



SWISS SEMESTER GmbH

2024

**PARENT AND STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

QUICK REFERENCE REMINDERS

Mailing Address: Student's Name
Swiss Semester
Postfach 136
3920 Zermatt
SWITZERLAND

Tentative Semester Calendar

September 12	LX #23 departs from New York (JFK Airport) at 7:25 p.m.
September 20—23	Hut overnights and Breithorn ascent
September 27—28	Overnight pass trip in Bernese Oberland
October 10—12	Trip to Strasbourg, France
October 25—27	Parents' Weekend
November 5—9	Trip to Venice, Italy
December 7—9	Semester exams
December 11	LX #22 arrives in New York (JFK) at 2:40 p.m.

Payment Dates

March 15	Half tuition
July 15	Balance of tuition

Not to be Forgotten

_____ Valid Passport (through 3/15/25)	_____ Desire to:	work hard
_____ Math text(s)		have fun
_____ Math calculator		observe carefully
_____ Foreign language text(s)		be thoughtful
_____ Parent and Student Handbook		give of yourself
_____ Broken-in hiking boots	_____ Up to date vaccinations	be responsible
_____ Arrive in good physical shape		try new things
		be supportive
		listen attentively
		be positive

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDENT LIFE

Clothing and Equipment	5-8
Discipline	10
Getting Ready	4
Laundry	8
Living Accommodations	5
Major Expectations and Rules	11
School/Home Communication	12
Student Mail and Telephoning	12

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Curriculum	13
Extracurricular Activities	13
In-Program Travel	14
Parent Visits	14
Transatlantic Travel	17

FINANCIAL

Billings	16
Health Care and Insurance	16
Personal Spending	15

QUICK REFERENCE REMINDERS

Address	Inside back cover
Not to be Forgotten	Inside back cover
Payment Dates	Inside back cover
Tentative Semester Calendar	Inside back cover

STUDENT LIFE

Getting Ready

To get the most of your Swiss Semester experience, it is important to be physically, mentally, and emotionally ready for Swiss Semester.

Be prepared:

- for academic, physical, and mental challenges** and for the pressures that are inherent in a program that strives to make the most of nearly endless opportunities
- to be sensitive to the needs and rights of others** and to understand the need for limitations upon some of your individual freedom
- to try** things, some of which may be unfamiliar and sometimes even uncomfortable
- to be polite, well-mannered, and considerate of others**
- to be trustworthy** and to be held responsible for your actions (and inactions); Swiss Semester presumes trustworthiness
- to give as well as to receive** (always GIVE your best effort!).

Be sure to arrive in good physical condition. The more physically fit you are when you arrive in Switzerland, the more you and your classmates will get out of (and enjoy!) the first weeks of the program. Prior conditioning also lessens the chance of an injury that might interfere with participation in many of the activities of Swiss Semester. Regular exercise to build endurance, flexibility, coordination, and strength is essential to the preparation for Swiss Semester.

Very good rock/ice climbing boots are readily available in Zermatt at school; however, proper hiking boots with ankle support (see following section on "Clothing and Equipment") should be found in the States; it is **highly desirable** that those boots be well broken-in before arriving in Zermatt. **Blisters**, by far the most common Swiss Semester injury, are not pleasant and can considerably detract from enjoyment of the first weeks of the program.

In addition, be sure to use the summer to **sharpen your biking skills**. Swiss Semester does some of its biking under conditions that require experience, concentration, and confidence. These are great opportunities to see other parts of Switzerland and maybe France.

With proper preparation (become familiar with the contents of this handbook!) and with a positive attitude, you are almost guaranteed to accomplish more than you ever thought possible, to grow in confidence and independence, and to have an extraordinary time in the process.

Swiss Semester can be, and likely will be, the "experience of a lifetime"; however, to make the semester that, **it requires enthusiasm, senses of adventure and humor, good judgment, thoughtfulness toward others, and high energy from everyone.**

Transatlantic Travel

Swiss Semester arranges for transatlantic flights from New York to Geneva and return. Due to favorable group fares, as well as the convenience, it is strongly recommended that students take advantage of these flights; the sense of family already begins at the airport in New York. Swiss Semester chaperones accompany the students to and from Geneva, and the cost includes this supervision on the flights, as well as transfer by chartered bus (and additional truck(s) for luggage) and train to and from Zermatt.

