



# GAIS Handbook

School Year 2009-10

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# **CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>I About GAIS</b>	
1. Overview	4
2. Mission	4
3. Core Values	4
4. School Membership	4
5. Board of Directors	5
6. Organizational Structure	5
7. School Accreditation	6
<b>II Admissions and Placement</b>	
1. General Conditions	6
2. Admissions	6
3. Language Proficiency Policy for Grades 1-8	7
4. Student Records From Other Schools	7
5. Admissions Documents	7
6. Withdrawal From School	8
7. School Tuition and Fees	8
8. Class Assignment Policy	8
<b>III Preschool Program</b>	
1. Preschool Philosophy	8
2. Staff	9
3. Preschool Curriculum	9
4. Language in the Preschool	9
5. Daily Program	10
6. Extended Day Program	12
7. Student Behavior	13
8. Special Events	13
9. Preschool Parent Information	14
10. Clothing	15
11. Sharing Things From Home	15
12. Personal Belongings	15
13. Licensing and Reporting Procedures	15
<b>IV Academic Program</b>	
1. Languages at GAIS	16
2. Kindergarten Program	17
3. The Primary Years	17
4. The Middle Years	17
5. Curriculum Overview	18
6. Reporting Procedures	18
7. Promotion and Retention Policy	19
8. Textbooks and Materials	20
9. Homework Policy	20
10. Home Reading Program	20

## **V Supplementary Programs, Activities and Special Events**

1. Extracurricular Programs	21
2. Afternoon Care (HORT)	21
3. Field Trips	21
4. School Library	22

## **VI Student Welfare, Behavior and Discipline**

1. Attendance and Punctuality	22
2. Acceptable Absences	22
3. Recess	23
4. Lunch at GAIS	23
5. Student Pick Up	23
6. Emergency Plan	24
7. Behavior and School Rules	24
8. Bullying Prevention Policy	26
9. Sexual Harassment/Prohibited Harassment Policy	28
10. Emergency and Health Forms	30
11. Immunizations	30
12. Student Illness	30
13. Head Lice	32
14. Illness or Accidents at School	32
15. Medicine Administered at School	32
16. School Insurance	32
17. Visitors and Campus Access	33

## **VII Communications**

1. Parent-Teacher and School Communication	33
2. E-mail	33
3. School Directory	34
4. Parent-Teacher Conferences	34
5. Parent Conference Days	34
6. Proper Channels of Communication	34

## **VIII Parent Participation**

1. Parent Representatives	35
2. Traffic and Parking Policy	36
3. Telephone Chain	37
4. School Nights	38
5. Volunteering and Job Assignments	38
6. Social Events	39
7. Fundraising	40
8. Buy-out Option	40
9. Donation of Goods	40

# **I About GAIS**

## **1 Overview**

GAIS was founded in 1988 by a group of parents with a commitment to international education and the goal to educate critical thinkers for tomorrow's world. Today, the school represents a dynamic international community of over 20 nationalities, sharing the vision of strong family values, supporting environment, positive challenges, and an inquisitive and fun approach to learning and life.

From preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we immerse the students in the German language and international culture, as well as embrace the American culture and local school standards. Our students perform exceptionally well in external achievement tests and continue their education in some of the best schools in the region and around the world.

## **2 Mission**

The German-American International School (GAIS) mission is to provide an outstanding international, bilingual education focused on inquiry-based learning with the goal to foster confident, creative and responsible learners and global thinkers.

## **3 Core Values**

The German-American International School (GAIS) is a place where children are given the opportunity to learn and grow as whole individuals. It is the school's philosophy that cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth is interrelated. Therefore, the school's activities, both academic and non-academic, address the needs of the total child. Moreover, the school's curriculum is designed to encourage and guide children in the development of self-direction, individual responsibility and intellectual growth. We believe that children can reach their fullest potential if they are able to develop a positive self-image. To further these goals, our school offers a learning environment that fosters the development of a creative and critical mind.

We emphasize the following:

- A student-focused, individualized approach to instruction
- The fostering of a child's imagination and creativity through hands-on projects and experiments
- An environment that encourages student involvement

The school strives to cultivate core values of respect, tolerance, responsibility, honesty, sincerity and politeness. Multicultural traditions are discussed and observed throughout the year, placing an emphasis on international awareness. Extracurricular events and field trips supplement our students' education, nurturing a commitment to the school community that is in turn supported and encouraged by our parents.

## **4 The School Membership**

The German-American International School is organized as an educational non-profit member organization, which operates GAIS through an elected Board of Directors. The members of the organization are called "Members" and we call the collective membership the "Membership". Parents apply for Membership at the time of enrollment, unless they specifically opt-out of the membership. The membership dues are \$100 per family or \$50 per individual member. The membership dues are fully tax

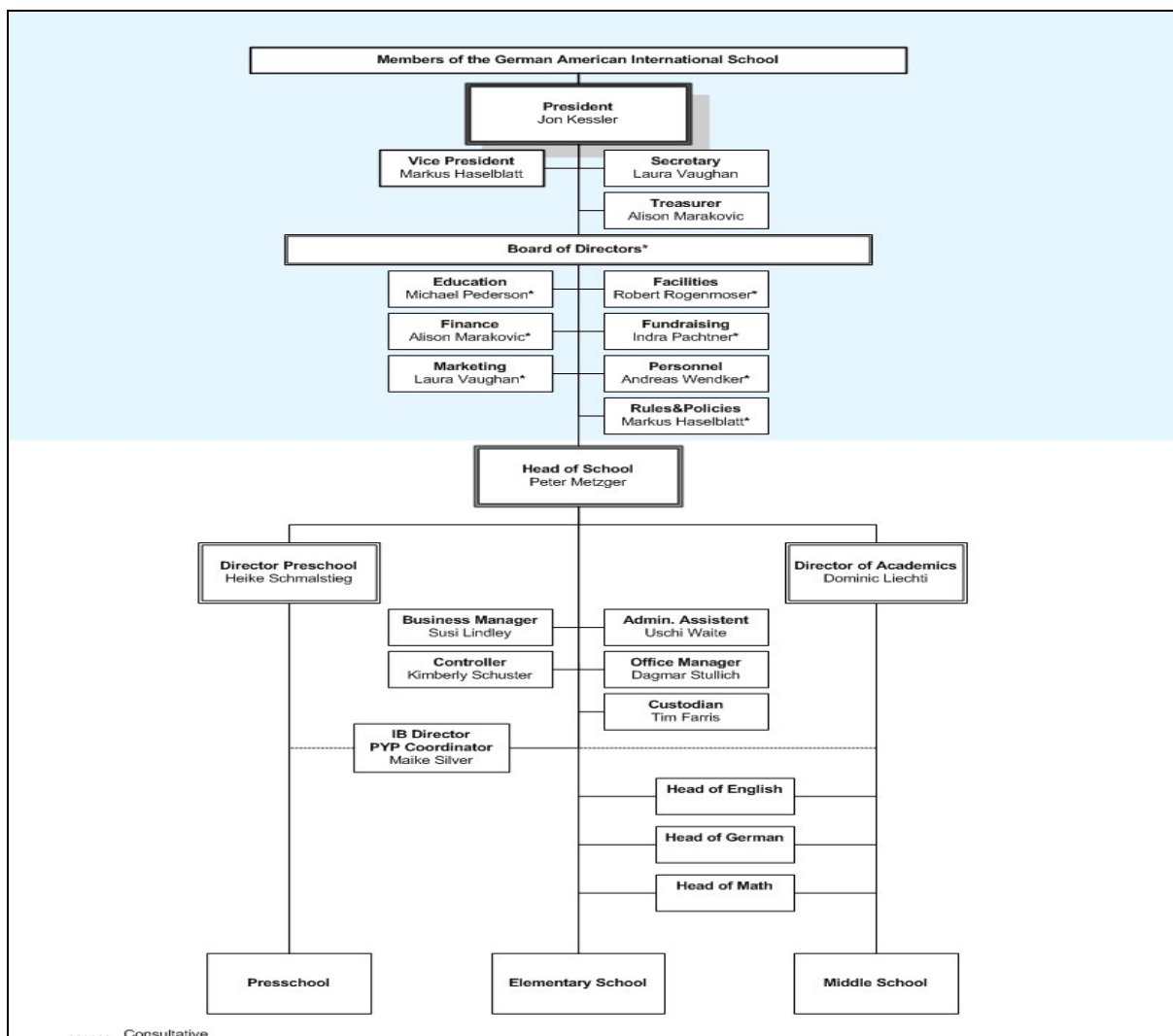
deductible. The bylaws of the School Membership govern the organization of the school. The bylaws are available for review at the school office upon request.

There are three regular Membership meetings annually. At the first meeting (September), the annual financial report and balance sheet are presented. During the February meeting, Society members elect four of the eight board members for 2-year staggered terms. A third Society meeting usually takes place in May where the budget for the coming school/fiscal year is introduced. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, do not hesitate to make yourself available as a candidate for the February election. This is one of the best ways to guide and enhance the future development of the school.

## 5 The Board of Directors

The Members elect the Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for all financial and organizational matters of GAIS. Several committees assist the board. Please refer to our website ([www.germanamericanschool.org](http://www.germanamericanschool.org)) for the current list of board members and committees.

## 6 Organizational Structure



## 7 School Accreditation

GAIS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This involves compliance with clearly defined measures of educational and institutional quality and is subject to periodic inspection by the association.

GAIS is also an authorized International Baccalaureate World School teaching the Primary Years Program (PK-5). The IB Organization includes a network of schools world-wide and is universally recognized for outstanding academic achievement and international mindedness. More information on the IB can be found on their website [www.iob.org](http://www.iob.org).

## II Admissions and Placement

### 1. General Conditions

The School admits students without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, national, ethnic origin or other protected status.

Admission to the School will be determined by the Head of School and Preschool Director, with the advice of the teaching staff, based on information obtained with respect to:

- a) The potential of the applicant to benefit from the educational services available
- b) The capacity of the School to meet the educational needs of the applicant
- c) The match of the child/family with the school and its educational goals.

### 2 Admissions

Application forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded directly from the GAIS website. Students entering in Grade 2 and above must include recent report cards and other relevant school documents. An application fee must accompany the form.

Applications for admission for the **current school year** can be considered at any time. It is recommended that parents contact the school to determine if there are any places open in the grade or program they are interested in.

Applications for admission for August of the **next school year** can be made at any time and the school will advise parents of the admissions schedule of the section applied for. Priority will be given to children of parents already enrolled at GAIS.

