

DIS Primary 'At A Glance'

Dear prospective DIS Parents,

Welcome to Dresden International School. This document is a brief overview of what you can expect in your child's school life at Dresden International School (DIS) and how you, as a parent, can be best connected to their learning. The overview is not exhaustive, but an attempt to highlight some of the more important things that may be new to you or different from previous schools.

Our goal is to build a strong parent-school relationship, and we hope this brief overview will address any queries or concerns that come with moving to a new school. All inquiries are welcome, and you may contact any member of the Primary Leadership Team for further clarity or information.

Kind regards,

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DIS Mission, Vision and Values

All members of our school community should be aware of and focused towards supporting the DIS mission, vision and values.

The DIS Mission

We are a diverse community that empowers innovative and collaborative learning. As learners, we are prepared to be multifaceted, self-sufficient individuals who contribute to society.

The DIS Vision

Inspire. Move Forward. Give Back.

For our students, this will mean an education that is relevant, enriching, and excellent preparation for meeting their needs today and exploring the possibilities of the future. Our collaborative learning culture is based on best practices that inspire students across all grades.

The DIS Values

These values describe principles or standards of behaviour in our school and the wider DIS community.

- **COMPASSION** - Our community shows empathy, respect and kindness in our relationships with each other and as active global citizens.
- **COMMITMENT** - Our community demonstrates dedication towards learning. We persevere in the pursuit of individual and community growth.
- **INTEGRITY** - Our community practices honesty and strong moral principles.
- **OPEN-MINDEDNESS** - Our community appreciates different cultures and personal histories. We seek, evaluate and respect a range of perspectives, and are willing to grow from the experience.

About the school

Dresden International School (DIS) is a private, coeducational day school that offers an English-medium educational programme for students aged 3 to 18, serving both the local and international communities in Dresden, Germany. DIS is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School and is authorised to offer three International Baccalaureate programmes: Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the IB Diploma Programme (DP). It is also fully accredited by the IB, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Council for International Schools (CIS).

Our Educational Programmes

As an IB World School, DIS is one of more than 6,000 schools worldwide that provide International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes. Those schools are found in more than 160 countries, teaching more than one million students worldwide. The International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes offer unique academic rigour and place emphasis on students' personal growth, thus building inquisitive, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed.

The IB programmes give students distinct advantages by building their critical thinking skills, nurturing their curiosity and their ability to solve complex problems. The IB programmes also strive to develop students who will build a better world through intercultural understanding and respect, and foster a healthy appetite for learning and excellence.

About the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)

The Dresden International School has been authorized to teach the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) since 2003. The PYP is designed for students aged 3 to 12. It provides a curriculum framework for international education in which inquiry learning and teaching are the foremost pedagogical approaches. As students engage in this guided/structured inquiry programme, they are actively involved, take responsibility for their own learning, and gradually build a depth of understanding of developmentally appropriate concepts, approaches to learning, and individual dispositions.

The PYP is a transdisciplinary programme in which traditional subject disciplines are taught through a transdisciplinary approach. PYP students learn about and use knowledge, concepts and skills from a range of subjects to explore themes of global significance. These themes unify the curriculum across all PYP schools worldwide. Below are some key elements of our inquiry-based teaching and learning:

- Learning is 'student-centered' – students are valued as learners – they have a voice and can make choices about their learning.
- The programme is 'concept-driven' – focusing on conceptual understandings that are authentic and relevant to real-world contexts.
- The students use critical thinking skills to investigate, question, discuss, and justify using various informational sources (people, artifacts, field trips, media, technology etc.).
- The programme teaches and develops skills that students can use and transfer to all of their learning.
- Student learning focuses on what students know, what they want to know and how they might best find out.
- Students work collaboratively in a variety of group situations.
- Student learning is differentiated to meet all learners' needs.

