Liden & Denz

Intercultural Institute of Languages

Student Handbook

2026 Edition

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Добро пожаловать!

Dear learner of Russian,

Welcome to the Liden & Denz Intercultural Institute of Languages!

It is not an understatement to say that times are challenging. That you have chosen to immerse yourself into Russian, shows that you share our passion for the language of Pushkin, Lermontov and Tolstoy.

No matter how you are studying, offline or online, do not forget that language learning involves discipline and hard work. We ask you to attend classes regularly, to be punctual and to do your homework – these are all essential steps to making progress in your target language. All our teachers are qualified and experienced. Although tuition is conducted in Russian, most of our teachers also speak a foreign language. If you do not understand something, or would like to know the exact translation of a word, please don't hesitate to ask your teacher.

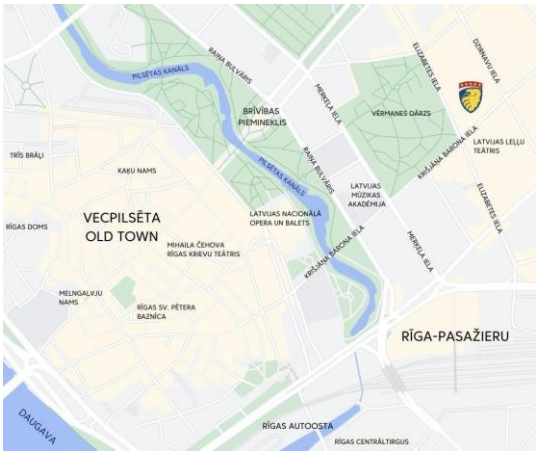
We hope your studies with us will be pleasant and worthwhile. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your teacher or one of our members of staff, who will be happy to help you.
I wish you every success in your studies!

Walter Denz, M.Sc.

CEO

Our campuses

Riga



The Liden & Denz Riga campus is located in the city centre on Krišjāņa Barona Iela 5 in a recently renovated landmark Art Nouveau building less than 10 minutes walking distance to Vecrīga (Old Medieval Town). Vermane Public Gardens are just around the corner as are a number of coffee shops and bars, and two of the best lunch places in Riga are in the same block. The railway station is 8 min walk away (commuter trains to the seaside), and the tram stop is 100 m away.

Liden & Denz Riga features 10 classrooms with a total seating capacity of 90. All classrooms are naturally lit. The facilities include a small lounge area. And of course, there is a fast and free Wi-Fi network available.

Postal address:
SIA Liden & Denz Riga
Krišjāņa Barona Iela 5 LV-1050, Riga, Latvia

Tel. (office + emergency): +371 28 743 572

Moscow

Our campus in Moscow is located in the central part of the city, a short walk from the Belorusskaya Railway Station, the terminus for trains from Berlin and Warsaw. Our premises are on the ground floor of a building that belongs to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most of the office space is used by foreign diplomats and accredited international press correspondents. The closest metro station (Belorusskaya) can be reached on foot in less than five minutes.

Our campus features 6 classrooms, all with mounted smart TVs, a lounge, a small kitchen and a WiFi zone. We also offer hot and cold drinks. Moderately priced restaurants and cafés for lunch can be found around the corner from the school.

Take the metro to Belorusskaya (circle line) and use the exit to Belorussky Voksal (Belarus Railway Station), then turn right and walk down Gruzinski Val for about 300 metres. Gruzinsky Pereulok is the second street to the left. House number 3 will be the second building on the right side of the lane. The building is a long 9-floor block dating back to the 1970s. Turn right into the courtyard where you will see gates and guards controlling access to the area. Tell them that you are visiting Liden & Denz – that is enough to be let in. We are on the ground floor of entrance number 6, office 181, door code 66 <key> 9864.

Postal address:
Liden & Denz Intercultural Institute of Languages Gruzinsky per. 3-181
123056 Moscow Russia

Phone (including emergency cases): +7 903 214-49-91

St. Petersburg

Our campus is conveniently located one block from Nevsky Prospect within walking distance from three metro stations:

Metro Ploschad Vosstaniya (red line): walk along Nevsky Prospect, take the first right to Ulitsa Mayakovskogo, then first left and walk about 200m.

