

Regulations of the German International School Washington D.C. for the promotion to the next higher grade at the Primary and Secondary I Levels

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1 Area of Application

- 1.1 The following *Regulations for the promotion to the next higher grade* provide procedural guidelines regarding the promotion of students. They apply to the Elementary School and the Orientation, *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium* (Upper School) levels of the *Sekundarstufe I* (Secondary Level I).
- 1.2 In the twelve-year course of education the *Sekundarstufe I* spans Grades 5 through 10. The 10th Grade serves a dual function: at the end of 10th Grade, the *Sekundarstufe I* formally ends but at the same time the 10th grade serves as the introductory phase to the Upper Level or *Oberstufe*.
- 1.3 Students enter the *Sekundarstufe I* at the Orientation Level (Grade 5 and 6). In 6th Grade the students start with a 2nd Foreign language and this grade ends with a *Versetzungskonferenz* (promotion conference).

- 1.4 The type of school (Elementary School, Orientation Level, *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*) has to be listed on the report card.
- 1.5 Grade 10 is regulated by the provisions on the entry of the qualification phase at German Schools Abroad¹ as specified by the *KMK (Kultusministerkonferenz, assembly of ministers of education of the German states)*.
- 1.6 The admission of former *Realschule* students into the introductory phase of the Upper School is regulated by the provisions „*Aufnahme von Realschulabsolvent/innen in die gymnasiale Oberstufe*“².

2 Basic Guidelines

- 2.1 The decision whether a student is or is not promoted to the next grade is a pedagogical one. It is made while considering the individual student’s learning progress and educational path and how they are aligned with the performance requirements dictated by the grade level and the curricula. It aims at ensuring that there is a basis for progress in the next higher grade – for the student, but also for the entire class.

A „probationary“ promotion to the next higher grade is not an option.

In special cases a probationary assessment can be made for the duration of three months to determine if the appropriate grade level for a new student has been chosen. Afterwards, the class teacher conference will make a final decision on the student’s placement.

- 2.2 The decision to promote a student is based on the student’s performance in the second semester of the school year. The student’s performance throughout the school year as well as the student’s individual progress will have to be taken into account.

The decision to promote a student is based on their grades in all mandatory subjects as well as the general development of a student’s individual learning style. To assess a student’s performance, all subjects have to be analyzed, even the ones the student won’t have to take again in the following year, be that because they won’t be taught or because they won’t be mandatory. For any subject only taught in the first semester of a school year, the grade achieved counts towards the final grade at the end of the year and is fully relevant when it is determined if the student moves up to the next grade level. On the report card, they will be highlighted as subject that they were only taught for one semester (e.g. “Music befriedigend, 1st semester”)

- 2.3 If a student changes schools during the school year, the final report marks achieved at the previous school must be analyzed in proportion to the time the student was actually at the school.

¹ *Ordnung für den Abschluss der Sekundarstufe I an Deutschen Schulen im Ausland* (as decided by the „Kultusministerkonferenz“ [assembly of ministers of education of the German states] on March 16, 2017)

² *Richtlinien für die Ordnung zur Erlangung der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife an Deutschen Schulen im Ausland „Deutsches Internationales Abitur“* (Rili DIA-PO) (as decided by the „Kultusministerkonferenz“ [assembly of ministers of education of the German states] on June 11, 2015, in the version dated May 3, 2018).



A student who is admitted towards the end of the school year and whose school did not issue a recommendation regarding the promotion to the next grade level will be assessed by the Head of School. In such cases it is not mandatory that a decision on the promotion to the next level be made.

3. Procedural Guidelines

- 3.1 The class teacher conference in its role as promotion conference under the direction of the Head of School or his or her deputy, decides on the promotion of individual students at the end of each school year.
- 3.2 All teachers that taught the student in question have a right to vote. A simple majority is necessary. In the event of an equal division of votes, the final decision lies with the Head of School (or his or her deputy). Abstentions are not possible.
- 3.3 All teachers are required to participate in class teacher and promotion conferences as part of their contractual duty. If a teacher is unable to be present for important reasons, he or she will submit a request for exemption with the Head of School.

The subject teachers determine the respective subject grade in a timely manner before the conference. The deadline for entering the grades set by the school management must be adhered to. The grade is the result of a professionally pedagogical evaluative overall assessment and is not calculated systematically. It must not rely solely on the results of written exams but should take into account the performance in ongoing classes, the quality of oral contributions, as well as other forms of assessment and alternative examination formats (e. g., presentations, films, etc.) in an appropriate proportion.

- 3.4 The results of the report conference and the promotion conference have to be documented in minutes. A promotion based on offsetting insufficient performance in one subject with better grades in other subjects will have to be documented in the minutes as well.

The decision to not promote a student necessitates a substantiating statement in the minutes of the promotion conference.

- 3.5 Grades that are better or worse by one full grade point than the previous grade require an explanation by the subject teacher. This explanation must be noted in the promotion conference minutes.

