



THE BUNRI POST

Special Edition

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Bunri embraces global education methods

Seibu Gakuen Bunri Junior and Senior High School has reached its first goal toward becoming a more international school. The school has been applying for the Middle Years Programme (MYP), and it was officially approved as a candidate school this year. This marks a significant step for the school to bring in more internationally recognized global education methods and prepare students for global opportunities.

The MYP is a program in the International Baccalaureate (IB) that is designed to enhance critical thinking and global understanding. Unlike traditional classes where students mainly listen to teachers and memorize lessons, the MYP emphasizes student-centered, inquiry-based learning with discussions and working on cooperative projects with their classmates. This helps them develop not only academic knowledge but also essential skills such as teamwork, communication and problem-solving.

Joshua Moon, the chief coordinator of MYP at Bunri, said that this approach marks a shift in classroom culture. He expects that students will be more independent and responsible by experiencing working with others



The main building of Bunri Junior High School MASASHI HATTORI PHOTO

without the teacher’s guidance. They also will feel confident as learners by working closely with their classmates.

He said that Bunri junior high school will launch a bilingual class from next year. While the introduction of the Diploma Programme (DP) in senior high school has not yet been confirmed, he expressed confidence that students from the bilingual class will be well-prepared to enter either a bilingual or DP class when they advance to high school.

The DP is the final stage of the IB for students aged 16 to 19, and puts emphasis on writing, research and discussion. DP students study a wide range of subjects, write a 4,000-word research essay and participate in Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) projects that encourage personal growth and community engagement. One of the most appealing aspects of the DP is its global recognition. Schools in 159 countries offer the program and DP graduates often receive significant advantages in university admissions. Many top Japanese universities provide entrance exam exemptions or special admissions routes for DP students, while leading overseas universities view the completion of the

program as evidence of academic excellence.

Two years ago, Bunri’s new principal, Pedro Marques, introduced sweeping changes to the school’s rules and educational policies. These transitions were designed to make Bunri more internationally oriented and to attract a wider range of students, including returnees from overseas and those interested in studying abroad. Under his leadership, the school has shifted its focus from traditional education for university exams to a more globally minded approach. It started placing greater emphasis on language learning and preparing students for success in an interconnected world.

The decision to adopt the IB is one of the clearest signs of Bunri’s determination to transform into a more internationally minded environment that meets global standards while continuing to enhance student individuality.

Implementing the IB will mean changes for both teachers and students. Teachers are receiving training to meet the IB’s introduction demands. On the other hand, students are learning to adapt to a system that requires more active participation and critical thinking. For some, the changes represent an exciting opportunity for

international pathways, while for others the transition away from traditional, exam-focused learning may be a challenge.

Despite these challenges, the long-term benefits are expected to be significant. Even students who do not continue in the IB track are likely to benefit from exposure to inquiry-based learning, collaborative projects and opportunities to build problem-solving skills.

These experiences are becoming increasingly valuable in a world where adaptability and creativity are important over memorization and test performance as artificial intelligence reshapes the workplace.

With its new position as an MYP candidate school, Seibu Gakuen Bunri Junior and Senior High School has taken the first step toward long-term growth. By combining bilingual education, inquiry-based learning and the potential future launch of the DP, the school is creating an environment where students can develop individuality, critical thinking and global competence. For Bunri students, these shifts mean more choices, more skills and more opportunities to succeed in an increasingly connected world.

By Masashi Hattori



Joshua Moon, chief coordinator of MYP MASASHI HATTORI PHOTO



MYP key concepts on a bulletin board MASASHI HATTORI PHOTO

NEW PROGRAMME

Bunri opens a new esports club, aims to foster skills beyond gaming

Seibu Gakuen Bunri Junior and High School has taken a bold step into the digital age by launching its very own esports club this year. While esports clubs are becoming increasingly common at the high school level, it is unusual for a junior high school to establish one.

