

GERMAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

SEATTLE, WA



Artwork by Julia Drossier

A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS



A VERY WARM WELCOME

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the German Language School of Seattle, WA.

We are looking forward to taking your child on an exciting journey to explore the customs and traditions of German speaking countries and learn to master the beautiful German language, the language of Schiller and Beethoven, Albert Einstein and Claus Friedrich Gauss, Steffi Graf and Karl Lagerfeld, of Doris Dörrie and Angela Merkel!

One of the major languages of the world, German is the first language of about 95 million people worldwide. It is the official language in six European countries and the most widely spoken native language in the European Union.

In a time when xenophobia is on the rise once again, studying a foreign language encourages respect for another culture, expands our horizons and helps bring down the barriers between people. "A different language is a different vision of life," Federico Fellini famously said. Globalization, increasing mobility and the internet have brought the world closer together and have made intercultural understanding more important than ever.

I very much hope that the learning experiences at GLS will support your child to develop into a multi-lingual, open-minded and tolerant global citizen.

Should you have questions or encounter problems while at GLS, please talk to us. We are here to help and will do what we can to make your journey a delightful one.

With my best wishes for a successful start and a wonderful time at GLS!

Susanne Rinner

Principal, GLS



MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

The German Language School (GLS) is a non-profit organization that has been offering excellent German language education for over 50 years. We are teaching German at all levels to children from Kindergarten through high school as well as to interested adults in a stimulating and welcoming environment on Saturdays. Students are admitted to our school regardless of gender, gender expression, race, color, nationality, faith, disability or sexual orientation. We value diversity, celebrate each family's uniqueness and foster cross-cultural understanding.

GLS strives to instill in our students an appreciation and love for the German language and for the culture of German speaking countries. Our students learn in an exclusively German and multi-sensory environment which includes music, arts and sciences and makes the German language accessible to children of a wide range of German-speaking abilities.

It is very important to us that our students truly enjoy coming to school on Saturdays. We work very hard to design creative and inspiring lessons which make learning engaging and fun and contribute to our students' social and emotional development.

Our highly motivated teachers foster interest and enthusiasm in our students and encourage as well as support them to do their best. Besides enabling them to develop their German language skills, they strive to instill tolerance, open-mindedness and critical thinking skills. They also nurture a positive self-image, self-motivation and self-discipline as well as promote kindness and caring for one another and the world around us. Our teachers collaborate well, work as a team and regularly participate in professional development training.

GLS is committed to evaluate regularly its teaching practices and curriculum, is open to new ideas and concepts in order to maximize student learning and welcomes new ideas and suggestions from the GLS community.

We promote an educational culture of collaboration with all of our parents and other German language schools in the area. GLS warmly invites all parents to participate in the learning experiences of their children and to support the school in various ways, e.g. as volunteers, board members, and fundraisers.

OUR TEACHERS

All of our teachers are native German speakers or have native German abilities and love what they do. All teachers regularly attend professional development courses, workshops and seminars in the field of foreign language education.

OUR STUDENTS

We accept children as young as 4 years of age into our classes. Kindergarten students must be potty-trained and mature enough to participate in class without a parent present. Exceptions to this rule can be made for medical conditions and/or other extenuating circumstances if previously discussed with the child's teacher.

The principal has the responsibility to assign the children to a certain class, according to their age and German language ability.

CLASS HOURS AND SCHEDULES

Classes meet on Saturdays from 9.30 am – 12.00 pm from September through June. 32 classes are guaranteed. There is a 15-minute recess period around 10.45 am.

PARKING

Please follow the signs for parking as you enter the Villa Academy campus and park your car in the designated parking areas only. Please remember, the South gate on 51st Street is an exit only.

STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport the children to school in a timely manner, to supervise them until school officially begins, and to pick them up promptly at the end of the school session.

We accept children at their scheduled class time and appreciate you respecting the precious minutes before classes that teachers need for preparation. All of our students need to be signed in and out with his/her respective teacher in the classrooms. Exceptions can be made for students older than 12 years but a form must be signed by parents.

