

LOCAL SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



German
**International
School**
Sydney



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Founded in 1989, GISS offers a complete multilingual school education from Preschool to Year 12.

Our pedagogical vision is to ignite a passion for lifelong learning, empowering our students to reach their full potential and succeed in our fast-changing global society. By fusing German, European and Australian excellence, we provide top tier multilingual secular co-education and are committed to inspire and challenge each of our students to become responsible, reliable, and confident bilingual adults.

This handbook will provide you with information about GISS, our structure, community and key contacts, and many other important aspects. If you have additional inquiries, please don't hesitate to contact the school and our dedicated staff will gladly help you.

Michael Cordes
GISS Principal

Our Vision

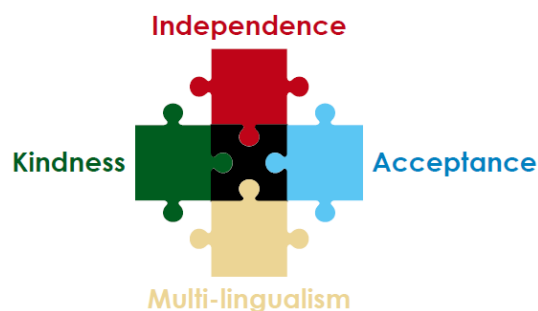
To ignite a passion for lifelong learning, empowering our students to reach their full potential and succeed in our fast-changing global society.

Our Mission

By fusing German, European and Australian excellence, we provide top tier multilingual secular co-education. We are committed to unlocking each student's potential, to inspire and challenge them to become responsible, reliable and confident bilingual adults.

Our Values

Independence	Promoting self-sufficiency , personal growth and the development of critical skills that benefit all members of our school community.
Acceptance	We provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.
Multi-lingualism	We have an appreciation of diverse languages and cultures .
Kindness	We create a nurturing environment where everyone treats each other with respect, empathy and consideration.



I AM KIND.

1. Teaching and Learning Framework

Lifelong Learners

We strive to empower the members of our school community to become lifelong learners whose ongoing, self-motivated learning goes beyond formal education. Our school nurtures a curiosity for learning and provides feedback that guides all in a journey of discovery.



International Education

In our culturally diverse, international and bilingual school, we foster strong values based on universal respect, solidarity and recognition of diversity. We provide our students with the best of German, Australian and IB curricula and aim for them to be fully proficient in the English and German language.

Innovative Development

GISS endeavours to continuously develop and reflect on the best ways to deliver a high standard of education.

Community

We strengthen the cohesion and collaboration between all members of the school community: students, staff, families and alumni.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a combination of physical, social, emotional, cultural and environmental conditions which are essential for us to flourish and fulfil our potential. It is embedded throughout the whole school and across the curriculum.

Learning Excellence

Our school strives for excellence in the pursuit of individual learning goals across a range of subjects for every student.



To view the extended version of the teaching and learning framework, please visit this page:
<https://www.germanschoolsydney.com/en/about-giss/teaching-learning-framework>

2. The Curriculum

From Preschool to Year 10, we offer a combined curriculum (GISS curriculum) of both the New South Wales Syllabus and the German State Thüringen curriculum, following the NSW school calendar year. In Years 11 and 12 we offer the IB Diploma Programme. This combination provides learners with a complete education experience in a co-educational and multi-lingual environment.

Our focus is to encourage our students to study a broad curriculum to achieve individual academic success, while also fostering personal development in preparation for life beyond school.

All students with no prior knowledge of the German language are welcome as we offer a successful intensive language immersion programme, leading to a high bilingual proficiency in both English and German. As children vary in their ability to absorb a second language, this program style provides the opportunity for each child to develop their level of competency at their own pace.



Overview of our School Structure

Senior Secondary School - International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (Years 11 & 12)

Head of Secondary School: Mr Alex Wreth

Head of Curriculum for Secondary & IB Coordinator: Mrs Simone Hessling

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) offered in Years 11 and 12 is a comprehensive two-year programme involving a curriculum model which is focused around six academic subject groups and the Core Programme of ToK, the EE and CAS – as is shown in the diagram.

Students must choose one subject from each group except for the Arts, where they can choose Visual Art or a second subject from one of the other groups, except Maths. German must be studied either at A, B or ab initio (beginners) level.

The IBDP is recognised worldwide as the best university preparation programme currently available to students completing post-secondary (16 years+) education; in fact, many universities such as Oxford, Yale, Harvard, ANU and UBC (to name a few), 'fast track' IB Diploma graduates into their second year of undergraduate study when they score 6s or 7s in IBDP subjects that are covered in the first year of their university programme.



Since all IB Diploma students are awarded an ATAR equivalent score and an equivalent Abitur score, our IBDP not only prepares students for university acceptance in Australia, but it is also recognised in Germany. In fact, if students choose, for example: German A, English A (or B at Higher Level), Biology (in German), History (in German), Maths and either Art/French B/Economics/Physics or Chemistry and one science subject or maths at HL, they are eligible to receive the "Gemischtsprachiges IB" (GIB). The school continues to work in close cooperation with the German KMK to offer specific subject combinations that are required in order to be accepted into universities in Germany.