- 3.6 Insufficient performance may result in a student not being promoted to the next grade. The parents or guardians must be notified in writing is sent in a timely manner (at least 10 weeks prior to the end of the school year) so they may be informed about the subjects in which the student did not achieve sufficient grades.

Failure to receive this message does not constitute the right for the student to be promoted to the next higher grade.

If a student is indeed not moving on to the next grade, the parents or guardians must be notified of this fact in writing, immediately.

4. School Career Decisions

4.1 In grades 5 and 6, the orientation level, close communication with the parents or guardians of students is advised to ensure that any information/counseling on the student's development, performance and school career is provided in a timely manner. The policy on the promotion of students must contain provisions to that effect.

4.2 After the orientation level, the promotion conference makes a recommendation with regards to the recommended school career for each individual student. Any decisions made will be based on the following criteria:

- Performance and performance development, especially in the main subjects with a higher lesson count.
- The student's speech, articulateness and capability of abstraction.
- The student's perseverance and willingness to work hard in class and at home.
- The student's interest and dedication when it comes to hands-on work in class and potentially during extracurricular activities.

4.3 If there is a discrepancy between the school's recommendation and the parent request regarding the student's future school career, the parent request is honored. To a student who is recommended to attend *Hauptschule* only the *Realschule* track is available as the highest school type. The final decision on the student's school career lies with the Head of School while taking into account the criteria listed above. This decision should be made during the one-year probationary period.

4.4 Pursuant to the principle of having as many students as possible attend Gymnasium after the Orientation Level, the class teacher conference or promotion conference may consider and recommend a change in school type right up to the end of 8th grade. This decision generally takes place towards the end of a school year. The class conference or promotion conference will validate and the Head of School will implement this.

5. Guidelines for Decisions on promotion to a higher level during primary education

5.1 Students are not promoted transferring from Grades 1 to Grade 2 of Elementary School as these grades form a pedagogical unit. At the end of Grade 2, students receive a general performance review.

5.2 It is possible for a student to repeat Grade 1 if the class teacher conference so advises and the student's parents agree. This is recommended if it appears unlikely that a student will be able to participate successfully in Grade 2 based on her or his performance development in Grade 1.

5.3 All students whose performance demonstrates that they have met the educational requirements in the ongoing school year and hence will be able to meet all educational goals

presented to them in the next higher grade will be promoted from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

- 5.4 From Grade 3 to Grade 4 and from Grade 4 to Grade 5 a student has to demonstrate a performance of „ausreichend“ (i. e. the student’s performance shows certain deficiencies, but still meets the educational requirements as a whole) throughout all subjects in order to be promoted to the next higher grade.
- 5.4.1 A student will be promoted to a higher grade if their performance in one of the following subject is graded as „mangelhaft“ but can be offset by a performance of „befriedigend“ in another subject of this group: German, Mathematics, Science and English.
- 5.4.2 The grade of „ungenügend“ in one of the above mentioned subjects renders a promotion to the next higher grade impossible. It is not possible to offset this grade with a better grade in another one of the subjects.
- 5.4.3 A promotion to a higher grade is also not possible if more than two of the subjects listed above are graded with „mangelhaft“ or „ungenügend“.
- 5.5 The Elementary School Principal can approve a voluntary move of a student in grades 2 through 4 to the next lower grade until April 1st of the current school year, if the parents submit a written request and the class teacher conference supports this move.
- 5.6 Voluntarily repeating a grade is considered a non-promotion. Further information can be found in paragraph 10 of these regulations.

6. Guidelines for Decisions on Promotion to a higher level at the “Hauptschule”

- 6.1 In the case of students who attend Hauptschule, only those subject taught at Hauptschule level and one foreign language subject can count towards promoting the students to the next grade. For students who attend the “Hauptschule” track, the promotion decision follows a standard that is appropriate for “Hauptschule”.
- 6.2 In special exceptional cases, a student may be promoted even if the promotion requirements could not be met due to reasons beyond the student's control, but it can be expected that successful participation in the following class is possible based on the student's performance and overall development. The decision for promotion requires unanimity. A detailed explanation should be included in the minutes. A promotion according to the first sentence (see above) is excluded if it is associated with the award of a certificate or qualification.

7. Guidelines for Decisions on Promotion to a higher level at the “Realschule”

- 7.1 With regards to promotion to the next higher grade and the regulations on offsetting insufficient grades, the Gymnasium regulations apply, with the exception of the grade of the second foreign language, which is not relevant when it is decided if a student moves up to the next higher grade.
- 7.2 A student attending Realschule may move to the next higher grade of the Gymnasium level until the end of 8th Grade, provided that the parents have given their consent and the



student has achieved a grade average of 2.5 in the subjects of German, Mathematics, English and a Science and an average of 3.0 in the remaining subjects at the end of the school year. The grade in the second foreign language has to be “ausreichend” or better.