All applications are reviewed by the school administration in light of the school's admissions criteria.

**Preschool:** The preschool has multi-age class groupings of children from 2.75 to 5 years of age. The German language immersion nature of the Preschool program gives students a solid linguistic foundation for transitioning into the regular GAIS academic program. As such, priority is given to families with future intentions of enrolling their children into the Elementary school program. Admissions considerations also include maintaining a balance of age and gender.

**Vorschule to Grade 8:** Students are assigned to instructional groups primarily on the basis of age. The school cut-off date is **September 1** and students who are five years old by September 1 of the school year

they are applying for will be admitted into the Vorschule program. Similarly, students who are six will be admitted to Grade 1. However, factors such as previous records, measured aptitude and achievement, physical and emotional development and other relevant details are also considered. The final decision rests with the Head of School.

Applicants who meet all admissions criteria are admitted for that year group, class size permitting. The School reserves the right to deny admission or re-enrollment to any applicant if, in its opinion, there were reasons to believe that admission or re-enrolment would not be in the best interest of the applicant or the School. The School also reserves the right to postpone admission if a class is full. In this case, the applicant is placed in a **Waiting Pool**. Qualified applicants are then accepted in order of date of application, subject to the previously indicated priorities

### **3 Language Proficiency Policy for Grades 1-8**

As German is the official language of instruction for 75% of the curriculum, a sufficient command of the German language is a prerequisite to attend the school. Non-native German-speaking students can be admitted in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and should reach required level of proficiency by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Non-native German-speaking students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and older may be admitted to the school after successfully undergoing a trial one week period of attendance in class and upon recommendation of both the pedagogical staff and school leadership. This decision is reviewed after 6 months.

### **4 Student Records From Other Schools**

For students applying to Grade 2 and above, the School requires student records from the applicant's previous school before any student is accepted. These records include reports, transcripts, results of standardized tests and any relevant reports by a counselor or psychologist. The School reserves the right to contact the applicant's previous school prior to acceptance. In some cases the School may require the applicant to be interviewed or to do a placement test if there is some concern about the candidate's suitability for placement in the Grade requested.

### **5 Admissions Documents**

Once a child has been admitted to the school, parents must provide the following list of documents before the start of classes. The school reserves the right to delay class attendance until these documents are submitted.

- Emergency Instructions
- Immunization Certificates
- Report of Health Exam for School Entry (From Kindergarten on)
- Physician's Report (Preschool only)
- Child's Preadmission Health History (Preschool only)
- Parent's Rights Form (Preschool only)
- Personal Rights Form (Preschool only)
- Consent and Release Form
- Field trip Authorization Form
- Field Trip Driver's Information and Field Trip Rules
- Parent Volunteer Form
- Student Directory

## **6 Withdrawal from School**

The enrollment contract with the school is a binding agreement for the school year that it encompasses. The School Board of Directors will only release a family from this contract in the event of the family relocating more than 75 miles from their current residence.

In addition, children enrolled into the Preschool program for the first time that do not arrive at a suitable level of readiness to attend the program, as determined by the Preschool Director, within the first month of attendance will be released from their contractual obligations with the exclusion of the enrollment fee.

## **7 School Tuition and Fees**

Tuition fees for the following school year are set by the School Board before January 31st. The fees are annual but can be paid in one, two or ten installments. The school office can provide you with a tuition schedule or you can download all tuition information from our website: [www.germanamericanschool.org](http://www.germanamericanschool.org).

There is no reduction in the annual tuition for students admitted during the first six weeks of the school year. Those admitted after the first six weeks of the school year will have the tuition pro rated.

A tuition credit/discount of 10% will be applied for the second child enrolled and a tuition credit/discount of 20% will be applied for the third child enrolled.

A returning family discount will be given to all families that re-enroll at the school for the following year within the set deadline.

Some families may qualify for Income-Based Discount. Information and application forms are available from the Business Office.

## **8 Classroom Assignment Policy**

At the end of the school year, teachers will create class lists for the next grade level where more than one section will be formed. The lists will take into consideration all relevant factors including gender, ability levels, native language profiles, learning styles, motivation special needs. Teacher specialists, including music, physical education, and language teachers, will be consulted in regard to class groupings. The goal will be to ensure balanced, heterogeneous class groupings that support the classroom teaching environment.

Parent requests for special consideration regarding student assignments can be made in writing to the Head of School. These will be taken under review as one of many factors in the final decision.

Final determination on all student assignments, and subsequent reassignments, will be in the sole discretion of and approved by the Head of School, in consultation with teachers.

Student, teacher and class assignments will be communicated to families through a posting at the school just prior to the start of school.

## **III Preschool Program**

### **1 Preschool Philosophy**

The Preschool of the German-American International School is a place where children are given the opportunity to learn and grow as whole individuals. To do so, activities address the needs of the total child. Therefore, we believe that social, physical, emotional, and cognitive growth are interrelated and are of equal value. The Preschool is designed to encourage and guide children in the development of self-direction, individual responsibility, and intellectual growth. We believe that children can reach their fullest potential if they are able to develop a positive self-image. To emphasize this goal, our Preschool offers an environment in which they can learn to choose their activities, cooperate, share, and form friendships with peers.

### **2 Staff**

The preschool staff of GAIS is international with various cultural backgrounds. All staff members are bilingual German – English and several speak additional languages as well. All staff members have college degrees; some received their diplomas in the US, some in Germany or other countries. For more detailed information on our current staff, please check our website at [www.germanamericanschool.org](http://www.germanamericanschool.org).

### **3 Preschool Curriculum**

The teachers plan the curriculum with four IB units during the school year, yet as the year progresses other themes/topics may be included, depending on the group's interests (child emergent curriculum). The curriculum may include events of the month or season, current situations in the group; themes initiated by the children or personal life experiences of the children. According to the theme, the teachers prepare activities such as games, plays, experiments, cooking, songs, books, observations, outside activities, field trips or visitors, parties, arts & crafts, and room decorations. Examples of themes are: animals, fire-water-earth, families, seasons, international holidays, professions, different countries and customs. Many of our themes address the many cultural backgrounds of the children. The curriculum of the preschool is kept flexible. It can and will be adjusted and changed to meet the needs of the children and the group. Our groups are age-mixed.

### **4 Language in the Preschool**

The Preschool provides a German language immersion environment that will give students the linguistic foundations needed for further study at GAIS. The children, however, speak English and German among each other. At the beginning of the school year, circle times are sometimes held in both languages to familiarize new children with no prior German skills and to get them comfortable with their new environment. As the year progresses, English explanations decrease. Matters concerning safety and other essential information will always be announced in both languages.

Because of the English-speaking environment outside the classroom, we have found that German-speaking children do not encounter great difficulties in acquiring English. A great number of our children are from bilingual homes.

## 5 Daily Program

The following gives some of the activities that are part of the daily program.

### a) Drop off/Pick up/Late Fees

Children can be dropped off after 8:30am in all the morning programs. Parents are required by the state to walk their children into the classroom and sign them in on the daily sign-in sheet. Children also need to be signed out before leaving. You can help avoid confusion during pick-up time by indicating on the sign-in list, 'who' will pick your child up that day.

Children may leave school only with their parents or those listed on our emergency forms or permission slips. If your child is going to be picked up by anyone else, you must give us a written note. Permission slips are available at the sign-in desk. All children must be picked up on time when their program is over. **Please note that a late fee (\$20 for the first 15 minutes plus \$1 for each additional minute) applies to children who are picked up after 1:45pm (or 6pm *Hort*).** The school will bill the late fee to your account.

### b) Free Choice Time

Children may move freely between the different areas of the preschool once all the rooms have opened. The children have the opportunity to choose according to their needs. Some guided activities take place during this time, in which the children can choose to participate (e.g., arts and crafts in the workshop; cooking projects on some days, German board games).

The teacher's role during this time is to offer activities, encourage and initiate play, assist in problem-solving and conflict resolution and be a source of comfort and guidance.

We provide the children with challenges and opportunities to experiment, as well as "food" for their natural hunger to learn.

### c) Circle Time

Circle time is mostly held in German. Activities include songs, finger plays, stories, conversations about a certain topic or theme, puppet play, games, etc. Planned activities for the day are introduced during the first circle of the day. These activities will be offered in the child's groups. Doors to the other groups will open at the end of the small group project time between 10 and 10:30am.

### d) Project Time

Immediately following circle time, the children continue in their smaller groups for project time. Project time is usually inside the classroom, but may take place outside as well. During this time the teacher may offer an art, science, math or other activity, related to the unit (theme) of the group which the child may engage in during this time. Other activities are continually offered throughout the day as mentioned in *Free Choice Time* (5.2.).

### e) Separation

If a parent feels positive about their child's entry into preschool, then so will the child. However, every parent and child will adjust differently at the start of a new school year, and for some it will be easier than others. The following suggestions are helpful at the transition time:

- Try to answer all of his questions-knowing what to expect should curb some of his fears and anxieties. Reading books on starting school for the first time can also be helpful.
- Tour the school with your child. This will help him gain a better understanding what to expect.

- Starting preschool for the first time is a big transition and can be stressful for your child as well as other members of the family. Try to keep the first month of school as simple as possible, plan extra free time and quiet time. Also, try not to start a lot of other new activities during this time.
- Establish a way that you and your child like to say “goodbye” each day. This helps the child to participate in the process as well as to anticipate your leaving. (\*Pick one book to read before you go \*Let’s go to the swings for our goodbye swing)
- Give your child a concrete memory of what you will be doing or where you will be going when you leave, whether it is for a short time or the whole morning. (\*I’m getting a cup of coffee, \*I’m going to buy groceries...)
- Form ties with a friend. (\*Invite a child from school for a play date, \*Carpool with another family...)
- Never sneak out on your child when they are distracted!
- When needed, remember to work together with your child’s teacher to make a plan so your child will adapt as quickly as possible to their new surroundings.

### **f) Outside Activities & Play**

We feel that especially in today's world, with the increased use of television and computers even at a young age, long commute hours and other factors that don't always encourage movement, it is important to provide opportunities for the children to use their bodies and develop the gross motor skills that are essential to the development of the brain. Sensory-motor activities are basic to academic skills (reading, writing, etc.). "Thoughts that don't get into muscles never fully possess the mind."