Swiss Semester has reservations with Swiss International Airlines, the Swiss national carrier. The eastbound flight (LX #23) departs JFK Airport in New York at 7:25 p.m. on Thursday, September 12. **Students should check in at Swiss International Airlines at least two and a half hours before flight time, allowing ample time for transfer between terminals.** The return flight (LX #22) is scheduled to arrive at JFK Airport at 2:40 p.m. on Thursday, December 11.

Students who do not accompany the group should meet the group at the Geneva Airport early on the morning of September 13. Accommodations in Zermatt are not available before Friday. It should be noted that it is about three and a half hours by train from Zurich or Geneva Airport to Zermatt; in each instance, at least one change of trains is required. Also, students not traveling with the group must have a return transatlantic ticket.

Students and their parents are reminded that the rules of Swiss Semester apply after check-in at the JFK Airport; smoking, vaping, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Realizing the importance of first impressions and that people, rightly or wrongly, make judgments about them, their families, country, and Swiss Semester in part based upon appearance, **students are expected to dress appropriately for their trip to Switzerland. Girls should travel in skirt, dress, or dress pants, and boys in sport jacket, slacks, and dress shirt and tie. Also, consideration of other people is of the utmost importance at Swiss Semester and no less so on the initial flight to Europe.**

Swiss International Airlines allows the free shipment of one checked piece of luggage, not to exceed 50 pounds or 63 inches combined linear dimensions (length + width + depth). Because of the amount of clothing, books, etc. that Swiss Semester students need for the semester, we have purchased one additional piece of checked luggage for each student with the same limitations as the first piece. Also, one piece of carry-on luggage, not to exceed 18 pounds or 22"x 16"x 9" dimension, is allowed. A further compelling reason to travel as light as possible is the limited closet/storage space in Zermatt and the expectation that all belongings be neatly stored. If parents are coming for Parents' Weekend, some thought should be given to exchanging some clothing—remember students will need one winter outfit early in the program.

Remember that all things that arrive in Zermatt (and get purchased in Europe) need to find their way back to the States (and postage is very expensive and time consuming, especially at the end of the program)!!

Billings

Half of the Swiss Semester tuition should reach Swiss Semester by March 15 and half by July 15. Since Swiss Semester incurs its financial obligations in advance of the semester, it must be assured of its income. Confirmation of enrollment, by payment of the \$1,000 deposit, entails an obligation to pay full tuition and room and board with no reduction for failure to attend, absence, dismissal, or withdrawal.

Payment can be made by the following methods:

- **Preferred method**—Bank transfer of Swiss francs to:
(account holder) Swiss Semester GmbH, Postfach 136, 3920 Zermatt, Switzerland
(IBAN number) CH67 0026 3263 1316 7601W
(bank) UBS AG, CH-Zermatt
(address) Bahnhofstrasse 45, 8001 Zurich, Switzerland
(swift code) UBSWCHZH80A
(for) Student Name
(bank telephone number) 011.41.27.966.9847
- Personal check in U.S. dollars made out to Swiss Semester GmbH. The check should reflect the bank exchange rate at the time the check is written. Note that the exchange rates for selling and buying a given currency are appreciably different. **U.S. dollars are converted to Swiss francs when credited to Swiss Semester's account and any balance due to exchange rate fluctuation will be debited or credited to the student's account.** To save time and reduce paperwork and correspondence, parents are asked to use currency exchange rates in such a way that tuition bills are slightly overpaid rather than underpaid (requiring an additional check or fund transfer). Any amount overpaid will be credited to the student's personal bank account and will be reflected in the acknowledgement of payment.

Health Care and Insurance

Health related information is required of all students and is acquired by means of a questionnaire sent to Swiss Semester families. Medical service in Switzerland is outstanding and hospital facilities are available in Visp, Brig, and Sierre. Doctors are always on call in Zermatt. Emergency transportation is available in and around Zermatt (ambulance and helicopter).

Swiss Semester GmbH provides health and accident insurance (not including emergency transportation if needed) for all students (with Sfr. 500 deductible). It is important that any additional health coverage be valid overseas. Payment for any medical expenses, other than those covered by the health and accident insurance policy, must be remitted upon receipt of an invoice and cannot await insurance claim settlement. In other words, bills need to be paid and brought back to the States for reimbursement from the parents' medical insurance carrier.