What parents need to know

Area of School	Topic	Response
Educational Programme Information	The IB Learner Profile	<p>The IB Learner Profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. These attributes help develop internationally minded individuals who experience intellectual, personal, emotional, and social growth.</p> <p>All members of our school community, both adults (including parents) and students, should strive to be: caring, balanced, inquirers, knowledgeable, risk-takers, reflective, communicators, principled, and open-minded.</p>
	Concept-driven curriculum	<p>A concept-driven curriculum is a powerful vehicle for learning that promotes meaning and understanding. It challenges students to engage with significant, 'real-world ideas' through authentic contexts. Concepts help to build students' understanding across, between and beyond all subject areas. For example, students in traditional programmes may learn about 'Dinosaurs', but in a concept-driven curriculum, they may inquire more broadly into the concept of 'Extinction' and its impact on the environment.</p>
	Inquiry Based Learning	<p>Inquiry is the approach to learning and teaching in all IB World Schools. Inquiry based learning cultivates children's interests, curiosities and passions which drive their learning. Through inquiry, students are able to develop and strengthen transferable 'Approaches to learning' skills such as thinking, research, communication, social and self-management. Students are encouraged to seek answers to questions that they develop during the learning process.</p>
	Assessment	<p>Assessment in the PYP is ongoing and happens naturally as part of everyday learning. It supports and strengthens learning, guides teaching and helps students and teachers to develop learning goals. A range of assessment tools are used to monitor and measure student learning, including: pre- and post-unit assessments, teacher observations, student presentations and 'exit tickets', marking of student work, checklists, student reflections, and student screeners. In addition, students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 take the twice-yearly MAP Test, an international online standardised assessment aligned with the US Common Core Standards. Parents receive their child's MAP Test results from the school.</p>
	Differentiation	<p>We provide a differentiated approach to learning that meets the needs of all learners. This means not all students in a class will be learning the same thing at the same time. The focus is to bring all learners from where they are and nudge them to the next step through appropriately levelled learning engagements.</p>

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	Transdisciplinary Learning through 'Units of Inquiry'	Our students learn through 'Units of inquiry'. This transdisciplinary learning approach teaches skills from traditional subject areas through the lens of a global theme of significance. Where possible, the learning of mathematics, language, science, social studies and other subjects is connected to the unit topic. This is engaging for learners and shows students how complex issues are interconnected.
	Collaboration	The PYP focuses on collaboration and group work. We encourage our students to discuss and share their ideas, questions, or opinions so they can learn from one another. As such, this social classroom learning environment helps to build positive relationships and foster collaborative work skills.
	Developing the Whole Child	<p>The PYP philosophy aims to develop the whole child, not simply factual, content knowledge. We teach students to think and inquire more deeply, make deeper connections with their prior learning, develop critical thinking skills, and deepen their conceptual understanding.</p> <p>Likewise, our teachers and counsellors support our learners in their social and emotional development. Our counsellors are available to help both students and their parents through transitions in and out of the school. Please contact the school if your family requires any support.</p>
	Play-based programme for K5 Learners	Our K5 programme has a strong emphasis on 'play-based learning'. This approach to learning develops language, motor, social, emotional and academic skills. Teachers organise a play-based learning environment that provides many opportunities for meaningful and engaging play whilst developing important early literacy, numeracy and self-management skills.
	English Language Learning	Our student population comprises over 30 nationalities, and the majority of students come from homes where English is not their 'Home Language'. As English is our main language of instruction, we provide support for all English language learners and have support teachers who work alongside homeroom teachers to assist all students in developing their language skills and accessing the curriculum. Daily out-of-class group work supports our newest English learners in developing basic communication skills.
	Learning Support Services	<p>We strive to provide an inclusive educational environment that honours the uniqueness of all learners. Our team of educators collaborates with families and teachers of students with learning differences and related challenges to meet their needs.</p> <p>Our Student Support Services team, which includes qualified Learning Support Specialists, is committed to providing various research-based models of support such as targeted small group instruction, response to Intervention, differentiated instruction, and student-centred accommodations.</p> <p>DIS supports students with mild to moderate learning needs using one or more of the following models: in-class support and</p>

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		accommodations, small group targeted instruction, and pull-out intervention.
	Counselling Programme	Our Primary Student Counsellor provides support to enable all students to access the curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to, the teaching of our Wellbeing Curriculum, providing short-term individual and small group support for children in areas of social and emotional wellbeing, assisting parents with outside referrals for services, and supporting transition into and out of the school.
	Information Technologies	Information Technology (IT) provides tools for learning and is not considered a separate subject. All students have supervised access to iPads and/or Chromebooks as classroom resources. Students learn skills and dispositions for using these tools. Skills related to communication and research are also part of our programmes, where students gather, investigate, and share information, or interact with the media to generate ideas or understanding.
	Student Agency and Action	We support all of our students in developing confidence and competence, and in demonstrating 'agency' in their learning. We encourage students to ask questions, have new and independent thoughts, be critical and analytical users of information, and take action based on their learning.
	Primary Voice Coalition	Our Primary Voice Coalition provides an opportunity for student agency. This group meets regularly to discuss issues, plan events, and lead assemblies. This group also helps develop school plans and initiatives. Student voice, choice, and ownership are important parts of learning to become responsible global citizens.
	German Language	From K5 onwards, all students in the Primary section learn German. The programme offers different pathways for students who are fluent in German and for those developing their German through the German as an Additional Language (GAL) programme. Students are placed in these classes based on their proficiency in German.
	PE & Swimming programmes	Everyone is expected to engage in all aspects of the PE and Swimming programmes (even during the cooler months), as they are compulsory parts of the school's curriculum. We have a large indoor sports hall, and we use the swimming pool located at the Schwimmsportkomplex Freiburger Platz, just a hundred meters from the school.
	Library	Students attend weekly library lessons with our Teacher Librarian. Lessons and book borrowing support reading, research skills and encourage a love for literature. Students may also use the library during the lunchtime recess and before and after school (see times on the library door).
	Code of Conduct	All students are expected to follow our Primary School 'Code of Conduct'. It is: Be Safe, Be Fair, Be Respectful