Metro Vladimirskaya (red line) and Metro Dostoevskaya (orange line): walk along Vladimirsky Prospect, cross Nevsky Prospect, continue on Liteyny Prospect, take the first turn right and walk about 70m.

Metro Mayakovskaya (green line): cross Nevsky Prospect, walk straight up Ulitsa Mayakovskogo, take the first turn left and walk about 200m.

Buses (3, 7, 22, 24, 27, 181, and 191) and trolleybuses (1, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 22) all stop at the intersection of Nevsky and Liteyniy Prospect.

Our campus is located on the third floor of a yellow neo-classicist building with impressive white columns. Enter the courtyard through the arch. Our door is the first to the left. The door code to enter the building is 199219.

Our purposely built language centre extends over 500 m2, featuring 10 spacious classrooms (all with natural light), a large lobby and dedicated chill-out and self-study areas. LED lighting, large screens with Apple TV compatibility, and super-fast WiFi are all part of our state-of-the-art learning environment.

Postal address:
Liden & Denz Intercultural Institute of Languages Ulitsa Zhukovskogo 3
191014 St.Petersburg Russia

Phone: +7 812 602 03 99
Emergency number: +7 921 975 22 41 (for mobile calls)
If using a landline in St. Petersburg, please dial 8 921 975 22 41

Irkutsk

Please note that with the reduced influx of foreign students to Russia, the school in Irkutsk has limited its operations to private tuition and homestays only. The address of the premises where your classes will take place will be confirmed nearer the start date.

Emergency number: +7 983 445 27 52

Administrative Information

Discipline
Both teachers and students must attend classes punctually. We may refuse to issue a course certificate to students who consistently arrive late. Absences cannot be compensated with extra classes later on. Our teachers expect students to arrive for tuition rested and alert.

No smoking/no drugs
Our schools enforce a strict no smoking policy. Smoking is only allowed outdoors. Use of soft and hard drugs is strictly forbidden and constitutes a serious criminal offence.

Arrival day
You must arrive on a Sunday, as all courses start on a Monday. Private accommodation (host family or shared flat, where available) is always booked from Sunday to Sunday. Extra days can only be booked at homestays on request beforehand and will be charged according to our price list. Important: before your trip, thoroughly check the specific regulations for travelling from your country to Russia or Latvia. If you are travelling on a visa, make sure you arrive within your visa validity period.

Compulsory pre-arrival placement tests
All students signed up for an open group course must take an assessment test before they arrive at one of our centres.
As a first step, a written multiple-choice test can be taken as soon as the booking is finalised, via the link.
It is followed by an oral assessment, which is absolutely mandatory. Students can join our assessment/placement sessions any time after the booking is finalised but **latest on the Wednesday before the course starts**.

Complete beginners do not need to be tested, as long as they have booked a Beginner course (not A1).

A placement session is a brief live interview with our assessment teacher in Zoom. It shouldn't take more than 10-15 minutes. There is no need to sign up for the assessment session in advance - just follow the link below at the chosen day and time.

The sessions are held every week of the year, on Wednesdays and on Fridays, at the following times:

Wednesday:
during summertime 13:00 CEST/14:00 Riga/14:00 Moscow,
during wintertime 12:00 CET/13:00 Riga/14:00 Moscow
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/95384960261?pwd=YU44Z1MvblNKb29XUFRvWFArMzJNZz09

Friday:
during summertime 19:00 CEST/20:00 Riga/20:00 Moscow,
during wintertime 18:00 CET/19:00 Riga/20:00 Moscow
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/92143858292?pwd=citzLzV6cWlEdUFLRkh3WERmQUdQUT09

Log in at least 5 minutes before the assessment starts. Make sure your mic and speakers are on. State your name and destination school clearly.

Any issues, link not working? **Contact us** immediately.

We do not offer assessments upon arrival!

Students **who fail to show up at our assessment,** face one of the following:

- missing a full day of classes (not reimbursed);

- forced conversion into an individual course (two group lessons convert into one individual lesson), most likely in online sessions. The forced conversion continues until we can place the student in a level-matching group.

The final decision on group placements for students who haven't attended remains with our academic director.

