

# Ecole Cousteau



## The International French School of Vancouver

### Pedagogical Contract with Parents

#### Teaching team of COUSTEAU School – 2017/2018

##### Introduction

Opting for a bilingual school is an educational opportunity which is stimulating as well as enriching both for the child and the family. Multilingual and multicultural skills developed within our school are invaluable assets for the child's education and future. Parents who choose our school must fully commit to it. Each parent must consider the soundness of his/her choice as Cousteau implements a demanding curriculum that requires strong parental involvement. The following pages aim at helping you make the right decision. It also works as a partnership contract between the school and the parents in order to contribute to the welfare of all our pupils.

##### Choosing Cousteau Means Understanding its Uniqueness

Our school closely follows the National Curriculum of France and British Columbia and has devised a common curriculum in line with these requirements. The implementation of both curricula is fully guaranteed. This curriculum is constantly monitored in order to cater for and adapt to students' dynamic needs.

This approach is validated by the educational authorities of both countries and monitored by the respective Inspectors of Education.

Based on this dual curriculum, teachers constantly coordinate to teach each subject, ensuring that key points are covered without unnecessary repetition. Teachers ensure that class rituals and rules are the same and work closely together for the welfare and progress of their students.

Our main goal is for our students to achieve fluency in two languages while aiming for overall academic excellence. None of the English or French languages are considered as a "foreign language". Children learn IN the language just like a child would do in a mainstream school in France or British Columbia.

##### Our pedagogy of language

To succeed in this multilingual plan, we rely on an adapted pedagogy. We teach in a manner that borrows and builds from both the mother tongue and the language of schooling. All subjects are taught in French. English is also taught, not only as a language, but also in subject areas such as art, geography and history.

This plan involves not only learning language for its own sake, but using language as a tool to learn about the world through a different lens.

We believe that immersion can be ineffective if it is not accompanied, structured, and conducted according to a balanced progression. We accommodate a period that allows a child to more comfortably integrate by providing intensive exposure to the target language in an individual structured setting free from stress.

We assess each student's level upon entry to best meet their needs. Then, we implement a language integration program to assist students in their language learning journey. This program is run by specialised teachers in French as an Additional Language and English as an Additional language. This step facilitates language learning and quickly advances the student.

#### Why bilingualism?

Research shows that children who benefit from bilingual teaching find it easier to learn another foreign language and they understand their mother tongue better too.

Furthermore, our bilingual classes provide a creative and motivating environment. Our teaching encourages independent learning. Children find learning motivating and they are encouraged to widen their interests. Our goal is to educate children to become open-minded, tolerant, without prejudice, and full of imagination and curiosity. They have the example of their teachers who have different nationalities and work in harmony. This is a rare experience which helps our students become world citizens.

#### The benefits of a bilingual education

<http://fisna.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/The-bilingual-advantage-Why-french.pdf>

<http://fisna.org/un-reseau-ouvert-sur-le-monde/leducation-biplurilinguale/>

The benefits of a dual language education are evidenced in the growing body of research on bilingualism and confirm the lasting impact that these programs will have for generations to come. Dual language programs prepare students for a successful intellectual, multicultural and global future. Below are some points pulled from research studies.

#### INCREASED ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Dual language students outperform non-dual language students on standardised tests.

Students who learn a second language in dual language settings achieve high performance levels on standardised tests. Language learners in one-way immersion settings, where 50% of the instruction was in the target language, scored significantly higher than language learners in mainstream English classes after only four years of bilingual schooling.

#### BETTER COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

Immersion students develop greater cognitive functioning and demonstrate increased attention control, better memory and superior problem-solving skills.

Researchers have identified that bilingual students have greater metalinguistic awareness (awareness about a language as a system) and cognitive processing. Bilingual children also have the ability to attend to important information and set aside less important input.

#### FASTER RATE OF LEARNING OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

The experience of becoming bilingual itself makes learning a new language easier. After learning a language, students can use the strategies they practiced with their second language to acquire a third or fourth language. They are in essence seasoned language learners. Furthermore, the study indicates that children who grow up with two languages end up being better language learners later on.

#### GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY AND WORK

Being bilingual at an early age can translate into many more opportunities to study and work abroad. Bilingual candidates are often given preference over monolingual students as they can adapt quickly to the linguistic demands of moving to another country.

International companies increasingly offer overseas positions to bilingual employees. Countries such as Canada have also eased immigration rules for bilingual and biliterate candidates.

## MARKETABLE SKILLS FOR HIGHER SALARIES

In an increasingly global and competitive job market, being bilingual and biliterate is an advantage that not only gives access to prized positions, but is also rewarded with higher salaries. Companies who employ bilingual people can save on translation and interpretation services. Perhaps more importantly, they can count on bilingual speakers to possess a better understanding of cultural business practices.

### Why French?

Fluency in French opens many doors to students throughout their academic and professional careers. From the very foundation of Canada, France and Canada have shared strong ties. These historical bonds have proven robust over the years and continue to unite both countries in front of major global challenges.

## THE LANGUAGE OF TRADING PARTNERS

Today, Francophones account for about 22.9% of Canada's population and nearly 10 million Canadians, or 30% of the population of the country, can speak French. Canada is a bilingual country, it's a necessity to know French to enter politics.

## THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

French is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and, alongside English, one of the two working languages of the U.N. in New York and Geneva. Students interested in a career in journalism, diplomacy and international relations will present a linguistic advantage by speaking French.

## THE FRANCOPHONE WORLD

From Paris to Montreal, from Port-au-Prince to Dakar, French is truly an international language in the 21st century. French is spoken in over 55 countries and on five continents by 220 million people around the world. In addition to being spoken in France and Canada, French is one of the official languages of 32 nations. In Africa, French-speaking countries cover an area larger than the United States. For young Canadian eager to contribute to the economic development of this continent or to support humanitarian efforts and work in NGOs, French will be a necessary tool in these rapidly changing nations whose demography is growing up very fast.

## Choosing Cousteau is a Family Commitment

Bilingual learning requires a sustained and continuous commitment from both the students and their families. Acquisition of two languages in both writing and speaking is a long term process and is part of a family project. This is why it is paramount to take into consideration the information below when enrolling your child in our bilingual school.

### Making the right decision for your child

Your child will have to adopt some educational strategies specific to the French system. For example, homework is introduced from Grade 1 and is more comprehensive in the elementary level than the BC system. Curiosity, enjoyment to learn, open-mindedness to others are qualities which will be appreciated and developed in our school.

### Making the right decision on a daily basis

School meetings, reports, and newsletter are mostly bilingual, however on occasion documents will be dispersed only in French or English as needed (Documentation from the French Ministry or the BC Ministry, homework, etc.)

### Making the right decision in the long term

Bilingual Education is a long term process and takes time. You have to be patient.

### Making the right decision for the parents

Parents play an important part in their children's bilingual education. Your efforts are needed with the following.

### 1. Your support for homework:

There may be more homework that in mainstream English or French classes in order to meet the requirements of our demanding curriculum. As early as Grade 1, homework may be set, e.g. learn new words. Children will be asked to read every day and learn spelling words. From Grade 2 onwards, they will have written homework in both languages. Your child will need your help.

Parents are advised to:

- Participate in homework workshops organized at school for parents
- Participate in adult French classes organized at school
- Enroll their children in the supervised study service. A French teacher will facilitate these sessions and assist with homework.
- Check homework
- Have increased communication with the child's teacher.

Workshop dates are set at the beginning of the year or parents can contact Cousteau for information at [info@cousteauschool.org](mailto:info@cousteauschool.org)

### 2. Your support for the bilingual project:

Your child needs to know that you are fully supportive of his/her education in order to understand the meaning/purpose of a bilingual education. Your motivation and encouragements are paramount. We would appreciate if you could expose your child to both languages as much as possible at home too. E.g. cartoons, games, trips abroad, books in both languages. Parents' linguistic involvement is also welcome. We ask you to be open to both languages in order to show that you share his/her bilingual experience.

