



KCC Newsletter

March, 2026

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Vol.
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Announcement

*Exchange Programs with
Sister & Friendship Cities of Kashiwa*

53rd Youth Delegation to Torrance – Recruitment

Represent Kashiwa City to our sister city, Torrance (California, USA).

We are seeking young people who are interested in international exchange.

This youth exchange program has a long history. The bonds formed between students and host families continue for many years. And they serve as a foundation for grassroots international peace activities.

Delegation Period: August 3 (Mon) – August 21 (Fri), 2026 (19 days)

N 8 students (Residents or students of Kashiwa City born between April 2, 2006, and April 1, 2011)

Cost: Approximately ¥400,000.

How to Apply: Attend the orientation session and submit the application form directly to the KCC office by Wednesday, April 1.

Application Forms will be distributed on Sunday, March 22, at the orientation session.

Selection Process: First Screening: Sunday, April 19, 2026 Second Screening: Sunday, April 26, 2026

*Exchange Programs with
Sister & Friendship Cities of Kashiwa*

53rd Youth Delegation to Torrance – Orientation Session

D Sunday, March 22, 2:00 PM (Reception from 1:30 PM)

P Raccolta Kashiwa (Chuo Kominkan), 5th Floor Auditorium

Details: Explanation of application for the 2026 delegation (eligibility, application procedures, application period, etc.)

Application Forms: Distributed at the session

Applicants must attend. Those interested in the program are also welcome to participate.



Torrance City Council
Visit in 2025

*Exchange Programs with
Sister & Friendship Cities of Kashiwa*

Online Exchange with Friendship City Camden

D Friday, March 20, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (Reception from 12:30 PM) **P** Palette Kashiwa Open Space

Details: Real-time exchange via Zoom with residents of Camden, Australia! Enjoy introducing each other's towns and chatting with residents. Why not experience a touch of Australia?

N First 30 applicants **F** Free

A From Sunday, March 1, submit your name and phone number directly to the KCC office or by email to boshu-1@kira-kira.jp.



Kashiwa Police Presentation “Bicycle Traffic Fines (Blue Tickets) Starting in April”

A presentation about upcoming legal changes regarding bicycle traffic fines.

D Thursday, March 5, 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

P Palette F

F Free (No registration required)

Details: Explanation of changes in the law beginning in April

Foreign residents are encouraged to attend.

Appreciation and Report on the “Sri Lanka Relief Fund”

To support those affected by Cyclone Ditwa in Sri Lanka, we have sent the donation of 10,000 yen, entrusted to us by donors, to the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Japan on February 3rd. We sincerely appreciate your warm support.

<Request> When applying via email, please be sure to include the event name, your name, and phone number.

DDate & Time **P**Place **F**Fee **N**Number of applicants **L**ecturer **C**ontents **A**pplication **R**eservation.

World New Year's Party (1/24)

KIRA's international and Japanese staff prepared New Year dishes from their respective countries and regions.

- Philippines: macaroni salad, fried spring rolls, pudding
- China & Taiwan: moiled dumplings, sweet and sour pork
- Thailand: curry
- Indonesia: fresh spring rolls, dessert
- Hawaii: seafood stewed in tomato soup
- Brazil: beijinho (sweets), pastel (fried dumplings)
- Japan: chikuzen-ni, gomoku namasu
- Peru: adobo (braised pork), steamed sweet potatoes

Participants included Japanese parents and children, junior high and high school students, and individuals from Poland and Colombia.

During the party, everyone enjoyed cultural exchange through introduction of traditional dishes, self-introductions, the Japanese game Fukuwarai, and a Rock-paper-scissors game.



Japanese Language Class Speech Presentation (1/31)

Twelve Japanese language class students gave speeches about their life in Japan and their future dreams at Palette Kashiwa.

(Speeches will be posted on our website.)



Participants of Japanese Language Speech Presentation

Online International Exchange Salon

Benefits of Zoom Meetings (1/15)

The session provided a detailed explanation of how to set up Zoom (via the web portal site). Instructor Kumiko Yamaguchi's demonstration, which involved sharing her own Zoom window, was very easy to follow. Zoom functions are updated daily and becoming more convenient with additions such as the AI companion. Attendees discovered features they didn't know about before and learned about other convenient functions, realizing that using Zoom can make things much more convenient.

Participants shared feedback such as, "True to the proverb 'Practice makes perfect.' Going forward, I want to confidently use Zoom and update it." "This workshop taught me how to check the Zoom web portal site. Now I understand its system and setup procedures."

Study Session to Better Understand the Current Situation of the Increasing Number of Foreigners

Let's gather to discuss how we should approach this situation as KIRA and as individual members.

D Saturday, March 21, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

P Palette Kashiwa, Meeting Room F

Upcoming Events (From April)

Cross-cultural Teatime "France" – May 16
Cross-cultural Teatime "Poland" – June 27

Barbecue – May 30

The 15th English Speech Contest (2/14)

The 15th English Speech Contest was held at Amuser Kashiwa, and 10 speakers participated, ranging in age from junior high school students to the 90s. They shared their thoughts in English about daily lives and their relationship with the language. Three teenagers swept all three awards: the Kashiwa Mayor's Award, the KIRA President's Award, and the Audience Award. The Kashiwa Mayor's Award went to Ms. Chihiro Kato. Her speech title was "Why is Japan's English Proficiency So Low?" We look forward to having many participants join next year's English Speech Contest. It is a place for Kashiwa citizens to showcase their English learning achievements and to exchange ideas. (The award winners' speeches will be posted on our website.)



