

LANGUAGE POLICY

“Language wraps itself, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.”

-- (Ritchhart, 2002)

[ISB policies](#) are designed to provide all members of our learning community with a clear picture of the philosophy, values and learning practices of the school. This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at ISB, and should not be viewed in isolation but instead as one piece of a comprehensive framework designed to foster a positive school culture that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and inclusivity. Our international learning community represents more than 70 nationalities, with multiple languages spoken across our students and families.

Our Philosophy

“Language is a means of affirming and expressing cultural identity and developing international-mindedness” (IB PYP, 2018) and also the **major connecting element across the curriculum**. At ISB, we see all teachers as language teachers and we acknowledge that learning language is a **developmental process**. It is fundamental that our students become effective **communicators** if we are to realise our school vision -- to cultivate a community of lifelong learners who will create a better world with courage, compassion and curiosity.



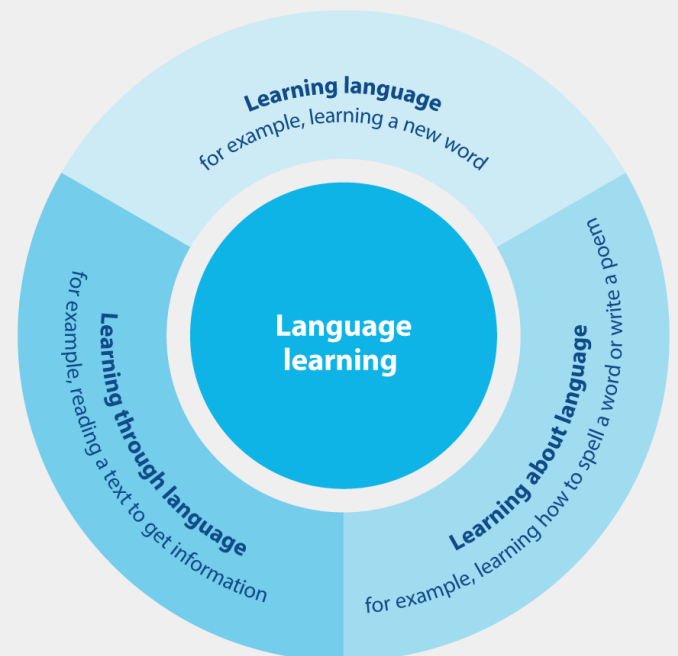
The **IB learner profile** represents a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that encompass intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth. Developing and demonstrating the attributes of the learner profile provides an important foundation for international-mindedness.

Among other attributes, all IB learners strive to be **COMMUNICATORS** - expressing themselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways.

We strive, therefore, at ISB to provide students with multiple, authentic opportunities to **learn**:

- **language**
- **about language**
- **through language**

ISB also recognises that **multilingualism** benefits learners and the learning community in a variety of ways.



Language Learning and Teaching (IB PYP, 2018)

Principles

Language		
We recognise that, since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication .	Language learning includes the development of home and family languages, languages of the school, additional languages and literacy.	Language is a means of affirming and expressing cultural identity and developing international-mindedness and as part of this the language of the host country is to be promoted.
We provide students with multiple, authentic opportunities to learn language, learn about language and learn through language .	Multilingualism benefits learners and the learning community in a variety of ways.	The student language portrait is a tool that captures a learner's complex language profile .

Links to IB philosophy and practice

The comprehensive IB programme and standards framework is the foundational set of principles which help IB world schools place **learning** at the heart of the school community by both:

- fostering a dynamic school **culture** centred on holistic, inclusive learning communities (*0300-xx standards*)
- creating student **learning** experiences of the highest quality possible (*0400-xx standards*)

Standards and practices relevant to language are listed in the [appendix](#) at the end of this document.

Facilitating Communication

The role of language plays an important role in cultivating intercultural awareness and international-mindedness. At ISB, all teachers are language teachers as all learning takes place through language. Our pedagogical approach to language learning aims to:

- be open and inclusive
- affirm each learner's identity and autonomy
- promote critical thinking.

