

## Answers to your questions in regards to the Mittelstufe (7-10)

Thank you for taking the time to study our presentations and for your good questions. We hope to answer most of them in these pages, and at the same time ask for your patience and “faith in the process” if you do not find a specific question answered. We ask that you focus your attention on the upcoming school year for your child. Please note that all school decisions are dependent on available teaching hours and thus subject to change.

Special thanks to the Parent Council for having collected, sorted and answered the questions which came up after the information presentations were posted. For clarity we have combined and summarized similar questions.

### Sections ABC versus DEF

The school philosophy of JFKS is to combine the strengths of the German and American educational traditions to support bilingualism and biculturalism. The two languages are treated with equal respect and incorporate the essentials of the German and American school curricula. **For this reason, no preference or choice will be given to the placement/division of students in classes (A-F).** ABC classes include D1/D2 students. DEF classes include D1/D2/D3/D4 students.

Homeroom groups stay together for 7/8 and are remixed for 9/10. **There is no guarantee** that a student will go from ABC to DEF or vice versa when homerooms are reassigned. Parents have absolutely no possibility to choose the homeroom group of the grade level nor the teacher of a subject class.

The balance of classes taught in German and English is dependent on staffing and scheduling. It changes every year and can never be guaranteed.

- How does the placement of the classes “abc” or “def” affect the chances of qualifying for the Abitur?
  - Students of all classes can qualify for the Abitur if they meet the necessary requirements.
- Are you guaranteed a switch to "abc" in 9th grade if you were “def” in 7th grade so that you at least have a chance at a mostly German instruction if you want to apply for the Abitur in 11th grade?
  - No, there is no guarantee for a switch. It depends on the distribution of students, which is different every school year.
- Can we choose whether the homeroom class is predominantly English (d,e,f) or German/English (a,b,c)?
  - No, students and parents have no choice of homerooms or sections.
- Is it random if my child is placed in group 7a-c or 7d-f?
  - Yes, the placement from Elementary School to High School in the different homerooms and sections is completely random. Administration follows certain requirements (equal distribution of genders, distribution of foreign language choices etc....)
- Will children with a D1 or D2 level of German be placed in the sections a, b or c?
  - Students with the language level D1 or D2 will be placed in the sections a - f.

- ❑ What are the differences between sections a, b and c in grade 7 in terms of how much German instruction or subjects taught in German they receive?
  - ❑ This depends on the teaching hours and varies every school year.

## Homeroom (only for 7th grade)

- ❑ How many hours of instruction per week does the homeroom teacher do for any given section? Is there a minimum of hours, i.e. does he teach one of the main subjects to ensure they really get to know their class well?
  - ❑ The homeroom teachers are selected depending on available teaching hours. It can be a core subject teacher, but also a subject taught for only one hour a week.
- ❑ What subjects are taught in the homeroom hour in 7th grade?
  - ❑ There is no given program for the “homeroom hour”. Teachers can use them for activities, method teaching, social support, organisational work etc.

## Mother tongue and partner tongue

Students in the German beginner’s program usually follow a course of four years (D4 to D3All) until they then reach the level of D2. Exceptional changing of German or English levels has to be applied for by the parents and is only possible (and will only be approved) in certain circumstances as an exception.

- ❑ A student is in the German Mother tongue track and wants to do the Abitur - is it possible for him to switch to "D2" and have German as his partner tongue and still make the Abitur?
  - ❑ Changes from D1 to D2 are usually not possible.
- ❑ There is no mention of double mother tongue in the transition infos. Is there anything we need to know? Will the programme continue?
  - ❑ There is no specific double mother tongue program in high school. Students are simply placed in mother tongue English (E1) and German (D1) classes.
- ❑ Wann ist der letzte Zeitpunkt, um aus dem DMT-Programm “auszusteigen” (Wechsel von D1 zurück nach D2 oder E1 zurück nach E2)?
  - ❑ In der Highschool gibt es kein DMT-Programm.

## Foreign languages

For the Abitur, students must take a single foreign language (French or Spanish) from 7th through 10th grade or through the 12th grade if the language was not started until the 8th grade (French, Spanish or Latin).

There are no possibilities at JFKS to start studying a new language after 8th grade or to join one of the language programs as a side entry.

