Tokyo, Japan
Head of School
July 2016
www.nishimachi.ac.jp
School Philosophy

Nishimachi believes that education should promote the well-rounded development of individuals through the cultivation of their intellectual, creative, personal, social, and physical abilities. The school is committed to educating both Japanese and foreign students to be international and independent thinkers. We believe that learning a second language provides the opportunity to grow beyond a single culture. We believe that classroom and co-curricular activities should foster sensitivity to, and respect for, individual talents as well as differences. We believe that every student must learn to function both as an individual and as part of a group. Our ultimate goal is that every Nishimachi student learns to live harmoniously in, and contribute to, world society.

School-Wide Learning Expectations

Each student at Nishimachi should become a:

- Communicator
- Thinker
- Responsible Learner
- Collaborative Worker
- Developer of Quality Work
- Global Ambassador

In the words of school founder Tane Matsukata,

“To share, to live and learn together, and yet keep a special identity, that is Nishimachi.”

The Position

For over 65 years, Nishimachi has been the school of choice for Tokyo families seeking a challenging academic program in English that features a unique Japanese language and cultural program, which complements the mainstream school curriculum. This program reinforces the school’s focus on respect and integrity that transcends cultures and lauds strong international relationships in a supportive, familial environment.

Located in the heart of Tokyo, the internationally known K-9 Nishimachi International School provides students a vibrant, nurturing, and global atmosphere in which to develop. Through a progressive curriculum that employs 21st century educational models, students learn to function both as individuals and as part of a community. Ultimately, students leave Nishimachi with the ability to be successful, live together harmoniously, and contribute to a global society.

At this time, Nishimachi seeks a new Head of School, effective July 2016, to lead the school community as it continues to improve on its already strong 21st century program. The successful candidate will be an experienced administrator with a passion for international education and a love for working with elementary and middle school students, faculty, and parents. He or she will be a committed, caring leader interested in developing a knowledge and understanding of Japanese culture and promoting intercultural awareness and connectivity.

School History

Nishimachi was established in 1949 by Tane Matsukata on her family’s property in Tokyo. She had recently returned to Japan after 17 years in the United States, where she received her education and spent the war years.

Miss Matsukata returned to a country that had been badly scarred by the war, and which needed moral and physical rebuilding. Along with a group of mothers, she began to realize the important role that education
would play in the reconstruction process. Together, they explored educational alternatives, concluding that a new approach other than traditional education—one that stressed the human side of learning and a peaceful coexistence with others—was needed.

The women thus began their own progressive school, where students learned both Japanese and English. They viewed learning two languages as fundamental to extending children’s understanding beyond the boundaries of their own culture and into other cultures. In 1956, English became the primary language of instruction, and daily Japanese classes began for all students. Beginning in 1986, the school gained accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and, from 2005, joint accreditation with WASC and the Council of International Schools (CIS).

**The School**

Today, Nishimachi is known for its innovative, international approach to education, which combines study in English and Japanese. Elementary and middle school students form a close-knit community and have frequent opportunities to engage with and learn from local Japanese culture. They leave Nishimachi thoroughly prepared to continue their education in first-class learning institutions worldwide. Approximately 30% of students enroll in secondary schools in the United States after completing ninth grade at Nishimachi. All students pursue higher education.

**Academics**

The academic environment at Nishimachi is both rigorous and nurturing, promoting independence and resourcefulness while touting tolerance, understanding, and respect for self and others. Teachers care about the overall well-being of each child, and they strive to create an environment in which students can foster strong relationships with one another and with their teachers. As students learn how to be part of a group, developing necessary interpersonal skills in the context of the classroom, they also learn about themselves as learners.

“Understanding by Design” forms the curricular framework at Nishimachi. This concept of curriculum development, assessment, and instruction is designed to foster deep understanding through stimulating, rewarding learning experiences for students. At Nishimachi, the ultimate goal of learning is student understanding and ability to

**Fast Facts**

- Enrollment: 357
- Faculty members: 52
- Faculty with advanced degrees: 48%
- Student/teacher ratio: 7:1
- Countries represented: 25+
- Students holding dual or multiple citizenships: 40%
communicate what they have learned. Students are at the center of the learning process at all grade levels, and they are aided by a supportive and nurturing faculty and by technology tools that are used in meaningful contexts to enhance learning.

A developmental and collaborative approach to education defines the Nishimachi elementary school, which forged a close connection with the middle school and creates one unified body of learners. In this division, students are prepared to be engaged and successful participants in their own education. The division was founded on the cumulative and social nature of learning, through which children grow and develop into committed, productive global citizens.

Students follow a rigorous core academic program that helps them develop as effective communicators, set on a path toward bilingualism, who appreciate multiculturalism. Students pursue coursework in English, Japanese, math, science, social studies, arts, physical education, health and wellness, information literacy and technology, sports, and fine arts. Teachers set high social and academic standards for all students, who become responsible, respectful learners as they progress to the middle school.

The entire middle school community at Nishimachi is committed to helping each student develop during the unique period of adolescence. Teachers adopt a holistic approach to middle school education, paying equal attention to academic and social-emotional development. In their classes, students engage in inquiry-based learning, learning hands-on about various academic subjects, co-curricular offerings, and the rich language, history, and culture of Japan. Middle school students are supported by a 1:1 Apple laptop program, and they pursue coursework in English, math, science, social studies, Japanese language, Japanese social studies, art, music, drama, physical education, health and wellness, and exploratory classes. Through these elective exploratories, students have the opportunity to expand and develop their personal interests. Current exploratory classes include instrumental ensembles, Spanish, international cooking, drama, movie making, Japanese calligraphy, knitting, robotics, and more.

