

Phorms Berlin Mitte

Secondary School Manual

2022-2023



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WELCOME

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Phorms Berlin Mitte Secondary School.

I would like to warmly welcome you and your child to our academic session 2022-2023.

With this manual, we would like to give you a guide to our Secondary School. We hope to answer your questions around organisational matters and general information concerning our school.

After two academic years that were impacted by the pandemic, we hope that, as well as offering regular face-to-face teaching, we can once again build up our extra-curricular programme. We are very much looking forward to after-school activities, school events, project days or class trips.

Please read through this manual carefully. If you have any queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me or another member of our school team.

I look forward to working together with you to achieve the best possible educational outcome for your child.

Wishing you all a great start to the academic year!

Warm regards,
Jana Stölting
Head of Campus

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Advisory lesson

From Year 7 to Year 12 there is a class teacher/tutor period every week on Mondays after lunch. During this time, the students can clarify any pedagogical or organisational issues with their advisory teacher or tutor. The topics that are typically covered in these periods range from planning trips and projects to problems in certain subjects to talking about disagreements or conflicts between students.

After-school activities

It is our aim to offer additional extra-curricular activities and courses that build on the students' interests and are appropriate to their personal development. We strongly encourage students to become involved and try out new things. In the second week of school students will be able to sign up for the afterschool clubs. The actual program will start in the third week of term. We will adhere to the current hygiene regulations at all times.

Assembly

An assembly is more than just a gathering of students and teachers in one room. With our assemblies, which take place every week and on special occasions, we aim to strengthen our school community because of their focus on appreciation, respect and recognition. With due regard to the relevant hygiene regulations, we will try once again this year to meet regularly as a school community.

Bicycles/scooters

We encourage our students to cycle to school. Students are requested to lock their bikes in our bicycle storage facility in the first courtyard. Scooters should be stored on the shelves assigned for scooters in the depot area. Students should be especially careful and considerate when using these storage areas.

Cafeteria

Students can register with our catering service "*Drei Köche*" or they can bring their own food from home. Our cafeteria offers a wide selection of food and drinks. Students can eat their lunch together in the Multi-Purpose-Room (MPR), which has been specially designed for this purpose. A water dispenser is also available to our students and can be used in the breaks to refill water bottles. The students themselves are responsible for keeping the MPR clean and tidy.

Class teachers' meeting

A class teachers' meeting is a meeting in which the different subject teachers of a class come together to discuss in a way that is pedagogically supportive the level of assistance needed by individual students in the class. Alternatively, the teachers may discuss and vote on disciplinary measures where the student has been in breach of our behaviour guidelines.

Careers counseling in Y7-10

On Boys' Day and Girls' Day, which takes place nationwide on one day in the End of April, our students can get to know various jobs and professions. We encourage all of our students to take advantage of this offer. For further information, please visit: www.girls-day.de and www.boys-day.de. In Year 10, students take a two-week work placement after the October holidays. The aim of this work placement is to enable students to get to know the world of work and to broaden their horizons. Students must choose their own company and organize their own placement; this is part of the learning process.

Committees

Participation and democracy are important in school. For this reason, the elected parents' representatives meet on a regular basis. At these meetings, any issues concerning the school that are of importance to the parents can be discussed with the Head of Secondary School and the Deputies. Teachers meet once a week to exchange ideas and experience concerning their teaching, the school and the students. Our class representatives also hold a general meeting on a weekly basis to discuss issues relevant to the students. Representatives of all committees meet three or four times a year in a school conference to provide feedback about the issues raised and experience shared in their areas, to canvass opinion on different topics and to take on new ideas.

Communication

If there are queries or problems concerning teaching, parents and students are requested to turn first of all to the relevant subject teacher and then – where necessary – to the advisory teacher. That way a solution to the problem can usually be found quickly. Of course, the Head of Secondary and/or Deputy can be involved in a subsequent step, if necessary.

Digital Years 10 and 11

All students in Y10 and Y11 are given their own convertible laptop (laptop and tablet in one). It is our aim to strengthen cooperative and individualised learning by using apps that support these processes. We want to develop new teaching standards for digital learning in school on the basis of the experience we have gained from online and hybrid classes. It is our long-term aim to transfer the know-how we acquire in this pilot project to other year groups in the school.

Digitalisation

In the past two years we have learned a great deal about digitalisation and are now very well prepared for face-to-face, hybrid or online classes. At the beginning of the academic year, each student is given the Office 365 suite and a Phorms email address with which s/he has access to MS Teams and a variety of apps. MS Teams is not only the basis for communication between the class and their class teacher or subject teachers, but is also the platform we use for digital teaching.

Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

Despite the more difficult conditions that prevailed during the previous academic year, our first students on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme persevered and carried on with the program. The program helps in particular to develop social skills. New students are warmly invited to join this year, too.

Electives

Starting this academic year, we have expanded the range of electives on offer to Year 9. In addition to courses that extend students in Music and Art, we are offering the subject Maths / ICT as well.

Homework

Homework is intended to support and consolidate the learning processes introduced in class or to serve as preparation for or as follow-up on what is covered in class. Homework is given at the discretion of the teachers. It may be assessed as part of the students' performance and can make up part of the student's overall grade. In general, homework is not given during the holidays unless the teacher decides to make an exception, e.g. the reading of a novel. Our agenda serves to ensure that our students in Years 7 to 10 learn to independently record and organise the process of their learning.

Leaving the school premises

Students in Years 7 to 10 are not allowed to leave the school premises during school hours. In the event of sickness, students must check out first with the teacher in charge and also with the school office. The school office will then notify the parents or guardians by telephone. During the lunch break, students may spend time either in the MPR, the library or the "school yard", namely the garden area by the church opposite the school building. It is not permitted for students in Years 7 to 10 to be anywhere other than these areas. This is to ensure that the school can meet the obligation to provide supervision.

Library and school textbooks

All Secondary School students are very welcome to visit the library during their lunch break, to read there in peace and to borrow books. The school textbooks that are handed out at the beginning of the academic year are also registered on a student's personal library account. That way students are accountable for any lost or damaged textbooks. School textbooks should be covered in paper. If textbooks are not returned in a good condition or are lost, they must be replaced by the student.

Lockers

Each Student is allocated a locker which can be used to store books and personal belongings. The lockers must be kept clean and tidy. Students should not share their locker codes.

Lost property

Lost property is kept in our lost property area in the Parents' Lounge. Any lost property items that have not been collected are donated to charity in February and at the end of the school year.

Students are strongly recommended to leave at home any valuables that are not required for classes. Students always have the obligation to look after their laptop.

Major tests (=Klassenarbeiten)

Major tests (=Klassenarbeiten) are used to monitor the level of development in the students' learning, performance and skills in the relevant academic year. The date of a class test must be announced no later than a week in advance. A clear indication of the areas of content that the class test will focus on must also be given at this time. Only one class test may be taken on a single day, and no more than three in a single week. The class tests must be signed by the parents. At the start of a half-year, a plan is drawn up in which all class tests and examinations are entered. This plan is sent to all parents.

If a student is sick on the day of a Klassenarbeit, a doctor's note must be presented to the school within three days of the student's return. Every Phorms student is required to make up for any major tests that they might have missed. In general, the date for a make-up test can be set at any time from the first day of the student's return.

Mobile phone policy

We want our students in Y7-10 to concentrate fully on studying. Therefore, the use of mobile phones is restricted. Students must place their phones in the bags available in every classroom. Mobile phones may be used if the teacher in charge deems it necessary for educational purposes. Mobile phones may be used by all students in our garden area during the lunch break. Our Year 11 and 12 students are requested to use their mobile phones in a responsible way during the school day.

Obligation to attend school

Starting this academic year, the obligation to attend school in person has been re-established. This obligation includes regular and punctual attendance at lessons and at compulsory events. Leave of absence for an important reason is possible if the parents/guardians inform the school in good time. Please contact the advisory teacher if you wish to apply for leave of absence of up to 3 days. If you wish to apply for leave of absence that is of more than 3 days' duration or that comes immediately before or after school holidays or public holidays, please contact the Head of Secondary School directly.

Religious holidays

Students who are members of any state-recognised religious community will be granted an exemption from lessons during the academic year on religious holidays - in order, for example, to attend a religious service - at the request of the parents and following approval by the Head of Secondary School. Parents are requested to inform class teachers in good time and in writing that they would like the student to be given such an exemption.

School events

School is about more than just attending classes. This is why school events provide an important opportunity to strengthen the school community, to become involved in the community and to do something for the community. For these reasons, we very much wish and expect that the students take part in and attend such school events (e.g. music evenings, fashion shows, discos, film evenings, summer fetes).

Student ID

At the beginning of the academic year, every student is given a student ID card, which is handed out by the advisory teachers in the first week. New students should hand in a passport photograph so a student ID card can be issued.

Student representation

The student representation body at Phorms represents the interests of all students, organises events, invites students to regular meetings and works constructively towards improving the atmosphere in the school.

Supporting students

We want to support our students. In Year 7, support in German, Maths and English is compulsory and built into the timetable. From Year 8, the teachers will invite specific students to take part in support. In addition to support in English, German, Maths, French and Spanish, we also offer a special lesson for academically strong students who are looking for an extra challenge.

