

Charles Dickens Europe School Berlin

**Parents' Guide
2014/15**

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Dear Parents,

I should like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family to the bilingual English German Charles Dickens Europe School. We are delighted to welcome you as parents and as partners in the education of your child.

To facilitate its bilingual school concept, the parents of Charles Dickens School support their children through the Dickens-Förderkreis which plays a major role in the primary school life. The aim of the school is to do all we can to ensure that your child gets the best education as well as to make the most of his or her own talents and abilities, embedded in a bilingual multicultural environment.

This booklet has been designed to help you to gain a broad understanding of the many facets of our Europe School. I also hope that it will be of help to those who have no experience of the German educational system.

We have tried to give you an outline both of curriculum matters as well as of administrative details, and hope that you will find the Parents' Guide useful.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further help or advice.

Yours sincerely

Frank Effenberger
Headteacher
Charles Dickens School

1 School history

Charles Dickens School was founded in 1972 as a pure German Grundschule. In 1992 it became one of Berlin's innovative Europe schools. These schools offer free bilingual education; i.e. schooling in German and, in the case of our school, English. The partner languages originally selected were English, Russian and French. Every year since then, new children have entered the Europe Schools and so the original schools have grown. The number of schools involved in the project has also grown, new languages have been introduced and Europe schools have been set up in all areas of the city.

2 School organisation / Aim of school

The aim of our Europe School is **to teach German and English speaking children together** at the same time. Ideally classes are made up of 50 per cent German and 50 per cent English mother-tongue children. The English mother-tongue teachers contribute not only their skills in their subject areas but also a feeling for the language and culture of their homeland.

Children learn to read and write in their mother-tongue language group (MT). Children continue to develop their partner-tongue (PT) through games, stories and creative activities. Children learn to read and write in the partner-tongue during their second year at school.



State Europe Schools are “all day schools” with **compulsory attendance from 8.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.** (“gebundene Ganztagschule”), so is the Charles-Dickens-School.

There are presently 460 children on the roll of Charles Dickens School, organised in classes ranging from Year 1 to Year 6.

The school is split into two parts: A pure German part with one class in each year group (approximately 170 pupils); and a Europe part with two classes in each year group (approximately 290 pupils). In the Europe part of the school class size does not exceed 24 pupils.

Children are placed in a class according to their age and ability. Each class has a designated class room and **two class teachers** (one English, one German) with whom they usually remain for two academic years. These teachers are responsible for the curriculum work in English and German as well as history, art and science, and sometimes other subjects too. Often individual subject teachers come to the classes for mathematics, sports and art. The organisation of the teachers depends on the school's needs each year.

Each class also has a German speaking **classroom assistant (Erzieher)**. The Erzieher have had an at least three year's training in education and some have also a degree in teaching. Their task is to foster and support the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of the children. They support the children with given work outside teaching lessons and do indoor and outdoor activities, ranging from playing games to project work.

All classes elect an **English and a German parent representative** and a deputy. Their task is to be the bridge between parents and teachers, help organise class events and help where problems occur. About every second month all the parent representatives meet in the evening with the school head teacher and deputy to discuss problems and ongoing projects.

You find the organisation chart of our school on the website: www.charles-dickens-gs.de (click 'School ABC', then 'Organigram')

3 Dickens Parents' Association / Dickens-Förderkreis

The Dickens-Förderkreis was set up 19 years ago, upon the initiative of parents wishing to promote and expand upon the bilingual concept of the Charles Dickens Europe School. The Committee members are voted-in on a yearly basis and work on a voluntary basis. The Dickens-Förderkreis is financed by the parents and has become, over the years, not only an integral part of the Europe School concept but also an important part of the "all-day school". English native speakers are organised and paid by the Dickens-Förderkreis. They support and complement the work of both the teachers and assistants and facilitate the exposure and practice of the English language after lessons, in a more recreational atmosphere. The Dickens-Förderkreis also employs two librarians and gives significant financial support to the well-stocked English library, which is the mainstay for English lessons. It offers research opportunities for teachers and pupils and of course plenty of leisure-time reading books.

Your membership is essential for the bilingual education and to live the idea of the Europe School. For more information and the membership form, see: www.dickens-foerderkreis.org and the Attachment 1: "DICKENS Parents' Association"

4 How to get to the school

If you take your child to school by public transport, you have the following options:

- a) Take the **bus M 49** and exit either at Heerstraße/Flatowallee or at Heerstraße/Ragniter Allee.
- b) Take the **S-Bahn S5** to Olympiastadion or Pichelsberg.

