



Summer 2025 Family Orientation Handbook

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2025 HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

[2025 HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[WELCOME TO NAKAYOSHI GAKKO](#)

[HISTORY OF NAKAYOSHI GAKKO](#)

[CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES](#)

[Mission Statement](#)

[CURRICULUM OUTLINE](#)

[SCHOOL POLICIES](#)

[HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY](#)

[EMERGENCY PROCEDURES](#)

[PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS](#)

[1. Maintenance Day I. 2](#)

[2. Parent Work Day](#)

[3. Committee Assignments](#)

[4. MVBT OBON \(Bingo Booth\)](#)

[PARENT/FAMILY EVENTS](#)

[Dine with Nakayoshi Gakko](#)

[Open House](#)

[ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE](#)

[LUNCH AND SNACK](#)

[DAILY SCHEDULE](#)

[LATE DROP-OFF AND EARLY PICK-UP](#)

[LATE DROP OFF](#)

[EARLY PICK-UP](#)

[INSURANCE](#)

[Liability](#)

[NON-DISCRIMINATION & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY](#)

[STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT](#)

[School Rules](#)

[The Behavior Expectation Code](#)

[Student Expectations](#)

[Examples of Misbehavior](#)

[Disciplinary Action](#)

[PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE](#)

[DISCLAIMER](#)

[CLASSROOM TEACHERS](#)

[SENPai \(In their own words...\)](#)

[2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BOARD INFORMATION](#)

[HONORARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS](#)

DISCLAIMER

The policies listed in this handbook are by no means exhaustive. Not every situation is included or addressed. Nakayoshi Gakko reserves the right to update or vary the application of rules and policies as it sees fit. This handbook is intended as a guide to help students, parents and volunteers, both adults and minors, to work together to ensure a comfortable and safe space for learning. The parents must ensure that they share the rules and consequences with their students and make sure that such students understand the behavior expectations.

WELCOME TO NAKAYOSHI GAKKO

Welcome to the 26th year of Nakayoshi Gakko. As we are in the middle of our third decade, we thank the many people who helped make Nakayoshi Gakko an enormous success. We are grateful for the continued support of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple and encouragement from our families and friends.

This year's superb staff of teachers, together with an energetic group of senpai volunteers, is looking forward to leading a variety of lessons and introducing your children to the many different aspects of Japanese and Japanese-American culture.

With your help, we know Nakayoshi Gakko will continue to be a wonderful experience for your children.

HISTORY OF NAKAYOSHI GAKKO

The vision of starting a Japanese Cultural Summer School program at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple was initiated by parents who wanted to pass from generation to generation the elements of their own Japanese culture. Armed with their vision, Temple parent Kathy Fujii presented the concept to the Temple board. She received overwhelming support and great enthusiasm from the Temple board and from participating parents.

In September 1999, a small volunteer board was organized and composed of Phyllis Chan, Pat Tomosada, Charlene Temple, Debby Inenaga, Becky Hudson and Kathy Fujii. Staff recruitment began with the hiring of an experienced Curriculum Director: Kit Nishiura, a former teacher and director at Medaka no Gakko. By January 2000, teachers and coordinators were hired. Both board and staff had the objective of putting on an exceptional program in an effort to make the children, the parents and the community happy and proud. In June 2000, Nakayoshi Gakko opened its doors to 76 students.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Nakayoshi Gakko offers a full and rich curriculum. After considerable research, we adopted a three-point mission statement, provided below:

Mission Statement

- To promote an awareness of Japanese culture in its historical and religious context.
- To gain an appreciation of Japanese-American heritage.
- To encourage friendship and cultivate those values that characterize the Japanese way of life.

The following objectives serve as guidelines to achieve the Mission Statement goals. With the help of experienced, credentialed classroom teachers, students will:

- Learn about different aspects of Japanese culture through various hands-on projects.
- Gain an understanding of Japanese-American heritage by participating in enrichment activities and field trips.
- Analyze and interpret Japanese and Japanese-American culture and history through literature and student-produced written and oral assignments.
- Demonstrate their appreciation of Japanese culture and values in school activities, such as Japanese language instruction, undokai (physical education), music, art, and cooking classes.
- Develop awareness that these values have importance in how we live and relate to others.
- Provide opportunities to develop a wider circle of friends from surrounding communities.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Class	Social Studies	Values	Holidays/Events	Cultural Topics and Terms
Panda	Family	“Me” in my family	(New Year’s Day)	Roles of family members (<i>chichi, haha, watashi, boku</i>), Family identity (family crest)
		Pride in tradition	Girls’ Day Boys’ Day	Kimono for boys and girls <i>Ayatori, menko</i> , and other traditional toys
		Respect to the elders	Respect for the Aged Day	Bowing and other forms of showing respect to the elders
Saru	Community (1): Awareness and Responsibility	Notion of <i>Mottainai</i> (appreciation of what we are given)	(Needle Festival)	Reusable items (<i>furoshiki, kimono</i>) Reuse of paper Japanese traditional paper (<i>origami, chiyogami, washi</i>)
		Harmony: Awareness & responsibility as a group	Nikkei Matsuri	House (<i>shoji, fusuma, tatami, noren</i>) Matsuri (<i>den den drums, hachimaki, ancestors</i>)
Kuma	Community (2): Connection to the Universe	Nature as gods	Star/Moon Festivals	Summer card & gift giving Calligraphy (<i>fude, sumi</i>) <i>Tanabata (orihime, hikoboshi)</i> Japanese mythology
		Mental/physical cleanliness	(New Year’s Eve)	Cleansing of house & self (water and salt), sumo, <i>Shinto</i>
Zou	Oceans & Nations	Ocean and Japanese Lifestyle	New Year’s Day	“ <i>Umi no Sachi</i> ” (food from the ocean, <i>gyotaku, sushi</i>) New Year’s celebration
		Weather & Life	Obon Relocation War Memorial Day	Weather and kanji characters, <i>teruterubozu</i>
		China and Japan		Tradition from China (<i>kanji, tango-no-sekku, tanabata</i>)
Kirin	Learn from our past	Perseverance	Relocation	Relocation (<i>Issei, Nisei</i>)
		Respect to ancestors	Obon	Items from Buddhism (Buddha, <i>Daruma</i>)
		Peace of two countries	War Memorial Day	A-bomb and prayer for peace (paper cranes)