- ❑ My child is receiving instruction in a foreign language (not French, Spanish, Latin) at home. Can we submit proof of study or take a test, to reduce his foreign language study requirements at JFKS or for the Abitur?
  - ❑ No, this is not possible.
- ❑ What language exchanges/trips/additional activities do the different foreign language departments do?
  - ❑ Please see the information on the homepage of the JFKS (->academics ->departments)
- ❑ If my child decides for French now, can he switch to Spanish within the first two weeks of 7th grade (or vice versa)?
  - ❑ Changes of languages and/or electives can be made within the first week of school - not later!
- ❑ If my child takes Spanish now, will he be able to continue Spanish until the Oberstufe? What are the possibilities in Oberstufe in terms of Spanish Leistungskurs, Grundkurs or Spanish as an AP class?
  - ❑ In the Oberstufe JFKS usually offers Grundkurs and Leistungskurs for languages. AP class is integrated in those courses. However, there is no guarantee for the Leistungskurs in the foreign languages - it depends on the number of students selecting this class.
- ❑ What are the different ways my child can study two additional languages and still fulfill the Abitur requirements? Is it possible to start with one, switch to Latin, and then switch back to the first one?
  - ❑ A student can take a third language starting in 7th grade and a fourth language as an elective starting in 8th grade.
  - ❑ The foreign languages have to be taken consistently. No switching back is allowed.
- ❑ Can you choose freely between Spanish and French in 7th grade? Are you guaranteed a spot in Spanish or French if you chose it?
  - ❑ In 7th grade you are guaranteed a spot in your chosen Spanish or French class. However, it is possible that in 8th grade a language elective class will not be offered if too few students sign up for it.
- ❑ Handelt es sich an der JFKS bei dem "Latinum-Vermerk" nach der 12. Klasse um das Große oder das Kleine Latinum?
  - ❑ Seit 1979 ist in einigen deutschen Ländern das Latinum („KMK-Latinum“, eine Vereinbarung der deutschen Kultusministerkonferenz) an Stelle des früher üblichen „großen“ oder „kleinen“ Latinums getreten.
- ❑ If a student is not at the D2 level in 8th or 9th grade, he's not going to be allowed to continue with Spanish in 9th grade? And if he's not allowed to continue with it, he's not on the Abitur track?
  - ❑ If a student is not D2 yet in 8th grade, but is aiming for the Abitur-Level, he has to take a foreign language as an elective and continue with this course through 12th grade. The student has to reach D2 level at the end of 10th grade in order to qualify for the Abitur.
- ❑ My child took French in 7th and 8th grade. She aims for the German Abitur but does not wish to continue with French. Does she have to choose between Spanish and Latin for the next two or four years instead?
  - ❑ Your child will have to continue with French until the end of 10th grade. At this point it is too late to start a new language and achieve the Abitur requirements.

## Mathematics (only for 9th and 10th grade)

Starting in grade 9, the math level is divided in honors and regular Math. The differentiation takes place within the class and mainly during written tests. Honors math is one of the requirements for the Abitur and is recommended for Diploma students planning to take AP Math/ Physics classes.

- ❑ What grade is it decided whether children can take honors math which is a requirement for Abitur?
  - ❑ Teachers Recommendations will be given at the end of 8th grade. Regardless of this recommendation parents may make the final decision.
- ❑ Was bedeutet Mathe "Honors" Niveau?
  - ❑ "Honors" ist Mathematik auf gymnasialem Niveau, welches Voraussetzung für die Zulassung zum Abitur ist. Ebenso wird empfohlen das Honors Niveau zu wählen, wenn ein AP Mathe oder Physik Kurs angestrebt wird.
- ❑ What are the requirements to be enrolled in Honors Math?
  - ❑ If a student in 8th grade has a Math grade better than a 3-, Math teachers will recommend him/her for Math Honors. With a grade between a 3- and a 4 Math teachers may recommend the regular program or the honors program. Students who are signed up for the honors level without the recommendation should be aware that extra effort will be needed to meet the requirements.
- ❑ Please could you explain /stress to parents again the difference between Math Honors and Regular. Especially if the students who aim to make the Abitur have to take on the Honors course, even if they are not as good in maths.
  - ❑ Yes, students aiming for the Abitur have to take the honors level. The differentiation between the two levels will be evident in the complexity and difficulty of the critical thinking problems that happen during class. Both levels will be taught in one class at the same time. The honors and regular tests will be different for certain problems.
- ❑ Are classes d,e and f taking honors math classes or do they automatically take standard math?
  - ❑ All classes (a - f) are mixed and treated equally and prepare students for the Abitur and the High School Diploma alike. Math honors level is a requirement for the Abitur and is recommended for High School Diploma students who plan to take AP classes in Math and Physics in 11th and 12th grade.

## Social studies

- ❑ Why does 7th grade maintain Social Studies as a subject as opposed to transitioning into the separate subjects of history, geography, politics?
  - ❑ The four subjects ethics, geography, history and politics are all taught in 7th grade (as in later grades). The report cards will list separate grades for these four subjects. But they are team-taught in a flexible manner.