Children need challenges and opportunities to experiment and to take risks. We believe that our outside environment provides just that. We often provide materials outside that the children can experiment with freely, without having to worry about making a big mess and, therefore, restricting their chance of exploration and discovery. Materials offered may include a water table where they can mix large amounts of flour, water and color and experiment with how the consistency changes. We also offer painting outside, where the children can paint on easels or large boards for their gross motor development.

We also have a sandbox with water where the children often combine sand and water and create rivers and dams or "just" make mud. **It often gets messy, and you can understand why it is important that the children wear old clothes to school that can get dirty.**

The children become little risk takers to master skills such as bicycling, riding a scooter and roller-skating. Many children learn new skills just by observing others and by imitating and practicing again and again. **Children need to bring a helmet from home with name.**

### **Free exploration allows the child to...**

- do his or her own thing, so later it will be possible to focus on the material as learning material.
- gain a sense of his or her environment.
- satisfy curiosity.
- realize that learning takes place in more than one way and with more than one material.
- learn from other children.
- discover a variety of possibilities with various materials.
- have an opportunity to spontaneously discover sorting, counting, pattern, geometry, measurement, balance, comparisons of color, shape, size, weight, sound, etc.
- feel successful.
- experience the idea that there are no right or wrong answers.
- verbalize ideas.
- problem solving.
- feel, explore, and find the possibilities and limitations of various materials.
- feel at ease in the classroom because the environment is familiar.
- make a decision to get involved in something.

- develop language.
- share experience and ideas.
- learn to share space and materials.
- awaken his or her senses.
- discover likenesses and differences in the world around them.
- begin to focus attention on the natural environment.
- know the variety within one material so they will be able to focus on those details in order to later build a pattern.
- become familiar with the environment so that later, for example, if the teacher wants to use Unifix cubes for a graph, they will be able to focus on the graph rather than on the particular qualities of the unifix cubes... how do they fit together? What do they feel like? Can you look through the hole? How many would it take to stretch to the wall?, etc.

#### **Free exploration allows the teacher to...**

- observe the complexity of the task various children set for themselves and to observe how they react to difficulties in completing their task.
- observe how the children interact with one another and the different materials.
- observe what the children do spontaneously with different materials. (To observe children working with materials without the children trying to “please” the teacher.)
- observe how a child learns through play.
- observe which children are self-directed.
- observe language patterns of children as they talk with their peers.
- have time to assess children’s skills.

#### **g) Snacks/Meals**

In the morning program, children can eat breakfast or a snack at any time until 10:30 a.m. A table is set up where the children can eat by themselves or with other friends. Lunch is eaten together.

**Notify the teachers of any food allergies!** Please pack your child a nutritious snack and lunch! The children may not bring any sweets (cookies, chocolate, puddings, etc.) as part of their meals. Children often use sweets to “buy” friendships. To avoid this and other problems and to promote a healthy lunch, the preschool has adopted a **no-sweets policy**.

Do not bring sodas or other sugary drinks and do not bring glass bottles. Make sure all containers are labeled (including the lids), so we are able to return them if left behind. Please, no disposables such as paper bags, aluminum foil, etc.; use reusable containers instead. Recycling and in particular reducing waste is part of our curriculum. We have experienced that small coolers make the best lunch and/or snack boxes. They are sturdy and will keep your child’s food cool. Make sure your child is able to open his/her lunch box and containers by himself/herself.

Involve your child in the process of packing a lunch as much as possible.

#### **h) Quiet Time/Story Time**

Since the children only stay in school until 1:45 p.m., they are not required to take a nap, however, we do offer a quiet time/reading time. Here they have the choice to rest and listen to stories that are read by a teacher.

## **6 Extended Day Program**

Children have the option to stay until 6 pm in the Hort program for extended care. The afternoons will include a resting time and various activities and is held in German. Children may enroll every day or take advantage of this program on a drop-in basis only.

## 7 Student Behavior

Our goal is to build a positive self-concept. Future success in life depends on being able to handle various social situations and interactions. Children will resolve their problems with “conflict resolution”. We use the following steps to resolve a conflict:

1. We find out what happened; taking into account both sides.
2. Children recognize that their behavior was inappropriate.
3. Children find a solution, what they could have done instead.
4. Children find a way to make the other person feel better.
5. Should another incident occur that same day, the child will lose the choice to play where they want and are given a teacher directed activity.
6. If the problem persists, parents will be notified. Teacher and parent will discuss the behavior and together a solution will found.
7. The only reason a child will be asked to leave our program is if the teachers feel that the child cannot cope with the program, the child’s behavior does not improve over time, or/and the child’s parents are unwilling to cooperate with the teachers.

While this is our general policy, each case is looked at separately taking the needs of each child into account. By California State Law, all corporal punishment between a teacher and child will immediately be reported to State Licensing.

## 8 Special Events

### a) Field Trips

Field trips are important events for the children. Field trips may include visits to the fire station, pumpkin patch, children’s museum, a train ride, etc. Parents will be notified before any trips take place. We ask parents to volunteer to drive and supervise during field trips. Parents who volunteer as drivers are required to read and sign the Field Trip Rules form. At the beginning of the school year each parent needs to fill out a Field Trip Authorization form.

Parents who do not wish their children to ride in other vehicles or attend field trips should contact the kindergarten staff. Children who are either under the age of 6 or weigh less than 60 pounds are required by law to have a car seat. It is the parent’s responsibility to send a car seat with the child’s name to school on the day of a field trip and to notify the teachers. **Children will not be able to participate if a car seat is not available.**

### b) Birthdays/Parties

Every child’s birthday is special, so we will celebrate this event in a special way. Children will celebrate their birthday during the school year on the day of their birthday. Birthdays that fall on a weekend or a school break are celebrated on the following weekday. Summer birthdays are often celebrated on the half-year mark. In the case of a late June birthday, we can either celebrate the half mark or in the last week of school.

We have a special birthday ritual for which we would like you to bring the following:

- Photo of your child for each year
- One small flower for each year
- Cake, muffins, cookies or fruit to share (please, not too sweet and creamy!)

A children's book in German or English for this class would also be nice. The kids always love to see their picture in the book they have brought to school and we make sure we read the inscription and show the picture whenever we read the book.

### **c) Visitors to the Preschool**

We often invite visitors to the preschool. Visitors in the past have included people who came to share some aspects of their culture, a storyteller, musicians, a dentist, someone who talked about emergencies and 911, and others. Visitors often include parents who share the above with the children and bring great pride for the child whose parent is involved.

## **9 Preschool Parent Information**

### **a) Communication**

The preschool staff strongly encourages open communication with all the parents. If you have any issue pertaining to your child, even if you may feel that it is not very significant, please do not hesitate to speak to the teacher of your child directly. All the teachers have a GAIS email, with which you may easily set up an appointment with the teacher. At times, they may also be able to speak to you spontaneously after school.

The teacher may contact you in the same way as well. The parent files are another way a teacher may notify a parent. For example, if a child had a minor injury on their head or other body parts, teachers will attach a message (same as a phone message slip) to the appropriate parent folder. Pick-up time may be hectic and this way the teacher can make sure that you are notified of an injury.

If you feel uncomfortable addressing the teacher directly, then you should speak with the Preschool Director.

### **b) Parents in the Classroom**

Parents are always welcome to come and be part of our preschool program! You may join for circle times or other parts of the day. All teachers believe that it is best for the children, if the parents are actively involved in our program, rather than just sitting and observing. We would like the daily activities to run as "natural" as possible so that you would hopefully see a glimpse (most children will always behave differently when their parents are present) of your children's behavior and activities when you are not present.

If your child is still having separation problems or is not able to participate in our program while you are present, then we might suggest for you to try again at a later time.

**Remember: English, German or parents with other languages are all equally welcome!**

### **c) Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The preschool groups have set days for conferences, which are posted by the teacher on the school calendar. During parent-teacher conferences we discuss your child's development and share information about your child and school. In addition, please feel free to contact your child's teacher at **any** time to make an appointment for a conference.

### **d) Parent Evenings**

Parent evenings are scheduled throughout the year to keep you informed and get you involved in what is going on in the program. It is important that you come to all parent evenings. Parents will be notified of dates.

### **e) Parent Files/Bulletin Boards**

Each family has a file located in front of the main office. Please check this daily for letters, announcements, etc. Please also arrange with your carpool to check the parent file.

Please regularly check the bulletin board in the main entrance for information on upcoming events, items for sale, etc.

Most communication will take place by E-mail. If you do not have an E-mail address, please inform the staff so that you will receive a hard copy in your file. Weekly school wide e-mails will be sent out by the office and your child's teacher will send out e-mails as well, pertaining to what is happening in your child's group.

## **10 Clothing**

Please always consider the functionality of your child's clothing. Keep in mind that children painting and playing outdoors get dirty and sometimes spots are not removable. It is best to dress your child in old, comfortable clothes! The clothes should also be easy to handle: large buttons and button holes, underwear convenient for toileting, shoes and boots the child can easily remove and put back on, loops on coats for easy hanging (Velcro closures for shoes are best!)

Each child needs to bring a spare set of clothes (in case he/she needs to change) and a pair of rubber boots and a raincoat for the rainy season. We go outside in any kind of weather, so please dress your child accordingly! There is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing!

Please **label your child's clothing and shoes**, so they can be returned if left behind. Unlabeled clothing is collected in the lost and found bin in front of the school and is given to charity periodically if not claimed.

## **11 Sharing Things from Home**

Children may not bring toys from home. Toys get broken, lost and often create unnecessary conflicts and tension.

Children may bring items on special occasions that will be announced in advance (i.e., stuffed animal day, sport day). Children may bring a comfort toy (i.e., stuffed animal) in the beginning of the school year if it helps them during transition time.

## **12 Personal Belongings**

The children have a cubby and a hook for their lunch box, other personal belongings, spare clothing and artwork. Please check your child's cubby and take all belongings home every day. Please instruct your carpool to do the same. Please **label all of your child's belongings** before they are left at school!

## **13 Licensing and Reporting Duties**

The preschool operates under Californian laws and regulations. The Department of Social Services - Community Care Licensing oversees Preschools and Child Care Centers. They have the right to visit a facility without prior notice to make sure that schools abide by the regulations.

Even though it happens rarely, licensing inspectors are permitted by law to visit the preschool and interview children without the permission of the parents. There are guidelines for these cases and we will make sure that the guidelines are followed to avoid unnecessary stress.

According to California Law, article 11166 (California Penal Code), all teachers of the preschool or the school are required to report any Child Abuse or any indication of suspected Child Abuse. Teachers can be prosecuted if they do not follow this law.

