



DUBAI INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

DREAM  INSPIRE  ACHIEVE

# *Language Policy*



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# Our Mission, Values, and Philosophy

## Our Mission

To empower students with a holistic, rigorous and international education for success in an ever-changing world.

## Our Core Values

- Achievement
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility

## Our Philosophy

- To be recognised by the success of our students in achieving their personal goals.
- To make student development the centre of all school decisions.
- To aspire to the highest internationally recognised performance standards.
- To celebrate our diversity of cultures, backgrounds and perspectives.
- To build and celebrate a culture based on internationalism
- To create a learning environment that will positively contribute to international and local communities.
- To implement the IB Learner Profile in an innovative way.

## Our Beliefs

- We believe that a healthy mind and body, a positive attitude and behaviour help one focus and learn.
- We believe in the pursuit of excellence whilst balancing academics, aesthetics and athletics.
- We believe that teamwork between students, teachers and parents is critical to the overall learning process.
- We believe in encouraging students to take pride in their achievements and applaud others' achievements.
- We believe that internationalism is vital for holistic education
- We believe that effective teaching in a safe, positive school environment enables children to develop academically and socially.
- We believe that the IB Learner Profile leads to the holistic development of students.

## Our Approach

- By benchmarking with the highest internationally recognised performance standards.
- By developing each student's individual potential for leadership.
- By empowering students with a global and a local perspective
- By responding sensitively to the full range of students' educational needs.
- By using technology to enhance learning.
- By utilising the IB curriculum and reinforcing the core of the programme models for our curriculum.

## Dubai International Academy Language Philosophy

Dubai International Academy (DIA) recognises that the study of language is the foundation for all learning.

Communication is fundamental to learning as it supports inquiry and understanding and allows students reflection and expression. Language study, including English, Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and mother-tongue Languages, develops international mindedness/understanding, reinforces cultural identity, enhances personal growth and promotes effective learning.

The majority of our teachers speak more than one language; however, English is the common language used for all collaborations, planning meetings and communications within the school. Dubai International Academy views all teachers as teachers of language, and all parents as essential contributors to the language learning process. The main language of instruction is English and support is provided to those still acquiring the language. It is believed that a common language used within and outside the classroom helps to build friendships and understanding between all members of the DIA community.

Due to the unique socio-cultural composition of our school community with a vast range of mother tongue languages, instruction in a number of mother-tongue and additional languages is facilitated in a variety of forms. The language of the host country is promoted through the compulsory learning of Arabic for all students from Years 2 – Year 10 and is optional thereafter (as per the guidelines provided by the local Ministry of Education).

Dubai International Academy understands that the most conducive environment to language learning is a positive and encouraging one, wherein students have the opportunity to engage in authentic and meaningful learning experiences. Dubai International Academy values differentiated and varied instruction, which integrates the skill areas of: Listening, Speaking, Viewing, Reading and Writing, therefore, language instruction considers students' multiple learning styles and individual development.

Students are respected and valued as members of the school community regardless of what language they speak. The school also recognises the value of seeking and using information in a student's first language as necessary to help in the understanding of academic content. Students are encouraged to use Language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning and self-expression establishing links between subjects, cultures, and other areas of experience.

We will strive to involve parents in planning their child's language profile and development and utilize the strengths of the wider community as part of the holistic practices outlined in the Dubai International Academy Language Policy. This is accomplished through not only our traditional Language Acquisition offerings, but also our Mother Tongue programme which begins in KG1 and allows students to enhance their native language proficiency while utilizing the parent community, as many of the Mother Tongue instructors are parents and community members themselves.

