



HEAD/ PEDAGOGICAL DIRECTOR

Candidate Information

INTRODUCTION

The Head / Pedagogical Director is outstanding opportunity for an experienced and dynamic leader to lead teaching and learning, as well as the day-to-day running, of a thriving Kindergarten of 110 pupils in a high-achieving, academically focused school. Set in a prime Düsseldorf location, the Kindergarten feeds the ISR Elementary School in Neuss (and, from next year, ISR's new campus in Düsseldorf). The successful candidate will thrive in a proprietorial, fast-moving and exciting environment where high expectations and standards are the norm.

ISR International School on the Rhine is very distinctive among European international schools. Within an inclusive and holistic education environment, it focuses strongly and boldly on academic achievement and preparing students for admission to top universities worldwide. ISR aims to produce multilingual students who have excellent academic results, are equipped with critical thinking and logical reasoning skills, and have a love of learning and a commitment to being active and responsible global citizens – ‘We enable great minds and strong characters’ is the guiding principle at ISR.

ISR unashamedly takes the approach that ‘It’s cool to be good.’

ISR spares no effort to ensure that every student achieves their full potential. The school combines Cambridge curricula up to IGCSE with the IB Diploma Programme. German is taught throughout, and from Grade 6 onwards, students choose a third language from French, Spanish, Mandarin or Japanese. Across all its programmes, ISR's results are well above the German and global averages.

ISR is located at the heart of the Düsseldorf-Neuss-Meerbusch region of North Rhine-Westphalia, with its main 140,000 square metre campus in the picturesque and historic city of Neuss. There are Kindergartens in Düsseldorf and Meerbusch, and an Elementary School campus will open in Düsseldorf in 2026. The school has more than 1,000 students from 60 nationalities and 200 staff – giving a whole-school staff-to-student ratio of 6:1. ISR is committed to this size – big enough to support a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities, small enough for the connections and relationships that help students to thrive.

The Proprietor, Peter Soliman, operates ISR with a lean leadership structure, effective decision-making, a fast-paced environment and resources focused on the continued development of teaching and learning, professional development and outstanding facilities.

ISR bases its approach on three pillars: Embracing Traditional Values, Fostering Respect and Academic Excellence, and Educating Students with the Highest Standards. It is traditional in its focus on academic achievement and is ambitious for its students’ success. However, it is also a thoroughly modern international school with a thriving multilingual environment, technology across the school to support teaching and learning, a truly holistic programme and a laser-like focus on preparing students for university and for life.





THE SCHOOL

With three – soon to be four – campuses serving Düsseldorf, Neuss, Meerbusch and the surrounding areas, ISR's 1,200 students represent 60 different nationalities. About 54% of the students are German passport holders. It is an unusually stable international student community: in an international city such as Düsseldorf, there will be some turnover each year, but students stay at the school for an average of eight years, and it is not unusual for families to remain in the school all the way from Kindergarten to graduation. School buses serve communities within a very wide catchment, and the school also offers full care for all students from 07:30 to 17:45 to suit the needs of working parents. In these and many other ways, ISR sets out to foster a family environment and to offer a home from home.

Academic results at ISR are excellent. In the recent examination cycle, 60% of students taking IGCSE achieved an A or A*. IB DP scores are equally strong: 8% of students achieved 40+ points (compared to a global average of 3%), and 7% achieved more than 42 points. Students secure admissions to leading universities worldwide, including in Europe, the UK, the USA and Asia. Students wishing to continue to universities in Germany are able to do so by taking specified IB subjects and meeting other criteria; further courses are offered to meet the requirements for technical studies in subjects such as Mathematics, Engineering and Natural Sciences.

ISR is a truly multilingual environment. Students take English right the way through to Grade 12 and German up to at least Grade 10. They also take up a third language from Grade 6 onwards – currently Spanish, French, Mandarin or Japanese – and are able to gain relevant qualifications in these languages.

ISR offers a rich and varied extracurricular programme that aims to strengthen character and provide the best of a holistic education. It includes more than 90 extracurricular activities and a programme of engagement with the local community.

