

SHIKAOI EXCHANGE

Shikaoi Student Exchange Application Package

Tentative Travel Dates:

July 13 – July 27, 2026



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Every July, the Town of Stony Plain sends a student delegation to Shikaoi, Japan for ten days to visit, travel and experience their local culture. The delegation will spend time touring museums, temples and shrines, participate in local festivals and activities and spend time at the local schools. While in Shikaoi, students will live with a host family and participate in family events, activities and traditions.

It is a fantastic opportunity for students interested in expanding their worldview.

EXCHANGE CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

The Shikaoi Student Exchange Program is for students in Grades 9-12 and be between the ages of 14-18 at the time of application

This program is ideal for students who:

- Are active, outgoing, personable and responsible
- Have been away from friends and family before without difficulty, such as attending summer camp
- Can adapt easily to new situations and who are comfortable meeting new people
- Are enthusiastic and eager to participate in new activities
- Demonstrate an interest in the history and culture of Japan.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The applicant must:

- Provide a recommendation letter from a teacher or school administrator that confirms that the student's personality and maturity makes them a suitable candidate for this opportunity.
 - Attach the reference letter to their application.
- Using attached reference form; provide one teacher or school administrator and one personal reference. This is separate from the reference letter.
- Provide a current photo of themselves.
- Be available to travel to Shikaoi, Japan from **July 13 - July 27, 2026**. (TENTATIVE DATES)
- Host two Shikaoi students during their annual delegation to Stony Plain in **October 2026**.
- Have a valid passport or proof of application for new passport with attached receipt. (Please note; applications received without passport information or passport application receipt will not be accepted)

CRITERIA

- Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.
- Applications received that do not contain all of the required components will not be considered. These include:
 - Application form
 - One teacher or school administrator recommendation Letter
 - One teacher or school administrator reference and one personal reference
- Applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a Travel Release Form, Homestay Commitment Form and Financial Commitment Form.
- Applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for their child's early return should a situation arise where the student must leave Shikaoi prior to the scheduled date.
- The student must be willing to live in a homestay while in Shikaoi.
- The successful applications will be required to attend a Council session after their return from Shikaoi to thank Council for their financial contribution and to describe their experience while in Japan.
- Students whom have previously travelled to Shikaoi with this program will not be considered.

Please note that preference may be given to students whom are residents of the Town of Stony Plain or have previously hosted Shikaoi students.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Costs

The Town of Stony Plain will pay up to 50% of travel costs. This includes return airfare, hotel accommodation (overnight at Haneda airport and overnight trip to Sapporo), and ground transportation costs while in Japan. The applicant is responsible for the remainder of the cost. Estimated cost to the applicant is \$2000.00 - \$3000.00 **plus** personal spending money. Confirmation of program costs will be available after the selection and booking process is complete.

Applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for any costs incurred should their child require an early return.

Travelling

All travelers to Japan must have a valid Canadian passport. Visas are not required for stays of less than three months.

All timelines are tentative until travel arrangements and travelers have been confirmed.

In addition to the students a minimum of 2 chaperones travels with the Student Delegation. Students will be given contact numbers for these individuals to have while in Shikaoi.

Spending Money

Based on previous experience it is recommended that travelers should anticipate the need to take approximately the equivalent of \$500.00 Canadian in Japanese Yen. As Yen is not always readily available at your local bank we recommend ordering well ahead of your trip. While ATM machines are available in Japan, it should be noted that only the 5 major Canadian institutions cards will be accepted. They are BMO, TD, Scotia, CIBC and RBC. **Chaperones and host families are not responsible for providing students with additional money.**

There will be little/no food expenses as the host families and the Town of Shikaoi will cover the majority of these expenses.

Home Stays

Home stay families will be arranged for all students. Personal biographies and pictures will be provided to the Town of Shikaoi for the purpose of matching with families of similar interests. If students have previous contact with families from Shikaoi, please note their name(s) on the application form under "special notes". We will make every effort to match students with these families.

Students will receive information about their homestay families including contact information prior to travel. This will allow the students to begin communicating with host family beforehand.

It is customary to bring small Canadian-made gifts for each of the family members you are staying with. They will also have small gifts for you.

Interview and Selection Process

Students selected for an interview will be contacted in March. The interview process is intended to help the Town identify suitable exchange candidates who will act as ambassadors while in Shikaoi.

As part of the interview process, each applicant will be required to complete a presentation. This presentation may take up to 15 minutes and will aim to demonstrate why they should be selected to participate in this exchange program.

Presentation examples may include:

- Reciting a poem
- A short video or power point presentation
- Oral presentation
- Any other form of presentation of their choice (music, art etc).

