
2020-2021

Handbook for Students and Parents



DEUTSCHE
SONNABEND
SCHULE
BOSTON







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MISSION

The German Saturday School Boston is dedicated to teaching the German language to children ages 4 through 17. The School strives to immerse students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the cultures of German speaking countries, thereby fostering their appreciation of global citizenship.

HISTORY

Founded in 1874, the School operates under the auspices of the Boylston Schul-Verein (www.germanclub.org, 8 County Road, Walpole, MA 02081). The School is supported by the Central Agency for German Schools Abroad / Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen (ZfA) and the German Consulate in Boston. It keeps close ties with and cooperates on certain occasions with the Goethe-Institut Boston and the German International School Boston.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Administration

A parent volunteer School Committee, consisting of nine members appointed by the President of the BSV, manages all aspects of the School operation and reports regularly to the Boylston Schul-Verein. The School Committee hires the Principal, the Controller/Registrar as well as all faculty and administrative staff. For further information, please see section "Contact Information."

Faculty

The Principal is responsible for developing and overseeing the curriculum, hiring teachers, and teacher development. The School employs mostly native German speakers as faculty members, many of whom hold academic credentials from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as from the U.S. Our faculty members regularly attend professional development opportunities to learn about the latest teaching methods and materials in foreign language instruction. The School maintains active institutional memberships in the Association of American Teachers of German (AATG), the German Language School Conference (GLSC), the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA), the Weltverband Deutscher Auslandsschulen (WDA) and the German-American Business Council of Boston (GABC).

Unlawful Harassment Policy (Including Sexual Harassment)

Excerpt:

“The School expects all employees and non-employees to be treated and to treat others with respect. The aim is to provide a working environment free from unlawful harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form, which may affect the dignity of the individual or the individual's ability to perform their job. The School's policy prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, military status, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation.”

For a complete transcript of the German Saturday School Boston's Unlawful Harassment Policy visit the School's Web site <http://gssb.org/about-us/unlawful-harassment-policy/> or request a copy from the School administration.

Enrollment

The School is open to all students with the academic skills and desire to master the German language. The student body is made up of children of diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. A significant number of our students hear and/or speak German at home. Students range in age from 4 to 17 and come from many communities in the Greater Boston area and neighboring New England states. Enrollment numbers are limited to keep class sizes at a level conducive to a positive learning experience.

Pre-School

At the entry level, students must be at least 4 years old by August 31 of the enrolling year and toilet-trained. Children should have previous preschool, playgroup or daycare experience. Preschool applicants must show the School a copy of the child's birth certificate to confirm the age at registration or on the first day of School.

All parents of enrolled preschoolers are required to be present in person in the preschool classroom at least 10 times throughout the school year to assist with bathroom visits and class activities.

Kindergarten and Above

An interview and/or placement test may be required for admission.

As German is the primary language of instruction, children with no German language skills will not be admitted automatically to classes above grade 3. The School evaluates the language abilities of first-time students interested in enrolling in grade 4 or above in order to determine the best placement.

Children are placed in classes according to age and/or language ability. The School may combine children from different classes/ages to maintain a positive learning environment.

The School reserves the right to transfer a student to a different class if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student. Parents will be notified in advance. The Principal makes the final decision about classroom placement.

Registration and Tuition

Current / Returning Families

Registration takes place through the online portal in the spring. Current families are notified by e-mail about registration dates. Registration and tuition payment must be completed online through the School's Sycamore Parent Portal. Spaces are guaranteed for returning students. Their siblings are given preference over new students when registration and payment have been completed within the priority enrollment period.

New Families

Registration for new families follows the enrollment period of current families. Dates will be posted on our website and also communicated via e-mail to a list of interested parents. To register a child, parents need to visit the "Registration" area on the school website (www.gssb.org) where directions will be posted. Once the registrar has received the enrollment information, the registration will be processed. Invoices for payment will be sent out to families whose children can be enrolled. Once payment has been received, the student is enrolled in the program.

