

Management of COVID-19

Japan has experienced 1.73 million cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic which has resulted in 18,343 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 80% of the population double vaccinated with either Moderna or Pfizer, Japan's vaccination rollout leads that of the G7 countries. The booster programme will start in December.

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 and all of our staff and faculty have remained healthy so far.

Over 90% of St. Michael's faculty are double vaccinated and we encourage all of our staff to have an annual influenza vaccine. 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, face masks are mandatory for staff and students as are daily general health declarations which include the completion of a daily temperature booklet for students. We 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. This year 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 our health and wellbeing initiatives received a national award from TELL Japan.

Visas & Travel

Whilst Japan has closed its international border to travellers, students and overseas businesses we have been able to secure exceptional travel permission for instructor visas, facilitated by the Japanese government on the understanding that the hiring of the teacher is essential to avoid the suspension of educational activities for our school. Currently, there is still a 10 day quarantine requirement for vaccinated people with visas arriving to Japan; this is pre-planned into the relocation schedule for the successful candidate.

Vaccination certificates for travel were issued in October and an app is expected to be released in the new year. Whilst international travel for Japanese residents is now possible, a 14-day home quarantine period is still required on return to Japan. For vaccinated travellers the quarantine period can be reduced to 10 days. Whilst we anticipate further changes in 2022, this does make international trips more complicated than pre-COVID and is something to take into account when considering Japan as your next destination.

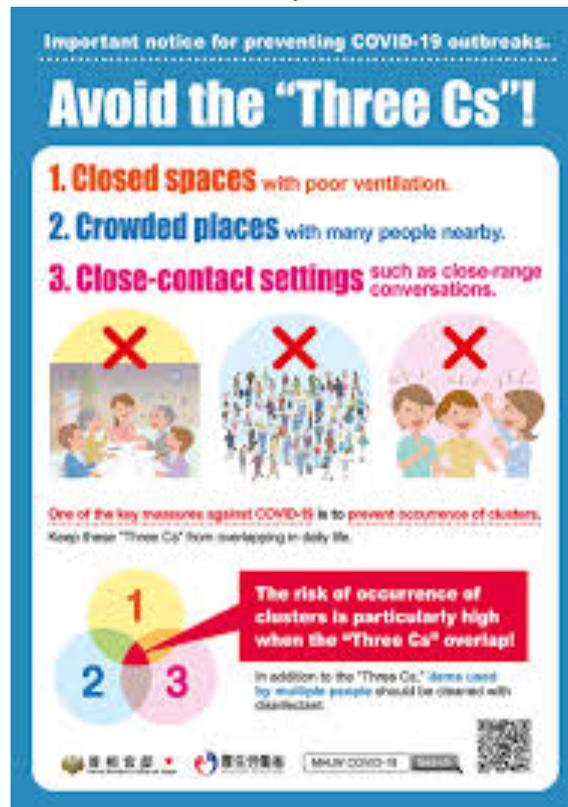
Japan's Management of COVID-19

Japan's approach to the pandemic has been to focus on preventative measures rather than implement measures that excessively affect socio-economic activity. On occasions, travel between prefectures has been discouraged, but generally residents have been able to go about their day-to-day activities relatively unaffected. A tiered lockdown like that seen in the UK has not been implemented in Japan, although there

have been locally announced *State of Emergency* measures put in place at various times. These measures have included:

- *Bars and restaurants requested to close after 8pm and sale of alcohol stopped after 7pm*
- *People requested to avoid non-essential outings after 8pm*
- *Live events limited to 50% of available seating with a maximum of 5,000*
- *Companies encouraged to establish remote working and limit on-site staff by up to 70%*

Japanese residents are encouraged to wear a face mask, observe effective hand hygiene and to avoid the 'Three C's.'



Healthcare & Insurance

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. 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.