

**Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene
Environment in Facilities Aimed Exclusively at
Educating Foreign Children (so-called “schools for
foreign students”)**

**Interim Report
(Tentative Translation)**

August 2021

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Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment in Facilities Aimed Exclusively at Educating Foreign Children (so-called “schools for foreign students”)	
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Results of holding the Advisory Committees	

1. Introduction

Since countermeasures against COVID-19 are necessary at schools, the facilities aimed exclusively at educating foreign children (hereinafter referred to as “schools for foreign students”) are also required to take countermeasures against COVID-19.

Under these circumstances, so as to ensure the health of all children residing in Japan, and to realize a harmonious society inclusive of foreign nationals, and to keep people safe, it is also necessary to ensure the health and hygiene at schools for foreign students.

For this reason, the government also states in the “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” decided in June 2021 that necessary measures will be taken based on the considerations of the Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment in Schools for Foreign Students¹.

In addition, the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) agreed to by all the Member States at the 2015 United Nations Summit set 17 universal goals in order to realize a sustainable and better society where “leave no one behind”. Among them, Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) states that “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, and it is also required throughout the world that all people, regardless of nationality or country of origin, be ensured the health and hygiene.

Based on these domestic and international trends, from June 2021, the “Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment in Facilities Aimed Exclusively at Educating Foreign Children (so-called ‘schools for foreign students’)” (hereinafter referred to as the “Advisory Committee”) was held, at which a decision was made that while utilizing the knowledge of operators of schools for foreign students, the local governments, NPOs and other stakeholders as well as that of health and hygiene specialists, the Advisory Committee will give consideration to the responses to the various issues relating to the health and hygiene of schools for foreign students including countermeasures against COVID-19.

¹ The “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (decided by the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals in June 2021) stated “as measures against COVID-19 in facilities aimed exclusively at educating foreign children (hereinafter referred to as ‘schools for foreign students’), information in plain Japanese and multilingual information will be provided using websites and e-newsletters, and necessary measures will be taken in FY2021 while considering the actual situations of the health management of children attending schools for foreign students and the appropriate involvement of the national government and local governments in ensuring the health and hygiene of such children and based on the considerations of the Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment in Schools for Foreign Students”.

2. Current situation

(1) Situation of Schools for foreign students

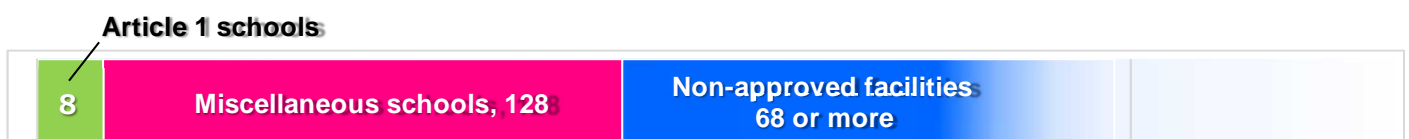
Schools for foreign students are facilities aimed exclusively at educating foreign children, which are the schools stipulated in Article 1 of the School Education Act (hereinafter referred to as “Article 1 schools”), the miscellaneous schools that have been approved by the prefectural governor based on Article 134 of the School Education Act, and the facilities that have not been approved (hereinafter referred to as “non-approved facilities”).

According to the fact-finding survey of private schools, there are 128 schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school, in which 26,857 children are enrolled (as of May 2020). Most of them are founded by (quasi) school corporations, but they may also be founded by stock companies, public interest incorporated foundations, general incorporated foundations, etc.

The overall picture of the non-approved facilities is not clear, but the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been notified of the existence of 30 facilities that were reported by the prefectures in the survey (as of May 2020), 26 facilities (as of July 2020, those not reported by the prefectures), 6 facilities approved by the Brazilian government (those not reported by the prefectures), and 7 facilities registered in the e-newsletters for schools for foreign students.

According to the “Results of the Survey on the Status of School Enrollment of Foreign Children (finalized numbers)” compiled by MEXT in March 2020, foreign children of school age (equivalent to elementary school students and upper secondary school students), the number of children in the Basic Resident Registers is 123,830, and the number of foreign children who may be out of school or are not confirmed the status of school enrollment is 19,471².

<Reference> Composition of schools for foreign students



² According to the survey, the number of foreign children who are confirmed the status of school enrollment is 5,023. It is presumable that 19,471 foreign children who may be out of school or are not confirmed the status of school enrollment include the children attending schools for foreign students.

(2) Efforts to support schools for foreign students

MEXT is taking the following measures to support schools for foreign students.

(i) In principle, exemption of corporate tax, income tax, etc.

In principle, schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school (excluding those are founded by stock companies, etc.) are exempt from having to pay corporate tax, income tax, etc.

(ii) Tax incentive of donation for designated donation / specified public-service promotion corporations

The following measures apply to schools for foreign students approved as a miscellaneous school that meet certain requirements.