All accepted students will receive a comprehensive acceptance package via email in late August or early September.

Tuition

The School Committee sets tuition annually and posts it on www.gssb.org. In order to keep tuition costs as low as possible, the School relies heavily on parent volunteers. For further information see section "Parent Participation".

Non-refundable fees

Transaction fees assessed by PayPal and other financial institutions are non-refundable. Late fees are also non-refundable.

Financial Aid

Limited financial aid is available to families in need of assistance through the School's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The TAP Policy and Application form is posted to the Web site under the "Registration" information.

Registration Deadline and Late Fee

Registrations and payments received after the Registration payment deadline will be subject to a \$200 non-refundable late fee per family.

Please note that on the first day of school only registered and accepted students will be admitted to the classroom and no registration is accepted on site.

Wait Lists and Late Admittance

If there are more applications than openings, the School will maintain a wait list. Families with children who could not be accepted will be placed on a wait list. Students placed on the on the wait list before the start of the school year have admission priority over non-waitlisted students.

With the exception of the preschool class, students may be admitted at any time during the school year if space becomes available, pending approval by the Principal and the classroom teacher.

Withdrawal

In case of withdrawal, notification must be made in writing to the Registrar at registrar@gssb.org. The withdrawal policy for 2020/21 has been adjusted as follows:

- Prior to August 31st, 2020 – 100% tuition refund
- Prior to the third day of school – 90% tuition refund
- Prior to the fifth day of school – 50% tuition refund

Additionally, PS/KG parents will receive 100% tuition refund until September 8, 2020.

All applicable transaction fees and the late fees are non-refundable. Please allow 4 weeks for a refund to be processed.

Registration guidelines are subject to change. Please be sure to visit the “Registration” tab on the School’s website for the most current registration information.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The goal of the German Saturday School Boston is for every student completing the tenth grade to have a strong command of German vocabulary and structure, to understand spoken German in a conversational situation, and to be able to express ideas fluently and accurately in oral and in written form, as well as to prepare students for German placement exams and college courses.

German is the primary language of instruction. Acquainting students with the cultures of German-speaking countries is an integral part of our curriculum. Please visit our School website (www.gssb.org) for more information about our academic program.

Standardized Testing

Several standardized German tests are administered at the School.

Special student accommodations for testing

It is the parents' or student's responsibility to inform the Principal every year if special accommodations are required due to an IEP for standardized tests, especially for the National German Exams and the DSD I and II.

National German Exam

In January, the National German Exam of the American Association of Teachers of German is administered to students in grades 6 and higher. The NGE exam measures a student's German proficiency in comparison to about 20,000 others who take the exam nationwide, primarily high school students. There are three different test levels: level 2 correlates to two years of high school German language classes; level 3 to 3 years; and level 4 to 4 years. Our teachers determine the test levels appropriate for each student.

The exam is delivered in electronic format only, which allows for the inclusion of original video and audio clips as source material. Students are able to pause audio and video materials and replay portions within an allotted time.

The exam is comprised of 100 questions divided into (1) listening and viewing and (2) reading and text completion sections. All materials used in the exam are from authentic resources, i.e. newspapers, radio or TV news.

Each participating student at our School is required to bring a laptop on the day of the scheduled test. The School also highly recommends that each student complete the practice test prior to the in-class test in order to ensure that all settings on the laptop are correctly activated and run without any technical problems or delays.

In the past, many of our students have scored in the 90th percentile or higher on this test.

