

Starting point of school year 2020

Boys and girls, tomorrow, on Tuesday, we are scheduled to have our 75th Entrance Ceremony, and all of you are going to see our new freshmen, your new *kōhai*. I am sure that you have been looking forward to this experience. Many of you are planning to try to induce freshmen to join in your club activities. There must be a lot of good things that you want to pass on to them. You should tell them about our Sports Day, the *Gaien-sai*, and other extra-curricular activities. I hope you will tell them a lot about our school and its proud traditions. And I do hope you, yourselves, will all have fulfilling student lives at Aoyama High School.

At this starting point of a new trimester, I would like to talk about two things.

First, it is less than four months until the Tokyo Olympic Games. All of you are going to enjoy track and field events at the National Stadium in August. For you, especially for the twelfth graders, however, it will come at an inconvenient time. During this period, we are going to give you summer lectures at Roppongi High School, as well as guarantee that you can use study rooms exclusively at Yoyogi Seminar, Shinjuku and, also, can share some at Ochanomizu Seminar, Suidōbashi. And if you want, you can take any lectures at those schools at a discount. Concerning club activities, you may have to practice or compete with other high school students at their schools. And you can have summer training camps during this period. However, when you go, you will have to carry your belongings on foot from the school to chartered buses. When you return, you will have to carry them on foot from chartered buses to the school, since general vehicles will not be allowed to drive into the Stadium avenue. And a lot of people from all over our nation and other countries will visit the National Stadium. As you know, trains on the Ginza line consist of only six cars each, and the platforms in Gaienmae Station are very small. Imagine how crowded it will be. It shouldn't be hard for you to imagine that because you know how crowded it gets around our school and the station when baseball or rugby games are being held. For your safety, I have decided not to allow students to come to school during this period except for the purpose of individual club activities or of watching the Olympic Games in year-of-admission-based groups. And, during this period, I will totally close our school for two or four days out of the seventeen days designated for the Games. That means that you will also be unable to prepare for the *Gaien-sai* at our school until the 10th of August. I know how inconvenient this will be for you, but I do hope you will understand the situation and will follow the rules that I have made.

Second, and last, we witnessed the abdication of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito and the end of his reign. A new era has begun. Emperor Naruhito has ascended to the throne and become the 126th Emperor. During the Heisei era, we suffered from many mega-disasters: the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, the Unzen volcanic eruption, the Higashi-Nihon earthquake and tsunami, other huge quakes, and heavy rains. The global climate seems to be changing radically. In many places in the world, people have also suffered from terrorist attacks and armed conflicts. We are not sure that our society will be able to enjoy further prosperity economically, politically, and culturally. Nobody knows what will happen, even in the near future. Thus, as I often tell you, it is essential for you to keep on learning as many things in various fields as you can. Learning helps increase people's happiness, and we should not stop learning. I do hope the new era will be a peaceful and prosperous one. And I do hope you will be able to lead fulfilling lives in this age of uncertainty. Don't take a dark view of your lives. You should become lifelong learners. There may be many more chances in the new era for you to attain achievements that will change our society for the better.

Today, I have told you two things: first, that I do hope you follow the rules that I have made for the period of the Olympic Games; second, that you should keep on learning so as to be able to help change society for the better.

One more thing—I hope all of you will be gentle and kind with one another, not ignoring your friends or speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. As I often tell you, diversity among students is very important. Any school without diversity would be unable to offer sufficient stimulation to students' curiosity. It is essential for you to spend your school lives in friendly rivalry with others who are better than you in certain fields.

Thank you very much.

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