

Information for Overseas Students (Year 7 -12)

**German International School Sydney (GISS),
CRICOS Provider ID: 02379**

Information and policies are in accordance with the ESOS ACT 2000 and the National Code.

1.0 The German International School

The school is an accredited German School Abroad, supported by the Federal Republic of Germany and guided pedagogically by the Secretariat of the Standing Committee of the State Education Department (KMK) with the aim to provide German School Leaving Certificates for Years 9 and 10.

The Commonwealth of Australia and the State of New South Wales acknowledge the German International School Sydney as equal to other private schools in NSW. The school is registered with the NSW Board of studies for Kindergarten to Year 12 and is licensed by the Department of Community Services for the operation of the Preschool.

The school offers neither the NSW Year 10 School Certificate nor the NSW High School Certificate.

The school is authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation to offer the International Baccalaureate Programme (for Years 11 and 12) in Australia. The non-award (not recognised within the Australian Qualification Framework) IB Diploma course is accepted worldwide as a high quality preparation for university studies.

Since 2002 GISS has made places available for international students in the secondary school (mainly in Year 10-12). We recruit our students through recommendations within our school community and our website. Thus, most of our overseas students come from German speaking countries in order to complete the bilingual IB Diploma course. Other students have transferred from several international 'German Schools Abroad' to graduate Year 10 at GISS. Since January 2008 we also cater for overseas students (and their accompanying families) in our primary school.

1.1 Entry requirements

The German International School Sydney (GISS) is a non-selective school which welcomes and caters for international students.

In order to be accepted for enrolment at the GISS, students have to meet the following requirements:

- are of high school age;
- live in the care of parents/ carers (as defined under DIMA requirements) or with local home stay families;

- have an adequate level of academic skills in German/English literacy and numeracy according to the German and Australian school standards;
- have a satisfactory behavioural record;
- be capable of applying learned knowledge at the appropriate age level;
- provide evidence in the form of satisfactory academic reports from their previous school.

Costs of obtaining certified translations, if necessary, are to be met by the applicants.

1.2 Attendance and academic requirements for overseas students

Student Visas for overseas students are granted subject to a number of conditions, one of which is Condition 8202 – Satisfaction of Attendance/ Academic requirements

1.2.1 Satisfaction of attendance in full time courses:

Students are required to attend classes each day of the school week according to our school time table and school terms.

Attendance Information for Overseas Students:

The attendance of our overseas students at GISS should not fall below 80% (National Code 39.6), however students are encouraged to attend 100% at all times. Once the absence reaches 20%, the school is obliged to inform the Department of Immigration (DIMA) via PRISMS. DIMA may ask the student to explain the absences to them and produce any medical certificates etc. that may be the reason for the absences.

Monitoring of Attendance of Overseas Students:

The attendance of our overseas students will be monitored in accordance with the GISS attendance procedure and the GISS – Attendance and Absence Policy (IB):

GISS – Attendance Procedure

Before the beginning of the first lesson the teachers should take the Class Books from the teacher's room to the classrooms.

Check the attendance and enter it into the Class Roll Book.

In the case of a student arriving late the arrival time should be noted, after his/her name.

The teachers have to check the entries and transfer them to PC school at the end of lessons, on a daily basis.

As a general rule, a written notification from the parent or guardian should be received the following day. If there is no notification as to the reason for the absence of the student, the teacher is to contact the parents or guardian.

If after two days of absence there is still no information as to the reason for the absence, the class teacher is to notify the Principal.

The Principal will take appropriate measures and inform the regional home school liaison officer Department of Education.

Absences without permission will be noted in the student files and also shown on the reports. On leaving the school all students must supply us with the name and contact details of their new school, including the country. If these details have not been provided a registered letter will be sent to the home address requesting the information. If no response, within 7 days the principal will inform regional home school liaison officer Department of Education.

All attendance roll records are kept for a minimum of 7 years at the schools archives. All electronic records are stored in the school's off-site data back up.

GISS Policy – Attendance and Absence (IB)

Responsibility of the Student

i) Students must attend all lessons unless they are sick or have a written dispensation from the Principal.

ii) Upon return to school (the first day back), the student should have organised a written and signed note to explain their absence, and should have this in their possession. This should either be;

- a note from a parent,
- a note from the IB Coordinator (if the student is an overseas student),
- a doctor's certificate for the whole time of absence (if more than 2 days),
- a Principal signed note (if the student had received a special dispensation from the Principal prior to their absence),
- a doctor's certificate (if the student was absent when an assignment was due or an examination or test was taken).