- 7.3 In special exceptional cases, a student may be promoted even if the promotion requirements could not be met due to reasons beyond the student's control, but it can be expected that successful participation in the following class is possible based on the student's performance and overall development. The decision for promotion requires unanimity. A detailed explanation should be included in the minutes. A promotion according to the first sentence (see above) is excluded if it is associated with the award of a certificate or qualification.

8. Guidelines for Decisions on Promotion to a higher level at the “Gymnasium”

- 8.1 A performance of „ausreichend“ or better in all subjects is the basis for being promoted to the next higher grade.
- 8.2 Students are not promoted transferring from Grades 5 to Grade 6 of the Upper School as these grades form a pedagogical unit.
- 8.3 Apart from this, a student is promoted to the next higher grade if the following apply:
- 8.3.1 Performance in one of the following subjects is „mangelhaft“ but the student achieved the grade „befriedigend“ or better in another subject of this group to offset the grade: German, Mathematics, first and second foreign language, or
- 8.3.2 performance in no more than one of the remaining subjects is no less than „ausreichend“, or
- 8.3.3 performance is „mangelhaft“ in either German, Mathematics, the first or second foreign language and one of the remaining subjects, however, the report card shows at least three subjects with a performance of „befriedigend“ or better (one of which in the subjects German, Mathematics, first or second foreign language). To offset the „mangelhaft“ grade, no more than one „befriedigend“ grade from an artistic subjects and sports may be used, or
- 8.3.4 performance is „mangelhaft“ in two of the remaining subjects, however, this is offset by three subjects being graded as „befriedigend“ or better (only one of them being an artistic subject or sports).
- 8.3.5 A grade of „ungenügend“ in one of the remaining subjects must be offset by three subjects being graded as „befriedigend“ or better, one of which will have to be either German, Mathematics or the first or second foreign language. Only one „befriedigend“ grade from the artistic subjects or sports may be used.
- 8.3.6 A grade of „ungenügend“ in either German, Mathematics, or the first or second foreign language automatically results in the student not being promoted to the next higher grade. There is no option to offset this grade with another, better grade.



- 8.3.7 Promoting a student to the next grade is also not possible if two or more subjects are graded as „mangelhaft“ or „mangelhaft“ in one subject and „ungenügend“ in another. The same is true if the student is given a grade of „ungenügend“ in two or more subjects.
- 8.4 If the promotion to the next higher grade coincides with a student switching school types, then the promotion regulations of the new school type apply.
- 8.5 In special exceptional cases, a student may be promoted even if the promotion requirements could not be met due to reasons beyond the student's control, but it can be expected that successful participation in the following class is possible based on the student's performance and overall development. The decision for promotion requires unanimity. A detailed explanation should be included in the minutes. A promotion according to the first sentence (see above) is excluded if it is associated with the award of a certificate or qualification.

9. Non-assessable performance records in individual subjects

- 9.1 If the performance in a certain subject cannot be assessed due to reasons brought on by the student's fault, a grade of „ungenügend“ will be given. A note of this will be made in the end of year report card and the reasons have to be captured in detail in the promotion conference minutes.
- 9.2 If the reasons for missing performance records are due to reasons outside of the student's control, the subject will not be graded and won't be relevant when it comes to deciding on the student's promotion to the next higher grade. The general guidelines according to paragraph 2.1 apply.

10. Repeating a Grade

The following guidelines apply to repeating a grade:

- 10.1 Generally, no grade may be repeated more than once. Similarly, the grade immediately following the one that was repeated, may not also be repeated. A student who failed being promoted a second time, will move from the *Gymnasium* track to the *Realschule* track or from *Realschule* to *Hauptschule*, respectively. The final decision on the move and assessment will remain with the class and/or promotion conference.
- 10.2 If the failure to meet the educational goals of the grade that's been repeated or the year following are outside of the student's control, the promotion conference may decide that the student may remain in the original track.
- 10.3 The parents of a student may request with the Head of School that their student voluntarily repeat one grade during the *Sekundarstufe 1* level. A decision that's been made on the student's promotion is not affected.



10.4 In the event that the student leaves the school during the lower grade level, a certificate will be issued to the student, documenting the level of performance achieved at the time of departure.

11. Advancing by one Grade

11.1 Students who are especially gifted and over-performing may advance by one grade if the request by the parents for this advancement is supported by the class teacher conference and approved by the Head of School.

Requirements for approving the advancement of a student are extraordinary class performance and a work ethic that will enable the student to successfully participate in the higher grade after a short transition period.

No students may advance by a grade during the introductory phase or the qualification phase of *Oberstufe* (Upper Level).

If a student advances, note of this has to be made in the end-of-year report card.

12. Taking Effect

These *Regulations of the German International School Washington D.C. for the promotion to the next higher grade* take effect with the school year 2023/2024. The changes regarding the orientation level will be in effect from grade 5 in an ascending manner.