



German International School of Houston

German-English Dual Language Immersion Preschool Program

ONE CHILD. TWO LANGUAGES. UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES.



Parent Handbook 2018 - 2019

German International School of Houston (GISH) located at
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Updated in August 2018

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August 15, 2018

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the **German International School of Houston (GISH)**!

At **GISH**, we are setting the foundation for a well-rounded child. Our teachers care for each individual child, and make the child feel welcome in the classroom.

It is our mission to foster the German and English language development of our students through age appropriate, interactive and hands-on experiences, as well as the exposure to the German and American cultures.

We believe that the partnership between the parents and a high-quality Preschool is conducive to education and progress.

The goal of this Handbook is to familiarize the Parents/Guardians with our School's policies and procedures. I am asking you to take the time to carefully read through the information. The Handbook is the framework designed to provide your children and our teachers with a safe, engaging and organized learning environment, that helps our daily classroom routines to operate smoothly.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact any school personnel who will be eager to assist you.

Again, we welcome you to **GISH** and to our wonderful learning community. A place in which we create memories and friendships that last a lifetime.

It takes a community to raise a child! We are honored to be a part of yours!

Sincerely,

Jessica Wood

Director



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. General Information | 6 |
| 1.1 Program Description..... | 6 |
| 1.2 Dual Language Immersion | 6 |
| 1.3 Educational Philosophy | 6 |
| 1.4 Language Exposure in the Classroom..... | 7 |
| 1.5 Curriculum..... | 7 |
| 1.6 Cognitive Learning | 8 |
| 1.7 Emotional and Social Development..... | 8 |
| 2. Goals and Objectives..... | 8 |
| 2.1 Licensing Authority..... | 8 |
| 2.2 Staffing..... | 9 |
| 2.3 Non-Discrimination Policy..... | 9 |
| 2.4 Environment..... | 9 |
| 2.5 Parents..... | 10 |
| 2.6 Students..... | 10 |
| 2.7 Discipline and Guidance Policy | 10 |
| 2.8 Classroom Arrangement..... | 11 |
| 2.9 Playground Structures / Courtyard | 12 |
| 2.10 Church Property | 12 |
| 2.11 Changes of Program or Policies | 12 |
| 3. Academic Calendar 2018-2019 | 13 |
| 4. Operational Hours 2018-2019 | 14 |
| 5. Daily Schedule..... | 14 |
| 6. Enrollment Policy | 16 |
| 6.1 General Information..... | 16 |
| 6.2 Waiting List | 16 |
| 6.3 Re-Enrollment | 17 |
| 6.4 Siblings | 17 |
| 6.5 Payment Policies..... | 17 |
| 6.6 Refund Policy | 18 |



| | |
|--|----|
| 6.7 Probation Period | 18 |
| 6.8 Parents with Shared Custody | 18 |
| 6.9 Children with Disabilities | 19 |
| 6.10 Policy for Late Pick-Up | 19 |
| 6.11 Liability of Parents for Damaged School Property..... | 19 |
| 6.12 Responsibility for Medical Bills | 19 |
| 7. Safety | 20 |
| 7.1 Student Release Authorization | 20 |
| 7.2 Family/Student Identification on Campus | 20 |
| 7.3 Visitors | 20 |
| 7.4 Parking..... | 21 |
| 7.5 Emergency Environmental Procedures | 21 |
| 7.6 Emergency/Facility Closings | 22 |
| 7.7 Child Abuse and Neglect..... | 22 |
| 7.8 Gang-Free Zone..... | 23 |
| 7.9 Safety of Children’s Products | 24 |
| 7.10 Anti-Bullying Policy..... | 24 |
| 8. Illness and Medical Policies/Procedures..... | 26 |
| 8.1 Location of First Aid Kit | 26 |
| 8.2 Immunization Requirements..... | 26 |
| 8.3 Illness and Exclusion Policy | 26 |
| 8.4 Communicable Diseases - Notification required | 28 |
| 8.5 Emergency Procedures..... | 28 |
| 8.6 Injury to Student..... | 29 |
| 8.7 Incident/Illness Report..... | 29 |
| 8.8 Administration of Medication | 30 |
| 8.9 Vision and Hearing Screening/Tuberculin Testing | 30 |
| 8.10 Students with Allergies | 30 |
| 8.11 Daily Health Checks | 31 |
| 9. Daily Routines..... | 31 |
| 9.1 Student Absence..... | 31 |
| 9.2 Late Arrival..... | 31 |
| 9.3 Student Drop-Off | 32 |



| | |
|--|----|
| 9.4 Student Pick-Up | 32 |
| 9.5 Parking | 32 |
| 9.6 Student Dress Code | 32 |
| 10. Meals and Food Practices | 33 |
| 11. Personal Hygiene | 34 |
| 12. Bathroom Policy..... | 34 |
| 13. Animals and Personal Toys and Belongings | 35 |
| 14. Special Activities, Transportation, Field Trips and Parent Outings | 35 |
| 14.1 Field Trips/Transportation..... | 35 |
| 14.2 Parent Outings | 35 |
| 14.3 Community Involvement..... | 36 |
| 14.4 Show-And-Tell..... | 36 |
| 14.5 Writing Curriculum and Phonic Awareness..... | 36 |
| 15. Photo Taking / Social Media | 36 |
| 16. Environmental Awareness | 37 |
| 17. Mosquito Control and Prevention..... | 37 |
| 18. Sunscreen | 37 |
| 19. Evaluation of Student Performance | 38 |
| 19.1 Parent Teacher Conference(s) | 38 |
| 19.2 Communication with the School | 38 |
| 19.3 Student Portfolio..... | 38 |
| 20. Parent Participation | 39 |
| 20.1 Parent Involvement | 39 |
| 20.2 Parent Responsibilities | 39 |
| 20.3 Helpful Contacts for Parents..... | 40 |
| 21. Appendix..... | 41 |
| Overview of School Forms | 41 |
| School Directory 2018-2019..... | 42 |
| Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook | 43 |



1. General Information

1.1 Program Description

GISH is a small German-American Preschool serving students ages two (2) to five (5) years in the Houston area, and offering a German-English Dual Language Immersion Program.

Our program is dedicated to enriching the lives of our students, parents and teachers through cross-cultural interaction. Students learn a second language naturally through exposure to stimulating content and a language rich environment.

The **vision** of *GISH* is to provide an international education, focused on inquiry-based learning with the goal of fostering confident, respectful, caring, creative and responsible lifelong learners and global thinkers.

It is our **mission** to provide an excellent educational experience for our students while developing and maintaining fluency in both languages (German and English). We foster cross-cultural understanding that enables our students to actively participate as citizens in a global community.

Instructions are provided from Monday through Friday in classrooms with a low student/teacher ratio (ideally 8:1). *GISH* focuses on small group interaction, important for language acquisition in both German and English. Our 2018-2019 academic school year is based on ten (10) months (184 instructional days) from August 20, 2018 to June 12, 2019.

1.2 Dual Language Immersion

Immersion (lat. *immergere*=to plunge into, to indulge) has proven to be a highly successful method of foreign language acquisition using a very natural approach. The key to success is a distinct separation of languages – either room/space or person. At *GISH*, we separate by person. The American teacher uses exclusively English whereas the German teacher uses German only.

Brain research and cognitive studies on language acquisition have shown that children learn more in their first six years of their lives than at any other time. This applies to young children's unique language learning abilities as well. Research also unequivocally demonstrates that children who are raised from birth or early age with two or more languages develop high levels of competency in those languages. The languages become the medium for learning rather than the object of learning. A multilingual education starting at an early age opens doors for a successful future in our global society.

1.3 Educational Philosophy

Our program provides a teacher-directed, child-engaged classroom setting. Besides the learning of two languages, we provide children with interactive and age appropriate hands-on activities that promote the cognitive, physical, social-emotional and language development. Small group settings allow for direct social and verbal interaction with teachers and peers.



The **multi-age classroom** enables children to form an understanding of age differences, and helps them to develop leadership skills. **Our goal** is to enable children to become self-sufficient, independent, critical thinkers and social individuals.

1.4 Language Exposure in the Classroom

Teachers are assigned a target language (German or English) and stay in this language unless communicating with parents, authorities, emergency situations or other situations that require a student to understand the teacher or directions given.