At GISS, the IB curriculum is taught in English, with some subjects offered in German. Therefore, it can be designed to be a fully bilingual programme, ensuring that students receive the IB Bilingual Diploma.

For more detailed IB information please refer to www.ibo.org.

Junior Secondary School (Years 7 to 10)

Head of Secondary School:

Mr Alex Wreth

In the Junior Secondary curriculum, our focus is on languages but also on mathematics and the sciences.

Students who take up German lessons on native speaker level (DaM students) are taught Maths in German and History bilingually.



Students who take up German lessons on language acquisition level (DaF students) are taught both Maths and History in English.

Bilingual students can choose Biology (from Year 5) as well as Social Science (Years 9 and 10) in either English or German according to their language ability.

Geography, Physics, Chemistry and Ethics are taught in English only while the subjects Art, Music, Religion and Sport are always taught in German as CLIL subjects (see page 8).

Additional languages taught at GISS are:

- French from Year 7 until Year 10 (generally by DaM students)
- Spanish from Year 9 (for DaF students).

Students who start in Year 7 without prior German language knowledge focus on learning German in the Years 7 and 8 with extra German lessons to support the CLIL subjects Music, Art and PE/Sport. In Year 9 these extra lessons are no longer required, and students take up Spanish as their second language acquisition subject while continuing to learn German.

English is taught according to the NSW curriculum in all Years by native English speaking and very experienced teachers.

Our highly recognised academic standards enable our students to transfer to either our *International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme* (IBDP) for Years 11 and 12 or to other national and international schools.

Primary School (Kindergarten - Year 6)

Head of Primary School: Ms Rachel Hennig

Head of Curriculum for Primary:

Mr Klemens Pedarnig

Our Primary School students experience a positive, nurturing and friendly learning environment in an atmosphere that promotes confident learning as well as overall enjoyment during the Primary School years. Our modern teaching methods enhance the development of independent, confident and autonomously thinking students.



Many children starting in Kindergarten or earlier have little or no knowledge of the German language when commencing at GISS. Children learn literacy / reading & writing in English from Kindergarten (5 years of age), according to the NSW curriculum and are taught English by native speaking highly qualified English teachers. Through language immersion (with most subjects taught in German) and the highly efficient language concept in Primary School students become quickly proficient in the use of the German language and continue to study many subjects in German throughout their Secondary School education. While most subjects are taught in German on a conversational level in Kindergarten, German literacy is taught from Year 1 according to the German curriculum.

Lessons take place in the classroom or in small composite tuition groups to allow all pupils to be taught according to their language skill set. With 35 lessons per week, English and German are taught across six and five lessons respectively. There is a choice between subjects Ethics which is taught in English and Religion which is taught in German from Year 1 onwards. The school week also incorporates supervised homework time, library lessons and co-curricular activities.



To further support our students, we follow the class teacher concept which enables Primary School teachers to accompany their class for at least two years, promoting a strong teacher-student rapport. This also allows our teachers to closely follow the students' development and in turn, monitor progress in cooperation with their parents. We also actively build parent-teacher relationships to ensure effective communication is achieved to encourage family involvement.

Our Primary students experience various social activities such as group work, working in pairs as well as benefiting from modern teaching methods including weekly schedules, rotation work and open learning. Under the guidance of their teacher, this system supports and develops the students' responsibility for their own learning.

Preschool (ages three to five)

Head of Preschool: Ms Silke Bethke

Preschool children are provided with a creative and interactive curriculum that is embedded in the Early Years Framework for Australia 'Being, Belonging and Becoming'. Our bilingual preschool program is based on an immersion approach and the pedagogical ideas are derived from elements of best practice from around the world. The languages used at the Preschool are English and German spoken by native speakers. However, as all teachers are bilingual, non-German speaking children are welcome! Usually, children at this age pick up a new language quickly.



The flexible daily program is shaped around a combination of opportunities to play freely, to participate in guided activities including small group activities, circle time, the use of the school's library and sports hall, mealtimes, and quiet times. The children's ideas and needs take priority over planned programs and we consider their needs to be of primary importance in shaping the day. Questions and inquiries of the children are captured and used as a means of developing projects.



Our Preschool offers a unique transition to Primary School with one teacher transitioning with the children from Preschool into Kindergarten, we believe this concept is very effective in ensuring a smooth transition and consistency.

The hours of operation are from 8.00 am to 3.30 pm. The Preschool is open during school terms and closed during school holidays. For more detailed information, please refer to the Preschool information pack.

A Playgroup for children aged 0 – 3 and their parents is offered on Fridays from 9.30 – 11 am. The pedagogical concept of our Playgroup is closely linked to that of our Preschool. This makes the transition to Preschool significantly easier. Playgroup children also have preference on the Preschool waiting list.



2.2 Language Immersion

It is our philosophy that students learn additional languages to pursue throughout their schooling. We provide students with a well-rounded linguistic backbone with the potential for high-level multilingualism to be achieved by Year 12 graduates.

