



**Victoria
German
School**

Parents' Handbook

About VGS

The Victoria German School (VGS) is operated by the Victoria German School Society and is a registered non-profit charity. As a provincially recognized Heritage Language School, the school has been providing German language and heritage education for children and adults for more than 40 years.

The school offers a range of courses for all ages from pre-school to high school credit level, targeted programs to meet requirements for German government language certification including university entrance requirements, and adult classes. The school's program also provides an introduction to the culture and history of German-speaking countries through games, crafts, music and celebrations.

Age Limits

Children will have turned 3 years of age by Dec. 31 of the school year that they begin in the 'Spielgruppe' class. There is no upper age limit, and we also offer adult classes. Students will be assigned classes according to their age and/or German language ability.

School Location and Parking

Saturday and Tuesday classes: Most of the classes of the Victoria German School take place on the 2nd Floor of the 'A' wing in the Clearihue Building, which is located to the inside off Ring Rd., near Finnerty Road, between the McPherson library and University Centre; parking lot C is right out front. You will receive a complimentary parking permit to drop off or pick up your child, valid for a short amount of time; if you need to park longer, please purchase a parking ticket at one of the dispensers on the other lots. Please display the parking permit on your vehicle dashboard during the times specified.

Schedule

Saturday classes: Begin at 9:30 am on the 2nd Saturday of September, and run until June
Start of Tuesday classes: Begin at 4:00 pm on the 2nd Tuesday in September and run until May or June
For the full calendar please see <http://www.victoriagermanschool.org/calendar/>

First Day

The first day of classes is a shortened day. The day is meant to serve as an introduction for the children, with some fun games and activities in their new classes, and followed by staff meetings.

Saturday classes: 9:30 to 11:00 am.

Tuesday classes: 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm (all classes but DSD2)

Only the Diploma class DSD2 will run full 2.25 hours.

We anticipate some organizational challenges on the first day and kindly ask you for your understanding.

Regular hours

Regular class hours commence the second week of classes, with Saturday classes running 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and Tuesday classes from 4:00 to 6:15 pm. Please arrive a little early so that classes can start punctually.

Holidays

Classes will not take place on holidays. Please refer to the VGS website (<http://www.victoriagermanschool.org/calendar>) to see the most up to date calendar.

Special Events

The VGS community celebrates special cultural events throughout the year, such as Laternenfest (Lantern Festival), Weihnachtsfest (Christmas Party), Osterfest (Easter). Some of these will be held during school hours. You will receive email or notices about upcoming events.

Teachers / Classes

The teachers will inform parents about the routine and expectations of their particular classes. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have any questions or concerns.

Your child's teacher will contact you via email shortly after the first day of classes if they haven't already done so.

Books and Materials

Most classes require the use of textbooks and workbooks. A flat fee for material is added to the registration and tuition fees, and covers textbooks, workbooks and classroom materials, such as for crafts for younger students.

Language

Our families - parents and children alike - range in German-speaking ability from little German knowledge to native Germans. In the hallways, you will hear a mix of both languages and the board will communicate with you officially primarily in English to ensure understanding by all. Students are encouraged to converse in German outside of the classrooms as well, such as during recess and library visits. In the classrooms you can expect total German immersion in all classes, except occasionally repeating instructions in English if there are students with little outside exposure to German language.

Performance

Teachers will provide casual feedback throughout the year. They will also provide one written report card to students at the end of each year. We will also be holding Parent/Teacher meetings, usually at the mid-point of the term. This is to provide formal feedback on your child's learning and to give parents some more information on how to support their child's learning.

Absences

If possible, please notify the teacher in advance if your child will be away.

Snacks

All classes will have snack breaks. Please send a healthy snack for your child. As we have some children with life-threatening allergies, we request that you send **only nut-free snacks**.

Clothing

The younger children will have some playtime outside. Please provide them with appropriate clothing for all weather, including raingear and boots, as we go outside in all weather.

Also, as arts and crafts are a regular part of class activity for the younger children, please have them wear clothes they can stain and get dirty. As well, for the youngest children, please pack a change of clothing in case there are “accidents”.

Library

Our library is available on Saturdays & Tuesdays. It is housed in a mobile bookcase in the corridor next to the reception desk. We have books for various age groups as well as videos, DVDs and audiotapes. We request that you take out materials for 1-3 weeks at a time only, Also, please only take up to two items and return borrowed items before you take out new ones. The library works as on "honour system" - you don't need to sign books out at the desk.

School Director

The school Director is Ralf Gabriel. You can contact him at: info@victoriagermanschool.org.

The primary role of the Director is to serve as point person for VGS and to oversee the daily/weekly operations. The Director guides curriculum development, implementation and review and carries primary responsibility in all matters related to teaching, curriculum, registration and class assignment. As well, the Director will be the main contact for VGS families.

Board of Directors

The Board, made up of current VGS parents, is responsible for the running of the school and does this on a volunteer basis. The Board is elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in the fall of each year. Parents and adult students are welcome to attend board meetings.

The board consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Other parents are welcome to be members at large. We are especially grateful for board members who can contribute some professional expertise, such as computer/technical knowledge, accounting, legal advice.

Volunteering

VGS runs on the volunteer efforts of its parents. Events would not take place if it were not for these volunteers. Please contact us if you are willing to volunteer in any way.

info@victoriagermanschool.org

Communication and Code of Behaviour

The Director and staff communicate with parents primarily by email. Please ensure you have identified the Director, your child’s teacher and the school Administrator as important senders, so that our email does not end up in your junk mail.

Note, our address books include the email addresses of the parent listed as the primary contact. Please let the Director and your child’s teacher know if a second parent or caregiver’s email address should always be included.

- **Inappropriate Behaviour**

It is expected that everyone – VGS staff, students and their families, speak and behave with respect and civility as they interact with VGS in person and with other types of correspondence.

Inappropriate behaviour, such as aggressive, abusive, threatening or bullying language, as well as any inappropriate physical contact will not be tolerated.

Teachers and VGS staff reserve the right to deploy effective discipline to maintain a calm, respectful and focused learning environment.

- Dispute resolution
 - In the event of a dispute/disagreement involving students and/or teachers and/or parents, it is hoped the parties can resolve the disagreement suitably among themselves.
 - If not, the school Director will be made aware of the dispute and attempt to resolve the issue.
 - If the recommended resolution is not satisfactory to both parties, it will be brought to the school Board's attention. If necessary, the Board will follow WorkSafeBC's Investigations Guide to Workplace Bullying and Harassment.
(<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/investigations-guide-bullying-harassment?lang=en>)
 - The Board's decision will be final.