GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL WASHINGTON D.C.

(As of Mai 21, 2025)

8617 Chateau Drive

Potomac, MD 20854

301.767.3800

www.GISWashington.org

Foreword

The rapid development of digital technologies is shaping the lives and working environments of our students in a wide variety of ways. As an international school, we are responsible not only for preparing young people for this digital future but also for enabling them to engage with media confidently, critically, and creatively.

Our media guidelines serve to promote responsible use of digital media in everyday school life. It is based on the pillars of holistic education: knowledge transfer, personality development, and intercultural competence. We see media education not as a standalone subject but as an integral component of all areas of learning and as a key competence of the 21st century.

Our school's vision is to create an environment where learners can use media as tools for communication, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. At the same time, we place special emphasis on fostering critical thinking and a reflective approach to information to enable our students to make informed and responsible decisions.

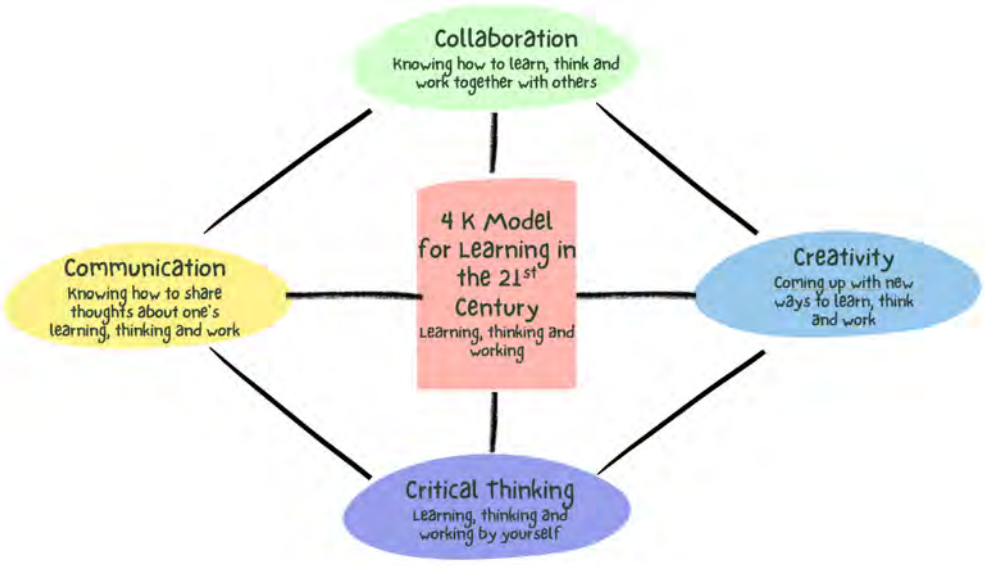

Fig. 1: The 4 Cs model of learning

These media guidelines provide an overview of our objectives, principles, and measures through which we integrate media education into teaching, school infrastructure, and staff development. It is the result of a collaborative process involving teachers, parents, and students, all of whom contributed their perspectives to develop a forward-looking and sustainable strategy.

We thank everyone involved for their support and commitment in developing this concept. Together, we can ensure that our students become not just passive consumers but active shapers of the digital world.

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1. Objectives

As an international school, we aim to enable our students to engage in independent, self-organized, and ultimately self-directed learning, regardless of their location. In doing so, we place particular emphasis on strengthening students' personal responsibility in their learning processes. A suitable learning environment is indispensable in this context, as it forms the foundation for such development. Here, new information and communication technologies can unfold their full potential—something traditional media can only partially achieve.

The use of tablets offers numerous advantages. Through both content-based and chronological progression from primary school through upper secondary school, we gradually introduce students to the possibilities of diverse learning. These devices can be accessed and monitored at any time through predefined profiles and the teacher's iPad. For tests and exams, specific settings can be configured to ensure secure and controlled use. This enables a personalized yet diverse learning environment that is optimally tailored to the needs of the students.

The German International School Washington D.C. (GISW) is committed to providing both students and teachers with media resources and an information technology framework in which they can sustainably learn to use both analog and digital methods and tools in meaningful ways for their own lives.

Our media concept thus promotes an open, balanced, socially responsible, and value-adding approach to all types of media. We view the harmonious interplay of analog and digital media as an enrichment and empower all participants—teachers and students—to independently choose, within the framework of school conditions, which medium is best suited for the respective lesson element.

It is explicitly encouraged that the format for working on lesson content is freely chosen. This decision should be made conscientiously, considering functionality and individual preferences, while teachers retain the right to make decisions from a pedagogical perspective. The Analog-Digital Cross illustrates this with examples such as the format of lesson notes and serves as a guide for the flexible use of both types of media.

