

ISB LANGUAGE POLICY

WHOLE SCHOOL

This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at ISB, which permeates the entire school curriculum through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

Language is at the heart of learning and ISB acknowledges that language acquisition and development is crucial for exploring and sustaining cultural identity, personal development and intercultural understanding. As an IB World school such concepts play an important part in supporting the school's mission statement:

“We guide and stimulate children to become ambitious lifelong learners who achieve personal fulfilment and who will make positive contribution to our ever-changing world. We believe this is consistent with the IB mission statement, which focuses on the idea of creating a better world through education.”

What we believe:

“Language wraps itself, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.” *(Ritchhart 2002 p.141)*

Language is developed across the whole curriculum. It encompasses the strands of listening-speaking, reading-writing and viewing-presenting. These strands are interdependent and enable language to develop in a variety of ways. All teachers are teachers of language, and all teachers work with parents, extended families and the community to promote language learning.

Effective inquiry teaching practices come from a constructivist approach to learning, which encourages students to build from prior knowledge, moving from the known to the new. Students will use language, including their mother tongues, to construct personal meaning and understanding of complex concepts.



“Language stands at the centre of the many interdependent cognitive, affective and social factors that shape learning.” (David Corson 1999)

At ISB we believe strongly that language is central to all learning and crucial for the development of the internationally minded person. We aim to foster in students the ability to express themselves with clarity and confidence in at least two languages. We respect the language of our host country, Denmark, and aim for all students to be able to function linguistically in the society in which they live. We strive to address the needs of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing an integrated, well-implemented English as an Additional Language programme throughout the school.



LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The principle medium of teaching and learning is English. We celebrate linguistic diversity on the playground and we encourage the use of English as our common language of communication in our multilingual environment in order to promote social inclusivity. English is also the main language of communication within the whole school community and in communication outside the school, except in situations where the use of Danish is more appropriate.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

We acknowledge and respect Danish as our host country language. All students learn Danish as the language of the host country. In addition we aim to offer extra language activities in the After School Activities programme. The Library will develop sections for our main second language, Danish, as well as smaller sections for our other languages, German, French and Spanish which we intend to offer as part of the curriculum as the school grows. There is also a large range of print and technological resources available for language learning.

MOTHER TONGUE DEVELOPMENT

Mother tongue is the language learned first and/or the language identified with as a native speaker, the language best known and/or the language used most. The development of mother tongue proficiencies is central to the whole development of cognitive skills in children. Well-developed mother tongue skills enhance general language skills. As language is part of one's identity, the recognition of one's mother tongue and the cultural traditions and customs associated with it increase a child's self-esteem and general sense of well-being.

We encourage all teachers to recognise students' mother tongues and cultural traditions and customs in lessons and school life. Additionally, we encourage all MYP students to read for 15-20 minutes each night in their mother tongue, either a fiction book or a text that relates to their subject. Finally, we encourage students to take ownership of their mother tongue language development at home and we celebrate those who regularly work hard to achieve this. ISB facilitates parent volunteers who wish to support students whose mother tongue is not English or Danish. Mother tongue maintenance is offered as an After School Activity and focuses upon verbal skills through conversation and story-telling. Parent volunteers are also welcome to participate in assemblies and classroom celebrations that reflect the traditions of their cultures.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Providing quality education in English for children from a variety of cultural backgrounds implies that ISB is committed to the development of English language skills in all its students. PYP and MYP Students who need to improve their language skills will receive support in order to assist them in their development of language skills, which will allow them to perform optimally in each class. ISB accepts students with all levels of experience in English into the Primary Years (3-11 year olds) and the Middle Years (11-16 year olds). EAL learners receive in class support from their teachers and from other teachers working alongside the teachers in some lessons.



LEARNING SUPPORT

Assessments either prior to students joining ISB, class-based assessments or observations identifies individual students' needs. Students with different language learning needs are supported by dedicated teaching staff in their classrooms. Individual students may be referred to Pædagogisk/ Psykologisk/Sundhedsfaglig Rådgivning: Psychological/Pedagogical/Health Care Counselling (PPS). The PPS has a range of specialists: reading consultants, speech therapists, physiotherapists, special pedagogues and psychologists. The help PPS offers depends on the child's age and their needs based on meetings with parents teachers and observations of the student of concern. There are allocated staff to oversee students' wellbeing in each section of the school. Three times a year PPS staff provide an open consultation with teachers on individual students to support staff with suggested strategies.

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Spelling and written communication at ISB will use British written conventions. However, within each class, teachers and students may use the written conventions for whichever version of international English to which they are accustomed, assuming they do so consistently. Students and teachers at ISB use the APA conventions for referencing and citing sources.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and their role in language learning is crucial, as they are also all language teachers from the first moments of their child's life and even before according to the latest research.

Parents model the use of languages by listening, speaking and reading with their children. They can also further language development at home by providing access to a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, newspapers, magazines and technology in the home language as well as the languages of the school. In support of learning at school, parents can encourage their children to read and express themselves through speaking and writing. Expatriate families are particularly encouraged to support and develop their children's home languages.



LANGUAGE POLICY REVIEW CRITERIA

ISB's Language Policy will be updated each year as necessary, and fully reviewed every 5 years. A review of the programme and policy shall consider:

- Evaluation of current programme through informal and formal feedback
- Possible shifts in student population

Appropriate members for the review may include:

Teachers; librarians; administrators; IB programme coordinators; parents; students; Language coordinators. This policy has been aligned with, and is compatible with, the school's admission and assessment policies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Language and Learning in the IB programmes (*IBO September 2011*)
- Primary Years Programme: Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy. (*IBO January 2006*)
- Learning in a language other than the mother tongue in IB programmes (*IBO April 2008*)

REFERENCES:

Corson, D. (1999) Language Policy in Schools. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ritchhart, R. (2002) Intellectual Character. San Francisco. California. USA. Jossey-Bass.

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