

Foreign Languages in the Elementary School at iDSB

Dear Parents,

Learning foreign languages not only opens new opportunities for our children but also promotes cultural openness and communication skills in a globalized world. From Grade 1, iDSB offers your child a comprehensive and structured foreign language program tailored to the individual needs of the students.

With this letter, we would like to introduce our foreign language concept and show you how you can support your child in learning languages outside of school.

Principles of Foreign Language Learning

- **“One Person, One Language”**
Especially in multilingual families, we recommend clear language separation. For example, one parent speaks German, and the other speaks English. This creates a clear language association for the child.
- **“Mother Tongue as a Foundation”**
Mastery of the mother tongue (German) in both spoken and written forms forms the basis for successfully learning other languages. For this reason, we place special emphasis on acquiring German language skills in Grades 1 and 2 before introducing reading and writing in the foreign language.
- **“Learning Through Application”**
Foreign language learning is most successful when it extends beyond the classroom. Interactions with French- or English-speaking children, extracurricular activities, or media consumption in the foreign language can significantly support the learning process.
- **“Children Have Different Language Abilities”**
We recognize that each child responds differently to foreign languages. Some learn quickly and enthusiastically, while others require more time or additional motivation. Our goal is to support each child individually and encourage them to enjoy learning languages through positive experiences.

Gradual Development and Individual Support

Grades 1 and 2

- **Playful and activity-based lessons:** Children are introduced to the foreign language through songs, poems, games, and stories. The focus is on listening, understanding, and speaking.
- **Language immersion:** Everyday situations, such as greetings or small dialogues, are embedded in the target language.

Grades 3 and 4

- **Introduction to reading and writing:** Development of age-appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- **Independent language production:** Children learn to write simple texts and express themselves orally in the foreign language.

Differentiation and Learning Groups

- Our learning groups are intentionally small, with a maximum of 16 students, to enable intensive and individual learning. Heterogeneous groups are differentiated internally so that each child is supported according to their abilities.

Learning Content and Assessment

Learning Content

The topics of the foreign language lessons are tailored to the interests and age of the children. Examples include:

- Me and My Family
- Animals, Colors, and Numbers
- Seasons and Holidays
- Hobbies and Sports
- Shopping and Food

These topics are revisited and expanded in a spiral approach, allowing children to continuously build their skills.

Assessment

- In Grades 1 and 2, the focus is on oral performance and individual learning progress.
- From Grade 3, written tasks, such as working with a vocabulary notebook or simple texts, are included.

How You Can Support Your Child

Everyday Life and Leisure

- Encourage interactions with English- or French-speaking children, e.g., in sports clubs, music schools, or through playdates.
- Use media that interests your child, such as series (e.g., *Peppa Pig*, *Franklin*), apps (e.g., Duolingo, RAZ-Kids), or audiobooks.

Cultural Opportunities

- Brussels and the surrounding area offer many ways to experience languages in practice. Visit places like the European Parliament, Fondation Folon, or local children's theaters.
- A highlight for Grade 4 students is the trip to a French-speaking farm in Juseret, where language learning is combined with hands-on experiences.

School and Home

- Encourage your child to experiment with the foreign language playfully in everyday life, such as repeating words or sentences.
- Help your child discover foreign language books in the school library or local bookstores.

Our Vision for Language Learning

Our goal is to provide iDSB students with a solid foundation in foreign language learning, equipping them for both their academic and personal journeys. The diversity of mother tongues and the international atmosphere at our school create an inspiring environment where languages can be learned with joy.

For questions or suggestions, we are happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Emanuel Imfeld
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School

Christine Seha
Head of French
Department

Stephanie Elster
Head of English
Department