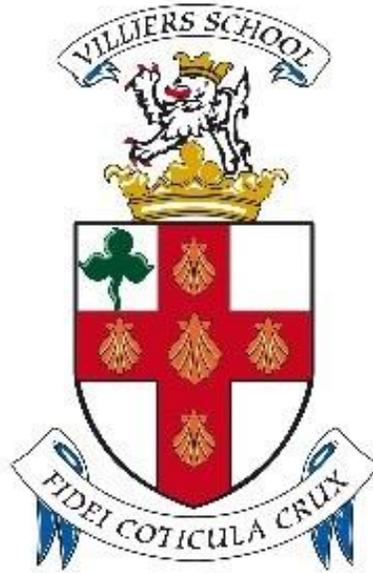


Villiers Secondary School



Language Policy

2017-2019

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1. Mission Statement

Villiers provides a broad and balanced education within a caring community. Our aim is to develop life and learning skills in order to face the challenges ahead with awareness and integrity.

Villiers School Ethos

Villiers School is a privately endowed, Co-educational, Boarding and Day School. The School maintains religious values in line with Protestant Traditions and as set out in the Scheme dated 21st December 1889 under the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act 1885. The philosophy of this school is such that it recognises, supports and endeavours to accommodate the right of the student to learn in an educationally conducive environment, regardless of innate ability, family/ social circumstances or religious affiliation. Villiers endeavours to educate students within the Church of Ireland / Presbyterian traditions however we also welcome members of other faiths. Villiers aims to ensure that the educational, emotional, spiritual, psychological and moral welfare of each individual student is provided for, while encouraging at all times the co-operation and assistance of parents /guardians of the students. Such aspirations are reflected in the structures and order of the School and are safeguarded by a Board of Governors nominated by the local Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Churches.

This ethos creates a very caring and highly academic environment for your child. This is in keeping with the tradition of Villiers School as founded under the will of Hannah Villiers in 1821.

2. Villiers school learner profile

The aim of education is to prepare students for the wider world so that they can participate and fully, both collaboratively and independently, in the local and international community. Developing on this the aim of the IBD Programme is to develop internationally minded

individuals who embrace their shared humanity and collective guardianship of the planet, so as to create a better and more peaceful world.

As educators we aim to instill the following learning skills:

- **ENQUIRERS**

Nurturing and developing skills for enquiry and research, both independently and cooperatively.

- **KNOWLEDGEABLE**

Developing theoretical understanding and knowledge, across a wide variety of disciplines, which impact on both a global and local level.

- **THINKERS**

Developing critical and creative thinking skills in order to analyse and act, in an ethical and rational manner, upon complex issues.

- **COMMUNICATORS**

Increasing competency and confidence in expressing opinions in more than one language. Developing the ability to listen to others and to share ideas and collaborate on projects.

- **PRINCIPLED**

Take responsibility for our actions and the consequence of them, thereby ensuring that we respect the dignity and rights of others.

- **OPEN-MINDED**

Develop an appreciation and understanding of the culture, values and traditions of others, in addition to our own.

- **CARING**

Demonstrate empathy, compassion and respect for those around us and ensure that we impact those we interact with in a positive manner.

- **RISK-TAKERS**

Embrace challenges with determination and prudence, working both independently and collaboratively to develop ideas and strategies.

- **BALANCED**

Strive for balance academically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

- **REFLECTIVE**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

- **LEADERS**

Take initiative when we see problems and cooperate with others to both motivate and facilitate change and guidance when needed.

- **STEWARDS**

Strive to make a positive difference so that the world we inhabit progresses into a more equitable and nonviolent place.

3. Rationale and statement of purpose

The purpose of the Language Policy is to outline the philosophy, practices and procedures for staff and students with regard to the development of languages within the school.

4. Language policy

Villiers School provides an education for all, which acknowledges, and is enriched by the diversity of ethnicity, culture and faith of its pupils.

Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those for whom English is an Additional Language, is ensured not only by direct language support from specialist teachers (EAL teachers), but also by a whole-school approach. This comprises of a learning environment that encompasses a varied range of teaching and learning strategies, multicultural and multilingual resources and displays, and school celebrations that embrace a wide range of world cultural events.

Language is central to teaching and learning in Villiers School. Almost all students choose a core Modern Foreign Language (French or German) in First Year, with Spanish available as an optional subject. Students generally continue with the study of their core language throughout their six years in the school. Students who opt for Spanish in First Year continue their studies throughout the Junior Cycle, and may opt to take Spanish in Senior Cycle also.