Our language concept in Primary and Junior Secondary School allows all students to be taught according to their language skill set. Therefore, students can be enrolled without either prior German or English language knowledge if they are proficient in one of the two languages. Several subjects are available in either English or German from Year 5 onwards. The choice of teaching language in Secondary School depends on each student's language proficiency. We highly recommend language proficiency level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a prerequisite.

At the GISS we use Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to support the language development in both German and English learners. This means that we have focal subjects in which special attention is given to the language used to teach the subject content. This is particularly present in subjects in which the students do not have an option to choose the teaching language. In Primary School up to Year 4 these are nearly all subjects except for English.

LANGUAGE IMMERSION & TEACHING LANGUAGE at a glance

PRESCHOOL (AGE 3 - 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual Preschool program using immersion approach English and German are spoken by native speakers (all teachers are bilingual).
PRIMARY SCHOOL (KIGA - YR 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning languages occurs within weekly English and German lessons. Art, Music, General Studies, Maths and Sport taught in German (CLIL*) Choice of Religion taught in German or Ethics taught in English (Years 1-4).
UPPER PRIMARY (Yrs 5-6)	German and English teaching language for Maths, Biology (DaM** students must take Maths and Biology lessons in German) CLIL* subjects taught in German: Art, Music, and Sport CLIL* subject taught in English: Ethics CLIL* subject taught bilingually: Geography and History Language subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> German for all levels, including beginners English according to NSW curriculum with support for EAL students
JUNIOR SECONDARY (YRS 5 - 10)	German and English teaching language for Maths, History, Biology and Social Science (DaM** students must take History & Maths lessons in German) CLIL* subjects taught in German: Art, Music, and Sport CLIL* subjects taught in English: Ethics, Geography, Physics and Chemistry Additional language learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> German for all levels, including beginners French in Years 7-10 (generally for DaM** students) German Support for CLIL* subjects in Years 7&8 (for DaF*** students) Spanish from Year 9 (for DaF*** students)
IBDP / SENIOR SECONDARY (YRS 11 & 12)	Curriculum is primarily taught in English; Biology and History are also offered in German. A broad range of languages are available at various levels. German can be studied at either A, B or ab initio levels.

* Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) ** Deutsch als Muttersprache (DaM) = German as a Native Language
 *** Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF) = German as an Additional Language

2.3 Art, Music, Physical Education

The subjects of Art and Music as well as Physical Education (PE) are part of our Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) concept. All three subjects are taught in German throughout all classes, taking into consideration that students with all levels of German proficiency, including beginners, sit in the same class. Due to the nature of this concept, this requires a less theoretical and more hands-on approach in Art and Music lessons. For example, music theory is taught less through textbooks but by practical examples and exposure to different instruments and concert scenarios.

Our curriculum focuses on the exposure to various instruments rather than students choosing and focussing on one particular instrument in depth. Additional music and instruments tutoring is offered during breaks and within our co-curricular activities. Our approach in art involves many hands-on art projects and encourages students to experiment in a wide range of media, whilst also introducing them to art history and art theory in Junior Secondary School from Year 5 onwards.

PE is designed to introduce students to a variety of sports disciplines. Each term is designated to either swimming at the neighbouring swim school, gymnastics, ball games or athletics. There is no mandatory school sport on weekends. However, we do encourage our students to join their local sporting club according to their choice of activity. As part of our co-curricular activities, we offer additional activities such as taekwondo, football, gym wheel, ball games and tennis.

2.4 Co-Curricular Activities

Our innovative co-curricular (AG) program for 2026 will foster a dynamic learning environment that propels students toward becoming lifelong learners equipped with indispensable skills for success in our interconnected world. It will place a strong emphasis on skill development and the embodiment of our unique learner profile.



2.5 Reports

Students in Kindergarten to Year 2 receive one report at the end of each Semester. These reports provide descriptive evaluations and do not contain marks.

Students in Years 3 to 10 receive a report at the end of each semester applying both the numerical assessments, from 1 to 6, with "1" marking the highest achievement, and the alphabetical system from A to E. The grades for Year 3 and 10 are also accompanied by a performance description.

All mid-year reports are issued on the last school day prior to the school holidays. Students leaving the School during the year will receive a letter of attendance on their last day of school, upon request.

In the IB, quarterly update reports are issued to students and parents at the end of the first and third term. These progress reports provide grades for effort and academic achievements for all elected subjects. The effort grade gives an indication of a student's effort and engagement and will usually give an indication of academic potential and attitude. Half-yearly reports are issued to students and parents after each semester and provide a cumulative academic grade for the semester for each elected subject. These correspond with academic grades in the quarterly updates. Other grades on these reports are examination grades, reflecting student achievement on the formal examinations, which are held towards the end of each semester. Semester reports also indicate student achievement across a variety of general learning expectations which are common to all subjects, and subject-specific learning objectives, which correspond with those outlined by the IBO in their subject guides. Teachers also include a written comment on student progress in each subject. In the IB years, Student-Parent-Teacher (SPT) Conferences are also held in the evening, after reports have been issued each quarter so that students are able to reflect, analyse and discuss their progress in learning to set targets for the following term.

Reports can be issued in either German or English. The desired report language should be advised well in advance as we cannot issue translations of reports. In the IB, they are issued in English only.

