

## Schule Schloss Salem

### Session 24/25

### Assessment Policy

#### Preamble

At Salem, we value the diversity of our community. We are committed to supporting the different needs of the members of our community as far as possible.

Our pedagogical approach is based on the school founders' vision of developing in our students the sense of responsibility for one's neighbour.

At the school's foundation after WWI Kurt Hahn chose the Parable of the Good Samaritan as its motto to express the expectation that Salemers recognize, respect and support their neighbour in any context. The values, freedoms and rights enshrined in the UN Human Rights Charter and the Basic Law of Germany, both formulated after WWII, form the broader framework of this approach.

Our staff and students come from a range of different cultural and religious contexts and value systems. We therefore protect the freedom of thought and speech of every member of the school community in balance with mutual respect. In particular, we are conscious of our responsibility for our students as they develop all aspects of their identities and personalities.

We aim to offer an environment in which to explore, as far as appropriate to their age, different orientations – be it political, religious, cultural, gender-related or sexual - and in which to learn how to have reflected and mindful discourse within the boundaries of our values.

This would exclude disparaging comments and behaviour related to and expressive of racism, extremism, misogyny, religious intolerance, homophobia and queer phobia.

#### Our Policy

Our aim is to support our students, with their diverse backgrounds and learner biographies, in both the national and the international systems we offer. We are academically selective in so far as we aim to establish

whether a student is suited to our academic programme, not because we aim for top results as a school (see our **Admission Policy**). We hope to help

our students and their families formulate realistic goals and become reflected and fulfilled learners in full ownership of their process of development and transition into adult life.

This general principle informs our approach to assessment. As regards the formative dimension, we assess in order...

- to identify a given student's attainment - what the student knows, understands and can apply
- to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses
- to aid the identification of students whose learning needs support through the school's provision of extra lessons, formal study time, counselling on study techniques or consulting with the IB regarding suitable access accommodation based on a documented diagnosis.
- to enable teachers to plan effectively for continuity and progression in the learning process both for individual students and for learner groups
- to share progress updates and feedback with the student so that they can take responsibility for learning. Effective communication of these updates and feedback is also necessary in contact with parents, fellow teachers and other educational institutions.

## Our Practice

### Our assessment tools

- Observation both by monitoring tools within the faculty and in the context of teaching and learning with direct exchange with and feedback for the students. One formal tool exemplifying this is the oral participation grade component in years 5 – 10 in both systems, a mandatory element in German grading regulations, which necessitates continuous exchange and reflection involving student and teacher.
- Marking written and oral (languages) work, with reference to IB guidelines and consisting of written teacher feedback and the grade in the context of IB criteria
- Timed written tests structured in a timetable allocating slots to each subject
- Formal examinations in the full IB format at the end of IB1 and in the winter of IB2 (mock exams)
- Formal feedback in interim reports in the Atlantis school administration system (see timetable below)

### Transparency of assessment

Every teacher at Schule Schloss Salem, in both the German and the international systems, is expected to be able to justify the grade that is given for each piece of work that is assessed and the mark given at the end of each grading period (Blitzlicht)<sup>1</sup> or semester. To this end and in compliance with German law, teachers are required to provide their classes with information regarding how grades are constructed at the beginning of each course. This process also entails increasing familiarity with the IB grading criteria as an integral part of IB learning.

Through the two years of the IB Diploma, semester reports are issued for the two semesters of Year 11 (IB1) and the first semester of Year 12 (IB2). All IB semester grades apart for Group 6 subjects have two substantial timed in-class tests as per the centrally issued timetable of written tests as a key component.

For the fourth semester, the semester report is replaced by the actual results issued on July 6 of every exam session.

### Record keeping

Teachers are required to keep detailed records of student assessment, thus allowing both teachers and students to track development and attainment, set targets and analyse strengths and weaknesses over time. Again, in the context of German school law, a student can ask for their current status at any time.

