

# The IntlSchool Network News

International School Network News from Japan

February 2014 #3

## Japanese Clothing Culture



Kimonos have been the clothing style that represented Japan. However, recently the Japanese government has taken in a new Japanese culture, "Cool Japan", featuring Cosplay and Lolita fashion from animations, comics, games, and J-POP idol groups.



Until the Edo Period, kimonos have been worn by the Japanese people as everyday wear. At special occasions such as New Years Day and

at weddings, people wore special, elaborate kimonos, which is now referred to as "haregi".



The photo above shows rolled up cloths for kimonos which are called "tanmono". In the photo, the store staff is holding up a roll of cloth, which is how the customer views their cloth to choose. This roll of cloth is 40 centimeters wide and 13.5 meters long. From just one roll of cloth, a whole kimono can be made. Kimono designs are made by spinning different strings or by printing. At celebrations such as Coming-of-Age Day and marriage, printed gorgeous kimonos are worn. Because there are few opportunities of wearing a kimono in modern Japan, not many people know how to wear one properly. People who wear kimonos study at specialized schools called "kitsuke" which teaches their students how to wear kimonos. Kimono stores may also help their customers wear kimonos.

An obi is a sash tied over a kimono, and it is as important as the kimono itself. Obis are also rolled up, similar to "tanmono", with the cloth being 30 centimeters wide and 4 meters and 50 centimeters long. The way an obi is tied depends on the occasion and place the person will wear it to. The photo below shows how obis are displayed in shops.



Zori (Japanese sandals), "kanzashi" (ornamental hairpins), and bags are also chosen to match the kimono. "Kanzashi" are especially important to pick out according to the occasion.



I was very surprised to hear that making a kimono and taking care of it takes much effort and difficulty. I appreciate the kindness of Mr. Yoshihara Kazuhiro and the shop staff of "Kurumaya Gofukuten" (車屋呉服店) for cooperating with this interview! (Address: 3chome, Maruyamadai, Konan-ku, Yokohama)



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## Yamate Gakuin

Approximately 60 years ago, two teachers, Ms. Emori Setsuko and Mr. Matsunobu Mikio, founded the secondary school of Yamate Gakuin. They wanted to develop internationalization and diversification of the future generation. The two teachers' educational ideals have been passed down to this day. The students of Yamate Gakuin are trusted to take part in the development of the world globally. With a total site area of 60,000 square meters, all four seasons flourish the environment of the school campus of Yamate Gakuin, starting with cherry blossom trees in the spring. There are approximately 7,000 trees and flowers on campus, with their species varying to more than 100.



Every year, students in grade nine (third grade in junior high school) homestay in Australia, and students in grade eleven (second grade in high school) have training programs in North America, allowing the students of Yamate Gakuin to jump into the world directly to grasp a global experience. Global student programs include "Return Visit", "Exchange Student", "United Nations High School Student Conference", "Short Stays from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand", and "Dayton, Walla Walla, Yakima, Pasco (USA) and Alberta (Canada) Scholarship Offers".

Since 2002, the school has started a program in which ninth graders (junior high school third grade) homestay in Sydney, Melbourne, or the Gold Coast districts in Australia during the beginning of November for seven days (six nights including

one night on the plane). This is recognized as being one step towards the school's international exchange activity. This opportunity allows the students to learn English, especially conversational English they don't learn in school classes.

Students from Yamate Gakuin have been visiting Canada and the United States for home staying since 1969. In the present, eleventh graders (second grade high school students) go to a city in Canada of the United States during mid-April for 16 days (15 nights) in pairs of two. During the two weeks, the students introduce and perform Japanese culture, and visit local school events for interacting with the global society.



Activities are substantial to fulfill the needs of the 2050 students of Yamate Gakuin. There are almost 40 club activities at the school. One activity, called "Nekorobu", is an activity that is rarely seen at other schools. At this club, students protect abandoned cats around the school. Recently, the school has been expanding the club by taking contact with the country's largest protective shelter organizations. The goal of this club is to provide a warm home to all cats.