<i>Class</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>Holidays/Events</i>	<i>Cultural Topics and Terms</i>
Tora	Nature and seasonal symbols	Appreciation of four seasons	Excursions to enjoy cherry blossoms, maple leaves, and snow	Natural beauty in the house (garden, <i>tokonoma</i> , table setting) <i>Haiku</i>
	Heritage of Japanese aesthetic value	<i>Ma</i> (balanced space) and <i>Sabi</i> (elegant simplicity)	(Hakone Matsuri)	Japanese visual art, <i>haiku</i> , tea ceremony
	Identity as "Nikkei-jin"	Pride of being a Japanese American	(Nikkei Matsuri)	How we enjoy our annual events and how people in Japan enjoy their annual events (review: months and seasons)
Ryu	Tokugawa			<i>Bunraku</i> <i>Kamishibai</i>
Tsuru	Migration Immigration			<i>Kabuki</i>

SCHOOL POLICIES

Enrollment Requirements

Eligibility

Students entering first through eighth grade in September of the upcoming school year are eligible to participate in Nakayoshi Gakko.

Tuition

At the time of registration, tuition is paid in full with the application. A 25% late fee is assessed on all late payments.. **All accounts must be settled by the first day of the session.**

Refunds

Payment is fully refundable, minus a \$50 processing fee, until April 15, 2025. No refunds will be given for cancellations made after that date.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- Proof of COVID vaccination is not required
- Masks are optional however, please see below for health guidelines
- Classes will be conducted indoors with the exception of undokai

Illness

- If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school. We ask each family's support and cooperation in this matter.
- We will send your child home for the following reasons: fever, injury, nausea, or suspected contagious conditions.
 - If your child becomes sick and has a fever, please have them remain at home until **fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducers.**
 - Take an at-home COVID test if symptoms for COVID are present.
 - If COVID test is positive, please see below.

If a Student Tests Positive for COVID

- If your child tests positive for COVID, please let the office staff know immediately and **remain at home until your child has not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication AND other COVID-19 symptoms are mild and improving.**
 - **Mask** when around other people indoors for the 5 days* after resuming normal activities or test positive (if no symptoms). Day 0 is symptom onset date or positive test date.

- For more information, refer to the CDC Respiratory Illness and Santa Clara County Public Health Respiratory Virus guidelines
 - [CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance](#)
 - [Santa Clara County Public Health - Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses](#)

If a Student is a Close Contact for COVID

- Please monitor for symptoms
- Consider testing for COVID within 5 days of exposure

Allergies

All allergies should be listed on the health form and must be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher and school personnel.

Emergency Medications

If your child carries an Epi-Pen, Benadryl, or any other medications, please inform the Office Staff, Classroom Teacher, and Senpai. A box will be provided in the office for medications and emergency instructions (ex. if you want medication dispensed or 911 to be called). Please place these in a clearly labeled Ziploc bag. Medications will be returned at the end of session.

Medical Emergencies

In the event your child has a medical emergency, the school makes every effort to contact the parents or guardians listed on the registration forms first. If parents or guardians cannot be reached, the school will contact the doctor listed on the medical release form.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL. It is imperative we keep our telephone lines open for emergency purposes.

Nakayoshi Gakko is prepared for emergencies and we maintain supplies of food, water, and first aid equipment should students need to remain at school for a substantial period of time. Nakayoshi Gakko has established emergency procedures to ensure the safety of all our students. Fire and earthquake drills are held on the first day of the session.

1. In the event of an earthquake, all children will be kept at school until picked up by a family member or a designated person.
2. For any other reasons, you will be contacted via phone using the number that is listed on the Emergency Form.

3. No student will be dismissed from school unless a parent (or individual designated in writing by parent) comes for him/her. Please ensure that the proper contact information is listed on the emergency contact form (jackrabbit.com).
4. All parents or designated persons who come for students must sign out at the temple gym or at the temporary student release station. Signs will be posted if this alternate location is required.

In the event of an earthquake, prolonged power outage, fire, etc., where it is necessary to close the school before regularly scheduled closing, we expect parents to pick up their children as soon as possible.

If you are not able to reach the school in an emergency, Nakayoshi Gakko will care for your children until you arrive or the person designated by you in writing arrives.

PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS

As a parent cooperative, Nakayoshi Gakko relies heavily on parent volunteers to support various school programs and curriculum. Parent participation is critical to the integrity of the program and well-being of the children.