- Expansion of the limits on deductive expenses for donations from corporations
- Income deduction for donations from individuals

(iii) Notification of flexible handling of approval of miscellaneous school and others

In June 2015, MEXT notified each prefecture in the notification of “Promoting approval of establishment of miscellaneous schools for schools for foreign students such as international schools (request)” that requires to positively consider efforts such as accommodating of the flexible requirements relating to renting school grounds and buildings and assets in approval of establishment of miscellaneous schools for schools for foreign students.

(3) Efforts for measures against COVID-19 in schools for foreign students

Since February 2020, MEXT has taken the following measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools for foreign students.

(i) Issuance of notifications regarding measures against COVID-19 similar to those for Article 1 schools to schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school (addressed to the departments of the prefectural governments in charge of miscellaneous schools) (from February 2020 onwards)

(ii) Support for schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school to purchase health and hygiene products for measures against COVID-19 (November 2020)

(iii) Establishment of a website geared towards schools for foreign students providing information on countermeasures against COVID-19 in plain Japanese (November 2020)

(iv) Distribution of e-newsletters that provide information to schools for foreign students, including non-approved facilities, in both Japanese and English (from November 2020 onwards)

(v) Creation and posting on the website of multilingual versions of the “COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools” and distributed it to schools for foreign students including non-approved facilities (from December 2020 onwards)

(vi) Notifying schools for foreign students including non-approved facilities that applications for workplace vaccinations for COVID-19 have started (June 2021)


(viii) Conducting the survey on the distribution of the simple antigen kits to schools for foreign students (excluding courses equivalent to kindergarten, elementary and lower secondary schools) including non-approved facilities, and distribution of the simple antigen kits, based on the results of the survey (from June 2021 onwards)

3) Limpeza e desinfecção

○ Onde limpar e desinfetar diariamente

- Uma vez por dia, limpar as superfícies que são muito tocadas (maçanetas, corrimãos, tomadas, etc.) com um pano limpo umedecido com água e em seguida, desinfetar com um pano ou papel embebido em desinfetante.
- Para os objetos de uso compartilhado, como os utensílios de limpeza e faxina, ao invés de desinfetar estes objetos a cada uso, orientar os alunos para que lavem as mãos antes e depois de usá-los.

(Referência) Imagens de alunos limpando as carteiras no final da aula




○ Desinfecção quando surge uma pessoa infectada

- Caso seja confirmada a infecção de um aluno, professor ou colaborador no ambiente escolar, delimitar a área de atividade da pessoa infectada e desinfetar todos os objetos suspeitos de contaminação (superfícies e objetos tocados pela pessoa infectada) com etanol ou desinfetante de hipoclorito de sódio a 0,05%.
- O tempo de sobrevivência do vírus nas superfícies dos objetos depende do tipo do objeto, porém é dito que os vírus podem persistir nas superfícies de 24 a 72 horas, portanto em locais onde não possam ser desinfetados, proibir a entrada e tomar outras medidas adequadas, considerando o tempo de sobrevivência do vírus.

(3) Aumento da resistência

Orientar os alunos a manter um “sono suficiente”, “exercícios moderados” e uma “alimentação equilibrada” para aumentar a imunidade.



6

The Portuguese version of the “COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines”

(4) Survey on actual situations of the health and hygiene environment of schools for foreign students

The regulations for Article 1 schools are not applied when it comes to ensuring health and hygiene in schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school and non-approved facilities, and they are treated in the same way as general business offices.

With the recent spread of COVID-19 infection, outbreaks of persons who have tested positive and clusters were also observed in the children and teachers of schools for foreign students.

Based on this situation, a survey was conducted on the health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students in order to ascertain the basic information necessary for examining their health and hygiene.

The survey period, survey targets and main survey items were as follows.

- Survey period: April 23 (Fri.) to May 24 (Mon.), 2021
- Languages offered in: Japanese, English and Portuguese
- Survey targets: Schools for foreign students meeting any of the following conditions (161 schools)
 - (i) Schools for foreign students approved as a miscellaneous school by the prefectural government
 - (ii) Schools for foreign students that have not been approved as a miscellaneous school but whose existence is known by the prefectural government
 - (iii) Member schools of the Japan Council of International Schools (JCIS)
 - (iv) Brazilian schools authorized by the Embassy of Brazil in Japan
- Methods of conducting the survey: For schools for foreign students falling in categories (i) and (ii) above, the survey was distributed and collected through the department of prefectural governments in charge of miscellaneous schools. For schools for foreign schools in categories (iii) and (iv) above for which categories (i) and (ii) above are not applicable, MEXT directly distributed and collected the survey.
- Number of responses (response rate): 80 facilities (50%)
 - Number of miscellaneous schools: 72 facilities (58%)
 - Number of non-approved facilities: 8 facilities (22%)
- Main survey items:
 - (i) Measures against COVID-19
 - Status of response measures from March 2, 2020 when all schools were closed nationwide until around June 2020
 - Status of school operations at the time of the survey (as of April 23, 2021)
 - Utilization status of information provided by the national and local governments for countermeasures against COVID-19
 - (ii) Measures for ensuring general health and hygiene
 - Existence of school infirmary
 - Assignment of Nursing teacher
 - Assignment of school doctor
 - Conducting of health checks for students
 - Establishment of standards for hygiene management at school
 - Conducting of health checks for teachers and staff
 - Entry by school in private insurance system such as accident insurance, etc.
 - Other measures for the health and hygiene of students, teachers and staff carried out by the school