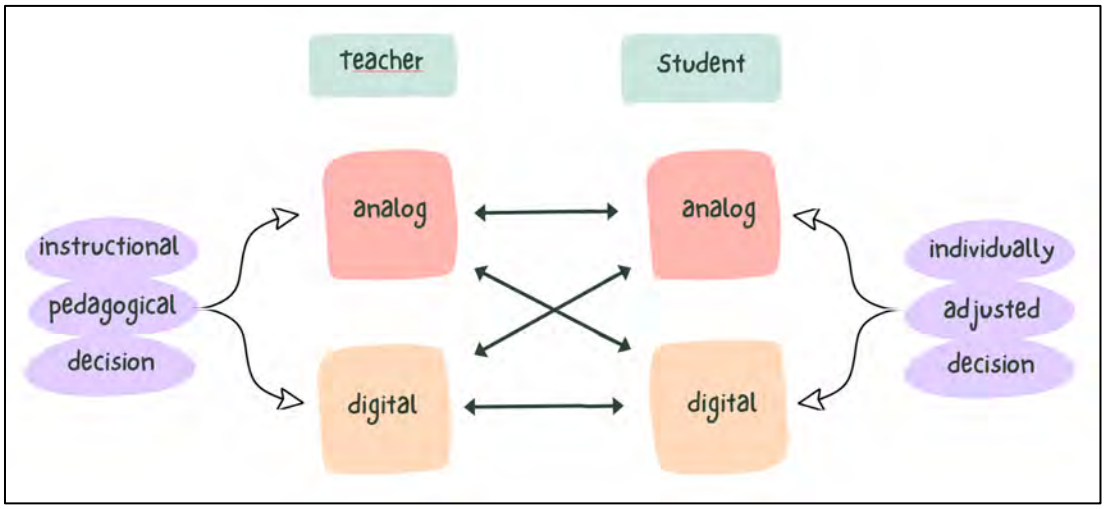

Fig. 2: Analog – Digital – Interplay

The analog notebooks, textbooks, and whiteboards or chalkboards remain a fixed part of teaching, alongside their digital counterparts like note-taking apps on iPads (OneNote, GoodNotes, or Notability). Worksheets can be received via AirDrop or cloud services and collaboratively edited on SMART Boards in classrooms, which are all equipped with Apple TVs for seamless streaming. The responsibility for organizing materials, whether analog or digital, lies with each individual. All documents must be structured and organized, a skill introduced from grade five onward using Microsoft 365 and OneDrive. This task supports students in expanding their media literacy while also fostering essential skills like self-organization and a sense of responsibility.

2. Progressive Use of Digital Media

The school's decision to adopt Apple iPads as standard devices while simultaneously using Microsoft 365 and Teams offers numerous advantages for both students and teachers. Moreover, this concept allows for a meaningful progression in the use of digital media from Grade 1 through Grade 12. In the lower grades, learning apps such as Seesaw take center stage, providing students with a playful and intuitive introduction to digital media. This early exposure helps them develop foundational skills in using digital tools, which are gradually expanding over time.

As students grow older, the use of digital technologies becomes more advanced. Starting in Grade 5, Microsoft 365 programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote—as well as the collaborative features of Teams—are used more extensively. These tools enable students to work more independently and in a more structured way, whether for projects, presentations, or group assignments. iPads support both analog and digital working methods, allowing for handwritten notes using the Apple Pencil or digital worksheet completion, for example. At the same time, they facilitate communication and collaboration between students and teachers.

From Grade 7 onward, students are allowed to take their iPads home. In addition, their IT skills are intentionally deepened. Students learn to use Microsoft laptops securely and professionally—skills that are also essential for higher education and future careers. Currently, these competencies are taught in work groups or enrichment courses, which are intended to be expanded in the long term through the integration of computer science into the curriculum. This approach enables students to acquire and further develop skills in computer science and digital literacy.

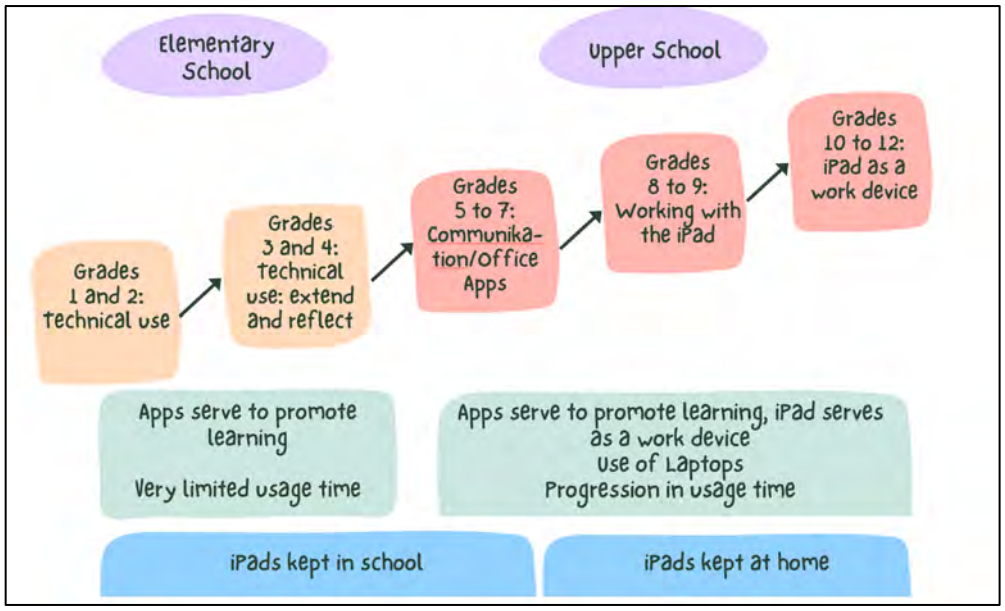

Fig. 3: Progression of Media Use
Across all grade levels, several system-relevant apps—such as Jamf School Students, Apple Classroom, SMART Mirror, etc.—are installed and included in the figures listed here.

