



Tamagawa Academy - IB Division

NEWSLETTER

Issue 01 May 2026

Message from the Head of IB Division

Recent events

Dream teacher project
Read about the special event which Kiraboshi Bank sponsors for our Grade 8 students.

World Book Day
Our hallways transformed into a living library as students and staff brought their favorite stories to life!

Purple Comet math competition
Our brightest mathematical minds teamed up to tackle complex challenges and showcase their legendary skills.

MUN Conference
Students stepped into the shoes of global leaders to debate pressing international issues throughout our school's immersive Model United Nations conference.

Students in Action

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April 2026

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Student Council

Want to know the real story behind the campaign promises? We sat down with the council to discuss recent upgrades, mental health initiatives, and everything in between.

Click M and S to read the whole interview!





Welcome to the first edition of our monthly IB Division newsletter!

We would like to wish all of our students, parents, and staff a very happy and successful start to the academic year.

We hope this year will be filled with growth, achievement, and meaningful learning experiences for everyone in our community.

We are also very pleased with the positive start students have made to the school year, and it has been wonderful to see so many already demonstrating a wide range of Learner Profile attributes, from being caring to knowledgeable as can be seen on our awards page.

This year, we will be focusing on the values of Hard Work, Global Issues, and Being Active. Through this newsletter, you will already be able to see these values in action—from students taking part in sport to raising money for worthwhile charities, responding to people's needs around the world.

The aim of this newsletter is to celebrate all that is happening across the IB Division. Each month, we will share highlights of student learning, achievements, events, and initiatives, as well as provide updates that help keep our community connected and informed. As the newsletter grows, we also hope to see increasing student leadership within it, with more students taking an active role in sharing their voices, experiences, and achievements.

At the start of the year, I had the opportunity to speak to students about the importance of reflecting on their achievements from last year and setting new goals. I shared how proud we are of their accomplishments both inside and outside the classroom, made possible through their hard work, the support of their families and friends, and the dedication of our teachers. Building on the celebrations from the March ceremonies, I encouraged students to think about what went well last year, what they would like to improve, and what new challenges they are ready to take on. Students were asked to reflect on their goals and dreams—both short-term and long-term—and to remember that success does not always come easily. Inspired by our founder, Kuniyoshi Obara, I reminded students to keep trying, stay proactive, and embrace challenges with a positive attitude.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead and to sharing many successes with you!

Oliver Furnival
Head of IB Division

Mr. Cook - Director of Teaching and Learning



A Helping Hand Across Campus

It was a quiet afternoon on the fourth floor of the Higashihama building until a small face appeared in the window of the Grade 9 classroom door. A Grade 6 student stood outside, looking noticeably lost and uncertain.

When he returned a few minutes later, the confusion had turned to tears. He poked his head through the door and asked for help finding his class. Our Grade 9 students immediately jumped into action, comforting the younger boy and helping him figure out where he needed to be.

"It was a truly caring scene that reminded us all of the strength of our school community."

After realizing the student actually belonged across campus in the Sci-Tech building, Student K kindly volunteered to personally escort him there to make sure he arrived safely. It was a wonderful display of leadership and empathy—a simple act of kindness that made a big difference for a student in need.

Ms. Wei - DP Coordinator



The G11 students have had a strong start to their Diploma Programme. Students are actively completing CAS activities and engaging with the local community.

The next few months will be quite busy for the G12 students as they wrap up the end of their DP journey. They are currently completing their IAs and will have mock exams in June in preparation for the IB exams starting in October.

Mr. Serpico - MYP Coordinator



Grade 6 students recently conducted their first lab-based science investigation. They explored how the amount of sodium chloride that can dissolve in water changes depending on the volume of solvent used. This activity provided an excellent opportunity for students to develop their self-management skills while working safely in a laboratory setting.



DREAM TEACHER PROJECT



What is the Dream Teacher Project?

