

German-Texan Heritage Society • *German International School of Texas at Austin*

PARENT HANDBOOK

2023 / 2024

901 Trinity St, Austin, TX 78701

GTHS Office: (512) 467-4569

School Phone: (512) 903-5143

<http://germaninternationalschooltx.com/>

August 2023

Purpose of this document

This document outlines the operational policies and procedures for the German International School of Texas at Austin that apply to families of the school community. It is revisited at least yearly by all teachers and staff, and edited with feedback from the community and observations from the year with the goal of maintaining an excellent school community and culture, as well as a safe and nurturing school experience for students.

To be considered for acceptance into the German International School of Texas for any academic school year, parents must read the *Parent Handbook* thoroughly, and sign the *Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form*, which can be found at the end of this document stating that they agree to abide by all policies explained herein. Parents will be notified by email of any change or amendment to the school's operating policies and procedures during the school year and will be additionally required to sign a document stating that they have read and agree to these changes. All parents of children returning to the school must review this document yearly as part of the re-enrollment process.

School Mission

Supported by research-backed principles of early education in the US and Germany, and through collaborative effort of the entire school community, it is our goal to provide students with the fundamental skills and tools needed for their first steps into formal education. We promote a positive view of learning, curiosity, critical questioning, and a world-view that is broad and tolerant.

It is the primary goal of teachers at the German International School of Texas at Austin to observe, guide, and facilitate students' social interactions and other explorations of the physical and social world around them, as well as to create an environment that is welcoming and inspiring. Each student is recognized as an individual, each with their own personal interests and proclivities. Teachers offer the tools and guidance needed for the development of self-responsibility and confidence to become a co-creator with the human community, small and large.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The German International School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and this policy extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Required and Additional Policies

Preschool and Kindergarten Policies

The German International School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The following policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers.

1. Hours of Operation

The German International School is open Monday through Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm. The standard school day runs from 9:00am to 2:00pm. We generally follow the Austin ISD yearly calendar, observing most of the same holidays and breaks. Tuition is based on a yearly amount, and payment amounts are not affected by any absences, holidays, or school closures. Parents are provided with a yearly school calendar listing all holidays before the start of each school year.

[2023/2024 Calendar](#)

2. Release of Children

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child anytime. In the event that a parent is unable, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up their child. Children will not be released to a minor. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form. The authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

3. Illness and Exclusion Policy

Children who are ill should not attend school. The German International School of Texas at Austin observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

- 1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, including outdoor play.*
- 2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.*
- 3. Oral temperature of 101 or armpit temperature of 100.*
- 4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, or 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours.*

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of severe illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, the German International School of Texas at Austin may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 24-hours without any medication.

4. Medication

The German International School of Texas at Austin does not administer any medication. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please inform your physician that your child is in school and that you prefer to give medications at home, in the morning and evening. If necessary, parents may administer medication themselves at the school during the school day with a signed medical information sheet.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

Parents may elect to provide the school with insect repellent and/or sunscreen, which teachers will apply to students as needed.

5. Procedures for Handling Emergencies

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff are First-Aid certified and will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, providing the location and nature of the emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency. If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

6. Parent Notifications

Open communication with parents is very important to children's success and the well-being of the school community. The German International School welcomes open-communication between teachers, parents, and students.

The German International School of Texas at Austin may communicate with parents via:

- Email
- Documentation placed in your child's weekly folders
- Social media sites such as Facebook
- Verbal communication from staff

7. Discipline & Guidance Policy

The German International School of Texas at Austin staff are trained in approaches to discipline and guidance that encourage the growth of self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Examples include positive reinforcement of behaviors that follow the values and culture of the school, being clear and consistent of behavior expectations through positive statements, and redirecting behavior when necessary.

Corporal Punishment or negative discipline have no place in the Immersion School classroom. Using fear and humiliation to direct behavior negates the mission and purpose of the school. Teachers and the German

International School of Texas at Austin reserve the right to deny acceptance and terminate care at any point in the event that a child is not a good fit for the school community.

