



International
School
of Bydgoszcz



Language Policy

A language policy is an action statement ... It is concerned less with where the students in a school are going, and more with how they are going to get there.

Language Policy in Schools, Corson (1999)

(taken from *Programme standards and practices: B1.20, IB 2005*)

At International School of Bydgoszcz, we believe that language is a primary means of communication and learning and as such supports the school's Mission and Philosophy. The school's goal is to help in the development of our students, so they become responsible, self-confident world citizens with established sense of service to others.

The acquisition of language is a life-long process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth of a human being. Many languages exist side by side within the ISOB community so students may explore and compare languages and cultures that are associated with them and this approach makes a significant contribution to whole child development.

In providing quality education in English for children of all nationalities we acknowledge that English language learners will face a challenge hence the recognition of the important role that mainstream teachers play in developing students' language competence and a belief in the importance of mother tongue development. English as a Second Language Department (ESLD), Special Educational Needs Department and Mother Tongue Support (MTS) focus on developing proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as possible in order to assist students in accessing the full educational programme and achieving the academic standards.



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English is the language of instruction within the school and as such the key to student success in other subject areas lies in their level of competency in this language. English lessons have an obvious role to play in teaching and reinforcing language skills needed in other mainstream subjects.

Every teacher at the International School of Bydgoszcz is a language teacher and recognizes the importance of this role within the IB philosophy. In addition to this, teachers are responsible for adapting their materials and teaching style to take into account the needs of students who are not native speakers of English. Subject teachers are encouraged to correct mistakes in English as well as content of written work and to provide missing vocabulary where feasible. Teachers should encourage students to speak English in class (except in Polish, French, Spanish or German classes).

By integrating language into every aspect of the curriculum, we are teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity towards others which in turn enhances their personal growth, cognitive development, and facilitates international understanding. Through the strong emphasis on language, our goal is to foster a deep understanding about language and provide an opportunity for enjoyment, creativity, and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of language and literature.

Standard Forms of Language and Handwriting

Students should be exposed to the language and culture of different countries and no one form is considered to be 'standard'. It is necessary for older students to appreciate the different forms of language, for example, British or American English. The type of language a teacher is likely to use depends on where that teacher is from. The teacher will however point out differences in expression or spelling where appropriate. Students also produce a variety of different forms of handwriting dependent on previous school experience. Throughout the school all forms of handwriting are acceptable, provided that it is neat and legible.



English as a Second Language Department

English, as the language of instruction is compulsory throughout the school. The course offered is suitable for students with a variety of English levels, from native speakers to those with a basic command of English. ESLD support is offered to students with a limited knowledge of English to successfully access the mainstream curriculum.

Host Language

The curriculum is guided by the IBO's Scope and Sequence documents as well as the Polish curriculum documents. Thus, the school carefully takes care of meeting the aims and objectives of both the state system and the international system within the school. Polish, as the host language, is offered as part of the curriculum at all grade levels as Language A. It is considered and indeed mandated by law that all students attending compulsory school in Poland have the opportunity to learn Polish.

Additional Languages

All students have the opportunity to learn a foreign language at the school. The school currently offers a choice between Polish, English, Spanish, French and German as Language B. There are course outlines for each language- English, Polish, Spanish, French and German, which include suggested content, resources, links with the Areas of Interaction and activities used for assessment. These course outlines are intended to ensure continuity and development of the language courses offered by the school.

Mother Tongue Support

Mother tongue development is central to the development of cognitive skills in children. Students with good mother tongue skills develop good general language skills and therefore skills in English, the school's language of instruction. Recognition and appreciation of students' mother tongues increases their self-esteem, teaching them to take pride in their own language and the culture associated with it. Students learn literacy skills best in their mother tongue and the mother tongue is the language in which they can think most easily. The Mother Tongue Support Programme supports the mother tongue of



students whose first language is not English, and its purpose is to help students obtain/maintain fluency in their native language as well as to celebrate and value the student's home cultures. The school makes rooms available for private language lessons and provides facilities such as a photocopy card which can be borrowed free of charge and audio equipment.

An effort is made to integrate private language teachers into the school staff, e.g. by inviting them to staff social functions and inviting them to share staff room facilities. Parents are encouraged to support their child as much as possible at home in their mother tongue. The main library may also provide books, CDs etc. in different languages on request. Teachers throughout the school are encouraged to recognize students' mother tongues and home cultures in lessons and school life.

Professional Development

Teachers are encouraged to be pro-active in their professional development. The school's strategic plan incorporates a vigorous policy of staff training and development. All teachers are provided with in-service training to look at school policy documents and at IBO workshops to look specifically at certain programme requirements, principles and methods. All subject teachers and administrators in our school are trained in cultural and linguistic awareness, and in the instructional techniques for working with second-language learners.