

Welcome to our introduction to the international Secondary section of the Schuldorf!

Our team of experienced teachers and teaching assistants from around the world offer a learning culture that increasingly reflects highly valued principles of international education:

Throughout the curriculum we strive to inspire students to explore, share and critically reflect upon our rapidly evolving world community and environment. Whilst adhering to clear conceptual progression defined by well-established international course materials, we also seek to foster independence in learning by seeking opportunities for enquiry and problem solving, derived from local and global contexts. Equally important are planned opportunities for students to creatively celebrate their ideas through artistic media as well as presentational experiences that enable them to develop their interests and grow in confidence.

Having successfully introduced the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** to years 11 and 12 in 2014, it was officially re-confirmed last year that we are an **IB world school** at diploma level. The implications of this have a profound impact on the development of teaching and learning throughout Secondary and we are increasingly able to call upon recent experiences in order to refine our approaches in lower Secondary. Consequently, we visibly celebrate and seek to integrate and apply the principles of the **IB Learner Profile** to our practice (see IB learner profile attachment for important learning attributes).

Our long-standing membership of the **Cambridge International exam** organisation continues to provide us with a clear pathway to the '**International General Certificate in Education**' (**IGCSE**) that is taken by all our Year 10 students. Cambridge curriculum frameworks define a significant element of our skills development throughout Secondary. This resource and planning guidance provides a solid foundation for entrance into vocational training or further school studies at 16+.

For details about our **IGCSE and IB programmes**, please refer to this link:

<https://www.schuldorf.de/dokumente-siss2> . You are also welcome to visit the 'Download' section of the SISS Secondary website of the Schuldorf Bergstraße.

Before shedding some light on our curriculum and life as an international school, we would like to stress that cooperation with the wider Schuldorf community provides us with a shared identity and sense of purpose. Fundamental principles of mutual respect, justice, celebration of cultural diversity and the protection of individual and democratic rights are essential. Our ultimate goal is for all members of the community to be integrated, valued and fulfilled as active members of the campus.

Being welcomed and 'well known' in Year 5

Our younger, new arrivals usually have classmates from faraway places and we feel that a good start to Secondary can be achieved through an effective connection to one of their main subject teachers, the **class teacher**. This person supports the group socially and organisationally as they settle into the larger, more open environment alongside many students from older year groups. The class teacher supports 'class councils' in which the students discuss and seek solutions to everyday issues together. They also relate to yourselves as parents and they can convene teacher meetings in order to share issues that may arise, thereby initiating a team response to individual needs.

How will learning happen from the beginning of Secondary?

Although some movement happens into specialist areas such as the art room, sports halls and occasionally science laboratories, stability is maintained with many core curriculum areas being taught in the Y5 classroom. The students change rooms more frequently in subsequent years.

It is very important that our students should be given the opportunity to perceive connections between curriculum areas and we seek opportunities to apply mathematical and language skills within the context of topic themes and cross-curricular modules within Humanities.

As they progress through school, our lower Secondary students experience many trips and some residential experiences (see below) that extend and apply knowledge acquired in contexts beyond the classroom.

Curriculum areas in lower Secondary – key features

Mathematics:

Courses:

Abacus International Primary Maths book 6 (Y5)

Cambridge Complete International Maths for Secondary books 1-3 (Y6-8)

Key approaches:

- Consolidation of calculation methods (continuation from Primary)
- Spiralling (revisiting) processes within and across year groups
- Real life problems
- Investigating patterns and sequences
- Participation in Schuldorf maths competitions with an emphasis on solving puzzles and logical thinking (Kangaroo Maths)
- Active application of Maths within Science

Sciences:

Courses:

Y6-8: We follow the international Cambridge lower Secondary Science programme with its associated learning objectives and course books.

Key approaches (from Y5)

Use of our own booklets and topic boxes for the development of these key scientific skills such as:

- safe use of scientific apparatus,
- measurement
- scientific method (incl. hypothesising, fair tests, data collection, concluding from results and evaluating practical work)

Topics in Y5 relate to real life contexts often present in other curriculum areas such as forces in mechanisation and industry (We visit the Manheim Museum der Technik).

