



Deutsche Schule Melbourne - Philosophy

The Deutsche Schule Melbourne (DSM) is a German–English bilingual school that aims to help students realise their individual potential and become creative and confident participants in the global community. The school has articulated its vision and mission as being structured around the three action principles of ‘inspire’, ‘nurture’ and ‘challenge’. The vision–mission statement is published on the school’s website.

Inspire

Deutsche Schule Melbourne (DSM) inspires life-long learning by empowering students to lead their own learning journey. Teachers and students work in partnership to structure individual student learning through the use of weekly plans in core subjects including German, English and Mathematics. Weekly plans are work logs that enable students to track their progress as they move through a mix of learning tasks. Students are given the opportunity to prioritise their own projects and choose which of the teacher-assigned tasks best suits their level of inspiration and energy. Offering choice within teacher-guided scaffolds allows DSM students to take responsibility for their learning while working creatively and productively.

The school inspires students by offering learning experiences that encompass the heart, head and hands. Woven throughout the core academic disciplines are opportunities to explore and critically reflect on students’ beliefs, assumptions and ever-changing emotions about our complex world. In all year levels in both the German and English languages, students create personal written and visual journals, publish portfolios of work for comment with Seesaw and participate in reflective discussion circles during Class Council. A challenging bilingual academic curriculum engages students’ intellects and emphasises the building of connections across languages and cultures. Additionally, students participate in hands-on projects during themed project weeks and special events, working in multi-age groupings to explore different concepts through art, drama, sport and information technologies.

Deutsche Schule Melbourne supports students to express themselves creatively and think critically about a world without borders. As a bilingual and multicultural school, DSM students are constantly exposed to and take an active part in conversations and celebrations in which they need to understand others’ perspectives and cultural practices. From Foundation Year, DSM students encounter and share experiences with other students, teachers and student teachers, modulating their language according to whom they are speaking and translating and interpreting for others. As different languages and dialects are spoken in the school, everyone shares the common language of a desire to connect with and include others.

Nurture

Deutsche Schule Melbourne aims to nurture the whole child in our vibrant German, Australian and multicultural community. The school features a busy calendar of events throughout the school year that allow students to connect with school families and members of the local community while participating in inclusive cultural and sporting events. Events include German Carnival (Fasching), school sports day, St Martin’s Day Lantern Walk, the annual Germany–Australia soccer match, the German Christmas Market and the annual



End-of-Year Celebration.

At DSM, the school environment is one in which mutual respect, understanding and caring for the individual are nurtured. We teach about and promote the school values of respect, trust, kindness, honesty and patience through Class Council, whole-school assemblies, multi-age groupings during project week and community events where everyone comes together to play a part. Within the classroom, teachers plan personalised learning experiences for students and in the school corridors, everyone is known and greeted by name.

The school strives to nurture inclusive classrooms in which everyone feels pride and belonging. Using individualised weekly plans to structure student learning means that each and every student has the feeling 'I can do this!' when it comes to their academic learning. Students are challenged to take responsibility for each other, through, for example, the Foundation Year–Grade 1 buddy scheme as well as project week work, which fosters the sense that each individual belongs at the school and plays an essential role in creating the school's culture.

Challenge

Deutsche Schule Melbourne challenges students to embrace diverse perspectives through bilingualism and by exposing students to an immersion program run by native speakers. At DSM students' daily lives involve speaking in different languages, switching between linguistic and cultural codes of behaviour. Students are also challenged to take up leadership positions by, for instance, representing their classmates in the student council, which meets regularly with the School Principal to communicate student concerns and develop action plans for implanting student-driven improvement projects. In Year 6, two students are given the challenge of acting as school captains, presiding over assembly awards presentations and making speeches during important occasions.

Furthermore, German-native speakers, teacher trained in their countries of origin, teach German lessons in accordance with the standards laid out in the state curriculum of Thuringia. English-native speakers, trained in Australia, teach English lessons based on the Victorian Curriculum. Connections to Germany are also fostered through the school's membership of German International Schools Abroad networks and relationships with local branches of German businesses and cultural organisations. These relationships support the school to create a more authentically German cultural environment for language learning by funding the acquisition of learning materials and enabling students to interact with native German speakers.

The school has set itself the challenge to live more sustainably by reducing its footprint and taking care of precious resources. Sustainability education is touched upon in Integrated Studies as well as the core academic subjects. Students come together during special projects to work on small gardens, reducing waste and learning about environmental stewardship.