

## Chapter 1 General Provisions

### I. FOUNDATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM

- 1 Each school should formulate a proper curriculum in compliance with the Basic Act on Education, the School Education Act, the provisions of other laws and regulations concerned, and those indicated in this chapter hereinafter, in order to accomplish the well-balanced development of individual pupils as human beings, with full consideration toward pupils' stages of mental and physical development and their individual characteristics, and toward the circumstances of the school and its local community, thereby conducting education to achieve the goals listed in the above documents.
- 2 In providing educational activities, each school should create specifically tailored educational activities by making use of originality and ingenuity through class improvements for realization of proactive, interactive, and authentic learning as shown in III. 1, and aim to realize the matters listed in the following (1) to (3), in order to foster Competencies for Living in pupils.
  - (1) Each school should be committed to enhancing education to enable pupils to solidly acquire basic and fundamental knowledge and skills, to foster pupils' ability to think, make judgements, and express themselves that are necessary to solve problems using acquired knowledge and skills, to cultivate an attitude of proactive learning to develop pupils' individuality, and to encourage working together with diverse people. In working towards these goals, each school should enhance its pupils' activities that create the foundation of learning, such as language activities, giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils, in cooperation with pupils' families at the same time, with consideration given to help pupils establish good study habits.
  - (2) Each school should be committed to enhancing the quality of education aimed at cultivating rich humanity and creativity through moral education and experiential learning activities, diverse expression, and appreciation activities, etc. Moral education should be implemented throughout all educational activities with morality, a special subject (hereinafter referred to as the "Morality Period"), being the primary period in which it is administered. Therefore, each school should give proper instruction not just during the Morality Period, but during the

classes for all subjects, foreign language activities, the Period for Integrated Studies and special activities, in accordance with their respective characteristics, while giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils.

The objectives of moral education are based on the basic spirit of education stated in the Basic Act on Education and the School Education Act. They are to foster morality which is the foundation for pupils to think in their own way about life, act based on independent judgments, and live a better life with other people as an independent person.

In providing moral education, each school should take particular care to ensure that it contributes to the development of Japanese citizens who would apply a spirit of respect for human dignity and reverence for life in specific activities at home, school and in other social situations, have rich humanity, respect traditions and culture, love one's country and hometown which have fostered such traditions and culture, contribute to culture with a distinctive character and, as people working to form a peaceful and democratic state and society, honor the public spirit, make an effort to develop society and the state, respect other countries, contribute to world peace and the development of the international community and the preservation of the environment, and have interest in exploring new possibilities for the future.

- (3) Each school should be committed to enhancing education aimed at realization of healthy and safe daily lives as well as active physical lives, by giving proper instruction regarding physical training and health promotion through all of the school's educational activities, while giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils. In particular, with respect to instruction on promoting dietary education and developing physical strength, safety-related instruction, and instruction on maintaining and promoting both mental and physical health, such instruction should take place not only in the Physical Education period, period of Home Economics and Special Activities, but also in all subjects, the Morality Period, Foreign Language Activities and the Period for Integrated Studies, etc., in accordance with the characteristics of each period. At the same time, each school should give consideration so that pupils will develop the foundation necessary to live safely, healthily and actively throughout their entire lives, by way of encouraging proper physical training and health promotion in pupils' daily lives in cooperation with their families and the local community.

3 When aiming to foster Competencies for Living in those pupils who are expected to realize the matters in 2 from (1) to (3), be equipped with rich creativity, and be the builders of a sustainable society, each school should clarify what kinds of competencies they are aiming to develop through instruction in school education overall and in all subjects, the Morality Period, Foreign Language Activities, the Period for Integrated Studies and Special Activities (hereinafter these are referred to as “all subjects, etc.”; in II. 3 (2) a. and c. special activities is limited to classroom activities, excluding school lunch programs) in order to enhance their educational activities. In working towards these goals, each school should ensure that each of the following is realized without bias, by taking into account the developmental stages and characteristics, etc. of the pupils.

(1) Ensure that knowledge and skills are acquired.

(2) Develop the pupils’ abilities to think, make judgements and express themselves.

(3) Cultivate the motivation to learn and humanity.

4 Each school should be committed to improving the quality of its educational activities organizationally and systematically based on the curriculum, by properly ascertaining the circumstances of the pupils, school, and local community, assembling the contents of education necessary for realizing the objectives and goals of education from a perspective that transcends subjects, assessing the status of implementation of the curriculum to work on its improvement, and ensuring the personnel and facilities necessary for implementation of the curriculum and working its improvement (hereinafter referred to as “curriculum management”).

