**ZŠ Slobodného slovenského vysielača, Skuteckého 8, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia**

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Language policy

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| Policy written by : | Leadership team |
| Version number: | 01 |
| Applicable to: | Students of the international programme, teachers, parents |
| Approved on: | September 2023 |
| Review Cycle: | annually |
| Date of Next Review: | 2026 |
| Related Policies: | Assessment Policy, Inclusion Policy, Admission Policy, Academic honesty Policy |

**Mission Statement at ZŠ Slobodného slovenského vysielača, Skuteckého 8**

Together with parents, we strive to educate active, responsible, caring, satisfied, and lifelong learners. We develop the key competencies and skills needed for them to be able to create a better and peaceful world in a constantly changing and culturally diverse global society.

**Our vision**

A graduate of our school is a smart, communicative, caring young person who is prepared to further develop his abilities and skills for application in life in a global society.

**Our values**

freedom, responsibility, caring for people and the planet, trust, creativity, honesty, justice, tolerance, courage, empathy, decency

1. **Purpose of the Language Policy**

 This policy was created by International Program staff and leadership as a working document. This policy complies with accepted IB standards and guidelines. The language and academic objectives of our school are described in this document. This policy aims to provide an overview and key ideas of language education at the ZŠ SSV, which is part of the curriculum. It is based on real-world situations in a multicultural environment. The personnel and community of Základná škola SSV are fully committed to adhering to this directive, in order for our institution to effectively accomplish its objectives.

As a school offering education in an international program, we are committed to the following **Standard: Culture through policy implementation (0301)**, Practices :

Culture 4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language (0301-04)

Culture 4.1: The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)

Culture 4.2: The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)

Culture 4.3: The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)

Culture 4.4: The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)

*The above statements are taken from the Programme standards and practices- updated April 2022*

1. **School Language Philosophy**

 Our school recognizes that language plays a crucial role in promoting academic achievement, social and emotional wellbeing, and cultural understanding. As a school with Slovak as the mother tongue and English as the language of instruction, we are committed to promoting bilingualism and biculturalism among our students. This language policy outlines our approach to language teaching and learning, including the use of Slovak and English in different contexts.

 The preservation and development of the mother tongue are essential for the development of knowledge and the preservation of cultural identity. Research, communication and self-expression are essential for every subject in the curriculum and for everyday life. As a result, we see all members of our educational community as those who are responsible for the development of the language, both mother tongue and language of instruction.

 To gain knowledge in other areas and to learn new languages, it is necessary to have a solid foundation in the mother tongue. Furthermore, the holistic approach to education in the International Program is reflected in language teaching, which is a part of every lesson. Language instruction facilitates the development of self-expression and comprehension of communication, crucial lifelong abilities that are essential for effectively addressing complex phenomena through diverse approaches, perspectives, and subjects, whether during one's studies in an international program or in the future. In an increasingly connected and globalized world, language study promotes cultural enlightenment and international thinking. Those students who are aware of cultural diversity feel prouder of their own cultures. Both the study of the mother tongue and the study of foreign languages are essential for the development of "curious, informed, and caring youth." " People who help create a better and more peaceful world through cross-cultural understanding and respect encourage students around the world to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who understand that other people with their differences can be right.” (IBO Mission Statement)

1. **School Language Profile**

The vast majority of students at our school come from a Slovak background and Slovak is their mother tongue. A small percentage of students have a different mother tongue.

 The Primary school curriculum is delivered in the Slovak language. From the first grade, pupils begin to learn English for a period of three hours a week. The school encourages them to learn foreign languages by creating an environment at school and participating in various activities. We try to include the English language in many lessons, which means that we support access to English, but not at the expense of Slovak. During the 5th grade, the number of English language lessons is increased in order to help students better adapt to the transition from our primary school to the international MYP program. Students are admitted to the transition year based on language tests, as studying in a language other than their mother tongue is more demanding. Students in the preMYP – 6th year start studying another foreign language (German, French or Russian). Since most of our pupils speak Slovak as their mother tongue, students in preMYP - 6th grade are also given a reinforced English language, so that their initial level of English is high enough to use English as a communication language. A portion of the students, who consistently rank in the A class, continue to pursue studies in the national program, wherein the primary language of instruction remains Slovak.

 The school can also accept foreign students without knowledge of Slovak, but with a high ability to communicate in English.

 Until students reach a level of English that allows them to study almost entirely in English, teachers use a combination of Slovak and English in the international program. The working languages of the teachers are Slovak and English, respectively. Pupils receive guidance in their mother tongue.

 IBO and our school strongly support students in the study of their mother tongue, which is especially important at this age.

1. **Language Learning Support:**

 We understand that students may have different levels of proficiency in the Slovak language and English language, and we are committed to providing language teaching support so that students reach their full potential. This support may include:

• language courses for non-Slovak speakers,

• Slovak language course upon arrival in our country,

• teaching English from the 1st year of primary school (3 hours a week),

• language training in English in the transitional year – 5th year (6 hours of English per week and the CLIL method in other subjects),

• individual support – tutoring as needed,

• motivating learning environment – we have created a suitable environment, classes, and school routines that help develop students' language skills and interests,

• reading programs in the library – the library is open every day, during which students can borrow books and magazines or study and read on its premises. The library contains literature and publications in the school's taught languages,

• various teaching materials in the mother tongue and in English,

• involvement in international school cooperation projects,

• communication with peers abroad,

• competitions in foreign languages,

• professional development of teachers to support multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Since Slovak and English are important school languages, we would like to develop at a high level both languages that we will use at the A level.

1. **Language Provision**

Základná škola SSV offers four language programs as an international school community to meet the various needs of our students and families. These are the programs:

A. Mother tongue

B. Language of Instruction

C. Language Acquisition

D. Host-country Language

1. **Mother tongue programs**

 The mother tongue is an integral part of the culture and heritage of individuals and communities. The development of the mother tongue helps preserve and strengthen their linguistic and cultural heritage, building their identity and self-confidence. Children establish a connection between their language and culture, broaden their understanding of the world, and develop a more profound comprehension. The development of proficient language skills in the mother tongue has a favorable impact on children's academic accomplishments. Children who have a solid foundation in their mother tongue are more likely to learn new things, read with greater comprehension, write with greater skill, and achieve better results in several school subjects. Therefore, teaching the mother tongue in our school is essential and is also an integral part of teaching in the international program. Furthermore, IBO emphasizes the development of the mother tongue. We also strongly encourage parents to read, write and speak with their children in their mother tongue as these skills carry over to their English language development. We believe that this is the best way to maintain and develop their mother tongue.

 The mother tongue of almost all students, except for a small percentage, is Slovak. When teaching the Slovak language in all grades up to MYP3, we follow national standards, but we use IB principles, methods, and procedures. Our objective is to prepare our students for national testing in the Slovak language and mathematics, as well as for successful passing of entrance exams for secondary schools. They will have to transfer to another type of school to participate in the national program. They will only later continue with the DP program. We teach Slovak language and literature for five hours per week.

 We encourage students to utilize language as a means of acquiring knowledge, expressing themselves through personal expression, engaging in critical thinking, engaging in reflection, and engaging in interpersonal interactions. Furthermore, we provide assistance to our students in using the Slovak language in Slovak language classes, both in writing and orally. We would like to increase the value of the Slovak language among students and motivate them to use, share and develop it. We emphasize the acquisition of skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, observing, and presenting in a variety of settings. By analyzing literary works, organizing cultural events, and utilizing technology, we foster an appreciation of the Slovak language among students. We help students love the Slovak language by studying literature, planning cultural activities, and using technology. To improve Slovak, we also use the school library, where students can read and borrow books. We encourage students to participate in knowledge and recitation competitions, as well as to create a school journal.

 We provide opportunities for pupils whose mother tongue is not Slovak to learn it at school if the parents request it and the school can provide a teacher. Furthermore, we also create space for online education in the mother tongue. We will also provide these students with the opportunity to showcase their mother tongue and culture in the classroom. This is in line with IB policy regarding the importance of preserving the student's mother tongue.

1. **Language of instruction**

In the classes of the international program, the language of instruction is English. All subjects, with the exception of Slovak language and literature, are taught in English in the first grades through the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method in preMYP, until the students acquire sufficient proficiency in the English language. Throughout the school day, students are immersed in English, providing opportunities to develop language skills in authentic contexts. Improving students' academic English is the responsibility of every teacher.

 Students who are performing poorly on standardized tests, class assessments, or language assignments will receive appropriate help and instruction. Flexible groups and differentiation in the classroom support students who do not meet standards and occasionally need individual help from teachers. The MYP language teachers will work with students who are new to school in order to help them learn the language and practice grammar and vocabulary.

 The school also provides various other options to improve communication in the English language, such as Erasmus+ programs, correspondence with students from schools abroad, and online teaching with partner schools.

 To facilitate instruction, we utilize a variety of resources in the English language, including textbooks for the Middle Years Program (MYP) and books that students can also access from the school library. We strongly encourage parents to help students in the home environment and to create opportunities for them to communicate in English.

1. **Language Acquisition (English, German, French, Russian)**

Since language has a significant impact on the daily lives of people of any race, creed, or region, we believe that it is vital to learn a second language. In contemporary times, proficiency in the English language is a crucial requirement in both professional and academic pursuits. Students have the opportunity to enhance their communication abilities and establish international friendships. In the contemporary globalized environment, the ability to communicate in diverse languages holds significant value. The use of language facilitates the communication of our emotions, aspirations, and inquiries to the world around us. Moreover, communication in multiple languages is becoming increasingly important in an integrated global business community. New horizons are broadened for pupils and new perspectives are opened to them. In this way, children can learn to appreciate and respect diversity. Language acquisition courses provide the opportunity to develop academic knowledge and language skills, and language learning includes the ability to communicate with new people in different languages.