This structured and step-by-step introduction to the digital media world provides a solid foundation for sustainable learning and the development of key future competencies. At the same time, it demands increasing awareness in the use of digital media as students grow older. The development of a *Media Driver's License*, introduced from Grade 5 onward, includes topics such as "Me on the Web" or "Media Non-Stop?". The combination of practical skills using tools like iPads and Microsoft 365/Teams with metacognitive competencies creates a flexible, efficient, collaborative, and sustainable learning and working environment.

Students benefit from individualized learning, enhanced media literacy, and seamless access to educational resources, while teachers are supported through simplified administrative processes and the opportunity to design interactive lessons. Overall, this concept effectively meets the needs of the school community in light of the demands of the digital age.

3. Use of Digital Tools for Internal and External Communication and Cooperation

At GISW, great importance is placed on versatile and effective communication between administration, teachers, students, and parents. Tools such as **Microsoft Teams**, **email**, and **Zoom** provide numerous advantages.

Microsoft Teams serves as the central platform for exchange and collaboration among the various groups. Teachers can easily share instructional materials and information, while students can submit assignments directly and receive feedback. In this way, Teams promotes a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

Email complements this system by offering the ability to send structured and official messages. This is particularly useful for communication between teachers, parents, and external partners, enabling important information to be shared quickly and clearly.

Zoom provides the additional capability of holding personal meetings in virtual rooms—whether for parent-teacher conferences, individual discussions, or remote lessons.

Through this combination of modern communication tools, efficient, transparent, and flexible collaboration is ensured, benefiting all members of the school community.

4. Distribution of Responsibilities

Promoting digital competencies requires the cooperation of all parties involved. Teachers design digital instruction, foster media literacy, and serve as role models. Students use digital media responsibly and critically for learning and creativity. School development creates the necessary framework, such as infrastructure and professional development, and supports the sustainable integration of digital technologies. Together, future-oriented learning environments are created..

4.1 Responsibilities of the Teachers

The teaching staff at GISW bear significant responsibility when it comes to integrating digital media into the classroom. The primary focus is always on the didactic and methodological design of the lessons, where content and instructional decisions take precedence. If a teacher recognizes that a particular medium is especially well-suited to exploring a topic, students are expected to follow this approach. Subsequent digitization—such as photograping posters after a “gallery walk”—is not only permitted but explicitly encouraged. This promotes sustainable learning experiences and allows for flexible use of the results.

To ensure a reflective use of media, teachers establish routines, such as placing the iPad face-down when not in use. At the same time, there is ample room to support individual learning and teaching processes. Students can choose between analog and digital working methods and structure their notes flexibly.

At DISW, proven teaching methods are combined with innovative approaches. Taking handwritten notes with the Apple Pencil or creating digital notes offers a wide range of possibilities. Standards for the use of digital media are consistently implemented to prepare students for the demands of a digital knowledge society.

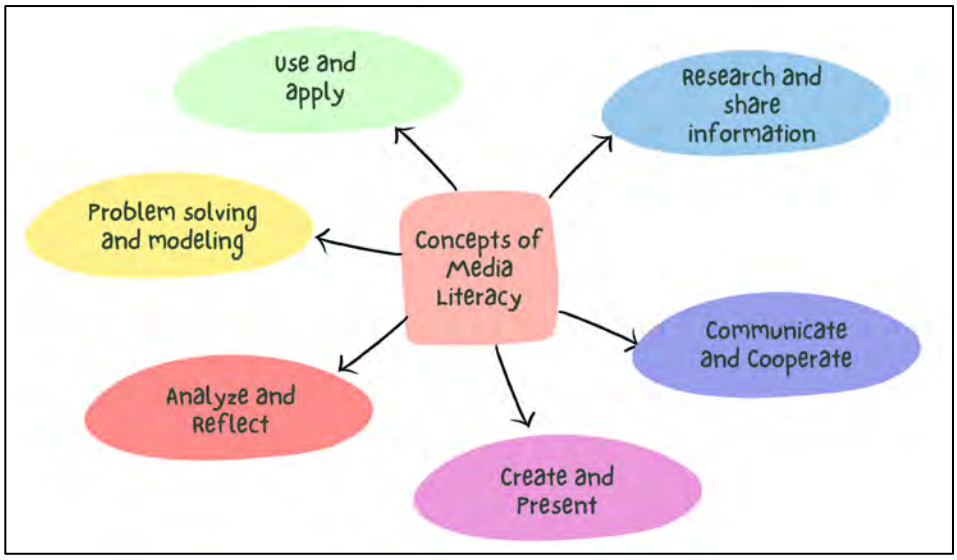

Abb. 4: Competency areas of the KMK

Media education is guided by the six competency areas defined by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. This holistic approach empowers students to navigate the digital world safely and competently while promoting lifelong learning.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Students

Students at an iPad school bear active responsibility in their use of digital media and take on various tasks that promote their media literacy and contribute to a productive learning environment. These tasks are an integral part of the media concept and encompass the following areas:

They use their iPads purposefully and in alignment with educational objectives. They comply with data protection regulations, respect copyright laws, and handle their devices with care to ensure sustainable use.