On a typical day, both languages will be present in the classroom and co-exist. In addition to free play, students will participate in **circle time** and **small group** activities. During small group activities, the target language is based on the executing teacher.

Students will be exposed to and receive daily instruction in German and English. Language exposure is based on the students' daily assignments and is subject to change, with the overall goal to have equal language experience per week.

Our teachers focus on the children's needs first. Our priority is to make each child feel safe and secure. Language is never forced. Students can freely choose in which language they communicate with their peers during the day. Teachers emphasize on the use of their target language in their group time and will model, motivate, re-direct and assist children to use the teacher's target language.

No prior knowledge or experience in German and English is required.

1.5 Curriculum

Learning at the *German International School of Houston* takes place through a thematic curriculum. Educational activities include storytelling, reading, singing, art projects, fine and gross motor activities, math and science projects, nature exploration and celebration of German and American holidays.

We believe in hands-on and inquiry-based learning through exploring, discovering, experimenting and observing the environment. Our goal is to build the foundation for a positive learning attitude. We provide a variety of activities that fit the students' individual needs and developmental level: physical, cognitive and social-emotional.

GISH focuses on small group activities that provide the basis for language acquisition. Being surrounded by German and English speakers gives students the opportunity to develop, expand and maintain fluency in both languages.

Our teachers guide students throughout activities by providing encouragement and assistance. Natural curiosity motivates children to engage in interactive and hands-on activities.



1.6 Cognitive Learning

We foster cognitive learning and developmental levels through:

- opportunities for higher level thinking skills and sensory development
- opportunities for small and large muscle development
- opportunities for language development
- opportunities for social-emotional development
- opportunities to become independent, confident and competent life-long learners
- opportunities to encourage a student's natural process of inquiry
- drawing on best practices from around the world to create a relevant, engaging and challenging education
- promoting the development of the whole person, including the understanding of concepts, the mastery of skills and the development of positive attitudes
- helping the students learn to be open-minded and learn how to learn

1.7 Emotional and Social Development

GISH employees will foster self-esteem in students by providing and promoting the following:

1. We will recognize each student as a unique individual.
2. We will keep expectations for the students age appropriate.
3. We will give the students the freedom to make mistakes.
4. We will provide guidance through new activities and situations.
5. We will help tackle and complete educational activities by positive reinforcement.
6. We will give encouragement by providing students with praise while focusing on their strengths and pointing out their success and not their failures.
7. We will accept and acknowledge each student's unpleasant feelings and emotions. All feelings can be accepted; however certain actions have to be limited.
8. We will give choices so students can develop a sense of ownership and responsibility.
9. We will provide responsibilities and expect cooperation in an age appropriate manner. We will not take over tasks the child can complete him/herself.
10. We will keep a sense of humor and let the children see the positive side in all situations.

2. Goals and Objectives

2.1 Licensing Authority

GISH is licensed by the *Department of Family and Protective Services* of the State of Texas (DFPS) which oversees Child Care Centers, Registered/Licensed Child Care Homes and Before/After Care Centers in Texas. Licensed facilities have to comply with the state guidelines and regulations outlined in the **Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers (MS)**. All employees are responsible for making themselves familiar with the MS. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available in the School office for the review by parents and teachers.



2.2 Staffing

GISH is sufficiently staffed to meet the developmental needs of the students by adults who are trained in Early Childhood Education. It is our goal to employ native speakers for our target languages German and English. To assure the child/teacher ratio, non-native speakers might be used as substitutes.

- Child/teacher ratio and group size are maintained in each classroom based on the Minimum Standards set by DFPS.
- All employees are certified in First Aid and CPR.
- Teachers complete an eight (8) hour on-site orientation prior to their first day in the classroom, followed by sixteen (16) pre-service hours, if applicable.
- Teachers participate in at least 24 hours of continuing education annually (director 30 hours).
- Teachers attend a one (1) hour minimum workshop annually on the topic of “Abuse and Neglect”.

Training is planned around the individual growth plans of the teacher. All continuing education classes need to be approved in advance by the director.

2.3 Non-Discrimination Policy

The *German International School of Houston* does not and shall not discriminate on the base of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors and vendors.

2.4 Environment

A safe, healthy and developmental environment is provided for all students.

- Specific health and safety practices are followed by all staff members as outlined in the Employee Handbook Addition.
- The classroom is arranged to facilitate large groups, small groups and to welcome individual children.
- A sufficient amount of materials and equipment are in each classroom and are specific to the developmental needs of the serving age group. Materials are accessible for independent use by students.
- The classroom provides space for creative art and writing, math and science, book center, role-play and for manipulative play.
- The outdoor area is used as an extension of the classroom and includes a variety of activities and equipment for students of all ages.



2.5 Parents

All staff members are responsible for communicating with *GISH* parents about their child's day on a daily basis, and share new information in regard to the program.

- Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in our classroom. However, an appointment has to be made for special activities such as reading books or visitation of more than two visitors at the same time.
- A monthly curriculum and newsletter will be sent out to the parents, outlining important information for the approaching month.
- Two Parent Outings are organized during the school year.
- *GISH* will host at least two events to encourage parent participation and interaction between families (Open House, Christmas Market, Garage Sale, etc.).
- One Parent-Teacher conference per student will be conducted during one of the two designated conference dates listed on the Academic Calendar. Additional meetings can be requested at any time by the parents or teachers throughout the school year.
- Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to feed their children while visiting our program. Our employees will offer a comfortable office chair and the desired privacy, as long as the practice does not interfere with our classroom instructions.

2.6 Students

Students are treated with respect, warmth and individuality. All employees are trained to follow positive guidance techniques in all interactions with students at each age level.

- All employees are trained in the age-appropriate academic and social expectations for children in their care.
- Employees should encourage independence and initiative in students.
- Students' feelings are acknowledged.
- Individual rights of all students are protected.
- Appropriate limits are set using these rules: be kind, be safe and be neat.
- Communication between students and employees is positive.
- Activities are planned to foster self-esteem in students.
- Isolation, bullying or teasing of classmates will not be accepted and appropriate consequences will be put in place.

2.7 Discipline and Guidance Policy

GISH employees are required to follow the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Discipline and Guidance Policy (Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L).



Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily, by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time-out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training;
- (3) Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed; and
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Children will be supervised at all times. Personnel will receive an overview of symptoms of child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse and it is their responsibility to report these.

2.8 Classroom Arrangement

Our classrooms are designed to serve the attending students with a challenging, but safe and age-appropriate environment. The classrooms are prepared by the teachers to promote an active learning environment. The equipment and variety should be organized in an attractive and usable fashion that enables independent play.

- It is important that the classrooms stay neat, clean and organized, but still appealing, warm and inviting for children.
- All materials must be age-appropriate.
- Broken items must be removed immediately or students will be removed off/from broken equipment.



2.9 Playground Structures / Courtyard

Playground Structures:

Children may use the playground structure suitable for their age group. The smaller playground structure is designed for students two (2) years to five (5) years of age, which will be used by the preschool students.

The bigger playground structure is designed for students five (5) years to ten (10) years of age and might be used during summer camp for students 5 years and older. Child care licensing forbids the usage of overhead play equipment. Therefore, the monkey bars as well as the spinning wheel cannot and will not be used by students.

Teachers will escort students through the court yard to the side gate of the building to the playground area, assuring the students safety. Students will always be supervised on the playground, and will always be accompanied by a teacher when leaving the playground.

Courtyard (community space):

While the playground provides our students with their outside play area, the children might use the courtyard for certain gross motor activities or during days when the playground cannot be used due to weather conditions. Under no circumstances are students allowed to play with the fountain. One teacher will be assigned to provide close supervision of the fountain. Student activity cannot interfere with any church activities or visitors.

2.10 Church Property

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child/ren while on church ground. All *GISH* Parents are expected to be respectful towards the church property, church staff and their visitors. While on church grounds, the children should walk with their parents.

The fountain in the courtyard is a decorative item and is not for play. Please note: it only takes a few inches of water for children to drown.

2.11 Changes of Program or Policies

GISH will update parents in writing of changes to the School's program or policies.



