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LANGUAGE POLICY

Author:	Deputy Head (Academic)
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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. As such, the school recognises, that teachers may need on-going support in terms of how to best deliver their subject(s) in the light of the above, and consequently the school will actively put in place such support where a need is identified by any relevant party (pupil, member of the teaching body, parent), as part of on-going professional development. This will usually be coordinated by the IB coordinator in liaison with the Deputy Head (Academic) and possibly the Head of the Languages faculty. Given that subject combinations and pupil requirements change every year, this needs to be part of a flexible and dynamic process, and, as such, this language policy should also be read as a dynamic document, not least as requirements can change over the course of an academic year.

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 pupils through the Learning Support department. In addition, where possible and as needed, the MFL department provides mother tongue support for these pupils through the School's language assistants.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of understanding for teachers and pupils in respect of language learning, irrespective of their native language. It will also embed the IB's aims and values in relation to language learning. The Diploma programme provides a learning experience that has global significance, and which gives pupils the opportunity to explore cultural similarities and distinctiveness. The policy also serves to underline importance of linguistic expression and cultural identity at all stages of a Bryanston education.



The Languages Curriculum – Prep and Senior School

Bryanston (Prep School)

Pupils are taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding. Since standard English, spoken and written is the predominant language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learned, pupils are taught to recognise and use standard English.

Pupils are taught to write using the patterns of language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects, including the construction of sentences, paragraphs and texts that are often used, e.g. language to express causality, chronology, logic, exploration, hypothesis, comparison, and how to develop arguments; to understand, use and spell the technical and specialist vocabulary of different subjects; to use spoken language precisely and cogently and to ask relevant questions; to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively.

We value the learning of other languages. Pupils learn French from Year 1 onwards and also British Sign Language is taught in the Pre-Prep. A Latin and Spanish taster session is given to pupils at the end of Year 5 ready for them to start their second language in Year 6.

EAL provision is available to international pupils and they may be prepared for the Cambridge First Certificate, if requested.

Bryanston (Senior School)

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, for pupils taking the IB, as a Group 1 subject at either Higher Level (HL) or Standard Level (SL) in English Language and Literature.

All pupils in D (Year 9) are taught French, German, Spanish and Latin. During this year, pupils reduce from four languages to two. This choice is strongly guided by the MFL and Classics Heads of Department, with some reference made to tutors and pupil preferences.

At Key Stage 4, academic programmes are selected with a strong recommendation that pupils should include one or more of the following languages: French, German, Spanish, and Latin. 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 language 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 and, Latin at A Level depending on numbers interested. 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 language assistants where possible, who act as consultants, coaches for idiomatic use of their respective languages and as cultural ambassadors, contributing, alongside a teaching fellow 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 pupil 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 choose French or Spanish ab initio if they enjoy the challenge of learning a new language or wish to develop previous Latin studies into a modern context. French, German and Spanish are also offered as B languages at HL or SL and are usually selected by pupils wishing to extend their previous GCSE studies. In addition, they can benefit from contact with pupils who are native speakers of these languages. They are not on offer for genuinely bilingual pupils with a recent background of having studied in the target language, or who have been fully immersed in the first language environment for a considerable length of time. Latin is also offered as Group 2 language where pupil demand and staffing permit.
- Groups 3 to 6: Pupils 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 pupils 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.