



KLOSTERNEUBURG
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

Language policy

General Remarks

Language is both a determinant of a community's culture as well as the product of multiple influences and historical developments working on this community. Language is the medium through which artistic expression, cultural heritage and the very identity of a respective community manifest themselves.

Thus it must be of foremost importance to encourage and support language learning. In this respect we must strive to work towards and pay respect to a multilingual environment by offering a variety of foreign language classes. However, it is just as vital to maintain a comprehensive and well-implemented mother-tongue programme for the above-mentioned reasons. (see APPENDIX: Basic organisation of Language Programme at KIS)

We aim to foster an appreciation of the richness and diversity of language. Language not only promotes cognitive growth, but is also crucial for cherishing one's cultural identity. The acquisition of a variety of languages and the maintenance of one's mother tongue both enrich personal growth and help facilitate international understanding and chances at the job market. As language, by its very nature, is integrated into all areas of the curriculum, every teacher within the school is required to see language teaching as a central part of their vocation.

Moreover, we strongly believe that the admittance not only of English native speakers but of such with a varied and international background not only accelerates language learning but also provides students with new insights and promotes international understanding.

Language Policy

Purpose

This language policy is a working document based on our school's linguistic and academic goals as well as the principles and practices of the IB. The policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning in the classes of the Bilingual Programme which permeates their entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally diverse classroom environment with close ties to the local community. Our policy is a statement of agreement - one to which the staff and the parent and student community are asked to commit in order to enable our students to become active, curious and efficient students of a variety of languages and cultures.

Beliefs and Aims

KIS students have the opportunity to study up to three languages. Among them are English, German, Spanish, French and Latin.

At KIS, we aim to encourage our students to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least three languages. Language development in more than one language enriches personal growth, provides cognitive advantages and is essential to the development of international mindedness. Addressing the specific needs of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue is of great importance by providing support teachers in English in lower school in order to guide students of different levels towards succeeding in their final exams with satisfying results.

Apart from that, we are strongly convinced of the educational value of Latin which represents a key source for many European languages. Studying Latin facilitates the acquisition of modern languages, encourages analytical thinking and sparks an interest in linguistics and the history of languages.

Admissions Policies and Language

A selective assessment, both in written and oral form, restricts entry into the two classes of the programme to flexible and keen learners. Students who seek admission to Grade 5 of the programme are liable to take both the written and oral test, evaluating language skills, intelligence and flexibility and logical thinking in their mother tongue/ their prior language of instruction/ the language they feel most comfortable in.

Applicants to the Lower Grades are required to have an advanced understanding of German. Starting out from this, they are given a period of 2 years (status of „Außerordentlicher Schüler“) in the course of which they are obliged to catch up with the standards of the regular mother tongue programme.

Applicants to the Higher Grades of the programme are required to complete a Student Educational History Form to indicate their proficiency in their mother tongue, English and further foreign languages.

For applicants to the regular class (Option A, see appendix) the same regulations regarding proficiency in German apply as for students of the Lower Grades.

Language Profile

While in the Lower Grades with the EAA programme there is a small percentage of international and bilingual students (10–20%), the higher grades show a much higher influx of students with a mother tongue other than German (up to 60%), currently accommodating students of 15 different nationalities.

All of our administrative staff speak English, the majority being fluent in both written and spoken English.

Teacher Profile

Teachers in the programme are either

- German native speakers whose competence in English is excellent due to long stays and professional commitments in an English speaking country
- German native speakers with a university degree in German language and literature for mother tongue courses
- English teachers with a university degree in English
- English native speakers with a good understanding of German
- Foreign language teachers (French, Spanish...) with a university degree in the respective language with a good understanding of both English and German
- Native speaker assistant teachers with a university degree and an English speaking background.

The school recognises that all school staff requires professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching. It is the policy of the school to pair teachers with another native language than English with English native speaker assistant teachers to encourage language and cultural exchange within the teaching staff. That way teaching methods are exchanged and improved. The school actively encourages all staff to apply for Comenius funding in order to attend language courses abroad.

