



GERMAN
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
WASHINGTON D.C.

Preschool Handbook



Admissions

The goal of GISW's preschool is to meet the social and educational needs of the children. Its mission is not only to provide an academic education, but also to help them find their place in the greater community. The preschool is approved by the *State of Maryland, Department of Education (MSDE)* to care for and teach children age **two to four**.

Children may be admitted to preschool throughout the school year provided there is space available. Children who have been accepted are considered fully enrolled once all necessary documents are complete and the registration fee has been paid.



Children aged three or older must be toilet-trained when entering preschool. We understand a child may have "an accident" now and then for a number of reasons, such as jet lag, a new environment/situation or a short illness. However, if this occurs on a daily basis, parents will be asked (generally by the fourth week) to keep the child at home until the daily accidents no longer occur. In order to keep their space, the family must continue to pay tuition and any other school fees. The school, at its discretion, may ask for a doctor's note prior to the return of the child to the group. Please contact the Preschool Principal if you have any further questions.

Two-year-olds will remain in their group until the end of the school year, even if they turn three during the course of the school year.

Both the child's age and the group size as determined by the State of Maryland, have to be considered during the admissions process.

Teacher - child ratio:

Two-year-olds:	1 teacher to 6 children
Three- and four-year-olds:	1 teacher to 10 children

How do we put groups together?

- **To the extent possible, each group has the same number of boys and girls.**
- Consideration is given to the language skills of the children. We strive for a good balance of children who are confident German speakers with children who are still developing their German language skills.
- Efforts are made to find an appropriate range of ages in each mixed-age group.

The decision on group composition is the exclusive responsibility of the Preschool Principal and the teachers. Typically, students remain in the same group as they move up through the preschool, with new children coming if others leave.

We provide a warm, nurturing and safe environment in all our groups. Preschoolers need continuity in terms of teachers, so every summer we ensure that at least one teacher moves with each group for the following school year. At the same time it is a growth opportunity for our little ones to welcome a new teacher into the group as this exposes them to different personalities and different teaching styles.

In order to provide professional development opportunities for our teachers, the school assigns them to work with a variety of groups and colleagues over the years to continuously increase their knowledge and experience.

Schedule overview:

Morning program for all groups **8:00 am - 1:15 pm; pickup time until 1:30 pm**

Afternoon program for registered 2-4-year-olds **1:30 pm - 2:45 pm; pickup time until 3:00 pm**
Buses leave at 3:20 pm

Extended Care for registered 2-4-year-olds **2:45 pm - 4:45 pm; pickup time until 5:00 pm**
Buses leave at 4:55 pm

Please park in the lower parking lot of the school at all times. Because school buses are entering and exiting, the upper parking lot is **not** available for drop-off and pickup - even for short periods.

Pick-up and drop-off times are particularly demanding. To allow the preschool teachers to fulfill their duties and to keep waiting times at a minimum, preschool teachers have limited availability for discussions during these times. Parent nights and weekly teacher conference times are available to you for all your questions and program information (see **Conference Times/Parent-Teacher Conferences**).

Children age four and older are permitted to use the school bus daily. A preschool teacher will meet the children at the bus upon arrival. A preschool teacher also accompanies the children to the buses after the Afternoon Program/Extended Care is over.

Preschool Gate

Opening Hours:

from	to
8:00 am	9:00 am
1:15 pm	1:30 pm
2:45 pm	3:00 pm
4:45 pm	5:00 pm

Please note the time when the entrance gate to the preschool, located in the lower parking lot, is unlocked. When the gate is closed, please use the upper preschool entrance.

Arrival

Please bring your child to preschool between 8:00 am and 9:00 am. Please use only the rear entrance to the school's lower parking lot, which is open until 9:00 am. After 9:00 am, please use the main entrance of the preschool. If you use the main entrance, you may have to wait a moment once you ring the bell. If you anticipate arriving after 9:00 am, please inform us ahead of time, as attendance is recorded at 9:00 am.

Please release your child to the preschool teacher's care in front of the appropriate room and sign your child in on the attendance roster. Until you release your child into the teacher's care and your child is signed in on the roster, you are responsible for his/her safety. Please hand in any changes to the daily dismissal arrangement to your child's teacher on arrival (e.g. the child will be picked up by adults other than his/her own parents, the child will not ride the bus or will ride a different bus, etc.). NOTE: We cannot guarantee that emails sent the evening before or on the same day will be read in time for dismissal by the preschool teacher.

Pickup and Late Fees

Please be **on time** when picking up your child. Pick-up is before **1:30 pm, 3:00 pm, or 5:00 pm**, as applicable. The Preschool Gate is open from **1:15-1:30 pm, 2:45-3:00 pm and 4:45-5:00 pm**.

We understand that delays sometimes happen. If you are delayed, please inform us immediately.

