

Language Policy

Last update: May 2024

Last Updated by: Nick Johnson (Senior Leader)

Next review date: April 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the school's language principles; inform the teaching and learning of languages in the classroom; guide the development of the curriculum; and involve all members of the school community in the goal of educating all students in an international environment.

Philosophy

At St George Madrid we believe that language plays a fundamental role in the education of young people and our wider school community. We recognise that the relationship between learning and language is inextricably bound: students learn language, learn about language and learn through language. It is through language that students can explore concepts and theories, solve problems, explore discoveries, express opinions, organise information and ideas and communicate effectively in the school and wider community.

We appreciate that language and the acquisition of language is developmental in nature, existing in a fluid and transitional state, responding to changes in culture, technology and society. As such, the process of learning language is ongoing and dynamic, underpinning the entire curriculum.

At St George Madrid, we also recognise that language is one of the cornerstones of culture and identity and as such we believe that the development of a student's mother tongue, use of the host nation language and use of English is central to their learning in our goal of producing internationally-minded global citizens. Given the importance of language, we recognise that all St George Madrid teachers are responsible for the continual development of language learning, assisting students in their academic and wider education.

We are committed to ensuring that educational pathways for all students are developed to promote the further development of native languages, the language of instruction and language acquisition.

Profile

St George Madrid is a culturally diverse school with over 700 pupils from a range of cultural backgrounds. We are an international school where English is the main language for communication and instruction. Many of our students are Spanish mother tongue speakers for whom English is an additional language, however, in the secondary phase of the school, many students are bilingual. A minority of students are English native speakers. There is a small but increasing number of students for whom both Spanish and English are additional languages.

We recognise the importance of native tongue teachers at St George Madrid, and as such, most of the teaching staff are English native speakers from a range of international backgrounds. We also employ several Spanish mother tongue speakers to facilitate students' learning and development in the language of the host country. Where students' native language is neither English or Spanish, we promote and seek out opportunities for students to continue to develop their mother tongue.



ST. GEORGE
MADRID



International
Schools
Partnership

At St George Madrid we consider English to be the main language of communication and instruction. From Pre-Nursery upwards students learn and communicate in English, but also take part in an extensive programme of Spanish to further the development of their mother tongue language. In the secondary phase of the school, students continue to advance their learning of Spanish to achieve the 4º ESO and ensure that they can access higher education both globally and in the host nation. For those students for whom Spanish is not their mother tongue, we offer Spanish as an additional language programme for students to communicate effectively with their peers at school and live their lives efficiently in the host country. Similarly, we also offer intensive programmes of study and support for those whom English is also an additional language. Developing the attributes of the IB learner profile is also integrated into the teaching and language learning since it develops the necessary skills for students to learn effectively and become internationally-minded citizens.

At the Language A level students will be able to choose from: Language A Spanish, Language and Literature and Language A English, Literature. Both of these options will be available at higher and standard levels. This reflects St George Madrid's commitment to the language of the host country and to English as our primary language of instruction. Students for whom Spanish is their native language must take Spanish A in group one and for those fluent in English as the language of instruction, the opportunity is provided for students to study two A languages. At Language B students will be able to choose from English, French and German. To support the learning about the host country, St George Madrid will also be providing Spanish B to international students. In order to select the most appropriate language pathway for students in the IB Diploma, the school will not allow any students with a level of B1 or above to follow a Language B course.

To reflect the importance of a student's native language, St George Madrid will provide students with the opportunity to follow a School Supported Self Taught course. This will only be available for the Language A Literature option at standard level. Members of the Languages department will support students by assisting them with the design of the course and guide them through the internal and external assessment process. The Head of Languages will coordinate the support programme and assist students with finding a tutor for the course.

English as an Additional Language

We accept students who need English as an Additional Language support throughout the school. To facilitate the integration of these students into the school community and to enable them to access the curriculum, we offer an EAL programme, led by the Learning Needs coordinator and the English as an Additional Language teacher, which is individualised to best meet the needs of each student. This support takes the form of intensive withdrawal lessons on a one-to-one or small group basis. Because of the demands of study in Years 10 and above, we accept students in need of additional English support until Year 9. It is the responsibility of the Admissions officer in conjunction with the Head of Languages and the Learning Needs coordinator to identify students who require support and the level of their need.



