



GERMAN
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
WASHINGTON D.C.

Independent. Bilingual. *Weltoffen.*

Preschool Reopening Information

August 22, 2020 (*updated April 8, 2021*)

Dear Parents and Guardians of Preschool students,

The German International School Washington D.C. (GISW) is prioritizing the full reopening of the Preschool with our primary concern being the safety of children, families and staff.

Things will obviously look and feel different: Staggered drop-off and pick-up times, masks and mask breaks, frequent handwashing routines, outside learning times, the school door as a protective barrier to an area for children and staff only, to name but a few.

In order to ensure that the environment is as safe as possible, we must all work together and strictly follow the guidelines and protocols for cleaning, safety and health. It is only by doing this that we will be able to help keeping each other in school, playing, learning and growing. The well-being and safety of your children and the entire school community is our priority! We are of course aware that under these circumstances, health and safety are indivisible - if one member is not healthy and safe, then nobody is. The Health Pledge form you have received reinforces the idea that all of us are responsible for keeping our Preschool healthy and safe.

In a world of uncertainties, we want you to know that one thing is certain: The teachers and staff of our Preschool are rising to the challenge of this unprecedented time with dedication, commitment and a resolve to deliver the best experience possible to your child and our Preschool families. This remarkable community of families, students and staff ensures that GISW remains a powerful and transformative experience.

Thank you for being part of that. Thank you for entrusting your children to us. Please know that we are here for you, to listen, to learn, and to care.

In summary our decisions have been based on two guiding principles:

Guiding Principle 1

Social and emotional development of the children

Guiding Principle 2

Safety and health measures to ensure the well-being of children and their families and staff

In weighing these aspects and deciding on a full-time, safe re-opening, we hope to have found a middle ground that will provide an emotionally, socially and academically healthy and positive experience for everyone.

We all know that there are many possible scenarios in the weeks and months ahead. These will certainly be addressed in a timely manner if and when they transpire. This document, however, serves as a roadmap to reopening our Preschool in our present situation. Further school-wide information and protocols will be forthcoming.

I look forward to meeting you and your children as we move into what will undoubtedly be a most unusual year.

Humbly yours,

Mojdeh Khojasteh

Preschool Principal

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Official Guidelines

For the school's safe reopening we are following the guidelines issued by the State of Maryland.

Guidelines that Child Care Programs Follow; valid as of August 21, 2020:

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/covid_guidance_full_080420.pdf

Groups and Teachers

This school year, we have five Preschool classes (Seahorses, Ladybugs, Frogs, Pandas and Zebras). Each group has its own classroom with two teachers.

Daily Health Screenings at Home

Daily health checks are key to mitigating the risk of transmission. The Office of Child Care requires that a Daily COVID-19 Screening Form be submitted every day on each child. The link is on the school website under the [QUICKLINKS > COVID-19 Daily Health Tracker](#). The school nurse tracks this information on a daily basis.

It is crucial that you keep your child home when sick! If your child comes to school with symptoms in accordance with CDC-guidelines, they will be sent to the Nurse's Office for assessment and possible quarantine. We may ask for a doctor's note or a negative COVID-19 test before your child can return to school - please consider that one sick child may compromise the whole Preschool. It is therefore everyone's responsibility to help keep the school a healthy and safe place to work and learn. We count on, and deeply appreciate, your support!

Drop-off and Pick-up

General Gate Schedules:

8:00 am to 9:00 a.m.
12:50 pm to 1:30 p.m.
2:30 pm to 3 p.m.
4:45 pm to 4:55 p.m.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

DROP-OFF

When arriving at the school, proceed to the lower parking lot and follow the one-way loop into the lower parking lot. Parents should escort their child(ren) to the gate that leads to the preschool playground **THIS IS THE ONLY ENTRANCE INTO THE Preschool**. Families shall not enter the preschool from the front door (upper parking lot). Bus children will be met on the upper parking lot and escorted to their appropriate classroom in the preschool.

Your designated homeroom teachers will welcome you and your child and assist your child into the classroom. We respectfully ask that you keep conversations with teachers to a minimum as there will be other families waiting to escort their child(ren) to the classroom.