As noted above, please inform us in writing of any changes (such as a change in the person picking up or the child going on a different bus). To ensure your child's safety, the person picking up the child must provide a photo ID when requested.

IMPORTANT: In accordance with a general rule of German International School Washington D.C. (*Late Fee Policy*), a fee will be charged for picking up children after **1:30 pm, 3:00 pm or 5:00 pm**, respectively.

For insurance reasons, the playground may not be used during pickup or drop-off times.

Parking in the upper parking lot

You may not enter, exit or park in the upper parking lot. **Yellow curbs are designated fire lanes; cars are not permitted to stop, park or stand in these areas.**

The law requires that you not move your vehicle when **school buses** in the parking lot have stop signs extended. Instructions by the supervisory personnel must be followed.

Parking in the lower parking lot

There are parking spaces available in the lower parking lot. Please ensure that your child uses the sidewalk when entering and leaving the school. As noted above, you may not park or stop next to the yellow curbs. **Please drive slowly and carefully - particularly when backing up.**

Please observe each stop sign, especially those at pedestrian crossings. Please observe the direction of traffic in the parking lot.

Lunch



You may preorder a hot lunch from the cafeteria. The weekly menu can be found on the GISW website at <http://www.giswashington.org>. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Susanne Köhler in the cafeteria at 301.767.3829.

Some students carry lunch from home. This allows parents to guide their children's food choices and to make sure the child has food he/she enjoys to eat.

For lunch, we recommend a nutritious meal such as sandwiches, yogurt, soup, fresh fruit, dried fruit, crackers, cheese, or fruit juice. All children are offered milk and water. Please avoid food high in sugar, preservatives, artificial colors, artificial flavors or caffeine. Soft drinks and chewing gum may not be brought into the preschool. Meals should be easy to eat.

Lunch boxes and thermoses should be labeled with the child's name. All utensils must be kept clean. Lunches will not be refrigerated and food will not be heated at

school. Please send perishable food with cold packs and/or in insulated containers.

Library

The preschool library is part of the main building and houses over 1,500 German children's books, German DVDs for Regions 1 and 2, and many CDs with songs and stories.



You are welcome to visit the library with your children and borrow materials from the great selection there.

Field trips

Every year, preschoolers in mixed-age groups go on field trips. In previous years, the children have visited theaters, fire stations, museums, and some well-equipped playgrounds. Field trips help children to discover their world and form new impressions. We advise parents of the date and the destination of the field trip at least one week in advance. All children require written permission to take part in field trips. Please ensure that the child's clothing is suitable for the weather and the destination on the day of the trip!



The Two-year-old groups have a big picnic to celebrate the end of the year on school grounds. Parents are invited to join.

Holidays and birthday parties



We would like your children to be happy, play, learn and develop their own personalities. For this reason, holidays that share other cultures and customs are important.

Holidays in both countries: As a German preschool in the United States, we celebrate both German (St. Martin, Nikolaus, Christmas, Carnival and Easter) and American (Halloween, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day) holidays. By doing so, we learn about different customs and continue traditions. Other cultures are included in the annual planning as well.

A birthday is an important event for every child. We celebrate birthdays with songs and games in the group. During the day, the child is the center of attention. You are welcome to participate in your child's birthday celebration with us and if you would like to bring small baked goods (such as cookies or cupcakes) for the group, please let your child's teacher know in advance. If there is a conflict with the class schedule, your teacher will suggest the best time for the birthday celebration.

Managing health, injuries and accidents

Our preschool program is dependent upon your child's active participation. A sick child cannot participate fully in our program. **Please keep your child at home if he/she is sick.** All children go outdoors to play every day in all seasons. If your child cannot play outdoors, please keep him/her at home.



If a child becomes ill during the school day, we will notify the parents immediately and ask the parents to pick up the child. While waiting for the parents' arrival, the child will rest. If the child is not picked up within **one hour** after notification is made, the preschool will

notify the contacts listed on the emergency forms to request that the child be picked up. Children who are sent home for health reasons may not return to preschool until they have been symptom-free for **24 hours**.

Therefore, a child who has gone home ill cannot be at preschool the very next day unless there is a written doctor's note confirming that the physician has examined the child and that the child is not contagious. For further information, please contact the school nurse.

What your child needs at preschool:

Preschool bag

This should contain a healthy snack, such as a drink, a sandwich, fruit and yogurt and, if applicable, lunch - please see the section on "Lunch".

Change of clothing

Please leave a bag with extra clothing and slippers or replacement shoes in your child's cubby. Please modify the clothing, including hats, to match the season. Please put your child's full name on all clothing items.

Sneakers

Every two weeks, your child will have physical education in the school's gymnasium. To participate, he/she needs clean athletic shoes. These will remain at the preschool.