NOTE: A telephone call is polite, but the student will still need to organise a written and signed note to explain their absence.

(iii) The student should show to and get a signature on this note from all course teachers whose lessons they missed during their absence.

(iv) When the student has completed this, they must give the note to their `Class teacher` for filing.

(v) It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on all work and information which they missed during their absence.

(vi) If a student has not handed up an assignment or homework due to absence, they must hand that assignment or homework up on their first day back at school. If they have missed an examination or test due to absence, they must be prepared to take it on the first day of return, or, if the course teacher decides, to set a new date for the test/examination to be taken. In the case of a Principal's special dispensation, students must ensure that all assignment/assessment/examination responsibilities have been taken account of before they leave school.

Responsibility of the Course Teacher

i) If a student is not in a lesson, the course teacher is to mark the date of absence in their `Class/Roll Book`. This is standard practice.

ii) At the beginning of the next lesson when the student returns, the teacher asks to see and must sign either;

- a note from a parent,
- a note from the IB Coordinator (if the student is an overseas student),
- a doctor's certificate for the whole time of absence (if more than 2 days),
- a Principal signed note (if the student had received a special dispensation from the Principal prior to their absence),
- a doctor's certificate (if the student was absent when an assignment was due or an examination or test was taken).

NOTE: A telephone call is polite, but the student will still need to organise a written and signed note to explain their absence.

iii) If the student doesn't bring in the note on their first day back, the course teacher is to remind the student to bring it to the next lesson.

iv) If the student hasn't brought back the note within a week, the course teacher is to inform the `Class teacher`.

v) When the student has shown the note to the course teacher, the course teacher is to mark this in their `Class/Roll Book` over the top of the original entry. A highlighter pen, pencil or red tick might be useful for this task.

vi) The teacher is to offer support to the student to help them catch up on missed work or information. However, they can expect previously set work to be handed in on the day of return.

vii) The course teacher is to keep a running check on the percentage of lessons which the students have missed.

viii) If the percentage of lessons missed goes over 20% at any phase during the course, the course teacher needs to inform the student, the `Class teacher` and the Coordinators in order to report the student's lack of attendance via PRISMS.

ix) The percentage of lessons missed for each semester will need to be written on the bottom of the semester reports.

Responsibility of the `Class teacher`

i) If a student is absent for more than two days, the `Class teacher` should make enquiries to find out what the problem is and if there is anything which we can do as a school to give support.

ii) If a course teacher informs the `Class teacher` that a note has not been shown to explain absence, then the `Class teacher` should speak with the student to ensure a prompt resolution to the issue.

iii) The `Class teacher` should file the absence notes in an organized fashion and investigate any inconsistencies.

iv) The `Class teacher` should work together with the Coordinators/Principal to try and resolve any issues with regard to a large absence rate.

1.2.2 Satisfaction of Academic Requirements:

An overseas student will need to meet the majority of the following GISS performance criteria to be assessed as achieving Satisfactory Academic Performance at GISS.

Students who appear to be in breach of the condition of Satisfaction of Academic Requirements will be counselled and given guidance. If no improvement is noticed the student will be reported to the Immigration Department via the PRISMS system.

GISS – Assessment Policy

Rationale:

- Accurate and comprehensive assessment of student performance against German and Australian standards aids in establishing open communication, guides student learning, assists in establishing future direction, and helps to identify areas of exemplary performance, as well as those areas in need of support and assistance.

Aims:

- To assess school and student performance accurately and comprehensively against German and Australian standards.

- To improve student learning by accurately determining current performance as well as areas of future need and development.

Implementation:

- The German International School Sydney is responsible for accurately assessing student achievement against standards and progression points detailed within the Essential Learning Standards.
- Assessment requires a mix of summative assessment of learning to determine and report what the student has learned, formative assessment to guide future learning, and ongoing assessment to focus teacher feedback alongside student self-assessment and reflection. Fundamentally, assessment will be used primarily to guide future lessons and learning, rather than simply a prelude to reporting achievement.
- The school has established a whole-school assessment schedule for teachers which will include a variety of assessment strategies providing multiple sources of information about student achievement. These may include tests and assignments, projects, portfolios, performance observations, discussions and involvement in statewide standardised testing processes and school entry assessment tests.
- The school has developed a manageable system of keeping records that will provide a rich mixture of observations, results, reflections and discussions.
- Teachers use the data they collect to make judgements about, and report on, student achievement in the essential learning standards.
- Staff participates in moderation professional development involving assessment maps and annotated work samples so that staff can apply consistent judgements of student progress against essential learning standards across the school.
- Our school will progressively develop individual learning improvement plans for all students in consultation with students, parents and where appropriate, with others with specific expertise.
- Self-assessments by students against individual learning goals is a feature of our assessment regime.
- We will provide in-services for parents on assessment the curriculum and state-wide testing.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Policy – The Process of Reporting Student Achievement (Years 7 - 10)

