



Admission Guidelines for Students at the German International School Washington D.C.

The German International School Washington D.C. (“GISW” or the “School”) is a German School Abroad. Instruction is based on the Curricula of the German Federal State of Thuringia and offers the following diplomas: *Hauptschul*-Certificate (school leaving certificate after nine years of schooling), *Realschul*-Certificate (school leaving certificate after ten years of schooling), American High School Diploma, and German International Abitur.

The following guidelines (the “Guidelines”) are made available to families of applicants to GISW in order that they may familiarize themselves with various aspects of the admissions process. While the standards set forth in these Guidelines will generally apply, the School may take actions that it determines to be in the best interests of the School, its Faculty, and its Students. These Guidelines are for informational purposes only. They are not intended to create, nor do they create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between GISW and any parent, guardian, or student applying to, considering applying to, or attending the School. GISW may add, revise, alter, and/or delete School policies at any time.

I. General Admission Requirements

GISW strives to bring together a diverse community of students. The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, and its educational, athletic, and other programs.

Students are admitted and placed according to their German language proficiency (School Entry Level (5-Year-Old-Program) through Grade 11), as well as their academic performance and potential.

- A. German is predominantly the language of instruction and learning. In general, with the exception of our Preschool program, proficiency in the German language is a prerequisite for admission to GISW. As described in greater detail below, academically strong English-speaking students with little or no knowledge of the German language may be admitted to the *Fast-Track Program* from the School Entry

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- Level (“SEL”) through Grade 5. From Grade 6 onward, students with little or no German language skills cannot be admitted.
- B. Applications must be submitted in electronic format through the Admission’s portal. Admission is not automatic, and the decisions to admit or deny a student admission, is only made after careful evaluation of all admissions materials (*which may include, but are not limited to, the application itself, academic records and achievements, language assessment tests, teacher recommendations, health forms, student visa, etc.*) by the Admissions Office in cooperation with the appropriate pedagogical staff/coordinators and the GISW’s Head of School.
 - C. There is no right, legal or otherwise, to admission to GISW. This applies to all students, including, but not limited to, children of parents or guardians with German citizenship, as well as to students transferring from other German schools abroad. The admission of students whose parents or guardians do not reside in the greater Washington, D.C. area, and who are adult students or international students, and of students with little or no knowledge of the German language are subject to additional restrictions. Admission will be based on GISW policies and may only be granted within the limits of the School’s spatial, material, personnel, and other resources.
 - D. Upon admission to GISW, parents and guardians commit to actively accompanying and supporting their children’s development of the German language and to supporting all School policies in a spirit of genuine partnership.
 - E. With admission to GISW, the parents and guardians of all students automatically become members of the German School Society and are required to pay the accompanying annual membership fee.
 - F. Parents and guardians who wish to enroll their child(ren) at the School for the first time, receive these Guidelines in advance and are required to confirm that they have acknowledged them through the annual school contract.

II. Admission to the GISW Preschool

German Language Skills and Language Support:

Proficiency in the German language is not a prerequisite for admission to the Preschool.

In cases where students have no or very minimal German language skills, close collaboration between family and preschool is required. As enrollment in elementary school may involve an assessment of language proficiency, once a student is admitted to the Preschool, it is recommended that families take additional measures to support the student’s language development, including, but not limited to:

- Participation of the student, and, if necessary, the parents/guardians as well, in courses offered by the German Language School (“GLC”); and.
- Private German lessons (tutoring).

A. Admission to the Two-Year-Old Program:

- To be admitted to the Two-Year-Old Preschool Program, a child must have reached the age of two by the time they begin school.

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- Children do not need to be diaper-free.
- The School may admit additional students to the Two-Year-Old program during the school year, provided that space is available.
- Two-year-olds typically remain in their group until the end of the school year, even if they turn three during the year.
- A student is considered fully enrolled once they meet all of the following criteria: (i) they have been accepted; (ii) all required documents have been completed and received by the School; and (iii) all financial obligations have been met (including the payment of the enrollment fee and contract deposit, if applicable).

B. Admission to the Three- and Four-Year-Old Program:

- To be admitted to the Three- and Four-Year-Old Preschool Program, a child must have reached the age of three by the time they begin school.
- Children in the three- and four-year-old classroom must be fully potty-trained.
- Children who are not fully potty-trained must be kept at home until they are no longer in diapers and are fully potty-trained. Otherwise, attendance will be suspended until this requirement is met. Payment of tuition fees is required to hold the child's place for direct payers and past tuition payments will not be refunded
- The School may admit additional children to the three- and four-year-old program during the school year, provided that space is available.
- A child is considered fully enrolled once they meet all of the following criteria: (i) they have been accepted; (ii) all required documents have been completed and received; and (iii) all financial obligations have been met (including the payment of the enrollment fee and contract deposit, if applicable).

C. Group/Assignment:

The responsibility for determining group assignments and the composition of the groups rests with the Preschool Principals and its team. Admission is only to the Preschool Program itself and not to any particular group, class, etc.

