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## 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.

ISoB has a language policy steering committee, comprising of language teachers, subject teachers, librarian, coordinators and Principal, with the purpose of collating the views of the school community, types of mother tongue, demand for foreign languages and to incorporate the requirements of IBDP rules with a plan to meet once a year for updating the policy as and when the need arises.

Our language programs aim to: enable students to learn and use language effectively, appropriately, accurately and confidently; develop students' powers of oral and written communication; develop listening skills in students; enable students to develop and use language skills in a variety of contexts and purposes; promote the appreciation, understanding, and analysis of literature; understand the vocabulary and terms used in different subject areas; encourage students to explore language as a means to understand the varied perspectives of people belonging to different cultures. 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 student development.

In providing quality education in English for students 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, Special Educational Needs Department and Mother Tongue Support 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.

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 or Spanish 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.

### **Languages offered at International School of Bydgoszcz**

The language of instruction within the school is English 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. All subject areas, except our Group 2 Language acquisition are instructed in English.

- Group 1 - Studies in language and literature : English A Literature Higher Level/Standard Level, Polish A Literature HL/SL, Spanish A Literature HL/SL, German A Literature HL/SL, French A Literature HL/SL

- Group 2 - Language acquisition : English B HL/SL, French B HL/SL/ab initio SL, Spanish B HL/SL/ab initio SL, German B HL/SL/ ab initio SL

Every Diploma Programme student must take Language A (Group 1): Literature at Higher Level or Standard Level and at least one subject from Language acquisition (Group 2). Choice of language level in Group 2 depends upon the student's preference, level of proficiency and literacy in that language and her/his overall program of study.

### *Group 1*

*Literature A* is a literature course studied in the first language of the student or the language in which the student is most competent. This will normally be the language of the environment to which the student has been exposed from an early age. Students who intend to select three other HL subjects for their career or are not very confident in literature will be advised to take SL option. In the literature course, students will study some works that are originally written in a language different from the one being followed in their course. Students will write assignments, including a cross-cultural perspective, on these works. This will enable them to understand and appreciate the essence of the language.

Language Literature standard level may be studied as a school supported self-taught subject in the following circumstances:

- where no teacher of the language is available
- where an external teacher is unable to see the candidate(s) on a frequent and regular basis and is therefore unable to meet the internal assessment requirements of the language literature course.

The school supported self-taught option is not considered appropriate for entries of more than five candidates in any language literature standard level. All self-taught candidates for the same language A: literature should follow the same programme of study.

### The role of a school

The school must appoint a School-supported self-taught supervisor who teaches a course in studies in language and literature.

The supervisor will:

- guide in developing a booklist
- approve a booklist once completed, ensuring that it meets course requirements
- help to set a timeline of study
- help to choose which other language A classes you could attend to further your studies
- discuss the assessment components and the assessment criteria for the course
- meet with a student (s) at least once a week at a fixed time in your school timetable
- administer the individual oral component
- connect with the first and best language tutor
- be a resource for your literary studies
- give you access to past papers and exemplars.

ISoB assists parents in searching for a suitable mother tongue language teacher. Any additional costs (e.g. tutor's remuneration) are the sole responsibility of the parents/guardians. It is expected that external tutors will inform a School-supported self-taught supervisor of the student's progress on a regular basis.

### *Group2*

*Language B HL or SL* (a language learner who has had three or more years of experience with the language): Students learn to communicate effectively in a number of situations, from everyday exchanges to literary texts. In this way they develop mastery of language skills.

*Language ab initio SL* is for a beginner who has little or no experience of the language: Students gain a basic level of communication based on everyday exchanges and prescribed situations.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Communication to Stakeholders**

The Language Policy is posted on the school webpage, made available in hard copy form in the main office and provided to all DPIB students and parents. Members of the community are invited to participate in our Language Policy Committee each year.