***Dubai International Academy views all teachers as teachers of language and this is achieved through the following:*** We aim to provide a language educational programme that comprises:

- Mainstream classes where the language of instruction is English;
- An English as a Second Language programme to provide students, whose first language is not English, with the facility to accelerate the learning of English, is provided to all ESL students up to Year 9; from Year 10 and 11, students can continue English language acquisition in MYP English B classes.
- Instructional time for Arabic language studies across the school in compliance with the requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education;
- Arabic B language classes for all non-native speaking students in Year 2 to Year 10;
- Arabic A classes for holders of Arabic passports from Year 2 to Year 13;
- Arabic A teachers closely follow the ministry documents while implementing their programme which is also integrated as an MYP moderated subject. For Arabic B students, language studies are integrated with the PYP, MYP and DP programmes;
- A variety of other language classes for all students across the 3 academic programmes;
- Various mother-tongue language programmes as part of the regular timetable and After School Activities programme;
- A multitude of other opportunities for students to gain exposure to a variety of languages and cultures through parent involvement, music, art, festivals, assemblies and curricular units;
- The development of literacy skills across all subject areas;
- Language development included in collaborative planning of the curriculum at all levels and planning is in collaboration with the ESL teachers;
- Language documents are monitored and reviewed and as part of the school cyclic review programme by representatives across year levels and language groups;
- Teachers regularly attend in-school Professional Development workshops in ESL and have access to local external and international workshops.

In addition to this, all teachers at DIA strive for the following standards in relation to languages:

- A stimulating learning environment which enriches their language development is provided;
- Teachers support the development of the IB learner profile and attitudes towards improving communication skills and provide a wide range of opportunities to do so;
- Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to teach a balanced language program which includes, listening speaking, observing, reading and writing;
- Teachers acknowledge differences in developmental stages, learning styles and previous language experiences and provide differentiated learning experiences allowing students to reach their full potential;

- All teachers provide support to the ESL students at all levels through differentiation appropriate to their language level.
- Follow the recommendations set out in the ESL IEP

and all parents as essential contributors to the language learning process. We all have a role to play in facilitating communication, both written and verbal. We will strive to ensure that our high standards of communication are met, working with students and colleagues to develop literacy skills that will allow our students to succeed in an ever-changing world.

## Language in the Primary School

“IB schools are committed to multilingualism as a means of affirming cultural identity and developing international-mindedness” (Kessler, Quinn 1980; Zelasko, Antunez 2000). The term “multilingualism” in the PYP refers to linguistic ability in more than one language and recognizes that each of a student’s languages may be developed to different levels, and within different contexts, depending on their social and academic experiences (International Baccalaureate 2019).

In addition, multilingualism has cognitive benefits relating to:

- Attention and focus
- Problem-solving thinking skills
- Thinking about language.

## Responsibility of Teaching Language

In the primary school, all teachers are language teachers- at DIA the language of instruction is English. All subjects, except Arabic A, Islamic Studies A and MFL, are transacted in English. The teachers facilitate language development and the acquisition of language skills through their subjects.

While the homeroom teachers assume responsibility for teaching language and about language, subject specialists aid in language acquisition through teaching through language. Single subject specialists ensure that students are familiar with the aspects within their subject areas using subject specific vocabulary.

## Language Policy for the Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Students in the primary school at DIA move through the following stages and levels (both horizontally and vertically):

### **Learning of Language**

Language is taught specifically with the focus on acquisition of skills and mechanics through listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the early years till year 2, phonics instruction is a focus to help in acquiring basic skills in speaking and reading, correct pronunciation. Usage, grammar, phonics, spellings, reading and writing are a part of

the curriculum in the primary school which is based on the phases of language learning in the PYP scope and sequence for language.

### **Learning *About* Language**

As students acquire proficiency in a language they move the learning about language. the cultural aspects, the development of the language the literature and literary works in the language are introduced and students are made aware of the cultural differences as well as encouraged to develop respect for all languages. This is especially true of the varied languages offered at DIA, where multilingualism is celebrated. The curriculum includes literature from many languages and students engage with these through discussions, reviews and open-minded exploration.

