

BRYANSTON

LANGUAGE POLICY

Language is essential to communication and, in an academic institution, is also fundamental to learning. Language acquisition is a life-long process and the skills developed in learning one can be transferred to others. Language is vital to the development of proficiency in all academic disciplines and so teaching and learning must take into account the linguistic needs of pupils, whether English is their first or an additional language. At the same time, language is an expression of identity, culture and tradition, and the acquisition of second and third languages encourages international-mindedness and a broader cultural perspective.

English is the language of instruction at Bryanston School. It is learnt across all disciplines by all pupils and every teacher is required to set an example for the use of language as a tool for clear and precise communication in all contexts, academic or otherwise.

Given our recruitment of pupils from a range of different countries, there are pupils in the School learning in a language other than their mother tongue, necessitating their acquisition of English not only to access the curriculum but also to participate in the cultural and social life of the School. Bryanston provides tailored EAL support for these students through the Academic Support department, overseen by the Head of EAL. In addition, where possible and as needed, the MFL department provides mother tongue support for these students wherever possible through the School's language assistants (French, German or Spanish):

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of understanding for teachers and students in respect of language learning, irrespective of their native language. It will also embed IB's aims and values in relation to language learning. The Diploma programme provides a learning experience that has global significance, and which gives students the opportunity to explore cultural similarities and distinctiveness. To an extent, this applies also to A level MFL language learners, who have access to the same facilities and opportunities as the IB students.

The Languages Curriculum

For native speakers of English, access to their own and other languages is provided through formal curriculum provision. English language and literature are studied to GCSE level and it is possible to continue with English Literature at A level or as an IB Group 1 subject at either higher level (HL) or standard level (SL).

All pupils in D (Year 9) are taught French, German, Spanish and Latin. In addition to this, some will also study Classical Greek. During this year, pupils reduce from three modern foreign languages to two. This choice is strongly guided by the MFL heads of department, with some reference made to tutors and pupil preferences.

At Key Stage 4, academic programmes are selected that for nearly every pupil will include one or more of the following: French, German, Spanish, Latin or Classics (Latin and Greek). There are exceptions, but these are for individual academic reasons and only with the approval of the Deputy Head (Academic). Native speakers of these or other languages may be permitted to take additional GCSEs, but these will be supplementary to and not a substitute for other subjects in a normal GCSE programme. In addition, early entry for languages GCSEs does not normally take place unless the advice from the MFL head of department is supportive.

In the sixth form, it is possible to study French, German, Spanish, Latin and Greek at A level. Pupils opting to pursue the IB Diploma are required to select either a Group 1 and a Group 2 language, or two Group 1 language courses. In some cases, three languages can be studied, but this is subject to timetable constraints. In addition to school-organised French, German and Spanish trips (subject to viable numbers), at this stage pupils are encouraged to make at least one extended visit to a country appropriate to the language being studied. This may not always be possible but is strongly encouraged and seen as central to genuinely successful language learning. The MFL faculty is happy to help and advise with respect to pupils wishing to spend time abroad in the sixth form.

In order to complement the teaching provided by full-time MFL teachers, the school recruits French, German and Spanish language assistants each year, who act as consultants, coaches for idiomatic use of their respective languages and as cultural ambassadors, contributing, alongside two teaching fellows from the University of Virginia, to the international dimension of the School.

Choosing languages as part of the IB Diploma programme

- Group 1: This will normally be the language of the environment to which the student has been exposed from an early age for formal education. English A Literature and German A Language and Literature can be studied at HL or SL and pupils are advised on an individual basis as to the choice of level. In all of these courses pupils are exposed to a wide variety of texts.
- Group 2: Pupils can currently choose Italian ab initio if they enjoy the challenge of learning a new language or wish to develop previous Latin studies into a modern context. In addition, they can benefit from contact with pupils who are native speakers of these languages. Trips to Italy are possible with the Art History and Classics departments which any student of an IB ab initio language can join. French, German and Spanish are offered as B languages at HL or SL and are usually selected by pupils wishing to extend their previous GCSE studies. They are not on offer for bilingual students with a background of having studied in the target language, or who have lived in the first language environment for a considerable length of time and feel at home in one or more of the four key skills. Latin and Classical Greek are also offered as Group 2 languages.
- Groups 3 to 6: Students will be familiarised with subject-specific language and technical terminology, and it is their responsibility to be aware of these requirements and to work towards them. It is understood that every subject has its own unique language of communication and that use of language differs from one subject to the next. This is the same for both mother tongue speakers of English and EAL pupils. The IB permits students to use a translating dictionary in formal examinations if their first language is not English in order to facilitate understanding of subject specific terms.

Sources consulted: IBO guidelines for developing a school languages policy; The Dwight School Languages Policy; The Heritage School Languages Policy; UWCSEA Languages Policy.

Reviewed: February 2021
Reviewer: Deputy Head (Academic)
Next Review: February 2022
Author: IB Diploma Co-ordinator