There are various formal and informal levels of reporting on student achievement.

Informal in the Classroom: Where teachers give constant feedback to students on their progress. This might include feedback on oral contributions or the completion of homework and other smaller exercises.

Formal in the Classroom: Where teachers give written comments on work completed and where parents are expected to sign completed and assessed tests and assignments. This might also include notes in a student's diary or in the 'Klassenbuch'.

Semester Reports: These are issued to students and parents after every semester and give a cumulative academic grade for the semester for every taught subject.

Policy – The Process of Reporting Student Achievement (Grade 11 and 12)

There are various formal and informal levels of reporting on student achievement.

Informal in the Classroom: Where teachers give constant feedback to students on their progress. This might include feedback on oral contributions or the completion of homework and other smaller exercises.

Formal in the Classroom: Where teachers give written comments on work completed and where parents are expected to sign completed and assessed tests and assignments. This might also include notes in a student's diary or in the 'Kursheft'.

Quarterly Update Reports: These are issued to students and parents after every quarter, and give them an effort and academic grade for every taught subject. They are presented on the same form over the year so that students and parents can track academic and effort progress over any given academic year over the 2 year course.

The academic grade is cumulative, taking into account all relevant assessment components and holistic judgements. They should give an indication as to the student's academic standing within the course up to that point in time. As the course progresses, the expectations will increase to a point towards Term 3 in Year 12, where expectations should align with IB standards. Thus, these academic grades should converge with IB predicted grades which need to be sent to the IBO at the end of Term 3 of Year 12. The IB grading scale of 1 to 7 is used.

Akademische Leistung/ Academic Grade

- 1 = sehr schlechte Leistung / Minimal Performance
- 2 = Schlechte Leistung / Poor Performance
- 3 = mittelmäßige Leistung / Mediocre Performance
- 4 = befriedigende Leistung / Satisfactory Performance
- 5 = gute Leistung / Good Performance
- 6 = sehr gute Leistung / Very Good Performance
- 7 = ausgezeichnete Leistung / Excellent Performance

When calculating a student's academic grade, teachers take into account their overall performance across all types of assessment tasks completed so far in the course. The grade must therefore be consistent with previous grades given. A jump of 2 or 3 grades might indicate that assessment has not been regular or consistent enough. Students should be receiving feedback on assessment work every 2 -4 weeks.

The effort grade gives an indication of a student's effort and engagement, and will usually give an indication of academic potential and attitude. An effort grading scale of A to E is used.

Arbeitsverhalten / Effort Grade

- E = unzureichende Arbeitsverhalten / Poor Effort
- D = mittelmäßige Arbeitsverhalte / Mediocre Effort
- C = befriedigende Arbeitsverhalten / Satisfactory Effort
- B = gute Arbeitsverhalten / Good Effort
- A = ausgezeichnete Arbeitsverhalten / Outstanding Effort

Semester Reports: These are issued to students and parents after every semester and give them a cumulative academic grade for the semester for every taught subject. These correspond with academic grades on the quarterly updates. Another grade on these reports are examination grades, reflecting student achievement on the formal examinations which are held in school towards the end of each semester. Semester reports also indicate student achievement across a variety of general learning expectations which are common to all subjects, and subject specific learning objectives, which correspond with those outlined by the IBO in their subject guides. Teachers also include a written comment on student progress in that subject.

IB Coordinator Reporting on Student Progress: Student progress is discussed at every IB Teacher's meeting, approximately once per month, where a plan of action is usually formulated. Furthermore, academic progress is systematically monitored and reported on at the end of each semester by way of a letter. The emphasis of this review is to check student progress with regard to potential results for the completed IB Diploma.