8. Meals & Snacks

The German International School of Texas at Austin does not provide or prepare any meals or snacks. Parents must provide sufficient food for an early-morning snack (around 10am) as well as a full lunch daily. Additionally, students participating in the after-school program will need to pack an extra snack. Before-School students may bring their breakfast to eat at the school.

Please advise the school if your child has any allergies. Any special dietary requirements will need a written confirmation from a licensed medical provider.

9. Immunization Requirements

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in the school. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

10. Tuberculin Testing Requirements

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required in order to be enrolled in our program.

11. Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Parents must bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

12. Enrollment Procedures

School Tour / Open House*

During the school year, we allow visits to the school for interested parents and children. Interested and waitlisted parents can sign up to visit and tour during our monthly scheduled open houses. [Sign-up here](#)

**school visit not mandatory for application to the German International School of Texas at Austin*

Application and Deposit

To be considered for acceptance into the school, you must complete the application form AND submit the application deposit.

For instructions for filling out an application and arranging payment of the deposit, please email gis@germantexans.org.

Acceptance

Students may be admitted to the school at any point in the school year. Parents will be notified of acceptance to the school by the primary email address provided in the application form. Acceptance is contingent upon

available space, review and approval from the school's teachers and director, and the parents' agreement to adhere and abide by the school's operational policies and procedures.

Enrollment

Children are considered fully enrolled once the first month's tuition has been paid and all necessary documents have been completed and signed ([checklist](#)). Retention of enrollment status is contingent upon timely payment of tuition installments and continued compliance with the school's operational policies and procedures.

Re-enrollment

All application items must be re-submitted for any child returning the following year, including application deposit. Returning students are given priority in regards to acceptance.

13. Transportation

The German International School of Texas at Austin does not offer transportation to or from the school. Transportation used for any field trip will be communicated with parents, and students will not be allowed to participate without written consent from parents.

14. Water Activities

The German International School of Texas at Austin does not participate in swimming pool activities. During warmer weather, children may participate in sprinkler and splash play at the school. Parents' written consent is required before a child is allowed to participate.

15. Field Trips

The details of any field trip will be provided to parents at least 48 hours prior to the date of the field trip. Parents' written consent is required before a child is allowed to participate.

16. Animals

Animals are not allowed on the German International School campus, excluding for school-related purposes. If animals are scheduled to be present at the school, prior notification will be provided to families, and a consent form would need to be signed and returned for children to participate in activities involving animals.

17. Questions or Concerns

Parents are encouraged to [contact](#) the office in person, by phone, or in writing with any questions or concerns regarding these policies and procedures.

18. Open-Door Policy

We welcome parents at any time, in any area of our school.

19. Parent Participation

Parents are and remain the most important caregiver throughout a child's transition into school. Therefore, it is important that parents and teachers maintain an open and regular line of communication regarding developmental and educational progress.

20. Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers

The German International School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and we follow the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

This facility is regulated by the STATE Department of Human Services; Adult and Family Services Division.

Child Care Licensing Coordinator:

Christopher Markley

GTHS Executive Director

507 E. 10th St., Austin, TX 78701

512-467-4569

christopher.markley@germantexans.org

21. Compliance History

The German International School of Texas at Austin encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection can be found at:

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp

Parents may also contact our local child care licensing office at 512-834-3426

22. Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. The German International School of Texas at Austin is a GANG-FREE ZONE.

23. Emergency Preparedness Plan

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for the German International School. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, the German International School of Texas at Austin will ask parents to participate accordingly. During any emergency the best course of action is to BREATHE AND STAY CALM, know how many children you have, and have your sign-in and -out log and transition sheet in your hands. If you have children of your own in the facility, but in another classroom, trust that their teachers will take care of them just as you are taking care of the children in your care.

In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to Constanze Heitkoetter and/or Annette Barrada. In the absence of a director, the GTHS Director on duty (Christopher Markley) assumes the role of Director and then designates another staff member to assume the responsibilities of the Assistant Director. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of his/her duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as he/she deems necessary.

