



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SUVA

World Class Citizens ~ Lifelong Learners

Language Policy

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Philosophy and Purpose of Language

Language and communication create the cohesiveness and understanding across cultures we need in a changing world. At International School Suva, we respect and honour how language reflects the individual and a culture's beliefs, attitudes and perspective, and are committed to creating the opportunity to help our students find their voice in our society.

Our belief is that all teachers are language teachers as language is transdisciplinary in nature; language is a medium of inquiry and therefore plays an essential role in learning. As English is the common language and primary language of instruction, a command of English is key to being able to access information and communication. We recognize, however, that English is not the first language of many of our students and that they come to us with a range of different language levels. In order for all students to be academically successful, all teachers are committed to the growth and development of a student's English language skills.

At International School Suva it is recognized that

- Our students come to school with many different language backgrounds and vary in their ability to learn languages.
- All languages are equally valued and may be used as a medium of inquiry during the school day. We view ongoing language development for ISS students as a shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students.
- We teach language through context and relate new information to existing knowledge.
- We view the range of languages within our school as an opportunity which allows us to reflect and celebrate the multilingual society we live in and provide opportunities for developing true global citizenship in students.
- We need to prepare students for a world where new technologies and rapid growth in information are transforming our society.
- English tends to be the medium of instruction for most classes, but this should be viewed as an opportunity to foster the development of language and literacy.

Language Profile

ISS is a multicultural school community and includes students from approximately 45 different countries. The school celebrates the cultural similarities and differences of its families through the school curricula. We have a wide range of student backgrounds, abilities and needs, particularly in the language areas. Each student is assisted to realize his or her potential and as such, students are supported in areas of need or challenged in areas of aptitude.

Assessment

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the current ISS Assessment Policy.

Language is assessed according to the curricula guidelines in the areas of oral, visual and written communication. Benchmark assessments are also given to determine literacy levels and skills.

Entry Assessment

Admissions requirements and assessments ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum in English. A range of procedures is used to assess English-language proficiency, including comprehension, written and verbal language tests, observations, viewing of previous reports and interviews.

Primary

- Primary students indicate on the enrolment form the language spoken at home. Once at school a learning support teacher will assess a student whose native language is not English to determine if additional support is needed.

Secondary

- Students undertake placement tests (Oxford Placement Test for English) that enables an understanding of the student's entry level of English. It is recommended that students entering High School need to matriculate in a short period of time so minimum entry levels are set at IELTS equivalent of 3 for Year 9 and 5 for Year 11.
- For languages other than English, students are counseled as to which language would be most appropriate to learn and at which level. They are encouraged to adopt a program that is challenging and reflects their previous learning experiences. In the High School admission into a particular language level is defined by regulations noted in both the IBDP and ACT policy manuals for language acquisition.

Learning through Language at ISS

Language is involved in all learning that occurs on campus and is essential for inquiry and the construction of meaning. Therefore in order for all students to be successful academically, all teachers are committed to the growth and development of a student's English language and literacy. Where this will add a deeper understanding of their learning, mother tongue can be used by the student.

The value of learning more than one language is also recognized and believed to be essential in ensuring greater intercultural understanding and capacity for learning in other areas.

From ECH – Year 12, the language programme values:

- the acquisition of an additional language while maintaining a first language and cultural heritage;
- instruction is aligned to standards and benchmarks;
- individualized learning opportunities for addressing diverse learning needs;
- multi-literacy skills for communication

Second language acquisition in these subject areas involves exposure to a range of vocabulary, texts, multimedia sources, and conversation. Collaborative planning meetings are held with each of the school's year level teams when planning for language studies.

English

English is taught in specific periods during the school week, but it is through English that the development of language and literacy is fostered. Features of the English language curriculum include the four Language strands of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and viewing and presenting. Across all subject areas, language is supported through various literacy activities, and opportunities for students to use language independently and through collaboration.

Students in responding to texts learn about form, content, purpose and audience, and should connect with texts in terms of social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts and value this. They also learn how language challenges ways of thinking and allows for creativity and independence in thought and action. The reading of a diverse range of text allows students to gain an understanding of culture, aesthetics and the importance of effective command of language to express views and ideas. Students are also encouraged to read widely. Texts chosen for specific levels are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet the demands and interests of particular cohorts. The courses in English offered at ISS are designed to be flexible enough to support a range of learner needs.

The ISS ESL and Learning Support team works with students who need additional support with English language. Small groupings for targeting skill deficits are deployed within the class through differentiated instruction. In addition students identified as requiring extra support in

literacy skills may be provided with targeted teaching and assistance in small groups withdrawn from the classroom.

