

## **SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **PREAMBLE**

South Africa's cultural diversity is a natural asset. The promotion of multilingualism, particularly the development of South Africa's official languages is something which should be encouraged in schools. Before the birth of democracy indigenous languages had little status in the country and their growth was not encouraged by the government. Afrikaans and English took pride of place and most South Africans felt obliged to communicate in one of these.

This discriminatory policy has affected the learners' access to indigenous languages and has resulted in an adult population which is mostly unilingual. To redress this situation it is imperative for learners to be given the opportunity and, importantly, to be encouraged to learn languages other than their own.

### **PRACTICABILITY**

Studying in one's home language is highly desirable. It is academically sound and it gives learners the opportunity to connect with their roots and with their heritage. Unfortunately, with South Africa having eleven official languages, it is not possible for a school to offer learning and teaching in each of these and a compromise must be reached by all stake holders.

The Education Department employs one teacher to 35 learners. This limits the number of subjects a school can offer. After ensuring that all compulsory subjects are covered, there are not enough teachers available to offer more than one or two additional languages. Thus encouraging multilingualism presents a problem. But, working within these limits, schools should do all it can to foster languages via activities such as cultural events and afternoon classes.

In spite of prolific international research there are still diverse views on the cognitive benefits of home language or multilingual schooling. Cost-effectiveness is another issue that needs to be addressed. The school must nevertheless, in the interests of national building, foster tolerance and respect for all languages.

### **THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE SCHOOL**

In accordance with the South African Schools Act and the admissions policy of Wendywood High School, the language of teaching and learning is English. The subject English is offered at Home Language Level. Wendywood High School offers pupils both Afrikaans and isiZulu as second languages at First Additional Language Level from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Every effort is made to employ language teachers who have their teaching subject as a home language.

Immigrant pupils are encouraged to study their own home language as an alternative to Afrikaans or isiZulu, if it is offered for examination by the Department of Education. These pupils attend lessons with private tutors who liaise regularly with the school. South Africans who speak one of the other official languages as a home language, may also take their home

language as an additional language if they can arrange for a suitable teacher to prepare them for the Grade 12 examination.

This language policy has been endorsed by all stakeholders, including the Governing Body. Eight periods are allocated to all languages in every 6 day cycle, Academic support, in all three languages, is given to any pupil who requires extra help and special enrichment classes are held to advance proficiency in the use of English. Special computer programmes to enhance reading and other language skills have been purchased and installed in the school's computer centre. Time is allocated to pupils to use these programmes under the supervision of trained teachers.

In spite of the fact that many of our learners have English as a second or even third language, they have in the past all passed English at home language level and many have attained great success in Public Speaking and Debating competitions against established and successful English speaking schools. This is a proud record which we strive to maintain every year through our enrichment programme, by encouraging listening skills, writing skills and reading.

Afrikaans and isiZulu are offered at First Additional Language level. Although a number of pupils have Afrikaans as a third or fourth language, the majority of pupils choose this subject, probably because they studied Afrikaans at primary school. The isiZulu group is comparatively small, but the success in this subject is great. Wendywood pupils score marks well above the provincial average.

All meetings in the school will be conducted in English. However, where a translator is required, the school and the parent can work together to arrange for the services of a translator.

All verbal feedback to parents regarding their children's progress will be conducted in English.

All correspondence will be through the medium of *English* namely, school brochures, bulletins on bulletin boards, timetables, letters, newspaper articles (except when the other approved languages – isiZulu and Afrikaans are being taught).

**LANGUAGE POLICY**

Compiled by the school stake holders and ratified by the School Governing Body at a General Governing Body meeting held on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatories: .....	Principal
.....	Chairman
.....	IDSO
.....	District Director