2.6 Example timetables

Timetable					
Year 10 – German Native Speaker (DaM)					
LESSON	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 (8:45am — 9:30 am)	Geography	History	History	English	German
2 (9:35am - 10:15am)	English	Geography	French / Spanish	English	German
3 (10:30am - 11:15am)	Physics	German	Biology	Chemistry	Religious Education
4 (11:20am - 12:05pm)	Mathematics	Art	Biology	Chemistry	Mathematics
5 (12:10pm - 12:55pm)	Mathematics	Art	Physics	Mathematics	Mathematics
6 (1:40pm - 2:25pm)	French /Spanish	French / Spanish	German	Sport	English
7 (2:30pm - 3:15pm)	Social Science	French / Spanish	German	Sport	English

Timetable

Year 10 – German Learner (DaF)

LESSON	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 (8:45am — 9:30 am)	Geography	History	History	English	German
2 (9:35am - 10:15am)	English	Geography	French / Spanish	English	German
3 (10:30am - 11:15am)	Physics	German	Biology	Chemistry	Ethics
4 (11:20am - 12:05pm)	Mathematics	Art	Biology	Chemistry	Mathematics
5 (12:10pm - 12:55pm)	Mathematics	Art	Physics	Mathematics	Mathematics
6 (1:40pm - 2:25pm)	French /Spanish	French / Spanish	German	Sport	English
7 (2:30pm - 3:15pm)	Social Science	French / Spanish	German	Sport	English

Overview on Hours per Subject per Class per calendar year – Years K to 6:

Learning Area	Subject	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Languages	English	168	168	168	168	168	140	140
	German	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Mathematics	Mathematics	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Science	Science & Technology	56	56	56	56	56		
	Biology						56	56
Humanities	General Studies	84	84	84	84	84		
	Geography						56	56
	History						56	56
	Ethics		28	28	28	28	56	56
Creative Arts	Performing Arts	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
	Visual Arts	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
PDHPE	Sport	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
Other	Library	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
	Co-Curricular Activities	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
	Homework Supervision	112	84	84	84	84	56	56
	SEL Social Emotional Learning	28	28	28	28	28	28	28

Overview on Hours per Subject per Class per calendar year – Years 7 to 10:							
Learning Area	Subject	7	8	9	10		
Languages	English	112	140	140	140		
	German (DaM / DaF)	140	140	140	140		
	French / Spanish	112	112	112	84		
	<i>French for DaM Students</i>	112	112	112	84		
	<i>German Support for DaF Students</i>	112	112				
	<i>Spanish for DaF Students</i>			112	84		
Mathematics	Mathematics	112	140	140	140		
Science	Biology	56	56	56	56		
	Physics	56	56	56	56		
	Chemistry		56	56	56		
Humanities	History	56	56	56	56		
	Geography	56		56	56		
	Ethics	56	56	56	56		
	IT	28					
	Social Studies			56	28		
Creative Arts	Music	56	56				
	Art	56	56		56		
Other	Co-Curricular Activities	28					
PDHPE	Sport	56	56	56	56		

Overview on Hours per Subject IB Diploma Years 11 & 12 over two years:								
Study group	Subject					Hours		
1. Language & literature	English					240		
	German							
2. Language acquisition	English					240		
	German							
	French/Spanish							
3. Individuals & Societies	Business Management					240		
	Economics							
	History							
	Digital society							
	Psychology							
4. Sciences	Biology					240		
	Chemistry							
	Physics							
5. Mathematics	Mathematics SL					192		
	Mathematics HL					240		
6. The Arts	Art or another subject from group 1 - 4					240		
TOK						96		

3. GISS Routines and Policies

3.1 Tuition Times

The School provides tuition from Monday to Friday. The timetable is as follows:

Roll Call	08.40am	
1. Period	08.45 am – 9.30am	45'
Break	09.30 am – 9.35 am	5'
2. Period	09.35 am – 10.15 am	40'
Break	10.15 am– 10.30 am	15'
3. Period	10.30 am – 11.15 am	45'
Break	11.15 am – 11.20 am	5'
4. Period	11.20 am – 12.05 pm	45'
Break	12.05 pm – 12.10 pm	5'
5. Period	12.10 pm – 12.55 pm	45'
Lunch Break	12.55 pm – 1.40 pm	45'
6. Period	1.40 pm – 2.25 pm	45'
Break	2.25 pm – 2.30 pm	5'
7. Period	2.30 pm – 3.15 pm	45'
8. Period (IB)	3.15 pm – 4.00 pm	45'

Attendance of all

full-time teaching staff: 8.30am – 3.30pm

Student timetable: 35 periods per week

Preschool opening hours: 8.00am – 3.30pm

K – 10: 8:45am – 3:15pm

IB: 8:45am – 3:15pm / 4pm depending on subjects chosen

Co-Curricular Activities

(AGs): every Tuesday

Assembly-Dates: for Primary School: twice a semester,
for whole school: once a semester

3.2 Holidays

Please refer to our [school holiday calendar](#) for all school and public holidays as well as student free / staff development days. Generally, the School adheres to all NSW Public holidays and follows the NSW Public School holiday calendar with the addition of two weeks in June/July.