Main survey results are as follows

(i) Measures against COVID-19

a) Response to the request for all facilities to temporarily close in March 2020

68 facilities temporarily closed, but 12 facilities did not.

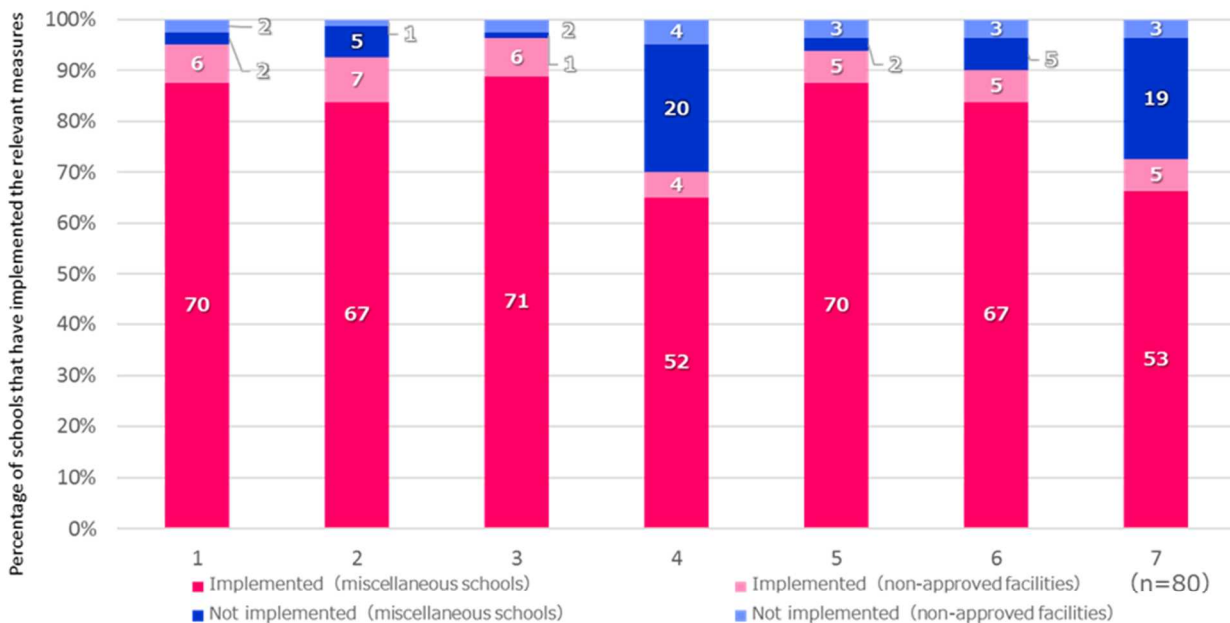
b) Measures against COVID-19 taken by each school for foreign students

Over 90% of the facilities took countermeasures, including appropriately ascertaining health condition of students, constant ventilation of classrooms, and preventing dispersal of airborne droplets when drinking and eating.

On the other hand, in regards to school activities requiring close contact among students such as group work and physical education, the proportion of the facilities taking measures was relatively low at around 70%.

Moreover, disparities were seen between miscellaneous schools and non-approved facilities in the proportion of carrying out countermeasures regarding some of the items.

Situation of countermeasures against COVID-19 taken by each school for foreign students



1. Appropriate monitoring of health status, such as temperature check before going to school or work
2. Creating an environment in which it is easy for teachers and staff to take time off and see a doctor when they are sick
3. Constant ventilation in classrooms, etc.
4. Suspension of activities that bring students into close proximity, such as experiments and observations in science, chorus and wind instrument performances in music, collaborative work and appreciation in art, cooking practice in home economics, physical education, and group work in all other subjects
5. Preventing the spread of droplets in all eating and drinking situations in the school (refraining from talking, seating separately, etc.)
6. Temporarily restriction of high-risk extracurricular activities based on the infection situation in the area
7. Implementing measures such as limiting the number of passengers, ventilation, and health check before boarding, if the school owns a school bus that students use to get to and from the school

Measures taken by each school for foreign students against COVID-19 (open responses, overview)

- Requiring all staff and students to wear masks at all times
- Restrictions on entry of parents or guardians and outside persons into the school
- Requiring all people coming to the school to have temperature taken and to use hand sanitizer
- Requiring new visitors to the school to fill out short questionnaire regarding their recent activities
- Paying attention to activities requiring close contact among students
- Suspension of elective courses in order to stop exchanges with other classes
- Prevention of contact among students of different classes, grades (including postponement of whole-school events)
- Disinfecting of classroom, facilities, and common spaces
- Increasing places to wash hands
- Setting of automotive air purifiers on school buses
- Taking temperatures twice daily, once on arriving at school, and the other during lunch break
- Making submission of daily health observation card mandatory

c) Utilization status of support provided by the national government for countermeasures against COVID-19

Around 60% of the facilities were aware of notifications from the national government, but just around 40% utilized subsidies and around 20% gained information from the e-newsletters.

