

Language policy at the Nazareth High School in Warsaw

I. School's Mission

The mission of the Nazareth High School in Warsaw is to provide high quality 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. School's Vision

The Nazareth High School in Warsaw is a girls-only private Catholic school. Since its beginning it has combined tradition and modernity. We wish to provide an excellent all-round 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 develop their personality and character. The foundation of this is – 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 welfare 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 fulfil 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 in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, is open to people of every culture, religion and nationality.

Among many qualities that distinguish our broad educational offer is the bilingual class and the IB Diploma Programme in the High School. The IB and High School candidates from outside of Warsaw can apply for a place in the school boarding house.

III. School's language philosophy:

1. The School believes that language is a vital subject when it comes to young peoples' 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 our heritage and a value cherished in family and in school where one learns not only the language itself, but also about the language
 - f) Is a tool necessary to the shaping of a person.
2. The School also believes that the learning of the Polish language:
 - a) Is one of the basic elements of our national identity and is the treasure of our national culture
 - b) Expresses our caring for keeping the national identity in the era of globalisation

- c) Along with Polish culture fosters 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 culture
 - f) Emphasizes the status of Polish as the first language
 - g) Makes it possible for the people of other nationalities to fully participate in our country's public life.
3. The School teaches foreign languages 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. Language Policy

1. Introduction

Most students, teachers and other staff members in our school are Polish, but we welcome all nationalities. Some students hold a double citizenship. Apart from Polish teachers the school employs foreigners, at the moment there are two English native speakers, one from the USA and the other from the UK.

School documentation is run in Polish, and the documentation for the IB in English. To meet our students' and their parents' needs all of the school and the IB documents are available in two languages: English and Polish. Polish is the language of everyday communication at our school. However, as some teachers and students do not speak Polish, the use of English is encouraged as it helps build friendly relations and sensitize students to cultural differences and language needs of every member of the school community.

Teaching foreign languages has always been the school's tradition. Since 1919, apart from learning their mother tongue, our students have had the opportunity to learn two foreign languages: German and French. At present all of the Polish students learn Polish. All students have the opportunity to learn English and either French or German. In the High School they can choose between basic and advanced levels. Moreover, the school provides regular English conversation classes with a native speaker.

1.1. National classes in High School have:

- 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 a continuation
- d) Polish as a foreign language – as extracurricular classes for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad.

1.2 Bilingual classes in High School:

- a) 5h of Polish per week
- b) At least 6 hours of English per week, some of which are taught by a native speaker.
- c) 3h of French or German per week; either language can be learnt *ab initio* (from the basics) or as a continuation
- d) Polish as a foreign language – as extracurricular classes for foreigners or Polish girls returning from abroad
- e) Bilingual teaching of some of the following subjects: History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Introduction to Entrepreneurship. The proportions between the lessons taught in Polish and those conducted in English are determined by teachers based on the general level of the command of English within each class.

1.3. Pre-IB class is taught:

- a) Polish (students follow Polish curriculum), Polish History, Polish Geography, Civics, Safety Education and Physical Education – taught in Polish.
- b) Religious Education, History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Introduction to Entrepreneurship and IT– taught in English.
- c) French or German, according to level
- d) a higher number of English classes including preparation for the CAE exam and an introduction to academic writing
- e) Polish as a foreign language – as extracurricular 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, German B and French B classes,
- b) Polish citizens have compulsory Polish language classes
- c) Polish citizens are also provided with Polish History and Polish Geography classes in pre-IB according to the MEiN educational program.
- d) Students that are not Polish citizens are given the opportunity to study Polish as a foreign language, in consultation with student's parents/legal guardians
- e) Students can learn two or three languages, depending on their personal subject choices
- f) Students can study the following languages:
 - From group 1: Polish: literature (SL and HL), English A: Language and Literature (SL and HL), mother tongue as a school-supported self-taught course.
 - From group 2: English B (SL and HL), German B (SL and HL), French (*ab initio*, SL and HL).

g) As part of their English classes students are taught academic writing and are familiarised with the academic integrity policy

2. Ways of promoting language learning:

2.1. Students are encouraged to take part in many language competitions:

- a) In Polish:
 - Polish Language Olympics for High School students (Olimpiada Języka Polskiego dla Licealistów)
 - Polish Language Competition (Kuratoryjny Konkurs Języka Polskiego)
 - Olympus Contest (Olimpiada Przedmiotowa: Olympus)
 - Omnibus, Multitest and Albus competitions
 - External literature competitions
 - External competitions for School Papers

- b) In English:
 - Olympus Contest (Olimpiada Przedmiotowa: Olympus)
 - English Language Olympics for High School students (Olimpiada Języka Angielskiego dla Licealistów)
 - Interdisciplinary linguistic Geography competition (Interdyscyplinarny Konkurs Geograficzno - Językowy)

- 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)
 - Competition organized by the Foundation of Talent Scouts JERSZ: "Deutschfreund"

2.2. Each year we have German and French Days.

2.3. 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 – the Japanese language. Similarly, Harima High School provides its students with classes of Polish as a second foreign language.

2.4. Students supervised by their Polish language teachers have the opportunity to write articles for a school magazine.

2.5. Students have the opportunity to go to USA on a scholarship: Global Outreach

2.6. Students are provided with an opportunity to go to Hungary/Germany on an exchange programme.

2.7. Students are given the chance to study English on the Summer Language Camp in Arclow, Ireland

3. Students as language teachers

As part of their CAS classes older High School students are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with their younger and less skilled fellow students. Learning groups are created where younger students can get help with their homework in every subject. Also, Polish students support their foreign friends in the process of learning the Polish language.

4. English entrance 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 *B1+ and C1* respectively (*Common European Framework of Reference Language Level*). If a student fails the exam, there is a possibility of re-sitting it.

5. Special educational needs

According to our Access and inclusion policy, students diagnosed with learning problems are taught individually, with compliance to the recommendations of the counselling and guidance centre. The form teacher and a school counselor coordinate the information flow and support teachers in the individualisation of the teaching process. Students can participate in re-educational activities organised at counselling and guidance centres. Moreover, every teacher is obliged to hold tutorials 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 a 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 fully understandable.

6. Cooperation with parents

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

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

- a) Model United Nations
- b) An exchange with Harima High School in Japan
- c) An exchange with Hungary/Germany
- d) Global Outreach in USA
- e) Language courses in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

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

The School makes decisions about any additional hours of the Polish language for foreigners or Polish students returning from abroad in consultation with their parents. Parents are also consulted about extracurricular activities that provide an opportunity to make up for any differences in the syllabi of different subjects.

7. Teachers' qualifications for teaching in bilingual, pre-IB and IB classes

Bilingual and international classes teachers hold not only higher education diplomas, but also language certificates confirming their knowledge of English at B2 level required by MEiN (Ministry of National Education). This level of proficiency enables them to teach their subject in English, familiarise themselves with and prepare documentation in that language.

8. Teachers' language education

Believing that every teacher is a language teacher, the School persistently encourages teachers to improve their language skills by taking teacher training courses and offers financial support as far as possible, while providing them with an opportunity of a conversation with native speakers, who are also members of the staff.