3.3 Lunch and Snacks

Morning tea is a 15-min break from 10.15 am to 10.30 am and lunch is from 12.55 pm to 1.40 pm. During all breaks, students are advised to go outside the classroom to move around and get some fresh air.

We generally encourage healthy snacks such as fruit and no-nut snacks. Students can also pre-order snacks and lunches from our food provider, Vanilla Blue, who offers a wide range of fresh hot and cold meals, healthy snacks and drinks in a regularly changing menu. To see the menu and place an order, please download the [FlexiSchools app](#). Please be aware that all food must be pre-ordered and is usually delivered after morning tea.

The use of the microwave oven in the Day Room is only permitted for Years 11 and 12.

3.4 School Captains & Liaison Teachers

Every class from Years 5 to 12 has two class representatives / captains who form the Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC discusses issues which are of interest to the whole school, not just to individual classes. The school captain team consists of one to maximum six students. They lead the SRC and their meetings with the support of the Liaison Teachers. The Liaison Teachers are elected through a student vote. They advise and mediate in situations of conflict and act in support of the SRC.

3.5 Student Welfare & Support

Our focus is to encourage our students to study a broad curriculum to achieve individual academic success while also fostering personal development in preparation for life after school. We provide an environment which supports students to learn self-regulation and to manage their own behaviour while taking into consideration their specific circumstances such as their cultural background or family situation. Lessons are tailored to cater for a diverse range of students' abilities and needs.

Supportive Measures:

We aim to identify and intervene as early as possible with students with learning difficulties. A learning support teacher is available in the primary years to assist with identifying students with learning difficulties and support them with their schoolwork, particularly with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

Specialists such as a learning support teacher, a learning support assistant and a counsellor are employed at the School. They all support students in their individual development, including students with behavioural, emotional and intellectual demands and challenges.

The counsellor works predominantly with individual students in the Senior Secondary level whereas the focus of the learning support teacher and assistant is in Primary School.



If a teacher or parent is concerned about a child's behaviour, the learning support teacher will observe the student in the classroom, meet with all teachers involved in a class conference to collect information and exchange observations. The same group of teachers and learning support and/or counsellor will then meet with the parents.

Communication with our parents is an integral part of the referral process. Should an external specialist have to be involved for assessment or therapy, this will be discussed in depth with the

parents. The kind of support the school can provide and which external resources should be used to best support the student's needs will be evaluated. The counsellor and learning support teacher have established contacts to a variety of different specialists and institutions and can provide appropriate contact details to the parents. Often, psychologists contact teachers for further information for their evaluation and therapy. Regular communication with all parties involved supports the development of any student requiring additional support.

3.6 School Council

The School Council is the body where topics relevant to the School as a whole are discussed and opinions are exchanged. In addition, it has the task of promoting the interaction of school management, teachers, parents and students as well as mediating, advising, discussing and adopting matters that are essential to the School. The School Council may provide the Principal and other committees (in accordance with the applicable policy) with suggestions and recommendations. A recommendation must be considered and then dealt with at the next meeting of the relevant group or committee.

The School Council consists of the following members:

- The Principal as Chair
- The Chair of the Parents Representative Council as Deputy Chair
- Two representatives from the teaching staff
- One additional representative from the parent body
- Two student representatives
- One representative from the non-teaching staff.

3.7 Library

With a wide variety of German and English books and audio-visual material available, the library is popular with all students from Preschool to Year 12. The library is open during most lunch breaks for use by students engaged in project research and independent study but also for quiet chats or games.

The Librarian assists students with their research both in books and online, encourages their reading for pleasure and teaches library skills as well as touch typing to students from Kindergarten to Year 5. She also coordinates and supports students participating in the Premier's Reading Challenge and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

3.8 IT and Computer Use

Our students use technology to support their learning in the classroom. Each learning area is equipped with a smartboard allowing for interactive teaching and other modern teaching methods.

Students up to Year 6 are provided with class sets of iPad or laptops. These devices are shared between classes in an age-appropriate and balanced manner avoiding extensive screentime.

Touch typing, internet research and the use of computers are taught primarily in our Primary School.

For students from Year 7 onwards, a **Bring-Your-Own-Device system**. Devices should comply with the School's advised system requirements. In addition, our students have access to computers in our library as well as our IB Study Centre. All students (and their parents) and staff must read and sign our Acceptable Use Policy prior to receiving a school network and email account. This policy and form will be handed out on the first day of school. To equip our students for the appropriate use of devices and the internet, Year 7 participates in weekly IT lessons as a mandatory co-curricular activity.



3.9 School Wear and Dress Code

Students do not have to wear a uniform at school. Nevertheless, they must comply with our dress code ensuring decency, appropriate clothing and safety. Details of our dress code and regulations can be found on our website under [policies](#).

During excursions and special school events our students must wear their school polo shirt. During the colder season, our wind & rain resistant and fleece lined school jacket is designed to keep our students warm during their outings. Shirts and jackets (and hats for Primary School children) can be purchased prior to commencing school.



