



Welcome to Japanese Immersion

ようこそ Youkoso!

The PTA's Japanese Cultural Committee (JCC) welcomes you to Fox Mill Elementary School's Japanese Immersion (JI) Program. **JCC's mission is to serve as a bridge between the school's JI program and the entire Fox Mill Elementary School community.** We integrate Japanese culture and learning activities into the school for the benefit of all students and families. We collaborate with teachers, administrators, and the community at large. We have prepared this booklet to answer many of your questions about the Japanese Immersion (JI) Program.

JCC is an excellent way to meet other families participating in the immersion program. We hope you will join us!

JCC meetings are held monthly at 9:00 AM in the FMES cafeteria. **Our next meeting for the 2022-2023 school year will be on Thursday, October 6th.** Future meeting dates are planned for:

- November 10th
- December 8th
- January 19th
- February 16th
- March 9th
- April 13th
- May 4th
- June 8th

Note: Meeting dates are subject to change and will be announced in the PTA e-newsletter Fox Prints and through the JCC email list.

We will also share opportunities to volunteer via email and will be planning evening and weekend opportunities for parents and family meet ups. **To sign up for the JCC email list, please send an email to jccfoxmill@aol.com.** The JCC emails include information about upcoming JCC events, Japanese cultural events in our local area and other important JCC information. We hope you will join us!

JCC sponsors school events like Japanese Art Week which is a school-wide Japanese art project and Matsuri which is a Japanese children's festival. Our 2023 Matsuri will be held on Friday evening, May 12, 2023, at Rachel Carson Middle School.

We welcome you to the Japanese Immersion Program at FMES and look forward to meeting you. We are always open to suggestions and feedback!

General Information About JI:

All Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) students learn new concepts each year in math, science, and health. Japanese Immersion students learn these concepts in Japanese. They will also learn to read and write in three different types of characters (Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji) and learn about Japanese culture by taking part in traditional events and activities both inside and outside the classroom.

More about the Japanese Cultural Committee (JCC):

JCC is a PTA Committee open to any Fox Mill Elementary School parent. All parent volunteers are welcome to join the JCC at any time and there is no need to speak Japanese or have any knowledge of Japanese culture.

Types of activities JCC sponsors:

- **Onigiri Action** - JCC supports the social action campaign, [Onigiri Action](#), which is organized through [Table for Two](#), a Japanese non-profit organization that sponsors global initiatives to address world hunger. Students learn about a popular Japanese snack, Onigiri (rice ball); make and eat their own onigiri; and take and post photos of the onigiri fun on the Table for Two website. The Onigiri Action campaign specifically provides 5 meals to school-aged children in need for every photo posted.
- **Japanese Art Week Project** - JCC coordinates a school-wide art activity with the art teacher. JCC volunteers present a Japanese folktale and related art project and assist the teacher in the classroom.
- **Doll Festival (Hina Matsuri)** - JCC volunteers set up a display of Hina-Ningyo (dolls) for the student body in March.
- **Children's Day Japanese Festival (Matsuri)** - JCC sponsors a Children's Day Matsuri or festival in early May. This festival is open to all Fox Mill families and members of the community. Festivities include cultural performances, traditional games and crafts, and food.
- **Japanese Culture Club** - JCC partners with South Lakes HS Japanese Honor Society students to offer hands-on learning about Japanese art and culture. This is an outside of school activity.
- **Cultural Exchange/Introduction Project with Yabe ES in Yokohama, Japan** - FMES has an exchange program with Yabe ES in Yokohama, Japan. During the pandemic, the JCC has transitioned from an in-person exchange to a "virtual exchange" by sending Flat Stanleys. 1st grade students will have the opportunity to send their customized Flat Stanleys to visit Japan and then 3rd through 6th grade students will have the opportunity to host Flat Stanleys from Japan.
- **JI Library** - The FMES library has many Japanese language picture books and Japanese audio books. JCC parents help to catalog these books. JCC assists the librarian in maintaining and organizing Japanese language material.
- **Bulletin Board** - JCC uses a bulletin board in the cafeteria to introduce Japanese phrases, holidays, and traditional customs to the student body.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which academic subjects are taught in Japanese?

Math, science, and health are taught in Japanese. The curriculum requirements and standards are the same as those taught in the English classes. The Japanese teachers use the same teaching concepts and textbooks as the rest of FCPS, teaching the concepts and curriculum in the Japanese language.

