Dear Parents and Students,

にほんごのクラスへようこそ！Welcome to Japanese Class! My name is Nathan Bynum and I am excited to start learning with you. Here is a little background information about myself. This is my fourth year teaching at the Obama Academy and I am originally from Michigan. I started learning Japanese as a middle school student—much like your students. As a senior in high school, I spent six months in Japan as an exchange student. I lived with a Japanese family and went to school everyday. After high school, I studied Japanese and German at Michigan State University. As a junior in college, I spent one year as an exchange student at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. I look forward to sharing my experience with you and your students.

In Japanese 6-8 we will work on developing fundamental skills in the Japanese language. This includes, but is not limited to basic grammar structures, different conjugations of verbs and adjectives, and various elements of the Japanese script. 6th grade students will focus on mastering Hiragana—one of the three Japanese alphabets. 7th grade students will be reviewing Hiragana and learning Katakana. 8th grade students will begin learning Kanji—the third and largest Japanese alphabet. My goal is for students to feel comfortable in interacting with native speakers. Therefore, class will be set up so that students will become proficient in both speaking and listening to Japanese.

Course Materials
Students will need one, two-pocket folder with prongs in the middle. I recommend getting one made out of poly plastic—as they are more durable. Students will also need lined paper in their folder at all times. Please speak with me if you need help procuring supplies.

Textbook Information
In Japanese class, we will use the textbook entitled “Adventures in the Japanese Language”. Due to the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP) curriculum enhancements, we will not be using the textbook everyday. Therefore, there will be a class set of textbooks available for use. Each student will be assigned a textbook of the class set.

Homework
Homework will be assigned 3-4 times a week and should take 10-20 minutes each day. On days when homework is not assigned, it is recommended that students look over vocab words/characters for at least 5-10 minutes.

Late homework and projects incur a 20% deduction per day that they are late (1pt in most cases). The 20% deduction will be taken out of the original amount of points. The students will be informed of the due dates for each assignment and project.

Students have one day to turn in makeup work from an excused absence. For example, if a student is absent on Tuesday and returns on Wednesday, the student has until Thursday to submit missed work. Do not expect to use class time to make up missed work, including tests or quizzes. Make arrangements
with me to take a test or quiz before or after school or during lunch. Being absent the day before or the day of a pre-announced test or quiz does not excuse you from taking it the day you return.

Absent students are **solely** responsible for getting the work and notes. Students must ask Bynum Sensei for absent work/notes at the beginning of class. Students may also check the class website (www.bynumsensei.weebly.com) to see what they have missed. They may also download any homework/notes we took. When there are no more additional copies, students may print out their own copies in the library during lunch.

**Grading**

All Japanese courses will use IB MYP rubrics to assess students’ growing ability (based on achievement levels 1-8) in the following fields:
- Comprehending spoken and visual text
- Comprehending written and visual text
- Communicating in response to spoken, written and visual text
- Using language in spoken and written form

All Language Acquisition courses at the Obama Academy will use the same grading scale.

**Classwork/Participation** - 30% - This includes students’ Survivor grades and any other assignments given and collected in class.

**Written Assessments** - 20% - These include Hiragana and Katakana tests and quizzes, as well as vocabulary quizzes, unit tests and projects that are not presented in front of the class.

**Homework** - 10% - This includes any homework assigned in class.

**Speaking and Listening Assessments** - 40% - These include unit speaking tests, class conversations, presentations, Survivor points, etc.

**Extra Credit assignments will not be given.**

*** Students may retake any test or quiz they want. In order to do so, the student must arrange with me a time outside of class to do the retake. The student must also show me proof that he/she has studied and that proof must be turned in with the ORIGINAL test/quiz. Proof can come in the form of a note from a parent or guardian, writing each word/quiz question ten times each, studying in Mr. Bynum’s room, etc. Retakes cannot be done within 24 hours of getting the test/quiz back or within 24 hours of studying with Mr. Bynum. I care that students have learned the information—not that students have crammed information and can spit it out within a short amount of time.

**Survivor**

A game called “Survivor” will be used to document students’ Japanese participation. Students will ten points each day for participating in Japanese. Speaking English during Survivor, will cause that student to receive zero points for the day. If a student speaks English during Survivor for three separate days over the course a quarter, students will be eliminated from Survivor and they will earn a zero every day for the rest of the quarter. If a student receives three strikes in a quarter, he or she can remove one strike
(only) by talking with me at the end of the class, receiving an additional assignment, and turning that assignment in. Only when the student turns in the assignment, will he/she begin earning daily points.