Settling disputes and complaints regarding group placement
Although we trust our placement procedure and believe it is credible, transparent, and efficient in securing the most accurate group placement, it is not absolutely flawless. Placement can be stressful for new students. Some may have rehearsed statements and perform better in an oral test than they would have in other circumstances.
Please also be aware that non-beginners will often join a group that has been running for some weeks beforehand and it can take some time to settle in. However, if you feel that the group is too challenging or too slow for you, you should talk to your school's Director of Studies (DoS) about changing the group.

If you feel your group is too challenging: you might notice this yourself, or your teacher will notice and discuss it with you and the DoS. You may need a bit of time to revise and revive your passive knowledge, or you might be lacking some essential vocabulary, or have some grammar gaps. Perhaps you simply feel it is hard to keep up with the pace of the class. Another important indicator is the weekly progress test - if you score less than 65% your teacher will suggest you talk to the DoS. An obvious solution would be to switch to a group one step below your current level for a bit of consolidation. There are other options as well, such as buying some extra individual lessons or joining an intensive mini group, but in any case, your academic wellbeing is our prime concern.

If your level is more advanced than your group's: please talk to your teacher and/or DoS and analyse your written placement test together. It is possible that you have covered the current topic and feel confident about it but have gaps in other areas. Alternatively, your school/university may have a syllabus very different from ours. We aim to place you in a group that will teach you new things without ignoring the basics. If you strongly believe that you'll benefit from a more advanced group, you may be required to do our end-of-level test, an assessment tool we use to transfer students to a higher group. You may also have another interview with the teachers of the group you want to join.

Changing groups is possible; however, the group placement decisions are made at the DoS's discretion. The school in general and the groups in particular follow the school's syllabus and study plan and there are a number of academic and non-academic criteria for each placement decision. Although the school and its academic management intend to do the utmost to meet every student's needs and expectations, we adhere to the highest academic standards for all participants.

If we have to cancel a group course due to a lack of participants at a particular level, you will receive one-to-one tuition with 50% of booked group lessons during the same period of time. However, if you missed a prior placement test (as specified above) and it turns out no earlier than the first day at school that you are alone in your level, you might receive these lessons only online.

First day at school
It is important that you arrive on time on your first day at school (normally Monday). Any delay will affect the whole day and interrupt the normal tuition schedule. Everyone, including beginners and students who have booked individual tuition, should be present for an introduction.
On your first day, someone from your host family will accompany you to the school (students sharing a flat or staying elsewhere should come on their own using the directions from the map sent together with the booking confirmation). Before tuition starts, you will be given a tour around the school and will be introduced to key school staff. On the same afternoon, or second day at the latest, you will be taken on a guided tour of the city (free of charge).

When to arrive at school on your first day:
9.45 in St. Petersburg
9.45 in Moscow
TBC in Riga
TBC in Irkutsk

General timetable St. Petersburg (Standard Group Course):
10.00 - 11.40 (2 lessons of 50 minutes, followed by a break of 20 min)
12.00 - 13.40 (2 lessons of 50 minutes)

Additional blocks: Intensive Course Supplement or One-to-One Modules start at 14.00-15.00 - to be confirmed on your first day at school.

General timetable Moscow (Standard Group Course):
10.00 - 13.50 (4 lessons of 50 minutes, each followed by a break of 10 min)

Additional blocks: Intensive Course Supplement or One-to-One Modules start at 14.00-15.00 - to be confirmed on your first day at school.

General timetable Riga (Standard Group Course):
09.00 - 10.40 (2 lessons of 50 minutes, followed by a break of 20 min)
11.00 - 12.40 (2 lessons of 50 minutes)
or
13.30 - 15.10 (2 lessons of 50 minutes, followed by a break of 20 min)
15.30 - 17.10 (2 lessons of 50 minutes)

Group courses in Riga start either at 8:00 in the morning or at 13:30. The exact timetable is confirmed on the week before the course start, for non-beginners – only after the placement test in Zoom, as described above.

Additional blocks: Intensive Course Supplement, Language Plus or Additional One-to-One Modules will be scheduled on your first day at school.

General timetable Irkutsk:
Will be confirmed **closer to the** start date depending on the booked course.

