

Primary School Language Policy

'Where learning takes off'

Introduction

This document describes our perspective and values on language. It outlines important principles when learning a language, about language and through language. It was developed in collaboration with all stakeholders.

Language Philosophy

IST believe that language is one of the most significant factors in the development of each individual and that it transcends all subject areas and therefore all adults at IST are considered language teachers. It is our primary means of thinking and communicating and as such is essential to all learning. We strive to develop a caring language community in which all students feel accepted and confident to take risks in a supportive context. Everyone expresses themselves in a unique way.

Students at IST not only learn language but also learn about language and through language in authentic contexts. Language is a means of accessing the curriculum and is a vehicle for lifelong inquiry. Students need to recognise, access and use different forms of language depending on purpose and audience. Students will learn to communicate through the languages of Visual Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Physical Education etc. Therefore, all adults share the responsibility of recognising and supporting language development.

We promote a culture of inquiry and curiosity, new cultural perspectives on the world and appreciation of the world's diversity and richness through learning language. Through language education, students grow up with freedom, respecting other people's values and cultural diversity, and develop solidarity from responsibility.

It enables students to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others effectively, and empowers them through their academic cognitive growth and construction of knowledge.

Mother tongue language is valued and recognised as a crucial ingredient for cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity whilst providing opportunities to learn more than one language and encourage respect for language differences.

Language context

All adults are considered teachers of language and are therefore responsible for the students' language development.

Being an international school, we often have students arriving with diverse linguistic backgrounds and educational experience at varying language levels. At IST, the language of instruction is English. The host country language is French which is taught through an integrated approach. French is also taught through stand-alone units to develop specific language skills.

Through our programme of inquiry, different mother tongue languages are valued and appreciated.

Principles and Practices of teaching language

We believe that students become good communicators when:

1. They are engaged in a wide variety of activities in which they are actively involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting (the six skills).

2. The language curriculum is embedded in the whole school curriculum and language activities are meaningful and relevant.
In practice this means that:
 - the teaching of elements of language such as writing, text structure, grammar, spelling and vocabulary are taught as much as possible in the context of the different programs.
 - the displays in the school reflect that we use language to pursue our inquiries.
3. The learning environment is positive, cooperative and inviting and encourages verbal expression and it provides a variety of resources.
4. They are involved in assessing themselves and receive continuous feedback through both summative and formative assessment practices
5. The six different language skills are taught in an integrated fashion
6. Differences in developmental stage are acknowledged and suitably catered for
7. All adults are responsible for modelling effective communication strategies
8. Through the written and taught curriculum the school actively promotes international mindedness

Host country language

Host Country Language Studies is an integral part of the IB PYP at IST.

At IST, all pupils will develop their proficiency in French as an additional language from the age of 4 years. All pupils are provided with the knowledge and skills to use French, referring to their prior experience and abilities. Native or near-native French speakers are taught in the top group. The programme offered ensures the development of both language and literature skills.

At IST we therefore offer 3 different ability groups for each grade, from K3 to Grade 5 including differentiation in small flexible groups. All students will have the opportunity to practice French during Physical Education classes where the language of instruction is French.

English as an Additional Language

At IST, there is a Student Support Department which offers an additional differentiated programme to target the language needs of students who have English as an additional language. The Student Support department works closely with Homeroom teachers and support is provided both in and out of class depending on the individual needs of the student. Close links are made between classroom learning to ensure connections are developed and help students to access all areas of the curriculum.

Mother Tongue

At IST, students have the opportunity to join language clubs and have access to a variety of books in different languages through our library and media centre. Families are invited to participate in different activities throughout the year - reading to the whole class in their mother tongue, international day, sharing culture and experiences. The school is committed to supporting and developing the integration of mother tongue languages as the PYP is implemented.

Responsibility:	Head of Primary, PYP Coordinator
Audience:	Primary Staff, Students, Parents and Board of Directors
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Secondary School Language Policy

Philosophy

In the Secondary School section of the International School of Toulouse (IST) we understand that all learning involves learning languages, learning about languages, and learning through languages. We also understand that through language learning students acquire the ability to think critically, learn independently and develop knowledge in a balanced, creative and reflective manner. Because of this every teacher at IST is a teacher of language and supports the language development of every student in their care.

Our approach to teaching and learning is driven by these beliefs and through them we will fulfil the IST Mission statement aims to “celebrate and value our cultural diversity and ... actively promote international mindedness” and to “enable our students to flourish as open-minded, confident and independent young people with a lifelong desire to learn and the will to have a positive impact on the world around them”.

Accompanying statements for the above philosophy:

- At IST all students are given the opportunity to access the curriculum through English, the main language of instruction of the school.
- All students also learn one or more of the three other languages offered (French, German and Spanish) at either first or foreign language level.
- Students come to IST with many different language backgrounds and differing linguistic abilities; we therefore use a differentiated and varied instruction that is adapted to our students’ needs.
- We are keen to encourage students to take advantage of the language and culture of our host country, France.

Secondary School language profile

The International School of Toulouse is a private fee paying co-educational day school which was created to provide a high quality, international education in English for students from a variety of backgrounds which helps to facilitate the global mobility of families. The IST operates on a site in Colomiers, France, called Eurocampus. Because we also host a section of the Deutsche Schule Toulouse on our site the official language of Eurocampus is French. However, both IST and DST function in their own language with their staff, students and parents. It follows that the scope of this document covers only the IST Secondary School.

At IST we value the range of languages spoken by our students at home and recognise that this needs to be taken into account in teaching and learning. At IST there is a diverse and changing language community although the overwhelming majority of students have one of four languages as a mother tongue: English, French, German or Spanish. These four languages are taught as first language and additional language¹ at IST.

Throughout IST, it is understood that we exist in a particular social context with complex language and learning-related needs. We believe that our students should become proficient communicators in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. For these reasons language study and communication underpin all our programmes from Grade 6 through to Grade 12.

Regarding specific language courses, the choice and planning of language courses is flexible in order to reflect a changing school population. Language Profiling is an important tool in this process. Information such as exposure to a language, tuition in a language and mother tongue is kept in the student's file for teachers to consult.

Specific reference to students for whom English is an additional language and students with special educational needs can be found in the IST Secondary School Student Support Policy (this document also concerns gifted and talented students).

Due to the fact that the main language of instruction in the school is English it follows that assessments are carried out in that language when appropriate. Details regarding assessment across the Secondary School of IST can be found in the IST Secondary School Assessment and Reporting Policy².

Specific Language courses:

Secondary English

All students at IST have access to specific English language teaching, both as a discrete subject and as part of the wider curriculum. We recognise that everyone who attends the school is entitled to acquire and develop their English language knowledge and skills, whatever stage they have reached, whether English is their first or an additional language. English language teaching at IST focuses on the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

¹ Additional language may be referred to as Second or Foreign Language at IGCSE level.

² The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a guideline used widely across Europe to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages (learning, teaching, assessment). It is used as a reference document to inform the development of our language programmes.

The English curriculum supports the wider language teaching of the school as well as being taught as specific subjects. Students have access to texts from a range of genres, both literary and non-literary, and they are taught to write for differing audiences and purposes. Close attention is paid to the development of knowledge about the English language as well as to the skills needed to be proficient communicators, verbally and in writing.

All students study English Language until the end of Grade 10. In Grade 9 most students also take English Literature or they may opt for German or Spanish Literature instead. Thereafter, as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, either Literature or Language and Literature (English A) are offered, or students can choose Language Acquisition (English B).

Secondary French

French is offered throughout the curriculum up to Grade 12. It is the only compulsory LOTE up to Grade 10 as it is the language of our host country and culture. It can be studied as a (near) first language or as a foreign language for beginners and intermediate students.

French First Language

French First Language is offered from Grade 6 to 10. French Literature A and/or Language & Literature programmes are offered in Grade 11 and 12 in the IB diploma. These options may be followed by students who obtained IGCSE French First language in Grade 10 or by students with a very high level of competence. There is no separate IGCSE French literature course and exam.

French Foreign Language

French as a foreign language is offered at two different levels according to the student prior experience and proficiency. In Grades 6-8 students strengthen and consolidate their language acquisition, allowing them to develop their skills in order to prepare for the IGCSE exam at the end of Grade 10. In Grade 11, students can either study French B or French *ab initio* as part of the International Baccalaureate Programme.

Secondary German and Spanish

German and Spanish are offered throughout the curriculum up to Grade 12. They can be studied as (near) first languages or as foreign languages.

German & Spanish First Language

German and Spanish First Languages are offered from Grades 6-8 and in Grade 9 students may opt for German/Spanish First Language IGCSE. They may also take IGCSE Literature in these languages. German and Spanish Literature A and/or Language & Literature A programmes are offered in Grade 11 and 12 in

the IB diploma. These options may be followed by students who obtained IGCSE German or Spanish First Language in Grade 10 or by students with a very high level of competence. There is no separate IGCSE German literature exam.

