



# Policy on admission into the elementary school

14 Feb 2020

Admission to Deutsche Schule Riga (DSR) is guided by the fundamental principle of only enrolling children, in whom we have high confidence, that they can graduate with the German high school diploma called “Abitur”.

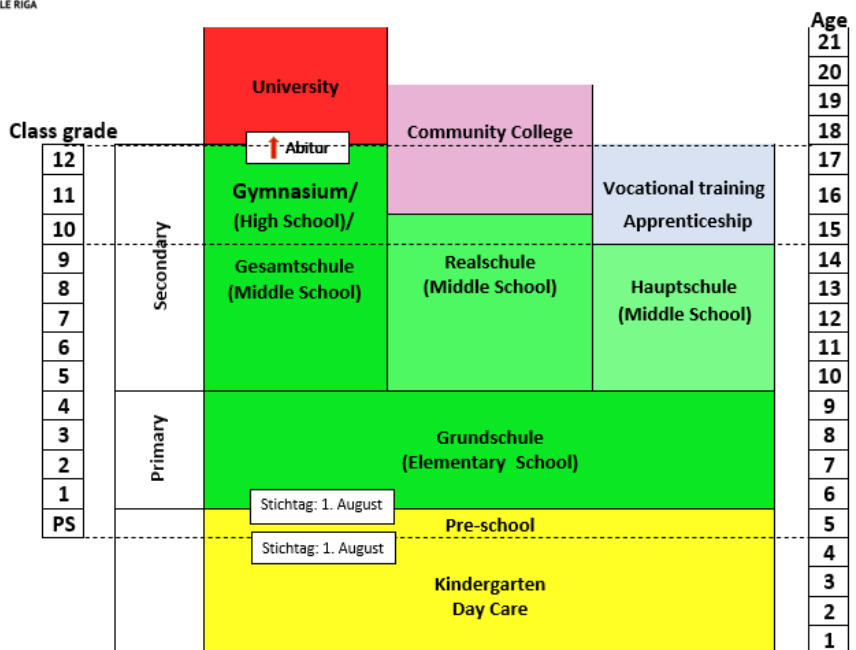
## Preamble

The German education system is radically different from the systems prevalent in most of the rest of the world. In most countries, including Latvia and the US, all children typically attend school grades 1-12 together and up to 95% of students manage to obtain the respective national high school diploma giving access to university.

In stark contrast, the German “Abitur” on purpose has been designed so that only 50% of native speaking Germans can pass it. The other half of German native speakers leave school after grade 9 or 10 years in order to attend vocational training schools or “non-university” professional academies leading to qualifications such as for example hospital nurse, policeman, or certified electrician etc. In Germany, children are sorted at age 10 either into the “Gymnasium”, track, which prepares for the “Abitur”, or into the “Realschule” or “Hauptschule” tracks, which prepare for vocational training schools or non-university academies.



## The German Education System



Furthermore, please be aware that children seeking to attend Deutsche Schule Riga (DSR) are required to learn more languages, at a younger age, and to a far higher level of proficiency; then children just about anywhere else in the world, including children at public schools in Germany. At DSR, we pursue the very ambitious goal of attaining full professional fluency in three languages, plus medium proficiency in one or two more languages.

Given those particular goals, the demands of the DSR curricula are therefore simply not suitable for all children.

For example, the number of our language lessons in DSR 1st grade is already **DOUBLE** that of a Latvian or public German 1st grade class. For example, in Latvia, 1st grade students get 6 lessons of Latvian and 2 lessons of English, for a total of **8 language lessons**. The DSR 1st grade curricula already features 6 lessons of German, 4 lessons of English, plus 5 lessons of Latvian (our instead of Latvian a different extra-curricular language of choice), for a total of **15 language lessons**. If, instead of 5 lessons of Latvian, you choose to study 5 lessons in another language, your child will still get (on top of that) 2 extra lessons of Latvian, for a total of **17 language lessons** (compared to 8 in the Latvian or German public school system). In grade 5 the DSR already introduces a 4th (or 5th) language, and the total number of weekly language lessons increases to a minimum of **19 language lessons**.