Dream Teacher Project (Yume no Kyoushitsu) is a special event which Kiraboshi Bank sponsors for our Grade 8 students. Every year, a professional athlete will come and do a team building activity with the students and then do a lecture about their life. This was our 3rd year.



Why does Tamagawa run the Dream Teacher Project?

They have the same event in grade 5 in the Primary Division, and this is a part of the career education to have students think about their future goals and dreams. Also get a chance to learn from the athletes that even their journey was not perfect, everyone has their ups and downs.

Tell us about Ayumi Kaihori's career.

Ayumi Kaihori is now an executive director for the women's national league (Nadeshiko League) for football/soccer. She played for the 2011 World Cup in Germany in which Japan won the Gold medal for the first time as the goal keeper and was selected as the MVP for the finals. She also played for the 2012 London Olympics where they won a Silver medal (Mr. Furnival was at the actual game!).



What advice did Ayumi give to our students?

Ayumi spoke to the students about how she started off as a forward player in soccer, but suddenly quit without telling anyone and wanted to challenge something new, which for her it was tennis. However, two of her friends knew that Ayumi should go back to soccer, and they brought her back to soccer in her last year of high school and that is when she became a goalkeeper. If that didn't happen, she would have not achieved anything. She brought her uniform and medals from the World Cup and the Olympics and had the students look and try it on them.

"Having friends that have your back can really help you, and also to try out what you are interested in is very important. Also having a role model is important - for me it was Hope Solo from the U.S."



DREAM TEACHER PROJECT



STUDENT VOICE



R.K. (Grade 9) told us:

“I really enjoyed the visit from Ayumi Kaihori because it was a very valuable experience for me. She used to be a professional soccer player, and it was exciting to learn from someone who has already achieved what I want to do in the future. We also had the chance to touch and even wear her World Cup gold medal and Olympic silver medal, which made it a truly special experience”.

My dream is to become a professional soccer player and play overseas!

“The advice I got from Ayumi Kaihori was to never give up and to keep working hard towards my goals. She also told us to believe in ourselves and continue challenging ourselves”.



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STUDENT COUNCIL

Why did you decide to run for President and Vice-President of the Student Council?

M: I decided to run for President because I believe that a school should be more than just a place we attend each day, but a community that students could feel proud to belong to. Through my previous experiences in leadership and school events, I saw how even small ideas could create meaningful change when people are willing to take action. I wanted to take on this role to help turn students' ideas into reality and make our school experience stronger, more exciting and more connected for everyone.

S: I decided to run for Vice-President because I really enjoy being involved in school life and working with different people. I wanted to help make our school a place where more students feel comfortable sharing their ideas. I also saw this as a great opportunity to challenge myself and grow as a leader while having fun with the process.

What personal qualities do you bring to the role?

M: I bring energy, determination and genuine commitment to others. I believe that I am someone who stays positive under pressure, works hard behind the scenes and does not give up easily when challenges appear. I also value listening and communicating, because I believe that the best leaders are not those who speak the most, but those who understand people and bring them together with purpose.

S: I try to be someone who is easy to talk to, so people feel comfortable sharing their ideas. I also enjoy coming up with new ideas and finding simple ways to make them happen. I hope to help create a school year where more students can feel that this was "their year."

What are you aiming to achieve in your Student Council role this year?

M: This year, I want to help create a school environment that feels more united, active and full of opportunity. I hope to strengthen communication between students, teachers and the council, while also creating events and initiatives that make school life more enjoyable and memorable. Most importantly, I want students to feel that their voices matter and that they have the power to shape the community around them. I am also aiming to make this year THE BEST year for all students, and I mean THE BEST of THE BEST, so be excited for the events, activities and ideas that are coming up!

S: This year, I want to make our school more connected and engaging for everyone. I hope to create more chances for students to share their opinions in a relaxed and open way. I also want to help organize events that are not only enjoyable, but also meaningful, so that students can feel more involved in school life. Stay tuned for what's coming!