Living Accommodations

All students will be assigned at least one roommate. Students from the same school are not roomed together and changes of roommates are not permitted.

Students reside in hotels and/or apartment buildings. In general, each building has at least three faculty members in residence. Swiss Semester teachers serve as student advisors as well as residence supervisor/parent.

Swiss orderliness and cleanliness are known and appreciated the world over. It is a goal of Swiss Semester to do nothing to diminish this deserved reputation; that is, **students are expected to keep their rooms neat.** There are daily room inspections, and if a student is used to "leaving it for later," such a habit will have to change. Also, students are expected to treat hotel property with the utmost care and are held responsible for any damage or wear and tear exceeding normal usage; "anonymous damage" is the responsibility of the occupants of a room. Since **space is limited**, students should not bring more than the recommended items. Beds have down (feather) duvets and pillows, so those with related allergies should contact Swiss Semester.

Clothing and Equipment

Students are expected to dress respectfully, sensibly, and appropriately. Any ostentatious display of lifestyle, clothing, possessions, or sexuality is inappropriate. Students are to wear clothing that is clean and in good repair. **Don't bring items to Switzerland that you will not be permitted to wear.** During the school day, students may wear collared shirts and jeans or shorts (depending on the weather); **not t-shirts/undershirts, leggings, sweatpants,** head coverings of any type (except for that dictated by religious observance), and anything that is too tight or revealing of the midriff area. **On trips, students "dress up":** slacks and dress type, button-down collared shirts, coat and tie for boys; skirts (of appropriate length—at least extended fingers) or tailored pants and blouses/sweaters for girls. In addition, a more formal outfit (late fall/early winter), suitable to wear to a nice restaurant or to a concert in a large city, is required (coat and tie for boys and a dress of comparable formality for girls). In short, **Swiss Semester expects its students to be better dressed when traveling than the average tourist.** Please note that dress, tailored pants, and skirts should not be of a fabric that is too thin or flimsy, **nor should they be too "tight fitting"**—no leggings or jeggings worn unless under a dress or shorts (outdoor activities). **As well, shirts should be of sufficient length to comfortably cover one's midriff!** It should also be pointed out that much of the travel (and the related walking outdoors) is done in relatively cold—and perhaps damp—weather, so one should plan one's wardrobe accordingly.

Remembering that **storage space is limited**, one should bring clothes that travel well and look neat; also, "wash 'n wear" clothing is recommended since dry cleaning is quite limited and expensive. Students experience the full gamut of weather (summer, fall, and winter!); since clothing needs range from shorts and short sleeved shirts for hiking in September to very warm clothing for skiing in December, **it is important to bring clothes that can be worn in layers.**

Hopefully, the following lists and suggestions will make planning easier and preclude bringing too much (a common refrain of many past Swiss Semester students post program). Recommendations of past students have been included.

Required

math and foreign language texts or portal (from the home school)
calculator and instruction manual (appropriate for home school's requirements)
passport (valid through April 2025)
any personal medication (sufficient quantities for the semester or intent to mail)
up-to-date tetanus shot and other vaccinations (including COVID)
book bag for textbooks (Swiss Semester provides a backpack for outdoor activities)
small piece of luggage with wheels for trips (also useful as carry-on for flight)
"city" raincoat and compact umbrella**
sun glasses and hat (baseball cap is fine)
hiking boots (see "Boot Purchase Information" in mailing)

Highly Recommended

extra glasses/contacts and contact solution
hydration system (bladder and hose) to put in your activities backpack
biking shorts (padded)
camera and storage media (more than you think you'll need—NOT phone!)
battery operated travel alarm clock**
headlamp, ski goggles, ski hat, gloves/mittens
sleeping bag liner (NOT a sleeping bag)
no ski equipment (since very good skis, boots, and poles can be rented very reasonably, i.e. about Sfr. 260. for five weeks, it is strongly recommended that students **not** go to the trouble of bringing their own ski equipment)
special toiletries** (don't bring an over-supply)
Band-Aid Blister Blocks** and moleskin** to prevent and/or treat blisters
talk to past Swiss Semester students and parents to get further suggestions

Important

For warmth and practicality, wool and synthetic fabrics (Gore-Tex, Drywik, etc.), rather than cotton, are strongly recommended. **"Layerable" clothing is highly desirable** (a water repellent windbreaker and various weight fleeces give considerable flexibility).