## II. FORMATION OF THE CURRICULUM

1 Formation of the educational goals and curriculum of each school

When forming the curriculum, each school should clarify the educational goals of the school taking into account the competencies it is aiming for through instruction in school education overall and all subjects and should be committed to ensuring that the basic policies regarding the formation of the curriculum are shared in the families and the local community. In working towards these goals, each school should aim for cooperation with the objectives stipulated based on Chapter 5 The Period for Integrated Studies II. 1.

2 Development of competencies from a interdisciplinary perspective

(1) Each school should give consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils

and utilize the characteristics of all subjects, etc. to form the curriculum from a perspective transcending subjects, etc. to ensure that the pupils develop the competencies that are the foundation of the learning of language ability, information literacy (including information ethics), problem discovery and solution ability, etc.

- (2) Each school should give consideration to the circumstances of the pupils, school, and local community and the developmental stages of the pupils and utilize the features of each school to form a curriculum which ensures that the competencies required to respond to modern issues for the realization of rich lives and the formation of a next-generation society that can overcome disasters, etc. can be developed from a perspective transcending subjects.

### 3 Common points in the formation of the curriculum

#### (1) Treatment of the contents

- a. Each school is obliged to deal with the items listed in Chapter 2 onwards concerning all subjects, the Morality Period, foreign language activities and special activities, except in special cases otherwise indicated.
- b. When it is particularly necessary, each school may include additional contents not specified in Chapter 2 onwards. Furthermore, the matters specifying the scope and extent of the contents in the handling of the contents specified in Chapter 2 onwards specify the scope and extent of the contents for instructing all of the pupils, and in the cases where it is particularly necessary in the school, additional instruction can be given regardless of these items. However, in this case, care must be taken not to deviate from the objectives and contents of all subjects, the Morality Period, foreign language activities, and special activities described in Chapter 2 onwards, nor impose an excessive workload on pupils.
- c. The order of the items listed in contents regarding all subjects, the Morality Period, Foreign Language Activities, and Special Activities, which appears from Chapter 2 onwards, does not reflect the order of instruction to be given unless otherwise specified, and each school should make proper adjustments to the treatment of these items.
- d. The contents of subjects and foreign language activities whose contents cover two grades are the items to be taught over a period of two school years. Each school should give instruction throughout the course of two years in a planned

manner in two separate grades or in either grade, unless otherwise specified, in accordance with the circumstances of the pupils, school, and local community.

- e. Each school does not necessarily need to follow the grade-wise order of the objectives and contents for all subjects and the Morality Period in such special cases as in classes composed of pupils from two or more grades, provided that the objectives of all subjects and the Morality Period can be achieved.
- f. The contents of the moral education implemented throughout all educational activities with the Morality Period being the primary period in which it is administered shall be the contents specified in Chapter 3 Special Subject Morality II., and implementation of those contents shall take into account the cautions related to moral education specified in VI.

(2) Scheduling teaching hours

- a. The annual teaching program should be made to cover 35 or more school weeks (34 weeks for Grade 1) for all subjects. The total teaching hours per week should not impose an excessive workload on pupils. Note that classes can be held at special times, if it is effective for subjects, etc. or learning activities, including cases when classes are held during the summer, winter or end-of-school year holidays.
- b. For the activities of the pupils' association, club activities and school events among special activities, the proper number of teaching hours should be allocated by month, school term or year, according to the contents of the activities.
- c. The class schedules of each school should be formed properly taking into account the following items:
  - (a) Each school should properly determine the length of single school units for the respective subjects etc., giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils and the characteristics of subjects, etc. and learning activities, while ensuring annual teaching hours for subjects are met.
  - (b) In the case that a school gives instruction in special subjects, utilizing the short time of about 10 minutes to 15 minutes in accordance with the characteristics of subjects, if a system has been put in place for teachers to responsibly decide the instruction contents and ascertain and utilize the outcomes of the instruction in the context of anticipating the integration of the contents such as the units and subject matter, and the hours, then those

hours may be included in the annual teaching hours of said subjects.

(c) The daily hours for the school lunch, recesses, etc. should be properly determined at each school.