Tornado / Bad Weather

- *Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.*
- *Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet and stuff it in your clothing.*
- *Grab your flashlight.*
- *Take all of your children to the safe room that is designated for your classroom. Have the children sit as close together as possible and have the children duck and cover. This will be familiar to the children since you practice this each time you have a severe weather drill.*
- *Stay there until advised that the bad weather has passed.*
- *It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.*
- *The Director in charge will monitor local weather stations and the weather alert radio for updates.*

Communicable Disease Outbreak

- *All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding toileting, hand-washing, food preparation and general common sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding, teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc., to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness in the first place.*
- *In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.*
- *The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.*
- *The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.*
- *All staff is to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.*

Lockdown

(INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT, INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, DISTURBANCE)

- *The Director, or person in charge, will announce, "Lock Down" or other discrete code and will call 911. The director, or designated person, will supervise the front desk at all times during the incident, if possible.*
- *Upon hearing this, or sooner if you are aware that an intruder has entered the building or immediate vicinity, say calmly to the children a discrete phrase, such as "Rabbits in the Hole"; the children will know what to do because you practice this every month.*
- *Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet in your hands and stuff them into your clothing.*
- *Close all your classroom doors.*
- *Turn off the lights.*
- *If you have reason to believe that no one else in the center is aware of the danger, and you can safely do so, use the phone to call the office and calmly announce the secret code for "Lock Down".*
- *Whisper and remind the children that "we are to be very quiet."*
- *Do a name/face check silently.*
- *Keep the children and yourself safe, in place, and away from all interior and exterior windows. Watch the children, not the situation!*
- *If the intruder enters your classroom, do not argue with him.*
- *The Director, or person in charge, will ensure that all building entrances and exits are locked and that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.*
- *Await further instructions from the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.*

Accident

- *Breathe and stay calm.*
- *Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.*
- *Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.*
- *Apply first aid as needed.*
- *Call the office if you need further assistance and/or the Director, or person in charge to call 911.*
- *If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.)*
- *If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.*
- *Complete an Accident/Incident Report, everyone who is witness to the accident must sign it immediately, and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.*
- *Turn the Accident/Incident Report in to the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.*
- *Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential while in your presence. When the report is signed by the parent, turn the report into the office.*
- *In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and a Director, or the designated person in charge, will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.*

Illness

- *Ask the child, "What doesn't feel good?"*
- *Take the child's temperature.*
- *If the fever is over 100.4 degrees, the Director, or person in charge, will contact the parent.*
- *If no fever, make the child comfortable and keep an eye on him.*
- *If the child complains of pain, ask him to point with one finger where it hurts the most and then investigate that spot for injury or discoloration and call the office.*
- *Light vomiting or mild diarrhea: If no pain, call the office after the third episode.*

Explosion, Chemical Spill, or Gas Leak

That occurs INSIDE the facility:

- *See procedures for FIRE and OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION*

That occurs OUTSIDE the facility:

- *Close doors and lock if possible.*
- *Turn off air conditioner/heater.*
- *Turn off lights, computers, TV, radio, CD player, or anything else that may cause a spark.*
- *Keep children seated on the floor and calm. Sing quiet songs or read stories.*
- *Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.*
- *If you detect a strong odor, show the children how to lift up and breathe through their shirts.*
- *If told to evacuate, consider crawling to avoid strong fumes that are floating higher in the air. Ask for clarification, if time.*

Bomb Threat or Other Threat

- *Write down everything the person says.*
- *Ask where the bomb is. Ask when the bomb (or other threat) will "go off" or "happen".*
- *Write that down, too.*
- *Notify Director, or person in charge, to call 911 immediately.*

Off-site Evacuation and Relocation

- *Your primary responsibility is to keep the children safe.*
- *Keep your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet in your hands or stuff them into your clothing.*
- *If time allows, gather children's bags and coats.*
- *Children will be evacuated by foot. Depending on the situation, the city may also send transportation vehicles.*
- *The Director is responsible for keeping a charged cell phone with them and overseeing and directing the evacuation process. They are the last person to leave the building.*
- *The Assistant Director is responsible for taking the emergency binder (of permission slips and parent contact information), the first aid kit, emergency medication (i.e. insulin, EPI pens, asthma medications), and a charged cell phone and accompany the first vehicle to the evacuation site so that they can be in charge of the evacuation site.*
- *The Director and Assistant Director must remain in contact throughout.*
- *Evacuation and relocation site for the German International School of Texas at Austin is the German-Texan Heritage Society.*
- *After all children and staff have been relocated to the evacuation site and are safe and have had all needs taken care of, the Director and Assistant Director will designate staff to contact parents and notify them of the situation.*
- *Staff members will continue to supervise and take care of the children including entertaining them with songs, stories, games, etc. at the evacuation site. Watch the kids, not the situation.*
- *The Assistant Director will continue to supervise and take care of the needs of the staff.*
- *The Director will be the contact person for emergency personnel and parents.*
- *The center's usual verification process for allowing adults to pick up children from the center will be used at the evacuation site. (i.e. only persons listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized to pick up will be allowed to do so after showing photo ID.)*