Why do you think that student voice is important?

M: I believe that student voices are essential as students are the ones to experience school life on a daily basis, and observe things from a perspective no one else could fully replicate. Their ideas, concerns and creativity are essential for building a better school environment. I believe that when students know they are listened to, they feel valued, motivated and more willing to contribute. A strong school community is built not only for students, but also with students.

S: I think the student voice is the thing that is most important, because school is not just a place we attend, but a community we are part of. When students are able to share their ideas, it makes the environment more supportive and inclusive. It also helps students feel that their opinions matter, which can increase confidence and motivation.

Learner Profile

AWARD WINNERS



A.Y. (Grade 7) - Communicator. A consistently shows a willingness to answer questions and share her ideas confidently in Mathematics class.

S.I. (Grade 7) - Thinker. S has consistently come to English class prepared, actively participated in lessons, and made a strong effort to communicate in English, even when speaking with her classmates, showing thoughtful engagement and a willingness to apply her learning in different situations.

Y.M. (Grade 8) - Caring. Y volunteered to play the piano when the class is singing the school songs every morning in homeroom. She plays extraordinarily well.

A.I. (Grade 8) - Principled. A showed strong principles by recognizing areas for improvement and working responsibly to create a fairer and more respectful Homeroom classroom environment.

K.V. (Grade 8) - Caring. K kindly volunteered to escort a lost, young, grade 6 student over to their classroom after this student opened the classroom door crying.

J.K. (Grade 9) - Caring/Thinking. J has taken the reins of creating decorations for the Haruna class such as a class banner and uchiwa. All in all, it seems he wishes to make the classroom a cheerful and bright environment.

Y.K. (Grade 11) - Caring. During Economics classes Y consistently takes the initiative to help the teacher and his peers.

Y.H. (Grade 11) - Caring. Y demonstrates responsibility, kindness, and a wonderful attitude every day.

Y.K. (Grade 12) - Communicator. During his formative oral assessment in English class, Y demonstrated very good interactive skills by listening attentively with genuine interest and responding naturally to his partner. He is also confident in asking questions and seeking help when needed, showing initiative in his learning.

PURPLE COMET

Math Competition

The Maths Department recently entered Grade 10 to 12 students in the Purple Comet Maths Challenge. Here, they explain what the challenge is and its importance to students.

What is the Purple Comet Maths Challenge, and why is it valuable for students?

It is a free, international, team mathematics competition, where teams have 90 minutes to solve as many problems as they can, from a set of 30 problems. The competition is an opportunity for students to creatively use their mathematical skills, in a competitive environment. It is also a great chance for students to work collaboratively with students from other grades.

How did students work together during the challenge?

The teams divided the questions among the team members, according to their strengths. For some questions, students would discuss their ideas and check their mathematical approaches with their teammates. Finally, they presented their solutions to each other to verify the results.



What strategies did successful teams use?

While the results are not out yet, I saw teams use a range of digital tools to manage repetitive calculations or test solutions. These tools ranged from graphics calculators to spreadsheets like excel. They also communicated well, balancing time for students to independently try different problems, and time to discuss complex problems together.

How did you support or guide students during the competition?

The teachers were very hands off during the competition! Prior to the competition, teachers just showed students how to prepare, such as where to find previous competition questions.

What was the most rewarding part of this experience as a teacher?

Seeing students have fun with mathematics, working collaboratively, and drawing from a range of skills that they have built up over the years.

What challenges did students face, and how did they overcome them?

Concentrating for 90 minutes in a high-pressure environment was a challenge for students. Every minute was precious, so they had to decide whether resting was worth it



WORLD BOOK DAY



On Thursday April 23rd, students and teachers across the IB Division came together to celebrate World Book Day in a vibrant and engaging way. The day was filled with creativity, enthusiasm, and a shared love of reading.