Teaching cover

In general, for students in Y7-10 all lessons from the 1st to the 7th period are covered. In case a teacher is absent, they will provide materials for the students and another teacher will supervise the class. In Years 11 and 12, the students receive the work they have to do directly via MS Teams and then complete this work independently.

Teacher/counsellors and social workers

Every two years the students elect two teachers who are available as confidential counsellors if students have personal problems or problems in school. Since the 2021/22 session, we have also been supported by our social worker Mr. Leidinger, who runs preventative projects with the students and is also available to them as a confidential counsellor.

GUIDELINES ON BEHAVIOUR

Guiding principle

Let us deal with each other in such a way that everyone in our school community feels valued and respected.

General guidelines

We deal with everyone who takes part in the life of the school amicably and respectfully. And we treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated.

Physical violence and verbal abuse are not permitted anywhere on the school campus.

Everyone must adhere to the hygiene rules that are in force at any one time.

All students must come to every single teaching period on time.

It is not permitted to chew gum during lessons. During breaks snacks can be eaten in the classroom. This does not apply to the lunch break. Water may be drunk in the classroom discreetly and in moderation.

We expect all students to handle our technical equipment responsibly and only to visit those websites that are necessary for what is being taught in class. School property may not be damaged or destroyed.

Academic dishonesty (plagiarism and all forms of cheating) during tests, written examinations, presentations, homework and other forms of school work is not permitted. Such work will be given the grade “unsatisfactory”. Smartwatches and other mobile devices must be handed in during all types of exams/ tests and will be stored safely.

The wearing of hats, baseball caps, headphones, hoods etc. is not permitted in school.

Students may only use the lift if they have a lift pass. Such a pass can be issued by the school if a student has a health issue.

Clothing

We expect students to wear appropriate clothing.

Public displays of affection

Displays of affection on the premises of the school should be appropriate to the atmosphere of an educational institution attended by children who are as young as two years old and also families from different cultural backgrounds. Students are expected to show restraint and a sense of propriety.

Searches of lockers and/or personal possessions

Where there is just reason, lockers, bags and backpacks of students can be searched. Any such search will be carried out by the Head of School and, where possible in the presence of the relevant students and a further member of the teaching staff.

Smoking/alcohol/drugs

Students are not permitted to smoke or to consume alcohol or drugs on or in the vicinity of the school premises or on school trips or at school events. Students who are found breaking this rule have to expect consequences, which may include a termination of the school contract. The school will support students who exhibit signs of substance abuse or who seek advice. However, the legal responsibility for this rests with the parents/guardians.

Disciplinary measures

Where these guidelines on behaviour are breached, teachers can adopt various disciplinary measures depending on the seriousness of the breach, the student's age and whether this is a repeat offence. For example,

- a reprimand
- re-seating the student in the classroom
- a one-to-one conversation
- additional tasks or tasks of general benefit to the school community (preferably, cleaning the classroom)
- informing the parents
- requiring the student to reflect on their own behaviour in a piece of written work to be completed at home
- detention during the lunch break with the student reflecting on their own behaviour in writing
- confiscating items that are not permitted
- conversation with the Head of Secondary School
- summoning the parents to the school

Regulatory measures

In case disciplinary measures have not led to a resolution of the problem or conflict or have no prospect of success, regulatory measures can be adopted as long as they observe the principle of reasonableness if the student's behaviour impairs the proper teaching and educational work of the school or puts at risk other persons who take part in the life of the school.

Repeated absence from classes without permission will also be seen as a sustained impairment of the proper teaching and educational work of the school.

CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL DAY

Our school curriculum follows the core curriculum of the Federal State of Berlin for Years 7 to 12. It is our aim to prepare students in the best possible way for the secondary school certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss, MSA*) and the Abitur.

Approximately 50 per cent of subjects in our bilingual Secondary School are taught in English. Spanish and French are offered as a second foreign language from Y7 onwards.

Timetable

The school day begins at 8.30 am and generally finishes at 14.55 for Y7 to Y10. From Y10 onwards Sports may be scheduled in period 0, starting from 7.45am. In Y11 and 12 students receive individual timetables according to their course choice. Classes might then range from 7.40 to 17.25.

The school day consists of 45-minute periods, some of which take place as blocks (double periods).

Although we all hope to have as much normality as possible in this academic year, we want to ensure from the outset that, if possible, not too many students are present in one room for any length of time. Therefore, we will continue to have staggered lunch breaks. The 45-minute lunch break for Years 7 and 8 begins at 11.45, and for Years 9 and 10 at 12.30. Years 11 and 12 students can take their lunch break on an individual basis depending on their timetable.