Please arrive on time to pick up your child. If for some reason, you are delayed, please call us, so we are informed and can pass on a message to your child. We will wait with your child until you arrive.

We understand that unexpected circumstances may arise which will result in you being late to pick up your child. However, being late repeatedly can't be tolerated. A mandatory fee of 10 \$ will be charged after the second late pick-up (being more than 10 minutes late).

If your child is picked up by someone other than you, a note signed by a parent MUST be sent to school. Under no circumstances will we release your child to an unauthorized party. We are very concerned about your child's safety and no exceptions will be made to this rule. Without written authorization, your child will remain at school until we can contact you to pick up your child.

HALLWAY AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

We ask our students to respect the property of Villa Academy students whose classrooms our students are using. Materials, computers, toys, displays are strictly off limits to our students.

SCHOOL MATERIALS

At the beginning of the school year, some teachers will hand out textbooks and workbooks to their students. If that is the case, students are required to bring their books to class every Saturday. Some classes (esp. our higher level classes) might be working with a great variety of materials and only use textbooks occasionally. In addition to books and textbooks, all students need to bring a binder, pencils, an eraser, scissors, a ruler, a glue stick and colored pencils to school. All textbooks are the property of GLS, must be kept in good condition and need to be returned at the end of the school year. GLS needs to be reimbursed for books which are not returned. Workbooks are for the students to keep.

CLOTHING

Please send your child to school dressed appropriately for the weather. On most days, we will play outside during recess. Please send warm jackets, mittens, rain coat, boots and hats, etc. as needed. Also, during the warmer months, sandals don't work very well on the playground because of the bark and slivers.

LOST AND FOUND

Our school has a box for lost and found items in our library. Please mark your child's coat, bag, backpack and all other important items with her/his name. For lost items please check the box or contact the Villa's custodian during the week at 206-234-8882.

SNACKS AND ALLERGIES

We encourage you to send a small, healthy snack with your child each week. Due to food allergies and sensitivities we ask students not to share food.

Please inform us about all food allergies of your child. That is especially important if your child has a serious and/or potentially life threatening allergy which would require either a 911 call, medication or shots.

OFF-SITE CLASSES AND FIELD TRIPS

GLS believes in the importance of cultural experiences and, if possible, makes arrangements to attend German plays, musicals, operas, movies, etc. We currently are not able to offer transportation for all of our students to these events, and, therefore, need to ask parents to provide transportation. Carpooling is very much encouraged and the schools is happy to help with arranging carpools. Any payments (e.g. entrance fees) must be made PRIOR to the scheduled events.

ILLNESS

If your child will be absent from school due to illness or any other reason, please inform the teacher in advance. Before returning to school, your child must have been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Please keep in mind that sending your child to school ill can get other children sick as well. If we observe any signs of illness, we will contact you and request that your child be picked up.

Students with communicable diseases are not permitted to attend class to protect other students from exposure.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will notify you or your emergency contact and expect that arrangements will be made to pick up your child from school as soon as possible.

FAMILY VACATIONS

If your child will be on vacation and absent from school, please let us know in advance. If you are going to be gone but your child will remain home, please inform us as well. Unfortunately, no tuition adjustments can be made for family vacations.

CHANGES WITHIN YOUR HOME

Please let us know if there are changes in your family situation which might affect your child's behavior at school. We will treat this information with much care and confidentiality and will be as supportive as we possibly can to your family.

Please remember to make any necessary changes in terms of emergency information.

SAFETY POLICY

The safety of your child is our primary concern. During the first few weeks of school, we will inform the students of our indoor and outdoor safety rules as well as how we will respond in the event of an earthquake, fire or other disaster. These safety rules will be reviewed and enforced throughout the school year.

You can expect that every precaution will be taken to provide a safe environment. Should an accident occur, we will follow Villa Academy's emergency procedures. If appropriate, you and/or your emergency referrals will be contacted immediately.

