

# Rudjer Bošković School PYP Language Policy

*Policy Review: 2020*

## School Mission Statement:

***Rudjer Boškovic School inspires learners to become honorable, principled, knowledgeable and caring individuals, capable and willing to make considerable contributions to their local and world-wide communities.***

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## Purpose:

This document has been created in order to outline the teaching and learning practices with regard to language at Rudjer Boskovic School and make them available to the school community. As such, this document is part of the Contract that students, parents and school leadership sign upon admission. Particular attention has been paid to the following International Baccalaureate requirements as published in *Programme Standards and Practices (Published October 2018, Updated March 2019 & April 2020)* for the Primary, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes:

*Leadership 4.1: The school has systems and processes in place to document, share and store curriculum, policies and procedures that safeguard programme implementation. (0201-04-0100)*  
*Student support 2.2: The school supports the identified needs of students, and evidences this support through planning, policy, and practice. (0202-02-0200)*

*Culture 4.1: The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)*

*Culture 4.2: The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)*

*Culture 4.3: The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)*

*Culture 4.4: The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)*

*PYP 1: The school ensures that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction (at least from the age of seven). Multilingual programmes, where students are learning in at least two languages, can but are not required to offer additional languages. (0301-04-0411)*

*Culture 6.1: The school implements processes with consideration of the relationship between its IB mandated policies. (0301-06-0100)*

*Culture 6.2: The school documents its IB-mandated policies and communicates them to the school community. (0301-06-0200)*

*Culture 6.3: The school considers physical and virtual spaces in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0300)*

*Culture 6.4: The school articulates a planned integration of human, natural, built or virtual resources in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0400)*

*Culture 6.5: The school considers the Learner Profile in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0500)*

*Culture 6.6: The school considers international-mindedness in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0600)*

*Culture 6.7: The pedagogical leadership team uses the school's IB-mandated policies in decision-making and curriculum development. (0301-06-0700)*

*Lifelong learners 7.1: The school provides opportunities for students to explore and develop their personal and cultural identities. (0402-07-0100)*

*Lifelong learners 7.3: Students take opportunities to develop their language profiles. (0402-07-0300)*

*Approaches to teaching 5.3: Teachers use IB-mandated policies to support students. (0403-05-0300)*

*Approaches to teaching 5.4: Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)*

## Language Philosophy:

At Rudjer Boskovic School we aim to create a learning environment that is rich in language exposure throughout all three IB Programmes: PYP, MYP and DP. We believe that honing the skills of the mother tongue are vital, and that learning in at least one additional language provides children with the chance to develop cognitive flexibility, academic literacy in at least two languages and balanced multilingualism in their later lives. This, in turn, enables them to pursue their educations in high-stakes international academic programmes and opens a world of opportunities.

Ultimately, this is fundamental in helping students become skilled and open-minded communicators - important IB Learner Profile Traits.

## School Language Profile:

At Rudjer Boskovic School Serbian is both the host country language and mother tongue of most students. At the same time, we recognize English as the global lingua franca and a vehicle through which students develop international mindedness. Throughout the PYP and MYP, therefore, our goals are to build students' skills and fluency in speaking and writing in both languages so that they may become increasingly bilingual and bi-literate, and eventually successfully complete the IB Diploma Programme - the instruction and assessments of which

are predominantly in English. We aim to accomplish this by adhering to a bilingual immersion education model, where teachers use a flexible approach when dealing with the language of instruction in their classrooms on a year-to-year and day-to-day basis.

## Languages of Instruction in PYP:

All teaching and learning in the PYP is done in two languages: English and Serbian. Learning in two languages in primary years and developing additive bilingualism requires exposure to both languages through various activities, with a lot of repetition of the same structures and lexical items in different contexts that are meaningful, comprehensive and relevant to students. Acquiring a second language is a complex process and it takes a few years for children to become sufficiently proficient and confident enough to use the language in complex learning processes.