## **IV Academic Program**

### **1 Languages at GAIS**

The goal of this language policy is to enable all students to attend the GAIS irrespective of their native language or land of origin. The main mechanism of assistance in language acquisition is remedial instruction and support with the objective to quickly bring participating students up to the required level that allows them to successfully attend the main program. This policy is reviewed annually and revised if necessary.

#### **German in K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

According to the structure of the GAIS, with German as the official language of instruction, a sufficient command of the German language to follow the instruction is a necessary prerequisite to attend grades 1-8<sup>th</sup>. Non-native German-speaking students in the first and second grade should generally reach the required level by the end of the second school year.

German lessons in the Elementary School have a language support for 50% of the instructional time. This is designed to help non-native German speakers and allows the teacher to differentiate instruction to meet all of the students' needs. For students with weaknesses in their German language skills, the school can also recommend that the parent provides additional help outside the regular school program.

#### **English in 1-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Starting in Grade 1, English is taught as a native language, rather than as a foreign language. The language program follows a GAIS-specific adaptation of the American language curriculum. In the report card, the subject is listed as English and implies native language level. Other subjects taught in English are US Social Studies (in Grades 6-7) and US Government (in Grade 8).

Students who enter the GAIS with little or no knowledge of the English language can receive language support in the form of English as Second Language (ESL) lessons. These are generally offered starting from Grade 1 and are conducted in parallel to the regular English classes. The participation can be noted on the report card as successful/not successful instead of a regular English grade.

Because of the immersion situation in an all-English-speaking environment, it can be assumed that those students can generally be integrated in the regular language program after one year. Should the command of the English language still be insufficient, it is the parents' responsibility to provide additional help outside the regular school hours. Students with two or more years of English language education in the US or abroad prior to their entering in the GAIS generally take part in the regular language program at grade level. Students who participate in ESL can receive a comment on their report cards noting a successful/not successful participation in CA History and US Social Studies instead of a regular grade in these subjects.

#### **Spanish and French**

Beginning in Grade 5, Spanish and French are taught as mandatory elective subjects to all students. Students entering the 5<sup>th</sup> grade have to choose one or the other language. Once the language has been elected, the student will study the language up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The various levels of prior knowledge of Spanish or French among the students will be taken into account within the context of the language classes.

## **2 Kindergarten – Inquiry-based learning**

‘Vorschule’ – as Kindergarten is called in German - is designed for those children who will be attending first grade in the following year. Children who turn five by September 1 will be admitted to Vorschule. The Preschool teacher can recommend students to the Preschool Director with birthdates that fall outside of this deadline for accelerated promotion following the same criteria for accelerated promotion throughout the school. This involves clear and demonstrated capacity to work and interact socially at a higher level. Such promotion is at the discretion of the Preschool Director.

In Vorschule the children are expected to become more responsible for what they do. They are expected to start and finish a project. Activities include language arts (listening to, discussing and creating books), math (by measuring, sorting, etc.), science (conducting and predicting experiments), arts (projects that require fine motor skills), etc. Children in the Vorschule program need to be able to participate at the required level set by the teacher.

The GAIS Kindergarten program follows the guidelines of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Primary Years Program. This program is divided into six themes, with the time and flexibility to explore these in considerable depth. We practice math via measurements, estimates, concepts, sequencing and science projects rather than simply memorizing numbers. We improve our language skills – in German and in English - through presentations, stories, reading, music, theater and self-initiated, teacher assisted writing introduction. We do not memorize the alphabet. By the end of the kindergarten year, the children are ready for the parallel introduction of writing in German and English in the first grade.

## **3 The Primary Years (Grades 1-5) – Student Centered Approach**

In Grades 1-5, students follow the guidelines of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Primary Years Program. This program is divided into six trans-disciplinary themes entitled: 1) Who We Are, 2) Where We Are In Time And Place, 3) How We Express Ourselves, 4) How The World Works, 5) How We Organize Ourselves, and 6) How We Share The Planet.

At GAIS, we put a great emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own work. Naturally, we still spend a significant time on skill-building and problem-solving techniques. But we also go far beyond that: we challenge the students from early on to take risks, to explore deeper, to question the obvious and to articulate their opinions in both German and in English. At the same time we continue to nurture their creativity through art, music and physical education, which are an important part of the curriculum through Primary and Middle School.

The children are introduced to writing in both German and English in the first grade. Linguistics plays a significant role in the early years. In the Grade 5, our students have the choice to add French or Spanish as their third language. With the help of expert native-language speaking staff, the students are immersed in a challenging yet very supportive environment.

## **4 Middle Years (Grades 6-8)-Preparation for the World Beyond**

The GAIS middle school is very special. It follows a departmentalized structure with specific subject teachers and introduces subjects like geography, biology, physics, and chemistry. By the time they reach middle school, GAIS students are ready to fully apply the skills acquired in Primary School such as inquiry-based learning, primary research, and critical thinking.

We encourage our students not only to become bilingual, but also to be prepared for the challenges of the world. In our eighth grade math preparation courses, we ensure that the students are exceeding all the requirements for advanced placement in US high schools, as well as being prepared for a seamless integration into top international schools. Naturally, they do this in both German and in English, with 75 percent of the curriculum being taught in native German and 25 percent in native English

The project-based approach introduced in kindergarten is applied consistently throughout the grades right up to graduation. As the projects get more complicated, the research more refined and the final presentations more comprehensive, the core values remain the same: we enable our students to discover the world and allow them to learn and master the skills they need to take on any challenge. At GAIS, we help our students to be ready for the world.

## 5 Curriculum Overview

The following chart shows the subject areas in Grades 1-8 and the number of lessons taught in each subject area per week.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grades 1-4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 6-8</b>
German	8	7	6
English*	6	6	6
Math	5	6	6
Social Studies/Science	5	5	-
Music	2	2	1
Art	2	2	1
Physical Education	2	2	2
Information Technology	1	1	-
US Social Studies*			2
History			2
Geography			2
Biology			2
Physics			2
French/Spanish*		3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>

\* Indicates subjects not taught in German

## 6 Reporting Procedures

Students in Grades 1 to 8 receive a report at the end of each semester. Reports are given to the students to be taken home according to dated indicated on the school calendar. Reports in Grade 1 give an evaluation of the progress achieved in all academic areas but do not include grades. Grade 2 reports are similar to those in Grade one with the exception of grades given in Mathematics and German on the Final Report. Grade 3-8 reports have grades given for each of the subjects taught. These reports are supplemented by Parent-Teacher conferences which are organized by the school during the academic year or which can be requested by a parent or teacher at any time. Incidental or progress reports may be sent to parents if there are matters a teacher wishes to draw to their attention.

The German grading scheme used at GAIS and its US equivalent is as follows:

1 = Very Good (sehr gut)

A = Excellent

2 = Good (gut)

B = Good

3 = Satisfactory (befriedigend)  
 4 = Acceptable (ausreichend)  
 5 = Poor (mangelhaft)  
 6 = Fail (ungenugend)

C = Satisfactory  
 D = Poor  
 F = fail

The translation of grades into the American system is as follows:

%	US Grade	Ger. Grade
<b>98-100</b>	<b>A+</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>95-97</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1-</b>
<b>92-94</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>89-91</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>2+</b>
<b>85-88</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>82-84</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>2-</b>
<b>79-81</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>76-78</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>3+</b>
<b>72-75</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>69-71</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>3-</b>
<b>66-68</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>63-65</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>4+</b>
<b>59-62</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>56-58</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>4-</b>
<b>53-55</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>50-52</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>5+</b>
<b>46-49</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>43-45</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>5-</b>
<b>40-42</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>0-39</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>6</b>

## 7 Promotion and Retention Policy

GAIS operates on the principle that a solid foundation in the skills and knowledge taught in one grade level are a prerequisite for a student's ability to profit from the subsequent grade's academic program. The GAIS staff will endeavor to instruct, support and assist each student based on their individual needs and abilities, and together with the student and family work towards a grade level promotion at the end of each school year. There may, however, be circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child's future to repeat a grade level. For students up to Grade 2, this could be the result of a student's insufficient academic level as determined by the appropriate faculty council. For students from Grade 3 onwards, this could be a result of poor achievement grades. Similarly, there may be circumstances where a child has already achieved a level of skill, ability and maturity comparable to that of the next academic level. In such a case, the appropriate faculty council, as determined by the section administrator, can recommend an accelerated promotion to the subsequent grade level. Should this be the case, timely and clear communication with the student's parents will precede any action on the part of the school.

## **8 Textbooks and Materials**

Textbooks and workbooks are supplied by the school. Textbooks are the property of the school and must be returned in good condition at the end of the school year. Workbooks become the property of the student and they are responsible for replacing them if lost. Students should bring to school their own pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, paper, notebooks and other consumable materials as may be requested by the class or subject teachers.

## **9 Homework Policy**

Given the fact that many students stay at school until 3:00 p.m. and may have up to an hour of travel time to get home, the school tries to carefully regulate the amount of work required after school hours. Students who do not complete their class assignments in school time may have to finish this work at home. Consequently good use of school time is encouraged by both the teacher and pupil.

When assigned, homework must be meaningful and support the lessons. It is up to the teacher to carefully monitor the time spent on this work so that the student's need for leisure time and rest is not compromised. As a daily average, students should not do more than:

- Grades 1-2      30 minutes
- Grades 3-5      45 minutes
- Grades 6-8      60 minutes

Parents should inform the class/homeroom teacher if their child regularly exceeds this amount. No homework will be given on the weekend apart from French/Spanish in Grades 5-8.

Homework assignments will be recorded in the classroom. Each student has a homework book provided by the school. Students will be taught how to use the homework book as an organization tool. It is the student's responsibility to record all homework assignments in this book.

Homework not completed must be finished for the next day. Students should not lose their recess time to do homework. Parents will be informed when a student frequently does not do their homework. If a pattern emerges the parent will be called in to meet with the teacher and/or the Head of School

## **10 Home Reading Program Grades 1-5**

In order to further our academic goals and to instill a love of reading in our students, GAIS promotes a program of home reading for all students in Grades 1-5. Reading is an integral part of our daily lives and as such is a vital component of all curriculum areas at GAIS. In order to improve the literacy levels of all students it is important to have effective cooperation between home and school. It is expected that GAIS students will be involved in daily reading at school and at home. They should be engaged in meaningful reading that they understand and is appropriate to their own personal level. Consistency between home and school must be maintained in order for the school program to be effective. Suggested times for home reading are:

- |         |                                                          |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | 30 minutes per language per week (guided or independent) |
| Grade 2 | 40 minutes per language per week                         |
| Grade 3 | 50 minutes per language per week                         |

Grade 4	60 minutes per language per week
Grade 5	70 minutes per language per week

These are minimum times over a week and students can clearly divide this up as they please. The important thing is to read in both languages with a great deal of flexibility in terms of the kind of material read. It could be subject related, a library book, book from home, or even a newspaper or magazine. What's important is to practice reading. First Graders might not begin the program right at the start of the year but would eventually join on once they have developed some mastery.