DEUTSCHE SCHULE RIGA

GRADE 5 - TIMETABLE

2021 - 2022	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 8:30 - 9:30	Sport	Chinese	Spanish	French	German
2 9:35 - 9:55		Ethics	German	MNT	Math
3 10:00 - 10:40	LV/RU	Math	Sports	German	Math
3/4 10:40 - 11:10	Breakfast				
4 11:10 - 11:50	German	LV/RU	Sports	English	English
5 11:55 - 12:35	Music	German	Math	LV/RU	LV/RU
6 12:40 - 13:20	Math	German	Media	Art	LV/RU
6/7 13:20 - 14:10	Lunch				
7 14:30 - 14:50	MNT	Geography	MNT	Art	Music
8 14:55 - 15:35	English	English	English	Ethics	Geography
9 15:40 - 16:20	Latvian as FL <sup>1</sup>	Homework	Homework	Remedial lesson	Admin hour
9/10 16:20 - 16:40	Afternoon snack				
10 16:40 - 17:20	Homework			Latvian as FL <sup>2</sup>	Homework
11 17:20 - 18:30	Extracurricular activities / Homework / Pick up / Supervised evening care				

### **Policy on admission into the elementary school**

In accordance with German school regulations we generally observe the 1<sup>st</sup> of August as the applicable cut-off date to determine principal eligibility for admission. Children who have turned 6 years old on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of August are eligible to be considered for enrollment into our 1<sup>st</sup> grade starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September that same year. Rare exceptions to the 1<sup>st</sup> of August cut-off date can be made on a case by case basis. The following are our enrollment criteria for the elementary school:

- **Emotional readiness.** Emotional readiness includes sufficient emotional strength to follow daily school routines without emotional stress and anxiety. Our teachers assess emotional readiness through general observation, if necessary, confirmed by the school psychologist.

- **Social skills.** Social skills include the ability to follow rules and integrate into a class of fellow children. Our teachers assess social skills through general observation, if necessary, confirmed by the school psychologist.

- **Motor skills.** Motor skills includes the ability to dress and undress independently without the help of an adult and in useful time. Our teachers assess sufficient motor skills through general observation, if necessary, confirmed by the school psychologist.

- **Cognitive skills.** We assess the child's cognitive skills with a test lasting up to 1 hour. The test should be conducted in the child's native language, or at least in a language the child is comfortable with. We are able to test in German, Latvian, Russian, and English. On request we might be able to offer the test in additional languages.

- **Concentration ability.** The child must be able to work independently (without the presence of a parent) for up to 30 minutes. We assess this ability during the same test and during general observation. If the assessment is conducted prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the child is only required to work independently for up to 25 minutes.

- **Academic knowledge, typically acquired in kindergarten.** The child must demonstrate minimum abilities in reading, writing, and basic mathematics below 10. We assess if the child has acquired sufficient knowledge and ability during the same test. The alphabet and the language used by the child to demonstrate its acquired reading and writing knowledge can vary. We can test either in the Latin or Cyrillic alphabets, and in the German, Latvian, Russian, and English languages. On request we might be able to offer the test in additional alphabets and languages.

A. Detailed admission policy for **Internal children** (already attending our kindergarten)

The pre-school teachers, if necessary, in collaboration with the school psychologist, will

determine prior to 1 March if internal children are ready to be promoted from pre-school into the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

## B. Detailed admission policy for External children

External children are eligible to attend the elementary school of the German School of Riga, even without prior knowledge of German, based on the following requirements and conditions:

### *1. Admission into the 1<sup>st</sup> grade*

#### **a. availability of space**

Available spots for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of elementary school are reserved until the 1<sup>st</sup> of March for internal children who attend the pre-school class of our kindergarten. Free spots who become available on 1 March can in principle be taken by external children.

#### **b. enrollment criteria**

See the above list of enrollment criteria which applying children must meet. We will evaluate every child through testing and observation. The observation period typically takes place during a two-day long trial during which the child is integrated into one of our pre-school kindergarten classes. During those two days we provide full emotional support, including in the Russian, Latvian, or English languages. In each class there are sufficient children who speak those languages so that a lack of German language skills will not affect the result of this two-day observation trial. This trial is free of cost and does not commit neither the parent nor the school to proceed with the admission process. The trial must take place prior to the begin of the summer vacations. Children who request admittance during the summer months can only be admitted on a provisional basis. Final admittance will only be granted in mid-September once the child has demonstrated meeting all enrollment criteria.

#### **c. Acquisition of minimal German**

If the child meets all enrollment criteria it can be admitted, but only if the parent commits that the child will eventually learn sufficient German to catch up to the rest of the class. The standard method for the child to learn German is attendance of our preliminary 6-week long summer course held for children with insufficient prior knowledge in German. This course however can only provide the bare minimum. Typically, 1<sup>st</sup> grade children with insufficient German keep attending an individually determined number of tailor-made private lessons during the first few months of elementary school until they have caught up. The school is prepared to provide all necessary private lessons.

### *2. Admission into higher grades*

In principle older children, regardless of their knowledge of German, can still join higher grades of our elementary school. In addition to the above enrollment criteria older students must first present

the grade report cards of their current school. We also reserve the right to ask the child's current school to fill out a transfer application.

For questions and clarification of this policy please contact our secretariat at (+371) 2925 0084 or at [sekretariat@deutscheschuleriga.lv](mailto:sekretariat@deutscheschuleriga.lv)

Martin Farenfield

Principal