



# LANGUAGE Policy

Approved by: Board of Directors, January 2018

Last review on: April 2022  
Next review due by: April 2023

## **Our Rationale**

At St Peter's School, we understand that language is the foundation of learning. It provides us with frameworks around which we construct our conceptual understanding and through which we critically engage with the world around us. It enables us to relate to others and negotiate meaning, allowing for intellectual, social and emotional development and overall well-being. Our understanding of language extends beyond the purely linguistic to include non-verbal elements and multimodal representations.

We understand that languages are dynamic and evolving. They are the means by which we express ideas and concepts but they also change over time and vary according to the communities and speakers that use them. For this reason, we focus upon the ways in which language is used in social contexts and is socially-constructed by speakers. We see languages as mutable resources which are not necessarily tied to geographical contexts.

We recognise that students are active agents in their own learning. They bring prior knowledge and experience, engage with learning opportunities in collaboration with others, thus enabling them to make connections, reflect upon their experiences and construct meaning together.

We consider that all students are unique, with diverse backgrounds, needs and personalities, which we meet by providing learning experiences which attend to different learning styles, through differentiation and awareness of individual identity, including their linguistic biography. Our families come from over 40 different countries and many have lived and worked in various cultures and form households in which various languages are spoken. For this reason, the social reality at school is complex and diverse, both linguistically and culturally. Likewise, the school's teaching staff is international and plurilingual, with teachers communicating mostly in English, but also in Spanish, German, Catalan or French, depending on their origin or identity.

At school, we believe that language learning incorporates all of the different languages which form part of our community and that all members of staff actively contribute to the language development of our students, through interaction, the provision of collaborative

experiences which are intellectually challenging and the creation of shared understanding. To this end we are in the process of creating a series of essential agreements which represent our core principles as a school.

## **Our Purpose**

This document describes our perspective on language, important principles when learning a language and how these principles influence our teaching and use of language.

- In conjunction with our core curricular documents, it provides the school with a framework that will promote consistency in approach across the school.
- It provides families with information about our principles and our practices and assists them in understanding our curriculum and teaching practices.
- It will be a tool for teachers to reflect on their language practice and guide professional learning and appraisal.
- It will assist new members of staff in understanding the principles and practice related to language learning in school.

The points in this policy describe what we value and what we strive to achieve. Our practices may not reflect all the points described in this policy but we aim to do so and to engage in constant reflection with reference to our guiding principles.

The policy is reviewed on an annual basis to see to what extent it reflects actual practice within school and is both coherent and consistent with the school philosophy. This review is carried out by the corresponding Heads of Language Departments, the Language Coordinator and Head of Education and shared with teachers. Parents have access to the policy via the website and through parent meetings and public events in school.

## **Our Philosophy**

The notion of plurilingual competence is central to our philosophy as educators. From the earliest stages in school our students experience language as a means of communication and of understanding their world. Over time they begin to differentiate

between how people communicate differently according to context and gradually they begin to make sense of different language systems and conventions. Their individual linguistic repertoire is both dynamic and developing, their resources may vary widely from one language to another and over time but they have a:

*single, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks*

*(CEFR 2001 Section 6.1.3.2).*

Consequently, our main objective is that a student at St Peter's is able to draw upon their combined knowledge and skills base to communicate effectively in diverse contexts in the languages which make up their individual linguistic repertoire as well as in English. We also aim to provide students with the necessary experiences, skills and strategies to be able to mediate texts, concepts and communication effectively across cultures and languages, thus promoting intercultural understanding and awareness.

Language is seen as comprising learning language itself, learning about language and learning through language, and is a principal connecting element across the curriculum.

Not only do we aim to make language learning inquiry-based and relevant, but also collaborative, allowing students voice and agency in their learning. In therefore follows that the focus on language extends beyond the boundaries of the classroom to include language use in social contexts around school, at home and in the community, both locally and internationally through links with students in other schools. Additionally, the use of technology enables students to expand their perspectives by researching and mediating information and exchanges through a variety of media.

Within school, class teachers collaborate with teachers of Additional Languages and Language Support teachers, together with Learning Specialists to plan integrated programmes of inquiry which reinforce, support and extend language learning.