The bicycle club is another rare club activity that is offered in Yamate Gakuin. In 1989, a bicycle club was set up for junior high school and high school students, for both boys and girls. During the weekdays, the members of the bicycle club would travel to nearby mountains or towards the Shonan coast. During the weekends or on holidays, they would go on trips or compete in races. Every year, they attend

tournaments such as "Amino Cup" and "Mountain Bike Cup", maintaining outstanding results.

The school facilities are also very effective, helping the huge school body. The library, swimming pool, and cafeteria are very popular amongst the students.



The library offers not only Japanese books, but also DVDs, graphic novels, computers, and English books. There is also a peaceful desk space for students to study quietly.



I would like to thank the Assistant Principal, Mr. Ichiro Osawa, and the Student Council representative, Mr. Ikko Nishimura for helping us with the interview. Please visit our website for memoirs written by Mr. Ikko Nishimura.



## Kanagawa International School

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Yokohama-shi Kanagawa-ken  
URL [www.kischool.com](http://www.kischool.com)  
info@kischool.com  
045-841-3928

### Kindergarten Class Age : from 2 years old

Regular Class : Monday to Friday 9:00-14:30  
Saturday Kindergarten Class : Saturday 9:00-14:00

### Elementary Class Age : 5 to 12 years old

Sunday Elementary Class : Sunday 9:00-15:00

### Middle school Class Age : 11 to 15 years old

Sunday Middle School Class : Sunday 15:00-17:00



## Saint Maur International School



Saint Maur International School, founded in 1872 by five Irish and French missionary sisters, has a long and colorful history as the oldest existing international school in Japan. Having less than 500 students, Saint Maur is a family school, where the quality of education is treasured more than the quantity.

Saint Maur International School values the concept of unique individuals. Students from all over the world come to learn at Saint Maur. The school celebrates its diversity of nationalities in an annual event called International Day in November. All students from preschool to high school (younger students have the opportunity to celebrate throughout a whole week with parents' involvement) wear a costume representing a country, and do activities from different parts of the world. Another annual event held at the school is Japanese Culture Day, which is an event celebrating the culture of the host country, Japan. International Food Fair is an annual community event held on April 29th where students, teachers, and parents cooperate to set up booths for services such as selling goods and food from all over the world, games, and music performances. Christmas Bazaar is another community event of the school, held in November.



Life long learning is a major concept of Saint Maur International School. Students of the school take part in special curriculums as well as activities involving parents. From the age of 2½ years, a toilet trained child with an English medium background is eligible to join the Montessori. The Montessori classes are mixed age groups from 2½ to 6 years of age. Montessori students focus on strengthening independence. The children work across a range of diverse activities where the emphasis is on "discovery" and freedom to choose (within limits). Activities are planned by teachers in a way that facilitates the 'discovery' of concepts and understandings and children are free to choose which activities (planned by teachers) they would like to work on.

As of Elementary School, the entrance qualification is determined according to the students' records and their previous enrollment at English medium schools (preferably 2-3 years depending on the child's ability to pick up the language quickly). Elementary school students follow the IPC (International Primary Curriculum), which is a program of science and social studies, relating to their field trips and the topics of other subjects, including maths, art, and language arts.



The French School (Grades 5-10) follows a national French curriculum. The students from the French School join the elementary school students in classes such as music and physical education, and in field trips.

From Middle School, in addition to their language classes of English and Japanese, students have an opportunity of taking a course of French or Spanish. Grade 6 students study both of the languages, and from Grade 8, they focus on learning either one of their choice. If an EAL student needs additional support in English, he/she takes an EAL course instead of French or Spanish.



For High School, certain English skills are required to be able to keep up with the school work so that they can receive credits upon graduation. For Grades 9-10, the school offers the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) program, and then Grades 11-12 are offered the IB (International Baccalaureate) certificate and diploma programs. After graduation, students may go to Japanese universities (starting from the fall season), attend English medium universities in foreign countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, or in countries of their mother tongues.

