



Information about the Middle School 2016-17

German European School Singapore



Introduction to GESS and the Middle School

The History of GESS	4
Welcome to the Middle School	5
Structure of the school year and day	6
Parent and community events	6
Useful contacts at GESS	6

Academic Curriculum

Curriculum Structure	7
Curriculum Overview	9
Assessment Rubrics	10
Reporting and Feedback	10
Languages in the MYP	10
German Mother Tongue Lessons	11
Mother Tongue Programme	11
The Personal Project(grade 10)	11
Laptop Learning Programme	12
Interdisciplinary Projects	12

Pastoral Curriculum and Student Welfare

Student Welfare	13
Student Expectations	13
Personal, Social and Health Education	13
Assemblies	14
Internship Project	14
Community Service	14
Co-curricular Activities	15
Excursions	15

A Brief History of GESS

The first lessons at the German School were taught on 25th of August 1971, with six students enrolled. In April 1972, less than a year after the initial opening, the Kindergarten and Pre-School opened their doors. The school continued to grow quickly and the completion of a new school building at 72 Bukit Tinggi Road laid the foundation for what is now the Main Campus.

During 2004, the school made the decision to offer students tuition in English as well as German and pursue accreditation with the IB Organisation. The school's name was changed to the German European School Singapore (GESS) and the European Section started teaching the IB curriculum. The Middle Years Programme received its IB accredited status in 2007.

Growing student numbers led to the decision to open a separate Primary School campus at Jalan Jurong Kechil in August 2008. When the Pre-School department received accreditation to teach the IB Primary Years Programme in 2010, GESS became a fully certified IB World School for all age groups.

In October of 2013 our Middle Years Programme underwent a comprehensive evaluation process with our accrediting body the IB and the Council of International Schools. The outcome of the evaluation was extremely positive, with **commendations** in the following areas:

- Strong emphasis on the importance of language learning including mother tongue, host country languages and culture and other languages based on the needs and interests of students.
- Well organized and systematic implementation of the grade ten personal projects.
- Teaching and learning at the GESS Middle School engages students as inquirers and thinkers.



- Teachers use a range of strategies and tools to assess student learning across all subject groups.
- Involvement of all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and the board) in seeking feedback to evaluate and further develop our programme.
- Community understanding of, and commitment to the MYP.

GESS is very much a community school, where the collaboration of the whole community is highly valued. Walk onto our campus and you will see parents, teachers and students coming together amidst the beautiful green backdrop of the adjacent nature reserve. Our small grade level cohorts and maximum class sizes of 22 students allow for a very personal relationship between students, teachers and parents. Each student is supported in their learning by highly qualified and experienced teaching faculty, who are themselves lifelong learners committed to a holistic approach to education. Our Middle School provides students with an inspiring and challenging academic programme. We strongly believe in student centered learning and plan our curriculum to support students in becoming skilled life-long learners with a solid emphasis on skills development both the pastoral (personal welfare) and academic curriculum.

Introduction to GESS and The Middle School



Dear Parents,

The Middle School curriculum of GESS runs from grades 6 through to 10, during which time our students follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP). Within the European Section Middle School, the language of Instruction is English.

In the Middle School we strongly believe in student centred learning and plan our curriculum to support students in becoming skilled life-long learners with a solid emphasis on skills development both the pastoral (personal welfare) and academic curriculum.

GESS is very much a community school, where the collaboration of the whole community is highly valued. Walk onto our campus and you will see parents, teachers and students coming together amidst the beautiful green backdrop of the adjacent nature reserve. Our small grade level cohorts and class sizes allow for a very personal relationship between students, teachers and parents.

GESS hosts regular annual information events pertaining to the IB MYP and other school initiatives, allowing for meaningful exchanges across the GESS community. To further continue our school-home communication we have a Secondary School newsletter which features articles based on the academic curriculum, pastoral guidance and student activities.

There are so many reasons why we are proud of our well respected Middle School, the highlights include:

- ✓ The open-mindedness which a European ethos gives to the teaching and learning
- ✓ The diverse international background and experiences which our teaching faculty bring to the students education
- ✓ Our strong commitment to education for life, both through the community action programme, special projects, and our Personal, Social and Health curriculum
- ✓ Our commitment to maintaining a small community feel; where every student has a strong connection with their teachers, and where we can focus on inquiry based learning to develop each and every students skill set
- ✓ We value parent involvement, through our association, board and parent committee. In the middle school parents are able to get involved with school life in multiple ways and as such we extend our community feel to our parents as well as our students. This is especially valuable for families who are new to Singapore

We hope this brochure offers you a taste of life in our Middle School, however if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

The Middle School Management team.

