

Language policy at the Nazareth High School in Warsaw

I. I School's Mission

The Nazareth High School in Warsaw's aim is the upbringing and education complementary to a full and integral development of a person based on Christian values, so that the students are able to continue their education on higher levels and actively participate in social life.

II. II School's Vision

The Nazareth High School in Warsaw is a girls-only private catholic school. Since the beginning it combines tradition and modernity. We wish to provide a solid education, which will result in students' ability to find their place in the fast-changing world. Our graduates are studying at some of the best universities, both in Poland and abroad. Well-qualified and friendly teachers aim to help students' integral development of their personality and character. The foundation of this all are – as told by the Gospel – love, truth and freedom. In this spirit our students are being prepared to find their own mission in life and to take responsibility for the good of their homeland.

Our school community consists not only of students and teachers – both sisters and secular people – but also parents, who are their children's first and main teachers. We are here to share all our experience in education and help them fulfill their calling, looking at the Holy Family who is the patron saint of our convent.

Our school community, in the spirit of Christian values and the teaching of the Catholic Church, is open to people of every culture, religion and nationality.

Among many qualities that distinguish our broad educational offer are a bilingual class and the IB Diploma Program. IB and High School candidates from outside Warsaw can apply for a place in the school dormitory.

III. III School's language philosophy:

1. The School believes that language is a privileged subject when it comes to young people's education and upbringing. We also believe that language:
 - a) Is the most important mode of communication between people and also the most important way of expressing oneself
 - b) Allows people to share their knowledge and experience with others
 - c) Lets people become part of a community
 - d) Creates a sense of belonging and safety
 - e) Is a heritage and a value, cherished in family and in school, where one learns not only the language itself, but also through language and about the language
 - f) Is a tool necessary to the shaping of a person.
2. The School also believes that the learning of Polish language:
 - a) Is one of the basic elements of our national identity and a treasure of the national culture

- b) Expresses the caring for keeping the national identity in the era of globalisation
 - c) Affirms a precious input of Polish language and culture in the building of a multicultural world
 - d) Helps perfect and develop language proficiency and the language itself as a tool of communication
 - e) Shows that there is a desire to elevate language culture, spread the knowledge about it and its role in the culture
 - f) Helps promote Polish language in the world and prevent its vulgarisation
 - g) Makes it possible for the people of other nationalities to fully participate in our country's public life.
3. The School makes other languages available for learning because we want:
- a) To communicate with people from different countries, cultures, with different traditions and history
 - b) To get to know other ways of seeing the world and ways of communication
 - c) To better understand the world and people in it
 - d) Our students to be educated internationally
 - e) To actively participate in multinational institutions
 - f) Our students to later find their place on the international labour market
 - g) To support the IB Learners, who express themselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways; who collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups (IB Learner Profile)
 - h) To provide students from national minorities with an opportunity to get to know the national languages further
 - i) To meet the needs of migrating and mixed families, who might experience some difficulties with clearly defining their nationality and mother tongue.

IV. IV Language Policy

1. Introduction

Most students, teachers and other Staff members are Polish. There are some students with dual citizenship.

The language of instruction is Polish, but some of the subjects in the bilingual classes are taught in English. School documentation is run in Polish, and the documentation for IB in English. To meet our students' and their parents' needs all of the school and IB documents are available in these two languages. Polish is the language of everyday communication at our school. Presence of some teachers and students who do not speak Polish encourages the use of English in everyday situations, helps build friendly relations and sensitise to cultural differences and language needs of the school environment.

It was and is a school tradition to teach foreign languages, including classics. Since 1919, apart from learning their mother tongue, our students were required to learn two foreign languages. Apart from native languages and English, students can study other foreign languages such as German and French (at basic or advanced level).

Moreover, the school provides regular English conversation classes with a native speaker.

2. Teaching foreign languages

The school offers general and bilingual classes as well as the IB Diploma Programme, which is preceded by a bilingual programme of study. The programme of study for High School students is as follows:

1.1. General classes in High School:

- a) 5h of Polish per week
- b) 5h of English per week; students are divided into groups that differ in level
- c) 3h of French or German per week; either language can be learnt *ab initio* (from the basics) or as continuation
- d) Polish as a foreign language – as extra classes for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad.

1.2. Bilingual classes

- a) 5h of Polish per week
- b) 6h of English per week; students are divided into groups that differ in level
- c) 3h of French or German per week; either language can be learnt *ab initio* (from the basics) or as continuation
- d) Polish as a foreign language – as extra classes for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad.

1.3. Pre-IB class, which is bilingual:

- a) Polish (students follow Polish educational program), Polish History, Polish Geography, Social Studies, Civil Safety Education, Physical Education – taught in Polish.
- b) Religious Education, History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Introduction to Entrepreneurship – taught in English.
- c) French or German, according to the level
- d) English in the extended amount of hours, with preparation for the CAE exam and an introduction to academic writing
- e) Polish as a foreign language – as extra classes for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad.

1.4. IB DP classes:

- a) English is the language of instruction, with the following exceptions: Polish language classes, Polish History and Polish Geography which are taught to the students that are Polish citizens.
- b) Polish citizens have compulsory Polish language classes
- c) Polish citizens are also provided with Polish History and Polish Geography classes according to the MEN (Ministry of National Education) educational program, in consultation with student's parents/legal guardians

- d) Students that are not Polish citizens are provided with Polish as a foreign language classes, in consultation with student's parents/legal guardians
- e) Students can learn two or three languages, depending on their personal subject choices
- f) Students take part in an Academic Writing Course during which they prepare for written tasks in the IB.
- g) Following languages are available for learning:
 - From group 1: Polish: literature (SL and HL), English: literature and language (SL and HL), self-taught to students whose mother tongue is other than Polish or English
 - From group 2: English B (SL and HL), German B (SL and HL), French (*ab initio*, SL and HL).

All students have a right to individual consultations with language as well as non-language teachers. All IB DP teachers are responsible for the linguistic development of students. In practice, this means that the linguistic abilities of students are taken into account when planning lessons, tests and writing internal assessments, if need be, organizing additional linguistic consultations.

What is more, IB DP teachers participate in monthly meetings during which current student problems are spoken of - including language problems. IB teachers work together to devise solutions to raise students' linguistic abilities so that their language is not an obstacle to gaining knowledge.

2. Language clubs and self-teaching

The School is willing to meet students' individual and group language interests. In response it provides students with the following extra-curricular English on levels: pre-FCE, FCE, CAE

In the computer lab students can study languages individually, using a vast collection of audio-visual programs and on-line courses. School library collection is equally rich, containing books as well as other media in different languages.

3. Other ways of promoting language learning:

3.1. Teachers prepare students for many language competitions:

- a) In Polish:
 - School Competition of Language Correctness (Szkolny Konkurs Poprawności Językowej)
 - Polish Language Olympics for High School students (Olimpiada Języka Polskiego dla Licealistów)
 - Polish Language Competition (Kuratoryjny Konkurs Języka Polskiego)
 - Olimpus Contest (Olimpiada Przedmiotowa: Olimpus)
 - Omnibus, Multitest and Albus competitions
 - External declamation competitions
 - External literature competitions

- External competitions for School Papers.

b) In English:

- Olympus Contest (Olimpiada Przedmiotowa: Olympus)
- English High Flier
- English Language Competition (Kuratoryjny Konkurs Języka Angielskiego)
- English Language Olympics for High School students (Olimpiada Języka Angielskiego dla Licealistów)

c) In French:

- French and Francophone Prose and Poetry Competition
- French and Francophone Song Competition
- French Language Olympics for High School students (Olimpiada Języka Francuskiego dla Licealistów)
- French Language Competition (Kuratoryjny Konkurs Języka Francuskiego)
- Inter-school competition of knowledge about other cultures (Międzyszkolny Konkurs Kulturoznawczy)

d) In German:

- German Language Olympics (Olimpiada Języka Niemieckiego)
- German Language Competition (Kuratoryjny Konkurs Języka Niemieckiego)
- Olympus contest (Olimpiada Przedmiotowa: Olympus)
- Konkurs Fundacji Łowcy Talentów JERSZ: "Deutschfreund"

3.2. Each year we have a festival: International Days or European Language Days during which each class, in different artistic forms, show the others their chosen country's language and culture.

3.3. Thanks to the cooperation with Harima High School in Japan, our students can not only get to know this country's culture and tradition, but also – as an extra-curricular activity – Japanese language. Similarly, Harima High School lets its students learn Polish language as a second foreign language.

3.4. Students are involved in the creation of school papers – supervised by Polish language teachers they write different articles and do interviews with many interesting people.

4. Students as language teachers

Older High School students are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with younger and less skilled ones. Learning groups are created, where younger students

can get help with their homework from every subject and language. Polish students support their foreign friends in the process of learning Polish language. Moreover, students that were able to learn a new language abroad sometimes organise their own language courses at school; everyone is welcome to join.

5. Language exam to IB DP

Pre-IB and IB candidates for whom English is a second language are required to pass an entry exam on levels respectively *B2 and C1 Common European Framework of Reference Language Level*. Students prepare for the language entrance exam as part of their pre-IB English course. If one fails the exam, there is a possibility of re-sitting it. However, the second exam should be preceded by intensive learning time.

6. Special educational needs

Students diagnosed with learning problems are taught individually, with compliance to any recommendations of a counseling and guidance centre. Form teachers and the school psychologist coordinate the information flow and support teachers in the individualisation of the teaching process. Students can participate in re-educational activities organised either at school or at counseling and guidance centres. Moreover, language teachers, as well as any other teachers, have their consultancy hours, during which they can help students overcome their learning difficulties.

Teachers apply different assessment criteria in teaching languages from groups 1. and 2. They adjust their forms of communication according to the students' language abilities. If English is student's second language, teachers from subject groups 3., 4. and 5. do not lower the marks if there are any language mistakes in the assignment, as long as it is still fully understandable.

7. Cooperation with parents

The School is known for its cooperation with parents in every field of educational and didactic work. Parents, in cooperation with school, shape their daughters' national identity; teach respect and openness to other cultures.

The School teaches this openness to other countries and cultures. In cooperation with parents, it provides many opportunities to participate in different international projects, such as:

- a) Model United Nations
- b) Space Camp in Turkey
- c) An exchange with Harima High School in Japan and an male High School in Budapest
- d) Global Outreach in USA
- e) Language courses in United Kingdom and Ireland.
- f) Youth Cultural Heritage in Greece
- g) Exchange programmes with schools in Hungary and the Czech Republic

Because of parents' different language abilities, the School runs the whole documentation in two languages – Polish and English. Also, if it is needed, the School holds meetings with parents in two languages.

The School makes decision about any additional hours of learning Polish language for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad in consultation with their parents. Common arrangements are made also about any extra-curricular activities that provide an opportunity to make up for any differences in various subjects' educational programs.

8. Teachers' qualifications for teaching in bilingual and international classes

Bilingual and international classes' teachers possess not only higher education diplomas, but also language certificates confirming their knowledge of English on the level required by MEN (Ministry of National Education). Their level of proficiency provides them with abilities to teach in English, make themselves familiar with and prepare documentation in that language.

9. Teachers' language education

Believing that every teacher is a language teacher, the School persistently encourages teachers to improve their language skills by taking outside qualification courses while providing them with an opportunity of a conversation with native speakers, who are also members of the staff. The School supports its staff's language education as far as it can afford it financially.