Will my child understand what is being said in the classroom?

Most of the children enter the program without understanding or speaking any Japanese. However, children are so adaptable that they quickly learn the routines and learn to follow directions and lessons in Japanese. The JI teachers are very effective using other means to communicate, such as hand gestures, visual aids (overheads, pictures, manipulatives), and music/songs.

How can parents help their child if the parents do not speak Japanese?

Communication with your child is key. Trying to understand what he/she is learning in the classroom and reinforcing that at home is important. You can do so by reviewing your child's homework assignments daily. The JI teachers send review information and class newsletters home in the Thursday Packets. You can find the same math, science, and health concepts that are taught in Japanese in your child's English language textbooks. Most JI parents, however, do not speak Japanese, and many parents of older JI students say that their children simply become very independent learners.

What do Sensei, san, and kun mean?

"Sensei" means "teacher" in Japanese and precedes the teacher's last name. Thus, the children address the JI teachers as "Last Name-Sensei" (e.g., "Endo-Sensei").

"San" is a title of respect added to the name of someone other than yourself. Students refer to and address adults as "Last Name-san" (e.g. a parent with the last name of "Smith" is "Smith-san" (although Mr. or Mrs. Smith would not refer to themselves as "Smith-san")). Students refer to and address female students as "First Name-san" (e.g. "Karen-san") and students refer to male students as "First Name-kun" (e.g. "Robert-kun").

What Japanese holidays and traditions are celebrated in class?

- **New Year Celebration/Oshogatsu.** In January, the children celebrate "Oshogatsu" which is the Japanese New Year (January 1st). The activities may include eating mochi (Japanese rice cakes); using sumi-e brushes to make Japanese characters for "Nengajo" (Japanese New Year's Cards); folding origami or other traditional activities.
- **Doll Festival (Hinamatsuri)** is held on March 3rd to celebrate the well-being of girls. Most families with girls display "Hina-ningyo", which are special dolls that represent the Emperor, Empress and Imperial court. Peach blossoms are dedicated to the dolls.
- **Children's Day (Kodomo No Hi)**, is held on May 5th to celebrate the healthy growth of children. The day was traditionally called "Boy's Festival". Many families with boys display a "kabuto" (a replica of a samurai helmet) or "gogatsu-ningyo" (samurai doll) inside the house; and fly "koinobori" (carp streamers) outside.

What are the Japanese songs that they are learning?

Ookina Kuri no Kino Shita de “Under the Big Chestnut Tree”	Do Re Mi no Uta “Do Re Me Song”
Donguri Korokoro “Rolling Acorn”	Sakura “Cherry Blossom Song”
A I U E O “Hiragana Alphabet Song” (Jingle Bells melody)	Calendar Song Yobi no Uta (Frere Jacques melody)
Morino Kumasan “A Bear in the Woods”	Chiisana Sekai “It’s a Small World”
Atama Kata “Head and Shoulders”	

Japanese Games in the Classroom

- **Fukuwarai** - Fukuwarai is a game like “pin the tail on the donkey”, but instead of a donkey, the children use a chubby-cheeked face, or “otafuku” to place facial features. The teachers often use this game to teach parts of the body in Japanese.
- **Karuta** - There are many variations of Karuta, or Japanese playing cards, in Japan. The teachers may use Karuta to teach vocabulary and Japanese characters.
- **Bingo** - The teachers may also use a modified version of bingo to teach Japanese vocabulary and Japanese characters.

What is a happi coat?

Happi coats originated as a Japanese overcoat traditionally worn by shopkeepers. Today, happi coats are still used by some shopkeepers; however, happi coats are widely used for Japanese festivals called Matsuri. Happi coats for a Matsuri are traditionally worn over a t-shirt with shorts or pants. JI students traditionally wear happi coats during the End-of-Year performance. The students can also wear them during the New Year Celebration/Oshogatsu activities and Children’s Day Matsuri. Happi coats can be made or purchased.

Japanese Characters and Language

Kanji, Hiragana, and Katakana

Contemporary Japanese uses a mixture of kanji, hiragana, and katakana characters. First grade students will learn all 48 Hiragana characters and 18 Kanji characters: Numbers 1 through 10, 100, and the days of the week.