Children need to have a **valid transport ticket** from the age of six. To get a monthly ticket for the Berlin transport companies you'll need to prove the child's identity by showing a Berlin pupil's ID ("**Schülerausweis**") which you can get from the school office in House I. Please bring a child's passport photo.

An alternative to a car ride is the bike ride when you live in a reachable distance. The school provides two bicycle stands. In year 4 the children will be thoroughly taught in road safety whilst bike riding and aim for a certificate.

5 The School Day

Mornings:

The school has two entrances: HeerstraÙe and Dickensweg. The entrance at **HeerstraÙe** is open between 7:00 and 8:10 a.m. The main gate at **Dickensweg** is open from 6:00 a.m. until the school closes. Please ensure your **child arrives at his/her classroom by 7:50 a.m.** each day, so that classes can start punctually at 8:00 a.m. We encourage the children to act more and more independently and walk on their own to their class rooms. **On Friday mornings** you'll have the chance to bring your child to the class room and have a look at the news board next to it.

Lessons	8:00 – 8:45 am 8:45 – 9:30 am
First Break Breakfast	9:30 – 9:45 am 9:45 – 10:00 am
Lessons	10:00 – 10:45 am 10:45 – 11:30 am
Lunch Break*	11:30 – 12:30 pm
Lessons	12:30 – 1:15 pm 1:15 – 2:00 pm
Afternoon Break*	2:00 – 2:20 pm
Lessons / Leisure time*	2:20 – 3:05 pm 3:05 – 3:50 pm

*Native Speakers offer a wide range of activities from sports to cooking during leisure time.

Afternoons:

After school, in addition to Dickensweg, the entrance at HeerstraÙe is open between 3:45 and 4:15 p.m. On Fridays your child can be picked up between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Please use the attached form to let the Erzieher know about your contact details and the pick-up procedure.

Attachment 2: "Freizeitbereich der gebundenen Ganztagschule"

6 Change to regular pick-up procedure

Please inform your class teacher and Erzieher if your (Year 1 or 2) child is being picked up by someone else or goes home with a friend. Written authorization will be required (Vollmacht) to avoid misunderstandings. Please address your note to the child's class teacher or Erzieher either in the "Mitteilungsheft" or on a separate sheet of paper.

7 After-school care

If you need **extra childcare after 4:00 pm**, you can enter into an agreement with the local authorities for after-school care services (Spät-Hort), which runs until 6:00 pm or in the early morning between 6:00 and 7:30 a.m. (Früh-Hort).

Your pre- or after-school care needs can be discussed with any of the Erzieher. The forms that you will require to enter into an appropriate contract are available at the main office or at the Bezirksamt.

Also for the school holidays you can arrange a holiday care. Here the Charles-Dickens-School works together with the Waldgrundschule in Eichkamp. Look at our web site www.charles-dickens-gs.de (click 'School ABC', then 'Holiday Supervision') to see when the "Ferienhort" at which school is open.

8 Absences

If your child is unable to attend school for any reason please inform us initially by telephone (main office – Frau Loka) or call into the classroom **on the first day of absence**. In addition to this we need to have a **written explanation** for our records when he/she returns back to school.

9 Late arrivals

Please ensure your child arrives at his/her classroom by 7:50 a.m. each day, so that classes can start punctually at 8:00 a.m. Parents have a legal duty to have their children in school by 8:00 a.m. every day. Persistent lateness has a significant impact not only on the child's academic performance but also on the whole class and will be noted in reports.