There is a strong focus on physical activities, taking advantage of the school's excellent sports facilities. Music and art lessons are available right across the school. There are two formal performances a year and many other performing opportunities, including an Arts Evening. The ISR Student Leadership Council is a place where students develop their leadership and organisational skills: they work their way up through the hierarchy of the organisation by proving themselves at lower levels and developing skills that will prepare them for the responsibilities of later life.

ISR invests heavily in its teaching staff, viewing high-quality teaching and motivated teachers as the key to its ambitions for academic achievement. The 6:1 staff-to-student ratio is an important part of this, and there is a structured system of substitute teachers to ensure continuity of teaching. This focus on teachers also ensures continuous educational support and weekly learning success measurements that enable progress to be monitored and interventions – including additional tutoring or booster lessons – to be put in place if necessary. Teachers are drawn from c.40 countries.

From 2026, ISR's new Elementary School campus will open in a historic building in a prominent part of Düsseldorf. This campus will feed into the Secondary School in Neuss, but it is anticipated that the overall student population in Neuss will remain at about 1,000.

ISR is recognised by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia as an international supplementary school (anerkannte internationale Ergänzungsschule). It is an accredited member of Cognia, a Cambridge Examinations Centre and an IB World School, and conducts College Board PSAT, DELE, and DELF examinations on site.

Mission

Our Mission is to promote intellectual curiosity, encourage students to strive for excellence and cultivate high moral standards that will guide them throughout their lives, ensuring that our graduates are well equipped and prepared for success in university and beyond.

At ISR, we firmly believe that pursuing knowledge extends beyond academic achievement. It encompasses the development of ethical, responsible, and compassionate individuals – with great minds and strong characters – who can contribute positively to our ISR Community and society.

Core Purpose

Our Core Purpose is to provide an outstanding education at a reasonable cost and help all students achieve their full potential.

Our Core Values contribute to reaching high efficiency and high standards. The values include:

- Practising honesty and integrity.
- Upholding our principles at all costs and at all times.
- Continually improving and never becoming complacent.
- Emphasising quality before profit.
- Making a difference.
- Recognising and rewarding efficiency, loyalty, and commitment.

ISR bases its approach on three pillars:

Our Culture: Embracing Traditional Values

At ISR, we uphold traditional values and believe that it is truly “Cool to be Good.” We hold hard work in high regard and value a strong work ethic. Performance is given importance, and at ISR, we stand for honesty, transparency, equal opportunities, loyalty, and excellence combined with humility, compassion, and integrity.

Behaviour and Discipline: Fostering Respect and Academic Excellence

Behaviour is a reflection of our values and culture. We emphasise discipline by adhering to school rules and maintaining a dress code that shows respect for our institution. Our traditional culture and values promote disciplined behaviour, which, in turn, cultivates respectful and studious students. This foundation of discipline contributes to academic excellence.

Partnership for Success: Educating Students with the Highest Standards

As educators, it is our responsibility, in partnership with parents, to uphold the highest standards for our students in all aspects. We continually strive for excellence in values, behaviour, and academics. The academic success of our students is built upon our culture, values, and behaviour. At ISR, we maintain that being good in all areas and aspects is truly cool.





ORGANISATION & LEADERSHIP

ISR was founded in 2003. The current owner has been visionary in shaping ISR since acquiring the school in 2013 to reflect his passion for education that is academically rigorous and prepares students for life. He is committed full-time to the school, taking responsibility for much of the operational and business leadership and delegating academic leadership to the School Director and other members of the leadership team.

The Senior Leadership Team is very effective: the owner has fostered a culture of rapid but strong decision-making – this is not an environment where decisions pass through countless committees. Members of the leadership team believe this is a key to the school's success: they are able to react to challenges and opportunities nimbly, and resource decisions are always informed by the potential benefit to teaching and learning.

DÜSSELDORF & NEUSS

ISR is at the heart of the two cities of Düsseldorf and Neuss, with campuses in each; the two cities are just a few minutes' drive apart. The school's catchment covers both cities and beyond, and teachers take advantage of living in a very wide range of neighbourhoods, with accommodation options to suit most preferences. Living is easy; one recent survey ranked Düsseldorf as the tenth most liveable city in the world.

