



# DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

# LANGUAGE POLICY

Colegiul Național „Andrei Șaguna” from Brașov is a Candidate School\* for the Diploma Programme. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Colegiul Național „Andrei Șaguna” believes is important for our students.

*\*Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme, or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).*



## **CONTENTS**

PURPOSE .....	3
RELATION TO IB AND SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY .....	3
CNAS LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND.....	3
LEARNERS’ LANGUAGE PROFILE.....	4
TEACHERS’ ROLE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING.....	4
LANGUAGE AT CNAS .....	4
LEARNING SUPPORT .....	5
LINKS TO ADMISSIONS POLICY.....	6
LINKS TO INCLUSION POLICY .....	6
FOREIGN LANGUAGES .....	6
OTHER MOTHER TONGUES .....	6
TEACHING METHODOLOGY AT CNAS .....	7
LANGUAGE POLICY REVISION .....	7
REFERENCES .....	8



## **PURPOSE**

The CNAS language Policy is a community-informed, staff-developed document aiming to define the language philosophy of the school, to bring forth the policies that will make the goals expressed in our philosophy tangible and achievable, quantifiable and measurable. In addition, the language policy will establish concrete actions and procedures in order to better ensure that students are supported in their acquisition of languages (maternal as well as foreign), in their learning of subjects taught through different languages.

In order to ensure the school's language policy is implemented, teachers, librarians, and all administrative staff receive in-house training, on bi-annual basis or upon employment, during which the language policy is presented, explained and discussed.

## **RELATION TO IB AND SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

CNAS values communication before anything, as it is more than a basis for cognitive growth; it is the very basis on which society is formed and functions. Language forms and ensures cultural preservation, develops the individual, creates cultural identity and makes intercultural awareness and understanding possible. It is also the basis on which human knowledge and schooling sits.

The ability to communicate in more than one's mother tongue is paramount, more so in an interconnected, interdependent, multicultural, metalinguistic, globalized world, as the one we live in. We embrace both the IB philosophy that all students should be able to communicate in more than one language, as well as the EU recommendations that all EU citizens, in order to truly be citizens of the world, must speak at least a total of three languages (one maternal, two foreign).

Our aim is to promote bilingualism/multilingualism in our school community, where languages and cultural heritage can co-exist, symbiotically, both within the individual and the community as a whole, all bearing the same importance, and benefitting from the same status, importance and respect, integrated into the curriculum. With this, we hope to nurture in our students the attributes of the Learner Profile.

## **CNAS LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND**

CNAS employs teachers from all ethnic backgrounds (Romanian, German, Hungarian, Greek, etc.) and caters to the educational needs of any ethnic group in Romania. As such, the school is a language hub, where multiple languages, cultures, ethnicities come together to form a heterogeneous linguistic community. Together, teachers, administrative staff and students alike, are encouraged to share their cultural and linguistic background, to learn from each other, and to grow as a community unified in their diversity, valuing differences as a source of learning and cohesion, understanding that cultures and the world are marked by interconnectedness.

Thus, the school promotes intercultural views intertwined with the need to preserve and treasure personal cultural identity. The language of instruction is Romanian, with a few subjects being elective in English, which is taught as a foreign language. The school administration uses Romanian for communication with parents and local School Inspectorate, and English for international correspondence. All students (ages 10 to 19) are required to study Romanian, English, French and German, depending on the profile chosen: Computer Science - Romanian, Sciences - Romanian, Sciences - bilingual French, Sciences - intensive English and Social Sciences - bilingual



English. For students opting for DP, language requirements vary depending on students' personal choices for groups 1 and 2. Other languages may be used to facilitate communication (with parents).

## **LEARNERS' LANGUAGE PROFILE**

CNAS learners come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, with many from bilingual families. This is due, on the one hand, to the German or Hungarian speaking minority in Romania. The school accommodates a variety of learners, each with their own language profile, from monolingual to multilingual.

Around 90% of students speak Romanian as their mother tongue, and 10% speak both Romanian and Hungarian, German, Turkish, Russian, French, Arabic or Indian. CNAS periodically revises linguistic policies and offers support to teachers to ensure they are able to deal with the challenges of accommodating these diverse needs, while also encouraging them to value the linguistic and cultural experience of all students, so as to promote international mindedness and intercultural appreciation.

In addition, CNAS makes efforts to revise procedures aimed to offer all learners, irrespective of their background, full, equal, access to the curriculum. Students aged 10-19 are encouraged to sit Cambridge English Exams (Key A2 to Advanced C1) and DELF or DALF exams in French, or Goethe in German, as a source of learning motivation and external validation. Preparation for such exams is done during extra-curricular classes.

## **TEACHERS' ROLE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

As a considerable number of our students are either native Romanian speakers, or come from mixed backgrounds, we understand their need to be constantly supported in their language acquisition, and we strive to create opportunities for extensive English, German or French learning environments. In doing so, we try to maximize the time the students communicate in the target language but also to prepare them for a different curriculum, that of the IB Diploma Programme.

In order to stimulate cognitive academic language proficiency (which is inseparable from successful learning in school), with the understanding that language cannot be separated from subject teaching and learning, all teachers are experts in the language of their subjects. To uphold this belief, teachers are to benefit from specialised training, to be better equipped to deal with linguistic diversity in the classroom. At this stage, the school is still working on a timetable and time allocation for specialised in-house training in English and French.

## **LANGUAGE AT CNAS**

### **1. Pre DP**

For pre-Diploma students (ages 10-16) CNAS offers three options of instruction, either Romanian Mother Tongue or Bilingual (joint programme, English-Romanian or French-Romanian mother tongues). Starting at the age of 10, all students study a minimum of 3 languages in school, with the aim of achieving comparable academic cognitive proficiency in all 3 by age 16. Romanian literature is compulsory in the pre-IB years, and for the National Baccalaureate. A situation that is valid for a minority of our students (about 10 %) is that of bilingual families, with the second language being one not included in the school curriculum (Hungarian, German, Arabic, Dutch, French, Russian, Indian).

English as a foreign language is introduced as an extra-curricular course in preschool, and becomes mandatory at age 6, in accordance with national requirements. Students are expected to



attain in English a similar cognitive academic language proficiency to Romanian by age 16. CNAS students do, on average, reach CEFR B2+ or C1 by grade 10, and naturally make use of sophisticated grammatical constructions, yet this does not imply the acquisition of specific academic terminology/ low frequency and technical vocabulary (e.g. concepts used in Physics, Psychology, Economics, etc.).

Students are encouraged, in grades 9 and 10, to individually engage with academic written and audio-visual literary and non-literary texts in English, as well as extra-curricular activities that expand their academic English vocabulary. In an attempt to meet these needs, some subjects, such as Physics, are partially taught in English.

## 2. DP

In grade 10, students may choose to enrol for:

- ❖ the National Baccalaureate – instruction in Romanian with English, German or French to be assessed as foreign language
- ❖ the International Baccalaureate – instruction in English with English as group 1 and German as group 2 subjects. Given the fact that most subjects are assessed in English in the IB (except German B and German Ab Initio), English is the dominant language of instruction for the final 2 years.

In the event of students wanting to attend IB DP, despite lacking linguistic ability, personalised training may be provided, should the parents accept, in which over a period of time (summer, semester, year) the student is to study English intensively, so as to speed up the learning process. This support can only be offered before the enrolment in the IB DP, as linguistic proficiency (alongside self-discipline and inner motivation) is paramount to ensure success in such a demanding programme.

### **Mother tongue in group 1 (including self-taught)**

For group 1, the school offers English as an option, aiming to include Romanian, as well. For other languages, the school aims at supporting students in identifying suitable teachers for self-taught courses. Alternatively, in the event of a number of 4+ students who wish to study the same language in group 1, the school may suggest the teacher hold all the classes on school campus.

### *Language Ab Initio / Language B*

As students may wish to study other languages in group 2 (ab initio, language B) than what the school has on offer, an external teacher will be employed to meet student needs, if one can be found. The school has offered other languages as extra-curricular courses in the past (Spanish, Chinese, Italian), yet students already proficient in three languages showed little interest in a fourth.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

Learning support is available as language-learning support or as subject-support. Both at the beginning of each school year, as well as throughout, teachers use direct observation and/or predictive tests to assess students' needs of support. In addition, parents can request school support if they feel their child is struggling or if the student has missed classes for a longer period of time (due to illness, or other objective reasons).

In either situation, class teachers assess the student's needs and devise a support program, which may be short-term (a series of one-to-one/ group consultations) or long-term (planned to span



across the semester/ year). Depending on the cause, teachers may request qualified special educational needs (SEN) personnel to help devise and/ or carry out the learning support program.

## **LINKS TO ADMISSIONS POLICY**

### *Assessing new students' language skills*

Prior to enrolling new students, in order to establish the linguistic needs and language level (CEFR) of the students, the following steps are followed:

- ❖ Verification of school documents: checking the manner in which the target language (English) has been taught: mother tongue / foreign language, including language certificates
- ❖ Language assessment through the General Admissions Test in Mathematics and Sciences, which is taken in the DP language, i.e. English.
- ❖ Interview with the students (part of the recruitment process at CNAS)
- ❖ Once the level is determined, and the needs are identified, the school devises and presents the students and the parents with an individualised language training program (ILP) (duration, resources allotted, timetable, intermediate and final aims, etc.).

## **LINKS TO ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY**

The school welcomes any student (SEN, dyslexia, speech problems, ADHD, autism etc.) and goes to great lengths to ensure they feel integrated and accepted in the school community. Given the host country's somewhat incipient efforts to integrate SEN students in regular school (traditionally, these students would be in special school, and it is only recently that integration in regular schools has come into law), the school is aware of the efforts required to genuinely integrate such students in a modern, mixed ability class.

As such, the school works with school-employed child psychologists as well as the child's personal therapist to create a safe environment, to support teachers in understanding the child's requirements (preferred method of learning, strengths and matters to be addressed, behaviour specifics, etc.).

As part of the special needs policy, great attention is to be given to language development, as some SEN students may have difficulty in acquiring languages, but may also be at the opposite spectrum, proving to be a polyglot prodigy. The support of the SEN specialist is vital in ensuring SEN students make the most of their language learning, that they become capable of communicating in more than one language, or that they reach their full linguistic and communicative potential.

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

English language is taught as a foreign language from primary school (Preparatory Year), with students reaching B2+ or Advanced level (C1) around grade 10. This prepares them for a possible IB Diploma Programme. Elective languages have been piloted in the school, offered as extra-curricular activities, yet have been successful only on occasion, oftentimes parents feeling that their multilingual goals are satisfied with one mother tongue and two foreign languages.

A tendency to learn new languages has been noticed in high school students, which may lead to IB Language Ab Initio options. Latin as a classical language is studied in middle school, according to the local curriculum, only in grade 7. For high school students, Latin is compulsory for Humanities/Social Sciences.



## **OTHER MOTHER TONGUES**

For students with other mother tongues, the school informs parents about the importance of maintaining contact and improving mother tongue skills, during annual parents' meetings, offering support in terms of suggesting educational resources/ platforms, or acting as liaison between parents and external language teachers.

## **TEACHING METHODOLOGY AT CNAS**

In order to ensure students have the best opportunity to acquire knowledge in general (through language) and language in particular, teachers employ a diverse, student-centred teaching methodology (strategies, resources, time, organisation patterns – frontal, individual, group) that accommodate students' preferred learning styles, customised to students' age, educational needs, inclinations to certain teaching styles, positive response to certain teaching resources (audio-video, smart board, etc.).

Our approach aims to guarantee equity of access to all students, and stems from the communicative approach, though in order to supplement lapses (caused mainly by students having a different mother tongue than the language of instruction, or by interference from multilingualism), a grammar translation approach is grafted on, all in view of the zone of proximal development (what the students already know). The challenge comes from the variety of linguistic background and language proficiency in each class, which often results in a need for differentiation (of teaching, learning, and assessment).

One goal is to make use of the mother tongue to transfer skills to the language of instruction. Teachers make use of "scaffolding" (or temporary support) to promote content learning (by breaking down tasks into manageable parts and connecting them later on to create a complex outcome), but also in language learning, making use of a variety of resources to stimulate learning.

As students tend to have a passive rather than active language ability, CNAS teachers (language and subject teachers alike) strive to design engaging tasks that encourage students to use language meaningfully and creatively – assessment is mostly formative, using complementary/modern assessment strategies: projects, portfolios, creative writing tasks, speeches, presentations, etc.

To further promote language acquisition and literacy, CNAS teachers encourage, through a variety of strategies, depending on age, cognitive development, abilities, interests, teaching objectives, etc. learner-centred practice and interaction both in the classroom, and outside. As part of our methodology, we routinely encourage students to bring their own cultural background into the classroom, both in their own everyday learning, and on days when we celebrate national days/ cultures/ identities (e.g. European Day of Languages, National Day of Romania, etc.).

## **LANGUAGE POLICY REVISION**

All stakeholders can express amendments electronically, which are later discussed within an annually established focus group, and altered, if necessary. Revision takes place annually or on a need-basis.

Language Policy revision committee:



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Carmen Felicia Tănăsescu	Head of School
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**REFERENCES**

*IB Guidelines for developing a school language policy* (2008)

*IB Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* (April 2008)