While English is the primary language of instruction at ISB, we recognise that students learn best in their home languages and try to provide meaningful opportunities for home language integration. We celebrate linguistic diversity and acknowledge that while English and Danish are the most commonly used languages at ISB -- both in academic and social contexts -- students are also encouraged to use their home languages at school. We encourage parents to talk, read and write with their children in their home languages.

Language programs

- Language of instruction: English
- Kindergarten: English is the main language of instruction, while play and exploration also take place in Danish and the other languages students bring with them.
- Primary School: English and Danish (*Language Acquisition and Language and Literature*) lessons
- Middle School: English, Danish (*Language Acquisition and Language and Literature*) and a choice between German (*Language Acquisition*) and Spanish (*Language Acquisition*) lessons

Language Development

The development of language is fundamental to the instinctive human need to communicate. Language learning includes the development of the home and family languages, the languages of the school, additional languages and the development of literacy. This is integral to exploring and sustaining cognitive and personal development and cultural identity. Language learning and teaching are social acts, dependent on relationships with the self and others, with context, with the environment, and with the world.

From 'Language' IB PYP, 2018.

Learning is a process of building knowledge and conceptual understanding, but also disposition and skill development. We know that students' language development is best served when they have opportunities to strengthen and build these competencies by engaging in language learning in multiple modes within authentic, meaningful contexts. It is facilitated by using a variety of physical and virtual resources, including, but not limited to literature, drama, story writing, technology and discussion. Students learn to appreciate both the functionality and aesthetics of language, and learn to reflect on its use across and within inter/trans-disciplinary and subject-specific contexts.

Learning language	Learning THROUGH language	Learning ABOUT language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receptive (<i>listening, reading</i>) and productive (<i>speaking, writing</i>) skills ● Basic interpersonal communicative skills ● Literacy and the art of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cognitive academic language proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysing literature ● Critical literacy

From 'Language and learning in IB programmes' IB, 2011.

ISB students learn to communicate confidently and creatively. Through language, students:

- express identity
- develop international mindedness
- develop literacy
- become effective inquirers
- communicate.

Language plays a pivotal role in shaping the learner's educational journey. Early communication, self-expression and interaction with symbolic language form the foundations of language and literacy. These contribute to the learner's growing linguistic repertoire. Language is the vehicle for learning and thinking across and through all subjects as learners ask questions, explore ideas, and construct their understandings in collaborative contexts.

From 'PYP Subjects:Language' IB PYP, 2025

At ISB we follow the Language and Literature and Language Acquisition subject guidance provided by the IB, which aims to support the understanding and implementation of language knowledge, skills and understandings within both transdisciplinary and inter-disciplinary programmes.

The IB continuum of international education provides a progression of learning for students aged 3 to 19. MYP language and literature builds on experiences in language learning that students have gained during their time in the IB Primary Years Programme. Knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills will have been developed through transdisciplinary units of inquiry or independent language inquiry. The six skill areas in PYP language—listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting—are further developed through the MYP years.

From 'Language and literature guide' IB MYP, updated 2021

Multilingual language support

English language learners who are unable to fully access the academic curriculum delivered in English receive support from their teachers. ISB acknowledges that learning is not solely linked to 'speaking English' and teachers may, for example, encourage learners to explore the topic in their home language to support understanding.

Learning support

Early Intervention

While most students develop literacy skills by participating in the general instruction facilitated within their classrooms, some experience challenges in learning to read, write and spell. Experience has taught us that language development varies from child to child and we monitor the development closely in the early stages to identify children who may demonstrate literacy challenges. We facilitate **'early intervention' literacy** for these students, which involves homeroom teachers working with small groups of students from their classes on a daily basis to help strengthen their **phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, word recognition, spelling, fluency and comprehension skills**.

