



Getting to Know our Families: The NIS Community Profile



Nagoya International School
Inquire Inspire Impact



There's one thing in this complicated world that is quite simple - as a parent, you want to ensure your children have the best.

In striving to achieve this goal, you're probably going through the, "What school should I send my children to" deliberation. You're looking at factors such as which language to focus on, the type of learning, university matriculation, the financial impact, how a diverse, multicultural school environment will help my child, what effect will it have on family dynamics, and other considerations.

We understand this is a difficult decision, and sometimes the best way to work through the dilemma is to talk to people who have been in your shoes.

This is why we put together a focus group full of community members who once were in the same predicament.

In the following pages, learn how several families came to the decision to enroll their children in NIS.



Parent 1: Julian

Julian is an American and is a General Manager of a mid-size manufacturing company. He and his Japanese wife have a daughter in Grade 7.



Q: Why did you consider an international school over a Japanese school?

"I had no idea what an international school was or meant until I was 18 and went off to college. At the college I went to, about 20% of the students were from outside of the U.S., and almost all of those students went to an international school, so I got to learn about their backgrounds. All of those students were high caliber, much more qualified than I was to be at college.

Fast forward 25 years and one of my jobs is to interview candidates for employment and I meet graduates from Japanese schools and alumni from international schools. Though the applicants are qualified in their own way, I do see endearing qualities from candidates who went to international schools. We have about 80 employees at our company and five have graduated from international schools. Those five are some of the highest performing employees.

I think my daughter - six years from now after she graduates, and then four years from then - will have more career chances because she went to an international school."

Q: Why did you choose NIS?

"We decided we wanted our daughter to start her education at an international school. Of course there were other alternatives in Nagoya, but the fact that we lived so close to NIS made that decision very easy.

The performance of the school and the value proposition is greater than the tuition we pay annually. And honestly, my wife and I have this decision to make every spring of whether or not to re-enroll. Every year we select NIS over the alternatives.

After nine years of NIS, we are very satisfied with the education that the school is providing my daughter."

Q: How does an international education help your daughter find and embrace her multicultural identity?

"We started our daughter off with Japanese only, and then we introduced English as a second language. Regarding multicultural identity, because of NIS, my daughter's classmates come from all different backgrounds and many different countries.

In Japanese schools, you have to blend in; at NIS, it's totally opposite. The teachers at NIS come from so many different backgrounds compared to a Japanese school. Because it's an international school, you have so much breadth and experience, and our daughter benefits from the multicultural background of her teachers."

Q: Would you recommend NIS to families in similar situations?

"If there are people out there who can't decide between a Japanese school and NIS, I would 100% recommend NIS.

Once a graduate of NIS is around 22 or 23, that individual would be in a position where companies or prospective employers will view them as someone with a passion for lifelong learning. I see all throughout the school that the students are very inquisitive and this is directly related to the quality of the teachers."



Parent 2: Bryce

Bryce is Australian and the President of a relocation company. He and his Japanese wife have a son in Grade 1.



Q: Why did you consider an international school over a Japanese school?

"I really noticed a big difference in the memorization-type of learning that Japan does versus the self-thinking approach to education that most western schools utilize (i.e. debating, expressing your own opinions). This self-thinking approach is really lacking from the Japanese education system.

The cost was the biggest hurdle to get our child into NIS, but we made the jump anyway and he started this year."

Q: Why did you choose NIS?

"With my connections to the school through the work I do, I had a feel for what the school was like and thinking about the NIS's model - inquire, inspire, impact - that really links to my personal comment about why I don't like Japanese systems, the lack of debate or opinion. The NIS model reinforced what I was looking for in an education system for my family."

Q: How did joining NIS increase your sense of community?

"My wife is Japanese and is really new to the NIS community. She speaks a bit of English, but is not fluent. With NIS, it's pretty much all English, so she's struggling a little in these last couple of weeks to take in all the information, but she's also talking to some of the Japanese mothers and sharing information with them, so I'm interested to see how she gets into the community."

