



## LANGUAGE POLICY (2026)

### 1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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| <b>Policy Owner</b>     | SMT and Board of Governors   |
| <b>Drafted By</b>       | SMT  |
| <b>Date of Approval</b> | 01 March 2026  |
| <b>Review Date</b>      | January 2027   |
| <b>Related Policies</b> | Admissions Policy (2026); FET Phase Subject Choice and Promotion Policy (2026); Learner Code of Conduct & Handbook (2026). |

### 2. PREAMBLE & ETHOS

Language is not only a tool of communication; it is the medium through which identity, culture, and relationship are formed. At Loreto Convent School, we are a multilingual community shaped by the inner city of Pretoria. We honour each learner's linguistic heritage as part of who they are. Our shared English-medium environment is a structure for academic excellence and common life — not a statement that any language, culture, or identity is less valued.

Loreto Convent School serves its community as an English-medium institution. While we operate as an English Home Language school, we recognise that for many learners, English is a second or third language. Guided by the charism of **Mary Ward**, this policy is anchored in:

- **Sincerity:** We use language as a tool for clear, honest communication to build a unified school community.
- **Excellence:** We employ a “total language immersion” strategy, ensuring learners achieve high proficiency in the language of instruction and global commerce.
- **Justice:** We value linguistic diversity while maintaining a common medium of instruction to foster inclusivity and reduce tension between different ethnic language groups.
- **Truth:** We communicate honestly with learners and families about language requirements, their purpose, and their implications for academic progression. We explain the reasoning behind every language decision.
- **Freedom:** We believe that a learner who is genuinely proficient in English is freer — better equipped to access higher education, employment, and global participation. Our language programme is in service of that freedom, not a constraint on identity.
- **Accompaniment:** We recognise that for many of our learners, English is not their mother tongue. We do not leave learners to find their way alone. Our educators walk alongside learners who are navigating English as an additional language, providing structured support, patience, and belief in each learner's capacity to flourish.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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This policy is drafted in compliance with:

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Section 6: Official Languages; Section 29(2): Right to Education in Language of Choice)*
- *South African Schools Act (SASA 84 of 1996)*
- *Language in Education Policy (LiEP, 1997)*
- *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*
- *South African Language in Education Policy for Schools (PANSAIB guidelines)*

- 3.1 The South African Constitution (Section 6) recognises eleven official languages and commits the state to promoting multilingualism. Section 29(2) provides that every person has the right to receive education in the official language of their choice where this is reasonably practicable.
- 3.2 Loreto Convent School operates as an English Home Language medium school. This is the school's established language of learning and teaching, supported by a qualified teaching staff, an established curriculum, and a history of strong academic outcomes for our learners.
- 3.3 In terms of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP, 1997), the school acknowledges that it is not in a position to offer instruction in additional official languages at this time, due to staffing constraints, timetable capacity, and consistently low enrolment in alternative language options. The school is committed to reviewing this position annually as part of its review of this policy.
- 3.4 The school values the linguistic diversity of its learner community. Home languages are not suppressed as inferior; they are the foundation of each learner's identity and cognitive development. The school's English-medium environment is a structure for academic access, not a statement about the worth of other languages.

### 4. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (MOI)

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- 4.1 **Primary Medium:** English is the official language of instruction, assessment, and daily communication from Grade R to Grade 12.
- 4.2 **Total Immersion:** To maximise linguistic proficiency, learners are encouraged to speak only English in all classes and during school activities, except during specific Additional Language lessons.
- 4.3 **Support:** Educators are committed to providing English vocabulary and communication development activities to support learners transitioning from other home languages.
- 4.4 **EAL Support:** The school recognises that for learners whose home language is not English, the total immersion environment requires deliberate, structured support. Subject teachers are expected to apply appropriate scaffolding strategies for English Additional Language learners. The SBST co-ordinates additional language support where a learner's English proficiency is identified as a barrier to learning.
- 4.5 **Dignity of Home Languages:** The school's English-medium policy does not imply that learners' home languages are unwelcome or inferior. Learners are not penalised for communicating in their home language in informal settings. The total immersion expectation applies to the academic and instructional context and is applied with sensitivity and pastoral awareness.

## 5. LANGUAGE STUDY REQUIREMENTS

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To comply with the National Curriculum Statement and ensure academic progression, the following requirements apply:

### 5.1. Foundation Phase (Grade R – 3)

- **English Home Language (HL):** Mandatory instruction in reading, writing, and speaking. Numeracy and Life Skills are also taught in English.
- **Afrikaans First Additional Language (FAL):** Formally introduced and assessed from Grade 1.

### 5.2. Intermediate & Senior Phase (Grade 4 – 9)

- **Official Languages:** English HL and Afrikaans FAL are the two official languages required for further study.
- **Selection Criteria:** Afrikaans is the designated FAL as it is well-established with qualified educators and suitable literature, yielding historically high achievement for our learners.
- **Admission:** Proficiency in English is required for academic access in these phases. Applicants who demonstrate strong learning potential but who are still developing English proficiency may be considered for admission with a documented EAL support plan. Refer to the Admissions Policy (2026) for the full admissions criteria and assessment process.

### 5.3. FET Phase (Grade 10 – 12)

- **Matriculation:** English HL and Afrikaans FAL are offered as the official languages for National Senior Certificate purposes.
- **Standard:** High proficiency in English is required to meet the demands of the FET curriculum.
- **Immigrant Concession:** Learners who entered the South African school system for the first time in Grade 8 or later may apply to be exempted from Afrikaans FAL in the FET Phase. The process and eligibility criteria are set out in the FET Phase Subject Choice and Promotion Policy (2026).

## 6. CONSTRAINTS & LANGUAGE VIABILITY

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- 6.1 The school is not currently in a position to offer instruction in additional official South African languages beyond English HL and Afrikaans FAL. This limitation arises from:
- a) the availability of qualified educators in other official languages;
  - b) timetable and resource constraints; and
  - c) historically low enrolment in alternative language options, making viable class groups unachievable.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Language in Education Policy (LiEP, 1997), the school will document and review these constraints annually. Should circumstances change — including meaningful demand from the school community for an additional official language — the SMT will present a viability report to the Board of Governors for consideration.
- 6.3 Parents who wish to raise a concern about the school's language offering may do so in writing to the Executive Principal, who will respond within 10 school days and refer the matter to the Board if it raises a policy question.

## 7. APPROVAL

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Signed on behalf of the Board of Governors:



01 March 2026

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fatima Rawjee**

**Chairperson: Board of Governors**

Signed by the Executive Principal:



01 March 2026

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Suzette Truter**

**Executive Principal**