Deutsches Sprachdiplom der Kultusministerkonferenz, DSD

The "Deutsche Sprachdiplom" (DSD) is specifically designed for students of German abroad. The Central Agency for German Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für Auslandsschulwesen, ZfA) is responsible for the design and evaluation of the exams. The German Saturday School Boston is a ZfA-accredited DSD School. The DSD I and II exams provide the most advanced students with an opportunity to demonstrate their German language proficiency at the highest level. In 2009, the German Kultusministerkonferenz introduced DSD Level 2 (B2/C1) and Level 1 (A2/B1) as "Stufenprüfungen", thus allowing for the assessment of a student's language proficiency within different levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. DSD I and II exams consist of four parts: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, written communication and oral communication. Information on those exams is available on www.gssb.org and can be requested from the School Principal (principal@gssb.org).

Student Eligibility: Because these exams are very demanding, student eligibility for the DSD I and especially the DSD II exam is subject to teacher recommendations, which are issued to current students in April of the school year.

Internationale Vergleichsarbeit (IVA) der Kultusministerkonferenz Stufe A2

In April, the *Internationale Vergleichsarbeit Stufe A2 der Kultusministerkonferenz* is administered to students in 8th grade. It tests listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing.

DSD Level I

The DSD I exam is taken in 9th grade and administered in spring (March/April) of 2021. The date for the written and oral exams will be March 2021.

DSD Level II

The DSD II written exam will be administered in November 2020, and the oral exam on January 2021. Students accepted into the School's DSD II program will need to complete one full year of DSD II preparation, as well as half a year until the completion of the oral exam (a reduced tuition rate will be charged for the final half year).

The DSD II diploma is an official certificate accepted by all German universities as proof of German language proficiency and will waive any further language entrance testing. Some American universities recognize the DSD II (B2/C1) by awarding college language credit and advanced placement.

AP Test German Exam and SAT Subject Test German

Interested students are also prepared to take the AP German Exam and the SAT Subject Test German. The first year of the DSD2 class is also an officially recognized AP German language and culture course in the College Board ledger. Students interested in taking the AP German Exam should enroll in the first year of the DSD2 class and register to take the exam directly with their respective high schools in the fall of 2020. Registration for the SAT Subject Test German can be made online at www.collegeboard.com. We recommend the students take these exams in 10th or 11th grade, at the conclusion of the first year of the DSD2 course.

STUDENTS

Attendance

Regular attendance is integral to the academic program at the German Saturday School Boston. Students should not miss classes for reasons other than illness or unavoidable emergencies. If a class is to be missed, it is the parents' responsibility to inform the teacher ahead of time. Attendance is recorded and noted on the report cards. If a student misses more than three Saturdays (or nine hours) per semester, a letter will be sent to the parents, warning them that the student's enrollment status at the School may be jeopardized. Teachers are not required to provide extra help to make up any

missed work; rather, it is the students' or parents' responsibility to obtain worksheets, homework assignments etc.

Homework

Students are expected to prepare for class. Weekly homework assignments begin at an early level. In the upper grades there are quizzes, compositions, reading assignments, and long-term projects. Practice with parental participation and encouragement is important at all grade levels.

General guidelines for homework each week are as follows:

- Grades 1 and 2: 1/2 hour
- Grades 3 to 5: 1 hour
- Grades 6 to 10: 1.5 - 2 hours

These guidelines do not take into consideration individual student motivation, efficiency or work pace. Parents are expected to reinforce the learning process outside the classroom and to encourage their student/s to use supportive materials such as books, audio and visual materials and computer software. The library at the School offers a large selection of these materials for all ages and language abilities. For further information please see section "Library".

Illness Policies

Please keep your child home from School if he/she:

- has been vomiting during the past 24 hours
- has diarrhea
- has an oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher (A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.)
- has a severe sore throat
- has pink bloodshot eyes with yellow or green drainage
- has just begun antibiotics (Any child with a contagious condition, such as strep throat, must be taking the medication for 24 hours before returning to school.)
- has lice or untreated nits. A child must be checked by a medical professional before returning to the classroom.

