

Chapter 7 Education



Saitama's Prefectural Mascot
Kobaton

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The Japanese education system consists of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior high school, 3 years of senior high school, and 4 years of university. Children usually begin elementary school at the age of 6, junior high at 12, senior high at 15 and university when they are 18. In addition to 4-year universities, there are 2-year junior colleges and various technical schools.

The first 9 years of education (elementary and junior high school) are compulsory. Foreign national children are exempt from this obligation; however, those who desire to attend may do so.

The academic year begins in April and finishes at the end of March the following year. Most schools have 3 semesters: 1st – April to August; 2nd – September to December; and 3rd – January to March. However some high schools just have 2 semesters: the 1st – April to September; and 2nd – October to March. All classes are conducted in Japanese.

Many parents send their children to kindergarten or nursery school before they enter elementary school.

The Japanese Education System

1 Kindergarten

Kindergartens help prepare children from ages 3 to 5 for elementary school (target age group may vary for each institution). Though most Japanese children attend kindergarten, it is not compulsory. It is standard for kindergartens to operate for 4 hours a day. Although kindergarten begins in April each year, you must apply by a specified date in the previous academic year. Fees apply for both public and private kindergartens.

As the fees charged, procedures for enrolling a child in kindergarten, and target age group differ between institutions, please contact the Municipal Board of Education in your area regarding public kindergartens, and contact individual kindergartens directly regarding private institutions within the prefecture.

You can search for kindergartens in Saitama Prefecture at the site below.

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0204/shiritsuitiran/youchienichiran.html> (Saitama Prefectural Government Private School Affairs Division website)

For *nintei kodomo-en* (authorized childcare facilities for children aged 0-5), see Chapter 5.4: Nurseries and *Nintei Kodomo-en*.

2 Elementary and Junior High School

If you would like to enroll your child in a municipal elementary or junior high school in Saitama, you need to go to the Board of Education at your local municipal or ward office, present your child's Resident Record, and complete the application forms. The Board of Education will notify you which school your child should attend.

(1) Elementary School

Children must be 6 years old as of April 1 when they enter elementary school. Enrollment for first graders is conducted around September of the previous year. If your child's enrollment is accepted, a "Notification of Admission" (*shugaku tsuchisho*) will be sent to you in January.

For children with disabilities, there are special needs classes available at standard schools as well as dedicated special needs schools.

(2) Junior High School

First grade students must be 12 years of age as of April 1 when they enter junior high school. In January each year, a "Notification of Junior High School Admission" (*chugakko*)

shugaku tsuchisho) is sent to children who are scheduled to graduate from elementary school that same year.

Almost all junior high schools require students to wear school uniforms. For information on where to buy your child's uniform, contact the school directly.

For children with disabilities, there are special needs classes available at standard schools as well as dedicated special needs schools.

(3) Midway Entrance (Transfer)

If your child has studied at an elementary or junior high school overseas and you want them to continue their studies at an elementary or junior high school in Saitama, convey this to the board of education of your local municipal or ward office (for residents of Saitama City) after completing resident registration procedures.

(4) Changing Schools

If your school zone changes as a result of moving, your child will have to change schools.

Before you move, please ask your child's current school for a school certificate and textbook lists. When you submit your notice of moving out at your current municipal or ward office, be sure to report that your child attends elementary or junior high school. After you move, you should report to the new municipal that your child is of elementary or junior high school age to your new municipal or ward office. Please also submit a school certificate and textbook list to your child's new school.

If you will be leaving Japan permanently, please also notify the school before leaving.

(5) Tuition Fees and Costs

Students of municipal elementary and junior high schools in Saitama are not charged for enrollment, tuition, and textbook fees. However, the student's guardians must pay for other study materials and meals provided by the school. To pay these fees, most guardians set-up an account at a bank specified by the school from which expenses are automatically deducted.