Fire

- *When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, quietly say, "Fire drill everyone; line up at the door, please." This should be familiar to them since you say it every month when you practice monthly fire drills. Your primary responsibility is to get the children safely out of the building. Do not attempt to put out the fire unless it is between you and a child or preventing exit.*
- *Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet and keep it with you.*
- *Make a quick head/face count. Make sure you have everyone.*
- *Proceed to the fire exit and exterior meeting place as designated on the floor plan in the classroom.*
- *Do a name/face check once you are outside and check it against your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet. If anyone is missing, tell the Director, or person in charge, or a firefighter immediately, but never leave the children unsupervised.*
- *The children must be safe (out of way of emergency vehicles and the fire) and supervised at all times. Watch out for anthills, broken glass and other hazards. If the designated exterior meeting is deemed unsafe (in the way of emergency vehicles and the fire), the Director will move the children to the gated parking lot of the GTHS.*
- *Watch the kids, not the situation.*
- *The fire department, Director, or person in charge will tell you when you and the children can re-enter the building or begin off-site evacuation procedures.*

Staff and Management Responsibilities

- *When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, the Director sounds the alarm, if necessary, thus alerting everyone and notifying the fire department.*
- *They then proceed to go to each classroom to ensure that everyone is out of the building.*
- *When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, the Assistant Director takes possession of the emergency binder and says aloud, "I have the binder!" and then proceeds to assist all classrooms to safely exit the building.*

- *When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, if a contracted teacher or teaching assistant is in the building (and not when already counted in child/staff ratio), they will assist teachers especially with the youngest students.*

24. Breastfeeding

The German International School of Texas at Austin can provide a comfortable place with a seat for any nursing mothers to breastfeed their child.

25. Child Abuse Reporting Law Requirements

The German International School of Texas at Austin staff are REQUIRED by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizes and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. The German International School of Texas at Austin has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. The German International School of Texas at Austin will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect. The staff may not notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except per the recommendation of CPS or the police when they are called.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are: leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html. The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

26. Well Checks

The German International School of Texas at Austin staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects.

27. Tuition and Fees*

\$900 (10 months/yr – August - May)

Tuition is paid to the German-Texan Heritage Society and payment is due on or before the 5th of any month your child is enrolled at the school prior to 8:00pm in the months of August through May. All payment should include the full amount of tuition as well as fees and additional services (listed below). Upon acceptance into the school, you will receive a list of payments owed for each academic year. Checks returned NSF will be charged \$35. A \$10 per day late fee will be added for all non-payments.

28. Extra Fees

Application Deposit \$150

Each new and returning student is required to submit a deposit with their application to reserve a spot for their child(ren) in the coming school year.

Supply Fee \$75

Paid semesterly with your August and January payments.

Before and After-school care

All amounts besides "drop-in days" are calculated monthly and in addition to the tuition amount.

Before School Care (7:30 AM - 9 AM)

- *M-F* **\$200 monthly**
- *4 days per Week* **\$170**
- *3 days per Week* **\$140**
- *2 Days per Week* **\$100**
- *1 Day per Week* **\$55**
- *Drop-in* **\$15**

After School Care (2 PM - 4:30 PM)

- *M-F* **\$340**
- *4 days per week* **\$280**
- *3 Days per Week* **\$225**
- *2 Days per Week* **\$160**
- *1 Day per Week* **\$85**
- *Drop-in* **\$25**

Late Pick Up Fee

Children not enrolled in after-school care must be picked up by 2:00pm. Children who are enrolled in after-school care must be picked up by 4:30pm. If you are late to pick up your child, a \$10/hr late fee will be assessed. Any late fees must be included with your next scheduled tuition payment.