In addition to those languages which are actively taught in school the school actively supports encourages and supports the development of home languages as a linguistic resource for the whole community. Where school is unable to do so, families are recommended institutions which offer classes in specific languages if they choose to continue with lessons in home languages. In addition, within school, students are actively

encouraged to use pedagogically-based strategies to link use of their home languages to support their language learning.

The school is currently developing training and resources in collaboration with students to support the integration of home languages into the school, through the library and through classroom resources in conjunction with centres of higher education.

To this end we also collaborate with different universities which offer degrees in bilingual education, such as the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Universidad Ramon Llull (Blanquerna), Sant Pablo CEU (Abat Oliba), Universidad de Lleida and Universidad Internacional de Cataluña. We also regularly participate in research programmes into plurilingual education and have hosted an annual congress (*Learning Through Language*) which aims to build bridges between universities and local and international schools, and in which different educational proposals are debated, shared and reflected upon, always within the context of language acquisition.

<http://www.stpeters.es/blog/tag/learning-through-language/>

## **Our Language Policy**

Our language programme covers all of our year groups from NI (age 12 months) through to the Diploma Programme, incorporating the Early Years, PYP, MYP and Diploma continuum.

We draw upon current local and European policy together with IB principles to create our language programme. Throughout the programme we focus on communicative, plurilingual and pluricultural competences together with more specific language strands, comprising reception, (spoken, written and visual), production/expression (spoken, written and visual) interaction (spoken, written, visual and online) and mediation (of texts, concepts and communication). During class time students are encouraged to use the target languages, they are encouraged to express themselves freely during recreation.

## **Languages of instruction/Additional languages**

Our main language of instruction is English, but the subjects of Spanish, Catalan (both co-official languages in Catalonia), together with French are also taught. Chinese is also

taught as an extracurricular language.

<b>Languages of instruction</b>	
<b>Early Years</b>	English; (Gym in Spanish)
<b>PYP</b>	English; Spanish, Catalan and French (introduced in Year 5) are additional languages
<b>MYP</b>	English, Spanish; Catalan and French are additional languages
<b>IB Diploma</b>	English and Spanish. Catalan and French are extra-curricular subjects

## **Language Support**

Students who, on arrival, do not have a high level of Spanish, Catalan or English, receive special tuition in smaller groups, which prepare them to access normal classes. The contents of these special classes enable the child to carry out simple communicative exchanges and to express their basic needs or to refer to common everyday situations.

## **Learning Support for Language**

Where specific needs are identified for students in languages teachers differentiate activities in coordination with the Support Centre, which may, on occasions, provide specific learning plans and provide additional support in class or by withdrawing students or groups of students as required.

## **Language Qualifications**

During their school years, students will take exams from external institutions for the purpose of validating the knowledge they have in their various languages. In addition, when they complete ESO (accredited by the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Ministry of Education) they acquire level C from the Instituto Cervantes in Spanish and level C in Catalan. At present St Peter's School is a Cambridge examining centre for international

IGCSE and 'A' level exams and an exam preparation centre for the ESOL qualifications (First, Advanced and Proficiency).

	<b>Y8</b>	<b>Y9</b>	<b>Y10</b>	<b>DPI</b>	<b>DP2</b>
French			A1	A2	B1
English	Cambridge B2 First		Cambridge C1 Advanced		Cambridge C2 Proficiency
Catalan			Level C		
Spanish			Level C		

To reinforce the language policy the school organises trips and exchanges in which students have the opportunity to practise the different languages which they learn at school and to get to know cultures in different environments. Examples of destinations include: Biarritz, Berlin, New York, London and Paris.

To consolidate use of the local language we organise trips to places of cultural or natural interest where Catalan is used as the language of communication.

We also take part in forums in which oral language skills, including mediation, form a key element:

<b>PYP</b>	Internal debates
	TED Talks
	Theatre Productions
	Yr 5 Exhibition
<b>MYP</b>	Liga debate castellano CICAIE
	Model United Nations España
<b>DP</b>	Model United Nations New York
	Liga debate inglés CICAIE
	Liga debate inglés CICAIE
	Olimpiada de filosofía
	Modelo Parlamento Europeo

## Languages of communication within school and with families

The principal working language at school is English, but other languages are used in certain situations depending upon the usage made by families or teachers.

<b>Website</b>	English, Spanish
<b>E-mails</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Blogs</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Facebook</b>	English, Spanish, Catalan
<b>Twitter</b>	English, Spanish, Catalan
<b>Parent Interviews</b>	As required (English, Spanish, Catalan). We also encourage the use of translators for those parents who are unable to use these languages.
<b>Parent meetings</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Staff Meetings</b>	English, Spanish, Catalan
<b>Informative Brochures</b>	English, Spanish

## The Early Years and PYP Programme

The focus in Early Years is upon global language development. We aim to provide a rich set of educational experiences in the target language (English) and encourage and model use of English in the classroom. Our aim is to create environments in which the target language is the main language used and modelled to ensure that students have maximum exposure to the language. However, we also encourage and welcome the child's own contributions in other languages and use these as opportunities for learning, by comparing and contrasting and modelling responses in the target language. The child's whole linguistic repertoire is respected and valued and seen as fundamental, not only for their successful acquisition of new language but also for their sense of identity and social and emotional wellbeing.

Spanish is introduced into the curriculum through gym lessons up until Year 1.

At this stage students who arrive with little or no prior knowledge of English are supported by teachers within the classroom. If additional learning support is required this is planned in conjunction with the learning specialists from the Support Centre.

From Year 1 upwards students are introduced to Spanish and Catalan as additional languages and French is also introduced in Year 5.

Our programme is based upon units of inquiry which are planned by class teachers in conjunction with specialists. Opportunities for learning about language across languages are provided through joint thematic planning of units wherever appropriate, but language learning also takes place in stand-alone classes and, from time to time, in joint activities in which more than language is used. As in the Early Years we focus upon the target languages in class, but welcome and encourage pedagogically-based strategies to link use of their home languages to support their language learning.

Students who, on arrival, do not have a high level of Spanish, Catalan or English, receive special tuition in smaller groups, which prepare them to access normal classes. The contents of these special classes enable the child to carry out simple communicative exchanges and to express their basic needs or to refer to common everyday situations.

Where specific needs are identified for students in languages teachers differentiate activities in coordination with the Support Centre, which may, on occasions provide specific learning plans and provide additional support in class or by withdrawing students or groups of students as required.

## **The Middle Years Programme**

Our language policy reflects the requisites of the MYP programme. Each member of staff recognises that each one has an important, active role to play in developing the linguistic competences of our students. In an international context such as St Peter's School the recognition and support in perfecting the home languages of our students is a very important factor. To this end we have access to materials in different languages in our Resource Centre. Students are able to use these resources whenever they need them and they are guided and advised as to how best to use them by teachers and the school librarian.

The school offers those students are not proficient enough in English or Spanish to follow the main classes are the chance to take part in language support classes in which they are introduced to the basic notions necessary for them to follow classes in subjects which are taught in those languages. The teacher who is responsible for Language Support classes in both Spanish and English follows the MYP methodology and plans their classes according to levels/phases.

For a student to be able to follow a Language and Literature course either in Spanish or English they must have at least level/phase 4 in Language Acquisition. Any student who has not reached level 4 in Language Acquisition cannot take the Language and Literature course in the corresponding language.

Where specific needs are identified for students in languages teachers differentiate activities in coordination with the Support Centre, which may, on occasions provide specific learning plans and provide additional support in class or by withdrawing students or groups of students as required.

## **The Diploma Programme**

The School Language Policy meets the requirements of the Diploma Programme of the International Baccalaureate as it follows a multilingual curricular design.

St Peter's School offers a programme in both languages (Spanish and English), so that the student can obtain a bilingual certificate as an additional extra in their learning. For this reason, we offer language and Literature both in Spanish and in English as subjects in group 1 and group 2. In this way, in both options there are subjects in Spanish and English.

In our Admissions Policy, the level requirements for Spanish and English are stated according to the pathway the student has chosen.

*"The most important thing you gain when you learn a language is that you establish what is called a bridge between your mother tongue and the target language. This bridge is essential in communication and mutual understanding among diverse nations and varied cultures."*

Ahmed Anter