On the other hand, around 10% of the facilities responded that they did not utilize support from the national government, and the majority of them answered that they "did not know about the government support."

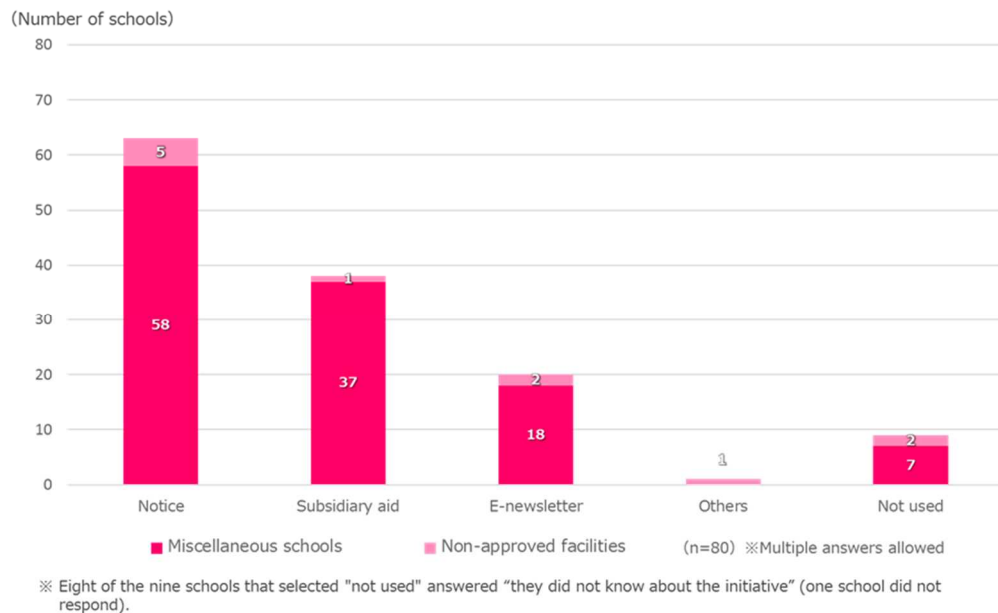
d) Utilization of support provided by the local governments for countermeasures against COVID-19

Around 80% of the facilities utilized information provided by the local governments, around 50% received materials and financial support, and around 40% received guidance and recommendations.

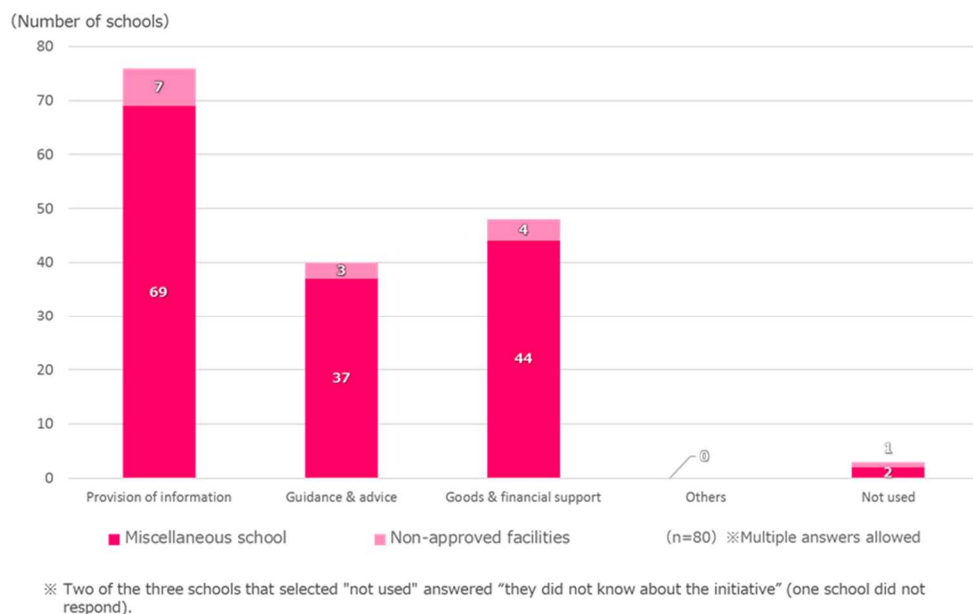
A greater proportion of the facilities, whether miscellaneous school or non-approved facilities, relatively utilized support from the local governments more than that provided by the national government.