Teaching materials
Textbooks are included in the course fees. Additional material can be obtained either at the school library or at a specialised bookstore.

Course certificates
At the end of your course, you will receive a graded certificate in Russian, issued by the school. Your certificate will state your course type, course dates, number of hours and level of Russian achieved according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Course extensions
If your visa validity period allows (if you need one), you may extend your programme after you arrive. Staying with a host family without extending your course is possible only in exceptional cases and only for a few extra nights.

Hybrid lessons
It is possible for learners to join the Russian classes online. Hybrid lessons are not recorded.

Mid-course crisis
Russian is not an easy language to learn. If you compare it to, say, Spanish or English, many more hours of tuition are needed to reach an equivalent level. Students from outside the Slavic region find it far more difficult to remember words, since the stems of words (other than loan words) are completely unfamiliar. This can sometimes have a demotivating effect. If your course lasts more than four weeks, you will undoubtedly go through a crisis or two. There will be days when you are convinced that you are making no progress at all. You will feel unable to learn any more or sort out what you have already learned in your head. We know from experience that these crises pass as quickly as they arrive, and that you should not blindly trust your own subjective perception of your lack of learning success. Every crisis ends with something new learned. Never give up!

Russian visa registration
Any foreign citizen who stays in Russia for more than 7 working days must register his/her visa.
If accommodation is arranged by Liden & Denz (except for hotels), we provide the registration service free of charge; otherwise, students should register independently with the owner of their accommodation.

Staying in a Russian speaking family

All host families where we accommodate our students are directly contracted by us. We operate a system of transparent selection criteria in terms of geographical location, cleanliness, room size, bathroom, etc. Our accommodation officer then visits the family and fills out a checklist. We interview the family members and inspect the apartment (with yearly re-inspections). While all our families live in clean and cosy apartments, the common areas (staircase, lift and yard) of most of the buildings are sometimes in need of repair.

The maximum travel time from home to school and vice versa is 50 minutes for St. Petersburg and Riga (average – 25-30), 70 minutes for Moscow (average – 35-40) and just 30 minutes in Irkutsk (average – 20).

We pay special attention to social integration and ask our families to communicate with our students in Russian only.

You will be provided with your own room in your host family's flat. Bed linen is changed every 2 weeks. You will receive your own set of flat keys. Please note that if you lose the keys, the host will have to change the lock at your expense.

Bathroom and laundry
If there is no private bathroom available in your host family, please don't forget that all family members use the same bathroom. Check with the other family members for a convenient bathroom time slot (especially in the mornings!).

Your host family may do your washing for an extra fee: in Riga it is 5 EUR, in the Russian locations – 300-500 RUR for one load. Please do not use the hosts' washing machine yourself unless you get an explicit permission, and before hanging out your washed things ask the hosts where you may do that. Alternatively, you can take your laundry to one of the many launderettes/dry cleaning services in the city. Our secretaries will be happy to provide more information.

Food
You should be prepared to eat everyday Russian or Latvian cuisine. It contains little you are not already familiar with. However, be aware that Russians and Latvians eat potatoes, beetroot, cabbage and buckwheat more than you probably would - and, as a rule, have less green salad or fruit, especially in winter and spring. Ask what time your family eats and try not to be late. Tell your host what you like and what you don't like. Let your host know if you are planning to eat out. You will also get your own space in the fridge where you can keep your own food - don't use the rest of the food in the fridge without a permission of the host. If you have booked breakfasts only and wish to cook dinners yourself in the kitchen, this should be settled with the host family before your arrival through the booking manager and will be subject to an extra charge.

Guests
It is unusual to invite your friends whilst staying with a host family, but if you really need to have a friend over to stay, please ask your host for an explicit permission.

Drinking water
Tap water in Russia is not drinkable. You may brush your teeth with tap water, but please drink only boiled or bottled water bought from a store. If your host family has a water filter installed, it is safe to drink tap water. In Riga and its suburbs, you can drink tap water.

Hot water supply during summer in Russia
It is a long story why this still happens, but be prepared that in the months of July and August, the hot water supply in your host family may be cut off for up to three weeks.

Staying out
If you are planning to come home late or spend the night somewhere else, please inform your host family in advance. If you are not back by next morning, your host will inform the school and our accommodation officer will notify your consulate, the police and your emergency contact.