SCHOOL REPORTS AND ASSESSMENT

Performance evaluation

Students' performance is evaluated according to the following 6-stage grading system:

1	very good	a piece of work that meets the standard required to an exceptional extent
2	good	a piece of work that fully meets the standard required
3	satisfactory	a piece of work that, in general, meets the standard required
4	adequate	a piece of work that has shortcomings but overall still meets the standard required
5	poor	a piece of work that does not meet the standard required but which nevertheless indicates that the necessary basic knowledge is in place and that the shortcomings can be eradicated in the foreseeable future
6	unsatisfactory	a piece of work that does not meet the standard required and in which even the necessary basic knowledge is absent so that the shortcomings cannot be eradicated in the foreseeable future.

In Years 11 and 12 the grades are refined to create a scale of 15 grades:

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
very good (+)	15	satisfactory (-)	7
very good	14	adequate (+)	6
very good (-)	13	adequate	5
good (+)	12	adequate (-)	4
good	11	poor (+)	3
good (-)	10	poor	2
satisfactory (+)	9	poor (-)	1
satisfactory	8	unsatisfactory	0

School reports

School reports are issued twice a year: at the end of the first term and at the end of the full academic year. In addition, there are two interim reports in secondary school (November and March). This ensures that the level of each individual student's development can be recorded every three months.

EVENTS

Class trips and excursions

In consultation with parents' representatives, class teachers organise trips for the students. The focus of these class trips is not only team-building but also improving foreign language skills and widening cultural experience.

In addition to class trips, outings and excursions are organised as well. The focus of these one-day activities is to build on work done in class, to do team-building and to learn to interact with nature and the environment. It is expected of all students that they take part in class trips and outings. These activities are part of our academic programme and constitute a decisive part of empirical learning. The school rules apply on all class trips. Where class trips involve overnight stays, parents and students sign a form to this effect.

Further information events

Important information events at our Secondary School are:

- Information evening about Year 11 and 12 / courses choice
- Information evening for Primary School parents regarding the transfer of their children to our Secondary school
- Information evening about the secondary school certificate (MSA)

Open House

Two Open Days are organised to inform parents about our school and to give them an insight into day-to-day life here.

Parent teacher interviews

Parent teacher interviews take place in Autumn and Spring. On these occasions, parents can speak with individual teachers about the academic and personal development of their child. All students finish school early on those days.

In addition, further meetings can be agreed at the request of either parents or teachers in order to discuss the progress of individual students. Parents who would like such an additional meeting are requested to make an appointment with the relevant subject teacher.

ABSENCES

We expect all our students to attend classes regularly. This is in accordance with the Education Act which states that attendance at school is compulsory for students up to the age of 16. Poor attendance has an impact on the academic career of students. Students who miss a significant number of days at school can run the risk of having to repeat the academic year. It should also be pointed out that lengthy leave of absence outside of vacation times can impact negatively on the entire academic career of a student. It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on work that they miss during their absence. Students in Years 11 and 12, if they have decided to attend school beyond the general statutory obligation to do so, are subject to the same obligation to attend school as they are up to Y10.

An accumulation of late arrivals is regarded as absence without permission. Absence without permission – even for one period – is recorded in the school report.

Absence from class due to sickness

If your child is unable to come to school for health reasons, please inform the advisory teacher or tutor **and** the secretary's office (secondary.berlin-mitte@phorms.de, or 030/ 467 986 303). Where a student is unable to attend due to sickness, we also require written notification. From the 3rd day of absence, students are required to provide a doctor's note. These written notes must be handed in on time to the advisory teacher/tutor. In case a student misses an exam (=Klassenarbeit, Klausur, MSA, Abitur) their absence must be excused with a doctor's note from the very first day of absence. Students will then be given the opportunity to re-sit the exam.

The students themselves are responsible for catching up on what they have missed in class and on any homework. The teachers and other students in the class will help students with this.

Leave of absence from class for an important reason

Students and/or parents/guardians should not plan absences immediately before or after the school holidays unless this is an important exception and cannot be delayed. An early start to a holiday or a late return from holiday do not constitute such an exceptional case.

Regular attendance is necessary and important for a successful school career. Every absence for which a valid excuse is not presented in time is regarded as an absence without permission.

An application for leave of absence should be submitted to the Head of Secondary School two weeks before the planned absence. The application should contain information about the reason for and the duration of the period of absence. The Head of Secondary School will make the decision about whether to approve the application. Please use the relevant templates for such an application. They are available for download on our website or in the secretary's office.

The students must arrange with their teachers in advance how they will make up test and examination appointments that they will miss due to their absence.

Performance evaluation for absence without permission

If work is not done because the student was absent without permission, the work that has not been done will be given an "unsatisfactory" grade.

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