control measures to provide places for kids to stay by scaling down nursery services in order to avoid causing circumstances that people requiring childcare service might lose opportunities to access the service. We have to take active measures for following children and their parents or guardians: children who are eligible for free of daycare in a new system for child and childcare support or free preschool education and childcare service; parents or guardians who are medical providers or need to work to ensure continuity of social functions; and children from single-parent families need to use daycare service due to failing to take day-offs.

Upon taking actions to provide spaces for such children to stay, there are options such as providing lunch. We shall select appropriate measures responding to the actual situation and the needs in their communities.

[4] Securing working environments of part-time school personnel

Upon temporary school closure, in response to the actual situation in each community and school, schools should secure working environment of all of school workers including part-time school personnel as well as making thorough preparation to keep an operation system as a whole. For example, even on days without lessons, not only teachers but also school personnel may work as follows; a part-time teacher may prepare for class activities or support student's home learning; a school care taker could repair school facilities; a school cafeteria cook would clean and disinfect kitchen equipment/facilities; a dormitory personnel may clean and disinfect dormitory facilities and work for operation of the dormitory; an education assistant in a special support school would help to prepare teaching materials; and an assistant language teacher (ALT) can offer support in preparation of classes and students' home learning. On the assumption that other workers including school personnel allocated in a subsidy program may also conduct operation for schools even during temporary school closure, each board of education should take appropriate measures, considering employment patterns and school operation for such part-time school personnel and aid objectives of a subsidy program for personnel allocated in the program.

Basically, school personnel would work on their originally allocated jobs or similar ones as mentioned above; however, according to circumstances, schools would take flexible measures, as schools might ask them to change job duties and/or scope of work and have them carry out those jobs after gaining their consent.

If schools have school personnel take day-offs unavoidably, schools must judge leave payment allowance flexibly.

[5] Dealing with attendance to/absence from school on school days involving staggered attendance  
- When a school is completely closed

When schools set up optional school attendance days under complete school closure, schools shall not count those days as “the number of school days” in cumulative guidance records (the number of nursery days for kindergartens, the same shall apply hereinafter)

- When a school is partially closed

For school attendance days counted as school days under partial school closure, attendance/absence of students should be dealt with as follows in accordance with policy specified in Appendix of “Improving learning assessment and cumulative guidance records of students in elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and special support schools” (Notification dated March 29th 2019 issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau):

- If all classes in a same grade are closed, avoid counting those days as school days
- If some classes in a same grade are closed, count those days as school days, record attendance/absence for students having lessons and “days of suspended attendance and absence from school due to mourning” for students having no lessons (for kindergartens, describe the fact in remarks columns). Provided that the same shall not apply to students who cannot come to school unavoidably as specified in 3 (2) and (3) of this Guideline, schools have to consider necessary measures when recording attendance/absence.

## 5. Tutoring guidance etc.

### (1) Tutoring

[1] Tutoring by using information and communication technology (hereinafter, ICT) for students who cannot attend the school unavoidably

- Basic policy

For students who cannot attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure or suspended attendance, important points are not only to avoid markedly delaying their learning but also to maintain well-regulated lives and continuous relationship between schools and such students.

Schools, thereby, should take necessary measures depending on COVID-19 transmission trend, considering circumstances of the communities, school, and students. In particular, if students cannot attend the schools unavoidably for a certain period, schools should take actions using ICT to have connection between teachers and such students staying at home without causing differences among students’ communities so that teachers can constantly communicate with students and promote their learning. For example, such students can take ICT terminals to their residence; they can join online morning class meeting and have interaction with classroom teachers through follow-up interviews; they can learn and carry out their assignment provided by their teachers via ICT terminals at home;

and they can follow classes at home via an interactive communication web system.