## Electives

- ❑ Which teachers teach which elective for 8th grade elective? (please make a list of the electives and which teachers do each one).
  - ❑ Every year electives are taught by different teachers. This can be in English or German. Electives should be chosen out of interest and not for a teacher or because of the language the elective is taught in.
- ❑ Who is the elective LOS! for? Is it primarily kids who are struggling, or for all kids? Which kids would this elective be a good match for?
  - ❑ The elective "LOS" is for all students but could be a great match for students especially looking to improve "hands on" life skills. As this is the first run of this elective, the program is still flexible and will depend on the students' interests and their motivation.
- ❑ Is there a follow up planned for the elective 'LOS' the year after?
  - ❑ This depends on the reception and success of the elective. After the first year there will be an evaluation before the decision.
- ❑ Wird "Drama/Darstellendes Spiel" ab der 8. Klasse NUR als Elective angeboten oder kann man es auch als „Activity“ o.ä. belegen? Hintergrund: Unser Kind würde gern als Elective eine 2. Fremdsprache wählen, aber zusätzlich Theater an der Schule spielen.
  - ❑ Bitte erkundigen Sie sich zu Beginn des Schuljahres auf der Website der JFKS bezüglich der Arbeitsgemeinschaften.
- ❑ Is it possible to choose computer science as an activity when going for the German Abitur?
  - ❑ No, computer science is only available for Diploma students as an alternative to the core language class. Computer science in 9th grade is not one of the regular electives but is instead one of the substitutes available for those who did not start a core language (French or Spanish) in 7th grade.
- ❑ Are 9th graders who are not taking a third language required to take either AP Chemistry (is this in English?) or Computer Science? Is there a third option such as a second non-language elective or an independent study?
  - ❑ Yes, for 9th graders the only options available in the time block used for third languages (French or Spanish started in 7th grade) are those listed: AP Prep (not AP Chem!) or Computer Science. These courses are taught in English.
  - ❑ All students also choose an elective, which can be a language (if continued from 8th grade) or a non-language elective.
  - ❑ Independent study is not an option.
- ❑ If you choose Spanish and in 8th grade Latin as foreign languages, is it still possible to take a drama (or other non-language) elective?
  - ❑ No, if you are aiming for the "Latinum", Latin is the only elective you can choose in all grades.
- ❑ How many electives can one choose?
  - ❑ Students can choose one elective per school year. No changes are possible during the school year.
- ❑ Can my child add Informatik as a non language elective with a view to making it an additional Prüfungsfach, even though he is studying Spanish as his third language as an elective in order to qualify for the Abitur?
  - ❑ Unfortunately, in this very unique case, your child would have to stay with the Spanish elective in order to fulfill the Abitur requirements. He will then have to choose a different Prüfungsfach than Informatik.

- My child is currently taking Latin and wants to continue with it. At the same time, she wants to take the Mathe/Physik Elective because she plans to choose Physik as a Leistungsfach later. Is there any way she can do both Latin and Mathe/Physik Elective?
  - No, all electives are taught during the same hours; each student can only select a single elective.

## Musical ensembles

Middle school ensembles (band, choir, and orchestra) are for 7-8 students. High school ensembles (band, choir, and orchestra) are for 9-12 students. These groups are independent of the required music classes for each grade.

- How often, how long and which days of the week do middle school ensembles meet?
  - MS band and orchestra meet Tuesday and Friday from 15:05-15:50.
  - MS choir meets two days a week during 6th period.
- How often, how long and which days of the week do high school ensembles meet?
  - HS band, choir, and orchestra meet three times per week. Twice during 6th period and once during 10th period (15:55-16:40).
- Are musical ensembles in addition to a required music course?
  - Yes. Participating is voluntary unlike the required music classes of each grade.
  - MS ensembles are ungraded.
  - HS ensembles are graded and count towards the HS GPA and Abitur score.
- Can you choose to participate in one of the music ensembles if you also take a foreign language?
  - Yes. In most cases, playing in a music ensemble does not conflict with other course choices.
- Is the "symphonische Blasorchester" full orchestra with strings or just "blasinstrumente"? Is there a full orchestra offered as an after school activity?
  - The orchestras are made of only strings. However, the HS orchestra frequently uses select members of the band for Symphonic Orchestra pieces.
- My daughter in 7b is playing the flute (Querflöte) since roughly a year (she is playing the recorder at a high standard since quite a while). Will that be fine for the Blasorchester?
  - The flute (Querflöte) is an instrument used in the band (Blasorchester). The recorder (Blockflöte) is not.

