

## Acknowledgement

### **Course of Study for Junior High School**

#### Chapter 1 General Provisions

##### Section 1. General Policies Regarding Curriculum Formulation

1. The curriculum for each school must be formulated according to law and the content described from this chapter onwards. It should appropriately cater for the aim of developing students into balanced people while carefully considering the circumstances of the region and school as well as the students' mental and physical characteristics and stage of development.

As a provider of the educational activities, it is incumbent upon each school to foster a zest for living in students and to originally devise specifically tailored educational activities. While the school should endeavor to teach students to learn and think for themselves, it must not neglect to ensure students acquire a thorough grounding in the basic and fundamental content. Moreover, all this should be done in a learning environment that encourages individualism.

2. Each school must ensure that all of its educational activities contain a moral education component. In addition to a period dedicated to moral education, the school also provides moral educational teaching in each class that is appropriate for the particular subject, special activity or integrated study period.

Moral education is based on the fundamental spirit of education set out in the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law. Its purpose is to foster a sense of morals that will provide a platform from which students can develop as future-shaping Japanese full of initiative, who not only possess the spirit of respecting fellow humans and show reverence towards life, which they demonstrate in their daily lives at home, school and in society at large, but who also possess a rich spirit, contribute to creating a culture rich in individualism, advance the democratic nature of the society and country, and contribute to a peaceful international society.

In providing moral education, the school must not only deepen the human element in the relationship between the students and the teachers and amongst the students themselves but the school should also deepen the students' self awareness in regard to their way of life as human beings. Moreover families and the local community should also be involved and students should be given the opportunity to develop their inner sense of morals by providing them with rich experiences such as volunteer work and excursions into nature.

3. The teaching relating to physical education and health education provided by the school must be appropriately dealt with through the school's education activities as a whole. In addition to a period dedicated to health and physical education, students must also receive teaching relating to improving physical strength and maintaining

and improving the health of both mind and body in a manner appropriate for the special activity or the like in which this teaching is provided.

The school not only aims to include families and the local community as part of this teaching, it also encourages students to gain beneficial results from their activities involving proper health and physical exercise in their everyday lives in order to put them in good stead to take part in an active lifestyle safely and healthily throughout their entire life.

## Section 2. Handling the Content of Compulsory Subjects, Moral Education and Special Activities

1. All schools are obliged to handle points relating to the content of each subject, moral education and special activities, as described from Chapter 2 onwards, except in cases that are specially mentioned.

If it is particularly necessary, a school may include extra content not contained from Chapter 2 onwards, however the addition of extra content must not deviate from the objective of each of the subjects, moral education, special activities, and objectives and content of each school year, each field or each language, nor put the student under excessive workload.

2. Except where explicitly mentioned, the order of points contained from Chapter 2 onwards, which were raised in regard to the content of various subjects, moral education, special activities and the content of each school year, each field and each language does not reflect the order of teaching. Therefore it is the role of the school to devise a suitable approach for handling these points.
3. In schools with classes comprised of students from two or more different grades, the content and objectives of each subject need not be designed separately for each grade, providing that it does not obstruct the achievement of objectives of each subject.

## Section 3. Handling the Content of Elective Subjects

1. Each school decides on the appropriate content and class hours of the elective subjects and creates a teaching plan for the elective subjects by taking into consideration the situation of the school and students while at the same time aiming to coordinate these classes with compulsory subjects and integrated study period.
2. Each school is responsible for deciding the appropriate content for the elective subjects so that various learning activities compatible with student characteristics can be held, such as project-based studies, supplementary studies and progressive studies described for the various subjects in Chapter 2. The school is obliged not to give the students an overly burdensome workload.
3. The number of elective subjects that can be taken by one student is one or more for second years and two or more for third years and student choices should be adequately considered based on the student's characteristics.

4. The variety of elective subjects that can be offered by a school will be the subjects listed in Chapter 2 for each grade.
5. The class hours for each of the elective subjects is within an annual range of 30 class units for first years, and 70 class units for second and third years. It is up to the individual school to decide on the appropriate class hours that is required to achieve the learning outcomes of the elective subject.