Students and teachers dressed up as characters from their favourite books, bringing well-known stories to life around the school. Throughout lessons, both students and teachers took the opportunity to read aloud from their favourite books.

At lunchtime, our Grade 11 and 12 student leaders organised and led competitions for Grades 6–10. These included activities such as “Which teacher is reading Harry Potter?” and “What’s your teacher’s favourite book?”, which were enjoyed by the students.

In addition, students participated in a variety of creative literary competitions, including:

- Writing a summary of a book in just six words.
- Redesigning the cover of a novel.
- Giving advice to a character in a story.
- Responding to thought-provoking statements about literature.



Ebenezer Scrooge (Mr. Furnival), Wizard of Oz (Mr. Siose), Superman (Mr. Serpico)

It was fantastic to see so many students actively involved throughout the day. The standard of work produced was excellent, and we look forward to announcing the competition winners soon!

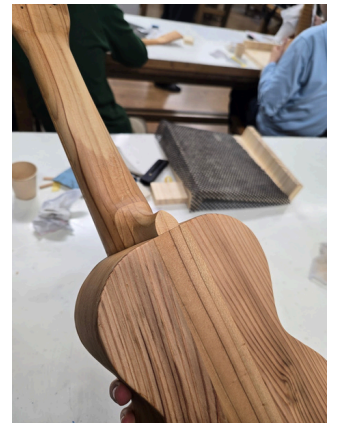
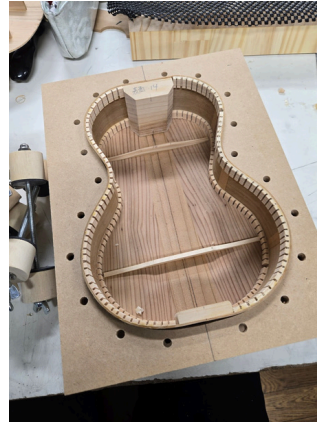




MY EXPERIENCE IN “HOU KU’I PROJECT” S.S.

As part of Tamagawa Academy’s Extended School yearlong Hou Ku’i Project, I had the opportunity to explore Hawaiian and Japanese culture through music and performance.

In the program, I handcrafted an original ukulele from trees preserved from the school forest, learning to value nature through craftsmanship, and developed my musical skills through weekly ukulele practice.



We made our own ukuleles using wood from trees at Tamagawa Academy that were cut down to protect the school forest. Each ukulele is made from different types of wood used in different parts, so every ukulele has its own unique smell and character. Each one is truly one of a kind!



As a hula dancer with 14 years of experience, I also performed hula during the program, sharing Hawaiian culture through dance as well as music. In Hawaii, local teachers were deeply moved by my performance and praised the expression and spirit behind it. I also had the chance to perform at a concert by world-renowned ukulele artist Jake Shimabukuro. Through music, hula, and cultural exchange, this project became a meaningful experience that showed me how culture can connect people beyond language and background.



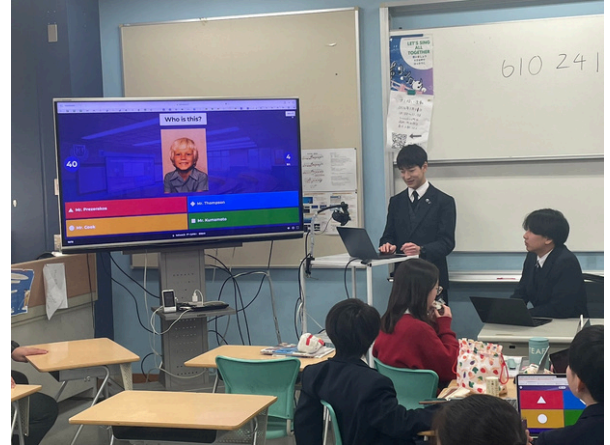
YOUTH FOR CEBU:

TAMAGAWA IB JOINS MULTI-SCHOOL EFFORT TO SUPPORT DISASTER RECOVERY

R.K.