3. Academic Calendar 2018-2019

| August 2018 | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su | M | Tu | W | Th | F | S |
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| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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| September 2018 | | | | | | |
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| October 2018 | | | | | | |
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| November 2018 | | | | | | |
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| December 2018 | | | | | | |
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| January 2019 | | | | | | |
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| February 2019 | | | | | | |
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| March 2019 | | | | | | |
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| 31 | | | | | | |

| April 2019 | | | | | | |
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| May 2019 | | | | | | |
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| June 2019 | | | | | | |
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| July 2019 | | | | | | |
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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

- School Closed/ Holidays
- Teacher in-Service Day (no school for students)
- First + Last Day of School
- Early Dismissal at 1:15 pm
- Parent Outing 09/10/18
- Summer Camp Weeks
- Parent-Teacher Conference – No School
- 184** Instruction days – Make up day: May 24, 2019



Our school year counts **184 days of attendance**, including

- 2 Parent Outings (September 10, 2018 & June 12, 2019)
- 1 Make-Up Day (May 24, 2019)

Non-instructional days are:

- 26 days break/vacation/holiday
- 2 Parent-Teacher Conference days (October 18, 2018 and February 15, 2019)
- 2 Teacher In-Service days (December 21, 2018 and June 13, 2019)
- 4 Early Dismissal days (first and last day of the school year, October 12, 2018, February 8, 2019)

4. Operational Hours 2018-2019

With the beginning of this school year, *GISH* is offering operational hours from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Regular day: 7:30 am to 2:30 pm (pick-up period 2:15 pm -2:30 pm)

Extended Day: 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm (pick-up period 5:15 pm -5:30 pm)

Extended Day Flex: \$20.00/daily - short notice care from 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm
(based on availability)

5. Daily Schedule

GISH provides a daily schedule outlining age-appropriate times and routines such as circle time, small group time, transition time, lunch, rest time, etc. Daily opportunities for outdoor play will be provided when weather permits. Each classroom is required to have a written age appropriate activity plan for the day. Changes in the schedule have to be discussed and approved by the director.

Children will be exposed to **German** and **English** throughout the day based on their activities. Both languages co-exist parallel to each other in the classroom. During small groups, the target language is based on the executing teacher.

Please note: **Breakfast, Lunch and Snack have to be provided from home.**

Please see the 2018-2019 Parent Handbook, Number 10: Meals and Food Practices for more information.



Daily Schedule:

| | Preschool Group 2-3 years | Pre-Kindergarten 4+ years |
|---------------------|--|--|
| 7:30 am - 8:00 am | Arrival & Breakfast Table / Ankunft & Frühstück | |
| 8:00 am - 8:30 am | Breakfast Table & Table Activity / Frühstück & Tischspiele | |
| | Instructional Time | |
| 8:30 am - 9:00 am | Freeplay / Freispiel | Freeplay / Freispiel |
| 9:00 am - 10:00 am | Circle Time - Small Groups / Stuhlkreis - Kleingruppen | Circle Time - Small Groups / Stuhlkreis - Kleingruppen |
| 10:00 am - 11:00 am | Outdoor Time / Spielzeit im Garten | Outdoor Time / Spielzeit im Garten |
| 11:00 am - 12:00 pm | Lunch - Story Time / Mittagessen – Vorlesezeit für kleine Zuhörer | Lunch - Story Time / Mittagessen – Vorlesezeit für die Großen |
| 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm | Nap Time / Mittagschlaf | Circle Time - Small Groups / Stuhlkreis - Kleingruppen |
| 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm | | Nap Time / Mittagsruhe |
| 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm | Art table / Maltisch | |
| 2:00 pm - 2:15 pm | Wake-Up / Aufstehzeit | |
| 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm | Dismissal / Abholzeit | |
| | Extended Day: Open pick-up time | |
| 2:15 pm - 2:30 pm | Snack / Zwischenmahlzeit | |
| 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm | Outdoor Time / Spielzeit im Garten | |
| 3:30 pm - 4:00 pm | Freeplay / Freispiel | |
| 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm | Project Time / Projektzeit | |
| 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm | Story Time & Board Games / Vorlesezeit & Brettspiele | |
| 5:00 pm - 5:30 pm | End of Day / Wir gehen nach Hause | |

All schedules are subject to change temporarily and permanently. Parents will be notified of permanent changes in writing.

GISH reserves the right to switch the German and the English portion of the day as needed, based on the students' needs and special events, without parent notification.

Group activities include literacy, math, science, art, music and dance, fine and gross motor skills.



6. Enrollment Policy

6.1 General Information

GISH has a first-come-first-serve policy for enrollment. Currently enrolled students and their siblings have priority for re-enrollment and admission.

How to enroll your child:

- 1) Visit and tour the school. Make yourself familiar with our routines and procedures.
- 2) Submit a completed **Enrollment Contract** together with the corresponding payment (checks made out to **GAES dba German International School of Houston**).
- 3) Our office will confirm the receipt of the enrollment contract and update you on your child's enrollment status before any fees are endorsed.
 - a. If we hold an opening for your child, you will receive an e-mail with our **Admission Information Form, Parent Handbook** and invoice for any outstanding fees. All applicable payments have to be submitted to finalize your child's enrollment.
 - b. If an opening is not immediately available, you have the choice to place your child on our Waiting List. Our office will contact you once an opening becomes available.

The following information needs to be submitted for each child **before the first school day to finalize your child's admission:**

- **Enrollment Contract**
- **Enrollment Fees** (see Enrollment Contract)
- **Predated checks or proof that automatic payments** through your bank have been set up for the remaining tuition payments of the school year as outlined in the Enrollment Contract.
- **Admission Information**
- **Immunization Form**, including signed **Health Statement, Vision and Hearing Screening** (applicable with four (4) years of age) and updated **Immunization Record**.
- Signed **Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook**
- **Allergy Action Plan for Students with Allergies** (completed by a physician)

(All forms will be e-mailed to you after your child has been offered an opening.)

6.2 Waiting List

You have the option to place your child on our Waiting List. A **\$150.00 non-refundable fee** applies, which will be credited towards the Enrollment Fees upon enrollment. Openings are distributed on a first-come-first serve basis. Parents will be notified of an opening via phone call and follow-up e-mail. A parent orientation will be scheduled and an informal teacher-child assessment will be held to determine the child's readiness, class placement and date of admission. Siblings of currently enrolled students receive enrollment priority over the Waiting List. Parents may withdraw their child from the Waiting List by written notice.



6.3 Re-Enrollment

Re-Enrollment is scheduled at the beginning of the calendar year for the upcoming school year. Returning students and siblings are given priority enrollment.

6.4 Siblings

Siblings receive priority enrollment after currently enrolled students are placed. Siblings will receive openings on a first-come-first serve basis. Waiting List placement for siblings is recommended! Sibling status does not guarantee an opening!

6.5 Payment Policies

Please note: **GISH accepts checks, money orders and automatic payment only!**

No cash or credit/debit cards are accepted!

All payments must be dropped off during hours of operation at our office or have to be mailed to the School.

To ensure the continuity of the program, **GISH** requires the 10 months of tuition paid as outlined in the Enrollment Contract. A payment schedule will be issued by the school office for students joining us during the school year.

All payments are to be made out to [GAES dba German International School of Houston.](#)

Payment Options: Tuition and Fees:

Parents may choose between one (1) Annual Payment or a Monthly Installment Plan.

1) One Annual Payment:

Check or One-time Bank Payment.

All related transaction fees are to be paid by the parents.

2) Monthly Installment Plan:

Pre-dated Checks or monthly Automatic Bank Payment.

All pre-dated checks are to be submitted by July 15, 2018, or before the first day of attendance for students starting during the school year.

Automatic Bank Payments are to be set on the 5th of each month to arrive on time. A set-up confirmation is to be sent to the school office.

All related transaction fees are to be paid by the parents.

Additional Fees: a 10% late fee will apply after the 25th of the month and will be enforced. A charge of \$50.00 will be assessed on each returned check.



Payments through company:

We happily work directly with your company in regard to your child's tuition payment. Parents are responsible to initiate the first contact between the company and the office.

6.6 Refund Policy

All paid tuition and fees are non-refundable. Refunds or allowances in tuition cannot be made for absences in the event of illness, vacations and extended personal leaves or at the occasion of holidays, unexpected school closings, or other circumstances.