3.10 Policies and References

Please feel free to browse through a wide selection of our policies and rules on our website under the 'School Life' tab. The policies listed are:

- Child Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Dress Code & SunSmart Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Care & Supervision Policy
- Student Assessment & Reporting Achievement Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Parent And School Communication Policy
- School Council Policy
- Student Discipline Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Responsible Use of IT Policy
- Locker Policy

Should you require more details or wish to read other policies not listed under the above link, please do not hesitate to contact us on info@giss.nsw.edu.au.

4. Our Community

4.1 Students

Our students come from all over the world and enrich our school community with their own culture and heritage. With more than 35 different nationalities and language backgrounds, our students are united in their interest in learning languages and living within an international and Australian culture.

As of January 2026, we have 440 students enrolled at the School (from Preschool to Year 12).



4.2 Staff

The School's Principal is Mr Michael Cordes.

The School employs over 55 dedicated full-time and part-time teachers to cover the entire educational offerings. This includes five seconded teachers from Germany and seven teachers for the Preschool.

All teachers have obtained their teaching qualifications in Germany or Australia or have an equal qualification from a different country.

The School is committed to continuous further education of all teachers to maintain the high qualification levels of our staff.

Nine staff members work in administration.

4.3 Parents/Guardians, PRC & Board of Directors

The participation, involvement and help of parents and community members are welcome and appreciated for various activities.

- Parents are often invited to help with class activities (during project week or to read in either German or English).
- The most common way to be involved as parents is to join our Parent Representative Council (PRC). Our PRC consists of selected representatives from each class at the German International School Sydney. Each class elects two parent representatives who address concerns that parents may have and are actively involved in supporting the School.
- Parents often support the School with their help at various school fundraising, cultural and other events. The funds raised are then used for teaching resources such as class laptops, the acquisition of outdoor furniture or the construction of a sports field.
- All members of the Board of Directors are voluntarily responsible for the overall governance of the School and actively oversee the school management.

4.4 Board of Directors

Before registering a child at the School, parents are required to become members of the company "German School Johannes Gutenberg Limited by Guarantee" which runs the School. The School's Board of Directors is therefore elected and formed by the members – our parents.

The Board is responsible for the overall governance and performance of the School. The members of the Board are personally liable under common Australian company law. All members work voluntarily.



4.5 Become Involved

Parent volunteers offer a huge resource and support base for the school community while showing their kids the importance of participating in the larger community.

Not only will the School reap the benefits of your involvement, but you will too. By interacting with teachers, administrators, and other parents on a regular basis, you'll gain a firsthand understanding of your child's daily activities. You'll also tap into trends and fads of school life that can help you communicate with your kids as they grow and change (all without intruding on their privacy or personal space). *



*<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/learning/school.html>

There are many ways to become involved at our School

- Become a member of our PRC (Parent Representative Council) and represent your child's class
- Volunteer at several fundraising events such as the annual Bunnings Sausage Sizzle, the flea market, or help at a clean-up day
- Assist with reading in the Primary School
- Help run an AG (co-curricular activity)
- Become a sponsor
- Support the School with your professional knowledge or skills as a consultant or even a member of our Board of Directors
- Participate at our careers night and share your experience with our older students who are yet to find their goals in life
- The biggest and most exciting event of our school calendar is our **Christmas Market** in August (*please check our [website](#) for current dates*). This family event is a must. In recent years it attracted over 8000 Sydneysiders over two nights and its magic is still growing. We need all hands-on deck to cater for such a big crowd and we therefore urge every single member of our community to roll up their sleeves and join in to help in whatever way possible.

5. Location and Transport

5.1 School Site & Facilities

The School is located in Terrey Hills, 25.5 kilometres north of Sydney's Central Business District on one of the highest points of the Northern Beaches. The land is 16,200 m² and houses eight buildings, two additional award-winning classrooms in shipping containers and three modular Passivhaus classrooms, outside areas and beautifully landscaped gardens. A safety fence, gates and cameras secure the premises. There is underground parking and a drop-off and pick-up zone.



Our school is conscientious of the environment; we produce energy with solar panels and conserve and reuse water with our own rainwater tanks and waterless urinals. The School can accommodate 400 plus students.

Our classrooms are complemented by specialist rooms for science subjects Biology, Chemistry and Physics as well as for Art and Music. For Kindergarten to Year 6, several sets of laptops allow for portability and can turn any room or space into an IT environment. From Year 7 onwards, students bring their own devices to school. All classrooms are equipped with the most recent smart boards.

Our library offers a comprehensive selection of both English and German literature and provides adequate space for library and IT lessons as well as computer study areas. For the Primary, Junior Secondary and the Senior Secondary School there are additional group and recreational rooms as well as an outdoor classroom. The sports hall is a multi-functional space with a stage and seating for up to 400 people. Besides our many sporting activities it is also used for assemblies, performances and other cultural events. Our expansive grounds include common play areas, a playground and a covered sports field. The Preschool has its own separate, secure playground. Swimming lessons take place at Terrey Hills Swim School next door.



5.2 School Student Transport

The transport of our students is built on two components: government-funded public buses and GISS-operated private buses.