The initiative came about in response to both student demand and the vision of the school leadership. According to the club’s advisor, Akinobu Mizumura, the goal is not simply to give students time to play games, but to channel their enthusiasm into meaningful skill-building.

“The principal’s strong support was part of it,” Mizumura said. “But I was also thinking about how we could take the students’ passion for esports and use it to cultivate abilities like communication, critical thinking, and teamwork. Since games are such a familiar medium for young people, they can be a great tool for growth.”

When asked what specific abilities he hopes students will develop through esports, Mizumu-



Students are engrossed in finding a knack of winning video games.

HARUHIRO YAMAMOTO PHOTO

ra emphasized the demands of the games themselves. “In many matches, players have to act as a team. That requires leadership, cooperation, and clear communication. To win, they also need to think strategically and solve problems under pressure. People might think it’s just gaming, but in fact these activities require a surprising amount of skill.”

The decision to create a club exclusively for junior high school students was deliberate. “There are many high schools with esports clubs already,” Mizumura explained. “But not so many junior highs. We wanted to adopt it early, and also make sure that our junior high students could take center stage. If we combined them with the high school,

the older students would naturally dominate, leaving the younger ones fewer opportunities. By keeping it separate, the junior high students can take on leadership roles themselves.

In the future, though, we hope to welcome high schoolers as well.” Looking ahead, the club is not planning to remain inward-looking.

Mizumura shared that they would like to organize tournaments hosted by the club and even community events involving local children. “It would be wonderful if we could create opportunities not just inside the school but also in the neighborhood, bringing people together through esports.” he said. For Seibu Gakuen Bunri Junior High School, the new esports club is about more than just competition. It reflects a broader educational philosophy: meeting students where their passions lie and transforming that energy into valuable skills for the future.

By Haruhiro Yamamoto

New creative activity, Bunri Beats launched!

Martin Johns, who is in charge of a new CA, Bunri Beats, brings the rave to Bunri!

Have you ever wondered how your favorite songs are made? This year, our school launched a new CA (Creative Activity) class called Bunri Beats, where students learn how to create, mix, and record music. I spoke with Martin Johns, the CA’s creator, to find out what happens behind the scenes.

Why did you start this CA?

So basically, there is a gap in the education system at the moment. Children and students and the teachers listen to modern music. Of course, some people listen to classical pieces. Since pop music is made using digital software and synthesizers and other machines. At Bunri at the



Martin Johns, the English teacher in charge of Bunri Beats

HARUHIRO YAMAMOTO PHOTO

moment, we teach students that are interested in music composition by using traditional instruments.

What goals do you want your students to achieve?

The goal that we want to achieve is music composition, self-expression, and picking up new skills.

I believe these goals will help students express themselves in different ways and even possess



Tablets for making beats

HARUHIRO YAMAMOTO PHOTO

new abilities they formally didn’t have before.

Writing note: In conclusion, this CA sounds like it’ll give some new skills to even use in the future! I think it’s great for people who want to give digital instruments a try, or to compose cool music that everyone can dance to!

By Day Joe

HISTORY AND FUTURE

The Evolution of Bunri Institution

We had the opportunity to interview Atsushi Kariya, the General Administrative Director overseeing Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy, Seibu Gakuen Medical Technology College, and Seibu Culinary Art College. I would like to share the contents of this interview with you.

History of Bunri Institution

Before establishing high schools and junior high schools, Chairman of Hideki Sato founded institutions such as the Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy and Seibu Gakuen Culinary School.

- 1966: Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy was established.
- 1974: Seibu Gakuen Culinary School and Seibu Gakuen Technical School was opened.
- 1978: Seibu Gakuen Medical Technology College was



Astushi Kariya, General Administrator Director of Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy
MINAMI MOTOHASHI PHOTO

- established.
- 1981: The educational foundation was renamed “Bunri Sato Gakuen” and Seibu Gakuen Bunri High School was opened.
 - 1988: Bunri College of Information was established in Sayama City.
 - 1993: Seibu Gakuen Bunri

- Junior High School was opened, initiating an integrated junior and senior high school program.
- 2004: Seibu Bunri Elementary School was opened in Sayama City.
 - 2021: The school was renamed as Seibu Culinary Art College returning to its birthplace in Shin-Tokorozawa.

About Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy

Seibu Nutrition and Culinary Academy, founded in 1966, was the very first school established under the Bunri Sato Gakuen educational foundation.

As the institution grew and evolved, it developed into what is now the Seibu Culinary Art College, offering three distinct departments connected through the concept of hospitality culinary arts, nutrition, and medical care or rehabilitation.

At first glance, these three fields may seem unrelated, but if we consider the origin of the word “hospitality,” we realize they are deeply connected. This unique combination of disciplines is one of the school’s most distinctive features.

By practicing hospitality through their studies, students are encouraged to gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of its true value.

About Hideki Sato

Founder Sato was known for his exceptional drive and bold personality — he was someone who always turned his ambitions into reality. Although he was a very strict educator, he was also incredibly kind. He was famous for always saying, “If you try, you can do it.”

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By Minami Motohashi

What are the good points of Bunri?

What makes a school special? Is it test scores and academic accomplishments? Is it school life and club activities? What makes one school different from another?

I wanted to learn more about my school Seibu Bunri JHS so I set out to find our principal Pedro Marques to discover what sets our school apart from the rest.

What are the good things about Bunri Junior High School as a whole?

The most important things are the students’ smiles. Bunri is a school that supports what each person wants to do, what they want to be, what they are good at and their hobbies.

Everyone is trying to get as close to the life they want to live as possible. Bunri’s teaching methods, goals, lifestyles and appearances are different because the school educates each student to find themselves, to have a high degree of freedom and a relaxed feeling. Everyone is always smiling.

There are a lot of student



Pedro Marques, principal of Bunri Junior and Senior High School
AKIHITO NAKAGAWA PHOTO

projects.

There are real-world projects that various students are doing. Other schools don’t have to design uniforms, create websites or produce newspapers.

There are various classes.

It is a school where people who are good at various fields are brought together. The progress varies depending on the class, but we live together in the same academic world. Our school has various classes that are good for studying for sports and for the

arts. Our school is a school where students can do what they want freely and slowly, without stress and the fear of ridicule.

What are the good things about Bunri students?

One good thing about them is that they ask a lot of questions.

If they think something is strange, they don’t keep quiet and many students have the courage to ask the teacher “Why is it like this?” – “I want to do this”- and “I don’t want to do this.” So, it

is easy to understand what they want to do and what is important.

Another good thing about Bunri students is that they don’t discriminate against me as a foreigner.

Even though I am not Japanese, they recognize me as their principal. I don’t feel much discrimination. Students have Japanese roots and culture but they understand more than that. That’s because of their international understanding. I think it’s because today’s young people are the Internet generation, and they see various cultures and people. Students have the ability to recognize cultural differences. I think it’s wonderful.

Our school is a school where students can fail, and I say that it is OK to fail. Many Bunri students like to take on challenges.

Students try new things, try to create new things. Students are not afraid of failure and take on more and more new challenges. I think that’s also a good thing about liberal arts students.

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By Akihito Nakagawa

LOCAL COMMUNITY

The story behind the creation of Oripy

Oripy has become well-known as the local mascot character of Sayama City. But in fact, it was originally created in a competition for second-year students at Seibu Bunri Gakuen High School at the request of a local shopping area.

We spoke with Ms. W, a graduate of Bunri High School, who was one of the members of the creation team, about the story behind Oripy’s birth. Ms. W explained that the character production contest was divided into several groups per class, each group thought of a character and selected one of them, and presented it to the students of the whole grade as their “yuru kyara (wobble character). There were four students in Ms. W’s group and she said that they carefully discussed what characteristics and personality the character would possess as well as the design and color.

