

Language policy of Literargymnasium Rämibühl

1. The Literargymnasium within the education system of the Canton of Zürich

The Literargymnasium Rämibühl (LG) is a public, state-funded grammar school in the Canton of Zürich, Switzerland. Students join our school by passing an entrance examination after 6 years of primary school.

We teach a 6-year programme at the end of which students take Matura examinations. Our school-leaving diploma (Maturitätszeugnis) is recognized by the Federal Government of Switzerland and entitles students to enrol at all state institutions of higher education within Switzerland.

Most of our students speak Swiss-German or German as their mother tongue. Around 80-85% of our students follow the Swiss Matura-courses. (Language of instruction is German.)

About 15-20% of all the students follow the bilingual Swiss-Matura-IB-combined course. The bilingual Matura-IB-course leads to the Swiss-Matura and the IB-diploma.

As a state-funded school, the LG is obliged to ensure that all students acquire knowledge of Swiss customs and culture. On the one hand this is done by integrating such aspects in regular classes (e.g. Swiss literature in both German, French and Italian classes). Additionally, civic education is part of the curriculum and is taught by history teachers, with the aim of teaching students about both the history of Switzerland and how the present-day political system works. Extracurricular activities to this end are also undertaken (visiting exhibitions in local museums, going to local theatre productions, spending away-days exploring various parts of Switzerland and local cultures).

2. Language policy

The working language at LG is mostly German; for the bilingual courses some information is available both in German and English.

The language of instruction is German in the Swiss Matura courses. In the bilingual Matura-IB-course the language of instruction is English in Biology, Mathematics and History. In all the other subjects, the language of instruction is German or the subject language (e.g. in Italian the language of instruction is Italian).

Teaching in English in Biology, Mathematic, and History commences in year 3, ensuring that the students acquire an adequate level of English before the IB DP begins in year 5.

The response language is German in the Swiss Matura courses. In the bilingual Matura-IB-courses the response language is English for all assessment (Biology, Mathematics and History).

Teachers at the LG use a wide range of methods to teach languages. These include: Class discussions, written assignments, listening comprehensions, readings (e.g. short texts, newspaper articles, world literature) presentations (physical, podcasts, films) and the use of interactive and virtual programmes (e.g. Kahoot) to aid language acquisition.

Students are required to sit regular exams to monitor their progress. If they do not meet the required standards, teachers will discuss deficits with students. The required standards for passing each term are set by the Canton.

Students are actively encouraged to maintain and develop their native language if it is not taught at the LG. This can be done within the framework of the DP (e.g. IAs in history, ToK exhibitions, CAS) or outside. Regarding the latter students are encouraged to participate in courses ran by the Canton. The courses – called Heimatlische Sprache und Kultur¹ – are subsidised.

¹ <https://www.zh.ch/de/bildung/schulen/volksschule/volksschule-ergaenzende-unterrichtsangebote/heimatlische-sprache-und-kultur-hsk.html>

3. Selection of languages offered / language programme

The Literargymnasium Rämibühl is a public, state-funded grammar school with a strong focus on languages. During the first two years at our school, all students are taught German, French, English and Latin next to other, non-language subjects. During the final four years at our school, students are taught the following four languages:

- German as their main language (Zurich is in the German speaking part of Switzerland)
- French or Italian as their second language (French and Italian being both official Swiss national languages)
- In addition, students have to choose two of the following languages:
 - o Classical Greek
 - o Latin
 - o English
 - o Italian
 - o Spanish

Within the bilingual Matura-IB-Programme, students are taught in the following subjects:

- German A: Lit HL
- English A: LAL HL
- One of the following:
 - o French A LAL HL / SL
 - o Italian B HL / SL
 - o Latin CL HL / SL

Prior to making the choices referred to above, both students and parents are comprehensively informed and are able to engage with language teachers during special parent-evenings and orientation events at school.

Students will spend at least one week in a region that speaks the language they chose (exception: Latin). In year 3, students spend two weeks at a language school in Oxford. In year 4, students spend a week in the francophone part of Switzerland and in year 5 they visit a city in Germany or Austria. Those students who chose Italian also spend a week in Italy, while those who chose Latin also travel to Italy to study ancient history. The aim of these weeks is for the students to immerse themselves not only into the language, but also the culture of the region or country in which they are staying. To this end, a number of excursions and projects are scheduled.