Information on the GISS-operated Buses:

Our students from Kindergarten to Year 12 can travel to and from the School on our own GISS-operated private buses or on public bus services. The private GISS bus system offers four bus routes to support our families in managing their busy lives.

All our bus drivers hold a bus driver authority from Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and therefore comply with all NSW Government regulations. This includes regular driver tests and medical assessments.

Our school uses the bus booking app 'RollCall', which is an online bus service portal. This app bundles all bus services into one app. Parents can book and change services online, track GISS-operated school buses to make the pick-up more convenient as well as receive real-time alerts and notifications. RollCall also gives the School an overview of which students are travelling on GISS-operated buses at any point in time.

For further details on how to book, including the School's bus service Terms & Conditions, please refer to the '[Bus Information Booklet](#)'.



GISS BUS SERVICE

Our private GISS-operated bus system is a unique benefit for the school community and offers a convenient and comprehensive network of buses. It is an affordable and safe service that allows your children to travel to and from school independently. To further improve our service to all GISS families, the school has implemented the bus booking app 'RollCall', which is an online bus service portal.

Benefits include:

- Modern bus fleet:** All routes are operated by modern, air-conditioned Mitsubishi Fuso buses, with 24 comfortable, seat-belted seats. *Please note that children must wear their seatbelt at all times when travelling on the bus.*
- Efficient and convenient routes:** All buses run to a fixed timetable and the routes have been streamlined to ensure that no journey exceeds one hour. This means less time spent on the road. We understand the importance of minimising travel time, and these new routes have been designed to make your child's daily commute more efficient.
- Affordable pricing:** Not only are bus trips cheaper, we also offer the flexibility of changing bookings if necessary, making planning the school run easy. Casual trips or changes to booked trips can be changed the day before for the morning run, or by 12 pm for the afternoon run.
- Easy booking process via the RollCall app:** This app bundles all bus services into one app. Parents can book and change services online, track GISS-operated school buses to make the pick-up more convenient as well as receive real-time alerts and notifications.
- Peace of mind:** RollCall allows you to track your child's journey while on the bus, letting you know when they will arrive at their stop.
- Environmental considerations:** Our buses provide a convenient and environmentally friendly alternative to driving yourself, contributing to a cleaner and greener community.

Further information about the service and how to set up an account on the Rollcall app can be found on our [website](#). Please send any questions, concerns, or feedback via email to bus@giss.nsw.edu.au.

Information on public buses:

Public transport is operated by the bus company **CDC**. There is a bus stop right in front of our School and teachers supervise the arrival and departure of all students.

Please go to [NSW trip planner](#) to find the current and most suitable public transport options from your home!

Free travel with School Opal Card – application and eligibility:

To apply for a School Opal Card please apply online at transportnsw.info/school-students, our registrar will be automatically notified to endorse your application. The School Opal Card will eventually be sent by mail to your home address.

To obtain a free Student Opal Card, students must fulfil several criteria:

Age: Students must be aged 4 years 6 months or older. Preschool children are not eligible.

Distance between home and school:

Kindergarten to Year 2: There is no minimum walking distance for these students.

*Year 3 to Year 6: - The straight-line distance from student's home to school is more than 1.6km, or
- The walking distance from home to school is 2.3km or further.*

*Year 7 to Year 12: - The straight-line distance from student's home to school is more than 2km, or
- The walking distance from home to school is 2.9km or further.*

Free school travel is available to students who live **outside** of the following distances from their school. If you live **within** these distances, the student may still qualify for a [School Term Bus Pass](#).

Visa-Status:

The student must be a resident of NSW.

This includes temporary residents but not Overseas Students residing in Australia on a Student Visa nor tourists on a Visitor Visa. However, students can receive a concession card from the registrar of the school and apply for a Child/Youth Opal Card, paying the youth concession fare.

6. Application and Enrolment Process

Application for Enrolment

Prior to enrolment of a student, the School must receive a completed application using our online application form together with the uploaded relevant documents and the application fee payment. Information about the enrolment process and the application form can be found here: <https://www.germanschoolsydney.com/en/enrolments/online-application-1>.

Letter of Offer

After approval of the Application for Enrolment by School Management, our registrar will email to the successful applicant a Letter of Offer, the Enrolment Form and an Enrolment Fee payment request.

Acceptance of Enrolment

Upon acceptance of the School's Letter of Offer, parents then complete the Enrolment Form for the student and pay the requested enrolment fee to finalise the enrolment.

Deadlines and Priority Criteria of Application

The deadlines for applications are defined by three rounds ending on 31 March, 31 May and 31 August for enrolment starting end of January of the following year (for Year 7 of the following two years).

Applicants applying within the first round (meaning before the 31st of March) are given priority to applications within rounds two or three. All valid applications will be assessed. Assessments are expected to be completed within a month after each application round closes.

Priority will be given to siblings of children already enrolled at GISS and relatives of GISS alumni. When applying for Preschool, priority will be given to students attending the GISS Playgroup. Students enrolled at Preschool and applying for Kindergarten also have priority and do not need to re-enrol. However, the transition is no longer automatic. The transition form (T1) sent to you by the School must be submitted by the deadline set by the School. The same is required for students pre-enrolled in Year 6 and transitioning to Year 7 (as confirmation of continuing enrolment by the parents) to allow for school planning.

