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French, German learners face uncertain transition mid-session: Teachers **CBSE schools adjust to 3-language rule**

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Calcutta: CBSE schools have begun introducing Hindi, Bengali or Sanskrit as a third language mid-session in June, following the board's May 15 directive issued just before most schools closed for the summer vacation.

Schools spent the intervening weeks assessing student enrolment, allocating teachers and adjusting timetables before rolling out the new language classes.

Some of them have reopened this week, and many are scheduled to resume classes next week.

CBSE has mandated that from July 1, all Class IX students study three languages, of which at least two must be

Indian languages.

The directive means schools that earlier offered French or German as a third language up to Class VIII can now teach them only as additional subjects or club activities.

For a language to be studied as a third language in Class IX, students would have to study the same language in lower classes as well.

We had already been teaching three languages from Classes III to VIII, and will extend the system to Class IX after the summer vacation, said Meena Kak, director of Lakshmiptat Singhania Academy.

Students who wish to study French or German can do so as an additional language



alongside the three-language requirement, she said.

Most schools used the summer break to integrate the third language into their curriculum and academic schedules.

"We circulated forms dur-

ing the summer break to determine how many students would opt for each of the three languages. We now have the numbers," said Joyoti Chaudhuri, principal of Delhi Public School Ruby Park.

"The break gave us time to finalise class divisions and allocate teachers. Without knowing the students' strengths for each language, implementation would have been difficult," she said.

Many schools schedule unit tests soon after the summer vacation. However, DPS Ruby Park has decided to postpone the assessment for the third language to give students adequate time to learn the subject before appearing for the test.

Lakshmiptat Singhania

Academy has scheduled its tests a month later, giving students time to adjust to the new requirement.

"Students will have four weeks to study the subject. The first examination for Class IX will largely be a recapitulation of what they learned up to Class VIII," said Kak.

Some schools, however, said that the three-language formula is unfair to students who have studied a foreign language for almost a decade.

The Newtown School, for example, offered French or German as a second language from Class I.

"We have students from overseas as well as from different parts of India who opted for a foreign language. It would be unfair to ask them to

abruptly switch to a new language in Class IX," said Satabdi Bhattacharjee, principal of The Newtown School.

"They would then have to compete with peers who have been studying Hindi or Bengali as a second language for nearly nine years, placing them at a clear disadvantage," she said.

The school had a significant number of students with French or German as a second language in Class X in 2026. 50 students had opted for a foreign language in Class IX this year.

"We have switched to only Hindi, Bengali, or Sanskrit from I to VI. But the foreign language department will continue to function," said Bhattacharjee.