

Report on the Questionnaire to Students and Educators on the GIGA School Initiative

September 3, 2021

Digital Agency
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and
Technology
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

**This is the digest version in English. The original text is at the following URL in Japanese.*

https://cio.go.jp/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/digital/20210903_giga_summary.pdf

1. Overview of the Report

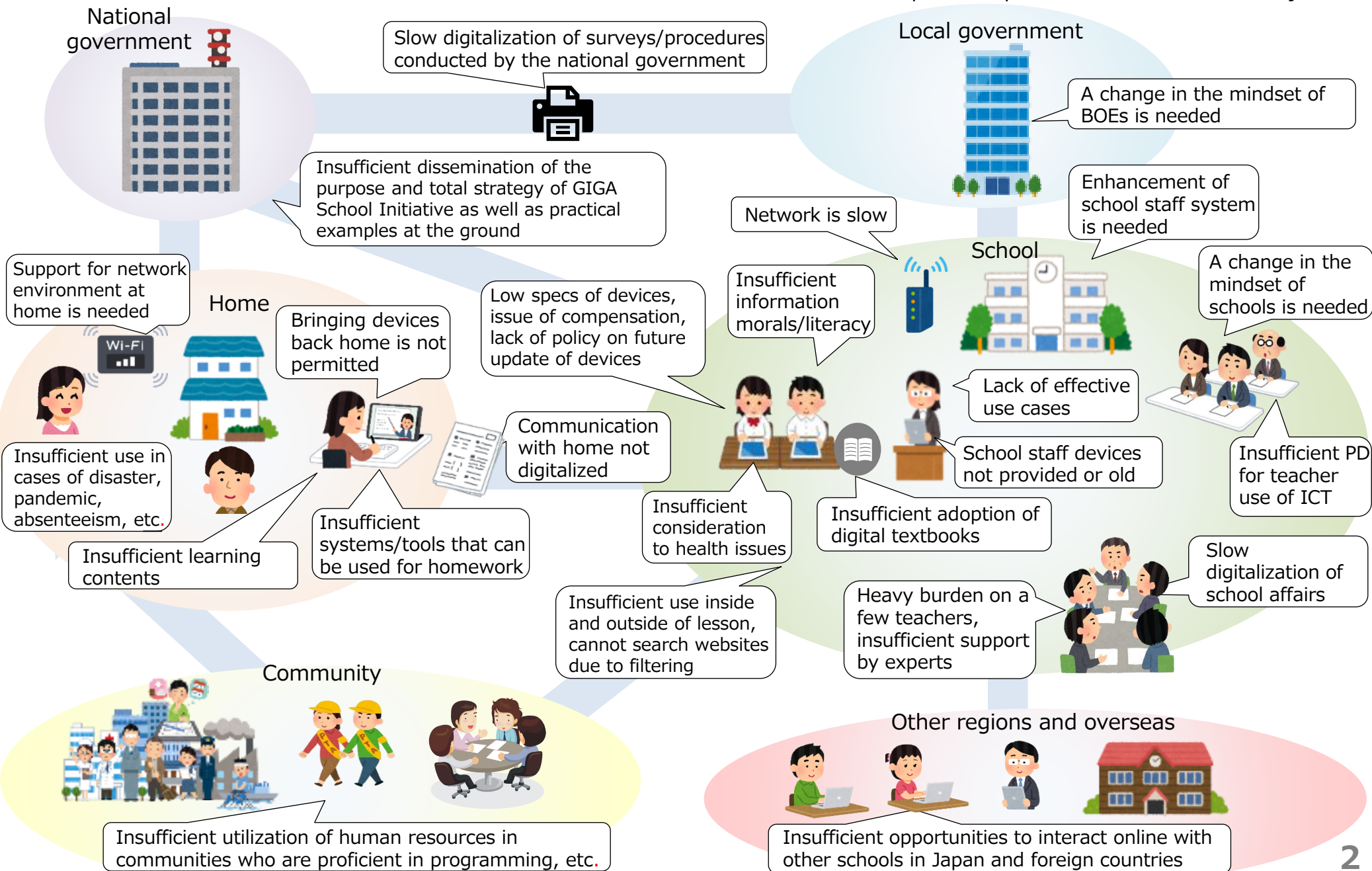
- In the [questionnaire to students and educators](#) on the GIGA School Initiative conducted in July 2021, we received **some 217,000 opinions from children (students) and some 42,000 opinions from adults (teachers, parents and guardians, etc.)**, both of which are a large sum. We analyzed the opinions **in collaboration with private companies who have text analysis technology** through the use of AI, etc., and reported on **major issues and future directions of relevant policies as well as answers to major comments and practices devised at schools** as a **new trial of policy refinement based on voices from the ground**.
- The purpose of digitalization in education is, **with digital as a means, to provide education suitable to the respective needs of various children who will become future creators in this increasingly-rapid changing society by bringing out their possibilities**. Additionally, remote/online learning through the use of ICT is extremely important, with the current situation of COVID-19 spreading, **“in order not to stop the learning of children in case of emergency.”**
- As a response to this questionnaire, **ministers concerned released a joint message to students and educators**, and presented major comments and future directions of relevant policies such as shown below.