Students regularly reflect on their use of digital media and seek ways to improve it or switch to analog methods when appropriate. They accept feedback and adjust their handling of digital tools accordingly.

Through these responsibilities, students actively learn to use digital media as valuable tools for their learning processes and for personal and societal development.

4.3 Responsibilites of School Development

Digitalization at our school remains a dynamic process and a central pillar of the media concept. In the past and current school year, important steps have been taken to progress further within the SAMR model. The teaching staff is well-trained in technology, so the **substitution phase**, in which analog materials are digitized to make them more easily accessible, is largely complete. However, these materials continue to be enhanced with digital elements such as hyperlinks or audio sequences (**augmentation**).

In the **modification phase**, interactive materials such as virtual worksheets are currently being developed, offering new opportunities for learning and comprehension. Collaboration is being actively encouraged,

both within individual departments and across subject areas. In the **redefinition phase**, innovative formats are being created—such as self-produced instructional videos—which can be used both as learning tools and as assessment formats.

In addition, new tools like **artificial intelligence** are being examined, critically evaluated, and purposefully integrated as needed. Some examples of this are outlined below.

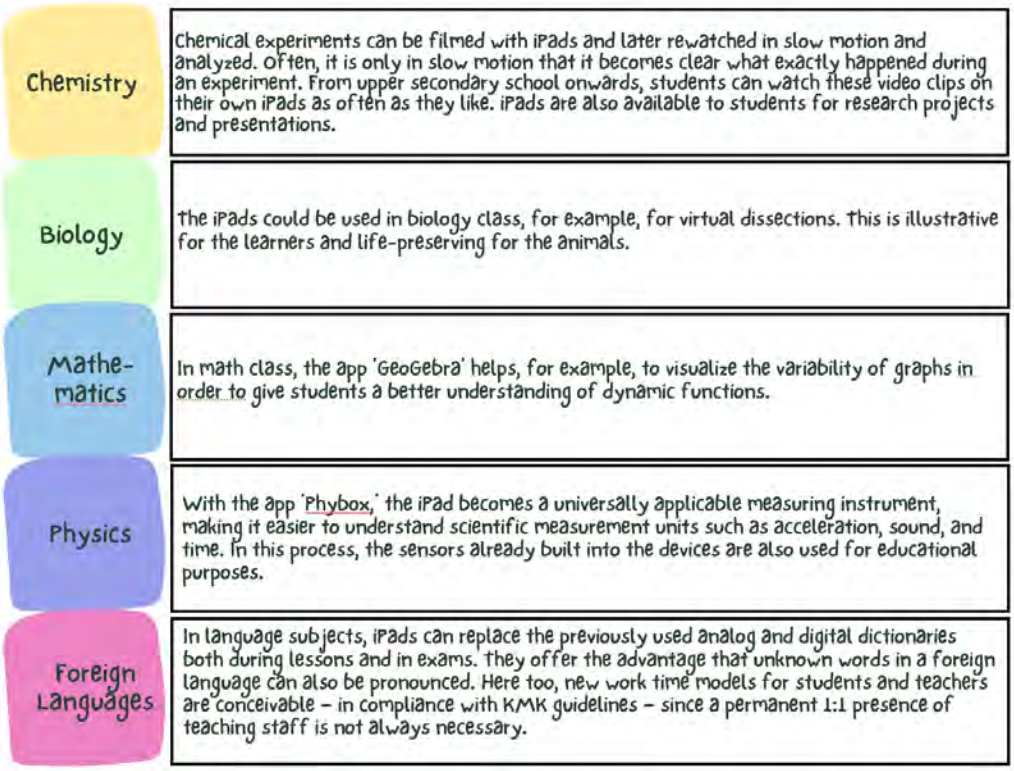

Abb. 5: Nutzungsbeispiele

To meet these demands and support their development, regular training sessions are held, organized and conducted by the Coordinator for Digital Instructional Development. The internal training series **"Media Café"** offers a wide range of topics: from using communication platforms like MS Teams and Zoom, to introductions to technology such as Smartboards and iPads, as well as innovative concepts like the **flipped classroom**, the creation of instructional videos, and the risks and opportunities of AI. In open meetups, teachers can address individual questions and receive targeted support.

This comprehensive training program is supplemented by the Fobizz platform and other project-based offerings, which also enable teachers to pursue individual professional development. In doing so, DISW creates ideal conditions for the sustainable promotion of digital competencies.

