



Mayfield Grammar School Gravesend

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Headteacher: Mrs E Wilson B.A. (Hons)



14 December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

**RE: 9 Day Tour of Japan – October 2025
for students currently in Years 7 to 11**

I am pleased to introduce a 9-day Cultural tour of Japan, departing near October half term 2025. The trip itinerary is outlined below. We hope to explore both the historic cities and religious temples along with experiencing the ultra-new and contemporary sights in Japan. We will travel as a group for a week moving from city to beautiful countryside. Please read the trip outline below.

Proposed Itinerary:

Day 1

Today you will depart from London on your overnight flight to Tokyo.

Day 2 – Tokyo – Arrival and Shibuya Crossing

Arrive in Tokyo to be met by our guide and private coach transfer into the city centre and the hotel. After time for check in, and depending on your flight arrival time, there will be a tour of your local district. The evening you head over to Shibuya Crossing for dinner, one of the liveliest parts of the city with shops and neon lights.

Day 3 – Tokyo Temples, Sky Tree & Akihabara

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but you will find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. You start the day by visiting one of Tokyo's most atmospheric neighbourhoods, Asakusa, where you can explore the Sensoji Temple, an ancient Buddhist temple and pagoda which originally dates to 645 AD. The temple you see today is modern, having been rebuilt after the bombing of WW2 but it remains the most recognised and visited of Tokyo's temples. As you go in through the iconic Thunder Gate – the Kaminarimon - you see the lantern and statues which are a universal symbol of the city. You then explore the lively shops on Nakamise Street with their interesting traditional handicrafts and food stalls which make the perfect opportunity for lunch.

In the afternoon you head across the river to the observatory on the Tokyo Skytree, the country's tallest tower, for a panoramic view over the city from Tembo Deck on floor 350. The high-speed lift ascends at speeds of up to 600 metres a minute to the enclosed viewing deck with its floor-to-ceiling windows and spectacular views, and on a clear day you can see Mount Fuji in the distance. In the evening you travel to the Akihabara district (known as electric town) where you can find all manner of technology and electrical shops, and anime, the iconic Japanese form of animation. This is the place where the Otaku hang out. Otaku is a Japanese term for young people who are obsessed with anime comics and videos.

Day 4 – Ginza, Imperial Palace, Meiji Shrine & Roppongi

This morning you take a stroll down the Ginza. This is historically Tokyo's main shopping street with many designer outlets located here. From the Ginza you can walk to the Imperial Palace known as Kokyo which literally means the imperial residence, the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. The actual Tokyo Imperial Palace building is located within the grounds of what was Edo Castle and some of the castle's moats, defensive walls, gate houses and turrets remain. You can also stroll in the beautiful Kiyosumi Garden, a traditional Japanese garden laid out during the nineteenth century Meiji Period. You then head to the Meiji Shrine. This is one of the most iconic

and visited sights in the capital with its famous wooden Torii gate marking the entrance. In the evening the group head over to Roppongi, a buzzing district with a great selection of restaurants.

Day 5 – Mount Fuji, Lake Ashi & Hakone

Today is a full day excursion to Mount Fuji, (3776m) and Hakone Lake. You travel by coach to Fujiyoshida on the north side of the mountain and from there ascent to the Fifth Station, the fifth staging post on the popular Yoshida Trail which is the easiest route to the summit. On a clear day you get fantastic views towards the snow-capped summit. There are restaurants and gift shops located here. In the afternoon travel to Gora and take the Hakone Ropeway to visit Lake Ashi, also referred to as Hakone Lake. This extremely picturesque lake has iconic views of Mount Fuji from the ropeway journey and is also the home to three replica 18th Century Pirate Ships. Including a replica of HMS Victory. There is a short cruise on the lake and in the afternoon, you travel by coach to Odawara to take the fast train back to Tokyo.