## **V Supplementary Programs, Activities and Special Events**

### **Extracurricular Programs**

A variety of extracurricular afternoon activities are offered during each school semester. These have included a large variety of activities which focus on sports, music, arts and crafts, games, languages and academic enrichment. The programs are offered according to teacher expertise/availability and student interest level. Some programs are outsources using local organizations.

For students from grade 1 through 8, we offer homework supervision after school. This gives them the opportunity to finish homework in any subject matter. The supervising teacher offers advice and strategies for completing assignments.

Extracurricular programs are offered for an additional fee. You will receive information in special flyers regarding the programs, schedules, and costs or you can inform yourself via our website.

### **2 After School Care (Hort)**

For children enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 8, the school offers child care 5 days a week from 2 to 6 pm. Preschool children can also sign up for after preschool care program. It takes place every day from 1:45pm until 6:00 pm.

Children may be signed up by the month or on a day-to-day drop-in basis. Priority will be given to monthly users. Child care will also be available on teacher in-service-days and during the Fall, Winter, and Spring vacations. Sign-up forms and further information can be picked up in the school office. Please note that a late fee (\$20 for the first 15 minutes plus \$1 for each additional minute) applies to children who are picked up after 6pm.

### **3 Field Trips**

The School encourages field trips and the use of the local community to enhance learning. Field study trips are organized by our teachers for students at all levels. Some purposes of the field study trips are to:

- Support and enhance a unit of study.
- Give students real, hands-on experiences to compliment their studies.

- Participate in a recreational and/or educational program.
- Participate in activities that promote team-building and leadership skills.
- Enhance the social cohesion of the group.

A Field Trip Authorization Form must be signed by a parent to allow their child to participate in school field trips. Transportation is by private automobile unless otherwise stated. Parents are expected to help with transportation for field trips. When asked by the teacher, Class Reps will help with the organization of cars for their class. On all excursions, the Code of Behavior should be adhered to.

A schedule of field trips for the year will be passed out by each class teacher at the start of the school year. The cost of the field trips is divided among the families in the class. The school business office will bill each family on the September statement for the cost associated with the year's schedule of trips.

## **4 School Library**

The school library offers books in German, English, and Spanish for all school age groups as well as reference materials and a number of videos, cassettes, and CDs. Due to an intensive expansion program the library collection has grown rapidly in the past few years and the current collection contains over 9000 items.

Students visit the library once per week as part of their regular program and are assisted by their teacher and/or library staff. Parents are also welcome to borrow books and materials from the library. The opening hours are posted by the main library entrance. The GAIS library is committed to a program of continual expansion and improvement in support of the school's academic program. The school librarian is assisted by parent volunteers.

# **VI Student Welfare, Behavior and Discipline**

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Classes start at 8:20 a.m for all students except the Vorschule and Preschool. The classrooms will be opened by the teachers 5 minutes before the beginning of classes. Students that come before that time should line up by their classroom door.

Students must be on time. Elementary and Middle School students who arrive late for school will be required to get a tardy slip from the office. These slips will be taken home so that the parents are aware of the tardy. These slips must be signed by the parents and returned the next day to the class teacher. Tardies can be excused or unexcused. Excused tardies are due to circumstances that are beyond the control of the parent such as emergencies or extraordinary traffic situations. Whenever possible, the office should be alerted by phone if such a situation occurs. Unexcused tardies are noted on the school report card. After the 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy, the school administration will contact the parents and take whatever measures are necessary and appropriate to remedy the behavior.

## **2 Acceptable Absences**

The School's instructional program is based upon the assumption that students will attend school regularly. The consistent daily attendance of the student is necessary to ensure his or her academic progress. Therefore, students should be absent **only for important reasons** such as personal illness,

family emergencies, impassibility of the way to school, or religious holidays. Should a situation arise where it is necessary for the student to be absent for an extended period, parents should inform the School in writing at the earliest opportunity.

For absence due to illness please refer to the section on 'Student Illness' found in this section. For non-medical, family related absences, a form is available from the school office and should be submitted to the administration. Teachers will prepare work for acceptable absences, whenever possible. Students will be held responsible for all work missed.

### **3 Recess**

There are two recesses, one snack-recess from 9:55 a.m. till 10:15 a.m. and one lunch-recess from 11:50 p.m. till 12:25 p.m. Teachers lock the doors of the classrooms. During recess no student is allowed in the buildings. During recess, the students play in the schoolyard, on the grass area, and on the tennis courts. Generally, two teachers supervise the recess areas.

Staying in the classroom during recess time is allowed when a "bad weather recess" has been announced (e. g. for rain or cold). The teacher who is last in the classroom supervises the students. Staying in the classroom is also allowed for prolonged classes in presence of a teacher.

In general, the students may eat or drink only in the areas intended for this purpose, not in the play areas. Playing is only allowed on the schoolyard, on the grass area and on the tennis court. Roller blades, skateboards, scooters, bicycles etc. are not allowed on the school yard for students in Grades 1-8. Using I-pods and cell phones during recess time is normally allowed unless the class teacher imposes restrictions for their class. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged items brought from home. Students may not climb on fences or trees

### **4 Lunch at GAIS**

The school does not provide lunch to students. However, for grades VS-8, the headmaster may approve a fee based lunch program organized by the Parent Group, provided that, in his/her reasonable judgment, the program:

- Does not impact negatively on the school staff, administration or the effective delivery of education at GAIS.
- Does not rely on parent volunteers or GAIS staff resources for daily administration, cleanup or collections.
- Provides for recovery from participants of any costs incurred by GAIS.
- Is open to all students in Grades VS-8th on a completely voluntary basis.
- Includes healthy choices that meet the nutritional needs of students, address dietary restrictions based on religion, and satisfy the desires of families to the greatest extent possible.
- Includes appropriate procedures to assure that students with severe food allergies are not exposed to food items which may be dangerous to them.
- Includes a plan for communication to families and VS-8 teachers.

### **5 Student Pick Up**

Classes end at 1:45 p.m. for Preschool, 2:00 p.m. for Elementary, and 2:50 p.m. for Middle School. Our duty for supervision ends with the end of classes. Parents are asked to pick up their children accordingly, in order to prevent situations that might pose a hazard to your children such as playing and running on the

parking lot, unsupervised climbing, etc. Students can wait in the front of the building to be picked up. After the last period, all teachers close the windows and lock the doors of the classroom they were last in. Younger children (up to Grade 2) who are not picked up punctually will be taken to the school office by the teacher. Parents arriving late should check with the office first. This is a provision for emergency situations and should not be abused.

## 6 Emergency Plan

GAIS has an Emergency Plan that covers a variety of emergency situations. As part of this plan, each school year the students participate in several earthquake and fire drills.

In the event of a major disaster no student will be dismissed from school unless a parent (or individual previously designated by a parent) comes for him/her. *Parents must constantly make sure that their "Emergency Files" are always up to date!* No student will be allowed to leave with another person, even a relative or babysitter, unless that particular person is listed on the student's emergency form. All parents or designated parties who come for students must sign them out at the office or temporary Student Release Area. Signs will be posted if this alternate location is required.

We are prepared to care for your students in times of critical situations. If you are not able to reach the school, we will handle the communication with local emergency services.

We do ask for your help in the following areas:

- As soon as possible come to school to pick up your child/children and any others for whom you are an emergency card designee.
- Park on the streets. Leave the driveway and parking areas clear for emergency vehicles.
- Unless we have been forced to evacuate the site because of unsafe conditions, your child/children will be at school. Please always drive to the school first. Our emergency relocation site, if needed, will be posted at the school.
- Report to the office or the Student Release Area to get an authorization slip to release your child/children.
- Be sure you have told your child/children to follow and to trust the directions of school personnel in cases of severe emergency.
- Please inform the school in writing if both parents are out of town.
- *Turn on your radio or television to get the latest information.*

## 7 Behavior and School Rules

The German-American International School values tolerance and the respect of people and materials. Relationships with other members of the community and especially with other students must be based on these principles. The following represents a code of behavior that we expect all students to follow:

Respect for yourself	Respect for our learning
Respect for others	Respect for our school environment

This operates within an environment where:

- Teachers exercise professional integrity and judgment in their management of students.
- Behavior expectations and consequences are related to students' age and experience, and their ability to respond. Guidelines are clearly explained and regularly reviewed with students.
- The emphasis is to encourage and reinforce positive behavior.
- Student self-reflection and self-management is promoted.
- The home-school partnership is fundamental to effective student management.
- Problem solving using negotiation and communication is taught and encouraged.

The following strategies are used for conflict resolution:

- We find out what happened, taking into account both sides.
- Students recognize that their behavior was inappropriate.
- Children reflect and find a solution and recognize what they could have done instead. The teacher summarizes if necessary.
- Children find a way to make the other person feel better.

**The following behavior modification actions may be imposed upon students by staff and/or Director as a result of misconduct:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Action</b>
Level 1	Student + Student	Minor difficulties	Students apply conflict resolution strategies independently
Level 2	Student + Teacher + Parent might be informed/ involved	Unacceptable	Teacher management e.g. loss of privileges, time out or student self reflection
Level 3	Student + Teacher + Administrator+ Parent will be informed/ involved	Consistently unacceptable or serious	Strategies for reflection and redirection e.g. time out, reflection process, consequences- might include behavior contract, community service, parent contact
Level 4	Student + Teacher + Administrator + Parent will be involved	Consistently serious or extreme	Parent meeting and student support plan, student put on probation and/or possible suspension

**The following are examples of unacceptable behavior**

- Excessive tardiness between classes
- Distracting classmates or disrupting class
- Disrespecting School property
- Lack of classroom materials
- Lack of cooperation
- Disrespectful attitude to staff or other students
- General inattention

- Excessive talking
- Excessive pushing, shoving
- Improper and disruptive behavior during lunch
- Rowdy and disruptive behavior school functions or field trips
- Use of foul or profane language
- Cheating and plagiarism
- Intentional falsehood (deliberately lying)
- Use of electronic devices like cell phone, ipod, game boy... during school hours

**The following are examples of serious misbehavior**

- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Starting or provoking fights
- Cutting classes
- Harassment or intimidation of students
- Serious disrespect of Staff

**The following are examples of extreme misbehavior**

- Stealing
- Destroying property (major damage)
- Smoking, possession of cigarettes, tobacco or other harmful substances
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or dangerous weapons.