Student Allergy Information

It is the parents' responsibility to provide accurate medical information regarding any food or environmental allergies during the registration process. In addition, parents should provide information to the classroom teacher and Front Desk Manager on any procedures that are to be followed in case of an

allergic reaction. The School does not employ a school nurse and medication for students cannot be held at the School for the duration of the school year. In cases of severe allergies, the School requires a parent to remain in the building while the student attends class.

Student Conduct

The rules of proper conduct apply to all students throughout the school day. Students are expected to:

1. Show proper respect to teachers, staff, and classmates at all times.
2. Be punctual when arriving for class and returning from breaks.
3. Remain inside the building between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM while classes are in session (unless otherwise directed by and under the supervision of the teacher or for break purposes).
4. Respect all property, in particular all property of the German Saturday School Boston and the Boylston Schul-Verein. Parents shall be held responsible for any damage caused by their children.
5. Help at the end of the school day to return the classroom to its original condition.
6. Not prop open any locked door on the first floor for outside access.
7. Come to class properly prepared to participate fully in all classroom activities. This preparation includes bringing completed homework assignments, the class textbook and workbook, a notebook, paper, pen or pencil and any other materials required by the teacher.
8. Not run or play ball in the hallways.
9. Not bring privately owned balls (soccer, football or otherwise) to School.

Also note: the following are NOT allowed during class:

- Eating, drinking and gum-chewing
- Use of electronic devices (e.g. iPod, cell phone)

Disciplinary Measures

Violations of the School's Code of Conduct are dealt with on an individual basis according to the specifics of the infraction. Teachers will resolve minor offenses, such as disruptive behavior, in class. For continued offenses, teachers will work with the Principal. After consultation with the parents, the Principal will decide on a resolution.

The Principal will report serious offenses to the School Committee for a final determination. Serious offenses include, but are not limited to, physical violence, possession or use of weapons or other dangerous objects (i.e. firecrackers), possession or use of drugs, including alcohol or tobacco, vandalism and triggering of false fire alarms. Such offenses constitute illegal behavior and may result in immediate expulsion. The German Saturday School Boston also reserves the right to dismiss students due to poor academic performance, improper conduct, damage to school property, and lack of regular attendance.

COMMUNICATION

Parent-School Administration Communication

Parent orientation

The School provides parents with program information during the Parent Orientation and during classroom visits at the beginning of the school year (see below).

E-mail communication

Throughout the year the School administration communicates with parents **primarily via e-mail**. It is therefore extremely important to provide the School with updated e-mail addresses (see also "Sycamore Parent Portal").

Communication via text message

Parents can opt to receive text messages from the School (see also "Sycamore Parent Portal"). This communication tool is used in important or emergency situations.

Web site

Parents should also obtain updated information from the School's website at: www.gssb.org.

Facebook

The School administers a Facebook page under the name "German Saturday School Boston" where photos, school events, news and other information of interest to the school community are posted on a regular basis. Parents and students are encouraged to "like" the School's site and follow School news.

The School communication team also administers a closed Facebook group “Freundeskreis GSSB” to which only current School members are admitted. Parents and students can post to this closed group if they are looking for babysitters, want to offer tutoring services, are looking for a carpool, etc.

Communication with Teachers/ Principal

Questions about a child’s classroom, academic progress etc. should first be directed to your child’s teacher. Parents may contact the Principal if a matter requires further attention.

Classroom Visit

A brief virtual classroom visit will be scheduled on the second day of school. Parents are encouraged to meet their student’s teacher and to introduce themselves, as individual teachers can best answer questions about classroom procedures and goals, homework policies, unavoidable absences, academic concerns, parental support etc.

Orientation

The School holds a Parent Orientation Webinar at the beginning of the school year. Parents are encouraged to participate and hear the Principal present important aspects of the academic program as well as meet members of the School Committee to learn about the School administration.

Ongoing Communication

The Principal, the Front Desk Manager, and most School Committee members are accessible by e-mail to respond to any questions or concerns. For e-mail contact information see section “Contact Information.”

