

Admissions policy



Vision statement

We want to see our students leave our school as critical thinkers who have a sustained interest in learning and inquiry. They will be responsible and morally ambitious young adults.

We will help our students to listen and acknowledge the views of others, especially when they oppose their own, and to communicate respectfully. We want our students to embrace each other's differences, recognise that there is a wider world outside of their familiar context and to live peacefully with their fellow human beings.

To achieve our vision, our school will align the best traditions of an Austrian Gymnasium with the global perspectives of an International Baccalaureate education.

Introduction

We are a state-funded secondary school with a Bilingual (English/German) Programme embedded into the school. About a quarter of the total number of students is enrolled in the Bilingual Programme. The Bilingual Programme was first introduced in September 2004 and the school has been authorised as an IB World School since 2010.

In our Lower School (ages 10-14), subject teaching in the Bilingual Programme takes place in both English and German. Ideally, pupils who have completed the first four years of the Bilingual Programme will feel confident in moving up to the Upper School (ages 14-18) with our pre-Diploma curriculum leading to the IB Diploma Programme. The IB Diploma Programme is taught and examined exclusively in English, with the exception of language subjects.

Admission to the Bilingual Programme must follow the general policies for general high schools (*Allgemeine Höhere Schulen*) as mandated by the Education Board of Lower Austria (*Bildungsdirektion Niederösterreich*).

Philosophy

The Bilingual Programme welcomes both local and international students from all backgrounds. Students who are resident in the Klosterneuburg catchment area and who fulfil the academic criteria are welcome regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

Admission process for the Bilingual Programme

Legal requirements

Students must be resident, with at least one legal guardian, in the Klosterneuburg catchment area which includes the surrounding towns of Höflein, Kierling, Kritzendorf, Maria Gugging, Weidling, Weidlingbach/Scheiblingstein and St Andrä Wördern. Proof of residence must be submitted as part of the application process.

Students must also fulfil the legal requirements for entry to an Austrian Gymnasium/secondary school which is specified by the Educational Board of Austria as:

- Being able to follow lessons that are taught in German
- Being mentally and physically fit for school

If these criteria are met, the student will be classified as a “regular student” (*ordentlicher Schüler*). However, if a student is not able to fulfil the language criteria necessary, they could be granted the status of an “irregular student” (*außerordentlicher Schüler*). Please see Appendix A below for more information on this.

If the classes are not at full capacity (max. 25 students), the school also welcomes applications of Erasmus students to attend the school for a limited time.

Admission to Year 1 of the Bilingual Programme

1. In January/February of the year of secondary school entry, the legal guardian must register the student using the online form for general enrolment for Gymnasium Klosterneuburg. Please ensure that you have selected preference for the Bilingual Programme on this form. The exact dates of this registration period are set by the Education Board of Lower Austria and are non-negotiable.
2. After submitting the online registration form, the legal guardian must submit the following documents in person on one of the three specified registration days:
 - Printed and signed online registration form
 - Social security number of the student
 - Certificate of residency (*Meldezettel*) of the student (original and copy)
 - Passport (original and copy)
 - Birth certificate (*Geburtsurkunde*) (original and copy)
 - Most recent semester school report (*Semesterzeugnis*) (original and copy)
 - Most recent German and Mathematics tests from primary school (*Schularbeiten*) (copy)
 - Certificate of baptism (*Taufschein*) if applicable (original and copy)
 - Guardianship decree (*Vormundschaftsdekret*) for single parents if applicable (original and copy)
3. If the student meets the general requirements for admission to Gymnasium Klosterneuburg, they will be sent an invitation for an orientation day in late February to determine the most suitable candidates for the 50 places available on the Bilingual Programme.
4. The legal guardian of the student will be notified of the outcome shortly after the orientation day.

In the case of the Bilingual Programme being over-subscribed, students will be put on a waiting list. If a student does not get a place on the Bilingual Programme but meet the general criteria for admission, they are still guaranteed a place in a regular class at the school.

Admission to the Bilingual Programme / Pre-IB Programme (Years 2 – 6)

External candidates seeking to join the Bilingual Programme/ Pre-IB Programme in Years 2 to 6 who fulfil all previously mentioned legal requirements will gladly be accepted into the Bilingual Programme, provided that:

- The candidate passes the prescribed entrance assessments with good results to ensure that their academic skills and knowledge match their prospective cohort's.
- The candidate does not have more than one subject that they have not studied before and are required to catch up on
- The candidate's grades are such that there can be a smooth transition (there must not be a "Genügend" or an equivalent to that in their last report, i.e. grade 4 out of 5 where grade 1 is the highest)

All external candidates who meet the above criteria will be invited to sit an English entrance exam and meet with the Bilingual Programme coordinators and, in the case of entry into year 5 and above, the IB coordinator. External candidates who are transferring from an Austrian school following the national curriculum do not have to sit an Mathematics entrance exam; candidates moving from a different school system or country must additionally sit a Mathematics exam.

Internal candidates who are already enrolled at Gymnasium Klosterneuburg must fulfil these requirements to be considered to transfer to the Bilingual Programme:

- Be already enrolled in the "Gymnasium" part of the school / language stream.
- Be supported by a teachers' conference
- Be able to provide a report where there are no "Genügend" grades nor a worse mark than "Gut" in English.

