

German International School Sydney

Language Policy

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Key Terminology

Throughout the GISS language concept there are some variations in terminology used. This is partly due to the different supporting documents used for different age groups and/or different authorities. Acronyms are explained the first time they are used, however, for the reader's reference, they are also listed below.

ai	ab initio: beginner level of language learning in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.
Bilingual	the term bilingual is used to refer to individuals (mainly students) who master at least two languages (in this document usually German and English) at an independent user's level and therefore can participate in classes in either language.
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DaF/DaZ	(Deutsch als Fremdsprache/Deutsch als Zweitsprache) German as a Foreign/Additional Language
DSD	(Deutsches Sprachdiplom) German Language Diploma
DaM:	(Deutsch als Muttersprache) German Mother Tongue Speaker
EAL	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
HL	Higher Level
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, CAE & CPE	Different English language proficiency tests
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
Language A, Mother Tongue and Native Tongue	all refer to a person's strongest language. Language A is also the term used to replace the term DaM and refers to the courses that focus on literature rather than language acquisition (compared to Language B).
Language B	refers to an additional language in the International Baccalaureate programme and for transparency is also the term used across the school to replace DaF/DaZ in all parts of the school.
Mainstream	refers to the students in the middle school who make up the majority of the learners in a class and who follow the GISS curriculum.
Target Language	refers to the language that is to be learned in that subject, e.g. French is the target language in French lessons.
SL	Standard Level

1. Philosophy

We believe that language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating. The German International School Sydney (GISS) aims to develop language learners who are confident in a range of contexts that are relevant both to their learning community and their lives. Effective language development is regarded as an essential foundation for the personal growth of each student in the context of their life-long learning.

Furthermore, language is a core element in cognitive growth, constructing meaning and knowledge which enables effective social communication, encourages a comfortable, positive approach to learning, and assists the development of critical thinking skills. Language is integral to both individual and cultural identity, while also supporting the development of understanding of the students' wider world. Inclusion of students' mother tongue/s and culture/s is a key aspect of this process.

A clear understanding of the role of language across the learning continuum is critical in determining the aims and objectives of language teaching and learning.

All teachers are language teachers and are therefore responsible for supporting students in their acquisition and proper use of language, in a range of contexts.

2. Our Language Principles

Language acquisition is supported by a language-rich environment. Language is learned in a context where risk-taking is encouraged and error-making is considered inevitable and necessary. *Teachers are positive role models of language usage* and attitudes to language and literature. Language is seen as a trans-disciplinary element throughout the curriculum. Talk in the classroom is fundamental to learning. Discussions, rehearsed talk, and social talk all play a role in language acquisition. Language skills are acquired most effectively from using language in meaningful contexts, for real reasons, and from experiencing real, multicultural literature.

Furthermore, we understand that language is integral in supporting the development of the IB Learner Profile attributes in our students, as it provides a vehicle for inquiry, facilitates critical application of thinking skills, allows imaginative, creative expression, develops confident communication in different languages and different modes, assists students to better understand their own and other cultures, assists students to bravely and articulately defend their beliefs, and enables quality reflection on learning and experience.

Students at the German International School Sydney learn productive and receptive language skills in the target language, but reception, interaction and production are not the only skills in language learning. Cultural and interpersonal aspects also hold a high importance in a multilingual and multicultural environment such as the school and in extension, the world. In praxis, this means that language teachers and subject teachers use teachable moments to highlight differences and similarities in the use of language in its broader sense. This may include being aware of the use of body language, idioms, text types, formalities in the language and its culture.

3. Language Profile

As an international school the German International School Sydney places a strong focus on the bilingual education of all its students. Regardless of whether they come from a

German, English or other language-speaking environment, all students are encouraged to learn both German and English in addition to possible further languages.

For students who start at the German International School Sydney in or before Year 3, the aim is to be able to communicate well enough in both languages to participate successfully in classes in either language by the beginning of Year 7. Alongside bilingual language acquisition students also develop a sense of cultural diversity and international-mindedness and improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

At the German International School Sydney, all teachers are language teachers in that each educator strives to enhance students' communication skills. Literacy is a responsibility shared across the whole curriculum. Varieties of text types are used in every subject area, and each discipline has a specific vocabulary. Language is used in specific subjects both as a tool for understanding and for communicating ideas. *All teachers are expected to differentiate teaching and learning experiences to cater for a range of students' language needs.*

Teachers model language through everyday use and actively seek out opportunities to introduce new vocabulary and assist students to master language structure. Teachers create a positive learning environment which helps students value the acquisition and development of language and encourages them to be willing, confident, creative communicators. Teachers also provide opportunities through language for students to become more open-minded regarding the perspectives, values and traditions of other persons and cultures.

4. Framework for Language Learning and Teaching

Language learning and teaching at the German International School Sydney is approached through the following framework.