(d) Each school may develop their own class schedules that provide flexible structures in accordance with the circumstances of the pupils, school and local community and in accordance with the characteristics of subjects, etc. and learning activities.

d. Learning activities in the Period for Integrated Studies can replace the events stipulated as school events in special activities when the same outcome can be achieved.

(3) Cautions when engaging in syllabus design

Each school should utilize the ingenuity of the school to create concrete lesson plans that are balanced as a whole, taking the following points into account:

a. Regarding the instruction contents of each subject, each school should take into account (1) a. while anticipating the integration of contents such as units and subject matter, and the hours, ensuring that the contents are appropriately integrated and priority is appropriately given to instructional contents, so that effective instruction can be provided to develop competencies through class improvements for the realization of proactive, interactive and authentic learning specified in III. 1.

b. Systematic and progressive instruction should be provided in a way that subjects, and each grade relate to each other respectively.

c. Instruction for the subjects and foreign language activities whose contents of the grade cover two years should be provided effectively in a step-wise manner throughout the concerned school years, while consideration is given to the developmental stages of the pupils, in accordance with the circumstances of the pupils, school, and local community.

d. In order to give consideration to the circumstances of the pupils and improve the effectiveness of instruction, cross-curricular or correlated instruction should be implemented, while consideration is given to the developmental stages of the pupils and the linkages between the instruction contents, etc.

4 Connections between school stages

When engaging in formation of the curriculum, each school should aim for connections between the school stages, etc. while giving consideration to the

following items:

- (1) Each school should implement educational activities taking into account the competencies developed through early childhood education based on the National Curriculum Standard for Kindergarten, to ensure that the pupils become able to proactively exercise their own abilities while approaching learning, by devising instruction taking into account the vision of raising pupils until the end of early childhood that they want.

Furthermore, in education overall in the lower grades, schools should actively seek cooperation in subjects, etc., to ensure that for example competencies for becoming independent and living a rich life that are developed in living environment studies, can be utilized in the learning of other subjects, etc., and they should devise ways to ensure smooth connections between early childhood education and education from the middle grades onwards. In particular, when pupils initially enroll in elementary schools, each school should devise instruction and design a syllabus, including the establishment of cross-curricular or correlated instruction and flexible class schedules, etc. and centered on living environment studies, to ensure that the things developed through play as spontaneous activities in early childhood are smoothly connected to learning in all subjects, etc.

- (2) Each school should take into account the Lower Secondary School National Curriculum Standard and the Upper Secondary School National Curriculum Standard to ensure that there are smooth connections between lower secondary school education and subsequent education. In particular, in compulsory education schools, elementary schools affiliated with lower secondary schools and elementary schools sharing facilities with lower secondary schools, a systematic and ongoing curriculum should be formed for the entire nine years of compulsory education.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ASSESSMENT

1 Class improvements toward the realization of proactive, interactive and authentic learning

Consideration should be given to the following items when giving instruction in all subjects:

- (1) Each school should implement class improvements for realization of the

proactive, interactive and authentic learning of the pupils while anticipating the integration of contents such as units and subject matter, etc. and the hours, so that the matters specified in I. 3 from (1) to (3) are realized without bias.

In particular, each school should pay attention to the fact that the perspectives and ways of thinking pertinent to each subject (discipline-based epistemological approaches, hereinafter referred to as “Approaches”) can be forged in pupils with their experience to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired through subject learning and other educational activities, to exert their abilities to think, make judgement and express themselves, and to demonstrate their motivation to learn, and humanity so that they will grasp and consider targeted subject matter appropriately and deeply and should also promote learning with a focus on the process where pupils can deepen their understanding by integrating sporadically acquired fragments of knowledge, weave closely examined information into thoughts, work out the solutions to the problems they have detected, and come up with new creations based on their desires and ideas, while utilizing Approaches they have acquired through learning, pertinent to each subject.

- (2) In order to develop the language ability specified in II. 2 (1), each school should put in place the necessary language environment and enhance the language activities of the pupils in accordance with the characteristics of the subjects, etc., primarily Japanese language. In conjunction with this, they should enhance the reading activities as specified in (7).
- (3) In order to develop the information literacy specified in II. 2 (1), each school should put in place the necessary environment for utilizing information devices, such as computers and information and communications networks, etc. and enhance learning activities that properly utilize these devices. Furthermore, each school should also use other teaching materials and aids properly, such as statistical materials and newspapers, audiovisual teaching materials and other teaching and learning devices.