In Transition Year (Fourth Year), students have the option to sample modules in Mandarin Chinese and Japanese. These modules allow students to extend their language engagement to countries and cultures outside of Europe. Students may deepen their contact with Asian languages by pursuing an *ab initio* course in Japanese which can be continued throughout the final two years of Senior Cycle.

Irish, as the native language of our country, is central to teaching and learning with the majority of our student body participating in the subject throughout their time in school. Students from non-Irish backgrounds in Transition Year may participate in Irish Studies as a means of deepening their engagement with and understanding of the culture of their host country.

The Language Philosophy of Villiers School is centred on the principles of choice and access. To this end, the school's curriculum provides multiple opportunities for students to participate in language learning encompassing as wide a variety as practicable of languages and levels in order to encourage the participation of the entire student body. Allied with this are structures to facilitate and encourage access to language learning opportunities for students with English as an Additional Language, and students with Special Education Needs. This is ensured through close collaboration between language subject teachers and their colleagues in the EAL and SEN departments.

Throughout the school we aim to foster language learners who are curious and engaged in their learning, who take risks in pursuit of their language learning goals, and who are open-minded and reflective in relation both to their engagements with other cultures and with their own language learning.

Planning for teaching and learning aims to teach language meaningfully and in context. It aims to foster proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction through engagement with tasks and activities that are structured, student-centred and inquiry-based.

5. Language practices

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB Standard C3, Practice 7).

Villiers recognises and values the range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of its student body. Through its development and implementation of a language policy, and close collaboration between language and subject teachers (particularly EAL teachers), the policy aims to anticipate and address the learning needs of students accessing the curriculum through a language other than their mother tongue.

5.1 Implementation of language policy

The school has an EAL Unit. The Unit has been established to support bilingual pupils and teaching staff in the school.

The role of EAL teachers includes:

- Induction of newly arrived EAL pupils.
- Initial assessment of language level of EAL pupils.
- Teaching of small groups of pupils in the EAL Base (Derravoher Building), particularly those who are newly arrived.
- Providing in-class support to EAL pupils.
- Monitoring of EAL pupils' progress.
- Developing self-esteem of pupils.
- Liaising with teaching staff.
- Liaising with the pastoral care team.
- Provide advice on classroom strategies to support and include EAL pupils.

- Provide advice on differentiation of work for EAL pupils.
- Promote, encourage and support with available means the maintenance and development of pupils' first language.
- Collaborative planning including advice on strategies and resources, CPD courses, language needs assessment and linguistic, cultural and social background.
- Provide consultancy to staff on issues related to bilingualism and the learning and teaching of EAL pupils.

5.2 *Curriculum planning*

The needs of pupils in accessing the curriculum need to be carefully planned, as does the provision of a balanced and positive multicultural education.

Teachers need to ensure that:

- The language and learning needs of pupils are clearly identified and provided for
- The language and learning demands of the curriculum are analysed and support provided.
- Visual support is provided for key concepts.
- The support requirements of pupils are identified.

5.3 *Curriculum and classroom practice*

- Teachers should have high expectations of all pupils regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social background.
- Pupils' needs and abilities should be taken into account in designing activities and should have a clear sense of progression.
- There is evidence of development in oral communication and literacy through:
 - the awareness and utilisation of children's first language expertise.
 - provision of scaffolding/writing frames.
 - using story props where appropriate.

- Practice and development in all language skills in an integrated manner will be encouraged through:
 - collaborative activities that involve talk.
 - opportunities for feedback to others.
 - models produced by peers to show what can be achieved.
- Classroom organisation and groupings will encourage and support active participation by:
 - grouping and regrouping pupils for connected activities in order to develop language skills.
 - ‘supportive experts’ in each group ie. good readers and writers.
 - using a range of grouping strategies (mixed/like ability, language, interest, random, gender, age).
- Displays in the classroom and around the school will reflect linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Assessment methods allow pupils to show what they can do in all curriculum areas.
- Bilingual dictionaries should be available, and bilingual pupils should be encouraged to use them.
- Access to meaning should be provided by presenting and introducing lessons or topics with visual support:
 - videos
 - maps
 - posters
 - pictures
 - objects
 - use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Through collaborative implementation and review of these policies and procedures, Villiers demonstrates its commitment to IB Standard C Practices 1.8 (“Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students”)

and 3.8 (“Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.”)

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Villiers

The IB Mission statement echoes and reflects the holistic yet caring focus that already exists in Villiers School. The IBDP develops Villiers’ commitment to prepare students to face the challenges ahead with knowledge and integrity. Both Villiers and the IB strive to equip and prepare young people to be active, compassionate and lifelong learners in an international and multicultural community.