Language learning and teaching:

- a. is student-centered and requires students' active involvement, interaction and collaboration with peers and teachers.
- b. includes teachers modeling language through everyday use, directly teaching command terms and metalanguage within the discipline and teaching vocabulary and language conventions within and across each discipline.
- c. arises from a constructivist approach to learning, allowing students to build on prior knowledge and construct personal meaning.
- d. is an intellectual process that develops high level thinking skills and concepts.
- e. involves planning for effective, relevant experiences to improve proficiency in all forms of language.
- f. is differentiated to meet the needs of individual students as they develop their language profiles.
- g. encourages students to understand the world from different perspectives in specific disciplines.
- h. encourages students to be multilingual to be better able to participate in, and contribute to, the global community.
- i. acknowledges that communication is a skill central to all other areas of the curriculum and beyond.

- j. covers the aspects of listening and reading comprehension as well as speaking and writing skills.
- k. is approached with different means and methods and focuses on communication skills.

To this end, we aim for teachers at the German International School Sydney to be bilingual in English and German and for them to be, collectively, multilingual. It is not only the learning of language itself that is important but also learning about language and learning through language. In this sense, language should be regarded as a significant cross-curriculum link and the specific language of the various subject disciplines as important branches of the language tree. Teaching and Learning strategies aim to develop the language skills of listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking and writing.

5. CLIL

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. CLIL involves the use of language-supportive methodologies and as is best practice, CLIL is used in all subjects and all classes. All teachers are required to include CLIL in their teaching.

Some subjects at the GISS are taught either in German or English and they have a stronger CLIL focus:

In Primary School and Junior Secondary Music, Art and Sport are taught in German. In Junior Secondary Geography, Chemistry and Physics are CLIL subjects and are taught in English.

In the remaining subjects, the teaching language depends either on the students' language proficiency (e.g. Mathematics is to be taken in German if the student attends German A) or to some extent it is up to students and their families to choose (as is the case with Biology in junior secondary). Furthermore, History in junior secondary is taught either in English or bilingually (German/English) and therefore also has a strong CLIL component. Depending on student numbers, subjects with a choice of the teaching language might also be offered as composite classes. Students need to have the appropriate language proficiency to follow teaching content in the chosen teaching language. Moving forward, to extend on what is currently in place for Music, Sport, and Art, the GISS endeavours to strengthen the use of CLIL further. The so-called "DFU-Arbeitspläne" which are subject and year level specific appendixes to the curriculum/scopes and sequences used to highlight language specifics related to the content taught are the next step. In junior secondary, Mathematics and Biology are the first subjects to take this step.

6. Mother Tongue Support

Multilingualism is valued, promoted, and supported throughout the school community. Families are actively encouraged to speak to their children in their mother tongue and to ensure that their home language is fostered so that students are enabled to maintain a strong foundation. Being proficient in the first language aides second or third language acquisition. It is also crucial that students perceive their family language as being valued

and regarded as an enrichment irrespective of which language is spoken at home. The school environment should reflect an appreciation of multiculturalism and the many different languages that are spoken within the school community.

All teachers ensure that methodology / approaches to teaching and learning are differentiated in ways that consider each individual student's language profile and proficiency. When required or deemed helpful teaching aids using home languages will be obtained.

Research indicates that developing and maintaining the mother tongue is important for a student's overall personal and educational development.

- a. Balanced bilingualism has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development.
- b. The level of development of the mother tongue is a good indicator of a student's potential development in a second language.
- c. Mother tongue support helps develop the student's ability in the host language of the school.
- d. Rejecting mother tongue can send an overall message of rejection to those students.
- e. Multilingual students help a school to shape a dynamic future identity.

The school therefore recognises the importance of supporting the mother tongue needs of students whose first language is neither English nor German, as this assists development of higher order thinking skills. It also affirms personal and cultural identity, encourages a celebration of cultural diversity across the school community, and helps in the development of cross-cultural awareness and understanding. From a group perspective, support for mother tongue languages allows students who are members of small cultural groups within the school to maintain and share their cultural identities.

7. Admission

For English language proficiency entry requirements please refer to Appendix I. These Language requirements apply to all applicants including Overseas Students. If in doubt, the student interview and admission test may be used to evaluate sufficient English language proficiency.

Enrolment without prior German language knowledge is possible at any stage from Preschool to Year 11. However, in the case of enrolment after the end of Year 3, additional tutoring might be required. The exception to this is when students enrol in Year 7 or Year 11 since these are the main intakes for language beginners. In-house assessment will identify the student's German language learning needs and if deemed necessary by the student's language teacher, it is expected that parents/guardians may need to arrange and pay for additional German language tuition. For students enrolling with some German knowledge, assessments can be used to establish a student's German proficiency in reading, listening, speaking and writing skills.