(6) PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations)

The objective of PTAs is to ensure the sound growth of children. As part of a PTA, parents and teachers cooperate to undertake activities necessary for children's social education outside of school. It's also a place where parents and teachers can increase their own understanding of children's education both in school and at home. While participation is optional, at most elementary and junior high schools, parents join PTAs when they enroll their children. Joining procedures and fees differ from school to school, so please contact

your child's school directly for more information.

(7) After School Children's Club (Schoolchild Care)

After school care is available for elementary school students whose parents are unable to take care of them after school because of work commitments, etc. Since the cost of this service and the application procedures differs from location to location, please contact the Child Welfare Division of your local municipal or ward office for further information.

(8) Education for Children Who Do Not Speak Japanese

Japanese language teaching staff is available at some schools that have many students who do not speak Japanese. Also, the Saitama Prefectural Government has provided information useful for school life and daily life, which can be accessed via the following website: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2214/kikokugaikokujinsapoutojigyoku240120.html>

(9) Guidebook for Starting School for Non-Japanese Parents and Guardians

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has written a "Guidebook for Starting School" oriented toward non-Japanese parents and guardians, which explains the procedures for entering Japanese schools in a number of languages. It can be viewed from the following URLs:

English: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/06/24/1358299_01.pdf

Chinese: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/01/1358299_05_1.pdf

Korean: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/01/1358299_02_1.pdf

Portuguese: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/19/1358299_06_1.pdf

Spanish: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/01/1358299_07.pdf

Vietnamese: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/01/1358299_03.pdf

Filipino: http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/06/19/1358299_04_1.pdf

3 Senior High School

Senior high school education is not compulsory in Japan. There are 4 different types of senior high schools in Saitama: national, prefectural, municipal and private. These schools can be further divided into ones that offer a standard curriculum such as English, Mathematics, Japanese, Science, and Social Studies, and others that specialize in fields such as Commerce, Industry or Agriculture for occupation-specific study. Some schools are beginning to offer a new subject called integrated studies as part of their curriculum to encourage students to think about their future path. Students can also learn various method

of studying full-time from morning, part-time*, or by correspondence*.

* Some students work while studying part-time or via correspondence. Part-time students usually attend night classes, and a feature of the correspondence course is that students attend class on designated school days, for example, 3 times a month, and otherwise study at home and submit their work to the school. There are also part-time high schools which offer classes during the daytime and evening.

For more information, see the “Part-time and Correspondence High School” section on the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education website:

URL: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2208/tei-tuu-sienninn.html>

(1) Entrance Examinations

To be eligible to take entrance exams, you must have graduated or expect to graduate from a Japanese junior high school or an equivalent thereof. Alternatively, if you have completed at least 9 years of formal education overseas, you may take this exam after completing procedures for obtaining a certificate that demonstrates your eligibility to apply to high school.

High school entrance examinations and classes are conducted in Japanese.

Public high schools in Saitama administer standard entrance examinations on a pre-determined day. National and private schools differ in regards to their entrance examination schedule and admission requirements. Please contact the school you wish to attend for further details. For information on entering a public high school, contact the junior high school you currently attend.

Q&A on prefectural high school entrance examinations (on the website of the High School Education Management Division, Saitama Education Bureau).

Japanese: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2208/r2nyuushiga.html>

English: <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2208/r2englishfaq1.html>

(2) Tuition Fees and Costs

The parent or guardian is responsible for admission and tuition fees as well as the cost of textbooks and other study materials.

At public prefectural high schools, financial aid based on income and scholarship allowances are available. Admission fees also may be exempted depending on income.

Tuition and costs for private high schools vary, and students at private high schools may be eligible to receive financial aid or scholarship allowances depending on income level. Furthermore, in the event a student enrolls in a private high school located within Saitama Prefecture, enrolment, classroom instruction, and other costs may also be reduced based upon income level and other factors.

