

Management of COVID-19

Japan has experienced 22.7 million cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic which has resulted in 47,133 deaths in a population of almost 126 million. Whilst regrettable, this data is remarkable when compared to many other countries worldwide and the UK in particular. With almost 82% of the population vaccinated with either Moderna or Pfizer, Japan's vaccination rollout continues to lead that of G7 countries. You can read updates on the current situation of COVID-19 in Japan [here](#).

School Protocols

Like most international schools, at the start of the pandemic St. Michael's developed a Distance Learning Policy to support staff, learners and families. However, robust public health protocols have enabled St. Michael's International School to remain fully on campus from June 2020. We have experienced a very limited number of COVID-19 cases in our wider school community.

Over 90% of St. Michael's faculty are fully vaccinated and we encourage all of our staff to have an annual influenza vaccine. St. Michael's currently provides school staff with antigen tests. In addition to maintaining a positive work-life balance, staff are encouraged to be self-aware, to monitor their own mental health and well-being and take appropriate action as needed. Our school nurse is proactive in providing support for staff who may have health concerns and we have partnered with local mental health professionals who can offer support in English.

Currently, Japan's 'yellow -yellow' alert status for COVID-19 makes indoor face masks mandatory for staff and students as are daily general health declarations which include the completion of a daily temperature booklet for students. We continue to operate in 'bubbles' to reduce the number of children together at any one time, particularly at lunchtime and during Friday assembly, but classroom learning takes place pretty much as normal. In 2021 we launched a Health and Wellbeing scheme of learning for primary classes and a school Wellbeing Policy to better support children and staff with their understanding of the importance of wellbeing to learning in school. In October 2021 and 2022 our health and wellbeing initiatives received national awards from TELL Japan.

Visas & Travel

Japan's strict immigration restrictions have finally been lifted and fully vaccinated travellers can now enter without problem. An [online registration system](#) makes transition through Japanese immigration and customs smooth and efficient. This system can be used at Kansai International Airport (KIX.)

Staff vaccinated in Kobe City can apply for a [COVID-19 Vaccine Passport for international travel](#).

Healthcare & Insurance

Educators in Japan are recognised as essential workers; in October 2022 all SMIS staff were offered their fourth omicron booster. Currently, COVID-19 vaccination costs are covered by the Japanese government.

St. Michael's International School is part of the Japanese national healthcare system; School pays 50% of the premiums. Health insurance covers 70% of hospital, clinic and prescription costs and also covers eyes, dental and a comprehensive annual health check-up at the local hospital with English speaking professionals. Currently, health insurance covers 100% of treatment costs for COVID-19. Generally, the standard of healthcare services in Japan is very high; in 2020 Japan was ranked in the list of top 10 countries with the best healthcare in the world according to the Legatum Institute.