English

Courses:

The course books that guide us through modules of the **Cambridge Upper Primary English and Lower Secondary** frameworks develop key reading and writing skills that are embedded within literature and various contemporary and historical real life scenarios. The course structures a consolidation into key genres that are revisited throughout years 5-8.

Key approaches:

We value the following principles that guide our teaching of English in early Secondary:

- Overt teaching of grammatical and syntactical elements that are actively applied as a tool for fostering a shared and celebrated pride in the writer's craft.
- Structured initiation into use of the library for enjoyment and appreciation of fiction and purposeful and assisted enquiry into topics of interest and relevance.
- Shared appreciation of novels and poetry that reflect and explore aspects of our international, cultural diversity.
- Active rehearsal for writing through group exploration of important issues (guided discussion, integration of drama techniques)
- Preparation for successful application of English across the curriculum with early focus on structuring planning and presentations and reports. Information collation and note taking are also taught.

Humanities:

In line with international curricular around the world, we at SISS believe our students should explore and become familiar with human processes that have shaped our world. For this purpose, we identify integrated themes that enable active reflection on the human condition to take place through a cross-curricular focus on historical change over time. Equally important is our focus on contrasting geographical settings and the influence of diverse beliefs.

Generally speaking, our topics begin in prehistoric times before moving chronologically into ancient civilisations and later into medieval and modern historical themes as students approach the end of Y8. We are increasingly seeking global contexts for our consideration of the geographical location and ethical thought.

Key processes developed from Y5 within Humanities themes

Recent early Secondary themes have included:

History of childhood and family oral history, industrialisation (connected to Science), origins of human existence, indigenous societies in the Americas, farming around the world, rivers and ancient civilisations.

Historical skills:

- Personal enquiry through questioning and observation of photos and other artefacts that reveal past life styles. (local heritage museums visited).
- Chronology and an appreciation of causology; categorisation into periods of history
- Impact of scientific and technological change and advance. (Connection to Science curriculum).

Geographical skills:

- Understanding how features of geographical location have affected civilisations – emphasis on human adaptation and survival
- Learning to recognise important facts about continents and countries but also an introduction to the location and function of German states.
- Physical geography of Germany, Europe and North America (Y5)
- Mapping skills including scale, direction, referencing in atlases, recording observations of places.
- Observing and measuring world weather patterns; understanding impact of climate and natural phenomena on life styles.

Spanish/French (from Year 6) and German language courses:

German:

Beginners and intermediate German groups follow the appropriate level of the newly revised Prima Deutsch series published by Cornelsen. More advanced learners of German are gradually introduced to a wide variety of text types and various genres of writing through courses that are based on the differentiated version of the Cornelsen first language course: 'Deutsch: Differenzierte Ausgabe'.

Approaches to modern foreign language teaching at SISS (beginner and intermediate levels only):

- Initial focus on functional language needed for self-introduction and basic survival tasks in the country (description of places, location, shopping, hobbies, talking about preferences, reference to school life etc.).
- There is purposeful connection grammar and its relevant, practical, contextual application within real life scenarios.
- Frequent exposure to authentic listening and reading situations in order to build up comprehension skills. This is supported by our language teaching assistants.

- Integration of role-play scenarios that enable social skills to be applied through language (enquiring, complaining, giving opinions, formal and informal address).
- Particularly in German as a foreign language, language levels in the course materials are structured and levelled in accordance with European language threshold levels (A1, A2, B1, B2).
- Grammatical accuracy is promoted at every stage of our courses and acquisition of tenses and parts of language support our students' awareness of patterns, enabling them to be creative and flexible in communication as vocabulary grows.

Spanish:

- In years 6 & 7 we currently follow the Heinemann Listos course books.
- In Y8 the students extend their language skills by using early modules from the Hodder IGCSE for Cambridge IGCSE Spanish course book.

French:

We offer a French option to some students from Y6-10 up to IGCSE. These parallel courses are taught within the Schuldorf Gymnasium and they require good levels of German in the initial years of the programme..

A note about first language or near first language speakers:

Spanish:

Native speakers join the regular classes in order to gain confidence with spelling and written structures in particular. Their support in acting as language models for classmates is encouraged. In the upper years, such confident speakers engage in wider reading and debate about current issues.