Report Cards

Report cards are issued twice a year, in January and May. Grades are based on an evaluation of the student's performance in the areas of participation and written work in class, homework, attendance and achievement tests. Report cards are available online only via download by logging into the family's Sycamore account (see also "Sycamore Parent Portal").

SYCAMORE PARENT PORTAL

The School maintains an online school administration system called "Sycamore" which allows parents access through its online parent portal:

Web site address: <https://app.sycamoreeducation.com>

School ID: 2132

A link to the Parent Portal can also be found on the School website.

Access to Parent Portal

Each registered and accepted family has access to the Parent Portal via the family's User ID and password that has been issued by the Registrar. The User ID is the family's "Family Code" (which cannot be changed) and consists of 3 letters and 4 numbers. The password provided can and should be reset by the user. The family code can be located on the acceptance letter each family receives before the first day of school as well as on the back side of each family's ID badge (see "Entrance Procedures").

Family Contact Information

Each family is responsible for keeping their family, student and emergency contact information up-to-date in the Sycamore Parent Portal (-> My Family -> Information).

Should any edits to the contact information during the school year be performed, please notify the Front Desk Manager at administration@gssb.org that changes have been made, so that any printed records the Schools keeps can be updated accordingly.

Family Directory

The School's online family directory is available to parents via the Sycamore Parent Portal. Privacy settings to publish or not to publish e-mail and mailing addresses as well as phone numbers are made by each family individually within their family account (-> My Family -> Information -> Tab "General"). The online family directory can be accessed -> Front Desk -> Family Directory.

Report Cards and other documents

Report cards and other certificates or documents are available for download online only via the family account. To access a child's report card, login to the

family account -> My Family -> Students -> select student ->Tab "Documents" (repeat if several students in one family).

Enable Text Messaging

In order for the School to communicate with a parent via text message, the following steps need to be taken by the parent to enable this feature:

Login into family account -> My School -> Notifications -> Tab "Family" -> Select Parent -> Select SMS cell phone number -> choose carrier -> check "Parent Notification List".

Once the "SMS Email" field is automatically completed, the SMS notification should be enabled. Repeat for each parent or guardian.

Sycamore "Family" app

Parents may opt to download the "Family" app from Sycamore for their phones for direct access to the School calendar, weekly School news and other School related information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

School Administration

Principal:

Claudia Bonmassar: principal@gssb.org

Front Desk Manager:

Yvonne Case: administration@gssb.org

Volunteer School Committee (Members 2020-2021):

Chair: Dr. Annette Pein (committee@gssb.org)

Parent Volunteer Liaison: Dr. Ines Dwyer (volunteers@gssb.org)

Registration Liaison: Antonia Kenney (registrar@gssb.org)

Communication: Jennifer Brideau (news@gssb.org)

Treasurer: Holger Kunst (accounting@gssb.org)

Library Liaison: Stephan Richter (library@gssb.org)

Events: Maxie Schmidt (events@gssb.org)

IT: Oliver Gros (it@gssb.org)

Facilities: Dr. Stefan Peukert (facilities@gssb.org)

www.gssb.org

Other Positions

Controller/Registrar: Irina Mavrodieva (registrar@gssb.org)

Library Co-Managers:

Yolyett Hohmann & Eva Yarger (library@gssb.org)

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The German Saturday School Boston depends heavily on parent volunteers to keep tuition costs as low as possible. An added benefit of becoming part of the parent volunteer system is the increased involvement of parents in their student's educational experience at the School.

Tuition rates for 2020/21 reflect a \$450 rebate for volunteering families, and has been set assuming that the administration and operation of the School can continue to rely on families pitching in. The rebate does not apply to families unable to volunteer. Volunteers help to defray costs associated with the administrative operations of the School.

