

*Schiller*schule

H A N N O V E R

School Code 006174
IB Diploma Programme

Language policy



Schillerschule language philosophy

First of all, it is obligatory for every school in Lower Saxony to follow the language policy of our country Lower Saxony (in German: Niedersachsen: https://www.mk.niedersachsen.de/startseite/schule/lehrkraefte_und_nichtlehrendes_personal/unterricht/sprachbildung/sprachliche-bildung-107637.html)

Here you find the translation of the country's language policy:

Language education as a task for all subjects

A central task of school education is to help pupils acquire the linguistic skills necessary for successful school attendance. The competent use of language is therefore the overriding goal of all subjects at Lower Saxony schools.

Consistent language education

In Lower Saxony, institutional language support for children begins at the day care centre for children and is continued in the sense of continuous language education in primary and secondary schools. Language education is systematic and goal-oriented, with the various educational institutions working closely together. They ascertain the individual language learning situation of the pupils, initiate appropriate steps for further support and document the individual learning development. The information on the linguistic learning status of the pupils is passed on to the further education institution at the interfaces of the educational system in order to ensure follow-up support.

Pupil orientation and consideration of all partial skills

Language education can be particularly successful if it is linked to the knowledge of the learners. The topics chosen are appropriate to its age and are geared to the interests of the students. Learning is embedded in situations and in action and product-oriented. Language learning takes into account the systematic development of all four language skills. Both listening and reading comprehension as well as oral and written production are encouraged.

From everyday language to educational and technical language

In the classroom, the aim is to guide learners gradually and continuously from the use of everyday language to the competent use of the language of education. In a stimulating environment, students are given the opportunity to absorb educational and technical language, to try it out for themselves and to develop language awareness. In the process, the linguistic means used and the linguistic forms of representation become increasingly complex.

Functions of language in class

Language plays a decisive role in the acquisition of knowledge and has various functions in the classroom. For the learner, language is first and foremost the basis for learning. Therefore, text development strategies, for example, must be practiced in school lessons. Language is the object of learning. In this sense, it must be taught in a targeted and systematic manner. After all, language is a learning medium, since it is in and with its help that professional learning processes are carried out.

Language-sensitive subject teaching



Because of the central role of language in learning, language education cannot be the sole responsibility of the subject German. Each subject has linguistic demands for the student. For this reason, the linguistic knowledge required for the development of the content of the subjects must be determined in each subject. When planning and carrying out concrete lessons, it must be ensured that the required linguistic knowledge is given as required.

Promotion of bi- and multilingualism

A natural bilingualism or multilingualism of many pupils has long been a reality in Lower Saxony. This bi- or multilingualism represents a special resource for the learners themselves and an important part of their personal identity. It can also be important for society. Therefore, the bi- and multilingualism of the learners should be appreciated and promoted. Continuous language education also includes the promotion of learners' competences in their mother language.

Schillerschule: Our Language Philosophy

Schillerschule's International Baccalaureate (IB) language philosophy, in accordance with the International Baccalaureate Organization's policies, recognizes that language is central to learning. All teachers are responsible for the language development of their students and are responsible for facilitating communication through the planning and delivery of their courses.

Schillerschule aligns with the IB's Language Acquisition Guide, which states that the acquisition of the language of a community and the possibilities to reflect upon and explore cultural perspectives of our own and other communities:

- is valued as central to developing critical thinking and is considered essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness and the development of internationally minded and responsible members of local, national and global communities
- is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development as well as cultural identity and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development
- greatly contributes to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills
- equips students with the necessary multiliteracy skills and attitudes, enabling them to communicate successfully in various global contexts and build intercultural understanding.

Schillerschule supports and values our students' mother tongue while guiding them through the process of language acquisition. As stated in Language and Learning in IB Programmes, "the ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the IB concept of an international education that promotes intercultural perspectives," which is one of the foundations of our language philosophy.

The predominant language of the school is German, although IB teachers model and encourage the use of English whenever possible. Our teachers who teach in the IB Programme, have very good levels of English proficiency as all of them have passed longer periods of time in an English-speaking country. They communicate with students in both



English and German. The academic environment exposes students to mainly British and American English while encouraging bilingual development.

The primary language need for the majority of learners in our programme is to build both social and academic English skills and knowledge while continuing to develop their German literacy. A few students who have come from other countries require support in the German language. All teachers endeavour to treat each learner as an individual regarding their language needs.

The School's Language Profile

We recognize that students learn language through the use of language, and provide students with as much opportunity as possible to experiment with and build upon their language skills to accomplish meaningful purposes in real life contexts.

Schillerschule strives to maintain an atmosphere in which students are comfortable making mistakes, as successfully acquiring second and third language proficiency involves risk-taking in a safe environment of learning.

We believe that second and third language development is enhanced by competency in a student's first language.

Due to the fact that Schillerschule is a German state school, German is the main teaching language.

In Lower Saxony it is obligatory for students to learn two foreign languages. One language – in our case: English- is taught from year 5 onwards to year 13. It is the subject with the highest teaching amount for our learners (on average 5 teaching hours per week), which enables students to use English as a lingua franca in our globalized world.

In year 6 the students are offered a choice between French or Latin as their second foreign language, in year 8 also Spanish is offered. Based on the language guidelines of Lower Saxony, students take French or Latin at least up to year eleven. According to this, two foreign languages are compulsory for all students in secondary schooling at a "Gymnasium".

One foreign language is compulsory up to Abitur. In most cases, students choose English. Moreover, they have the possibility to also continue their second foreign language as a subject in senior school (years 12-13).

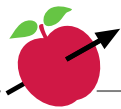
German is taught as first language/ mother tongue from year 5 up to Abitur (year 13).

From year 7 onwards the students have the possibility to take the bilingual learning profile. Being taught Geography, History and Biology in English has proven to be an excellent prerequisite for being admitted to the IBDP.

As we cherish language learning, a third foreign language can be acquired from year 8 onwards and then again from year 10 onwards, so that in total the students could learn as a maximum

Mother tongue- 1st language: German

2nd language: English



3rd language: French

4th language: Spanish

5th language: Latin.

The bilingual branch

Thanks to the special permission of our ministry of education, Schillerschule offers more English lessons in year 5 and 6 and bilingual sneak peek lessons from year 6 onwards. From year 7 onwards our students can choose to have first History, then History, Biology and Geography in English.

Starting with the IB, all IB lessons are taught in English.

Before being admitted to the bilingual lessons, our students have to prove that they are able to do the extra work and follow as well as contribute to the lessons. Their marks must be good to excellent and they teachers must recommend them for the bilingual lessons. Once they have chosen this path, they have to follow it from class 7 to class 10.

In the IBDP, all students take German A Literature as their first language (group 1), either as SL or HL, and English B HL (group 2). Further, students are offered the possibility to take French B HL or Latin HL, depending on which subject they chose in year 6.

During the IBDP the oral competence of the English language is further developed due to the fact that TOK, History, Geography (group 3), Physics, Chemistry, Biology (group 4) and Mathematics (group 5) are taught in English. Also, the interactive orals further attribute to this competence. Also, writing competence is enhanced, because internal assessments and extended essays are produced in English.

Other languages

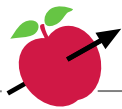
All our IBDP students are native speakers or at least near-native speakers of German due to the requirements for the German Abitur, although some are native speakers of two languages. We have quite a few parents who come from different national backgrounds. Most of the time the children speak another language as their mother tongue. So we have e.g. Spanish, Polish, Turkish, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Romanian speakers and those speaking Indian accents.

Official communication with stakeholders, through workshops and programme guidebooks, is done in German and English.

Mother-tongue support for German at Schillerschule is offered in years 5-6.

In cases where it is possible we encourage students to use their mother tongue as a school supported self-taught language.

We also encourage our students to learn and expand their knowledge of their mother tongue in extracurricular courses. We always appreciate their efforts by taking part in their special ceremonies and competitions as well as by certifying and appreciating their efforts in their school reports.



Since January 2020, we have established a class for refugees that come from all sorts of countries. It is their priority to learn German first and then English.

Special Needs

In case students suffer from performance deficits like dyslexia, perception disorder or selective mutism, special regulations are applied on the basis of guidelines by the Ministry of Education. For example, students may be given more time during exams or tests or alternative assessment forms may be arranged for them

Supporting Language Development

Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction

In English, all students attending the years 12 and 13 at Schillerschule have a language level of B2 to C1 according to the *European Common Framework* due to the requirements for the German Abitur. In consequence, all IB Diploma Programme students in year 12 and 13 are proficient in the language of instruction.

Active use of English in real-life situations

Students are encouraged to use English at every given opportunity, both inside and outside the classroom. This is why we have established Exchange Programmes with the Netherlands, France and Spain. As the Dutch do not speak German, neither do our students speak Dutch, English is the language of communication. Naturally, in France our students speak French and in Spain they speak Spanish.

Furthermore, we have taken part in first Comenius and now Erasmus+ programmes with our partner schools in Italy, Estland, Spain and Martinique. The languages used are those taught at the school.

The expectation is that students will make significant efforts to increase the amount of English used in class and each assessment as they progress through the Programme. From 2017 onwards we have started a cooperation with our French partner school and from 2020 onwards with our Dutch partner school in Haarlem as well which makes it possible for our students to pass three months in the partner school.

Resources

All students must purchase an electronic dictionary and are expected to have their dictionary with them in all English language based classes.

The Library provides students with regular access to a growing collection of books, electronic resources, and various other sources of information in German and English. This practice supports both mother tongue and additional language development.

In addition, the university libraries of Hannover which our students are acquainted with offer a variety of resources.

The internet is a resource our students use most of the time.



Strategies to support the teachers

The language teachers receive as much support as possible with regard to financial resources to buy the material they need or want. Our support association (VFS) additionally supports requests for special equipment and material alike.

The teachers of the Schillerschule are supported with numerous further training courses. We have a training officer who presents them with offers of further training courses. In addition, the colleagues can always select further training courses themselves which could support them in their work.

Our colleagues are supported in being multipliers and trainers themselves. Especially in the field of bilingual and digital learning (especially eTwinning) we have some colleagues who are active in this area.

Whenever the school management visits colleagues in class, the linguistic issue is always one of the points to be discussed.

Review cycle

This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.