Hello, this is Rinki from Grade 12. This time, I am going to introduce my service activity I've done in Cebu, the Philippines during spring vacation. This was my second time visiting there to observe how people in disaster areas live while having difficulties, because of the earthquake and typhoon that happened last year. Before actually going to Cebu, high school students who were participating in this event from four different schools in Japan, including Tsuda Gakuen (Mie), Housei Daini (Kawasaki), Minami (Yokohama) high schools and our Tamagawa IB division, organized charity in each school. In total, collected 66,045 JPY (24,800 PHP), estimating that more than 600 students took part in. One normal family in the Philippines can live for two months with this amount of money.

As Tamagawa IB Division, Y, R, L, and myself from Grade 12 organized charity week in January and raised 11,605 JPY (4,500 PHP).



This picture shows local houses in the disaster area. You can see that some houses are badly broken and only the framework exists. I was shocked to see this kind of situation for the first time in my life.

To conclude, our support was meaningful, distributing donations to nearly 100 families, which was more than what we expected before doing the activity. And lots of local people said "Thank you" to us. I would like to say thank you very much for the cooperation of all Tamagawa IB students and teachers.



Using donations collected, we bought 64 packed noodles, 48 can products, and 100kg of rice at the local supermarket. We distributed those items to nearly 100 families in different areas. They looked happy and thankful to receive them.

I found that our support was meaningful, making us and local people understand each other. By actually meeting them face to face, not only us, but also local people would have a positive feeling of receiving donations directly from us. I learned that it's significant to understand what they need at first, and to think from an equal standpoint. At first, we interviewed a local university student to know what people in the disaster area really need. Since she told us that they really need groceries, we bought and distributed them.



Using donations collected, we bought 64 packed noodles, 48 can products, and 100kg of rice at the local supermarket. We distributed those items to nearly 100 families in different areas. They looked happy and thankful to receive them.

Thank you for reading, and please look forward to the next newsletter!

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THE 2026 TAMAGAWA – GOETHE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Since 1989, Tamagawa Academy and Goethe Gymnasium have fostered a deep international bond through a collaborative exchange program. Built on the principles of Round Square, this partnership continues to provide students with transformative experiences in cultural immersion and global education.

The 2026 program, documented by **K.K.**, featured two primary windows of activity. The first leg took place from September 29 to October 13, students from Germany came to Japan and shared athletic and scientific endeavors. Students participated in a "Super Science High School" sports festival and experienced traditional Japanese culture through Aikido. The second segment, scheduled for March 18 to March 28, Tamagawa participants traveling across Germany to explore the historic and modern landscapes of Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, and München.



For the Tamagawa students, beyond the formal ceremonies, the program offered a true look at daily life in a different culture. Students followed rigorous academic schedules, with classes typically running from 9:30 to 10:35 and beyond. They shared meals in school cafeterias and worked together in science labs and computer rooms.



The exchange was also about building personal connections outside the classroom. Participants enjoyed exploring local landmarks, visiting German supermarkets like REWE, and sampling local cuisine in city centers. Whether through group sports or quiet moments of friendship, the 2026 exchange successfully upheld the tradition of mutual respect and learning that has defined this partnership for over thirty years. We look forward to seeing how these international friendships continue to grow!





SOCCER REPORT



Date: Sunday April 26th.

Competition: 2026 High School Comprehensive Sports Tournament Tokyo Prefectural Qualifiers.

South Branch Qualifiers.
First Round.

Location: Tokyo Metropolitan Oizumi High School

Result: Tokyo Metropolitan Oizumi High School 0 - 4 Tamagawa Gakuen.

**TOKYO
METROPOLITAN
OIZUMI HIGH
SCHOOL**

VS

**TAMAGAWA
GAKUEN**



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“IMMERSE YOURSELF IN EVERYTHING ENGLISH!”