OUR INDOOR RULES ARE:

- Use inside voices.
- Use walking feet.
- Share school material.
- Clean up when you are done working or playing.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

During school hours, parents and children are welcome to enjoy the playground. General playground rules that are in effect during school hours are listed below. We ask your cooperation in abiding by and reinforcing these rules when you are using the playground facilities.

PLAYGROUND RULES:

- Playing is allowed only within the fenced area.
- Sticks, rocks, and bark should stay on the ground.
- No throwing of anything, including sand.
- No standing on the slide.

- No walking or crawling on the top of the horizontal ladder on the climbing structure.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSURE

During periods of inclement weather – be it snow, heavy rains, flooding and associated power outages – the safety of our students and staff is our primary concern. Rather than following a particular school district’s closure policy, please check our website and/or with your child’s teacher for schedule changes and closure information. The website will be updated frequently (at least daily) during inclement weather.

If snow begins to fall or significant weather changes occur soon after you have dropped off your child at our school, please return to the school or call us for further information about a possible closure of the school.

We offer make-up classes for all full morning closures.

EMERGENCY GUIDELINES FOR CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

- A catastrophic event includes severe weather, gas or hazardous material leaks, police issues, or a code alert status signaling a terrorist attack. During such potential danger the following procedures will be implemented by the school depending on information from local authorities:
 - Continue to operate as usual.
 - Stay open until children are picked up by their parents.
 - Initiate a lock-down until further information is given.
 - Initiate a shelter-in-place procedure when it is determined that for the safety of all, everyone should remain inside. At this point, no one will be admitted to pick up a child until a clearance is given by authorities.
 - In the event of either a lock-down or shelter-in-place status, it may be difficult to maintain phone contact with everyone. Individual phone calls to parents will NOT be made so that lines can be left open for emergency contact. Rather, if possible, a message will be left on the schools' website to keep everyone informed about the situation. In addition, please follow information on the radio regarding the actions of public school districts surrounding us.

FEES AND OBLIGATIONS

Our budget is based on full enrollment from September through June. Your timely payment helps us to meet and maintain our operating budget.

The registration fee is not refundable.

Tuition is based on annual costs per child and needs to be paid in full at the beginning of the school year or in three installments as specified on the registration form.

No refunds are offered for missed days.

If for some reason you are not able to pay tuition on time, please notify the treasurer or registrar immediately. There will be a \$15 charge for handling NSF checks returned to us from the bank. A late fee of \$35 applies to all payments received after their due dates.

Required payment for any other items throughout the year must be done with a separate check or cash payment.

GLS reserves the right to cancel classes in case minimum enrollments are not met.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If a student is to be withdrawn from school for any reason, the responsible adult is required to notify the principal or treasurer in writing (not email) **at least 30 days ahead of time**. The responsible adult will still be responsible for tuition due and a return of all materials, including textbooks and any materials checked out from the library (books, movies, etc.).

If the withdrawal is requested before the half year mark (up to and including January 25th, 2020), half of the tuition for the remaining Saturdays will be refunded.

If the withdrawal is requested after the half year mark (January 26th, 2020 or later), there will be no tuition refund of the yearly tuition.

Unpaid tuition installments are due in full at the time of withdrawal.

Our withdrawal policy is intended to protect the long-term operation of GLS as a non-profit organization. Should a student need to be withdrawn due to a medical emergency or other exceptional circumstances, please contact and talk with the principal.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Teachers regularly inform parents via email about class contents and other important issues. In addition to that, the principal sends out monthly newsletters to all parents.

A bulletin board at the entrance to the 4th floor will also be used to communicate and/or remind parents of important school information. Be sure to check the board when you drop off or pick up your child.

Please hand all important information directly to the teachers as they will not go through their student's bags.

Should you need or want to discuss certain issues with your child's teacher or the principal, please reach out to them either in person or via email and they will be glad to arrange a time with you to talk. Matters of particular importance and of sensitive nature should not be discussed in front of other students. Any conversation between parents and teachers will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be shared with the children or other parents.

