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Parents angry as COVID-19 shuts schools for a month – 4th March, 2020

Level 0

Japan closed its schools. It wants to protect children from COVID-19. Schools will close until April the 8th. Parents are worried. They have to look after their children. Grandparents will look after some while their parents work. Many children have no grandparents or extended family, so parents may have to pay for childcare fees.

Japan's schools shut after an anti-virus task force meeting. It wants to stop children getting infected. The next two weeks are important to stop the virus. Companies should help parents take time off work to look after children. An angry mother said children should not stay at home alone. She said parents are still travelling in packed trains.

Level 1

Japan closed its elementary, junior-high and high schools. It wants to protect children from the COVID-19 virus. Schools will stay closed until April the 8th. Parents are worried about the school closures. They have to think about how to look after their children. Grandparents will look after some children while their parents work. Many children have no grandparents or extended family nearby, so parents may have to pay for childcare fees.

Japan's schools shut after a meeting of an anti-virus task force. Japan wants to lower the risk of children getting infected. The next two weeks are important to stop the virus spreading. The government will ask companies to help parents take time off work to look after children. An angry mother said it was not OK to leave children at home alone. She asked: "What's the point of closing schools if parents are still [going to work] in packed trains?"

Level 2

Japan and Hong Kong closed their elementary, junior-high and high schools. Governments want to protect children from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Schools in Japan will stay closed until April the 8th; children in Hong Kong will return to school on April the 20th at the earliest. Parents are worried about the school closures. Parents have to think about how to care for children. Grandparents will look after some children while their parents go to work. Many children have no grandparents or extended family who live nearby. Parents may have to pay for childcare fees.

Japan's Prime Minister shut the schools after meeting Japan's anti-virus task force. The next two weeks are important to control the spread of COVID-19. He wants to lower the risk of children and teachers getting infected through gathering together. The government will ask companies to make it easier for parents to take time off work to look after children. An angry mother said: "I wonder if the government thinks it is OK to leave children at home alone." She asked: "What's the point of closing schools if parents are still commuting in packed trains?"

Level 3

Japan and Hong Kong have closed its elementary, junior-high and high schools until April. Governments say they want to protect children from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Schools in Japan will remain closed until April the 8th, which is the start of the new school year. Children in Hong Kong will return to school on April the 20th at the earliest. Parents are now worried about the school closures. Working parents have to think about how to care for younger children. Grandparents will look after many children while their parents go to work. However, many children have no grandparents or extended family who live nearby. Parents may have to pay for expensive childcare fees.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shut the country's schools after a meeting of Japan's anti-virus task force. He said the next two weeks are critical to control the spread of COVID-19. He wants to "stem the risk of many children and teachers becoming infected through gathering for long hours every day". The government said it would urge public services and private companies to make it easier for people to take time off work to look after their children. An angry mother said: "I wonder if the government thinks it is OK to leave children at home alone for long hours." She asked: "What's the point of closing schools if parents are still commuting in packed trains in which passengers may have COVID-19?"

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