NIS NOTE: We know transitioning to a new school community can be a challenge for any family, particularly if there are any language or cultural barriers. For those struggling, we have a program called [Parent Partners](#). These individuals will assist parents who are considering a move to NIS. Parents are connected with other parents with similar family, cultural, or language backgrounds who can offer peer-to-peer support. These partnerships can help integrate new families into the parent community.

Q: How does an international education help your son find and embrace this multicultural identity?

"Growing up in my school in Australia, people were from all over the world. That's definitely a plus for my son too going to NIS, as he will get that exposure to a lot of different cultures. One concern for my wife is, because NIS is an international school, she was worried that they don't do the Japanese festival type things that Japanese schools might emphasize more.

With that said, we are going to take it upon ourselves to try harder at home to expose our son to Japanese culture."

NIS NOTE: We understand that your children will not have the same exposure to their Japanese culture as they would in a Japanese school, and that is why we encourage parents to get involved. Speak your mother tongue at home, attend cultural events around the community, and educate your children on their multiple cultural backgrounds. As an international school, there are many ways we help students find, maintain, and celebrate their multicultural identity. Click [HERE](#) to find out.

Q: Would you recommend NIS to families in similar situations?

"Definitely! NIS is a great school and I think it leads to a lot of opportunities for kids in the future if they want to go to university overseas or in Japan.

NIS helps children have their own opinion, think for themselves, be inquisitive, ask questions, and that's what I really like."



Parent 3: James

James is Canadian and the Founder and CEO of a communications company. He and his Japanese wife have two daughters. The older daughter is in Grade 12 at NIS and the other is in a Japanese Preschool.



Q: Why did you choose an international school over a Japanese school?

"My stepdaughter is half Japanese, half Chinese and has been in the Japanese school system since she was young. We wanted her to have the ability to choose between attending a university inside or outside Japan, and the question came up of where she wanted to go to High School when we first talked about it. I brought up NIS and she was super excited about the idea of going to an international school and being able to get her English skills up.

For my youngest who's in a Japanese school, I'm thinking about the same thing. I want her to have her Japanese language to the point where she can communicate here in Japan. I do want to bring her over to the international school so she can have the best of both worlds at the same time."

Q: Why did you choose NIS?

"I chose NIS because of the opportunities it provides my stepdaughter. Seeing my stepdaughter grow in the school from where she was to where she is now, it's like night and day. I think that the teachers, and the staff who have supported her, the opportunities with different extra-curricular activities have contributed to this.

The IB Programme was also a really large drawing factor to be able to open up different opportunities to connect with various universities around the world and not just have the choice of going to a Japanese university.

The overall atmosphere of the school as well, it's just very different from a Japanese school in the sense that kids can be who they want to be. She can be her own person."

Q: How did joining NIS increase your sense of community?

"Nagoya is a pretty small community in terms of the foreign community here, so we generally all know each other, especially those who are involved with other associations, like the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) and the Tokai Japan Canada Society (TJCS), hence there are those connections in place.

But through NIS, it's deepened some of these relationships, which has been great. This happened for my wife, as well, who knows a number of people in the community. She has probably connected with more of the parents than I have at NIS to be honest."

James's wife, Saeko, had the following to say:

"I've had a lot of opportunities to speak with Japanese mothers and exchange information. NIS parents - and all community members - are really nice and supportive."

Q: How does an international education help your daughter find and embrace her multicultural identity?

"To give her the opportunity to expand and grow her multiculturalism and understanding of who she is, I think NIS does provide that environment for her to expand, especially with the different nationalities and backgrounds of the teachers. At her age as a teenager, it's integral to be exposed to different types of nationalities and backgrounds.

I think the support she's experienced, to figure out who she is as a person, has been very important."

Q: Would you recommend NIS?

"NIS allows us to provide our children with opportunities and choices. With the demographics in Japan changing, you want to have, especially being a child from a mixed family, strengths in both languages and a multicultural upbringing. So yes, I'd recommend NIS.