Students can earn more than ten points by actively raising their hand, winning in-class games, speaking Japanese outside of class, etc. Students can earn less points each day by disrupting class, coming tardy, not being prepared for class, etc.

Each week, Bynum sensei will calculate survivor grades, based on an average of the top three students with the most points. Survivor grades will be posted and reviewed weekly. The Survivor grades will be entered into the grade book twice a quarter: once at progress reports and once at report cards.

At the end of each quarter, there will be a quarter exam. The top 20% of students in each class will be named “Survivors” and will receive an automatic A on the exam.

**Tardies, absences, and seats**

Be on time to class; I take tardies very seriously. If you are in the classroom without a valid permission slip after the bell rings, expect to be marked tardy. One tardy equates to a loss of five survivor points. Four tardies equate to a lunch detention. Remain in your seat until the final bell rings, including when a guest teacher is present. You may change seats only when permission is given.

**Academic Integrity**

The use of online Japanese translators is not allowed on any assignment given. Translated sentences are very easy for me to detect and will lead to a zero on the assignment of project. If students are looking for an online Japanese dictionary (which is allowed), [www.jisho.org](http://www.jisho.org) is the best one.

No copying or cheating is allowed. Any copying or cheating will receive the consequence of a zero, as well as a conference with the student’s parent.

**Classroom rules**

Students will be prepared to be great Japanese learners by following the classroom rules. In order to learn a language, it is important that all students hear the language as much as possible. These rules are designed to enable students to be effective learners. The five classroom rules are the following:

1. Listen and follow instructions
2. Raise your hand before speaking and leaving seat
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself
4. Respect your classmates and your teacher

When a student chooses not to follow the classroom rules, he or she will receive a warning. If the student chooses to break a rule again, students will be assigned a refocusing seat away from classmates. Students will also lose Survivor points. If a student breaks a rule a third time, the student will be sent home with a letter for his/her parents to sign. The student will have lunch detention in Bynum Sensei’s room until the signed letter is turned in.
Communication

Email is the best form of communication with me. My email address is nbynum1@pghboe.net. I will respond to emails as soon as possible. You may also feel free to call me at 412-529-2232. This is a classroom phone, therefore, I will not answer when I am teaching. There is voicemail and I will return calls as soon as possible.

Additionally, I will be using a service called “Remind” to periodically send out mass text messages to parents and students!. If you would like to be apart of this service, you can text “@japanese6” to (469) 208-6790. Standard text messaging fees apply. For students who are in Japanese 7, text “@japanese7” to the same number. Likewise, parents with students in Japanese 8 may text “Japanese 8” to the same number. Remind now has a function that allows teachers to chat (via text messages) with recipients.

Thank you for reading this letter. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I’m looking forward to learning with both you and your students this year.

Gambarimashou!

Nathan Bynum
Japanese Teacher

Approved: [Signature]
Principal
Dear Parents and Students,

We have discussed the course syllabus in class. Please read the syllabus together and keep it in the student’s folder for your record. Then sign and return this page to me by August 30th. Please address any concerns or comments at the bottom of this page. I will be more than happy to communicate with you in person. If you have any question, please contact me at the email address listed on the syllabus.

Here are a few key points to remember:

✧ Feel free to contact me at any time by email (nbynum1@pghboe.net), phone call (412-529-2232).
✧ Classwork and Participation are worth 30% together. Therefore, not participating in class DETRIMENTAL to a student’s grade.
✧ Homework is worth 10%. Therefore, do not expect a student’s grade to go up a few letter grades when he/she turns in a bunch of missing assignments. The best thing a student can do is turn homework when it is due.
✧ There is a class website with downloadable homework and a schedule on it (www.bynumsensei.weebly.com).
✧ Students need one two-pocket folder (preferably made with poly plastic) with prongs in the middle. They also need lined paper in their folder at all times.

Student name: ____________________________________________

Student email address: ______________________________________

Parent name: ______________________________________________

Parent email address: _________________________________________

Parent phone number: _______________________________________

Best time of day to be reached (circle): Morning Afternoon Evening

Yes, I have read and understand the Japanese Opening Letter and Classroom Expectations.

Student signature: _________________________________________ Date: _____________

Parent signature: ___________________________________________ Date: _____________