1. Maintenance Day 1, 2

- All families are required to participate
- Sign-ups are sent out via email
- Volunteers will be assigned a duty.
- Focus on clean-up & set-up of the classrooms & grounds.
- Maintenance Day 1: Saturday, June 14 (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.)
- Maintenance Day 2: Saturday, June 28 (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

2. Parent Work Day

- Daily Classroom Support (12:00pm - 3:30pm)
 - Support Senpai and Specialty teachers
 - Be fully engaged!

3. Committee Assignments

- Arts & Crafts
 - Prepare materials for classroom projects
- Publications
 - Print/copy class workbooks
 - Make name tags and print certificates
 - Picture Day photos
 - Mid-session digital newsletter

- Create photo slideshow for Open House
- Take video of Open House event
- Open House Committee
 - Set up Open House (Friday, June 27th)
 - Pack down Open House (Friday, June 27th)

4. MVBT OBON (Bingo Booth)

- July 19th & 20th, 2025
- Set up, Caller, Announcer, Table Runners, Prize Runners
- Sign-up sheet will go out during Nakayoshi Gakko session

PARENT/FAMILY EVENTS

Dine with Nakayoshi Gakko

Dine at designated restaurants on specified days and Nakayoshi Gakko receives a percentage of sales from Nakayoshi Gakko customers. This year, it's dining out with **Pizza My Heart** (1st Tuesday, June 17th, Mountain View location or online, use code NG505), **BJ's Restaurant Brewhouse** in Cupertino (1st Thursday, June 19th, Online Order Promo Code: JUN145), **Kona Ice** (1st Friday, June 20th from 3:30pm - 4:30pm, on-site) and **Golfland** (2nd Tuesday, June 24th, Sunnyvale location).

Mochitsuki

Mochitsuki is a traditional Japanese New Year's custom of pounding steamed rice into mochi, a sticky rice cake. It will be held on Thursday, June 19th 3:00pm-4:30pm.

Open House

Open House will be on the last day of camp! It will showcase all the crafts and activities your student has participated in during the 2 weeks of camp. Friday, June 27th from 3:30pm-5pm

Other Fundraisers

- We accept donations and corporate matching.
- Need name labels to label all your child's school, camp, sports stuff? Order through Label Daddy. www.labeldaddy.com/nakayoshi

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Camp is from Monday - Friday 8:30am - 3:30pm, June 16 - 27, 2025

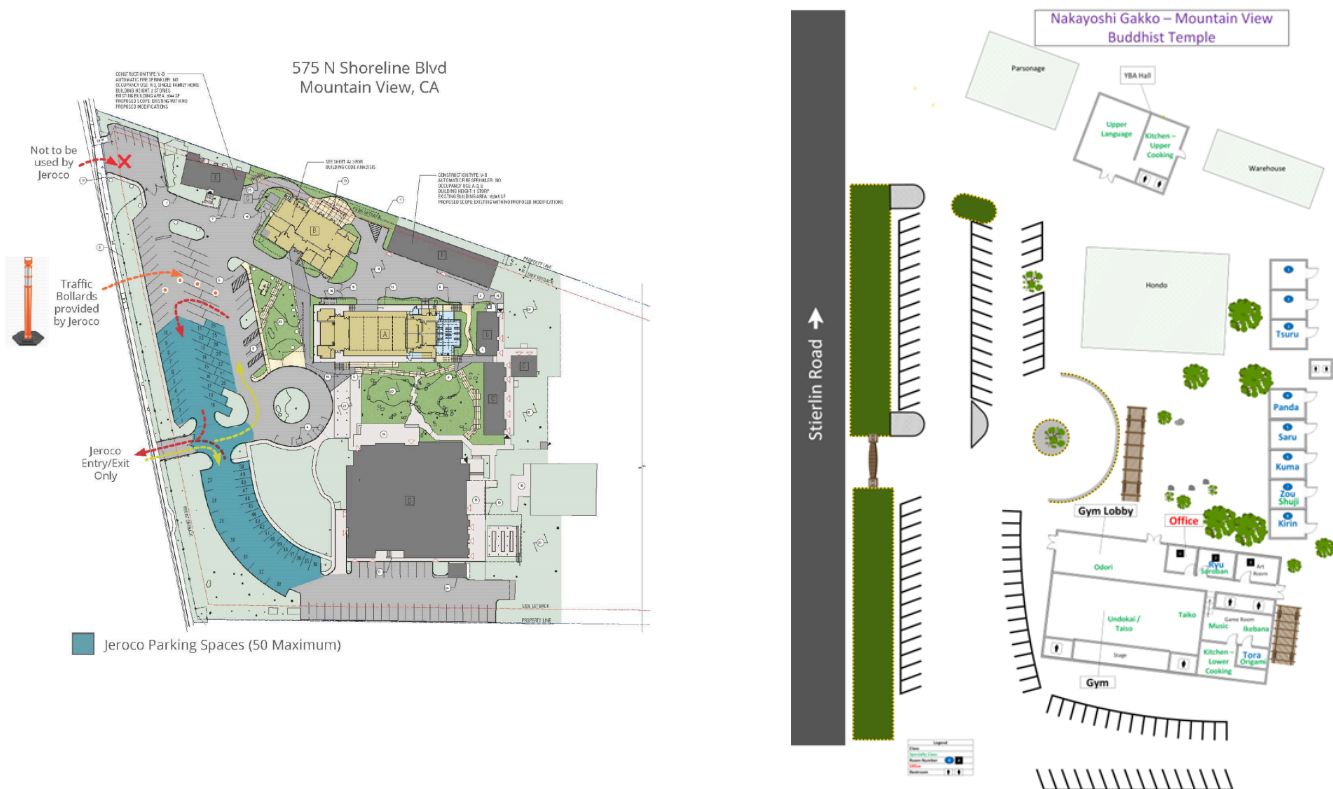
Drop Off: 8:15am - 8:30am **Pick Up:** 3:30pm - 3:45pm

