

# LANGUAGE POLICY

## IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

**Akademickie Dwujęzyczne Liceum Oxford Secondary School**

**Bielsko-Biała, Poland**

**IB World School No. 061648**

This document has been produced on the basis of and in alignment with the following IB publications:

- *Programme standards and practices* (Published January 2014; Updated March 2016)
- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy* (Published April 2008)
- *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy* (Published 2012)
- *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* (Published April 2008)
- *Towards a continuum of international education* (Published September 2008)
- *IB learner profile booklet*

### **Table of contents**

1. IB Mission Statement
2. IB learner profile
3. Purpose of this document
4. The school language philosophy
5. Language of instruction
6. Language development – a shared responsibility
7. DP language courses offered by the school
8. Mother tongue support
9. Second language teaching
10. Links to other school policies
11. Language Policy review
12. Communication of the school's language policy
13. Final provisions

## 1. IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## 2. IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

- Inquirers – We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
- Knowledgeable – We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
- Thinkers – We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
- Communicators – We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
- Principled – We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

- Open-minded – We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
- Caring – We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
- Risk-takers – We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
- Balanced – We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
- Reflective – We thoughtfully consider the world and our ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

### **3. Purpose of this document**

Since language is a means of communication and it is crucial to the educational process, the primary purpose of this document is to outline the objectives for language teaching and learning and also the practices adopted by the school to achieve and evaluate these objectives. With regard to student language development, the following goals should be pursued:

- Students are able to communicate effectively in more than one language.
- Equal importance is placed on the development of mother tongue and a chosen foreign language or languages.
- Students develop receptive, productive and interactive language skills concurrently.
- Students are able to use language for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.
- Students develop their understanding of literature and appreciation for it.
- Students are able to use the language to explore different concepts, perspectives and build intercultural understanding.

#### **4. The school language philosophy**

The policy reflects the school's language philosophy which places language development as the focal point of the school's educational activity. It is also featured in the school's mission statement. Offering bilingual education to students of various nationalities, Oxford Secondary School facilitates and appreciates students' engagement in foreign languages learning as a means of enhancing intercultural communication as well as a means of acquiring knowledge. In addition to their mother tongue, Polish students study English as a second language of instruction at the school, and also a second foreign language which they may choose from among the following ones: Spanish, German, French, Italian and Russian. Non-Polish students attend Polish lessons with the aim of acquiring basic knowledge and skills to be able to communicate in their host country language. In order to even students' language skills in English that are key when it comes to subjects taught bilingually, students are provided with the opportunity for extra tutorials or teacher-supported self-study and also an individual course if necessary. English lessons are taught by both Polish teachers – to fulfil the requirements of the Polish national curriculum – and native speakers whose major task is to develop students' skills – receptive, productive and interactive with emphasis on presentation skills and academic writing skills. The students are exposed to a number of accents and ways of conveying knowledge since English native speakers come from all over the world. In this manner the importance of language learning and international mindedness are promoted at the school.

#### **5. Language of instruction**

The language of instruction is the language used to teach a subject or a group of subjects. For classes following the national curriculum the language of instruction and learning is primarily Polish, yet some of the subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, ICT, History, Geograph are taught bilingually with English as the second language of instruction.

For IB Diploma Programme classes the language of instruction and learning is English for all subjects except Polish A: Literature – where the language of instruction is Polish – and subjects from the group Language acquisition – if other than English.

## 6. Language development – a shared responsibility

According to the IB principle, all teachers are equally responsible for the language development of students. The latter must be provided with the opportunity to develop all language skills concurrently and expand their vocabulary and grammar structures range not only in foreign language classes. Therefore, each teacher should bear in mind that they all equally contribute to the language development of their students and should plan the teaching in such a way that addresses both subject content and use of the language. It must be highlighted that language competence will serve not only as a means of further academic study, but also as a means of international, intercultural communication in the future life that the school is preparing its students for. With this in mind, collaborative planning takes place on an ongoing basis to reflect on all students' progress and plan for their individual learning needs. We may not diminish the fact that the responsibility for language development lies also with the students themselves and they are expected to utilize their language learning experiences to the best of their abilities. And last but not least, the school is committed to support its teachers in becoming more proficient in English or any other IB working language to the advantage of student language development. This may be done for instance by offering teachers the possibility of attending language courses either concerned with general knowledge and skills development or aimed at building up subject-specific vocabulary and notions.

## 7. DP language courses offered by the school

- **Group 1: Studies in language and literature – Language A**
  - The school offers one **Language A: Polish A Literature**.
  - Students of foreign backgrounds will be enabled to register for **school-supported self-taught (SSST) Language A** at Standard Level (their mother tongue). In such case the school will provide the student with a **generic SSST supervisor** who is a Language A teacher at the school. The supervisor will meet the student on a regular basis to explain and make sure the student understands the assessment components and the respective assessment criteria fully.
  - If needed, the school will help the student find their **first and best language tutor**.
  - The minimum first and best language support that must be provided to the SSST student is feedback on their assessment component practice and some guidance on the language A works the student is planning to study and the way such works are going to be organized.

