

## **IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME**

# **LANGUAGE POLICY**

This policy has been produced in alignment with:

- *Programme Standards and Practices* (IBO October 2018, last update April 2022)
- *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (IBO 2024)
- *Guidelines for developing a school language policy* (IBO April 2012)
- *Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy* (IBO 2012)
- *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* (IBO April 2008)
- *DP language courses: overview and placement guidance* (IBO August 2020, last update August 2021)
- *Language A: literature school-supported self-taught support material. Guidance for schools* (IBO)

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## 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.
- **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.
- We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

### 3. Purpose of the policy

Since language is a means of communication and it is crucial to the educational process, the purpose of this policy is to outline objectives for language teaching and learning at the school and also the practices adopted by the school to achieve and evaluate these objectives. The policy aims to reflect the Diploma Programme principles and meet the needs of students in terms of mother-tongue language support and second language teaching.

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: "we promote language learning". The school recognizes multilingualism as a natural and positive effect of globalization, while it aids better intercultural communication and understanding, serves as a resource for learning and opens different opportunities for students' education and development. While

offering bilingual education to students of various nationalities, Oxford Secondary School facilitates and appreciates student's engagement in foreign languages learning as a means of enhancing intercultural mindedness and communication, as well as a means of acquiring knowledge.

In addition to their mother tongue, Polish students obligatorily 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, and Italian.

Non-Polish students attend Polish lessons to acquire basic knowledge and skills of written and spoken Polish to be able to communicate in their host country language. In line with the regulations of the Ministry of Education, foreign students or students of Polish origin that used to live abroad, whose first or best language is not Polish, are entitled to receive additional language support in the form of extra Polish lessons scheduled for them in their weekly school timetable. Each foreign student who does not study the Polish language in the IB Diploma Programme is entitled to the same kind of support and it is the school's legal obligation to provide this support. This inclusive approach is meant to help foreign students to assimilate to the school community.

In order to even students' language skills in English which 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 teacher qualifications – and native speakers, whose major task is to develop students' skills – receptive, productive and interactive with emphasis on presentation skills and academic writing skills. 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, and Geography are taught bilingually

with English as the second language of instruction. The purpose of this is to equip students with subject-specific vocabulary, which will further facilitate learning in English when students undertake the Diploma Programme.

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 – or another Language A Literature - if other than English, and except other languages from the Language acquisition group – if different from English.

## 6. Language development – a shared responsibility

The school follows the IB principle that all teachers are in practice language teachers equally responsible for the language development of students and facilitation of communication. The latter must be provided with the opportunity to develop all language skills concurrently and expand their vocabulary and grammar structures 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 it will address both subject content and the 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 supporting 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 aimed at general language knowledge and skills development or building up subject-specific vocabulary and notions.

Teachers of all subjects educate students in linguistic accuracy and language culture. For this purpose, they use a multitude of varied physical and virtual resources. Students have access to the school library and are advised to take advantage of university libraries in the city and outside. Apart from that, teachers and students use a variety of online resources to facilitate language development (both mother tongue and second language), for example:

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pl/dictionary/polish-english/>

<https://sjp.pwn.pl/>

<https://zpe.gov.pl/a/materialy-do-nauczania-jezyka-polskiego/DgVjbKla8>

## 7. DP language courses offered by the school

While studying the Diploma Programme students are expected to learn at least two languages - their home language (their first and best language) and a foreign language (their second language). It is crucial that all DP students have the chance to study their home language(s) and the school will provide support for them in this respect. By Language A we understand the student's first and best language, and by language B we understand the student's second language.

When a student is bilingual and they consider two languages as their home languages, it is possible that the student will take two Languages A (e.g. Polish A Literature and English A Literature). In this case they don't need to study Language B as the requirement of two languages studied at the Diploma Programme is met.

### 7.1 Group 1: Studies in language and literature – Language A

- The school offers one **Language A: Polish A Literature**. It is planned to introduce **English A Literature** from the next school year.
- Students of foreign backgrounds will be enabled to study their mother tongue as a **school-supported self-taught (SSST) Language A** at a standard level if their native language is not taught at the school in group 1. In such a 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 (one lesson scheduled in a week in DP Year 1 and DP Year 2) to explain the rules of studying their first and best language as SSST subject, guide the student and help to plan the study and set a timeline for the study, and also ensure the student understands the assessment components and the respective assessment criteria fully.
- The school will help the student find their **first and best language tutor**. For this purpose reliable IB DP tutoring-service providers may be used, or the school may request other IB World Schools for recommendations of tutors working with SSST students. If the student already has a tutor, the school will cooperate with them. If there are any fees corresponding to such tutoring service, it is the responsibility of the SSST student's parents/legal guardians to pay them.
- The tutor may work with the student at the school or online. It is recommended that they have some DP Language A experience. A close cooperation between the tutor and the school is required. The tutor will be responsible for issuing a predicted grade for the student.

