

# International Baccalaureate

## Language Policy

The linguistic goal of BeBe is to promote strong language skills in German, English and the student's mother-tongue, if other than German or English. Although the working language of the school is German, Bebe is proud that our students speak nearly 40 different languages and want to help students grow and achieve in all of them. The percentage of students in our English Enrichment and IB programs who have a mother tongue other than German is an astounding 30%.

The linguistic goal of BeBe's English Enrichment and IB programs is to offer students the opportunity to study in the English language across academic subjects, developing a level of fluency and understanding that would otherwise be difficult to attain. Students with mother tongues other than German or English may take IB language and literature self-study courses in that mother tongue language, permitting for the sophisticated development of these language skills as well.

Proficiency in German is a requirement for admission to the school, as the state curriculum is taught in German. As part of that curriculum, students are required to take English as a second language from grades 5 to 12. A third foreign language -- French, Russian or Latin -- is required from grades 6 to 10, although some students elect to take the language through graduation in grade 12. Spanish is offered currently as a 4<sup>th</sup> language elective in grades 8-10 with possible instruction in grades 11-12.

For students whose mother tongue is not among these languages, BeBe's goal is to support its students in maintaining and improving their abilities in this language and, as necessary, in supporting their cultural and social integration.

German as a Second Language (DAZ) support: BeBe has 5 qualified Deutsche als Fremdsprache (DAZ -- German as a Second Language) teachers. Students register at the beginning of each school year and are placed in small groups with a DAZ teacher, with whom they receive extra language instruction throughout the year. DAZ teachers also use this time to provide integration assistance to those new to Germany. This support is of particular value to students whose families do not have a firm grasp of German and may rely on their children for assistance with administrative, medical and other daily tasks. All BeBe teachers receive regular trainings from our DAZ team on how to incorporate techniques which benefit DAZ students (and everyone else) in their normal classes.

Mother-tongue support: Students whose mother-tongue is not German have several options with which to maintain and improve their native languages.

- Integrated language instruction in English, Russian and French. All students are required to take English from grades 5-12. All students must take a second (foreign) language from grades 6 -10 or 12. For students whose mother-tongue is English, Russian or French, this provides an outstanding way to fully master the written, spoken and comprehensive skills of this language.
- Extracurricular support for mother-tongue languages. Under state law, students are offered the opportunity to register for weekly free language instruction in various languages, including (in 2018) Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Hungarian, Ukrainian und Vietnamese. Students meet in small groups with teachers after the normal

## International Baccalaureate

school day. This option has been particularly popular with students who speak a language at home but need support to perfect their reading and writing skills.

Working languages: The working language of the school is German and the working language of the IB program is English.

Language skills required for admission: Students whose mother-tongue is not German are admitted to BeBe on the recommendation of their previous school and with the approval of the Head of School.

- Admissions English Enrichment: All students, regardless of English language level, are eligible for admission. In fact, participation in the program has sometimes helped students struggling in their normal English classes to improve their skills. If, however, the English Enrichment Coordinator or Head of School determines that participation in the program is detrimental to the student's academic performance, the student may be denied admission.
- Admissions IB Diploma and Course: Students interested in enrolling in the IB Diploma are encouraged but not required to participate in the English Enrichment program (EE) in grades 5-10. Those students who do not participate in the EE but still wish to enroll for the IB Diploma must offer evidence of proficiency in English to the IB Coordinator before being accepted. This evidence may consist of grades received in English classes and/or of an interview with the IB Coordinator.

Languages offered in the IB Diploma:

- Language A (First Language): Because admission to the school requires fluency in German, German is offered as Language A and it is recommended that all students take the course as Higher Level. Whenever possible and if suitable supervision can be found, BeBe strives to offer students whose mother-tongue is not German the opportunity to take a Language A Self-Taught course in this language. To date, several students have taken Russian as Language A Self-taught and Hungarian will be offered as well. Students wishing to take a self-taught course should speak with the IB Coordinator to arrange for instruction.
- Language B (Second Language): BeBe offers English, French and, depending on demand, Russian as Language B and French as Language Ab Initio.

Every teacher is a language teacher

Given the nature of the BeBe IB Programme as an additional educational option, every teacher in the program is de facto an English language teacher, helping to equip the students with the linguistic skills they will need to successfully complete their IB studies. Teachers pay special attention to the vocabulary needed to help students accurately transfer knowledge learned in Abitur courses to their IB classes, but most importantly to proper English usage and clear communication. It is precisely this awareness of the centrality of language to student comprehension and academic development that permits students to succeed in both programs. Teachers are given ongoing training by DAZ instructors at staff meetings with diverse techniques for teaching language within their subjects.

## International Baccalaureate

### Language policy review cycle and process

This language policy will be reviewed annually at the start of the school year by the DP Coordinator in conjunction with the Head of School and DAZ coordinator. Special attention will be paid to changes in the student population as well as language weaknesses made evident by examination results or comments made in the student survey.

Resources: The BeBe library has a large selection of English books and movies to support student study and language improvement.