Nevertheless, 3 facilities did not utilize support from the local governments, responding that they "did not know about the local government support." The number of facilities which answered "never utilized any services" and "did not know about any of these efforts" about support from the local government was smaller than that for the same question asked about support from the national government. This indicates that in many cases the facilities had closer contact with the information provided by the local governments than that provided by the national government.

The number of facilities that answered "utilized any services" about the national government support



The number of facilities that answered "utilized any services" about the local government support

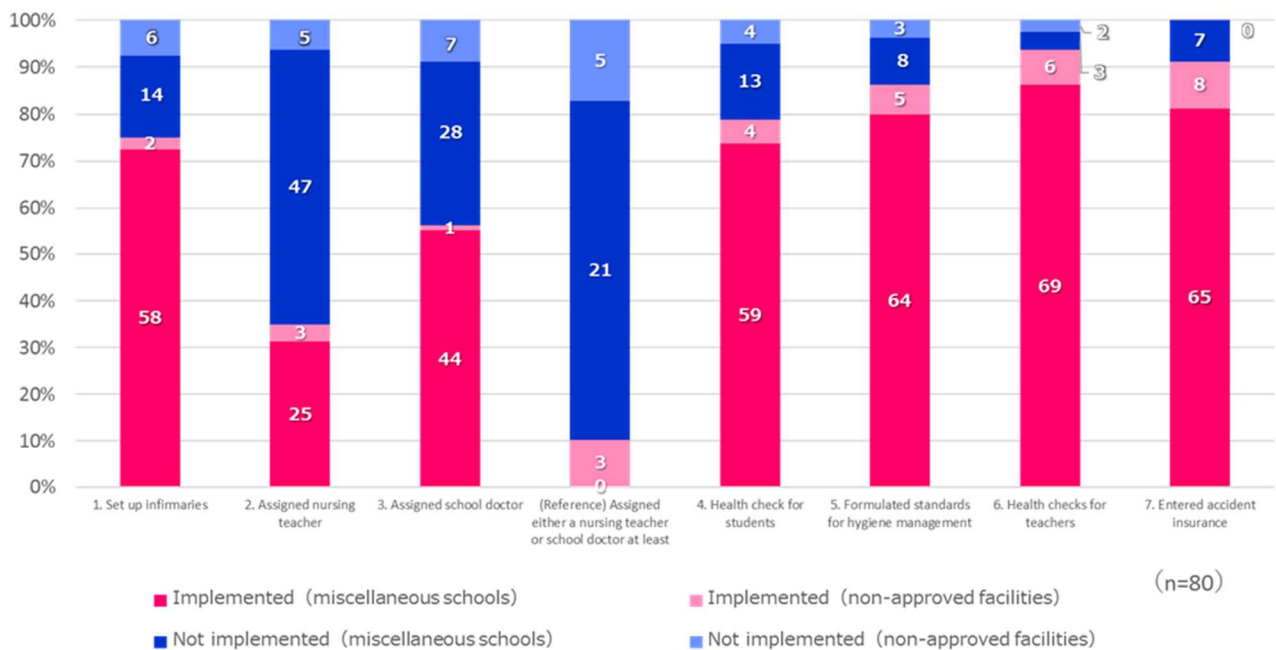


(ii) Measures for general health and hygiene

Around 90% of the facilities were carrying out health checks for teachers and staff, entered accident insurance programs targeting students, and formulated the standards for hygiene management. In addition, around 80% were providing health checks for students.

Around 70% of the facilities responded that they had set up infirmaries, and less than 70% had assigned either a Nursing teacher or a school doctor at least. In particular a Nursing teacher was assigned in only around 30% of the facilities.

Measures for general health and hygiene at each school for foreign students



Efforts for ensuring health and hygiene carried out by each school for foreign students (open responses, overview)

- Thorough implementation of hand washing/sanitizing by providing hand disinfectants, disinfection gel, and soap
- Disinfecting of desks, doors, entrance, school bus, etc.
- Providing classes and lectures on health and hygiene
- Distribution and wearing of masks and face shields
- Temperature-taking of students, teachers and staff, and visitors
- Restrictions on entry of parents or guardians and outside persons into school grounds
- Thorough ventilation of school facilities
- Placing of protective shields
- Conducting of meetings related to health and hygiene by hygiene committee, etc. (targeting teachers and staff)
- Raising awareness of health and hygiene through bulletin boards
- Prohibiting, in principle, talking during lunch time

- Formulation of guidelines for absences and staying at home
- Daily confirmation of health condition
- Refraining from going outside other than for necessity
- Providing health checks at school enrollment
- Conducting PCR and antigen tests (relating to COVID-19)

