

Languages at Dame Alice Owens

Important information for parents of new students in Y7

Being able to speak more than one language is a vital skill in today's rapidly changing world, and those taught at DAOS ([French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#)) are global and highly influential languages that give students the opportunities to travel, study and work in many countries.

We want our students to achieve their full personal and academic potential, and access all the advantages and opportunities that are open to speakers of more than one language.

This is why **DAOS students are expected to study two languages in KS3, and at least one language to GCSE level.**

Our curriculum - KS3

Students study two foreign languages from the start of Year 7 through to year 9 - students will not change or rotate languages through Key Stage 3 (as is the case in some schools).

- The language that is studied by all Year 7 students alternates each year between French, German and Spanish. In the academic year 2023-24 all Y7 students will learn **French**
- **The second language** (in 2023-24 either Spanish OR German) **is assigned by the school, there is no free choice of language at DAOS**

Exceptional circumstances: we will do our best to accommodate requests to study a specific second language when a student has **a compelling and specific reason** for doing so.

Unsuccessful reasons to request a specific language have included:

- The student believes a specific language is more useful / spoken more widely
- The student prefers to go on holiday in a specific country.
- The student has / has not enjoyed learning a specific language at primary school

In the past we have been able to grant requests for the following reasons

- The student has immediate family (eg Grandparents) living in the country and visits them regularly.
- The student is already fluent in one language, and therefore wishes to learn the other instead. (this does NOT preclude native-speaking students from being entered for public exams in their 'home' language).

If you have a compelling and specific reason why your young person should study a specific language in Year 7, **please complete the relevant section in the googleform that will be sent to all new Year 7s in due course** explaining why you think this would be appropriate. We will consider each case on an individual basis, however **we cannot guarantee that we will be able to grant your request.**

Our curriculum - KS4

In the longer term there is also an expectation that **all students will continue with AT LEAST one foreign language from those taught at the school to GCSE level.**

We value multilingualism and encourage the study of all different languages - including 'home' languages - especially as the skills developed in learning one language help with the acquisition of new languages.

However, the skills and discipline involved in formal learning of a foreign language from scratch as part of the school curriculum are different. We know that many employers and universities who value GCSE and A level qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages very highly are less impressed by qualifications in a 'home' language.

Students will therefore be expected to study for and sit GCSE examinations in Year 11 in one or both of their 'Year 7' languages even if they already have a formal GCSE in another language (such as Greek or Russian).