

GROOTE SCHUUR HIGH SCHOOL

Language Policy Document

Adopted by School Governing Body: [Date to be inserted] 13 August 2025

Effective Date: [Date to be inserted] Immediately

Review Date: [Three years from adoption date] August 2028

1. Introduction and Legal Framework

This document constitutes the language policy of Groote Schuur High School, as approved by the school governing body in accordance with Section 6 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended by Act No. 32 of 2024.

The language policy has been drafted in full compliance with:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)
- The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended by Act No. 32 of 2024
- The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996)
- Applicable Western Cape provincial legislation on school education
- Relevant judgments of South African courts
- The International Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
- The Norms and Standards for Language Policy in Public Schools, 1997
- Guidelines of the Pan South African Language Board

2. Constitutional Compliance and Guiding Principles

2.1 Constitutional Foundation

This policy has been developed in strict accordance with:

Section 6(1) - Recognition that the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu

Section 6(2) - Commitment to elevating the status and advancing the use of historically disadvantaged official languages

Section 9 - Adherence to equality provisions and the prohibition of unfair discrimination

Section 29(2) - Recognition of the right to receive education in the official language or languages of choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable

2.2 Guiding Principles

The governing body is committed to:

- The best interests of the child, with emphasis on equality and equity
- Promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity
- Ensuring no form of racial or linguistic discrimination
- Providing quality education in a linguistically supportive environment
- Respecting the language rights of all learners and families

3. Community Needs Analysis and Consultation

3.1 Education District Context

In determining this language policy, the governing body has thoroughly considered the language needs of the broader community in the Southern Suburbs education district, including:

Demographic Analysis:

- Home language distribution among current and prospective learners
- Language preferences expressed by parent community
- Linguistic profile of the broader Southern Suburbs area
- Migration and settlement patterns affecting language demographics

Community Consultation Process: The governing body conducted extensive consultations including:

- Parent and community surveys on language preferences
- Stakeholder meetings with local community organizations
- Consultation with nearby schools regarding language provision
- Input from local education district officials

3.2 Mandatory Factors Considered

In accordance with Section 6(5) of the South African Schools Act, the governing body has carefully considered:

(a) Best interests of the child - with emphasis on equality as provided for in section 9 of the Constitution and equity in educational outcomes

(b) Section 6(2) of the Constitution - commitment to advancing historically disadvantaged official languages through additional language offerings

(c) Section 29(2) of the Constitution - recognition of language choice rights while balancing practical implementation

(d) Changing number of learners - ongoing monitoring of learners who speak English as their primary language of learning and teaching, with current analysis showing [percentage to be inserted based on school data]

(e) Effective use of resources - optimal utilization of classroom space, teaching staff, and learning materials to support quality multilingual education

(f) Enrollment trends - analysis of admission patterns showing [trends to be inserted based on school data] and projected future language needs

4. Language of Learning and Teaching Policy

4.1 Medium of Instruction

Groote Schuur High School operates as a single-medium English institution for Grades 8 to 12.

Rationale for English Medium: Based on comprehensive community consultation and analysis of factors outlined in Section 3, English medium instruction has been determined to:

- Serve the educational needs of the majority of learners in the school community
- Align with parent and community preferences in the education district
- Optimize the use of available teaching resources and facilities
- Support learners' post-school educational and career aspirations
- Enable effective classroom management and resource allocation

4.2 Language in Teaching and Assessment

All teaching, learning, and assessment activities, including tests and examinations, are conducted in English as the medium of instruction, except where subjects are specifically taught in other languages as outlined in Section 5.

5. Promotion of Multilingualism and Additional Languages

5.1 Commitment to Multilingualism

The school actively promotes multilingualism and linguistic diversity through a structured additional language program:

(a) English Home Language - delivered at appropriate cognitive and academic levels

(b) Afrikaans as First Additional Language - offered to support the historically significant role of Afrikaans in the Western Cape and to develop multilingual competency

(c) isiXhosa as First Additional Language - provided in recognition of isiXhosa as the predominant African language in the Western Cape, supporting constitutional commitments to historically disadvantaged languages

(d) Mandarin Language Program - offering conversational Mandarin with progression to Mandarin as Second Additional Language, responding to global communication needs

5.2 Language Equity and Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Section 6B of the South African Schools Act:

- No unfair discrimination exists in respect of any official languages offered as subject options
- Afrikaans and isiXhosa First Additional Languages are offered at the same academic level and standard
- All additional language subjects receive equitable resource allocation
- Qualified educators are provided for each language offering
- Learning and teaching support materials are adequately provided for all languages

5.3 Educator Responsibility

Every educator at the school takes responsible steps to:

- Inform learners about the importance and value of multilingualism
- Promote respect for all official languages beyond the medium of instruction
- Support learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds
- Create an inclusive classroom environment that values linguistic diversity

6. South African Sign Language Recognition

6.1 Official Status Recognition

In accordance with Section 6(4) of the South African Schools Act, as amended, South African Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at public schools.