- The first and best language tutor may be any adult who is proficient in the language A studied by an SSST student as long as they are properly informed and supported to do so by the SSST supervisor. Therefore, close collaboration between the supervisor and the tutor is highly recommended.
- The tutor might also be a school former SSST student who did a course in the same language or a relative of the student.
- If the student and their parents cannot find themselves the tutor, the school may help, using a number of IB DP tutoring-service providers or contacting the student with a tutor who is an IB DP teacher at another IB World School. If there are any fees corresponding to such tutoring service, it is the responsibility of the SSST student's parents to pay them.
- The SSST student will receive about 100 hours of support from both the generic SSST supervisor and first and best language tutor. The distribution of hours will be decided on between the supervisor and the tutor.
- **Group 2: Language acquisition**
  - The school offers one **Language B: English B** at both Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL). The offer will be further expanded with Spanish and German.

## 8. Mother tongue support

- **Mother tongue in the Polish national curriculum**

Mother tongue is also referred to as first language, native language, home language; it's the students' most competent language.

Learning a mother tongue is a compulsory requirement at all grades of a secondary school in Poland. For the majority of students the native language is Polish. The study of the Polish language involves reading and analysing literary works and learning the language systems. In the final year students are required to take Polish as a mandatory subject at the external Matura exams.

- **Mother tongue in the IB Diploma classes**

It is expected that every student takes a compulsory first language (Language A) course in their most competent language, which is normally the language students have been exposed to since birth. For the majority of students it is Polish. Therefore, it is Polish A Literature that is offered to students as Group 1 subject. Students may choose between Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL) and the number of classes taught for this

subject a week is 4 for SL and 6 for HL. In this way the school ensures that students' mother tongue is developed by the teacher(s) of the subject.

- **Learning of the host country language (Polish for non-native students)**

Polish A Literature may be studied by students of foreign backgrounds provided that their language skills are good enough to understand, analyse and interpret literature and produce written assignments. Otherwise, students may be offered additional lessons of the Polish language in order to improve their skills to such a level at which studying Polish as DP Group 1 subject is possible and doesn't impose unnecessary burden on them.

- **Support for the students' mother tongue if different from Polish**

A student may study a different Language A at Standard Level registering for Language A: Literature as a school-supported self-taught course. In such case students shall study under the guidance of an external teacher and supervision of the school DP Coordinator.

## 9. Second language teaching

As a second language students may study English B at either SL (4 hours a week) or HL (6 hours a week). The goal for our students is to become proficient in English by the time they have completed secondary education. With this in mind students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods and techniques, used in various contexts, supported by different teaching aids and resources, that aim at developing all aspects of language competence to ensure they become what IB expects them to be – communicative, internationally-minded young people who are able to use a language for many purposes, with a clear intention and achieving the intended result. Developing English is crucial in the case of our school where it's the language of instruction in the DP. Therefore, English will be developed across different disciplines, will serve as a means of communication, and as a working language at the school will be fulfilling the school's mission.

## 10. Links to other school policies

This policy has been produced in alignment with the school's DP admissions policy, assessment policy and inclusion policy.

- **Admissions policy** – Since English is the main language of instruction in DP classes, students take a written language placement test in English to estimate their level of proficiency, followed by an interview in English. If the level is lower than required (B2),

students or prospective students are given an opportunity to attend a language course to improve their skills and expand vocabulary range in order to be able to attend DP classes.

- **Assessment policy** – At all stages of the course both formative and summative assessment should be used. Pre-assessment and self-assessment are crucial when it comes to expanding students’ knowledge and building on what they already know. Also, teachers are required to employ criteria-based assessment for all DP subjects.
- **Inclusion policy** – During all classes teachers are required to apply differentiation strategies for SEN learners in order to respond to their individual educational needs and facilitate their learning.

For more details, the above policies should be referred to.

### **11. Language Policy review**

The policy is subject to review on a yearly basis in order to ensure it aligns with the school language profile, other school policies with relation to the Diploma Programme and all relevant documentation published by the IB. The policy is reviewed at a general meeting of the DP Faculty held yearly and any observations or suggestions from the DP staff shall be communicated to the DP Coordinator.

The review shall also concern the evaluation of the effectiveness of the language policy as a working document.

### **12. Communication of the school’s language policy**

At the beginning of DP Year 1 students and their parents/legal guardians will be presented with the policy provisions during a meeting held for this purpose. They will have the opportunity to read the policy, have it explained by the DP Coordinator and also, they will be able to reflect on it and ask questions if any obscurities appear. Since it is the learner who is central to the IB philosophy, any remarks or requests from students and parents/legal guardians are welcome, and the school will do whatever it takes to act upon them.

### **13. Final provisions**

For any matters not directly addressed herein, the relevant IB publications should be referred to.