

Schule Schloss Salem

Session 24/25

Language Policy

Preamble

At Salem, we value the diversity of our community. We are committed to supporting the different needs of the members of our community as far as possible. Our pedagogical approach is based on the school founders' vision of developing in our students the sense of responsibility for one's neighbour.

At the school's foundation after WWI Kurt Hahn chose the Parable of the Good Samaritan as its motto to express the expectation that Salemers recognize, respect and support their neighbour in any context. The values, freedoms and rights enshrined in the UN Human Rights Charter and the Basic Law of Germany, both formulated after WWII, form the broader framework of this approach.

Our staff and students come from a range of different cultural and religious contexts and value systems. We therefore protect the freedom of thought and speech of every member of the school community in balance with mutual respect. In particular, we are conscious of our responsibility for our students as they develop all aspects of their identities and personalities.

We aim to offer an environment in which to explore, as far as appropriate to their age, different orientations – be it political, religious, cultural, gender-related or sexual - and in which to learn how to have reflected and mindful discourse within the boundaries of our values. This would exclude disparaging comments and behaviour related to and expressive of racism, extremism, misogyny, religious intolerance, homophobia and queer phobia.

Our Policy

With our Language Policy we want to affirm identity, open students' minds for cultural diversity, and enable conceptual thinking in their subjects and beyond. Everybody in the school must be prepared to live and work in a multilingual environment where no single language should be dominant.

Language courses in either German or English are available to colleagues who wish to improve their versatility.

Our students should relate to their cultural roots and develop their individual cultural identity through maintaining the development of their own language. At the same time, this process should foster the realization and acceptance of ‘otherness’– culturally, socially or in terms of values. We want our students to be able to communicate with the others in a differentiated manner not only in the two school languages – English as language of instruction and, as far as possible, German as the host country language.

The use of mother tongue is encouraged amongst friends and outside classes, as long as there is a sensitivity for situations in which those not knowing a particular language might feel excluded and/or uncomfortable. In a classroom setting, only the target language or language of delivery are permitted.

Ultimately, conducting meaningful and constructive discourse about otherness and finding the common ground would be the highest aim of our language practice. Our students’ different voices from their diverse cultural and linguistic contexts are perhaps the most valuable element of their learning experience. Teachers and mentors aim to work with language diversity as an enriching dimension to teaching and learning.

Our Practice

Operational premises

Our school is a German school with two international branches and a mixture of 30 to 40 nationalities across all systems.

We offer three different academic programmes:

- a) the German Gymnasium system of the federal state/county Baden-Württemberg (grades 5 to 12) leading to the national school leaving and university access certificate, the Abitur,
- b) the International Classes (grades 8 to 10) delivering the Baden-Württemberg curriculum in English and thus leading to a Mittlere Reife (a German middle school leaving qualification comparable to the GCSE) and
- c) the IB Diploma Programme (grades 11 and 12).

Language and Admission in general

To be able to promote student learning and development in the branches where English is the language of instruction we demand entrance tests in English, mathematics for the International Classes and additionally in the sciences for the IB Diploma Programme, the English test being the most crucial one as it shows the language proficiency and the ability of an applicant not only to handle abstraction and conceptual thinking, but also reflection and an active learning process. In the context of the Common European Reference Framework (CERF), we require level B1 in grade 8, level B2 in grades 9 and 10, and level C1 in grade 11. Please consult also the contract section **Conditions for promotion to the next school year at Schule Schloss Salem**, giving details on language levels and certificates.

Language in the Lower School (Grades 5 – 6)

The **Lower School** consists of grades 5 to 6 of the German national system (the Gymnasium curriculum in its Baden-Württemberg expression, see above).

Students that do not speak German can also be admitted. These young students come from international backgrounds and to assist their integration we have the DaF (German as a second language) classes building their German skills while also introducing curriculum content in the target language. In the first semester students in this programme receive preliminary grades in all subjects and will only be graded according to the full criteria in the end of year report.

Students still acquiring German language skills will initially have a guest status and thus receive a report for guest students.

For English native speakers there is a support system in place. They are taught English by native teachers in parallel to the regular classes, which enables them to join the International Classes in grade 8.

During organized study time there is individual support for all subjects and this one-to-one work enables colleagues to establish whether students are able to later join the International Classes.

Additionally, some students may have native mother tongue tutoring.

Language in the Middle School

The **Middle School** comprises Grades 7 to 10 and offers one system (the German Mittlere Reife – Middle School Leaving Certificate, see above) in two different languages: German and from Year 8 English.

Students can maintain their mother tongue Chinese, Russian, Romanian, Spanish, French etc. as one of their mandatory languages. Some students even choose a third language in this phase in addition to two mandatory languages. Students admitted directly to the German system while still developing their German language skills receive additional DaF periods to improve their German in all subjects.

For students joining the **International Classes** the language of instruction is English delivering the German national curriculum for the Gymnasium (see above). All students have to participate with German lessons. In this English-delivery strand students are prepared for the IBDP, e.g. by producing a personal project, yet, they keep the option open to join the Abitur system for the two final years, if their German skills enable them to do so and all conditions are fulfilled. Additionally, there are ESL learner groups. Further second languages offered are Spanish, French, and Latin.

Numerous exchange schemes with our Round Square partner schools around the globe, plus projects uniting both German- and English-speaking strands such as the Outward Bound Expedition to Norway in Grade 9, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Model United Nations or our theatre and music projects foster lively language development. On top of that, daily life in our boarding school is bilingual.

Language in the Diploma Programme ('Salem College')

In **College** consisting of Grades 11 and 12 we offer two different systems: The German Abitur and the IB Diploma. Campus life is at least bilingual, academically and on the boarding side. In terms of admission to this level, students entering the Abitur system either from our own Middle School or as new entrants must meet the requirements of the German national system for the Gymnasium/the Abitur.

The school wholeheartedly subscribes to the IB principle that all learning is also language learning, and that all language learning must provide the student with both challenge and opportunity. Language placement is determined by the respective subject teams based on the CERF level of students, previous school experience, and IB guidelines. If necessary, the IB

Coordinator and ultimately the Director of Studies are involved.

English

Students entering the **IB Diploma** at Grade 11 must have successfully completed ten school years and demonstrate an appropriate level of written and spoken English (C1).

While the bulk of our students enjoy work at this level in English A Literature or English A Language and Literature, a small number of students are more appropriately placed in English B Higher Level. A number of criteria are applied to determine this group – previous school experience and learner biography (such as having completed the second tier of the German school system, the Realschule), but mainly the IB placement criteria offered in the language guides. Timetabling of both German and English classes also allows for teacher experience to suggest changing the level of a student in the first stages of the programme.

For students that are either constrained to or absolutely want to choose an English A course despite major weaknesses, an ESL support scheme giving targeted help with IELTS test preparation as an added incentive can be made available. This course runs for the first or the first two semesters, depending on need, and is taught by a qualified ESL teacher.

German

It is our school policy that all IB students have to take **German** (at Group 1 or Group 2 level).

German is the language of the host country and that is why the school insists that all students make themselves familiar with the language and culture of the country, and that is also actively sought by the majority of students joining us. Many students also join our school to prepare for tertiary studies in Germany, Switzerland or Austria, however, German can also be chosen as an extra certificate.

General principles of course and level allocation

As a general principle, students cannot freely choose the level of German. Allocation to levels and courses is subject to experience and linguistic competence. The evidence for this are the track record of instruction already received and any certificates (CERF-related, usually TELC, Goethe or Test DAF) already gained.

German A: Students who have attended a German-speaking secondary school for several years and who show reading and writing competence at secondary level need to attend German A.

German B: Students who are fairly fluent, are perhaps even native speakers but without experience of schooling in German, or non-native speakers with competencies appropriate to

the level.

As an example: if at the end of Year 10 a student has successfully gained a German A1 or A2 certificate, he or she will be allocated to German B and cannot choose German ab initio.

German ab initio: Real beginners or students with some rudimentary previous instruction, but no CERF certification.

Our German teachers work closely as a team and their experience and assessment of a student's ability is the final word in terms of level allocation. If students feel their language achievement is affected by issues such as stress, aural disorders or similar, we aim to help the student overcome these challenges, which might involve inclusive assessment arrangements if considered by the IB (see our **Inclusion Policy**), but we will not allow a language level that is lower than appropriate.

Delivery of German

As already mentioned above, all German classes are timetabled in parallel in case the original placement of a student proves to be wrong. Our German classes also include the preparation and examination for Goethe, TELC and Test DAF certificates within the Common European Reference Framework, working closely with regional test centres.

International teachers and house tutors are able to receive German or English courses to enable their integration into the German environment or their work with international students. Colleagues can also progress through the language certificates set out above.

Other taught languages: French and Spanish

In addition to English and German, **Spanish** A Literature, Spanish B, and **French** ab initio and B are offered within the IB Diploma programme, either in school or in case of only one student choosing this language through Pamoja. All languages except for German ab initio are a continuation from grade 10 and are planned respectively.

German students in the IB may also complete their **Latinum** through an additional course.

Again, placement is determined by previous learner biography, CERF level and IB guidelines.

Self-taught languages

In the IB Diploma Programme **school-supported self-taught languages** are strongly advertised and we aim to foster students' connectedness to their own linguistic and cultural roots.

Students can continue developing a language in which they feel at home and which serves as a transfer language for all complex thinking and communication processes. It can be a particular strength and a source of motivation. Students who choose a self-taught language A are guided by a Self-taught Languages Coordinator who monitors their progress very closely,

offers an organizational framework and keeps close contact with their specific language tutors and their families.

An area of further development is the promotion of mother tongue usage and development apart from being elected as a SSST-Language A. Some beginnings, such as by provision in the school library (see below), are being made.

Language and the Library

Our College library is stocked in both German and English as regards the subject sections, has sections in French and Spanish, plus caters to wider recreational reading of our students with sections in Russian, Chinese, Korean.

At the moment a new concept is being developed for our library, allowing both traditional and digital research and learning.

Our chief **librarian** is bilingual with experience in academic and municipal libraries. She is also affiliated with the Extended Essay Delivery Team.

Language, CAS and life at our school

Salem College is a truly **bilingual environment** with German and English as the two official languages. There exist two different academic programmes, yet, CAS is the same for all students – the CAS Coordinator is also the Coordinator of the ‘Dienste’ (services) of the students in the Abitur system. All information and documentation regarding all aspects of our school is supplied in German and English.

Creativity

The weekly **school assembly** (90 minutes) is bilingual. Students who hold offices, e.g. the school speakers, sport captains etc. address the audience in both languages, so do the teachers and the school leadership. All extracurricular activities are bilingual. Very successful integration of English and German occurs in **theatre**. The annual One Acts (Internal Assessment of Theatre) are partly German, partly English. Our large-scale musical productions tend to be in both languages, with leading roles equally shared amongst the different levels and systems of the school. This is a tradition that needs to be actively protected and fostered.

Activity

In **sport** teams and classes Abitur and IB students are often mixed, thus instruction is bilingual.

Service and student representation

Through the various services or offices like Academic Council (a student body with three Abitur and three IB students that intends to foster academic excellency) the Global Action Network, Café or Common Room teams cultural events, lectures/field trips, are organised and presented in the school assembly to make the multicultural nature of the College community visible and tangible.

Students unfamiliar with Germany and learning German also come into direct contact with their **host country** through our services that link to the outside community. Our music service tours local institutions and regional traditions. Playing with refugee children, visiting senior citizens or being part of – and doing the training for - local rescue services like the fire-brigade, paramedic or sea rescue all afford immediate communication with local people and institutions.

Field trips around Lake Constance and into nearby Switzerland, Austria and France as well as the Duke of Edinburgh excursions to the Black Forest allow students to experience the beauty and the international dimension of this region living a multitude of languages and local dialects. We hope that such an environment contributes to cultural awareness, respect for diversity and true international-mindedness.

Policy to be updated annually by the Executive, the Director of Studies Team, the Heads of Boarding, the Subject Team Leaders, the teaching faculty for the subsequent session.