Dismissal:

Tuition may be refundable for school-initiated dismissal of a student or family while in attendance. The Board of Directors will decide upon each case, after gathering information from teachers and parents. The Board of Directors holds the right to not issue any refunds.

Withdrawal:

All withdrawals are to be submitted in writing to the school office or via email to office@gish-houston.org.

6.7 Probation Period

All students are enrolled on a **20-day probationary period**. For students whose overall placement in our program is in question, conferences with the teachers and parents will be held during this period to determine continued enrollment of the child. The director of **GISH** reserves the right to suspend or terminate any enrollment contract.

6.8 Parents with Shared Custody

The parent enrolling the child in our program is responsible to inform the other custody holder about their child's enrollment in our program, and must provide **GISH** with the contact information including current address, phone number and e-mail address of the custodian.

Court Orders / Visitation Schedule:

Our team will assist to coordinate any court-ordered visitation or NO visitation schedule. A copy of the court-ordered visitation schedule and any other documents signed by the judge to validate the schedule HAVE TO BE submitted to the director before the child's first day of attendance. **In addition, GISH requires a written visitation schedule, signed or confirmed by both parents for quick reference.** Without a current visitation schedule on file, your child's attendance will be put on hold until all documents are updated.



6.9 Children with Disabilities

Parents are required to notify our team of any known disabilities, developmental delays or other medical history that might influence their child's development. **Failure to do so may result in termination of the child's enrollment.**

GISH will accommodate children with special needs to the fullest extension possible for the School, while providing the child with a safe and developmental supportive environment. However, if the child's special needs require modifications beyond our building structure, our teachers' professional backgrounds or if they interfere with our program's philosophy, we cannot guarantee enrollment.

6.10 Policy for Late Pick-Up

Parents are responsible to be on time for their child's pick-up, and to call the School if they are running late. **Regular Program dismisses at 2:15 pm and Extended Program dismisses at 5:15 pm.** Arrival after 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm is considered late.

A late pick-up fee of \$20.00 per family will be charged for pick-up after:

- **2:30 pm for our Regular Program** (students move automatically into Extended Day Flex)
- **5:30 pm for our Extended Program**

Parents arriving late will be asked to sign a late slip and will receive an invoice from the office. Late fees are due upon receipt. Late Pick-Up fees are non-negotiable and will also apply for late pick-up through a third party. In case of a late pick-up, parents are required to call the School.

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) will have to be contacted if neither a parent/guardian nor the person designated as Emergency Pick-Up for the child can be contacted within one (1) hour after the end of our operational hours.

6.11 Liability of Parents for Damaged School Property

Parents are liable for any damage to school property caused by their child.

The teacher/teacher assistant witnessing any damage to school property is responsible for ensuring the students' safety, and for reporting the damage to the director in writing. He/She is furthermore responsible for notifying the parents about the incident verbally at pick-up and in writing within 12 hours.

6.12 Responsibility for Medical Bills

Parents are responsible for any medical bills if their child is to seek medical emergency treatment while in care, or if their child needs to see a medical health care provider due to an injury or accident that occurred while in care.



7. Safety

7.1 Student Release Authorization

Parents are considered **First Party** members. Parents can authorize **Second Party** members in their child's Admission Information Form. All second parties are authorized to pick-up the child from the facility without prior notification from the parent or guardian.

In cases of **Third Party** pick-up (parties not designated in the Admission Information Form), we require a written notification (preferably by e-mail) in advance. **For any deviation, parents are responsible to call the school office.** If Third Party pick-up has not been clearly communicated, the parents will be called. The student will not be released until we have reached a parent and received the necessary confirmation.

Picture-ID required for pick-up:

All persons are to identify themselves to the **GISH** staff by a valid photo ID when picking up a child. **GISH** will keep a copy of the driving license or other form of official picture ID (such as passport) in the student's file for all first, second and third parties. Please submit copies beforehand, or our staff will make copies on the day of their first pick-up from school.

For families with shared custody arrangements, we require a written pick-up schedule including a list of dedicated Second Party members.

7.2 Family/Student Identification on Campus

All **GISH** students, parents and regular assigned pick-up persons will have to identify themselves to the security guard in the parking lot, the church receptionist or other church personnel. For easy identification, all parents/regular assigned pick-up persons and students will receive a school badge during orientation. Students should wear their badge when exiting the car. The badge will be placed in the child's cubby until it is time to go home.

7.3 Visitors

Visitors must announce themselves to the church receptionist or security guard, and the school office will be notified of its visitors via phone call.

To prevent unexpected and unwanted visitors from entering our preschool rooms, all entrance/exit doors will not be accessible from the outside during the hours of operation. The school office entrance/exit door will be open for brief periods during drop-off and pick-up time or as otherwise needed.

To ensure a safe environment for our families and students, **all visitors must sign-in and out.** This will apply also to grandparents and other family members, family friends, volunteers and vendors, as well as service personnel. A record is kept in the school office.



To assure a smooth transition of our daily routine, all visitors aside from parents or legal guardians joining us during our operational hours need a confirmed appointment. Please contact our school office to schedule a date and time for a visit or volunteer opportunities.

Parents and Legal Guardians:

Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to visit and participate in our classroom without securing a prior appointment. However, an appointment has to be made for special activities such as reading books or visitation of more than two visitors at the same time.

Our school reserves the right to end/shorten any visitation if the presence of a visitor interrupts classroom instruction; has any impact on our students or their behavior, or compromises our daily routine, as well as the teachers' attention towards our students to any extend.

7.4 Parking

Parking is permitted on the church parking lot (**access from Fannin St.**) during drop-off, pick-up and parent/teacher conferences. The public parking lot on Main St. (Hermann Park and Zoo) can be used, but has a three (3) hour time limit and ticketing/towing is enforced.

Parking in front of the building and gates is prohibited.

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child while crossing the parking lot. Students should hold an adult's hand while walking in the parking lot.

7.5 Emergency Environmental Procedures

GISH' employees are informed about the location of the following: **first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and emergency phone numbers.** All *GISH* employees are trained in emergency procedures, evacuation practices and evacuation routes. A log of the monthly emergency and fire drill procedure is posted next to the fire extinguisher. Severe weather drills are practiced every three months.

Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP):

GISH has established an Emergency Preparedness Plan (**EPP**) for emergencies such as: severe weather alert, lock down of the building, hurricane and lost/missing child. A copy of the **EPP** will be located in every classroom and one example will be displayed in the entrance for parental review.

- **Fire/Explosion/Toxic Fumes/Chemical Release:**
Exit signs and fire escape routes are posted in each room. There will be a fire drill every month (announced and unannounced).
- **Severe Weather (Tornado):**
Students will be taken inside a windowless room. A severe weather drill will be performed every three months.
- **Lock Down:**
Students will be taken into a designated room to find shelter.



In case of emergency, GISH will contact the parents utilizing the following procedure:

Evacuation/Lockdown/Severe Weather warning concerning a situation that involves the group:

The in the Admission Information Form designated Emergency Evacuation person and phone number provided by the parents will be contacted first. This person is responsible to coordinate the immediate pick-up of their child/ren between the caretakers. All students will remain with our staff at a safe place.

In case of an evacuation from school, the meeting spot, if not communicated differently to the parents, will be the **South College lot @ Rice University (Cambridge and Main St).**

If the situation permits, emergency notices may be sent out via Remind101 app and via e-mail.

Emergency involving/concerning a single student:

The director of GISH and instructed staff members will contact the parents via phone. In case we are not able to reach the parents, we will contact the person listed in the student's Emergency Contact Information (see Admission Information). The student will remain with our staff at a safe place.

Severe Weather closures:

If the decision is made to close the School before the school day begins (usually due to extreme weather conditions), please note that **GISH** follows the **HISD Emergency Closing Schedule**. Closing announcements can be viewed on the HISD website www.houstonisd.org, the radio and the local TV channel KTRK ABC 13 (look for banner).

7.6 Emergency/Facility Closings

In case of a last-minute facility closure due to unforeseen safety or unsanitary situations, all parents will be notified via phone immediately. Parents are responsible to arrange pick-up of their child within an hour after receiving the notification. Only one emergency closing per school year will be made up through the make-up day, as outlined in the Academic Calendar. Closures announced after 11:00 am will not be made up.

7.7 Child Abuse and Neglect

All **GISH** employees are required by law to report suspected child abuse within 48 hours. **Failure to report abuse or neglect is a Class B criminal offense.** All staff members will receive the handout "Information on Reporting Child Abuse" and review it with the director during their orientation. Furthermore, they will attend an annual workshop of a minimum of one (1) hour on this topic. By law, professionals may not delegate their duty to report to another person such as a coworker or family member.

The Abuse and Neglect Hotline is 1-800-252-5400, or reports can be filed online at:

<https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> .



What is Abuse and Neglect?

Definitions by the Texas Family Code (TFC):

Abuse:

- Physical abuse is deliberate actions resulting in injuries to a child or genuine threats of such actions, or concerns about physical injuries of an unexplained or suspicious nature.
- Sexual abuse includes sexual indecency, sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault. Failing to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct to a child. Using the child for the creation of obscene or pornographic material.
- Emotional abuse is an emotional or mental injury caused by the parent or caregiver that results in an observable effect on the child.

Trafficking:

- Labor trafficking: parent or caregiver forcing a child into labor or services that are unhealthy or harmful to the child.
- Sex trafficking: parent or caregiver receiving compensation for forcing a child to engage in prostitution or other sex acts.

Neglect:

- Neglectful supervision means improper supervision of a child left alone, which could have resulted in/with the possible result of substantial harm.
- Medical neglect is failure to seek, obtain or administer medical treatment that could result in/with the possible result of substantial harm.
- Physical neglect is the failure to provide a child with the necessary food, clothing, and shelter to maintain a healthy life.
- Abandonment is when a child is left in a potentially harmful situation by the parent or caregiver with no intention to return.
- Refusal to accept parental responsibility is when a child has been out of the home for any reason, and the parent or caregiver refuses to allow the child to return home.

7.8 Gang-Free Zone

Gang-Free Zones are designated areas around specific locations where gang-related activity is prohibited and subject to increased penalty under Texas Law. The specific location includes day care or child care centers. The Gang Free Zone is a radius of 1000 feet around your child care center. For more information on what constitutes a Gang Free Zone, please consult Sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code. The motivation behind establishing a Gang Free Zone is to deter certain types of criminal activities in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/child_Care/Forms/2846.pdf



7.9 Safety of Children's Products

All facilities licensed through the Department of Family and Protective Services are required to assure that there are no unsafe children's products in their facility. The director is responsible for reviewing the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recall list at www.cpsc.gov. In addition, she/he must certify annually in writing that each of the recall notices has been reviewed. This form will be posted on our parent board for our parents to review.

7.10 Anti-Bullying Policy

At the *German International School of Houston*, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse. Bullying is an anti-social behavior and affects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable at our School, and will not be tolerated. All students need to be able to report about bullying behavior. Our staff will act promptly, and effective action will be taken. **We are a TELLING school:** This means that anyone who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to tell a member of the staff immediately.

What Is Bullying?

"Bullying behavior abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Isolated instances of hurtful behavior, teasing or arguments between individuals would not be seen as "bullying" (Torfaen definition 2008).

Bullying generally takes one of four forms:

- **Indirect:** being unfriendly, spreading rumors, excluding, tormenting, taking away or damaging personal items, writing notes or drawing pictures
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence, touching or showing private body parts
- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, threats, sarcasm
- **Cyber:** All areas of internet misuse, such as nasty and/or threatening e-mails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging, mobile threats by text messaging and calls

Common examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Racial bullying
- Homophobic bullying
- Bullying based on disability, ability, gender, appearance or circumstance



Implementation in our School:

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- 1) If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of the staff who has been approached.
- 2) A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to the director.
- 3) The director will interview all concerned parties and will record the incident.
- 4) Parents will be informed within 24 hours after the school is aware of the incident.
- 5) A follow-up meeting will be held within a week after the School has notified the parents.
- 6) If necessary and appropriate, a school psychologist will be consulted at the expense of the parents/guardians of the students involved.

Implementation with our students:

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their class teacher or a member of staff of their choice;
- reassuring the student;
- offering continuous support;
- restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened;
- discovering why the student became involved;
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change;
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behavior of the student;
- if necessary, consulting a school psychologist on the parents'/guardian's expense.

The following disciplinary steps, depending on severity and/or continuity of the behavior may be taken:

| Disciplinary Steps | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Reminder of expectations / re-direction | X | | |
| Separation from the group, but within the class / assigned activity (example: move play/work area) | X | | |
| Verbal apology | X | | |
| Letter of apology (drawing) | X | | |
| Student/Teacher and/or Student/Administrator conference | X | X | |
| Reflection of own behavior and plan about problem solving | X | X | |
| Loss of recess or special privileges | X | X | |
| Parent/Teacher conference | | X | |
| Behavior plan/contract | | X | |
| Early dismissal for the day | | | X |
| Exclusion from school (short-term/long-term) | | | X |



Monitoring, evaluation and review:

The School will review this policy annually, and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Prevention:

We will use some or all of the following to help raise awareness and prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, this may include:

- Writing and implementing a set of school rules;
- Signing a behavior contract;
- Using Art, Drama or Music to reinforce awareness;
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly;
- Having regular discussions in the classroom about bullying, why it happens, and why it matters to prevent it from happening.

8. Illness and Medical Policies/Procedures

8.1 Location of First Aid Kit

The **First Aid Kit** is located in the bathroom in Room C111. An additional First Aid Kit can be found in the emergency backpack.

8.2 Immunization Requirements

GISH students must comply with the **immunization requirements**. While attending school, each student must comply and be vaccinated following the schedule set forth by the State of Texas. **Failure to do so may result in your child being excluded from school.** Parents are responsible for keeping their child's immunization record updated. If you choose to exempt your child from complying with the regular State of Texas vaccination practices, an official affidavit must be submitted for the child's file. The Exemption Form can be found at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm> and is valid for two years.

If an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease occurs, any student not properly immunized could be asked to not attend school. **For a detailed list of our exclusion criteria, please see the attachment "Illness and Exclusion" in appendix.**

8.3 Illness and Exclusion Policy

Sick Children:

Sick children should not be brought to school. A student who does not feel well, has body temperature greater than 100°F (armpit) or has a contagious disease, must remain at home until the child is no longer contagious, and is symptom free for 24 hours with a normal body temperature of 98.6°F/37°C **without fever reducing medication.**

If a student misses school due to illness, the parents or guardians must notify the *GISH* office, explaining the nature of the illness.



To avoid endangering the health of other students or putting your own child's health at risk, we ask you to respect the following:

- Fever may indicate an early sign of an infection. Normal body temperature is 98.6°F/38°C orally or 99.7°F/37.6°C rectally. If your child's temperature should rise above 100°F/38°C (armpit) in the night or in the morning before school, your child should remain at home. Your child's temperature should return to normal for 24 hours BEFORE returning to school.
- If your child vomits and/or has diarrhea during the night, DO NOT send him/her to school for 24 hours, EVEN IF she/he is feeling better. Stomach viruses usually last 24-48 hours
- An ear infection can be very painful. If your child complains of pain in one or both ears during the night or in the morning before school, keep him/her at home and consult with your child's physician.
- Frequent coughing can interfere with your child's learning as well as the learning of other students. If your child has a cough with cold or a cough with nasal congestion, keep your child at home and consult with your child's physician.
- Thick, green or yellow nasal discharge could indicate a sign of an infection. If your child presents these symptoms, keep your child at home and consult with your child's physician.
- If your child wakes up with one or both eyes crusted over, has yellow or clear watery drainage from one or both sides, has red, irritated eyes or has itchy weeping eyes, keep him/her at home and consult with your child's physician. Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye is VERY contagious.

Returning to School:

Students need to be **symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school**. In case of a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, lice or strep throat..., please view point 8.4 Communicable Diseases.

When visiting the doctor, it is always good to request a "**Return to school note**" and to bring it to school to avoid any questions.

All children who have any of the following symptoms will be sent home:

- fever of 100°F armpit/101°F orally
- reddish or pink eyes, with/without drainage
- croup cough, consistent nasal drainage, with/without fever
- vomiting or diarrhea
- any undiagnosed rashes
- signs of abdominal pain, headache, unusual tiredness, unusual paleness or irritability
- the student cannot participate comfortably in outdoor or indoor play
- the student is in need of extra care

When a student becomes ill or shows any of the above symptoms, the parents are contacted to pick up the child. **After notification, the sick student must be picked up within one (1) hour**. The student will be provided with a nap mat, pillow and blanket and will be taken to the school office until parents arrive. If the school office is not staffed, the child will be separated from the main group and placed within sight and hearing distance of a staff member till parent arrival.



Vaccine Preventable Diseases:

If an outbreak occurs of any vaccine preventable disease, any student not immunized could be asked not to attend school.

8.4 Communicable Diseases - Notification required

The office needs to be notified in writing if your child has contracted a communicable disease. The School will notify all parents via e-mail and door posting about the circulating communicable diseases. Students must be symptom free before they can return to the program.

Texas Department of State Health: Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Child-Care settings
http://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/health/schools_childcare/resources/

Among the few of the illnesses/diseases requiring exclusion from school are the following communicable diseases:

- Chicken Pox
- Common Cold with fever greater than 100°F (armpit)
- Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye
- Head Lice
- Impetigo
- Influenza
- Pneumonia (including Walking Pneumonia)
- Mononucleosis
- Gastroenteritis (stomach virus)
- Hepatitis
- Mumps
- Meningitis (viral/bacterial)
- Scabies
- Streptococcal Infections (i.e. Strep Throat)
- Measles
- Tuberculosis

Return to School Note: required for communicable diseases

In the case of a communicable disease, parents are required to provide a return to school note from their child's physician stating that their child is **not contagious** anymore, prior to the student's admission to the class. Without a return to school note, attendance will be put on hold. This note must be handed over at drop-off and then placed in the student's file.

ATTENTION - BACK TO SCHOOL NOTE:

Please check in the doctor's office that your return to school note clearly states that your child is **NOT CONTAGIOUS**, and able to return to school. Licensing does not allow notes simply stating that the child can return to school on a specific date, the note must clearly declare the child non-contagious.

8.5 Emergency Procedures

Parents and/or guardians must complete and sign an **Authorization for Medical Emergency Attention** (part of the **Admission Information Form**) at the beginning of each school year.



In the event that a student is injured at school or becomes seriously ill, and the School is not able to contact a parent or designated caretaker, the following applies:

“In the event of a medical emergency or if I cannot be reached to make arrangements for medical care, I hereby authorize the person in charge to take my child to a Hospital or Emergency Medical Care facility. I give consent to the School to secure any and all necessary emergency medical care for my child. I prefer my child to be taken to the below designated Hospital or Emergency Medical Care facilities.”

8.6 Injury to Student

Minor accidents such as minor cuts, abrasions or bruises:

The person in charge will take proper procedures of cleaning the area with water and antibacterial soap, covering and/or cooling. Further treatment will be received at home. The lead teacher is responsible for informing parents at pick-up time about the incident, as well as the medical assistance offered to the student.

Accidents requiring medical attention:

If the injury requires medical attention, the parents will be notified. In case of a serious injury, 911 emergency services is to be contacted, then the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, the contact listed as emergency contact will be contacted next.

Severe/Life Threatening Emergencies:

In case of a severe/life threatening emergency, the student will be separated from other students and First Aid or CPR will be applied by our staff. 911 will be called immediately. Parents will be called and informed of the incident(s) as soon as the situation allows. One staff member will stay with the student until the parents or designated caretaker arrives.

8.7 Incident/Illness Report

This form is located in the Emergency Contact binder. The form has to be signed by the supervising teacher, the parent and the director. The report needs to be kept in the student's file.

Teachers need to complete an Incident/Illness Report if:

- the student requires medical attention due to an accident which occurred during operational hours;
- the student was placed at risk or observed an incident that placed him/her at risk;
- the child has fallen ill with severe symptoms and had to be excluded from the facility;
- any observation has to be documented in regard to a child's health and well-being.

Parents are required to notify the School if their child has been seen by a doctor due to an incident or illness that occurred at school. If a medical professional has been consulted, the parents must complete the appropriate section in the **Incident and Illness Report** and bring it to the office within 12 hours of the incident. The director is required to notify licensing of any illness or injury that required medical attention.



8.8 Administration of Medication

Note that **GISH does not provide or maintain any over-the-counter medication and does NOT administer any prescription medication that can be administered before or after school.** If it is necessary to send medication to school, permission has to be granted by the director. An **Administration of Medication Form** has to be completed and signed by the parent. Medication has to be handed directly to the director and medication usage and dosage has to be reviewed. **No staff member aside from the director will accept medication for a student.**

With your signed permission, we may dispense medication when appropriate. All medication must be in the original container(s), appropriately labeled with the student's name, including English instructions on dosage and timing. A pediatrician's order must be submitted if the dosage exceeds the directions on the medication label. The order must be updated annually. Changes in the information provided should be reported immediately in writing to the director. **A single dose may be administered without the written consent of parents through the authorization by the parents by phone. The Administration of Medication Form has to be completed by the parents upon pick-up.** The Administration of Medication Forms has to be renewed annually.

Under no circumstances can medication be kept in the students' personal belongings such as lunch bags or backpacks. **Students are not allowed to self-administer medication.**

8.9 Vision and Hearing Screening/Tuberculin Testing

All students need to complete a **vision and hearing screening** within three (3) months after their 4th birthday. Results have to be submitted to the **GISH** office and will be placed in the student's school file. **All test results must display the student's name, date of birth, test results, office stamp and pediatrician's signature.** Please double check in the doctor's office that all criteria are covered.

Exemption:

Parents can provide the School with a signed and dated affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which they are an adherent or member.

A Tuberculin Testing is **not** mandatory.

8.10 Students with Allergies

Parents are responsible for informing the School about their child's allergies and document them in the Admission Information. A list with allergies present in the classroom, including information on treatment, must be displayed in the classroom.



Information steps for parents and caregivers:

If allergies are reported, the following steps will be taken:

- Step 1:** Parents receive the Allergy Action Plan and forward it to the pediatrician or allergist.
- Step 2:** Director and parents will determine if an **Individual Healthcare Plan** has to be put in place.
- Step 3:** Individual Allergy Action Plan must be completed by the child's pediatrician or allergist.
- Step 4:** Parents provide medication and complete the **Administration of Medication Form**.
- Step 5:** For severe allergies, the **Individual Healthcare Plan** will be reviewed by the parents.
- Step 6:** Employees are educated about the Individual Healthcare Plan and Allergy Action Plan.
- Step 7:** Classmates and parents are educated about allergies present in the classroom, new procedures and regulations through designed lesson plans and written notice of any new food restrictions in the classroom.

8.11 Daily Health Checks

Upon arrival, the classroom teacher will give a health check to each student. If there are any doubts about the student's health, she/he refers the child to the director. The director will call the parents for all unexplained rashes or bruises that were not communicated to the staff during drop-off.

9. Daily Routines

9.1 Student Absence

Illness or Vacation:

Parents are required to notify the School between 7:30 am and 8:30 am if a student will not be able to attend the School or will arrive late.

Please send an e-mail to office@gish-houston.org or call (832) 831-6843 leaving a detailed message including the reason for absence and possible return date.

Extended absences outside of the regular closing dates:

For any extended absence outside of the regular closing dates, please send a written notification one week prior to our office.

Early Return:

If a student returns earlier than planned, parents need to inform the office in advance to allow teachers to plan for that student's attendance.

9.2 Late Arrival

Please let our office know about any late arrival in the morning. **Students should arrive at school no later than 8:45 am.** After this time, the teachers guide and take part in play situations and cannot assist the parent and child with the transition.

Students who arrive late miss out on free play time and often have problems integrating into the group. Arrival during circle time results in disturbance for the whole group.



9.3 Student Drop-Off

Students must be walked into the School. **Parents and students need to wear identification badges.**

Sign-in: Parents are responsible to sign their child/ren into our program with their personal PIN via the School's laptop or other manually sign-in sheet provided by the School.

Separation:

Saying good-bye to parents can sometimes be hard, especially in the beginning. At **GISH** we work together with the parents to provide the child with a smooth transition into the classroom. If a student has severe separation anxiety, a special drop-off routine will be developed in a parent meeting. If a student feels upset at drop-off, our teachers will be there to provide comfort and help the child to integrate.

A teacher will call the parents with an update as soon as the student has been integrated into the group. We will also contact the parents if the student cannot be comforted and no progress on integration is made. Our team will work together with the parents on techniques to ease the separation anxiety.

9.4 Student Pick-Up

Students must be picked up in the School. **Parents and students need to wear identification badges when leaving the facilities.**

Sign-Out: Parents are responsible to sign their child/ren out of our program with their personal PIN via the School's laptop or other manually sign-out sheet provided by the School. Please note that the child will remain under our supervision until the child is signed-out of our program.

Personal belongings: Parents have to check the "accident" basket for dirty or soiled clothes, and to collect the child's personal belongings.

9.5 Parking

Please note that parking around the **GISH** campus and in the church parking lot is at your own risk. The School is not responsible for theft or damage to vehicles or their contents.

9.6 Student Dress Code

Always consider the functionality of your child's clothing. Students need to wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing and shoes.

We also request the outfit to be age appropriate, therefore:

- NO pants, skirts or dresses shorter than two fingers above the knee.
- Girls have to wear leggings/biker shorts or modesty pants underneath their dresses/skirts.
- NO flip-flops.
- NO tops or dresses with spaghetti straps, unless a t-shirt is worn underneath.
- NO face paint or facial tattoos.



Please note that we may request you to pick up your child if your child is not dressed age or weather appropriate.

We reserve the right to introduce the “GISH School Uniform” if the dress code is not observed.

For safe playing in the School and for reasons of hygiene, we request **non-skid socks, soft house shoes or Crocs**. House shoes or socks will be send home on a regular basis to be washed and cleaned.

At *GISH* we believe in hands-on learning, and it can get messy. The color we use is mainly water-based and we provide smocks for painting projects. However, **clothes can get dirty and color can fail to wash out**. It is safe to leave the nice clothes at home and send your child in older clothes.

Every student needs to have a set of extra clothing provided by the parents and stored in their cubby. Students that are currently toilet training need to have more sets of extra clothes.

10. Meals and Food Practices

Please note: ***GISH* is a PEANUT FREE and TREENUT FREE Zone!**

Parents will provide the students with their individual lunch boxes. Food cannot and will not be shared! Lunch boxes and water bottles should be labeled with the student’s name or initials. **Parents are responsible for providing a nutritionally balanced lunch.**

Refrigeration/Reheating:

Due to regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services, *GISH* is not set up to refrigerate or reheat food. Your child’s lunch needs to be in a lunch bag equipped with an ice pack.

Please provide your child with food that can be consumed at room temperature or use thermos containers which will keep the food warm until lunch time.

Containers & Utensils & Water Bottles:

Lunch boxes and water bottles must be labeled with the child’s name or initials. All children will eat out of their container. Please note that children cannot eat from napkins, but may use the lid of the container as a tray. Parents are responsible for providing re-usable utensils for their child each day.

***GISH* does not provide any plastic utensils!** All students must be provided with a filled water bottle – no perishable liquid (juice or milk), since WATER bottles will be taken outside during “Outdoor Time.” Bottles will be accessible throughout the day and refilled if needed. Juice/milk may only be served at lunch and must be provided in a separate bottle.



Food Allergies:

Our team will inform parents about any food regulations in regard to food allergies in writing. Parents are responsible for abstaining from packing exempt food items. Please note that we will not serve exempt food items and you may have to pick your child up early if there is no other food that we can serve.

Celebrating Birthdays:

We celebrate your child's birthday in school. For this occasion, parents can bring in a special treat like muffins or cookies, individual juice boxes, napkins or plates. **All food items have to be store bought and delivered in their original packing, which must show an ingredients list. NO ICING, please!!** Icing will be removed. No-mess sugar frosting is allowed. Our team will inform you how many students we are expecting in class on that day. No candles are allowed on school property.

Outside Food:

Parents are in charge of their child's nutrition. Therefore, no outside food will be accepted in the classroom. For limited special occasions or celebrations, the School will provide a treat for the whole class. Special treats are announced in the curriculum, newsletter or through bag tags in advance. Parents may exclude their child from receiving special treats by sending a written notice.

11. Personal Hygiene

Students and staff must wash their hands in the morning upon arrival, after using the restroom and changing diapers, before and after eating, when coming inside from the playground or from outside play and when soiled. The staff will monitor and assist a student when needed.

Each student will use a **small, personal towel** for handwashing provided by the School. The towel will be washed weekly or when necessary. Child appropriate hand soap will be provided.

New staff will be informed about the handwashing routines and practices, as well as regulations.

12. Bathroom Policy

Our students use the bathroom in Room C111, and the bathroom located in the entrance hall of the church might be used as needed under the supervision of a teacher.

For children under 3 years, parents are to supply the School with pull-ups, wipes and any diaper ointment needed for their child. Please provide pull-ups that can be **opened and closed on the side** and allow changing without taking off the pants. All items should be labeled with the child's name. Students should be toilet trained by three (3) years of age. Please notify our teacher if your child needs to be reminded to use the bathroom frequently and provide extra clothes for possible accidents for a student who is recently toilet trained.



The Preschool has an open-door bathroom policy for all students and bathrooms with two toilets can be used simultaneously. Students who express the need of privacy may use the toilet individually and close the door to the extent that the teacher still has easy access. Please notify our director if our open-door policy interferes with your cultural background.

Summer Camp Students:

Students Kindergarten age and up have to use the bathroom individually and will close the door for privacy.

13. Animals and Personal Toys and Belongings

No personal pets are allowed at any time on the school premises.

Students are asked not to bring personal toys to school. Please leave those items in the car at drop-off. No electronics are allowed. *GISH* is not responsible for any personal belongings of our students. In case your child needs a personal toy in the morning for emotional security, it has to stay in the cubby during the remainder of the school day. Teachers and visitors must store their personal purses out of reach, preferably in a locked cabinet.

14. Special Activities, Transportation, Field Trips and Parent Outings

During the hot summer months, *GISH* may offer outdoor activities involving water. For the children to participate in these supervised water activities, such as splash and wading pools, the School needs the permission from the parents (see **Admission Information Form**).

14.1 Field Trips/Transportation

Our program may take students off campus for nature walks or community enrichment such as a library visit. Field trips are announced in advance, and parents must sign a permission slip for their child to participate. Students are required to wear their school t-shirt to attend the field trip.

If bus transportation is necessary, it will be outsourced to a local bus company. State regulations on vehicles and transportation will set the age requirements for students able to be transported by bus.

14.2 Parent Outings

GISH holds a minimum of two parent outings per school year. Parents need to be present for a child to participate, and are responsible for the transportation and the supervision of their child at all times. Parent outings will be announced in the curriculum, and detailed information will be provided to the parents in the newsletter or by e-mail.



14.3 Community Involvement

We like to invite people from the community like Firefighters, Dentists, Mail Carriers or Police Officers into our classroom to enhance our learning experience. Special visitors will be announced to the parents in writing.

14.4 Show-And-Tell

On show-and-tell day, students are allowed to bring in ONE toy from home, which they will present and share with their classmates during circle time. Show-and-tell days will be outlined in the monthly curriculum, and changes will be announced in the Newsletter. Parents are responsible for keeping up-to-date through the curriculum on their child's show-and-tell day. There will be NO changes for missed days.

14.5 Writing Curriculum and Phonic Awareness

Each language has a designated letter day once a week, in which the whole group focuses on the phonic sound, and how the letter looks like through different circle time activities.

The Preschool has been using the writing curriculum and material of **Handwriting Without Tears** since 2008 in the classroom. The multi-sensory and interactive approach of the program made it a perfect fit for our School. Parents are encouraged to visit the HWT website at www.hwt.com to learn more about this program. Over the years we have found that this program is a great child-friendly approach to handwriting. Students will only focus on uppercase letters. While lower case letters exist, and will be introduced in print, our students will not be introduced into writing lower case letters.

Pre-Kindergarten students that will transition into Kindergarten the following school year will receive separate writing instructions once a week in each language. The principle of the writing curriculum will be used in both languages. However, only the English Teacher will focus on the completion of a workbook. The German Teacher will create a German ABC book in which the students are focusing on other important Kindergarten skills, while creating a page for each letter of the alphabet.