POST DROP-OFF

Every child reacts differently to changes, especially to new environments and during this unprecedented time. You may choose to (or we may request that you) stay close by for a period of time after drop-off in case your child has difficulty adjusting to being at school.

Late Arrival Procedure

We understand that there are extenuating circumstances that may cause you to be late or not be able to arrive within the assigned time. If this occurs, please do not forget to call ahead 301-767-3837.

Late Pick-up Procedure

If you are going to be late picking up your child(ren), please call to inform the teachers at 301-767-3837. After parking in the lower parking lot, proceed to the preschool gate and ring the preschool bell to be buzzed in.

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

Sample of a daily schedule

Below is a sample of what we are doing throughout the day. Each group will have their own time schedule, staggered times for using the playground and bathroom breaks.

Time	Activity
8:00 – 9:00 am	Arrival, Practicing good hygiene, Free play
9:00 – 9:30 am	Greetings, songs, and sharing during our morning circle
9:30 – 10:00 am	Snack, practicing good hygiene Your child eats a snack brought from home, No Masks
10:05 – 10:35 am	Playground, No Masks
10:40 – 11:40 am	Time to put on our gear and go to the <i>Wiese</i> (weather permitting). In the daily learning circle, the class studies a specific book, learns a new finger play, explores nature, sings some favorite songs, plays a number or letter game, etc. No Masks
11:45 – noon	Practicing good hygiene
Noon – 12:30 pm	Lunch, getting our lunch from cafeteria or lunchboxes and sit down to eat and enjoy our lunch together with friends. No Masks
12:40 – 1:00 pm	Practicing good hygiene, Reading circle with a favorite story in German
1:15– 1:30 pm	Departure of non-Afternoon students
2:15- 2:25 pm	Practicing good hygiene
2:45- 3:00 pm	Departure of Afternoon students Snack time for Extended care students with friends. No Masks
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Let's go to the playground! Free play, sing a song, games, read a favorite book in German No Masks
4:35 – 4:45 pm	Practicing good hygiene
4:45 – 4:55 pm	Departure of all students, Auf Wiedersehen

Recess

Every group will spend a minimum of 30 minutes outside, weather permitting. Every class will be assigned playground times. The GISW is exceeding CDC guidelines by cleaning play equipment after each class use. Use of other play areas around campus are utilized to maximize outside time as well as social distancing. Areas are cleaned and sanitized according to CDC guidelines.

Ventilation

The air condition units have been inspected and circulate fresh air from outside. Additional air purifiers have been installed throughout the Preschool. Our Facilities Department will allow ventilation to the greatest extent possible. During inclement, very hot or very cold weather, it may be necessary to turn the air conditioning/heating on. Please be aware of this ventilation issue when dressing your child. Classrooms may be warmer or colder than usual when allowing outside air to ventilate classrooms.

Additional Educational Programs

German and English program - Hocus & Lotus

Hocus & Lotus will be offered in German or English through remote sessions in small groups or individually.

Music

Music will be implemented only outside the classroom in the lobby or outside in fresh air (weather permitting) because of the higher risk of air transmission during loud singing. Dancing and rhythmic activities will continue to be part of our daily program.

Guidelines in the Building

Masks

As mask wearing remains a regulation in Montgomery County, all children should be sent to school with four (4) masks in a paper bag marked "Clean" along with a plastic bag marked "Dirty" for soiled masks. Please also label all cloth masks with the child's name so they can be properly returned. If a mask is discovered on the ground with no name, it will have to be properly disposed.

All teachers will wear a mask within the classroom. We are aware of the difficulties of wearing masks for young children and will include frequent mask breaks during the day. During snack and lunch time and during nap time the children do not wear masks.

We would encourage our parents to model mask-wearing in the days leading up to the first day in preschool, while classroom teachers will play “mask” games and engage in other creative endeavors to get children used to wearing the masks. Obtaining child-friendly and fun masks will all help your child become more comfortable with wearing masks.

The link below shows an example of clear masks for children. These types of masks can be useful for communication and emotional support. Please feel free to use whatever mask you believe best to keep your child safe and comfortable. Masks that are worn at school cannot have ventilators and it is recommended to have at least 2 layers of fabric for full protection.