Approximately 45 minutes will be allocated for the interview. (This includes the 15 minute demonstration component)

Please note, only students that have been selected for an interview will be contacted.

Payment Schedule

Once students are selected to participate in the program the following payment schedule must be adhered to:

- 50% deposit of the trip cost will be due immediately upon acceptance and invoice is sent out.
- Remaining 25% due on **June 5**.

Participants are welcome to pay the full amount up front if they choose.

Student Delegation Information Evening

Once selected to participate in the delegation. Students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to an information evening. This mandatory and important information session will help prepare the students and their families for the upcoming trip. The signing of commitment forms will take place at this time.

Pre-Departure Meeting

A final pre-departure meeting will be held in June. At this meeting, travel documentation, flight itineraries and home stay information will be made available to the students and their families. The final payment will also be due at this time.

Travel Dates

Currently the dates we are tentatively booking for the Student Delegation to travel to Shikaoi, Japan is **July 13 - July 27, 2026**.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The final application must be submitted by **March 6, 2026**, and include all of the following items:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed Application Form <u>AND</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	One teacher or school administrator reference letter <u>AND</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	One teacher or school administrator reference (<i>listed on the reference form</i>) <u>AND</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	One personal reference (<i>listed on the reference form</i>) <u>AND</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recent school photograph (or similar head shot photograph) <u>AND</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of passport or proof of application for new passport with attached receipt

Applications that are missing any of the above items will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted.

Please forward your completed application form, reference letter, reference form and photograph to:

Kelly Dixon | Facility Programming Coordinator | kdixon@stonyplain.com
Town of Stony Plain | 4905 - 51 Avenue | Stony Plain, AB | T7Z 1Y1

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: March 6, 2026 - 4:30 pm



2026 Student Exchange Application Form

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

FULL LEGAL NAME: _____

(must be the legal names exactly as they appear on your passport, not the name you go by)

BIRTHDAY: _____

(yyyy/mm/dd)

GENDER: _____

CITIZENSHIP: _____

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: _____

PASSPORT #: _____

PASSPORT EXPIRY: _____

(yyyy/mm/dd)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

PRIMARY PHONE #: _____

EMAIL: _____

PART 2: FAMILY INFORMATION

PARENT/GUARDIAN 1 NAME: _____

(if other please specify)

OCCUPATION: _____

WORK #: _____

EMAIL: _____

CELL #: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN 2 NAME: _____

(if other please specify)

OCCUPATION: _____

WORK #: _____

EMAIL: _____

CELL #: _____

PART 3: HEALTH INFORMATION

Do you suffer from any allergies severely enough that it may affect the exchange?
(Please also list any minor allergies)

Yes, please provide details and treatment No

Do you currently take any prescription medication?

Yes, which ones and why? No

Are there any medical, physical or psychological conditions that may affect this exchange?

Yes, please provide details and treatment No

Do you have a special diet?

Yes, please provide details No

Are you physically challenged in any way?

Yes, please provide details No

PART 4: APPLICANT PROFILE

Excluding English, list any additional languages you know, the # of years you've studied them and rate your ability using Good, Fair or Poor.

In the past 5 years, which provinces and/or countries have you visited?

(Include the year visited and duration of stay)

Have you participated in an exchange before?

Yes, please explain

No

Which of the following best describes you? *(You may select more than one)*

Athletic

Artistic

Musical

Academic

Social

In general, you are more?

Reserved

Calm & Quiet

Outgoing

Energetic & Active

I prefer to spend my free time?

Alone

with Friends

with Family

In a typical week, approximately how much time do you spend (**in hours**) on the following activities:

Homework/Studying: *Favorite subjects:* _____

TV/Movies: *Preferred shows:* _____

Reading: *Preferred materials:* _____

Music: *Preferred types:* _____

Computer: *Preferred types of activities:* _____

Electronic Devices: *Preferred types of activities:* _____

Extra-curricular activities: *Types of activities:* _____

Social time: *Preferred activities with friends:* _____

Volunteering: *Preferred types of activities:* _____

Considering all of the above, what are your 3 favorite activities? Why?

1.

2.

3.



2026 Student Exchange Reference Form

____ wishes to apply to the Shikaoi Student Exchange Program.

Student Name

You are asked to provide a recommendation below if you feel that this student is a suitable exchange candidate.

*If you wish to review the program details and requirements, they can be found at our website
www.stonyplain.com/japan*

Teachers or Administrator's Name: _____

Subjects: _____

Comments: _____

*Teacher or Administrator's Signature &
Date*

Personal Reference's Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Comments: _____

Personal Reference's Signature & Date