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RĪGAS VALSTS 3. ĢIMNĀZIJA

International Baccalaurate Authorized School for:

Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme

Riga

Nr.SB1

Language Policy

Introduction

Riga State Gymnasium Nr. 3 is an International Baccalaurate Authorized School for Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme

Our Mission:

Riga State Gymnasium Nr. 3 thrives to provide a challenging and safe multicultural learning environment in which the students become knowledgeable, inquiring, balanced, principled, reflective life-long learners who care about their community, the country and the world.

Vision:

- students are provided a challenging learner centered, inquiry based education,
- students study in a multicultural environment, working within global contexts and exploring significant content,
- students are provided with effective approaches to teaching and learning,
- students are encouraged to become active lifelong learners who understand people of other cultures, beliefs, languages, religions.

Philosophy

In our school the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) will place the language learning as a central part in the student's academic and emotional growth. The school will ensure that the IB's values and aims in relation to multilingualism and access will be reflected in the classroom and out-of-class activities. Teaching and learning will support the student's home language, address diversity of the student's preferences, ensure practices for inclusion and equity of access to the MYP and DP for all learners, including those who are learning in a language other than their home languages. Teaching and learning approaches will demonstrate that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication, and promoting intercultural and international-mindedness. To ensure more effective language learning and extending

access to the MYP and DP education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the parents of the MYP and DP students will be involved in planning their children's language profile. The school administration staff and the Support team will be involved in teaching/learning languages on daily bases. In case, a certain language needs additional support, the IB coordinator will meet the student, the subject teacher, a social pedagogue and make additional support plan for the student, including extra individual lessons.

General Principles

The Language Policy for the MYP and DP is a working document and its principles are based on the Programme standards and practices:

- The school places on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages .
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes,
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students,
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue,
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students,
- Assessment of the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).

The practices highlight the pathways of the school's Language policy to reach students from a variety of cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds, as stated in our Mission and Vision. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that will ensure the IB's values and aims reflection in the school's activities.

The Language Policy outlines the school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programme to help the students to attain the goals in the MYP and DP.

The School's Language Profile

In the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in Language and literature: Latvian, Language acquisition: English B, German B, French B and Spanish B, and Diploma Programme (DP) have specific learning outcomes for Language A: Latvian: literature) and Language B (English B, Spanish B, French B, German B teaching and learning, regarding speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. We follow the holistic principle based on inquiry and authentic learning approaches. The school pays a great attention to Language A and Language B teachers professional development to ensure a high quality of the language of instruction, host language and other languages. Thus, Latvian is taught in all grades, in both programmes.

The greater part of our students speak Latvian and are Latvians by nationality. Latvian is a compulsory language that must be studied at school and one of the final examinations in Grade 12. Bilingual students speak Latvian and English. In addition, many students are fluent in Russian. Students are allowed to use their mother tongue to follow the lesson activities and access the curriculum.

Additional consultations are offered to students who are not fluent in Latvian or the language of instruction- English . Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practices according to IB requirements in the standards and practices. Teachers respond to all students learning and thinking styles, and needs, providing individual instructions. The classroom activities are organized in small groups, teachers provide differentiated learning materials, changing tasks for students, if necessary. The school provides individual support by a class teacher, or a social pedagogue. MYP and DP students are placed in classes according to the language B learning phases.

The IB Middle Years Programme subjects are taught using bilingual method, in Latvian and English. This method is useful for grades 7–8, but in Grades 9–10 a greater percentage of classroom activities are instructed in English. Bilingual method is also used in Diploma Programme, while 90% of instructions are provided in English, and 10% in Latvian.

MYP and DP students have the opportunity to study three languages: Latvian, English and Spanish or French, or German. In special circumstances students have the opportunity to follow the course of other Language acquisition,

since we have Chinese students.

Parents are encouraged to teach their children their mother tongue, for example, a private tuition with the assistance of the coordinator and externally taught by the language teacher.

Each School Year the School organizes the Language week, e.g. investigating Language tree, organizing translation competition.

Because of the above described language profile, our students may fall into the following categories:

1. Latvian speaking students with prior English language instruction and Russian as the 2nd foreign language;
2. Latvian speaking students with prior English language instruction and German as the 2nd foreign language
3. Students coming from abroad with limited Latvian and good English and various languages as the 2nd foreign language.

The statistics of nationalities at our school is not kept. There are a few representatives of Lithuanians, Estonians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Americans, Japanese, Chinese, etc.

Working languages

The language in which the school communicates with its stakeholders and supporters providing all the services needed for implementation of the MYP and DP programmes are Latvian and English. The Language Policy is uploaded on Moodle Platform and made available in hard copy form in the main office and communicated to all IB students and parents.

As we are a Latvian State school with Latvian as a compulsory language, but English is the working language for the MYP and DP programmes, most documentation is bilingual. The meetings of MYP and DP teachers are held in Latvian and English. Information on the school's website is mainly in Latvian.

Mother tongue and Language A support

Our school acknowledges the importance of the student's native language in promoting personal identity and maintaining cultural heritage, but it has very limited possibilities to teach other languages as Language A, except Latvian. Students are encouraged to maintain their cultural and language identity and share it with the school community.

The school offers extra lessons and extra support by teachers to acquire Latvian for those students who have come from abroad. All MYP and DP teachers are responsible for language learning. Development of basic skills for communication are planned in the MYP subject group overviews, Unit plans and in the DP course outlines.