The voltage in Europe is 220 and transformers (not just plug adapters) are required for some U.S. electrical equipment (see product instructions). Transformers appropriate for an appliance's wattage should be purchased in the States. Inexpensive hair dryers, if not provided in the room, are readily available in Zermatt—do not bring one from the States!

Regarding computers: Computers are not available to students at Swiss Semester and therefore are not needed and should be left in the States.

Regarding cell phones: Cell phones are not permitted while at Swiss Semester; however, students are welcome to bring them for travel prior to the transatlantic flight. When the student arrives at Swiss Semester, those phones will be given to Swiss Semester and will be returned to the student just before the return flight to New York in December.

Regarding iPods, MP3 Players, etc.: Students are welcome to bring MP3 but those electronics should NOT have internet capability (i.e. Mighty Vibe, Sandisk-Clip, or Sony Walkman).

** Readily available in Zermatt

FINANCIAL Personal Spending

To help students be responsible for their finances, arrangements have been made for each student to have a personal account. Students can withdraw money at any time. This arrangement precludes the need to keep significant sums of money on one's person or in one's room.

A student's account can be credited by:

- A personal check made out to "Swiss Semester GmbH"; it is essential that there be adequate funds behind each check.
- The direct transfer of funds to school's bank account. Please be sure to clearly highlight student's name on the transfer.

It is difficult to make a specific recommendation regarding allowances. While the appropriate amount inevitably differs from student to student, the goal should be an adequate, not excessive, allowance. However, there can be no denying the fact that Switzerland is expensive; most things are more, and some considerably more expensive. **It is strongly recommended that before coming to Switzerland, to the extent possible, students earn their spending money.**

Swiss Semester recommends that parents set what they consider to be a reasonable allowance; past students have suggested about Sfr. 230 per month for things such as postage stamps, supplies, toiletries, snack food, beverages when eating out, etc. Considering the expense of Swiss Semester and the high cost of things in Switzerland, it is only reasonable that students practice frugality and restraint. **It is important to keep track of that for which one is spending money, especially early in the program. Above all—for health and budgetary reasons**—one should refrain from excessive "snacking." It helps to realize from the start that the local currency (Swiss francs) is not play money, e.g. a crepe or a coffee and croissant a day won't keep the doctor away, but it will amount to well over Sfr. 450 a month. You can buy an apple a day with better nutrition for Sfr. 50 a month. Incidentally, Swiss Semester food is of good quality and quantity.

Stress is placed upon good eating habits which the physical demands of the program require; all are expected to eat wisely and nutritiously (not just candy, chips, coffee, and chocolate). For limited and controlled snacking, fruit, protein bars, and juices are recommended. It should be noted that on trips and when we eat out, beverages are often extra (and more expensive than in the States).

The suggested allowance does **not** include optional weekend trips (see the section on In-Program Travel), nor does it include expenses such as hiking boots, the rental of skis, or large souvenirs and gifts. In addition to the monthly allowance, approximately Sfr. 350. should be budgeted for the combined special personal expenses during the trips to France and Italy.

Swiss Semester hopes that students will be ardent consumers of visions, ideas, and culture rather than objects! Students should show restraint in shopping; there are better things to do with one's time. It is also important for parents to realize and remember that it is an important goal of Swiss Semester to have students grow more independent and self-sufficient, to develop an "I can do it by myself" attitude. In a sense, Swiss Semester is a controlled beginning in the process of "breaking away" and "letting go." Excessive telephoning, letter writing, "care packages," spending money, etc., not only increase the cost of Swiss Semester but very likely diminish "the return" in terms of personal growth. **Parents and students alike should show restraint!** If students are given credit cards, please make an effort to regularly monitor what money is being spent.

Summation: an amount of Sfr. 2,800 was an adequate amount for many students in 2023. This includes allowance, travel spending money, skis, and "optional" weekend trips.