4. Extracurricular language subjects:

In addition to the above, students can choose between various language subjects. The school usually offers English, Italian, Spanish, Latin courses. All the extracurricular courses will only take place if enough students apply for the course.

5. Additional German courses for non-native German students:

The school offers German courses for non-native speakers at different levels (so-called “DAZ: Deutsch als Zweitsprache”² and “DAF: Deutsch als Fremdsprache”³)

- DAZ:
 - o German for students with a Swiss-German background but no profound knowledge of German.
 - o German for students who join the IB class from abroad or from international schools.
- DAF: German for exchange students.

These courses are free of charge and are taught by teachers who are specifically qualified to do so. The Literargymnasium Rämibühl and its partner school, the Realgymnasium Rämibühl coordinate these courses.

6. Additional course in other languages:

French:

The school realised that some students moving to Switzerland from abroad have only a limited knowledge and understanding of French. For those students the school offers the following course:

- French DELF/DALF: those two courses should allow students to keep up with the level of the regular French courses. These lessons are an addition to the regular French lessons.

English:

- There is a weekly lesson of “special English” for native/bilingual speakers of English in the first and second year at our school. Many of these students go on to be future IB students.
- Cambridge C1 Advanced and C2 Proficiency courses are also offered at our school.

7. Review process

This policy is evaluated on a regular basis and will be reviewed no later than 5 years from the date of publication or whenever the head of school and/or the IB diploma programme coordination deem it to be necessary.

January 2025, IB coordination (AN, KH), Literargymnasium Rämibühl

² See Appendix 1 on pages 4-5 for the school’s guideline on DAZ.

³ See Appendix 2 on pages 6-7 for the school’s guideline on DAF.

Appendix 1: Concept for teaching German as a second language at the LG and RG Rämibühl (Revised version dated June 24th, 2020)

Offer	The Literargymnasium Rämibühl (LG) and the Realgymnasium Rämibühl (RG) provide a total of 5 classes for German as a second language. There are 2 courses with one double class each. The fifth class is intended as an individually available and plannable one-to-one coaching period to support students, specifically with their writing skills.
For whom	The lessons are aimed at LG and RG students who have learnt German as a second language and/or speak another language at home and are not receiving any support to improve their writing and reading skills in German.
Registration procedure	<p>Students are sent to the "German as a second language"-programme on the recommendation of the class council and typically attend for one school year. Registration after the interim assessment in the middle of the semester is also possible in urgent cases. Registration is binding for one semester in each case. The duration can be extended as required and on the explicit recommendation of the class council.</p> <p>Students are recommended to enrol in the German as a second language programme by the class council at the LG from the 1st semester intermediate class meeting.</p> <p>Guest students are sent to the "German as a second language"-programme at the beginning of the 1st school year where necessary. Students at the RG are recommended for the German as a second language programme by their teachers from the beginning of the 1st school year.</p> <p>The "German as a second language"- teacher provides an information sheet including a registration form, which the class teacher can hand out to the students, have signed by the parents and hand in at the secretary's office.</p>
Course concept	<p>The objective of the course is to provide additional support for those students who have difficulties composing texts and understanding demanding texts in the interests of equal opportunities. With this in mind, "German as a second language" should be seen as a supplement to the regular, assessed lessons and not as an independent course where learning objectives are formulated independently of the subject lessons.</p> <p>"German as a second language" is specifically not an exam preparation course or homework assistance. Attendance at the German as a second language programme does not entitle students to any compensation for disadvantages and the German as a second language teacher is not obliged to achieve a specific goal. The objective is rather to provide individual support and encouragement to strengthen the students' fundamental writing and text comprehension skills.</p>

<p>Organisation and communication</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions are held at the grading conference or, in urgent cases, beforehand if a student is to be recommended for the "German as a second language"- programme. The class teacher discusses the situation and the course programme with the student or their parents (registration form) and then informs the "German as a second language" teacher. 2. The class teacher provides the "German as a second language" teacher with the necessary contact details (e.g. e-mail address of the German teacher, etc.) along with information about the student ("diagnosis" with references to the difficulties, when possible with specific examples from essays, etc.). 3. At the end of the semester, the German as a second language teacher provides brief feedback on progress, problems, etc. to the class teacher for the attention of the class council.
<p>Absence policy</p>	<p>Registration for the German as a second language programme is binding, i.e. the absence policy applies.</p>