8. Vertical Language Learning

12								
11								
10								
9								
8								
7								
6								
5								
4								
3								
2								
1								
Kinder								
Pre-School								
	German A	German B	English A	English B	Mother Tongue A	French B	Spanish B	Mandarin B

Table 1 Vertical language learning at the GISS

German and English are compulsory languages throughout the school with German in the IB being the only exception. German A and B are offered as separate classes throughout the school and English A and B classes are available in Primary School and in the IB-programme. For students participating in German A in Primary, French B is compulsory from Year 7 to Year 10. Students identified as “Realschüler” in the German education system can opt out of French in Years 7-8 if their German language proficiency makes it relevant for them to attend extra German B classes, or in Year 9 to take Spanish as a beginner language instead of French B. For students in German B, Spanish becomes compulsory in Year 9 and 10.

8.1 Preschool

The Preschool, being a bilingual environment, offers an immersion language programme by providing experiences in both English and German. The children will learn the additional language the way they acquire their mother tongue by being immersed in it during their daily activities as language is acquired most effectively when it is learned in a meaningful social context.

Our goal is to promote both languages in our setting in which we create situations where the children have a need to communicate in these languages (German/English).

Educators actively model languages throughout the day and involve the children in dialogue (CLIL). As we live in an English-speaking environment, and children therefore have exposure to English outside of Preschool hours, stronger emphasis is given to the German language. All Preschool teachers are bilingual in German and English. One teacher (a native speaker) speaks predominantly English with the children whilst all other teachers speak predominantly German.

It is recommended that children who do not speak German as their mother tongue at home attend the Preschool for five days so that they have the opportunity to use the language as much as possible. We also recommend that families speak with their children in the language that is their mother-tongue (not the additional language), as it is important for children learning an additional language to have their mother tongue as a strong foundation. The ability to be able to communicate in many languages is an immense enrichment for children and adults. Children that experience difficulties with language should not be discouraged from learning more than one language and it is especially important in these situations that parents maintain their home language with children experiencing difficulties – again so that a strong basis is formed.

Many children need time and sufficient exposure before they actively use their additional language. Often, they are acquiring the new language passively and beginning to formulate understandings about how to use it in certain situations. In research, this time is often referred to as the silent period. The time that it takes children to start using a language actively, varies between individuals, but the emphasis here is that most often they do need time and space before they actively use the language.

8.2 Primary School (Kindergarten & Years 1 – 6)

GISS students come from different cultures and language backgrounds. Within the bilingual German/English immersion programme at our school, students acquire a second or even a third language. The level of language competency at enrolment in English and German ranges from no prior knowledge to native speakers.

Within the Primary School (Kindergarten to Year 6), the language of instruction is German in the following subjects: Mathematics, General Studies, Art, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies. In Mathematics and General Studies, the school aims to provide a second teacher for language support within the classroom. Ethics is taught in English. Each student attends 6 English language lessons and 5 German language lessons per week. Students with no or little prior language knowledge in German are placed in language acquisition classes in German (German B), which run parallel to the regular language lessons. Students who initially cannot follow the German lessons in the classroom will participate in these intensive language groups. The transition to the regular classroom depends on the individual language development of the child. The respective language teacher and classroom teacher will determine when the child is ready to follow the content in the regular language lessons with little support. Changes within the language groups can be made at any time throughout the year and on a gradual, flexible basis.

Students with no or little language knowledge in English are supported within the classroom by a second teacher or teacher's aide and withdrawn for EAL instruction as needed. German B or EAL-students in Years 3 and 4 are exempt from grades and instead receive descriptive comments about their language development on their report cards. These comments are based on the language proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf).

In Kindergarten, students start their reading and writing acquisition programme in English. Initially the German language curriculum focuses on speaking, listening, auditory and visual perception skills, fine-motor skills, and the emotional and social development of the individual child. These build the foundation for the start of the formal literacy programme in the German language in Year 1.

The head teacher of each Primary class uses predominantly the German language with the children, however, they can support a student in the English language when needed. At the end of Year 4 the aim is for all students to have completed the German language

certificate "Internationale Schulische Vergleichsarbeit – Auf dem Weg zum DSD" on A1 or A2 Level (by the Central Agency for Schools Abroad).

8.3 Junior Secondary School (Years 7 - 10)

To support language learning and to enhance awareness of cultural diversity students in the Junior Secondary School (Years 7-10) are brought together and taught in either English or German in a number of subjects. Our curriculum model provides some choice and flexibility by aligning German and English-speaking students and offering a balanced, shared curriculum which is fully compliant with both the German authorities and the Board of Studies. The curriculum consists of English classes following the NSW curriculum; separate German mother tongue (German A) and German as a foreign language class (German B). Three subjects (Art, Music & Physical Education) are taught in German and three subjects (Chemistry, Geography and Physics) in English. For students taking German A, Maths must be taken in German and History has to be done bilingually (German/English). Depending on their language proficiency and choice, students take Biology in either English or German. This gives students some flexibility to tailor the curriculum to their individual needs. Linguistically talented students will be able to fully immerse themselves in the other language by electing further subjects in German and attain a high level of bilingualism. Students can choose between Ethics in English and Religion in German.

