

2 Schools in Japan

(1) The Japanese Educational System

① Japan's School System

	Matriculation Period	April	April	April	April
Age	4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17 18	19 20 21 22
School	Kindergarten (Day care)	Elementary School (6 years)	Middle School (3 years)	High School	University
	Compulsory Education (9 years)				

- a. Compulsory education is for nine years from April after the child turns 6 through March of age 15. Before compulsory education, most children attend kindergarten or day care. Also, over 97% of children advance to high school (see p. 8).
- b. Japanese schools are of two types: public schools established by national, prefectural and city authorities, and private schools.
- c. During compulsory education (9 years), no tuition is charged for classes. However, it is necessary to pay various fees (such as school lunch fees). Public kindergartens, day care, high schools and universities each charge their own tuition and other fees. Private schools also charge tuition.
- d. For elementary and middle school, students attend the designated school in their area.
 - ✂ This is called a school district (*gaku* or *tsuugaku*).
 - ✂ Except under special circumstances, a student's school district cannot be changed.
- e. In elementary school, teachers at each grade level teach most or all subjects. Middle schools use a subject system (with teachers who specialize in each subject area).

The School Year for Shizuoka City Elementary and Middle Schools

Month													
Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March		
Students enter school and change grade levels				Summer Vacation					Winter Vacation		Grade level advancement Graduation		Spring Vacation
First Term							Second Term						

- f. The school year begins in April and ends in March. Schools in Shizuoka City follow a two-term system consisting of a first term (*zenki*) and second term (*kouki*). The spring term lasts until mid-October and includes the summer break, while the fall term lasts from mid-October through March, including the winter break.
- g. At the end of both spring and fall term, each child is given a report card (*tsuushinhyou*) from the school. The report card notes the child's performance in school (progress, behavior). Performance is evaluated based on three grade levels (five levels for middle school; see p. 28).

② School Fees

Public schools do not charge tuition, but they do require parents to pay various fees as explained below.

Required Fees

※These examples are for elementary and middle school. The amount and name of each fee will vary from school to school.

PTA Member Fee	···funds the activities of school committees led mainly by parents, such as the safety committee, the health committee, and the adult education committee.
Annual Fee	···covers the cost of materials used at school.
Children's Fee (elementary school) / Student Fee (middle school)	···funds the activities of student committees (such as the greenery committee, and the bulletin committee).
Lunch Fee	···covers the cost of meals that students eat at school.
Grade Level Fund	···helps cover the cost of school trips and outings.

Collection of Fees

This will vary from school to school, but most schools use one of the following methods:

- An account is opened at a bank specified by the school, and fees are withdrawn every three or six months;
- Moneys are put in a special envelope and given to children to take to school.