Arrival:

- Park in the parking lot and walk your student inside the gym lobby.
 - The MVBT is renting a portion of the parking lot to the Construction team so parking spaces may be limited during the session. Please try to avoid parking in the teal spaces indicated on the attached map for extended periods
- Sign-in and have your student put on their name badge.
- Students need to place their lunch bag and snack bag in the appropriate box, labeled by class.
- Walk students to the classroom to put water bottles and bags away.
- Senpais will be waiting in the classrooms until it is time for Taisho. Parents are welcome to watch Taisho in the gym.

Pick-Up:

- Line up outside of the classroom.
- Sign your student out and return the name badge.
- Pick up snack and lunch containers in the lobby.



LUNCH AND SNACK

Each student should bring a snack and lunch **free of nuts**. Lunch bags will be kept in the walk-in refrigerator. No microwave is available to reheat food, so please plan accordingly. Lunch and snacks should not be shared between students due to allergies.

Please bring refillable water bottles. Water stations will be available to refill the bottles.

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Taiso
8:45 a.m.	Classes Begin
Snack Periods	Staggered (1st - 8th)
Lunch	Staggered (1st - 8th)
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Specialty Classes
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Clean Up
3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Dismissal

LATE DROP-OFF AND EARLY PICK-UP

LATE DROP OFF

- Bring your student to the office

EARLY PICK-UP

- Parent/Authorized adults check-in at the office to sign student out
- One of the office staff will escort you to the classroom to pick up your student

INSURANCE

Nakayoshi Gakko does not carry medical insurance.

Liability

1. Children not officially enrolled in the program are not allowed on the school grounds.
2. No person shall be personally liable for debts of Nakayoshi Gakko solely because of association with the school.
3. All participating students are required to have a signed photography release and parental consent waiver on file.

NON-DISCRIMINATION & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Nakayoshi Gakko is committed to providing learning and volunteering environments in which all students and volunteers, both adult and minor, involved in school programs and activities can participate in an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. All students and volunteers have the right to learn and teach in an environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military and veteran status, religion, disability, medical condition, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, domestic partnership status, pregnancy, or sexual orientation is prohibited.

Prohibited harassment or discrimination includes, by way of example, slurs, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual, harassing or discriminatory nature: unwelcome sexual advances or reference to sexual themes which are deemed offensive, or other discriminatory or harassing verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct based on the recipient's race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, veteran's status, religion, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

Any participant at Nakayoshi Gakko (students, volunteers, both adult and minor) who engages in the harassment or discrimination of anyone at school programs or activities shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program and possible police arrest if such action is criminal in nature.

Anyone affected by harassment or discrimination should immediately contact staff if they feel they are being harassed. Within 24 hours, staff shall report complaints to the Principal or Designee. Staff shall similarly report any such incidents they may observe, even if the affected person has not complained. The Principal and the President of the Nakayoshi Gakko Board of Directors will investigate reports of harassment. Upon verifying that harassment has occurred, they will ensure that appropriate action is promptly taken to end the harassment, address its effects on the affected person, and prevent any further instances of harassment.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Nakayoshi Gakko Code of Conduct supports our effort to maintain a safe and supportive school environment. Each student is expected to behave appropriately in all activities and accept responsibility for his/her actions. Parents and staff share responsibility for supporting the school's objectives and working together to correct problems when they arise.

School Rules

At Nakayoshi Gakko, students are expected to:

1. Treat Sensei, Principal, parents/adults and each other with respect and courtesy.
2. Get Sensei, Principal or parent/adult permission before leaving the class or group.
3. Use appropriate language and gestures.
4. Refrain from physical and verbal aggression.
5. Refrain from using cell phones and other electronic devices during school hours.

The behavior expectation code at camp is that students will:

1. Follow the rules of camp.
2. Cooperate with other students and staff.
3. Listen and follow instructions.
4. Participate in all activities.

Nakayoshi Gakko senseis and senpais and staff will provide leadership, guidance and assistance to all students in meeting their behavior expectations. Students who choose to behave in a socially appropriate manner will maximize the benefits they receive from the camping experience.

Student Expectations

Nakayoshi Gakko will take place from June 16 - 27 (M-F) 8:30am - 3:30pm. All camp activities will be in person.

Examples of Misbehavior

The Nakayoshi Gakko Summer Camp sensei and senpai understand that students may misbehave and that the majority of those misbehaviors will be minor or inconsequential. Sometimes a student's misbehavior may be serious enough to warrant the sensei, senpai or principal intervention. The following are some examples of serious misbehavior at camp:

1. Social misbehavior

- a. Refusing to follow instructions, directions or safety rules.
- b. Bullying other students.
- c. Harassing other students by teasing or name-calling.

