

Acknowledgement

Course of Study for Elementary 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 pupils into balanced people while carefully considering the circumstances of the region and school as well as the pupils' 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 pupils and to originally devise specifically tailored educational activities. While the school should endeavor to teach pupils to learn and think for themselves, it must not neglect to ensure pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils and the teachers and amongst the pupils themselves but it must also involve families and the local community and allow pupils 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 physical education, pupils 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 pupils 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. Common Points Relating to Handling Content

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, nor put the pupil 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 or content of each school year, 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. The content of subjects which include the content and objectives of the school year for two school years describe points that should be included in the teaching of these subjects over a period of two school years. When planning the teaching of these points, each school must plan ahead for two years and take into consideration the circumstances related to the region, school or pupils and except where explicitly mentioned, the objectives and content can be split up into points that are assigned to either of the school years or objectives and content can be covered at any time in either of the school years.
4. In schools with classes comprised of pupils from two or more different grades, the content and objectives of each subject and moral education preferably should be designed separately for each grade. However if it is particularly necessary to do otherwise and it does not obstruct the achievement of objectives of each subject and moral education, then it is permissible to do otherwise.

Section 3. 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 pupils such as cross-sectional or integrated study and study based on the interests of pupils.
2. The integrated study period should involve teaching that holds the following objectives.
 - (1) To develop the qualities and abilities necessary for pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils' 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) Pupils 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, for example, 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.
 - (3) When conducting conversations in foreign language as a part of study related to international awareness, the pupils should be able to receive hands-on learning such as gaining exposure to a foreign language and becoming familiar with lifestyles and cultures of foreign countries that takes into consideration the circumstances of the school and the suitability for elementary school level.

Section 4. 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 (34 weeks for first graders) to ensure the weekly class hours do not become burdensome for the pupils. Note that if it is effective for one of the subjects etc 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 pupil committees, club activities 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 pupils' stage of development and the characteristics of each of the subjects etc and learning activities.
4. Each school must originally devise syllabuses that provide a flexible structure specifically tailored to the circumstances of the region, school and pupils while taking into account the characteristics of each of the subjects etc and learning activities.

5. 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) When the content and objectives of particular subjects are described for two school years, the teaching of those subjects must be planned ahead for the allocated school years and taught in an effective and incremental way while focusing on the developmental stage of the pupils and the circumstances of the region, school and pupils.
 - (3) Effective teaching for the teaching content of 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.
 - (4) In order to achieve more effective teaching that is better tailored to the circumstances of the pupils, teaching methods that draw on cross-subject and interrelated elements should be encouraged.
2. In addition to the above, the following points must be considered.

- (1) The general passage of school life should deepen the pupils' 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 pupils and promote autonomous and self-motivated study.
- (3) Aim to always improve class management, develop a trusting relationship between pupils and teachers and positive interpersonal relationships amongst the pupils, deepen pupil understanding and provide good teaching and guidance for pupils.
- (4) The teaching for each subject etc should find ways for the pupils to select activities and study topics, and provide opportunities for pupils to consider their own futures.
- (5) 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, repetitive teaching and teachers teaching cooperatively together. This should be done while taking into consideration the circumstances of the school and the pupils in order to facilitate a thorough acquisition of the learning content by the pupils and better cater for the individual pupils.
- (6) For pupils with disabilities or other needs, it is important to devise teaching content and teaching methods that are appropriate for the pupil'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.
- (7) When teaching pupils who have returned from overseas, teaching should find appropriate ways to include the pupil's life experience while overseas and help the pupil adjust to school life.
- (8) 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 pupils to become familiar with and properly use information searching methods such as computers and information communication networks.

- (9) Teaching should aim to use the school library strategically so as to utilize its function and pupils should be given the opportunity to carry out independent and self motivated learning activities and reading activities.
- (10) In addition to positively evaluating the pupil's good points and state of progress, the progress and results of teaching must be evaluated so as to improve teaching and motivate pupils to study.
- (11) 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 elementary schools, kindergartens, junior 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.