You will also be asked to fully collaborate with the school. Your child's success is linked to your trust (in) and your full support (of) the bilingual project. Hence we ask you to regularly communicate with the teachers and the Principal, to attend our meetings and more importantly to come and meet us on a regular basis in order to expand your knowledge and understanding of our bilingual system.

## Choosing Cousteau Means Asking the Right Questions

### **1. Can my child receive a French-language education if he/she does not know any French or English?**

Yes, depending on his/her age. Anybody can submit an application for admission to our French school. This request is reviewed by an admission test after Preschool in Kindergarten. Our aim is to identify your child's needs. Special measures are implemented by school to assist both the learner and his or her family to better integrate into the community and ensure that the student meets with success at school. Our French as an Additional Language teacher is in charge of the language integration program for each child.

### **2. Do students learn and speak any English at all during the day at Cousteau school?**

Yes. Students are taught English from early elementary school to Grade 9. Students are immersed in an English environment. We guaranty a high level of English in our bilingual school. English teachers comply with the expectations of the British Columbia curriculum.

Preschool: 2 hours of English per week.

Kindergarten and Grade 1: 3 hours of English per week

Grade 2: 4 hours of English per week

From Grade 3 and up: 5 hours of English per week

### **3. Can attending a French school affect a student's likelihood of being accepted into an English-language Middle school, high school or university?**

French-language school students can apply to French-language, English-language or bilingual post-secondary institutions and training programs. Attending a French school would give students a positive edge in applying to other schools.

### **4. Will my child be at a disadvantage compared to BC teaching?**

We have adapted both the French and BC curriculum to build an efficient curriculum. Studies have

proven that bilingual teaching does not have any negative impact on the learning of other subjects and can even improve it.

**5. We are a monolingual family. Is the bilingual education suitable for my child?**

Our results show that with appropriate support, monolingual children can become successful bilingual students. Your child needs to understand why you have enrolled him/her in the school. It is paramount that you show him/her an interest for the other language and take part in cultural events in this language. If you are a French family living in BC, you need to ensure that your child is immersed in the Canadian language and culture and that homework, reading and other studies are done regularly. If you are an English speaking family, you need to create time outside school for your child to learn and practice French. We organize after school support clubs for children and parents (e.g. homework club) as well as leisure activities which we highly recommend your child to join. We also advise you to organise play dates with French pupils, create homework exchange club with French and English families, visits to our school French library and French Institute (Alliance française) and we encourage borrowing of French CD, DVD and books. It is also advisable that parents get involved in French or English too to show their child they participate to their bilingual environment.

**6. We are a plurilingual family. Is Cousteau's bilingual education adapted to my child?**

Most of our students already have two languages at home. This is not an obstacle. You must ensure that the languages are well structured and that the language of support is strong from the earliest years of the language. You must also be patient and know that the plurilingual construction of language is a demanding process for your child, which takes time. We are here to help you and do this work with you.

**7. Our child has special needs. Can we enroll him/her in Cousteau?**

We welcome all children in our school. If you have any specific concern about your child, you are required to come and tell us before enrolment to ensure that the demanding bilingual school is suitable and the best option for your child.

**8. Are French and Canadian teaching methods very different?**

Yes, they are and this is one of the strengths of our teaching in our school. Indeed, it means that children are exposed to a wide range of teaching methods; hence, they can find the one that is the most suitable to their learning needs. The educational system of British Columbia puts the emphasis on the individual, each child is expected to strive to do his/her best, whereas the French system, whilst differentiating, insists on the fact that all children achieve at least a minimum level, the common grounding of knowledge. We therefore encourage independent learning and the ability to adapt. Both systems, with their specificity, are equally demanding.

**9. What if it is not working for my child?**

Parents and teachers are in constant communication. Teachers are always ready to meet parents and discuss with them their mutual concerns. There are also two official parent-teacher meetings per year and school reports are given three times a year to parents. Teachers help you as much as they can and give you advice and support if your child is struggling. Thus, most issues are usually quickly resolved. If this is not the case, due to severe difficulties or inability to adapt to a bilingual school, the educational team, with the parents' agreement, can opt for a transfer to a more appropriate school.

We are extremely proud of our pupils' results in our school. We are convinced that they will benefit from an enriching and stimulating education. They will leave us well equipped to the future stage of their education. If once you have taken all the above information into consideration, you wish to enroll your child in our bilingual section, we offer a warm welcome to you and your child.

## Some tools to learn French and help your child (tested and approved)

### Books and magazines (subscription)

1. <http://www.bayard-jeunesse.com>
2. <https://www.ecoledesloisirs.fr>

### Interesting Applications and pedagogical software :

- <http://www.lasouris-web.org/parent/logiciels.html> (excellent links for fun reading)
- <http://app-enfant.fr/applications/categorie/apprendre-a-lire/>
- <http://www.souris-grise.fr> (learn mathématiques, sciences in French)
- <http://www.lepointdufle.net/p/enfants.htm> (for all levels, games, etc.)
- <http://www.logicieleducatif.fr/maternelle/accueil/> (Preschool)

### Vocabulary

- 1- Learn French vocabulary Apprendre et étudier le français en enrichissant le vocabulaire  
<http://lexiquefle.free.fr/>  
<http://www.lepointdufle.net/vocabulaire.htm>
- 2- Cross words to learn French - Mots cachés (more than 1000 topics !)  
<http://www.mots-caches.net/langue.php?page=Fran%E7ais>
- 3- Easy French spelling - Bréviaire d'orthographe française  
<http://mapage.noos.fr/mp2/>
4. <http://vopic.com> (Preschool)

### Grammar

- 1- Fun exercices for grammar, conjugaison)  
[http://www.lasouris-web.org/primaire/signets\\_6.html](http://www.lasouris-web.org/primaire/signets_6.html)
- 2- Dictionnaire French conjugaison - Dictionnaire de la conjugaison française et grammaire des verbes  
<http://www.conjugaison.com/>
- 3- Learn French with detective novels - Apprendre le français en suivant une enquête policière –  
<http://www.polarfle.com/>

### Reading

- 1- Books on line  
<http://www.livrespourtous.com1>. <https://www.iletaitunehistoire.com> (French stories on line)
- 2- Audio books on line  
<http://www.litteratureaudio.com>
- 3-Learn how to read - Apprendre à lire  
<http://apprendrealire.net/>  
<http://www.maxetom.com>
- 4- French phonics for beginners - Lecture Phonologie  
<http://ecole.lakanal.free.fr/exercices/lecture.htm>  
<http://www.logicieleducatif.fr/maternelle/francais/phono.php>

### Songs

- 1- French songs (Preschool)  
<http://platea.pntic.mec.es/~cvera/hotpot/chansons/index.htm>
- 2- French songs for primary school and parents. Enseigner le français avec TV5  
<http://www.tv5.org/cms/chaine-francophone/Musique/p-14238-10.000-brasses.htm?chanson=3685>
- 4- Lyrics - Paroles de chansons  
<http://www.paroles-de-chansons.com/>
- 5- Songs to learn French for kids and parents - Chansons pour apprendre le français  
<http://chansons-fr.com/>

## **Culture**

1- French news for children - L'actu pour tous les enfants

<http://1jour1actu.com/>

<http://www.lepetitquotidien.fr>

2- Fantastic: Discover French monuments via 16 visits on line

<https://www.monuments-nationaux.fr>

3. French Ministry of culture for juniors : discover French history of art, history with fun activities or more serious workshops.

<http://www.culture.fr/Junior>

<http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr>

4. Paris museum for kids (all excellent !)

<http://parismuseesjuniors.paris.fr/zigomar>

[http://www.musee-orsay.fr/une\\_minute/index.html](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/une_minute/index.html)

5. Fun sciences in French (un classique !)

[http://www.france3.fr/emissions/c-est-pas-sorcier/les-emissions-par-thematiques\\_187860](http://www.france3.fr/emissions/c-est-pas-sorcier/les-emissions-par-thematiques_187860)