** GTHS membership discounts do not apply to school tuition or fees.*

** Tuition and Before-School/After-School programs are based on a monthly amount, i.e. absences and holidays do not affect this rate*

29. Absence, Holiday, and Vacation Policy

Tuition rates and before and after-school care are calculated based on the academic school year, i.e. holidays and/or student absences do not affect the amount. If a child joins the school on a date other than the first day of the school year, a prorated amount is used to determine payments according to the days remaining in the year.

30. Parent Referrals

We do not currently offer any parent referrals.

31. Confidentiality

As members of the school community, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from the German International School of Texas at Austin must remain confidential at all times. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

32. Parent Code of Conduct

Please understand, young children are present in our building. The German International School of Texas at Austin urges you to be mindful of the language you use on our property. Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The German International School of Texas at Austin has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian. The German International School of Texas at Austin must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property.

33. Parent Responsibilities

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Parents who fail to sign children in or out may be charged a \$5 penalty for each occurrence. Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of the German International School of Texas at Austin are not permitted to take children home from our center. Children are allowed to bring one small, soft toy, but it may be requested that these items be stored during the day if they lead to distraction or conflict. Otherwise, unless specifically requested for an activity or project we ask that no items for play are brought from home. The German International School of Texas at Austin staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys.

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder and/or posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, or in email.
- Pick up any take-home examples of your child's work regularly. This provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be generally aware of the daily schedule, and especially mindful of meal times and rest times as to not cause a disruption in the classroom schedule, which affects all of the children in the classroom.
- Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to the classroom.
- To promote healthy eating among students, we encourage parents to pack foods for snacks and lunch that are healthy and nutritious.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly.
- For sanitary reasons, children are required to wear underwear and socks.
- Children's fingernails need to be properly groomed. Long fingernails on children can be very harmful as they can permanently scar or damage the skin or eyes of themselves or others.
- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services do not allow smoking on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

34. Withdrawal from the School

Thirty (30) day written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from the German International School of Texas at Austin. Any payment due for a month in which the child attended school must be paid in full. The German International School of Texas at Austin has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason.

35. Custody Situations

The German International School of Texas at Austin would prefer NOT to get involved with custody disputes. The German International School of Texas at Austin will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents' information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, the German International School of Texas at Austin has the right to terminate care.

36. Inclement Weather Policies

The German International School of Texas at Austin will generally base decisions to close or delay the start of school on the decisions of other school districts, colleges, and universities in the Central Texas area. Any decision by the Austin Independent School District to close and/or delay school will be followed by GIS of Texas; please monitor local TV stations and AISD social media for any announcements of closure and/or delayed start. Any delay or closure will be communicated to parents via email, including those events where our school does not follow the decision of AISD.

Full tuition is due during inclement weather times and inclement weather days will not be made up. In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

37. Child to Staff Ratios

The German International School of Texas at Austin prides itself in its small class sizes, and strives to maintain a maximum student-to-teacher ratio of 1:10.

38. Birthdays

Parents may send a treat to share with the class with prior approval from the teacher. However, it must be store-bought with a complete list of ingredients. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance.

39. Clothing

Children must provide a complete change of clothing, clearly marked with the child's name, that remains at the German International School of Texas at Austin. Children need to be dressed appropriately for the weather every day as we will spend significant time outdoors except for during the most extreme weather (above 100 degrees, below freezing, heavy rain, etc.). Additionally, please dress your child in clothing appropriate for play, including at times with somewhat messy materials.

In order to participate in active play, children should follow these dress guidelines daily:

- Closed toe shoes and clothes that allow them to move freely and do not restrict movement or would cause tripping or get entangled. No flip flops, sandals, long dresses etc.
- Children may wear rain boots outside, but must bring an additional pair of shoes to school that is appropriate for active play indoors.

- Children should keep a change of clothes at school that is appropriate for active play, the season and weather.
- Hats and hoodies may not have any straps or strings which could cause strangulation
- Children should not wear jewelry that could get caught on play equipment.