2. Group misbehavior

- a. Refusing to follow instructions, directions or safety rules.
- b. Disrupting the program process.
- c. Refusing to participate in program activities.
- d. Harassing other campers through misbehavior

Disciplinary Action

- Students violating the student's code of conduct or the Sensei's classroom rules may result in being sent to the office to have a conversation with the Principal.
- Further disruptions from students may result in a CLASS SUSPENSION where the Student is removed from camp for the rest of the day.
- EXPULSION – This form of suspension is assigned only by an administrator and the President of the Nakayoshi Gakko Board of Directors. An expulsion is a complete exclusion and removal from Nakayoshi Gakko and all Nakayoshi programs from the remainder of the current session. Return of the student in future years will be reviewed on an individual basis. No fees will be refunded for expelled students.

PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE

As parent/guardian of a child or children (hereinafter "Child"), parents acknowledge that audio/video recordings may be made and/or photographs may be taken of Child during participation in demonstrations, field trips, games, contests, and classes and other activities set forth in the Nakayoshi Gakko descriptive materials ("Activities") offered during the Nakayoshi Gakko Summer 2025 session ("Summer Session"). "Photographs" shall mean a picture or likeness obtained by photographic reproduction, still or moving, using either traditional film media or digital recording or storage media, and further including any video tape or live television transmission. Photographs may be taken of parents or Child either alone or with other persons in any setting.

Parents have given authorization and consent (signed during registration) to Nakayoshi Gakko, its Board, officers, agents, volunteers, employees, successors, and assignees (hereinafter "Recipient") to reproduce, perform, publish, create derivatives, and distribute (by whatever means including but not limited to, using newspapers or discrete media such as CDs and DVDs, through the internet, through any other electronic medium presently in existence or invented in the future), of parents and/or Child's voice, photograph or likeness (hereinafter collectively the "Property"), for any purposes, including but not limited to the public promoting of, the public advertising of, describing the mission, class offerings, demonstrations, or other programs and activities of Nakayoshi Gakko in a public forum only after providing written consent to the Recipient. **All public usage of the Property must be formally requested in writing prior to usage by the Recipient.**

Through the registration of Nakayoshi Gakko, parents release and forever discharge Recipient from any and all claims, demands, actions, causes of actions, suits, costs, expenses, liabilities, and damages arising from Recipient's reproduction, performance, publication, creation of derivatives, and distribution of the authorized use of the Property.

Parents further hereby agree not to bring or consent to others bringing claim or action against Recipient on the grounds that anything contained in the authorized Property, or in the advertising and publicity used in connection herewith, is defamatory, reflects adversely on me, violates any other right whatsoever, including, without limitation, rights of privacy and publicity.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Principal - Joanne Endo (she/her)

I have been a teacher in San Jose for eighteen years, and I am currently at Country Lane Elementary School. I especially enjoy science, writing, and art. During my free time, I like to do crafts, play the guitar, and visit Disneyland. This will be my 17th year at Nakayoshi Gakko.

Panda Sensei – Annette Lowe (she/her)

My name is Annette Lowe. I am currently a Kindergarten teacher at Sedgwick Elementary School in Cupertino. I live in San Jose with my husband and our two wonderful children. I have been teaching the Panda class for over 20 years and love it!

Saru Sensei - Marilyn Higa-Armistead (she/her)

My name is Marilyn Higa-Armistead. This will be my 11th year teaching the Saru class and I look forward to meeting the new incoming class. I was born and raised in Mountain View and our family has been active in the Mountain View Buddhist Temple since 1973! I graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and got my teaching credential and Masters degree from San Jose State University. I taught 1st grade at Laurelwood Elementary in San Jose before finally finding a 3rd grade position which I love at Huff Elementary School (now Imai Elementary) in Mountain View. During my free time I enjoy watching and playing sports with my two children, crafts, gardening, fishing, camping and hanging out with family and friends.

Kuma Sensei – Jeanifer Tsukamoto (she/her)

My name is Jeanifer Tsukamoto. I have been teaching in the Cupertino Union School District for over 25 years. Fun fact, I was one of the first teachers that taught at Nakayoshi Gakko. Also, I grew up going to Japanese school in the same classrooms that Nakayoshi Gakko uses today. Most of my spare moments are spent with my husband and daughter going to her extracurricular activities. However, when I do have some time, I enjoy reading, traveling, and doing yoga. I look forward to teaching the Kuma class this summer.

Zou Sensei – Kelly Kusumi (she/her)

Hi there, my name is Kelly Kusumi. I am a fourth-grade, soon-to-be TK teacher at Orchard Elementary. I earned both my bachelor's degree in Child and Adolescent Development and my master's degree in Education/Curriculum and Instruction from San Jose State University. This is my first time being a sensei at Nakayoshi Gakko, and I am excited to be a part of this program. Some fun facts about me are that my favorite animals are pink bunnies and anglerfish, and I love listening to audiobooks.

Kirin Sensei – Satomi Fujikawa (she/her)

Satomi Fujikawa grew up in Oakland and has been teaching in San Jose since 2007. Currently, she is a middle school teacher in the Moreland School District. She loves teaching the Kirin class because she has always been interested in the Japanese American experience during World War II and wants to help pass on their stories to the next generation. When she's not teaching, she is often picking up new hobbies—her current favorites are birding, sewing, and watercoloring. She also enjoys visiting National Parks and volunteers at Yosemite National Park for a whole month during summer vacation!

Tora Sensei – Ann Chavez (she/her)

I am so excited to be a part of the Nakayoshi Gakko community. My daughter, Sara, completed Nakayoshi Gakko and is back this summer in the Senpai program. My son, Logan, completed Tsuru last summer. I have been teaching for over 20 years in the field of Deaf Education for preschool through middle school aged students. I look forward to seeing everyone this June!