In conjunction with this, each school should systematically implement the following learning activities in accordance with the characteristics of the subjects.

- a. Learning activities for the pupils to acquire the basic operation skills with the information devices that are necessary as the foundation of learning, such as keyboarding, etc.
- b. Learning activities for the pupils to experience programming while acquiring

the logical thinking ability necessary to be able to carry out deliberate processing on computers

- (4) Effort should be made to include well-planned activities in which pupils can plan their learning and reflect upon what they have learned.
- (5) Each school should place importance on experiential learning activities tailored to the characteristics of the subjects, cooperate with families and the local community and ensure that the activities can be implemented systematically and continuously so that the pupils can understand while strongly sensing the finite nature of life, the value of nature, and the importance of proactively taking on challenges and working together with diverse people.
- (6) Each school should make an effort to come up with ways to promote autonomous and self-motivated learning, while stimulating pupils' interest, such as establishing opportunities for the pupils themselves to choose learning issues and learning activities.
- (7) Each school should systematically use the school library and utilize its functions, aiming at class improvements for realization of proactive, interactive and authentic learning of pupils, and enhance the autonomous, self-motivated learning activities and reading activities of the pupils. Furthermore, they should actively utilize facilities in the local community such as libraries, museums, art galleries, theaters, music halls, etc. and enhance learning activities such as the gathering and appreciation of information utilizing information resources.

## 2 Enhancement of learning assessment

Consideration should be given to the following items when implementing learning assessment.

- (1) Each school should positively evaluate the strengths and progress, etc. of the pupils, so that they can strongly sense the significance and value of what they have learned. Furthermore, from the perspective of ascertaining the status of learning toward realization of the objectives of the subjects, each school should come up with evaluation situations and methods while anticipating the integration of the contents such as the units and subject matter, and the hours to evaluate the processes and outcomes of the learning, aim for the improvement of the instruction and increased learning motivation, and ensure that these are utilized in the development of the competencies.
- (2) Each school should promote organized and systematic initiatives and come up

with ways to ensure the outcomes of the learning of the pupils are smoothly connected across grades and school stages, so that the validity and trustworthiness of learning evaluation is raised within the process of introducing innovations.

#### IV. SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS

##### 1 Enhancement of instruction to support the development of pupils

Consideration should be given to the following items when engaged in formation and implementation of the curriculum.

(1) In order to develop a trusting relationship between teachers and pupils and better interpersonal relationships amongst the pupils as the foundation of learning and life, each school should enhance daily class management. Furthermore, they should support the development of pupils through both guidance that offers the instruction and help necessary mainly in group settings, and counselling that takes into account the diverse circumstances of individual pupils to offer instruction individually tailored to the issues that each individual faces.

In conjunction with this, each school should come up with forms of instruction utilizing the strengths of the timing of grades in the lower grades, middle grades, and higher grades of elementary schools.

(2) Each school should deepen understanding of pupils, link it to learning instruction and enhance student guidance so that the pupils may strongly sense their own presence, form better interpersonal relationships, and achieve current and future self-realization while leading a valuable and enhanced school life.

(3) Each school should enhance career education in accordance with the characteristics of the subjects, with the primary focus on special activities, so that the pupils may anticipate the ties between what they learn and their own future and acquire the competencies that are the necessary foundation for social and occupational independence.

(4) Each school should improve individually targeted teaching to ensure that pupils can acquire what they have studied including the acquisition of basic and fundamental knowledge and skills in accordance with the circumstances of the pupils and school, through improving and devising teaching methods and teaching systems; for example individual or group-specific learning, repetitive learning, differentiated learning according to the level of proficiency achievement, task-based learning activities according to the pupils' interest,

instruction incorporating learning activities such as supplementary or advanced learning, and ensuring team-taught lessons where teachers work cooperatively . In working towards these goals, each school should utilize the information devices and teaching materials and aids specified in III. 1 (3).