The parent or guardian may also be required to pay into a fund for costs such as school

trips and excursions and pay PTA membership fees. These fees are different for every school. For further information, please contact the school directly.

(3) Changing Schools

After entering a prefectural high school, if a family moves to another district, the student may request to not change schools. In this case, s/he can continue to attend their current school.

However, if you would like to change to a school closer to your new address, you will be required to take a transfer entrance examination. In this case, first consult with the high school you are now attending.

(4) Special Selection of International Students

Special admission procedures are in place for those who came to Japan recently. These differ from the usual entrance examination procedures, so please consult with the schools which practice the special admission procedures.

Starting from the 2020 school year (April 2020), 12 schools will offer this special selection to non-Japanese students. These schools are Iwatsuki High School, Soka Minami High School, Nanryo High School, Fukaya Dai'ichi High School, Wako Kokusai High School, Warabi High School, Kawaguchi Higashi High School, Kawagoe Nishi High School, Kurihashi Hokusai High School, Menuma High School, .Niiza yanase High School and Misato Kita High School.



Consultation and Inquiries

Office	Telephone	Hours
For inquiries about the special selection of international students, contact the High School Education Management Division of the Saitama Prefectural Education Bureau.	048-830-6766	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 8:30 - 17:15
For inquiries on admission into prefectural high schools, changing schools, and certification of applicant qualifications, call the Prefectural Schools Management and Personnel Division of the Saitama Prefectural Education Bureau.	048-830-6735	
For inquiries regarding the tuition policy and admission fees for prefectural high schools, contact the Financial Affairs Division of the Saitama Prefectural Education Bureau.	048-830-6652 https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2204/j-its/index.html	
For inquiries about reduced tuition costs at private high schools, contact the Private School Affairs Division of the Saitama Prefectural Government.	http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0204/fubofutan2.html	

4 Special Needs School

This is a school which accepts disabled students with special educational needs. There are elementary, junior, and senior high education departments that correspond to elementary, junior high and senior high schools (some schools have pre-school and vocational departments, too). If you wish to enroll your child in elementary or junior high school, first bring the official copy of the child's Resident Record to your local board of education and discuss it with them. If you wish to enroll your child in a preschool or senior high school, please contact the Special Support Education Division of the Saitama Prefecture Education Bureau.

Special needs schools carry out education for different types of disabilities, including visual, aural, mental or physical disabilities, or students with who are highly susceptible to illness.

(1) Preschool

Saitama Prefecture has established three schools for special needs with preschool

departments: Hanawa Hokiichi School (education for students who are visually impaired), Omiya School for the Hearing Impaired, and Sakado School for the Hearing Impaired. These schools are targeted towards children from the ages of 3 to 5, prior to entering elementary school, and require a consultation prior to enrollment. Also, all three schools accept consultations and offer day care for infants from the age of zero (0). Early specialized education leads to an improvement in visual and hearing impairments; thus, we recommend consultations at an early date.

(2) Elementary Education

Children who will be 6 years old as of April 1, have weak health or visual, aural, mental, physical disabilities, and need special education assistance are candidates for entering the elementary school.

If you are looking to enter your child into elementary school, please contact your local board of education by the summer of the previous year.

(3) Junior High School Education

Children who will be 12 years old as of April 1, have weak health or visual, aural, mental, physical disabilities, and need special education assistance are candidates for entering junior high school education.

If you are looking to transfer your child into junior high school education, please contact your local board of education.

(4) Senior High School Education

Senior high school education features either specialized or regular courses depending on the school, so please contact the Special Support Education Division of the Saitama Prefecture Prefectural School Department. To enter a school, it is necessary to go through a selection process. Regarding prerequisites, it is necessary to have either graduated or expect to graduate from a Japanese junior high school or school for special needs, or the equivalent.



