

August 2020

To all students,

(児童生徒等や学生の皆さんへ)

I am sure that ever since the coronavirus outbreak began you have been worried about what will happen with school and in the future. As the new school term approaches, I have something I would like to talk to you about.

First of all, there are several ways to prevent infection. As you have already been doing, you must wear a mask when you talk, wash your hands, and stay home from school if you're sick. And, above all, it's important to live a healthy lifestyle. Having said that, you have all had colds or the flu in the past. Now, on top of that, the coronavirus has also become an issue.

These three illnesses have similar symptoms. So, all of you will experience these symptoms in the future. Out of all the people who get sick, it may be someone close to you who is infected by the coronavirus. Of course, if you find out that it's your friend, you may be worried about yourself as well.

Anyone could be infected with the coronavirus. It does not mean that the person who got infected is bad. If there is an atmosphere at school or in the classroom that it's bad to be infected, people become afraid of being suspected of being infected by the coronavirus, and if they get sick, they are less likely to say anything or may delay going to the hospital. This may cause further spread of the infection in your area.

Rather than blaming people who have become infected or who have symptoms, I would like you to have compassion for them, encourage them to get well soon, and warmly welcome them back when they return to school. I would like you to think about and do as you would want your friends to do if you became infected or had symptoms.

There have already been cases of people who have been infected being spoken to and treated in an unkind manner. We would like you to help us to make sure these things don't happen around you as well.

In addition, elderly or sick people may develop serious symptoms if infected. You may feel that if you're not sick then it does not concern you, but please have consideration for the sick and elderly to be sure that they don't become infected.

The coronavirus outbreak has profoundly changed all of our daily lives. Many of us see our friends less than we used to, have less exposure to sports and culture, and are more anxious and stressed about our future.

We humans have experienced new diseases like the coronavirus before. And, each time, researchers around the world have searched for the cause of the disease, looked for ways to prevent it, and developed drugs. And so we live with these diseases. History repeats itself. As research on the coronavirus progresses and we learn more about it, we will be able to prevent and treat it and start a new coexistence with the disease.

We adults are here to support you. We have a vision for the future, and we will maximize opportunities for you, the future leaders of society, to learn, play and interact with each other. Until then, I hope that you will take the preventative measures you can now, set goals for the future, and continue your studies every day at home and at school.

Kōichi Hagiuda
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology