



LANGUAGE POLICY



ST BENEDICT'S

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE COLLEGE

1. INTRODUCTION

St Benedict's acknowledges and commends the recommendations of the South African Schools Act which states that pupils should ideally receive instruction in their mother tongue wherever reasonably practicable and that no discrimination should be tolerated with regard to language. In addition, all official languages should enjoy equal status and respect.

Notwithstanding this declaration, in terms of the act the Board of Governor determines the language policy. This is the language to be used for teaching and learning in the school i.e. language of instruction. The language of instruction will be the language spoken by the majority. At St Benedict's the current language of the majority is English and therefore the school is regarded as a single medium school with English as the language of instruction. The school is committed to the use and sustained development of English as an academic language in a multilingual context and as an international language of communication.

Afrikaans is offered as the First Additional Language at this moment in time.

The school is committed to improving its linguistic diversity and from the start of 2015 has embarked on a process of introducing IsiZulu as an alternate First Additional Language. (The planned rollout of Isizulu is outlined in Addendum A. All references to Afrikaans in this policy will, as per the rollout, henceforth also apply to Isizulu.)

The institutional language of the College is English and this will be used for external communication.

2. LANGUAGE AND ADMISSIONS

- 2.1. To secure admission to Grades R, applicants should ideally be able to speak and understand English. Boys who enter St Benedict's with limited proficiency at Grade R level will be provided with appropriate support structures and the school may insist on attendance at language development classes.
- 2.2. To secure admission to Grade 1 – 11, applicants must display sufficient verbal/listening proficiency to follow instruction and explanation in the classroom. Boys must be able to soundly express their ideas in written English and read with comprehension at a level appropriate to the Grade for which they seek admission. Age appropriate assessment tools are used to guard fluency upon entry. Ideally, boys must also have received some instruction in Afrikaans (Home Language or First Additional Language) at their previous school.
- 2.3. In the case of immigrants seeking admission to the school, the official definition for immigrant status adopted by the Gauteng Education Department will apply and the school will assist applicants in applying for Immigrant Status with the Independent Examinations Board.

When Immigrant Status is officially granted, immigrants will either complete an additional academic subject or provide satisfactory evidence that they are receiving instruction in the mother tongue from a reputable tutor registered with an officially recognized examination body.

3. ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

An English Entrance Test will be required as a component of the application process. In addition, a Maths Entrance exam is written. Should an applicant fail such an Entrance Test, admission may be denied.

4. LANGUAGES AS LEARNING AREAS IN THE SCHOOL

- 4.1. From Grade R all boys will take English as an approved language learning area;
- 4.2. From the start of Grade 1, in addition to English Home Language all boys will receive instruction in both Afrikaans and IsiZulu at First Additional Language level.
- 4.3. From Grades 1 to 4 progression to the next grade is based on performance in one language and mathematics.
- 4.4. From Grades 4 – 12, English must be passed with 50% and Afrikaans with 40% to meet St Benedict's internal promotion requirements.

5. LANGUAGE SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Additional support in English and Afrikaans is available to all boys in all Grades. Any boy entering St Benedict's College with enough, but limited English, may be admitted on condition that his parents provide a suitable intensive English and/or Afrikaans course outside of school hours.

6. LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

- 6.1. Language is a major means of communicating, fundamental to learning, and is developed across all learning areas; therefore, **all teachers are teachers of language.**
- 6.2. The acquisition of language is a dynamic, life-long process that permeates all learning and is a key factor in intellectual growth and promotes the development of personal and international understanding.
- 6.3. Learning language, learning about language, and learning through language is the most effective approach to teaching students. Language learning meets and is relevant to student needs within our environment.
- 6.4. Effective teaching practice arises from a constructivist approach to learning, allowing students to build on prior knowledge and construct personal meaning.
- 6.5. Through meaningful interaction in language, we communicate with and understand others, the world and ourselves to develop intercultural awareness.
- 6.6. The school community is a resource to foster language learning. The acceptance of an additional language enriches personal growth, enhances first language development, and promotes bilingualism.

7. LANGUAGE PRACTICES

- 7.1. All teachers need to create a comfortable, risk-free environment to foster a variety of means of communication. Teachers must encourage boys to demonstrate open dialogue in all interactions to understand the world through the different lenses in specific disciplines. Teachers must model language through everyday use and directly teaching vocabulary and procedural terms within and across each discipline.

- 7.2. Teachers must plan effective, relevant and significant learning experiences to improve proficiency in all forms of language.
- 7.3. Boys will learn language by the “doing” of language; talking, listening, reading, and writing. Boys will learn through language as they discuss and reflect on what it is they are learning. Boys will learn about language as they explore how language functions and the conventions that support communication.
- 7.4. Boys will be given the opportunity to develop as critical thinkers, making connections and responding to tensions and issues they encounter. Teachers should continually evaluate what skills boys have and what they need in order to become more proficient and language users.

POLICY HISTORY

Reviewed by School Executive Committee on Monday, 10 June 2013

Amended by Headmaster 3 March 2015

Rebranded by Executive Headmaster - 31 March 2015