

## Parents angry as COVID-19 shuts schools for a month

4th March, 2020



Japan and Hong Kong have closed its elementary, junior-high and high schools until April. Governments say they want to protect children from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Schools in Japan will remain closed until April the

8th, which is the start of the new school year. Children in Hong Kong will return to school on April the 20th at the earliest. Parents are now worried about the school closures. Working parents have to think about how to care for younger children. Grandparents will look after many children while their parents go to work. However, many children have no grandparents or extended family who live nearby. Parents may have to pay for expensive childcare fees.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shut the country's schools after a meeting of Japan's anti-virus task force. He said the next two weeks are critical to control the spread of COVID-19. He wants to "stem the risk of many children and teachers becoming infected through gathering for long hours every day". The government said it would urge public services and private companies to make it easier for people to take time off work to look after their children. An angry mother said: "I wonder if the government thinks it is OK to leave children at home alone for long hours." She asked: "What's the point of closing schools if parents are still commuting in packed trains in which passengers may have COVID-19?"

Sources: *asahi.com* / *kyodonews.net* / *bbc.com*

## Writing

It is essential we all self-quarantine to combat COVID-19. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

elementary school / protect / coronavirus / school / closures / grandparents / fees / meeting / virus / task force / spread / public services / angry / mother / commuting

## True / False

- a) Japan, Hong Kong and China have closed their high schools. T / F
- b) Schools in Hong Kong will stay closed until April the 20th at the earliest. T / F
- c) Parents are not at all worried about the school closures. T / F
- d) Japan has said childcare will be free in March for working parents. T / F
- e) An anti-task virus force met in Japan. T / F
- f) The next two weeks are important to stop the spread of the virus. T / F
- g) Japan wants companies to help workers who have children. T / F
- h) A mother questioned the closures when people use crowded trains. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. closed</b>   | a. safeguard  |
| <b>2. protect</b>  | b. acceptable |
| <b>3. remain</b>   | c. charges    |
| <b>4. worried</b>  | d. stay       |
| <b>5. fees</b>     | e. important  |
| <b>6. force</b>    | f. concerned  |
| <b>7. critical</b> | g. encourage  |
| <b>8. urge</b>     | h. shut       |
| <b>9. OK</b>       | i. crowded    |
| <b>10. packed</b>  | j. group      |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about COVID-19?
- b) What should we do to reduce the risk of catching the virus?
- c) What do you think of the news coverage of COVID-19?
- d) What do you think of the school closures?
- e) What else should governments close?
- f) What is your government doing about COVID-19?
- g) How can students keep up with their studies?
- h) What should parents do if they have to go to work all day?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. they want to protect                  | a. of closing schools |
| 2. Schools in Japan will                 | b. family             |
| 3. worried about the school              | c. children           |
| 4. grandparents or extended              | d. force              |
| 5. Parents may have to pay for expensive | e. infected           |
| 6. a meeting of Japan's anti-virus task  | f. remain closed      |
| 7. control the spread                    | g. in packed trains   |
| 8. children and teachers becoming        | h. closures           |
| 9. the point                             | i. childcare fees     |
| 10. parents are still commuting          | j. of COVID-19        |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How worried are you about the coronavirus?
- Have you changed your daily routine because of the coronavirus?
- What would you do about COVID-19 if you were your country's leader?
- What will the COVID-19 situation be like in a year's time?
- Is it right to leave children at home alone?
- Is there a point to closing schools if commuters pack trains?
- What questions would you like to ask coronavirus scientists?

## Spelling

- mlytенеare, junior-high and high schools
- ctrpeot children from the COVID-19 coronavirus
- merina closed until April the 8th
- worried about the school sseuolcr
- grandparents or ntxeeedd family
- expensive childcare efse
- Japan's anti-virus task corfe
- laircrtc to control the spread
- children and teachers becoming nfdeceit
- it would uegr public services
- parents are still imgomctun in packed trains
- asresnegsp may have COVID-19

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. a	3. d	4. f	5. c
6. j	7. e	8. g	9. b	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Hand-Washing

You think hand-washing is the best thing to avoid COVID-19. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): self-quarantine, wearing a mask or alcohol spray.

### Role B – Self-Quarantine

You think self-quarantine is the best thing to avoid COVID-19. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): hand-washing, wearing a mask or alcohol spray.

### Role C – Wear A Mask

You think wearing a mask is the best thing to avoid COVID-19. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): self-quarantine, hand-washing or alcohol spray.

### Role D – Alcohol Spray

You think alcohol spray is the best thing to avoid COVID-19. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): self-quarantine, wearing a mask or hand-washing.

## Speaking – Avoid COVID-19

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to avoid COVID-19 at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| • alcohol spray   | • avoid people          |
| • self-quarantine | • don't touch things    |
| • hand-washing    | • don't touch your face |
| • wearing a mask  | • listen to WHO advice  |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.