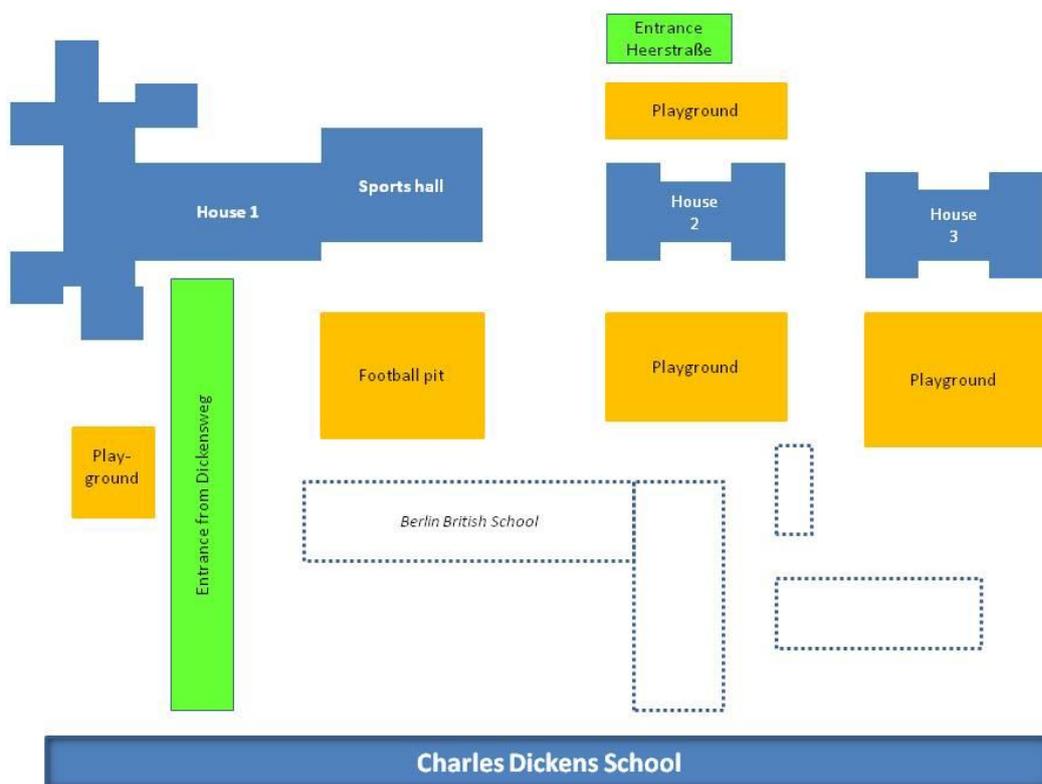
10 Change of address/telephone numbers

Parents are requested to inform the secretary's office, the class teacher/Erzieher and your Parent Representatives if there is a change of address, telephone number, e-mail address or any other details on the school records. Accurate records (particularly in relation to medical details and emergency contacts) are most important when urgent contact with parents is necessary.

Please make sure that also your child has your telephone numbers in the school bag, e.g. in the "Mitteilungsheft".

11 School facilities

There are 18 classrooms for the six academic years. In the Europe part of the school there are additional rooms for English lessons when the classes are split in mother-tongue groups. The school area includes three buildings.



House 1		Europe classes
	Ground floor	Assembly hall, English and German library, kitchen, sports hall, ICT room, lost property station
	First floor	Secretary, head teacher and staff room
	Basement	Art and Science room
House 2	Ground floor	Canteen and dining rooms
	First floor	Rooms for leisure time care ("Hort")
House 3	Ground floor	Europe classes, rooms for religious education
	First and second floor	Classes of the German part of Charles Dickens School, ICT room

The outside area offers much space for running and playing games between and after lessons. It includes a football pit, playground, a sandpit and a ropeway. A Garden of the Senses, maintained by classes of year 4, invites children to explore different types of grounds and herbs.

12 Lunch time and snacks

The children can bring either lunch packs from home or have a hot school lunch. Both are eaten in the canteen. Hot school lunches are provided by an **outside caterer** (currently GREENs unlimited). To participate you have to make a contract with the caterer. Parents' contribution is **€ 37 per month**, 12 months a year. 30 % of the total price is subsidised by the state of Berlin. If a child chooses not to eat a hot meal on one day or another there is no refund. The children can



choose between two menus. The choice can be made on the day. School lunches are eaten between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. At 09:45 a.m. each class has a **healthy breakfast** which you will have to provide, for example a sandwich, a piece of fruit and a drink. In the afternoon the children will probably need another snack as school lasts until 4:00 pm.

For more information about the caterer GREENs unlimited and the weekly menu, see: www.greens-unlimited.de.

Attachment 3: Contract with GREENs unlimited

13 Curriculum

The whole curriculum is based on the German curriculum and a special English curriculum designed for the Europe schools. In addition our school offers a variety of cross-curricular themes and topics as vehicles for carrying the whole curriculum. These themes cross traditional subject boundaries and provide opportunities for reading, writing, studying the environment, learning songs and producing craft work. This is a stimulating and exciting way for the children both to learn and to accustom themselves to the use of two languages.

