

Language Policy

INTRODUCTION

Rydal Penrhos School aims to develop each pupil's sense of his or her own contribution and self-confidence by providing curricular programmes and activities that make the most of the advantages offered by a diverse and multicultural school community. The linguistic and cultural breadth of the School's population is considered to be both a strength and a rich resource in the promotion of language learning amongst pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES & LATIN

Modern Foreign Languages (hereinafter "MFL") are at the heart of the international human experience. Through their language learning, our pupils gain knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the different cultures which provide the context within which other languages are spoken; at the same time, core British values can be promoted and an awareness raised of dangerous tendencies such as extremism. By realising that there are multiple ways of viewing the world, pupils learn to communicate in multilingual communities in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways.

The mission statement of Rydal Penrhos includes the following sentence:

Rydal Penrhos is internationalist, multicultural, inclusive and committed to sustainable development and global citizenship.

To fulfil that objective, the School aims to enable children to live as international citizens, and this includes the ability to adapt to and to understand other cultures. Knowledge of, or indeed familiarity with, more than one language is an integral part of this preparation and, as a result, all pupils are expected to learn at least one modern foreign language in addition to English up to and including the GCSE stage. In rare instances, exceptions to the requirement to study one or more languages at Key Stage 3 and GCSE may be made on an individual basis for pupils with documented learning needs, after full consultation between the pupil and parents, the Head of Learning Support and the Director of Studies.

Pupils are taught French from Year 7, with Spanish added from Year 8; hence the pupils are in a position to make an informed choice for Years 9 to 11, when they may opt to continue with French or Spanish. Until its withdrawal in August 2019, International Baccalaureate ("IB") pupils may take up Spanish as an *ab initio* language.

The language of instruction which is used to deliver the curriculum at Rydal Penrhos is English. As an independent school in Wales, we are not regulated by the language policy governing Welsh maintained schools, but we acknowledge the importance of the Welsh language for pupils who come from Welsh-speaking families and its cultural value for all pupils in the school; hence classes leading to GCSE Welsh in its First Language and Second Language variations are available to all year groups as part of the Enrichment Programme. The latter also includes the opportunity to study Latin.

The *mother tongue* is the language that is most strongly linked to the culture with which an individual identifies as his or her culture of origin, and is often the language used in the home, while the *first language* is the one in which the individual is most proficient. Rydal Penrhos encourages the development of the mother tongues and first languages of the pupils through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of linguistic diversity within the community. There is also recognition that a strong level of competence in the mother tongue or first language of pupils can be an important ingredient in their success as learners of further or additional languages. At the same time, the School recognises that one reason for many overseas pupils' joining Rydal Penrhos is to improve their English, and all pupils are therefore expected as far as possible to use English as the main medium of communication during the school day and whilst taking part in school activities.

Although our geographical location prevents our offering support for pupils' mother tongues other than English (except through "A Language" teaching in the IB Diploma programme until August 2019), the School is committed to being inclusive and to providing equity of access to the curricula offered to all learners, including those who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English as a Foreign Language (“EFL”) refers to English teaching that is provided to assist pupils in gaining sufficient English language proficiency to cope within the English-speaking school environment, and ultimately to prepare them for university or Higher Education and the wider world. Instruction is designed to equip pupils with enough language to enable them to:

- forge social relationships and cope with the practical expectations of life in an English-speaking school;
- acquire the spoken and written language required to function fully in the mainstream academic classroom.

This is accomplished through a combination of specialist instruction within the timetable and additional individual support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups; by arrangement with the Director of Studies, pupils may be disappplied from certain subjects in favour of EFL classes, and these will usually be subjects in which a high level of discursive language is required, thus making them less accessible to non-native speakers. It may also be appropriate to withdraw pupils from Modern Foreign Language classes so as to enable a sufficient number of EFL lessons to take place.

Pupils whose first language is not English are encouraged to support their learning with the various tools at their ready disposal, such as dictionaries and their mobile ‘phones. However, the eventual examination context must inevitably be borne in mind, and the appropriate dictionaries will always be provided in the Examination Hall, where mobile ‘phones are banned. At GCSE, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar form part of the assessment objectives in English, Geography, History and Religious Studies, so dictionaries are not allowed in these examinations, nor are they available in MFL examinations; thus the teaching leading up to these papers will be designed in full awareness of this restriction.

Since language is central to learning, in practice every teacher at Rydal Penrhos is in some sense a language teacher with responsibility for facilitating communication with each pupil and amongst pupils in the class; to this end, the School aims to encourage an awareness of, and promote skills in, language learning and language teaching amongst all teachers and academic support staff, with the following intentions:

- to improve language skills for all pupils in the language of instruction;
- to facilitate the use of the specialised language required for the academic demands of different subjects. Subject lexicons have been drawn up in many instances such that these pupils can readily learn the key vocabulary required in particular disciplines;
- to raise awareness of Modern Foreign Languages and, where feasible, mother tongue and first languages other than English.

The Head of EFL inevitably plays a significant role in the overall learning of her charges and regularly liaises with colleagues with regard to the communicative skills of the EFL pupils; as a result of such communication, strategies will be put in place in order to meet any particular needs identified as requiring attention.

Last reviewed by S-AH:	January 2018
Approved by Governing Body:	
Next review:	September 2018