Pedagogy, Assessment and Language Programmes

Pedagogy

In all subjects our teachers are committed to the dual concept of being both language teachers and subject teachers in order to facilitate language acquisition and encourage communication skills.

Language acquisition in non-language classes happens on a more subconscious level than in regular language classes through

- the method of "Total Immersion". The main purpose of this method is to foster bilingualism, in other words, to develop learners' communicative competence or language proficiency in their second foreign language in addition to their mother tongue. Additional goals are the cognitive advantages of bilingualism.
- CLIL (=Content Language Integrated Learning) methodology
- communicating with peers and staff, an important aspect stemming from the way the whole programme and its administration are organised.

In Language classes per se (English, German, 1st and 2nd foreign language) great emphasis is placed on communicative skills that are assessed and practised through presentations, classroom debates and performances. Apart from that the four skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading are profoundly and regularly practised in order to achieve a general level of excellence.

In order to encourage our students to develop into confident, independent and mature speakers of their mother tongue as well as of any foreign language they are studying, independent research, group- or pair work and student presentations are constant elements of language teaching. Students learn to do research, to develop their findings further, to produce evidence of their own reflective process and to pass their new knowledge on to peers using the universal vehicle of language.

Further, the programme aims at introducing its students to the cultural background of the languages studied by

- school exchange programmes
- school trips to foreign countries either with a cultural or language focus
- student subscriptions to theatre performances
- extensive reading of fiction and non-fiction texts

Assessment

As language acquisition follows distinct stages, students' rate of acquisition varies distinctly from individual to individual. Therefore, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), regularly differentiating through scaffolding or extension as required within their language classes.

While assessment in class follows the prescribed requirements of the Austrian Education Board, that is through a fixed number of written tests, homework assignments and assessment of classroom participation, effort, authenticity and artistic expression are taken into consideration to a considerable extent.

Prescribed, standardised assessment schemes that are used for grading of students' written work ensure a certain level within each age group or grade. Furthermore, standardised tests and external examinations in the Upper School also provide evidence of language acquisition levels.

Students who are identified as requiring additional support in a language class to access the curriculum will be set up with a private tutor or a peer tutor in order to reach the expected level of competence while being assessed regularly to monitor progress.

Language Programmes

German: Mother Tongue Programme

For the majority of students at KIS German is the mother tongue. The Mother Tongue Programme (German) at KIS aims at achieving the following goals:

- using language as an instrument to not only communicate advanced ideas and concepts, to sustain relationships and to follow interests but also to conceptualise ideas about our world
- encouraging students to communicate and reflect upon their own aesthetic and cultural concepts in an increasingly multicultural and therefore multilingual society
- advanced knowledge about the structure, grammar, function and historical development of their mother tongue
- profound study of and insight into a selection of literary works and the historical context in comparison to world literature

Apart from regular language classes and German A Literature, there are a variety of optional subjects available to give talented students the possibility to deepen their language skills, such as "Schreibwerkstatt", "Drama", visiting theatre performances, attending language competitions and "Academic Writing".

German (Host Country Language) for Non-Native Speakers

LOWER SCHOOL:

For students of the Lower Grades who have different mother tongues, we follow a full immersion policy. All pupils attend all lessons of German teaching. Individual support with language acquisition in order to catch up with their cohort is given through "Beginners' Courses for Non-Native Speakers of German" and by trained German Native Speaker Assistants in the classroom. In addition, we recommend private tutoring. For a period of up to two years, these students are not graded in the regular German classes, but given time to adjust. After that they are assessed as every other student at our school. It is our policy goal that after 4 years at KIS these students achieve C1 level in German.

Apart from that, we greatly value students continuing to use their own mother tongue. We aim to place students in classes with other students who speak the same language whenever possible. We prioritise those students who are new to learning German.

UPPER SCHOOL:

Students unable to do German A and who join us after Grade 8 are required to sit German B. A specific German B course is offered in the Upper School. At the school's digression a Beginners' Course (Ab Initio) is offered to students who join during the final two years of school.