### **Learning *Through* Language**

Once they can communicate using the language of instruction, students begin to learn through it. They engage in tasks that require debating, comprehending complex texts, understand perspectives, conduct research by reading and summarizing their understanding, write using a variety of text styles, express their opinions and communicate their understanding of the content. They do this across all curricular areas.

### **Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in the PYP**

From year 3, students choose to study an additional language, which is different from their home language, mother tongue, host country language and language of instruction. Currently DIA offers Spanish and French as the MFL choices. These are time-tabled- with 2 lessons a week for years 3 to 6. The curriculum follows the same principles of language acquisition as the language of instruction, using the language scope and sequence document of the PYP as a basis of the development of progressions in learning. Teachers use strategies and techniques to facilitate the learning of the language in a school set-up. These include immersion, role-plays, audio-visual inputs, songs, body-language etc. The teachers conduct assessments in-line with the assessment policy of the school and report on the progress to parents. MFL is celebrated through an exhibition at the end of the academic year with a display of understanding of the language and the culture.

### **Arabic in KG 2 and Year 1**

Though the requirement to teach Arabic does not include Year 1, at DIA we have chosen to introduce our young students to the language. This is done as a whole class engagement in developing familiarity with the language of the host country. Th curriculum comprises basic vocabulary, simple conversation, songs and basic cultural celebrations. Students attend one lesson a week in KG 1 and two lessons a week in year 1.

## Common Practices to Promote Language Learning

Circle Time	In class sharing of ideas and emotions, raising concerns, solving problems, using language that is appropriate and common. Developing social aspect of language through an open and inclusive platform for all.
Listening and Speaking	All teachers develop these aspects through the curriculum with engagements that require students to speak up in class, discussions, presenting, offering explanations and debates.
Use of Learner Profile	Learner Profile provides a common vocabulary for language development and teachers and students focus on various attributes that related to becoming a language user.

## The Development of Language in KG

In KG1 and KG2 we teach language through the Units of Inquiry and follow the same philosophy as in the Primary school.

We also use the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework to benchmark students' progress and attainment. The framework is structured to include standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. There are seventeen Early Learning Goals in this framework and they are divided into seven learning areas. The learning goals are categorised into the following learning areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The three initial areas of development are communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Reading and Phonics instruction will be based on each child's ability and readiness. Learning through 'enquiry focused play' is central to the teaching and learning of language in KG.



# Language in the Secondary School

## Language Expectations

Communication is fundamental to learning, as it supports inquiry and understanding, and allows student reflection and expression. Our goal is to prepare our students primarily for English speaking universities; English is therefore our language of instruction and communication throughout the school. When a student insists on speaking a language other than English, he/she is missing an opportunity to improve his/her language skills. Moreover, this excludes other people who do not understand; which builds distrust and impedes friendships. We prefer to have inclusion – the use of a common language to build friendships and understanding between all participants.

As per the Ministry of Education requirements, it is compulsory for all Arab students to study Arabic A up to Year 12 and for non-Arab students to study Arabic B up to Year 10. However, those who wish to continue their tertiary education in the UAE are required to continue Arabic B up to Year 12 in order to get the equivalency acknowledgement from the MOE.

Students are expected to speak English in all classes except Arabic, Islamic Studies, and other language classes.

Recognising that language usage contributes to cognitive knowledge, students will:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of the English language through purposeful use in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- Learn to speak, read and write English developmentally, progressing across a continuum of skills in each area;
- Endeavour to express themselves confidently in English in a variety of situations;
- Receive support from the English as a Second Language (ESL) Programme, as is deemed necessary (ESL support is only provided up to Year 11);
- Be given the opportunity to take part in other language instruction as is deemed necessary for globally mobile students;
- Be encouraged to seek and use resources in their first language, as necessary, to help in the understanding of academic content;
- Respect each other as valued members of the school community regardless of their first language;
- Develop an appreciation of literature and a variety of texts;
- Establish links between subjects, cultures, and other areas of experience;
- Use Language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning and self-expression.