40. School Safety Policies

Parents need to personally escort their child(ren) inside the building and sign them in and out when their children enter and leave the facility.

Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly. You will be notified of any incidents other than very minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time of any and all incidents that occurred. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all emergency medical fees.

41. Cameras

The German International School of Texas at Austin does not use closed-circuit camera monitoring

42. Photographs

The German International School of Texas at Austin believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their own child, unless written permission is given by the other parent(s). Please note: during school hours, Pre-K graduation, GTHS camps, classes, festivals, markets, and other events, photographs may be taken for the sole purpose of advertisement.

43. Cyber Identity/Social Networking Web Sites

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of the German International School of Texas at Austin are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

44. Cell Phones

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building.

45. COVID and Teacher Vaccination Policy

All teachers, staff, and volunteers entering the classrooms are highly encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and other vaccinations, however are not required. Note that all teachers and staff for the 2022 - 2023 school year have been vaccinated. Please see the full details of our COVID policy for the 22/23 school year [here](#).

Policies for the Preschool Classes

1. Curriculum

Though our curriculum and approach to education is informed by many methodologies, we look heavily to the [preschool education plan of Baden-Württemberg](#). We plan inquiry-based projects on individualized student interest. German is the dominant language at the school, with English being used when it is functionally more appropriate (for example, a confused, or upset, child). Preschoolers do not need any prior German language knowledge.

Developing World-View

We believe that education most fundamentally should strive to develop tools to conceptualize the world and to become a responsible creator in it. It should help students to navigate the life-long process with self-confidence by assisting in:

Developing self-responsibility

The formation of the idea of the self in this world

Becoming a collaborative, contributing member of society

The formation of the idea of others in this world

Becoming a responsible co-creator

Participation in the world community

Fields of study

<u>Communication, Language, and Media</u>	<i>hand puppets, role-plays, rhythm, rhyming words, onomatopoeia, playing with characters, multiplayer games</i>
<u>Health</u>	<i>mirrors, diet, differences in appearance, sensory exploration, outside play</i>
<u>Sciences, Environment, and Technology</u>	<i>building and designing toys, playing in nature and with nature, experiments</i>

<u>Mathematics</u>	<i>scales, clocks, play-money, measuring, calendar, sorting, counting</i>
<u>Arts and Music</u>	<i>paper, colors, shapes, painting to music, instruments, singing, dancing, movement and rhythm games, circle games</i>
<u>Social and Cultural life</u>	<i>portrayal of self, social role plays, cooperation games, expressing feelings, name games, world events and celebrations, and celebrations</i>

Teachers Role

It is the role of the teacher to pay attention to the social relationships between children, to support them in these interactions, as well as to protect children from emotional or bodily injury.

Functional roles of teachers:

- Observing and documenting
- Structuring of the day to day activities
- Suggesting forms of play
- Long-term project structuring
- Offering access to space and materials
- Ensuring inclusion of all children
- Overseeing smooth transitions

Teachers maintain an environment that offers:

- Opportunity for forming relationships
- Developmentally fitting and engaging pedagogical stimulus
- Ample time for self-paced learning processes.

Teachers shape the future of the school:

- Formal professional development to inform our educational concepts and strengthen the program
- Continual, informal collaboration and discussion of our daily work
- Regular, formal meetings throughout the year to review state of the school and make adjustments

2. Sample Daily Schedule

The German International School of Texas at Austin follows a daily schedule designed specifically to meet the children's developmental, social and emotional, and personal needs. All schedules are contingent on the needs of the children and may vary from day to day.

Below is an outline of your child's typical day:

7:30 - 9:00 am – ***Before-Care Activities***

9:00 - 9:15 am – ***Arrival / Morning Snack***

9:15 - 10:00 am – ***Activities, projects, learning centers and free play***

10:00 - 10:30 am – **Greeting, morning circle, group learning activities**

10:30 - 11:30 am – **Physical Movement Outdoors (Indoors in inclement weather)**

11:30 - 12:30 pm **Lunch**

12:30 - 1:30 pm – **Restful Period**

1:30 - 2:00 pm – ***Closing Activities***

2:00 - 4:30 pm: – ***After-Care Activities (Snack at 2:30pm)***

Morning Circle Time

We begin each day gathering together as a class to check in with each other. We sing, converse, play, and offer a preview of what the day will bring.