Two-year-olds

Two-year-olds also need: Diapers (pull-ups if applicable), baby wipes, a comfortable blanket or a stuffed animal and athletic shoes for gym (in a small cloth bag)

IMPORTANT: Please label all athletic clothing (including shoes) with your child's name using a waterproof marker.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior (such as hitting, biting or stomping) is not acceptable. Preschool teachers will immediately intervene if such a situation occurs. The parents will be informed about the incident. If this kind of behavior is **repeated**, the child must remain out of preschool for one day. If the behavior happens a **third time**, the child must remain at home for two days.

If such incidents continue, the parents will be asked to meet with the teacher to discuss a behavior plan. Direct communication is the best and most effective way to help your child adjust his/her behavior.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Every month, preschool parents receive a monthly schedule for their group. The schedule is flexible because special events can lead to minor changes.

A typical schedule for daily activity is as follows:

Morning:

8:00 am - 9:30 am

Creative Start

9.30 am – 10:00 am

Morning Circle and age-appropriate academic support

10:00 am - 10:30 am

Snack

10:30 am - 10:45 am

Personal Hygiene (hand-washing)

10:45 am - 11:45 am

Group Activities and age-appropriate academic support

11:45 am - 12:15 pm

Unstructured Play outdoors or indoors

12:15 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm - 1:15 pm

End of day circle

1:15 pm - 1:30 pm

Pickup time/Afternoon Groups

1:30 pm - 2:45 pm

Afternoon Group / End of Day Circle

2:45 pm - 3:00 pm

Pickup time

2:45 pm - 4:45 pm

Extended Care / End of Day Circle

4:45 pm - 5:00 pm

Pickup time



Sleeping materials are sent home every Friday and should be laundered. Children may not change to the activity room from the sleeping room in the middle of the year. While in the sleeping room, the children do not have to sleep; they may merely rest. Soft music or an audio story is played. Every afternoon, the children are woken up at 2:30 pm. Then the children get their things, use the restroom and are taken to the bus or picked up.

Activity room

Four-year-olds can be signed up for the activity room at the beginning of the school year after coordination with the teachers. After the afternoon preschool teacher gives a short welcome in the Frog room, the children can play or create with various arts and crafts activities. Weather-permitting, we offer the children the opportunity to play on the preschool playground. At 2:45 pm, the children are either picked up, taken to buses, or stay in the preschool for Extended Care until 4:45 pm.

Extended Care program

Extended Care is offered Monday through Friday from 3:00 to 4:45 pm. In this fee-based program, we offer the following: traditional play, arts and crafts, dancing, and puppetry. Weather permitting, the children play outside on the preschool playground.

Afternoon Program and Extended Care

The Afternoon Program and Extended Care offer yet another opportunity to deepen not only friendships, but also German language skills, through play. The Afternoon Program runs from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm Monday – Friday.

Sleeping area:

At 1:30 pm, two-year-old children either rest/sleep in the Seahorse Room or remain in their two-year-old group. Often the two-year-olds already will have had a little rest earlier in the day.

It is desirable for children who stay at preschool until 4:45 pm to also have a short rest. All of the three-year-olds will have a place in the sleeping room. Please send a stuffed animal, a pillow and a blanket with your child.

In the sleeping group, daily routine is important and we encourage the children to be independent. The children learn to take off their own shoes and put them on again, remove their sleeping materials, etc.



Children may also rest or participate in other activities. For example, we might take a short tour of the German International School grounds, go to the preschool library, head to the soccer field or bake a tasty cake together. The children help to prepare a snack. They help with preparing vegetables and fruit or setting the table. On Early Release days, our Extended Care Program runs from 1:30 pm - 4:45 pm.

We are weatherproof

A cold wind or a bit of rain does not keep us from going outside. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, with a coat, hat, gloves, etc.



School closure

Information on cancellation of classes due to inclement weather or for other reasons is available on the German School website.

The German International School Washington D.C. does not follow Montgomery County school closings. The Head of School determines when classes are canceled at the German International School Washington D.C.

Changes in address or telephone number

Please inform the school office and the preschool immediately of any change in your address or telephone number. Please keep us updated with your cell phone number as well. In an emergency, **all parents, or at least the person listed on the Emergency Form**, must be reachable.

Conference times/parent-teacher conferences

All preschool teachers have regular weekly conference times. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher. Please do so at least one week in advance.

Twice a year, the school holds parent-teacher conferences. Preschool parents register on sign-up sheets at the preschool. Please look for sign-up timeframes in the weekly Wednesday Mail.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are collected in the preschool hall. Please look through the lost and found items periodically to check for your child's belongings.



I have received the Preschool Handbook of the German International School Washington D.C.

Parent's/Caregiver's Name (printed)

Signature

Date