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<sup>1</sup> A *Blitzlicht* (flashlight in its literal translation) is a brief interim report

### IAs and moderation

Internal assignments are created in close reference to IB guidelines regulating the nature and extent of teacher instruction and feedback. They are introduced in a staged sequence with corresponding internal deadlines to prevent overload. Missing deadlines is followed up by a system of catch-up sessions, warnings and binding adjusted deadlines for groups or individuals. It has to be realized that non-submission of an IA constitutes a failing condition and continuously missing teacher-set deadlines or the first internal deadlines in IB1 can be a factor in not being allowed to proceed from IB1 to IB2.

Subject teams moderate IA grades in-school before upload; 'single' subject teachers in a given session implement a moderation process with experienced colleagues momentarily not teaching a course, or colleagues in neighbouring IB schools with whom we maintain professional exchange (such as cluster workshops et cet.). For this important process subject teams can choose one of two half-days when they are relieved of other duties in order to meet, discuss, arrive at moderated grades and document the moderation.

In some areas, joint assessment has become the standard practice, e.g. TOK exhibitions are always graded by at least two TOK colleagues.

### Reporting to colleagues

The assessment and feedback cycle involves regular conferences attended by both academic and pastoral staff discussing the respective interim reports. These conferences enable both positive trends and problem cases to be identified. Students concerned can then be supported through appropriate measures agreed with House tutors, teachers and school management/Coordinators as appropriate.

### Reporting to parents

Parents receive all interim reports after the respective conference, sometimes including additional communication, suggestions and measures. As a point of principle, however, the school does not offer any system of constant parental access to online grade monitoring.

## **The assessment and reporting cycle**

### **Years 5-10**

- **Blitzlicht 1** – only for major subjects - teacher comments, grade optional (October)
- Parents Meeting (Elternkaffee): parent-teacher talks (mid-end October).
- Teachers Conference: discussion of individual student progress
- **Blitzlicht 2** – teacher comments, grade mandatory
- Parents Day (Elterntag): parent-teacher talks (before Christmas)
- Major Teachers Conference: mentors and class teachers only (early December).

- Blitzlicht 3 – Half-Year Report – grades only.
- Half-year conference – subject teachers only – to confirm half-year grades (end January)
- Classteacher and Mentor mid-year reports (detailed assessment and description of student progress)
- Blitzlicht 4 – comments and grades (before Easter)
- Parents Day (Elterntag): parent-teacher talks
- General Teachers Conferences: discussion of individual student progress
- Blitzlicht 5 – Final Report – grades only (early July)
- Report conference – subject teachers only – to confirm final grades (early July)
- Mentor end-of-year reports (detailed assessment and description of student progress).

### **The reporting cycle in the Diploma Programme**

#### **IB1**

- Blitzlicht 1 with teacher comments, grades where possible (October)
- Autumn Parents Day (Elternkaffee, early November)
- Blitzlicht 2 with teacher comments, grades and conference (December)
- Blitzlicht 3 Semester Report with short House tutor's report and conference (January)
- Spring Parents Day (Elternkaffee, February)
- Blitzlicht 4 with teacher comments, grades and conference (April)
- Blitzlicht 5 Semester Report with House tutor's report, conference and decision regarding progression to IB2 in cases of less than 24 points and/or other significant failing conditions (July)

#### **IB2**

- Autumn Parents Day (Elternkaffee, early November)
- Blitzlicht 1 with teacher comments, grades and conference (end of November)
- Blitzlicht 2 and Semester Report and conference (end of January)
- Spring Parents Day (Elternkaffee, February)
- Feedback to parents about problematic mock exam results (March)

In both years, individualized high-frequency reporting patterns are in operation for students struggling for whatever reason to realize their potential.

Parents' meetings take place in November upon return from the autumn half-term and over a full weekend between the end of February and the middle of March. In special circumstances meetings are also arranged outside this normal cycle. An important element in such meetings is the exploration of alternative pathways such as certificates should the

full Diploma leading to direct university access overtax the student, while their aims can be achieved through foundation courses or similar.

*Policy to be updated annually by the Executive, the Director of Studies' Team, the Heads of Boarding, the Subject Team Leaders, the teaching faculty for the subsequent session*