

Danube International Elementary School



Handbook

Danube International School

Elementary Section School

Welcome to Danube International School. I hope you enjoy your visit to our school. We are very proud of it - not only the beautiful building itself, but our students, their parents and the team of teachers and support staff who lead them.

This booklet is designed to provide you with current information regarding the organisation of our Elementary School. I hope that you will find it useful both for yourself and for sharing with your child. We are an international school with English as the medium of instruction. We draw our students from over thirty countries as well as many from the Austrian business community.

Our curriculum includes the core subject areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Art which are taught by the student's homeroom teacher. Specialists teach Music, Information Technology, Physical Education, English as a Second Language (ESL) and German. All students receive German instruction either as a first or second language depending on their proficiency.

Wherever possible, the above subject areas are taught within our units of inquiry, the Putting it into Practice program. This means that different subjects are often integrated into particular units, although at other times particular skills in each of these areas are taught on a stand alone basis. Our Inquiry based program builds on students' prior knowledge and experience, with a strong emphasis on - how to learn and how to find out.

We also have an activities co-ordinator in charge of after school activities. These can vary from art to drama to football.

Our Early Years Unit caters for our youngest students. Children may start the term they are three years old, providing they are toilet trained. They learn through structured play . Please see the Early Years Booklet for full details.

In Primary and Grade 1 classes we have an English through Mother Tongue Programme in place. This programme enables our German speaking children to excel at English language acquisition by learning their initial literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongue. Meanwhile their English vocabulary and understanding is being developed in the oral side of the programme. The non-German speaking children receive oral German lessons. We also have a school Languages Coordinator who oversees the mother tongue development of our students.

In our school the child is at the centre of the educational process and our curriculum is based on this philosophy.

We also have a strong ethos in our school which aims to help each student meet their highest potential through intellectual, social, emotional, moral, physical and artistic growth. We do this with the understanding that each child learns and develops in their own way within a structured and agreed framework of behaviour and expectations. Our Grade 5's lead a very successful conflict resolution team which works to empower the children to solve their social problems appropriately and effectively.

We are a small, friendly school with a very warm and supportive atmosphere. We have one class per year group in Early Years, Grade 1, 2 and 4. We have a two form entry in Primary, Grade 3 and 5. Our maximum class size is 24 children with an average of 18 children. We regard ourselves as a "small school-big family" and this is very important to all of us learning and working here. We hope that every student will take a full share in enhancing the quality of the school community and the international ideas we promote.

Our parents have a core role in promoting this ethos, too. Through their parent organisation PADIS and through their individual class contributions we have an active "parents-in-partnership" involvement. I hope that you will be willing to add your talents and expertise whenever possible.

If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact me when you visit the school.

Barbara Nagy Elementary Principal

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What is the daily schedule and routine?

School begins at 08:25 with registration and ends at 15:05, except Friday when we finish at 14:25. The school day consists of eight 40 minute units, with a 25 minute morning break and a 50 minute lunch break. Students should arrive at school each morning between 08:15 and 08:25 in time for registration in the homeroom. Registration begins promptly at 08:25 and parents should not need to be in the classroom after this time. Students arriving in the classroom after 08:35 will be recorded as late.

Students have mid-morning break from 10:15 until 10:55. From 10:15 until 10:35 they play outside in the courtyard. From 10:35 until 10:55 students have snack in the classroom and drink school milk if ordered.

Lunch time is from 12:15 until 13:05 . The students eat lunch in either the dining room or the winter garden and then go out to play.

All breaks are supervised. Weather permitting, students spend break and lunch times outside.

Students should not attend school after illness until they are fit enough to play outside and take part in all curriculum activities **including P.E.**

At the end of school please arrange for your child to be **collected promptly** and do not leave them unattended around the building or courtyard. **The Hof is out of bounds after school finishes.**

Please note: unless involved in formal after school activities children are not supervised after 15:15 and are no longer the responsibility of the school.

Bell and lesson times

08:15 - 08:25 Arrival in classroom

08:25 - 08:35 Registration

08:35 - 10:15 Lessons

10:15 - 10:55 Break

10:55 - 12:15 Lessons

12:15 - 13:05 Lunch break

13:05 - 15:05 Lessons

15:05 Homeroom, dismissal or activities (Monday to Thursday; Fridays 14:25)

Activities

The activity programme is organised by Mr. Tonci Maranic. He will inform you which activities are available each semester and organise a schedule for your child.

Please ensure that your child is picked up promptly at the end of every activity. The children are usually very tired and the school does not supervise uncollected children unless there has been a family emergency.

What will my child need?

The following equipment is essential for the day to day routine and for successful study in the Elementary school. We hope you will make sure your child always has each item on the list below.

Please mark every item with your child's name.

- a school bag for carrying a snack, reading books, message book and homework books.
Please ensure drinks are leak proof!
- basic classroom equipment (kept in child's own pencil case and in chair back pockets)
 - * sharpened pencils
 - * coloured pencils
 - * felt tips/markers
 - * a ruler
 - * scissors
 - * an eraser
 - * pencil sharpener
 - * a glue stick - renewable at intervals
 - * paint box

Please check your child's stationery regularly as they tend to lose scissors and pencil sharpeners and use up their glue. Replace as necessary, please.