All internal candidates will be invited to sit an English entrance exam and meet with the Bilingual Programme coordinators and, in the case of entry into year 5 and above, the IB coordinator.

Admission to the IB Diploma Programme (Year 7 – 8)

Students seeking to join the Diploma Programme in years 7 or 8 who fulfil all previously mentioned requirements and have attended an IB World School up to the point of application, will gladly be accepted into the Bilingual Programme, provided that:

- The academic programme of the student's previous school correspond to the IBDP's and our school's in terms of academic rigour and attitudes
- The IB courses which the student has previously chosen and participated in are offered in the respective year
- Offered courses correspond in terms of subject routes.
- When applying to year 8, the student has a first draft of their Extended Essay and a hundred CAS hours at the end of their first year in the IBDP.
- Applications to year 7 or 8 from within the school and to year 8 from other bilingual schools without the IBDP cannot be taken into consideration.

Evaluation and Decision-Making Process

Definite decisions concerning acceptance will be made within two weeks by the Bilingual Programme coordinators and, for students in year 5 and above, the IB coordinator, after the application is submitted. Decision on the allocation of a place will be based on the objective and fair evaluation of exam results, previous grades, confidential student evaluation of the previous school (where applicable) and the suitability of the student for the respective year. Should the number of places be limited, suitable students will be ranked according to the previously mentioned criteria.

When we are in doubt about the suitability of our programme for an applicant, occasionally "irregular students" can be admitted on a trial basis, meaning they are only granted a conditional offer. Supported by external and privately paid tutors, the student will be given enough time to prove that they can be successful in certain subjects.

Admission for ISTA families

Other rules apply for families of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA).

Implications of admission into the Bilingual Programme on foreign language choices (see also the Language Policy)

Students who join the Bilingual Programme in the Lower School without (near) fluency in German follow a full immersion policy for German. In the first two years in which they are in the Austrian school system, they attend all lessons, and we recommend additional private tutoring. In these two years, these students have *außerordentlicher Schüler* status meaning that they are not graded in a subject where they cannot (yet) fully follow the language of instruction. After that, they must be assessed in all subjects, becoming regular students ("ordentliche Schüler"). It is our policy goal that within 4 years, these students achieve C1 level in German.

In our Upper School (ages 14 - 18) Bilingual Programme, English is the main language of instruction in all subjects, with the exception of the languages. Students who join the programme at any point after the age of 14 (Years 5 – 8) have *außerordentlicher Schüler* (extraordinary student) status until they graduate. They prepare to sit only the IB Diploma.

If an *außerordentlicher Schüler* (a.o.) student joins in year 5 without sufficient proficiency in German, they are put in group L (see "Foreign Language teaching" above for explanation on Group F/L). With parent and teacher agreement, they are exempt from attending Latin as it is taught in German. In the same way as non-religious students who don't attend Catholic or Protestant religion lessons do not have to be on school premises during religion lessons in period 1 or period 6, a.o. students do not have to be on school premises during Latin lessons in period 1 or period 6. Attendance in all other subjects is compulsory.

If an a.o. student joins at the beginning of year 5 and the teacher agrees to teach Spanish in English, students attend Spanish as all students in group L start Spanish as beginners at the start of year 5. If an a.o. student joins at any point from the second semester of year 5 onwards, they do not attend either Latin or Spanish and the abovementioned rules regarding attendance apply to both subjects.

A.o. students in years 5 and 6 must attend German, but they are not expected to follow the main instruction. Instead, the parents should provide a German as a foreign language course book at the appropriate level and the student should work independently during the lesson. The student's German teacher can give recommendations for appropriate books.

In year 6 when students make their IB Diploma subject choices, a.o. students must take German B for their Group 2 Language Acquisition subject to ensure integration in the life and culture of the host country.

A.o. students in year 7 and above must also attend the "Austrian core" subjects: Ethics or Religious Education (depending on faith), Music or art (depending on student's choice), Sports, and Theory of Knowledge.

Appendix A: the Status of "irregular students" (*Außerordentlicher Schüler*)

According to Austrian Education Policy § 4 a student can obtain the status of "Irregular Student" (außerordentliche*r Schüler*in) in one or more subjects provided that:

- Age and level of maturity are suitable for the respective grade
- On grounds of well-founded reasons that the student won't be able to participate in subjects that is part of the curriculum (e.g. lack of/ insufficient German)
- Before the completion of compulsory education, these reasons have to be related to language issues and the status will only be granted for 12 months. Should the student join the school within the 2nd semester, the stated period won't start before September 1st of the following year.
- The stated period may be prolonged for another 12 months should there be extenuating circumstances for why the student has not been able to catch up on the language requirements. In this respect a request must be submitted to the school administration by the legal guardians.
- Following this, the student might be asked to sit an exam (*Feststellungsprüfung*) to ensure that the requirements will be met. The student will be transferred to the status of a "regular Student" afterwards, no matter what the outcome of the exam is.
- Students who have completed compulsory education can be exempt from subjects they do not have prior knowledge in or do not need to complete their education. They are entitled to attend courses on different levels.
- Irregular students may only be accepted if there is no regular student applying for the place and if the enrolment does not disadvantage the regular students or if the total number of students do not exceed the legal maximum.