(5) Main issues emerging from survey

- In more cases, both miscellaneous schools and non-approved facilities relatively utilized information and other support provided by the local governments rather than from the national government regarding measures against COVID-19 at schools for foreign students. Because of that, cooperation with the local governments, from which schools for foreign students get information more closely, is important for these schools to develop effective countermeasures.
- In regards to measures for ensuring general health and hygiene, less than 70% of the schools for foreign students have arranged for either a Nursing teacher or a school doctor to be available to them. In particular schools for foreign students which have a Nursing teacher remain around 30%. Measures for supporting the improvement of the normal health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students are necessary.
- It is necessary to consider from a long-range perspective how information on non-approved facilities that did not respond to the survey can be obtained and what are the most effective ways to provide information.
- In order to make the communication of information through notifications and other means more effective in the future, further surveys need to be conducted to ascertain how schools for foreign students take concrete measures, utilizing the information obtained from notifications and other sources.
- Since compared with Article 1 schools, the percentage of having a school infirmary, a Nursing teacher, and a school doctor is relatively low in schools for foreign students, it is important to consider appropriate measures, taking into consideration the special characteristics of schools for foreign students.

3. Issues

3 main issues have been identified from the discussions at the Advisory Committee and the results of the survey described in 2 (4) above: (1) issues related to monitoring schools for foreign students and the children attending schools for foreign students, (2) issues that arise when taking measures for the health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students, (3) issues related to the support system when taking measures for the health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students.

Based on these three issues, the discussions at the Advisory Committee are summarized below.

(1) Issues related to monitoring schools for foreign students and the children attending schools for foreign students

- In the guidelines in which MEXT indicates the items for the local governments to develop in order to promote the school enrolment of foreign children and monitor the school enrollment status, the importance of collaboration with boards of education and departments of the local governments (department for Resident Basic Register, department for international relations, department for welfare, and department for miscellaneous schools, etc.), and NPOs and other support groups³. It is conceivable that information on non-approved facilities can be better ascertained through monitoring children in such collaboration with many organizations.
- Since local government departments in charge of international relations have means for liaising with foreign communities, it could be possible for them to ascertain the situation of foreign children through these contacts. Even if it is difficult for MEXT and boards of education to ascertain the situation of foreign children, it is still possible to consider how they can support the school health environment by utilizing the relationships between international relations departments and foreign communities.
- It is also conceivable to ascertain children through monitoring the school enrollment status, immigration records and other sources.
- It is important to accurately ascertain the administrative system and operation of each school for foreign students.
- Further consideration on ways of ascertaining and responding to non-approved facilities.
- It is also important to ascertain the situation of children who quit Article 1 public schools because they cannot fit in the surrounding environment of such schools due to differences in language and culture and are currently attending a school for foreign students.

³ Regarding to monitoring the school enrollment status of foreign children, the “Guidelines for the Promotion of School Enrollment of Foreign Children and Identification of Their School Enrollment Status” (issued by MEXT on July 1, 2020) says that the boards of education need to promote the initiatives that “ascertain and manage integrally the school enrollment status of all foreign children for making the registration of school-age children in collaboration with local government departments (department for Resident Basic Register, department for international relations, department for welfare, etc.), and NPOs and other groups supporting foreign children”.

(2) Issues that arise when taking measures for the health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students

(i) Underlying principles of the health and hygiene environmental standards based on the situations of schools for foreign students

- The School Health and Safety Act provides for school health and school safety in relation to Article 1 schools in order to stipulate specific provisions corresponding to parts of provisions of the School Education Act, and is not intended to apply to any educational facilities that are not placed in the Act. In addition, the contents of the School Health and Safety Act contains that “schools must formulate a plan on health-related issues to maintain and improve the mental and physical health of students and teachers” (in Article 5), and covers a wide range of issues that requires expert knowledge. That is why, the Act is applied *mutatis mutandis* to specialized training colleges which are educational facilities which have a certain scale and level, but miscellaneous schools are not applicable. According to these points, it is difficult for the School Health and Safety Act to be uniformly applied to schools for foreign students. However it is desirable for schools for foreign students to take measures according those of Article 1 schools, such as health and hygiene measures including health checks implemented as much as possible, considering the characteristics of schools for foreign students and separating from the framework based on the School Health and Safety Act applied to Article 1 schools.
- Upon implementation of countermeasures against COVID-19 at schools for foreign students, it could be effective for each school to utilize in accordance with their situations the “COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools” updated by MEXT.
- For promoting arrangements for schools for foreign students to have a school infirmary, a Nursing teacher, a school doctor, a school dentist, and a school pharmacist, it should be clarified under what kind of system these arrangements are specifically made. Moreover, if such arrangements are difficult, it is important to consider what kinds of alternatives are feasible.

(ii) Obtaining appropriate information

- Considering the differences between overseas and Japanese culture is important.
- It is necessary to ascertain the needs of schools for foreign students as to what kind of information they need in order to deliver appropriate information.