Internet
All our host families will share their internet connection with you.

The safety of your belongings
We ask you not to keep large amounts of cash at home. We trust our host families but we cannot guarantee the decency of people who visit the host family as guests or hired workers. While no foreign credit cards are accepted in Russia, you may open an account at a local bank, store your cash there and get a debit card – feel free to ask the school staff for directions.

Problems with your host family
If you feel uncomfortable in your host family and you think you cannot discuss this with your host, please address your issue to our accommodation officer without delay. If you have serious reasons to ask for a change of host family, we will try to find another family for you as soon as possible. Please understand that you can only change families on the weekend. If this is not possible, we will have to charge you the equivalent of one week's accommodation fees. Please also refer to our refund policy at https://lidenz.com/procedure-terms/, replicated partly in the Refund Policy section of this handbook.

Staying in a Shared Flat

Note: *shared flats are temporarily unavailable in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Irkutsk. If you are specifically interested in this option, please check possible solutions with the booking office.*

If you prefer independent living but at the same time wish to experience a student atmosphere, you can choose our shared flat option. Our flats have single bedrooms (there are usually around 2 to 4 bedrooms in each flat), one or two shared bathrooms and a kitchen. Bed linen, cutlery and dishes are provided. All our flats are equipped with dishwashers, washing machines, microwave, iron and vacuum cleaner. The shared flat option is no more expensive than staying with a host family, but no meals are provided.
The travel time between the flats and the school depends on the destination. In Riga it is approximately 20 minutes.

Equipment
You can use all the equipment provided for you in the apartment. Please use it carefully and only for the purpose intended and do not cause any damage. Please report any issues, losses or necessary repairs to the accommodation manager immediately. If you fail to do so, you could be held liable for any damages even if the original defect was not caused by you.

Cleaning
You are responsible for the tidiness of your room and jointly with your flatmates – for the common areas. You must keep communal areas clean and tidy: clean the fridges and bathrooms regularly and clean cookers and surfaces immediately after use. Please look carefully through the instructions of each of the electrical devices in order to ensure their safe use. Take out the trash regularly, both from your room and the common areas.

We provide a spare set of bed linen and towels for each room, so please wash and change your bed linen and towels regularly.

On your last day, please take down bed linen and place them together with used towels on your bed. Our cleaner will wash them and prepare your room for new arrivals. Make sure to take all trash out on your last day and leave the flat in the same order as it was when you arrived. Do not forget to report anything broken or not in working order to the school.

Guests
You are allowed to invite guests to the shared flat (but **never** for overnight stays). We reserve the right to charge a full week's rent as a fine if you have an overnight guest. Please keep in mind that according to local laws, no excessive noise is to be made after 22:00, so keep the noise after that time to a minimum.

Non-smoking policy
Smoking is NOT allowed in our shared flats, on balconies in the shared flats and in the staircase.

Security
When leaving the apartment at any time please switch off the lights and electrical items, and close and lock the windows and outside doors.

Damage deposit
A deposit of €200 is secured on arrival at the school – paid by credit card or in cash. Upon your departure, after inspecting your apartment, we will unblock the deposit on the next working day or make a refund, if the amount was collected in cash. Costs incurred by damage, breakage or loss will be deducted from your deposit. Please make sure you are able to provide a credit card with sufficient funds to cover the damage deposit. Please note that AMEX and Maestro cards are not accepted for this operation.

Handover
Before the end of your stay in the shared flat, please contact the accommodation manager, who will inform you about the handover procedure. Please hand over your room cleared of any personal belongings, in a clean and tidy state and together with all keys.

Keys
For your stay in a shared flat you will receive your own set of keys. Please take care of them, do not lend them to other people, and in case of loss or damage contact the accommodation manager. Please bear in mind that for each lost key €40 will be deducted from your deposit.

Complaints Procedure

Not happy with your classes?
All students are placed in groups according to the language level determined following the oral evaluation test. Given the different backgrounds and different native languages of our students, it is impossible to create completely homogeneous groups. But our relatively small group size should ensure that all our course participants receive the appropriate attention. If you are not happy with the level of your group, please wait until the end of the second day of the course and then discuss this with your teacher. If you and your teacher cannot reach an agreement about moving you to another group/level, please talk to the director of studies, or the centre director.