German & Spanish Foreign Language

After an induction period in Grade 6, students will choose between German and Spanish foreign languages and will continue until the end of Grade 8. They may choose to continue to IGCSE level in Grades 9 and 10. In Grade 11, students may either study German/Spanish B or German/Spanish *ab initio* as part of the International Baccalaureate Programme.

Responsibility: Principal / Head of Secondary

Audience: All IST Secondary School community

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APPENDIX A – Possible language pathways for IST Secondary School students

2 compulsory languages (6 - 8)					
ENGLISH		A N D	FRENCH		
First Language			Foreign Language		First Language
Grade 6	English		Standard	Intermediate	Advanced
Grade 7	First Language				
Grade 8					

1 compulsory third language (6 - 8)				
SPANISH		O R	GERMAN	
First Language	Foreign Language		First Language	Foreign Language
Spanish	Spanish		German	German
First	Foreign	First	Foreign	

3 core subjects (IGCSE)						
ENGLISH			A N D	FRENCH		
English First Language or English as a Second Language				Foreign Language		First Language
IGCSE Grade 9 & Grade 10	AND			Standard	Intermediate	Advanced
	English literature	German literature	Spanish literature			

1 or 2 options (IGCSE) (to choose out of 5)			
SPANISH		GERMAN	
Spanish	Spanish	German	German
First Language	Foreign Language	First Language	Foreign Language



One language from group 1			
For first language or near first language speakers			
IB Grade 11 & Grade 12 (exam)	English SL/HL	English A Literature	English A Language & Literature
	French SL/HL	French A Literature or Language & Literature	
	German SL/HL	German A Literature or Language & Literature	
	Spanish SL/HL	Spanish A Literature or Language & Literature	

One <u>or</u> two languages from group 2		
	For non-first language speakers	For beginners
English SL/HL	English B	English B
French SL/HL	French B	French <i>ab initio</i> SL only
German SL/HL	German B	German <i>ab initio</i> SL only
Spanish SL/HL	Spanish B	Spanish <i>ab initio</i> SL only

APPENDIX B

Language learner profile

The aim of the language learner profile is to develop internationally minded people who help to create a better and more peaceful world. They recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of their own language and culture, as well as of the foreign language(s) and culture(s) learned.

Inquirers: They use language as their prime medium of inquiry to learn through and about language and use a foreign language as a second medium.

Thinkers: They use language precisely and skilfully in the context of higher level thinking and to some extent in a foreign language.

Communicators: They are confident users of oral and written language forms in a variety of situations.

Risk-takers: They attempt to read, write and speak in situations where they may not feel totally competent.

Knowledgeable: They understand the internal structures of language and the various influences on its development. They have experience of a wide range of literature in their first language and develop one in a foreign language.

Principled: They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect, and that it must be used responsibly.

Caring: They show responsible, caring attitudes towards the use of language and they value literature for the insight it gives into the feelings of others.

Open-minded: They respect differences and similarities between languages and dialects. They are aware of the use of language as an expression of bias and strive to maintain an objective stance.

Balanced: They are aware of the need for an educated person to be an effective communicator. They use literature for learning and for leisure in their native and in a foreign language.

Reflective: They reflect upon their own levels of language development in their mother tongue and other languages. They consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

Creative: They use language creatively to explore their world and to communicate effectively with others. They are ambitious and seek different strategies in their interactions.

Resilient: They do not give up when language learning is challenging. Through learning languages they acquire behaviours that can be transferred to other subjects.

APPENDIX C

Glossary

Ab initio Language - This is a language course taken by students who are beginners or have a limited knowledge of this language, or for whom the school considers it to be a challenge. It is assessed by a standard level exam at the end of the two-year programme.

CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

DP - a two-year diploma programme offered by the IBO.

DP Subject Groups - The IB philosophy requires that full-diploma DP candidates study in six subject areas, referred to as groups. For languages these are:

- Group 1: Language A: The student's first language or near first language.
- Group 2: Language B or *ab initio*: The student's foreign modern language.

EAL - English as an Additional Language. English for students whose first language is not English.

ESL - English as a Second Language (IGCSE, Cambridge International Examinations)

LOTE - Languages Other Than English also called Modern (Foreign) Languages

PYP - Primary Years Programme (IB programme for primary years)

SEN - Student with Educational Needs