5. Opportunities of the use of Digital Media in Schools

5.1 Self-regulated Learning

Working with digital media promotes self-directed learning in many ways. Students can work at their own pace, solve problems independently, select appropriate learning materials and difficulty levels, and learn asynchronously. These competencies were particularly strengthened during distance learning and continue to be purposefully developed. In addition, teamwork combined with independent learning goal monitoring is supported, fostering both personal responsibility and collaboration.

5.2 Networking

Digital media open extensive networking opportunities. Online research on literature, background information, or current developments is an integral part of classroom instruction. Virtual classrooms—such as those used at DISW with Office 365 and Teams starting in grade 5—enable communication and support even outside of regular class hours. Tools like AirDrop, Teams, and OneNote simplify the quick distribution and editing of work results and offer maximum flexibility. Exchange programs such as the Makeathon promote international networking with partners around the world.

5.3 Media Creation

Digital media offer diverse opportunities for creative work. Students can create their own digital products in projects, such as presentations, hypermedia, or films. In doing so, they learn to critically select and purposefully use media. By publishing their work, they receive recognition that boosts their motivation.

5.4 Electronic Reference Works, Dictionaries and Aids

Electronic reference works provide diverse, up-to-date information and support both learners and teachers in lesson preparation and delivery. Additionally, learning content can be conveyed through animations. DISW aims to further establish and expand the use of these resources.

5.5 Opportunities for Teachers

Für Lehrkräfte erleichtern digitale Medien die Materialverwaltung und Anpassung an neue Unterrichtssituationen. Die Zusammenarbeit im Kollegium wird durch die digitale Übertragung von Informationen effizienter, und der Vorbereitungsaufwand wird durch die Wiederverwendbarkeit und Differenzierbarkeit von Materialien reduziert.

5.6 Opportunities for Students

Students benefit from a greater individualization of their learning processes through digital learning environments. The digital notebook allows them to integrate links, videos, and images into their handwritten notes. OneNote, embedded within the class teams in MS Teams, makes teaching materials available at any time, even for students who are absent. The familiarity many teachers have with digital technology also enables learners to join classes via video conference, helping to bridge longer periods of absence.

5.7 The Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into everyday school life offers numerous opportunities but also presents challenges. AI can enrich teaching by enabling personalized learning, supporting teachers in the creation and differentiation of instructional materials, and providing targeted support for students. Adaptive learning platforms that analyze individual performance levels, offer customized tasks, and provide feedback help make learning processes more effective. Additionally, AI can take over administrative tasks and relieve teachers, allowing more time for pedagogical work.

However, there are also challenges that must be considered. A critical approach to AI-generated content is essential, as such content is not always reliable. Students must learn to question AI-supported information and to distinguish between credible and flawed results. Data protection and ethical considerations also play a central role, especially when handling sensitive personal data. The school sets clear guidelines and provides support for the safe use of AI tools by teachers, ensuring that responsible use is conveyed.

Through reflective and targeted use, AI can help optimize learning processes and open new possibilities for instructional design. It is essential to seize the opportunities without losing sight of the critical aspects.

5.8 Advanced Media Literacy

The newly established **Hacker/Makerspace** offers students a unique opportunity to expand their digital skills through hands-on experience. In computer science classes and extracurricular activities, they learn to look beyond Apple's "walled garden" and engage with open systems, open-source hardware, and software. This not only enhances technical understanding but also promotes a creative and solution-oriented approach to digital challenges.

A specially configured, separate network is available to ensure secure and independent work. This allows students to implement their own projects while learning to use digital resources responsibly. A key element of the concept is the formulated **Hacker Code of Ethics**, which emphasizes values such as transparency, ethical behavior, and data security.

Through this values-based approach, students are encouraged to use digital tools consciously and reflectively, protect networks, and develop creative solutions to technical problems. The Hacker/Makerspace thus creates a space for innovation, experimentation, and responsible digital engagement.

6. Dangers of Digital Media

Technology can be of great benefit to us, but it also carries risks associated with excessive use, inappropriate content, and digital security issues.

Excessive Use

It is important to develop healthy habits when using technology and to take regular breaks from screens such as smartphones, iPads, computers, and televisions. Constantly checking messages, app notifications,

and social media can make one feel more connected while simultaneously feeling socially isolated. When we interact with digital media, our brains release dopamine, the chemical associated with pleasure—which makes it harder to disconnect from these devices.

However, studies show that excessive device use is linked to mental health risks such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, especially in connection with social media. Physical health is also at risk due to an imbalanced lifestyle, poor posture, eye strain, and headaches.

Device addiction is not officially recognized as a mental illness but shares characteristics with other behavioral addictions, such as gambling. People who use devices excessively at a young age are also at a higher risk of developing addictive behaviors later in life.

At GISW, we promote the use of technology for learning, but we also strive to maintain a healthy balance.

Content and Security Aspects

The internet is an excellent source of knowledge, but not all content is age appropriate. At school, we block access to certain websites through our firewall and restrict iPad usage. However, it is also important to monitor your child's access on other devices they may own. Use parental controls to block websites and internet access.

Some unsafe online interactions may take the form of trolling, catfishing, identity theft, cyberbullying, and sexting. It is important to recognize and be aware of these risks.

Trolling – Negative, offensive comments intended to provoke and upset others. These may include insults and personal attacks.