For tutoring using ICT terminals, refer to “Active Using Devices as One Device per One Student Prepared under the Global and Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) School Program” Notification No. 1962/2020 dated March 12th 2021 issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau

- Precautions needed for tutoring

When teachers tutor students, teachers must give lessons to students based on curriculum formulation and trace student’s learning progress. In details, it is important for teachers to offer help to the students with their studies in response to COVID-19 transmission trend in the communities or school and students’ condition by using textbooks, that is a primary education material, combining textbooks and other devices (e.g., digital devices or non-digital teaching materials, on-demand videos, TV programs, etc.), and using an ICT system. At that time, digital textbooks for students or digital education materials, combination of such tools will be available to teach lessons. Teachers should thoroughly monitor students’ learning progress and their achievements through meeting on school attendance days, carrying out student’s home visits, calling, and/or sending e-mails.

Teachers should pay attention to provide them at appropriate quality and quantity in response to students’ growth development and learning progress while handing assignments to students via digital devices. When providing assignments, teachers shall figure out appropriate ways for students to study at their home along their learning plans, referring to “Study plan” in Appendix of “Maintaining students learning during temporary school closure due to COVID-19 infection control measures in elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools” (Notification dated April 21st 2020 issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology updates education materials for home learning aids to students in “Children Learning Support Website” as one of support programs. Education providers can use the website.

For students requiring special attention for family reasons, schools need to take special measures to prepare ICT environment, encourage them to use local study support systems, or have them attend the school as special cases.

Special support schools shall arrange individual curriculum formulation and review it in response to disabilities, characters, and physical and mental development levels of students, fully taking school situation such as temporary school closure into consideration. In addition, when providing home learning plans and supplying education materials, special support schools need to think about better ways of home learning for not only students but also parents or guardians whose cooperation are required for student’s learning as needed and show clearly what to pay attention to.

Each kindergarten should consider possible activities and activity styles including education support in family and communities as well as providing education based on conditions of children in each kindergarten and regional/family situation. At that time, refer to “Examples of actions in kindergartens against COVID-19” posted in “Children Learning Support Website” and address on supporting early childhood education for children staying at home and children’s parents or guardians.

(Reference) Children Learning Support Website 【in Japanese】

[https://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/ikusei/gakusyushien/index\\_00001.htm](https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/ikusei/gakusyushien/index_00001.htm)



With regard to support funds for communication expenses related home learning by ICT systems for students from lower-income household, Japanese government subsidizes on communication expenses (equivalent amount) in support programs such as tuition support (subsidy to support students whose guardians are in need of welfare assistance), subsidies on tuition of special support education (for families are in need of welfare assistance), and high school supplemental scholarship fund. We shall make such support programs widely known and encourage people requiring aids to use those programs.

From viewpoints of handling copyrights related to utilizing productions in remote lessons by ICT, if an owner of an education institution pays compensation to a designated management association, school providers of the institution can use various products within proper extent in the process of lessons, in principle, without the authorization of the copyright owner on applicable products pursuant to “The Compensation System for Public Transmission for Educational Purposes” established by the amended Copyright Act in 2018. (For details about the amount of compensation fee, refer to Regulations on Compensation for Public Transmission for Educational Purposes posted in a following website of the designated management association “Society for the Administration of Remuneration for Public Transmission for School Lessons (SARTRAS)”

(Reference) SARTRAS Documents related to license 【in Japanese】  
<https://sartras.or.jp/ninka/>

- Handling home learning of students who cannot attend the school unavoidably

If teachers give lessons and tutoring to students who cannot attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure or suspended attendance instructions amid emergency involving infections including COVID-19 or disasters based on curriculum formulation, the teachers must monitor the progress and situation on the daily basis to make use of updated information for improving students’ studying and teachers’ tutoring. Teachers can apply conditions of learning and the achievement to learning assessment in the school.

If teachers give lessons to students who cannot attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure or suspended attendance instructions amid an emergency involving infections including COVID-19 or disasters, as a result of verifying that those lessons and tutoring met following requirements and assessing conditions for learning and the achievement in those students, when a principal judges that students have acquired what they had learned and do not need to learn again, teachers need not give same lessons on a face-to-face basis again in the school.

<Requirements>

- The tutoring is validated as proper schooling based on curriculum formulation of applicable subjects.
- Teachers can assess students’ conditions for learning and the achievement appropriately.

