

Dear Parent/Carer

October 2021

I hope your son/daughter has enjoyed the opportunity to study French, German, Spanish and Mandarin in the MFL taster sessions as part of our cultural awareness half term. The languages team has been impressed with the work rate, willingness to learn and enthusiasm of our Year 7 students.

We are now asking students to state a preference of the **one language that they will study throughout Years 7, 8 and 9**. For those with older siblings, you will note that this is a change from previous curriculum models and aims to ensure that students achieve proficiency in one language by giving more time to study the language and its culture in greater depth.

We are proud of the choice that we offer at The Castle School and will do our best to give each child their first preference. However, staff specialisms and class numbers will also need to be taken into account, and so this may not always be possible. We are therefore asking students to state their first choice and second choice of language. We can then bear these preferences in mind when allocating students to groups.

We are committed to ensuring that all students of MFL at The Castle School become global citizens and we offer a wide range of opportunities for them to explore a broad range of languages and cultures. One part of this includes our MFL celebration days once each half-term, where students will have an opportunity to learn about the culture and language of the French/German/Mandarin or Spanish-speaking world, which they are not studying as part of their regular timetable. In addition, for those students who want to broaden their language skills, **there will be an opportunity for students to add a second language in Year 9 if they wish.**

Students who are interested in opting for Mandarin should note that the school is a part of the prestigious Mandarin Excellence Programme. This programme is funded by the Department for Education and is delivered by the UCL IOE Confucius Institute for Schools, in partnership with the British Council. Students who sign up to this programme will attend normal lessons in Mandarin (3 hours per week), as well as an additional hour after school once per week. They will also be required to complete project-based tasks at home. The programme is highly regarded by employers and further education providers alike, and aims to provide greater support to students in order to achieve fluency in Mandarin. The programme will suit those who want to excel in Mandarin and are keen to study the culture and language in greater depth. It includes opportunities for subsidised visits to China. Further information about the programme can be found here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/mandarin-celebration>

Once the groups have been decided your son/daughter will be informed of which language he/she will study from November 2021. In addition, we would be grateful if your child could answer a few questions about their experience of languages at primary school, as this is helpful to better understand the background of our language learners on arrival to the school. Your child will receive a link via their school email to an online form in order to rank the languages in order of preference and to answer the questions about previous experience of language learning. The online form can also be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=L-EUL11N3USI2F3alfkrxHb3gDCWuhdNmaXFbHUa33NUMDZHRTA0WVo1VFJDNzdQMzk2QkdIV0oyTS4u>

Please fill in the online form by **Friday 15 October**.

Yours sincerely



Simon Floyd

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