- It is necessary to consider more effective ways of providing information, such as using existing materials on health and hygiene for Article 1 schools and ensuring that sufficient information is delivered to non-approved facilities.
- With regard to channels for providing information to schools for foreign students, it is important to ensure the effective utilization of various channels for providing information such as word of mouth between parents or guardians, the foreign communities and companies which have a lot of foreign nationals as well as a channel for providing information from the local governments to schools for foreign students. In addition, Building a framework to communicate to foreign nationals health and hygiene-related information by translating it in an easy-to-understand format is also important.
- For countermeasures against COVID-19, taking measures at home is also important, but in some cases, foreign parents or guardians are in the situation where it is difficult to obtain information. Thus, it is important to positively provide the parents or guardians with health and hygiene-related information.
- It is good to have summarized and translated the COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools into English, but it is also necessary to provide the additional detailed information useful for daily life, such as how to dilute disinfectant spray, which are translated into English.
- As there are cases when the Japanese language hinders the smooth management of schools for foreign students, increasing the number of staff who can speak Japanese may help schools develop effective countermeasures when schools gather and exchange information related to health and hygiene and communicate with the local authorities. For this reason, Japanese language education for teachers and staff at schools for foreign students is also important.
- Schools for foreign students do not necessarily receive detailed COVID-19 related information from their home countries, and schools for foreign students which have been approved as a miscellaneous school can obtain information from the local governments or other means, while non-approved facilities are at risk of being isolated from information as they can not necessarily receive information from the local governments.

(iii) Issues of mental care and others

i) Mental care and other issues

- If an infection case is confirmed at a school for foreign students, it is important to appropriately correspond to mental healthcare and defamation so that the school does not become isolated within the local community.

- Nursing teachers are deeply involved in various issues including health issues faced by children, and are anticipated to play a crucial role in foreign children's mental care and the early detection of mental and physical issues.
- There are also children who need special supports at schools for foreign students, and they may face mental issues and difficulties establishing identity in puberty from language and cultural background. Thus, the roles which clinical psychologists play in supporting such children is important.
- Existing manuals for Article 1 schools could be translated and used for mental care at schools for foreign students.

ii) COVID-19 issues

- There are limits to the measures taken only by schools for foreign students in order to appropriately deal with COVID-19.
- Countermeasures against COVID-19 for school buses are also an important issue.
- Initiatives need to be considered for actively disseminating information on the efforts of facilities that are appropriately taking the countermeasures against COVID-19 and on the efforts of the local governments taking steps to raise awareness, issue alerts, and stop discrimination in order to prevent them from being isolated from the local communities due to discrimination or reputational damage when foreign nationals are infected by COVID-19.

(3) Issues related to the support system when taking measures for the health and hygiene environmental at schools for foreign students

(i) Relationships between the local governments and schools for foreign students

- There are large disparities in the local governments and in educational organizations among the carrying out of health and hygiene measures for schools for foreign students and for foreign children. It is possible that the disparities will widen only in the voluntary dissemination of information by the local governments and requests for their supports by schools for foreign students. It will be important to consider what kinds of measures can be taken to rectify these disparities.
- It may be difficult in some cases to build a continuous relationship with the persons in charge at the local governments, since there are frequent personnel changes at administrative departments. Moreover, the level of understanding and knowledge of the local government people in charge have a great impact on the effectiveness of measures.
- In order to build good and continuous relations between the local governments and schools for foreign students under their jurisdiction, building support systems under the cooperation between related departments in the local governments, providing supports anticipating the needs of these schools, and daily contact and exchanges in person are effective.

- In order to assign and promote the utilization of primary care doctors, some local governments have surveyed whether collaboration between schools for foreign students and medical institutions providing primary care doctors for such schools goes beyond just the provision of information, issued notifications for promoting bridge-building between these schools for foreign children and medical institutions, provided lists of medical institutions offering multilingual care and assistance to schools for foreign students and households of foreign nationals for wide use.
- In some cases, schools for foreign students may not be able to obtain information or technical advice from public health centers. For this reason, it is also necessary to take measures being aware of the community health framework in order to ensure the health of foreign children and schools for foreign students.

(ii) Perspectives of wide range support for schools for foreign students

- Since many children go to school across prefectures and municipalities, towns and villages, it will be important to consider administration and perspectives over wide areas.
- If many children go to school from a wide area, it is necessary to reconsider whether support from only the locality of the schools for foreign students is sufficient regarding measures for providing primary care doctors and other issues.
- It is important to provide support and disseminate information through cooperation with not only the local authorities but also stakeholders, including NPOs working for foreign nationals and children's health and hygiene, private companies employing large numbers of foreign nationals, the foreign communities, etc.