Since language is a tool for learning and cognitive development, all teachers in the PYP share the responsibility for developing both communicative skills and academic skills through instruction in English and Serbian. During the day, there are designated periods when English is used for instruction and interpersonal communication during lessons. During those times, the class teachers, who are responsible for teaching Serbian, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics, use English for both communication and instruction. English language teachers focus on providing opportunities for the acquisition of language structures, vocabulary and skills necessary for language use in both communication and learning. The English language teachers use the Common European Framework and Cambridge English Young Learners' Exams when planning the language acquisition programme and assessment of the students' progress in the first four years. In the next stage of the students' education, the focus is more on the language development skills that are required for English as the first language.

The development of the first language, in our case Serbian, is closely connected to the cognitive development of the children, and that is why in the first three years of the Primary Years Programme an emphasis is put on expanding vocabulary, literacy, reading and reading comprehension skills as well as developing speaking skill and enhancing speaking and writing production in Serbian. In these grades, English is mostly used for interpersonal communication and simple instructions. Students are expected to respond to instructions and commands and produce responses that consist of single words or short phrases. Later, as the competence of English grows, it is increasingly used for activities that engage all four skills (speaking, listening,

writing and reading) while dealing with the content of other subjects as well as for the introduction of certain elements of literary content (literary genres: fables, fairy tales, poetry, original excerpts from novels and/or their abridged and/or adapted versions ). The students are encouraged to use English in classes, but they can choose which language their documents, presentations and projects will be in. Teachers are aware that it can take up to seven years to develop cognitive and academic language proficiency<sup>1</sup>, so they allow students time to develop confidence in using English. The importance of learning academic content in two languages is accomplished through the incorporation of the outcomes of the Serbian National Curriculum into the PYP scope and sequence for all subject areas. By acquiring academic terminology in Serbian during Serbian language classes, students can express their creativity in speaking, writing and presenting as well as through reading and analysis of different literary works that belong to different genres appropriate for their age (fairy tales, fables, drama, poetry, prose, epics).

### Literacy development:

Our goal is for children to be equally proficient in writing and reading Serbian and English by the end of Grade 3. In order to achieve that, beginning literacy skills are developed in both English and Serbian from grade 1. This means that in Grade 1 children learn the English alphabet and the Serbian Cyrillic letters. When the Serbian language is concerned, they learn to recognize the beginning sounds of words and the symbols/graphemes they are represented by as well as to read short words. In English language classes they learn to recognize the phonics and gradually start to read monosyllabic and bisyllabic words.

In Grade 2 children develop techniques of beginning reading and writing skills in block and cursive letters in Serbian. They also learn to read short texts fluently. In English classes the students learn to write isolated words and shorter sentences. They also learn to read short sentences and texts.

In Grade 3 students should be skilled enough to use both Serbian Latin and Cyrillic alphabets for reading and writing in Serbian. When the English language is concerned, they learn to write short passages on the given topics.

English language literacy development might take a little more time with some learners, but it is our goal to have the students who can use equally Serbian and English for both general communication purposes and age-appropriate academic purposes at the end of the PYP Programme.

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<sup>1</sup> *Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*. International Baccalaureate Organization.2008, p.5

## Number of classes for language development:

For Serbian and English, students have five 45-minute classes a week allotted to language development of each language. Also, both languages are used transdisciplinary for learning in other subjects and negotiating meaning during inquiry activities. English is the first language of instruction and is used to a greater degree than Serbian in grades 3 and up. When necessary, both languages are used in the same class because of cognitively difficult content that needs to be grasped, or because this is a quick way to check understanding in the middle of an activity. The third language, German, French or Spanish, is allotted two 45-minute classes per week from Grade 2. In these classes, children are exposed to language through different activities that engage them primarily in listening and speaking. Later, as they develop literacy in English and Serbian, they learn how to read and write in the third language and from grade 3 they are expected to engage in reading and writing in reading and writing activities in these classes.

## Language support for students who join the PYP later than grade 1:

The students who transfer from other schools (foreign or Serbian state schools, for example) where English was not a medium of instruction are offered language support in order to catch up with their peers.

The students who join the PYP programme in Grade 2 are tested at the beginning of the school year and those who have not learned either Serbian or English before, form a separate group to attend additional classes of language support. The purpose of this is to tailor the class activities in such a way that the students can develop their language skills so as to catch up with more proficient learners in Grade 3.