For students in Grades 2, 3 and 4

- * a bilingual dictionary
 - * an English dictionary - can be purchased from school €13/€16
 - * a German dictionary - can be purchased from school €13
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- games equipment
 - * a white T- shirt (a suitable DIS shirt may be purchased in school)
 - * burgundy coloured shorts (also available for purchase in school)
 - * white socks
 - * gym shoes (no black soles)
 - * a sports bag
 - a protective apron, overall or other garment (an old shirt will suffice) for art and craft.
 - indoor house shoes or slippers.
 - mid morning snack. Please send a small healthy snack, such as fruit, crackers or raw vegetables. Milk is available for those wishing to order it from the office. Chewing gum, chocolate and sweets are **not allowed** in school during school hours.

Lunch

School lunch is available to order in the dining room. Order forms and erlagschein are available from Mr. Hasler in the reception office. If you prefer you may send your child with a packed lunch instead.

Drinks should be in sealed plastic containers. No glass bottles or cans please.

Money

Children in elementary school are not encouraged to bring personal money to school except 50 cents on Friday for the PADIS bake sale.

If children bring money to school for any other reason, it should be in a named purse or sealed named envelope and given to the class teacher at the beginning of the day for safe keeping.

All students are expected to be responsible for their own property and to respect the property of others.

Lost and found property is kept at Reception.

The sweet and soft drink machines are out of bounds during school time for all elementary students.

What about homework?

In elementary grades homework consists of activities that either reinforce or extend learning that has taken place at school.

It is very important that your child **reads for a period of time every evening** either in English or their mother tongue or both! Reading alone in bed before going to sleep is a great way to end any busy day. It is recommended that you also read with your child and that you use this time to share the day's experiences in your home language. A reading record is included in the reading folder for you,

as well as the teacher, to record achievements and comments.

Children also have **message books** where you and the teacher can keep in contact on a daily basis. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of school we urge you to write them here first.

Spellings, research, exercises and work to finish from class are given in small amounts regularly from Grade 2 onwards. In Grade 3, 4 and 5 children are expected to study a little most weekday nights. Please check your child's diary for homework tasks and help your child by providing them with a quiet environment in which to work.

Homework should **not** become a stressful experience for students or their parents! It is a time when you and your child can share discussions on school work and you can give individual help if need be. Please see the class teacher if homework becomes an issue in your family.

What will my child learn?

As a team of professional teachers we work together with subject specialists to achieve the best for every student in our care. In our classroom teaching, we strongly emphasise literacy and numeracy skills so that our children can be effective inquirers and independent learners.

As well as language and maths the children have science, art, music, topic work, physical education, swimming and ice-skating.

Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 also have formal computer instruction.

We have established assessment procedures the results of which are shared with parents at individual conferences twice a year. We also have in place a highly respected British assessment programme called Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) which is designed to measure individual and whole school performance. Grades 2 and 5 are tested every year.

Overall, at D.I.S. your child will:

- develop understanding of important concepts
- conduct research into knowledge which has local and global significance
- be encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards themselves, learning, the environment and other people
- have the opportunity for involvement in responsibility, action and service to others
- learn about Language, Mathematics, Science, the Arts, Social Studies, Physical Education and Information and Communication Technology.

How will I know how my child is doing?

We believe that it is of paramount importance to share discussion and exchange comment on your child's progress as part of our "parents in partnership" philosophy and this is reflected very clearly in our reporting process.

There are two written reports per year. The first semester report is issued at the end of January or early February and may be followed by a parent - teacher conference if required. The final written report is available at the end of the summer semester.

We have three formal parent conferences: a whole class meet -the -teacher one at the very beginning of the school year, the second in October and the third in April. However, we have a strong commitment to an 'open door' policy and Elementary School staff are always available before or after school to discuss individual student's progress. Please arrange appointments in advance, preferably through the message book.

Any concerns you may have about your child's welfare should first be raised with your child's homeroom teacher. If your concern continues you should then raise the matter with the Elementary Principal.

How does my child successfully complete the academic year?

Almost all children succeed in progressing to the next grade; almost all have achieved

- adequate attendance to ensure good progress
- adequate maturity
- adequate academic progress.

However, at the end of the year, students who have given cause for continued concern are considered carefully before promotion to the next grade. Any decision is only taken in the best interests of the child and is always agreed between parents and teachers.

What is expected of my child?

The expectations for students in the Elementary School are set out in this code of conduct. These expectations are based on our belief in:

.consequences for behaviours and actions

- the importance of courtesy to and respect for others and themselves
- the need for a safe, healthy learning environment
- the importance of the orderly operation of the school
- respect for school and personal property.

Courtesy and Respect

We expect students to:

- be polite and helpful to others
- follow the rules agreed by the teacher and the students so that everyone in the classroom can work together.
- show kindness by using thoughtful words and actions
- use good table manners and clear away lunch trays in the racks provided
- place classroom chairs on their desks at the end of the day to aid the cleaning staff.