Not happy with your accommodation?
Please start with talking to your host. Many of our hosts have been working with us for years and are very experienced in hosting foreign guests. If you have difficulties communicating or experience any kind of problems, please discuss this with our accommodation officer. Should you feel it is necessary to change accommodation please inform us immediately. Please understand that you can only change accommodation on the weekend. If this is not possible, we will have to charge you the equivalent of one week's accommodation fees.

Not happy with your stay?
You will notice very quickly that many things abroad are quite different from life at home.
If you are generally unhappy with your stay in a particular Liden & Denz destination, please talk to the staff member in charge.

Refund policy

If for any reason you need to cut short your course and return home earlier than planned, please note the following:

Bookings made through an agency
If you have booked your course through an appointed agent, the refund policy of your agent applies and your fees will be repaid to you by the agent and NOT by Liden & Denz. You will need to check the booking conditions of your agent and we recommend you to contact the agent immediately. Please also check your travel insurance policy.

Direct bookings
Liden & Denz will retain course fees and (if applicable) accommodation fees for 3 full weeks from the Monday following receipt of written notification of course termination at reservations@lidenz.ru. Any other payments received by us will be refunded in full within 30 days, less any applicable transfer fees.

Unusual Hardship
The above conditions do not apply if you or your family back home suffers from unexpected and unusual hardship, such as death or a serious medical condition, which require you to fly home immediately. In those circumstances we will refund you for all unused full weeks.

Activities (culture and leisure)

We aim to put on an interesting and varied programme every week, so that our students can get to know their destination city and have a chance to relax away from lessons, make friends or simply chill out.
The activities depend on the time of year. In the summer, we try to do as much as possible outside, while cultural activities occupy more of the programme during the colder seasons.
Some activities are free, such as the city tour for new students. Other activities are charged for. The current programme is available at the Reception and is given to every new student.

Safety

Although crime has become a problem in some countries in the post-Soviet space, foreign citizens in Russia and Latvia have nothing to worry about, provided they behave as they would in any major European city. Common sense is important. Below are some basic safety tips.

Travel warnings for Russia
Please check official travel advice before booking a course in Russia. Avoid any protests and do not take pictures of people protesting or of the police! Never!
From our side, we can assure you that the environment in Russia is absolutely safe and friendly. Everything is open and accessible, and life goes on as usual.

Pickpockets
Only carry with you what you need for the day or evening, i.e. enough cash, and credit/debit cards only if you plan to use them. Otherwise, leave them at home. In Russia you should always carry your passport and visa registration with you. Keep a close eye on your possessions at all times, especially in restaurants, cafés and public transport. Bags and mobile phones are stolen even in more upmarket places with security guards.

Taxi rides
Use established services like YandexGo (in Russia) or Bolt (in Latvia).

FAQ about your stay with Liden & Denz

On Booking and Classes

Can I choose to have lessons in the morning or afternoon?
If you book a one-to-one course, you can have your lessons in the afternoon. In the Russian locations group courses take place in the morning, whereas in Riga they are distributed between two shifts: morning and afternoon. You will get your exact timetable on the week before the start; for non-beginners – only after a placement test.

How do I get to school on the first day?
On your first day you will be brought to the school by someone from your host family. If you live in a shared flat, you can easily find your way to school on the city map following the instructions sent to you before your departure.

Can I change groups?
Please check the section above on group placement first. But yes, if you feel that you are in the wrong group,

please talk to your teacher who will (after consultation with the Director of Studies) suggest you continue your studies in a group of a different level. If we find no suitable group for you, we will offer you an individual course with 50% of your booked group lessons.

What should I do if I do not understand a teacher during the lesson? Can I speak English?
According to our method of teaching, all lessons are taught in Russian only. This immersion into Russian culture will ensure you progress. But please do not worry; if you do not understand something, the teacher will talk slowly and make sure you understand the task. However, if it is important to you to have a teacher with foreign language knowledge, we may arrange individual lessons which meet your special requirements as far as possible.