Introduction to GESS and The Middle School

Structure of the school year and day

Our academic year commences in August and ends in June. The academic year is divided into two semesters (four quarters).

Each school day starts with a five minute homeroom slot. During this time each student registers with their homeroom teacher who will proceed to share any notices with the students during this time. The role of the homeroom teacher is as a first contact point for both the students and parents in the homeroom class.

7:50 - 7:55	Homeroom registration
8:00 - 8:45	Lesson 1
8:50 - 9:35	Lesson 2
9:35 - 9:55	Morning break
9:55 -10:40	Lesson 3
10:45 - 11:30	Lesson 4
11:35 - 12:20	Lesson 5/Lunch grades 6-8
12:30 - 13:15	Lesson 6/Lunch grades 9-10
13:20 - 14:05	Lesson 7
14:10 - 14:55	Lesson 8

The school has a bus service which offers transportation both to school in the morning and home again at 15.00 and 16.30 in the afternoons.

Many of the CCA activities take place between 15.00-16.30.

One day each week our grade ten students have lessons between 15.00-16.30.

Our academic calendar is available on our school website.

Parent and Community events

We are proud to host several parent information evenings during each academic year. Amongst these are our Introduction to the MYP information evening, MYP assessment evening, and the Personal Project evening for our Middle School families and the Diploma programme information evenings for our high school families.

GESS holds two larger annual events, the Christmas Bazaar and the Summer Festival, which bring together the whole school community.



Curriculum Structure

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is a five year programme developed to provide the student with a good preparation for further studies. The MYP curriculum consists of eight subject groups:

1. Language and Literature (English, German, Dutch and Danish)
2. Language Acquisition (English, German, French, Spanish or Mandarin)
3. Individuals and Societies
4. Physical and Health Education
5. Design
6. Sciences
7. Mathematics
8. Arts (Music, Drama and Visual Arts)



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In addition to the eight MYP subject groups students receive one personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson each week.

Student learning in all subjects focuses around six global contexts. The six global contexts are; Identities and relationships, orientation in space and time, personal and cultural expression, scientific and technical innovation, globalisation and sustainability, fairness and development.

We celebrate student success in the IB Learner Profile attributes through certificates and achievement awards. The ten IB learner profiles describe student attributes. IB learners are the following: knowledgeable, communicators, caring, risk-takers, balanced, principled, reflective, open-minded, inquirers and thinkers.

Further information about the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme can be found on the IB website at www.ibo.org/myp.

The MYP subjects

1. English Language

Differentiated into two course types

- English Language and Literature course: Mother tongue or near native (reading, writing and speaking)
- English Acquisition course for intermediate or advanced second language learners.

Students who are not coming from an English mother tongue level background will need to complete an admissions test prior to enrolment. Please note that we do not have a course for students who have no working English language experience.

2. German Language

Differentiated into two course types

- German Language and Literature course: Mother tongue or near native (reading, writing and speaking). In grades 6-8 this course is taught within the German Section of the school and does not follow the IB MYP curriculum. In grades 9 and 10 it is taught as an IB MYP course within the European Section.
- German Acquisition courses are offered at beginners, intermediate and advanced level.

3. Third Language

Students in the secondary school study a third language in addition to English and German. The choices available for the 2015-16 academic year are:

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Mother Tongue level courses	Danish Language and Literature				
	Dutch Language and Literature				
Language acquisition courses*.	Mandarin (Year 1 of 5)	Mandarin (Year 2 of 5)	Mandarin (Year 3 of 5)	Mandarin (Year 4 of 5)	Mandarin (Year 5 of 5)
	French (Year 1 of 5)	French (Year 2 of 5)	French (Year 3 of 5)	French (Year 4 of 5)	French (Year 5 of 5)
	Spanish (Year 1 of 5)	Spanish (Year 2 of 5)	Spanish (Year 3 of 5)	Spanish (Year 4 of 5)	Spanish (Year 5 of 5)

* Please note that these courses start at a beginner's level in grade 6 and so the levels in the following grades follow on from this

If your child has a mother tongue language which is not offered by GESS, and you would be interested in your child studying their mother tongue language please contact our World Language Coordinator Ms Tan (ares.tan@gess.sg). As we may be able to help connect you with a Singapore based tutor, and to liaise with the tutor regarding the MYP curriculum framework. The cost of the tutor would rest with the family, as this would be a private arrangement. We would, where possible, liaise with the tutor to acknowledge your child's academic progress in their mother tongue within our report cards.

4. Mathematics

In grades 6 and 7, our students will study mathematics within homeroom groups. From grade 8 and above the students will be placed within a streamed mathematics group.

If you are enrolling your child in grade 8, 9 or 10, then our Head of Mathematics, Mr Chris Stoltz will work with our admissions team review your child's most recent report cards, and where necessary request a placement test, before determining the most appropriate class for your child.

5. Physical and Health Education

Themes covered include, creative movement, ball sports, athletics and swimming.

6. Product Design

In this subject, students will work through the design cycle to investigate, design, create and evaluate a product.

7. Science

Students study this subject in homeroom groupings. In grades 6 to 9, the curriculum has a combination of Biology, Chemistry and Physics units taught by one science teacher. In grade 10, the students rotate three times each semester (approximately every 6 weeks) to be taught by a subject specialist Biology, Chemistry and Physics teacher.

8. The Arts

In grades 6 and 7, students will have one semester of Art and one semester of Music. In grade 8 students will study both Music and Visual Arts concurrently throughout the year. In grades 9 and 10, students will select one of the following arts course choices: Drama, Music or Visual Arts.

9. Individuals and Societies

Students study this subject in homeroom groupings. The units of work include elements of Geography and History, with some Economics being introduced in the final two years of the programme.

Curriculum Overview

Our Middle School students follow a 40 period week, with one period each day given for lunch. The outlines below indicate time allocation across the subjects.

<i>Grade 6 Curriculum</i>	
English	5 periods
German	5 periods
Mathematics	5 periods
Science	4 periods
Third Language	4 periods
Humanities	4 periods
Physical Education	2 periods
The Arts	3 periods
Technology	2 periods
PSHE	1 period

<i>Grade 7 Curriculum</i>	
English	5 periods
German	5 periods
Mathematics	5 periods
Science	4 periods
Third Language	4 periods
Humanities	4 periods
Physical Education	2 periods
The Arts	3 periods
Technology	2 periods
PSHE	1 period

<i>Grade 8 Curriculum</i>	
English	4 periods
German	4 periods
Mathematics	5 periods
Science	4 periods

Third Language	4 periods
Humanities	4 periods
Physical Education	2 periods
The Arts	4 periods
Technology	2 periods
PSHE	1 period

Grade Ten students currently follow a 42 period week.

Assessment Rubrics

When a student is assessed in the MYP they will receive a rubric (grid) which sets out what the student needs to do to achieve each grade level for that task. Some rubrics will have more general objectives and others will contain task specific instructions. This is very much dependent on the subject and work being assessed. Our Middle School teachers will go through the rubrics during class and students may find it useful to make notes on the rubric to help them in completing the assessment task. As a parent or guardian you may find it useful to read through the rubric with your child when supporting them with their assessment work.

Reporting and Feedback

In the Middle School, we currently have four reporting sessions during the academic year. Two of these take the form of a written report card, which is given out to families at the end of each semester. In addition to this we hold two parent, teacher conferences (PTCs) annually.

The report cards consist of written comments about the student's progress and also some suggestions to assist continued progression in each subject. Your child's attainment in MYP assessment criteria will also be included for each subject.

The parent teacher conference is an opportunity for parents (and the student) to meet with each subject teacher individually and discuss the curriculum, assessment and student's progress. This process is facilitated by the use of the student assessment portfolios, which contain examples of the student's assessed work. At the end of each academic year the student will be given their portfolio to take home

Languages in the MYP

One of the unique features of GESS as an MYP school is the curriculum provision for students to take a third language lesson within their academic programme. This feature of the Middle School at GESS is in accordance with the middle schooling language requirements of many tertiary education providers in continental Europe.

<i>Grade 9 Curriculum</i>	
English	5 periods
German	4 periods
Mathematics	5 periods
Science	5 periods
Third Language	4 periods
Humanities	4 periods
Physical Education	2 periods
The Arts	2 periods
Technology	3 periods
PSHE	1 period

<i>Grade 10 Curriculum</i>	
English	5 periods
German	4 periods
Mathematics	5 periods
Biology	2 periods
Chemistry	2 periods
Physics	2 periods
Third Language	4 periods
Humanities	4 periods
Physical Education	2 periods
The Arts	3 periods
Technology	3 periods
PSHE	1 period



There are two types of language course within the MYP structure. Language and literature or language acquisition.

The language and literature courses are aimed at a mother tongue level of speaking, reading and writing. The language acquisition courses are taught at a second language level.