Consultation and Inquiries

Name	Telephone	Hours
Special Support Education Division, Saitama Prefectural Education Bureau	048-830-6880	Mon – Fri 8:30 - 17:15 (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period)

5 University, Vocational School

In Saitama Prefecture, there are a few national/public universities and numerous private ones. There are also junior colleges and vocational schools.

Since the prerequisites and procedures for entering university or vocational school vary, please contact the institution you wish to enter directly.

The Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) offers information on universities/vocational schools and scholarships on its webpage.

Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) website:

(Information on study abroad in Japan):

http://www.jasso.go.jp/study_j/schinfo.html (Japanese)

http://www.jasso.go.jp/study_j/schinfo_e.html (English)

6 Scholarships

There is a scholarship system for students advancing to senior high school, vocational training schools (vocational schools), university, junior college, or graduate school. The following chart lists the scholarships available in Saitama Prefecture.



Consultation and Inquiries

Scholarship Office	Contact	Hours
Saitama Prefectural Senior High School Scholarship	Financial Affairs Division, Saitama Education Bureau 048-830-6652 http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/f2204/j-s/index2.html	Mon – Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 8:30 - 17:15
Part-time and Correspondence Education—Student Incentive Scholarship	High School Education Management Division, Saitama Education Bureau 048-830-6765	
Single or Widowed Parent Welfare Fund Scholarship	Birth Rate Policy Division, Department of Welfare, Saitama Prefectural Government 048-830-3337 http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0607/boshifushikafukashitsuke.html	

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Saitama Nursing Scholarship and Educational Loans	Medical Human Resources Division, Department of Public Health and Medical Services, Saitama Prefectural Government 048-830-3543 http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0709/ikueishouga-kukinn/index.html	
Saitama-ken Ishi Ikusei Shogakukin (Saitama Prefectural Scholarship for Aspiring Doctors)	Medical Human Resources Division, Department of Public Health and Medical Services, Saitama Prefectural Government 048-601-4600 http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0709/ishiikusei-shougakukin/	
Dr. Seiroku Honda Scholarship	Forestation Division, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Saitama Prefectural Government 048-830-4310 https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0905/ho-ndashogakukinboshu2.html	

Other scholarship programs are provided by municipalities and private organizations.

For further information, please contact the relevant municipalities, schools, and organizations.

7 Japanese Language Study

There are various methods of studying Japanese in Saitama including free Japanese classes conducted by volunteer instructors and formal classes held at Japanese language schools. Please note that Japanese language schools charge tuition fees.



Consultation and Inquiries

Office	Telephone	Hours
<Volunteer-run Japanese Classes> Saitama International Association	048-833-3296 http://www.sia1.jp/foreign/japanese/	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 9:00 - 16:00
<Japanese Language Schools> The Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education	03-5304-7815 https://www.nisshinkyokyo.org/ →Information about Japanese Language Schools (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean)	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 9:30 - 17:30

8 Japanese Language Proficiency Exams

There are Japanese language proficiency examinations available to evaluate your Japanese ability.

Results of these examinations will be useful when entering Japanese schools or looking for employment in Japan.

For further information, please contact the respective organizations that conduct Japanese language proficiency examinations.



Consultation and Inquiries

Exam name	Contact	Hours
Japanese Language Proficiency Test http://www.jlpt.jp/	Japan Educational Exchanges and Services (JEES) Japanese Proficiency Test Center 03-6686-2974	Mon - Fri 9:30 - 17:30 (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period)
J.TEST (Test of Practical Japanese) http://j-test.jp/	Association for testing Japanese Proficiency / J.Test Office 03-5875-1231 info@j-test.jp	Mon - Fri 10:00 - 17:30 (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period)
BJT Business Japanese Proficiency Test http://www.kanken.or.jp/bjt/	Japanese Kanji Proficiency Test Foundation (a public interest foundation) 0120-509-315 bjt@kanken.or.jp	Mon - Fri (Except National Holidays and during the New Year's Holiday Period) 9:00 - 17:00