In-Program Travel

Travel is an integral part of the Swiss Semester program in general, and of the French, humanities, and English courses in particular. Swiss Semester attempts to prepare students for their various foreign experiences in the belief that such preparation increases the educational benefit. There are course assignments related to most travel. Also, Swiss Semester stresses the student's role in making a given experience as enriching as possible.

The cost of the following trips is included in tuition:

September 20 - 23	Hut Overnights and Breithorn Climb
September 27 - 28	Bernese Oberland
October 10 - 12	Strasbourg, France
November 5 - 9	Venice, Italy

Many weekends there are different adventures from which the student must choose; some include overnights. There are special climbs (2-3 students on a rope with an alpine guide), ice climbs, hikes, bicycle trips, and visits to Swiss cities. The cost of these trips varies from Sfr. 80. (most hikes) to Sfr. 350. (overnight bike trips and trips to cities) to Sfr. 500. (helicopter assisted, guided mountain ascents). **For budget planning purposes, one should assume three weekend adventures totaling about Sfr. 1,000 (this sum is included in the suggested allowance amount of Sfr. 2,800).** It should be noted that past Swiss Semester students have strongly recommended that students take advantage of as many “optional” climbs, bicycle trips, and other travel as possible.

A tentative schedule of “weekend” plans follows:

September 20 - 23	Alpine hut overnight and Breithorn ascent (included in tuition)
September 27 - 28	Over-pass hikes in Bernese Oberland (included in tuition)
October 4 - 6	Climbs, hikes, bicycle trips
October 10 - 12	Trip to Strasbourg, France (included in tuition)
October 18 - 19	Climbs, hikes, bicycle trips
October 25 - 27	Parents' Weekend (no trips scheduled)
November 1 - 2	Climbs, hikes, bicycle trips
November 5 - 9	Trip to Venice, Italy (included in tuition)

Parent Visits

In making Swiss Semester possible, parents have given their children a very special opportunity to "be on their own" in a caring and supportive (albeit demanding) atmosphere. Swiss Semester is proud of the increased self-confidence, responsibility, and maturity with which students return home. It believes that from these ultimately will come a more enriching adulthood. The personal growth is largely the result of a challenging and fast-paced routine. Because of the demands and pace, Swiss Semester asks parents to limit visits to the weekend of October 25 - 27. Parents should plan to spend their visit in the environs of Zermatt exploring with their child (bring good walking shoes!) and meeting his/her new student and teacher friends. All Swiss Semester rules apply when students are with their parents; for example, the consumption of alcoholic beverages by students is not permitted. Swiss Semester students are not allowed to go skiing until Swiss Semester's ski season officially begins in early November.

If for some reason, you are unable to make Parents' Weekend, please contact Swiss Semester to work out another time that would be suitable for a visit. As well, please feel free to contact Swiss Semester for travel information. A list of possible hotels in which to stay is on the accompanying “Guidelines for Parents' Weekend.” Parents' Weekend will begin on Friday, October 25 at 12:30 pm at the Alpen Resort Hotel and will end on Sunday at 7:30 pm.

Things to Leave at Home

shoes and clothes in disrepair, oversized, undersized, or sloppy
clothing with inappropriate writing (including any writing on the buttocks)
room decorations, bulky items, and "things" in general
travel irons (irons and ironing boards are available in each residence)
hairdryers
snowboards
loose-leaf binders, paper & note cards (U.S. items are **not** compatible in size with supplies (A4) available in Switzerland)
walkie-talkies, iPods (excepting Mighty Vibe, Sandisk-Clip, or Sony Walkman), iPads, mobile phones, computers, Watch, GoPro or the like, DVD players, e-readers, and electronic games of any sort, etc.
Internet access is not allowed at Swiss Semester.