6.2 Accommodation and Support

The school is committed to:

- Acknowledging SASL as an official language option for learning
- Providing reasonable accommodation for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners
- Seeking appropriate resources and support for SASL interpretation when required
- Collaborating with relevant organizations to support SASL users
- Including SASL considerations in accessibility planning

7. Head of Department Authority and Oversight

7.1 Recognition of Statutory Authority

The school acknowledges that the Head of Department may, in accordance with Section 6(7) of the South African Schools Act, direct the school to adopt additional languages of instruction where:

- It is practically feasible to do so
- The mandatory factors outlined in Section 6(5) support such direction
- Proper consultation procedures have been followed
- Adequate resources can be provided to support quality instruction

7.2 Consultation and Appeal Process

Should the Head of Department consider directing additional languages of instruction:

- The school and governing body will be informed in writing with detailed reasons
- Full community consultation will be facilitated including public hearings
- The governing body will provide input and representations
- Any directive will be implemented only after adequate resources are secured
- The governing body retains the right to appeal to the Member of the Executive Council within 14 days

8. Implementation Framework

8.1 Resource Requirements

Effective implementation of this policy requires:

Human Resources:

- Qualified educators for English medium instruction
- Competent additional language teachers for Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and Mandarin
- Support staff with multilingual capabilities where possible

Learning Materials:

- Age-appropriate textbooks and resources in English for all subjects
- Quality learning materials for each additional language offered
- Digital resources supporting multilingual learning

Infrastructure:

- Classroom facilities optimized for the school's language offerings
- Technology supporting language learning and assessment
- Accessibility features for learners requiring SASL support

8.2 Quality Assurance

The school maintains educational quality through:

- Regular assessment of learner progress in all language subjects
- Ongoing professional development for language educators
- Curriculum alignment with national and provincial requirements
- Parent and learner feedback on language program effectiveness

9. Policy Review and Amendment

9.1 Mandatory Review Schedule

In accordance with Section 6(6) of the South African Schools Act, this policy must be reviewed:

- **Every three years** from the date of adoption
- **When demographic factors** outlined in Section 3.2 change significantly
- **When enrollment trends** indicate substantial shifts in language needs
- **At the request** of the Head of Department
- **When circumstances require** immediate policy reconsideration

9.2 Review Process

Policy reviews will involve:

- Updated community needs assessment and demographic analysis
- Consultation with parents, learners, educators, and community stakeholders
- Analysis of educational outcomes and resource effectiveness
- Consideration of changing provincial and national language policy requirements
- Formal governing body deliberation and decision-making

9.3 Amendment Procedures

Policy amendments require:

- Formal proposal to the governing body with supporting rationale
- Community consultation appropriate to the scope of proposed changes
- Governing body resolution approving amendments
- Communication of changes to school community and education authorities

10. Monitoring and Compliance

10.1 Annual Monitoring

The school will conduct annual assessments of:

- Language demographic trends in the learner population
- Educational outcomes across all language subjects
- Resource adequacy for current language offerings
- Community satisfaction with language provision
- Compliance with national and provincial language requirements

10.2 Reporting and Accountability

The governing body will:

- Report annually to parents on language policy implementation
- Provide required information to education authorities
- Maintain records of community consultation processes
- Document decision-making rationale for policy choices

11. Communication and Access

11.1 Policy Accessibility

This language policy is made available to:

- All parents and learners at the school
- The Head of Department of the Western Cape Education Department
- Community members upon request
- School website and official communications

11.2 Translation and Support

Where reasonably possible, key policy information will be made available in the major languages of the school community, and interpretation support will be provided for parents requiring assistance in understanding policy provisions.

12. Conclusion

This language policy reflects Groote Schuur High School's commitment to providing quality education while honoring South Africa's linguistic diversity and constitutional values. The governing body remains dedicated to regularly reviewing and refining this policy to serve the evolving needs of learners and the broader school community.

Approved by:

Chairperson, School Governing Body: E. AVONTUUR Date: 13 August 2025

Witnessed by:

Principal: M. EHRENREICH Date: 13 August 2025

Next Review Date: August 2028