Through developing and regularly reviewing this philosophy, Villiers School demonstrates its commitment to upholding IB Standard A, Practice 4: “The school develops and promotes international-mindedness and all attributes of the IB learner profile across the school community.”

6. IBDP admission requirements

Students for whom English is a second language and who wish to enroll in the IBDP must demonstrate at least a level B2 (CEFR) before they will be considered for admission. For this reason, these students will be expected to take an admissions examination in English to determine whether this course will be of benefit to them.

All students will be interviewed by the Headmistress and/ or the DP Coordinator to determine their suitability for the course and to discuss the subject options available to them. Students may be asked to demonstrate core competencies for individual subjects prior to admission to the IBDP. Please see Villiers Admission Policy for full details on admission requirements and procedures.

7. Language and literature

The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages (IB Standard A, Practice 7)

The majority of the IB student body will take English A (Language and Literature) as their Group 1 language. This will be available at Standard and Higher level.

Where there are sufficient students enrolled to justify the provision of an alternative mother-tongue as Language A, the school will examine the viability of such an option, taking into consideration the expertise available within the school and local education community and the financial implications.

Language A English Language & Literature courses are taught by qualified native speakers who have benefitted from IB-recognised training.

8. Language acquisition

Language acquisition is central to the IB Diploma Programme, and all IB students at Villiers will study one Language B option at Standard or Higher level, and the possibility of offering a second option will be a priority as the programme grows and develops.

Villiers School prides itself on the range of languages on offer throughout the school. While it will not initially be possible to offer IB Language B options from across the full range of languages available in the school, staff development and training will be a priority to ensure that options available in this area can develop in line with student interest as the programme establishes itself.

Initially, it is envisaged that the Language B option available will correspond to the core language (French or German) studied in First to Fourth years by the majority of the IB cohort, which will be available at Standard and Higher levels. There will also be the possibility of taking

English B (Standard or Higher) for students for whom English is an additional language who are undertaking an alternative Language A as outlined in the previous section.

As *ab initio* Japanese is currently available in the Senior Cycle at Villiers, it will also be available as a Group 2 or additional language for Villiers IB students.

Collaborative planning and reflection focus on facilitating students to develop the basic skills for oral, written and visual communication in a structured and sequenced manner while encouraging them to think for themselves, recognize patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language and use it for discovery and self-expression.

9. Language resources

The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB Standard B2, Practice 11).

Language teachers employ, and make available for independent student use, a range of books, newspapers, magazines, films and multimedia resources.

The school's ICT facilities are employed in the classroom for teaching and learning, and made available outside of class time to encourage independent learning and research. Language teachers use ICT to suggest and provide resources for independent study, to monitor student development of language and independent-learning skills, and to gather material for assessment.

The school library provides a range of books in a variety of levels and languages taught in the school, and the librarian is available to encourage and advise students in the selection of appropriate reading material. The library also maintains subscriptions to newspapers and magazines in the languages taught, and students are encouraged to avail of the opportunity to select their own texts for classroom exercises and assessments wherever practicable.

The school community itself provides ample opportunities for language exchange, with native speakers of all the languages taught in the school being part of the student body. This provides ample opportunity for formal and informal peer-learning.

Finally, an area for future development will involve the establishment of links with educational institutions on the wider Limerick community to increase the range and depth of language learning opportunities available to IB students in Villiers School.

These collaborative and community-based approaches to language learning also demonstrate its commitment to IB Standard B, Practice 2.7: “The school ensures access to information on global issues and diverse perspectives.”

10. Disability and special educational needs

Villiers School welcomes pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Such applications are subject to the Admission Policy. In addition, Villiers may subsequently access pupils’ records or personal education programmes and targets from his/her previous school/s and apply to the Department of Education and Science for resources to support these pupils.

11. Code of behaviour, discipline and academic malpractice

The Code of Behaviour and Discipline contains the School’s policy on positive behaviour and discipline and on matters of serious indiscipline, including suspensions and expulsions. Please see the separate Academic Honesty Policy regarding Academic Malpractice.

12. Review of language policy

The review of the Language Policy is a collaborative process involving relevant stakeholders including but not limited to Senior Management, Language teachers and the IBDPC. All policies will be formally reviewed at least biannually and any changes will be submitted to the Board of Governors for acceptance.

References and Resources

Guidelines for developing a school language policy. IBO, 2008.

Guidance for language provision in groups 1 and 2. IBO, 2009.

Programme standards and practices. IBO, 2010.

EAL Policy, Villiers School, 2015.