Mother tongue programme

At GESS, we understand the need to encourage and develop our Middle School students in their mother tongue. Indeed we incorporate within this the need for students to understand their mother culture. This is exemplified in our Dutch and Danish Mother tongue programme where students experience not only language lessons but also Dutch culture lessons.

At GESS, we support a wide range of mother tongue languages through our established 'Mother Tongue Support Programme'. This programme was developed and is monitored by our experienced Language Coordinators who have an established relationship with a team of mother tongue language tutors. If you would be interested to learn more about our Mother Tongue Programme please contact our Head of World Languages, Ms Ares Tan (ares.tan@gess.sg).

German Mother Tongue lessons

Students following the German Language and Literature programme in grades six to eight will attend German mother tongue classes within the German Section of the School. As such, grading of assessment within this class follows the German system and does not follow the MYP assessment structure.

Grade nine and ten German Language and Literature classes are taught within the European Section and do follow the MYP assessment structure

Personal Project (Grade Ten)

The Personal Project is an opportunity for our grade ten students to explore an area of personal interest and construct an individual project around this. Through the process of completing their project the students have the opportunity to develop and utilise the skills they have gained during their MYP experience. The project is assessed through a written report in which the students write about the project which they have undertaken. Each student is paired with a mentor from the teaching staff for the duration of the project for guidance.



Laptop Learning

Here at GESS, we value the impact that technology can have on learning. We equip our students with technology skills and understanding to ensure they can be effective learners both at school and beyond. We have portable sets of laptops and iPads for use within our grade 6 to 8 curriculum. Students in grades eight and above are expected to use a laptop as part of their studies.

Interdisciplinary Projects

Interdisciplinary projects are ones which draw upon content, themes or skills which the students have learned in two or more different subject areas. Some small scale interdisciplinary projects may involve just two subjects where the skills and knowledge from both subjects are utilised to complete a task. One example would be where knowledge of the ratio and scales from mathematics is used to draw out the stages of foetal development in science.



Student Welfare

We are dedicated to student welfare and this is the key role of the deputy head of Secondary school who offers support and guidance to our Middle School students if and when it is required.

We also have two school counsellors offering an English/German bilingual counselling service on campus.

The campus has a full time nurse available for our students. Should there be a serious emergency parents are contacted immediately. Several of our teaching staff are also first aid trained.



Student Expectations

GESS is very much a community school with a positive and welcoming atmosphere. We strive to achieve academic excellence whilst also offering our students an enriching and broad 'life skills' experience.

We encourage our students to foster both respect and positive working relationships with their teachers and peers. Clear expectations for behaviour and working practice are given in the Parent and Student Handbook. This document is updated annually.



Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Each week, every class has one tutorial lesson with their homeroom teacher. During this time, the homeroom teacher will facilitate our Personal, Social and Health Education lessons. The PSHE programme offers the students skills and knowledge in essential aspects of both school life and also life beyond school. The course content covers but is not limited to personal study skills, nutrition, finance, careers and collaboration. Each grade level follows a different programme of topics, enabling them to be effective life-long learners in a variety of situations.





Community Service

In the MYP at GESS, all students are expected to complete meaningful community service during the academic year. Our MYP students are actively involved in a range of successful community partnerships. In the Middle School students are encouraged to reflect on the community service both before and after they participate. All grade ten students in the European Section will participate in the Cambodia Community Service Project during quarter 2 of the academic year. The students travel with teachers to Cambodia to complete some valuable community service work.

Assemblies

In the Middle School, we believe that assemblies are an important opportunity to bring the student community together. Our students are guided in taking the lead role in the organisation and presentation of assemblies. Thereby fostering their personal sense of ownership in community events and assisting them to develop organisational and communication skills. We also use this as an opportunity to celebrate student success by awarding certificates of achievement for a wide variety of student endeavour.



Internship Programme (Grade Nine)

Each grade nine student is expected to participate in a two week internship within a Singapore company. This valuable 'real-life' experience follows a series of careers skills training lessons within the PHSE programme. Students are encouraged to locate their own placement, and will be guided to explore opportunities in areas of personal interest.

Co-Curricular activities

GESS offers around 50 CCAs (Co-curricular Activities) ranging from various sporting and artistic disciplines to social activities and natural sciences that reflect the school's diversity of talents and ideas. CCA activities take place after school each day. To find out more about the current range of CCAs on offer at GESS, please refer to our school website.

Excursions

During the academic year, GESS offers a range of subject-specific and interdisciplinary excursions to a wide variety of venues within Singapore.

During quarter two, each class is involved in a curriculum-focused enrichment week/fortnight, which takes the majority of students out of Singapore to participate in a variety of experiential learning activities which support the curriculum and skills development.





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