Kanji was introduced to Japan around the 5th century. The Japanese, with no writing of their own until the 5th century, adopted about 2,000 Chinese characters to represent their own language. Each Kanji character has a specific meaning (for example, “一月” represents the name for “January”, or “Ichigatsu”).

Hiragana. In the 10th century, the Japanese developed Hiragana and Katakana. Hiragana is a more simplified form of Kanji, consisting of 48 characters. As opposed to Kanji, where a single character can represent an entire word, Hiragana is phonetic (for example, “January” or “Ichigatsu” is represented by 4 Hiragana characters: いちがつ i-chi-ga-tsu).

Katakana, also phonetic and consists of 48 characters. It is used to write words of foreign origin adopted into the modern Japanese language (for example, Martyn-Sensei’s last name would be written as マーティン or “ma- te-i-n”).

Hiragana Chart

	A a as in ah	i i as in pizza	u u as in flu	e e as in egg	o O as in open
	あ	い	う	え	お
k ka	か	き	く	け	こ
s sa	さ	し	す	せ	そ
t ta	た	ち	つ	て	と
n na	な	に	ぬ	ね	の
h ha	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ
m ma	ま	み	む	め	も
y ya	や		ゆ		よ
r ra	ら	り	る	れ	ろ
w wa	わ				を
	ん				

Sample 1st Grade Vocabulary

Numbers

Following are numbers in Japanese in Romaji (written English), Kanji, and Hiragana. Please note that we have not included all numbers serially, but there is a pattern similar to numbers in English.

Number	Romaji	Kanji	Hiragana
1	Ichi	一	いち
2	Ni	二	に
3	San	三	さん
4	Shi or yon	四	し or よん
5	Go	五	ご
6	Roku	六	ろく
7	Shichi or Nana	七	しち or なな
8	Hachi	八	はち
9	Ku or Kyuu	九	く or きゅう
10	Jyuu	十	じゅう
11	Jyuu ichi	十一	じゅういち
12	Jyuu ni	十二	じゅうに
13	Jyuu san	十三	じゅうさん
20	Ni jyuu	二十	にじゅう
21	Ni jyuu ichi	二十一	にじゅういち
22	Ni jyuu ni	二十二	にじゅうに
30	San jyuu	三十	さんじゅう
40	Yon jyuu	四十	よんじゅう
50	Go jyuu	五十	ごじゅう
60	Roku jyuu	六十	ろくじゅう
70	Nana jyuu	七十	ななじゅう
80	Hachi jyuu	八十	はちじゅう
90	Kyuu jyuu	九十	きゅうじゅう
100	Hyaku	百	ひゃく
123	Hyaku nijyuu san	百二十三	ひゃくにじゅうさん

Days of the Week and Months of the Year

Following are the days of the week and months of the year written in Romaji (written English), Kanji, and Hiragana.

Day/Month	Romaji	Kanji	Hiragana
A Day	Hi	日	ひ
Sunday	Nichiyoubi	日曜日	にちようび
Monday	Getsuyoubi	月曜日	げつようび
Tuesday	Kayoubi	火曜日	かようび
Wednesday	Suiyoubi	水曜日	すいようび
Thursday	Mokuyoubi	木曜日	もくようび
Friday	Kinyoubi	金曜日	きんようび
Saturday	Doyoubi	土曜日	どようび
One Week	Isshuukan	一週間	いっしゅうかん
A Month	Gatsu	月	がつ
January	Ichigatsu	一月	いちがつ
February	Nigatsu	二月	にがつ
March	Sangatsu	三月	さんがつ
April	Shigatsu	四月	しがつ
May	Gogatsu	五月	ごがつ
June	Rokugatsu	六月	ろくがつ
July	Shichigatsu	七月	しちがつ
August	Hachigatsu	八月	はちがつ
September	Kugatsu	九月	くがつ
October	Jyuugatsu	十月	じゅうがつ
November	Jyuuichigatsu	十一月	じゅういちがつ
December	Jyuunigatsu	十二月	じゅうにがつ
One Year	Ich nen	一年	いちねん