**Parents are encouraged to:**

- Be aware of and support the behavior expectations
- Maintain open and honest communication with staff.
- Support the staff in the management of inappropriate behavior.
- Bring any issues or concerns promptly to the attention of the relevant Staff member.

## **8 Bullying Prevention Policy**

The GAIS believes that providing an educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and families, free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying, supports a learning experience that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness, and freedom from discrimination and abuse. GAIS will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety – physical or emotional, direct or indirect - of any student. “Bullying” means any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern of these that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the school, on school grounds, at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of a student which may, but need not be based on the student’s race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability or age that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property; or
- Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; or
- Insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school’s educational mission or the education of any student.

There is a difference between conflict and bullying. Occasional peer conflict is inevitable. Bullying is not. In a conflict, both sides have equal power to resolve the problem. Bullying involves the intentional, one-sided use of power to control another.

Bullying actions may be direct or indirect

*Direct* bullying or identifiable bullying actions may include:

- Repeated hitting, tripping, shoving, pinching, and excessive tickling
- Repeated verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs, and insults
- Demanding money, property, or some service to be performed
- Stabbing, choking, burning, and shooting

*Indirect* bullying may be more difficult to detect and may include:

- Repeated rejecting, excluding, or isolating of a student by another student or group of students
- Repeated humiliating of a student by another student or group of students
- Repeated manipulating of a student's friends and relationships by another student or group of students
- Sending hurtful or threatening e-mail or writing notes
- Blackmailing, terrorizing, or posing dangerous dares
- Developing a Web site devoted to taunting, ranking, or degrading a target and inviting others to join in posting humiliating notes or messages.

As part of the PYP program, GAIS follows a Personal and Social Education Curriculum that will help students, parents and teachers learn and practice how to handle and minimize conflicts and bullying.

At the beginning of each school year, staff will review the Bullying Prevention Policy, as well as their responsibilities regarding bullying behavior. A copy of the policy will be disseminated annually.

The Bullying Prevention Policy will be available in all student, staff, and parent handbooks.

### **Reporting Intimidation, Harassment, or Bullying Behavior**

Students and parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior to school personnel and administrators. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are confirmed, prompt disciplinary action may be taken.

1. Any student who believes he/she has been the target of harassment, intimidation or bullying by a student or school personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of such conduct that may constitute harassment, intimidation or bullying toward a student should immediately report the alleged acts.
2. The report may be made to any staff member. The staff member will assist the student in reporting to the appropriate school administrator.
3. Teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying are *required* to promptly notify designated staff.
4. Head of School or designee is *required* to accept and investigate all reports of intimidation, harassment or bullying.
5. Head of School or designee is *required* to notify the parent or guardian of a student who commits a verified act of intimidation, harassment, or bullying of the response of the school staff and consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.
6. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting directly to the Head of School.

7. Retaliation against an individual who either orally reports or files a written complaint regarding harassment, intimidation or bullying, or who participates in or cooperates with an investigation is prohibited.
8. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and the accused, shall be preserved consistent with applicable laws.
9. If harassment or bullying continues, the perpetrator can be immediately suspended until a hearing with the parents, administration and teachers can be held.
10. Any student who believes he/she has been the target of cyber bullying by a student or school personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of such conduct that may constitute harassment, intimidation or bullying toward a student through the use of technological devices, should immediately report the alleged acts.

### **Investigating Intimidation, Harassment, or Bullying Behavior**

The Head of School, or designee, will appropriately and promptly investigate all reports of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes bullying or cyber bullying, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.

### **Consequences for Bullying**

The goal of all disciplinary actions is to encourage positive behavior and to produce a safe environment for all students. The most effective discipline plans are the product of mutually supportive parent-school partnerships. Discipline includes positive behavioral support to assist students in resolving problem behavior and encourages personal responsibility. While this document states our general policy, each case is looked at separately, taking the needs of each child into account. It should, however, be noted that:

1. Verified acts of bullying or cyber bullying shall result in intervention by the Head of School or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced.
2. Bullying behavior, including cyberbullying, can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there is no one response to bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in and out-of-school suspension, or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Head of School.

## **9 Sexual Harassment/Prohibited Harassment Policy**

The German-American International School prohibits sexual harassment of any student or employee at school by anyone. Off campus, sexual harassment of any student or employee by anyone connected with the School is also prohibited. While teachers will discuss this policy with their students in age appropriate ways, it is the responsibility of each student where the child is capable of doing so and employee to read and abide by this policy. Under no circumstance is a student or employee expected to endure any form of sexual harassment or any other kind of prohibited harassment as described below.

No teacher, administrator, other employee or student is allowed to engage in any form of sexual harassment of a student or employee of the School on or off the campus at any time. Sexual harassment by a visitor at the School likewise is prohibited. No teacher, administrator, other employee or adult visitor of the School shall make sexual advances to a student whether welcomed or not.

As defined by the State of California, prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term of a condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or progress.

Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting the individual.

The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.

Prohibited sexual harassment also includes, but is not limited to the following types of behavior:

Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, innuendoes, comments or slurs of sexual nature, unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments.

Visual conduct such as sexually oriented posters, cartoons, photography, drawings or electronically generated material.

Non-verbal conduct such as leering, staring at sexual body parts or making sexually suggestive gestures.

Physical conduct such as unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or assault.

Threats or demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of employment or academic status, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment or academic benefits in return for sexual favors.

Retaliation for reporting of threatening to report sexual harassment, or for participating in a sexual harassment investigation.

The determination of what constitutes sexual harassment will depend on specific facts and the context in which the conduct occurs. Sexual harassment may take many forms. It can be subtle and indirect, or blatant and overt. It can occur between people of either gender, between peers, or between individuals in a hierarchical relationship. A single incident could be grounds for discharge or expulsion, depending upon its severity.

If you believe that you have been or are being harassed sexually or because of any of the other reasons listed above (race, color, ancestry, etc.), you should immediately speak with one of the Committee Members or alternate person, as listed below, so that the matter can be investigated promptly and appropriate corrective action can be taken. Also, if you have a question or concern about harassment, please speak with one of the Committee Members.

Do not tolerate any form of harassment. Tell the harasser to stop and promptly speak with a Committee Member or alternate person, as listed below.

Your communication pursuant to this policy will be handled in a manner that respects the privacy of the parties concerned to the extent permitted by the situation. The School prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who complains or participates in the complaint process.

If harassment is established, the offender will be disciplined. If the harasser is an employee, the individual will be disciplined up to and including discharge. If the harasser is a student, the individual will be disciplined up to and including expulsion. If the harasser is a visitor or someone not directly connected to the School, the individual will be dealt with appropriately, such as permanent prohibition from visiting the School and possible prosecution.

The German-American International School's Harassment Prevention Committee members are: The Head of the School, a Teachers' Representative, a Representative of the Board of the School (currently the Vice President)

The School encourages all employees and students to report immediately any incident of harassment and discrimination forbidden by law so that complaints can be promptly addressed and fairly resolved. You also should be aware that the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigates and prosecutes complaints of prohibited harassment in employment. If you think you have been harassed or that you have been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency or telephone them for information about their rules and procedures for reporting charges of sexual harassment and for pursuing available remedies. The nearest office is listed under the government listings of your local telephone directory.

## **10 Emergency and Health Forms**

For emergencies, the school needs to have on file all required forms about the child's health history, medical insurance numbers and current emergency numbers. This file also contains the names of people who are authorized to pick your child up from school. The forms are provided by the school and are available at the office. Please make sure that this information is current at all times. New families must complete and return their child's immunization records by the first day of school. Children without completed records may not be able to attend school.

## **11 Immunizations**

Under California State law, all children entering School must be immunized against certain diseases. The requirements are listed on our web-site [www.germanamericanschool.org](http://www.germanamericanschool.org). Please be sure your children have had the required health examination and immunizations before school begins. If you are coming from outside the U. S., be sure to carry your immunization records with you. Parents who do not follow the prescribed vaccination schedule can sign a waiver form available from the school office.

## **12 Student Illness**

Please call the office if a child is absent and give the reason for the absence. If a child is out more than one day, one call will be sufficient. Students are responsible for completing make-up work.

Children, who are contagiously sick or show symptoms such as chills, communicable disease, heavy coughing, diarrhea, ear ache, inflamed or swollen eyes, flushes or unusual pallor, fever, severe headache, listlessness, nausea or vomiting, skin rash or sore throat need to be kept at home. Mildly ill children who are irritable and cannot fully participate in school also need to stay home. Children with a fever need to be fever free for 24 hours before they can return to school. Do not send children back to the preschool or

school until they have completely recovered and will be able to participate in the entire program including outdoor play.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, we will contact you using the information on the Emergency form. We will notify parents of communicable diseases by hanging a notice outside the classroom door. Families may wish to consult their family physician concerning incubation period, duration of illness and/or immunization. The list which follows contains guidelines for illnesses requiring exclusion from school mandated by the California State law.

### Guidelines for Illnesses Requiring Exclusion

Exclude children and adults with these illnesses or symptoms:

- Fever (Fieber): defined by the child's age as follows; until medical evaluation indicates inclusion:
- Infants and children older than 4 months:
- (accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness)
- Rectal temperature of 102 F or greater, oral temperature 101 F or greater, axillary (armpit) temperature 100 F or greater.
- Signs of possible severe illness (Zeichen einer möglichen schweren Erkrankung): including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing.
- Uncontrolled diarrhea (Durchfall): defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form that is not contained by toilet use.
- Vomiting (Erbrechen): two or three times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores (Mundsoor) with drooling unless the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.
- Rash (Hautausschlag) with fever or behavior change until a physician has determined the illness not to be a communicable disease.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (Augenentzündung): defined as pink or red eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye.
- Infestation (z.B. Läuse) (e.g. scabies, head lice): until 24 hours after treatment was begun and all nits have been removed.
- Tuberculosis (Tuberkulose): until the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.
- Impetigo (Hautentzündung): until 24 hours after treatment was begun
- Streptococcal pharyngitis: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated, and until the child has been fever-free for 24 hours.
- Ringworm infection (Ringwurm) (tinea capitis, tinea corporis, tinea cruris, and tinea pedis): until 24 hours after treatment was begun.
- Varicella (Windpocken) (chicken pox): until 6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Keuchhusten): which is laboratory confirmed, or suspected based on symptoms of the illness, or suspected because of cough onset within 14 days after having face-to-face contact with a laboratory-confirmed case of pertussis in a household or classroom, until 5 days of appropriate chemoprophylaxis (currently erythromycin) has been completed.
- Mumps (Ziegenpeter): until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling

- Hepatitis A (Leberentzündung) virus infection: until 1 week after onset of illness or until after immune serum globulin has been given to appropriate children and staff in the program, as directed by the responsible health department.
- Measles (Masern): until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Rubella (Röteln): until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Streptococcal Infections (including Scarlet Fever (Scharlach) and Streptococcal sore throat (Angina): Onset usually 2-5 days after exposure; sore throat, fever. In some instances, a rash develops. If your child becomes ill, consult your physician immediately.

