

Cirriculum

Of:

The Danish School of Washington, DC

The Danish School of Washington D.C. offers a curriculum based on teaching students "Everyday Danish" (hverdagsdansk). The students who attend the school come with varying Danish language background: at one end of the spectrum, some students come with very limited Danish background and may not currently be speaking Danish in the home; at the other end, a number of our students speak Danish at home on a daily basis and may have some ability to read and write in Danish.

With this mix of students, The Danish School plans and teaches using a curriculum structure, which seeks to incorporate students at their own particular level of proficiency, and takes advantage of the opportunity for students to act as peer role models in a positive classroom atmosphere where students assist in teaching each other. Using the immersion method of language instruction, which is highly appropriate when working with young children, most communication in the classroom takes place in Danish.

The curriculum is designed around themes. These may revolve around Danish culture and society, focusing on topic such as history, the royal family, geography, and traditions. Or we may focus on practical aspects of everyday situations such as telling time, asking and giving directions, shopping, counting and understanding money and currency. For the younger classes, teaching basic literacy (such as Danish alphabet based activities) is also essential. In this sense, teaching "Everyday Danish" means that we focus on comprehension as well as oral and written production of the language, anchored in a practical perspective.

At The Danish School of Washington, D.C. we also seek to create an environment where children share a common interest in Denmark as well as Danish language and culture; together enhance their Danish identity; and where students learn to collaborate and listen and help each other. Students plan for and celebrate major Danish traditions together, contributing to their sense of belonging to and learning in a Danish community. We aim to insure that all students, regardless of proficiency, experience progress during each school year. To accomplish this goal, and because individual levels of ability vary, our teachers at times ask students to do differing kinds of work both in and out of the classroom.

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Based on the curriculum offered at The Danish School of Washington, D.C., a student who starts in Class 1 and continues through Class 4 should exit the school able to comfortably carry a conversation in Danish, read a basic Danish text (such as a magazine or tabloid newspaper article), and write basic Danish (such as a letter to a relative). Our teachers incorporate some "school Danish" (Skoledansk), especially for advanced students, however students and families who desire a curriculum strictly based on teaching "School Danish" (skoledansk) at the level taught in the Danish Folkeskole are encouraged to investigate organizations such as Danes Worldwide.

A close school-home connection is essential to the success of all students, especially in regard to students whose Danish language is fairly limited. We ask that families with students in The Danish School play an active role in their children's active Danish language development. Interacting and reading in Danish will help the students increase their vocabulary base, so they more quickly become comfortable in the classroom environment, where they can better participate in conversations and discussions. Teachers will assist families in this process by sending home activities or ideas for integrating classroom learning into conversations at home. At times, students may be asked to complete writing, vocabulary work or reading at home. At all class levels, teaching strategies focus on active and involved learning. Teachers bring groups outside during all seasons for appropriate activities and play, and cultural traditions are taught by letting the children experience and participate in them. Field trips may be planned for individual classes when relevant and may require parent assistance and chaperones.