8.4 Senior Secondary School, IB (Years 11 & 12)

8.4.1. Demographic

In the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) at the GISS, the student/family community comprises approximately 75% students/families from Australia and/or Germany, with 25% of students/families from other parts of the world. Our students and their families are often bilingual or multilingual, with most speaking English and/or German as their first language/s at home, with many speaking additional languages, such as but not limited to Dutch, French, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Russian, Hindi, Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese.

It should be noted that:

- a. students joining the IBDP from our Junior Secondary School are generally bilingual English/German speakers, with many also studying French as an additional language for 4 years from Year 7. Other students will have taken Spanish in years 9 and 10.
- b. students joining us for their IBDP from Germany are also proficient in German and English but their English language skills are not usually as strong as our local students, who have been studying English as an 'A language' throughout Junior Secondary whilst students joining us from Germany usually study English as a 'B language'.
- c. students joining us to study their IBDP from overseas locations other than Germany, tend to be expat students who are also either bilingual or, they have competent 'language B' experience in an additional language.
- d. students joining us for their IBDP from local high schools tend not to have bilingual competence and/or, whilst they might speak an additional language at home, they do not have significant academic experience in an additional language.

In addition to our transitioning students from our Junior Secondary School, as well as students from Germany who seek a learning exchange and, German nationals from other countries who apply to study for their IB Diploma with us, GISS also seeks to enrol students from diverse socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds who will benefit from our challenging IB Diploma Programme and who will contribute to the culturally

diverse fabric of our school.

8.4.2. Guidelines for determining suitable levels of language proficiency to access learning in the IB at GISS

As the language of instruction in the IBDP is English or German, applicants must be proficient in English to at least a Band 5.5 on the IELTS scale, and/or German to B2 level of the CEFR to be able to access the learning; pending their subject selection, which might be a combination of subjects taught in English and German or, mostly all English or, mostly all German.

Guidelines for English Proficiency:

- a. if coming from Germany, students should have a grade of 2 or above in English as a Foreign Language if they wish to choose IB subjects *that are taught in English*.
- b. if coming from other places where English has been taught in school, students should have a grade of 65% or above in English as a First Language, or 80% or above in English as a Foreign Language.
- c. if coming from the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) system, students should have achieved a grade of C or above in English as a First Language, or a B or above in English as a Foreign Language.
- d. if the student is coming from another system, from a country where the language of instruction is not English, their English language proficiency can be proven via presentation of a language proficiency test certificate, such as, but not limited to:

IELTS	Band 5.5
TOEFL(PB)	506
TOEFL(IBT)	62
PTE	46
CAE & CPE	162

Link to English Language scales comparison table, last accessed March 2021:

<https://www.mystudentguide.net/studying/before-your-studies/education-system/toefl-ielts-comparison/>

All language courses in the IBDP are taught with English as the language of instruction but with a greater emphasis on teaching via the target language with some allowances made at *ab initio* (absolute beginner) level, where students and teachers might code switch between English, German and the target language. It's important to note that textbooks and teaching materials use English as the language of instruction.

8.4.3. Bilingualism and Further Additional Languages

Due to the school's strong focus on language learning, many our students are bilingual or multilingual and therefore have the option of choosing to study two languages at 'Language A' level (i.e., from Group 1), leading to the award of the bilingual diploma. Alternatively, some of our students choose one language at Group 1 and then two languages at Group 2 'Language B' level, by choosing to study a further Language B as their Group 6 elective subject.

In addition, one subject from Group 3 (History), and one from Group 4 (Biology) are offered in German or in English and, students have the option of completing their ToK course and/or their EE in German or in English. All other subjects in the IBDP are taught in English. A bilingual diploma is also awarded when the student studies a different language in Group 1, to that of the language of instruction of the subject they choose in Group 3, 4, 5 or 6; for example, if they study German A in Group 1 and take Chemistry taught in English in Group 4, or English A in Group 1 and then History taught in German in Group 3, they receive the Bilingual Diploma.

8.4.4. Mother Tongue Support

The over-riding principle in language learning in the IBDP at the GISS is that first and foremost, the student's mother tongue language should be an option for Group 1 study. To this end, we offer Mother Tongue A Literature as a self-taught, school supported subject, with the ongoing support of the IB Coordinator and the Group 1 teachers; for example, a student might study Mother Tongue A Literature in Dutch and choose to sit in on German A Literature classes to learn about the texts and approaches to the tests and assignments. We also provide access to a database of language tutors and mentors available in the Sydney Northern Beaches region. (Managed by the IB Coordinator).

