

Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment in Facilities Aimed Exclusively at Educating Foreign Children (so-called “Schools for Foreign Students”) Summary of the Final Report (Tentative Translation)

December 2021

1. Background

- It is important to ensure health and hygiene at schools for foreign students to secure health of all children residing in Japan and to keep safe of the people.
- For that, members for local governments, school operators, support organizations, health and hygiene professionals discussed current situations, issues and future measures for improving health and hygiene of schools for foreign students, including countermeasures against COVID-19.

2. Current situations

- **Efforts for measures against COVID-19 in schools for foreign students**
 - Supports for schools for foreign students that have been approved as a miscellaneous school to purchase health and hygiene products
 - Distribution of e-newsletters; multilingual translation of the “COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and Guidelines for Schools”
 - Notification of applications for workplace vaccinations for COVID-19; distribution of the simple antigen test kits
- **Survey on current situations of the health and hygiene environment in schools for foreign students**
 - Questionnaires and interviews targeting the schools have been conducted to survey the health and hygiene situations at schools for foreign students.
 - The questionnaires surveyed countermeasures against COVID-19 and for general health and hygiene at the schools. 80 facilities (50% response rate) replied the questionnaire.
 - The interviews were an additional survey for local governments and NPOs as well as schools for foreign students to grasp their issues and needs more detail.

<Reference> Composition of schools for foreign students

Schools stipulated in Article 1 of the School Education Act (“Article 1 schools”); miscellaneous schools that have been approved by prefectural governors; facilities that have not been approved (“non-approved facilities”)

Article 1 schools, 8

Miscellaneous schools, 126

Non-approved facilities, 89 or more

4. Future direction

(1) Items requiring prompt responses

① Appropriate dissemination of information

- Preparation of systems for the dissemination of information based on the needs of schools for foreign students, such as a multilingual platform enabling the unified dissemination of information.

② Detailed and effective supports

- Preparation of systems for relevant organizations, including regional medical institutions and support organizations, to develop ties with, and support for, schools for foreign students.
- The accumulation of knowhow through support for the initiatives taken by local governments and the establishment of a nationwide multilingual platform.

③ Promotion of initiatives based on the situations at schools for foreign students

- Conducting of individual consultations by professionals and teacher-training based on the cultural backgrounds of schools for foreign students.

④ Responses to issues related to countermeasures against COVID-19

- Dissemination by the national government of information regarding measures against infectious diseases, and ascertaining the infectious disease situations at, and provision of detailed support to, schools for foreign students by local governments.
- Training and awareness-raising of teachers at the schools and professionals to promote mental health care.

3. Issues

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

- It is difficult to grasp the administrative system and operation of schools for foreign students and grasp children attending the schools.
- In order to monitor schools for foreign students, it is necessary to collaborate with schools, national and local governments and support groups, and to provide information through foreign communities.

(2) Issues related to taking measures for the health and hygiene environment in schools for foreign students

- Regarding the assignment of nursing teachers, implementable systems should be presented in consideration of the financial and personnel situations at schools for foreign students.
- Guidelines for schools for foreign students should be discussed in addition to the promotion of the utilization of existing manuals. Moreover, matters that schools for foreign students should undertake voluntarily and the roles of relevant organizations should be discussed.
- It is important to provide effective information that reflects the needs of schools for foreign students so that sufficient information can also be provided, including the provision of information that considers the cultural backgrounds of the schools and that is presented in multilingual formats, to non-approved facilities.
- The implementation of measures against COVID-19, the provision of mental health care, and appropriate responses against defamation are necessary.

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

- It is necessary for local governments to clarify the departments in charge, and relevant departments in the local community need to collaborate to support schools for foreign students.
- It is necessary to consider a wider geographical perspective, including the utilization of going around and online consultations, in order to support children going to school across prefectures and municipalities.

(2) Items requiring mid- and long-term initiatives

① Showing the direction related to health and hygiene measures at schools for foreign students

- Study on appropriate guidelines for the health and hygiene environment that fit the actual situations at schools for foreign students, and appropriate support systems and collaborations by relevant organizations.
- Collaboration with health departments, etc. at local governments in order to strengthen relations with local medical institutions.

② Improving the capabilities of schools for foreign students to respond to health and hygiene issues

- Building systems for the utilization of health and hygiene professionals.
- Study on systems enabling the conducting of health checks based on collaboration among local governments, NPOs, medical associations, etc.
- Nationwide utilization of knowledge gained through the efforts of local governments and a multilingual platform.