Tora Sensei – Kimi Hiroshima (she/her)

I am so excited to join the Nakayoshi Gakko community this summer. I taught at Suzume no Gakko for about 15 years. I have been teaching for 19 years in a variety of grades, I am currently teaching kindergarten. I look forward to meeting everyone soon!

Ryu and Odori Sensei - Lauren Furukawa (she/her)

Lauren Furukawa received her Bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies at Cal State Long Beach and is currently working as a substitute teacher in the Long Beach Unified School District. In the Fall she will be teaching at Lotus Preschool at San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin. She grew up in the Nakayoshi Gakko program in which she went from Panda to Tsuru and was then a senpai in high school. Nakayoshi has always been a highlight of her summers and she is excited for this year's session.

Tsuru Sensei – Toshimi Fujikawa (she/her)

Toshimi is happy to return to Nakayoshi Gakko this year as the Tsuru Sensei, after formerly teaching Lower Language a few years ago. She is also the sister of the Kirin teacher, Satomi Fujikawa. After receiving her teaching credential and Master's from Cal State East Bay, Toshimi has been a high school science teacher for 8 years, currently in Pleasanton Unified School District and formerly in San Lorenzo Unified School District.

Language (Lower) Sensei – Yoko Kobashi

Hajimemashite! My name is Yoko Kobashi, and I'm thrilled to become a member of the Nakayoshi Gakko community. When I previously lived in San Jose, I had the pleasure of being involved with the San Jose Betsuin Japanese Language School and Suzume no Gakko. In Massachusetts, I taught both adult and children's classes at Showa Boston University.

I'm known as the "Obon Gypsy." During the summer, my husband and I travel to 12–13 Obon festivals. I'm passionate about volunteering in the community and long-distance running.

Language is deeply connected to a country's culture and customs. I hope to create a class where students enjoy not only learning the Japanese language but also experiencing its rich culture and traditions. Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu!

Language (Upper) Sensei – Lisa Nakamatsu (she/her)

Although Lisa Nakamatsu was born and raised in the South Bay, she lived in Japan for ten years. Her husband is from Okinawa and both of her daughters were born in Japan. After returning to the States, she earned a degree in Japanese from SFSU followed by her teaching credential. She has taught Japanese at Homestead High since 2004. Lisa loves to travel and has been to 21 different countries (including Cuba).

Lower Cooking Sensei (Panda through Tora) - Cathy Nakamura (she/her)

I worked as a nutritionist and registered dietitian for the USDA Food and Nutrition Service in San Francisco for 6 years. I retired from Monta Vista High as a Special Ed secretary and paraeducator. This is my 23rd year at Nakayoshi Gakko.

Upper Cooking Sensei - Irene Nishimoto (she/her)

Irene has been a former registered dietitian and is now a retired elementary school teacher. Irene received her Bachelor of Arts degree in home economics with a dietetics emphasis from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and later her teaching credentials at San Jose State. After working as a registered dietitian for 17 years, she taught at Country Lane Elementary School for 22 years. When her children were younger, she was a board member of Medaka no Gakko in Palo Alto and taught a combo 4th, 5th, and 6th grade class for one year. This is her 13th year teaching cooking for the 7th and 8th grade classes at Nakayoshi Gakko. She is looking forward to joining the staff again.

Music Sensei – Cheryl Shay (she/her)

My name is Cheryl Shay. I grew up in Sunnyvale and have attended the Mountain View Buddhist Temple since childhood. I currently live in San Jose and enjoy traveling and playing the piano for MVBT.

Origami Sensei - Jake Aquino (he/him)

I am going into my third year at Cal State Long Beach. I went through the entire Nakayoshi program from Panda to Tsuru and was also a senpai during high school. I am excited to return for my second year of teaching origami at Nakayoshi.

Soroban and Taiko Sensei - Joy Tanaka (she/her)

Joy Tanaka began studying *soroban* (Japanese abacus) at age 10 in Honolulu, Hawaii. She continued to pursue advanced soroban levels through high school and college and became a chief instructor at the Araki Hiroya Soroban School. Joy was also a performing member of the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble and a director of the Taiko Center of the Pacific Youth Group in Honolulu before moving to the Bay Area. She is currently a member of Jun Daiko and an instructor for the Mountain View Buddhist Temple Taiko group.

Shuji (Calligraphy) Sensei - Makoto Pease (she/her)

My name is Makoto Pease. I graduated from Osaka University of Health and Sport Sciences, with an Elementary school and Special Education school teachers license. I have taught at several different schools in Japan and in the Bay Area for 5 years and learned Shuji (Japanese calligraphy) from kindergarten to 5th grade. I'm very excited to teach Shuji and become a Nakayoshi Gakko teacher.

Undokai Sensei - Connor Sato (he/him)

My name is Connor Sato, and I just finished my first year at San Diego State University studying information systems. I'm grateful to return this year as a sensei, having previously been a student and a senpai.

SENPai (In their own words...)

Jillian Higa (she/her), Head Senpai

My name is Jillian, I'm a senior at Mountain View High School. My favorite sport is basketball, I've been on my high school team all 4 years, as well as, on my club team, the Foster City Flyers, for 7 years. I also help coach 4th/5th grade girls in basketball through the Tri-City Youth Group program. I've participated in Nakayoshi Gakko from Panda to Ryu, as well as being a Senpai the past 3 years. I'm so excited to complete my last year of being a Senpai.