Düsseldorf is Germany's sixth-largest city and is known for its internationality – 18% of its 650,000 population is international. It is the capital city of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and is now a major business and financial centre. It has become an increasingly important centre for the telecommunications sector, and this has driven an increase in tech companies basing themselves in the city. It is also the centre of the German fashion and advertising industries and is well-known as a location for international legal and consulting firms. Düsseldorf has always been an important hub for education and now hosts 22 higher education institutions.

Neuss is a smaller city (population: 160,000) that shares the title of Germany's oldest city. Neuss is famous for its Roman past, and there are important historical sites and buildings that date from throughout its 2,000 years of existence and highlight a fascinating urban history. Neuss is an attractive, charming town that offers an alternative for those who want more peaceful living away from the bustle of Düsseldorf.

Düsseldorf International Airport is 8 km north of the city centre. More than 70 airlines use the airport, serving 180 destinations on four continents. There is excellent local transport infrastructure, and Düsseldorf's railway station makes train travel to the rest of Germany and further afield in Europe very easy.





THE KINDERGARTEN

The international, English-speaking ISR Kindergarten in Düsseldorf Niederkassel is an integral part of the ISR group, and for many learners, it provides a seamless transition into the ISR Elementary School in Neuss (and, in the future, into ISR’s campus in Düsseldorf).

The Kindergarten cares for 110 boys and girls starting from age three. Inside the modern building, the children prepare in different age groups for elementary school; they spend their days in an enriching environment characterised by cultural diversity and an excellent kindergarten education, as well as loving and individual care and support.

Safeguarding and the general wellbeing of children are at the heart of the Kindergarten’s philosophy, and extensive literature on policies and process are available to staff and parents. These policies and processes inform a lived culture where every child is nurtured as an individual in a warm, secure and happy environment.

Children are engaged in various guided learning activities which focus on English and German language acquisition, as well as the development of numeracy skills. Additionally, ISR focuses on the development of physical coordination. Therefore, the programme includes Mindful and Motoric Movement sessions alongside an emphasis on the social and emotional development of the children to help them gain an awareness of their place in the natural world. The thematic approach and structured, age-appropriate programme ensure that an ISR Kindergarten education address all stages of the child’s emotional, physical and social growth.

ISR values children’s academic performance in addition to their social development. The Early Years Educators foster the development of the whole child. Children’s interactions with adults as well as their peers help promote their social, physical, emotional and intellectual development. Children are encouraged to express their feelings appropriately and to treat each other with respect.

The Kindergarten motto is: *We plant the seeds to enable great minds and strong characters.*

Kindergarten Mission

Our Mission at ISR Kindergarten is to prepare your child with the ability, curiosity and excitement for lifelong learning.

Kindergarten Goals

- To provide a safe environment that will support the optimal social and emotional learning as well as academic development of each child.
- To truly get to know your child and use this knowledge to guide, support and motivate him or her to grow and blossom by exploring his or her environment with enthusiasm.
- To deliver a kindergarten programme and educational approach designed to ensure each child develops at his or her individual pace.
- To generate an appreciation for differences as well as similarities in peoples from around the world.
- To nurture excitement for lifelong learning.
- To employ highly qualified Early Years Educators.
- To encourage and value parent partnership in order to give your child the most rewarding and joyous learning experience possible.

Example of a KG Daily Schedule Time Session

7:30-8:30	Early check-in / Extended Care
8:30-8:55	Start of the day with a morning snack
9:00-9:30	Session 1: Circle Time - time for greeting and planning out our day, e.g. Language and Early Literacy activities
9:30-10:15	Session 2: e.g. Numeracy activities
10:15-10:40	Playtime - outdoors
10:40-11:20	Session 3: e.g. German language and activities
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-1:00	Quiet Time
1:00-1:50	Playtime – outdoors
1:50-2:35	Session 4: e.g. Mindful Motoric Movement / Story time
2:35-2:45	Snack Time
2:45-3:15	Session 5: e.g. Music, Crafts or Art
3:15-4:00	Home time / Pick up time
4:00-6:00	Activities / Extended Day Care

Field trips are also an important part of the programme.