The School offers a variety of opportunities for parents to help with various time commitments, based on a diverse range of interests and skills. A complete list is provided during the online registration process and is also available on the School's website. Families opting to volunteer indicate their job preferences when they register their student/s. Please note that while the School makes every effort to accommodate these preferences, all positions have to be filled in order to maintain the quality of the program. Families who stated no job preferences during the registration process will be assigned where needed.

The School notifies parents of the tasks to which they have been assigned with the acceptance package. Any requests for possible adjustments should be emailed as soon as possible to: volunteers@gssb.org.

All parent volunteer meetings will be scheduled by the respective team coordinators. In all meetings team coordinators will provide important information, set up schedules and verify contact information. All families who signed up for a volunteer task are required to attend.

It is expected that parents (or close family members who regularly bring a child to School) fulfill their assigned volunteer tasks *in person* (no nannies or substitutes, please). This policy has been developed over the years to ensure that the School runs as efficiently and safely as possible. Families who signed up as volunteers and do not come to the initial team meeting or do not complete their assignment will be asked to pay back the participation rebate of \$450, in addition to an administrative fee of \$50. Non-compliance with this policy will jeopardize the student's future enrollment status at the School. Please bear in mind that the School cannot provide the current level of education without support from the parents, either by taking over a volunteer task or by paying the non-participation fee.

LIBRARY

The School has a German lending library for students, parents and teachers. The library was founded in 1992 as a parent initiative, and in 2005 endowed its sizeable collection - along with its newly designed and implemented automated computer system - to the German Saturday School Boston. In 2008 the library was renamed the "Krisjann Van Opdorp Library" in honor of its founder and long-time director. Library privileges for School families are included in the tuition.

The Library has an extensive selection of books, magazines, and audio-visual materials for all ages. Emphasis for acquisitions is placed on supporting classroom content areas and on multi-media title reinforcement (book, audio, DVD and CD-ROM) whenever possible. Special exhibits are presented around holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

Operated by parent volunteers, the School Library supports the work of the teachers as well as parents' efforts to continue the learning process between school days. Detailed information about library materials, policies, and procedures will be provided via email. This information is also posted on the School's website for ongoing reference.

Library services will be offered bi-weekly during the school year. Parents will be able to pre-order materials for pick-up from a central location in Waltham. Returns will be handled in the same manner.

The Library welcomes donations of any suitable material.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Calendar

Classes are held on thirty Saturdays from September to May. In order to accommodate families and keep absences to a minimum the School calendar is tailored to public school calendars and major holidays as best as possible. The School reserves the right to alter the calendar if necessary during the school year.

A copy of the calendar is emailed to families along with the acceptance packet to help families plan for vacations, school-related events and activities. The calendar is also available on the School's web site: www.gssb.org.

Hours

School hours are from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Students are expected to be punctual and to be ready to start class at 9:30 AM.

Special Events

In December, the School holds a *Weihnachtsfeier* (Christmas Celebration). In May, a graduation celebration (*Abschlussfeier*) takes place at the Boylston Schul-Verein in Walpole. Both of these events count as school days.

Family Directory

A family directory is made available through the Sycamore Parent Portal. Families set privacy settings individually (see "Sycamore Parent Portal"). Please note that this directory should solely be used for the purpose of assisting families in organizing car pools and facilitating contact with class- and schoolmates and their families for homework consultations or social occasions. Any other use is prohibited.

Photo permission

From time to time the School uses photos or videos taken during the school year and school events on the School's website, Facebook site and other promotional printed materials such as a brochure or year book. Permissions to do so are included in the agreement section during online enrollment.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Each family is required to acknowledge during the online registration process that this Handbook has been read, understood and its rules and regulations have been accepted.

“The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint students and parents with the rules and regulations of the German Saturday School Boston. The handbook provides families with a better understanding of the School and its expectations. Parents will find useful information about the organization and operations of the School.”

The term "parent" as used in this policy includes legal guardians.

The German Saturday School Boston does not discriminate by race, color, religion, sex, age, country or ethnic origin.

NOTES