Day 6 – Shinkansen Bullet Train to Kyoto

This morning you travel to Kyoto via the Bullet Train on the Shinkansen Line where the fastest trains take under 3 hours to travel the 500km journey. After lunch you begin your tour of Kyoto to see the World Heritage temples and pavilions.

Kyoto is known as the city of 10,000 temples. You begin with a visit to the Golden Pavilion of Kinkaku-Ji. This incredible Zen temple looks as if it is floating on the lake and was originally built in its current form by a Japanese Shogun called Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Then you visit the imperial Palace of Kyoto Goshu, one of the most important monuments in all of Japan.

In the late afternoon you visit the Gion Geisha district where you may be lucky enough to see Geishas.

Day 7 – Kyoto

This morning you begin the day by walking down the Philosopher's Path to Nanzen-ji and Eikando. In cherry blossom season this is one of the most popular parts of Kyoto. You also visit Kiyomizu-dera which offers the perfect panorama of Kyoto city including Yasaka Pagoda. In the afternoon you explore the Nijo Castle which was built in 1603 by Tokugawa Iyeyasu, the first Shogun of the Edo Period. In 1867 the castle was used as an Imperial Palace, later it was converted into a historic site and opened to the public. The castle has been designated a UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Day 8 – Kyoto – Departure from Osaka

This morning you visit the orange torii gates of Fushimi Inari Taishi, perhaps the most photogenic location you will see in Kyoto, a hypnotising tunnel of Shinto gates that seems to go on forever. Lunchtime is free in Kyoto for you to do any final souvenir shopping. In the afternoon you transfer to the airport in Osaka for the homeward flight.

Day 9 – Arrive home.

The cost of the trip is estimated at £3,700 to cover all travel in UK and Japan, accommodation, entrance fees, full time guide, breakfast, evening meals and trip insurance. The cost of the trip is estimated as the cost for flights, accommodation, final numbers etc cannot be confirmed this far in advance. It is likely we will be able to confirm the full cost in November 2024. Please note the cost of a visa (if required), lunch and drinks (other than water) with meals are not included.

We have provided a payment schedule at the end of the letter to assist with incremental payments towards the cost of the trip.

We hope you will agree the tour is a full and varied exploration of this fascinating country. If you wish to secure a place for your daughter, please complete the reply slip attached and make a deposit payment of £100 by Wednesday 31 January. Please note any deposit or subsequent monies paid towards the trip will be subject to cancellation terms and conditions once the trip is confirmed with Kipling Tours. These will be outlined to you once the trip is confirmed as viable.

If you require any further information regarding the proposed tour, please either contact myself or my colleague Mrs Ferrara via email or phone. Contact details are listed below.

Yours faithfully,

K Burke

Mrs K Burke
Teacher and Curriculum Leader for Humanities

Enc. Reply slip

Email: ferraraa@mgsg.kent.sch.uk or enquiries@mgsg.kent.sch.uk
Tel: 01474 643374

Proposed payment plan:

**** Please note you deposit becomes non-refundable once the trip is confirmed as viable and the tour operators' terms and conditions including cancellation details will be confirmed to you at this time. Please note you may not get all the money you have paid returned to you should you later decide to cancel your daughter off the trip.**

Payment	Due date	Amount
1 st (**deposit)	31 January 2024	£100
2nd	31 March 2024	£400
3rd	31 May 2024	£400
4th	31 July 2024	£400
5th	30 Sept 2024	£400
6th	30 Nov 2024	£400
7th	31 Jan 2025	£400
8th	31 Mar 2025	£400
9th	31 May 2025	£400
10th	17 July 2025	£400
*This amount to be confirmed pending final itinerary and numbers	TOTAL	*£3,700

RE: 9 Day Tour of Japan, October 2025, please return to the Finance Office by 31 January 2024

I/we confirm we give permission for our daughter to attend the Tour of Japan due to depart in October 2025.

Student's Name: Form:

Please find a deposit of £100 enclosed (cash or cheque made payable to MGSG)

I have made a deposit payment online.

Parental signature: Date:

Parental name (printed):

KB/af