Content of opinion	Future direction of relevant policy
Network is slow	→ Collect and analyze info on problems, etc., and disseminate them with solutions
Cannot bring devices back home, can only use in few lessons	→ Publish a guideline for promoting further utilization of ICT devices, including for bringing them back home, as soon as possible
Textbook should be digital	→ A pilot project on further promoting the use of digital textbooks, etc. reflected in the Budget Request for FY 2022
Support to school staff for use of ICT is needed	→ Expenses for establishing a systematic and stable ICT support system for schools reflected in the Budget Request for FY 2022
School staff devices are not provided or old	→ Promote use of school staff devices through tax allocations to local governments
Effective use cases should be disseminated	→ In addition to use cases on the websites of MEXT & METI , disseminate practices drawn from this questionnaire

- On the other hand, it does not follow that all the problems will be resolved now or soon, and there are still **issues that should be further examined** such as the network environment in schools and providing/updating of school staff devices, and others that have pros and cons such as filtering restriction. **Ministries concerned, as “one team,” will tenaciously continue to consider these issues while attending to voices from students and educators**, and try to react to these voices by taking such measures as **clarifying room for policy improvement in the “New Priority Policy Program”** that will be published as a cabinet decision by the end of 2021.

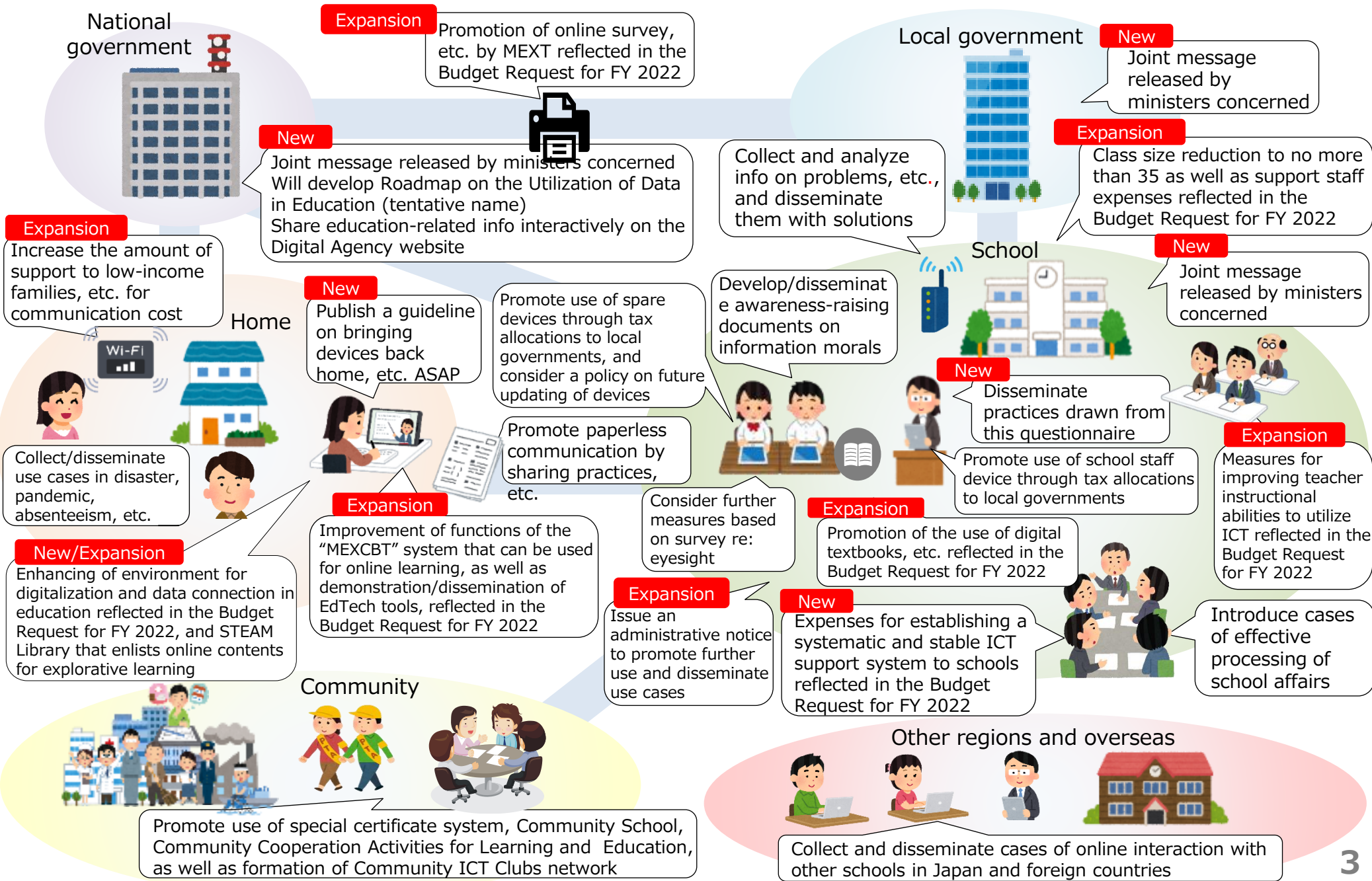
3. Major issues illuminated in this questionnaire

※ These are not all the opinions, and a big picture is presented below based on major ones.



3. Future directions of relevant national policies (1)