Mrs. LIWAG

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Caloocan City, Metro Manila.

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I come from a family of teachers who have definitely inspired me to become a teacher myself.

What subject do you teach and why do you love it?

I teach Language Acquisition in the MYP and English B in the DP. I love it because it is interdisciplinary and I really enjoy our literature units!

What advice do you have for students on how to do well in your subject?

Immerse yourself in everything English! Read, listen, write, and speak in English as much as you can!

What's the best thing about working at Tamagawa?

The best thing about working in Tamagawa is being surrounded by nature all the time. I love seeing how the seasons are reflected in my surroundings.

What's your favourite thing about our students?

My favorite thing about our students is that they are friendly. Students greet their teachers when they pass by each other in the hallways and they would say “Thank you” when you give them hand-outs for class. These may seem like small and simple things but they matter.

What's your favourite school event?

My favorite school event is the Pegasus Festival. It is so nice to see students just having fun and enjoying themselves. It is also a wonderful opportunity to see the different talents that our students have!

What made you want to teach in Japan?

Japan has always been a dream country of mine. Growing up, I was exposed to Japanese culture and tradition through different media. Japanese hospitality and politeness is known worldwide and I wanted to experience it first-hand. I was also very curious about the educational system in Japan and how I can contribute to it.

What do you like most about Japan?

I like the efficiency and reliability of transportation here, especially the trains. Even if they are late, they issue a slip of paper for you to give your school or employer which helps a lot.

What is the biggest difference between Japan and your home country?

The biggest difference between Japan and the Philippines is that Japan has four seasons whereas the Philippines only has two seasons: the wet season and the dry season, based upon the amount of rainfall. Thinking about what clothes to wear is a bit easier back home as you can wear what you normally wear the whole year-round.

Which IB Learner Profile trait do you value most, and why?

Being an inquirer is what I value the most because there are so many fascinating things around us! We must have a thirst for knowledge and always remain curious and keep growing!

How do you encourage a global mindset in your classroom?

I encourage my students to have a global mindset through the topics that we discuss in class and by exposing them to different voices/perspectives from around the world.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself.

I finally tried cliff diving for the first time last summer!

What's your favourite dessert?

Halo-halo

What's your favourite snack?

Pinipig Polvoron

What's your favourite drink?

Yuzu tea and Masala Chai

What's your favourite music artist or band?

Sara Bareilles

What's your favourite hobby?

Painting

What's your favourite sport (to play or watch)?

I like watching tennis matches and playing badminton.

What's your favourite season?

Spring

What's your favourite time of day?

Night time

What's your favourite holiday?

Christmas

What's your favourite quote?

"The greatest gift you can give someone is your time because when you give your time, you are giving a portion of your life that you will never get back."- quote from "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom.



MODEL UNITED NATIONS CLUB

The Tamagawa IB Model United Nations club has been growing in recent years. With only four members in 2020, we now have 25 members from grades 8-12.

MUN is sponsored by the United Nations to promote international mindedness, promote awareness of global issues, and develop the passion and ambition for youth to address these issues and develop creative solutions to them. Participants in an MUN conference are given a country to represent and an issue to address within the scope of a United Nations Committee.

On January 24 this year, we hosted our third annual Tamagawa Junior Model United Nations conference. MUN is sponsored by the United Nations to promote international mindedness, promote awareness of global issues, and develop the passion and ambition for youth to address these issues and develop creative solutions to them. Participants in an MUN conference are given a country to represent and an issue to address within the scope of a United Nations Committee. Each year at Tamagawa, we invite junior high school students from international schools in the Tokyo area and students from other Japanese schools with English language programs.