D. Early/Enrollment:

Children may be enrolled at the beginning of the school year in the Two- or Three-Year-Old Group, even if they have not yet reached the age of two or three. However, they may only begin attending once they have reached the respective age. To secure the placement, tuition fees must be paid from the start of the school year for direct payers.

E. Contracts and Re-Enrollment for the Next School Year:

Preschool contracts are determined on an annual basis. Unless parents receive an individual notification regarding a contract change from the Preschool Principal or the Admissions Office, families will automatically receive an offer of re-enrollment (and be required to sign an enrollment contract as well as a contract deposit, if applicable) for the following school year.

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III. Admission to the GISW Elementary School

(This includes the School Entry Level ("SEL") and Grades 1-4)

A. Admission and Enrollment in the School Entry Level (5-Year-Old-Program)

- Attendance of the SEL is not a requirement for enrollment in Grade 1.
- To be admitted to the SEL, a child must have reached **the age of five by July 31** of the calendar year in which they begin SEL. A child who will turn five by December 31 may be considered for admission to the SEL upon request by the parents. Any such student's admissibility will be evaluated by the Admissions Office, the responsible pedagogical staff in consultation with the SEL coordinator and the Elementary School Principals. The final decision regarding admission rests with the Head of School.
- As a condition of admission to SEL, a child must demonstrate language proficiency in German and/or English at level B2/C1 or C2 (see Common European Framework of Reference: <https://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de>).
Children with limited or no knowledge of the German language may be admitted to the *Fast-Track Program*. As participation in the Fast-Track Program alone is insufficient for acquiring proficiency in German, parents are advised to take additional measures to support the student's language development as outlined in Section II.
- A one-time repetition of the SEL may be required. The final decision rests with the Head of School.

B. Admission to Grade 1

- To be admitted to Grade 1, a child must have reached the age of six by July 31 of the calendar year in which they will begin Grade 1.
- A child who will turn **six years old by December 31 of the calendar year in which they would begin Grade 1** may be considered for admission to Grade 1 upon request by the parents, and following the successful completion of a school readiness test and consultation meetings. The final decision regarding early enrollment rests with the Head of School, in consultation with the Elementary School Principals.
- In order to be considered for admission to Grade 1, the child must demonstrate language proficiency in German and/or English at level B2/C1 or C2 (see above). Children with limited or no knowledge of German will undergo an entrance assessment in German, English, and Mathematics. The recommendation for admission to the *Fast-Track Program* is made by the DaF (*German as a Foreign Language*) Coordinator. The final decision regarding admission rests with the Head of School, in consultation with the Elementary School Principals, the DaF (*German as a Foreign Language*) Coordinator and the Admissions Office. As participation in the *Fast-Track Program* alone is insufficient for acquiring proficiency in German, parents are advised to take additional measures to support the student's language development, as outlined in Section II.

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- A student may participate in the *Fast-Track Program* for a maximum of two years, after which point, **the student will be required to transition out of GISW. The final decision rests with the Head of School.**

C. Admission as a Transfer Student to Grades SEL–4

- Transfer students must demonstrate age-appropriate language proficiency in German and/or English as determined by the School, as well as age-appropriate developmental progress as determined by the School in order to be admitted to the Elementary School.
- When applying for admission to GISW, parents or legal guardians must submit, health forms, report cards and documents such as developmental reports and/or recommendation letters from all of the student’s previous educational institutions. An assessment test may be conducted. A consultation meeting with the parents or guardians may take place. The Head of School, in consultation with the Elementary School Principals and the Admissions Office, will make the final decision regarding the child’s admission based on all available information. **Withholding relevant documents may result in termination of the contract with GISW.**
- In certain instances, and as a condition of admission, GISW may require that a student repeat a grade level, place a student in a lower grade level and/or admit them to the *Fast-Track Program*, depending on their developmental and language proficiency. The same Guidelines that pertain to the *Fast-Track Program* in Section II above apply here.
- These admission regulations also apply to students transferring to GISW from another German (International) School Abroad.

IV. Admission to the GISW Upper School

(This includes Grades 5-11)

- Students from school systems in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, or Lichtenstein are generally admitted and placed based on the submitted report cards, recommendation letters, and other documents. However, each student must submit all required elements of the admissions packet, and the School may refuse admission to any student for any lawful reason. Depending on the student’s educational background, GISW may make admission contingent upon the results of a placement tests.
- Students transferring from an international school in Germany, a German International School abroad, and/or a non-German-speaking school may have to take an entrance examination test. Students with little or no German language proficiency may be admitted to the *Fast-Track Program* only in Grade 5.
- Students may not be admitted as transfer students into Grade 12, as Grades 11 and 12 both constitute the qualification phase and are included in the overall assessment for the German International Abitur.

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Addendum:

The admission of students with health limitations, whose medical care cannot be adequately provided by the School's Health Room, requires a careful individual assessment by the Health Room Manager, in consultation with other healthcare professionals if necessary. Following this assessment, and consistent with applicable laws, admission may be denied if deemed necessary.

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