### **13 Head Lice**

Head lice have become an ever-increasing problem in schools around the country. To lessen the impact of head lice in our school, we have adopted a no-nit policy as recommended by the San Mateo County Health Department. A child found to have head lice needs to be picked up from school. The child needs to be treated for head lice and may not return to school until all nits are removed. Children will be checked and sent immediately back home if nits are still found.

### **14 Illness or Accidents at School**

Parents will be called and emergency procedures followed.

### **15 Medicine Administered at School**

When staff is requested to give medication to a child, the parent and/or physician are required to make the request in writing with specific instructions as to the dosage and time when the medication is to be given. Prescription medication can be given only if it is prescribed by the child's physician with the prescription present on the container. Children may not bring their own medication and administer it themselves (e.g., do not put any medication, prescription or non-prescription, in the child's lunch box). For the Preschool, hand the medication to the Preschool teacher, for school children, please see the Office Administrator.

### **16 School Insurance**

The school carries general liability insurance in the amount of one million dollars. The term liability insurance implies that the School is insured up to the amount of one million dollars in the event that the School or individuals working for the School are sued for liability. In the event of a lawsuit brought against the School or individuals working for the School, the insurance would pay for legal costs, fines etc. up to the amount of one million dollars. Our policy is based on the number of students, and is in effect 24 hours a day. Both private and public schools in California commonly carry this kind of insurance. The School is required to provide supervision of the children from beginning of classes until the end of classes. Outside of these hours the School does not carry a legal supervisory responsibility.

Medical treatment, if necessary, will be covered by your family's medical insurance as a primary coverage. The percentage of the cost covered varies from plan to plan. In most cases the insurance company will not cover all costs and there will be a deductible which has to be paid by you as an out of pocket expense. However, the school provides an excess coverage of up to \$20,000 for medical payments per accident for the students and volunteers for the school.

The School does **not** provide insurance coverage for drivers, neither carpool, volunteer or employee drivers. Drivers must carry their own personal auto insurance to cover such activities. Both private and public schools do not commonly carry this kind of insurance. Every car registered in the State of California is required by law to be insured for general liability. This means that in case of an accident caused by the insured driver the insurance would pay for damage to other cars involved, bodily injury of passengers of other cars involved, and bodily injury of passengers in the insured driver's car. There usually is a limit up to which dollar amount the insurance will cover these expenses. As a volunteer driver **you** must know that you assume full responsibility for your passengers, in the same way you would if you gave any other person a ride. In the event of an accident caused by you, you will be liable for any damage both to objects and persons both in your own car and in the other car.

The School currently has liability coverage for field trips, special events, class trips, and sports team excursions at the location, but again, not while driving to or from such location.

## **17 Visitors and Campus Access**

All GAIS parents and those individuals designated by them will have free access to the school campus at all times. It is the responsibility of the parents to advise the school office of any changes to the list of persons that are authorized to pick up their children from the school.

All visitors to the campus must report to the school office, sign in, and wear a visitors badge while they are on the grounds. This excludes regular workers under contract to the school.

All teachers are responsible for questioning persons on the campus that they do not recognize and who do not have a visitor badge on. They must report unknown persons to the office, and office staff will confirm the individual's identity and purpose.

## **VII Communication**

### **1 Parent-Teacher and School Communication**

You will receive regular communications from GAIS, these include:

- Weekly Infomail from the Office (via e-mail)
- Unit Infomail from your child's homeroom teacher
- Once per semester Parent Evenings
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Student-led Conference

For additional communication with teachers, your child's teacher has a weekly office hour, which you are welcome to visit with appointment. Should that not be convenient for you, kindly contact your child's teacher for a special appointment. For general information, please check your mail folder in front of the office and our web-site [www.germanamericanschool.org](http://www.germanamericanschool.org) regularly for information on upcoming events, announcements, items for sale, etc.

### **2 E-mail**

The school's preferred method of communication is via e-mail, as this allows for efficiently and timely dissemination of relevant information. For this reason, we request that you provide us with your

preferred e-mail address on your enrollment form, and that you check your e-mail regularly for news from the school, parent representative group, etc. The German-American International School will use your e-mail address only for school-related communications. Out of privacy and respect, also, it is to be understood by the German-American International School community that use of any GAIS community member's e-mail, likewise, is to be used for school related purposes only, and that communications listing other peoples' e-mail addresses NOT BE FORWARDED, etc., to anyone outside of the immediate school circle.

To make email communication more efficient keep your messages brief and to the point. Two or three sentences to your teacher should be the limit. If you have major issues to discuss you should schedule a meeting. When using email between parents in your child's class be respectful of others points of view. Parent reps should intervene if communication between parents in their class exceeds proper decorum or violates the schools principles of behavior. Remember, email is not the place to discuss confidential information.

### **3 School Directory**

The GAIS also provides a school directory near the beginning of the school year. This directory is for the express purpose of promoting communication within the parent-teacher-student community and, like the use of e-mail, is a privilege we share with one another based on trust and respect. Our community places high value on privacy, security, and safety for our children and ourselves. Therefore, again, it is expressly forbidden to reproduce or provide this information to anyone outside the German-American International School community or for any purpose of marketing, political canvassing, or special interest groups. Your adherence to this is essential. Misuse of directory or e-mail information may result in discontinuation of the directory.

### **4 Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The staff encourages parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's development and share information about your child and school. A schedule with office hours for each teacher is published at the beginning of each year. Please feel free to make an appointment at this time for a conference. Meetings outside of the scheduled office hour can be arranged directly with the individual teacher.

### **5 Parent Conference Days**

The school schedules a conference day once per semester where the parents and teachers have a chance to review and reflect on the student's work. One of these conference days in Grades 1-8, will take the form of a student-led conference where the students will illustrate and assess their academic progress to their parents. The classroom teacher will be present to help guide the student and make comments about the student's presentation of the materials.

### **6 Proper Channels of Communication**

If you have a problem or concern, it is important that you contact the right person. A parent or guardian with a concern, complaint or grievance on any school matter should always first approach the staff member(s) directly involved or concerned. It is essential that concerns be brought to the attention of the right person.

If the concern is academic, the homeroom teacher or subject teacher should be contacted. If the concern is pastoral, one of the homeroom teachers should be contacted. If the concern relates to a more general issue, the Head of School or Preschool Director should be contacted, as appropriate.

The following chart is intended to give parents an indication of which school administrator should be approached in dealing with specific issues that cannot be resolved or addressed directly by the classroom teacher.

**Primary Years Coordinator**

International Baccalaureate Program  
 Primary Years Program  
 Units of Inquiry  
 Relations with other IB schools  
 Student attitudes and Learner Profile  
 Inquiry Based Learning at GAIS  
 IB School Evaluation  
 PSE Program

**Preschool Director**

Preschool tours and admission  
 Hort Program  
 Preschool program  
 Student Life & Behavior  
 California State Licensing  
 PS Parent Outreach  
 PS Marketing  
 PS Staff Supervision/Evaluation

**Director of Academics**

GAIS Curriculum  
 Student Assessment  
 School-wide Achievement  
 Student Academic Progress  
 Transition to other schools  
 Professional Development  
 MS Staff Supervision/Eval  
 MS student behavior

**Head of School**

Budget and Finance  
 Enrollment & Admissions  
 Facilities  
 Schedules  
 Strategic Planning  
 Academic Calendar  
 School-wide Communication  
 El. Staff Supervision/Evaluation  
 Recruitment  
 WASC Accreditation  
 GAIS School Policies  
 Public Relations

**Business Manager**

Billing & Invoices  
 Tuition  
 Financial Records  
 Tuition Discount Applications  
 Payroll  
 Insurance  
 Visas

**Administrative Assistant**

Extra-Curricular Program  
 Events Management  
 Advertising  
 Manage Book Orders  
 School Keys  
 School Website

**Office Manager**

General Information  
 Student Attendance/Tardies  
 Parent Directory  
 Monthly Online Calendar  
 Infomail  
 Communication Distribution  
 School Access

**VIII Parent Participation**

**1 Parent Representatives**

The Parent Representative group is comprised of the elected representatives of all school grades. Parent representatives are chosen by the parents of each grade at the first parent meeting of the school year. The two Head Parent Representatives are then elected by the greater parent representative body. One Head Parent Representative comes from the membership of the preschool/Kindergarten and one Head Parent Representative comes from the membership of the school grades. The Head “Parent Reps” organize the monthly representative meetings, attend the Board meetings and facilitate the flow of information between parents, grades, and teachers. They help organize various school events during the school year and are also responsible for determining classroom needs in order to optimize the educational atmosphere at the school.

Another role of the parent representative group is to help facilitate the relationship between parents, school, and Board to integrate the parents' perspective into discussion of the issues concerning education, facilities, school events, etc.

Additionally, while we always appreciate parents approaching the GAIS teaching staff or administration with questions, concerns or comments, we recognize that in some situations, parents may feel more comfortable speaking to the parent representatives. Parents may initiate a parent discussion evening through the parent representative if they feel that there is an issue which they would like to discuss within the class.

"Parent Rep" meetings are usually held on the first Friday of each month. Agenda for and minutes of recent meetings are available electronically. All parents are welcome to attend. Additionally, you are free to pass questions, comments, concerns, etc. to the larger group through your own class/grade/program Parent Representative.