15. Photo Taking / Social Media

Pictures will be taken on a regular basis to document students learning. No names will be used in pictures that are accessible for the public.

To take pictures at school, the School's camera has to be used. No personal cameras or cell phones are allowed in the classroom, unless authorized by the director.

No visitors (INCLUDING PARENTS) are allowed to take pictures in the classroom. Picture taking is allowed while on parent outings, events outside of the regular classroom setting, or special classroom events to which all parents are invited.



The School holds the right to use student pictures in school publications and related websites, any objection has to be submitted in writing.

16. Environmental Awareness

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy surrounding without harming the environment. Students and teachers will use fabric towels, and we request that our students use a re-usable water bottle and utensils. **Educating our students to respect the environment, all living creatures and each other is an integral part of our curriculum.** We do recycle and ask the parents to join us in this effort. Please help us by providing re-usable eating utensils for your child's lunch.

17. Mosquito Control and Prevention

Teachers will apply "Off SPRAY" or any product of the parents' choice upon request during our outdoor time (see **Admission Information Form** for consent signature). Note that **GISH** does not supply mosquito repellent and that parents need to hand in the product, labeled with the student's name. **Please note that we require pump spray, since aerosol spray produces "fog" and is unsafe to inhale.** Mosquito spray cannot be placed into the student's lunch bag, but must be handed directly to a teacher. Parents will be asked to re-stock their child's mosquito spray if needed. If parents forget to provide new mosquito spray, the School reserves the right to spray the student with "Off Spray", as outlined in the Admission Information Form.

During the summer time, parents will be asked to apply mosquito spray in the morning before school. We will then re-apply when necessary.

In addition, teachers will spray the yard after excessive rain periods and during mosquito season before the students' arrival. **All insect spray has to be placed out of the reach of children at all times.**

18. Sunscreen

The parents will provide written permission to apply sunscreen. The sunscreen has to be provided by the parents. Lotions need to be labeled with the student's name (see **Admission Information Form**) and have to be handed directly to a teacher.

Never leave lotion in your child's belongings. During the summer time, parents will be asked to apply sun lotion in the morning before school. We will then re-apply when necessary.



19. Evaluation of Student Performance

19.1 Parent Teacher Conference(s)

One parent-teacher conference is held per school year for each student. The first parent conference outlined in the Academic Calendar is reserved for new parents. During this first conference, parents will receive an update on how their child has integrated into the program, and any issues or questions from either the teachers or parents can be addressed. The second conference date is reserved for returning students who are attending their second year with us. This conference will include a detailed developmental assessment of the child. Issues and questions from the teachers or parents can be addressed during the conference.

Parents can always request a conference if they have acute concerns or problems with their child that they want to discuss with the teachers. Our teaching staff on the other hand will invite parents for an extra conference, if needed, to update them on the development of their child, or to discuss any problems that the child may have in the classroom.

Please note that **a formal assessment will only be documented for parents once a year, unless otherwise necessary.**

19.2 Communication with the School

Drop-off and pick-up are busy transition times, therefore all questions or concerns from parents should be addressed at a different time. We appreciate parent feedback. E-mail is a good way to communicate with our teachers. Our staff can contact you once drop-off and pick-up are finished. Simply ask your teacher to call you, or send an e-mail to the office (office@gish-houston.org) with your questions with the request of a call. A parent meeting can be scheduled during the week, as needed.

19.3 Student Portfolio

Each teacher will be responsible for documentation of behaviors and skills observed in each student. These anecdotal notes and collected work will be used in parent-teacher conferences. Samples of art and work projects will be collected on a regular basis and kept in the student's art file until the end of the school year. A developmental check list will be completed for Pre-Kindergarten students, who will enter Kindergarten the next school year.



20. Parent Participation

20.1 Parent Involvement

The success of *GISH* depends upon parental involvement. We envision various ways to accomplish this goal:

- active participation in school events;
- volunteering for enrichment programs;
- offering support for activities or help at special occasions, any other ideas are welcome.

Please contact the *GISH* office to schedule an appointment to talk about your ideas.

20.2 Parent Responsibilities

Parents hold the following responsibilities:

- Be on time for drop-off and pick-up.
- Call the office by 8:30 am at the latest, if your child is absent or if the family is running late.
- Sign your child in and out of our program daily.
- Collect your child's belongings at pick-up.
- Pay tuition and late fees on time.
- Check your e-mail on a regular basis, since we use this media as our primary source for communication.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SET UP YOUR COMPUTER/E-MAIL PROVIDER TO ACCEPT EMAILS FROM THE FOLLOWING EMAIL ADDRESSES:

***GISH* Office:** office@gish-houston.org

***GISH* Head of Preschool:** director@gish-houston.org

GAES Board of Directors: board@gaeshouston.org

- Read our e-mails, curriculum and monthly newsletter to stay informed about events, outings and other things going on in our classrooms.
- Update us on any changes in address, phone number or e-mail address.
- Update your child's immunization record.
- Bring in new clothes if your child has been changed in school.
- Provide a balanced lunch and snack.
- Help us establish a good communication between parents and teachers.
- Give us a heads-up in the morning if there is something that could affect your child's behavior that day (did not sleep well, woke up early or did not eat breakfast...).
- Complete your volunteer hours (Family Tuition Rate).



20.3 Helpful Contacts for Parents

The following websites may provide helpful information:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

Phone: 713-940-3009

www.dfps.state.tx.us

Child Abuse Hotline:

Phone: 1-800-252-5400

Early Child Intervention:

Phone: 1-800-250-2246

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>

Harris County Health Department:

Phone: 713-439-6260

www.co.harris.tx.us

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing:

www.txchildcaresearch.org

National Child Care Information Center:

<http://www.nccic.org>

Texas Licensed Child Care Association:

www.tlcca.org

US Consumer Product Safety Commission:

www.cpsc.gov

Houston Independent School District:

(for weather related emergency closings)

<http://www.houstonisd.org>

Chanel abc13 (KTRK):

(for weather related emergency closings)

<http://abc13.com/>



21. Appendix

Overview of School Forms

Required Forms for Student File:

- 1) Enrollment Contract**
- 2) Admission Information Form** (includes)
 - Emergency Release Form
 - Medical Release Form
 - Release Authorization
 - Medical History
 - Permit for Application of Sunscreen/Crèmes/Lotions and Mosquito Repellent
 - Permit for Supervised Water Activities
 - Health Statement/Vision and Hearing Screening
 - Immunization Record
- 3) Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook**

Additional School Forms:

Incident/Illness Report

Please contact our office for a copy of this form.

Allergy Action Plan for Students with Allergies

Please contact our office for a copy of this form. This form must be completed by a physician.

Authorization for Dispensing Medication

Please contact our office for a copy of this form.



School Directory 2018-2019

| | |
|---|--|
| Administration | |
| Jessica Wood (Director) | director@gish-houston.org |
| Barbara Roussel (Office Manager) | office@gish-houston.org |
| Preschool Team | |
| | Jessica Wood (Director/German Lead Teacher) Janie Beltran (Assistant Director/English Lead Teacher) Antje Damanik (German Teacher's Assistant) Vera Peneva (German Teacher's Assistant) |
| Board of Directors | |
| Office Hours: Monday – Friday 10:00 am – 3:00 pm 832-212-6400 board@gaeshouston.org | <u>Voting Members:</u> Bianca Reich (President, Treasurer) Dr. Christian Schaaf (Vice-President, Secretary) Mari Gianukos Veldekens (Advisor) |
| | <u>Non-Voting Members:</u> Jessica Wood (Director, Curriculum Advisor) |



Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the
GISH Parent Handbook 2018-2019

Including the following topics:

- Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Playground Structures/Courtyard
- Church Property
- Change of Program or Policy
- Enrollment Policy
- Payment Policies
- Parents with Shared Custody
- Policy for Late Pick-Up (including changes in late pick-up fee)
- Responsibility for Medical Bills
- Family/Student Identification on Campus
- Visitors
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Daily Health Check
- Daily Routines
- Change in Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedure
- Parking
- Parental Responsibilities
- Helpful Contacts for Parents

Student's Name: _____

[Signed by both parents and/or legal guardians:](#)

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print Name)

Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian (Print Name)

Signature

Date