This year we had over 100 students from seven different schools participate. Our senior high school students organized the conference, and chaired the three committees. Students addressed issues of protecting children in war zones, water scarcity in conflict zones, and protecting indigenous rights. MUN is a great opportunity for students to exemplify the IB value of international mindedness, and also develop personal skills, such as research and public speaking skills. Most importantly, it is an opportunity for students to interact with peers from different schools to learn and collaborate with the goal of making the world a better place.



KOINOBORI CUP '26



On Thursday, April 30, the IB Division at Tamagawa Gakuen participated in the Koinobori Cup alongside Secondary students. This annual sports event is jointly organized by the IB and Secondary student councils to foster camaraderie among students and between classes.

While the event was organized primarily by homeroom classes, it also featured club-based relays, with a total of six events taking place. The students created matching class T-shirts, and the day was filled with yellow cheers that seemed to chase away the cloudy skies, making it a day of deepened camaraderie.



The Koinobori Cup at Tamagawa Academy is a spirited annual tradition that perfectly captures the school's "Zenjin" (Whole Person) education philosophy through the lens of athletic competition and cultural celebration. Held in late April to coincide with Children's Day, the event sees the campus transformed by the sight of vibrant carp streamers—koinobori—dancing in the wind, symbolizing strength and perseverance. Students across various grade levels engage in a series of energetic sports and

team-based challenges, fostering a deep sense of camaraderie and "Tamagawa Spirit." It isn't just a tournament; it is a visual and physical manifestation of the students' growth, where the focus on sportsmanship and collective effort reflects the school's commitment to building resilient, well-rounded individuals.



KOINOBORI CUP '26

The day began early with the Executive Committee gathering at 7:45 AM, followed by an inspiring Opening Ceremony at 8:50 AM. The morning session featured high-energy traditions, including the Ball Scramble (Tamaire), the Eye of the Typhoon, and an intense Rope Scramble. These events built incredible momentum leading into the lunch break, where students enjoyed a communal meal on the field and in their homerooms.

The excitement continued throughout the afternoon, starting with the highly anticipated Club Competition Relay at 12:35 PM. Students then demonstrated impressive coordination and stamina during the Long Rope Jump before the day reached its peak with the Selected Relay. The festivities concluded with a formal Closing Ceremony at 2:25 PM, wrapping up a memorable day of camaraderie and athletic achievement. By the 3:00 PM dismissal, it was clear that the event had once again strengthened the vibrant spirit of the Tamagawa community!



This year's Koinobori Cup stood out as a highlight of the season, perfectly capturing the strength and perseverance symbolized by the carp streamers. The tournament showcased an exceptional level of skill and fair play, leaving players and spectators alike with a profound sense of school pride.

As the trophies were hoisted under the clear sky, the event concluded not just as a competition, but as a lasting celebration of the friendships and sportsmanship that define our community!

FIELD TRIP

TSUKUSHINO FIELD ATHLETICS



A total of 175 students from Grades 6 to 8, along with their chaperones, went on a field trip to Tsukushino Field Athletics.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Tsukushino Field Athletics is a nature-oriented sports facility featuring 50 different wooden obstacles, making it a place that can be enjoyed by a wide range of ages.

Although the weather was a concern on the day, the students took on the athletic challenges alongside their peers, getting covered in mud in the process.

In the morning, students worked in mixed-grade groups (Grades 6, 7, and 8). While navigating the obstacles, they searched for chaperones to take on various quizzes and puzzles presented by the teachers. The challenges were diverse and demanding—ranging from physical tasks like jumping rope to answering questions such as "What book am I currently reading?" based on hints, or providing their own explained answers to open-ended questions like "Is it ever okay for people to lie?"



The students worked hard to collect as many teacher signatures as possible. After lunch, they spent the afternoon participating in activities with their respective classes.

Throughout the day, the Grade 8 students began to show dependable leadership qualities, such as escorting injured younger students to the school nurse and constantly checking to ensure everyone was keeping up.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day for everyone, including the Grade 6 students who have just joined the IB division and all the new transfer students.

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