If you look at the origin of Oripy’s name, the Ori-is taken from Orihime, the Weaver Girl star celebrated in the Tanabata Festival,



The mascot design award shield.
MS. W PHOTO

and-py is a wobbly character, and I heard that the group named it so because it would be a cute image.

Ms. W said that she first thought about the cloak with a Tanabata motif decoration, and decided on the color of the ears and head decoration to give a fun impression. She admitted to feeling a little confused when the cream color she had chosen was announced as orange at the official unveiling in the shop-



狭山市 セタの妖精 おりぴい
Sayama City Official Mascot

ping street. I also asked how she felt when it was announced that Oripy had been chosen to be the image character of the shopping street revitalization project.

“Various characters were announced from each class, but among them, I thought Oripy was almost perfect to act as the official mascot for the street, so I was happy that my character had been chosen,”she said.

Around June of this year, the

Character 1 General Election was held to recruit elementary school and junior high school students in Sayama City to vote for the design of Hikorin, a new Sayama city mascot that would join Oripy in representing Sayama City. I asked Ms. W about that. However, I was surprised that she didn’t know about the general election.

In addition to the poll, when asked about Hikorin, she replied, “It’s nice if a character has no gender bias such as boyish or girlish, that is why Oripy was designed without a gender.”

In addition to the character poll, I heard that a picture book of Oripy has been produced.

Finally, I asked Ms. W what she thinks about Oripy now. She smiled and said,

“It’s strange. When you create something with your own hands and it’s finished, there’s a kind of sadness. But I am very grateful Oripy is loved by so many people.”

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By Reina Tanaka

Bunri Hospitality Halloween back again

Right after the Bunri school festival, the school campus will undergo a dramatic transformation. Both the Bunri junior and senior school buildings, located in Sayama City, will be transformed into one of the largest haunted houses in the city.

For two days in late October, visitors wander through dark corridors, experiencing themed haunted houses filled with ghosts, eerie sounds, and creative decorations. However, the Hospitality Halloween Festival offers more than just thrills and chills. Guest artists will perform live on stage, while rows of food stalls and kitchen trucks line the schoolyard, serving everything from warm snacks to sweet desserts. In addition, visitors can enjoy an AI-powered baking experience and take part in a costume contest for which the winner will receive a secret prize.

Last year many visitors commented that the combination of spooky entertainment, lively music, and savory de-

lights is what makes the event unforgettable.

Beyond seasonal entertainment, the festival is a student-led project called “Gachi-Pro” that involves months of preparation. Students take the initiative in planning and organizing, while also working with the local people, companies, and professionals to make the event a reality.

Yuto Hamada, the supervising teacher emphasized the educational benefits of the festival: “The Halloween event is not just an extension of the Bunri school festival. By creating the project with working people and brainstorming how to make it into a success, students develop responsibility, planning skills, and collaboration through teamwork.”

Last year, students struggled with sharing information effectively, lack of coordination, and difficulties in managing the unexpected number of visitors. However, these challenges played an important role for improvement.



The billboard of Bunri Hospitality Halloween

For example, a manager position was introduced to oversee communication between groups and to ensure smooth coordination through the event.

Furthermore, a mid-festival event is planned to reduce congestion and allow visitors to enjoy themselves for an extended time. Hamada added, “Although it is difficult to feel a sense of accomplishment during preparations and countless meetings, see-



Yuto Hamada,in charge of Bunri Hospitality Halloween
CHISA YAMAZAKI PHOTO

ing visitors return with big smiles makes all our efforts worthwhile.” With passion, creativity, and teamwork, students continue to bring this unique event to life.

This year’s Hospitality Halloween Festival is sure to be an unforgettable celebration. So, mark your calendar on Oct. 26 and 27, and don’t miss out the fun!

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By Chisa Yamazaki