Each grade level is subdivided into advisory groups, and during “circle solutions,” students develop skills in empathy, inclusion, problem solving, reflection, creativity, and democracy.
Ninth grade is a unique time at Nishimachi, intentionally designed for a small group of students. During this final year at the school, students become mature learners, challenging themselves through rigorous coursework, high learning expectations, the grade nine challenge, Japanese thesis work, and graduation speeches. Socially, this is an important year—students create strong bonds with their classmates and enjoy special ninth grade privileges, from expeditionary field trips to their own ninth grade social area and a unique graduation ceremony.

**Student Life**

Students have myriad opportunities to become involved in the colorful fabric of life at Nishimachi, through artistic, athletic, and service-oriented outlets. A strong commitment to service begins in kindergarten at Nishimachi, where the philosophy is to nurture in the students the natural response to want to contribute to their local or global communities, and to encourage a lifelong commitment to community service. Students have pursued service opportunities by fundraising for local NPO/NGOs in the devastated Tohoku region or working with the Kirivorn School in Cambodia, which was sponsored and built by constituents of Nishimachi.

Other co-curricular activities include music ensembles, visual art outlets, drama performances, a food fair in October, a winter concert in December, and a sports day in May. After-school activities include tennis, fencing, Japanese *taiko* drum lessons, and more. Sports teams play competitively with other international schools in the Tokyo area, and students can choose to play basketball, volleyball, cross country, track and field,
badminton, and soccer.

Field trips are an integral part of the academic program. All students have opportunities to enrich their understanding of Japan, whether they are planting rice with students at Nishimachi’s sister school in Kurohone, pounding mochi rice, or bonding with classmates during the Kazuno camp program. Each year, upper elementary and middle school students take a week-long ski trip, and they see first-hand the beauty and customs of Japan.

**Physical Campus**

The school is conveniently located in a residential neighborhood surrounded by embassies, within easy access of all that one of the world’s most exciting and culturally rich cities has to offer. The school is housed in modern classroom facilities that surround Matsukata House, the historic former residence of the family of the founder. With a gymnasium, an observatory, a school-wide Information Technology network and wireless Internet access throughout the campus, the school is well-equipped for 21st century learning. The Yashiro Media Center contains 18,000 volumes, 65% in English and 35% in Japanese. The kindergarten unit is located in a state-of-the-art facility across the street from the main campus. In addition, Camp Rioichiro Arai, Nishimachi’s outdoor education facility at Kazuno, in Gunma Prefecture, is located 150 kilometers northwest of Tokyo.

**Tokyo, Japan**

Tokyo, which means “Eastern Capital” in Japanese, is the capital of Japan and the most populous metropolitan area in the world. The home of the Japanese Imperial Family and the seat of the Japanese government, the city’s splendor is unmatched by any other in the country. Over 9 million people call the city home, and 51 of the Fortune 500 Global companies have outposts in Tokyo—the highest number of any city in the world. It is an alpha-plus world city, and in 2014 was ranked the “best overall experience” in TripAdvisor’s World City Survey. The city takes pride in its nightlife, dining, shopping, public transportation, safety, and cleanliness.

Tokyo’s subtropical climate ensures that residents enjoy warm summers and mild winters. Residents can escape the congestion of the city by visiting many of Tokyo’s national parks, which comprise over 30% of the city’s land area. Visitors learn about Japan’s culture and history by visiting the city’s various museums, from the Tokyo National Museum to the National Museum of Western Art, the Ueno Zoo, and the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation.

An eminently livable city steeped in history and culture as well as modernity, Tokyo is a wonderful place to call home.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Nishimachi has long been known for its high quality of education, wonderful traditions, supportive parent involvement, hard-working and passionate teachers, and close-knit, family-like community. The school enjoys strong relations with alumni and a sound financial condition.

That said, in recent years, as with most schools in Japan, there have been downward trends in enrollment. This has spurred renewed efforts to improve marketing and communications. In January 2014, a CS&A consultant interviewed a wide cross-section of community members and from those conversations generated these ideas for possible future action:

- Promote the strong foundation that a Nishimachi elementary and middle school education provides.
- Actively research more sports and fitness activities on and off campus.
- Harness the passionate parental volunteers to assist in promoting the school to prospective families.
- Utilize the central Tokyo location of the school to provide outside opportunities of learning.
- Increase fundraising efforts and build stronger relationships with alumni worldwide.
- Promote the advantages of a small school.
- Further develop IT in the curriculum.
- Enhance the arts program.
- Enhance internal/external communications for strategic marketing purposes.

QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

- Is an inspiring leader, driven by the school’s mission and values, while at the same time has a practical, hands-on approach to Head of School role.
- Has excellent communication skills; including being a good listener.
- Is forward thinking, but respectful of tradition.
- Is an energetic, skilled fundraiser.
- Can effectively promote/market the school to develop Nishimachi as the go-to international school for K-9 education in English and Japanese.
- Is even-tempered, approachable, visible, engaged, and known to all members of the school community.
- Has excellent multicultural/diverse stakeholder management/engagement skills.
- Has a proven record of success implementing strategic plans.
- Is familiar with and has a vision for the use of technology for teaching, learning and communication.
- Is a consensus-builder, with
proven record of working harmoniously with and motivating faculty, staff, parents, students, Board members, alumni, and the local community.

- Has strong financial management skills.
- Has an excellent background in education and experience with international schools/multilingual environments.
- Fluency in a second language and/or a connection to or strong affinity for Japan is preferred, but not essential.

**To Apply**

To apply, submit electronically and as separate documents the following materials:

- Cover letter expressing interest in the Nishimachi International School position
- Current résumé
- Statement of educational philosophy
- List of 5 references with name, phone number, and email address of each to:

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