Rebecca Kunze (she/her), Assistant Head Senpai

Hi! My name is Rebecca Kunze, and I'm going into my senior year at Notre Dame San Jose. In my free time, I love to read and hang out with friends. Outside of school, I do track and field, speech and debate, and play taiko, among other things. I'm excited to be back at Nakayoshi this summer, as the program is something I've always loved and I look forward to it every year!

Madisen Nishimoto (she/her), Panda (1st grade) Senpai

Hi, my name is Madisen Nishimoto and I'm an incoming junior at Leigh High school. I enjoy participating in a variety of activities such as color guard, Girl Scouts, and clubs at school. Color guard has taught me how to be a good team member and the virtues of hard work and perseverance. Girl Scouts has helped me gain leadership skills through the variety of activities and events that my troop does with younger troops. Some of my other hobbies that I like to do in my free time are reading and writing.

Sara Chavez (she/her), Panda (1st grade) Senpai

Hello! My name is Sara Chavez and I have been a Senpai for one year. I'm an incoming Junior at Notre Dame High School - San Jose. I strive to create a safe environment for the kids to engage in various activities and learn more about Japanese-American history and culture. Thank you for attending Nakayoshi Gakko and we hope to make an experience your child will never forget!

Addison (Addy) Ando (she/her), Saru (2nd grade) Senpai

My name is Addison Ando, a sophomore at Leigh high school. A little more about me is that as an active basketball and tennis player, I've learned the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance qualities that I believe are essential for supporting kids both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, my involvement as an officer for two different clubs and as the vice president for my Girl Scouts troop has honed my communication and leadership skills, allowing me to effectively collaborate with a diverse group of individuals and to be someone to look up to from other's point of view. In Girl Scouts we have a younger sister Girl Scout

troop where we have to control the girls but also have fun with them. Leadership is a major quality I have learned in order to make decisions for what's best for the girls which shows my problem solving. I'm also part of the YBA (Youth Buddhist Association) cabinet as the community service chair, where I share and organize the different charities that we organize throughout the year. Additionally I am on the Coast District dance committee for both San Jose and Mountain View YBA which connects to my communication skills through both different chapters of YBA and bringing everyone together.

Kylie Uyekubo (she/her), Saru (2nd grade) Senpai

Hi! My name is Kylie Uyekubo and I am a rising senior at Aragon High School. In my free time I enjoy playing basketball, reading, baking, and hanging out with friends. I am lucky enough to have been a part of this program since the Panda class, and have made so many unforgettable memories during my time here. I am so excited to be making more fun memories and friendships this summer!

Kaitlyn Yee (she/her), Kuma (3rd grade) Senpai

Hi! I'm Kaitlyn Yee, and I am an incoming senior this fall at Leigh High School. Some of my interests include playing basketball, watching sunsets, eating good food, and spending time with my friends and family. I have attended Nakayoshi Gakko since Panda and it has always been my favorite part of the summer! Additionally, I have been a senpai for 2 years, one year as a program senpai and one year as a classroom senpai. Being a senpai these past 2 years has helped to build my leadership skills and this session I hope to continue to build connections with the students and create lasting memories!

Jordyn Matsushima (she/her), Kuma (3rd grade) Senpai

My name is Jordyn Matsushima and I'm a sophomore at Piedmont Hills High School. For hobbies I play basketball for school and outside leagues and I also like to play video games. I have actually been playing basketball since I was 4 and it has been really fun ever since the start. I started Nakayoshi Gakko during Panda year and completed it all the way until Tsuru in 2022, only missing Tora and Ryu due to distance learning. Other hobbies I have include listening to music, or just spending time with my favorite people.

Lacey Armistead (she/her), Zou (4th grade) Senpai

My name is Lacey, and I've just graduated from Pinewood High School. I've participated in Nakayoshi Gakko from Saru to Ryu, and this is my fourth year as a Senpai. In my free time, I like to play sports like soccer and volleyball, as well as draw or paint. Through this session, I can't wait to connect with more senpai and students while continuing to further my understanding of Japanese culture.

Emi Hirabayashi (she/her), Zou (4th grade) Senpai

Hi! My name is Emi Hirabayashi and I am a rising Senior at Homestead High School. Outside of school, some of my favorite extracurriculars include volunteer tutoring, singing in choir, and assistant coaching a 3rd grade girls' basketball team. I have been a Senpai at Nakayoshi Gakko since the first year I was eligible, and it is something I look forward to every summer. Some of my happiest memories have come from my time as a student at Nakayoshi Gakko, and I am excited to create more—both for myself and for this year's students! :)

Ella Weeks (she/her), Kirin (5th grade) Senpai

Hello, I'm Ella and an incoming senior at Mountain View High School. I attended Nakayoshi Gakko as a kid, and it is where I have made so many friends and so many precious memories. I enjoy reading, photography, nature, and am always eager to learn new things and expand my knowledge.

Miya Kosakura (she/her), Kirin (5th grade) Senpai

Hi, I'm Miya Kosakura, and I just graduated from Monta Vista High School! In my free time, I play basketball and taiko, and enjoy bullet journaling and making stickers! Ever since being a Panda, Nakayoshi Gakko has always been the highlight of my summer; a fun and memorable two weeks with new and old friends, while learning about my culture is something I'm so grateful to have experienced as a kid! I'm so excited to be back as a 4th year Senpai, and I can't wait for these two weeks!

