



Educational Mission Statement

for the School Subject
Humanistische Lebenskunde

Humanistic education and upbringing

The Humanist Association Berlin-Brandenburg KdÖR is committed to enlightenment and advocates for the humanisation of an open society.

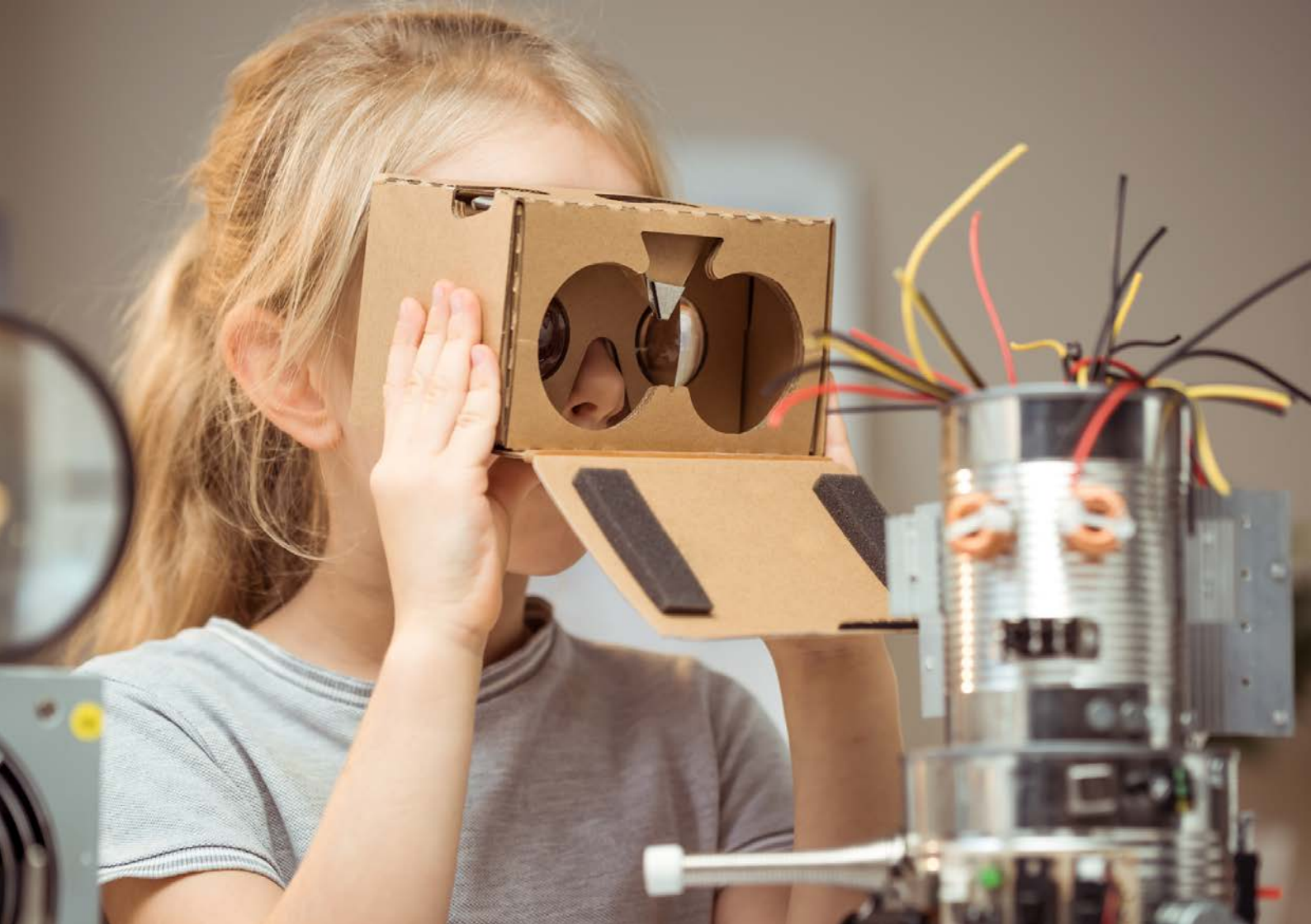
As an organisation representing the interests of non-religious people, it promotes the ability to speak and act among pupils through *Humanistische Lebenskunde*. Since 1984, the Humanist Association has been offering the subject *Humanistische Lebenskunde* at schools in Berlin and since 2007 also at schools in Brandenburg.

With its philosophical approach, *Humanistische Lebenskunde* supports schools in their assigned task of supporting children and young people in their individual development of abilities and skills to their full potential. This applies both to their personal life as well as their ability to actively participate in social processes.

The school subject is particularly aimed at those pupils who themselves or whose parents look for a humanistic and secular orientation in regards to important questions of life.

In *Humanistische Lebenskunde*, pupils find support in the development of their ability to reflect, self-confidence and value orientation in a complex world that is characterised, among other things, by debates on the global market economy, migration, interculturality, digitalisation, distributional injustice, gender issues and climate change.

Children and young people are encouraged to actively participate in an open, democratic society on the basis of humanistic postulates and thereby lead a meaningful life.