Catfishing – Creating a false online persona to deceive or manipulate others. A person may fall victim to catfishing when their own pictures, information, and data are stolen and used to trick others.

Identity Theft – The acquisition of important personal data such as name, date of birth, and social security number to fraudulently obtain credit or other benefits. It is important to teach children how to protect this information online, and a child's credit should be checked regularly for signs of fraudulent activity.

Cyberbullying – A pattern of bullying that occurs online and can take place in many forms, such as through messages, social media, servers, and gaming chats. Cyberbullying can be easier to carry out because there is often no immediate social feedback. Children who belong to marginalized groups are especially vulnerable to cyberbullying. If cyberbullying is suspected, saving chats and taking screenshots are useful ways to identify and document bullying behavior and initiate disciplinary measures.

Sexting – Sending sexually explicit content, language, images, or videos to others via digital media. It is important to understand that sending sexual images is illegal, even if all parties involved are minors, and sexting laws vary greatly from state to state. Children often feel pressured to share sexual messages, pictures, or videos, so it is essential to take the time to have an open conversation with them. Even if

sexting occurs between minors, it can be considered the distribution of child pornography, which can have serious legal consequences.

Through our prevention team, the school educates students on these topics to promote safe online behavior. At GISW, we aim to support students with clear expectations regarding their digital lives at school. We currently have several policies covering usage, content, and responsibilities, including a mobile phone usage policy, an iPad usage policy, and a media usage policy.

7. The Media Concept in the Different Departments

7.1 Preschool

From an early age, children are exposed to the influence of films, series, or digital applications in their daily routines. As a kindergarten, we bear a special responsibility to accompany children in their interaction with media and to provide them with tools for a responsible and conscious approach.

With this media concept, we aim to demonstrate how we integrate media education into our daily activities in an age-appropriate, reflective, and pedagogically sound way—strengthening the children and supporting their development.

Principle

These media guidelines serve as rules and regulations for the intentional and pedagogically supervised use of media in preschool. It is based on the Quality Framework for Preschool and school entry level by the ZfA (Central Agency for German Schools Abroad), the regulations of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the educational experience of our institution.

The legal guidelines are:
Limited passive media consumption for older children: Children aged 2 and up may use digital media for a maximum of 30 minutes per week, and only with age-appropriate, educationally valuable content. This media time may only be exceeded in exceptional cases, and such exceptions must be documented.

Media use in the kindergarten is intentional, project-based, and always accompanied by educational guidance. The goal is to support children in their language development, creative expression, and intercultural competence, and to introduce them early on to the responsible use of media.

Goals:

We aim to create a balance between digital experiences and analog activities. Children should be encouraged to actively engage with their environment, ask questions, be creative, and also consciously take breaks from media.

We see media education as an ongoing process that we continuously develop together with the children, parents, and our team.

- Promotion of language skills
- Support for social and cultural integration
- Development of media literacy as a key qualification

- Encouragement of creativity and active media production
- Strengthening of self-efficacy through targeted media projects
- Learning to handle media reflectively and critically from an early age
- Age-appropriate strengthening of children's media skills to ensure educational opportunities and impart basic competencies for later life
- Understanding, operating, and using media meaningfully
- Selecting content according to their own knowledge needs

Use of Media in Preschool

Media is used in preschool in a targeted, age-appropriate, and project-based manner. We ensure a balanced mix of analog and digital offerings:

- Use of audiobooks and audio plays to promote language development
- Children learn to use media as tools that support their learning through play, exploration, and experimentation
- As means of expression and creativity for their own experiences, impressions, views, ideas, and reflections
- Use of interactive whiteboards (smart panels) to visualize learning content, accompanying situation- or project-based work
- Documentation of daily kindergarten activities via apps (e.g., Shutterfly) to inform parents
- No independent use of digital devices by children – always pedagogically supervised
- Use of photos and videos for reflection and presentation of project results.

Reflecting on media experiences as a contribution to promoting media literacy

Even though we do not provide digital devices for children in kindergarten, many children still bring media experiences from their everyday lives — such as from TV, series, or advertisements. These contents often affect children emotionally and mentally quite strongly. It is important for us to give children space to talk about these experiences. We support them by:

- processing impressions from films, series, or advertisements,
- distinguishing between fantasy and reality,
- becoming aware of the impact of media content.
- In practice, we implement this through:
- discussion circles where children can talk about their TV experiences,
- creative activities such as painting pictures related to a series or advertisement to express what they have experienced,
- role-playing to act out scenes, question them, and re-evaluate them.
- This not only promotes language development and social skills but also strengthens children's media literacy by reflecting together on content, understanding emotions, and developing a critical perspective on the media world.