## 2 Instruction to pupils who require special considerations

### (1) Instruction to pupils with disabilities or special needs

- a. For pupils with disabilities or special needs, each school should devise instructional contents and methods that are appropriate for the conditions of the disabilities of individual pupils in a planned and organized manner while utilizing advice and support from special needs schools or other sources.
- b. The special curriculum implemented in special needs classes should be formed as follows.
  - (a) Each school should incorporate the independence activities specified in the National Curriculum Standard for the Elementary and Secondary Departments of Special Needs Schools, Chapter 7 in order to overcome learning or life difficulties caused by the disability and achieve independence.
  - (b) After giving consideration to the degree of the disability of the pupil and the circumstances of the class, etc. each school should form a curriculum tailored to the circumstances by replacing the objectives and contents of the subjects with the objectives and contents of subjects in lower grades, replacing the subjects with the subjects of special needs schools that offer education to pupils who are persons with an intellectual disability.
- c. In the case of offering a partial inclusion program where special needs pupils leave the mainstream classroom to receive special support services located on site and forming a special curriculum for pupils with disabilities or special needs, each school should refer to the contents of the independence activities specified in the National Curriculum Standard for the Elementary and Secondary Departments of Special Needs Schools, Chapter 7, stipulate concrete objectives and contents, and offer instruction. In working towards these goals, each school should be committed to cooperation among the teachers including linkage of all subjects, with the partial inclusion program where special needs pupils leave the mainstream classroom to receive special support services located on site, so that effective instruction can be offered.

- d. Regarding pupils with disabilities or special needs, each school should collaborate with families, the local community, and institutions dealing with medical care, welfare assistance, healthcare promotion, work training, etc., and in order to provide educational support to the pupils from a long-term perspective, they should be committed to designing and utilizing individual education support plans, and when giving instruction in the subjects, should ascertain the circumstances of individual pupils accurately and be committed to designing and utilizing an individual syllabus. In particular, for pupils enrolled in special needs classes and pupils receiving a partial inclusion program where special needs pupils leave the mainstream classroom to receive special support services located on site, each school should ascertain the circumstances of individual pupils accurately, design and utilize effectively individual education support plans and individual syllabuses.
- (2) Adaptation to school life by pupils who have returned to Japan from overseas, and Japanese language instruction for pupils who have difficulty acquiring Japanese language
    - a. Each school should help pupils who have returned to Japan from overseas, etc. to adapt to school life and provide proper instruction such as utilizing their life experience in foreign countries.
    - b. For pupils who have difficulty acquiring Japanese language each school should devise instructional contents and methods tailored to the circumstances of individual pupils in an organized and systematic way. In particular, for Japanese language instruction in a partial inclusion program each school should be committed to cooperation among the teachers and to effective instruction by designing plans for instruction individually.
- (3) Considerations for non-attendance pupils
    - a. For non-attendance pupils at school should cooperate with guardians and related institutions, obtain the advice or support of experts in psychology and welfare assistance, and from the perspective of aiming for social independence should provide information tailored to the circumstances of individual pupils and offer other necessary support.
    - b. In the case of forming a special curriculum recognized by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for pupils who have been absent from elementary school for a significant period and are recognized to be

continuing to be absent, each school should form a curriculum giving consideration to the circumstances of the pupils, and be committed to improving and devising teaching methods and teaching systems such as individual or group-specific learning, etc.

## V. CAUTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL OPERATION

### 1 Improvement of the curriculum and school assessment

- a. Each school should be committed to ensuring that under the policy of the school principal the school staff divide their roles properly based on the division of school duties, cooperate with each other, and carry out curriculum management utilizing the features of each school. Furthermore, each school should take care to implement the school assessment carried out by each school taking into account the fact that formation, implementation and improvement of the curriculum will be the core of the educational activities and school operation while linking it to curriculum management.
- b. When forming and implementing the curriculum, each school should link it to the overall plan of the school in each area, including the school public health plan, the school safety plan, the overall plan for guidance concerning diet and nutrition, the school basic policies to prevent bullying, etc. while taking care to ensure that effective instruction is provided.

### 2 Cooperation with families, the local community, and other schools

Consideration should be given to the following items when engaged in formation and implementation of the curriculum:

- a. In order for each school to achieve its objectives, it should deepen cooperation and joint initiatives with families and the local community; for example obtaining the cooperation of families and people in the local community to arrange the personnel and facilities necessary for the implementation of educational activities in accordance with the circumstances of the school and the local community. Furthermore, each school should establish opportunities for exchanges across generations in the local community, such as with the elderly and between children of different ages.
- b. Each school should carry out cooperation and exchanges with other elementary schools, kindergartens, centers for early childhood education and care, nursery schools, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, special needs

schools, and provide pupils with opportunities for exchange and joint learning with disabled preschoolers, pupils, or students, and foster an attitude of living cooperatively while respecting one another.