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Activities & Community	Co-curricular - Activities (CCAs)	An extensive Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) programme provides a range of athletic, arts, performance, and academic activities to support and extend curricular learning. CCAs are available to students Monday to Friday after school.
	Instrumental Music Lessons	Instrumental Music Lessons are available on-site and offered by outside service providers (non-DIS staff members). Parents are responsible for the payment for these lessons. Please contact the school for further details.
	Sports Days/Aquatics Events	Our school hosts several Athletics and Aquatics events for all students, and we encourage our families to attend when invited. More detailed information is sent home prior to the event.
	Before and After School Care Holiday Care	All Primary students are eligible to attend our Before and After School Programme. Before School Care starts at 07:00 until the start of the school day. After School Care starts at the end of the school day and is open until 18:00. There are no additional fees to attend Before or After School Care. During most school vacations, a Holiday Care service is available on a daily fee basis. Parents must make a booking for this service. In each of these care programmes, we provide safe, fun learning spaces that balance structured activities with free play; engaging student creativity, curiosity, and active participation.
Events	Grade 5 Exhibition	This is the culmination of the Primary Years Programme, where students inquire into a topic or issue they are passionate about and want to explore further. They share their journey with the community at the staged 'PYP Exhibition'. All Grade 5 families are involved in this journey of exploration.
	Celebrations of Learning	Year level teacher teams plan celebrations of learning where parents come to school during the school day to see current units of work. Sometimes these are the culmination of a Unit of inquiry, while other celebrations demonstrate where work is in progress. We hope you can attend these events.
	Student Performances	There are a range of opportunities for families to attend school events: Visual Arts Exhibitions, Productions - plays, concerts and musicals, etc. Events are advertised on Seesaw and in our 'News and Notes' newsletter.
Home/School	International Mindedness	All members of the school community are expected to work towards this goal by drawing on the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.
	Seesaw	Seesaw is an online communication platform that helps the school and parents communicate. Posts of student work and important messages are shared via Seesaw. Parents can access their child's individual Seesaw account on a computer or via the Seesaw App on their smartphone. Notifications let parents know of new posts or messages in the student's account.

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	Unit Overviews	When grade levels start a new 'Unit of inquiry', the teachers will share a Unit Overview. These outline the intended inquiries and learning engagements, the unit's important vocabulary, and ways parents can help at home. Unit Overviews are shared via our Seesaw platform.
	Home Learning (Homework)	Our Home Learning (Homework) is focused on 'Daily Reading' in English and/or their home language. It is expected that all students read every day because it is highly beneficial for developing language skills. Students are also provided with opportunities to develop English, Mathematical, and German skills through online learning platforms accessible both at school and at home.
	Independence	We believe that children should be encouraged to develop their independence at school and at home, and given opportunities to actively contribute to community service, family chores, tasks, events, and activities. Students should manage their own school bags, library books and school materials.
	Conferences and Connection meetings	Parents can learn about their child's progress via several conferences throughout the year. These are called 'Parent Teacher Conferences' (K5 - Grade 1), 'Three-Way Conferences' *Grades 2 - 5) and 'Student Led Conferences' (all students). We also host Connection Meetings where parents can share with the teachers information about their child that is important to their child's learning and development. Parents are contacted via email to arrange conference bookings. If you would like to speak with a teacher at any other time during the year, you would be most welcome. It is very important that parents email the teacher to make an appointment.
	Written Academic Reports	Written reporting on student progress occurs twice during the school year. These provide a snapshot summary of a student's learning and achievements, covering all subject areas. These are shared with parents in February and June.
	Lost and Found	We collect and display found items in the Building B Atrium. Items left in the Sports Hall can be collected there. If not claimed, items are donated to charity on a regular basis.