(iii) Others

- In some cases, supports from the government may exceed the administrative capability of the receiving schools. Accordingly, it is important to recognize the actual situations at each school for foreign students.
- In order to achieve better health and hygiene environments, the idea that government administrations and schools for foreign students jointly develop relevant measures is important.
- At first, liaising rather than only assistance is necessary. Thus, ascertaining with which organizations should be collaborated is vital. In addition, it is important to consider that schools for foreign students that did not respond in the recent survey regarding the health and hygiene and the local governments develop exchanges and then how the two sides cooperate. It is also important to consider how they can cooperate together through specific matters like integrated ascertaining the school enrollment status of foreign children by the registers of school-age children.
- While prefectural governments have the authority to approve schools for foreign students as a miscellaneous school, many also have deep ties with municipalities, towns, and villages.

It is important both to raise awareness of persons in charge at the local governments for co-creation with schools for foreign children to solve issues and to promote understanding of schools for foreign students about the local governments.

- Improving the normal health and hygiene at schools for foreign students is important. Health checks including for staff at schools and health checks by school doctors making rounds, etc., including support in Japanese should be considered.
- It is necessary to consider what schools for foreign students work on their own to improve their health and hygiene environment.

4. Future direction

With the opportunity provided by the identifying of issues through the recent survey, it is necessary to thoroughly identify and consider methods for ascertaining the actual situations of the health and hygiene environment at schools for foreign students and ways to support these schools in order to prevent COVID-19 from expanding and to improve their health and hygiene environment.

Moreover, based on the current situation of schools for foreign students outlined in section 2 above and the issues they are facing outlined in section 3 above, it is necessary to promptly develop countermeasures that can immediately be put into place while considering various viewpoints, including the special characteristics of schools for foreign students.

When taking countermeasures, it is essential for the government not to just give one-way support to schools for foreign students but for the government and these schools to develop jointly measures (3 (3) (iii)), and for them to collaborate with Nursing teachers, clinical psychologists and other experts to deal with a variety of issues, including mental care and measures against slandering (3 (2) (iii) i) and ii)).

Based on these perspectives, the future direction of measures has been clarified, categorized into (1) items for which immediate measures should be taken, and (2) items for which measures should be considered for the future as below.

(1) Items that should be responded immediately

(i) Survey on further monitoring the actual situations

- The survey in 2 (4) above was limited in the range of survey items. Thus, it is necessary to ascertain more detailed information on the actual situations and needs of the health and hygiene environments at schools for foreign students through local surveys conducted in close collaboration with the local governments and others.

- Since the response rate for the survey was low at around 50 percent, it is necessary to ascertain the situation at schools for foreign students that did not respond to the survey. In particular the system for disseminating information to non-approved schools should be prepared.

(ii) Appropriate dissemination of information

- It is important to simultaneously take initiatives to establish a nationwide liaison system for the dissemination of information to schools for foreign students (3 (3) (ii)), set up and manage websites and SNS accounts for schools for foreign students, and provide multilingual translations of materials (3 (2) (ii)).
- It is necessary to establish a system that enables the dissemination of information not only through the local governments but also through a variety of stakeholders such as NPOs, private companies and the foreign communities (3(3) (ii)).
- Particularly in regards to multilingual translations, it should be possible, for example, to promptly translate not only an outline of the COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools but also specific information that can be utilized on a daily basis and provide them to schools for foreign students.

(iii) Detailed and effective supports

- In order to improve the health and hygiene environments of schools for foreign students, the local governments and schools for foreign students need to build relations each other and develop systems for providing necessary support (3 (3) (i)).
- Some prefectural and municipal governments have developed s certain level of collaboration systems with schools for foreign students. For this reason, by supporting these efforts and expanding them nationwide, it is important to increase examples of best practices tailored to the actual situations of each local government and school for foreign students, and to accumulate the necessary knowhow for improving health and hygien environments.
- Among the schools for foreign students, some have difficulty building relations with particular local governments because they accept children from a wide area. In order to promote measures for improving the health and hygiene environment in these schools, a nationwide liaison system needs to be established that function both to provide consultations on health and hygiene and to disseminate information, which will lead to the accumulation of necessary knowhow (3 (3) (ii)).

(2) Items to consider in the future

- As described in 4 (1) above, feasible measures will promptly be taken. On the other hand, in regards to items that require institutional response such as specific ways to develop standards for the health and hygiene environments of schools for foreign students, it is

conceivable that there are cases when one-size-fits-all measures are not appropriate, since the establishment form of schools for foreign students, the scale of their facilities, and the cultures of foreign countries and Japan differ, and the range of their children's ages is wide. Moreover, it is expected that a certain amount of time is necessary to develop specialists who can smoothly communicate across the barriers of language. Because of that, consideration of these measures need to be promoted from a medium-term perspective while carrying out collaboration with local government departments in charge of health and hygiene, relations with foreign residents, and so on, depending on the contents.

- Because of that, it is important to gather and accumulate best practices and knowhow described in 4 (1) above and proceed with the consideration of concrete measures based on them.
- It is also necessary to continue to examine the issues indicated in “3. Issues” above from a medium- to long-term perspective.