In this case, even if a teacher decides not to give same lessons again based on conditions for learning and the achievement in the whole classes, once the teacher finds that some of students have acquired the lessons insufficiently, the teacher should take necessary countermeasures such as tutoring those students individually through supplementary courses.

- Handling on cumulative guidance records

If a principal approved that teachers gave lessons using online tools (special classes using online systems) to students who could not attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure or suspended attendance instructions amid an emergency involving infections including COVID-19 or disasters, school should have teachers prepare records of special classes using online systems in an emergency in the unit of grade as an attachment of “records related to tutoring” in cumulative guidance records in accordance with “Tutoring to students who cannot attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure or suspended attendance instructions amid an emergency involving infections or disasters” (Notification No. 1733/2020 dated February 19th 2021 issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

- Tutoring using interactive online system
- Classes using a web-based system enabling students to receive and submit their assignment online and involving remotely tutoring by teacher through question and answer or discussion among students (including lessons in combination with on demand videos)

When teaching such classes, teachers shall write the days of attending special online lessons in “remarks” of “attendance/absence records” in cumulative guidance record in accordance to “Handling description in “attendance/absence records” of cumulative guidance records in elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and special support schools” (Notification No. 1152/2021 dated October 1st 2021 issued by Director-general of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology).

[2] Measures after school reopening

At the point of time when students can come to school, schools shall take suitable steps in response to students’ conditions such as arranging supplementary lessons within the extent of curriculum or further education which is not included in curriculum as much as possible, after confirming acquisition of learning during temporary school closure.

Schools can enhance education environment through following actions as needed: arranging class timetables by shortening school hours to 40 or 45 minutes/session while increasing the number of classes; rescheduling vacation period; using Saturday for school days; choosing school events with high priorities; and reducing preparation for lessons.

At that time, schools should make efforts to reduce burdens on not only students but school personnel. Even If actual school hours on the curriculum arranged due to temporary school closure for COVID-19 control measures are less than the standards specified in Enforcement Regulations of School Education Law, it shall not be violation of the Regulation for Enforcement. Also, for high schools and special support schools, even If credit hours on the curriculum arranged due to temporary school closure for COVID-19 control measures are less than standards (calculating a class of 35 credit hours as one credit unit) specified in the official guidelines for school teaching, schools would respond it flexibly, and can certify acquisition of credit units. If COVID-19 impacts cause the situation where schools cannot complete all lessons based on curriculum which was scheduled at the beginning of the fiscal year during that school year while schools have worked on various actions to enhance schooling, we may consider the situation as a special case and execute

following actions; for example, in order to make lessons specified by the official guidelines for school teaching effective for students, by providing some individually practicable education activities using ICT outside of class settings, schools shall put priority on these training and lessons in education activities to be performed in school, such as classes to enhance student’s knowledge through communication/interactions between teachers and students or among students which lead to motivation for learning, teamwork lessons, and practical trainings available only in the school.

Kindergartens should take flexible actions so that children gain experiences necessary for their growth development based on children’s family circumstances during temporary closing. At that time, refer to “Examples of actions after kindergarten reopening” posted in “Children Learning Support Website” as needed.

(Reference) Children Learning Support Website “Early Childhood Education” webpage  
【in Japanese】

[https://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/ikusei/gakusyushien/mext\\_00456.html](https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/ikusei/gakusyushien/mext_00456.html)

[3] Completion of courses in each student year and authorization for graduation

For students who cannot attend the school unavoidably due to temporary school closure, schools must take flexible measures on completion of courses in each student year or authorization to graduate to avoid loss of their benefit on moving up to a higher grade or entering a higher-level school.

(2) Using school libraries

School libraries are required to work on services so that students can use or borrow books in predetermined time to use the facility under thorough infection control measures. In particular, if students must attend the school during various time slots under a staggered attendance system, school libraries may be used for self-learning spaces.

(3) Providing school lunch

School owners are responsible for thorough hygiene and sanitation management on cooking and food distribution in compliance with “School Lunch Hygiene and Sanitation Management Standards.” Teachers will instruct students to wash hands well before and after eating and to prevent from sit facing each other or to eat in silence in order to avoid spreading droplets at lunch.

