

Philosophy

Our mission is to provide students with a high-quality education while developing the attributes of caring, respect, and responsibility towards others and the environment.

Located in Switzerland, a country with four national languages – French, German, Italian and Romansh, our school is convinced that plurilingualism is a necessary attribute for students and a requirement in today's society. Besides our own official languages, it is required that Swiss students also learn English. Language acquisition is thus at the heart of Swiss education and we believe the study of multiple languages should be a component of any modern educational programme.

Language profile

Our school is located in the Canton of Jura, a region whose main language is French. In line with the language spoken locally, French is the language most heard within the school's walls. However, our anchorage in a multilingual country, home to international organizations, naturally directs us to accommodate other languages and cultures. Across the whole curriculum (be it Swiss or international), students interact with other languages. Not only does their schedule include "language acquisition" classes, but also students are regularly taught specific chapters or course components in a foreign language (English, German) – a practice known as "îlots immersifs". Opportunities for interlingual exposure exist beyond the classroom, as the school welcomes students with a wide variety of native tongues, making every school member aware of the global community. Also, students are given access to books in various languages in the school's library.

The school is quite unique in that it offers a wide range of opportunities including: a French/English bilingual program for students aged 8 through to 13; the Swiss Matura; the Swiss Bilingual Matura; the IB's Middle Years Programme as well as the IB's Diploma Programme. While there are similarities between these programs, the language requirements are different. For example, the IB requires that students be given opportunities to sustain and further develop their home language, whereas the Swiss system does not expect schools to incorporate the native tongue of allophone students into their curriculum.

In the MYP and DP, English is the language of instruction, whereas French is widely used in social and whole-school events. The importance of French as one of the host country's main languages and the native tongue of most of the student body is a significant factor in the overall character of the school.

Language and admissions

When it comes to the IB, the language of instruction is English. For the teachers this means that they must necessarily be proficient in English. As for students, during the admissions process, the school gathers information about their language profile – their native tongue, the language they use most frequently, previous language studies, etc. Most candidates have a language other than English as their

native tongue. The school offers help to students who require additional language support (see below), but entrance testing also plays an important role. Indeed, the school must ensure that students are able to access the curriculum with their current English skills. For entry into the MYP programme, it is expected that students have a level of English equivalent to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (2001). For entry into the Diploma Programme, students should have a level equivalent to C1 according to the CEFR.

Every teacher in Saint-Charles, in addition to the subject(s) they teach, plays an essential role in facilitating language learning, helping their students to improve their language skills through a variety of methods. Many teachers have been trained for instruction in a multilingual context and been taught various strategies for differentiation. Saint-Charles is committed to the professional development of its staff and offers many opportunities for teachers to improve their competences. This includes guest speakers, in-house workshops, IB-approved workshops, and partnerships with neighbouring schools.

Students who are admitted to the school with limited French skills are enrolled in a “French ab initio” class (MYP: Language acquisition, Phase 1), and if necessary additional support is offered through parent-funded private lessons or tutoring, student partnerships and/or mentorships. All boarding students attend study sessions each evening. During these sessions, peers can collaborate to improve their language skills. Typically, full immersion into the French language allows for students to access the host language fairly quickly. Travel and language exchanges complete the language curriculum.

Swiss curriculum

With regards to the Swiss curriculum, all students are taught modern languages (English and German) right from the primary school level, in addition to the official language of the school’s region (French). Subjects are taught in two languages: English and French. Thus, education is bilingual from primary school onwards.

In secondary school, students may choose to study Latin in addition to the required aforementioned languages.

When it comes to language learning in high school (swiss curriculum), we must follow the federal maturity regulations of 1995 (ORM) which require students to study:

- Language 1: the official language of the part of the country where the school is located.
- Language 2: a second national language, in our case German or Italian
- Language 3: a third language to be chosen between English, Latin or Greek

Students may also choose a language as their major: English, Italian or Latin.

From primary school onwards, all students have access to optional Mandarin, Italian, Russian and Spanish courses.

MYP curriculum

Within the specific framework of the Middle Years Program, students have access to the languages mentioned below. By default, all students are required to attend a **language acquisition** class in French.

A student may also take additional language acquisition courses in German, Mandarin*, Italian, Russian or Spanish**.

*This course is designed to maintain and further develop the native tongue of our students from our partner school located in Beijing. Students wishing to explore Mandarin and delve into the Chinese culture are also welcome.

**French and German are currently being taught in the MYP curriculum. Spanish and Italian will also be offered depending on the number of candidates who wish to learn these languages. A minimum of five students is required for a class to open.

Students in the MYP curriculum may attend language acquisition classes with students in the Swiss curriculum, depending on their level.

All students in MYP are required to follow an English **language and literature** class.

DP curriculum

All students in Year 1 study English either as a Language A (literature course) or as a Language B (language acquisition course). Below are the subjects that are proposed to be offered at the DP level. Each course and its corresponding level will be offered based upon the number of applicants. Typically, a course will run for five or more students. For HL Language B courses, it is possible to combine the sections alongside the Swiss Matura program.

Language A: English Literature

Language B: French *ab initio* HL/SL
German HL/SL

A description of each of the classes and levels proposed above is available from the DP Coordinator. Students and parents should discuss which of the courses is most appropriate for individual students with the DP Coordinator and/or Director of Admissions

Home-language program

When a student's first language is neither English nor French, the school provides them with opportunities to continue to develop their home language. This includes self-study, pen pals, reading material in their native tongue*, parent-funded private lessons, and partnerships with younger students. Students are invited to collaborate with other speakers of their native language to access the curriculum. They are also encouraged to share their learning and progress with their parents, using their native tongue. Additionally, the school aims to assist students in developing their home language by partnering with embassies, corporation and libraries in the district and beyond.

*We are in the process of equipping our school's library with resources in Bulgarian, Farsi, Mandarin, Russian and any other native language found among our cohort of IB students.

Sources

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