 MYP students at ZŠ SSV take English, German, French, and Russian language courses according to their choice and interest. For students who have no prior knowledge or experience of French, German, or Russian, we provide language acquisition courses starting in Phase 1. Students who have prior knowledge and experience of these languages will begin at an appropriate stage to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Organization of teaching and learning for students starting preMYP – MYP3:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **preMYP** | **MYP1** | **MYP2** | **MYP3** |
| **English** | Phase 2/3Emergent/Capable | Phase 3Capable | Phase 4Capable | Phase 4 - 5Capable |
| **German** | Phase 1 Emergent | Phase 1 - 2Emergent | Phase 2Emergent | Phase 2 - 3Emergent |
| **French** | Phase 1 Emergent | Phase 1 - 2Emergent | Phase 2Emergent | Phase 2 - 3Emergent |
| **Russian** | Phase 1 Emergent | Phase 1 - 2Emergent | Phase 2Emergent | Phase 2 - 3Emergent |
| **Slovak** | Phase 1Emergent | Phase 1 - 2Emergent | Phase 2 - 3Emergent-Capable | Phase 3 - 4Capable |

At the end of the transition year - 5th year, students write a placement test. The percentage achieved in the placement test at the end of the school year determines the transition between individual phases in language acquisition subjects and the division into groups.

 All students are enrolled in language acquisition courses at the same level from the start, regardless of their level of language proficiency. If there is an increase in the number of pupils and a sufficient number of qualified teachers, we can change this and divide the pupils into groups according to their level of knowledge. When students reach the required level of English, they will take the subject of English language and literature.

1. **Host-country Language**

 Our objective is to establish an inclusive educational institution that caters to all nationalities, whether from Europe or the rest of the world. Students of our school study Slovak as the language of the host nation at three levels - beginners, intermediate, and advanced - according to the Slovak curriculum and with the assistance of qualified staff. We provide the course based on national standards. Pupils are evaluated in the Slovak language regarding the length of stay in Slovakia, two classification periods according to grades in the mother tongue in the country of origin.

 If the student is interested, they have the opportunity to enroll in courses, private lessons with teachers, or utilize alternative methods to acquire proficiency in the language of the host nation..

1. **Staff**

 All language teachers are qualified with a university degree, but they are not necessarily native speakers. Other subjects are taught by teachers who are qualified and know how to teach their subjects in English. The priority is to have expertise in the given issue. The school gradually establishes conditions for teachers to improve their communication skills in the English language and hires new employees according to the need and local legislation.

1. **Professional development**

 Professional development provides staff with the opportunity to share best practices and design plans to ensure all students have access to the curriculum and develop their language skills. Teachers have the opportunity to complete an English language course. New employees are provided with appropriate training. The course will include an introduction to program-specific tools and methodology, as well as information on IB-related documentation. The MYP coordinator and school management provide feedback that highlights language learning strategies to aid teachers in lesson planning and teaching as a component of the twice-yearly lesson observation process.

1. **Parents**

 Our families are part of the school community and communicate in Slovak and English, depending on the mother tongue. Almost all parents communicate in the Slovak language. Communication takes place through the organization of parent workshops, parent associations, individual parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, social networks and through technology. We use Edupage for communication in the online space. Parents are strongly encouraged to ensure that students have access to the English language at home through, among other things, subtitled television, original language films, books and websites.

1. **Assessment**

 While language acquisition follows distinct stages, students’ rate of acquisition varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, our teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), frequently, differentiating through scaffolding or extension as required. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on language growth in accordance with the assessment guidance and rubrics of the IB. (see Assessment Policy)

1. **Responsibility for Implementation and Regular Revision**

 All teachers are required to follow the schools' language policy. Every teacher is also responsible for the development of a language, whether it is native or foreign. Supervision of the implementation and continuous revision of the directive according to the requirements of the students and the school is the duty of the head of school and the program coordinator. Regular revision will be conducted in accordance with the recommendations and feedback provided by the teachers. The councellor in cooperation with the psychologist and each teacher are responsible for following the procedures for teaching languages to students with special needs.

1. **Language for pupils with SEN**

Language education is especially difficult for pupils with SEN who have been diagnosed with developmental learning and behavioral disorders, and therefore have a differentiated approach, educational aids and a different approach to education and assessment according to the psychologist's recommendation.

Recommendations used to develop students with special educational needs (SEN) include but are not limited to the following:

• avoid long direct instruction,

• use visual aids and multimedia, ICT,

• check spelling, evaluate each student's progress,

• do not encourage the student to read aloud,

• allow students to think aloud,

• explain the basic instructions to the students,

• give students individual instruction in written assignments,

• break down complex learning material into manageable chunks,

• teach the necessary skills,

• give students additional time,

• give instructions in a meaningful way,

• use visual displays, graphic organizers, experiments, concept maps,

• provide students with pre-prepared notes.

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1. **Resources:**
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* Middle Years Programme Language acquisition guide (for use from September 2020/

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V Banskej Bystrici dňa 26. 6. 2023 Mgr. Zuzana Sedláčeková

 Head of school

 Mgr. Izolda Kerner

 Coordinator MYP