English

English lessons are based on a curriculum specially designed for the Europe school, based on the national curriculum in UK and taught by native English speakers.

The aim is that by Year 9 both the mother-tongue (MT) and partner-tongue (PT) pupils have reached the MT level, and are taught together from then on.

The school has adopted the **Oxford Reading Tree (ORT)** as its core reading scheme and is supplied with the complete range of the ORT material. The children are also given the opportunity to broaden their reading horizons by being introduced to a range of children's fiction.

Much weight is given by the National Curriculum to the development of speaking and listening skills, and this is reflected in the school's work. The children learn how to describe, discuss, report, explain, instruct and seek information. In writing, the children are introduced to a number of writing skills such as stories, instructions, reports, notes, opinions, poems and facts. Weekly spelling tests are also performed.



German

German lessons are based on the national curriculum in Berlin.

In Year 1 the English MT children are introduced to German as their partner language, purely orally, through play and creative activities. In Year 2 the children learn to read and write German in a structured way. Tests in spelling or dictations - and later essays - are introduced from Year 3 onwards.

The aim is that in Year 9 both the MT and PT pupils will have reached the MT level and are taught together from there on.

French

French is introduced as a foreign language in Year 5 with five lessons a week. It is taught based on the German curriculum and uses the same book series as is used in the secondary education. Regular spelling and grammar tests are conducted.

Science/Geography/History/Environmental Studies

In Year 1 – 4 Science is taught within Topics in English. Topics consist of a variety of subjects which are used as a common denominator to teach Art and Craft, Music and Physical Education based on the German curriculum.

In Year 5 Science is introduced for four hours a week and comprises different facets based on the German and English curriculum. It covers aspects of Physics, Chemistry and Biology, with supportive use of varied experiments.

In Year 5 Geography and History are also introduced. Both subjects are taught in English and are based on the German curriculum.

Mathematics

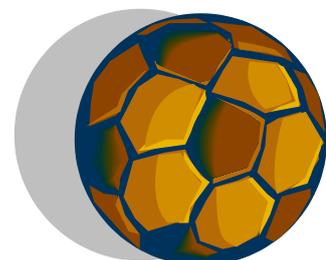
Mathematics is **taught in German**. It follows the German curriculum. German books and materials are used. In Year 1 and 2 the children work with exercise books but problem solving is done orally.

Swimming lessons

In **Year 3** all children receive swimming lessons. The children are picked up by bus and go with their swimming teachers to the swimming pool (currently Stadtbad Charlottenburg). The children are divided into groups depending on their ability, starting from non-swimmers. Swimming lessons last approximately 45 minutes. You'll get detailed information about swimming lessons at the beginning of Year 3.

Physical education

The pupils have two hours of PE a week which is usually taught in German. The PE kit should include: Trainers, PE trousers and a T-shirt, according to where PE lessons take place, either in the well-equipped sports hall or outside. Each year the school organises



competitions like the Dickens-Mile (spring), Charlie's Run (late summer), ball tournament (December) and other athletics competitions. Some children will have the chance to represent the school in, for example, football tournaments or swimming competitions.

Religious Education / Ethics (Lebenskunde)

With the child's registration at our school you had decided in which religion course your child will be taught, either **Protestant** or **Catholic** religion. All children, independent of their religious denomination and ideology, are welcome to take part in this instruction. Lessons are held once a week for two hours and are integrated into the school's timetable. The church is in charge of the curriculum which revolves around discussion of religious, social, ethical and ideological topics.

Ethics is also an option at our school. Ethics is a meaning and value-orientated course encompassing aspects of all religions. The human rights-based instruction upholds the cultural diversity of our school's population. During discussions of philosophical questions and social and scientific phenomena, children are encouraged to think critically and develop their own opinions.

All these lessons are taught in German. A change to another group is possible after a consultation.

14 Marking/Reports

Marking is done in the German way with a **1 as the top mark** and a **6 as the lowest mark**.

In German, English and French marks are apportioned equally for written work, spelling tests, comprehension and oral work.

End of year reports in Year 1 and 2 comprise a written assessment of your child. After the first term, you'll be informed about your child's performance in a parent-teacher conference. At the beginning of Year 3 the parents can choose, collectively, whether or not their children should receive a written report or a report with marks. Years 4, 5 and 6 receive reports with marks. Then reports are written twice a year at the end of each term (February and June/July).