Communication

For internal coordination and communication with parents, we use data protection-compliant digital platforms:

- Microsoft Teams for coordination within the teaching staff
- Microsoft Teams for internal coordination through shared duty rosters, agreements, and the exchange of information and files
- Apps for sharing photos with parents
- Use of photos in daily routines, displayed on information boards in the kindergarten and for up-to-date communication about projects, events, and special activities
- Email communication for official notifications, parent letters, and individual feedback
- Parent information evenings and digital parent meetings for discussions on educational topics, projects, and organizational matters
- Development meetings, held regularly – upon request also digitally via video conference
- Feedback options for parents to share their perspectives and collaborate in building a successful educational partnership through the use of media

Framework Conditions

- Compliance with data protection regulations (GDPR)
- Consideration of copyright and personal rights
- Responsible handling of image, audio, and video materials
- Minimizing screen time in accordance with children's developmental needs
- Evaluation of new apps and tools regarding data protection and educational value

Training

The educational team regularly participates in internal and external training sessions to ensure responsible and contemporary use of media. Topics of these training sessions include, among others:

- Media education in early childhood education
- Data protection and data security
- Creative use of media in everyday preschool activities
- Working with parents and media education

Elternarbeit

Eltern werden aktiv in die Medienerziehung einbezogen. Dazu gehören Informationsveranstaltungen, Workshops und individuelle Beratungsgespräche. Ziel ist es, die Eltern für einen sicheren und bewussten Umgang mit Medien im häuslichen Umfeld zu sensibilisieren und zu unterstützen.

Quality Assurance

The media concept is evaluated annually and adapted to current technological, educational, and legal developments. Feedback from children, parents, and the team is actively incorporated into its ongoing development.

Conclusion

A conscious, reflective, and pedagogically guided use of media enriches our everyday kindergarten life and supports children on their path to becoming confident, creative, and responsible media users.

7.2 Elementary School

The media concept of the primary school is based on teaching fundamental digital competencies (hard skills) as well as social and methodological skills in media use (soft skills) – for both learners and educators. These are divided into four key areas:

1. Handling standardized devices (hardware)
2. Using standardized apps and programs (software)
3. Personal behavior and rules when using digital devices
4. Internet use and the responsible handling of online information

Detailed content and specific instructional topics for media education are described in the school's media curriculum [25_02_18_CurriculumMedien_E.docx].

Handling Standardized Devices

The use of standardized digital devices in primary school simplifies the handling of technology for both students and teachers. A standardized deployment of uniform devices reduces technical barriers and provides a reliable foundation for digital learning.

Advantages of standardized equipment:

- **Ease of use:** Students learn to use digital devices more quickly, as they do not need to adapt to different models.
- **Efficient lesson planning:** Teachers can prepare materials in a targeted way and ensure that all students have access to the same programs and learning resources.
- **Optimal learning conditions:** Equipping classrooms with interactive whiteboards, projectors, and stable Wi-Fi creates a consistent and disruption-free digital learning environment.
- **Simplified maintenance:** Standardized devices make technical support easier and minimize downtime.

Use of Standardized Apps and Programs

To support digital learning, students in primary school use the learning platform *Seesaw* as well as various educational apps such as *ANTON* and *Antolin*.

Advantages of using standardized software:

- **Individualized support:** Teachers can provide personalized assignments and offer targeted feedback.
- **Creative opportunities:** Students can create their own content and actively shape their learning process.
- **Flexibility:** Digital learning content can be used both in the classroom and at home for review and reinforcement**.**

- **Simplified access**: Using a small number of carefully selected programs helps students navigate more easily without constantly having to learn new applications.

Personal Behavior and Rules for Using Digital Devices

From the very beginning, clear rules for using digital devices at school are defined and discussed together with the students. These rules create a safe and structured learning environment and help students develop a conscious and responsible approach to technology.

Key aspects:

- **Careful handling of devices**: Students learn to use and protect devices properly.
- **Focus on educational use**: Digital devices are to be used specifically for learning purposes, not for personal use.
- **Respectful collaboration**: Fairness and mutual consideration also apply in digital environments.
- **Reflection on media consumption**: Teachers support students in reflecting on their own media habits and developing a healthy approach to digital media.

Internet Use and Responsible Handling of Online Information

Even in primary school, it is important to teach students a safe and critical approach to the internet. They learn to evaluate digital content and handle online information responsibly.

Key learning objectives:

- **Safe research:** Students use child-friendly search engines like *FragFinn* to find age-appropriate and safe information.
- **Evaluation of sources:** They learn basic criteria to distinguish reliable information from questionable content.
- **Respect for copyright:** The importance of copyright and the correct use of digital content are taught in an age-appropriate manner.
- **Conscious media consumption:** Children are encouraged to reflect on their own media use. Questions like “Does this app help me learn?” or “How much time do I spend with digital media?” promote reflection.

Screen Time in the Classroom

Responsible use of digital media also includes age-appropriate limits on screen time. Especially in the early school years (SES classes), the use of digital devices is kept to a minimum. It is primarily used for fine motor and auditory exercises, with tablet time not exceeding ten minutes per learning session.

In higher grades, screen time is gradually adjusted. In addition to targeted practice formats for review, reinforcement, and individual support and challenge, tablets are increasingly used for research work and creating presentations. Through this phased approach, students learn to use digital media purposefully and efficiently without developing excessive screen time.

Conclusion

Through a structured and age-appropriate introduction to digital media, primary school students are sensitized early on to the safe, reflective, and responsible use of digital technologies. This lays the foundation for lifelong learning and active participation in an increasingly digitalized world.