The work of the teacher in promoting language learning is to:

- Create situations, which encourage students to use language in different ways;
- Provide a comprehensive reading programme;

- Teach students the specifics of language;
- Equip students with adequate vocabulary;
- Immerse students in a rich language environment;
- Provide students with good models of language structure and usage;
- Provide challenges to stretch individual student capabilities;
- Guide students to an appreciation of the forms and aesthetic qualities of language;
- Equip students with the skill to express themselves;
- Create a common presentation policy and bibliography policy across the subject groups.

### Benefits of Language Continuation

Please note that the Language Acquisition Department at DIA strongly advises students to continue with their chosen language B option in Year 7 up to Year 11, which will allow them to register for intermediate/advanced courses of that language (Year 11 Phase 4 in MYP and Language B SL&HL in the Diploma Programme). These courses entail a deeper knowledge of the target language and culture and present numerous academic and social benefits such as:

- Improvement of communication skills in the first language: students will delve into advanced linguistic aspects transferable to any language, such as text format conventions, creative writing techniques or literary analysis.
- Improvement of performance in other academic areas: intermediate and advanced language courses require the use of higher cognitive skills, which has a positive impact on standardised exam results in areas other than languages.
- University applications: many universities in the world require or highly value language courses taken at an intermediate and advance level in high school, especially in the Unites States where Spanish is widely spoken.
- Increase of networking skills: intermediate and advanced courses include more opportunities to reflect on cultural diversity, identities and other global topics which will benefit students' social and intercultural skills.

### Mother Tongue Support

DIA nurtures student's own mother tongue by providing optional opportunities through taught lessons and dedicated mother tongue teachers within the school day in multiple languages.

In addition, students in the diploma years have the option of taking their mother tongue as a self-taught course (with teacher supervision). This occurs when numbers do not justify having a dedicated class; as student numbers increase, it is the intention to include more mother tongue classes into the Language A programme.

# Language Policy for the Middle Years Programme (MYP)

## MYP English A Policy

The following guidelines have been identified:

- Literacy develops when language has meaning and purpose;
- The five areas: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing and Viewing, are interrelated;
- Communication is a cooperative process in which skills such as critical listening, questioning, persuasion and expressing ideas clearly are necessary.
- Literacy skills must be developed across all subject areas.
- Students should develop skills in formal and informal communication and in real-world situations.
- The curriculum should be sensitive to the needs of all students. World literature (short stories, poems, novels, etc.) should form part of the school syllabus;
- The increasing need for computer literacy and the use of technological tools must be considered.

## Arabic in the MYP

Language A Arabic is compulsory for students whose Emirates ID nationality is from an Arab Nation. Arab students take Arabic A in Years 7 to 9 in addition to their Language B subject and continue with Arabic A only in years 10 and 11.

- All other students are required to take Arabic B as well as one other Language B subject up to Year 10.
- The Ministry of Education Arabic B course will be mandatory for all Year 10 non-Arab students. If students select MYP Arabic B, they will study BOTH MYP Arabic B and MOE Arabic B for Year 10 only. In Year 11, students do not have to study MOE Arabic B, but they will continue with MYP Arabic B if this is their chosen Language B option.

## MYP Language Acquisition Policy

At DIA, students will be able to choose either French or Spanish, and students may also select Arabic as a Language Acquisition subject (a consideration outlined above). All students in Years 7-9 are placed in the relevant phase level groups depending on their ability. For new students to the school, there is a language placement test to help ensure correct placement of students based upon their ability.

- Students in Year 10 are placed in Phase 1/2 (complete beginners) or Phase 3 (Previous experience of the language)
- Students in Year 11 are placed in Phase 2 or Phase 4 as the IB assessment is only assessed at Phase 2 and Phase 4.

- Students in Years 10-11 Arabic B are taught in Phases 1 and 2. In Year 11, Arabic B is only offered at Phase 2. There is no Phase 4 in MYP Arabic B for Year 11.
- Students new to the school and the language B in MYP will be provided with a 'Catch-Up' pack and will be expected to attend the after-school support club.

## Language Policy for the Diploma Programme (DP)

At DIA, English is the working language of the DP and the medium of instruction. All subjects other than language B are taught in English. Students write their Extended Essay in English unless the EE is in a Group 1 or Group 2 other than English. TOK Internal and External Assessment are presented in English. All CAS paperwork must be completed in English.

### Group 1 – Language A

At present, the school offers English A Language & Literature as 'taught' courses. In order to be enrolled in the above, a student should be able to demonstrate adequate fluency in the language and competency in literary analysis.

A student may select mother-tongue Language A1 SL as a school supported self-taught course under the following conditions:

- Linguistic fluency in the language, as well as proven background of the study of literature of the language (national curriculum of the country in secondary school) (at least up to Year 9 level);
- Regular access to a qualified private tutor, who would be reimbursed by the parent;
- A clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the student and the school as outlined by the Self-Taught Languages Coordinator;
- A commitment to adhere to the timeline and deadlines for submission of work as imposed by the school;
- A full list of works to be studied (from the approved lists) submitted to the school by the end of September of Year 12.

### Group 2 – Language B & Language Ab Initio

The school makes decisions regarding which languages and levels are offered for a smooth transition from MYP into the DP. The school currently offers English B SL and HL, Spanish B SL and HL, Spanish Ab Initio SL, French B SL and HL, French Ab Initio SL and Arabic B SL and HL as taught courses.

#### Language B HL/SL

- May be taken by a student who has adequate fluency in the language.
- The above would be measured on performance in the MYP eAssessments, including the phase in which the student sat the assessment. The level at which the language would be studied would be determined through the above assessment.

## Language Ab Initio

- Students should have no prior knowledge of the language
- Is not the mother-tongue of either parent, regardless of passport country.

## Language Policy for the Career-related Programme (CP)

### Language Development (LD)

As part of the CP Core, students are required to complete the Language Development component of the programme. Language Development (LD) ensures that all CP students have access and are exposed to a second language that will increase their understanding of the wider world. Students are required to begin or extend the study of an additional language that suits their needs, background and context and show evidence of language development through a portfolio of evidence.

Students will be taught face to face with the Language Development supervisor who will monitor their portfolio of evidence at least once a fortnight in line with the school assessment policy. The language portfolio is for private use by students to reflect on their learning; it is not a formally assessed document but will be monitored and formative feedback will be given on an ongoing basis to which the student must respond. A simple progress form will be used as suggested in the IB guidance document which gives feedback on oral, written and reading skills as well as visual interpretation. Students must ensure that the language portfolio is up to date, relevant, reflective and comprehensive. The language portfolio will be created and maintained online as a reflective journal but a display will be created of some of the contents for an end-of course exhibition.

### Course Selection: English A or B

#### **ENGLISH A: Language & Literature HL or SL**

The language A: language and literature course aims to develop skills of textual analysis and the understanding that texts, both literary and non-literary, can relate to culturally determined reading practices, and to encourage students to question the meaning generated by language and texts.

#### **ENGLISH B HL**

Language B in IB Diploma is a language acquisition course designed for students with some previous experience of the target language. In the language B course, students further develop their ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works

# Language B Transition Policy

## **Our Aim**

To provide transparent guidelines regarding the transition of students across phases and languages.

## YEAR 7 ENTRY POLICY

Year 7 students can take a language of their choice (French or Spanish) regardless of their language experience in Primary school. This choice should be communicated to the Primary School Office at the end of Year 6. The only exception to this is native speaking students who are fluent in a given language cannot take that language as their Language B option as per IB requirements.

