

Gymnázium a SOS Rokycany (G+SOS) is a state grammar school with more than a century of tradition and provides students with general education in a four-year and an eight-year programme. IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) is implemented in one of the four-year programmes, comprises the last two years of study there and is based on a curriculum called *Inspiration and Knowledge in Context*. The aim of the educational process is to guarantee universal and complex development for each student including motivation for lifelong learning, creative education and promotion of logical thinking and problem-solving techniques. We are not aiming for a particular focus or field; our priority is a satisfied student supported by an individual approach. The following policies (Admissions Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, Assessment Policy, Inclusion/Learning Support requirements Policy, Language Policy) have been elaborated to provide framework for the educational processes at Gymnázium a SOS Rokycany and to present our school's attitude towards learning and teaching.

Language Policy

"Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going."
Rita Mae Brown

1. Purpose of Language Policy

The purpose of this document is to outline the practices of learning and teaching languages at G+SOS. Furthermore, it provides information about the languages of instruction, and about other languages which our students may choose to study. It also shows the practices we use in accordance with the IB practices, and the practices our school follows in order to support the languages of instruction and to support students with a different mother tongue than Czech.

This document is also in close conjunction with other policies (SEN Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, Assessment Policy, and Admissions Policy) and documents relevant to the IB DP offered at our school. Together they form a complete set of documents which respect and follow the philosophy of the IBO.

1. 1. Philosophy

The philosophy is the core of teaching and learning at our school and our staff promotes various principles and standards (as introduced above).

In addition, in order to secure a high level of a learner's experience at our school, we acknowledge that:

- language is a primary means of learning, teaching, and communicating in life
- all teachers are, in fact, language teachers who secure learners' language development in their field/subject
- becoming a multilingual person enables our students to become global citizens
- the process of learning any language is a never-ending process
- acquiring language knowledge is one of the key components of students' and teachers' personal, intellectual, and global growth
- promoting international mindedness is a key element in order to become a global citizen
- ensuring positive learning environment secures higher chances of students' growth
- supporting students to be successful at acquiring a language is an important part of the learning process
- supporting students' mother tongue different from the languages of instructions helps them to be successful in their studies
- providing students with various learning and teaching strategies and techniques is more intriguing when learning languages, we can raise their awareness and understanding of their own and other cultures

- applying different assessment techniques enables students to manifest themselves in various ways through different languages
- learning a language creates a cohesion among students with different cultural and national backgrounds and raises their awareness of those backgrounds

1. 2. The school language profile

Czech is the mother tongue of a vast majority of our students. However, there are a few students whose mother tongue is different and Czech is their second language. The most common language among these students is Vietnamese, because there are many students whose parents have moved to the Czech Republic in recent decades. Even though their mother tongue is not Czech, they have usually lived in the country since early childhood. Therefore, their level of Czech is generally sufficient enough for studies at our school. Of course, our school provides help and support to students who wish to join one of our programmes but their level of Czech is below the sufficient level.

Other mother tongues, which rarely appear at our school, are English and French. We also provide support and guidance to these students in order to aid them in their studies and to make their learning experience at our school more pleasant and successful.

2. School curriculum/languages of instruction

The language of instruction, in general, is the Czech language. However, students at IB DP have two languages of instructions – Czech and English (Czech is mandatory according to national requirements). English is the language of instruction for all the subjects taught in IB DP except for Language A: Czech literature, where the language of instruction is Czech. In addition, there are two extra lessons of Czech per week (continuation of the Czech course studied in the first two years) in IB DP as a supplement since our school does not offer Language A: language and literature.

Furthermore, our school implemented a new two-year bilingual programme prior to IB DP which has two languages of instructions – Czech and English. The curriculum of this programme is called ***Inspiration and Knowledge in Context***. Our school implemented this programme in order to prepare our students better for the IB DP curriculum. However, it still meets the requirements of the Czech curriculum system.

The subjects in this programme taught in English are the following: English, World literature, World history, Social studies, Regions in context and Discourse and communication. Other subjects are taught in Czech. The full description of this programme is available on the school website. In the first two years prior to IB DP students take 5 classes of English per week in order to raise their level of proficiency and to prepare them for IB DP.

