



Brentwood School

SENIOR SCHOOL LANGUAGES POLICY

Our Language Philosophy

Language and literacy are integral to exploring and sustaining personal development, cultural identity and intercultural understanding. English is the lingua franca at Brentwood School: it is both the language of instruction and it is the language of the host country in which the School is situated. We are committed to inclusion and therefore facilitating and enabling all students to develop English in order to fully access the curriculum. At the same time, we value and celebrate diversity in our School community and enable all students whose first language is not English to study their mother tongue, in the spirit of additive bilingualism and thereby affirming their identity. We are committed to the principles of international mindedness and open-mindedness and expect all our students to study at least one foreign language in addition to their mother tongue, at least up to GCSE level. And we have the capacity for students to study three foreign languages to GCSE level. Facility with languages, and understanding of language and linguistic register is empowering and is instrumental in our students becoming effective communicators and life-long learners. Language is central to all learning and all teachers regardless of their subject are aware of their responsibilities as teachers of language.

The School Context and Language Profile of our Student Body

We are a School of around 1200 pupils situated in an ethnically diverse area in Essex. Our small boarding houses (around 80 pupils) also enables us to take pupils whose families reside all over the world. The language of instruction at the School is English, but around 5% of pupils have a mother tongue other than this or speak another language or languages with equal fluency alongside English at home. This 5% is made up of a very diverse number of languages indeed. We identify pupils whose mother tongue is not English and provide tailored additional support through our EAL (English as an Additional Language) Department.

Our usual English language requirement at admission is: A2-B1 Level on the Common European Framework (IELTS equivalent 4.5-5.0) for First to Third Form entry; B1 Level (IELTS 5.0) for Fourth to Fifth Form entry; B2 Level (IELTS 5.5) for Sixth Form entry.

At application and admission to the School, students joining the School are asked about what languages they speak at home, including community languages. This information is recorded in our Management Information System, SIMS.

The Languages Curriculum

Our languages curriculum is personalised to the individual needs of our students, providing additional support for those who need it, while enabling students to study a wide range of languages.

First Form – All First Form pupils study four languages: French, German, Spanish and Latin.

Second Form – Pupils have the opportunity to continue with all four of these languages. Students are permitted to switch one or two of their modern foreign languages for Classical Greek or Global Perspectives. Some students also have their study supplemented by a Language Development course to support their language learning.

Third Form – Pupils continue the language route chosen in Second Form.

Fourth Form – Pupils choose GCSE options. The expectation is that all students will continue with one modern foreign language, but can opt for up to four languages in the option blocks if they wish. In very exceptional circumstances, in the case of a student with particular Special Educational Needs, and with the permission of the Deputy Head Academic, a student may be given permission to not study a modern foreign language.

Fifth Form – Pupils continue with their GCSE courses.

Lower Sixth Form – Pupils choose between A Levels and the IB Diploma. French, Spanish, German, Latin and Classical Greek are available in both routes. Chinese ab initio, Chinese B, Italian ab initio and German ab initio courses are also available in the IB Diploma route, as are English B and a number of Language A Literature courses for students whose mother tongue is not English.

Upper Sixth Form – Pupils continue the courses begun in Lower Sixth.

We value all language-learning and aim to support the acquisition and development even of any language including those which we do not teach ourselves. We will facilitate the accreditation of community languages and development of mother tongue by supporting pupils in sitting examinations through the School wherever possible. Recent examples include GCSE Arabic, GCSE Russian, GCSE Chinese, A Level Russian, A Level Chinese.

Languages within the IBDP

English A Literature is delivered by the English Department, Classical Languages (Latin and Classical Greek) are delivered by the Classics Department, but all other Language A subjects and Language B subjects (including English B) fall under the remit of the Modern Languages Faculty and the Head of Modern Languages.



We are currently able to offer taught Language A Literature courses, both Higher and Standard Level, in: English; German; Spanish; Italian; French; Chinese.

We also offer Self-taught School-supported Language A Literature courses for students whose mother tongue is not English, or in years when we do not have sufficient students for one of the above languages to justify running a full taught course. These students are supervised by a Language A Literature teacher at School who monitors their progress, teaches general literary analysis and ensures they meet the requirements of the course. We employ Language A Literature teachers from other IB World Schools as tutors to assess key pieces of work over the two year course.

We are currently able to offer (though do not always have sufficient students to run) Language B courses, both Higher and Standard Level, in: German; French; Spanish; Chinese; English; Latin; Classical Greek.

We are currently able to offer (though do not always have sufficient students to run) ab initio courses in: German; French; Spanish; Chinese; Italian.

Languages at ab initio level are only open to pupils with virtually no previous knowledge of the language, or who studied it at Key Stage 3 only. Ab initio language courses are not available for students who have studied the subject to GCSE level (or who have equivalent ability).

Language B courses are suitable for students with GCSE-level knowledge (or equivalent), or students who perhaps have a strong oral ability from home but no

experience of the written language in an academic context. We normally expect students to have attained at least an A grade at GCSE to study Standard Level, and strongly advise A* at GCSE to study Higher Level. Students with a grade B or lower at GCSE are usually advised to undertake study of a different language at ab initio level.

Language A Literature courses require strong ability and experience of using the language in an academic context, though students need not be “native speakers”. We are fully committed to the principles of additive bilingualism and encourage students to develop and extend mother tongue ability, thereby valuing and affirming their identity, while also integrating them fully into the Brentwood School community. We celebrate students who attain the IB Bilingual Diploma at Prize Giving on Speech Day.

When students join the School, if there is any uncertainty as to which level language course would be appropriate, we assess these students formally.

English as an additional language

Students for whom English is not their first language participate fully in the School curriculum, alongside native English speakers. We are committed to inclusion and enabling all students to access the curriculum. We support our students for whom English is not their first language by offering additional EAL classes leading to an EAL GCSE in the Fifth Form, and the English B courses and IELTS classes in the Sixth Form. All subject teachers support the development of English by, for example, giving vocabulary lists of subject-specific terminology, and giving additional support where necessary. Advice and support is coordinated by the Head of EAL.