How do you select your host families?
We operate a system of transparent selection criteria in terms of geographical location, cleanliness, room size, bathroom, etc. Our accommodation officer then visits the family and fills out a checklist. We interview the family members and inspect the apartment (with yearly re-inspections).

Can I get accommodation in the historic city centre?
If you book early, especially for summer courses, we will try to take your wishes into account as much as possible. Living in the centre is certainly convenient. On the other hand, if you travel to St. Petersburg, many central buildings are in need of renovation. Staircases and yards look worse in the centre than in the much greener residential areas, where the quality of air is also generally better.

Can I use my laptop in school?
Yes, in all our campuses we provide wireless internet for free.

Do I have to pay for teaching materials?
Textbooks are included in the course fees. Additional material can be obtained either from the school library or specialised bookshops.

What kind of certificate do I receive at the end of my stay?
At the end of your course, you will receive a graded certificate in Russian, issued by the school. Your certificate will state your course type, course dates, number of hours and level of Russian achieved according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

On Travel and Arrival

Can I travel to Russia without a visa?
Just a few countries (e.g. most of Latin America, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Israel and a few others) have reciprocal visa-free travel agreements with Russia. However, even within this list the visa-free stay periods vary. Students from most of the world need a visa even for short stays. Make sure you leave plenty of time for the process of obtaining a visa, as these things move at their own pace and not yours. The cost of the visa varies depending on the processing time. The quicker you need it, the more you pay.

If your prospective stay in Russia does not exceed 16 days, we recommend you to use an easy and fast way to obtain an e-visa without applying to a Russian consulate in person:
https://electronic-visa.kdmid.ru/index_en.html

EU nationals are also welcome to benefit from our turnkey visa service here https://visarussland.ch/. Besides visa support, on this website you can purchase a travel insurance policy and book a hotel with an immediate payment via credit card of any country (the service which no other Russian booking platform offers).

Travelling to Russia
While there are no direct flights to Russia under the current sanctions, you can consider connecting ones through Istanbul, Belgrade or Abu-Dhabi, or convenient bus service between Europe and Kaliningrad or Saint Petersburg. Please check the available options before planning your itinerary and feel free to ask us for advice.

Payments within Russia
While your course and accommodation should be prepaid via a bank transfer to our Swiss account, you will definitely need money for your living costs beyond that (extra meals, transportation, entertainment, etc.). At the moment, no foreign cards are accepted in Russia (and vice versa). Please make sure you bring enough cash

for your stay (in any major currency); you will need to exchange it for roubles in any Russian bank and then will be able to open a Russian bank account and get a local card. However, please note that under current EU regulations, you cannot take cash euros out of the EU, so, if you are travelling to Russia overland by bus, it is recommended to have your cash in other currencies (USD, CHF, GBP, etc.)

SIM-cards for foreigners in Russia

As of the 1st of January 2025, new regulations for buying SIM-cards became effective. Please read our article with detailed instructions. If you are coming for less than two weeks, a better solution would be roaming and WiFi, where available.

Can I travel to Latvia without a visa?

Latvia is a Schengen country: Students from the EU and selected other countries (like UK, USA, Canada…) can travel visa-free to Latvia for up to 90 days. If you do need a visa for Latvia, please check visa policies and costs at your nearest Latvian consulate.

Are there any goods that you are short of in Russia or Latvia that you recommend bringing?

The choice in the shops is now similar to what you will have at home, so just pack your luggage as if you were coming to any other European country.

Is there anything special I should bring?

Slippers: Locals always take their shoes off at home and wear slippers instead.
Small gifts for your host: some souvenirs from your home country, like chocolate etc., are always appreciated.
Electrical adapters: sockets in Russia and Latvia take two thin pins (the same as European plug sockets).

Will I freeze in Russia or Latvia?

We don't think so. In all our destination cities, summers are generally pleasant, sometimes hot, especially in Moscow and Irkutsk, which have a more continental climate than St. Petersburg or Riga. Summers in Latvia are extremely favourable and you can enjoy Jurmala beaches and even swim in the sea. However, the temperature can sometimes suddenly drop to 10-15°C, even during summer, so don't forget to bring a jumper and jacket. In winter the temperature can fall below -20°C and in January it will rarely rise above 0°C. Bring plenty of warm clothes. The traditional Russian fur hat (ushanka) can be bought here. You should bring heavy-duty shoes, boots and gloves.