## **2 Traffic and Parking Policy**

The Parking and Traffic Policy at the German-American International School (GAIS) is based primarily on requirements and conditions set forth by the City of Menlo Park Planning Commission and the Menlo Park City Council. The City of Menlo Park imposed traffic regulations cover the areas of 1) Traffic Volume and Speed 2) Parking, and 3) Speed Monitoring

The school's use permit is subject to annual review by the City of Menlo Park. Among the requirements of this use permit, all parents and adult students must agree to abide by the German-American International School's Parking and Traffic Policy as a condition of their enrollment at the German-American International School. Please follow these guidelines to ensure an orderly flow of traffic and a positive relationship with our neighbors:

1. Carpooling: All parents or adult students, who wish to drive to the campus on a regular basis to drop off or pick up their children or to attend a class shall, whenever possible, participate in carpools.

2. Parking Policy: Parking is available in the school's parking lot and we expect this be used as the only area for parking. GAIS parents should not park on Elliot Drive, O'Connor or Oak Court when picking up or dropping off their children at the School. The yellow curbside closest to the school is a morning drop-off zone ONLY. Parents must remain with their cars in this zone. Parking in this zone will be permitted when the Grade 1-8 drop off is ended at 8:25.

3. Speed Limit: As a condition of enrollment in the GAIS school program, every parent or adult student agrees to drive less than 15 mph on Elliott drive when driving to and from the school. A parent or adult student who exceeds the speed limit will be subject to the following set of escalating consequences.

- i. A parent or adult student will receive a written warning the first time that school driver has been reported as speeding on Elliott drive. (Note: In this document, "speeding" refers to driving in excess of 15mph)
- ii. After receiving a second written warning for speeding, the driver will be required to sign up for one extra traffic monitoring.
- iii. After receiving the third warning for speeding, the driver will no longer be allowed to drive on Elliott Drive during school hours or for special events for the remainder of the school year.

- iv. Any subsequent speeding infraction will result in removal from the GAIS program with no refund of tuition.

The speed limit for cars inside of the school parking are is 5 mph.

4. Traffic Monitoring Duty: According to the conditions of the City of Menlo Park use permit, the School will provide traffic monitors each year on the schedule outlined below. The purpose of the monitoring is to assure that the speed limit 15 mph is not exceeded, and the School parking does not occur on Elliott Drive. The key elements of traffic monitoring are as follows.

During all monitoring times, at least one monitor will be positioned in the 90 degree turn of Elliott Drive. This position allows the monitor to see all of Elliott Drive.

All monitors will receive written instructions as to their duties and safety issues by the Society.

Speed and parking violations (corresponding license plates) shall be noted in the Monitoring book.

Other measures will be used periodically when monitoring is not scheduled, such as placing cones in the street with 15-mph signs, or speed trailers.

It is understood that if the Neighborhood Committee determines that compliance with the 15 mph speed is not adequate, additional monitoring may be required.

Monitoring times:       AM: 8:05 am to 8:35 am  
                                  PM: 1:40 am to 2:10 pm

Each GAIS family with children must sign up for and complete two traffic-monitoring slots. Alternatively, you pay a fee of \$100 for not completing this duty. Parents with children or adult students who walk to school are exempt from traffic monitoring duties. Sign-up for traffic monitoring is done in the school office. Parent or adult student may request to be excused of their obligations contained in the Parking and Traffic policy due to extenuating circumstances. Parent or adult student should direct such requests in writing to the Board of the GAIS.

5. Joint Community Committee: A joint traffic committee consisting of GAIS Board member and a designated Elliott Drive resident shall meet as needed, and no less than quarterly during the school year. The objective of these meetings is to address traffic related issues that may arise between the local community and the GAIS. It shall be the responsibility of the GAIS Board to ensure that these meetings take place.

### **3 Telephone Chain**

In the event that it becomes necessary to close the school or to send the students home early, we will use the telephone chain. Each class representative will be advised of the situation and will call parents using the class directory. Once you are called it will be your responsibility to call the next person on the list which is in alphabetical order. If that person does not respond then you should call the next person. Thus it is important that you keep the list with you and that your information is always current.

Although closing the school it is a rare occurrence, there are a number of events that may make this necessary such as rare environmental phenomenon (hurricanes), technical breakdowns (water, electric) of safety issues.

## **4 School Nights**

During the year we organize a number of school nights, which are designed to give parents important information about the school, a chance to meet the staff and an opportunity to discuss issues with other parents. We encourage you to join us for the following school nights:

### First Back to School Night

At the back to school/preschool night, we will give you important information regarding the curriculum and the day-to-day routines at our school. This is your chance to ask questions that might have come up during the first days of school/preschool/Kindergarten and to connect with other families and teachers.

### Second Back to School Night

At this meeting you will get informed about what you can expect during the second half of the school year. This includes focus on the upcoming curriculum and what is expected of the students in meeting it. The Kindergarten/Preschool will concentrate on upcoming events. Also, Kindergarten parents will receive information about the school's academic program in Grades 1-8.

### Membership Meetings

Our school is run by the Board of Directors that is elected by the school members. The members of the nonprofit organization are you as the parents of our school. During the Membership meetings, the board and principal report on the status and upcoming plans regarding the future of the school. The Membership meetings are your chance to get informed regarding school budget, enrollment, educational concepts and many more issues that concern your children. The Membership meetings are also the forum for input or questions that need to be raised to the board. You will receive an agenda with the invitation for each meeting. Three evenings per year, time expectations are announced with the agenda.

### Board of Directors Meetings

The Board of Directors meets monthly, usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. All parents and school members are welcome to attend any of the Board's Open Sessions. Please inform a board member or the business manager of your intended attendance so we can arrange to have enough space to accommodate all interested participants. Parents are welcome to place items of concern/interest on the agenda by notifying the Board secretary 10 days prior to the Board meeting.

## **5 Volunteering and Job Assignments**

In order to participate in the learning experience of your child and to help keep the tuition as reasonable as possible, we need your help and support to operate the school effectively. As such, each family is obligated to volunteer for activities during the school year

There are 3 ways for you as a parent to contribute. You can choose to:

A. Be elected as one of our board members and get involved in the decision making process of our school.

B. Become a class parent representative or classroom helper. Each class has one person in each of these roles. The class parent representative attends monthly meetings with other class reps and helps to facilitate a healthy flow of information and take care of organizational issues involving class parents. The

classroom helper is available to help the teacher in a more hands-on manner, helping the teacher to do small day to day things needed for the class.

C. Join a committee or team. Committees are mostly chaired by board members and include a variety of jobs large and small. Some committees create their own sub-committees to divide the work load. Teams often work in conjunction with one of the committees. These groups are integral to the optimal functioning of the school. Committees and teams open for parent participation include:

Education	Preschool/Vorschule Laundry Team
Facilities	Yearbook Team
School Events	Book Fairs (Eng & Ger.) Team
Hospitality	Library
Marketing/Public Relations	New Family Support
Fundraising	Preschool Fair Committee
IT Team	

Whichever committee or activity you decide to contribute to, we will try to provide great flexibility and consideration to your personal situation. We did not think a system of counting hours and policing would fit the style of our school. We would much rather have you decide how much time and effort you can give. We do, however, ask that you do your part to help support our school community.

### Volunteer Job Selection and Sign Up

Before you sign up for a volunteer job, ask yourself from which of your skills the school could benefit the most and how much of your time you can give. To help us find the right position for you, we need you to complete a Volunteer Interest Form that is included in your enrollment package. Please return it with your enrollment forms! Based on this form, the school will find the right volunteer job for you.

## **6 Social Events**

We would like to point out the many events at the school throughout the year. These events are excellent opportunities to meet and get to know other parents. The school calendar lists specific events and dates. You will receive an invitation for each of the major events.

The following social events have become a tradition at our school. We would love to see you at all of them, but we understand if you cannot participate at all of them.

- August Work-Nic. The Saturday before school starts, all parents and students are invited to a working picnic to help us launch the new school year.
- Beach Party. Join us at the beach for a late summer beach day for a potluck party (bring some food to share) in September.
- Oktoberfest. A traditional German event.
- St Martin's Parade. In November, we host a lantern parade and discuss the virtues of sharing.
- Holiday Festival. In December, the children of the school and Kindergarten/Preschool give a short holiday performance at the school.
- Easter Picnic. Come and hunt Easter eggs at a nearby park and bring your own lunch.
- Sommerfest. The Summer Party in June is a nice get-together with lots of fun games and activities for the children.

## 7 Fundraising

All private schools in the United States, and a growing number of public schools, ask for gifts of money over and above tuition. This is called fundraising, and here is why we do it:

- Tuition alone does not cover the entire cost of operating the school and implementing capital improvements.
- Fundraising is tax deductible. Tuition is not. On average, you will get back 30% of your gifts to GAIS in lower income taxes.
- Fundraising brings in money from alumni, grandparents, and businesses where we work or that we patron. For every dollar given by our parents, these sources add another twenty five cents.

Add it all up and members' voluntary gifts to GAIS go a long, long way. For example, if you give \$1,000 to GAIS, you will get a tax deduction worth, on average, \$300. Because of your gift, businesses and others will give too: another \$250 on average. GAIS gets \$1,250 and the net cost to you is just \$700.

Parent volunteers on our Fundraising Committee coordinate all fundraising activities. There are two key points for annual giving to GAIS.

**The Annual Fund Campaign** happens near the end of each calendar year. Current parents are asked to make direct cash contributions to GAIS. In recent years, the average contribution requested has been about 7.5% of tuition. As part of the Annual Fund Campaign, GAIS volunteers also solicit contributions from alumni, local businesses, and other supporters of GAIS. Many employers have charitable matching programs, in which they will fully or partially match contributions to GAIS of their employees.

**The Gala Auction** happens in the first semester of the school year. It is a fun and festive evening for everyone. Tickets are sold to partially cover the cost of putting on the auction, and families are strongly encouraged to invite friends and relatives to come to the event. Auction items themselves are solicited widely from businesses as well as parents. Each class at GAIS prepares a "class gift" which is also part of the auction.

## 8 Buy-out Option

We realize that some families may not wish to participate in the school's various volunteering programs. For them, we have instituted an actual cost rate equal to the corporate tuition rate which is approximately 20% higher than the private payer rate. The corporate rate payers will be excused from traffic duty, volunteering positions, and fundraising obligations such as ticket purchase and auction item donation to the Fundraising Gala.

## 9 Donations of Goods

The school welcomes donations of classroom materials, computer software, and office supplies, depending on present school needs. For further information regarding making a donation, please talk with the office staff, who will pass on the information to the appropriate person. We will be happy to provide a tax receipt for your donations.