Together with the report you'll get a separate information concerning behaviour and attitude ("Information über Arbeits- und Sozialverhalten"). You are asked to sign both reports to indicate that you have seen them. Your child then shows the signed reports at school and brings them back home again to remain in your property.

15 Homework

As the school is an "all day school" all work including homework should be done at school. Nevertheless in the lower classes there will be reading homework, exercising for spelling tests and practising the time tables. In Years 5 and 6 the amount of "homework" may increase especially with repeating and preparation for class tests. Sometimes project work needs a bit of parental help, too.

16 School books

In Berlin parents must provide the school books and material for their children. These become more expensive each year and many of the English books maybe difficult to purchase in Germany. In addition some of the work material is only available in multi-packs.



The Charles Dickens Primary School has a well established and successful school book fund (Lernmittelfonds - LMF) with around 90% of the children participating each year. The purpose of the school book fund is to provide school books and materials based on a lending system and the headteacher strongly encourages you to participate.

Participation is voluntary. Parents fill in a participation form and pay an annual fee. The books are handed to the children at the beginning of the school year and must be returned at the end of the school year. Any books not returned must be replaced or paid for. In addition all new participants must pay a one off security deposit. Providing the books have been returned punctually this is paid out in full when the participation is withdrawn or when the child leaves the school.

The teachers prefer the children to leave the books at school. However the books and material are for your child's individual educational purpose and may be taken home to finish off school work or for revision.

To participate, please read attachment 4 and fill in the participation form. On the school website www.charles-dickens-gs (click 'School ABC', then 'Book Fund') you can download more information, the terms and conditions as well as a participation form. The book list is also available with prices shown for orientation purposes. Should you have any questions or need more information please email the school book fund organiser at cdgs-lmf@gmx.de or ask the school secretary to do this for you.

17 Materials

All materials for the school e.g. note-books, pencils etc have to be provided by the parents. In the lower classes the teacher might ask parents for money to buy note-books for the whole class. At the beginning of each academic year the children will be given a **list of materials** that will be needed in school.

18 Library

The English-German library is open to all pupils and their families. It is run by the Dickens Parents' Association (English librarians) and volunteering parents. Books are mostly donated or bought with donated money, for example from the Book Week. The children visit the library once a week within a language lesson. They may borrow English and German books for one week but can renew the books by calling in if they haven't finished them. Please ensure that the books are returned on time otherwise.

19 School clubs

All clubs provided by commercial providers charge a fee.

- Computers: www.computer-bildung-berlin.de
- Drama: www.die-theaterei-berlin.de
- Judo: www.kaizen-berlin.de
- Football: Dutch Football School
- Pottery: Rezi
- Sewing: Slawa Jones
- Dancing: Ariane Lips
- Choir: Enya Noelte
- Music: Musikschule Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf: www.ms-cw.de
Internationale Musikschule Berlin: www.ims-berlin.de
Musikschule Fröhlich (melodika/accordion): www.musikschule-froehlich.de/jaekel

For other free time activities, see our website: www.charles-dickens-gs.de (click 'School ABC', then 'Free time activities'). Note the free-of-charge activities provided by the English native speakers. If you want your child take part of any of these clubs or other activities, please speak to the Erzieher of the class.

20 Class day trips



Children will go with their class teachers and Erzieher on a variety of class day trips in a term. The aims of the trips are to broaden the children's education and to strengthen the class camaraderie. Trips might include a visit to the opera, to a museum or ice-skating. The trips usually have to be paid for by the parents. To keep the cost of travelling on the public transport low you will be asked whether your child will join the class Travel Ticket which is valid for the whole academic year and currently costs 8 Euros.

21 Overnight class trips

It is up to the class teacher whether or not the class goes on an overnight trip. Younger classes usually go on a 3 day trip (2 nights) to a small resort on the outskirts of Berlin, later another trip is usually offered for 5 days (4 nights) a bit further away but reachable within two hours. Costs will be kept to a minimum, and parents can in certain circumstances ask for assistance. If you do not want your child to participate in one of these trips he or she can be placed in one of the other classes without a problem.