Please note that the Language Acquisition Department at DIA strongly advises students to continue with their chosen language B option in Primary up to Year 11, which will allow them to register for intermediate/advanced courses of that language (Year 11 Phase 4 in MYP and Language B SL&HL in the Diploma Programme) These courses entail a deeper knowledge of the target language and culture and present numerous academic and social benefits such as:

- Improvement of communication skills in the first language: students will delve into advanced linguistic aspects transferable to any language, such as text format conventions, creative writing techniques or literary analysis.
- Improvement of performance in other academic areas: intermediate and advanced language courses require the use of higher cognitive skills, which has a positive impact on standardised exam results in areas other than languages.
- University applications: many universities in the world require or highly value language courses taken at an intermediate and advance level in high school, especially in the Unites States where Spanish is widely spoken.
- Increase of networking skills: intermediate and advanced courses include more opportunities to reflect on cultural diversity, identities and other global topics which will benefit students' social and intercultural skills.

## YEAR 7-9 PLACEMENT POLICY (NEW STUDENTS)

New students in Year 7 and 8 will be placed in a Phase 1 class of the language of their choice. The only exception to this is native speaking students who are fluent in a given language cannot take that language as their Language B option as per IB requirements. New students in Year 9 will be placed in a Phase 1-2 or Phase 2 class of the language of their choice based on their experience and abilities.

### YEAR 9 INTO YEAR 10 TRANSITION

Students who studied a given language from year 7 to year 9 will continue with that language (Phase 3) in Year 10. New students in Year 10 will be placed in a Phase 1-2 or Phase 3 class depending on their level. A diagnostic assessment takes place in September of Year 10. If their level is lower than Phase 2, they will be placed in a Phase 1-2 class (beginners).

### YEAR 10 INTO YEAR 11 TRANSITION

#### *Phase 1-2 students:*

Students who studied the beginners course in Year 10 will be automatically placed in a Year 11 Phase 2 class.

#### *Phase 3 students:*

Students who have achieved an MYP grade 6 or higher in the final report are automatically placed into a Phase 4 class. Students who have achieved an MYP grade 5 or below have 2 options:

- a. They agree to move down to a Year 11 Phase 2 class.
- b. They take a level test in September of Year 11. If they demonstrate a Phase 3 level, they will be placed in a Year 11 Phase 4 class.

\*New students in Year 11 will be placed in a Phase 2 or Phase 4 depending on their level. A diagnostic assessment takes place in September. If they demonstrate a Phase 3 level, they will be placed in a Year 11 Phase 4 class.

### YEAR 11 INTO POST-16 TRANSITION

Students with 2 or more years of a given language will not be allowed to take Ab Initio of the same language.

Below is an example timeline using students in year 9 of 2022-2023:

<b>Year 7 – 11</b>	<b>Year 12 – 13</b>	<b>Possibility</b>
French	French Ab Initio	No
French (P2)	Spanish Ab Initio	Yes
French (P2)	French SL	Yes (with grade 7) *
French (P4)	Spanish Ab Initio	Yes
French (P4)	French SL	Yes (with grade 5)
French (P4)	French HL	Yes (with grade 6)
Spanish	Spanish Ab Initio	No
Spanish (P2)	Spanish SL	Yes (with grade 7) *
Spanish (P2)	French Ab Initio	Yes
Spanish (P4)	French Ab Initio	Yes
Spanish (P4)	Spanish SL	Yes (with grade 5)
Spanish (P4)	Spanish HL	Yes (with grade 6)
Arabic B	Spanish Ab Initio	Yes (if not studied at MYP)
Arabic B	French Ab Initio	Yes (if not studied in MYP)

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. If a student does not meet the requirements to take Ab Initio of the same language they studied in Year 11 phase 2, they need to choose a different language in DP (Ab Initio or Self-taught).
2. \* Only in a case by case basis, students registered for a phase 2 who obtain a final MYP grade of a 7 would be considered as potential candidates for Spanish B/French B SL as the knowledge gap could possibly be filled but a further discussion with the Subject Leader and relevant programme coordinator would have to be held to set certain commitment requirements.



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