Recommended for Boys (see separate accompanying sheet for updated suggestions)

blazer for city trips
3 dress pants for city trips and for the Thanksgiving banquet
2-3 casual pants (jeans, cargo, etc.)
3 dress shirts (for use with or without a tie; easily laundered and as wrinkle free as possible)
2 ties
5-6 casual shirts (golf shirts, flannel, turtlenecks, and/or rugby shirts)
5-6 shirts for hiking (wicking material preferable; one long-sleeved)
sweatpants
3-4 sweatshirts and fleeces
1-2 sweaters (varying weights and formality—at least one fairly formal to wear with a blazer)
1 “non-athletic” shorts (to wear to class)
4-5 sport shorts
pajamas
long underwear
~ 10 underwear
~ 14 socks (athletic, dress, including 5-6 pair of very good hiking socks—not cotton)
windproof pants (preferably waterproof but not too expensive; can get ripped by crampons)
warm ski pants and ski jacket
hat (for town and hiking) headband, scarf, ski mask, gloves (light and heavy), and/or mittens
light jacket for fall or base layer under ski jacket (“windstopper” can be helpful)
rain jacket (for outdoor activities) and "city" coat/raincoat/trench coat (not ski parka)
belts and bandana
light vest, e.g. fleece or similar material
shoes:
tennis/running
sandals (no flip/flops)
hiking boots with ankle support (see handout)
climbing boots; compatible with crampons (for rent from school)
1-2 slippers (can be worn in school)
after-ski boots (warm and waterproof) or use hiking boots
1 casual shoes
1-2 dress shoes (rubber soles, comfortable, and suitable for a lot of walking!)
tennis racket (optional)

Recommended for Girls (see separate accompanying sheet for updated suggestions)

3 fall/winter skirts (not of thin fabric; not too short and worn with opaque tights)
nylons/tights—essential for travel in cities in cold weather
1 “dress up” outfit (not cocktail dress) suitable for a concert and Thanksgiving dinner
1 tailored pant for trips (not cords or jeans, not tight-fitting or flimsy)
2 blouses suitable for city travel
4 pants/jeans/cords (not leggings or jeggings)
4-5 casual shirts (golf shirts, flannel, turtlenecks, and/or rugby shirts)
5-6 shirts for hiking (wicking material preferable; one long-sleeved)
sweatpants
3-4 sweatshirts and fleeces
2 sweaters (varying weights and formality)
“non-athletic” shorts (to wear to class)
4-5 sport shorts; bathing suit
nightgown or pajamas (flannel recommended)
long underwear
~ 10 underwear and ~7 bras (including sports bras)
~ 10 socks (athletic, dress, including 5-6 pair of very good hiking socks—not cotton)
windproof pants (preferably waterproof but not too expensive; can get ripped by crampons)
warm ski pants and ski jacket
hat (for town and hiking) headband, scarf, ski mask, gloves (light and heavy), and/or mittens
light jacket for fall or base layer under ski jacket (“windstopper” can be helpful)
rain jacket (for outdoor activities) and “city” coat/raincoat/trench coat (not ski parka)
belts and bandana
shoes:
 tennis/running
 sandals (no flip/flops)
 hiking boots with ankle support (see handout)
 climbing boots; compatible with crampons (for rent from school)
 1-2 slippers (can be worn in school)
 after-ski boots (warm and waterproof) or use hiking boots
 1-2 casual shoes (boots and wet/muddy shoes can’t be worn in the school building)
 1 dress shoes
 1-2 “city” shoes/boots (rubber soles, comfortable, and suitable for a lot of walking!)
tennis racket (optional)

REMEMBER, all this will have to be packed in two checked pieces of luggage and one carry-on (see page 17 for specifications), AND invariably the students will have MORE to pack when they return home in December...pack frugally and wisely! Overweight luggage is NOT an option when returning from Switzerland.

Laundry

Except for hotel linen, which is provided and changed weekly, students are “responsible” for their own laundry. The hotel will do student laundry each weekday, and students will be supplied with mesh bags for that laundry). Otherwise, there are dry cleaners in Zermatt—quite expensive. **Students are expected to keep their clothing clean and neat.** Irons are available and should be used as needed.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Curriculum

No one should fail to realize that rigorous academic standards are at the very heart of Swiss Semester. It is expected that all Swiss Semester students will take their courses very seriously and put forth their very best effort at all times. Less than serious academic interest and application is unacceptable at Swiss Semester. Parental advice to the contrary (rare, but not unheard of) is not constructive. One can do one's best academically and still reap the other various benefits of Swiss Semester.

Swiss Semester students take five major courses and one non-credit course: English; art history; geology; math; French, or Spanish; and U.S. foreign policy/current affairs (~once a week).

Placement in math and foreign language depends upon the home school's curriculum and textbooks and placement exercise rather than the school's course designation. Swiss Semester's goal is a smooth reentry into whatever course the student is scheduled to take upon return to the home school.