#### Section 4. Handling the Integrated Study Period

1. For integrated study period, each school should provide originally devised educational activities that is specifically tailored to the circumstances of the region, school and students such as cross-sectional or integrated study and study based on the interests of students.
2. The integrated study period should involve teaching that holds the following objectives.
  - (1) To develop the qualities and abilities necessary for students to independently seek out topics for projects etc, to learn and think for themselves, to form their own judgments and to develop their problem solving skills.
  - (2) To teach students study skills and thinking skills, encourage them to use initiative and creativity when participating in problem solving and exploratory activities and encourage them to think about their own way of life.
3. Each school must conduct learning activities specifically tailored to the circumstances of the school and formulated in line with the objectives described in 3.2. These activities could, for example be cross-sectional or integrated projects on issues such as international awareness, information, the environment, and health and welfare, projects based on the students' interests or projects related to region-specific or school-specific issues.
4. It is up to each school to provide a title for the integrated study period that is appropriate for the school.
5. When conducting learning activities for the integrated study period, attention must be paid to the following points.
  - (1) Students should actively gain social experience such as excursions in nature and volunteer activities, observation and experiments, fieldtrips and research, presentations and debates, hands-on learning such as creating and producing things and problem solving study.
  - (2) Schools should devise strategies such as using various forms of study such as group study and study involving mixed aged groups, including teaching frameworks such as where all teachers teach together as a group and receive cooperation from people from the community, and positive utilization of regional educational resources and study environments.

#### Section 5. Scheduling Class Hours

1. Lessons of the various subjects, moral education, special activities\* and integrated study period (hereafter “subjects etc”) should spread over at least 35 weeks a year to ensure the weekly class hours do not become burdensome for the students. Note that if it is effective for one of the subjects etc (not including special activities) or learning activities, these can be held at special times. It is up to each individual school to allocate an appropriate time for lunchtime and recesses etc.
  - \* Note that in 1. and 3. of this section, “special activities” refer only to class-based activities and excludes activities relating to school lunches.
2. For lessons of special activities, the school decides on the appropriate class hours per year, term or month for student committees and school events, and when doing so, takes into consideration the content of these activities.
3. Each school decides on the length of single class units for the respective subjects etc, which will ensure the annual class hours can be met but at the same time be sensitive to the students’ stage of development and the characteristics of each of the subjects etc and learning activities.

#### Section 6. Considerations when Creating a Teaching Plan

1. Each school must originally devise concrete teaching plans that are balanced as a whole and specifically consider the following points.
  - (1) It must provide teaching that is systematic and developmental in a way that each subject etc and each school year mutually interrelate with each other.
  - (2) Effective teaching for the teaching content of each field, each language or each subject for each school year, must be provided by ensuring the content is compiled skillfully, all key points are included and the teaching materials are carefully selected.
2. In addition to the above, the following points must be considered.
  - (1) The general passage of school life should deepen the students’ understanding and interest towards language, provide a solid linguistic environment and facilitate suitable linguistic development.
  - (2) The teaching provided for each subject etc should: emphasize experiential and problem solving learning, make use of the interests of the students and promote autonomous and self-motivated study.
  - (3) Aim to develop a trusting relationship between students and teachers and positive interpersonal relationships amongst the students, deepen student understanding and provide good teaching and guidance so that students can judge and act for themselves and realize their full potential.
  - (4) So that students can reflect on their own way of life and make independent choices regarding their academic and career path, appropriate guidance for these choices must be provided in a strategic and organized manner through all aspects of the school’s educational activities.
  - (5) The school should endeavor to provide adequate guidance through all aspects of the school’s educational activities to not only help students better adapt to life in the school and classroom, but also enable students to develop the

manner and skills necessary to think about and make changes to their life in the present and future.

- (6) The teaching for each subject etc should include the development and improvement of teaching methods and teaching structures such as individualized teaching, group-based teaching, teaching that caters for varying degrees of student proficiency and teachers teaching cooperatively together. This should be done while taking into consideration the circumstances of the school and the students in order to facilitate a thorough acquisition of the learning content by the students and better cater for the individual students.
- (7) For students with disabilities or other needs, it is important to devise teaching content and teaching methods that are appropriate for the student's circumstances. In particular teaching conducted in a special classroom, or special needs teaching must be effectively carried out in cooperation with the other teachers.
- (8) When teaching students who have returned from overseas, teaching should find appropriate ways to include the student's life experience while overseas and help the student adjust to school life.
- (9) Teaching for each subject etc should provide suitable utilization of teaching materials and aids such as audio visual aids and learning devices and include learning activities that allow students to positively use information methods such as computers and information communication networks.
- (10) Teaching should aim to use the school library strategically so as to utilize its function and students should be given the opportunity to carry out independent and self motivated learning activities and reading activities.
- (11) In addition to positively evaluating the student's good points and state of progress, the progress and results of teaching must be evaluated so as to improve teaching and motivate students to study.
- (12) In order to work towards creating an open school, it is important to strengthen ties with families and local community through, for example, getting cooperation from families and the community in ways that best suit the circumstances of the region and school. While seeking better ties and relations with other junior high schools, elementary schools, senior high schools, schools for the blind, schools for the deaf, and other schools for the disabled, the school must provide opportunities for exchange with disabled infants/pupils/students or aged persons etc.