

Mayor's Message (May 25th)

Hello. I'm FUSHIMI Takashi, Mayor of Hirakata City.

The declaration of emergency state for Osaka, which was issued on April 7th, was finally lifted on May 21st.

Due to the nationwide spread of infectious diseases, all elementary and junior high schools were suddenly shut down on March 2nd. Since then, unusual school lives in which pupils and students were not allowed to meet their friends and to study at school started.

I fully understand that parents or legal guardians of pupils and students must have had immeasurable tensions and anxieties when none knew the exit of the dark tunnel. I would like to express my gratitude for everyone's cooperation for school closure.

The number of patients with COVID-19 is decreasing in Hirakata. But, it is concerned that the second spike may come again. Therefore, until new medicines and vaccines for this disease are made, we need to live with the virus for a while. To avoid infections, let's wear a face mask, keep a distance between yourself and others, and wash your hands frequently. Even if any symptoms do not come out, you may infect your family and friends with the disease. I would like you to think "What if I am infected with COVID-19?" in order to take continuous action for the prevention of infectious diseases.

Pupils and students need to get necessary knowledge, learn how to communicate with others and exercise to build strength for self-help in the future. For doing so, we should prepare for the reopening of schools whilst carrying out sufficient anti-infection measures for pupils and students.

Now, we are making ready to fully reopen all elementary and junior high schools on June 15th. In addition, we will carry out thorough anti-infection measures and restart school meals and school clubs. Before the full reopening, all schools will shorten school hours for pupils and students to attend classes on shifting schedules from June 1st.

All the schools were closed for almost three months. Therefore, school lessons are far behind schedule. To catch it up, the schools should have lessons on Saturdays and shorten the period of summer and winter holidays. It will not be happy for pupils and students if long holidays will be cut down. But, I hope that they will do their best in such a situation.

Some of children may not be able to go to school due to a feeling of anxiety about a new school life. For them, we will provide better learning environment in which they can study at home and communicate with friends in school using computers and tablets.

Furthermore, we also will provide supporting services for children who are struggling with new school lives. If they cannot ask for any advices at school, there is the opinion collection system named "Your Voice to

Mayor”. In the system, I, Mayor of Hirakata, will directly listen to people’s voices. Please use this.

When the schools are reopened, we look forward to seeing children doing well. We also hope that all the schools will be fulfilled with merry voices and smiles.