So, with the Extended Care arrangements for families who require it, the Kindergarten day runs from 7.30am to 6pm.

CAMPUS & FACILITIES

The Kindergarten opened in 2020 in a prime Düsseldorf location, and its facilities are excellent. It has a capacity of 110, across five rooms in premises specifically designed for the age group, with the distribution of learners across its three years varying from year to year and with flexibility to accommodate learners at different stages of development; both these points highlight the need for the leadership to be able to think and plan creatively.

Facilities elsewhere in the ISR family are outstanding and, in many respects, unmatched by any other international school in Germany.





THE ROLE

The Head /Pedagogical Director is titled to differentiate the role from that of the CEO, Jutta Soliman. Mrs Soliman focuses on operations, finance, marketing and admissions and other non-education areas, although it is expected that the Head / Pedagogical Director's work will cross over into these functions to ensure cohesive and secure leadership.

It will be crucial that the person coming into the role is comfortable working in a proprietorial environment, understands the balance of autonomy and accountability that entails, and will be able to form a very strong relationship with Mrs Soliman. The CEO and Head / Pedagogical Director will sometimes share an office, which will necessitate a relationship of trust.

ISR is seeking an Early Years specialist with maturity and commitment, a strong record of pedagogical leadership, and most likely with international experience (although candidates coming out of national systems, the UK in particular, may be appropriate if they can demonstrate the mindset and personality for a role in such an international environment). They should also be effective working with parents and align strongly and enthusiastically with the overall ethos of ISR, including 'It's Cool to be Good' and 'Great Minds - Strong Characters.'

The incoming Head / Pedagogical Director will need to be able to provide the sort of strong and clear leadership that will enable the Kindergarten to maintain and build its profile in Düsseldorf. This will be essential for admissions to the Kindergarten but has a further dimension: ISR has a strong profile in Düsseldorf and Neuss, but until its Düsseldorf campus opens, it is the Kindergarten that 'flies the flag' for ISR in the city. This will require the Kindergarten to have an increasingly strong public image and a Head / Pedagogical Director who is enthusiastic about engaging more widely in the community. When the Düsseldorf school opens, the new challenge will be to ensure that the Kindergarten can provide a seamless transition into both elementary schools.

The new Kindergarten Head / Pedagogical Director will, above all, subscribe to ISR's approach – the impactful idea that it's cool to be good. They will have a passion for supporting each child to achieve their very best and preparing them for a rich and fulfilling life in which they can make a difference. They will appreciate a fast-paced environment where the focus is always on teaching and learning. While the successful candidate will be a passionate educator, they will also have the commitment, enthusiasm and interest to contribute more widely to the school's leadership.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Overview

The Head / Pedagogical Director holds a senior leadership position and reports directly to the CEO. The Head / Pedagogical Director is responsible for the effective educational programme in the Kindergarten and leads the strategic direction in line with the whole-school vision and mission. The Pedagogical Director ensures that a high standard of educational instruction and learning is achieved.

Professional Responsibilities

Strategic Direction, Continuous Development and Implementation of Educational Programme

- Promote the mission and vision of ISR, with clear focus and purpose.
- Develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programme.
- Provide staff with support and guidance to implement the programme successfully.
- Manage change judiciously.

Governance of Instruction in Learning Environment

- Maintain an environment that ensures high standards of planning, organisation, educating, learning, behaviour and safety.
- Establish an effective partnership with parents to support, motivate and accompany children on their educational journey.

Leading and Management

- Determine the duties of all Early Years Educators and Assistants are fulfilled.
- Work with Human Resources to manage the recruitment of new staff members.
- Ensure systems are in place to monitor performance and review effectiveness.
- Develop open and honest relationships with staff, mentoring, holding workshops and/or seminars.
- Observe Early Years Educators in the Kindergarten groups and provide constructive feedback.
- Work closely with other members of the Leadership Team.
- Ensure compliance with local educational authorities and accrediting bodies.
- Adhere to the Child Safeguarding Policy.





PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience and Qualifications

- Applicants must hold a relevant degree in Early Years Education/ Child Development/Primary Education.
- Have a minimum of 4 years' proven leadership experience, ideally in international school settings.

Values and Attributes

- Be dedicated to delivering high-quality standard in education.
- Have commitment to collaboration and team-building.
- Demonstrate strong initiative and desire for innovation.
- Stay current with emerging educational developments.
- Be practised in operating within a culturally diverse environment.
- Be forward-looking and have a growth mindset.
- Possess excellent writing and verbal communication skills.
- Be thoughtful, considerate, intelligent and articulate.
- Be committed to an inclusive environment which serves the needs of every individual.
- Show energy and determination to set out, achieve and personify the aspirations and priorities of ISR, yet be pragmatic enough to adjust priorities when necessary.

- Be thoroughly cognisant of the Head/Pedagogical Director's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues and with a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.
- Be diplomatic, politically astute and able to forge and maintain good external relationships.
- Be a confident ambassador, able to work with a wide range of people.
- Be an excellent communicator in English, able to share the ISR vision with staff, pupils and parents.

REMUNERATION

ISR is committed to offering a very competitive package that reflects the seniority and importance of this role. The full remuneration package will be worked out with the successful candidate and may include accommodation and relocation support and coverage of school fees for dependant children attending the school.

APPLICATION PROCESS

This recruitment process is being managed by RSAcademics Ltd on behalf of ISR International School on the Rhine. Unless stated otherwise, all communication about the appointments will be conducted via RSAcademics.

Two members of the RSAcademics team are primarily engaged in this process:

- Chris Edwards, Senior Advisor
chrisedwards@rsacademics.com
- Jean Sullivan, Head of International Search
jeansullivan@rsacademics.com

Interested candidates are invited to contact Jean Sullivan by email for an initial confidential discussion and include a copy of your CV/résumé.

Closing date: Tuesday 21 October 2025 at 10:00 (UK) / 11:00 (Germany).

Preliminary interviews with RSAcademics may commence before the application deadline, and ISR reserves the right to appoint candidates in advance of the intended timeline; early applications are therefore encouraged.

You should submit:

- A completed application form.
- A copy of your curriculum vitae/resumé.
- A covering letter, preferably of no more than two pages, addressed to Eileen Lyons, School Director, ISR International School on the Rhine. The letter should explain your reasons for applying, the attractions of the role and the school, the relevance of your experience, and how you relate your educational philosophy and your experience to your understanding of the school and the role. Please make sure your letter is bespoke to this position; a generic letter may result in your application not being fully considered.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. Please apply at www.rsacademics.com via the Apply Now link accompanying the announcement of the position. You will be taken to an online portal where you will be able to download an application form. Please follow the instructions provided to complete and submit your application.

When you submit your application, you will receive an automated email from RSAcademics confirming that we have received it. If you have not received the automated email within two working days of submitting your application or if you have any other queries relating to uploading your application documents, please contact Alison Hooper, Project Coordinator, at applications@rsacademics.com. Alison can also be reached by calling +44 (0) 204 6269 791. The recruitment process will proceed as follows:

- Preliminary interviews with RSAcademics colleagues will commence during w/c 27 October 2025 (preliminary interviews may also take place before the application deadline).
- Longlist interviews are scheduled to take place by video call with members of the ISR team in the w/c 3 November 2025.
- Final-stage interviews will take place in the school w/c 10 November 2025.
- RSAcademics will collect references for candidates invited to attend the final-round interviews. No referees will be contacted until RSAcademics has received your express permission to do so.

RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools.

Founded in 2002 by Russell Speirs, RSAcademics has advised and supported over 700 schools and educational organisations in the UK and worldwide. Through our working partnerships with heads, leadership teams, boards, staff and parents, we specialise in supporting schools in five main areas: strategy, marketing and research; equality, diversity and inclusion; operational improvement; leadership and governance and philanthropy. We enable schools worldwide to thrive by finding and developing senior leaders, guiding decision makers, making connections and shaping debate. We are known for the calibre and spirit of our people. We exist entirely to serve schools because we believe that the world needs thriving schools.

Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information. RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.



Because the world needs schools to [thrive](#)