PYP Language learning practices

In PYP, language learning practices are set to follow the IB requirements along the following lines:

- Promote inquiry-based authentic language learning.
- Focus on the trans-disciplinary nature of language learning.
- Incorporate the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry.
- Develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy.
- Interrelate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy.
- Provide for the teaching of additional languages.

PYP Language Courses

Host country language is taught through the cultural programs of Hindi and Fijian. A World Language program is introduced in year 4. This includes an introductory course in French and Chinese. In Year 5 the students have a term of French, Chinese, Fijian and Hindi and do 4 lessons per week.

MYP Language Courses

All students study English as their Language and Literature Course. Upon starting in the MYP, students select either Chinese or French as their Language Acquisition Course, which they continue throughout the five years of the MYP. ISS commits to:

- Group the students In Language Acquisition Courses in appropriate phase levels, consistent with the IB Language Acquisition guide.
- Integrate the learning of languages with learning in the subject groups, through Interdisciplinary planning.

Diploma / ACT Programme

All students are expected to complete an English course at ISS in Year 11 and 12. For students completing the IBDP, the subject for Group 1 (studies in Language and Literature) will be English Language and Literature or Language B English (when numbers allow). Those students completing the ACT program, will be expected to complete an English program (T, A, M) or ESL T (when numbers allow).

Students for whom English is not their mother tongue and who are studying the IBDP may opt to take their mother-tongue as a School Supported Self-Taught language upon approval by the DP Coordinator and have the option of completing an English B course as an alternative to

English A Language and Literature or English A Language. The school will endeavor to ensure the program is sufficiently different to that of the English program to enable students to attain a bilingual diploma. Students are also encouraged to write an Extended Essay or TOK essay in their own language where practical. Those students completing the ACT program may opt to take ESL T and/or apply for the Linguistically Diverse category for the ACT Scaling Test (AST) examinations if they satisfy conditions.

Students are also encouraged to opt to take a second language and French and Chinese are offered. In the IBDP program, French can be taken at Ab initio, SL and HL level as a Group 2 (Language Acquisition) subject. Students in the ACT program can take Chinese T at Continuing level or French T at Beginning, Continuing or Advanced level. Decisions regarding a student being eligible for a particular level are defined under guidelines outlined by the IBO (for the IBDP) and BSSS (for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate).

English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Mother Tongue Support

Students whose first language is not English are supported in several ways. International School Suva employs EAL teachers to meet the needs of these students. Students are evaluated and provided with EAL instruction either individually or within the context of the classroom. Teachers work together to plan lessons and activities to ensure EAL students can access the curricula through a range of proficiency levels in English. Parents are updated regularly with student progress, and support is given to families whose first language is not English. ISS supports the development of and respect for the mother tongue language of students, and we have resources available to enrich and support mother tongue development.

EAL Practices in the PYP

Students who need EAL support are assessed using WIDA Assessments. Support is provided by the learning and support team in the form of targeted pull-out sessions and in-class support depending on the English level of the student and the academic needs of the program. The learning and support team plan with the year level team to ensure best EAL practices are used.

Middle School EAL Department Practices

High School EAL Department Practices

It is recognized that EAL students have additional challenges in constructing meaning and understanding when learning takes place in English. For the most part, EAL students enter high school at Year 9 and the primary aim is integration and English acquisition. Support is primarily in-class support and where relevant, individualized instruction. The EAL teachers give additional

support and guidance to teachers in modifying or adapting lessons and assessment to ensure access to learning and assessment by EAL learners.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions exist:

Mother Tongue – a student’s primary language, best known and spoken at home

Language of instruction – language through which lessons are delivered

Ab initio – In the IBDP in Group 2 Language Acquisition, Ab initio courses are designed for learners who have had little or no exposure to the language being taught.

In the ACT curriculum the following terms / conditions apply (ACT BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual 2020 pp18, 68):

- *Beginning courses* - are intended for students who have no previous knowledge of the language.
- *Continuing courses* - are intended for students who have completed two or three years study of the language in high school.
- *Advanced courses* - are intended for students who have had considerably more exposure to the target language than the average high school student.
- *Linguistically Diverse* – students who satisfy the conditions for the Australian Scaling Test conditions for LD

EAL – English as an Additional Language – In the Australian Curriculum this specifically refers to learners whose first language is not English.

Bibliography

IBOLanguage Policy, 2014. IBO <https://www.ibo.org/language-policy/>

Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Policy and Procedures Manual, 2020.