Students are required to bring with them copies of the mathematics and foreign language texts they will use upon return to their home schools. Supplementary texts for Swiss Semester's math and language courses, as well as the texts for the other courses, are provided by Swiss Semester in Zermatt.

Swiss Semester students have a special opportunity to use the modern languages that they are studying in school (less so Spanish) and encouragement is given to them to do so. In the final analysis, individual initiative and courage play a major role in determining the progress made in speaking a given foreign language during Swiss Semester.

While academic reentry into the home school has presented very few problems in the past (almost always, students find themselves ahead of their peers when they return), for many students much of December is available in case minor adjustments are necessary. Also, those planning to continue the study of Latin or Mandarin and/or chemistry can consider being tutored in the summer and/or December to cover work missed during the semester.

The Swiss Semester 2024 exam schedule follows:

Semester exams (no classes)

December 7 - 9

Final grades, as well as personal evaluations, are sent to the home school as well as to parents.

Extracurricular Activities

The extracurricular activity program is an important and integral part of the Swiss Semester experience. The daily opportunities are varied and contribute significantly to the personal growth and physical development that take place. **Students are required to take part in the hiking, climbing, and skiing programs.** Activities such as tennis, swimming, soccer, and aerobics also are offered occasionally. Group instruction in climbing and skiing is part of Swiss Semester, and the cost of lessons is covered by tuition. These lessons will be provided by professional Zermatt Alpine Guides—many of whom have been working with Swiss Semester for years and have become integral members of the Swiss Semester family!

Past students have noted, sometimes painfully, that Swiss Semester is physically demanding and presumes high energy on the part of all. Since, from the very beginning, a lot of hiking and climbing is done by all Swiss Semester students, **it is strongly recommended that students arrive "in shape."**

School/Home Communications

Swiss Semester encourages parents to readily share questions and concerns about their child. For its part, Swiss Semester tries to keep parents well informed. In addition, students are encouraged to share with the faculty and administration problems that arise. There may be minor problems concerned with cultural differences and misunderstandings and with adjustment to boarding school life. However, such matters are usually easily put into perspective and most often are valuable learning experiences.

Each student has an advisor who periodically communicates with parents. Parents can expect the following official communications from Swiss Semester:

Mid-September	Report on first days and advisor's letter of introduction
Parents' Weekend	Advisor's letter
Late-October	Mid-semester grades and teacher comments,
Mid-December	Semester grades, teacher comments, and advisor note (grades, comments and transcript also sent to home school).

During the semester, Mr. Robbins can usually be reached at 011.41.79.335.75.45 (mobile phone); please note the time difference☺. Note also that Mr. Robbins accompanies the students on most trips and participates in many of the activities, making telephone availability unpredictable.

Parents should note Mr. Robbins' home telephone number: 011.41.27.967.34.21. The best time to reach him at home during the semester is from 8 to 11 p.m., Sundays through Thursdays. In case of an emergency, he may be called at any time at either telephone number (mobile phone best). In addition, Mr. Robbins can be reached via e-mail at swissem@mac.com and will respond promptly.

Student Mail and Telephoning

Mail should be sent "regular mail" and addressed to the student at Swiss Semester GmbH, Postfach 136, 3920 Zermatt, Switzerland (see inside back cover). There can be no mistaking the fact that **students look forward to receiving mail from family members and friends**. Students are encouraged to share, in writing, what they are experiencing; similarly, families should periodically keep students informed in writing about what is going on at home. **Please limit "care packages!"** Incidentally, there is no shortage of "sweets" and good chocolate—nor good fruit—in Zermatt. Swiss Semester encourages letter writing rather than telephone calling. Since frequent telephone contact can be counterproductive in terms of the very important Swiss Semester goal of developing the independence and confidence that come from a variety of experiences and factors, including the temporary separation from home and parents, students and parents are asked to show restraint. Also, experience has shown that a **"blackout" on telephone contact during the first week of the program** is in everyone's best interests. Assume that no news is good news; also, assume a safe arrival in Zermatt. If parents simply cannot bear being out of contact for a week, they may e-mail Mr. Robbins for the necessary assurances. If there are noteworthy problems, you will be contacted.