※ Details are touched upon in later pages.



4. Answers to major comments –Children①–

- **Provided answers as the national government** to major comments from stakeholders in the questionnaire.
- Based on the “Open/Transparency” principle of the Digital Agency, explained our stance in as much detail as possible, including cases in which measures are difficult to take.

<Opinions from children>

※Major opinions are listed with some excerpts and omissions, coupled with answers as a national government.

Content of opinion

- Abide by rules
- Don't use for purposes other than study
- Decide on how long to use
- Rules should be determined with some input from students

• The specs of devices are low

- Too many restrictions to view websites useful for study
- Put restrictions on search

• Increase learning activities that entail searching

• Cannot bring devices back home from school

- Network should be solid
- Ensure communication environment so that all students at school can have access at the same time

Answer as the national government

For example, there are cases in which teachers, rather than impose rules, have a discussion with students on why rules are necessary and what kinds of rules are necessary, as are shown in the results of this questionnaire and [MEXT website](#), which we will share in the future as well. Additionally, the national government will publish, as soon as possible, a guideline on the notes for schools and parents and guardians so that tablets and PCs will be further utilized.

The specs of tablets and PCs that you are using are selected by Boards of Education which take into account scenes of utilization in communities/schools, with the amount of budgetary support from the national government and standard model presented by them as a reference.