Saint Maur International School offers a great variety of activities. Activities of fine arts and sports are scheduled on alternate practice dates, allowing students to be part of both fine arts and sports at the same time.

As life long learners, classes for adults and toddlers are offered at Saint Maur. Adult Enrichment Classes are free classes for parents, who wish to learn about different cultures and socialize in a lively manner. Japanese traditional culture is learnt through activities such as ikebana, painting, origami, and cooking. A weekly toddlers' group is also offered, which allows toddlers and their parents to socialize.



I would like to thank Miss Jeanette K. Thomas, MBE, M.Ed., L.R.A.M., Head of School Emerita (left) and Mrs. Catherine Endo, M.A., Head of School (right) for the interview.

I, Madoka Nishina, have been attending St. Maur International school since grade one. This year is my tenth year at this school.

## Yokohama Midorigaoka High School



90 years after the school was founded, students have been working actively on their studies, events, and club activities. I went to interview a public high school that is famous within Yokohama city, Midorigaoka High School. The principal, Mr. Tanaka, and three student council representatives, Ms. Akane Yoshida, Mr. Kensuke Yamamoto, and Ms. Kaori Sanada, have cooperated with us with the interview.



**What are your feelings towards the school?** The students and teachers have very close relations with trust and friendly relations.

**Why did you decide to take this interview?** I wanted to get to know the lifestyles of different people and introduce our school.

**How will you make use of your experiences from school in the future?** I would like to reflect on my experiences earned from hard work in events and studies, to demonstrate that freedom comes from hard work and responsibility.

**What are your plans after graduation and what do you dream to be in the future?** I would like to attend a national university to study mathematics and informatics and work with computer sciences. I would like to attend study social welfare in college and work as a medical social worker. I would like to study mathematics and sciences at a university, and teach students the love of sciences.

What do you enjoy the most about your school life? I enjoy everything- the activities, classes, and conversations with friends. Talking in English is also enjoyable!

How are the school facilities helpful for you school life? The building for different activities called "bushitsutou" is very helpful. Students use the building as a place to put our luggage and as a place to eat.



**Do you take part in any activities?** What is significant about the activities? I take part in the archery club. Our school is the only public school in the Kanagawa prefecture that offers this activity. I am in the fork-song club. I learnt to play the guitar when I started high school, and now I am able to sing while playing the guitar in front of an audience at school events. I belong to the Language and Literature club, where I wrote newspaper articles.



**What are the jobs of the Student Council?** The Student Council does not make commands to students. Our jobs include dividing the Student Council fund, presenting an activity orientation for the new students in April, fund-raising for donating twice a year, and setting up idea boxes for students to contribute their opinions and ideas.

The Student Council is also responsible for introducing the school to students who wish to join the school. With the teachers, we have a panel discussion answering questions and talking about school features.

I interviewed the principal, Mr. Tanaka.



**What type of student would fit into the school curriculum the best?** A student needs to have a clear reason why they want to study at Midorigaoka High School. It could be about what they want to do at the school, or it could be an inspiration. Also, a student should be able to think individually and express their thoughts through words.

**What do you wish for your students to become?** I would like my students to become influential people who make the future, live the future, and improve the future. I would like them to lead the future generation. For this to happen, all students are required to take the TOEIC exam, to have a seminar of a variety of activities including cooking and voice training, and to carry out a program called the "Science Caravan", which is an interesting program allowing students to think deeply about sciences and mathematics.

**What is the entrance qualification for foreigners?** As long as the student has graduated a Japanese middle school or has been living in the prefecture for a certain amount of time, they are qualified to enter our school. Our school also allows temporary students. If anyone wants to join our school for around a month, please contact us.



I would like to thank the school principal and the student council representatives for cooperating with the interview. My school, Saint Maur International School, is situated very closely to Midorigaoka High School, so I am looking forward to expanding our school connections.

Please mail us, and we will go to interview you! Please contact us if you want to post any written work. We are accepting advertisements! Please mail us.

Director, Reporter: Madoka Nishina (10th grade St. Maur)  
Assistant: Karen Nishina (4th grade St. Maur)