After the first week, Students will have access to prepaid phones provided by Swiss Semester. It is expected that students will use these phones frugally (part of the independence mentioned earlier). Students can find time on the weekend or at the end of activities period (1530-1630 GMT + 1) to use these phones. Please remember, that time on the phone is time given up with peers and exploring Zermatt. Also, Swiss Semester "weekends" do not always correspond with weekends at home due to additional classes and changes in schedule due to weather.

Customs can be frustrating in terms of delays and additional expenses. If packages are a necessity, please be sure to label the contents accurately: "used clothing for personal use" will not as likely to be charged customs as "clothing." Be aware of what box you are sending an item in (i.e. do not use an old Amazon box!). **Lastly, remember most things will have to find a way home at the end of the semester!**

Notes:

Discipline

Like all good boarding schools, Swiss Semester takes its responsibility of *in loco parentis* very seriously and exercises it in the best interests of the program and of Swiss Semester students. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively upon them, their families, their home schools, Swiss Semester, and the United States. **In short, there are definite standards of behavior and attitude for Swiss Semester students, some of which are unapologetically "old fashioned," e.g. insistence on politeness, proper attire, proper table manners, thank you notes, no gum chewing in public, removing hats indoors, etc.** It should be pointed out that in Europe there are often more formal rituals of politeness and courtesy.

Students may be dismissed for just causes, including the use of drugs or alcohol, dishonesty, theft, and other actions which, in the judgment of the faculty and the administration, threaten the good order of Swiss Semester, reflect adversely on the image of the program, or show the student to be out of sympathy with Swiss Semester's standards, ideals, and objectives. Furthermore, **incompatibility with, or unwillingness to abide by, the objectives of the program and the spirit of the rules designed to further those objectives will not be tolerated; nor will "low level harassment," i.e. behavior or attitude requiring repeated reprimands.**

While "second chances" should never be assumed, it should be assumed that the possession or use of drugs would result in automatic and immediate dismissal. Offenses such as plagiarism, vandalism, and theft are treated with the same seriousness, and likely outcome, as they would be at the home school. **Smoking or vaping is not permitted.**

The size of the program and the village assure close supervision and frequent opportunity for communication regarding expectations. **In general, "character development" is given very high priority and, among other things, stress is placed upon good manners, friendliness, sensitivity to others, and responsibility for one's actions.**

The family nature of Swiss Semester and the resultant friendships are very important; they result from, among other things, shared experiences over a three-month period and the insistent discouragement of exclusionary behavior such as cliques and romances.

At Swiss Semester, it is axiomatic that clear expectations and limits, consistently enforced, are needed by students and are in the best interests of the school community.

Major Expectations and Rules

As a student at Swiss Semester, you must honor and abide by the program's Major Expectations and Rules. Breaking Major Rules will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from Swiss Semester. The Director of Swiss Semester, with faculty input, will decide on the dispensation of discipline for students who break these Major Rules.

- You must respect the rights of others. Physical or verbal assault of another person, including without limitation, bullying or hazing, is prohibited. Any type of harassment, including sexual harassment, is prohibited.
- You are expected to be honest.
- You are expected to be free of illegal drugs and alcohol while enrolled at Swiss Semester.
- You must not be in the presence of alcohol or any illegal substance while at Swiss Semester.
- Your behavior must not endanger the health or safety of yourself or others.
- You must abide by all federal and local laws.
- You must be present in your hotel and dorm room after "lights out" and must remain in your room until at least 6 a.m. the next day.
- Your behavior must never jeopardize the welfare or good name of Swiss Semester.
- You are expected to meet all your commitments unless excused by a Swiss Semester faculty member.
- You are prohibited from using all tobacco or tobacco-like products.
- You may not visit students of the opposite gender in their rooms.
- You are expected to refrain from sexually intimate behavior.
- You are prohibited from possessing pornographic and/or sexually explicit materials.
- You are prohibited from possessing cell phones, computers, DVD players, pagers, portable two-way electronic communications devices, drones, and laser directional lights.
- You must respect all school and hotel property, including student rooms, common rooms, and school textbooks. This property is supervised by school personnel and can be inspected at the discretion of Swiss Semester.
- You are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and courteous manner and to support a healthy and safe learning environment.
- You are expected to give everything your best effort!