German A (native speaker level):

We can only provide courses for these students if it is possible to form a class size. However, many of our German A/B groups are engaging with text and writing genres at age appropriate levels and we find that many of these students benefit from a focus on wider vocabulary development and accuracy in writing.

Ultimately, we expect our higher level German speakers to embrace German A courses at IGCSE and IB levels, wherever possible.

Physical education:

Activities

Great sports facilities at SISS:

- three sports halls
- track & field stadium
- nearby public pool (10 minutes walking distance)
- nearby forest/park for outdoor sports activities

Variety of indoor/outdoor sports disciplines:

- individual sports: gymnastics/acrobatics, dancing, track & field, swimming
- team sports: ball games such as basketball, soccer, handball and volleyball

Competitions:

- school teams for *Jugend trainiert für Olympia*
- sports day: *Bundesjugendspiele*
- sports badge for individual performance: *Deutsches Sportabzeichen*

Our approach

- motivating students for lifelong physical activity
- encouraging students to do sports in their free time (e.g. joining a club)
- improving personal fitness and other skills
- experiencing nature
- respect and fairness
- encouraging team work vs. competitions
- handing out of workout plans/ fitness videos during lockdown

Ethics:

Courses

The Ethics curriculum has been developed specifically for SISS lower secondary students. It combines specially selected links to Humanities topics, elements of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and an introduction to major world religions.

A special focus in Year 5 is on the transition from primary to secondary school and on settling in to and finding one's place in a new learning environment.

Key Approaches

Progressive and targeted development of English language skills in both reading and writing, with a focus on building the communication skills required for upper secondary work.

A growing understanding of the elements of the IB Learner Profile and its relevance and application within the Ethics curriculum.

Age-appropriate development of teamwork and leadership skills, skills in developing friendships, dealing with conflict and strategies for making ethical decisions.

An awareness of commonalities shared by faith groups of major world religions, including the relevance of these beliefs and practices for the understanding of historical developments.

The Arts:

In art, students experiment with a range of media including: paint, photography, printing, pen and ink for sketching and observational pencil drawing. We also introduce 3D activities, which have frequently contributed to theatre productions through the preparation of masks or stage props.

As a general principal in art and drama activities, we require regular use of reflective diaries to encourage our students to record their own responses and observations whilst evaluating the wider impact of their own work.

In class music sessions, groups learn to read musical notation and this is practised on electronic keyboards. Students also experience a range of musical styles and they have the opportunity to make music creatively in small groups. Instrumental skills that many students have developed outside school are shared, celebrated and incorporated within whole class sessions.

What happens to our students when they move on?

Accreditation Years 5-10:

We follow the German state regulations of Hesse for our ongoing assessment programme. This ensures that bi-annual school report grades are based on a combination of teacher assessment of student contribution to learning with an aggregate taken from a set number of formal, written or project-based assessments each semester.

At the end of Year 10 our report grade is recognised as documentation that forms the equivalent to the German 'Mittlerer Abschluss' or Hauptschulabschluss, depending on the grade average of the Year 10 report card and our consideration, as teachers, of the outcome of IGCSE exams. Students applying for the Diploma years from outside should please refer to the IB entrance requirements in the 'Downloads' section of the Schuldorf website. This system forms the basis of acceptance to our IB programme, transfer to other state schools in Germany or to vocational training in the region. The IGCSE exam grades are also recognised as a component of the application process to further and higher educational institutions around the world.

What have our school leavers achieved so far?

Post IGCSE:

Students who have left us after Year 10 have successfully transferred to training courses in Darmstadt and we have recently been able to support our international students in this process. This usually happens in consultation with professional careers guidance counsellors from the Bundesagentur für Arbeit who visit our school on a regularly.

Post IB:

The majority of our students enter our IB programme where they meet new fellow students who join the international school branch from other countries.

The balance of subjects within the IB Diploma Programme here at SISS Secondary guarantees that the IB Diploma will be recognized as an "allgemeine Hochschulzugangsberechtigung" (i.e. a general qualification for admission to an institution of higher education) provided that one of the three HL courses is taken either in one science or mathematics and that all the standard requirements outlined in the 2020 KMK Agreement are met. This enables our students to have access to university application for all programmes of study within Germany. Furthermore, we can confirm that our students do receive offers of placement for a wide range of university courses in this country.