7. The Company

The German International School Sydney is an Australian public company limited by guarantee, which is registered under the name German School Johannes Gutenberg and ACN 003 484 204. Before enrolment of a child, parents are required to become a member of the School's company. The company's Board of Directors is elected by the members and all work is voluntary.

The company is a non-profit organisation which is exempt from income tax. The Building Fund ADVR T415 and the Library Fund ADVR T415-1 are recognised by the ATO and any donations to these funds are tax deductible.

The School receives recurrent funding from the Federal Republic of Germany, the Commonwealth of Australia and the NSW Department of Education. In addition to financial funding, the Federal Republic of Germany supports the School by seconding 4 teachers and the principal from Germany. The company is a member of the NSW Association of Independent Schools.

7.1 Registration, Accreditation & Licenses

The School is an accredited German School Abroad and part of a network of 140 German Schools Abroad in more than 60 countries. The School is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany and guided pedagogically by the Secretariat of the Standing Committee of the State Education Departments (KMK) with the aim to provide German School Leaving Certificates for Years 9 and 10. In addition to the financial support, the Principal and four teachers are seconded from Germany to our School.



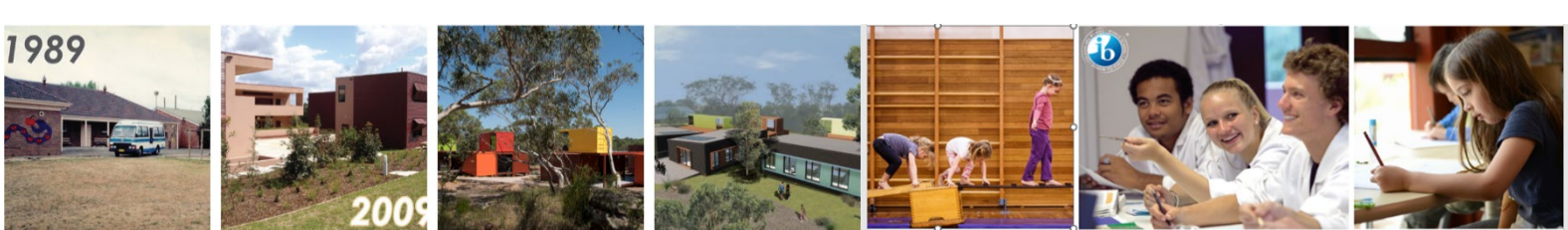
The Commonwealth of Australia and the State of New South Wales acknowledge the German International School Sydney as equal to other private schools in NSW. The School is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for Kindergarten to Year 12 and is licensed for the operation of the Preschool by the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, Department of Education.

GISS is CRICOS registered which allows for the enrolment of International Overseas Students. The CRICOS Provider ID is 02379D.

The School is also licensed by the International Baccalaureate Organisation to offer the only bilingual International Baccalaureate Diploma program in Australia and is entitled to accept guest students not accompanied by their parents from overseas.

The School does not offer the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) after Year 10 or the HSC after Year 12.





History

- 1989** German School Johannes Gutenberg commences operation in Prospect with 28 students from Kindergarten to Year 4
- 1992** Move to Ryde, with 79 students across eight classes
- 1993** Founding of Preschool
- 1996** First Year 10 exams for German Year 10 Certificate
- 2001** Additional land acquired in Ryde to house the IT lab & library; student numbers exceed 200
- 2002** Introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
Complete Education from Preschool to Year 12 available
New trading name: German International School Sydney
New land acquired in Terrey Hills
- 2006** Registration with the NSW Board of Studies and now offering a unique blend of the German and NSW curriculum

Commencement of construction in Terrey Hills with funding from Germany over AUD 13 million
- 2008** Start of first English Stream – Year 7 class for students without prior knowledge of German
- 2008** Teaching commences in Terrey Hills
- 2010** With funding from the Australian Government two new buildings housing a new library and further classrooms are built; at the same time the land size is doubled by purchasing the neighbour's land
- 2014** GISS celebrates its 25th anniversary
- 2015** School Year changes to the Australian School calendar from January to December, integration of the English and German streams. Implementation of the GISS curriculum, including choice of teaching language in many subjects from Primary to Senior Secondary and allowing enrolment of students without prior German language knowledge across all classes. Capacity is nearly reached, and several full classes incur waiting lists for the following year
- 2016** A new outdoor sports field is built, partially funded by the school's fundraising
- 2018** Opening of new classrooms built from shipping containers
- 2018** Transition to the Australian academic year is now concluded
- 2019** GISS celebrates its 30th anniversary
- 2019** Building and opening of the school kiosk
- 2020** Introduction of stage-based learning in Year 3/4
- 2021** Introduction of After School and Vacation Care (Monday to Friday)
- 2022** Opening of three new Modular Passivhaus Classrooms
- 2023** Introduction of stage-based learning in Years 1/2
- 2025** Introduction of stage-based learning in Years 5/6
Launch of the GISS Football Academy with Borussia Dortmund (BVB)
GISS becomes a candidate school for the IB Primary Years Programme



For more information

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Registrar

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