Humanistische Lebenskunde

The subject *Humanistische Lebenskunde* is taught by non-religious people that:

- live humanistic values and orientate their pedagogical work on them,
- place the dignity of people at the centre of attention,
- prepare children and young people to lead a self-determined and solidary life,
- promote critical questioning, constructive criticism as well as participation and tolerance in living together and respect differences,
- empower children and young people to recognise themselves as part of nature and to behave in an ecologically responsible manner,
- understand learning as an active and constructive process, without pressure to perform and embedded in social processes,
- utilise diversity and difference as a learning opportunity as well as resource and through appreciation promote the development of the children,
- organise their lessons according to the experiences and the environment of the children and young people, see themselves as continuous learners and continuously develop their reflective skills,
- develop and ensure the quality of their work.





Humanistic postulates

Humanistic education and upbringing are based on humanistic views of humanity and the world, which are expressed in six postulates (presented in detail in the framework curriculum for the subject *Humanistische Lebenskunde*). They challenge us to pay particular attention to essential aspects of being human. Our humanistic postulates translate – in adaptation to our educational goals – into special approaches in pedagogical practice as well as a corresponding attitude of the teachers teaching the subject.

In this publication, we take up the six postulates and define them along three categories:



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

What pupils should learn in class.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

This is how the educational goal should be reached.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

These convictions guide our teachers in class.

A close-up photograph showing two hands, one from the left and one from the right, gently holding a small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves. The hands are positioned over a mound of dark, rich soil. The background is a blurred expanse of similar soil, suggesting an outdoor setting like a garden or field. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the soil and the freshness of the plant.

Affiliation to Nature

Learning to Live Nature-Conscious



Picture: iStock.com/Sasiistock



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Pupils learn to understand their physicality, their limits and their responsibility as part of nature.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

In *Humanistische Lebenskunde*, we promote the sensual, creative and exploratory engagement with nature and all its creatures.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

We are aware of our function as role models in terms of sustainability and nature conservation. At the same time, we deal with our affiliation with nature and the finiteness of human life.

A group of children are playing outdoors in a grassy area. In the foreground, a young girl with light brown hair, wearing a red top, is smiling and holding a thick rope. Behind her, several other children are visible, some smiling and some looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus green field.

Connectedness

Discovering Humanity



Picture: iStock.com/StockPlanets



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Pupils discover themselves as part of the community and thereby develop moral and social skills.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

We promote experiences of solidarity and responsible behaviour in the group and strengthen the ability to empathise.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

We approach children and young people as trustworthy attachment figures who exemplify empathy and show appreciation for others.

A photograph of several wooden figures of various colors (red, white, orange, green) on a wooden surface. The figures are arranged in a line, with the red figure in the foreground and others in the background. The background is a solid blue color.

Equality

Practicing Respect



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Pupils learn to recognise and appreciate themselves and others in their dignity as well as discover what unites them in their differences.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

We take the diversity of the group as a starting point to discover differences and similarities with the children and young people as well as scrutinise discrimination.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

Our approach is characterised by a focus on the strengths of the children and young people and takes individuality and social needs into account.

A close-up photograph of a young child wearing a bright yellow raincoat with a hood. The child's mouth is wide open in a shout or cry, and their eyes are squeezed shut. Their arms are raised, and they are standing in the rain, with water droplets visible in the air and on their coat. The background is blurred, showing another person in a blue raincoat on the left and a grey paved surface. The overall mood is one of joy and freedom.

Freedom

Developing Self-Determination



Picture: iStock.com/PeopleImages



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Pupils are encouraged in their decision-making competence in order to contribute to the community as self-determined and emancipated people.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

We offer many opportunities to have a say and make own decisions in the classroom.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

We see *Humanistische Lebenskunde* as a space for experience, in which we repeatedly provide opportunities where young people can try things out and „mistakes“ are allowed.

A close-up photograph of two young children in a grassy field. The child on the right is wearing a straw hat and holding a magnifying glass over a plant. Both children are smiling and looking at the plant. The background is a bright, out-of-focus green field.

Reason

Learning to Substantiate



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Through investigation and reasoning, pupils learn to reflect critically on themselves and the world.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

We introduce pupils to enlightened, scientific and sceptical thinking and understand that errors, doubts and crises are human.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

We substantiate our own decisions to the children and young people and are prepared to have our own opinions scrutinised.

A young woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking out a window. The window is covered in raindrops, and the background outside is a blurred green landscape. The woman's expression is thoughtful and serene. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an overcast day.

Secularity

Discovering Meaning
for Oneself



EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

Pupils learn, by themselves and together with others, to give meaning to their lives, justify morality and explain the world from within.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE:

We strengthen the self-confidence of children and young people and their confidence in their own abilities as well as accompany their search for meaning.



STANCE OF OUR TEACHERS:

With regard to our humanistic outlook on life, we live out a clear commitment, characterised by tolerance towards other views. We base our ethics and morals on a secular perspective.

“Overall, we as humanists, both in *Humanistische Lebenskunde* as well as our general practice of life, are concerned with making tangible the equal freedom of all in social coexistence as an enrichment, even as an element of happiness.”

FRIEDER OTTO WOLF

Philosopher, Politician, Humanist,
former President of the Humanist
Association Germany (2010–2017)





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