NIS has a lot of positive benefits to offer. I think an important thing to consider as a family, especially with those in mixed marriages, with different backgrounds, is where you plan to be in the long run.

At the same time, if a family wants to stay in Japan, they have to have that foundation with a strong Japanese language and culture base to be able to take advantage of the opportunities here. It depends on the situation and when kids are at a younger age, it's hard. We ultimately gave the choice to our daughter. I told her, 'If you want to go to NIS, it's going to be a tough road ahead and you have to put in a lot of work, but we will support what you want to do.'

To answer your question, absolutely."



Parent 4: Nathan

Nathan is an Austrian-American and is a lecturer at a university in Nagoya. He has three children with his Japanese wife - one in Grade 2 at NIS, one at a local preschool, and a younger child under one.



Q: Why did you consider an international school over a Japanese school?

"There were several reasons why we chose an international school. One was we decided we were going to stay in Japan and it was for educational reasons. I wanted my daughter to have a better chance of getting into a non-Japanese university once she gets older and thought this would be the best chance.

The other reason, even in the local preschool, we started noticing a lot of 'othering' happening in the Japanese school because she looks different than many of the other kids. We thought this might get worse as she gets older possibly, so that was a concern."

Q: Why did you choose NIS?

"We looked around at various international schools in the area, or schools with the word 'international' in their name, and many of them are run a bit more like a traditional Japanese school.

NIS really stood out as being different because they have the IB Program and each program straight from preschool leads up to give students the best possibility to enter that program when they become a high school student. In order to give our daughter the opportunity to join such a fantastic program, that's why we decided NIS as the other schools just don't have that sort of program."

Q: How did joining the NIS community impact your social circle / increase your sense of community?

"I think in terms of other families who go to NIS, it's definitely helped me expand my social network. Nathan described how joining NIS distanced him from other instructor friends who chose other paths. He said

one of the reasons for this was the tuition.

NIS NOTE: *The investment into an education at NIS doesn't mean that quality learning is out of reach for your child. As an inclusive community school, we strive to make a NIS education possible for a diverse range of families. With the right information and planning, you may discover there are options available to make your child's future at NIS a reality. Click [HERE](#) to find out more about our scholarships.*

Q: How does an international education help your children find and embrace their multicultural identity?

"At Japanese schools the motto is to blend in, not stand out, so if you want a singular Japanese identity, Japanese schools are great.

I really feel like NIS gives the opportunity for people to be themselves. For my daughter, being on a campus with

other students who look similar to her is very important.

Since attending NIS, there have been some days where she comes home and says, 'Mommy, am I Japanese?' And we answer excitedly in the affirmative. Then another day she comes home and says, 'I'm American, right?' and we say, 'Yes, you're also American.' She's Austrian as well, so she has three. She comes home and realizes she has these different identities and that's okay, that's cool.

She's starting to think about these different identities and embracing them openly and I feel like she would probably try to hide those other identities if she was at a Japanese school rather than embrace them."

Q: Would you recommend NIS to families in similar situations?

"I believe in the mission of NIS, what the school has done for our family, the quality of education, the quality of teachers. Yes, I would recommend it, I do recommend it, and I will continue recommending it."

NIS Community Profile

NIS is an independent, non-profit, co-educational preschool-Grade 12 day school established in 1964 to serve the needs of the multicultural, international, and internationally minded community of Nagoya, Japan. Click [HERE](#) to read our School Profile.



Why NIS?

NIS was founded as a community school and holds this legacy core to our values, striving to be responsive to the needs of our diverse community through the education we offer. We understand that choosing a path for a child's education is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. We also know that a good school is more than just having a good mission. A lot more. In fact, below are three reasons why NIS could be the best option for your child:

- Because of **WHO** we are, because of **WHO** we serve, and because of **HOW** we serve

We invite you to discover more about our multicultural, inspiring, impactful community by clicking [HERE](#).