Projects and Activities

Project Work

Teachers continually observe and document children's behavior, their choices of play, the topics of their stories and language, their artistic expressions, dreams and daydreams, and their demonstrations of motor skills. It is from these observations that we look for pedagogical opportunities, and plan projects and activities in collaboration with the children accordingly to address their emotional and physical needs. Projects will look at a thematic topic from the lens of various fields of study. Project work activities take place both indoors and outdoors.

Teachers catalog their observations, and the class will partake in a reflection of what they've experienced and produced during the course of a project.

Movement Activities

All students in the preschool classes will participate in movement activities, both indoors and outdoors, that require use of small and large muscles that are scheduled at least twice daily. This helps to promote a healthy, active lifestyle and the resulting benefits. Students will participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous outdoor physical activity, and 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active indoor activity daily.

Exploring Activities

Students will participate in “child-initiated” activities, where equipment, materials, and supplies are within reach of the child and where the child has autonomy in deciding how to apply the materials. Exploring activities take place both indoors and outdoors.

Before- and After-Care Activities

Programming outside of the regular school day centers around playful activities that extend what children are working on during the school day. Instructors plan for hands-on, student-driven activities, similar to Exploring Activities during the school day.

Project Portfolios

Teachers facilitate in collecting examples of work and experiences in individualized *Project Portfolios*. Examples of these experiences include teachers’ daily written reflections regarding children’s experiences and events, children’s artwork depicting their experiences, as well as photographs and videos of their interactions with their world.

Following the wrapping up of a project (typically 4 weeks to a few months) student work is evaluated and reviewed by the group. Photos, videos, audio recordings, and other examples of their work from the project are reviewed and discussed.

Enrichment Teachers

Special enrichment teachers will supplement the work of the primary teachers and before- and after-care instructors, visiting with children in small groups regularly throughout the week. Examples of these programs include Yoga and Music.

3. Classroom Assignments

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child’s chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. Temporary transitions between classrooms may take place throughout the week, and students may be transitioned to another class within a school year.

4. Nap Time

All students are highly encouraged to nap or take a mindful rest between 12:30 and 1:30pm. Please send a cleaned mat and cover or sheet for naptime *every Monday*. You may optionally bring a pillow. These items will be sent home at the end of your child's week to be washed.

Students who are still restless after 30 minutes of the class' quiet restful period will be provided with an alternative, quiet activity (books, quiet-activity-bag, etc.).

6. Personal Belongings

Parents must supply a water bottle for their child daily. Please label everything (lunchbox, clothing, water bottle, etc.) with your child's first and last name. Please leave valuable items at home.

7. Active Play, Indoors and Outdoors

Active play - physical activities, both indoors and outdoors - plays an important role in child development. Its benefits include improved motor skills, overall health and muscle strength, increased openness with parents and caregivers, self-awareness, appreciation for the environment, improved communication skills and relationships with peers, aid in brain development, and development of a sense of independence.

We will dedicate a minimum of 60 minutes to active play each day. Physical activities outdoors include running, playing on playscape, tricycles/cars/push toys, hula-hoops, balls, bubbles, jumprope, gardening, outdoor games. Physical activities indoors will take place in the music room and classroom; examples are dance, movement with videos, balance exercises, games with scarves and balloons, and yoga. In case of inclement weather, outdoor active play will be replaced with indoor physical activities.

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Please review [section 39](#) of this handbook regarding Appropriate clothing relating to outdoor activities.

8. Biting

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. The German International School of Texas at Austin will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible, however, disenrollment is always a possibility when the problem cannot be resolved in a timely manner.

Policies for the Elementary

1. Curriculum

Our curriculum at the Elementary-level (Kinder and 1st Grade) will continue to foster students' taking their own responsibility, initiative, and ownership of learning and a tolerant and broad world-view, with a focus on language and culture. Students study German and English as a first-language, and lessons for all subjects take place in both German and English. **Elementary school children should have at least a strong ability** to understand spoken German.