Students whose first language is not Serbian and who have not studied in English the school are given support through an individually tailored language programme that lasts at least one whole school year. This support programme is devised and carried out by a class teacher, an English language teacher and/or a teacher who teaches the student's first language (if need be). The length of the support programme depends on the student's English or Serbian language proficiency at the time of joining the PYP and the age of the student. The family is also advised on how to support the student's language development at home.

The students whose first language is Serbian and have not studied in English have an individually tailored language support programme that can last several months to one term. The support programme is devised after the analysis of the results of the English language diagnostic test that the student does when they enroll into PYP.

The children whose first language is not Serbian are provided with an opportunity to learn Serbian through additional language classes. This support programme is carried out by a teacher who speaks Serbian and English and is familiar with literacy instruction strategies for the Serbian language in accordance with the General Standards of Achievement for the Subject Serbian as a Non-mother Tongue for the End of the First and the Second Cycle for the Compulsory Education, General Secondary Education and Elementary Education for Adults.

Students with speech and language difficulties attend a specially devised programme that may have only one language of instruction and they may choose not to attend classes of additional foreign language. Speech development specialists are consulted for developing an individualized or adjusted programme for such students.

### Support for Mother Tongues in PYP:

At Rudjer Boskovic School we welcome students from all backgrounds and cultures and aim to support those whose native language is neither Serbian nor English as best we can. Mother tongue classes will be organized if the number of students who share the same mother tongue is larger than five. In other cases, the school will work with families to provide, at an additional cost, mother tongue instruction outside regular classes. The school will provide guidance for mother tongue development.

The students whose mother tongue is English are given additional support for developing English beyond the set expectations for their age group. This is done through differentiated activities in regular classes, additional English language classes (if this is recommended by the English language teachers) when additional resources from the school library or electronic collections are used.

### Policy Review Process



Rudjer Boskovic School's Language, Assessment, Academic Honesty and Special Educational Needs Policies are reviewed on a two-year cycle. The PYP, MYP and DP Coordinators, in cooperation with a selection of teachers and the Directors of the Elementary and High Schools form the Policy Review Committee who will:

- Review current IB standards and practices as well as policy guidelines;
- Review the current policy to assess alignment with IB standards, practices and guidelines;
- Revise the current policy as needed;
- Share revised policy with all faculty;
- Review questions/comments/suggestions from faculty;
- Prepare the final policy draft;
- Submit the final policy draft to management for approval;
- Share the approved policy with faculty, students, parents and greater school community.

## Budget Support

The management of Rudjer Boskovic School is committed to providing financial support for the hiring of adequate professional staff, the purchasing of instructional materials, the maintaining and storing of student records and any other supplies, platforms or tools deemed necessary for the effective organization and delivery of the PYP, MYP and DP curricula.

## Professional Development

The management of Rudjer Boskovic School is committed to providing ongoing professional development for all teachers in the area of language development. This includes, but is not limited to: International Baccalaureate face-to-face, online and in-school PYP, MYP and DP conferences/training, Rudjer Boskovic School teacher-led workshops, and any other professional development opportunities deemed necessary for the effective organization and delivery of the PYP, MYP and DP Curricula.



## References

*Making the PYP happen: A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education*  
International Baccalaureate Organization. 2009. Print.

*Learning in a Language other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes.* International Baccalaureate Organization. 2008. Print.

*Language and learning in IB Programmes.* International Baccalaureate Organization. 2011. Print.

*Standards and Practices.* International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. Print.

*Law on the Education System Foundations* (Official Gazette of the RS)

*Rulebook on Primary Curriculum*

*Cambridge English Young Learners' Exams*

*General Standards of Achievement for the Subject Serbian as a Non-mother Tongue for the End of the First and the Second Cycle for the Compulsory Education, General Secondary Education and Elementary Education for Adults*

NOTE: Language Policy for PYP is part of a larger document stating detailed practices for language development in all three IB programmes implemented in Rudjer Boskovic School. All three documents detailing language policy have the same introductory section stating the purpose of the document, language philosophy and language profile and the sections stating the policy review process, budget support and professional development at the end of the document.