## Religion classes

Religion is an optional extra class offered (in German or English, by the Protestant or Catholic churches but not other religions) during 6th period (lunch hour). The class might interfere with other optional classes meeting during this time (for example music ensemble classes or extracurricular activities).

Ethics is a regular subject taught in 7th through 10th grade as part of the standard social studies curriculum.

- ❑ When does religion instruction typically take place?
  - ❑ Religion classes are taught in 6th period (lunch time). After the class the students have about 20 minutes to eat lunch after the class.
- ❑ Wird auch jüdischer Religionsunterricht angeboten?
  - ❑ Zur Zeit gibt es keine Lehrkraft an der JFKS, die jüdischen Religionsunterricht anbietet.
- ❑ Mit welchen anderen Fächern oder Aktivitäten könnte sich der Religionsunterricht überschneiden?
  - ❑ In der 6. Stunde finden üblicherweise noch musikalische Ensembles und andere Arbeitsgemeinschaften statt.
- ❑ Is religion a mandatory or voluntary class starting 7th grade? What happens if you choose not to participate in religion anymore?
  - ❑ Religion is a voluntary class. You can choose to join or cancel the class only at the beginning of the year or at the semester - but communication about this with the teacher and the Mittelstufenkoordinatorin is important.

## Abitur or Diploma

Please understand that on the slides for the grades 7-10 you can just find an overview for the Abitur and HS Diploma program. More specific answers can be found on the information slides for the transition from 10th to 11th grade Abitur and/or High School Diploma

- ❑ Is the HS Diploma included in the Abitur program?
  - ❑ Students in the Abitur track may also receive the High School Diploma if they fulfill the specific course and credit requirements.
- ❑ Can my child be transferred from the Abitur program to the Diploma Program and therefore learn subjects in English and German as a language?
  - ❑ Although students entering 9th grade are asked to choose which track they are in, there is no big difference in their study plans in 9th and 10th grade; some subjects are taught in English, and some in German. Students make a final decision when registering for 11th grade. Abitur students will be taught almost exclusively in German for 11th and 12th grades, while HS Diploma students will be taught almost exclusively in English.

## Special needs

- ❑ My child receives accommodations / Nachteilsausgleich as a special needs student with 'sonderpädagogische Förderstatus'. What can my child expect in High School?
  - ❑ Support hours for students with sonderpädagogische Förderstatus are assigned according to the individual need as specified by the SIBUZ and according to availability of teacher hours - not necessarily filled by a teacher with special needs experience. This is in accordance with Berlin inclusion practices.
  - ❑ Teachers are informed by the counseling office/admin about their students with special learning needs and accommodations (whether sopäd status,

dyslexia, ADHD or illness) at the beginning of the school year, or during the year if a new status is assigned or there is a change.

- ❑ The bilingual program at JFKS is rigorous and requires a high degree of independence. Haus Reil, support staff, and administration work with students to promote self-advocacy and encourage positive communication between students, teachers, and parents.

## Registration process

All documents for registration can be found on the JFKS website at [jfks.de/students/transition-information](http://jfks.de/students/transition-information).

- ❑ Warum gibt es keine Online Veranstaltung, also eine Live- Präsentation mit Erklärung für die Eltern, bei der anschließend auch Fragen direkt gestellt werden können?
  - ❑ Es gibt Live-Veranstaltungen für die großen Wechsel von den Klassen 6 nach 7 und 10 nach 11. Informationen finden Sie im regelmäßigen Friday-Newsletter der Schule.
- ❑ Can I send the registration to the secretary as a scanned document digitally?
  - ❑ No, all registration sheets have to be sent as an original copy to the HS secretary.
- ❑ Do we receive a confirmation from JFKS that the registration form was received and the child is registered for 7th grade?
  - ❑ No, you don't get a confirmation.
- ❑ Wir spielen mit dem Gedanken die Klasse aufgrund der aktuellen Schulsituation freiwillig zu wiederholen. Füllen wir das Formular trotzdem entsprechend der ursprünglichen Möglichkeit erst einmal so aus und bis wann dürfen wir uns die Möglichkeit der Anmeldung für eine freiwilligen Wiederholung offen halten?
  - ❑ Berlin hat noch keine Regelung zur freiwilligen Wiederholung veröffentlicht. Bitte setzen Sie sich zwecks eines Beratungsgesprächs mit Ms. Krull und Fr. Simons sobald wie möglich (noch vor der Frist am 19.3.) zu einem Beratungsgespräch in Verbindung.