8.4.5. Guidelines for choosing IBDP Language Subjects and Levels in the IBDP

Group 1

German A Literature SL/HL

English A Language & Literature SL/HL

Mother Tongue A Literature SL SSST (school supported self-taught with target language tutor & course admin mentor)

Group 2

German B ai/SL/HL

English B HL

French B ai/SL/HL

Spanish B ai/SL/HL

Mandarin B ai (taught online with Pamoja)

Group 1, Language A – Studies in Language and Literature SL & HL

All Group 1 Language A courses are suitable for students experienced in using and analysing the language and literature, in literary texts across genres and in a variety of other texts in the target language in an academic context, as an accomplished (SL) and sophisticated (HL) user of the language. It is recognised that students have language backgrounds that vary significantly. For one student the target language may be his or her only proficient language; another student may have a complex language profile and competence in more than one language. While students in Group 1 courses will undergo significant development in their ability to use the target language for a range of purposes, it should be emphasised, these courses are not language-acquisition courses. In Group 1, it is assumed that students are highly competent in the target language (native or near native'), regardless of if it is their mother tongue or not. (IBO)

NB: The student considers their Group 1 language to be their 'strongest' language for reading and analysing literature and linguistics for academic purposes.

Group 2, Language B – Language Acquisition SL & HL

Group 2 Language B courses provide students with the opportunity to further develop an additional target language and to promote an understanding of other cultures through the study of that language. Language B is a language acquisition course designed for students who already possess knowledge and experience in the target language and are comfortable using the language across all four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Those learning a language B at HL should be able to follow university courses in other disciplines in the language B that is studied and, they will be required to complete two units of literature study and analysis as part of their Language B course, including an oral exam of a literary commentary based on an extract from the literature studied. (IBO)

Group 2, Language B – Language Acquisition ab initio

The ab initio courses are designed for students who have little or no experience of the target language, to acquire the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the target language is spoken. This process encourages the learner to go beyond the confines of the classroom, expanding an awareness of the world and fostering respect for cultural diversity. Language ab initio courses develop students' linguistic abilities as a beginner learner of the language, through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, by providing them opportunities to respond and interact appropriately in a defined range of everyday situations. Language ab initio is available at standard level only. (IBO)

8.4.6. GIB (Mixed language – “gemischtsprachiges” International Baccalaureate)

Students who are a native speaker of German or who have achieved a B2, C1 level of German language skills are encouraged to choose the GIB, which allows them to use and deepen their language skills in German and English. The GIB is also accredited by the German Government as an equivalent to the German Abitur. Students who have finished their senior school education with the GIB can apply at German Universities without the need of any further German language certificate.

Besides this university pathway for German universities, the advantages of studying for the GIB are to become highly proficient in both German and English, comfortably use both languages on an academic level and gain a better cultural understanding of the countries where German and English are national languages.

Overview of the relevant subject choices related to the GIB:

Explanation related to the table:

Blue: One of these language courses must be chosen, Group 1 is recommended.

Green: Both History & Biology, taught in German, must be chosen.

Yellow: One subject from Group 4 or Group 5 must be chosen at HL.

GIB Subject Choices	Higher Level	Standard Level
Group 1 Studies in Literature	German A HL	German A SL
Group 2 Language Acquisition	German B HL	
Group 3 Individuals & Society	History HL (Ger)	History SL (Ger)
Group 4 Experimental Sciences	Biology HL (Ger)	Biology SL (Ger)
Group 5 Mathematics	Mathematics A&I HL Mathematics A&A HL	Mathematics A&I HL Mathematics A&A SL

9. English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL)

EAL learners are simultaneously acquiring the English language whilst applying conceptual skills to reading, interpreting and responding, to a wide variety of English texts. They require additional time and support, along with informed teaching that explicitly addresses their language needs, and assessments that consider their developing language proficiency.

A policy of inclusion is the focus of the English faculty in respect to EAL students and EAL students are taught alongside the mainstream English-speaking students. Inclusion is crucial for students to engage with the same topics as their peers; to hear and practice fluent English; and to engage with peer-to-peer learning that benefits both the fluent and the beginning English student.

To include EAL students in mainstream English lessons, the EAL student may be given an alternative or an additional textbook to support their learning. For example, an EAL student may be given a beginner's grammar book with audio support, or a shorter novel that covers the same theme or genre as the mainstream class. When support teachers are available, EAL students may be withdrawn for more intensive lessons, but the EAL student will maintain constant contact with the mainstream class.

Assessments are differentiated to meet the needs of EAL students. This may be achieved by offering texts with easier vocabulary demands; requiring shorter responses; or by offering students choice within assessment tasks. Differentiation can also be offered by giving EAL students the same assessment as the mainstream class but then marking the assessment against an amended criterion.

All students are measured against NSW English Syllabus Outcomes (referred to as Competencies in the GISS curriculum). Because of the differentiated English curriculum, students within the same class may achieve the same grade, but these grades may mean two different levels of achievement. When the curriculum, assessments and marking criteria are amended for an EAL student, it will be noted in the report comment.