Multilingualism

The IB defines multilingualism as 'Linguistic competence in two or more languages at any stage of acquisition or proficiency, reflecting the dynamic interplay between languages and the social behaviours associated with language.'

From 'The Learning Community' IB PYP, 2025.

As an IB world school, we are committed to multilingualism as a means of affirming cultural identity and developing international-mindedness. We recognise multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. In addition to the cognitive benefits, including improved attention and focus and enhanced problem solving thinking skills, research has shown that students who are multilingual also have increased capacity to think, talk and and reflect on how languages work. We acknowledge that language is integral to identity, and that a person's home and other languages fundamentally form the relationship they have with the world and how they come to feel about that world. We strive therefore to:

- foster a learning environment that welcomes, values and embraces diversity of culture, perspectives and languages
- create an environment where students use their home language with pride, and access host or global languages to engage with the world
- liaise with the parent community to establish understanding of how to best collaborate to achieve shared goals.

Home language integration

The education of the child shall be directed to [...] the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate and for civilizations different from his or her own.

-- (UNICEF 1989: Article 29)

Staff at ISB may use students' home and family languages to:

- engage students who are new to English
- value the students identity
- enhance meaningful learning
- allow students to realise their full potential
- help students to access their prior knowledge and to build conceptual connections.

Students who see and hear their own languages within the learning environment, and who are encouraged to actively make links to their prior linguistic experiences, connect more quickly to the community and their own learning. (Cummins, 2000) We know that including the language profiles of students in our planning has a positive impact on their language development. Teachers might, for example, interview parents in order to gain an insight into a student's

language competencies in home and/or family languages. Another way that teachers support language development is to use translanguaging, a process in which students draw on known languages to support their learning.

Additional languages - Danish, German, Spanish

To learn another language is quite simply and profoundly one of the best ways of learning to recognise the world and to see how others and otherness inhabit it. It is an education in difference as a pathway to understanding how to contribute to [...] global citizenship.

-- (Worton, quoted in Reisz 2010)

Host and foreign languages programmes help reinforce literacy and cultural identity and reflect the multilingual society that we live in.

As a caring and committed international community with respect for our host country, we promote an awareness of Denmark's culture and language by teaching **Danish** as both an acquisition and home language. This begins with informal use of the Danish language in the kindergarten, and then, in alignment with both Danish legal and IB programme requirements, *(specifically that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction from at least from the age of seven)*, students at ISB have Danish lessons from P1 onwards.

As per IB programme requirements, from M1, students begin to learn an extra additional language - **German** or **Spanish**.

The study of additional languages in the MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realise that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world.

From 'Language acquisition guide' IB MYP, 2020.

Appendix

IB Programme Standards & Practices

The comprehensive IB PS&P framework is the foundational set of principles which help IB world schools place **learning** at the heart of the school community by both:

- fostering a dynamic school **culture** centred on holistic, inclusive learning communities (*0300-xx standards*)
- creating student **learning** experiences of the highest quality possible (*0400-xx standards*)

Standards and practices relevant to assessment are listed below.

Culture

- The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language (0301-04)
- The school implements and reviews a language policy that is aligned with IB language policy guidelines. (0301-04-0100)
- The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)
- The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)
- The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)
 - PYP 1: The school ensures that students learn a language in addition to the language of instruction (at least from the age of seven). Multilingual programmes, where students are learning in at least two languages, can but are not required to offer additional languages. (0301-04-0411)
- The school considers international-mindedness in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0600)

Learning - Approaches to teaching

- Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)

Bibliography

Guidelines for developing a school language policy (IB, 2008)

IB Primary Years Programme: Language scope and sequence (IB, updated 2018)

IB Primary Years Programme: The learning community (IB, updated 2025)

IB Middle Years Programme: Language and literature guide (IB, updated 2021)

IB Middle Years Programme: Language acquisition guide (IB, 2020)

Language and Learning in the IB programmes (IB, September 2011)

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

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