Apart from the two languages of instruction, our school offers other foreign languages: Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Russian. They start their course in their first year and continue through all four years. However, in the third and fourth year they are not part of the IB DP, but a mandatory extracurricular course. In IB DP, the only language offered to students in Language acquisition group is English B HL.

2. 1. Mother tongue support

Supporting the continuous mother tongue development is crucial for all learners. Our school encourages students' improvement both in their mother tongue and other foreign languages. It is our belief that a mother tongue reflects the historical and cultural background and that all students should value and cherish their mother tongue.

Apart from that, we also provide support to students whose mother tongue is different from Czech. Nevertheless, currently there are only a few students who need the support, but in the course of time the number of such students will increase.

The following ideas show how mother tongue is promoted at G+SOS:

- students are offered extra courses outside of school
- students are provided with extra resources for their language development
- various activities, competitions, and celebrations are organized at our school
- students are encouraged to help each other; in and outside school
- mother tongue is fostered through various teaching, learning and assessment methods
- students are encouraged to read more literature
- students develop their mother tongue vocabulary in various fields/subjects throughout their studies at our school
- various literary sources are available in the school library (fiction and non-fiction)
- students are provided access to various academic websites
- teachers adapt various assessment techniques
- students are encouraged to participate in various competitions
- teachers adapt various techniques and procedures in order to develop positive motivation in students towards learning a language

2. 2. Language of instruction support

There are two languages of instruction at IB DP at our school – Czech and English. Since the mother tongue of almost all the students is Czech, the provided support for this language is described in the above section. Therefore, this section explains how our school supports the development of students' proficiency in English:

- in the first two years students have 5 English classes a week in order to improve their English to C1 level (according to CEFR)
- some subjects are taught in English in the first two years to broaden their academic vocabulary
- students have library access with various resources
- students are encouraged to read more literature in English
- access to various academic websites (Elsevier, JSTOR, and others) is provided in the school library
- teachers provide high-quality resources in English to students
- students are introduced to free online library (Project Gutenberg)
- teachers adapt various assessment techniques
- teachers adapt various teaching techniques and procedures in order to develop positive motivation in students towards learning a language
- students are encouraged to participate in various language competitions

3. Students' aims

Our school sets educational aims for the students, encourages students to set goals themselves and fulfil them. All members of the school community (teachers, parents, students and administration) make every effort to:

- ensure that all students are proficient and able to continue their studies in at least two languages – Czech and English
- increase students' language skills – both receptive and productive – as much as possible
- foster students' interest in studying and reading literature (both fiction and non-fiction) in different languages
- motivate students to explore other cultures through languages
- encourage students to express themselves (both in oral and written forms) in various situations in different languages without diffidence
- make students understand the connection between a culture and its language

4. Language practices

Our school is determined to follow the IB principles in order to aid the students in their process of learning, to promote the ideas of the IB organization, and of the IB learner profile.

Regarding the language policy, we follow these principles (Programme Standards and Principles):

- The school develops and promotes international-mindedness and all attributes of the IB learner profile across the school community. (Standard A, practice 4)
- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages. (Standard A, practice 7)
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programme(s). (Standard B2, practice 11)
- Collaborative planning and reflection incorporate differentiation for students' learning needs and styles. (Standard C1, practice 6)
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognize that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (Standard C1, practice 8)
- Teaching and learning address the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue. (Standard C3, practice 7)
- Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for language development of students. (Standard C3, practice 8)

5. Policy review

As this is a working document, our school will revise the policy as often as needed in order to adjust the policy to a current school's state. Additionally, our school will adapt this policy to any changes in practices and needs of the language learning processes as often and effectively as necessary.

6. Resources

Guidelines for developing a school language policy. (2018). International Baccalaureate Organization. Cardiff, Wales.

Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes. (2008). International Baccalaureate Organization. Cardiff, Wales.

Diploma Programme: From principles into practice. (2015). International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva, Switzerland.

Programme standards and practices. (2014). International Baccalaureate Organization. Geneva, Switzerland.

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Head of school: RNDr. Pavel Vlach, Ph.D.