

# Sister School Programs



## St Kilda Primary School & Ishigase Elementary School

The sister school relationship between Ishigase Elementary School and St Kilda Primary School evolved from the sister city relationship between Cities of Obu and Port Phillip, with the objective of exchanging children's work. Since 1994, International Understanding classes have been held, and in 1995 study presentations started.

On 13 September 1996 a delegation of 15 members led by then school principal Louise Perce visited Ishigase Elementary School for the official signing of the sister school agreement between St Kilda Primary School and Ishigase Elementary School, accompanied by an unveiling ceremony.

Since the signing of the sister school agreement, there has been an active exchange of students' work and penpal letters between the two schools as well as official visits. St Kilda Primary School has a Japanese program for all students from Prep to Grade 6, and the language and cultural program is greatly enhanced by the sister school relationship with Ishigase Elementary School.

During the 2008 visit, St Kilda Primary School students presented Ishigase Elementary School with webcams and in February 2009 student from both schools were able to connect online via Skype, introducing a new era of communication between the schools.

### Previous visits:

- 1997 May - An official delegation from the City of Port Phillip, led by then Mayor Christine Haag visited Ishigase Elementary School.
- 1997 December - 'The Brilliance of Friendship' a monument created by students to commemorate the signing of the sister school agreement was presented to St Kilda Primary School.
- 1998 August - Seven teachers from Ishigase Elementary School, led by then principal Osamu Kajitani, visited the City of Port Phillip and St Kilda Primary School.
- 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 - A delegation of teachers and Grade 6 students from St Kilda Primary School visited Ishigase Elementary School.
- 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013 - A delegation of teachers and students from Ishigase Elementary School visited St Kilda Primary School.

## Elwood College & Obu Higashi Senior High School

Elwood College and Obu Higashi Senior High School have enjoyed a fruitful sister school relationship since 1985. The aim of this sister school program is to encourage understanding between countries through the experiences of young people and to specifically encourage the study of foreign languages in both countries.

After much planning and organising between the schools, a delegation of 18 Elwood College staff members visited Obu Higashi Senior High School in November 1985, and the sister school agreement was signed by the principals of both schools. The visit was held over two weeks during which time the delegation members participated in classes, homeroom and club activities, further deepening the exchange between both staff and students.

A short term biannual exchange program between the schools was established soon after the signing of the sister school agreement.

In recognition of the educational benefits that can be achieved through longer exchanges, a long term exchange program was also been established, with one or two students annually taking part in year-long exchanges in order to immerse themselves in respective languages, cultures and societies.

Principals, teachers, parents and students have all visited one another on many occasions and gifts, teaching materials and mementos have been exchanged over the years. Those students who have participated in these exchanges have also returned to their home schools with memories of hospitality, friendship and acceptance, which will shape their future lives.

It is difficult for schools to continue international exchanges single-handedly. There has been much support from school Parent Teacher Associations and other groups, and schools regularly involve city councils in their sister school visits and students exchanges, giving students the opportunity to see governments working cooperatively towards international understanding.

Elwood College and Obu Higashi Senior High School have maintained a close relationship since 1985 and was the inspiration for the sister city relationship between the Cities of Obu and Port Phillip.

In 2006, a delegation of 15 students from Elwood College visited Obu Higashi Senior High School to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister school relationship. After six days of classes, assemblies and excursions, the delegation was joined by a group of students and teachers from St Kilda Primary School, who were also in Obu visiting their sister school, and began a tour around Japan.



## Obu Middle Schools Visit

Since 1994 the City of Port Phillip has hosted an annual delegation of 20 middle school students (years 7 – 9) and accompanying teachers from the City of Obu.

In August each year, five students from four different middle schools in Obu are selected to participate in the study tour to Australia during their summer holidays. The students participate in classroom activities and experience first-hand the Australian school life with their peers at Elwood College. They also participate in a weekend homestay program as well as visit other cities in Australia.

Obu Middle Schools visit provides students of both cities with the opportunity not only to gain an international perspective and cultural awareness but most importantly forging friendships which will be cherished for a long time.