10. German as an additional language (German B) and as a native language (German A)

As a German School abroad the GISS offers German for native speakers (German A) as a separate class in every year group. Since German A is an elective in the IB, a separate class is offered when there are sufficient students. If this is not the case, students can choose a German A self-taught course which is supported by a teacher. The school aims to offer German as an additional language according to the students' proficiency level. Students will be taught in the appropriate group according to their individual language proficiency (e.g., beginners, intermediate, advanced, etc.). Internal differentiation strategies are also used to cater for varying language levels in each group.

10.1. German Language Diploma (Deutsches Sprachdiplom - DSD)

The GISS prepares students for the German Language Diploma I and II (Deutsches Sprachdiplom – DSD I and II) of the German Federal Government and the federal states.

The DSD exams are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

- Level B1 (DSD I): independent use of the language. DSD I diploma offers advantages for job applications, permits entry to a "Studienkolleg" in preparation for attending a German university.
- Level B2/C1 (DSD II): competent use of the language. DSD II diploma allows students to apply for scholarships, e.g., the prestigious DAAD scholarship and counts as language qualification for university studies in Germany.

Our DSD programme enhances our students' learning experience and allows them to live up to their full potential in Secondary School education. It also gives them an edge in today's highly competitive international job market. Employers in Australia and abroad acknowledge the DSD as proof of the holder's excellent knowledge of German.

At GISS we understand that language learning is an organic process with students having different language skill sets and personal learning needs.

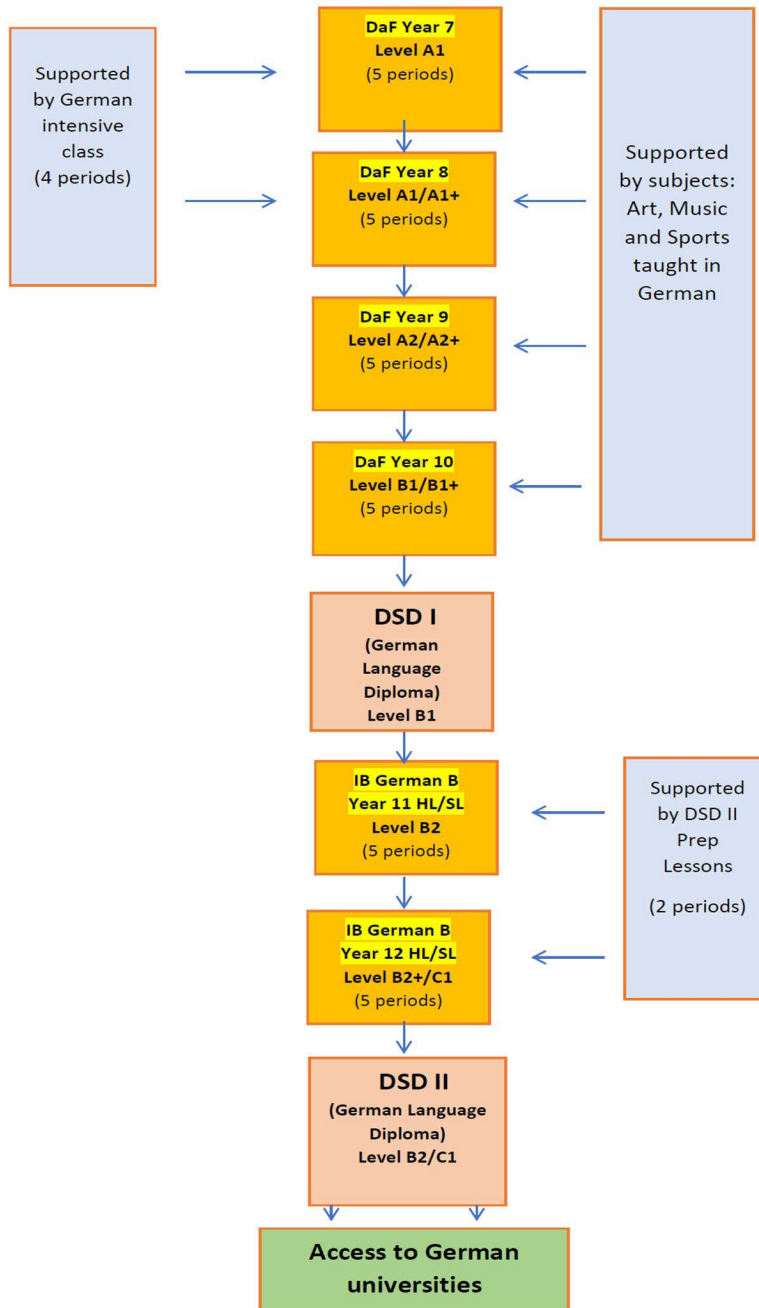
Students can take the DSD I and DSD II exams when their language proficiency level and their maturity to handle the exam texts reach the required CEFR level.