- 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.
- It is recommended that the number of hours of support from both the generic SSST supervisor and first and best language tutor should be about 100. The distribution of hours will be decided on between the supervisor and the tutor.

## 7.2 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.
- If there is a need among future DP students for Language ab initio, the school will introduce this subject to the school subject offer.
- It is important that students are appropriately placed into DP acquisition courses according to their current level of proficiency. Therefore, before entering the Diploma Programme students are required to take a placement test in the foreign language they want to study for group 2.
- In the case of the English language, if a student has studied the language since the first grade of primary school in Poland and the result of the language placement test shows at least level B2 of English, the student is required to study English B at a higher level. Other students who haven't studied English so long can be placed either at a standard level English B course or a higher level course, depending on the result of the placement test.

## 8. Mother tongue support

### 8.1 Mother tongue in the Polish national curriculum

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

Learning the mother tongue is a compulsory requirement for Polish citizens at all grades of a secondary school in Poland, including the two years when they study the Diploma Programme. For the majority of school students the native language is Polish. The study of the Polish language according to the Polish curriculum involves reading and analysis of literary works as well as learning about the language systems. If students continue to study the Polish curriculum in the last two grades of secondary school and decide to take Polish final examinations (in Polish referred to as Matura examinations), they are required to sit the final examination in the Polish



language as a mandatory subject. If students decide to do the Diploma Programme, they are also required by the Polish national educational regulations to take the final examination in Polish A Literature.

### **8.2 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.

### **8.3 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.

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

A student may study a different Language A at a standard level as a school-supported self-taught (SSST) course. In such a case the school will enable the student to do so and ensure they are guided and supported in this by a school Language A teacher who acts as an SSST supervisor and their mother tongue tutor.

## **9. Second language teaching**

As a second language, students may study English B at either standard level (with 4 teaching hours a week) or a higher level (with 6 teaching 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 the IB expects them to be – communicative, internationally-minded young people who can 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; it will serve as a means of communication, and as a working language at the school, it will be fulfilling the school's mission.

## **10. Responsibilities of the school community**

### **10.1 Responsibilities of the school**

The school is expected to:

- support maintenance and development of the student's mother tongue;
- provide support for students learning in a language other than their mother tongue;
- provide support and all necessary resources to students studying their mother tongue as school-supported self-taught language;
- ensure all teachers act as language teachers and enhance language proficiency of their students;
- acknowledge in the lesson planning that students may differ within a class as far as their language competence is concerned;
- provide inclusion and access to the programme for all learners;
- monitor the effectiveness of differentiation strategies employed to meet the specific language learning needs of students;
- ensure adequate resources to support language development;
- provide opportunities of professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching to the teaching staff and administration;
- ensure the current language school offer reflects the students' needs in this respect;
- ensure the language policy reflects the current social, cultural and linguistic context of the school.

### **10.2 Responsibilities of the students**

The students are expected to:

- study at least two languages for the Diploma Programme - their mother tongue and a foreign language;
- strive to develop their proficiency in the foreign language chosen, and maintain and develop their mother tongue;
- follow the school's guidance if their mother tongue is taken as a school-supported self-taught language A;
- use language as an inclusive communication tool;
- be actively engaged in their learning in all subjects;

- communicate their current needs in terms of language learning and development to the school (e.g. in questionnaires);
- act in accordance with the school language policy and other policies directly linked to it.

### **10.3 Responsibilities of the parents**

Parents are expected to:

- serve with guidance to the school with regard to their students' language competence (e.g. determining the student's first and best language);
- cooperate with the school in planning the student's language profile and development;
- ensure the student's mother tongue is fostered at home by continuing to speak, read and write the language at home;
- encourage their children to develop both their native and foreign language by for instance reading literature or website articles at home;
- provide feedback to the school on their child's language development and the needs they observe in this respect;
- stay in contact with the school in order to be informed about current school language practices, read newsletters and have conversations with the DP Faculty.

## **11. Links to other school policies**

This policy has been produced in alignment with the school's Access and admission policy, Assessment policy, Inclusion policy, and Academic integrity policy.

### **11.1 Access and admission policy**

Since English is the main language of instruction in DP classes, students take a written language placement test in English before they enter the programme to estimate their level of proficiency, followed by an interview 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.

### **11.2 Assessment policy**

At all stages of the language courses both formative and summative assessment is 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.

### **11.3 Inclusion policy**

In all IB DP classes, regardless of the subject, teachers are required to apply differentiation strategies for learners with special educational needs in order to facilitate their learning.

## **12. 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 (gathered at informal discussions, questionnaires, observations, and interviews with students and other members of the school community) 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. The last review meeting was held on May 7, 2024.

## **13. Communicating the Language policy**

The policy will be presented to all DP students by the DP coordinator at the beginning of DP Year 1. It will also be communicated and explained to parents/legal guardians at the beginning of DP Year 1 at an information meeting. 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.

## **14. Final provisions**

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