Support of Self-Taught Students

Within the IBDP, students with mother tongues other than English or German are supported by our school in organising "Language A Self-Taught" courses. That includes finding tutors by maintaining close collaboration with the University of Vienna and private tutoring institutions.

When the Secondary School receives a request for a mother tongue course, the IB Coordinator will manage the following process of identifying a tutor, and will provide that tutor with the materials and training to deliver a suitable course.

The parent(s) will commit to paying the tutor for his/her services. The IB Coordinator will bring families who can share a tutor in contact with each other, so that costs can be shared.

If external tuition is organised as a replacement of the Language A or B course requirements for the IBDP, tutors are required to provide the IB administration with evidence of student progress.

English: Language of Instruction/ Mother Tongue (A) subject/ Foreign Language (B) subject

In Grades 5 to 8 English is used both as language of instruction as well as taught as a regular subject of the Austrian curriculum.

While English purely functions as a communication medium in all other subjects, English classes aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary, but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. Modern media play an important role in conveying English.

In the two years of the IB Diploma Programme, English native speakers or students with a high proficiency in their first foreign language English attend the IB English Literature Course.

Students who have chosen another A Language Course, are advised to take the IB English B Course.

APPENDIX: Basic Organisation of the KIS Language Programme and Language Teaching at KIS

BG/BRG Klosterneuburg is a state-funded Secondary School with a specifically designed stream/programme ("EAA = Englisch als Arbeitssprache, English as language of instruction"), covering Grades 5–12. The programme comprises two classes in Lower School (5–8) and usually one class in Upper School (9–12) that is working towards the International Baccalaureate and usually one class with English as the language of instruction (EAA). The programme is supported by English native speaker assistant teachers from various English-speaking countries but also by German support teachers to guarantee cultural exchange and authenticity in both languages of instruction.

In all the classes mentioned above English is used as the language of instruction (alongside German) at a progressing rate. As a result it becomes a natural vehicle for communication not only for various subject contents in classes but also among peers outside the lessons. This goal is additionally encouraged by the integration of international students of different nationalities and backgrounds.

Language learning is further encouraged by the introduction of a second foreign language in Grade 7, either a 6-year-course of Latin or French. This is again supplemented in Grade 9 with a third foreign language where the students can choose a 4-year-course of Spanish or Latin. We seek support from native speaker assistants in all of the modern languages and are keen to offer and organise school trips and exchange years for our students. Additionally, there is a range of optional language subjects for students to choose from.

Table A: Language Teaching KIS in Lower School

5 (Age10-11)	6 (Age11-12)	7 (Age12-13)	8 (Age 13-14)
* English and German as languages of instruction	English and German as languages of instruction, with the amount of English increasing	*English and German as languages of instruction with English outweighing German *Year one of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language	*Predominantly English as language of instruction *2 nd year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language

Table B: Language Teaching at KIS in Higher School

HIGHER GRADES	9 (Age 14-15)	10 (Age 15-16)	11 (Age 16-17)	12 (Age 17-18)
Option (A) with English and German as languages of instruction	*Predominantly English as language of instruction Introduction *3 rd year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *Year one of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language	*Predominantly English as language of instruction *4 th year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *2 nd year of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language	*Predominantly English as language of instruction *5 th year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *3 rd year of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language	*Predominantly English as language of instruction *6 th year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *4 th year of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language *Matura Exam
Option (B) entirely taught in English, leading towards the IBDP	*English as language of instruction *3 rd year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *Year one of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language	*English as Language of Instruction *4 th year of 6-year French/Latin as foreign language *2 nd year of 4-year French/ Latin/ Spanish as foreign language	IBDP	IBDP Matura & IB Exams
Additional possibility to choose optional language subjects: Italian, Russian				

We see language learning in general as an enormous chance in today's competitive and interconnected world. We believe that by offering a curriculum which leaves you fluent in two languages and with great proficiency in one more language our students will be well prepared for an international career. However, we additionally place great emphasis on the study and preservation of German as a mother tongue as well as on the imparting of the same to international students as an additional foreign language.

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Next review: September 2017