How much money should I bring with me?

For your lunch you may need the equivalent of €5 to €15. The excursions organised by the school cost between €10 and €40 (full-day trips). Your personal expenses will range from €50 (going out once a week, no shopping, no souvenirs) to €300 per week.

What kind of transport is best for getting around the city? How do I pay for public transport?

The best type of public transport for getting around in both Moscow and St. Petersburg is the metro, which, of course, is not affected by traffic jams, meaning you can estimate your exact travel time. In order to use the metro you can purchase either a token (in St. Petersburg) or a travel card (in Moscow) for each single trip or, as a good alternative, you can buy a multi-pass contactless card, which will allow you to travel multiple times. Otherwise, you may also use buses and trolleybuses but they often run behind schedule. The system of payment is the same there; either a one-trip ticket or a multi-pass.
There is no metro in Riga, but trams and buses are efficient. 5 consecutive days' travel pass is 10 EUR, single ride (up to 90 mins with unlimited changes) - 1,50 EUR. Travel passes to be obtained at Narvesen kiosks.

Can I get around by bike?

We do not recommend this in Russia, though you can rent a bike in many places throughout the cities. There are no bicycle lanes and Russian car drivers are not very polite, to put it nicely.
In Riga it is much more common to cycle, but you have to be careful when parking your bike. Don't leave it unlocked anywhere!

Why are the bridges raised every night in St. Petersburg?

To allow passage for cargo boats on their way to Moscow or the Volga region. From the beginning of May until mid-November, all bridges over the Neva are raised from about 1.30am until 5.00am.

Can I approach the police if I am lost?
If you speak Russian, yes. Latvian police officers usually speak 3 languages – Latvian, Russian and English, but in Russia you may meet an officer without any foreign language skills.

Does Vodka in the evening guarantee a hangover the next day?
No, as long as you don't mix it with other alcoholic drinks. Never ever drink beer after vodka!

Some information about living costs expenses as of summer 2025:

	St. Petersburg	Moscow	Riga	Irkutsk
Public Transport: 1 ride / 1 day	0.9 € / 3.5 €	0.8 € / 4 €	1.15 € / 5 €	0.5 € / --
Entry ticket to a cinema	5 €	5 €	8.2 €	4 €
River boat trip	15 €	15 €	15 €	10 €
Espresso	2.5 €	3 €	2 €	2.5 €
Beer in shop / cafe	2 € / 5 €	2 € / 5 €	1,5 € / 3 €	2 € / 5 €
Lunch in a cafe (prices starting from)	6 €	6 €	8 €	5 €
Dinner in a restaurant (prices starting from)	18 €	20 €	25 €	18 €

Discrimination and Bullying Policy

Liden & Denz aims to create a harmonious learning and working environment based on mutual respect and equality.

Liden & Denz does not condone any form of discrimination or bullying from either students, staff or host families. This includes any behaviour where an individual is unfairly treated due to their:

- gender
- marriage or civil partnership
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity leave
- sexual orientation
- disability
- race
- colour
- ethnic background
- nationality
- religion or belief
- age

Unacceptable behaviour can take different forms including:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Cyber-bullying

Some general examples of harassment may include:

- unwanted physical contact
- verbal and written harassment through jokes or gossip
- photos posted on the Internet
- bullying
- verbal or physical intimidation
- isolation or exclusion

Liden & Denz will take disciplinary action against anybody found to be involved in bullying or harassment.

In the case of students:
In the first instance, the class teacher will speak to the student and explain why the behaviour must cease. This will then be reported to the Director of Studies, who will inform the Centre Director. In the case of groups, the group leader will also be informed. The student will be warned that if this unacceptable behaviour continues, further steps will be taken. All of this should be recorded in the student's records.
If the behaviour continues or escalates, it may lead to dismissal or expulsion from the school. This must be made very clear to the student.

In the case of staff:
Discrimination and bullying of another member of staff or students is unacceptable and will be subject to staff disciplinary and grievance procedures.

In the case of host families:
If host families bully or harass students, this will be dealt with by the Accommodation Officer.