



VIS Language Policy

VIS aims to provide our students with a first-class, well-rounded education while being immersed in a beautiful and safe mountain environment. Critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness to the cultures and beliefs of others inspire learning at our school. With a strong emphasis on sports and the arts, we believe in developing the personality of each student and helping them to become principled global citizens.

Key Contact Personnel

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Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Philosophy | 2 |
| 2. Context and purpose | 2 |
| 3. Language programmes overview | 3 |
| 4. Administrative Aspects | 4 |

1. Philosophy

Language is important in promoting the development of personal and cultural identity and international understanding. Verbier International School (VIS) acknowledges the importance of a balanced mastery of languages for the students' intellectual and emotional development.

VIS considers the development of procedures to enhance the skills of the students in their language of study and in a foreign language as a key feature of the continuing improvement that constitutes the final aim of the quality manual.

This policy is intended to provide an overview of principles and structure of language learning in VIS.

We support a multilingual approach to education. Whilst the majority of non-language lessons are conducted in English we support and offer learning different languages including French, German, Spanish, Swedish, Chinese, and Russian.

2. Context and purpose

VIS is situated in the French speaking region of Switzerland. The ultimate goal of VIS' approach to language is that students show sufficient language skills to follow the English National Curriculum and support integration into a local community through consistent French language learning from FS1 to Year 11. Different French or other language abilities are catered to through small class sizes and a class setting according to ability not age.

This demand is an essential requirement in the design of the curriculum. Preschool follows a bilingual program in both languages, French and English. Starting from FS1, children follow all lessons in English, with separate French lessons.

3. Language programmes overview

French Groups

French groups are created according to the level of French language knowledge.

Native speakers and not native speakers having a minimum level B2 are in Group 1.

Non-native speakers are in Group 2.

For non-native speakers there are 4 levels in French from A1 to B2 (according to CEFR¹).

¹Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

VIS' English-Language Curriculum is designed as follows :

VIS Preschool:

- following the bilingual program in both languages English and French
- arts, music and extra-curricular activities are taught in French when possible

VIS FS1-Y8:

- all subjects of the English National Curriculum are taught in English
- French lessons are taught in every class, offering an intensive French-language learning environment;
- arts, music and extra-curricular activities are taught in French if possible.

Non-native speakers of English are invited to take Cambridge ELS exams.

VIS Secondary School

- all subjects of the English National Curriculum are taught in English
- French lessons are taught in every class, offering an intensive French-language learning environment;
- arts, music and extra-curricular activities are taught in French if appropriate

VIS Secondary School offers students the opportunity to learn a third language in addition to English and French: either German or Spanish. The offering of other languages can be considered.

VIS secondary school students have the opportunity to pass following Cambridge IGCSE exams:

- French - first language
- French - foreign language
- Spanish - first language
- Spanish - foreign language
- German - first language
- German - foreign language

4. Administrative Aspects

Choice of third language courses are confirmed to students in the acceptance letter. Changes must be requested in writing by the parents or the student's representative.

Extra costs related to the teaching of further languages will be dealt with on a case by case basis.