Though our curriculum and approach to education is informed by many methodologies, we look heavily to the education plan for Grundschule of Baden-Württemberg. We also ensure that our Kindergarten curriculum framework incorporates skills and knowledge of local public Kindergartens so that students are on grade-level and prepared for transferring, be it to another private school or the public school system.

Students begin to take a greater role in planning inquiry-based projects completed throughout the year. Lessons, activities, and projects explore topics under the subjects listed below.

Fields of study

Core Curriculum

English

Students will take their first steps into reading and writing. Students will learn sight words, letters and letter sounds, to recognize rhyming words, and handwriting skills. Additionally, students will learn to recognize features and conventions of print and digital media, as well as learn early media literacy skills.

Deutsch

Students further their exploration of the topics and practice to develop the skills in English class as they apply to German. Students will learn about letter and letter sounds in the context of the German language.

Cultures and Society

Students learn about and reflect on the cultural practices and products (religion, foods, art, music, stories, etc.) of their communities and the communities of the world.

Sciences, Environment, and Technology

Hands-on, project based exploration of the natural physical world. Introduction to the natural sciences.

Mathematics

Number sense and early mathematics. Students learn to count to 100, add and subtract. Students learn about money, time, and other practical applications for math in their daily lives.

Electives

Movement, Health and Fitness

Running, jumping, throwing, dancing, competing, and collaborating. Learning about our bodies.

Arts and Crafting

Crafting, drawing, painting, printing, digital art, exploring famous art and artists, etc.

Music

Making, listening, and understanding music. Singing and playing instruments.

Theatre

Dramatic play, expressive movement, imitation and recreation of sounds and objects.

2. Sample Weekly Schedule

The German International School of Texas at Austin follows a daily schedule designed specifically to meet the children's developmental, social and emotional, and personal needs. All schedules are contingent on the needs of the children and may vary from day to day.

Below is an outline of your child's typical week:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	Morning Circle (SEL learning)				

9:30					
	Recess				
10:00	Movement, Health and Fitness	Arts and Crafting	Music / Theater	Movement, Health and Fitness	Arts and Crafting
10:30					
11:00	Deutsch	English	Global Studies	Deutsch	English
11:30					
12:00	Lunch / Recess				
12:30					
	Restful Period / Quiet Activity				
1:00	Math	<i>Unit Project</i>	Science, Environment, and Technology	Math	<i>Unit Project</i>
1:30					
2:00	Closing Activities				

Morning Circle Time

Students gather as a group to check in with each other every morning. During morning circle, students converse, move, play, and discuss the plan for the day. Students read, sing, and talk about emotions and how we express them, and explore ways to handle difficult situations that we may experience.

Types of Activities

Lessons:

The teacher introduces students to new concepts which are explored by the class as preparation for center activities.

Centers:

During center time, students are introduced to activities that explore and practice the skills of each of the 5 core subjects (English, Deutsch, Global Studies, Science, and Math). Students take control of their own learning during center time, with the teacher serving as a guide to facilitate their completion of work.

Projects:

Multi-week projects are undertaken in small groups and as a class throughout the year. Projects are interdisciplinary, combining topics, skills, and understanding from all core subjects and electives. Teachers design projects based on student input and according to specific needs and interests of the class as a whole.

Following the wrapping up of a project (generally 2 - 6 weeks) student work is evaluated and reviewed by the group. Photos, videos, audio recordings, and other examples of their work from the project are reviewed and discussed by the class.

Assessments

Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of what has been learned and practiced through teachers' informal assessment of students' work and interactions. Teachers collect examples of student work that demonstrate growth, as well as places where future effort should be focused.

At the conclusion of the year, parents will receive a formal summary from their child's teacher with respect to their assessment of student learning and growth. Students are evaluated on their behavior, work ethic, and academics. This formal assessment will be discussed between the teacher and the parent at the end of the year in a conference.

German International School of Texas at Austin

2023/24 PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have received a copy of the German-Texan Heritage Society German International School of Texas at Austin Parent Handbook - version *August 2023*.

The handbook contains policies and rules which apply to me, and my child(ren). I agree to abide by the school policies and procedures therein.

Parent's Signed Name

Date

Parent's Printed Name