Each community/school determines what kinds of websites should be browsable on your tablets and PCs. The national government believes it is important to solve issues as they arise from the use of ICT rather than put in place excessive restrictions in fear of these issues, which we will continue to deliver.

Tablets and PCs are useful for learning activities that entail searching, etc. We will continue to share good practices in the results of this questionnaire and [MEXT website](#).

Bringing tablets and PCs back and utilizing them for learning at home is effective in terms of ensuring your learning in cases of disasters or the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, we would like to ensure an environment in which you can bring them back with safety and security. Thus, we will conduct a survey on how often you use tablets/PCs and in what scenes, and publish, as soon as possible, a guideline on the notes for schools and parents and guardians so that tablets and PCs will be further utilized.

We have supported enhancing network environment and preparing charging cabinets in elementary, junior high, high, and special support schools; as a result, 98.0% of public schools can use in-school networks as of June 2021. Additionally, when a school network is slow, it's necessary to conduct an assessment by network experts to understand problems. Therefore, MEXT notified, with major cases for problem resolution, BOEs on the need to confirm the necessary network environment for smooth communication and make improvements based on issues as they arise. We will continue support by collecting and analyzing information on problems, and disseminating them with solutions.

4. Answers to major comments –Children②–

Content of opinion

- Devices are heavy
- Difficult to bring back home
- Occupy too much space on the table

•It is desirable that teachers share notes and handouts of lessons online, and students submit homework online

•Provide financial support for anyone to have a device regardless of his/her family background

•Network environment at home should be ensured first before distributing devices to students. I cannot stand receiving a device without proper preparation. Please close the network environment gap that results from economic inequality.

•Textbooks should become digital

•It's difficult to use a device because I'm not accustomed to it

•Please just let us use whatever is useful. Making mistakes is also a learning opportunity. I cannot make use of it because it's prohibited even before making a mistake.

•What teachers think is understandable, but just putting restrictions on it does not make sense.

•It's desirable that teachers trust us a little bit, and give us freedom to use PCs at least during recess as well as use them more frequently in lessons.

Answer as the national government

The specs of tablets and PCs that you are using are selected by Boards of Education which take into account scenes of utilization in communities/schools, with the amount of budgetary support from the national government and standard model presented by them as a reference.

As for the size of table, we allocate necessary money to local governments so that schools can prepare tables of a larger size that can accommodate tablets/PCs in classrooms in a planned way.

We believe that learning will be enriched by using tablets/PCs inside and outside of school. Therefore, we will conduct a survey on how often you use tablets/PCs and in what scenes, and then consider necessary measures based on the results.

In order to promote use of tablets/PCs at home, we provide financial support to schools lending mobile routers to families that cannot afford to prepare a network environment at home due to their economic situation, as well as to low-income families for communication expenses re: online learning. We aim to increase the amount of budgetary support for the aforementioned communication expenses.

We will continue to realize the vision of "No one will be left behind, human-friendly digitalization."

In order to enrich your learning through the GIGA School Initiative, further promoting the use of digital textbooks is needed. We will consider room for improvement and effective use through a pilot project on a national scale so that schools will be able to fully adopt digital textbooks in accordance with the next revision of textbooks of elementary schools in FY 2024. Especially, we would like to conduct a pilot project (one subject in grades 5 to 6 at elementary schools (also grades 1 to 4 in priority schools), all grades at junior high schools and special support schools/classes) to promote use of digital textbooks in elementary and junior high schools, etc.

Nobody can see how to use digital devices from the beginning. Please try it out in the spirit of "Try First." If you still do not get it, you can ask adults or friends around you.

We believe that it's important to solve issues as they arise from the use of ICT rather than stop using tablets/PCs in fear of problems/risks.

Thus, we will conduct a survey on how often you use tablets/PCs and in what scenes, and publish, as soon as possible, a guideline on the notes for schools and parents and guardians so that tablets and PCs will be further utilized.