Speakers of English Speech Contest

Speech by the Mayor's Award Winner

Why is Japan's English Proficiency So Low?

by Chihiro Kato

Have you ever wondered why Japanese people spend so many years studying English, yet still struggle to communicate confidently? In terms of English proficiency, Japan is ranked 96 out of 123 countries. Can you believe it?

We Japanese people work very hard at school, especially memorizing vocabulary, taking grammar tests, and studying for examinations. So why is our English proficiency still so low? I think there are three main reasons: a big difference in the structure of languages, the quiet personality of the Japanese people, and the lack of importance or [of?] reading English aloud.

First of all, the structure of Japanese and English is very different. Japanese does not use the Roman alphabet, so the letters are unfamiliar, making it hard to read and write. The difference means it takes more time for Japanese learners to get used to English reading, pronunciation and grammar.

Secondly, many Japanese people tend to be shy and cautious. We worry a lot about making mistakes in public. Even when students know the answer, they often hesitate. In contrast, learners in many Western countries try to speak without worrying too much. This cultural difference affects how confident we feel when using English.

Finally, I believe that reading aloud in English is not emphasized enough in Japanese education. In my experience, I have taken many vocabulary and grammar tests, but I have never had a reading aloud test, even though, in my opinion, reading aloud is one of the most effective ways to improve not only reading skills but pronunciation, listening, and speaking. When I was in elementary school, I used to read English picture books aloud at home. It also helped me get used to English sounds naturally.

So, what can we do to improve Japan's English proficiency rank? We can't change the language structure and shouldn't change our modest personality, but we can change our approach to English education. For example, teachers could include short daily speaking activities, more discussion time, and more opportunities for students to express their ideas.

Most importantly, I think reading aloud should be used more often in regular classes, not just as homework or a self-study method. If students speak English every day, even for a few minutes, their confidence can improve dramatically.

My dream is to be an English teacher in the future. When I go to university, I'd like to study and research English education methods. In particular, I want to promote the importance of reading aloud. Because I believe it can transform the way Japanese students learn English.

I hope that one day, Japan will be ranked much higher, maybe, even in the top 20 in English proficiency.

I hope that future students will enjoy using English and not be afraid of it.

Together, we can build a future where English becomes a bridge, not a barrier.

Japan can grow, step by step, as long as we keep trying.



Ms. Chihiro Kato

March Events

Japanese Shonan Classes(Spring Vacation 3/16-4/4)		
Online Classes		
Sun	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Primary II(38~);Chukyū kara Manabu Nihongo(19~)
Sun	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Primary II(50~)
In-person Classes (Shonan Kinrin Center)		
Thu	10:00 a.m. - noon	Primary I(25~,22~), Primary II(38~)
	9:30 a.m. -	Primary I(8~)
	11:00 a.m. -	Primary I(2~)
Sun	10:00 a.m. - noon	Primary II (28~) Conversation Elementary Cultural Primary Japanese I(Conversation)
Japanese Kashiwa/Kashiwanoha Classes(Spring Vacation 3/16-4/6)		
Online Classes		
Tue	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 44-)
Wed	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 10-)
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Conversation Elementary
Fri	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 41-)
In-person Classes (Palette Kashiwa)		
Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 1-/Unit 19 -) Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 29-/Unit 43-)
Wed	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary & Intermediate
Fri	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 18 -)
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 7 -/Unit 23 -) Primary II (Unit 35 -)
In-person Classes (Thu: Kashiwanoha Service Corner, Sat: Kenmin Plaza)		
Thu	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary (first half/second half)
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Hiragana, Katakana
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Intermediate

Free Legal Advice and Administrative Procedure Support for Foreign Residents

To foreign residents. Are you in need of help? Lawyers and Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialists are available for consultation. You can ask for specialists' advice on issues such as family or partner violence, divorce, visa procedures, and problems at work. Reservation necessary
D Wednesday, March 22, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **P** Palette Kashiwa MTR A **R** the KCC Office

<Announcements from Other Organizations>



●Members Wanted! Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA)

Would you like to join us and take part in international exchange activities? Let's plan and organize various events while interacting with people from different countries! For more details, please visit our website.

Information for Foreign Residents from Kashiwa City

Consultation for Foreign Residents

Available in English (Thu), Chinese (Wed and Fri), Spanish (Mon), and Korean (2nd and 4th Tue) from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Consultation Counter for Foreign Residents (City Hall Main Office Building, 3rd floor).
 Tel: 04 - 7168 - 1033
 No reservation required.

Email distribution service from Kashiwa City

Sign up to receive email announcement from the city, such as information on natural disasters, crimes, and fires of your area in the language of your choice. Scan the QR code and register!

Multilingual "Koho Kashiwa," monthly official city bulletin

Scan the QR code and select your language under "Foreign Language" to read the official city bulletin, "Koho Kashiwa," selected and translated for foreign residents.

NHK World-JAPAN's website has been renewed. Available in multiple languages.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/multilingual_links/



Questions?
 Please contact the office of
 Kashiwa Cross-cultural Center (KCC)

Tel: 04-7157-0281 Fax: 04-7165-7321
 Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.
 Closed on Sundays and national holidays