For students in Year 9 and Year 10 who have reached the B1 level, the school strongly encourages to take the exams for the German Language Diploma DSD I. The school recommends language learners who have already reached the B1 level in German in Year 9 and are taking the Year 10 exams to sit the DSD I exams in Year 9.

For students in the IB Diploma Programme who have reached the B2/C1 level in German, the school strongly encourages to take the exams for the German Language Diploma DSD II. The school recommends language learners who have already reached the B2/C1 level in German in Year 11 and will take the IB exams in Year 12 to sit the DSD II exams in Year 11.

In Year 11 and Year 12 students are offered DSD II preparatory lessons (2 lessons per week) as exam preparation practice. While these lessons will improve German language skills, they don't replace German language lessons, e.g., German B lessons.

German as a foreign language flowchart (class 7 -12)



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10.2. Additional Languages

All students are encouraged to learn yet another language at school. This is compulsory for students who aim for the German Year 10 examinations, some of which may return to the German School system and will need a third language to be admitted to the Abitur programme. For these students, the school currently offers French as a third language, starting from Year 6.

English speaking students joining the school in Year 7 or later concentrate on German as their additional language before engaging in learning a further language. Therefore, additional German support classes are offered in lieu of French. These students take Spanish in Years 9 and 10. French and Spanish can be continued in the IB Diploma Programme.

11. Language Exchanges

Language learning at the GISS is further supported by student exchange programmes. These programmes can vary in length and location, and participation may be on a voluntary basis or as part of the curriculum. Shorter programmes include working with partner schools also offering the target language (e.g., the French school-sleepover). The voluntary, longer exchange programme with a school in Germany (German) stretch over approximately three weeks. The student exchange with Germany is scheduled in alternating years and include at least a week of living with a host family and visiting the Germany partner school and the reciprocal hosting of the German student for approximately two weeks in the following year. These exchanges, short and long, are excellent opportunities to practise learned and acquired language skills first-hand in a linguistically authentic environment. In addition to deepened language skills, and in accordance with the school's pedagogical principles, the students gain a broader understanding of different cultures and ways of life in countries where the target language is spoken. Furthermore, in addition to exchange programmes within the language departments of the school as part of the IB Diploma programme, Year 11 students participate in an exchange with Fiji. Focus here is on social/emotional/cultural skills and students find themselves in situations that require well-developed English linguistic skills but also skills in mediation of information, for example regarding social norms and differences in culture and way of life.

12. Mother Tongue Support – whole school

We celebrate the diverse languages and cultures of our wider school community on Harmony Day, and our Library also has a growing selection of 'world literature' with novels and texts in a variety of languages ranging from pre-school level to adult reading.

13. Communication to Stakeholders

This language concept is accessible to members of the school community via the school website. Students' language proficiency is communicated to the school and wider community by:

- a. celebrating language learning through presentations and displays
- b. updating information on the school website
- c. publishing and reviewing National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing results and analysis; this data is also available on the Australian Government's My School website
- d. publishing and reviewing the Thüringer Kompetenztests
- e. publishing and reviewing the Deutsches Sprachdiplom (DSD I and DSD II) exams.

14. Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Effective implementation of the Language Concept requires the cooperation of all stakeholders of the school community. In general, meetings, conferences and the like are held in either English or German, ensuring that main stakeholders are not excluded. As a bilingual international school in an English-speaking country, German is the preferred language, and English is the required working language. When possible, families have a choice of English or German as the language of communication.

14.1. Role of School Management

Ensure that policies and procedures regarding language acquisition are developed, implemented, and are regularly reviewed.

- a. Provide funding, facilities, leadership, and resources for the successful implementation of the Language Concept.
- b. Ensure the planning, delivery, and evaluation of effective professional development meets the unique requirements in relation to the Language Concept.
- c. Share responsibility for oversight, implementation and revision of the Language Concept and curriculum efforts.
- d. Support teachers in their language instructions by observing them and providing constructive feedback, materials, planning time and staff development opportunities.
- e. Promote communication with parents concerning students' language development.
- f. Promote an extra-curricular programme that encourages the use and development of English and German and any additional language students might be learning.

14.2. Role of Teaching Staff

Since learning and language are inextricably bound, every teacher is both a content teacher and a language teacher. The teaching staff is encouraged and expected to:

- a. use German as the language of social interaction with students out of the classroom if German speaker.
- b. integrate language instruction with content instruction.
- c. make high-level academic content instructionally comprehensible.
- d. create classroom environments that are discourse-rich and process-oriented with plentiful opportunities for students to listen, read, speak, and write through interactive activities.
- e. support and encourage language self-assessment and peer-assessment.
- f. give ongoing feedback to students on their linguistic and cognitive development by using a variety of balanced assessment strategies.
- g. hold high linguistic and academic expectations for all students.
- h. build a strong home-school partnership using various means of communication.
- i. be a role model for ethical behaviour in an international world (i.e., tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, flexibility, respect for others' languages and cultures).
- j. allow parents to communicate through an interpreter.