ST. GEORGE
MADRID



International
Schools
Partnership

Goals

- To develop our students' comprehension and ability to communicate in English and equip them with the language skills they need for academic success in all subject areas.
- To promote the use of English as the primary form of communication and learning in all areas of the school; the only exception being MFL and Spanish lessons.
- To promote and respect the host country's language and culture throughout the school.
- To respect, and where possible, facilitate development of every student's mother tongue language with the recognition that learning languages supports intellectual, cultural and social growth.
- To recognise the value of all languages, encouraging students to become bilingual or multilingual.
- To ensure the teaching of language meets and develops the existing knowledge and skills of individual students.
- To provide a safe, positive and welcoming learning environment which is stimulating and well resourced.
- To fully embed the language curriculum throughout all subject areas in the primary and secondary phases of the school.
- To develop the skills in students necessary to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners as well as internationally minded citizens.
- To promote multilingualism across the school community and celebrate the linguistic backgrounds of all students.
- To consistently promote and model the use of academic language across the curriculum.
- Provide a range of language opportunities throughout the school to celebrate and promote the diversity of languages in the school.

Practices

- Support language development by providing a range of meaningful courses, tasks, and activities designed to enable students to make progress in their reading, writing, aural and oral skills.
- Offer a support programme to support international students for whom English is an additional language.
- Provide mainstream Spanish lessons for Spanish mother tongue students. Provide a programme for non-Spanish speaking students, with the opportunity for them to learn Spanish vocabulary, grammar and conversation so they are able to interact with their peers and meet the demands of daily life in Spain.
- Support international students in the study of their own language, where possible guided by a teacher and supported by parents and other members of the school community.
- Review students' language profile during elective selection to ensure that studies in language and literature represent appropriate challenges for the development of language skills. Students with a level B1 or above in a particular language, will not be able to access a group 2 subject in that language.
- All teachers have a responsibility to explicitly teach academic language consistently throughout the school.
- All teachers have a responsibility to promote and model academic language orally, in writing and for a range of purposes.
- Provide support for students with special educational needs, including scaffolding and differentiating learning activities to accommodate individual needs.

- Provide context and relevance to the learning of languages by incorporating all elements of language including, grammar, structure, writing, reading comprehension and vocabulary.
- Offer access to a well-resourced library including a multilingual section, subject specific material and periodicals with the assistance of a school librarian.
- Integrate IB learner profile attributes into the teaching and learning of languages.
- Offer ab initio languages to students who enter the school without any second language.
- Include an annual calendar of language opportunities throughout the school, including exchanges.

Working with parents to support

The school works closely with parents to plan the language development profile of all students when first joining St.George, Madrid and then throughout their time at our school.

Liaison with parents begins on admission regarding their child's initial choice of foreign language study. Information is obtained from our parents as to students' language profile as well as in school language assessment(s).

This liaison continues with the school's regular tracking and communication to parents of their child's language development in both the English and Spanish language, as well as further additional languages, as relevant. Any concerns regarding a student's language development are shared with parents and action identified, both at a school and home level to support their further development.

Parents and students have access to a range of resources to support language development and promote multilingualism:

- Physical resources from the school library – a wide range of language acquisition books and literary texts are available to support language learning.
- The school subscribes to Linguascope which provides access to language development resources in English, Spanish, French and German. Students are encouraged to use at home to enhance their language development outside lessons.
- EAL and SAL departments work closely with students and parents to ensure students develop their use of the language of instruction and the language of the host country.

Review of Language Policy

The St George Madrid language policy was established in 2013 and was most recently updated in 2024. It is designed to be a working document, responding to development of new ideas and changes in the language profile of the school. The language coordinator will work with staff, students and parents, to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy on teaching and language learning at St George Madrid.

Links: Learning and Teaching policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, Assessment policy



ST. GEORGE
MADRID



International
Schools
Partnership