Bradley Aquino (he/him), Tora (6th grade) Senpai

Hi my name is Bradley, I'm a senior at Mountain View High School. My favorite sport is lacrosse. I've been playing for 7 years, on club and the school team. I've attended Nakayoshi Gakko from Panda to Ryu, and been a senpai the past 2 years. I can't wait to enjoy and finish my final year as a senpai at Nakayoshi Gakko this year.

Mari Mizota (she/her), Tora (6th grade) Senpai

Hi! My name is Mari, and I will be entering my senior year at Mission Early College High School this fall. In my free time, I enjoy playing soccer, crafting, and spending time with family and friends. Participating in Nakayoshi Gakko has always been a highlight of my summer, both as a participant and senpai. I am excited to meet new people, connect with my culture, and help create a fun and memorable experience for everyone.

Bria Shimada (she/her), Ryu (7th grade) Senpai

Hi! I'm Bria, and I just graduated from Los Gatos High School! I love to go on road trips, hang out with my friends, and play basketball. I'm so thankful that I've been able to be a part of Nakayoshi Gakko for many years and a senpai for the past three years! I'm really looking

forward to reconnecting with all of the students and continuing to create new, long-lasting memories with this amazing community!

Kate Hojo (she/they), Tsuru (8th grade) Senpai

Hi! My name is Kate Hojo and I just finished my sophomore year at Carlmont High School and I am a member of both the competition and sideline cheer teams. I attend Mountain View Buddhist Temple with my family and I am also a member of YBA. I enjoy spending time with friends and traveling. I attended Nakayoshi Gakko from Panda through Tsuru and this is my second year as a Senpai.

Zoe Tang (she/her), Tsuru (8th grade) Senpai

Hi my name is Zoe and I'm currently attending Branham High School as a Junior. Some of my favorite hobbies are baking, doing arts and crafts, and overall being creative. I love playing sports, especially basketball, and I've attended Nakayoshi Gakko since I was a panda. The last two years I've been a cooking senpai for upper class but hope to experience being senpai for the classroom. I'm excited for this new year of Nakayoshi Gakko and look forward to meeting everyone!

Devin Lowe (he/him), Lower Cooking Senpai

My name is Devin Lowe. I am a sophomore attending Cupertino High school, and have been attending Nakayoshi Gakko since the Panda class. I'm a member of junior YBA, and have gotten to help out with events like the Obon festival. I really enjoy playing volleyball, participating on my school team and club team, as well as helping to coach younger players and teams. I enjoy music as well, participating in my school's a cappella choir group as well.

Kylie Higa (she/her), Lower Cooking Senpai

I'm a student at California High School and will be entering my sophomore year in Fall 2025. I'm a member of the Save Promise club to help schools become safer and spread awareness about students' wellbeing. When I'm not in school, I enjoy playing softball, crafting, and supporting my cousins in their extracurricular activities. I'm looking forward to becoming a senpai because I enjoy helping people and plan on being an elementary school teacher after college.

Summer Duazo (she/her), Upper Cooking Senpai

Hi! My name is Summer Duazo, and I'm an incoming junior at Westmont High School. In my free time, I enjoy drawing, reading, and playing basketball! I've been in Nakayoshi Gakko since first grade (Panda), and was a senpai for the first time last year. This program has given me so many amazing memories - from rolling sushi to playing with water balloons - and I'm excited to help the campers make some too!

Lex Maag (she/her), Upper Cooking Senpai

My name is Lex Maag. I'm 16 years old and I go to Design Tech High School. Before being a Senpai, I attended Nakayoshi Gakko Panda through Tsuru. Through working as a Senpai, I hope to provide kids with the same good experiences that I did growing up.

Brady Doi (he/him), Program Senpai

My name is Brady Doi. I am a Nakayoshi Gakko alumni from the year of 2023. I am currently a freshman attending Wilcox high school. In my spare time, I enjoy playing tennis and video games.

Damon Uyehara (he/him), Program Senpai

Hi my name is Damon and I am going to be an incoming junior at Fremont High School. I did Nakayoshi Gakko since Panda. I enjoy playing sports like basketball and baseball, and also participate in my school's marching band and winter percussion. I also enjoy things like YBA and bowling.

Julian LeConte (he/him), Program Senpai

My name is Julian LeConte, I go to Leigh High school. I enjoy helping out and working with kids when they need help. I play baseball on the school team as a pitcher and center fielder. I enjoy photography and making videos. When I have the chance to help out I always try to do my best and make sure people around me are also helped out if needed.

Kimi Aquino (she/her), Program Senpai

My name is Kimiko Aquino and I am finishing my freshman year at Mountain View High School. I participated in Nakayoshi Gakko from Panda through Tsuru and have been looking forward to being a senpai since I was little. I go to Mountain View Buddhist Temple and love hanging out with the Dharma school kids after service. I am looking forward to a fun session with everyone.

2024-2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BOARD INFORMATION

An organizational chart along with job descriptions of the Executive Board, Working Board, and Committees are available at: <https://www.nakayoshigakko.org/html/contact.html>

Executive Board

Co-Presidents	Doug Doi Kim Tsuchida	president@nakayoshigakko.org
Principal	Joanne Endo	principal@nakayoshigakko.org
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Webmaster	Barry Tao	webmaster@nakayoshigakko.org
Ex-officio	Julie Uyekubo	

HONORARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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City of Mountain View Council Member

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Former U.S. Congressman, 17th District of California

The Honorable Tom Kinoshita
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