- k. work collaboratively to develop culturally inclusive and age-and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
- l. integrate appropriate technology to enhance language development.
- m. select resources which are linguistically accessible and culturally inclusive.
- n. teach English/German language skills for social interaction.

14.3. Role of Parents

A number of parental actions will facilitate linguistic and academic success for students. Families are encouraged to:

- a. have a positive attitude toward English, German and home language.
- b. promote the advantages of learning other languages.
- c. maintain mother tongue literacy skills in the home or after school.
- d. encourage and support their children's additional language acquisition.
- e. support the expectation that students use English and German as the language of learning and social interaction on campus, whilst sometimes code switching into other languages.
- f. supply multilingual materials in the home.
- g. be prepared to make the long-term commitments that success requires.
- h. have realistic expectations of their children's language development and the GISS.

14.4. Role of Students

English and German are the primary languages of instruction and social interaction at the GISS, which means that students learn and communicate in both languages. English and German are equally recognized as the languages of inclusion on campus, and therefore students are expected to use both in and out of the classroom to:

- a. acquire information by listening to oral presentations, interpreting print and graphic material, and observing and recording practical experiences.
- b. convey information by telling stories and explaining ideas.
- c. think logically through inference, hypothesis, analysis, prediction, and evaluation.
- d. accomplish practical tasks either individually or by collaborating in small groups.
- e. make decisions by identifying alternatives, evaluating evidence, and determining appropriate actions.
- f. work creatively by using ideas and materials inventively.
- g. strive to develop fluency in English and German for all forms of communication.

15. The language concept as a working document

This Language Concept needs to be implemented and interpreted in connection with both the Inclusion Policy and the Admissions Policy.

Professional development opportunities in language learning and support are actively promoted by the school management to administrators, teachers, librarians, and other school staff. Putting into practice the philosophy, skills and strategies learned at conferences, workshops and in-services makes the language concept a living, working

document, in keeping with the school's commitment to provide innovative, best practice language teaching and learning. Ongoing discussion and review at general staff meetings assist in this regard.

16. The Review Process

Review of the school's language concept is a continuous process, reflecting feedback from the various stakeholders in the school community, changes in the school's language profile and the influence of fresh pedagogical approaches. School Management will ensure that evaluation of the effectiveness of the language concept as a working document is an agenda item at appropriate times throughout the year. The annual release of external test results (DSD/ IBO/NAPLAN/Thüringen) may be such occasions for reflection.

17. References and further reading

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

<https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97> 16.9.2018

Linguistic and cultural mediation:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/linguistic-and-cultural-mediation> : 9.12.2019

Appendix

English Language Proficiency Requirements

1. GISS Primary School - Kindergarten to Year 6

There are no English language entry requirements for Primary School children in Kindergarten to Year 6.

There will be an in-house assessment in the first weeks of enrolment to identify English language learning needs. Additional support will be provided via differentiated EAL groupings. It is expected that depending on this assessment, parents/careers may need to pay for additional English language tuition.

2. GISS Junior Secondary School - Years 7 to 10

It is expected that students have at least a basic proficiency in English, to be able to access their learning across all subjects taught in English.

Students enrolling in Years 7 - 10 must provide evidence (report cards and/or transcripts from the last two years) that they are a diligent student with good grades across their academic programme, including minimum levels of English, according to the guidelines below:

- if coming from Germany, students should have a grade of 3 or above in English as a Foreign Language.
- if coming from other places where English has been taught in school, students should have a grade of 45% or above in English as a First Language, or 65% or above in English as a Foreign Language.
- if coming from an Australian school, students must have reached Level 3 on the ESL scales in Years 5-8, and a Level 4 in Years 9 and 10.

There will be an in-house assessment in the first few weeks of enrolment to identify any necessary EAL support needs. EAL students are placed within mainstream English as a First Language classes for their English lessons and their English teacher will differentiate accordingly, including additional EAL resource materials and some additional EAL support, where possible. It is expected that depending on this assessment, parents/careers may need to pay for additional English language tuition.

3. GISS Senior School - Years 11 & 12 (IB Diploma Programme)

Students enrolling in Year 11 to commence the two-year IB Diploma Programme, must provide evidence (report cards and/or transcripts from the last two years) that they are a diligent student with good grades across their academic programme.

School based analysis of previous transcripts/report cards along with possible interviews (in person or via digital media) are used to create a holistic assessment of the student's suitability for the academic rigour of the IB Diploma Programme, including their ability to access the learning in English.

Document Management

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School responsible	Principal
Board portfolio	Pedagogical
Related documents	
Reviewed/Updated	Approved 1 March 2026
Approved by	Michael Cordes (Principal) and Tammie Christie (Director)

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