22 School uniform

German schools in general do not have school uniforms. However our school offers a hooded sweatshirt, a T-shirt and a Polo-shirt with the school logo which can be ordered. We encourage our pupils to wear it, especially on school trips. Have a look at the range we offer and order it using the order form on our website: www.charles-dickens-gs.de (click 'School ABC', then 'School shirts').

23 Secondary Education

In year 6 your child will get a recommendation from Charles Dickens School – depending on the performance - as to which school he or she should attend, either a “Gymnasium” or a “Integrierte Sekundarschule”. After 6 years in the Europe Primary school pupils can continue the Europe School education at secondary level.

The following options are presently available:

- **Schiller Gymnasium** - the equivalent to a British Grammar School - which takes the pupils up to a bilingual “Abitur” after 12 years (A-Level).
- **Peter Ustinov School** which goes up to year 10 (“Mittlerer Schulabschluss” GCSE) with the option for an “Abitur” after 3 additional years.

At the beginning of year 5 you’ll be thoroughly informed about this procedure.



24 School declaration for pupils, teachers and parents

In Charles Dickens Primary School three groups of people pursue a common goal. **Pupils, teachers and parents work together** to make the phase of growing up and learning in school a healthy, cheerful, enriching and promising time in the children’s lives.

Each of these three groups takes responsibilities in achieving this goal.

- ➔ The most important responsibility of the teachers and Erzieher is to educate the children. This involves designing instruction that is varied, rich and stimulating, as well as providing guidance in becoming independent.
- ➔ The most important responsibility of the parents is to raise their children in a way that develops their ability and willingness to live with other people in accordance with generally accepted rules of behaviour.
- ➔ The most important responsibility of the pupils is to pay attention in school and give their best, so that they can learn successfully and be part of a cheerful class community.

As a reminder of these obligations and goals, teachers, parents and pupils of Charles Dickens Primary School sign the Home-School-Agreement (attachment 5).

This is not a law but a declaration of intent designed to enable and accompany a trusting co-operation over many years.

25 School Rules

Charles Dickens Primary School is a place where many different children and adults spend a lot of time with each other. If we are to be happy here, we need to have rules for us all to follow.

General Rules

- The school entrance halls are opened at 7.30 a.m. We go to our classrooms at 7.50 a.m.
- We enter and leave the school grounds through the gates on Dickensweg or Heerstraße.
- We do not leave the school grounds during school hours (except for school outings).
- We keep our school clean and put rubbish in the bins.
- We treat the school's and other people's property with care.
- All electronic devices (including mobile telephones) are switched off and put away during school hours.
- We do not bring dangerous items to school.
- We leave the school grounds at the end of the school day.

Behaviour in the classrooms

In the classrooms class rules apply. In other rooms we follow the rules displayed there. We pay attention to the school bell. A teacher or educator (Erzieher) starts and ends the lessons.

- We open windows in the tipped position only.
- We eat breakfast together in the classroom.
- During rain breaks (signalled by school bell), we stay in the classroom.

Behaviour in the school building

- We walk quietly and calmly through the school building.
- We do not play ball or throw things inside school buildings.
- We do not crowd, jostle or push past other people in doorways.
- We keep the toilets clean.

Behaviour in the school grounds

- We spend breaks outside on the playground (exception: rain breaks).
- If we see others in danger, we tell an adult immediately.
- We treat the plants and animals in our school grounds with care. We do not climb the trees.
- We do not throw stones, sticks, acorns, snowballs, etc.
- Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, Heelys and inline skates are left at the bicycle stands and are not to be used on the school grounds.
- When the bell rings at the end of break, we go straight to the classroom without jostling.

Notes for Parents

- Parents are not allowed to drive cars into the school grounds, including the teachers' car park (exception: deliveries to the school).
- Parents bringing or collecting children at Dickensweg are asked not to let them walk through the teachers' car park (danger!).
- Parents should not drive or park on the pavement and should show consideration for other road users when stopping and manoeuvring.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the school grounds or buildings.

26 Contact details

School Head: Frank Effenberger **Deputy Head:** Ralf Müller

School office: Secretary: Christiane Loka

Phone: 030-303 2868 0

From abroad: 0049 30 30328680

Fax: 030-303 2868 19

Erzieher coordinator: Herr Jankowski

Emergency calls between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.: 0157-8471 3788

by E-mail: verwaltung@charles-dickens-gs.de

by Post to: Charles-Dickens-Grundschule
Dickensweg 15
14055 Berlin
Germany

More information: www.charles-dickens-gs.de