School owners shall have full discussion with related service providers for halting school lunch due to temporary school closure and make efforts to get their understanding and cooperation.

(4) Club activities

Schools shall plan practical club activities and methods to allow students enjoy them, prioritizing students’ health and safety depending on local COVID-19 transmission trend.

Provided that schools must impose restraints on club activities during temporary complete school closure.

(5) Managing tutoring systems

When taking special measures, schools should have enough manpower resources on the

assumption that irregular tasks may arise from the measures; for example, if dividing students of one class into two groups or giving lessons on Saturday, teachers may need to give lessons to students on the face-to-face basis and support their home learning as well as overseeing students' behavior at lunch. To respond such irregular tasks, schools should review tasks and roles of school personnel to appropriately allocate working days and hours. In addition, schools must pay attention to avoid overload on school personnel through using advisors on lifelong learning and inter-generational relations or school support staff in order to manage tutoring systems to provide meticulous academic guidance while keeping safe physical distancing.

## 6. Other items

### (1) Service of school personnel

Public schools should appropriately deal with service of school personnel pursuant to applicable municipal ordinances for following cases: schools may have school staff take sick leave if a school personnel contracts COVID-19 or special leave if a school personnel is allowed not to work unavoidably due to fever or cough, or schools might suspend attendance to minimize potential risks of spreading infection attributed to the attendance of the personnel while accepting remote-work or waiver of the duty to concentrate on his/her job if he/she is a close contact. Schools should adopt suspended attendance of school personnel, presupposing measures including remote works and waiver of the duty to concentrate on his/her job

If schools arrange school days or provide lessons on Saturday when it is a school holiday, school should give school personnel who work on such days replacement day-offs pursuant to applicable municipal ordinances.

On temporary closing of a complete or partial school, the school must adopt flexible working patterns as much as possible such as a remote working style or staggered working hours for school personnel and coming to school by rotation in school personnel including executives in order to ensure their own health; in contrast, schools should continue to work for necessary tasks with following up students' home learning and mental health in cooperation with their parents or guardians.

Besides, from viewpoints that teachers have to execute infection control measures at education settings and directly support students' mental health, which results in much mental stress on them, consequently school executives and owners should also pay close attention to mental health of teachers.

### (2) Measures related to tuition fee and tuition support

School owners should properly stipulate how to deal with payment including tuition fee during temporary school closure under own authority and responsibilities and run schools along the rules; that is, the rules have specified fees necessary for education activities in a school in general. Even if students cannot attend the school temporarily for a certain period, as long as schools play their roles as education providers to maintain students learning, school owners do not always need to reimburse students for school tuition during the closing period.

As for tuition support fund and the certification as well as financial aid related to school supplies, prefecture governments shall take flexible actions such as extending an application period as much as possible and should follow through certification procedures immediately once they receive

applications from students/families requiring to be certified for financial supports amid a school year because of sudden income losses caused by COVID-19 so that the applicants can receive financial supports.

For public high schools or special support schools, some students may have their fund sponsors who fail to pay their students' education expenses including admission fees and tuition fee because a change in their circumstances took place due to COVID-19 impacts; accordingly, each board of education should respond to them based on systems under which each local government exempts/reduces admission fees or grants a moratorium. For private schools, the competent sections for private schools in prefecture governments are required to call for private school owners/corporations to respond to above-mentioned case by exempting/reducing school expenses or granting postponement of the payment. The main sections are also needed to support appropriately to private schools to exempt/reduce school expenses.

Prefecture governments are required to respond flexibly to such students depending on each school and students' circumstances by extending application period or setting multiple application terms for High School Tuition Support Fund and High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund. Cases in which students and their parents or guardians delay submission of necessary documents for High School Tuition Support Fund due to COVID-19 matters, such cases should be handled as those with any "unavoidable reasons" in Article 6, Paragraph 3 of the Act on Paying High School Tuition Support Fund Program (Act No. 18 of 2010); the same shall apply for tuition support to other students like High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund (tuition support to other students should be limited to cases payable in the applicable school year).