Sample Phrases Used in First Grade

Japanese language - Nihongo
First Grade - Ichinensei
Teacher - Sensei
Good Morning - Ohayogozaimasu
Good Afternoon - Konnichiwa
Good Evening - Konbanwa
Good bye - Sayonara
Thank You - Arigatou
Thank you very much - Doumo arigatou gozaimasu
You're welcome - Dou itashimashite
I'm sorry - Gomennasai/Sumimasen
"I am (name)" - Watashi wa (name) desu. For example: "I am Jon" - Watashi wa Jon desu.
"My name is (name)" - Watashi no namae wa (name) desu. For example: "My name is Jon" - Watashi no namae wa Jon desu.
To denote a girl's name, add the suffix, "san" (name)-san For example: Karen-san, Sara-san
To denote a boy's name, add the suffix, "kun" (name)-kun For example: Robert-kun, David-kun
I do not understand - Wakarimasen
I understood - Wakarimashita
Please sit - Suwatte kudasai
Let's listen - Kikimashou
Let's stand up - Tachimashou
Please be quiet - Shizukani shite kudasai

Resources

Japanese Language Classes

- Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education (ACE) Japanese I through Intermediate levels. To check class schedules and fees, visit the FCPS web site at: <http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses>
- FCPS Summer School Program offered through Adult and Community Education (ACE). Japanese language courses for FCPS students are offered through ACE. ACE has offered a one week Japanese summer camp at Fox Mill Elementary previously. For information on future summer options, check the FCPS web site or the summer ACE catalog.
- One week summer camps at Lake Fairfax through o-en network. Two separate week-long camps are offered in August. One of the weeks is geared toward immersion students, but both are open to all. Register early as the camps fill quickly. <http://o-en.net/>

Web Sites for JI Parents and Students

Parental Guide for supporting Japanese Language Education:

- Japan Foundation, Los Angeles - The organization was established by the Japanese government to promote international cultural exchange and mutual understanding between Japan and other countries. The Los Angeles office also provides assistance for Japanese-language education nationwide and offers online links and resources. <http://www.jflalc.org/>

About Japanese Language (Character and language charts):

- Access Japanese <http://www.accessjapanese.com/hiragana.html>
- AIRnet <http://www.sf.airnet.ne.jp/ts/japanese/table.html>
- Kids Web Japan <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/language/hiragana/index.html>
- Free Japanese Learning Website <http://www.erin.ne.jp/en/>
- Information Media Center, Hiroshima University http://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/en/top/kenkyusyo/p_ho0a22.html
- Youtube videos can also be helpful. For example, when you type in Hiragana, there are Hiragana songs, Hiragana flash cards, how to write Hiragana, and many more helpful videos.

Japanese-English Dictionaries:

- Jim Breen's WWWJDIC Japanese Dictionary Server <http://freelanguage.org/blog/opal-myth/jun/2007/jim-breens-wwwjdic-japanesedictionary-server>
- Denshi Jisho <http://www.jisho.org/>
- Freedict.com <http://www.freedict.com/ondict/jap.html>

Japanese Culture:

- Shen's Books Site Dedicated to multicultural books for children. Offers books about Japanese culture as well as some published in both Japanese and English. <http://www.shens.com/>
- Kids Web Japan Contains information on culture, geography, language, and education. Website is mostly in English, but can be converted to Japanese. "Meet the Kids" links directly to schools in Japan. Sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). <http://web-japan.org/kidswweb/index.html>
- Japan-America Society of Washington DC (JASW) Nonprofit, nonpartisan educational and cultural organization of individuals and institutions with an interest in Japan and U.S.-Japan relations. Includes information about Japanese-related events, programs and educational support in the Washington DC area. <http://www.us-japan.org/dc/>

Japanese News Sites (in Japanese):

- <http://www.nhk.or.jp/>
- <http://www.asahi.co.jp/>
- <http://www.mainichi.co.jp/>
- <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/>

Places to Visit

Museums: The following museums have Japanese-related exhibits.

- Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Art <http://www.asia.si.edu/>
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond <http://vmfa.museum/collections/east-asian-art/>

Local Stores:

- **Super H**, 10780 Fairfax Blvd. (Lee Hwy.), Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: 703-273-0570
- **Maruichi Grocery**, 1049 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 301-738-1042
- **Lotte Plaza**, 13955 Metrotech Dr., Chantilly, VA 20151
Phone: 703-488-6600
- **Fresh World International Market**, 1050 Elden St. Herndon, VA 20170
Phone: 703-435-8200

This information is distributed by the Japanese Cultural Committee (JCC), and while Fox Mill Elementary School supports the activities of the JCC, the school does not assume accountability for the content of this specific distribution. The information found in the resources section is for reference only and should not be considered endorsements of the JCC.