Minor differences between a student and a teacher or between students will be settled at school and not be brought to the attention of parents. However, we will inform you of any particular matters that we consider to be of a more serious nature.

VISITORS AT THE SCHOOL

Parents are welcome to visit the school any time but we ask that you refrain from visiting with the teachers, other parents, or children in the classroom during classes. The teachers' lounge on the third floor is available for parents who wish to wait for their children at school. Should you wish to attend a class with your child, please make arrangements with the teacher ahead of time.

Children who don't attend classes may visit the school only if they are supervised by an adult.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

Students are expected to act respectfully toward teachers and behave appropriately toward other students. Parents and guardians agree to support the teaching staff in these matters.

If a student disrupts a class or acts inappropriately while at school, the teacher will talk with the student and, if necessary, will inform the principal and parents/guardians.

If, after several disciplinary steps, the behavior of a student does not improve and he/she continues to behave in inappropriate manners, the student may eventually be suspended or terminated from our program. No refund of tuition will be granted in such a case.

ON DISAGREEMENTS

Parents/guardians and adult students agree to settle all disagreements arising from GLS attendance by mature discussion and by mediation if necessary, specifically waiving any other outside means, excepting binding arbitration, to settle differences.

As a small non-profit association, we seek to reach agreement for the common good quickly. The following clauses require that you mediate in good faith any disputes with the German Language School for Children before you may seek arbitration.

Any dispute, claim or controversy arising out of or relating to the participation of any student in the German Language School for Children, including the determination of the scope or applicability of this agreement to arbitrate, shall be determined by arbitration in Seattle, Washington, before one arbitrator. The arbitration shall be administered by JAMS (Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services)* pursuant to its Streamlined Arbitration Rules and Procedures. Judgment on the Award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction. This clause shall not preclude parties from seeking provisional remedies in aid of arbitration from a court of appropriate jurisdiction. The arbitrator may, in the Award, allocate all or part of the costs of the arbitration, including the fees of the arbitrator and the reasonable attorneys' fees of the prevailing party.

The parties agree that any and all disputes, claims or controversies arising out of or relating to the participation of any student in the German Language School for Children shall be submitted to JAMS (Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services), or its successor, for mediation, and if the matter is not resolved through mediation, then it shall be submitted to JAMS, or its successor, for final and binding arbitration pursuant to the arbitration clause set forth above.

Either party may commence mediation by providing to JAMS and the other party a written request for mediation, setting forth the subject of the dispute and the relief requested. The parties will cooperate with JAMS and with one another in selecting a mediator from JAMS panel of neutrals, and in scheduling the mediation proceedings. The parties covenant that they will participate in the mediation in good faith, and that they will share equally in its costs. All offers, promises, conduct and statements, whether oral or written, made in the course of the mediation by any of the parties, their agents, employees, experts and attorneys, and by the mediator or any JAMS employees, are confidential, privileged and inadmissible for any purpose, including impeachment, in any arbitration or other proceeding involving the parties, provided that evidence that is otherwise admissible or discoverable shall not be rendered inadmissible or non-discoverable as a result of its use in the mediation.

Either party may initiate arbitration with respect to the matters submitted to mediation by filing a written demand for arbitration at any time following the initial mediation

session or 45 days after the date of filing the written request for mediation, whichever occurs first. The mediation may continue after the commencement of arbitration if the parties so desire. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the mediator shall be disqualified from serving as arbitrator in the case. The provisions of this Clause may be enforced by any Court of competent jurisdiction, and the party seeking enforcement shall be entitled to an award of all costs, fees and expenses, including attorneys' fees, to be paid by the party against whom enforcement is ordered.

* <http://www.jamsadr.com/locations/resolutioncenter.asp?id=19>

FINAL REMARKS

This booklet is provided to families as a reference. If at any time you have additional questions, please speak to your child's teacher or contact the principal.

Our goal is to provide an outstanding German language learning experience for your child. Thank you for selecting our school to enrich and educate your child.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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