'Klassenlehrer' and IB Coordinator undertake ongoing checks of overall academic achievement for overseas students. If it is found that the students do not maintain satisfactory academic results for the IB course, the school must report the student to the department of Education, Science and Training in accordance with ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code.

Parent/Student & Teacher Afternoons/Nights: These are held two times a year to give an opportunity for parents and students to receive formal oral feedback on student progress.

Final IB Diploma Results: These are determined by student results in written examinations and internal assessment components as determined by the IBO. They are reported to students via the internet, and paper copies of IB Diplomas and Certificates are posted to the school afterwards.

1.2.4 Notification to DEST and DIMA

Student details:

Details of each student accepted will be submitted to DEST/DIMA via PRISMS within fourteen (14) days.

Changes:

Any change of status to a student's enrolment will be notified to DEST/DIMA via PRISMS.

Students wishing to change schools, either to enrol in another Independent or Public School or transfer out, must obtain a letter of release from the course they are undertaking. For students wishing to transfer interstate, the student data transfer notes must be completed and forwarded.

For exiting students, a letter of release is provided by the school upon request. It includes information regarding the following:

- The course currently enrolled in
- The student's commitment to study
- The student's attendance record
- The payment of fees

Breaches:

Breaches of any student visa conditions relating to either attendance or academic performance will be reported to DEST and DIMIA via PRISMS.

Any such breach will be brought to the attention of the student by the principal or coordinators. The school will present the student with written statement given particulars of the breach, and state that the student is required to attend before an officer within 28 days in order to explain the breach. Students will also be informed that photographic identification will be required at the meeting.

1.3 Support services for overseas students

Students under 18 years must be accompanied by either a parent or full-time guardian (as defined under DIMA requirements). Guardians must be adults normally resident in NSW and aware of their responsibilities for the welfare of the students. Delegation of responsibility should be made in writing by parents and accepted in writing by the guardians. In all other cases the school must approve arrangements for care of the student.

It is the student's obligation to advise the school of any change of their contact details.

Home stay & address details

Students under 18 years, not cared for by a parent or guardian (as defined under DIMA requirements) are expected to live in a home stay arrangement approved by the

school. It is the responsibility of the Overseas Students Counsellor to find suitable home stay accommodation for the overseas students. The OSC is also the liaison person between the student, the home stay family and the parents. It is a visa condition that the student maintains this arrangement. A change of the home stay arrangement of the overseas students will be organised and monitored by the school's OSC.

Orientation

The Overseas Student Counsellor arranges for the student to be met at the airport upon arrival in Australia (the students will be usually picked up by the home stay family). The OSE also supports the students in all aspects with their relocation and adjustment to their new school, new country, and a different environment and culture and assists in understanding Visa and Overseas Student Health Cover issues. The school provides guidance and orientation with regular outings to help the overseas students settling in to their new cultural environment.

Academic progress and further studies

The GISS offers a Welcome Breakfast on the first school day where all teachers and students will be introduced to the overseas students, followed by some general information sessions about the school curriculum, timetable and extracurricular activities. In the first school week all overseas students receive detailed information about internal school procedures and further studies including student records, academic and attendance requirements.

Counselling

In our school we care for the educational and personal development of our overseas students. At all times our overseas students have access to counselling services provided by the school's Overseas Student Counsellor (OSC). Support for students is also provided by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Class teachers and Coordinators. The OSC is a continuous point of contact within the school for any issues students, teachers or parents may have. If necessary independent and inexpensive dispute resolution procedures will be available to the overseas student.

2.0 Fees

See our current school fees list.

2.1 Fees Refund Policy and Procedure

Students withdrawing from the School must give one term's written notice or pay a full term's fees. Provided such notice is given pro-rata refunds are made on all tuition fees paid.

If the course does not start on the agreed starting day or the course ceases to be provided before it is completed or is not provided in full then a full refund or partial refund of tuition fees will be made. Refunds will be payable within two weeks of any default by the School. Refunds will be accompanied by a detailed statement of accounts explaining how the refund was calculated.

Where a student does not start the course on the agreed date or withdraws before completion, partial refunds may be approved depending on the reasons for non-attendance or withdrawal and the amount of notice given.

This agreement does neither remove the right to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws, nor the right to pursue other legal remedies.

3.0 General

Students need to be aware that information about them may be made available to Commonwealth and State agencies.

All staff dealing with overseas students at GISS has been advised of their relevant responsibilities under the National Code, the ESOS Act 2000 and relevant NSW requirements.

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