Dr. Christine Feller, Vice-Rector LG Dr. Tobias Weber, Vice-Rector RG in consultation with Michael Schmitz, German as a second language teacher LG and RG, June 2019 Version 2 with amendments from June 24th, 2020

Appendix 2: Concept for teaching German as a foreign language at Rämibühl (revised version dated June 24th, 2020)

<p>A. Offer</p>	<p>The Literargymnasium provides 4 classes for German as a foreign language lessons. Students can be released from regular lessons for up to 4 sessions in order to attend the German as a foreign language course. The didactic concept of the courses (division of the lessons into courses with varying levels, forms of work, etc.) is the responsibility of the German as a foreign language teacher. The classes are held at specified times.</p>
<p>B. For whom</p>	<p>The classes are for guest students who attend Rämibühl as part of an exchange programme and generally go to school at the LG, RG or MNG for 6 months to a year.</p>
<p>Significance of the course</p>	<p>A. Attendance at the German as a foreign language course is compulsory for guest students and is prioritised over subject lessons. This rule is not applicable to students from Switzerland (Western Switzerland, Ticino), who attend regular German lessons.</p> <p>B. Students who are ill must notify the German as a foreign language teacher in advance by e-mail and subsequently excuse the absence in accordance with the school's usual absence regulations. The German as a foreign language teacher reports unexcused absences to the person responsible for the exchange.</p> <p>C. The German as a foreign language teacher must be informed about special events at the schools, the following also applies here: the German as a foreign language course takes priority, in special cases (e.g. school trip etc.) the student can be excused, of which the German as a foreign language teacher must be informed as early as possible by the person responsible for the exchange.</p> <p>D. Homework is given (which can also be undertaken during regular German lessons or in other lessons during which the guest students are unable to follow).</p> <p>E. Exams are written to reflect the focus on skills development in German as a foreign language lessons (e.g. presentations, grammar tests, etc.).</p> <p>F. The German as a foreign language teacher is in contact with the German departments and participates in a departmental meeting at least once per school year.</p>
<p>Course concept and organisation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The German as a foreign language teacher receives a list of guest students from each school prior to the start of the school year, containing the following information: Surname, first name, date of birth, expected departure, country of origin, previous knowledge of German, information on graduation arrangements (see point 5). 2. Regular lessons will presumably not be possible in the first three weeks of school, since the organisations are still conducting introductory events and in some cases also offering language courses during this time. The course rules are generally binding after three weeks. 3. The objective of the German as a foreign language programme is for the guest students to learn German as well as possible, i.e. to reach level B1 to B2 if possible.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Homework is assigned, learning objectives are formulated and enforced (> exams are written and assessed) 5. The German as a foreign language teacher sets a grade each semester, which is included in the guest student's certificate (instead of a German grade from the regular lessons). Exceptions, e.g. due to specifications/expectations of the home school, must be agreed with the German as a foreign language teacher prior to the start of the school year (see point 1). This regulation is not applicable to guest students from Switzerland (see point C.1) 6. Guest students can be motivated to register for a language diploma (Goethe Diploma B1 or B2) towards the end of the school year if required and if their level is appropriate.
E. Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The exchange organisations (AFS, Rotary, etc.) inform those responsible for the exchange about their offers and requirements in terms of German language skills (their own courses, certificates of achievement) as well as extracurricular programmes during school time. Those responsible for the exchange forward this information to the German as a foreign language teacher. 2. The schools organise their internal communication for the guest students on an individual basis. The person responsible for the exchange communicates with the German as a foreign language teacher, provides them with all the important information (e.g. deadline for submitting grades) and receives feedback from the German as a foreign language teacher (absences, performance records, etc.). 3. The German as a foreign language lessons are entered in the school timetable, especially in the timetables on the room doors, to ensure that lessons run without disruption. 4. The German as a foreign language teacher attends the German departmental meeting of the three schools once a year by arrangement so that they can provide information about the course and be/remain in dialogue with the German teachers. 5. The German as a foreign language teacher writes a short feedback on each guest student's commitment to the course (this can be one or two sentences if everything runs smoothly) for the grade council at the end of autumn and spring term, which is sent together with the grade via the contact person for exchange.