For the purpose of supporting high school students with sudden income losses caused by COVID-19 amid a school year, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has established subsidy programs; High School Tuition Support Fund Program for those going to public high schools (funding each family with sudden income losses) and Fund Program of Subsidy to Private High Schools for Current Expenditures for those going to private high schools as a necessary reduction and exemption measure for tuition fees. Moreover, we improved procedures for High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund in FY 2020 so that families with sudden income losses can receive scholarship and get some fund payment earlier. We do hope that these funding programs will help such students and families. We will respond to students and their parents or guardians thoroughly through widely providing information on each program/system and contact information related to tuition support for above-mentioned high school students.

Each local government shall take flexible measures as soon as possible for students requiring scholarship provided by each municipality.

Local governments are required to follow through procedures at any time for the application from families with income losses amid a school year so that such families can receive fund payment as quickly as possible or are granted for reduction and exemption of tuition fees.

Also, aiming to support final graders of high school to prevent them from giving up their further schooling due to financial reasons, we will widely provide information on new High School Tuition Support Fund System (benefit-type scholarship and tuition fee reduction and exemption) and student loan (interest-free/interest-bearing) provided by Japan Student Services Organization, as well as financial support programs available for them to go to universities/colleges.

If schools reduce expenses to be paid in exchange for services related to school buses, air-conditioning, or dormitories because of temporary school closure, schools may need to offset actual

expenses by related pre-pay fees in following manners; canceling to collect related expenses after reopening schools in the case that schools have collected such fees every month/quarter/school term beforehand, or refunding extra amounts for annual pre-pay fees at the proper timing after reopening schools.

(3) Following up students' physical and mental health and mental care

School personnel must strive for students as one team logistically under leaderships of school executives in following steps; providing information on hotlines for stress, bullying, and prejudice attributed to COVID-19 ("24-hour children's SOS hotline" or consultation center opened by each local government) as needed; sufficiently following up students' conditions through careful health monitoring and stress assessments made mainly by teachers in charge of classes or nurse-teachers, health counseling, and supporting by school counselors and school social works from both mental and welfare aspects.

(4) Response to prejudice and discrimination against individuals infected by COVID-19

All of us are oppose to any actions leading to prejudice and discrimination against COVID-19 patients, close contacts and their family members, medical health providers responding/treating COVID-19, essential workers and their families, and individuals non-immunized/immunized with COVID-19 vaccine. We combat to prevent students from practicing such prejudice and discrimination through instructions in response to growth development based on proper knowledge of COVID-19.

(5) Ensuring safety in schools

[1] Preventing Heat-related illness accidents

If local governments or schools make up for school hours by shortening summer holidays or having students come to school in summer holidays, schools should pay close attention to students' health during summer. Local governments and schools, thereby, must fully prepare for environment and facilities with access to drinking water properly, well air-conditioning, and much care for weather conditions to use holidays to make up for school hours.

[2] Ensuring security while traveling to and from school.

For ensuring security when students travel to and from school, each school should take actions such as providing safety instruction based on traffic safety and crime prevention and having local watch programs in cooperation with the community

In particular, at the time of staggered attendance as an infection control measure, schools must pay close attention to ensuring students' safety, assuming that a student may travel alone to and from school.

For strengthening security when students travel to and from school, many individuals, such as those belonging to the boards of education, schools, local police, traffic or security sections of local government, PTA, parents or guardians, and local community volunteers need to cooperate with each other. Also, neighborhood watches like school guard leaders may be helpful. Schools need to pay close attention to ensure safety for students, especially, first graders of elementary school because they are unexperienced in commuting to the school.

(6) Using classrooms for after-school children's club

After-school children's clubs need to maintain enough spaces to avoid a congested area and prevent COVID-19 transmission, the board of education and a social welfare bureau shall fully cooperate each other to encourage the use of school facilities if classrooms, school libraries, gymnasiums, schoolyards, etc. are available.

(7) COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools

In addition to information specified in this Guideline, we describe detail continuous school operation in response to COVID-19 separately in COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools and other practices.