Students are encouraged to master the concepts of context, culture, reflection and fluency, step by step progressing from communication in MYP to the usage of academic language in DP.

Teachers encourage students to read at home and during summer holidays. Students may read in their native language.

To raise interest in reading, teachers offer to practice a variety of reading strategies to comprehend the context of the text. Reading text may be connected with any subject they study at school. For the DP course it is possible to offer Chinese or any other native language as a self-taught language.

Language B support

MYP students acquire Language acquisition subjects, such as English, German, French and Spanish starting with emergency level and finishing with capable level. For all DP students the school offers Language B subjects at Standard and Higher Level. The courses develop students intercultural understanding, enables students to understand and use the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes, and develops students' awareness of the role of language in relation to other areas of knowledge. To support English B, the school does not have to offer much extra support as English is widely used by our students via social networks, mass media. Thus, to promote further use of foreign languages, our school:

- has established contacts with the IB International Schools in Europe (Latvia, Estonia).
- is taking part in international projects (Erasmus+, Nordplus Junior programmes with the schools in Germany, Italy, Turkey, Ireland, United Kingdom, Sweden, Estonia, etc.)

Teaching learning activities

We consider that all MYP and DP subject teachers are a part of implementing Language Policy, since subjects are taught bilingually, there are textbooks in Latvian and English. Writing, speaking, listening, reading skills are emphasized in all subject groups. Subject – specific terminology is taught bilingually.

In the classrooms teachers offer different text types, starting with [outlines, arguments, drafts, editions, conclusions, etc.

DP HL students read two literature works for Internal Assessment, develop their vocabulary, use of language, listening and speaking skills. Teachers use formative and summative assessment tools to follow the progress of students' knowledge, skills and understanding of the language. Formative assessment is used to monitor the learning progress and to provide a feedback on learning. At the end of each unit students have a summative assessment demonstrating their learning achievement levels. In the MYP assessment tasks are related to concepts, global contexts and inquiry. Students are assessed according to the Language B phase criteria. Task specific criteria are created for each MYP assessment. In the DP teachers organize a summative assessment, using level specific criteria.

A self-taught DP language courses use the same guidelines for formative and summative assessments (Assessment of the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s). Language A and Language B teachers collaborate planning and reflecting on creating MYP Interdisciplinary Unit plans, summative assessments, standardizing Internal assessments. DP teachers meet to plan what to teach, consider the needs of students.

Teachers discuss transition from the MYP to DP in order to follow consistency and current requirements of the IB programmes.

The support of the school library

In the school's library books are available in English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, and Latvian. Books in English and in other foreign languages are also available in the National Library in Riga. At the beginning of each school year we order the latest periodicals and ebooks in the target languages. In both programmes the MYP and DP programmes we have textbooks for all subject groups that are offered in our school for all students.

Students also have access to a variety of resources, such as online and paper based newspapers, magazines, Britannica <https://school.eb.co.uk> in a various languages, thus they can foster their reading habits, enlarge vocabulary, develop research skills, develop IB LP, such as inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers.

Communication in and outside the classroom

The instruction language in the IB programme is English. However, we understand that we are a Latvian school with Latvian students, that is why the bilingual teaching method is used for the IB subjects. We use Latvian and English, in communication with the local educational institutions, and parents.

MYP and DP coordinator provide all the IB implementation agenda in both languages, English and Latvian. The coordinator makes sure that the teachers involved in the IB implementation process are well informed about the IB requirements, including requirements of the Language Policy.

Links of the language policy to other policies

The Language policy will be explicitly linked to other school's policies, such as Admissions, Assessment, and Inclusion policies.

Admissions policy. The language learning will be considered as an ongoing process towards the improvement of the language skills. Entering the MYP or DP, the students will complete a language placement test to advise the appropriate level to build their knowledge based on prior knowledge and skills and allow them to progress to the next phase. The teachers gather appropriate data for the student to support the transition to the next phase.

Assessment policy. Pre-assessments are used in the language placement tests to place the student in appropriate phase in Language acquisition Language B. The teachers also use subject specific criteria described in Language A

and Language B guides.

Inclusion policy. The MYP and DP teachers use differentiation methods for inclusion learners to provide support and help in learning.

Conclusion

Language policy was developed in collaboration with the leadership team, including the MYP & DP coordinator, MYP and DP teachers, Headmaster, Librarian, Social pedagogue, and representatives of parents. This policy was written in line with the International Baccalaureate documents (see Bibliography). Language policy will be revised throughout the implementation, revised once in two years in August, and developed further in accordance with the current IB requirements.

The school's policies will be communicated to the stakeholders and published on the school's website. The MYP and DP students and their parents will be informed about the Language policy during informational meetings. The subject teachers will practice the policy components in the classrooms.

A copy of the policy will be given to the newly admitted students with the study agreement and the attachment. The policy will be explained at the beginning of the school year in the first class teacher's lesson. The signed paper copy will be kept by the MYP and DP Coordinator.

Created by Ingrīda Breidaka, DP Coordinator

Approved by Andris Priekulis, Head of Riga State Gymnasium Nr. 3

We acknowledge that this policy was created on the basis of and in line with the following IB publications:

- *Programme standards and practices*
- *IB learner profile booklet*
- *Language policy. Information on the International Baccalaureate's support for languages, language courses and languages of instruction (Updated February 2014)*
- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008)*
- *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy (Published 2012)*
- *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes (2008)*
- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008)*

For notes:
