

9 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you of the possibility of your child taking up a second language in Year 9 and to explain in detail how the programme will work.

### Structure of the programme

All students in Year 8 currently study one language (French, German or Spanish) for 6 hours per fortnight. There is an exciting opportunity for our most able and committed linguists to begin studying a second language alongside their current one next academic year, with a view to selecting both languages as GCSE options in Year 10 and 11. For these dual linguists, the 6 hours of language lessons per fortnight would be split between the current and new language, with 3 hours of each per fortnight. They would be combined with their single linguist classmates for their 3 lessons per fortnight in the language they have been studying since Year 7, where the department will ensure that all necessary content is covered in those 3 lessons, and they would start a fast-paced beginner's course in the new language to cover everything needed in order to be ready for GCSE study at the end of Year 9 in the remaining 3 lessons per fortnight. All students would be ready to take either language as a GCSE option later in their academic career. To clarify, please see the table below:

	Single linguists (in Year 9)	Dual linguists (in Year 9)
French (studied in Y7 & Y8)	6 hours per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours French per fortnight with single linguist classmates</li> <li>• 3 hours German <b>OR</b> Spanish per fortnight</li> </ul>
German (studied in Y7 & Y8)	6 hours per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours German per fortnight with single linguist classmates</li> <li>• 3 hours French <b>OR</b> Spanish per fortnight</li> </ul>
Spanish (studied in Y7 & Y8)	6 hours per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours Spanish per fortnight with single linguist classmates</li> <li>• 3 hours German <b>OR</b> French per fortnight</li> </ul>

### How to define our most able linguists

It is important to remember that the dual linguist programme will move at a much faster pace in all languages and cover the same content in half the lessons of single linguists. Please also note that at GCSE level, students who opt to become a dual linguist in Year 9 would join Year 10 and 11 classes with students who have studied just one language throughout and therefore have had twice the amount of curriculum time dedicated to that language in Year 9. Therefore, the dual linguist option is best suited to our most able linguists. Some qualities of an able linguist include:

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- an ability to pick up, learn and recollect new vocabulary and grammatical concepts quickly
- an ability to make connections between words, structures, and languages
- an ability to identify, memorise and reproduce new sounds
- an ability to read and listen for gist with confidence
- an ability to extrapolate general rules from samples
- an ability to understand and articulate their own strategies for language learning
- an ability to transfer skills across to other languages
- an early awareness of the second language as a separate system
- a motivation to participate and communicate
- a curiosity in how the language works and ask questions about meaning
- a willingness to make and learn from mistakes
- a creativity and imagination when using complex lexical and grammatical structures

We also look at students' attitude to work and our most dedicated linguists are expected to demonstrate not only a strong desire to learn a new language, but also excellent behaviour, meeting all deadlines and commitment to going above and beyond in their independent learning. Students will also need to show strong resilience and an ability to cope under pressure. This year we have approximately 50 students who have made the decision to become dual linguists. Please see below for some testimonies from them:

*"After 21 hours of learning French and it is now nearly Christmas, it has been challenging. However, the progress we have made has really surprised us. We did not expect to be able to sustain a 3-minute basic conversation with our teacher and to also be able to accurately write a 90-word paragraph on free time activities using past, present and future ideas. We are very proud of what we have been able to achieve; it shows that hard work pays off. If you enjoy languages, are prepared to push yourself and not being afraid of making mistakes, then it is for you. It will definitely boost your confidence and make you become better at problem solving."*

*"It is so interesting and full to learn it all (German); there are so many links with French and English so it is very useful; it just makes sense. We would do it again."*

*"Spanish is a lovely language and I recommend learning it. However when doing two languages or just learning one is quite a challenge. So just remember what you're trying to do. You need to put in quite a bit of hard work. I still sometimes struggle with Spanish, but once I get my head around it - I find that it's quite a fun and sweet language. The teachers are well caring and give very good feedback. So even though it is tough learning a new language, with all the help you get it will pay off in the end!"*

### **Preparatory independent work**

In order to facilitate the start of the academic year in Year 9, dual linguists will be set a pack of independent work covering the basics in the new language they have opted for, to be completed before September of Year 9. Please note that all this content will be revisited in term 1 of Year 9. This pack will include, but is not limited to:

- basic pronunciation rules
- numbers, days of the week, dates, months
- describing yourself and others
- talking about sports and other free time activities
- describing your town
- talking about school and school subjects
- likes and dislikes, giving your opinions
- basic verbs in present tense, including regular verb forms and key irregular verbs

- definite and indefinite articles
- adjective agreement
- possessive adjectives – my, your, his/her, etc.
- an introduction to the near future tense

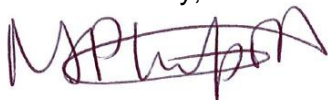
### **The dual linguist process**

We will be sending a separate letter before half term to parents and carers of those students whom we feel would be most suited to the dual linguist programme, specifically inviting them to take up a second language if they wish to. The letter will clearly explain the submission process for selecting the desired second language, by completing an online form.

If you do not receive our letter inviting your child to become a dual linguist but your child has a strong desire to study a second language, or if you have any further questions at all regarding the dual linguist programme, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Philpott at [nphilpott@wealdgs.org](mailto:nphilpott@wealdgs.org). Depending on the outcome of our conversation, we would then be able to send your child the information on how to submit their second language choice.

As ever, thank you very much for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'N Philpott', written in a cursive style.

**Ms N Philpott**

Head of Modern Foreign Languages