Safety and Health

We expect students to :

- **walk** on the right inside the building and move about quietly during lesson times
- walk silently from the building in an emergency
- keep the school and courtyard clean by always using the litter bins
- leave all chewing gum and sweets at home.

Orderly operation of school

We expect students to:

- be punctual at the start of the school day, arriving before registration
- bring a signed letter if they have been absent from school or if they will be absent on extended holiday.

Respect for Property

We expect students to:

- have all items clearly marked with their names
- leave valuable items and money at home
- leave their outdoor coats and shoes tidily in the cloakroom area
- show responsibility for the tidiness and care of the homeroom.

Discipline

Danube International School is a very caring, supportive environment. Our aim is to encourage self-discipline and positive attitudes. Generally the students respond very well to this approach. As befits a well ordered family the boundaries are rarely challenged beyond a common sense level. However, there may be times when your child's behaviour does cause concern. The homeroom teacher is always aware of such behaviour and will discuss their concerns with the child and the principal if appropriate. Persistent or severe cases of bad behaviour will always be communicated to the parents and discussed. In such cases we would expect you to reinforce the necessary good behaviour.

Use of mobile telephones is not allowed during school time. If you need to contact your child or they you, please do so through the school office.

Gameboys and other electronic toys are allowed at the discretion of the parent. They can be used only at playtime and lunchtime in the Hof. However loss or damage is the responsibility of the child.

Purchases from the school canteen can only be made **before and after** school.

Quality

We encourage high standards from our students and we expect only their best efforts. Consequently we recognise and reward exemplary effort by making special awards from time to time in class and at assemblies.

Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance is essential to good progress, commitment to a routine and to the development of friendships.

Parents are expected to ensure regular and punctual attendance at school. In the event of absence, explanations must be given in writing either by letter or fax. Requests for leave of absence during the school term should be sent in writing to the Elementary Principal.

Assemblies

The Lower Elementary School meets first lesson every third Monday to share songs, stories and classroom work while the Upper Elementary classes meet every third Friday. We may focus on world festivals, welcome new students or discuss important events.

You are invited to share in the **first Friday assembly of each month**. It takes place in the theatre and begins after registration at 08:35.

Birthday Celebrations

When your child is celebrating a birthday you **may** decide to send in a cake for the whole class to share. You are very welcome to come into class and join the celebration and take photographs. Please arrange a convenient time with the home room teacher.

Library

We are fortunate to have a small but well stocked and well organised elementary library. Classes have time tabled library periods for study and exchanging books. Children may borrow 1-4 books per fortnight depending on grade level and are expected to remember to return them promptly.

What annual events will my child participate in ?

* Wandertag	A get-to-know-each-other day in the countryside, August
* Class residential and day trips	September and throughout the year
* School Photographs	November / December
* St.Nicholas Visit	December
* Winter Festival	Elementary School concerts, December
* Fasching	A fun afternoon of costumes and games in February / March
* Science Fair	Problem solving and demonstrations
* Art Exhibition	May
* Ice-Skating	A physical activity for the winter months in January and February
* Swimming	A ten week programme sometime during the school year
* Fun Sports Afternoon	June

Extra Curricular Activities

As our school philosophy is to educate the whole student we place great emphasis on the role of extra curricular activities. Students are encouraged to participate in these "out of class" activities, whether they are organised by school, or by an outside organisation or club. Please inform the class teacher if your child has talents or coaching after school so that we can celebrate these achievements in school.

Extra curricular activities are organised by the Activities Coordinator, Mr Tonci Maranic, and differ from one semester to the next. Current activities are posted in newsletters and the notice board. Students are expected to make a commitment to any activity undertaken and to participate with discipline and focus.

In addition, each class also makes frequent field trips to museums and galleries in Vienna and the surrounding area in connection with their class units of inquiry and sometimes even just for fun!

What can I do as a parent volunteer?

You will receive a parent helper's letter from your child's homeroom teacher at the start of the school year. Parents are always welcome to help out in the classroom or with activities and school trips. If you have the time and are able to help, please fill in the form and return it to your child's class teacher.

What if.....?**What if my child is sick at school?**

You will be contacted in the event of sickness and injuries that require medical attention. If ambulance assistance is required you may be requested to pay for this. Please be sure to provide the office with your day time telephone numbers.

What if my child is sick and is away from school?

Please inform the school office either by telephone or fax, or send in a note with your child the first day back at school.

What if I am away and my child is staying with relatives or friends?

Please inform the school if your child is staying at another address. We need a number to contact during the day in the event of an emergency.

What if there is a change in address or telephone number?

Please inform the school as soon as you are able.

What if my child has a problem at school?

The best person for you to see is the class teacher concerned. Appointments can be made for the end of the teaching day. Problems requiring further discussion can be raised with the Principal.

We hope we have answered all of your questions. If you can think of any others please contact us at school and we can update this booklet for the next year!

Finally

Should you decide to join us we wish you and your child every happiness and success at Danube International School. We look forward to getting to know you and your family well in the coming years.