

LANGUAGE POLICY AT ISOB (*revised 2024*)

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 that 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 Department, 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.

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. Therefore, the school management encourages and supports teachers' professional development in the field of language learning and teaching (i.e. by schedule flexibility, refunding language courses, participation in the Erasmus+ projects). 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 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.

IB Language Programs

The IB offers two different language programs: Language Acquisition and Language and Literature. Language and Literature is designed to support native (or mother-tongue) speakers and is based on the study of literature; Language Acquisition is designed for students who are still learning the language and is aimed at mastering the target language.

In Grades 6-10, students usually study two languages as Language Acquisition, but if a student’s linguistic competence is high enough, they can attend two Language and Literature courses and one Language Acquisition course. All non-domestic students are required to take up Polish Language Acquisition course as the language of our host country.

Language choices for MYP students are as follows:

The English Language

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.

In the PYP English is a working language in all the classes and grades. Teachers differentiate activities to meet individual students' needs. To support students' linguistic development, ESL and EFL classes are offered.

In the MYP ISOB offers three English language courses in MYP: English as a Language of Instruction, English Language Acquisition and English Language and Literature.

In case of students who successfully completed phase 4 of Language Acquisition course, there is a possibility to transfer to Language and Literature course to further enhance their language learning. The choice is made at the discretion of ISOB's language department members.

In Year 1 of the MYP students attend one course of English that constitutes the mixture of acquisition and literature courses and is targeted at levelling the possible differences in linguistic competences of the students transitioning from the PYP.

After a year, students are assigned to one of the courses based on their skills, the scope of linguistic competence, prior learning experiences and English teachers' recommendations.

MYP Language Requirements for e-assessment purposes

Please note that to meet the requirements for the ISoB IB Middle Years Programme in G9 and G10, a student must follow at least two languages and one of these must be Language and Literature if a student wants to participate in the optional e-assessment. As a result, students who plan to take e-assessment exam at the end of MYP are obliged to attend Language and Literature course for 2 years as it is a part of the e-assessment procedure.

Language learning in DP

In DP, students choose their Language A – Literature or Language B on entering the programme. Here English is one of the languages they can choose from, the total number of language courses vary year to year based on the needs of students. If student's choice is English, they can qualify either for English A – Literature or English B based on their language proficiency and literary analysis skills. As it is generally understood, Language A – Literature programme is for native speakers and near-native proficient students, Language B is language acquisition course; both offered at high level and standard level.

Placement of students in language courses (based on 'DP language courses: overview and placement guidance').

When making placement decisions, the following guidance must be taken into consideration:

Language A: literature is suitable for students who have experience of using the language in an academic context. It is recognized that students have language backgrounds that vary significantly. There are some students for whom the target language is their only proficient language, whereas other students have complex language profiles and are competent in more than one language. Language A: Literature is offered at SL or HL.

The language ab initio and language B courses are language acquisition courses—designed to provide students the opportunity to develop in a language in addition to their home/personal/best language(s). They are not designed for students entering the course who already have the ability to communicate confidently and proficiently in that specific language.

Language B is designed for students with some experience in the target language; providing students with an appropriate degree of challenge is important for their development. Language B is offered at SL or HL.

Language B HL is designed for students with previous experience in the target language who have the ability to communicate in that language in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. As the study of two literary works originally written in the target language is compulsory in language B HL, entering the course with these communication skills would allow the student to begin the study of works of literature originally written in the target language.

Language B SL is designed for students with some previous experience in the target language who already have the ability to communicate in the language in familiar contexts.

Language ab initio SL is a language acquisition course designed for students with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous exposure. It should be noted that language ab initio is offered at SL only.

The following statements, developed from course Grade descriptors, provide guidance in placing students in an appropriate language course. A student who exhibits a majority of these statements would likely be able to handle the course whilst being appropriately challenged.

If a student can demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts, including literary texts; demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts; recognize some subtleties of specific language use and their effects, speak mostly clearly and fluently and use a varied range of language mostly accurately; write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy; show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; express ideas and organize work coherently, handle ideas mostly effectively with generally full interaction; exhibit some difficulties with more difficult questions the recommended course is **Language A: literature**.

If a student can demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts, speak generally clearly; respond appropriately to most questions but struggle with responding to difficult questions; demonstrate an adequate command of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy; use basic and some complex language correctly; show a reasonable ability to adapt writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; express ideas and organize work appropriately, respond appropriately and demonstrate comprehension; use pronunciation and intonation which facilitate the understanding of the message; make independent contributions; produce clear messages the recommended course is **Language B HL**.

If a student can demonstrate adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; demonstrate adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of oral texts, develop some ideas using a logical structure; use a range of basic cohesive devices; use basic grammatical structures accurately; use a range of basic vocabulary and appropriate register, respond appropriately and generally demonstrate comprehension; use pronunciation and intonation which often facilitate the understanding of the message;

make some independent contributions; produce mostly clear messages the recommended course is **Language B SL**.

If a student has no prior experience in or has had very limited previous exposure to the target language the recommended course is **Language ab initio**.

Host Language - Polish

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.

It is considered and indeed mandated by law that all students attending compulsory school in Poland have the opportunity to learn Polish.

In the PYP Polish is offered to the native speakers as an obligatory subject (the state system requirement to follow the Polish curriculum) as Polish Mother Tongue Support classes.

For non-native students Polish is offered as an extra-curricular class – the Polish for Foreigners Club.

In the MYP Polish, as the host country language, is offered as part of the curriculum in two courses: Polish Language Acquisition (for foreign students at all grade levels in MYP) and Polish Language and Literature (for Polish students). Polish teachers make a decision if a student attends Polish Language and Literature or Polish Language Acquisition course after an interview with a candidate and based on a diagnosis at the beginning of the school year.

In the DP students can choose Polish as a Language and Literature course at both SL and HL.

Additional Languages

All students have the opportunity to learn a foreign language at the school. The school currently offers a choice between Spanish and German in the PYP. In the MYP and DP students can choose between Spanish, French and German as Language Acquisition and as Literature courses in DP at various levels.

Native speakers of other languages are able to study their own mother tongue as DP Language A - Literature SL since ISoB offers it as a school supported self-taught subject. The school supported self-taught option is not considered appropriate for entries of more than five candidates in any Language A - Literature standard level. All self-taught candidates for the same language A - Literature should follow the same programme of study.

Mother Tongue Support (Spanish, German, French, English)

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 or maintain fluency in their native language as well as to celebrate and value the student's home cultures. The school, apart from offering a wide range of languages, promotes multilingualism by holding events like the International Day, the Polish Language Day, by inviting international guests or by making rooms available for private language lessons and providing facilities.

Parents are encouraged to support their child as much as possible at home in their mother tongue. The 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.

EFL (English as the First Language) is offered to native speakers of English, students born in English-speaking countries for whom English is one of the first languages and to students whose one of the parents is a native speaker of English. The classes are offered as additional lessons scheduled individually; they are optional and extra paid.