7.3 Upper School

The media concept of the upper school is based on teaching both hard skills and soft skills for learners and educators. These can be further divided into the following aspects:

1. Handling standardized devices (hardware)
2. Handling standardized apps and programs (software)
3. Personal behavior and use of sources
4. Social behavior and respectful interaction

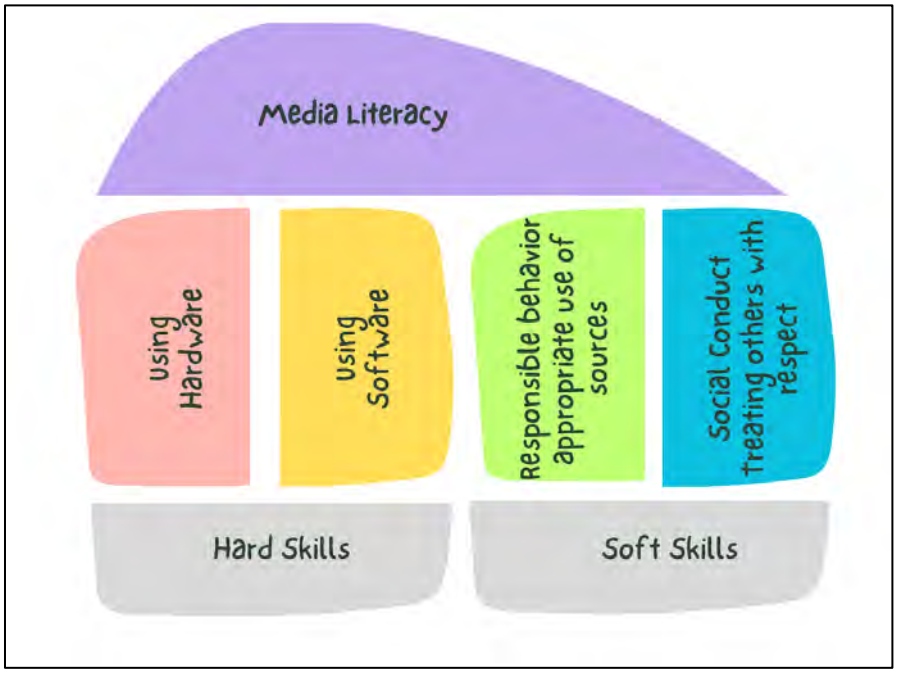

Fig. 6: Foundation of the Media Concept at WeiSch

The following lists only exemplary advantages of media use in the school setting, as the list—especially regarding soft skills—cannot be considered exhaustive.

Advantages of Using Standardized Hardware

When students and teachers have the same devices and all classrooms are equipped with uniform technical equipment, numerous advantages arise. The homogeneity of the devices enables simplified operation, as everyone works with the same functions and interfaces. This reduces technical barriers and promotes efficient use of technology. Teachers can prepare lessons more easily and ensure that all students have access to the same resources. The standardized equipment of classrooms—such as smartboards, projectors, and a stable Wi-Fi network—ensures consistent teaching and learning

conditions. This makes lessons more predictable and minimizes technical challenges. Additionally, standardized hardware facilitates maintenance and support because fewer different devices need to be managed.

Advantages of Using Standardized Software

The use of standardized software, such as Office 365, Teams, or OneNote, creates clear structures and standardized processes. Teachers can centrally provide assignments, materials, and feedback, simplifying lesson organization. Students benefit from a unified learning environment that makes access to materials and communication opportunities easier. The consistency in software simplifies the introduction to new applications, as no additional training for different programs is necessary. This saves time and resources and promotes collaboration between teachers and students, as well as among student groups.

Personal Behavior and Use of Sources

A conscious and reflective approach to websites and sources is essential for developing media literacy. Students learn to distinguish credible from unreliable sources by paying attention to criteria such as authorship, timeliness, and content. They are guided to use search engines efficiently, evaluate the quality of information, and assess its relevance for their tasks. Teachers support these skills by recommending reliable sites and providing students with tools such as citation aids or source management apps. Additionally, adherence to copyright laws and responsible handling of digital content are emphasized. Students also learn to reflect on their own online behavior. This includes managing the time they spend with digital devices consciously and evaluating the usefulness of digital applications in their daily lives. They are encouraged to ask themselves questions like: “Does my internet use contribute to my personal growth?” or “How do social media affect my self-image?” Such an approach strengthens students’ critical thinking and personal responsibility, preparing them for the demands of a digital knowledge society.

Social Behavior and Respectful Interaction

In working with digital media, students develop important soft skills at school, especially those that promote social behavior and respectful interaction. They learn empathy by putting themselves in others’ perspectives and responding respectfully to opinions in digital spaces. Respectful communication is practiced avoiding misunderstandings and create a positive atmosphere in chats, social media, and online forums. Through clear rules and reflection, teachers foster respectful treatment of classmates and their digital contributions. Team projects enhance cooperation by demonstrating the importance of consideration, mutual support, and clear agreements. Awareness of cyberbullying prevention is also heightened, so students learn to resolve conflicts peacefully and make digital spaces safe for everyone.