<https://rafinova.com/products/kids-smile-mask?variant=32224478691376>

Promoting Handwashing and Good Hygiene

Good and frequent handwashing will be discussed with the children and promoted. Cleaning protocols for highly touched areas are in place and will be followed; we have arranged for a dedicated cleaning staff member to be all day in the Preschool. The classroom will be frequently cleaned and sanitized with a natural cleaning EPA certified product. We will avoid mixing of groups when sharing bathrooms to the greatest extent possible.

Physical Distancing in the Classroom

One important goal in having students return to the building is their continued social development. Measures will be put in place to encourage physical distancing. Nevertheless, as teachers, we will most certainly continue our efforts to help children grow in their social development.

Measures to be put in place include:

- Assigned seating and spaces for each child
- Markings on the floor (line-up, walking directions,)
- Child-friendly signage
- Limiting item sharing

Health Guidelines

Protocols and guidelines as to how to handle students or staff with signs of sickness will be handled by our School Nurse. An isolation room has been assigned in the nurse’s office to ensure that anyone with symptoms can immediately be separated from other members of the cohort.

There is a protocol in place on how the school proceeds if there is a positive test result of students, parents and staff of GISW and what the consequences will be in such a case. Additionally, the school will immediately contact the local health department and follow all guidelines. While we

at GISW will initiate tracing protocols and associated communications, the local health department’s professional tracing resources will also be initiated.

Please remember to submit health forms and vaccination records to the School Nurse. It is very important, especially during these exceptional times, that staff are kept up-to-date on any medical issues so we can care for your child(ren) accordingly. All school health forms can be found on the school website under [CAMPUS LIFE > Health Room](#). If your child needs medication during the school day, a Medication Authorization Form must be completed and signed by a physician and the medication must be brought to the Nurse’s office in the original container. This includes over the counter medications such as Benadryl, Tylenol and cough medications.

Items from Home

Please familiarize yourself with our handbook found in our GISW website.

https://giswashington.org/files/dswashington/Dateien/2018-19/Kindergarten/18_08_06_Preschool_handbook_E.pdf

- Your child is not allowed to bring any toys from home. Everything should be clearly labeled with your child’s name and be in a sealed plastic bag.
- Diapers and wipes can come in their original packaging or in a sealed plastic bag.
- Bedding should be dropped off at the start of the week and will be returned at the end of the week.

Communication

To minimize personal contacts, face-to-face communication between parents and teachers will be very limited. Please contact the teachers of your child by email to arrange an online meeting.

If your child is not attending the Preschool for any reason, please still complete the Daily Health Tracker for our School Nurse AND call our teachers directly at:

+1 (301) 767-3837	Main Preschool Number
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Additional Contact Details:

Mojdeh Khojasteh	Preschool Principal	mkhojasteh@giswashington.org +1 (301) 767-3838
Martina Voss	Deputy	mvoss@giswashington.org +1 (301) 767-3837

Julia Cashmere	School Nurse	nurse@giswashington.org +1 (301) 767-3814
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For additional information we refer you to our Preschool handbook and concept on our GISW website about our program not related to reopening.

Changes of Guidelines / Closure of School Building

Should the current health situation change in Montgomery County and additional guidelines or new orders are released, we are prepared to adapt our protocols and procedures accordingly. The health of our community is our top priority. We monitor the information released by the Department of Early Childhood Education, Maryland State Department of Education and, the State of Maryland closely. We will inform and keep you updated about any changes in our schedule and procedures. We greatly appreciate your support and cooperation during these unusual times.

	Regular School	All students are on campus every day, no cohorts, Afternoon and Extended care program in mixed groups, no online activities, no physical distancing or masks
	Adapted Regular School Start August 24, 2020	All students are on campus every day, clusters (morning, Afternoon and Extended care), some remote teaching (German and English) to keep cohorts isolated, physical distancing as much as possible, masks. Parents or other visitors are not allowed in the preschool building during the school week.
	Remote Learning	No one in the building, off campus learning, online live teaching and offline material provided

We thank you for your patience, understanding and for your commitment to your child's education and safety. We look forward to a safe and healthy school year in the preschool!

We expect that we will continue to offer our full preschool program in the 2021/22 school year, five days per week for all preschoolers including the afternoon program and extended care.