Many of our students receive University and Higher Education course admission at institutions elsewhere in Europe and around the world (including; Scotland, England, the Netherlands, USA)

Achievements of SISS alumni over the past four years of graduation:

We proudly share this list of University courses and career directions that are now being pursued by our ex-students in Germany and around the world!

Automobile research and development	Electrical Engineering
Tourist Management	Neural Engineering
Marine Biology	International business
Civil Service (foreign office)	Business and science
International Law	Aviation/ flight control
Medicine	Aeronautics
Dentistry	Space engineering
Medical engineering	Pilot training
Criminology	Computer Science
Teaching	Psychology
Social work	Biomolecular Science
Theatre	Chemistry (BASF)
Music Therapy	Biochemistry
Mechatronics	Physics

What financial commitments do I have if I send my child to SISS Secondary?

We ask for a monthly payment to a company called DaDi gGmbH to cover the following:

- The employment of specialist Teaching Assistants at Secondary enable these areas of essential support to be implemented:
 - Targeting of specialist skills development with groups students across the curriculum at all age levels.
 - Science laboratory organisation and related support to IB project requirements in the Sciences.
 - Library organisation with support to students on referencing and related book project work.
 - Supervision of Creative Action Service (CAS projects) which are integral to the personal development of our Diploma students in Y11 and 12.
 - Supervision of study sessions.
 - Cover of some break times.
- Membership fees for the Cambridge International Assessment Programme and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).
- Mandatory staff training for teaching on IB exam programmes.
- Enrolment fees for international examinations (IGCSE and IB).
- Trips and residential educational visits.

School meals on campus can be purchased (if required).

Supervision:

In Secondary we offer a paid supervision provision that is run by experienced youth workers and educationalists. The programme is open from 15:00 until 18:00 and it offers the opportunity for students to experience group interaction and involvement in the 'Play garden' on campus. There is also an 'open supervision' provision for activities over lunch time in the Secondary building.

Please refer to information on the Schuldorf home page for further information about Secondary supervision.

Aspects that are free of charge and integral to our state school:

- All teacher salaries
- All textbooks and learning materials in school (personal work booklets are bought by parents).
- The building and site maintenance.
- Homework clubs and Schuldorf clubs including, Drama, Big Band, school orchestras and choirs, track and field training.

Special Events at SISS:

As mentioned above, we at SISS encourage involvement of our wider community with the aim of creating a lively and enriching educational experience for all.

Our Diploma students are constantly engaged in creating and supervising activities for all students and families which include:

Charity events - (annual sponsored **Walkathon**, Saturday afternoon fund raiser for a different charity each year; '**Kinder helfen Kindern**' box collection in the run up to Christmas, involvement with elderly persons' homes).

CAS students also run student council meetings, debating groups and cinema evenings.

Organisation of the SISS **International Festival**, which is a celebration of music, dance and culturally diverse talent within the Community.

Other key events:

Talent show: This event is a much anticipated social event that encourages students across the Schuldorf to share their sometimes hidden skills in music and entertainment!

Student prom events, (allowing for occasional evening social gathering according to upper or lower Secondary)

Residential trips:

Ernsthofen (Odenwald, Y6) - the whole year group follow a three day outdoor environmental activity programme that supports group development at this early stage in Secondary.

Sylt (Y7) - currently we spend one week on the island of Sylt in the north of Germany! This is a combined event with the German 'Haupt- und Realschule' and it is an opportunity to interact with young people from across the Schuldorf whilst gaining insight into issues concerning coastal environments.

Finally, we would like to point out that we greatly appreciate the active support and involvement of our parent representative groups. Apart from keeping us in touch with parental views and suggestions these groups also play an active role in supporting school events, particularly graduation and farewell evenings.

The '**Friends of SISS**' parent group raises funds and supports aspects of school development financially. Please click on this link to enquire more about the important assistance provided by this group: <https://www.friendsofsiss.com/>